

THEOLOGICAL TRENDS (2)

Feminist Critique and Re-visioning of God-Language

FEMINIST THEOLOGY is engaged in a critique of patriarchal images and concepts of God and also in a re-invisioning of God-language that would be inclusive of women and men. I shall begin by saying how I see this problem of patriarchal God-language. What I am not saying is that the traditional patriarchal language for God has been fine for men, but has excluded women, so we need some additional 'feminine' language for God to relate God to women as well as to men. I am not interested simply in 'adding' feminine God-language to complement and 'round out' our inherited masculine God-language. I start out with the assumption that language for God which subordinates women is bad for men as well. Although such patriarchal God-language may appear to give men a God who is 'for men', it does so in the sinful ways that powerful men have wished to be 'for themselves'. This distorts and limits the humanity of men, as much as the humanity of women. A God who is alienating and dehumanizing to women is bad for everyone and for the well-being of the planet earth itself. Therefore the task of feminist critique and revisioning of God-language must go beyond adding 'mothering-nurturing' images to father-ruler images, and must rethink the root metaphors of our relation to God in terms of the ethical effects of such metaphors on each other and on the world around us.

What then has been the problem with the images of God we have inherited? Feminist critique has focused on the idea that God is imaged as male, and so men are seen as able to represent God, while women are not able to represent God.¹ Even if the maleness of God is not taken in a literal, biological sense (and no Christian theology has actually said that), nevertheless godlikeness is seen as expressed in activities which men can do but women cannot do. The Episcopal bishop of San Francisco put this crudely a few years ago, in explaining his opposition to the ordination of women. God, he said, creates by begetting the Word of God. Since only men can beget, only men can represent God.² Earlier Christian tradition would have stressed ideas such as God's sovereign power or rule, and would have assumed that men could exercise such rule, but women can not. In the era of Margaret Thatcher that assumption is less convincing, hence the bishop's flight to the exclusively male biological act. But one suspects that his idea of the male sexual act of begetting is strongly mixed up with power that dominates and rules over the bodies of others; namely, the bodies of women.

The notion that males are godlike and women are not, thus, is linked with the fundamental model of relation of God to the world as ruler to ruled. Maleness represents mind and power which rules over others as body; women represents the bodily, creaturely being which is ruled over. It was on the basis of this metaphor of male to female, as ruling mind to dominated body, that Augustine, in his treatise on the Trinity, denied that women possess the image of God 'in themselves'. Women stand in relation to God only through the male 'who is their head'. Not only is Augustine saying that women image the body, but also that women's bodies are simply an extension of male bodies, jointly ruled over by one head; namely, the male's head. This is a thoroughgoing denial of women's autonomous personhood. It also makes clear that when a theology rejects the appropriateness of imaging God as female, it, at the same time, denies that women are, in themselves, in the image of God.³

The God-language we have been discussing does not actually image God in terms of male persons as a whole, but in terms of a particular role played by some males; namely, the exercise of power over others by ruling-class males. Thus the image of God as Father in this tradition is based on a patriarchal concept of the *paterfamilias* in which the Father is lord or master, not only of his wife, but his children and servants as well. It is useful to remember that in the Roman legal definition of the father of the family, the father is not himself a member of the family. He is outside of it as one who possesses and rules over it. The *familia* in Roman law did not include the father, but referred to those persons and things owned and ruled over by him; his wife, children, servants, chattel, lands and properties. It is not accidental that the three images we have for the relationship of the Church to Christ, or humans to God, is that of sons, spouse and servants. These represent the three categories of persons ruled over by the *paterfamilias* whose essential relationship to wife, children and servants is that of Lord. Servants, however, might be emancipated and sons might grow up to be householders in their own right. So it is women who become the prime representative of dominated body, of those whose essential nature is to be ruled over by others, but not to govern themselves or others.⁴

These images of God as *paterfamilias*, or Lord, foster many ethical problems in our construction of relationships, not only between men and women, but also between all groups of people divided by class or race into dominant and subservient relations. It also raises problems about how we understand our relationship to our own bodies and the relationship of humans to the non-human nature around us. The God who is disembodied sovereign Mind, outside of the cosmos as his creation, both leaves the cosmos itself without the presence of God within it and suggests that we get to God by turning away from the world and rejecting our bodies. It also suggests that God rules the world in the same way as an

emperor does, by a combination of force and mercy. In this context, sin is to be understood as rebellious behaviour against divine sovereignty. Such insubordination brings down divine wrath upon us, reducing us again to subjugation. Since such insubordination of subjects against God is unforgiveable, the only way we can be restored to divine favour, as good children or loyal subjects, is through divine mercy or forgiveness.

Such a notion of divine mercy fosters an essentially passive relation to God. Since divine will and human will are seen as over against and mutually exclusive of each other, we proclaim that God is all only by declaring ourselves to be nothing. Such a model of divine-human relations fosters the same relationship between human rulers and ruled. On the one hand, annihilating wrath and violence is appropriate for 'bad wogs' who dare to rebel against our righteous rule. On the other hand, obedient subjects are those who carry out the orders of their masters without taking any responsibility for their own actions. I suggest that Ronald Reagan's construction of his role in the world corresponds closely to this model of righteous divine sovereignty. He is only imitating God when he punishes rebellious sinners in Libya and Nicaragua with righteous wrath, while beaming benignly at tyrants who enrich themselves by obediently doing his will. Reagan's violence and his type of Christian piety are not contradictions, but are of one piece. This, I hope, suggests something of the reasons why such a notion of God is not only bad for women, but dangerous for all life on earth.

In recent years there has emerged in Western culture a post-Christian or neo-pagan feminist spirituality which sees this model of the violent, militaristic male God as essential to the biblical, Jewish and Christian traditions. They believe that this kind of patriarchal God overthrew an earlier understanding of the divine as Goddess. They believe that there were earlier cultures and peoples, repressed and conquered by patriarchal cultures, that not only saw the divine as Goddess or as female, but understood the divine-world relation differently. Instead of outside and ruling over the world, the Goddess is seen as pervading the world from within, nurturing the world as an expression of her own body. Such a Goddess not only affirmed the female as goddess-like, but fostered peaceful, cooperative relations between human beings, between humans and non-human nature.

The era of the Goddess was one of peaceful mutuality and shared abundance for all, in contrast to the patriarchal God who fosters competition, hierarchical social systems, with poverty and exploitation at the bottom and leisured wealth at the top, and who keeps this unjust system intact through military might. For these neo-pagan feminists, this earlier happy era was overthrown by violence, by either the Jews, as the creators of the patriarchal understanding of God, who then taught us to view all pagans as evil idolaters, or else by some earlier patriarchal coup that

began with civilization or early city society in Sumaria. The goddesses of the Ancient Near East, and other cultures that retain such female deities, are vestiges of this earlier Goddess, while Judaism, Christianity and Islam represent successive efforts to purge out all traces of the Goddess in favour of the patriarchal God.⁵

Before Christians, and other patriarchal monotheists, rush in to protest at the unhistoricity of this picture, the lack of evidence of such a link between Goddesses and peaceful egalitarian societies within ancient Near Eastern societies or of the existence of such societies before the rise of written history, it is important to pause and recognize what is being said by these post-Christian feminists. They are describing God-language that alienates and horrifies them and imagining the kind of understanding of the divine that would indeed be salvific for all of us, humans and non-human beings as well. In other words, we must read this story, not as an accurate account of what happened in one thousand or four thousand B.C., but as a powerful myth whose cultural locus is nineteenth-twentieth century Western Europe and America, particularly after Hiroshima, when male military might indeed threatens to annihilate all life on earth. We need to take this story seriously as a *cri de coeur* of those who see accurately the dangerous effects of one kind of God-language and who try to project an alternative model of spirituality that could foster a different ethic towards one another and the beautiful planet around us which is our threatened home. It is only when biblical monotheists take with equal seriousness the threat to global survival of nuclear madness, and the way one type of God-language has either promoted or made us indifferent to such violence and oppression, that we can look back at our tradition and see whether it is an accurate expression of the origins of biblical monotheism in relation to the earlier polytheistic religious culture.

The post-Christian feminist picture of the era of the Goddess is a contemporary Garden of Eden myth. It does not refer to some actual historical time in 'pre-history', but it does capture a powerful mythical memory of how earth 'might be fair', in contrast to the violence and injustice that has been 'history'. The question is to what extent has biblical monotheism promoted that very history of violence and oppression that it has protested with its stories of original goodness and future redemption? To answer this I would like to take another look at the essential characteristics that separate the biblical understanding of God from that of the ancient Near Eastern world around it.

Ancient Near Eastern views of deity do not consist of 'a Goddess', but of many gods and goddesses. Divinity is manifest in a plurality of deities, which, like humans, come not only in two genders, male and female, but also in successive generations; grandmother and grandfather, mother and father and siblings, brothers and sisters. The gods and goddesses are one big, multigenerational, sometimes loving, more often quarrelsome,

family. Secondly, the successive generations of the gods and goddesses are seen as evolving within the evolution of the cosmos itself. Thus, for ancient mythology, the story of cosmogony, or the generation of the cosmos, is told through theogony, the generation of the gods from the inchoate, monstrous forms of the beginning, to the bright, beautiful human forms of the deities who rule over the settled world of city states.⁶

Thirdly, this present heavenly world of gods and goddesses is modelled after a ruling and leisured aristocracy. The essential metaphor of ancient mythology, as far back as written records in Sumeria, for the relation of gods to humans is that of aristocrats to servile classes. In the literary traditions of antiquity that come down to us, Goddesses, as well as Gods, are pictured as a leisured ruling class. Contrary to our post-Christian mythology, Goddesses, like Inanna, Ishtar or Anath, are not, first of all, fertility figures. They do have a relation to the promotion of fertility, but no more so than do male deities. Moreover, although they have offspring, Goddesses have little correspondence to our romantic notion of nurturing motherhood. The essential image of the ancient Goddess is that of a Queen, not a 'Queen Mum' or a consort of a King, but a Queen ruling in her own right. The social world in which she is Queen is one of feudal aristocracy, not absolute monarchy. It has a multiplicity of rulers, male and female.

This feudal aristocracy, however, unites as one class *vis-à-vis* the world of mortals below them. The essential differences between humans and gods are that humans die and gods do not and also that humans work and gods do not. As the Babylonian creation story puts it, at the end of its description of the slaying of Tiamat to fashion the cosmos out of her body, human beings were created by the gods in order to do the work, so the gods could be at leisure.⁷ Thus the basic model of divine to human as ruler to ruled, as king to servant, and as leisured class to working class, was not invented by patriarchal monotheism. It is found earlier in the world of ancient polytheism.

What then is essentially different about biblical God-language from that of Babylonians and Canaanites? First of all, there is much continuity between the two, so we should think of the ancient Hebrews, not as rejecting one religious world for a totally different one (although this is the way they saw themselves and we have been taught to see them through their eyes), but as making creative revisions in a common stock of religious ideas. What were those creative revisions? First of all there is monotheism—an idea which grew gradually from asserting that their God was the only God for Israel to the far-reaching belief that this was the one God who created and sustained all reality and history.

Does monotheism automatically mean that the one God is seen as male and hence the male is seen as the normative bearer of the image of God, while polytheism is necessary to allow for parallel gender personifications

of deity? In so far as the one God is construed as male, I think monotheism does greatly enhance male domination. The master-servant model of divine-human relations is connected with male over female in a way that makes God the ultimate sanction of gender hierarchy. Divine-human hierarchy now finds its root model in male-female hierarchy. This leads to the kind of patriarchal theology which I discussed at the outset.

However there are critical elements in Hebrew monotheism that should have and can mitigate against the identification of monotheism with only the male gender. God is thought of as beyond all literal anthropomorphic images. So concerned were the Hebrews that people should not take either pictorial or even verbal images literally that all visual pictures were forbidden and the holiest name for God was not allowed to be pronounced. This understanding of the distance between God's nature and our human experience leads to the apophatic tradition in Christian theology. This has been restated in recent years by Sallie McFague in her *Metaphorical theology*.⁸ It declares that although all our language for God is necessarily drawn from human experience, since this is the only experience we have directly, its application to God can only be analogical or metaphorical, not literal. To take male imagery for God literally, to imply that God is male and not female, is idolatry.

Although the Hebrew Scriptures use predominately male images and gender grammar for God, it does at times use female images. This occurs when God is compared both to male and female roles, to a warrior and to a birthing mother. The Wisdom tradition sees the immanence of God as Wisdom in female personification. This line of thought continues in the Jewish mystical tradition that sees the divine *Shekinah* or Holy Presence of God with Israel in female personification.⁹ There are expressions of this view also in Syriac Christian imagery of the Holy Spirit as female.¹⁰ This does not get us fully free of gender stereotypes. To see God transcendent as male, God immanent as female, to relate the two as husband and wife, obviously is built on social role complementarity, although it assumes a very powerful role of the wife as ruler of her household and teacher of her children and imagines divine Wisdom operating in a similar way in the household of the world. But it does make clear that biblical thought did not take literally God as male. God who is beyond literal gender could be imagined in metaphors drawn from the social roles of both males and females.

A second important aspect of biblical theology is divine transcendence. God is outside of and prior to the cosmos. God does not evolve within it in the manner of polytheist theogonies. Yet the Hebrew sense of God does not easily fit into the Greek philosophical concept of immutable transcendent Being, although Christian theology united the two. The Hebrew anthropomorphic sense of God combines the qualities of a good ruler and an anxious parent, concerned to punish wickedness and establish

righteousness and also to educate Israel to the right path of life. Such a God can be spoken of as exhibiting a whole range of human emotions, including repentance or change of mind. Thus when the people of Nineveh repent and turn from their evil ways, God responds to this change in them by 'repenting' of the punishment that God had intended to mete out to them (Jon 3;10).

The picture of God as immutable, disembodied spirit, outside of and ruling over the world, lends itself to a one-sided authoritarian concept of the divine-world relationship. We relate to God by turning away from embodied reality. We obey God by negating ourselves. But this picture fits less well with other elements of Jewish and Christian theology. The idea that God 'brings forth' God's Wisdom or 'begets' the divine Logos, as the way to become immanent as creator, revealer and redeemer of creation, reintroduces an element of divine 'theogony' or process within God as an expression of God's relationship with creative process. The Christian belief that God becomes incarnate and even suffers and dies on the cross flew in the face of the Greek sense of immutable transcendence and was the source of early Christian conflicts over 'patripassianism'. It was partly resolved by allowing the divine Logos to suffer, but not the 'Father'. But what does this mean if the Logos is of one being with the 'Father'? Greek theology itself tried to bridge God and body by suggesting that this changeable aspect of God, the Logos, was not only architect and intellectual blueprint for the cosmos, but also the ground of its being. The Christian sacramentality of writers such as Irenaeus is rooted in the sense of the cosmos as the bodying forth of the Word and Spirit of God.¹¹ The incarnation of God in Christ then is not unique so much as exemplary paradigm of the bodying forth or incarnation of God, not only in all humans, but in the whole cosmos. Feminist theology, along with process theology and ecological theology, seeks to correct the authoritarian, anti-material concept of God's transcendence with incarnational and interactive views of divine-world relations.

Finally, the Hebrew God is a God who liberates captives, who intervenes on behalf of the poor and the oppressed. Even God's primordial work of creating the cosmos is remembered in the context of that essential historical act which establishes God's relation to Israel; God chooses a people who were no people. God liberates this people from bondage to Pharaoh, the great embodiment of imperial rule. Although biblical religion continues the basic Near Eastern analogy of human to God as servant to King, a new element is introduced into this idea of servant of God. Israel is servant of God as people liberated from servitude to worldly power. In the creation story of the first chapter of Genesis, written in all likelihood in conscious correction of the Babylonian creation story, God creates humanity, not to be God's slaves, so God could be at ease. God gave

the example both of creative work and rest by labouring six days in creation and then resting, and commanding humans to do the same.

Humans are created to be images of God; that is, sharers in divine sovereignty in caring for the earth. Humans are divine stewards, rather than divine slaves. Since this role of exercising divine care over the earth is given to humanity generically, male and female, this leaves open the possibility of a radical egalitarianism between human beings. Feminist and abolitionist writers, commenting on this text in the nineteenth century, were quick to note that no like dominion is established between one group of humans and another, either by class, race or gender.¹² Yet it took people shaped by the democratic ideas of liberalism to draw out this possibility from the text. Patristic and medieval Christian theology, as we have seen, justified the subordination of women in the original 'order of creation' by denying that women possessed the 'image of God' in themselves; that is, as autonomous persons.

The idea of God as liberator of slaves reflected a common stock of ancient Near Eastern ideas of kingship. The righteous king established justice by righting wrongs done to the most disadvantaged in society, widows and orphans. Kings also exercised benevolence or mercy by liberating captives and forgiving debts. But biblical language at times goes beyond this general idea of justice and mercy within established relations of power. It suggests that God not only rights wrongs to individuals, but overturns systems of unjust powers, puts the mighty down from their thrones and lifts up the lowly, establishes a new world order where every household has its own land, its own vine and fig trees, where none need be afraid of violence from their neighbours. This more radical idea of God as liberator has been a key source of Western movements for social justice, political democracy, socialism, anti-racism, anti-colonialism and feminism. These movements have generally seen themselves as secular or anti-Christian because they identified religion with the sanctification of social hierarchy. Liberation theologies represent a Christian reappropriation of God as liberator as the essential message of the bible.

This exploration of biblical shifts in God-language suggests two radically different directions these shifts might go. One direction takes the emphasis on transcendence and monotheism into modelling God on distant male kingly absolute power over subjects who are to be kept in submission by threats of punishment and promises of mercy. This God establishes social hierarchy of men over women, masters over slaves, kings over subjects as the expression of the ultimate hierarchy of God over creatures. Other aspects of the biblical God suggest a very different direction, a God who establishes no social hierarchy between human groups, where all are made in God's image and exercise joint care over the earth as representatives of God, a God who enters into human struggle and suffering to overcome

systems of unjust domination to create a new earth of peace and justice where God's will is done on earth.

Feminist theology develops this second direction of biblical faith by re-envisioning it in the context of women's equal personhood with men. As the conclusion of this essay, I will explore several aspects of this feminist revisioning of the liberationist tradition of biblical faith. Some contemporary post-Christian feminists have argued that it is necessary to return to polytheism in order fully to affirm women as autonomous beings.¹³ I disagree with this direction. I feel that humanness is more fundamental than differences of gender, as well as other differences between humans, such as race and culture. The unity of God is an essential presupposition of the underlying unity of all humanity, the underlying unity of all creation. Plurality needs to be affirmed within a unity that underlies and upholds them all. This means that one element of particularity, such as maleness, the white race, Western culture or the Christian religion, cannot be made the norm of unity. Even human beings cannot be made the sole norm of the preciousness of life. The one God who upholds us all, both in our authentic differences and relationships, cannot be thought to be exclusively modelled on white ruling-class Christian male human beings. God transcends all these differences and cannot be literally identified with any of it. But God also upholds all of it, not just as impersonal power, but as personal love. God is the personal heart of all things in community, allowing us all to enter into personal community with each other. God, therefore, can be imaged metaphorically in terms of all aspects of our entrance into loving and lifegiving relationships, as male and female, with the face and dress of all cultures, as bird and lamb, wind, fire and water, as well as human persons.

The solution to white ruling-class male monopoly on God-language is not to move to abstract, generic, impersonal language. This solution to the problem of inclusive language, that translates God as Lord and King into God as sovereign, fails to recognize the metaphorical, analogical and poetic nature of religious language. It also fails to address the question of how we envision divine power in relation to our own. God-language, which recognizes the inclusive and metaphorical nature of religious language, should move towards a pluralism of images, male and female, images drawn from nature, as well as human society.

But is God equally imageable in terms of all the plurality of experience? Is there no principle of discrimination between more or less appropriate images? I think that images of God can be drawn from all the plurality of natural goodness, which includes both genders, many races and all of nature. But it does not equally include the social roles, both dominant and subservient, that have been created by human sin. Therefore language of kings and subjects, masters and slaves, fatherhood as patriarchal domination and motherhood as submissive nurture, need to be eschewed

as social stereotypes that enshrine unjust social relations. To use them uncritically of God and God-human relations is to give divine sanction to human evil. Thus, while we need to image God in terms of female, as well as male persons, we need to reach for creative images that shatter conventional patriarchal stereotypes and point us to a vision of full and liberated persons, male and female, able to enter into mutual relations with each other. The image of Wisdom as a strong woman, ruler of her own household, who invites others to a banquet that she prepares, is one such image. Surprising, paradoxical language, such as that found in the parables of Jesus, where an old woman sweeping her floor to find a lost coin becomes an image of God seeking a lost sinner and rejoicing when the lost one is found by throwing a party and inviting in the neighbours, is particularly appropriate to the kind of transformative imagination that we need to overcome gender stereotypes in religious language.

This takes us to the question of God as Father as the primary image of modern Christianity. The objection to this image as sole or primary is not simply that it is male, but rather than it is based on a certain construction of fatherhood or male parenting, as the *paterfamilias*, an all-powerful rule that keeps us, as women, children and servants, in a state of permanent dependency. To seek to escape such relationship with authority figures is then construed as rebellion against divine patriarchy. We need a different model of divine parenting, not based on domination and dependency, but on wise nurture that guides those who are dependent, as weak or wounded persons, into graduate adulthood where they are able to enter into reciprocal and responsible relationships with each other. Neither our images of father as *paterfamilias*, nor our images of motherhood as infantilising nurture, are models of good parenting. Applied to God such neurotic images of fathering or mothering makes for bad ethics of human relations.

The image of God as parent remains an important image of God. It is a root image for relation to persons from whom we have our life and growth. But we need to model God after what we know to be good parenting, not neurotic parenting, the guidance of the young toward responsible adulthood, rather than servile obedience or infantilising dependency. Both mother and father need to be seen as co-parents in joint exercise of nurturing authority, rather than assigning authority without nurture to men and nurture without authority to women. It is in this context of good parenting that God can be seen as both mother and father, not only affirming the nurturing aspect of divine parenting, but also the nurturing aspect of male parenting, or fathering, as well.

I suggest that Jesus language for God as *Abba* expresses this re-envisioned idea of God as parent. *Abba* was the baby's affectionate and trusting name for the male parent. Such a name for God overthrows God as *paterfamilias*. God is like a parent in whose love one can have

unconditional trust. But not a parent that either infantilises or creates master-slave relations between people. In the words of the gospel of Matthew (23,9), 'call no man your father on earth, for you have one *Abba*, who is in heaven', relation to God as parent makes us all brothers and sisters, rather than establishing some as lords and others as servants. God as parent, mother and father, needs to be supplemented by other models of human relationship, God as tutor (in the sense of one who teaches us how to learn) God as lover, God as friend, relationships that draw us towards responsible adulthood, and which draw us into loving and reciprocal relations with each other.

This re-envisioning of God, in terms of liberating, loving and mutual human relationships, suggests also a need to rethink divine transcendence in relation to creation. Instead of thinking of divine transcendence in terms of disembodied absolute power, outside and above the world, ruling over it by remote control in a way that does not touch God's own being, one might think of divine transcendence as the divine matrix of being and new being. God is that 'still more' of transcendence being, from which we ourselves and all things emerged from nothingness, and that 'still more' that opens up potential for transformation and newness of life beyond our sinful deformations of our creative possibilities.

God does not create in a way that crushes our freedom. God grounds our finite freedom and calls us into a free choice of our good possibilities, against our own failures to live up to this potential. God also suffers and is wounded by human evil, is hung on the cross of human misery and human violence. We and God are reciprocal partners in building a redeemed earth. We cannot do it without God, but equally God cannot do it without us. God cannot redeem the world apart from our free and loving response to God which is, at the same time, a choice to love and support one another.

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NOTES

¹ See Daphne Hampson, 'The challenge of feminism to Christianity', in *Theology*, September, 1985 (Vol 88, no 725), pp 342-350.

² The statement was made by the Episcopal bishop of San Francisco, C. Kilmer Meyers, in 1978, as part of a challenge to the ordination of women at the 1978 Biennial Convention of the American Episcopal Church.

³ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 7.7.10.

⁴ Herlihy, David: *Medieval households* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1985), chapter 1.

⁵ For example, Carol Christ: 'Why women need the Goddess: phenomenological, psychological and political reflections', in *Womenspirit rising: a feminist reader in religion*, ed. Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), pp 273-287. Starhawk: *The spiritual dance: the rebirth of the ancient religion of the Goddess* (New York: Harper and Row,

1979). Elizabeth Gould David: *The first sex* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1971). Merlin Stone: *When God was a woman* (New York: Dial Press, 1976).

⁶ See the Babylonian Creation Epic in *Religion in the Ancient Near East: Sumero-Akkadian religious texts and Ugaritic epics*, ed Issac Mendelsohn (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), pp 17-46; also *Hesiod's Theogony* (New York; Liberal Arts Press, 1953), pp 56-78.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Babylonian Creation Epic, p 37.

⁸ McFague, Sallie: *Metaphorical theology: models of God in religious language* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

⁹ Patai, Raphael: *The Hebrew Goddess* (Philadelphia: Ktav, 1967).

¹⁰ *The Odes of Solomon*, ed with translation and notes James R. Charlesworth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

¹¹ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haer.*, *passim*, in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed Cyril Richardson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953).

¹² Grimke, Sarah: 'Letters on the equality of the sexes and the condition of women' (1837), in Miriam Schneir, ed, *Feminism: essential historical writings* (New York: Vintage, 1972), pp 36-48.

¹³ Christ, Carol: 'Symbols of Goddess and God in feminist theology', in *The book of the Goddess: past and present: an introduction to her religion*, ed Carol Olson (New York: Crossroads, 1983), pp 231-251.