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THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN

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The Old Testament references to the doctrine of the image of God in man are tantalizing in their brevity and scarcity; we find only the fundamental sentence in Genesis 1:26 'Let us make men in our image after our likeness', a further reference to man's creation 'in the likeness of God' in Genesis 5:2, and a final statement in Genesis 9:6: 'Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image.' Yet we become aware, in reading these early chapters of Genesis and in studying the history of the interpretation of these passages, that the importance of the doctrine is out of all proportion to the laconic treatment it receives in the Old Testament.[1]

One essential meaning of the statement that man was created 'in the image of God' is plain: it is that man is in some way and in some degree like God. Even if the similarity between man and God could not be defined more precisely, the significance of this statement of the nature of man for the understanding of biblical thought could not be over-emphasized. Man is the one godlike creature in all the created order. His nature is not understood if he is viewed merely as the most highly developed of the animals, with whom he shares the earth, nor is it perceived if he is seen as an infinitesimal being dwarfed by the enormous magnitude of the universe. By the doctrine of the image of God, Genesis affirms the dignity and worth of man, and elevates all men—not just kings or nobles—to the highest status conceivable, short of complete divinization.

There is perhaps in the doctrine of the 'image' a slight hint of the limitation of the status of mankind, in that the image is not itself the thing it represents and that the copy must in some

[1] *Cf. e.g.* T. C. Vriezen, 'La création de l'homme d'après l'image de Dieu', *OTS* 2 (1943) 87–105, especially 87.

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respects be unlike its original.[2] Yet this limiting aspect of biblical anthropology is hardly to be recognized as an important element in the 'image' doctrine, which itself points unequivocally to the dignity and godlikeness of man. It is the context of the 'image' doctrine that conveys the complementary view of human nature: that man is 'made' in the image of God, that is, that he is God's creature, subject to the overlordship of his Maker. Genesis 1, with its overriding emphasis on the unconditional freedom of God's sovereignty, leaves no doubt that man is a creature of God at the same time as he is 'in the image of God'.

Yet even if the essential meaning of the image is clear, namely that man's splendour is his likeness to God, we still need to know in what respect man is like God. Obviously the fact that he is 'made' in the image of God, that is, that he is a creature, imposes limitations upon the range and degree of his similarities to God. What these limitations are and what the precise meaning of the 'image' is will be the subject of our enquiry in this paper. Only by considering what meaning such a phrase could have had to the author of Genesis 1, and not at all by working from general philosophical, religious, or even biblical indications of the likeness of man and God, can we discover in what exact sense we may use the term if we wish to expound the content of the biblical revelation.

1. THE HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION OF THE IMAGE OF GOD

It has proved all too easy in the history of interpretation for this exceedingly open-ended term 'the image of God' to be pressed into the service of contemporary philosophical and religious thought. Karl Barth has shown in his survey of the history of the doctrine how each interpreter has given content to the concept solely from the anthropology and theology of his own age.[3] For Ambrose, the soul was the image; for Athanasius, rationality, in the light of the Logos doctrine; for Augustine, under the influence of trinitarian dogma, the image is to be seen as the triune faculties of the soul, *memoria*, *intellectus*,

[2] So T. Nöldeke, *ZAW* 17 (1898) 186; N. W. Porteous, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (hereafter *IDB*) II, Abingdon Press, New York/Nashville (1964) 684a.
[3] K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (hereafter *CD*) III/1, Clark, Edinburgh (1958) 192ff.

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amor. For the Reformers[4] it was the state of original righteousness enjoyed by Adam before the Fall, the 'entire excellence of human nature' including 'everything in which the nature of man surpasses that of all other species of animals', which since the Fall is 'vitiated and almost destroyed, nothing remaining but a ruin, confused, mutilated, and tainted with impurity'.[5] For the time of the Enlightenment, the seat of the image is the soul, of which Herder exclaimed: 'It is the image of the Godhead and seeks to stamp this image upon everything around it; it makes the manifold one, seeks truth in falsehood, radiant activity and operation in unstable peace, and is always present and wills and rules as though it looks at itself and says: "Let us", with the exalted feeling of being the daughter and image of God'.[6] Barth concludes his catalogue with the sardonic remark: 'One could indeed discuss which of all these and similar explanations of the term is the most beautiful or the most deep or the most serious. One cannot, however, discuss which of them is the *correct* interpretation of Genesis 1:26.'[7]

Old Testament scholarship has produced an equally varied range of interpretations of the image. J. J. Stamm, in surveying the history of interpretation,[8] has drawn a dividing line in 1940. Before that date four groups of views may be discerned: (i) The image is a spiritual quality of man: his self-consciousness and self-determination (Delitzsch), his talents and understanding of the eternal, the true, and the good (Dillman), his self-consciousness, his capability for thought and his immor-

[4] For a significant exception, *cf.* G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids (1962) 46f.

[5] J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I, xv, 3–4 (ET by H. Beveridge, James Clarke, London (reprint 1953) 164f.). *Cf.* M. Luther, *The Creation. A Commentary on the First Five Chapters of the Book of Genesis* (ET by H. Cole), Clark, Edinburgh (1858) 91: 'Wherefore, when we now attempt to speak of that image, we speak of a thing unknown; an image which we not only have never experienced, but the contrary to which we have experienced all our lives, and experience still. Of this image therefore all we now possess are the mere terms—*the image of God!* ... But there was, in Adam, an illumined reason, a true knowledge of God and a will the most upright to love both God, and his neighbour.'

[6] *Cf.* K. Barth, *op. cit.*, 193.

[7] *Ibid.*, K. L. Schmidt has shown how earlier Christian writers than Ambrose likewise borrowed from contemporary anthropology in interpreting the image ('"Homo Imago Dei" im alten und neuen Testament', *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 15 (1947f.) 149–95, especially 158–162). Earlier still, the interpretation offered by Wisdom 2:23 is plainly influenced by Hellenistic thought (*cf.* H. Wildberger, *Theologische Zeitschrift* 21 (1965) 251 n. 29).

[8] J. J. Stamm, 'Die Imago-Lehre von Karl Barth und die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft', in *Antwort. Festschrift K. Barth*, ed. E. Wolf *et al.*, Evangelischer Verlag, Zollikon-Zürich (1956) 84–98, especially 86–92.

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tality (König), his reason (Heinisch), his personality (Procksch, Sellin), his vitality and innate nobility (B. Jacob).[9] (ii) The image consists in man's rule over his fellow-creatures (Holzinger, Koehler in 1936, Hempel). (iii) The image is the term for the immediate relationship between God and man (Vischer). (iv) The image consists in man's form, which is similar to God's (Gunkel, von Rad in 1935).

Since 1940, according to Stamm's analysis, Gunkel's view of the image as external form, a view which could be distinguished as an under-current even in writers such as Dillman and Procksch, who stress rather the spiritual character of the image, came to the fore and dominated Old Testament scholarship. The physical meaning of צֶלֶם was emphasized in an influential paper by P. Humbert, who concluded from a study of צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת in the Old Testament that the phrase בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ 'in our image according to our likeness' in Genesis 1:26 means that man was created 'with the same physical form as the deity, of which he is a moulded three-dimensional embodiment, delineated and exteriorised'.[10] L. Koehler similarly considered, in examining the use of צֶלֶם in other Semitic languages, that צֶלֶם is primarily an upright statue, and that the image of God is to be seen primarily in man's upright posture, and more generally, in man's creation according to God's צֶלֶם, *i.e.* His image in the sense of form.[11]

There emerge, therefore, if we take the whole history of interpretation into account, two quite distinct approaches to the meaning of the image. The first, which has been dominant throughout the history of biblical interpretation, locates the image in some spiritual quality or faculty of the human person. If the image refers primarily to similarity between God and man, it is only to be expected that the image will be identified with that part of man which man shares with God, his spirit. It would appear that no further arguments at this late date

[9] We omit W. Eichrodt from Stamm's list; *cf.* Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* II, SCM, London (1967) 129 n. 1. We may add here J. Muilenburg's view that the image is to be found in man's ability to choose and evaluate ('Imago Dei', *Review of Religion* 6 (1942) 392–406, especially 399f.).

[10] 'Avec la même physique que la divinité, qu'il en est une effigie concrète et plastique, figurée et extérieure' (P. Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse*, Secrétariat de l'Université, Neuchâtel (1940) 153–175, especially 157). *Cf.* also his 'Trois notes sur Genèse 1', in *Interpretationes ad V.T. ertinentes Sigmundo Mowinckel missae*, Forlaget Land og Kirke, Oslo (1955) 85–96.

[11] L. Koehler, 'Die Grundstelle der Imago-Dei-Lehre', *Theologische Zeitschrift* (hereafter *TZ*) 4 (1948) 16–22, especially 20f.

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could increase the attractiveness of this interpretation; for it is plain from the setting of the image doctrine at the apex of the pyramidal structure of the creation narrative and from the solemnity of the statement of divine deliberation with which it is introduced that we have here no mere *obiter dictum* about man but a carefully considered *theologoumenon* which adequately expresses the superlative dignity and spiritual capacities of man. On the other hand, recent biblical scholarship has been well-nigh unanimous in rejecting the traditional view of man as a 'composition' of various 'parts', and has emphasized rather that in the biblical view man is essentially a unity.[12] When this insight is applied to the doctrine of the image, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the whole man is in the image of God.

The force of the second approach, which leads to a physical interpretation of the image, is not always well appreciated. Genesis 1:26 makes it clear that it is by the image of God that man is distinguished from all the animals, which share with him the sixth day as the moment of their creation. One of the chief distinguishing marks of man in relation to the animals is his upright posture, as was already recognized in antiquity. So Ovid:

> *Os homini sublime dedit, caelumque videre*
> *Jussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.*[13]

In Dryden's paraphrase:

> Thus, while the mute Creation downward bend
> Their Sight, and to their Earthy Mother tend,
> Man looks aloft; and with erected Eyes,
> Beholds his own Hereditary Skies.[14]

We do not, however, need to specify man's upright posture as his chief distinguishing characteristic in order to propose a physical interpretation.

It could be suggested that the earliest interpretation of the image in physical terms was by the 'P' writer himself, when he spoke of Seth's being born according to the image (בְּצַלְמֹ) of

[12] *Cf. e.g.* W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* II 149.
[13] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I 85f.; for other classical references, *cf.* L. Koehler, *TZ* 4 (1948) 20.
[14] J. Dryden, *Poems from Examen Poeticum: The First Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses*, lines 107–110.

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Adam (5:3). It would indeed seem that it is the physical resemblance of father and son that is in view here, and if the difficult expression in Genesis 1:26 is to be interpreted by the comparatively clear reference in 5:3, as H. Gunkel suggested,[15] a strong case for a physical meaning of the image develops. We may finally note here the quite remarkable statements of Calvin: 'I deny not that external shape, in so far as it distinguishes and separates us from the lower animals, brings us nearer to God; nor will I vehemently oppose any who may choose to include under the image of God [the lines of Ovid quoted above].'[16] 'Though the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and the heart, or in the soul and its powers, there was no part even of the body in which some rays of glory did not shine.'[17]

We should, however, observe that hidden below the surface of the definition of the image as upright posture or physical form there often lies a theological significance. H. Gunkel's own form of words is revealing in this respect: 'This being made in the image of God refers in the first place to the body of man, without indeed excluding the spiritual.'[18] Even man's upright posture is not simply a mark of difference from the animals; it indicates man's superiority over the animals, and is seen by some also as a token of man's capacity to commune with God.[19] So, for example, H. Wheeler Robinson could write that the natural meaning of Genesis 1:26 was that 'the bodily form of man was made after the pattern of the bodily form of God (the substance being different). . . . No doubt, writers so late as those of the Priestly Code thought not only of man's bodily shape and erect posture as distinguishing him from the animals, but also of his obvious mental and spiritual differentiae from the animal world. But this was not expressed by the words "image" and "likeness"; it was implied in the psychology which did not divorce body and soul, but conceived the body psychically.'[20]

[15] H. Gunkel, *Genesis*[6], Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen (1964) 112. But see below, n. 117.

[16] J. Calvin, *Institutes* I, xv, 3 (*edit. cit.* I 162).

[17] *Ibid.* (*edit. cit.* I 164).

[18] 'Demnach bezieht sich diese Gottenbenbildlichkeit in erster Linie auf den Körper des Menschen, wenn freilich auch das Geistige dabei nicht ausgeschlossen ist' (*Genesis* 112).

[19] *Cf.* L. Koehler, *TZ* 4 (1948) 19.

[20] H. W. Robinson, 'Hebrew Psychology', in *The People and the Book*, ed. A. S. Peake, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1925) 353–382, especially 369.

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Certain writers in recent years have sought to combine both a spiritual and physical reference in the word צֶלֶם. G. von Rad writes: 'One does well to separate as little as possible the bodily and spiritual; the whole man is created in the *imago* of God.'[21] According to E. Jacob, man's representative function is what is principally implied by the image, and he stresses that man is a representative of God by his total being, physical and spiritual.[22] H. Gross similarly has argued that Old Testament anthropology does not permit one to divide between soul and body when considering the image.[23] A novel approach along the same line has been made by B. de Geradon, according to whom the image is to be found in man's possession of heart, tongue, and limbs, which corresponds to the divine faculty of thought, speech, and act.[24]

On the other hand, some have recently denied strongly that the physical nature of man can form any part of the image, H. H. Rowley on the ground that Yahweh is not conceived of in the Old Testament as having a physical form,[25] and P. G. Duncker on the ground that 'P's' conception of the transcendence of God would have precluded him from speaking of the corporeality of God, which would furthermore have to be bisexual if both male and female are created in the physical likeness of God.[26] This rejection of a physical interpretation leads once again to the definition of the image as some quality which is shared with God: intelligence and power (Duncker),[27] self-consciousness and self-determination (Festorazzi),[28] spiritual nature (Rowley),[29] thought and conscience (Cassuto).[30]

A quite fresh and provocative interpretation has been ad-

[21] G. von Rad, *Genesis*, SCM, London (1961) 56. Similarly W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* II 122–125; H. Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning*, Herder and Herder, New York (1964) 110.

[22] E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, SCM, London (1958) 166–170.

[23] H. Gross, 'Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen', in *Lex Tua Veritas. Festschrift für Hubert Junker*, ed. H. Gross *et al.*, Paulinus-Verlag, Trier (1961) 89–100, especially 92. So also N. W. Porteous, *IDB* II 684.

[24] B. de Geradon, 'L'homme à l'image de Dieu', *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 80 (1958) 683–695, especially 689.

[25] H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel*, SCM, London (1956) 75f.

[26] P. G. Duncker, 'L'immagine di Dio nell' uomo (Gen. 1, 26.27). Una somiglianza fisica?', *Biblica* 40 (1959) 384–392, especially 390f.

[27] P. G. Duncker, *Biblica* 40 (1959) 391.

[28] F. Festorazzi, 'L'uomo immagine di Dio', *Bibbia e Oriente* 6 (1964) 105–117, especially 105.

[29] H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* 79.

[30] U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Magnes Press, Jerusalem, I (1961) 56.

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vanced by Karl Barth,[31] following hints from W. Vischer[32] and D. Bonhoeffer.[33] He finds in the text of Genesis 1:26f. two starting-points: first, the plural of Genesis 1:26, which he considers can only be understood as a 'summons to intra-divine unanimity of intention and decision';[34] that is, that there is within God Himself a distinction between the I and Thou. This is not a return to the old dogmatic trinitarian interpretation,[35] but an attempt to take seriously the plural of Genesis 1:26 and to use it positively in exegesis instead of labouring under it as encumbrance that has to be disposed of before the meaning of the image can be apprehended. Secondly, that 1:27a 'Male and female he created them' must be recognized as 'the definitive explanation given by the text itself' of the image of God.[36] The relation and distinction in mankind between male and female, man and wife, corresponds to the relation and distinction of the I and Thou in God himself. There is thus between God and man an *analogia relationis*; God's image in man is the reciprocal relationship of human being with human being.[37] It thus appears that the individual man is not the image of God, since the image comes to expression in the 'juxtaposition and conjunction of man and man which is that of male and female'.[38] Barth, however, when he comes to describe the image employs a wider formulation, which refers it to the individual man: as bearer of the image man is partner of God Himself, capable of dealings with Him and of close relationship with Him. He is a being whom God addresses as Thou and makes answerable as I.[39] Thus the image describes

[31] K. Barth, *CD* III/1 182–206. Barth's interpretation has been discussed at length by J. J. Stamm in the article mentioned in n. 8 above, and in *Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen im Alten Testament*, Evangelischer Verlag, Zollikon-Zürich (1959); also by J. Konrad, *Abbild und Ziel der Schöpfung. Untersuchungen zur Exegese von Genesis 1 und 2 in Barths Kirchlicher Dogmatik III, 1*, Mohr, Tübingen (1962), especially 177–207.

[32] W. Vischer, *The Witness of the Old Testament to Christ* I, Lutterworth, London (1949) 48 (ET of *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments* (1934)).

[33] D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, SCM, London (1959) 33–38 (ET of *Schöpfung und Fall* (1933)).

[34] *CD* III/1 182f.

[35] Though the idea of a differentiated unity in God, which approximates to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, is nearer to the text than 'the alternative suggested by modern exegesis in its arrogant rejection of the exegesis of the Early Church' (*ibid.*, 192).

[36] *Ibid.*, 195.

[37] *Ibid.*, 184f., 195f.

[38] *Ibid.*, 195.

[39] *Ibid.*, 199.

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the I-Thou relationship between man and man *and* between man and God.

Barth's understanding of the image has received qualified support from a number of Old Testament scholars. F. Horst sees the meaning of the image in man's personhood, which has 'the character of a Thou addressed by God and an I answerable to God'.[40] He does not accept Barth's view of a distinction within God of the I and Thou to which the I-Thou relationship of man and woman is analogous, and puts in its place an analogy between the relation of man and God and that of man and woman. Horst makes an interesting, though not entirely convincing, addition of his own to the meaning of the image when he speaks of it as having a conditional character: 'Man is person, is image of God, in so far as he is man who hears the word of God, who speakes with God in prayer and obeys him in service.' N. Krieger similarly suggests that 'the image is conditioned by the obedience of man'.[41] J. J. Stamm attempts to effect some co-ordination between Barth's view and the tendency of modern Old Testament scholarship, and finds such a co-ordination possible through the rejection of the image as some spiritual or moral quality in man, and the affirmation of its meaning as the personality of man in his relationship with God.[42]

It appears that scholarship has reached something of an impasse over the problem of the image, in that different starting-points, all of which seem to be legitimate, lead to different conclusions. If one begins from the philological evidence, the image is defined in physical terms. If we begin from the incorporeality of God, the image cannot include the body of man. If we begin with the Hebrew conception of man's nature as a unity, we cannot separate, in such a fundamental sentence about man, the spiritual part of man from the physical. If we begin with 'male and female' as a definitive explanation of the image, the image can only be understood in terms of personal relationships, and the image of God must be located in mankind (or married couples!) rather than the individual man.

[40] F. Horst, 'Face to Face. The Biblical Doctrine of the Image of God', *Interpretation* 4 (1950) 259–270, especially 266 (='Der Mensch als Ebenbild Gottes', in F. Horst, *Gottes Recht*, Kaiser, München (1961) 222–234).

[41] N. Krieger, 'Zu Gen 1 und Gen 2–3', *ZAW* 70 (1958) 265–269, esp. 265f.; *cf.* C. Westermann, *Der Schöpfungsbericht vom Anfang der Bibel*, Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart (1960) 23; E. Jacob, 'Le thème de l'Imago Dei dans l' A.T.', *Proceedings of the XXIInd Congress of Orientalists*, Brill, Leiden (1957) 586.

[42] J. J. Stamm, *Die Gottebenbildlichkeit* 14.

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II. THE PROBLEM OF THE PLURAL IN GENESIS 1:26

Since Barth has raised once again the problem of the plural 'let us' in Genesis 1:26, which has proved an embarrassment to exegetes[43] ever since the time of the Jewish scholars who were said to have produced for King Ptolemy the 'corrected' version 'let me',[44] we shall do well to clarify our position on the question before we embark on the subject of the image itself. The meaning of the plural in Genesis 1:26 is, to be sure, peripheral to the interpretation of the image; nevertheless it is not without value to enquire 'In whose image is man made?' Who are the 'us' of Genesis 1:26?

Those who are impressed by the theological statements of ecumenical councils will have little difficulty with this plural, for the First Council of Sirmium in AD 351 not only affirmed that the *faciamus* of Genesis 1:26 was addressed by the Father to the Son as a distinct Person, but also excommunicated those who denied it![45] We set beside this statement those of two modern Catholic exegetes: 'The Old Testament reader can recognize here no "*vestigium Trinitatis*" ';[46] 'Whoever understands the verse of the trinity forgets that Genesis 1 is part of the Old Testament.'[47] We can only agree that it is the primary task of the Old Testament exegete to expound the sense intended by the author of the passage and that such was not the sense needs no proof. Yet we do not necessarily deny that the Church's interpretation of the plural as a reference to the Trinity has some validity. We have a right to hope, indeed to expect, that the interpretation we offer as Old Testament exegetes of this plural will not be incompatible with a proper Christian exegesis which sees here the co-operation of the Godhead in the work of creation. But we shall not lay down in advance the form which

[43] Very few have denied any significance to the plural; E.A. Speiser translates simply 'I will make man in my image, after my likeness' (*Genesis* (Anchor Bible), Doubleday, New York (1964) 4, 7), and A. R. Johnson thinks the oscillation between singular and plural in verses 26f. could be a mere matter of idiom (*The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God*[2], University of Wales Press, Cardiff (1961) 28 n. 1).

[44] *Cf.* J. Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen. 1, 26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen (1960) 75.

[45] For this and other early Christian interpretations of the image, see the usefu collection of passages in H. H. Somers, 'The Riddle of a Plural (Gen 1:21 (*sic*)): Its History in Tradition', *Folia. Studies in the Christian Perpetuation of the Classics* 9 (1955) 63–101.

[46] H. Junker, *Genesis*, Echter-Verlag, Würzburg (1949) 13.

[47] P. Heinisch, *Das Buch Genesis*, Aschendorff, Bonn (1930) 100.

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such compatibility will assume. In brief, we cannot *explain* the plural of Genesis 1:26 as a reference to the Trinity.

Many explanations of the plural verb 'let us make' have been offered: we shall review these suggestions in what we think to be an ascending order of probability.

1. *An unassimilated fragment of myth*

Isolated from its setting in Genesis 1, verse 26a would read very naturally as an address by one god to another in preparation for the creation of man. When we turn to some Ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies, and discover that the creation of man is frequently the outcome of conversation between the gods, the possibility that Genesis 1:26 reproduces some traditional mythological expression becomes attractive.[48] Thus in *Enuma elish:*

> 'Marduk's heart prompts him to fashion artful works.
> Opening his mouth, he addresses Ea,
> To impart the plan he had conceived in his heart . . .
> "I will establish a savage, "man" shall be his name" . . .
> Ea answered him, speaking a word to him,
> To relate to him a scheme for the relief of the gods.'[49]

A Sumerian text depicts Nammu, the primordial sea-goddess, urging her son Enki, god of wisdom and water, to create men to relieve the gods from their toil:

> 'O my son, rise from thy bed, from thy . . . work what is wise,
> Fashion *servants* of the gods, may they produce their . . .'[50]

Enki thereupon gives instructions for the fashioning of mankind. The Old Babylonian Atrahasis Epic, describing the creation of man by Mami the mother-goddess, similarly narrates a conversation between the gods.[51] The closest parallel of all occurs in an Assyrian text which represents the

[48] So H. Gunkel, *Genesis* 111; S. G. F. Brandon, *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East*, Hodder and Stoughton, London (1963) 151. For other adherents of this view, *cf.* W. H. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift*, Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen-Vluyn (1964) 129 n. 1.

[49] *Enuma elish* VI 2–4, 6, 11 (=*ANET* 68a). The translation 'savage' in line 6 is probably incorrect (W. G. Lambert, *JSS* 12 (1967) 105).

[50] S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, rev. ed., Harper and Brothers, New York (1961) 68–72.

[51] *ANET* 99b–100a.

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Annunaki as discussing among themselves what may be created next now that the world itself has been made:

> 'What (else) shall we do?
> What (else) shall we create? . . .
> Let us slay (two) Lamga gods.
> With their blood let us create mankind.'[52]

We think it extremely unlikely, in spite of the superficial similarity of these texts, that the use of the plural in Genesis 1:26 is in any way dependent on such mythological descriptions. If the author of Genesis 1 was in every other instance able to remove all trace of polytheism from the traditional material he was handling, as he is generally agreed to have done,[53] why did he not manage to expunge the plural of 'let us'? Did he not realize the contradiction between 'let us' and 'God created' (verse 27; וַיִּבְרָא singular verb)? On general grounds we cannot but agree with G. von Rad, who writes of Genesis 1: 'Nothing is here by chance; everything must be considered carefully, deliberately, and precisely. It is false, therefore, to reckon here even occasionally with archaic and half-mythological rudiments. . . . What is said here is intended to hold true entirely and exactly as it stands.'[54] If the plural is here, it is here deliberately, not as some dimly recalled or partly digested fragment of mythology.

2. *Address to creation*

This view, which was held by some mediaeval Jewish scholars,[55] but finds little support today,[56] at least has the merit of taking the plural seriously and of looking for some subject mentioned already in Genesis 1 who will co-operate with God in His work of creation. Maimonides argued, along these lines, that God addressed Himself to the earth, which was to bring forth man's body from the earthly elements, while God Himself was to

[52] A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*[2], University Press, Chicago (1951) 69f.

[53] W. Eichrodt, for example, speaks of the sources as having been 'energetically corrected' for this purpose (*Theology of the Old Testament* I 408).

[54] G. von Rad, *Genesis* 45.

[55] Joseph Kimchi and Maimonides (*cf.* J. P. Lange, *Genesis* (ET), Clarke, Edinburgh (1868) 173). This view is already in the Midrash; *Genesis Rabbah* 8.3: 'R. Joshua b. Levi said: He took counsel with the works of heaven and earth . . . R. Samuel b. Nahman: With the works of each day.' (Soncino ed. I 56).

[56] Only by W. Caspari, 'Imago Divina', in *Festschrift Reinhold Seeberg* I, ed. W. Koepp, Deichert, Leipzig (1929) 197–208, especially 207.

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produce the spiritual part of man's being. 'In our image' means in the likeness of both earth and God.

If this interpretation were correct, Genesis 1:26 would form a very interesting parallel to Genesis 2:7, where man is formed out of earthy material and divine inbreathing. Yet it is surely rather strange that the earth should be invited by God to co-operate with Him as a partner in the work of creation; it would also be anomalous that the earth should be spoken of in the third person in verse 24 and included in the first person in verse 26. There is the further difficulty that the supposed share by the earth in the work of creation is not mentioned in verse 27, where God alone is the creator.

3. *Plural of majesty*

While there seem clearly to be plurals of majesty in nouns in Hebrew—אֱלֹהִים being the best-known example[57]—there do not appear to be any certain examples of such plurals in verbs or pronouns. Genesis 11:7: 'Come, let us go down and confuse their language' may be one, but it seems rather to be an ironic mocking by God of the tower-builders who have said, 'Come let us build ourselves a city' (v. 4). In Isaiah 6:8: 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?', Yahweh may be thought to speak of Himself in the plural, but 'us' more probably includes the heavenly court who are specifically described in the earlier verses of the chapter. The royal plural has been discovered by some in Ezra 4:18: 'The letter which you sent to us has been read before me',[58] but more probably 'us' means 'my government' or 'my court', and 'me' equals 'me personally', so in fact 'us' is here not really a plural of majesty. The word אֱלֹהִים, which normally is construed with a singular verb when referring to Yahweh, does occasionally take a plural verb, but such instances are usually patient of an explanation other than the plural of majesty. For example, Abraham tells Abimelech in Genesis 20:13: 'God caused me to wander (הִתְעוּ) from my father's house', using the plural form possibly out of deference to Abimelech's presumed polytheistic views. When Joshua tells the Israelites in Joshua 24:19 'You cannot serve Yahweh, for

[57] *Cf. e.g.* P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique*[2], Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome (1947) §136 d–e.

[58] So *e.g.* A. Dillmann, *Genesis critically and exegetically expounded* I, Clark, Edinburgh (1897) 78.

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he is a holy God (אֱלֹהִים קְדוֹשִׁים)' he is perhaps using the plural sarcastically, since he has just encouraged the people, if they are unwilling to serve Yahweh, to choose which of the heathen gods they are acquainted with they will worship.

We thus consider the explanation of the plural of Genesis 1:26 as a plural of majesty to be not very convincing on the ground of the absence or near-absence of parallels in verbs or pronouns in the Old Testament.

4. *Address to the heavenly court*

We have already noticed one instance (Is. 6:8) where Yahweh includes His heavenly court (seraphim) within an 'us'; many references depicting Yahweh as a king surrounded by couriers, sometimes themselves called אֱלֹהִים may be found in the Old Testament,[59] so it would seem natural to take the plural here as inclusive of the heavenly beings. Many modern scholars accept that this is the correct explanation of the plural.[60]

This view, however, suffers from some serious difficulties. It would imply that man was made in the image of the *elohim* as well as of God Himself ('in *our* image');[61] it would mean that the *elohim* shared in the creation of man ('let *us* make'); there would be a conflict between the plural of verse 26 and the singular of verse 27; there has been no previous mention of the heavenly court in the chapter;[62] and, for what it is worth, there is no other place in the 'P' strand of the Pentateuch where angels or heavenly court are mentioned.[63]

We can hardly avoid the difficulty by adopting the ingenious rabbinic explanation that man was not actually made by the angels in their image, for after God afforded them the opportunity, they declined, on the grounds that this was too important a creative act for them to be associated with, whereupon

[59] *Cf. e.g.* F. M. Cross, 'The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah', *JNES* 12 (1953) 274–277.

[60] So G. von Rad, *Genesis* 57; T. C. Vriezen, *OTS* 2 (1943) 90; H. Gross, 'Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen' 95.

[61] The difficulty is not solved by saying that man *is elohim*like (H. Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning* 125; G. von Rad, *Genesis* 57), for the image is not primarily a matter of likeness (see pp. 90ff. below).

[62] In other references to the heavenly court (*e.g.* 1 Ki. 22:19f.; Jb. 1; Is. 6) we usually find a description of it (U. Cassuto, *Genesis* I 55).

[63] W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 129; V. Maag, 'Alttestamentliche Anthropogonie in ihrem Verhältnis zur altorientalischen Mythologie', *Asiatische Studien* 9 (1955) 15–44, especially 29.

God created man without their help in His own image alone.[64]

If 'we' includes the heavenly court, man must be made in the image of the *elohim*. Von Rad argues thus: the plural is 'to prevent one from referring God's image too closely to Yahweh. By including himself in the heavenly court, he conceals himself in this majority.'[65] But we may ask why an author who was too sensitive to write 'I will make man in my image' proceeded to say in the next verse 'God created man in *his* image'.[66]

The force of the further objection, that the *elohim* would be said to have shared in man's creation,[67] is seldom recognized by those scholars who see the heavenly court here. The Old Testament quite consistently represents creation as the act of Yahweh alone,[68] and we cannot evade the force of 'let us' by explaining it as a mere consultation before the work of creation begins. We agree with K. Barth: Genesis 1:26 'does not speak of a mere entourage, of a divine court or council which later disappears behind the king who alone acts. Those addressed here are not merely consulted by the one who speaks but are summoned to an act . . . of creation . . . in concert with the One who speaks.'[69]

One point in favour of an identification of 'us' with the אֱלֹהִים is the appearance of אֱלֹהִים in Psalm 8, which bears very close affinities with Genesis 1:26. Here man is created a little lower than אֱלֹהִים, which could be interpreted as meaning a little lower than the אֱלֹהִים or heavenly court.[70] However, even if this is the correct understanding of Psalm 8, it is not necessary to find the same reference in Genesis 1, and it would seem that in general the difficulties involved in this interpretation of the plural outweigh the superficial suitability of the identification.

[64] *TB*, Sanhedrin 38b (= Soncino ed., p. 244). *Cf.* J. H. Lowe, "*Rashi*" *on the Pentateuch. Genesis*, Hebrew Compendium Publishing Co., London (1928) 39f.

[65] G. von Rad, *Genesis* 57.

[66] The absence of this phrase from the LXX of 1:27a is probably tendentious, and not evidence of a variant Hebrew text (H. Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning* 123; W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 141 n. 5).

[67] 'Let us make' is not simply communicative, as argued by Franz Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis* I, Clark, Edinburgh (1888) 98, and H. E. Ryle, *The Book of Genesis*, Cambridge University Press (1914) 19.

[68] *Cf. e.g.* Is. 40:14; 44:24. Even in Job 38:7 the בני אלהים are merely witnesses to creation.

[69] K. Barth, *CD* III/1 191f.

[70] So LXX. It is not decisive that the opening and closing verses of the psalm contain the name Yahweh (*contra* G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* I, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh (1962) 145; and others); Elohim may be used instead of Yahweh in the body of the psalm for the same reason as in Genesis 1.

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5. *Self-deliberation or self-summons*

It may reasonably be argued that since no other beings have been mentioned in Genesis 1, God must be addressing Himself.[71] Self-address (or 'self-objectivization') is not uncommon in the Old Testament (*e.g.* Ps. 42:5); but it is extremely rare to find a plural form in such a case.

We do indeed in colloquial English use the first person plural in self-encouragement, *e.g.* 'Let's see', and L. Koehler has noted similar uses in Swiss German.[72] Can such a use be found in Hebrew? A most unlikely source provides a close parallel: Song of Songs 1:9ff. 'I compare you, my love, to a mare of Pharaoh's chariots. . . .Let us make [נַעֲשֶׂה as in Genesis 1:26] ornaments of gold studded with silver.'[73] The lover here speaks of himself in the first person plural. Perhaps we have here colloquial language, but if so, it is strange to find it in Genesis 1. A similar usage is to be found in 2 Samuel 24:14, where David speaks of himself in the plural: 'Let us fall (נִפְלָה) into the hand of the Lord . . . but into the hand of men let me not fall (אֶפֹּלָה).[74] Perhaps we could add Genesis 11:7: 'Let us go down.'

The rarity of parallels gives us little confidence in the correctness of this view, but it has the great advantage that it removes the difficulty of the singular of verse 27. God says 'Let us' in verse 26 simply because this is an idiomatic way of expressing self-encouragement or self-deliberation. If we accept this view, it will be not for its merits, but for its comparative lack of disadvantages.

6. *Duality within the Godhead*

It is only because other solutions prove so unsatisfactory that we suggest, with some hesitation, an explanation which raises as many problems as it solves, but nevertheless seems no worse than the other possibilities, and may furthermore be turned to good account in our exposition of the meaning of the image, as we shall later see.

K. Barth, indeed, has been very bold in seeing here a plurality within the deity, a 'unanimity of intention and plan'.[75] We

[71] *Cf. Genesis Rabbah* 8.3 (Soncino ed. I 57): 'He took counsel with his own heart.'
[72] L. Koehler, *TZ* 4 (1948) 22.
[73] Noted by W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 130.
[74] Noted by U. Cassuto, *Genesis* 55.
[75] K. Barth, *CD* III/1 192. *Cf.* M. J. Lagrange: 'If he uses the plural, this sup-

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believe that he is incorrect in linking this with the 'male and female' of verse 27, which he regards as definitive of the image.[76] But perhaps he has correctly seen something in verse 26 which Old Testament scholars have not seen, partly through reaction to the trinitarian interpretation, partly through the difficulty of reconciling duality or plurality in the deity with the strict monotheist faith.

Barth, however, does not specify who God's partner here is; we suggest therefore that God is addressing His Spirit, who has appeared in verse 2 in a prominent though usually little understood role (it is not simply a 'mighty wind'),[77] and has curiously disappeared from the work of creation thereafter. In other Old Testament passages, however, the Spirit is the agent of creation, *e.g.* Job 33:4: 'The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of Shaddai gives me life'; Psalm 104:30: 'When thou sendest forth thy spirit they (animals) are created'; *cf.* also Ezekiel 37 (valley of dry bones and the recreating spirit).[78] If one compares the vivid personification of Yahweh's wisdom in Proverbs 8 as His partner in creation it is perhaps not inconceivable that the Spirit could have been similarly thought of by the author of Genesis 1 as another 'person' within the divine Being.[79] Certainly the Spirit is in a number of places depicted as distinct from Yahweh (*e.g.* the Spirit of Yahweh in Judges), though nowhere so obviously personal as in the New Testament.

We do not press this point, and our general approach to the doctrine of the image is not dependent on it. The transition from the plural 'let us' to the singular 'God created' creates no difficulty on this view, since the Spirit, though able to be distinguished from Yahweh, is nevertheless God, אֱלֹהִים, divine.

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poses that there is in him a fulness of being so that he can deliberate with himself' ('Hexémeron', *RB* 5 (1896) 381–407, especially 387). This view is therefore really a development of the 'plural of self-deliberation'.

[76] So J. J. Stamm, in *Antwort* 94.

[77] *Cf. e.g.* A. R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*[2], University of Wales Press, Cardiff (1964) 32 n. 8.

[78] See the full collection of references by P. van Imschoot, 'L'esprit de Jahvé, source de vie, dans l'Ancien Testament', *RB* 44 (1935) 481–501.

[79] I find that my suggestion was anticipated 100 years ago by J. P. Lange, *Genesis* 173: the plural of Gn. 1:26 'points to the germinal view of a distinction in the divine personality, directly in favour of which is the distinction of Elohim and Ruah Elohim, or that of God and his Wisdom, as this distinction is made, Prov. viii., with reference to the creation'.

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III. THE IMAGE OF GOD: PHILOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

We must look afresh at the precise way in which the image doctrine is expressed, and consider whether the usual translation of the text is justifiable.

1. It is clear that the key term is צֶלֶם 'image'; the word דְּמוּת 'likeness' has an explanatory significance but is not essential to the concept, for it does not need to be repeated after 'in his image', 'in the image of God'.[80] It cannot be denied that the most natural meaning for the phrase בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים is 'in the image of God', that is, that God has an image, and that man is created in conformity with this image. The *beth* in בְּצֶלֶם is then a *beth* of the norm,[81] and the word is to be translated 'according to the pattern, or model, of our image'. Such an image would normally, speaking from the point of view of Ancient Near Eastern thought, be conceived of as (*a*) a physical form, but we can also examine the possibility that the image is to be understood metaphorically as (*b*) a spiritual quality or character.

(*a*) Has God an 'image', then, in this sense, according to the Old Testament?[82] There is no denying that God is recurrently spoken of in the Old Testament as if He were a man: parts of the human body, such as hands, eyes, ears, were attributed to Him, as also physical actions such as laughing, smelling, whistling; He was also spoken of as feeling the emotions of hatred, anger, joy, regret.[83] Such anthropomorphisms cannot easily be dismissed as merely metaphors,[84] since everywhere else in the Ancient Near East these terms were understood to be literally true of the gods, and it is difficult to believe that Israel would have run the risk to faith of using such terminology if she had believed that Yahweh was pure spirit, without parts or passions. Nevertheless, it is significant that the anthropomorphisms used of Yahweh in the Old Testament do not enable us to construct an identi-kit picture of Yahweh's physical appearance,[85] as is the case, for example, with Greek deities

[80] *Cf.* also Gn. 9:6, where צֶלֶם alone is used. On 5:1, see below, n. 117.

[81] So *e.g.* H. Gunkel, *Genesis* 111; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* II 122 n. 6.

[82] 'Israel conceived even Jahweh himself as having human form' (G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* II 145); so also L. Koehler, *TZ* 4 (1948) 19.

[83] *Cf.* W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* I 211.

[84] As is done by H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* 75.

[85] Even Dn. 7:9 is somewhat reticent (H. Wildberger, *TZ* 21 (1965) 248 n. 15). If W. Herrmann ('Gedanken zur Geschichte des altorientalischen Beschreibungsliedes', *ZAW* 75 (1963) 176–197) is correct in identifying the existence in

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described in Homer, but rather they concentrate attention on the personhood of Yahweh. Yahweh is depicted in human terms, not because He has a body like a human being, but because He is a person and is therefore naturally thought of in terms of human personality.[86]

In addition to the numerous anthropomorphisms, whose theological significance is not entirely unambiguous, the Old Testament provides us with some more direct statements concerning Yahweh's 'form'. When Israel stood before Yahweh at Horeb, they 'heard the sound of words, but saw no form (תְּמוּנָה)' (Dt. 4:12). 'Second Isaiah' says: 'To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness (דְּמוּת) compare with him?' (Is. 40:18). Nevertheless, it might be possible that Yahweh could have a form, though it remained hidden from the eyes of men.[87] Ezekiel 1:26 would suggest this: 'Seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form.' G. von Rad comments on this statement: 'The light-phenomenon of the "glory of God" clearly displays human contours.'[88] On the other hand, we should notice the extreme hesitation with which Ezekiel phrases his description of God;[89] he does not say that he saw a human form, but only a 'likeness' (דְּמוּת) 'like the appearance' (כְּמַרְאֵה) of a man, that is to say, the divine appearance is at two removes from human form. Other celestial objects in his vision are described as the 'likeness' (דְּמוּת) of their earthly counterparts: the living creatures are only the 'likeness' of living creatures (v. 4), the throne is only the 'likeness' of a throne (v. 26); but on the throne is seated not the likeness of a man, but only the likeness of the appearance of a man. In verse 28 the appearance of Yahweh is described even more vaguely as 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh (מַרְאֵה דְּמוּת כְּבוֹד־יהוה)'. Isaiah also in vision 'sees' Yahweh upon His throne (Is. 6:1), but no description of any appearance of Yahweh is here given. In summary, it would seem that when Yahweh is seen in vision, some 'appear-

Ancient Near Eastern literature of a stereotyped form for describing physical appearance, originally of a divine statue, it is noteworthy that in the Old Testament this form is employed only for the description of a human being.

[86] *Cf.* L. Koehler, *Old Testament Theology*, Lutterworth, London (1957) 24.

[87] H. W. Robinson, in *The People and the Book* 367; N. W. Porteous, *IDB* II 684.

[88] G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* I 146.

[89] *Cf.* J. J. Stamm, *Die Gottebenbildlichkeit* 15; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* II 123.

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ance' (מַרְאֶה) is descried, yet there is no real דְּמוּת 'likeness, configuration' that can be described, nor any צֶלֶם 'image, shape'.[90]

When Yahweh appears to men in theophanies He is indeed seen in human form (*e.g.* Gn. 18), yet there is no suggestion that this form is anything but a form which Yahweh has assumed for the sake of a temporary manifestation.[91] A hesitation to identify the human form with Yahweh Himself is suggested by the use of the figure of the 'angel of the Lord', who, it frequently transpires, is none other than Yahweh.

The relation of the prohibition of images in the second commandment to the question of the 'formlessness' of Yahweh is problematic;[92] but it seems to us certain that even if some view of the spirituality and formlessness of Yahweh was not responsible for the commandment, the prohibition of material images in Israel must have operated powerfully in promoting acceptance of the non-physical, inimitable, character of the divine nature. If an image of God must not be made, the explanation may naturally be offered that it is impossible to do so since God is formless. Such is the line of argument explicit in Deuteronomy 4:15–18: 'Since you saw no form (תְּמוּנָה) on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure (תְּמוּנַת כָּל־סָמֶל), the likeness (תַּבְנִית) of male and female, the likeness of any beast . . ., winged bird . . ., anything that creeps on the ground, . . . any fish.'

A not inconsiderable difficulty for the interpretation of the צֶלֶם as the physical form of Yahweh is raised by the fact that both male and female are said to have been created 'in the image of God'. Can this mean that God's צֶלֶם also includes female characteristics?[93] Is it not significant that when God appears in a theophany, it is always a male form that is seen?

[90] Two passages, however, speak of a תמונה of God (Nu. 12:8; Ps. 17:15), but if we are to set Is. 40:14 besides these, we would have to say that the תמונה is strictly incomparable and so indescribable.

[91] J. Barr, 'Theophany and Anthropomorphism', *VTS* 7 (1960) 31–38, notes that in many theophanic narratives 'no attempt whatever is made at describing the form of the appearance, and we are told only what words were uttered' (p. 32).

[92] *Cf.* K. H. Bernhardt, *Gott und Bild. Ein Beitrag zur Begründung und Deutung des Bildererbotes im Alten Testament*, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin (1956) 78ff.

[93] Few would agree with G. W. Ahlström, *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion*, Gleerup, Lund (1963) 50, that man is 'created in the same forms as those represented in the assembly of the gods; there were to be found both the male and

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In answer to our question, then, whether in the Old Testament God has a 'form' according to which He could make man, we find that although the evidence is not entirely unambiguous, various lines of thought point toward a conception of God as without any such form. H. H. Rowley has remarked: 'In the teaching of the Old Testament God is nowhere conceived of as essentially of human form. Rather he is conceived of as pure spirit, able to assume a form rather than as having in himself a physical form.'[94] We may query the expression 'conceived of as pure spirit' as difficult to substantiate from the Old Testament,[95] yet the basic point in Rowley's statement is God's formlessness, which does not indeed imply His disability to assume a form when He wishes to 'let himself appear'.[96] We may indeed go further, with J. Barr, and note that when Yahweh does appear in a form, the human form is the natural and characteristic one for Him to assume. Nevertheless, 'thoughts of God appearing in human shape are by no means naturally reversible into thoughts of man sharing the shape of God'.[97]

(*b*) To turn to the second possible interpretation of the image, if the *beth* of בְּצַלְמֵנוּ is taken as *beth* of the norm, could the image be understood metaphorically, as referring to some quality or characteristic of the divine nature on the pattern of which man is made?

We mention first the fact that צֶלֶם and its cognates in other Semitic languages are used predominantly in a literal sense, of three-dimensional objects which represent gods, men, or other living beings.[98] Within the Old Testament, slightly more than half of the usages of צֶלֶם are clearly in reference to such physical objects, *viz.* nine times in six contexts.[99] Only eight usages of

female principles'. Even if the *Vorlage* of Gn. 1 contained the idea of a 'sexually differentiated pantheon' (J. Hempel, *Apoxysmata* (*BZAW* 81) Töpelmann, Berlin (1961) 220), no such idea can be found in the Old Testament (*contra* P. Winter, *ZAW* 68 (1956) 79 n. 24).

[94] *The Faith of Israel* 75f.; similarly H. Gross, 'Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen' 91; P. G. Duncker, *Biblica* 40 (1959) 388–391; H. Wildberger, *TZ* 21 (1965) 248.

[95] *Cf.* J. Barr, *VTS* 7 (1960) 33; L. Koehler, *Old Testament Theology* 21. According to A. R. Johnson, God was conceived of rather in terms of 'a light and rarefied substance best explained as "like fire" ' (*The One and the Many* 14).

[96] As B. W. Anderson translates the reflexive niph'al of ראה (*IDB* II 419b).

[97] *VTS* 7 (1960) 33, 38.

[98] *Cf.* L. Koehler, *TZ* 4 (1948) 19. Upright posture is, however, by no means as essential to a צלם as Koehler thought (*cf.* W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 133 n. 2); were the צלמים of mice (1 Sa. 6) upright figures?

[99] Of gods: 2 Ki. 11:18 (= 2 Ch. 23:17); Nu. 33:52; Am. 5:26; Ezk. 7:20.

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צֶלֶם, in five contexts, could be regarded as not referring to a three-dimensional image, and even this number may be reduced since it includes: צֶלֶם as a two-dimensional representation, relief, or drawing (Ezk. 23:14f.), צֶלֶם as Adam's image (Gn. 5:3), which almost all would agree involves a physical reference, and the few problematic usages (Gn. 1:26, 27 (*bis*); 9:6) in reference to the image of God (here counted as one context). Thus we are reduced to two usages, in two contexts (Ps. 39:7; 73:20), in which a non-physical sense of צֶלֶם seems likely.[100]

The word צֶלֶם therefore appears to be used occasionally in a metaphorical sense. The fact that *ṣlm* in Nabataean or Old South Arabian has only a concrete meaning 'statue' is not particularly relevant to our enquiry, since in these languages no literary texts, in which alone a metaphorical meaning for צֶלֶם may have been expected, are extant. In the case of the one language that both uses a cognate of צֶלֶם and has a literature sufficiently ancient and extensive to be adequately compared with the Old Testament, Akkadian, the word *ṣalmu* is used a number of times with a metaphorical meaning.[101]

Yet if we examine the metaphorical meanings both of Hebrew צֶלֶם and Akkadian *ṣalmu* we find that the idea of shape or configuration or figure is still prominent.

Thus in Psalm 73:20 the wicked who have been destroyed by God are said to be 'like a dream when one awakes: on awaking you despise their images' (צַלְמָם) or 'phantoms' (RSV). Here the צֶלֶם is indeed an insubstantial non-physical object, a dream-image;[102] yet it is recognizably the shape or configuration of something. Psalm 39:7 is more obscure: 'Surely man goes about as a shadow' (בְּצֶלֶם) (RSV);[103] in the

Of men (or phallic objects; *cf.* P. Humbert, *Etudes* 156): Ezk. 16:17. Of mice: 1 Sa. 6:5 (*bis*), 11.

[100] Examination of the root *ṣlm* in Semitic has shown that the proposal to take צֶלֶם in these verses as a different word derived from a different root צלם II 'to be dark' is unnecessary (*contra* Friedrich Delitzsch, *Prolegomena eines neuen hebräisch-aramäischen Wörterbuchs zum Alten Testament*, Hinrich, Leipzig (1886) 139 n. 4; P. Humbert, *Etudes* 156; L. Koehler, *TZ* 4 (1948) 18). For our view, *cf.* now H. Wildberger, *TZ* 21 (1965) 251f.; P. G. Duncker, *Biblica* 40 (1959) 391.

[101] *CAD*, Ṣ 85b.

[102] So H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*[2] I, Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen (1961) 299, 302, who compares the Egyptian text: 'The time which man spends on earth is only a dream-picture.'

[103] The ב is probably *beth essentiae* (D. W. Thomas, *The Text of the Revised Psalter*, SPCK, London (1963) 14).

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light of the parallelism of צֶלֶם with הֶבֶל 'breath' (v. 6), a word which expresses the vanity and unsubstantiality of life, we may translate: 'Surely man goes around as a dream-image', an insubstantial will-o'-the-wisp, which has appearance and form, but not much else. The idea of shape is also present in metaphorical uses of *ṣalmu* in Akkadian. In the Gilgamesh Epic we read: 'How alike to the dead is one who sleeps! Do they not both draw the image of death?'[104] *i.e.* 'Do they not both look alike?'[105] Elsewhere in the same text phrase 'the form (*ṣalmu*) of his body' occurs;[106] although the text is damaged at this point, there is a clear reference to the shape of a human body. We may compare the Babylonian name Ṣalmu-PAP.MEŠ (= aḫḫē), *i.e.* 'likeness of (his dead) brothers', where the physical appearance of a child is compared with that of his brothers now dead. *Ṣalmu* is also used for 'constellation', *i.e.* the outline or configuration of a group of stars.

Thus even in the more metaphorical uses of צֶלֶם and its cognate *ṣalmu*, the idea of physical shape and form is present. No example remotely matches the meaning צֶלֶם would have in Genesis 1:26 if it referred there to God's spiritual qualities or character, according to the pattern of which man has been made.[107] It is not indeed impossible that we should have here a vivid metaphor unparalleled elsewhere, but the linguistic evidence would suggest that it is most unlikely that צֶלֶם means anything here but a form, figure, object, whether three- or two-dimensional.

We conclude therefore that what is at first sight the most obvious meaning of בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים, 'according to God's image', is very probably not the correct meaning, and that we should look in another direction for the clue to its significance.

2. A much more satisfactory interpretation for the phrase appears to me to be supplied if we understand the *beth* here as the *beth* of essence, meaning 'as', 'in the capacity of'.[108] The

[104] *Gilgamesh* X vi 34 (= *ANET* 93a).
[105] *CAD* Ṣ 85b.
[106] *Gilgamesh* I ii 5 (= *ANET* 73b).
[107] *Cf.* P. Humbert, *Etudes* 157f., whom I follow only in seeing *physical* appearance in the צֶלֶם, not physical *resemblance*.
[108] *Cf. Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*[2], ed. E. Kautzsch, rev. A. E. Cowley, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1910) 379 (§ 119i). On its origin, *cf.* L. N. Manross, 'Beth Essentiae', *JBL* 73 (1954) 238f.

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classic example of such a use of *beth* is Exodus 6:3: וָאֵרָא בְּאֵל שַׁדָּי 'I appeared as (*beth*) El Shaddai', *i.e.* 'in my capacity, nature, as God Almighty.' This use of *beth*, though apparently out of accord with the usual meaning of *beth* 'in' [109] and admittedly rather uncommon in Hebrew, is accepted without hesitation by grammarians, and has indeed been proposed by a number of scholars in the interpretation of Genesis 1:26.[110]

Some objections have been made, however, to taking the *beth* of בְּצַלְמֵנוּ as *beth essentiae*.

First, it has been argued that in other examples of the phrase עָשָׂה + accusative + בְּ, the noun prefixed by בְּ is the standard according to which a thing is constructed, and that this usage is decisive for the interpretation of נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ.[111] There appear to be only two occurrences of such a phrase: Exodus 25:40: 'And see that you make them after the pattern for them (בְּתַבְנִיתָם), which is being shown you on the mountain'; Exodus 30:32: 'You shall make no other like it in composition' (בְּמַתְכֻּנְתּוֹ). But it is plain that the meaning of בְּ in such a phrase depends upon the meaning of the noun to which it is prefixed, and upon the general context. There is nothing in the phrase עָשָׂה + accusative + בְּ in itself which fixes the meaning of בְּ. A quite different example of עָשָׂה + accusative + בְּ may be given: Judges 21:15: 'And the people had compassion on Benjamin because the Lord had made (עָשָׂה) a breach in (בְּ) the tribes of Israel.' בְּ here, of course, has its normal meaning of 'in, among', or perhaps 'upon'.

It is true, nevertheless, that there do not appear to be any examples in the Old Testament of עָשָׂה + accusative + *beth essentiae*. The usual construction following עָשָׂה is either two accusatives, or one accusative and לְ (*e.g.* Gn. 27:9; Jdg. 8:27). However, both these constructions may well be felt to be unsuitable for expressing the meaning 'Let us make

[109] For analogous uses of Greek ἐν, *cf.* C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*[2], Cambridge University Press (1959) 79.

[110] In view of the centrality of this view for the present paper, a reasonably full list of its adherents is here given: J. Hehn, 'Zum Terminus "Bild Gottes" ', *Festschrift E. Sachau*, Reimer, Berlin (1915) 36–52, especially 45 n. 2; K. L. Schmidt, *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 15 (1947f.) 154f.; E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* 167f.; G. von Rad, *Genesis* 56; J. Jervell, *Imago Dei* 21; H. Gross, 'Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen' 90; A. Kruyswijk, *'Geen gesneden beeld . . .'*, Wever, Franeker (1962) 190ff.; N. W. Porteous, *IDB* II 683; H. Wildberger, *TZ* 21 (1965) 491f.

[111] So T. C. Vriezen, *OTS* 2 (1943) 93f.

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man as our image'. Both contain the idea of making a thing into what it was not before; נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם לְצַלְמֵנוּ or נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם צַלְמֵנוּ might suggest 'let us make the (already existing) man *into* our image'. There appears, in short, to be no other concise way of saying 'Let us make man, with the intention that he should be our image' than the construction that has been used; it is a mere accident that there are not other examples of the same construction with עָשָׂה.

There are examples, moreover, with similar verbs, which make it possible to regard the present expression as in conformity with the use of the language: Numbers 18:26: 'The tithes which I have given (נָתַתִּי) you as (בְּ) your inheritance';[112] Psalm 78:55: 'He drove out nations before them; he apportioned them (יַפִּילֵם) as (בְּ) a line of inheritance', *i.e.*, 'as a measured inheritance'.[113] Deuteronomy 1:13: 'Choose wise ... men, and I will appoint them (אֲשִׁימֵם) as (בְּ) your heads'.[114]

The second objection to understanding בְּצַלְמֵנוּ as '*as* our image' is that it is immediately followed by כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ which means 'like us', and so would not be strictly equivalent to בְּצַלְמֵנוּ; כְּ is a comparative particle, and therefore, it is argued, the בְּ of בְּצַלְמֵנוּ must bear a similar meaning.[115] It may be replied that there is no reason why בְּצַלְמֵנוּ and כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ should be equivalent, and a perfectly satisfactory interpretation is gained by taking בְּצַלְמֵנוּ as 'as our image, to be our image' and כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ not as synonymous with בְּצַלְמֵנוּ, but as explanatory of the 'image', that it is an image made כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ, 'according to our likeness, like us'.

A third and similar objection to taking the *beth* of בְּצַלְמֵנוּ as *beth essentiae* is that no sure distinction can be established between בְּ and כְּ especially in Hebrew of the supposed date of 'P'. The freedom with which the prepositions are used in the passages under consideration:

Genesis 1:26 בצלמנו, כדמותנו
1:27 כצלמו, בצלם אלהים

[112] *Cf.* also Jos. 13:6f.; 23:4; and P. Joüon, *Grammaire* 404f.
[113] *BDB* 89a.
[114] Not 'at your heads'; the *beth* is *beth essentiae* (S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*[3], Clark, Edinburgh (1902) 16 (philological notes)).
[115] P. Humbert, *Etudes* 159.

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5:1 בדמות אלהים
5:3 בדמותו כצלמו
9:6 בצלם אלהים

makes it impossible, it is argued, to draw any conclusions from the choice of the particular preposition.[116] To this we may reply: (i) From the point of view of method, when we suspect that two terms are synonymous, we ought to examine whether any difference of meaning can be established between them. The fact that their meanings overlap does not prove that they are always synonymous. (ii) Consequently, we must ask whether the variation between בְּ and כְּ may not be exegetically grounded. We hope to show below that a satisfactory exegetical reason exists for the aberrant use of the prepositions in 5:1, 3.[117] (iii) When the reference is to the image of God and not to Adam's image (5:3), the preposition with צֶלֶם is always בְּ. This could be accidental, but we suggest that it is not. (iv) The confusion in meaning between בְּ and כְּ, which we must admit exists to some extent in biblical Hebrew, can operate in two directions. It need not mean that the בְּ must be a בְּ of comparison or norm; it could perhaps be that the כְּ is virtually a *kaph essentiae*.[118] (v) The confusion between בְּ and כְּ has been established most clearly for Hebrew of the exile and later. While the usual literary analysis assigns the document 'P' to such a date, it is doubtful whether the priestly tradition enshrined in Genesis 1 attained its present form so late as the post-exilic period.[119] We have moreover, in the case of the statements about the image of God, one piece of evidence which points quite clearly to an early date, namely the occurrence of the phrase בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים within a complex which bears the marks of

[116] P. Humbert, *ibid.*; W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 133.

[117] Gn. 5:1, 3 does not speak of the transmission of the divine image (for it belongs to man as such, and so cannot be transmitted; *cf.* below, pp. 99ff.), but of Seth's likeness to Adam; hence the aspect of the image doctrine that is of interest to the writer at this point is that Adam was made 'in the likeness' (which is the same thing as 'according to the likeness') of God. Thus verse 1 has בדמות, and not בצלם. Seth is not Adam's image, but only like Adam's shape; so verse 3 has not בצלמו, but כצלמו. Thus Gn. 1:26 is not to be interpreted by 5:1, 3, but *vice versa*.

[118] Acknowledged by T. C. Vriezen, *OTS* 2 (1943) 91f., citing Zc. 4:10, Ps. 104:2ff.; *cf.* also the '*kaph veritatis*' (*BDB* 454a).

[119] 'It is becoming increasingly difficult not to believe that the bulk of the material in P is of pre-exilic, even of quite ancient, origin' (J. Bright, 'Modern Study of Old Testament Literature', in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. G. E. Wright, Routledge, London (1961) 13–31, especially 22).

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ancient legal terminology (Gn. 9:6).[120] It is inconceivable that the two halves of the verse did not originally belong together, since 6a is fully intelligible only in the light of 6b.[121] It is possible that we have in Genesis 9:6 the earliest statement of the image doctrine; it is significant that the preposition בְּ is used here, and that here, perhaps even more than in the other references to the צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים, the translation '*as* the image of God' affords the best interpretation.

A fourth objection to the interpretation of בְּצַלְמֵנוּ as '*as* our image' arises from suggested Babylonian parallels in which a man or a god is created according to the image in the mind of the creator-god. Some have thought that a similar picture may lie behind Genesis 1:26.[122]

In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the nobles of the city of Uruk, oppressed by the riotous Gilgamesh, cry out to the goddess Aruru, the creatrix of Gilgamesh, to create another man like him, who may be able to subdue him.

> ' "Thou, Aruru, didst create [the man];
> Create now his double [*zikru*];
> His stormy heart let him match.
> Let them contend, that Uruk may have peace!"
> When Aruru heard this,
> A double [*zikru*] of Anu she conceived within her.
> Aruru washed her hands,
> Pinched off clay and cast it on the steppe.
> [On the step]pe she created valiant Enkidu,
> offspring of . . . , essence of Ninurta.'[123]

The term *zikru* also occurs in the myth of the Descent of Ishtar:

> Ea in his wise heart conceived an image [*zikru*]
> And created Aṣušu-namir, a eunuch.[124]

A similar term is used in *Enuma elish*:

[120] *Cf.* G. von Rad, *Genesis* 128. Note also the poetic form of Gn. 1:27.

[121] The murderer has committed an act of *lèse-majesté* against God Himself, since he has attacked God's image (*cf.* below, p. 83); perhaps this verse also validates the right of the avenger, since he too is the image of God and so may execute judgment as God's representative (*cf.* below, p. 87ff.).

[122] So S. G. F. Brandon, *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East* 151.

[123] *Gilgamesh* I ii 30–36 (= *ANET* 74a).

[124] *Descent of Ishtar* rev. 11f. (= *ANET* 108a–b).

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Yea, Anshar's first-born, Anu, was his equal.
Anu begot in his image [*tamšīlu*] Nudimmud.[125]

The meaning of *zikru* is unfortunately much in dispute; its usual meaning is 'name' or 'command', but although some have endeavoured to see such a meaning here,[126] most have preferred to find a different word *zikru* here, meaning 'image, double, idea'.[127] If this is correct, we are a long way from צֶלֶם with its concrete reference. *Zikru* and *tamšīlu* are if anything closer to דְּמוּת than to צֶלֶם.[128] Had *ṣalmu* been used in these passages there would have been a stronger case for doubting that we are dealing with *beth essentiae* in Genesis 1:26.

It should also be noted that, unlike Genesis 1, the passages from the Gilgamesh Epic and the Descent of Ishtar do not concern the creation of mankind, but of a particular man for a specific purpose; the passage from *Enuma elish* does not concern the creation of man, but the begetting of a god. There is therefore little reason to see any connection between these passages and Genesis 1.[129]

Our survey of the objections which have been raised to the understanding of *beth* in בְּצַלְמֵנוּ as *beth essentiae* has shown them to be far from cogent; our conclusion thus is that Genesis 1:26 is to be translated 'Let us make man as our image' or 'to be our image', and the other references to the image are to be interpreted similarly. Thus we may say that according to Genesis 1 man does not have the image of God, nor is he made *in* the image of God, but is himself the image of God.

IV. THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

We must now examine what meaning the statement that man *is* the image of God could have had for the author of Genesis 1.

The meaning of the image cannot be satisfactorily deduced from the Old Testament, because Old Testament faith was strongly opposed to the use of images and no rationale for

[125] *Enuma elish* I i 15f. (= *ANET* 61a).
[126] So J. Hehn, *Festschrift E. Sachau* 46; similarly A. Schott and W. von Soden *Das Gilgamesch-Epos*, Reclam, Stuttgart (1958) 28.
[127] So *CAD*, Z 116b.
[128] P. Humbert, *Etudes* 163.
[129] *Cf.* P. Humbert, *Etudes* 166.

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images can be found in its pages. In order to discover the meaning of the image, we must find what it signified to those who worshipped images and thus held beliefs about the nature of images.

1. In the Ancient Near East, as K. H. Bernhardt has shown in his monograph *Gott und Bild*, the primary function of the image was to be the dwelling-place of spirit or fluid which derived from the being whose image it was.[130] This fluid was not immaterial, but was usually conceived of as a fine, rarified, intangible substance which could penetrate ordinary coarse matter, so it is often spoken of as 'breath' or 'fire'. Images of the dead were dwellings for the souls or spirits of the dead, for whom, especially in Egypt, the provision of a permanent body was an indispensable prerequisite for peace in the after-life. Images of the gods were of two kinds: the plastic form and the living person, usually the king. 'The decisive thing in the image of the god is not the material nor the form, but the divine fluid, which inspires the image in that it takes up its abode in the image.'[131] Thus in the Egyptian text known as the Memphite Theology, we read that after Ptah had formed the gods and had made cities 'the gods entered into their bodies of every (kind of) wood, of every (kind of) stone, of every (kind of) clay, or anything which might grow upon him [Ptah, as the 'rising land'], in which they had taken form'.[132] Osiris is depicted as coming as spirit in order to descend upon his image in his shrine and thus unite himself with his form.[132a] It is precisely this belief that images possess the divine fluid or spirit or breath, which Old Testament polemic denies by its claim that there is no 'spirit' in idols (Hab. 2:19; Je. 10:14; 51:17). A human being could also be the dwelling-place of a deity. Religious men, such as priests and prophets, could be temporarily possessed by a deity, and even a sick man could be indwelt by a deity in place of a malevolent demon.[133] But of greater importance is the figure of the king, who was regarded at certain times in certain places as the life-long incarnation of the god. Of the Egyptian king F. Preisigke wrote that he 'is

[130] K. H. Bernhardt, *Gott und Bild* 17–68, especially 17f. *Cf.* J. Hehn, *Festschrift E. Sachau* 36f.; S. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart (1960) 158–164.

[131] K. H. Bernhardt, *op. cit.* 28.

[132] *ANET* 5b.

[132a] H. Junker, *Die Stundenwachen in den Osiris-mysterien*, Hölder, Wien (1910) 6.

[133] K. H. Bernhardt, *op. cit.* 22.

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bearer of the divine fluid in its greatest potency. . . . The visible and tangible body of the king is only the covering for the god or the dwelling of the god. The king's words and acts are expressions of the god dwelling in him.'[134]

If the essential thing in the image is its possession of the divine fluid, its representational quality as a likeness of the deity or the man must play a secondary role. Images are in fact by no means always representational portrayals; many images of great antiquity were unhewn lumps of rock or other non-pictorial objects, and the Akkadian word *ṣalmu* can refer not only to representational portrayals, but also to mere stelae without the depiction of any form.[135] Bernhardt perhaps minimizes the representational character of the image; the obvious fact that most images do in fact look like something cannot be utterly insignificant, but must reflect some attempt to conform the appearance of the image to the supposed appearance of the being whose spirit it bears, and shares. Yet we may agree that the degree of similarity to the being represented is of quite secondary importance; for images are 'not an illustration of faith, but the object of faith'.[136]

As bearer of spirit, the image is consistently regarded and treated as a living being. After it has been completed by the workman, the image is ritually brought to life by touching mouth, eyes, and ears with magical instruments. The image of a god in a temple has a daily routine. In Egypt the day begins with the call of the priest to the image 'Wake in joy!' The little chapel in which the image has been shut up for the night is opened. In Babylonia also images are awoken, dusted and washed, sometimes bathed in the sea; then a large breakfast is brought to the image, and so the day continues. An injury done to the image is a crime against the deity and is punished as such; hence images were seldom destroyed in war, but rather carried into captivity, where the image still remained god.[137]

Statues of kings also would appear to have some spiritual link with the rulers they represent, although our evidence for

[134] F. Preisigke, *Vom göttliche Fluidum nach ägyptischer Anschauung*, Papyrusinstitut Heidelberg, Berlin/Leipzig (1920) 11.

[135] K. H. Bernhardt, *op. cit.* 31ff., 55. For Babylonian evidence of non-representational images, *cf.* E. D. van Buren, *Orientalia* 10 (1941) 76–80. W. van Os, 'Wie haben die Sumerer ihre Statuen angefertigt?', *BO* 18 (1961) 3f., has shown how in Sumer the shape of the image was largely dictated by the material.

[136] K. H. Bernhardt, *op. cit.* 33.

[137] K. H. Bernhardt, *op. cit.* 42–51 (with references).

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the treatment of royal statues is slender beside that concerning divine statues. We do know that Assyrian kings set up their statues in territories they had conquered;[138] though this of itself need not mean anything more than a desire for self-advertisement, when the normal function of an image as bearer of spirit is recognized, it becomes likely that the significance of a royal statue is that it represents the king's present occupation of the conquered land. To revile the royal image is as treasonable an act as to revile the king himself.[139] Kings have statues of themselves set up in temples in order to represent their perpetual attitude of supplication to their deity.[140] The image is no mere symbolic portrayal of the king, but stands in a spiritual union with him.[141]

2. One further set of Ancient Near Eastern data which is relevant to our enquiry has been mentioned only in passing, namely references to living human beings, usually the king, as the image of God.

Several such references occur in Mesopotamian literature.

A seventh-century Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, is addressed by one of his correspondents, the astrologer and court-official Adad-shum-uṣur, as the image of Bel:

> 'The father of the king, my lord, was the very image (*ṣalmu*) of Bel, and the king, my lord, is likewise the very image of Bel.'[142]

In another letter Adad-shum-uṣur calls Esarhaddon the image of Shamash:

> 'Whoever mourns for Shamash, the king of the gods, mourns for a day, a whole night, and again two days. The king, the lord of countries, is the (very) image (*ṣalmu*) of Shamash; for half a day only should he put on mourning.'[143]

[138] For Ashurnasirpal, *cf.* D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, University of Chicago Press (1926) 146, §445; for Shalmaneser III, *ibid.* 201, §558.

[139] *Cf.* E. D. van Buren, *Orientalia* 10 (1941) 74.

[140] So Esarhaddon: 'I had a statue of me as king made out of silver, gold and shining copper . . . (and) placed (it) before the gods to constantly request well-being for me' (cited in *CAD* Ṣ 81a).

[141] On the similar understanding of the image in the Greek world, *cf.* H. Kleinknecht, *TWNT* II 386f. (= *TDNT* II 389).

[142] R. H. Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria*, American Oriental Society, New Haven (1935) 119f. (no. 161).

[143] *Ibid.*, 186 (no. 264).

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To Esarhaddon the same writer expresses the wish that men may repeat concerning him the proverbial saying:

> 'A (free) man is as the shadow of god, the slave is as the shadow of a (free) man; but the king, he is like unto the (very) image (*mušŠulu*) of god.'[144]

About the same period the astrologer Asharidu the Greater (or Elder) addresses an unnamed Assyrian king:

> 'O king, thou art the image of Marduk, when thou art angry, to thy servants!'[145]

In a ritual exorcism we read:

> 'The exorcism (which is recited) is the exorcism of Marduk, the priest is the image (*ṣalmu*) of Marduk.'[146]

These examples appear to constitute the sum total of Mesopotamian references to man as the image of God; there may be some common link between them, possibly through the use of the term *ṣalmu* 'constellation' in astrology.[147] They are certainly not widely separated in time or place. We may here pause only to note that in all but one example it is the king who is the image of God.

When we turn to Egypt, however, we find a wide variety of forms in which the concept appears in reference to the king.[148] In the New Kingdom, especially in the 18th Dynasty (16th century BC), the pharaoh is entitled 'image of Re', 'holy image of Re', 'living image on earth', 'image of Atum', *etc.* Two terms are used, *mśtjw* and *twt*, which do not appear to be differentiated; they are used separately and together. This terminology continued to be used as late as the Greek period.

It is of interest that the pharaoh is several times said to have been begotten or created by the god whose image he is: he is

> 'the shining image of the lord of all and a creation of the gods of Heliopolis . . . he has begotten him, in order to create a

[144] *Ibid.*, 234 (no. 345).
[145] R. C. Thompson, *The Reports of the Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon* II, Luzac, London (1900) lxii, 58 (no. 170, lines 2f.).
[146] G. Meier, 'Die zweite Tafel der Serie bīt mēseri', *AfO* 14 (1941–1944) 151, lines 225f.
[147] Both Adad-shum-uṣur and Asharidu were astrologers.
[148] Very full collections are provided by W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 137ff.; and H. Wildberger, *TZ* 21 (1965) 484–491.

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shining seed on earth, for salvation for men, as his living image'.[149]

Amosis I is:

'A prince like Re, the child of Qeb, his heir, the image of Re, whom he created, the avenger (or the representative), for whom he has set himself on earth.'[150]

Amenophis III is addressed by the god Amon as:

'My living image, creation of my members, whom Mut bare to me.'

Amon-Re says to Amenophis III:

'You are my beloved son, who came forth from my members, my image, whom I have put on earth. I have given to you to rule the earth in peace.'

The application of the phrase 'image of God' to a human person in the foregoing texts enables us to conclude, with particular reference to Egypt, that: It is the king who is the image of God, not mankind generally.[151] The image of the god is associated very closely with rulerhood. The king as image of the god is his representative. The king has been created by the god to be his image.

V. THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The meaning of the image of God in Genesis 1 cannot be understood without reference to the significance of the image in the Ancient Near East. Not every aspect of that significance is transferable to the Hebrew thought-world, but, as so often, Old Testament belief lays under tribute other ancient thought and freely borrows anything that is not incompatible with faith in Yahweh. We may therefore consider in what ways the Old Testament meaning of the image may be illumined by reference to Ancient Near Eastern attitudes to the image.

1. The image is a statue in the round, a three-dimensional object. Man according to the Old Testament is a psychoso-

[149] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, Mohr, Tübingen (1923) 73.

[150] For references to the following Egyptian passages, see W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 139.

[151] An exception is discussed below, p. 93.

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matic unity;[152] it is therefore the corporeal animated man that is the image of God.[153] The body cannot be left out of the meaning of the image; man is a totality, and his 'solid flesh' is as much the image of God as his spiritual capacity, creativeness, or personality, since none of these 'higher' aspects of the human being can exist in isolation from the body. The body is not a mere dwelling-place for the soul, nor is it the prison-house of the soul. In so far as man is a body and a bodiless man is not man, the body is the image of God; for man is the image of God. Man is the flesh-and-blood image of the invisible God. This is not to say that it is the body as opposed to something else, *e.g.* the spirit, that is the image of God. For the body is not 'opposed' to the spirit; indeed as far as the image is concerned at least, what the body is the spirit is. It is the *homo*, not the *animus* or the *anima*, that is the *imago Dei*.[154]

The importance of this understanding of the image is obvious; the value of the body is strikingly affirmed. The body has been consistently depreciated in Christian theology, under the influence of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic conceptions of man as primarily *nous*, 'mind' or 'reason'. *Nous* is that which is unique in man, being a universal and immortal principle that enters man from outside. Reinhold Niebuhr has analysed the consequences of this belief in the supremacy of *nous* and its concomitant body-soul dualism:[155] (i) It identifies rational man with the divine, since reason is, as the creative principle, identical with God. The concept of the individuality of persons is insignificant, since it rests only on the particularity of the body. (ii) It identifies the body with evil, assuming the essential goodness of mind or spirit. Thus we find Augustine declaring in neo-Platonist style: 'For not in the body but in the mind was man made in the image of God. In his own similitude let us seek God, in his own image recognize the creator'.[156]

In biblical thought a far higher value is set upon the body.

[152] *Cf. e.g.* T. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, Blackwell, Oxford (1958) 201.

[153] '[Man], and not some distillation from him, is an expression or transcription of the eternal, incorporeal creator in terms of temporal, bodily, creaturely existence.' (D. Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Press, London (1967) 51. *Cf.* H. Gross, 'Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen' 92.)

[154] K. L. Schmidt, *Eranos-Jahrubuch* 15 (1947f.) 154.

[155] R. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* I, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York (1945) 7.

[156] Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV* XXIII 5 (*PL* XXXV 1585).

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The body is 'not an object which we possess, but which stands outside our real being. . . . It is the living form of our essential self, the necessary expression of our individual existence, in which the meaning of our life must find its realization.'[157] The doctrine of the image is thus the protological counterpart of the eschatological doctrine of the resurrection of the body; like eschatology, protology (the doctrine of the beginning) is basically concerned to depict a truth of existential significance,[158] in this case, that of the indivisible unity of man's nature. In turn, this doctrine of the union of physical and spiritual in the nature of man has far-reaching implications in the sphere of man's relation with the world and with God, on the understanding of sin and redemption, on the validity and significance of the cult, on the development of the importance of the individual;[159] but these broader issues can only be mentioned here.

As far as concerns this aspect of the image, namely that it denotes the corporeal existence of man, we have to stress that what makes man the image of God is not that corporeal man stands as an analogy of a corporeal God;[160] for the image does not primarily mean similarity, but the representation of the one who is imaged in a place where he is not. If God wills His image to be corporeal man—union of physical and spiritual (or psychical)—He thereby wills the manner of His presence in the world to be the selfsame uniting of physical and spiritual. At this point, where the doctrine of the incarnation lies close at hand, together with the rejection of ultimate dichotomy between sacred and secular, we must leave the exploration of the repercussions of the image doctrine in so far as they stem from the corporeal aspect of the image.

2. Reference has already been made to the function of the image as representative of one who is really or spiritually present, though physically absent. The king puts his statue in a conquered land to signify his real, though not his physical, presence there. The god has his statue set up in the temple to signify his real presence there, though he may be in heaven, on the

[157] W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* II 149.

[158] 'We can only *know* of the beginning in the true sense as we hear of it in the middle between beginning and ending' (D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* 12).

[159] *Cf.* W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* I 404f., II 149; R. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* I 54–92.

[160] The function of the image is not to depict but to express (K. H. Bernhardt, *Gott und Bild* 55).

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mountain of the gods, or located in some natural phenomenon, and so not physically present in the temple.

According to Genesis 1:26f. man is set on earth in order to be the representative there of the absent God who is nevertheless present by His image. Throughout Genesis 1 the transcendence of God is firmly established; God stands outside and above the created order, and 'the only continuity between God and his work is the Word'[161] (until verse 26, we should add). Unlike almost every other creation story of the Ancient Near East, Genesis represents God as freely bringing the world into existence, not Himself being generated from the world. Every element of the world order comes into being at His unconditioned command; even light is a mere creature, not an 'overflow of the essence of deity' as elsewhere.[162] The sea-monsters are no primordial chaos-beings subsisting in their own right, but the 'first of the creation of God' (Jb. 40:19).

It is of the greatest theological moment therefore that precisely within this depiction of God's transcendent freedom over the whole world-order we find the doctrine of God's image, that is to say, of the real presence, or immanence, of the deity within the world through the person of man.[163] One senses the deep acuteness of the theologians responsible for Genesis 1 in their juxtaposition of these two aspects of the divine nature; they have at one and the same time freed God from bondage to the world-order by asserting the creaturehood of all that is not God, and have ensured that the statement about the immanence of God firmly excludes any possibility of man's divinization, for man too is explicitly said to be a creature of God. The Old Testament does not see the relation of the transcendence and immanence of God as a problem, to be sure, yet there is considerable tension between statements of these two aspects. Here the polarities are merged in the conception of the transcendent God immanent through the person of man.[164] We may therefore add to Bonhoeffer's dictum 'The only continuity between God and his work is the Word': 'But from the sixth day of creation onward man, the image of God, becomes the continuity.' In a sense, the Word becomes flesh.

[161] D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* 19.
[162] G. von Rad, *Genesis* 49.
[163] *Cf.* H. Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning* 92, 117.
[164] The image doctrine thus excludes the idea of God as the 'wholly Other' (H. H. Rowley, *The Faith of Israel* 83).

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The word calls the creation into existence; but the image of God is the permanent link between God and his world.

By what means does the image represent the one it represents? What is the bond that unites the god and His image? The Ancient Near East provides a clear answer to this question by its concept of the divine fluid or spirit which inspires the dead matter of the image with a principle of life. Genesis 1, on the other hand, would seem to be rather reticent on this subject; it draws our attention away from the mechanism of the image to the function of the image, namely rulerhood of the creation as God's vizier. This silence on the part of Genesis 1 need not have been so absolute, for Genesis 2 knows of an inbreathing of God's breath (נִשְׁמָה) by which man becomes 'a living נֶפֶשׁ' (v. 7). Man is dead matter, dust of the earth, infused with divine breath or spirit.[165] The implication here is not that man possesses some 'part' which is divine, for breath is not a 'part' of man, but the principle of vitality itself, which remains in God's possession and may be withdrawn by Him as He pleases.[166] Nevertheless, the concept of filling by the divine spirit was capable of being misunderstood as a suggestion that man is partly human, partly divine, like Gilgamesh, two-thirds god and one-third man.[167] Such a suggestion Genesis 1 would go far out of its way to avoid, since the worlds of Creator and creation are here kept quite distinct; perhaps we have here, therefore, the reason for avoidance of this aspect of the image in Genesis 1.[168] For it is only a short step from recognizing the image to be indwelt by divine spirit to divinization of the image and the paying of divine honours to it.[169] This was a step that Hebrew anthropology never took for the gulf between God and man, though narrow at certain points, is an absolute one.

In spite of the apparent silence of Genesis 1 about the role of the spirit in the image, we venture to ask whether it is possible that the Spirit or breath of God as the vivifying element in man lies implicit here, as it is explicit in Genesis 2.[170] If God is

[165] *Cf.* Jb. 33:4 'The breath of Shaddai gives me life'; 32:8.

[166] *Cf.* Jb. 34:14f.; Ps. 104:29; Dn. 5:23.

[167] *Gilgamesh* I ii 1 (= *ANET* 73a).

[168] *Cf.*, in relation to Gn. 2, the avoidance by Gn. 1 of speaking of pre-existent material for the creation of man (*cf.* D. F. Payne, *Genesis One Reconsidered*, Tyndale Press, London (1964) 27).

[169] *Cf.* K. H. Bernhardt, *Gott und Bild* 29, 42ff., on the divinization of the image in Babylonia.

[170] Attempts to effect a rapprochement between the theologies of Gn. 1 and

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addressing His Spirit in 1:26 and summoning Himself and His Spirit to co-operate in the creation of the image, the mechanism of the image is explained. It becomes a genuine image of the deity by the infusion of divine spirit or breath. As we have already remarked, it is entirely reasonable that the author hesitated to spell out in clear terms a doctrine that could so easily be misinterpreted; and indeed his concern is chiefly with the function of the image, as the following verbs make clear. But he may have left us a hint, in the plural verb and noun suffixes, that man as the image of God is vivified by the divine spirit. Can we thus argue that the plural is here deliberately as a disclosure and at the same time a concealment of a 'difficult' doctrine?

3. The image is also very often, though not necessarily, a likeness of the one it represents. K. H. Bernhardt has emphasized that the idea of similarity is an element of quite secondary importance in the meaning of the image; 'the possession of spirit is the one decisive thing for the religious worth of a divine image'.[171] Perhaps Bernhardt goes a little too far in stressing the secondary nature of the similarity, but he has made quite clear that the primary function of an image is to express, not to depict. Nevertheless, since an image frequently depicts something, even if only symbolically, we should take this function also into consideration when we are examining the meaning of the image.

That man is the image of God need not in itself imply any similarity between man and God, especially if, as we have argued above, there is no צֶלֶם of God on the pattern of which man could have been made. Thus it is very remarkable that Genesis 1 goes out of its way to stress that man is an image which is also a likeness, as well as a representative, of God. We understand the term כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ 'according to our likeness' to be an amplification and specification of the meaning of the image.

Gn. 2–3, though not always convincing, are to be welcomed, since that part of the exegete's task which consists in interpreting the text as it stands has been long neglected in the case of these chapters, which now form a unit, in spite of the fact that they may not have done so 'originally'. Among such attempts may be mentioned: M. Bič, 'The Theology of the Biblical Creation Epic', *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 28–29 (1963f.) 9–38; I. Engnell, '"Life" and "Knowledge" in the Creation Story', *VTS* 3 (1957) 103–119, especially 112; F. Festorazzi, 'I plurali di Gen. 1, 26; 3, 22; 11, 7 e l'intima natura del peccato dei progenitori', *Bibbia e Oriente* 5 (1963) 81–86; D. Kidner, 'Genesis 2:5, 6: Wet or Dry?' *Tyndale Bulletin* 17 (1966) 109–114.

[171] *Gott und Bild* 67; *cf.* 31.

We can hardly say that 'likeness' (דְּמוּת) *strengthens* the meaning of צֶלֶם,[172] for an image which is also a likeness is not more of an image than one which bears no likeness to what it represents; this follows from our acceptance of the representative quality as the essential significance of the image. Yet we may say that the use of the term 'likeness' brings into sharper relief the huge claim that is made for man in this statement.

We find ourselves here in opposition to the great majority of scholars, who have either understood the abstract term דְּמוּת 'likeness' to be a weakening of the strong physical implication of the concrete term צֶלֶם 'image', or have denied that any distinction between the two terms may be discerned. These two opinions, however, have usually been held for reasons which we do not find acceptable or necessary.

Those who believe that דְּמוּת 'weakens' the strong physical force of צֶלֶם have assumed that צֶלֶם by itself would signify man's creation according to the physical image of God, and that the author must therefore qualify this strong term by explaining that man is not an exact copy of God, only a 'likeness'.[173] But if we understand the צֶלֶם to refer to man as the image and not to God's image, there is no reason why we should not understand it in a quite physical sense (which does not of course exclude the spiritual, since body and soul/spirit are for practical purposes indivisible); דְּמוּת then specifies what kind of an image it is: it is a 'likeness'–image, not simply an image; representational, not simply representative.

Those on the other hand who deny that any distinction can be drawn between the terms צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת[174] are often conscious of the fundamental error in the traditional Christian interpretation, by which the terms צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת were made to refer to entirely different things. This interpretation, which goes back to Irenaeus,[175] understands the צֶלֶם to refer natural likeness to God (*e.g.* reason, free-will), דְּמוּת to supernatural likeness (*e.g.* moral excellence). This

[172] So I. Engnell, *VTS* 3 (1957) 112.
[173] P. Humbert, *Etudes* 160; L. Koehler, *TZ* 4 (1948) 21.
[174] So W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 143.
[175] A. Struker, *Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen in der christlichen Literatur der ersten zwei Jahrhunderte*, Aschendorff, Münster (1913) 87, 101ff.

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distinction between צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת is based ultimately on the insertion of καί by the LXX between the two terms: κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καί ὁμοίωσιν. This apparently insignificant addition, which was carried over into the Vulgate as *ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*, encouraged exegetes to assign different content to the two terms, a procedure which can hardly be substantiated by the Hebrew text, especially in view of the omission of דְּמוּת in other statements about the divine image. Even the LXX and Vulgate may not have intended the two terms to be understood separately; it is very possible that they form a hendiadys.[176]

In suggesting here that a difference in meaning can be established between the words צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת we are by no means asserting that they have quite different contents and refer to different elements in the image. Rather we are suggesting that the דְּמוּת refers entirely to the צֶלֶם; it has no referential meaning in itself, but only specifies the kind of image, namely a representational image.[177] We are at a loss to discover from the text in what the likeness as distinct from the image may consist, and we can only assume that it has a force applicable to all the meanings of the image. The representational image in the Ancient Near East is intended to portray the character of the god whose image it is; thus, for example, a fertility god may be represented by a bull. So in Genesis 1, man is not a mere cipher, chosen at random by God to be His representative, but to some extent also expresses, as the image, the character of God. The precise elements in the nature of God expressed by man may, however, not be determined by examining the term 'likeness', but only by concentrating attention upon the term 'image'. Genesis 1:26 speaks of man's likeness to God only in the senses in which an image is like the one it images.

4. The image of God, when applied to a living person, is understood almost exclusively of the king. As in Mesopotamia, so also in Egypt, if a god is spoken of at all as being imaged in living human form, there is only one person who can be regarded as the image of the god, namely the king. He is already believed on other grounds to be closest of all men to the realm of the divine, if he is not already, as in Egypt, a member of it.

[176] K. L. Schmidt, *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 15 (1947f.) 154f.
[177] So G. von Rad, *Genesis* 56.

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He alone has some claim to possession of divine spirit, so he is the natural dwelling-place of the god.

There are indeed one or two exceptions to the usual restriction of the term 'image' to the king. A priest is called 'the image of Marduk' in Babylonia,[178] but here it is probably only the notion of representation that is intended; it is heightened to an extreme degree by calling him an 'image', which is the most perfect type of representative known to men, since it is the only representative that is actually in spiritual union with the one it represents. The exorcism which the priest utters is really Marduk's exorcism, so the priest himself may for this purpose be identified with Marduk as his image.

A remarkable passage concerning the 'image of God' is found in the Egyptian text, the *Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re*, from the 22nd century BC:

'Well-directed are man, the cattle of the god. He made heaven and earth according to their desire, and he repelled the water-monster. He made the breath of life (for) their nostrils. They who have issued from his body are his images.'[179]

Here we have an unparalleled description of all mankind as the images of God. It would be tempting to regard it as an example of 'democratization' in the circles of wisdom-teaching,[180] were it not for the fact that this text comes from a time several centuries earlier than the regular use of 'image of God' for the king.

We can hardly suppose that there is any direct relationship between this isolated reference to mankind as the image of God and the biblical text. However, there may with more probability be assumed to be some connection between the title 'image of God' for the Egyptian king and the term in Genesis 1; all the more so in the light of the important parallels between Egyptian cosmogony and Genesis 1 which until recently have been obscured by an exaggerated emphasis on a supposed Babylonian background of Genesis 1.[181]

Even if there is no relationship of dependence of the Genesis 1 doctrine of the image upon the Egyptian or Babylonian title

[178] *Cf.* above, p. 84.

[179] *ANET* 417b. *Cf.* S. Herrmann, 'Die Naturlehre des Schöpfungsberichtes', *Th L* 86 (1961) especially cols. 418–420.

[180] So W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 139 n. 8, 143 n. 3.

[181] *Cf.* most recently the correctives of R. Kilian, 'Gen. I 2 und die Urgötter von Hermopolis', *VT* 16 (1966) 420–438; and W. G. Lambert, 'The Babylonian Background of Genesis', *JTS* 16 (1965) 287–300.

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'image of God' it is at least significant that whereas in the rest of the Ancient Near East the image of God was limited to the king, in Israel it was regarded as characteristic of mankind generally, without distinction between king and commoner, man and woman, or Israelite and non-Israelite.

That is to say, man is defined according to the divine summons of Genesis 1:26 which is constitutive for man's being, as 'the image of God', a term which denies any fundamental quality to the phenomenal difference between man and man.[182] Man everywhere is *essentially* the same. Every distinction between man and man is secondary to the fundamental standing of every man as the image of God.

We may readily confess that Israel failed to draw out the implications to any marked degree. We shall not argue that the reason for this failure was the late introduction of the concept into Israelite thought, for we have already suggested that it is likely to have been much older than the supposed date of the source. Rather we would locate Israel's comparative disregard for the doctrine of the image in its implication that the distinction between Israelite and non-Israelite was secondary to man's underlying unity before God. Salvation-history in the Old Testament is the history of the salvation of *Israel*; any universalistic doctrine militates to some extent against the particularism implicit in the concept of salvation-history, and so must be kept within close confines for the sake of the validity of the salvation-history.

Israel appreciated, it is true, to a larger extent than her neighbours, the equality of mankind before God. The king, for all his wealth and the trappings of office, was always, in orthodox Israelite thought at least, merely man; although he stood in a relation of special nearness to God, he belonged to the human world and not to the divine world, unlike the Egyptian king. Woman, though by no means man's equal, nevertheless enjoyed a higher dignity in Israel than elsewhere in the ancient world; perhaps the most striking expression of her status is found in the phrase 'a helper, a counterpart to man' in Genesis 2:18. The nation of Israel, for all its consciousness of its distinction from the 'nations' by its unique vocation, recognized, sometimes at least, that its vocation could not be fully defined in terms of Israel itself, but had a wider reference

[182] *Cf.* W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* II 128.

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that involved the nations in blessing as well.[183] Nevertheless, none of this recognition of the equality and unity of man seems to have stemmed from the doctrine of the image of God. The image doctrine may in fact have been a precipitate of, rather than a catalyst for, the type of thought we have referred to here.

There is, however, one phenomenal distinction between man and man which is specifically denied by the text of Genesis 1:27 to be ultimate, namely the distinction between male and female. The image of God does not subsist in the male but in mankind, within which woman also belongs. Thus the most basic statement about man, according to Genesis 1, that he is the image of God, does not find its full meaning in man alone, but in man and woman. E. Brunner has observed on the phrase 'male and female created he them': 'That is the immense double statement, of a lapidary simplicity, so simple indeed that we hardly realize that with it a vast world of myth and Gnostic speculation, of cynicism and asceticism, of the deification of sexuality and fear of sex completely disappears'.[184]

5. It is the king who is the image of God; in virtue of his being the image of God he is ruler. Likewise in Genesis 1 the concept of man's rulership is connected in the strongest possible way with the idea of the image: 'Let us make man as our image according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth' (verse 26). Again we find: 'So God created man as his own image . . . and God blessed them and said . . . , "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" ' (verses 27f.). Again in Psalm 8, which has been aptly termed the best commentary on Genesis 1:26,[185] man's status is linked with kingship and dominion:[186]

Thou hast made him a little less than God,
and dost crown him with glory and honour.
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his feet,

[183] *E.g.* Gn. 12:3; Ps. 2:10f.; Is. 19:24f.; 42:6.
[184] E. Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, Lutterworth, London (1939) 346.
[185] *Cf.* P. Humbert, *Etudes* 170.
[186] For analysis of the terminology see H. Gross, 'Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen' 96ff.

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all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the sea.
(Psalm 8:5–8)

The question which arises here is whether man's dominion over the animals is to be understood as definitive of the image itself, or is merely a consequence of the image. Most modern scholars agree that the dominion is only a consequence of the image; even if it is the primary consequence, it is none the less not to be included within the image. It is often argued that support for this view is found in the special blessing of Genesis 1:28 in which man is directed to have dominion, as also in the possible translation of 1:26 'let us make man . . . and let them have dominion' (simple *waw* joining two co-ordinate jussives), which would suggest that being the image and having dominion are separate.

We agree that man's dominion over the animals cannot be definitive of the image, for we have already seen that the image must include a number of elements and cannot be defined so narrowly. But it seems to us that since dominion is so immediate and necessary a consequence of the image, it loses the character of a mere derivative of the image and virtually becomes a constitutive part of the image itself.

From the exegetical point of view this opinion is completely justifiable. Genesis 1:26 may well be rendered: 'Let us make man as our image . . . so that they may rule' (*i.e. waw* joining two jussives with final force for the second).[187] The transference in verse 28 of the thought of dominion to the context of a 'subsequent' blessing need not be understood as indicative of the purely consequential character of the dominion. In 1:6 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters' we have two commands (in form apparently co-ordinate jussives linked by simple *waw*), yet two acts of creation are not referred to; the firmament, in being a firmament in the midst of the waters, in fact is already separating waters above from waters below. If the second member of the sentence were not true, the first could hardly be so; thus the second is not a mere consequence of the first but

[187] So *e.g.* W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 142.

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draws out the permanent implication of the first. Somewhat closer in form to 1:28 is 1:16f. 'God made the two great lights. . . . And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth and to rule over the day and night and to divide between light and darkness.' We cannot speak here of an initial act and its consequences, as though the making preceded the setting, which in turn brought about the giving of light and the ruling. Rather the act of creation of the sun and moon includes within itself the purpose which they are to serve. Their giving of light is not the same thing as their being set in the firmament, yet their being set there cannot be fully defined without reference to their function as luminaries. In the same way, though man's rulership over the animals is not itself the image of God, no definition of the image is complete which does not refer to this function of rulership.

This conclusion can be confirmed on more general grounds. It is very likely that the Ancient Near Eastern description of the king, especially in Egypt, as the image of God, formed part of the background to the phrase in Genesis 1:26. Ancient Near Eastern understanding of divine images has seemed very clearly to lie behind Genesis 1:26, and we further suggest that the idea of the king as the living image of God is a further element in the background of man as the image of God. We cannot specify the means by which this Ancient Near Eastern terminology was utilized, especially as Genesis 1 offers us no clues to its dating, but for our purpose of assessing the theological significance of the image of God in man in the Old Testament, the mechanics by which this term came to be used are of comparatively little importance; what is important is that Ancient Near Eastern court-style, in which the king is described as the image of God, enables us to appreciate the category of the terminology used about man in Genesis 1. Man is here described in royal terms,[188] not only in the command to have dominion, but in the image of God phrase itself. The term 'image of God' in itself indicates the regal character of man, it seems to us, just as it does in Egypt, where only the king is image of God, and where his rulership is often specifically associated with his being the image. Hence the command to have dominion (Gn. 1:26, 28) does not advertise some function of man which may or may not devolve from his being the image; he has dominion only because he is the

[188] *Cf.* I. Engnell, *VTS* 3 (1957) 112ff.; H. Wildberger, *TZ* 21 (1965) 256–259.

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image, and his being the image means, without any further addition, that he is already ruler.

The same conclusion is reached from a general view of Genesis 1. Here God is presented as sovereign Creator of the universe; since to make means to possess, He is therefore sovereign Owner or Lord of the world. As the image of such a deity man is made and rules the world in the place of God as His *locum tenens* or vizier. It is precisely because he is the image of the God of Genesis 1 that he is ruler; dominion is not some *donum superadditum* which is not intrinsic to the image.

Man's dominion over the animals may seem to be a remarkably non-religious expression of his spiritual status as the image of God. Perhaps also we find this a rather uninteresting conclusion, for it is obvious to us that man is superior to the animals, however like them he is in some respects. Nevertheless, it may be suggested that this statement about man as master of the animals conveys more than at first sight appears.

In other Ancient Near Eastern thought the worlds of the gods, man, and animals were inextricably intertwined. Man was as much a servant of animals, or at least of theriomorphic deities, as master of them. Genesis 1, by its precise structuring of the universe in which man stands between God and the animals,[189] liberates man from the bondage which results from the divinization of the animal world.[190] Moreover, it empties the realm of the divine of its non-moral, sub-personal, animal elements. The doctrine of man as God's image is also a doctrine of the moral, personal, and non-animal, character of God. [191]

The image doctrine is not, however, concerned to deny the links between man and the animals.[192] Man shares with them the day of his creation; and like them he is corporeal, bisexual, herbivorous, a created being. All that differentiates him from them and that elevates him above them, according to Genesis 1, is the task which God lays on him, to be His image. Were he not God's image, he would not be man, but a mere animal. But since he is God's image, no philosophical or psychological

[189] Gn. 2 makes the same point in narrative form.

[190] Animal gods are usually the focus of religious terror (K. H. Bernhardt, *Gott und Bild* 52f.). Similarly, the humanization of animals as ancestors in a totemistic society leaves little room for the personal freedoms essential to man's humanization; *cf.* C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London (1966).

[191] *Cf.* H. Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning* 112.

[192] *Cf.* P. Heinisch, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, Hanstein, Bonn (1940) 133.

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description of man, such as 'naked ape' or 'machine' which does not reckon with the image, can be a complete description of man.

We may go further with G. von Rad and observe that the animals of which man is bidden to have the mastery stand for the whole created order; they figure so prominently in the texts about the image because they are the only possible rivals to man.[193] Man is thus not simply master of the animals, but king of the earth.

It does not need to be stressed how vastly this Hebrew creation story, in which man is created to be ruler, differs from other Ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies, in which man is created to be servant of the gods and to relieve them of their toil. The Atrahasis Epic provides a fair sample of Mesopotamian creation narratives:

> 'Create a human to bear the yoke.
> Let him bear the yoke, the task of Enlil,
> Let man carry the load of the gods.'[194]

6. Once an image in the Ancient Near East has become the dwelling-place of divine fluid, it remains the image of the god, regardless of the vicissitudes to which it is subjected. The Egyptian king is constantly the image of God until the moment of his death, when he is re-united with the god whose image he was while on earth.

In Genesis also man remains, from the moment of his creation, the image of God. The mere parallel with the Ancient Near Eastern conception of the image would not be sufficient to confirm this view, but the biblical texts which speak of the image put it beyond question.

We note first that the image is what is said of man, not of the first man. Man is created in order to be God's image, and no hint is given that man has ceased to be the image of God. There can be no question, therefore, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, of a 'loss' of the image.[195] When the image is otherwise defined than has been done in the present essay there

[193] G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* I 147, following K. Barth, *CD* III/1 206.

[194] A. R. Millard, 'A New Babylonian "Genesis" Story', *Tyndale Bulletin* 18 (1967) 3–18, especially 8ff.

[195] Nor of a conditional character of the image, *contra* F. Horst and C. Westermann (n. 40, 41 above); *cf.* W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 135 n. 4.

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may be some justification for speaking of the loss of the image; it would be possible to start, as Luther apparently did, from the premise that the image is lost, and consequently to define the image negatively, in terms of what man is not. Such a method indeed ensures the confirmation of the original premise, but it does not do justice to Genesis 1:26 or the other texts which speak of the image.

In defending our view that the image is not lost, a view which is shared by all modern Old Testament scholars, we shall not lay much weight on Genesis 5 as is done by many exegetes, for there we are not dealing with the transmission of the divine image, but with the begetting of a son in Adam's image. Genesis 9, however, which concerns not simply the post-Fall but the post-Flood world, affords no indication of a loss, or even a partial defacement of the image. Rather, the primeval creation of man as the image of God is regarded as having contemporary validity, in that it is used as a warning against murder and as validation of capital punishment. In Psalm 8, also, it is taken for granted that the image (which is indeed not explicitly mentioned, but is alluded to by the description of man's rulerhood) is to be seen here and now in man. The permanence of the image is a concept which persists even in the New Testament: for Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:7, man is the image and so the glory of God; James 3:9 speaks of the inconsequentiality of using the same member of the body, the tongue, both to bless God and to curse men, 'who are made in the image of God'. This lively contrast would lack all point if James did not believe that men are still the image of God.

The same conclusion regarding the permanent validity of the image may be drawn from consideration of the term 'man' in Genesis 1:26f. Genesis 1 does not describe the creation of the ancestors of each species of life, but rather the creation of the various species. The whole race of man is in view therefore in Genesis 1:26f. not the primeval pair.[196] Inevitably we read Genesis 1 in the knowledge of Genesis 2, where the creation of a primeval pair of humans is narrated; but if Genesis 1 is read for its own sake, as it should be, at least initially, it becomes clear that it is the creation of the species that is in mind. It is no argument against this interpretation that man is told to be

[196] V. Maag, *Asiatische Studien* 9 (1955) 30; W. H. Schmidt, *Schöpfungsgeschichte* 144f.

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fruitful and multiply; although from the point of view of strict logic the human species as a whole cannot multiply, if 'species' is defined as 'the sum-total of members of that species', yet in ordinary language it is possible to say that the human race propagates itself without implying that it propagates other human races.

Thus man, so long as he remains man, is the image of God, for man as mankind, not as primeval man, is made the image of God. We concur with K. Barth's statement: '[The image] does not consist in anything that man is or does. It consists in the fact that man himself and as such is God's creation. He would not be man, were he not the image of God. He is God's image, in that he is man.'[197]

In summary, we formulate the image doctrine thus:

Man is created not *in* God's image, since God has no image of His own, but *as* God's image, or rather *to be* God's image, that is to deputize in the created world for the transcendent God who remains outside the world order. That man is God's image means that he is the visible corporeal representative of the invisible, bodiless God; he is representative rather than representation, since the idea of portrayal is secondary in the significance of the image. However, the term 'likeness' is an assurance that man is an adequate and faithful representative of God on earth. The whole man is the image of God, without distinction of spirit and body. All mankind, without distinction, are the image of God. The image is to be understood not so much ontologically as existentially: it comes to expression not in the nature of man so much as in his activity and function. This function is to represent God's lordship to the lower orders of creation. The dominion of man over creation can hardly be excluded from the content of the image itself. Mankind, which means both the human race and individual men, do not cease to be the image of God so long as they remain men; to be human and to be the image of God are not separable.

VI THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The doctrine that man is the image of God, made in the likeness of God, is still to be found in the New Testament, in the two passages in 1 Corinthians and James we have already noted.

[197] K. Barth, *CD* III/1 184.

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Yet when we review the expressions εἰκών, ὁμοίωσις, μορφή, χαρακτήρ and the like in the New Testament,[198] all of which are related to the concept of the image, we find that by far the greatest weight in the New Testament doctrine of the image lies upon the figure of Christ, who is the true image of God. As the second man, the last Adam, Jesus is to perfection the image of God. From Christ, 'who is the likeness of God', streams 'the gospel light of Christ's glory', which is hidden to unbelievers; but believers see the 'light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Christ' (2 Cor. 4:4ff.). He is 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15); therefore 'he who has seen me has seen the Father' (Jn. 12:45; 14:9); He is also the firstborn of all creation, *i.e.* the image of God, who is Son of God ('beloved son', Col. 1:13), and to whom authority over all created things is given. We have already discussed the continuity between God and the world through His word and His image; it is of great interest that both themes are taken up in the New Testament: in John 1, Christ as the Logos is the continuity; in Hebrews 1 Christ is the image, who 'reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his character', and who is also Son and firstborn *and* word ('hath spoken to us by a Son').

As the second Adam, Christ is the head of the new humanity; therefore as Adam shares the image with his descendants, so Christ shares the image with *His* descendants, namely those that are 'in Christ'. 'Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8:29). The image of Christ, rather than the image of God, comes to the forefront when the believer's conformity with the image is spoken of.

Bearing the image of Christ is an eschatological concept; it contains elements both of the now and the not yet. 'We are God's children now, but it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him' (1 Jn. 3:2). 'Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we

[198] A convenient summary is given by R. McL. Wilson, 'Genesis 1:26 and the New Testament', *Bijdragen* 20 (1959) 117–125. On the New Testament doctrine of the image, *cf.* also J. Jervell, *Imago Dei*; F.-W. Eltester, *Eikon im Neuen Testament* (*BZNW* 23), Töpelmann, Berlin (1958); R. Scroggs, *The Last Adam*, Blackwell, Oxford (1966); R. P. Martin, *Carmen Christi*, Cambridge University Press, (1967) 99–119; K. Barth, *CD* III/1 201–206.

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shall also bear the image of the man of heaven' (1 Cor. 15:49). Complete conformity with the image of Christ is not yet attained but already 'as we behold the glory of the Lord we are being changed into the same likeness from one degree of glory to another' (2 Cor. 3:18).

The protological doctrine of the image, which retains its existential implications, has become transformed in the New Testament into an eschatological doctrine itself with existential implications; for example, 'He that has this hope (of eventual likeness to Christ) in him purifies himself' (1 Jn. 3:3). Man is God's representative on earth; Christ in a *sensus plenior* is God's 'one' representative on earth and the community of believers becomes the dwelling-place of God on earth. The Spirit, if we have rightly interpreted the image, is the life-force or vitality of human kind, yet in a *sensus plenior* He indwelt Christ, and hence those who are 'in Christ' 'live by the Spirit' (Rom. 8:5) in a fuller sense than that in which Genesis 1 and 2 can say that man lives by the Spirit. Just as man's creation as image of God spells the equality of all men before God, so within the community of the new humanity there can be no divisions of race or class: 'You have put on the new man, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all' (Col. 3:10f.; *cf.* Gal. 3:28). Man is still lord of creation, and Psalm 8 is still true, yet in a fuller sense, as Hebrews 2 reminds us, 'we do not yet see everything in subjection to him' (2:8). Here is the tension of the new age, between the now and the not yet. The hope that the not yet will presently become the now lies in the next verse, 'But we see Jesus, for a little while made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour'.

In Christ man sees what manhood was meant to be.[199] In the Old Testament all men are the image of God; in the New, where Christ is the one true image, men are image of God in so far as they are like Christ. The image is fully realized only through obedience to Christ; this is how man, the image of God, who is already man, already the image of God, can become fully man, fully the image of God.

[199] In the New Testament the image doctrine is brought into the realm of soteriology, as it never was in the Old (P. Humbert, *Etudes* 175).

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