

UNITY and TRINITY
**THE GOD OF
CHRISTIANITY**

Philip Chempakassery

Systematic Theology - 3

UNITY AND TRINITY THE GOD OF CHRISTIANITY

Philip Chempakassery

M.S. Publications, Thiruvananthapuram

2006

Dedication

*This book is dedicated to the sweet and sacred
memory of my mother, Annamma Yohannan
Chempakassery who went to be eternally united with
the triune God on 1, June, 2006*



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2006

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Foreword

A book on the Trinity is a difficult task. Not only is the subject which is difficult but it is more difficult to fight against the trend which ridicules everything that is divine. Our culture has become intolerant about God. It is not an atheistic mentality as such but a mentality which wants to avoid God and God talk. This is especially true when it concerns a mystery like the Trinity. Lesslie Newbegin narrates a story about the fountains Abbey in Yorkshire. There a community of monastics lived. Every Sunday, they had sermons on the different topics of the Christian faith except on the Trinity. Trinity was avoided because it was difficult (see “The Trinity as public Truth, K.J. Vanhoozer, *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*, Grand Rapids, 1997, p.2)

Though the difficulty of the subject is frightening, this work was undertaken because of the pressing need of a text book on the subject. Moreover the help and encouragement I have received from my students were a constant inspiration. Their performance in the class and in the examinations opened my eyes to the fact that even in this age of secularism and antitheism there are a good number of people who want to learn things divine. My thanks go also to my ecclesiastical superiors who gave me a chance to do higher studies in theological subjects and who entrusted me with the task of theologically forming the students for priesthood. I thank also my colleagues whose cooperation has been encouraging. My thanks go also to the manager and workers of the Bethany Press Kalathipady who did the printing in a beautiful way and finished it in time.

The author

Thiruvananthapuram
May 31, 2006

Introduction

“The mystery of the most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and of Christian life. God alone can make it known to us by revealing himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit”, says the Catechism of the Catholic Church (no. 261). This mystery forms the centre of faith not only to the Catholics but also for all the Eastern Churches and other denominations of the Christian religion. The Trinity is not the discovery of the theologians. It is the self revelation of the God whom we believe to be the creator, redeemer and the final destiny of all creatures. Yet the word “Trinity” or the doctrine as it is formulated and taught by the Christian Churches cannot be found in either the OT or the NT of the Bible. The word “Trinity” came to be used only through a slow process of the development of the doctrine in the life of the Church. The doctrine in the form in which it is taught today also is the result of a slow process of development. But it is very firmly rooted in the Bible. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all part of the revelation. The interrelationship among the three also is part of revelation. The fact that all the three share the same divinity also is part of revelation. But how to relate these facts with the already revealed and proclaimed faith in the unity of God is the problem and the task of theology was to interrelate these two data. The outcome is the Trinitarian doctrine. But the doctrine is not the final word about the mystery. It remains still as mystery beyond the grasp of man. There is need for further elucidation. The course of action a Christian should take is not to be silent about it because it still remains beyond comprehension, but to go on attempting newer and newer ways of elucidating it. That is what is done here. It is hoped it will inspire further attempts at better explanations of the mystery.

The author

CHAPTER - I

THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

Monotheism is the belief Christianity has inherited from Judaism where we have the source of this new God idea. It seems that there was no religion of the ancient world, which insisted on the truth that God is no more than one, notwithstanding the fact that monotheistic tendencies are perceptible in the philosophies related with these religions. In other terms the practice of the ancient religions was such that they gave little credence to monotheism, even though in thought some of them maintained a sort of monotheistic or monistic idea about the Supreme Being. Even in Israel, the kind of monotheism they practiced is subject to philosophical criticism since it is not clear whether their monotheism was a strict belief in the oneness of God or whether they worshiped only one God as their God. Therefore the main accent in the early period of Christianity was to safeguard the unadulterated monotheistic faith in God. The conventional creeds of Christendom opened with an assertion of monotheism, the faith in one God, who is the creator of heaven and earth, things visible and invisible¹. In the

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minds of the earliest Fathers of the Church this faith was the main point of disputation with the pagans. It was understood as the dividing line between paganism and Christianity. Some examples will clarify this point. According to Hermas, the first commandment is to believe that God is one². Therefore to look for a theology of the Trinity on the Bible especially in the OT is a futile attempt. "Exegetes and theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity"³. At the same time the doctrine of the blessed Trinity is derived not from the human mind but from the Revelation only. If it is the product of human mind then the Church has no authority to preach such a doctrine. If it is a doctrine of the Christian Church and if it has roots in the self-communication of God, then we cannot rule out the traces of such a doctrine all through the revelation, the OT being part of it. Trinitarian mystery is something that belongs to the inner being of God. Therefore man is unable to have any idea of it unless it is revealed to him. Through revelation God reveals himself to us. In revelation we encounter God Himself. This God is a Trinitarian God or a God who is one and three at the same time. In revelation we encounter God in his triple manifestation that is his own being. Therefore we examine each aspect of this triple manifestation and come to a conclusion as to the substance of the manifestation. The first of these manifestations is God as Father. We begin here.

God's paternity is fully revealed only in the revelation realized in the coming of Jesus. There in relation to Jesus, God is presented as father, as father of Jesus Christ. But revelation is a slow process of unfolding of the divine mystery in the course of time. Therefore, though the full revelation of God as father was given in Jesus Christ, there was a time before Jesus, which prepared man to understand

the Fatherhood of God. This is done in the non-Christian world as well as and in a very emphatic way in the O.T of the Bible. How this idea was implied in God's dealings with non-Christian religions will be treated later. Now we go to the O.T.

1.1. The OT ideas of God as Father

The OT experience of God is a multifaceted one. The eminent OT scholar of the last century, John L. Mckenzie identifies six areas in which the people of the OT experienced God. The areas are cult, which is placed at the first place in the Israelite experience of God, then revelation, thirdly their own history, then nature itself and then the wisdom tradition, which sees God as **the wise one** and finally the institutions of Israel⁴. Through these means Israel experienced God as Father. This experience of God as Father is something thorny in our present day world, which is persistently being subjected to far-reaching social changes. The father figure in the present society has nothing to acclaim about it. In fact the father figure has created certain tensions in our minds. This is due to the unsteady sociological portrait of the father in our epoch. For many children brought up in one parent families with the mother as the only parent the father figure is something superfluous and far from meeting any important need in the life of the children. In families where the father is the only parent to bring up the children, he fulfills the role of the mother, which is not in his nature. For many other people today the idea of father is connected with power and authority, sometimes exercised with cruelty. Therefore in our present day society it is incapable to take this idea as granted. In many of the broken families, the father is remembered with fear. In some other families the father projects the picture of a dictator. Therefore, there is need, before we

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elucidate the OT idea of God as father, to be sure of the father figure in Israelite family life as well as in social life. The father figure in the Israelite society of the biblical times is much different from what the father is in the modern societies, especially, the western society and those societies under the constant influence of the West or in the present Israelite society or in any society for that matter.

1.1.1 Father figure in OT Society

In the OT the word father (*ab*) is almost totally used in the secular realm. Therefore the use of the word in reference to God can be appreciated only in relation to its use in the secular world. The secular use of the word is calculated as 1180 times while its use in the religious sense is only 15 times⁵. The Israelite society was essentially and totally patriarchal. The family and the house of the family were called *bet ab*- house of the father. Jesus himself uses this phrase many times in his sermons. In Jn 14:2. "In my father's house are many rooms", says Jesus. Though the word *ab* is mainly used of the male parent and head of the family, it is also a title of honour to anybody who is highly regarded in the society. For example in Judges 17:10 and 18:19, *ab* is used as a title of honour for a priest, while it acquires the same sense in reference to the prophets in 2King 6:21 and 13:14.

The most important function of the father in the family is not simply as the one who procreates the children. More than that the children are considered to be included in the father's house. Through this inclusion they are tied to the family. It gives a sense of belongingness which is unparalleled by any other social institution in the Israelite society. Not only is it his task to feed, protect, and educate his

family, but more important still, he is the family priest (Ex. 12:3ff) and teacher (Ex 12:26f; 13:14ff; Deut. 6: 6:7, 20ff; 32:7, 46; Isa. 38:19⁶).

The heritage goes from the father to the son and never from the mother to the daughter or from mother to son. The relation of the father to children is one of full authority. At the same time it is a relation of loving providence. The child is fully sheltered in the house of the father. Insults against parents are severely punished. This is clear in the provisions of the law. The Decalogue states, "He that smites his father or mother shall surely be put to death" (Ex 21:15). Not only smiting but cursing the parents also was given capital punishment (Ex 21:17). It is the duty of the offspring to honour their parents and this duty has been given as part of the Ten Commandments, which are the terms of the covenant relationship between God and Israel (Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16).

Though strict rule is there for the children to obey and respect the parents and especially the male parent, the relationship between parents and children was never one of legality only but one, which was governed by sincere love and commitment. The son enjoys all the goods of the father but remains strictly under his dominion. The parable of the prodigal son is an excellent example for the authority under which the son is placed and the freedom he enjoys within this supreme authority. Whatever the father has belongs to the son (Luke 15: 31). To be united with the father means this belongingness to the father as well as to all that belongs to him. At the same time, as long as the father lives the son never has the possessions in his own name. The son never becomes independent of the father. Thus the relation between the father and son is legal, social and personal at the same time. This

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relation can never be disengaged except through death. It is a relation in which authority and freedom co-exist; superiority and equality go hand-in-hand; honour and love exist complimenting each other.

1.1.2 God as Father

The idea of God as father is not a prominent idea in OT. This is the case especially in the early part of the OT. The main reason behind this caution about presenting God as Father seems to be the mythological tendencies of the religions of Israel's neighbors. The OT authors were afraid that if God were to be presented as father, sexuality and procreation will also be attributed to Him and the God of Israel will be no better than the gods of the other people.

Yet there are many passages where God is given the title of fatherhood. These should be studied against their background to arrive at a conclusion about OT idea of God as father.

1.1.3 God is Father of Israel

The chief idea of God's fatherhood is related to his very particular relation with Israel. God is Father of Israel given that he is the creator of this people. God is the only explanation for the subsistence of Israel as a nation and as a people. Creation does not mean here the natural creation of the individuals but the formation of this people as an especially elect people and as the population belonging to God. The use of the father figure in relation to God appears in two different spheres, namely God as father of the people of Israel in general and God as father of the kings of Israel. The second use is to be understood in close connection with the first. God is the father of the king because the king represents

the people in a very special way. But no other individual is called the son of God nor God the father of any such individual⁷.

This idea of God as Father of Israel is expressed for the first time in God's message to Moses: "You shall say to Pharaoh: Thus says the Lord; **Israel is my first born son**. Let my son go that he may serve me ... If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay your first born son". (4:22,23). This text is the basis for the idea of God as father of Israel expressed in the later texts of the OT.

Here the word used to qualify Israel is **first-born**. In the biblical tradition this expression points to the predilection of God in favour of Israel. Israel is more beloved than others; he is chosen from among many others (cf. Deut 7:6, 14:2). It also implies the guarantee of God's predilection against oppression. If protection is guaranteed, it implies on the part of Israel, the duty to serve God whole-heartedly.

The Prophet Hosea puts these two ideas together in 11:1. Yahweh's continued care is contrasted with the stubbornness of Israel. In the farewell song of Moses, we have a further developed idea. [Deut 32:1-11 (esp. v.6)]. The unshaken faith in the fatherhood of God is further proclaimed in Deutero-Isaiah. In 64:7, (cf. also 63:16), this fatherhood of God is an idea not only to express Israel's relation with God and vice versa, but it is also understood as a bond that unites all the Israelites as many as they are. Mal 2:10 is a development of this idea.

Paternity of God implies God's supreme authority over Israel (Deut 14:1). Fatherhood also implies God's personal love and affection

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for his people. Therefore God can complain about the faithlessness of Israel (Is 1:2-3). This fatherhood should not be misunderstood as an exclusively male figure; it includes also motherhood (cf. Is 49: 15).

1.1.4 God as Father is the Saviour of His Nation

In the Greek mystery religions, salvation was the concern of the individual, while in Israel salvation was understood as a national concern and God was the one who realizes it; it is never man who realizes salvation for himself or for others. In this national dimension of salvation God who is the Father of the nation had to act. This idea was developed during the captivity under Babylon. Isaiah 63:16 gives voice to this faith of the people.

Being sons of God in a true sense was part of the promises to be fulfilled in the Messianic Age. "In the place where it was said to them: "You are not my people, it shall be said unto them: you are the sons of the living God" (Hos 1:10)

As sons Israelites are invited to return to Yahweh, "Return, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness" (Jer. 3:22).

The original idea of saviour or redeemer refers to the one whose duty it was to ransom his relative or friend in captivity. The father had the primary duty to redeem a son or daughter in captivity. After the father it is the brother who is duty bound to be the redeemer of those in danger of captivity. Hence many old Hebrew names refer to God as father or brother. E.g. Jo-ab (God is father); Jo-ah (God is brother) etc.

Mosa'ah, Ga'al: *Mosa'ah* or redeeming is a concept to be seen in this connection. 'Redemption' is the usual English rendering of this Hebrew word. Another word in Hebrew used in similar sense is the verb *ga'al*. From this verb comes the noun *go'el*. *Go'el* is the nearest blood relative, who in case of feuds, or captivity or poverty has the duty to ransom his relative. "In an extreme situation of violence, the kinsman redeemer may have to assume the role of a vindicator, an avenger of blood...this responsibility... extends also to non-relatives, to any victim of injustice"⁸. It is not; therefore, by chance that Deutero-Isaiah calls God as redeemer (*go'el*) so frequently (cf. 41:14; 43:1,14; 44:22ff; 52:3; 62:12; 63:9 etc). Israel was at that time in captivity, and God was the only one who through the covenant relationship is bound to redeem Israel and the one who was able to do that.

1.1.5 God as Father and the King

As God is the father of the people of Israel in general, He is also the father of the king of the people. In the early periods of Israelite history God is called father in a national sense only, but in later periods this fatherhood was extended to the kings. To David God says about His relationship with the Solomon, "I will be his father and he shall be my son" (2 Sam 7:14) To David God says further, "He shall cry to me 'Thou art my father, and God and the rock of my salvation' and I will make him the first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth. My steadfast love I will keep for him forever and my covenant shall stand firm for him (Ps 89:26-28).

Later it is not only Solomon who is considered the son of God but each king of the family of David had this title. It is obvious that

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the king in a very special way represents the people and therefore he is the son of God on account of the people. Gradually all members could individually claim God to be their father on the basis of their membership in the nation. "If the individual sees God as his Father, it is because of his status as a member of the people and because he has experienced the work of God in a way corresponding to his redemption of Israel."⁹ The idea of personal salvation is developed mainly in the sapiential literature. "I proclaim: Lord, thou art a Father and hero of my salvation; do not abandon me in the hour of trial" (Sir 51:10)

In the book of wisdom the pious Israelite is challenged for his personal faith in God, which puts him in a father-son relationship with God.

"The very sight of him (the righteous one) is a burden to us... And he avoids our ways as unclean; he calls the last end of the righteous happy, and boasts that God is his father. Let us see if his words are true and let us test what will happen at the end of his life (Wisdom 2:15-17). This idea is in the mind of Jesus' enemies when they challenge him to come down from the cross.

In the Apocalyptic literature the salvation looked forward to in the messianic age is presented as divine sonship. In Psalms of Solomon 17:30 we read that the Messiah "will know all of them, that they will be sons of God".

Again in the book of Jubilees the end time is presented as a time when "they all will be called children of the living God"(Book of Jubilees1:23).

The understanding of God as father received a development in the time of the rabbinic literature. In these writings the expression “father in heaven” or “heavenly father” occurs very frequently. In the time of Jesus the expression was quite popular and the prayer “Our Father” taught by Jesus also shows the popularity of this expression in that time.

The “father in heaven” stands in contrast to the “father on earth”. In the period after the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Jews were left without any visible house of worship or a visible symbol for the presence and protection of God. During this time the expression “father in heaven” was very helpful to maintain their faith in the protecting presence of God. Even if nothing visible is there to symbolize the presence of God, they believed that God remains as father in the invisible heaven.

1.1.6 Conclusion to the OT views on God as Father

The idea of God as father was introduced step by step into the thinking of the Jewish people in the time of the OT. They had apprehension about the suitability of this expression mainly because of the fear that the whole idea of God might be mythologized and Yahweh reduced into an ordinary god like the gods of the gentiles.

The complete absence of the idea of God as mother also is to be understood against this background. The mother figure was more prone to mythologization. The divine transcendence and power could not be expressed through the mother figure.

The relation of a child to the father can be spiritualized. But the mother is so closely tied to the physicality of the child that it will

always remain in the material realm. “Universally what is experienced in the form of the “great father” is the absolute lack of form and shape from whose unapproachable light existence pours into the womb of time, into the nocturnal flood of the ferment of possibilities”¹⁰ For the God of Israel the father image was the most suitable image because in the traditions of man the father image symbolized “a mystery that precedes all origins” and it points “to an event that defies inspection”. Existence starts from God in a hidden way, as is the case with the origin of life from the father. Then it matures and comes to light through the medium of the mother. “From what is hidden it flows into the sea of possibilities, into the primeval womb from which what is real can appear and come to light”.¹¹ In the OT the father figure is used in such a way that it could be purified of its materiality and applied to show the transcendence and power of God.

Though the father symbol was hesitatingly used in the earlier times it becomes the most powerful and comprehensive expression of biblical monotheism, leading to the final revelation of God in the NT.

1.2. The Son in the OT

Is there anything at least vaguely revealed of the Son in the O.T.? Revelation attained its fullness in the NT. But the same is the God who spoke in the OT and NT and therefore one would expect something of God's inner nature implied in the revelation in the OT also. This has been the belief of the Church from very early times. Thus the early Church has taken different figures of OT as pointing to the revelation of the Son.

1.2.1 Angel of Yahweh (*Mal'ak Yahweh*)

Early tradition has seen in the revelation of the angel of Yahweh a manifestation of the Son. In the angelology of the OT we may distinguish three layers – (1) the angel as self-revelation of Yahweh (2) the idea of angels as intermediary beings who carry out special functions. (3) The hierarchy of angels in Hellenistic Judaism. The second and third layers of angelology do not concern us because there the question is about beings lower in status than God himself.

1.2.1.1 Angel as self-revelation of Yahweh¹²

In texts where the first type of angels appears, they carry out a definite function but they speak and act in such a way that they are identified with God. So though the angel appears as distinct from God he is divine. His function is to help the people of God. “The angel of Yahweh appears almost always to help Israel or an individual. He is virtually a hypostatic appearance of Yahweh, the personified help of God for Israel...”¹³

In Gen 16:7 the angel of Yahweh appears to Hagar who flees from Sarah. The angel says, “I shall so greatly multiply your descendants so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.”. It is the angel who speaks. But this blessing can come only from God. An angel who is only a messenger cannot bless people like that. God himself earlier gave this blessing to Abraham (Gen 15:5). This blessing given to Hagar is only the continuation of the blessing given to Abraham. Yet the angel speaks in the first person, as “I shall so greatly multiply your descendants.”

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On another occasion when Hagar flees with her child, a similar encounter occurs between her and the angel. There the angel says, “I will make him (Ishmael) a great nation” (Gen 21:18).

In the scene of the sacrifice of Isaac, the angel appears again. Then the angel says, “Now I know that you fear God, seeing that you have not withheld your only son from me”(Gen 22:11). Here also God and ‘me’ are identified.

The angel of Yahweh appearing to Moses in the bush makes a clear identification of himself with God. “The angel of the Lord appeared to him and when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush... “Moses...”. First it is said that it was the angel who appeared to Moses in the bush. Then it is said that the Lord called him out of the bush.

In Judges 2:1-3 again there is the use of God’s words and those of angel of the Lord in an interchangeable way,

“I brought you up from Egypt...” (2:1)

“I will never break the covenant with you, and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.”(2:1-2).

In all these texts we have manifestation of God in which God reveals himself, not merely through a messenger, but by Himself, yet in a form distinct from Himself.

In the thinking of the early fathers this manifestation was interpreted as the revelation of the Logos or Word. Under the influence of these texts Christ was often called the Angel of the Lord. In the vision of Hermas, six men and a glorious man in the midst are presented. Of these the six men are understood as angels. In this

angelology the six angels are associated with the six days of creation and Jesus is presented as the Sabbath¹⁴.

The same way in some early writings, Jesus or son is called Michael. The reason is that he is the chief of the archangels.¹⁵ In another early book Christ is called Gabriel because he is also one of the chief angels. Jesus says there: "I took the form of Angel Gabriel, I appeared unto Mary and spoke with her; her heart accepted me. She believed and laughed. I the word entered into her and became flesh"¹⁶.

1.2.1.2 Conclusion to OT Angelology

In the early texts of the Bible, Yahweh is presented as manifesting himself as Angel. Early theology interpreted this angel as divine, as the revelation of the invisible God through His word.

This early Jewish-Christian theology of the angel as word was taken over by Christian theology both orthodox and heterodox. They did not speculate about the nature of the word. But their concern was about his function of revealing, guiding and judging. This word was identified with Gabriel, Michael and others. This identification has its danger. It did not highlight the divinity of the son only his function was highlighted. It is Epiphanius who raised objection about this identification¹⁷. Arius made use of this theology of identification to prove the subordination of the Son.

1.2.2 The word of God

Another concept in the OT, which may be considered as preparation for the Trinitarian revelation, is the concept of the Word of

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God. *Logos* or word is a prominent idea in the NT especially in the Johannine writings, in the gospel of John, in the first Epistle of John and in the book of Revelation, which also is known after John. This NT idea has its roots in the O.T. This seems to be the most powerful idea in the OT, which paved the way for the Trinitarian revelation in the NT. What is the Word? *Dabar*, the Hebrew term, which is translated word, has a wide range of meaning. "... While in some contexts, it could mean narrative, saying, speech, message, command or request, in others it could be translated as matter, event, affair etc"¹⁸. We can start our reflections on the word of God (*Dabar Yahweh*) with creation itself. God speaks the word and creation is realized (Gen 1:3). All the creatures come into existence by the word of God. This speaking of God and the appearance of the creatures is a pattern that is continued without break in all the six days of creation. Man also is not an exception. Though the mode of creation of man is different from that of the other creatures, the presence of the Word is something common. God said, "let us make man in our own image and likeness" (Gen 1:26). This speaking of God is interpreted as the instrumentality of the word in creation. In the Psalms we read, "By the word of God the heavens were made" (36:3).

The word is further considered as a mediator in the redeeming work of God "The people cried to the Lord in their trouble in the desert...." (Ps 107:19-20). Thus in God's work in nature and history, in creation and continued preservation the word is considered as the mediator and instrument.

In Ps 147:15. This idea is very clear "He sends forth his command to the earth; his Word runs swiftly..."

In Isaiah this instrumentality of the Word is much more clear (55:10) “For as the rain and snow come down from heaven and return not.... So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth, it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose....”

The book of wisdom applies this concept to God’s judgment on Egypt and his saving action in favour of Israel. “While gentle silence enveloped all things and night in its.... Thy all powerful word leaped from heaven....”(Wisdom 18:14 ff). Here we have a very developed personification of the Word. It is under the Hellenistic influence that this personification reached its climax in the Alexandrian Jewish writings. But apart from this Hellenistic influence words of Yahweh (*Memra Deyahweh*—Aramaic) are used like a hypostasis and in some places as a name of Yahweh or as standing instead of the name of Yahweh. The opinion of J.O Akao seems to be very relevant in this context. According to him, “*dabar* could be taken to mean the projection forward of what lies behind, that is to say, the transition into the act of what is at first in the heart. Apart from its other connotations as thing or object, *dabar* virtually means the projection into reality of the intention and wishes or will or the source of utterance”¹⁹ In later Jewish theology the Torah was conceived as a subsisting creative power of God and as a daughter of God.

1.2.3 The Divine Wisdom

Wisdom is another idea in the OT, which prepared the way to the revelation of the Son of God. Wisdom or *Sophia* is a development from the concept of the Word. Wisdom is the ultimate

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hypostasis of God's word. The word was mostly considered as God in action. But the wisdom is more than that. It is the medium through which the world is created and history is ordered. The description of the wisdom in the OT can be followed in stages.

A. Job.

The earliest text about wisdom seems to be Job 28. It contains the answer to Job's problem concerning the why of the suffering of the innocent man. The book of Job is a parabolic treatise on the problem of evil, why there is evil in the world. The presence of evil (Physical and moral) cannot be explained by recourse to the sins of man. In other words evil is not always the result of man's infidelity to God. Even the most righteous persons sometimes suffer the intense form of evil. Job is an example. Therefore job declares that man needs divine wisdom to comprehend the meaning of evil.

In 28:12 we read,

"Silver has its mines and gold its place for refining. But tell me where does wisdom come from? It cannot be found; it is precious beyond all earthly things. God alone has traced its path and found out where it lives. When God created the world he had it in sight and declared it and established it and fathomed it. And he said to man "behold the fear of the Lord is wisdom and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28:28).

B. Proverbs

The book of proverbs is another treatise on wisdom. The book is mostly a collection of practical rules of life. The first 9 chapters are an introduction. In this introduction wisdom speaks as a person present to God Himself. It explains the value of wisdom and the ways

of acquiring it. It also warns against folly. Chapter 8 is the climax. Here after extolling the value of wisdom the origin and work of wisdom are narrated (8: 12-31, esp. 22-31).

1. Wisdom was created in the beginning. (When He fixed the heavens firm, I was there) (8:22-26)
2. Wisdom was with God in the entire work of creation (8:27-31)
3. Then an appeal to humans:

My sons, listen to me... happy those who keep my ways.”
8:32 f

Of all the details about wisdom the most important is the mention of it in God's work of creation. Here wisdom is presented as the pattern of creation and of human society.

C. Sirach (chapter 24)

The text important in this regard is Sirach 24. Here we can see a development from the text of Proverbs. Wisdom says “ I came from the mouth of the most high” (24:3) Wisdom was present with God during the creation of the land, sea and all that are in them. Wisdom pitches her tent among the chosen people where she flourishes and bears fruit. Ultimately all wisdom is in the law, based on the covenant.

D. The book of wisdom

The heightest point of sapiential thinking in Judaism is in the book of Wisdom. The whole book is a treatise on Wisdom. The book has the following plan.

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1-5 Invitation to wisdom (here virtue is presented as better than vice)

6-9 The nature of Wisdom is explained

10-19 Wisdom was present in the history of Israel.

Of these, chapters 7-9 are the most important for us. The content of these chapters may be summarized as follows

Kings have no better origin than others (7:1-6)

Wisdom is the most distinguished gift over all other gifts of God (over kingship even) (7:7-14).

Wisdom gives insight into all secrets (7:15-20).

Wisdom is of divine nature (many adjectives are used to qualify the nature of wisdom – sublime, quick, penetrating, unchangeable, almighty) (7:22-30).

Wisdom is the breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty (7:25).

Wisdom is praised as the source of all other gifts, indispensable for man. – (Chapter 8)

A prayer for the gift of wisdom (Chap 9)

In this prayer Solomon says to God “with you is wisdom, she knows your works, she who was present when you made the world; she understands what is pleasing in your eyes” 9:9.

In the description of wisdom a clear pattern is visible. In chapters 1 to 10 wisdom is described as endowed with divine qualities

and associated with God. But in later chapters, which deal with the history of Israel, it is God who is active. Chap 11 is a transition from wisdom to God. God fulfills the same functions that are attributed to wisdom in the early chapters.. From this we can conclude that wisdom, on the one hand is of divine nature, on the other hand it is distinct from God. In actions God and wisdom are always one acting principle. Thus the basic Trinitarian concept could be reconstructed from here.

1.2.4 Conclusion to OT views on the Son

If we look for full proofs for a doctrine of the Trinity in the O T, we will be disappointed. It is fully revealed only in Christ. Yet we see a progressive self-manifestation of God. God acts in creation and history. The acting of God is described through certain media –the Angel, the Word, the Wisdom. In these media we see the power of God active both in the origin of the world and in the on-going history of it and in a very special way in the history of the Israelite people and nation. These mediators are truly divine and have divine predicates. They present, as it were, God’s face turned towards the world and become the object of specific reflection. Therefore there is place for this question: Are these mediators mere personifications i.e. human way of thinking of God and poetical expressions of God’s divine actions or are they distinct realities?

There is a strong tendency for such personification in late Judaism under the influence of Greek thought. The personified use of such expressions like Word, Wisdom, Spirit etc “is merely by way of poetic license, though it shows the minds of God’s people were being prepared for the concepts that would be involved in the forthcoming revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity”²⁰ Are these only personifications? The N T

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gives us the answer and the answer is that these mediators are preparations for a deeper understanding of the inner life of God. Jesus is 'the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight' (Mal 3:1). He is the Logos made flesh in Johannine thought. Jesus is he whom God made our wisdom (1Cor 1:30)

1.3 The Spirit in the OT.

Spirit or *ruah* is essentially related to the history of salvation. According to the OT idea through his spirit Yahweh leads the history of salvation.

The OT concept of *ruah* is that it is primarily a power, a divine power. An excellent proof for this concept is Is 31:3. There, speaking against the Israelite tendency to seek help from Egypt to keep up their independence, Isaiah says, "The Egyptians are men, and not God; their horses flesh and not spirit".

Here men and God are contrasted as well as flesh and spirit. The same way spirit is put in parallelism with God.

Two things are clear here

1. Spirit is of the realm of God, or to put it the other way, God is of the realm of the spirit and that realm is the divine realm
2. Since the saying is to undermine the power of Egypt, spirit here means power, which is contrasted with flesh, a symbol of weakness in the biblical tradition.

The spirit is also an agent of creation. In the beginning it is the spirit, which works in the ordering of the disorderly state of

beings. It is also the beginner of creation. So we read in Genesis 1:2,3:

“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light” and there was light” (Gen 1:2-3).

Here the spirit is put between the statement about the void and the word of God. This means the spirit is the first principle, which begins the ordering of the world; it is the principle of creation.

The spirit is not only the principle of ordering and creating; it is also the power, which gives life. In Gen 2:7 we read, “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (*ruah*) of life; and man became a living being” (Gen 2:7).

The Hebrew word for breath is the same as the word for spirit (*ruah*.) Therefore here the *ruah* is given as the power, which gives life to the dead matter.

In Gen 6:17 also the spirit is called the spirit of life. There the idea is that the spirit is a power, which enlivens. This same belief is proclaimed in the words of Job:

“The spirit (*ruah*) of God has made me and the breath (*nishmah*) of the Almighty has given me life” (33:4).

The spirit is, in an anthropomorphic way, described as the breath of God. The reason why there is life in the world is that this spirit is distributed to the creatures. Whoever has received this spirit of God

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has life. If this spirit is withdrawn from the world, then everything will return to the original state of inanimate matter.

In the same book we read:

“If God gathers unto him his spirit and his breath (*nishmah* and *ruah*), all flesh shall perish together, and man shall return again to dust” (Job 34:14)

All God’s action in the OT is primarily directed towards the chosen people, Israel. So also God’s spirit is working mainly in Israel. This is not only in the religious or spiritual realm alone but also in a variety of profane or secular circles.

This spirit may be sent to man as well as withdrawn from him. When the spirit is given to a man it causes in him intelligence, skill, wisdom as well as the prophetic *charism*. This is explained in Micah 3:8 “As for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might to declare to Jacob its transgression and to Israel his sins”.

In the history of Israel certain important leaders are filled with the spirit. Moses received this spirit. After him, the 70 elders were given this spirit (Num 11:17-25). During the time of the Judges, the spirit is given to these judges as and when it was needed (e.g. Gideon- Jud 6:34). At the anointing, the kings receive this spirit (E.g. David- “the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day onward”- (1 Sam 16:13).

The spirit gives righteousness and justice. It is the spirit, which sanctifies the people. This purification is realized by judging the

people or by punishing the people for their sins. Isaiah has a similar idea; “When the Lord will have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion...by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning (Is 4:3f).

In the OT theology of the Spirit, the fullness of spirit is associated with the Messianic Age. In that age the Messiah himself will be filled with the spirit as well as the people.

About the fullness of the spirit in the Messiah, Isaiah says:

“And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him... and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord” (Is 11:2-3). Then the prophet speaks about the various virtues of the Messiah like wisdom, understanding, counsel etc. All these are the gifts of the spirit.

The fullness of the spirit in the Messiah has its consequence in the life of the people and animals and every living being in the land. The final result is that “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters over the sea” (Is 11:9)

In the Messianic Age every individual will be filled with the spirit.

This is what Ezekiel tells us “... I will put my spirit within you, and cause you walk in my statutes....” (Ezek 36:26ff). In Ezekiel the spirit is associated with the eschatological uprising of the people. Life will be imparted to the dead bones with the blowing of the spirit upon them (Ezek 37:1ff). The reception of the spirit and consequent reception of life in the end-times is a frequently repeated theme in the prophets (Ezek 37:14; Is 44:3-4). One of the very clear

prophecy which associates the end time with the spirit and the reception of new life is in Joel 2:28-29.

1.3.1 The *ruah* in the rabbinic writings

In the period of the Rabbis the concept of *ruah* received a development and this is reflected in the so-called rabbinic literature and in the apocalyptic writings of this time. *Ruah* is connected with their angelology. Thus they speak of the angels as the good spirits. They rule over the powers of nature. Thus there are the spirits of wind, spirit of rain, spirit of snow etc. They speak also of evil spirits. They are the fallen angels. These were driven away from heaven. These evil spirits have an important place in Jewish religious practices. Since they can harm human beings, they have to be warded off. They also are a source of temptation to man since they know the inner inclinations of man. The souls of the dead also are feared in Jewish religion.²¹

There is also another idea of spirits, which are like the human soul. Developed from the second account of creation in which the creation of man is described as having two elements, the earth and the *ruah* of God this belief supposes the existence of so many spirits stored up in heaven. These will be combined with the bodies formed in the womb of women. The rabbis speak also of the Spirit of God. It is the power through which God operates. It is mainly in prophets that the spirit works. The spirit of truth and the spirit of lie influence man. The man under the influence of these spirits can be externally recognized. His face may be shining like flames; his hair may become stiff and so on. All good actions of man are attributed to the spirit of God, some times also called the Holy Spirit. In this regard the scripture also is to be considered. The scripture is the work of man under the

spirit of prophecy²². Only the bible and nothing else is written thus under the influence of the prophetic spirit. The Bible, especially, the Torah is not only the product of the spirit but also the giver of the spirit in the sense that if one studies the Torah with the intention of fulfilling it he receives the gift of the spirit. But they also speak of certain bodily and psychic conditions for the reception of the gift of the spirit like health of the body and a mind, which has to be joyful. Sin causes the loss of the spirit. Associations with unclean places or places of sin causes the loss of the spirit. Undue sorrow is an enemy of the spirit. It is said that the Holy Spirit receded from Jacob because he was overcome by sorrow at the death of Joseph. The Rabbis also speak of the spirit in connection with the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah will be a man powerful in the spirit. The same way the people will receive a new gift of the spirit in the Messianic Age.

Though rabbinic literature never speaks of a divine person comparable to the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, there is a tendency to personify the spirit. Some times the spirit is presented as speaking to God or as crying or as exhorting people. These are the cases where the spirit is mentioned in the scriptures. The scripture quotations are reinterpreted in the personification of the spirit in such a way that the spirit is conversing with God. Therefore this personification should not be compared to the hypostatizing in Christianity. The same way there is no place in the rabbinic writings where the spirit is presented as standing before God in heaven and speaking to him.

1.3.2 Spirit in Qumran Documents

Among the monks of Qumran there was the belief in the spirit. In this regard the "Manual of Discipline" is particularly important. The

monks speak about two types of spirits. There is the spirit of truth, which is associated with knowledge, light etc. This spirit is put in opposition to the spirit of error and is associated with evil, darkness etc. Both have an irresistible influence on man, one leading on one direction and the other leading man on the other direction. Yet the Qumran idea of the opposite spirits do not go to the extent of making them two ultimate principles or as having origin from two opposite principles. About the spirits, the Manual of Disciplines read: "He (God) created man to have dominion over the world and **made for him two spirits**, that he might walk by them until the appointed time of his (God's) visitation; they are the spirits of truth and of error"²³. It is clear that there is no strict dualism here; because the spirits are neither eternally existing principles nor are their functions totally independent. They originate from God, because it is God who created them. It is said that God made for man two spirits. God also controls their functions, because he made them for man. This idea of the spirit is perhaps the last stage of the development of OT theology of the spirit.

1.3.3 Conclusion to OT views on the Spirit

From what we have said above we can come to the following conclusions. Spirit in the OT is the dynamic force with which God carries out his works. It is not clear whether the spirit is distinct from God or only an aspect of God's power. The spirit functions mostly in the realm of the humans than in the non-human cosmos. Men in general do not come under the influence of the spirit; rather it is the chosen people who are the direct object of the spirit's work. Working in the chosen people God directs and shapes the history of the chosen people. The very prominent functions of the spirit are the inspiration

of the sacred scripture and the prophets. The aim of the spirit is that he leads the chosen people to the Messianic Age where everybody will receive the fullness of the spirit.

1.4 The monotheism of the OT

The OT theology is strictly monotheistic. At the same time this belief should not be examined from a discursive or speculative thought because the Bible does not exhibit any such philosophical exercises. But it is a proved fact that there was no questioning of the existence of God in the ancient Near East.

Thus the Israelites were sure of the existence of God. But the unicity of God is not so clear an idea in OT as the faith in the existence of God. There is no clear denial of the existence of gods other than the God of Israel before the time of Deutero-Isaiah. There is in Deuteronomy 32:39 a passage where monotheism is given an emphasis similar to that given in Deutero-Isaiah (44:1-9). Some scholars date this passage (the song of Moses) to an earlier date. If so this is the first clear denial of the existence of gods other than Yahweh.

Therefore we have to start our enquiry in another way. The question to be asked about the monotheism of OT is this. Is there any Yahweh other than the Yahweh of Israel? The answer will be an emphatic denial. When there may be any number of Gods or *elohim*, Israelites believed that there is only one Yahweh. Yahweh is not any *elohim*. He is *elohim* in a way in which no other being is. The fact that there is only one Yahweh is proved first of all from the name which is

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not applied to any other god in the ancient Near East. It is also proved that the relationship that existed between Yahweh and his people was unparalleled by any other people of the ancient Near East. This relation is expressed in terms of the covenant. This very special and intimate relationship between Yahweh and Israel gives rise to the striking demand that Israel will have no other god. This exclusion of other gods expresses not only the fact that Israel is a peculiar possession of Yahweh, it also means that every human being and nature as a whole exist under God's domain. He alone creates and he alone directs the operations of the world.

Now is there any Trinitarian idea of God in the OT? Since Trinitarian revelation is the special contribution of the NT, there is no point in searching for a Trinitarian doctrine in the OT. Yet there are ideas of God in the OT, which may be interpreted, as leading to a Trinitarian faith. What we have seen so far are aspects of the OT idea of God, which are not Trinitarian as such, but are ways leading to the full revelation of the Trinity in the NT. In fact the common trend among the early Fathers of the church was to see the whole Bible- both NT and OT-as a unity and to look for any doctrine in the whole Bible. For example, St. Theophilus of Antioch interprets the three days of creation before the creation of the luminaries as types of the Trinity²⁴. We have to situate any allusions to O.T Trinitarian ideas in this background. For the Israelites the main concern was the Universality of Yahweh and the preservation of Yahweh's image untarnished by idolatry and polytheism. Though there is anthropomorphism in the O.T, Yahweh is also described as supremely different from all human conceptions.

1.5 OT categories of God's Presence

The unique and universal God, Yahweh is said to communicate with the world of men in a very special way on certain occasions. This is in addition to the general communication with the world. This special communication is through his presence. The OT uses many categories to speak about the special presence of God in the world. The angel, the word, the spirit etc are such categories. These categories imply the identity and difference between these categories of divine presence and God himself. Yet it is not clear how these different categories are related to each other. In addition to these we have certain texts where the number 3 is related to the presence of God. Let us examine some of these cases.

1.5.1 The Presence of God in Genesis 18: 1-16

Of the many examples of God's presence described in the OT, Gen. 18:1-16 is a very important text. Here singular and plural are used intermittently of God as well as the number three also is used to speak about the number of persons who appear before Abraham who received the vision of God in this passage. The change from plural to singular and then from singular to plural may be shown in the following way.

In 18:1 it is the **Lord** who appeared to Abraham. So naturally the following verses that describe the details of this appearance should refer to this Lord.

But in 18:2 we are told that when Abraham lifted up his eyes he saw three men in front of him.

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In 18: 3 Abraham speaks to them. In this addressing Abraham uses the singular “My Lord, if I have found favour....”

In 18:6 there is reply from the three men to the request of Abraham. There the plural is used “They said ‘Do as you have said’...”

In 18:8 also the plural appears: “Abraham sets the food, which he had prepared before them” (not before him).

In 18:9 also the plural is continued, “They said ‘where is Sarah your wife?’...”

In 18:10, the plural changes into the singular “Lord”. More over in the words of the Lord singular is continued, “I will surely return to you”.

In 18:13 the singular is continued: “The Lord said to Abraham”

In 18:14 the singular is continued: “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

Then the Lord is identified as ‘I’. “At the appointed time I will return to you”

In 18:15 the singular is continued: “He said...”

In 18:16 the whole scene is changed and the situation in 18:2 is regained. Here it is the plural and men (not Lord): “Then the men set out from there and they looked toward Sodom...”.

How to understand this epiphany of God?

The most striking feature of this epiphany is that it is given in a very ordinary language. Usually epiphanies are described in extraordinary style with the accompaniment of signs in nature. For example a theophany in Exodus is narrated as follows:

“On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightning, and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled” (Ex 19:16). The first epiphany to Moses also is given in a style that is greatly distinguished in its mention of fire and the command to Moses to put away his sandals” (Ex 3:2)

But here God appears in human form as three men. There is no element of wonder and amazement here. More over the three men eat what Abraham offers.

Secondly, there is identification of the three men with the Lord. When they are speaking in the first person, the first person singular is used; but when the narrator speaks about them the third person plural is used.

The author is making use of a powerful style to speak about the loving care of God and dealings with Abraham. God comes to him in such a human form and promises him a child. The origin of Israel is here, in God’s very loving and kind communion with man. The intention of the author is to warn the Israelites against their infidelity. When they go to idolatry and sinful living they are offending a God who made himself a guest of Abraham to the extent of eating the meal offered by him. This makes Abraham additionally bound to obey God.

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“No, for I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice” (Gen. 18:19).

Therefore this narrative cannot be taken to mean a revelation of the tri-unity of God. Yet there can be the question “why the number 3”? Three is a perfect number according to the OT tradition. Therefore if God’s presence is to be presented by a plurality of individuals then “three” is the most possible and natural number to be used. There is also another reason for choosing 3 as the number of the individuals. It is the ideal number for presenting a person who communicates something important. A person should take two witnesses with him (Mt. 18:15). The minimum number of witnesses is two according to OT (Deut 19:15). The final conclusion is that these texts do not help us to say anything about the Trinitarian doctrine in the OT.

1.6. First Person Plural in God’s Conversation.

There are some passages in the OT where God uses the first person plural to speak of himself. The following are such passages.

1. Gen 1:26: “Let **us** make man after **our** image, after **our** likeness”
2. Gen 3:22: “The man has now become like **one of us**, knowing good and evil”
3. Gen 11:7: “Come, let **us** go down, and there confuse their language”
4. Is 6:8: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for **us**”?

How to interpret these “us” and “our” in these texts? In the early Church these texts were interpreted as pointers to the Trinitarian doctrine in the OT. But today the general tendency is to reject such an interpretation.

First of all the “us” and “our” are only indefinite plural. Therefore there is no guarantee that they mean three. Secondly, these plural forms are understood as plural of majesty. But in Hebrew there is nothing called plural of majesty. Moreover 3:22 cannot be interpreted like that because here it is “one of us” which can only mean one of the many of us.

Today this plural is understood as referring to the heavenly court of angels. God is speaking to the host of angels. Moreover in OT the phrase *Yahweh Sabaoth* (Lord of hosts) is a very frequent nomenclature for God (1 Sam 1:3, 14; 4:4; 15:2; 17:45; 2 Sam 5:10 etc. The phrase means God is king of heaven with a host of angelic army.

1.7 Conclusion to OT views on Trinity

In the O.T there is no clear teaching about the Trinity. The plural ‘us’ and ‘we’ in God’s self address are totally sterile as expressions of tri-unity of God. The story of the three men who appeared to Abraham only means the friend-to-friend communication between God and Abraham and has nothing to do with the persons in the Godhead. But the angel, Word, Wisdom and Spirit as categories of speaking about God and his action in the world are important from a Trinitarian consideration. They are important not because they express the Trinity, but because they could be taken as preparations for the Trinitarian revelation which came to a fullness in the coming of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER - 2

TRINITY IN THE NT

Our consideration of the Trinitarian ideas of the New Testament has to begin, as we did in the case of the Old Testament, with an examination of each person of the trinity as reflected and elaborated in the pages of the NT. We do not have a well-defined Trinitarian idea of God in the NT, an idea comparable to the doctrines developed through the councils, especially the Trinitarian councils of the first four centuries of the history of the Church. At the same time all that we believe about the trinity are well founded on the teachings of the NT. Therefore caution and special effort are needed to bring to light the Trinitarian teachings of the NT. This is what we are attempting in this chapter of the book.

2.1 God as Father in the NT

The God of the NT is Father to the people and in a very special way Father to Jesus Christ. The fatherhood of God is a clear teaching of the NT. In this teaching we may find continuation from the OT as well as improvement and new insights. This complicated issue of the fatherhood of God in the NT may be explained as follows.

2.1.1 Continuation from the O.T

The NT teaching about the fatherhood of God is a continuation from the tradition in the OT. Jesus takes up this tradition in his sayings about God. This is to be understood against the Jewish social background in which fatherhood is not merely related to the generation of the children but as a social institution. The same way the fatherhood of God is primarily applied to the chosen people i.e the people of the kingdom. There, both those who are the legal Jews and those who have gone astray are included in the fatherhood of God. The story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11) and the parable of the two sons (Mt 21:28) are examples of the common fatherhood of God to the obedient and non-obedient Israelites.

2.1.2. The Universal Fatherhood of God

In addition to the fatherhood of God in relation to the chosen people, there is a universal fatherhood of God. The Sermon on the Mount is an example. Here man as such stands in a very special way under the fatherly care of God. The sun, which God sends, shines on the just and the unjust (Mt 5:45). Man is better provided for than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field (Mt 6:26). Thus the fatherhood of God extends over all human beings-both Israelite and pagan.

Yet this fatherhood is to be distinguished from the stoic teaching on divine fatherhood²⁵. The stoic idea is basically a materialistic idea, which considers God as father because of his universal providence over the world. In that consideration there is no clear distinction between humans the thinking beings and other subhuman beings, which are not endowed with that power. But in Jesus' teaching there is a clear

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distinction. God provides for all creatures, but this providence is not the main reason, which qualifies God to be the father. Only man stands in a father-son relationship with God. The cosmos as such has no such a status.

The fatherhood of God is essentially related to the kingdom Of God. Every man stands under this fatherly relationship with God in so far as he is related to the kingdom. God is father in so far as he establishes his kingdom among the people and invites every one to enter into this kingdom. Man follows this invitation to the kingdom. This is clear from the gospels.

In Mt. 5:9 it is said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God". "Peacemakers" means those who attempt to establish the kingdom of God.

In Mt 5:44 this idea is continued "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those you persecute you, so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven". This means the love that is demanded of the kingdom is a requirement for becoming the sons of God. That is why Jesus reiterates his teaching that "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well". This association of kingdom with fatherhood of God is properly to be understood. The kingdom is not related to territorial boundaries or to nationality or race. This fatherhood is beyond the boundary of nationality or racial determinations. It is extended to all people of all nationalities who are generous enough to accept the kingdom brought by Jesus. In John it is very clear (1:12). "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become the children of God". No restriction on the basis of territory, race, nationality etc is made. In that

sense it is universal. In the *Our Father* Jesus extends the Fatherhood of God to all men; yet it is linked with the kingdom. The first and second petitions in this prayer are “Holy be your name” and “your kingdom come” (Mt 6:9-10). Relation with the kingdom is the only restriction placed on the understanding of God’s fatherhood.

2.1.3. Jesus’ unique Relationship with the Father

Though the fatherhood of God extends to all men who are related to the kingdom, there is uniqueness in Jesus’ relation to this Father. Jesus addresses God as Father and makes him known as Father to the people. This is a tradition, which he inherited from his Jewish background. But Jesus gave this tradition a new intensity and meaning. To count the instances of Jesus’ address of God in all the gospels together, “God is designated father 170 times by Jesus and never invoked by another name in Jesus’ prayers”²⁶. There is something decidedly new in Jesus’ message of God as father. This newness is in his personal relation to the Father. “On the lips of Jesus ‘Father’ becomes a proper name for God. It thus ceased to be simply one designation among others. It embraces every feature in the understanding of God which comes to light in the message of Jesus”²⁷

In his personal address to God he exhibits a very intimate relationship. The term he uses for addressing God is ‘*Abba*’ (Mk 14:36). The context is the agony of Jesus in the garden of Olives. It is a time when he feels totally rejected and all human assurance and strength appear broken down. In such a situation Jesus is seen relating to the Father in a very intimate and personal way. This expression is the one Jesus used habitually to address his father. *Abba* is a familial term used by the child in tenderly calling its father sitting on the lap of the father.

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Nowhere in the OT or in other Jewish writings we see this word used to express any human being's relation with God. Speaking about this word and its use by Jesus, Kittel says:

“New is the use of this word, taken from the daily world of the child, in relation to God. This is too familial to the Jewish taste. For Jesus it meant the most simple and intimate expression of God's relation to man, and the renouncing of all religious solemnity. Hence ‘Abba’ becomes the basic formula of Jesus’ revelation and of the profession of the community”²⁸

This unique relationship of Jesus and the use of the familial term to address God impressed on his disciples that they also started using this term in speaking about intimate God experience (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15).

This exclusive relation between Jesus and God is clear also from Jesus' qualification of God as ‘my father’ and ‘your father’. Jesus never uses the phrase ‘our father’ to include the people and himself in the fatherly relation of God. When he wants to speak of himself and others in relation to God he says “my father and your father and never ‘our father’ (Jn 20:17). The Lord's Prayer which begins with ‘Our Father’ does not include Jesus in the ‘our’. This is taught to the disciples as a group and therefore the plural is used. He introduces the prayer by saying “when you pray” and not when we pray.

Further this exclusive relationship of Jesus with his father is emphasized in many other texts where he explains how a person is related to God. In Mt 11:27 we read: “no one knows the Son except

the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal it”.

It shows that there is a natural father-son relationship between Jesus and the Father, which is exclusive, not shared with other people. It consists in the perfect communion, which belongs to Jesus only. At the same time this sonship of Jesus is such that in some measure known to him alone and depending on his good will alone, it can be shared with others if he chooses to do that, without losing the uniqueness of his relationship with the Father as the only natural Son.

The really new dimension in God's fatherhood- a dimension that is never known to the Jewish people – is expressed here. This is the newness of the NT revelation about the Fatherhood of God. God is father in a very unique and intimate way, in a natural way, in a way surpassing all other relationships to Jesus. Hence the early church recognized that in the first place God's fatherhood is in relation to Jesus Christ. For them God is “the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Eph 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3).

The sonship of the faithful is not on the same level or of the same measure as that of Jesus. It is entirely dependent on his sonship. God is our father because we share in Jesus' sonship. That precisely is the idea John wants to convey when he says, “To every one who receives him, who believes in his name he gives authority to be the sons of God” (Jn 1:12).

But this sonship of the faithful is not the same as the sonship of the other people, the non-believers. It is more intense and intimate. It is so familial that we are also able to call God '*Abba*', father in the

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power of the Spirit that indwells us (Gal 4:6). Our sonship is not the general sonship of the non-believers, or of the same degree as the sonship of Jesus. It is a mediated sonship, a sonship that results from our integration and union with the One and Only Son of God, Jesus Christ.

A survey of the gospel data about our sonship with God confirms the idea that Jesus' sonship is exclusive and unique and has no parallel. We have no access to the father except through Jesus Christ (Mt 11:27; John 14:6).

We are sons of God in so far as we are related to Jesus Christ. As we said above, this sonship of the faithful is more intense and intimate than the sonship of human beings to God conceived in other religions. There is something uniquely new in this idea of sonship. This sonship is not based on God being our father directly, but his being father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom we are incorporated through faith.

The distinction between the sonship of Jesus and our own sonship is clear from certain texts in the NT where the context makes us expect Jesus say 'our' Father, but he uses only 'my' father instead.

In Mt. 7:21 Jesus says "Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord shall enter the Kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven" (cf also Mt. 12: 5)

In the parable of the merciless Stewart, Jesus says after speaking about his punishment "so also my heavenly father will do to everyone of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart" (Mt. 18:35).

The same way, highlighting the importance of common prayer Jesus says, “If two of you agree on anything they ask it will be done for them by my father in heaven” (Mt 18:19)

The stability of anything depends on its being done by God and speaking about it Jesus says, “Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be routed out” (Mt 15:13). Any special intelligence that knows God and his place in the world comes from God.

“Flesh and blood have not revealed this to you but my father who is in heaven” (Mt 16:17). Eschatology and the salvation of man is planned and realized by God “to sit at my right hand and at left is not mine to grant but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my father” (Mt 20:23). Jesus invites people to this eschatological glory in the words, “Come blessed of my Father” (Mt 25:34).

This unique relationship between God and Jesus is even more emphatic in St. John “My father gives you the true bread from heaven” (John 6:32) “In my father’s house, there are many rooms” (John 14:2). “My father will love him and we shall come to him” (Jn 14:23). “You shall not make my father’s house a house of trade” (Jn 2:16). “In this my father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples” (Jn 15:8).

2.1.4 Conclusion to the NT views on God as Father

God’s fatherhood is very clear in the NT. God is father to all humans just because they are humans and in this sense God provides for man much more than the non-human world. This fatherhood is not like the stoic fatherhood, which is too materialistic and is based on creation and providence.

God is in a more special way father of the chosen people. This fatherhood is common to both the law-abiding children as well as the law-breaking sinners. This fatherhood also receives a new dimension in the NT where it is related to the kingdom of God. This relationship based on acceptance of the Kingdom goes beyond the boundaries of national, racial and territorial identity. This relationship is a mediated sonship, because the NT sees only one person who is naturally the Son of God. All other sonship is evolved from this one. A man becomes a son of God in so far as he is related to Jesus, the true Son of God.

2.2 Son in the NT

This research into the NT idea of the son is one that belongs to Christology. Therefore we cannot go into the details of it. We only give a general idea of the concept here. Son is a very commonly used appellation for Jesus in the NT. We will see some of them.

Pais Theou – Servant of God (Child of God)

This phrase is used 5 times for Jesus in the NT (Mt. 12:18; Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30) Whether Pais means servant or Child is not certain in all texts. But in Acts the meaning is confirmed to be servant. In 4:25 David is called God's Pais. This is a reference to the OT custom of calling David God's servant. In OT David is God's servant and never he is God's child. So in the case of Jesus also the title means servant.

However in the NT Pais is not restricted to Jesus. In LK 1:554, it is used for Israel. It is used for David in LK 1:69. The use to Israel as a whole and to David in particular is in agreement with the

tradition of the OT where from the time of Deuteronomy and Isaiah, Israel and David are God's servants.

But in the NT the Christian church or community is never called Pais. But individually Paul uses this term for himself. (Gal 1:15). This use in Paul is in accordance with the use of the term in Is 49:1

***Houios tou anthropou* – Son of man**

Jesus is also called son of man. In Jesus' own words, he is the son of man. But this phrase is used to show his authority or to show that he has to tread the path of suffering. In some places son of man is related to eschatology. The son of man is a literal translation of the Aramaic *bar nasa*. The Hebrew equivalent would be *ben adam*. In the GK translation it is given with the definite article as HO HUIOS *tou anthropou*....(The son of the man). This is continued in the gospels except in John. In Jn 5:27 for the first time we see the use of the phrase without article. There it is given as *Houios tou anthropou*.

The article points to the theology of the evangelists. They attached great importance to this title. There are certain striking peculiarities in the use of this phrase. It is in the gospels that the phrase occurs more frequently than anywhere else. There also exclusively Jesus, referring to himself, uses the phrase. No disciple or the evangelists themselves use this phrase.

The same way, there is the striking absence of the phrase in the epistles, even in those written in the first half of the first century.

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The use of the phrase in the synoptics can be classified under six heads.

1. The phrase occurs in contexts where Jesus identifies himself with his fellow human beings, especially with the poor and down trodden. (Mt 8:20; Lk 9:58; Lk 7:34)
2. In a second group of texts the phrase 'son of man' occurs in contexts speaking about the powers of Jesus above the level of ordinary men. This group stands in diametrical contrast with the former ones (Mk 2:16- in a context where it is questioned that man can forgive sins Jesus asserts his power and the phrase used is 'son of man'). In Mt 12:8 Jesus claims to be having power over Sabbath. There also the little he uses is 'son of man'.
3. The third group of texts relates son of man with the messianic mission of Jesus. Thus Jesus is the sower of the word- Mt 13:37. Jesus goes after the lost and saves them (Lk 19:10)
4. In a fourth group of texts the son of man is related to the supreme value of the person of Jesus for whom the follower should be able to suffer tortures, persecution etc. (Lk 6:22; Mt 5:11; Mt 16:13; negatively Mt 12:32; Lk 12:10)
5. In a fifth group of texts the phrase 'son of man' occurs in contexts where Jesus, suffering and death are mentioned. These are more numerous than the above four groups. (Mt 12:40; 17:12; 22; 20:18; Mk 9:31).
6. In a sixth group of texts son of man is related to eschatology. This group also is very large. This is a reference to the final glory of Jesus (Mt 10:23; 13:41; 16:28; Lk 9:27).

Son of God

It is a title, which is frequently applied to Jesus in the N.T. The frequency is as follows:

Synoptic – 31; John – 23; Epistles – 42; Acts – 3 and Revelation – 1

Modern scholars think that the title Son of God applied to Jesus comes from the Greek tradition. In the Greek world this phrase is used for demigods, kings, priests etc. Son of God has no Jewish background because among the Jews this phrase is never used for the Messiah. The use of the title in NT does not reflect also the tradition in the pagan world, though the title may be influenced by the pagan use. It is a term by which the NT authors wanted to highlight the unique character of Jesus. This term occurs mostly in the post resurrection scenes. It means Jesus stands in a uniquely close position with God, which is not shared by other humans. In this regard the “I am” sayings of Jesus deserves special consideration. It is the Gospel of John, which gives so many instances of Jesus using this phrase in his discourses, though the other gospels also are not totally silent about it. In John there are 7 solemn “I am” sayings and all these refer to Jesus’ unique relationship with the God of the OT. When we compare these sayings with Is 43:25 which reads, “I, I am he, who blots out your transgressions for my own sake and who will not hold your sins in remembrance any longer” we understand that “As God’s representative, the Son of man assumes the attributes of *elohim*...”²⁹

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2.2.2 Son of man and Son of God:

These two titles mean the same. Son of man is the title by which Jesus refers to his unique position with man and God, the title by which Jesus tells us that he is at the same time closely related God and man. Thus the unique nature of Jesus is brought out by this phrase in the words of Jesus. Son of God is the phrase used by the church to refer to the same reality, the unique character of Jesus.

2.3 The Spirit in the N.T

Unlike the OT where the spirit is a very rarely mentioned reality except in the prophetic literature, the NT is full of the teachings about the spirit. Each NT author has his own contribution to the theology of the spirit. Therefore we take each section of the NT in our enquiry into the theology of the spirit.

2.3.1 The spirit in the Synoptics

The synoptic idea of the spirit is a development directly from the OT. In the OT spirit is the agent through whom God works the salvation of his people. The term *pneuma* stands for the power at work in man. It stands against the unclean spirit (*pneuma*) There are altogether 80 occurrences of the term *pneuma* in the synoptics. Of these 33 refer to the unclean spirit, twelve instances refer to the spirit (the life element) in man. The other 35 instances refer to the Holy Spirit of God. Of the three synoptics, Luke is the one who makes frequent use of the term. In Luke alone *pneuma* occurs 38 times. (H. Spirit, Human spirit and unclean spirit taken together)

In the synoptics it is difficult to say anything about the nature of the Holy Spirit. Except in the baptismal formula (Mt 28:19) it is not clear whether the Holy Spirit is a person or a power of God.

The functions of the Spirit according to the synoptics are the following

1. Spirit is the author of the scriptures (Mk 12:36, cf also Acts LK. 4:25)
2. The Messiah is born under the influence of the Spirit (Mt 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35)
3. The gift of the spirit is accompanied by the prophetic gift (Lk 1:41; 1:61; 2:25).
4. Jesus' public life is marked with a powerful descend of the Spirit upon him (Mk 1:9 ff)
5. Jesus is initiated into the Messianic mission through the Spirit. (Lk 4:18).
6. In a personal way as his special prerogative Jesus possesses the Spirit.

We have the expression like Jesus is 'full of the Spirit (Lk 4:1)

Jesus is directed by the Spirit (Lk 4:14).

Jesus claims the fullness in him (Lk 4:18).

Jesus exults in the Spirit (Lk 10:21).

Jesus' miracles reveal the Spirit (Mt 12:28).

Jesus' preaching to the poor reveals it (Lk 4:18).

7. The Spirit is promised to those who follow Jesus (Mk 1:8; Mt 3:11; 10:20).

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In short, the synoptics give us the following idea about the Spirit. Jesus' advent is connected with the dawn of the age of the Spirit. Jesus is full of the Spirit. He works and preaches in the power of the Spirit. Yet there is a vast difference in the idea of the Spirit between the synoptics and Acts.

Holy Spirit in Acts

The Holy Spirit is revealed in the book of Acts in the charismatic aspect; i.e. the work of the spirit in the Church. Jesus pours out the fullness of the Spirit into the Church and forms the Church into a Messianic people. The Pentecost is the fulfillment of the promises of the Spirit. This Spirit is the eschatological gift. It is also related to the universality of salvation.

Even in the rabbinic literatures the Sinaitic event is understood as open to all peoples. "All the people perceived the thundering..." (Ex 20:18) is interpreted in a multinational way. They say that the difference is this. The word was given to all; but only the Israelites accepted it; others rejected it. This division is now broken. The word is given to all nations.

2.3.2 The effects of the Spirit

It is primarily to reveal God's light and strength in the community. Hence the emphasis lies on the Charisma (the gift of the spirit in persons) by which the light and strength of the Spirit is revealed. This may consist in miracles (e.g. Acts 8:39) such as the lifting up of Philip. It consists mainly in the guidance and strengthening of the young church to give witness to Jesus Christ. Therefore the Spirit inspires the Apostles to speak (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 10:10; 11:5; 10:19 etc).

The deacons also get the gift of the Spirit. The gift means his power and strength to speak.(6:10). The entire Church is promised the Spirit and all Christians actually receive it. It also includes the power to work miracles. Stephen even at the moment of his death sees Jesus in his glory (7.55). The promise of the Spirit is without discrimination of Jew or pagan. In the very serious decisions of the Church, she is conscious that it is the Spirit, which guides her. This is the lesson we know from the Council of Jerusalem. (15:28).

2.3.2 The Holy Spirit in St. Paul

For Paul the Spirit is the eschatological gift of the Father. It is also the presence of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ in the Church. The Spirit is the *pneuma* of final fulfillment. He says “we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait for the adoption as sons” (Rom 8:23). Thus Spirit is also the guide of the Church. The special contribution of St. Paul with regard to the theology of the spirit may be spelled out as follows.

(1) The Problem of Terminology

The word *Pneuma* appears 123 times in the genuine letters of Paul. Of these the first letter to the Corinthians alone accounts for 41 occurrences of the term. All the epistles known after Paul i.e. the 14 letters together, show a total of 163 occurrences. Over and above the use of the noun *Pneuma*, Paul uses the adjective *Pneumatikos* (= Spiritual) 18 times in the genuine letters. Here also I Corinthians account for 14 uses of the adjective. Therefore this letter (I Cor.) may justly be called the letter about the Spirit.

The following are the ideas we get about the Spirit in Pauline usage of the term.

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The 'Spirit' is used in a variety of senses. The word is used in the sense of the principle of different evil influences in man. This use is in continuation with the use in rabbinic literature. Thus we read in Eph 2:2, "The spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience".

. This spirit is explained as "the trespassing and sinning spirit". It is further called the "course of this world" and the prince of the power of the air". (Eph 2:2)

So it is clear that 'spirit' in this use means the evil forces, which influence man to follow their course.

The same sense is detectable in 1 Tim 4:1

2. In a second sense 'spirit' appears as the inner principle in man.

In 1 Cor 2:11 we read, "Who knows the thought of man except the spirit of the man". The reference is to the inner principle of man, which knows what others cannot know of a man.

3. A third meaning of the word is in the sense of the charismatic gifts"(1Cor 14:1, 32). 1 Thess 5:19 "Do not extinguish the Spirit". It means the inner principle of divine life in man

Thus we have phrases like

"The spirit of faith" (2 Cor 4:13)

"Spirit of the adoption of sons" (Rom 8:15).

Though it is difficult to determine the exact meaning of the word *pneuma* in Paul, and in spite of the fact that he uses it in a

variety of meanings as shown above, there is a quite clear use of the term in contexts of the teaching about the Holy Spirit in Paul. Paul's pneumatology can be summarized as follows:

2.3.2.1 The Holy Spirit is the principle of faith.

We can see a change from Acts to St. Paul in the teaching about the Spirit. In Acts the stress is on the preaching of the gospel. The spirit is the principle of preaching (2:2). But in Paul, the stress is on the inner aspect of preaching, the effect of preaching and the fruit of it.

For Example, in I Thes 1:5, Paul says, "Our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in full conviction". It is clear that the preaching in mere words is contrasted with preaching in the Holy Spirit. So the spirit is not to be seen in preaching as such but in the effect of the preaching. In 1Thes 1:6 Paul continues this idea "you received the word in much affliction with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit". Here also the Spirit is associated not with the preaching as such but with the reception of the preaching.

In this connection we can understand his use of the phrase "the Spirit of faith" in 2Cor 4:13. This idea is further explained in Eph 3:14,19. "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith".

2.3.2.2 Holy Spirit is the Principle of New Life

Another emphasis of Paul associates the Spirit with New Life in Christ. "This new life is received at baptism. Rom 6:3-4 is a very clear text in which Paul associates new life with baptism. New life is the end envisaged in the sacrament of baptism. This shows also the importance he attaches to baptism over against imposition of hands by which the Spirit of charismatic gifts is received.

The reality of the Spirit belongs to the realm of the Risen Lord. The entire Christian life derives from this realm. It is from the realm of the Risen Lord that we receive all the strength needed for a true Christian life. In fact Jesus himself received the Newness of existence by his resurrection. In Romans 1:4 f Paul says about Jesus,

"He was designed Son of God in power according to the spirit of Holiness by his resurrection from the dead"

Moreover in 2 Cor 3:17 Paul identifies the resurrected Lord with the Spirit. The just people are renewed in the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 6:11).

According to Paul, the greatest effect of the reception of the spirit is the divine sonship. A man becomes, so to say, the son of God, by the power of the Spirit. (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:9-16); A man confesses Jesus as the Son of God only in the power of Spirit (1 Cor 12:3)

2.3.2.3 Spirit is the guarantee of unity among Christians

The unity among Christians is a unity in diversity. The Spirit gives diverse gifts to the faithful. These gifts are all different from each other. The diversity of gifts is well explicated in 1 Cor 12:4 ff. Paul speaking about the gifts of the spirit makes clear two very important ideas. First of all there is diversity of gifts. It is the first truth about it. Secondly there is the stress on the oneness of the Spirit, which gives these diverse gifts.

“There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Cor 12:4).

This second idea is still more clearly explained in 12:12 where he says that all these diverse gifts nourish one and the same body, which is the Church. So the gifts are given with a goal, that they nourish the body; if not to nourish the body, then these gifts have no value. Paul further explicates this idea in Eph 4:4f, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call”.

2.3.2.4 The spirit is associated with Eschatology

The Spirit is the pledge for the eschatological goal to which we are called (Eph 1:14). This hope becomes a reality already in the lives of the Christians because they experience the abundant love of God in their lives through the power of the Spirit. (Eph 1:14; Rom 5:5).

Because of the experience of the spirit already in the life of the faithful, the final transformation of all the faithful into the spiritual body is hoped for.

2.3.2.5 The spirit is a distinct Divine Person

First we will see whether Paul understands the Spirit as a person. Then we will see whether the spirit is divine. In describing the Spirit Paul uses verbs like give, witness, help, desire, speak openly, distribute gifts etc.

Give, witness	-	Rom 8:16
Help	-	Rom 8:26
Intercede	-	Rom 8:26
Speak openly	-	1 Tim 4:1
Distribute gifts	-	1 Cor 12:4 ff
Search the depth of God	-	1 Cor 2:10

These are functions, which only a person can do. Therefore it is clear that Paul conceives the Spirit as a person.

Further the biggest prerogative of a faithful is that the Spirit dwells in him making him a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). This indwelling is so intimate and intense that the believer loses to be himself but becomes the possession of the Spirit. In a very strong language Paul teaches,

“I will live in them and move among them and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor 6:16).

Further he says in 1 Cor 6:19, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body”.

If the relationship between the faithful and Holy Spirit is so intense as to make the faithful the temple and possession of the Spirit, then that Spirit cannot but be a person; because these are personal actions.

Spirit is a distinct person

Now we enquire about the distinctness of the Spirit. Is he distinct from the Father and Son? This question can be answered only from a consideration of the mission of the Spirit. The one who is given the mission and the one who gives the mission cannot be the same. From this consideration we can establish the distinction between the Father who gives the mission and the Spirit who receives it. Gal 4:4f is an important text in this regard.

“And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying “Abba! Father”.

Two things become clear in this text.

1. There is a God who sends the Spirit
2. There is a Spirit who is sent into the faithful

The *sender* is clearly distinguished from the *sent*. Among those *sent* Paul speaks of the Son who gives us adoption as sons of God and the Spirit who makes us call God as *Abba*. Each is distinguished from the other from the difference in their mission- one is sent (the Son) for the faithful to become sons of God. Another is sent (Spirit) so that those who have already been adopted as sons feel free to call God *Abba*, Father

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3. There is another clear proof for the distinction of the Spirit from Father and Son:

In 2Cor 13:14(13) Paul ends the letter with a blessing and there he says:

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all”.

Here three persons are named, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and each is distinguished with clear enumeration. So they have to be three distinct persons.

4. Further in 1 Cor 12:4-6 Paul makes a distinction between the three persons from the distinction in their functions.

Gifts are related to the Spirit

Services are related to the Son

Working is related to the Father

The formula of blessing in 2 Cor 13:13 and the statements about the gifts in Cor 12:6-8 clearly show the distinction of the three persons as well as the equality between them. If these three persons are involved for blessing, it is clear that they are equally divine.

Objections: 1. But in traditional theology objections are raised about the distinction of the three persons, especially the distinction between the Son and the Spirit, basing on certain other texts in Paul. Let us examine them.

1. The Function of the Son and Spirit seem to be identical

The functions of the spirit are the same as the functions of the Risen Lord in the Church.

E.g. 1. Our justification is attributed to Christ in Gal 2:17

“But if, in our endeavor to be **justified in Christ**, we ourselves were found to be sinners”.

The same **justification** is attributed to the spirit in 1 Cor 6:11.

“You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and **in the Spirit** of our God”

Sanctification is attributed to Christ in 1 Cor 1:2

“To those **sanctified in Christ**”. The same thing is attributed to the Spirit in Rom 15:16.

“So that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, **sanctified by the Holy Spirit**”.

Signing or sealing is associated with Christ in Eph 1:13

“In him (**Christ**) you... **were sealed....**”

Signing is associated with the Holy Spirit in Eph 4:30

“Do not grieve the Holy **spirit of God in whom you were sealed** for the day of redemption.

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Circumcision is associated with Christ in Gal 2:11

The same is associated with the Spirit in Rom 2:20.

It is said we must stand firm in Christ in Phil 4:1; but in Phil 1:27, we must stand firm in the Spirit

There is joy in the Lord (Christ) in Phil 3:1 in the Spirit in 1 Cor 12:9

There is charity in Christ in Rom 8:39 In the Spirit in 2 Cor 13:13

So it is clear that the same functions are attributed to Christ and the Spirit.

Our Answer to the Objections

1. It is true that the same functions are attributed to Christ and Spirit. But this is no objection to the real distinction between Christ and Spirit. Here in these functions Paul is speaking about how our salvation is brought about. In that sense all the persons are equally involved. God the Father, through the Son in the Spirit, realizes our salvation. Therefore to each of the persons the redemptive work can be attributed. But this attribution has different nuances. When we go into the depth of this action we see that the nuances are different.

The Spirit does not contribute anything new in the redeeming work because it is already fulfilled in Christ. But the fulfillment of this salvation in the human sphere by making it real to human beings is the work of the Spirit. Or we can say salvation is objectively

realized in Christ, it is personalized in the spirit or personally communicated by the Spirit. Thus the same function is attributed to both the persons in different senses.

Further; though these things are thus attributed to both, there are other things, which are not so attributed

- (1) For example, we cannot say that the Spirit died and rose again for us or that the spirit must be formed in us. In Rom 8:34, Jesus died and rose; in Gal 4:19, Jesus must be formed in us
- (2) Nor does Paul consider the Spirit as the head of the body, that is the Church; but Christ is the head. (Eph 5:23)

Yet both the Spirit and Christ are in us. This is explained in patristic theology as: Christ is the head and Spirit in the soul of the Church.

2. Identification of the Spirit and Christ

Another objection is from 2 Cor 3:17. Where Christ is apparently identified with the Spirit. The text reads, "Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor 3:17) (**Ho de Kurios to preuma estin**)

Here the Lord refers certainly to the risen Lord Christ. But here the word *Pneuma* does not refer to the person of the Holy Spirit, but it stands for the new life and situation that has begun in Christ. Paul is speaking about himself as the apostle of the new covenant. This new covenant is such that it consists no longer in letters but in the spirit (2 Cor 3:5).

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The Israelites have hardened their minds so that they do not see and understand this new message (3:12-15). But when we turn to the Lord, the veil is removed, and we are able to see (3:16), because the Lord is spirit (17). In other words, in the Risen Lord we have freedom and a new vision. This transformation comes from the Lord who is spirit (3:18).

3. There is another objection from 1 Cor 15:45

There we read, “the last Adam became a life-giving *Spirit*” (1 Cor 15:45)

In fact this also is no objection. What Paul wants to say is this. In the risen Lord we have the new world of the Spirit. Not only that Jesus is transformed into pneumatic state but also that he becomes the source of the new life for all believers. Or in other words the text means that through Christ we have the eschatological life beyond death. It means also that our new existence in Christ is not simply the restoration of an original spiritual nature which man possessed before the fall, but it has its origin in the Risen Lord.

Spirit is God

That Paul teaches the divinity of the Spirit is clear from his idea that the Spirit effects divine life in man. The Spirit according to Paul, is not simply a messenger who stands outside of man. He is intimately present to man. Through this presence he makes the divine life in man to grow and develop. There are many passages in Paul, which make this teaching clear.

- a. In Rom 8:4 he says, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the

dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you”.. (Rom 8:11)

- b. In Eph. 1:13, he says, “In him you also were sealed with the Holy spirit.
- c. The spirit brings about the divine sonship of the believer (Rom 8:14; Gal 4:6)
- d. The Spirit is the principle of everlasting life (Rom 8:11)
- e. He is the source of Christian life (Gal 5:22)
- f. The spirit is said to be indwelling in us as his temple (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). The indwelling can be attributed only to God. In fact Paul understands the indwelling of the Spirit as the fulfillment of the promise of God’s indwelling (2 Cor 6:16) (this is fulfillment of Ex 29:45)

In short we can say the Spirit is God because he produces fruits like divine sonship and life, which only God is able to produce. Only God who is holy can produce holiness without destroying man’s initiative and responsibility or bless the personal quality of his acts. The name of the Spirit in Paul is **Holy Spirit** (1 Cor 6:19; 12:3; 2 Cor 13:13; Rom 5:5; 16:16; Eph 1:14; 4:30). This holiness of the Spirit produces the fruit, namely, holiness in man.

2.3.3 Holy Spirit According to St. John

The Fourth Gospel may be considered the final teaching about the Spirit in the NT. For John, the *pneuma* is not something extraordinary. It is not a force manifest in ecstatic experiences, in miracle and prophecy.

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Pneuma is the name of God's essence in so far as it is revealed to the world; it is God's life, which has become the life of the world. Yahweh is God above the world. He is at the same time immanent in the world because of his working in the world. In that sense *pneuma* may be understood as God immanent in the world. Some of the most important ideas in St. John may be stated as follows.

1. God is spirit (*Pneuma ho theos*) (Jn 4:24)

Perhaps the first idea we get in John about the Spirit is that God is spirit. This means God is the all-pervading immanence in all beings. This is not distinctly called a divine person. This revelation is given as an answer to the question of the Samaritan woman. In his answer Jesus first gives Jerusalem as the right place to adore God. But in the second step he goes further and says God is to be worshiped in truth and in spirit. The reason is that God is spirit. In the OT God is a hidden God. He enters into the history of people and gives it a new meaning and orientation. This is something extraordinary in the nature of God. But here in St. John, God is proclaimed as the spirit. He is present as the innermost meaning of all creatures. Jesus wants everybody to acknowledge this fact. In acknowledging people have to be guided by this spirit.

To the question of Nicodemus (Jn 3:1 ff), Jesus gives the answer "No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born anew" This new birth is further explained as a birth in the spirit. Then this spirit is compared to the wind to illustrate the fact that it is beyond the comprehension of man and that we cannot calculate these things.

In chap 6, Jesus gives another dimension of the spirit. It is the spirit, which enables man to understand the words of Jesus. His words are spirit and life. Only those who are under the guidance of the spirit can follow Jesus' teaching.

2.3.3.1 Jesus and the Spirit in the New Birth

The new birth in the spirit is essentially related to Jesus. Even before the public ministry of Jesus, John the Baptist proclaims Jesus' relation to the spirit. Jesus is one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and not with water alone as John was doing. (Jn 1:33)

Giving baptism in the Spirit is the essential difference between Jesus and other preachers and prophets. In Jn 7:38f Jesus challenges people to come and drink from him. "If any one is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Living water will flow from the bosom of him who believes in me... This he said about the Spirit which those who believed in him would receive".

In all these texts, the birth in the Spirit is related to Jesus Christ. Jesus baptizes and from him the Spirit comes. This has to be related to the first idea that sees God as spirit. Therefore these two ideas may be connected to get the following conclusion. The saving action of God as spirit depends on the Son. Thus it is an economy of Salvation.

2.3.3.2 The Paraclete texts

Over and above these ideas, which are in the general scheme of Johannine theology, there is a special teaching about the Spirit in the farewell discourse of Jesus. These are known as the Paraclete

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texts. Altogether there are four such texts: (1). Jn. 14: 15-17; (2). Jn. 14:26; (3). Jn. 15:26; (4) Jn 16:7-15.

Here the Spirit is called the Paraclete. It is an anglicized form of the Greek word *Parakletos*. In the NT this word occurs only in the 4 Paraclete texts we have seen and in 1Jn 2:1. In the gospel the term is applied to the Spirit while in the letter it is applied to Jesus. That means both Jesus and the Spirit are Paracletes. Moreover in Jesus' Promise of the Paraclete he says "I will pray the Father and he will give you another Paraclete (*allos Parakletos*). This means Jesus is the first Paraclete and the spirit is another or second Paraclete. The meaning of the term is not very clear. In early Christian translations (esp in the *Vulgate*) the word was translated as *advocatus* (advocate). This is from the literal meaning of the Greek word *Parakletos* (one called alongside). This means a legal counselor. But this meaning fits only with the context in 1Jn 2:1 and not in the context of the gospel. Moreover this meaning is not attested in the Greek language of John's time.

In John the word means that the Spirit is the helper and one who continues Jesus' activity. The Paraclete comes only after the exaltation of Jesus representing him and continuing his work. "The Paraclete is the Spirit understood as the presence of the absent Jesus, and by definition the Paraclete and Jesus cannot be on earth together"³⁰ The functions of the Paraclete and of Jesus are not the same though it may appear so. The Paraclete declares what Jesus has already taught them. But it is not a simple repetition but an interpretative reminding. R.E. Brown commenting on the Greek word used here (*appegelien*) says that these proclamations "clearly involve interpretation of what has been already revealed in Jesus Christ".³¹

Thus the Paraclete continues the work of God in Jesus, he is the representative of the exalted Christ until the promise becomes fulfillment “I will come again and receive you unto myself, that you may also be where I am”(Jn. 14:3)

H.Spirit, according to John, is a distinct divine Person.

The fact that the Spirit is a person is clear from his intimate relationship with the Father and Son.

1. The name Paraclete itself shows the personal character of the Spirit, because he is a helper and helping is an action attributable only to a person. Moreover, he is another Paraclete, Jesus being the first. If Jesus is a person, then the Paraclete also has to be a person.
2. Many personal acts are attributed to the Spirit such as to remain (14:17), to hear and to speak (16:16), to proclaim (16:13), to receive, to teach (16:14), to convince, to glorify (16:13), to bear witness (15:27).
3. The actions of the Spirit are parallel to those of Jesus. For example, like Jesus, the Spirit is sent (14:26//15:2; 16:7); like the son, Spirit is given (6:32//14:16); the Spirit gives witness like The Son (3:21); like the Son, Spirit glorifies the Father (17:4//16:14); like the Son Spirit hears (3:32);

So the personhood of the Spirit is a very clear teaching in John.

But the distinction of the Spirit from Father and Son is not so clear as the personhood. Yet in the usage ‘another paracelete’,

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John distinguishes the Spirit from the Son. Then the Father sends the Spirit therefore it is distinct from the Father who is the sender.

The Spirit comes when Jesus leaves; therefore the Spirit is distinct from Jesus. Jesus says, "If I do not go, the Paraclete will not come" (In 16:17)

Since the spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (14:26, 15:26) it is to be understood as distinct from both of them. (Here proceed also is to be understood as mission (15:25).

But there is an objection.

In 14:18 Jesus says "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you". Then is not Jesus himself who is promised as the Paraclete?

The answer is this. No doubt, Jesus promises his presence. But this does not mean the coming Spirit or Paraclete is identical with him. To the redeemed world all the three persons are present; but not in the sense that they are identical. Each person in his specific relation and function is present to man.

The Spirit is God in John

The divinity of the Spirit is implied in the works attributed to him. Even in the OT the Spirit is said to be inspiring the prophets. God creates through the spirit and the spirit leads his people etc. These are divine actions In the O.T divine actions are attributed to the Spirit, but the Spirit was not understood as a distinct person. In the NT the same Spirit is presented as a distinct person. Since divine actions are attributed to this person, it is clear that he is a divine person; he is God.

2.3.3.3 Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is revealed as the innermost subject of man's relation to God. In him we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit is not revealed in the objective sphere as the Father. He is neither embodied in our history like the Son. But the Spirit is in the depth of our heart. He is the principle by which we see and act in a new way.

As we cannot see our eyes and yet see with them and the eyes are present in every vision, so too we cannot understand the spirit nor imitate him as we imitate Jesus, and yet he is the principle of all supernatural actions.

To know the Spirit is then, first of all, to experience his action; to allow one's self to be influenced by him, to make one's self docile to his desires; it is to want to make him always more and more consciously, the source of our life.

This understanding of the Spirit is especially important in our time with a maddening desire for symbols and idols. Man is becoming more and more unable to think of anything except through idols and symbols. In this era the true knowledge of God will be to find him in our innermost reality, as the meaning and possibility of our innermost reality. God will have his place in our modern world only if we have him dwelling in us as the Spirit, giving us the eyes of faith and directing all our actions.

2.3.4 Trinitarian faith in the Apostolic Kerygma³²

So far we were dealing with the biblical teaching on each person of the Trinity-the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now

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we proceed to consider how these three persons are considered together as related to one another. Our aim is to see whether there is a Trinitarian doctrine in the NT.

The NT is the witness to the apostolic *Kerygma*. What did the apostles and their contemporaries teach about God. We also want to see what were their main issues in their preaching about Jesus. We will examine the NT section by section.

2.3.4.1 Acts of the Apostles

As we know the Acts is the second volume of Luk's writing. It continues the teaching in the gospel of Luke. The final words of Jesus to the disciples were, "And behold I send forth the promise of my Father to you"... (Lk 24:29).

This promise is said to be the baptism by the Spirit in Acts 1:4,5. The actual fulfillment of this promise happens through out the history of the Church. The Pentecost is one of such instances of the fulfillment of the promise. But it is not all. The reception of the Spirit by Cornelius is another instance because Peter understands it as a fulfillment of the promise. Peter says about that event, "I began to speak, and the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, ...but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:15,16)

In the report about the reception of the Spirit we see the triad mentioned together. There are at least two such instances in Peters' speech (Acts 2:33).

"Being therefore at the right hand of God and having received... the Holy Spirit, he has poured forth this, which we see and hear".

Acts 2:38-39: “Repent ye, be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ...and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit...even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him”.

In all these passages the three are mentioned not in a passing way, rather deliberately, they are mentioned together clarifying the particular function of each of them.

In short we can say that the summary of the teaching is this. Those who are baptized in the name of Jesus will receive the Spirit; they are called by God.

In Acts 11:17 a slightly different idea is given. There the gifts of the Spirit are connected not with baptism but with faith.

Further Acts 9:17, 31; 10:38 are other passages where traces of the threefold formula can be found.

Yet there is a strange descent from this threefold idea in the last part of the book. What was prominent in the early chapters become dim in the later chapters.

However in the early part of Acts, Luke has a better theology of the three persons than Mathew or Mark has. Luke does not just mention the three persons in passing, but he links them together in his thought. The speech of Peter at Pentecost and at the conversion of Cornelius gives evidences that Luke linked these three. He also sees these events as the fulfillment of the prophecy about Spirit baptism. Yet one thing is clear that he does not see a problem in the relationship among the persons. This means he has not tried to relate the idea of three persons with the strict monotheism of the Bible.

2.4 Trinitarian Theology in St. Paul.

In the genuine letters of Paul, though he speaks of the three persons, it seems that he was not aware of a problem in relating these three. But there are a few passages, which point to this problem.

1. In Gal 3:13-14 Paul writes, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree...that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”. According to this passage the purpose of the crucifixion is that men might receive the Holy Spirit. So here Paul links the Spirit and Christ in a causal relationship.
2. In Gal 4:6 he says, “And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son in our hearts, crying, Abba Father”.

Here Paul is thinking of the relationship among the members of the triad. He says it is God who sent forth the Spirit and the Son.

3. The first eight chapters of Romans. We can divide this passage in the following way.

Introduction (1:1-17)

Judgment of God upon gentiles and Jews (1:18-3:20).

Justification through faith in Jesus Christ (3:21-8:1).

Life in the Spirit (8:2-30).

Concluding paragraph (8:31-39).

Here also the direct purpose of Paul is not to describe the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. But it is to trace the pattern of our Salvation – the wrath of God, the saving work of Christ and the new life in the Spirit. Here God the Father dominates the first part, Son the second part, Spirit the third part.

4. The first three chapters of I Corinthians is another important text. There is no definite outline here. The structure is as follows:

Introduction 1:1-9

Plea for harmony in the Church (1:19-17).

It is the power and wisdom of God (1:18-2:9).

The instruction given by the Spirit (2:10.16)

The function of Paul and Apollos in the Corinthian Church (3:1-9).

Jesus Christ the foundation for men's work (3:10-15).

Men are God's temple in which Spirit dwells (3:16-17).

Conclusion to the section (3-18-23).

Here also instead of trying to explain the relationship among the triad, he explains their work, which often intermingles and overlaps. Yet he has a tendency to move on to the Spirit after speaking about the Son.

In these epistles together we have the following idea. There are clear traces of the triad. Father is given priority. Even in places

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where Son and Spirit are only mentioned the Father is presupposed, because in the beginning of the epistles Paul speaks of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.4.1 Conclusion to Pauline thought

Our survey of the letters of Paul does not reveal a conscious attempt to answer a problem about the Triad. It seems, however, that Paul was aware of some of the factors that come in a Trinitarian idea of God like the divinity of Jesus. But belief that Jesus is God was not put into a Trinitarian confession. It is clear that he worshipped Jesus. Yet this faith in the divinity of Jesus and his worship of Jesus were not made part of his public thinking. This is clear in his statement. "There is one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 8:6). This verse seems to be a Pauline way of adjusting the divinity of Jesus with the unity of Godhead.

In 1 Cor 15:24 ff, he says:

"Then comes the end, when he delivers the Kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For God has put all things in subjection under his feet...When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him, that God may be every thing to every one". (1 Cor 15:24-28)

This means also that Paul was aware of the Trinitarian aspect of our Salvation. But he did not make a theology of this aspect. In fact we are not sure of Paul's theological thinking because the letters are not written as theological treatises but as answer to concrete

problems in the Church. The only genuine letter of Paul which shows theological concern is Romans; and then among the Pauline doctrines the Ephesians. Paul was also more concerned about the work than the person of Christ, about Gods' plan of Salvation than Gods' nature. Therefore his silence is no indication that he never thought of that subject. He speaks of Gods' activity as a threefold activity in which he mentions the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But he does not exhibit the awareness of a threefold problem.

2.4.2 Trinitarian theology in the Synoptics

Here we are dealing with the Trinitarian formulae found in the synoptic gospels. As there are expressions, as we have seen earlier, which show the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit separately, there are also expressions where all the three persons are mentioned together giving the idea that the NT idea of God is a Trinitarian idea. We will examine some of the most prominent of such expressions

Mt 28:19. This is one of the Trinitarian passages. According to Mathew Jesus himself spoke these words in 28:19. But there are different problems concerning this saying like textual problems, literary problems and historical problems.

Textual Problem: This text is the only one in the NT with a Trinitarian formula for baptism. This itself paves way for a critical question about the correctness of the text. The question is this: Is the text original or is it a later interpolation? From manuscript evidence we cannot question the text, because there is no manuscript of the gospel of Mathew without this text or with this text in another form.

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Literary and Historical Problems

From a literary point of view this Trinitarian formula has no parallel anywhere in the Synoptics or the whole NT. The passage which resembles it most closely is MK 16:15-18. In the Markan text there is no Trinitarian formula. There is no evidence apart from Mt 28:19 that Jesus used the Trinitarian formula. Another question is concerning the probability of Jesus using it. Did Jesus actually use such a formula? We have no evidence. From the fact that there is no such a formula anywhere else in the NT, we have to doubt about its origin from Jesus. Also if Jesus gave such a formula for baptism why the other evangelists do not give it? Another question is if the formula comes from Jesus why in the Acts the formula used is an one name formula, namely baptism in the name of Jesus? Many such questions may arise in our minds. But they have no answer. Therefore we have to go with the text that is available. In other words there is a Trinitarian formula of baptism and that points to the belief in the Trinity, what so ever be the precise content of that belief.

2.4. 3 Other Synoptics

As we have already attested earlier, no other Synoptics give a trinitarian formula of baptism. The missionary mandate in MK is not part of the original gospel which ended in MK 16:8. Further the Markan Missionary mandate has a single formula and not a threefold formula. In the gospel of Luke the situation is quite different. He has a missionary mandate coming as part of the original gospel. But the form is quite different from that of Mt and Mk and there is no command to baptize as part of the missionary mandate.

2.4.4 Gospel of John.

The faith in the Trinity as expressed in the fourth gospel needs an elaborate treatise. The Trinitarian problem consists in the first level in the relationship between Christ and the Father, i.e. how the divinity of Christ can be reconciled with a monotheistic faith and in reconciling how Christ is to be related to the Father. In the second level of the problem, there is the question of how the Spirit is related to the Son on the one hand and the Father on the other.

The Fourth evangelist is the only NT writer who clearly understands the threefold nature of the problem. Other writers touched on parts of the problem, but the fourth Evangelist sees it in its threefoldness. Yet his answer to the question does not deal with all its complexities. When he had finished, there was much room for development and explanation. This development and explanation were done in the later centuries in the definition of the Trinitarian dogma.

John does not use the word Trinity but he sees the triadic nature of the problem. How the problem is treated in John?

In many passages in the Johannine writings, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are mentioned together. These texts themselves can be divided into three groups:

(1) The first group: Jn 1:33-34; Jn 14:16; Jn 14:26; Jn 20:21-2; Jn 16:15; I Jn 4:2; I Jn 14:13-14

In all these the three persons are mentioned together. But there are two more passages where the Trinitarian problem is clear but

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where no mention of the Father is made; only the Son and Spirit are mentioned in their mutual relationship. This may be enumerated as the second group.

Group (2): Jn 7:39; Jn 16:7

Group (3): John, like the Synoptics mentions the baptism of Jesus, but in a way different from theirs. He refers to the baptism only in passing. But all the teaching of the Baptist concerning the Son and the Spirit are concentrated in Jn 1:33-34.

The Spirit descends on Christ who will himself baptize with the Spirit. The fourth gospel essentially links the descent of the Spirit on Jesus and the Spirit in baptism, which Jesus was to give to those who believe in him. This link is something unique for John and it is not found in this manner in the other gospels. In the gospel according to John, the Baptist says, "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. In the other gospels there is the description of the baptism of Jesus and the descent of the Spirit on him as well as the voice from heaven which said, "This is my Son". But none of them says that this event is a sign by which the Baptist recognized the Sonship of Jesus. John, on the other hand, has been very selective about the details of the event. He does not even mention that Jesus was baptized. For him this event is a sign, which explains the intimate relation among Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He seizes the opportunity to draw out the threefold nature of divine life.

The Father sends the Baptist.

The Spirit descends on Jesus.

Jesus will baptize with the spirit. What is this Spirit? This Spirit is another Paraclete. But this **another-ness** is so important that he cannot function side by side with Jesus but only after Jesus has gone.

The only activity of the Spirit in the lifetime of Jesus is that he descends on Jesus; after that no activity of the Spirit in the world is given. But the Spirit comes after Jesus has gone. John clearly gives the time schedule of the Son and the Spirit and how they are separated:

“The Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified” (7:39).

The letters of John does not add anything new to this teaching but confirms it. According to the letters the Spirit leads men to confess the divine truth, namely, that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and is God, and that he is the Son whom God sent to be Saviour of the world.

The fourth gospel emphasizes deliberately and clearly that Jesus is God.

In the words of Thomas, “My Lord and My God” there is clear and direct confession of the divinity of Jesus.

The same way at the beginning and end of the gospel the divinity of Jesus is stressed. In the beginning “Jesus was word, with God and God” (1:1) ; in the end Jesus is Messiah and Son of God (20:31) This gospel, the author says, was written with this intention; “that you

may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God". This belief is not a light thing. It is a matter of supreme importance because your having life depends on your faith that Jesus is Son of God. Now this Son of God does not mean somebody who is divine. That it means that Jesus is truly God is proved by the previous verse where Thomas confesses Jesus as God. The reaction of Jesus is also very important. Thomas is not praised. Rather he is put below others who believe without seeing. Now those who believe without seeing are the later generations of the faithful. They should believe without seeing that Jesus is God.

The "I am" sayings form another section of the gospel, which proves Jesus' divinity. It reflects the supreme revelation of God in Ex. 3:14. "I am who I am". When John uses the I-am-sayings he means that he is the one who revealed himself in Ex: 3:14 as I-am-who-am.

In 12:41 John says that in the vision of Isaiah in the temple, he saw none but Jesus.

The Father-Son relationship is very prominent in the gospel of John. It is expressed by putting together the difference and oneness between the Father and Son. (Jn 1:1)

The word was with God –that is, they are two. Yet the Word was God.

After speaking of the difference and oneness between these two realities, God and the Word, in the later sections of the gospel, he speaks about the relationship between them as Father and Son (Jn 1:8). In other words it seems that the being with God and God can be expressed by Father Son relationship.

In 1:18 this is clear. This is the conclusion of the prologue. What was expressed by word-God terminology is now expressed by Father-Son terminology. "The Son was in the bosom of the Father. By expressing this relationship by Father-Son terminology he also wants to say that there is prominence to the Father without detracting from the divinity of the Son.

What is the Spirit? It is another Paraclete. It is like Jesus. Yet it is not the same as the Son because their functions are chronologically and qualitatively different. The function of the Spirit is reminding the disciples of the teaching of Jesus. But Spirit is not called God. The Spirit is not the final revelation. He has nothing new. He only declares what Jesus has said. All that the Father has is Jesus'. But there is no idea that all that the Father has is the Spirit's.

In the gospel of John there is no doctrine of the co-equal trinity but only the foundations. There is the doctrine as far as the relation between Father and Son is concerned. For, they are both God. They are also one. Yet the Father has priority over the Son. Here we have not only an awareness of the problem but also a sort of answer to the problem. But the discussion of the relationship between the Spirit and Son and between the Spirit and Father is not developed. It remains a problem. But the problem itself is pointer to the fact that the evangelist was conscious of making a place for the Spirit in the divine reality.

CHAPTER – 3

EXPRESSIONS OF TRINITARIAN FAITH IN THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES

The previous chapters gave us a general idea of the concepts clearly or otherwise leading up to the Trinitarian doctrine in the Bible. Now we pass on to the development of this faith in the formulations of the early Church. Here we are concerned with the developments in the first and second centuries only, especially in the writings of the post apostolic fathers and the apologists. What we get from these writers about the Trinity may not be termed theology proper; rather what we have in these writers is the expression of their faith in the Trinitarian character of the God they believed in. A theology proper on the Trinity is available only from the time of the councils, which we will deal with in the next chapter. In the first and second centuries there was not any theological formulation of the doctrine but it is clear that the Church had this faith. We can come to an understanding of the faith of the early Church from the following documents.

3.1 The Baptismal Formula

While discussing the missionary mandate of Jesus as given in Mt 28:19 ff, we said that in the NT this is the only document where the

Trinitarian formula is given with baptism. In all other NT books the impression we get is that baptism was in the name of Jesus. If so probably there was a time when baptism was given in the name of Jesus alone. But we are not sure of it. But for baptism given in the name of the Trinity, we have witnesses from the earliest period of the history of the Church. Some of the clear witnesses are the following:

A. According to the *Didache*, the practice in the early Church was that baptism was given by three immersions in flowing water, pronouncing the names of the three persons of the Trinity. The relevant text reads: "In regard to baptism-baptize thus: After the foregoing instructions, baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit in living water"³³. If baptism in flowing water was not possible another method was suggested. It is pouring water three times on the head of the candidate in the name of the Father, in the name of the Son and in the name of the Holy Spirit. Here also the Trinitarian formula is used.

B. That this was the practice in the Church is clear from the witnesses of Justin, Tertellian, Cyprian and others of the first three centuries³⁴.

We learn the following from the baptismal rite

- i. There is a literal fulfillment of Jesus' command in Mt.28:19. i.e. the command is literally followed in the actual baptismal rite in the Church.
- ii. There is a deep reflection on the meaning of the Trinity in the sacrament of initiation. This reflection is revealed in the

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teachings of the Fathers on baptism as a birth from God and a new citizenship of the faithful as a citizenship by which they belong to heaven. .

3.2. The Norms of Faith

In the earliest witnesses of the norms of faith the Trinitarian confession is included. These norms of faith are the summary of the things a person, especially one who comes to the Church newly had to believe and confess. In these norms of faith there is no speculation on the content but only a public confession of what they believe. Only the tradition of the Church concerning these things is expressed here. Here the Father and Son and Holy Spirit are distinctly and separately mentioned and God is called the Almighty Father and Jesus is related to this God as Son. The Spirit is always qualified as the Holy Spirit. These norms of faith are expressed in the letters of the Apostolic Fathers and those who lived as contemporaries of these Fathers. For example, in St. Clement's letter to the Corinthians we read, "Do we have not one God, one Christ, and one Spirit of Grace poured upon us? And is there not one calling in Christ?"³⁵

3.3 The Creeds

When the catechumens received baptism, they had to make a profession of faith. It was the official doctrine of the Church. This doctrine was accepted as handed down from the Apostles. Now if we examine the creeds of the early Church, before the Nicene Council, the first impression we get is that there is much variety in these creeds. Of these the one that goes back to the second century and which is used

more generally than any other in the early Church is the Creed known as Apostolic Creed. It was originally composed in Greek and it contained a simple statement about the three persons.

3.4 Doxologies

In the Jewish tradition, prayers ended with a praise of God. The same way did confessions of faith end with a praise of God – e.g. the Paschal meal. The form of such doxologies is mostly “Blessed Be....” as we find in Eph 1:3, Rom 1:26; 2 Co. 1:3 etc

In the New Testament in the place of this Jewish Praise of God we have a Trinitarian form as in Eph 1:3 ff. In Eph 3:21 the Spirit is replaced by the Church. “To him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus”. In the early Church such doxologies were very common. Most of these doxologies were Trinitarian.

3.5. Inscriptions

In the inscriptions found on the tombs of the believers certain invocations are included. In some of these invocations, the Trinitarian formula is used. In the catacomb of Domitilla it is written, “Secundianus, who has believed in Jesus Christ, lives in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”. In a Samaritan city an inscription reads as follows: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, beautiful is the city of Christians”.

3.6 Confessions of Martyrs

The confessions of the martyrs have special importance because they are not mere doctrinal statements but a manifestation of their radical and absolute faith for which they were ready to offer their lives.

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In the Acts of the Scilitan martyrs (A.D 180) we find the following confession:

“So they are all together crowned with martyrdom and reign with the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen”.

The account of the Martyrdom of Carpus and companions reads like this:

“The relics are secretly carried away and preserved by Christians to the glory of Christ and his martyrs, because glory and lordship belongs to him to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”.

3.7 The writings of the Apologists

The foregoing documents express simple faith of the Church. There is not much thinking on the mysteries but only faithful representation of the articles of faith. On the contrary, we see a fundamental change in the presentation of the doctrines in the Apologists. This change happens because they were forced by the situation in Church and in the world to justify their faith against the attacks of heretics and non-believers. Some of the famous apologists who have contributed to the growth of the doctrine on the trinity are the following:

3.7.1 Justinus

For Justin the issue was defense of the faith of the Church against pagan criticism. The pagans criticized the Christians as atheists. The reason was that the Christians did not worship those whom the

pagans believed as gods. Justin defends the Christians by saying that they truly believe in God. His own words are as follows:

So we are called atheists. Well, we do indeed proclaim ourselves atheists in respect to those whom you call gods, but not in regard to the Most True God, the Father of righteousness and temperance and the other virtues, who is without admixture or evil. On the contrary, we reverence and worship Him and the Son who came forth from Him and taught us these things, and the host of other good angels who are about Him and are made quite like Him, and the prophetic Spirit. We pay homage to them in reason and in truth; and to all who wish to learn, we pass on intact what we have been taught³⁶.

Here there is mention of all the three persons. But was it a true idea of the Trinity? We are not sure. It seems that in details he seems to be slanting towards subordinationism in viewing the Son and Spirit as subordinate or lower than the Father. He has put the Son in the company of the good angels. The “prophetic Spirit” comes only after the good angels. Does it all mean that Justin considers the Son and the Spirit as subordinate to the Father? We are not sure.

In another place he speaks of Jesus as “the Son and Apostle of God, the Father and Ruler of all”³⁷. Does it mean that the Son is of the same rank as the Apostles of Christ? Further in the same Apology he says that the Christians worship the Father in the first place and the Son in the second place and the Spirit in the third place.³⁸ But we have to note also that he clearly speaks of the homage that is given to these three persons as **worship** and we know that worship is given only to God. If so all the three are God. If God there cannot be lower and higher ranks, because any one who is lower in rank cannot be God.

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Therefore should we not think that Justine's idea of the Trinity is as orthodox as any official formulation of the doctrine?

In the second Apology Justine speaks of the Son as the one "who alone is properly called Son, who was both with Him (Father) and was begotten by Him before anything was created, when in the beginning the Father created and put everything in order through Him"³⁹ We can notice a clear distinction between the origin of the Son and the creatures. The creatures are created and they are created in the beginning. That is they have a beginning in time. But about the Son Justine clearly says that He was begotten and that too before the beginning. In other words, the Son shares the nature of God as the begotten Son of God and He is co-eternal with the Father because He was begotten before the beginning of time.

Justine's belief in the divinity of the Son is further proved from his words of instruction to the non-believers. He agrees that there are some of those in the Church who believe that Jesus is only a man born of men. But about this position Justine says, "I do not agree with them, nor would I, even if the greater part of those who now agree with me were to say so; for we have been warned by Christ Himself not to be persuaded by human doctrines, but by those proclaimed by the blessed prophets and taught by Himself"⁴⁰

About Justin's teaching on the Trinity we may say the following as a summary.

Justin the martyr is a very strong witness to the faith of the early Church on Trinity. Yet in details he shows an undeveloped position. He gives the impression that the three persons are not equal and that

the origin of the word is not eternal, that is, in Justin we see the stage before the development of the idea of the eternal procession of the Son and Spirit and the idea of the oneness of nature of the persons. That his problem was a problem of terminology and not a difference of faith is clear from his words to Trypho. He says, “ Friends, I will give you another testimony, from the Scriptures, that God begot before all creature a Beginning, who was a certain Rational Power from Himself, and whom the Holy Spirit calls Glory of the Lord, or sometimes the Son, sometimes Wisdom, sometimes an Angel, sometimes God, sometimes Lord and Word. On another occasion He calls Himself Commander-in-Chief, when He appeared in the form of a man to Jesus the Son ...”. What does it all mean? Justin is struggling to express his faith in the divinity of the Son in his own way with help from the revealed doctrines contained in the Scriptures. In many places he succeeds very wonderfully. But in other places his terminology gives the impression of subordinationism. It is because he did not have the terminology developed by the Fathers of the subsequent centuries and the doctrines approved by the councils. Therefore we can say with all certainty that Justine’s faith is perfectly orthodox though he sometimes fails properly to give expression to that faith in an intelligible way.

3.7.2 Athanagoras

Perhaps Athenagoras, among the apologists, is the best in his presentation of the Trinitarian mystery. His book on the subject is *Supplication for the Christians*. It is a teaching on God the creator. In this teaching on God he includes the teaching on the Word. The Word is eternally born from the Father. But this birth is contrasted

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with the birth of gods in pagan mythologies and the myths of the poets. The Word is born as the idea of the Father and its actuation. The words he uses are *idea kai energeia*. The origin of the word is also contrasted with the origin of other things. The other things are created but the Word is not created. God had the word in himself from the beginning. About the faith of the Church on God and the Son he says, “we acknowledge one God, unbegotten, eternal invisible, incapable of being acted upon, incomprehensible, unbounded; who is known only by understanding and reason; who is encompassed by light and beauty and spirit and indescribable power, by whom all things through His Word, have been produced and set in order and are kept in existence. We recognize also the Son of God... The Son of God is the Word of the Father... By Him and through Him all things were made, the Father and the Son being one. Since the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son by the unity and power of the Spirit, the Mind and Word of the Father is the Son of God”⁴¹

His idea of the Spirit is different. It is not like the Word. The spirit is an effluence of God going out and returning to the Father. It is compared to a ray of the sun. In his own words, “The Holy Spirit also who works in those who speak prophetically, we regard as the effluence of God, flowing out and returning like a ray of the sun”⁴². These words may be misleading. But the fact is clear that he had orthodox faith in the Trinity. It is clear where he speaks of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit together and qualifies them as God. “Who then would not be astonished to hear those called atheists, who speak of God the Father and God the Son and of Holy Spirit, and who proclaim their power in union and their distinction in order?”⁴³. These are his words of speaking about the unity of nature and distinction of persons of the

Godhead. “Distinction in order” cannot mean distinction in rank, but distinction in personhood.

The situation of Athenagoras is similar to that of Justin. He also writes to refute the arguments of those who called the Christians atheists. He argues that it is strange to call the Christians as atheists when they profess the true faith in the one God who exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3.7.3 Theophilus of Antioch

Theophilus, rather stands one step higher than Athanagoras. The unity and difference of the three persons is maintained. He has certain peculiar interpretation of the Scriptures in terms of the Trinity. For example, he understands the three days before the creation of the luminaries in the creation account in the book of Genesis as referring to the three persons of the Trinity. He understands the Son as the internal Word or wisdom of God. The relationship between God and the Word is explained as,

God, therefore having His own Word internally in His very organs, begot Him, emitting Him along with His own Wisdom, before all things. He had His Word for a Helper in the things which He made, and through Him were all things created. He is called Beginning (*arche*), because He rules (*archei*) and has dominion over everything, which was fashioned by Him⁴⁴.

The Father is God, the Son is the word of the Father, and the Spirit is the wisdom of the Father, according to Theophilus. But the distinction between the Son and Spirit is not sufficiently clear in his writings.

3.7.4 Irenaeus

He is the last prominent apologist to give a systematic doctrine of the Trinity. He takes ideas from the other apologists but does not follow their speculations. He is very simple in his presentation. He says that the faith which we have received from the Apostles is “the faith in one God, Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who announced through the prophets the dispensations and the comings and the birth from a Virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming from heaven in the glory of the Father to re-establish all things...”⁴⁵. This may be the creed, which was in use in Irenaeus’ Church. It includes everything that is basic to the Trinitarian faith. Irenaeus also gives evidence to the universality of this faith all over the Church, in whatever place she is found. “She (the Church) likewise believes these things just as if she had but one soul and the same heart; and harmoniously she proclaims them and teaches them and hands them down, as if she possessed one mouth”.⁴⁶

He understands the Son as word of God. Yet he does not make a comparison with the human word. The reason seems to be that he wants to maintain the infinite difference between God and creatures. Also if the divine word is compared to the human word then, the word will be subordinate to the Father. Therefore he says, “The Father is one with the word”. In his own words “Being altogether mind and altogether word, God utters what he thinks, and thinks what he utters.

His thinking is His word and his word is his intelligence, and the Father is that intelligence comprising all things”.

Interrelating the Word and Spirit he uses the image of the hands. Word and Spirit collaborate with God. They are compared with Gods two hands.

3.7.5 Evaluation of these witnesses

Ireneus is especially important for his emphasis on the unity in God. He identifies the Word with God. If at all there is some possibility of misinterpretation it is to the line of Monarchianism. Then his idea of the Spirit is economic Spirit.

The Son is as much God as the Father. The reason is he is begotten of God. Whatever is begotten of God is God.

About the Spirit, nowhere he uses the word God. But in his expressions the Spirit is given the same rank as God. Spirit is God's Spirit, ever welling up from his being. In Ireneus we have for the first time the most perfect trinitarian doctrine. This is the best before the development in Tertullian. Ireneus concludes the treatise on Christian faith saying:

“Error with respect to the three articles of our seal has brought about much wandering away from the truth. For either they despise the Father, or they do not accept the Son, they speak against the dispensation of His incarnation, or they do not accept the Spirit that is they reject prophecy. And we must beware of all such men, and flee their way if we really desire to be well pleasing to God and receive from Him Salvation”.

CHAPTER - 4

TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH CENTURIES

In these centuries we see a development in Trinitarian doctrine in the line of theology. So far the doctrines of the Fathers did not have a theological nature. They were rather trying to explain the doctrine against the enemies of faith. But by the third century this explanation receives a theological systematization. Before we go into the teachings of these Fathers we have to have an idea of the two trends in their Trinitarian doctrine. One of such trends is to stress the unity of God to such an extent that the difference among the three persons is lost sight of. The other trend is to stress the difference in the persons to the extent of losing sight of the unity. These two tendencies when over-emphasized will give rise to different types of heresies. Therefore before we consider the teaching of the Fathers of this period it is better to speak about the heretical views. The main reason that we start with the heretical views is that the positive teachings that emerged during these centuries and the views that received approbation of the Church in the early councils are answers to the heretical views expressed by the enemies of the Church. We should keep in mind that no positive

teaching about the Trinity could claim to be the perfect expression of the mystery. These positive teachings are only pointers towards the overemphasis that happened in the heretical views. This means what we have in the positive teachings is only an attempt to compensate for the disorderly emphasis on certain aspects of the Trinitarian mystery. Therefore if we have a correct understanding of the heretical views we will be on our guard against wrong theology of the Trinity. Avoid the heretical views; you have more or less the correct view. Or we can put it in the following way: Be cautious about repeating the same mistakes, which the heretics made. If you are able to do that you will not be at least subscribing to the condemned positions.

Before we go to enlist the heretical views, there is need to define heresy itself. In the history of the Church there are many cases of various people having been condemned from the Church because of heretical views. Many of them were the leading thinkers of those times, some times even more erudite and wiser people than the orthodox teachers of faith. Why they made such mistakes if they were wise and intelligent? The answer is in the definition of heresy.

Now what is heresy? Heresy is not simply a problem of expression; rather it is also a problem of attitude. In heresy not only the intellect is involved but also the mind and heart. We can say heresy is man's proud spirit questioning the Word of God. The word of God has revealed the nature of God. We know God only through the Word of God. We are cent percent dependent on the Word of God to know any thing about God or to say any thing about God. Heresy is denying the fact of man's total dependence on the Word of God. It is saying that man can know and express that knowledge

about God without depending on the Word of God Human understanding may be based on philosophical conceptions or traditions. If this human understanding takes control of the word of God and subjects the word to the laws of philosophy, then that is heresy. Real faith means, on the contrary, an attentive listening of the word of God and accepting it in obedience and then trying to formulate it in human language. In every step of the formulation of the faith, the theologian is guided not by his intellect but by his faith in the Word and a basic mistrust in his own ability. With this understanding of heresy let us look at the main heresies of the third and fourth centuries, especially the heresies against the Trinitarian doctrine. The following are the heresies against Trinitarian faith in the early centuries.

4.1 Monarchianism⁴⁷

This is one of the earliest forms of heresy against the Trinitarian doctrine. The word *Monarchianism* is a compound word coming from two Greek words- *monos* (one) and *arche* (principle). So the compound word means that there is only one principle in God i.e. God is one ultimate principle and diversity of persons is not possible in God. Monarchianism itself has appeared in two forms as dynamic Monarchianism and static Monarchianism.

Dynamic Monarchianism. In this theory the Son and the Spirit are not given distinct realities. They are considered as two powers of the one God. The Greek word for power is *dynameis*. So the heresy is called **dynamic monarchianism**. For them the Son and the Spirit are not distinct persons.

The first representative of this heresy is **Theodotus Coriarius**. Coriarius means leather merchant. The origin of the heresy is in Byzantium. Theodotus brought it to Rome in 190.

He starts the conception of the Trinity from Christ. According to him Christ was an ordinary man till his baptism. While he was baptized in Jordan the Spirit of God descended upon him and gave him a special power to work miracles. But this descend of the Spirit does not make him God.

His followers stressed the simple humanity of Jesus with quotations from the Bible. They say Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Deut 18:15. There Moses says "God will raise up for you a prophet like me, from among you, from your brethren". So Jesus is one with humanity, a man.

They believed in the virginal conception of Jesus. But in the rest of theology they followed philosophers like Aristotle, Euclid etc. They were very strong Hellenists and preferred Hellenistic interpretation of the Bible.

Pope Victor condemned Theodotus Coriarius.

The ideas of Theodotus Coriarius were given a different shift by another Theodotus, i.e. Theodotus Hummularius (Hummularius means Banker). He started philosophizing about the power, which descended upon Jesus.

For him Father and Son cannot be both truly God, because then there will be two Gods which is impossible. Therefore they

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said their position is the correct one. The most important representative of this heresy is Paul of Samosata. He was condemned in a local Synod of Antioch in 268. He said that the Logos that descended on Jesus and dwelt in him was not a substance (*ousia*) but an impersonal power called also as *Pneuma* or *Sophia*. Even this one dwelt in Jesus not substantially but by its influence. It was present in him as in a temple. Therefore it was only a moral union.

From a Christological point of view this theory is called adoptionism. From Trinitarian point of view it is called strict monarchianism.

The trend of this sect is rationalistic. They keep the true oneness of God. But they fail in upholding the true faith of the Christians that Christ is true God. Hence this heresy could not flourish long. Christians rejected it.

There is another heresy which comes very close to dynamic monarchianism. While dynamic monarchianism originated in the hellenistic world, this one called Ebionism originated in the Jewish land. This is in fact the earliest heresy against Trinitarian faith. The word Ebionites or ebionism comes from the word *Ebion* – poor. They are the Christians who remain within the realm of Jewish conceptions and customs. They interpreted the mystery of Jesus Christ in terms of the Jewish traditions. They called themselves the poor in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount. Their basic error is Christological. First of all they deny the virginal conception of Jesus. In this they go further than the dynamic monarchianists. They deny also the pre-existence of Jesus. They deny his divinity.

These people kept all the Jewish traditions and customs like circumcision. They also kept the Sabbath side by side with the Sunday as obligatory day. They said that observances of Jewish customs are necessary for salvation.

They did not accept the epistles of Paul. For them Paul was an apostate. Later the practices and beliefs of the Essene monks also crept into their doctrine. They have no doctrine of Trinity. According to them there is only one God, the God of the O.T. Christ is a divine messenger or legate. Often Christ is called an angel, the prince of Light, Michael. Christ is not begotten of God the Father, but created by him. He is one of the Archangels, reigning over the angels and all the work of the Almighty.

Christ will be prominent in the future world, but in the present world the devils have got prominence.

The Ebionites have not got or understood the newness of the Christian revelation. They remain in the OT world.

4.2 Modalistic or Static Monarchianism

This is another form of Monarchianism. These people want to keep both the oneness of God and the divinity of Jesus Christ. In this they are correct. But in explaining these two realities they go wrong.

They thought if a real distinction is introduced between the Father and Son, then the unity of God will be at stake. In the time of Justin there was some form of this trend. In that time to keep the unity of Godhead Christ was considered simply as a *virtus* of God.

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Later this theory became modalistic monarchianism. This is a heresy in which the strict identity of Christ with the Father is proposed by Noetus of Smyrna. The time was the end of the second century.

His main thesis is the oneness of God. This is proved with quotations from the Bible. E.g. Ex 3:6; 20:3; Is 44:6.

There we read, "I am the first and I am the last, besides me there is no God" (Ex 20:3) The consequences of this theory are the so-called Patripassianism i.e. the theory which says Father suffered on the cross. They prove it from John 10:30 "I and the Father are one".

More over they argued that the prologue of the gospel of John where the Word and Father are distinct uses metaphorical language and not the metaphysical teaching on Father and Word.

His disciple Epigones followed Noetus' teaching. He went to Rome and spread this theory. He said God is a monad. In him there are contradictory qualities like mortality and immortality, passibility and impassibility.

Praxeas followed the same doctrine. According to him the distinction between the Father and Son is our fiction. The Father himself entered the womb of Mary to be born as a Son. He suffered, died and rose again.

But then there was a problem in this theory, that is, a Christological difficulty. What is the role of Christ? So they changed the position this way: Christ the man is strictly the Son and sufferer and the Father is co-sufferer. .

Another modalist is Sabellius. He lived in the beginning of the third century. A Christian writer, Pope Callistus, first favored him but later he repealed this idea and condemned him. For him God was a monad. This monad expressed himself in three modes or operations. He compares God with the sun, which radiates both light and warmth. So the Father is the essence. He reveals himself as Son and Spirit who are two modes of his self-expression.

God, as creator and Lawgiver, is the Father, God as redeemer is the Son. But this mode (the mode of Son) was withdrawn after the completion of the redemptive work. God as sanctifier is the Spirit. Thus there are three modes of operation of one person, one God.

4.3 Subordinationism

This is another important heresy of this period. Here also the problem was one of harmonizing the oneness of God with the divinity of Christ. But this heresy answers the problem in a direction opposite to the direction taken by the monarchianist heresies. Modelism overstressed the unity of God and as a result denied the distinction in the persons. Subordinationism, on the other hand over-stressed the distinction and as a result the equality of the Son with the Father is denied making him inferior to the Father. Many writers of the early Church, mainly, those with a basis in Alexandria show some sort of subordinationism. Origen is the one who began this trend in his writings but in him it was not well pronounced. After him, Dionysius a disciple of Origen developed this theory. Dionysius was the bishop of Alexandria. His intention was not anything wrong. He wanted to safeguard the faith of the Church against the heresy of Sabellianism. This was a form of Monarchianism (the modelism), which got

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established in Lybia. Dionysius over stressed the distinction between the Father and the Son. This led the Sabellians to accuse him of heresy. The Sabellians wrote a letter to the Pope Dionysius in which they said that Dionysus bishop of Alexandria separated the Father and Son and he denies the son's eternity and also the fact that the Son is *homoousios* with the Father. They said Dionysus considered the Son as a creature and that the Son was made of a different substance. The difference between the Father and Son is like that between the vinedresser and the vine.

In reply to the letter of the Sabellians, Pope Dionysius wrote a letter in which the true doctrine of the Church was explained. The Pope's teaching was a *via media* standing between subordinationism and the Sabellian Monarchianism. As an offshoot of subordination came another heresy called Arianism. But it was of later origin and was most popular just before the council of Niccaea. Therefore we will deal with it when we study the decisions of the council.

4.4 Marcionism

This is another heresy of the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It takes its name from Marcion who started this heresy. Marcion was a Gnostic. Because of his Gnostic tendencies he denied the continuity between the OT and NT. According to him OT is the revelation of a semi-god, a demiurges, the god of the Jewish nation. This god wanted to make the Israelites rulers of the whole world. In opposition to this stands Jesus, who is the true revelation of the Father. Now in explaining Jesus, he goes wrong and shows himself to be a modelist. Jesus is distinguished from the Father only as a *modus*. He is universal saviour

and God of love. According to him the God of the OT is not the true God and there is nothing in the NT God to do with the OT God.

4.5 Conclusion

The heresies we have enlisted are all attempts at reconciling two main contents of revelation. There is the revelation from the formation of the people of God the Israelites that there is only one God. This God revealed himself as Yahweh. He called a people to himself and made Abraham the foundation of this people. He made a covenant with this people. This God spoke through Moses and the prophets. It is the same God who promised the coming of the Messiah. Therefore NT has no other God than this God of the OT. It is in obedience to the word spoken by this God that people waited for the Messiah.

Therefore this faith in the one and only God is to be maintained. At the same time, the Christian experience is that Christ is God and Son of God. The problem was to reconcile these two fundamental questions, the unique qualities of Jesus and the Oneness of God. Two answers are given, overstressing one or other of these problems. When the oneness of God is overstressed, it gave rise to modelism; when the divinity of Christ is overstressed, it resulted in polytheism or subordinationism.

The Orthodox Fathers

Hyppolitus: He is important as an early theologian who fought for the true faith of the Church in the midst of early heresies. His first

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book appeared in A.D 200. It was against the Monarchianism, which was still upheld by same people in Rome. He was involved in the Church politics of Rome. He is called the Anti-Pope because of this involvement in Roman Church Politics. His enemies attacked him on the basis of his theology of the trinity. They said he was subordinationist . He counter attacked the Popes accusing them as modalists. The Pope he attacked on the basis of faith are Zephyrinus and Callistus. Though all these politics were going on for and against Hyppolitus, his doctrine is sound.

He begins with a description of God as alone. About God who created he says: "There was nothing besides him, but though he was alone, he was many. He was not without reason, without wisdom, without power, without counsel. All was in him; he was all when he wanted and in the way he wanted, he showed forth the Word at a time fixed by Him; through it he made all things".

His idea of the Word is expressed in the following statement, "There appeared another beside Him. But when I say another (*heteros*) I do not mean there are two Gods, but that is only light from light, or as water from a fountain, or as a ray from the sun"..

The word 'Son' is never used for the word before it is made visible in creation. Yet his idea of the Word is correct because he understands the Word as eternal. The same way his idea that the Word was manifest only in creation is correct.

It is in his attack against the modelists that he stresses the real distinction between God and the Word. There also he maintains the correct or orthodox teaching on Trinity.

Tertullian

Tertullian also held a position similar to that of Hippolytus. Tertullian was writing against the Monarchianists. Already in an Apology he explained his position about God. But the detailed theology was given in a book entitled *Adversus Praxeam*. His special importance is that he, for the first time, gives the correct terminology to express the mystery of the Trinity.

He both defends the plurality of persons against the modelists and upholds the orthodox faith in the unity of Godhead. His theology may be summed up as follows.

Tertullian begins with the faith in One God. Then he says "yet under the dispensation which is our word for economy, this one God has a Son, his Word, who proceeded from God himself and through whom all things have been made. This Son then sent, according to his promise, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete out of the Father". (*Adversus Praxeas*)

Then he calls these three persons. This is the first time the word person is used for these three divine beings.

He also stresses the unity of these Persons saying "We have the truth if we say that the One God must not be believed in any other way but that he is Father, Son and Spirit; not that in this way all be one, but that all are from one (*ex uno omnia*) i.e. through the oneness of substance so that the mystery of the economy is preserved, which reveals the oneness in the Trinity, which means that there are three-the Father, Son and Spirit, but they (are three) not by status (or fundamental

quality) but by degree (i.e. order) not by substance but by form (manifestation); not by power but by self-manifestation (species).

This terminology is very complicated. Unless we are very careful we may misunderstand Tertullian. The *status* here means the divine essence, which is common to all the three. Also he makes a distinction between *unus* and *unum*. The three are not *unus*. Then there will be only one person, which is not true. They are *unum* i.e. the essence is one and the same.

This is the basic theology of Tertullian about the Trinity. This is a correct position, which should be used as a measuring stick in interpreting and evaluating his other Trinitarian theses.

He explains the Trinity by means of comparison with material things. In these comparisons he sometimes seems to be deviating from the correct position. For example he speaks of the three persons by comparing them to

1. Radix – frutere – fructus root – sprouting shoot – fruit.
2. Fons – flavius – river fountain head – spring – river
3. Sol – radicus – apen son – ray – light point.

In these comparisons he stresses the fact that one and the same substance is fully contained in each of the three stages of self-communication.

At the same time we should not press too much these comparisons because in pressing too much we will end up in polytheism.

In one place Tertullian says that the “Son is derivation of the whole, a portion. This is not true. The Son is not derivation from the whole (in the sense the three persons together). Neither is the Son a portion. He is complete God.

In evaluating Tertullian we have to keep in mind his background and his intellectual training.

Tertullian was a sharp mind. But he was not a philosopher, but a legalist or one with legalistic mind. Moreover Tertullian is speaking from a stoic background. In stoicism God was presented in a crude material way.

These are the reasons why he looks like deviating from the true doctrine when he comes to the explanations of it.

Another misunderstanding about Tertullian is his expressions about the Son. Some people accuse him of saying that the Son is not eternal. They criticise him from the following expressions.

There are, according to him, eternal and non-eternal attributes in God. The eternal attributes are those related to God’s essence – Goodness, Kindness etc are such eternal attributes. But there are others attributes, which depend on the things related to God. Thus he says Fatherhood, being a judge etc is non-eternal attributes. In his own words,

God is not Father before the Son and not judge before the world. From this expression one may say that the origin of the Son, according to him, is temporal and that is why fatherhood is said to be non-eternal.

But we have to understand him in his proper background. Even before him in the time of the Apologists the term Son was applied to the second person of the Trinity only in relation to his being sent. It does not mean that the Son was not there from all eternity but only that the name Son was not applied to him before his being sent by the Father.

Therefore we should not judge him in the light of the terminologies used in later theology.

4.6 Conclusion

Hyppolitus and Tertullian give us a thorough reflection on the mystery of the Trinity. They also introduce the main points in the discussion of the mystery. They gave us the idea that the three are *unum* but not *unus*. In substance, they have avoided the subordination of the heretics, but in expression they have not succeeded completely in avoiding it.

CHAPTER - 5

EARLY ALEXANDRIAN THEOLOGIANs

If Hypolitus and Tertullian represent the Western Theological trend in the third century A.D., side by side with them there were theologians in the East, especially in the Alexandrian Church. Clement of Alexandria and Origen are representative theologians of the Alexandrian form of early theology.

Alexandria was the home of Platonism by the middle of the third century Neo-Platonism represented by Plotinus also influenced the thinking of the intellectuals of Alexandria. Side by side with these philosophical schools, there were catechetical schools in this Church. These catechetical schools were developed with the help of the best of Greek thought. One of such wise men, who explained the Christian mystery with the help of Platonism and Neo-Platonism was Clement of Alexandria.

5.1 Clement of Alexandria

He was not a systematic theologian. He was rather a moralist. But he has very clear teachings on the Trinity. They are not

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in the form of properly developed theology; rather they are in the form of confessions of the Trinity. In these confessions we read as follows:

“When the loving and benevolent Father had rained down the Word, that Word then became the spiritual nourishment of those who have good sense. O mystic Wonder, the Father of all is indeed one, and one also the universal Word, and the Holy Spirit is one and the same every where.”⁴⁸

By this phrase he teaches the oneness of God and at the same time professes the three-ness. He has a very orthodox idea about the generation of the Son. He says clearly that the Father from all eternity generated the Word i.e., he upholds the eternal generation of the Word.

But in his elucidation he betrays the deep sway of Platonism. This teaching may be presented in the following way:

God is unity, but beyond unity, transcending the monad, and yet somehow embracing all reality. This is the Father and he can be known only through his Word, the Son who is his image and inseparable from him, His mind or wisdom. Like the *nous* of middle Platonism and of Neo-Platonism, the Word is at once unity and plurality, comprising in himself the Father’s idea and also the active energy by which he animates the world of creatures. His generation from the Father is without commencement and he is in essence one with him. The Spirit thirdly is the light issuing from the Word, which divided without any real separation, illuminates the faithful; he is also the power of the Word, which attracts men to God.

5.2 Origen

Origen is another Alexandrian theologian of this period who was still more profoundly influenced by Platonism. In his book *Peri archon* we have his clear profession of faith in the Trinity. He insists on the distinction of the persons and he calls them *hypostases* (this is the stoic term for essence). By *Hypostasis*, Origen understands (contrary to Stoic thinking) individual. With these expressions he tries to defend the distinction of persons, which the modelists had played down. He stresses the generation of the Son in such a way that the distinction of persons cannot be denied. Yet his overemphasis is misunderstood by some of his opponents who say that in Origen's elucidation of the Trinity, especially the relation between the Father and Son as the Generator and the Generated the union is lost sight of and that he understands the union only as a mere moral union. In one place he says, "In the first place, it behooves us to know that in Christ the nature of His deity is one thing, because He is the Only begotten Son of the Father; and quite another is the human nature which He put on in these most recent times for the purpose of the dispensation".

But a careful study of the statements of Origen will eliminate all doubts about his belief. He has clear elucidation of the nature of the three persons. He says that the three persons share in the same common nature. Example is given of ray and light. The ray proceeds from the light and both the ray and the light are of the nature of light i.e. they have the same nature. The same way, the Son is of the same nature as the Father because the Father generates him. Therefore, he is God. There is, yet distinction between them. The Father is not the

Son; nor is the Son the Father. In explaining the difference, Origen seems to be vague and leaning towards Subordinationism. He says that being distinct, the Son is subordinate to the Father. But is this subordination something that touches the metaphysical identity of the Son? In fact Origen never makes a statement to the effect that the Son is metaphysically inferior to the Father. Rather in Origen's explanation, the subordination is a moral subordination. The Son is subordinate to the Father in the sense that he obeys the commands of the Father, carrying out everything according to the mind of the Father.

Another idea that we can see in Origen is that the Son is eternal and the first in the series of emanations. Distinguishing the Son from the Father, Origen says that the Father's influence is universal, but the Son's influence is limited to the rational beings. Then he says also that the Father, Son and Spirit constitute the divine realm, distinct from the realm of the creatures. Origen also clearly states the divinity of the Son. But this divinity is through sharing with the divinity of the Father. This shows that the origin of the Son is from the Father and that he is God.

5.3 Conclusion

Origen is a faithful witness to the Trinitarian faith of the early Church. He has also insisted on the real distinction of persons, which is the orthodox view on the subject. This is a real contribution to Trinitarian theology. Moreover his speculations on the Word have enriched the theology of the Word.

Yet he has a subordinationist tendency. This is, perhaps stronger in him than others of the orthodox school in his time. Some of the wrong ideas are

1. He says the Son and Spirit are more distinct from the Father than they are from the creatures. This makes the whole thing look like subordinationism.
2. Prayer should be addressed only to the Father, since Son and Spirit are only mediators.

There is another side of his thinking; he speaks of these distinctions in the context of God's descending communication i.e., God and his communications. Son is God's first communication and the creatures are other communications. As communications Son and creatures are related. This may be his point. Yet his terminology has been misunderstood and misinterpreted to give rise to a later heresy called Origenism.

CHAPTER - 6

TRINITARIAN TERMINOLOGY AND THE CONFUSION

6.1. The Two tendencies in the formulation of the doctrine

As has been explained earlier there were two tendencies in the explanation of the faith in the Trinity. These are the tendencies to over emphasize the distinction in persons on the one hand and to over emphasize the unity on the other hand. In the developed forms of theology in the early Church, one of these two tendencies was more or less identified with the Latin Fathers and the other with the Greek Fathers.

The Latin approach begins with the oneness of the divine essence and understands the three persons as the concrete subsistences of that one divine essence. The extreme form of this tendency is modelism. Traditional Western theology is to a great extent built on this basis.

On the other hand there is the Greek approach, which is very much founded on the data of the NT. In the Greek school, the division of persons is the starting point and from there they try to

explain the unity. Here the oneness is rather attributed to the Father who communicates his whole life to the Son and the Spirit. The works of God are not coming from the three divine persons through their common divine nature, but from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. Here the distinction of the divine persons is safeguarded but the oneness is not that clear.

The consequences of this approach may be listed as follows.

1. Insistence on the uniqueness of Father. He alone is without origin. The Greek expression *Ho Theos* is used only for Him. The Son is only *Theos* or *Theos ex Theou*. This also is biblical and correct if understood properly. But if overstressed the equality of the Son will be in danger. The solution is this. We have to distinguish between difference in origin and equality in substance. This comes only in the council of Nicaea.
2. Secondly, the Greek Fathers understand the Son in association with the creatures. This also is biblical and we have the expression, "Christ is the first born of all creatures" (Col.1:15). But if this phrase "first born of creatures" is understood as the principle of creation, i.e. the Son is the principle through which God created the creatures, then there is no danger. But if we are to understand the phrase as referring to the creatureliness of the Son i.e. the Son is the first creature, then the divinity of the Son will be in danger.
3. Another problem is the expression which gives the idea that the Father was free to generate the Son. "He sent forth the Son when he wanted." It is correct if this statement is meant to say

that the Father is always free as a person, or never under any law above himself (laws like evolution). Yet this freedom cannot be understood as he could choose not to generate the Son.”

6.2 The Struggle For Words

In the early Fathers we see a real struggle for words to express the mystery of Trinity. This is quite natural because every science has its technical terms. More than any other science words are more important in theology because theology deals with a subject which cannot be seen or experienced empirically. The main concerns in the struggle for words can be enlisted as follows.

6.2.1 The words that express distinction

The Word that will express that which distinguishes the persons in the Godhead. In the Greek schools the term *prosopon* was used to describe what in God is three. Now *prosopon* means a specific individual reality. Thus we can say John is a *prosopon*, the horse is a *prosopon*. In itself the word *prosopon* does not include the idea whether it is a living being or dead, an intellectual being or not. It only points to its objectivity and individuality. In this sense we can say God is three *prosopon*, i.e., the Father, Son and the Spirit are different, specific objective realities.

But a problem arose when Tertullian translated the word *prosopon* into the Latin as *persona*. Now *persona* means a specific human individual. Nothing non-human or less than human can be a *persona*. While Tertullian's translation is correct it adds a new connotation to the Greek *prosopon* which it did not have, i.e., it is a

subject, a mind, a personality. This new possibility was some thing which Tertullian did not in tent or understood because in his own use persona was approximate to *res* (thing, object)

With the translation Tertullian said that in God there are three persons. What he meant was that in God there are three specific, distinct, objective realities – Father, Son and Spirit. This also gave the idea that the words Father, Son and Spirit applied to God are not mere words but they signify three objective realities. So we can say in God there are three *prosopa* or three *persona*.

6.2.2 The word which will express the Unity

To speak about what unites the persons in God *hypostasis* was the word used by the Greek theologians. *Hypostasis* means what is under or the basis or the constant. Another word which was used as a synonym for this is *ousia*, the essence.

Now what is essence? That which a thing is is the essence. So we can say God is one hypostasis or *ousia* and three personae. In Latin the term Hypostasis was translated as *substantia*. This translation is proper because there is a perfect philological correlation. *Hypo* means sub and *stasis* means *stantia*. So here substance means essence or what underlies, the constant. So in Latin terminology God is one *substantia* and three *personae*.

6.3 Confusion about terms

Though the translations are correct if understood properly, there was much confusion about the meaning of these terms by the end of the third century. The modelists used the same word *prosopon* (which

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the Greek used) to spread their heretical ideas. In modelism there is no real distinction in God only three modes or forms or masks of the same reality. Now the term for mask in Greek also is *prosopon*. Therefore, in the terminology of the orthodox Fathers heresy was spread. Therefore, the Orthodox Greek Fathers abandoned the word *prosopon* and in its place used the word hypostasis.

But the problem is that already hypostasis had been used as a term to express the unity of God. This gave rise to the confusion in Trinitarian theology.

But those who replaced *prosopon* with hypostasis had a justification.

They said *hypostasis* has two meanings. I) It can mean first the unchanging and under lying abstract in a specific thing ii) It also means an objective subsistent reality i.e., it is also used in opposition to the inconsistent reality without content i.e., Hypostasis was commonly used as a synonym for pragma, thing.

They had another argument in their favour. Origen, the unopposed theologian in the East had already used hypostasis to express what differentiates in God. Thus he had already said that there are three *hypostaseis* in God. So in Greek uses *hypostasis* became a synonym with the persona of the Latins.

But there was the confusion with that which unites God because this same word was used for expressing that which unites in God. To avoid the confusion, they started using *ousia* exclusively for expressing that which unites in God. Thus the Greek formula of belief in Trinity

was this: *Treis hypostaseis kai mia ousia* and in Latin : *Tres personae et una essentia vel substantia*. But the confusion did not end here. A new phase of tension arose when some Latin writers wanted to use a philologically correct word as translation of *hypostasis*. The word they used was *substantia*. Thus for them God was one essence and three substances. But this is clear heresy. This will mean that God had three natures or essences because in philosophical use *substantia* is almost a synonym for essence or nature.

So those who replaced *prosopon* with hypostasis went back to the old use of *prosopon*. We know this will also result in confusion. This confusion surfaced in Antioch at the end of the fourth century. This we will see later.

CHAPTER - 7

TOWARDS A DOGMATIC SETTLEMENT

As stated above the use of the different terms in more than one sense and the difference in the senses given to these words resulted in Trinitarian problem. In Origen himself there was the seed of confusion and heresy if his terms are overstressed. Then Eusebius of Alexandria followed up. He speaks of the unique transcendence of the Father who alone is without beginning and unborn.

The word for without beginning is *anarchos*. The word for unborn is *agennetos*. There is a similar word *agenetos* in Greek which means unmade. Now Eusebius and many others used these two words interchangeably. This will mean that the Son is made or created. This is heresy. In actual application it was said that the Son is infinitely different from the Father and that he carries only his likeness.

This line of thought gave rise to another heresy called Arianism. Arius was born around 260 in Lybia. He calls himself and Eusebius and others of his line of thinking as disciples of Lucanus, the founder of the Antiochean catechetical school. His training in this school made him somewhat a rationalist and in his arguments this thinking had its

influence. He interprets the scripture literally and this interpretation lies on the background of all his arguments.

Arius was a priest of the Alexandrian Church. There his spiritual relationship is with the church of Alexandria and the traditions of Origen. When his doctrines were found to be wrong, he was condemned in a local council participated by 100 bishops. Then he went to Eusebius of Caesarea and he was taken back as a priest and placed in Nicomedia. Later his doctrines were condemned in the Council of Nicaea in 325 and emperor Constantine exiled him. Later in 335 he was re-established by the Synod of Tyros, but the day before his reconciliation was fixed he died.

7.1 Arius' Doctrine

The doctrines of Arius are contained in some of his letters and in fragments of a book called *Thalia* (banquet), which is half poetry and half prose.

The main argument of Arius concerns the uniqueness of God, which he defends very strongly. This uncompromising defense of the uniqueness of God is clear in his statement to the bishop of Alexandria. There he says "we acknowledge one God who is alone unborn (*agenetos*), alone eternal, alone without beginning (*anarchon*), alone true, alone possessing immortality, alone wise, alone good, alone sovereign, alone judge of all." This is the nature or essence or *ousia* of God. This nature or *ousia* is incommunicable, non-sharable. If this nature is communicated, then we will have to say there is division in God and even change or duality. This will imply polytheism. Now the

problem is this: if this is the *ousia* of God how do we understand Christ or the Word? Arius understands the Word in the following way:

- i) The word must be creature. Arius has two words to express the idea- *ktisma* and *poiema*. *Ktisma* means creature and *poiema* means that which is made. So the Word, according to Arius, is *ktisma* or *poiema*. He bases his argument on the Bible. In the Bible the word is begotten of the Father or the only begotten of the Father (Jn 1:14): *monogenous para patros*. Arius says this "only begotten" cannot be understood literally. It has to be understood in a figurative way. Otherwise we will be making God like man with the result that we give the impression God physically begot the Son. At the same time the begetting of the Son implies that he is not like other creatures. He is the perfect creature. He is perfect creature because he owes his existence to the Father only, while the Father creates other creatures through the Word (Jn 1:3). In other words, there is no secondary causality in the origin of the Word.
- ii) Since the Word is a creature, he must have a beginning. He is before all other creatures and therefore, he was born before time was born, i.e., he is before time or outside of time. Yet he has a beginning and therefore, there was a time when he was not. So the Word or Son is not eternal with the Father. If he is said to be eternal, then we will have to say there are two Gods.
- iii) The Nature of the son is different from that of the Father.

Since the Son is alien and utterly dissimilar to the essence of the Father, his nature is different from that of the Father. Therefore, his knowledge of the Father is not perfect. He knows the Father as far as his capacity permits.

Yet the Son can be called God in the sense that he is above all other creatures. At the same time the little God is not proper to him. It is a courtesy little. He is not true God; he is God by participation in grace. Therefore, the Son is God only in name. In Grace he is designated Son.

Now Arius makes a distinction between Christ the Word and the Eternal Word with the Father. The Word in God is the same as the Father. It is not distinct from the Father. It is different from the Word, which is the first creature.

- iv) The Word is subject to change. He is even liable to sin i.e., by nature the Word the Son is peccable, liable to commit sin. But Arius does not say that the Word has actually sinned. Though peccable the Word was preserved by grace from falling into sin.

With the emergence of Arianism, which is a clear heresy, the problem of the understanding of the Trinity became a crucial problem in the Church. Together with Arianism, there was also confusion and misunderstanding among the orthodox Christians. The Fathers were more or less divided into two camps, one representing the West and the other representing the East. The letter of Pope Dionysius to bishop Dionysius of Alexandria represented the Western idea of the Trinity. This document took a middle path between the heretic Sebellianism

and subordinationism. In fact the document gives all the teachings which were adopted in the Council of Nicaea. But in interpretation the Eastern Fathers were not satisfied with the Latin form. Therefore, the question had to be settled in an official pronouncement of the teaching as a dogma. Moreover, the clear heretical teaching of Arius had to be condemned. Thus to put a stop to the controversy concerning the unity in Godhead and the distinction in persons, the Council of Nicaea was convoked.

7.2 The Council of Nicaea (AD 325)

Constantine who came to power as the emperor of the eastern part of the Roman world in 306 became the sole ruler of the whole Roman Empire in 324 after the defeat of Licinius who had shared the power of a part of the Roman Empire. Therefore, all disputes concerning the dogmatic problems were referred to him. To put an end to the dispute he first sent bishop Hosius the bishop of Cordova who was his special adviser in ecclesiastical matters to the bishop of Alexandria (Alexander was his name). But the problem could not be settled at the local level. So he for the first time convoked a general council i.e., a council in which the bishops of the entire world were to be gathered together.

The Roman Pontiff, Sylvester I was not consulted before Constantine acted for the convocation of the Council. But Sylvester I ratified the move by sending his legates – two priests – Victor and Vincentius—from the Roman Church. This way it became the Council officially convoked by the head of the College of bishops.

The council was to be held in Nicaea in Bithynia because it was a convenient place for the Western bishops to reach. It was also

convenient for the emperor to attend. The Council was inaugurated on 20 May, 325 and came to and end on 19 June. Altogether there were 250 bishops. 220 bishops have put their signature in the creed of the Council. Most of the bishops were from the Eastern half of the empire. But Western province like Africa, Spain, Gaul and Italy were also represented. Our knowledge of the proceedings of the Council is limited. It is said that the proceedings of the council ran into some 40 volumes. But now they are all lost.

In the council, the bishops grouped themselves into different parties according to their conviction. There was a powerful group of 15 to 20 bishops who supported Arius. A second group wanted no clarification to the Trinitarian question but only a simple statement of it in terms already in use. But a third group which was the majority wanted a thorough study of the entire teaching in the light of tradition and to express the Catholic teaching clearly and if needed in new terminology. Arius was given chance to defend himself. But he bluntly repeated what he has been teaching. the Fathers were not satisfied with it. So he had to be condemned. But there should be a formula on which ground he should be condemned. And so a formula was formulated and it read as follows:

We believe in One God, the Father almighty, Creator of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father; God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not created, consubstantial (*homo-ousios*) with the Father⁴⁹.

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7.3 Clarification of terms

The council said that the Son is born of the Father and then the phrase is explained as 'of the substance of the Father' *ek tes ousias tou Patros*. This was intended to refute the position of Arius who, though admitted the divinity of the word, understood it not as sharing same substance of the Father but as participation in grace.

Born not made – *egennetos kai agenetos kai apoios* :- This was used to differentiate the origin of the Son from that of the creatures. Though the Son has originated from the Father it was a birth and not a creation.

Consubstantial (of the same substance) with the Father – *homo ousios to Patri* :- this explains that the Word has the same nature as the Father.

After formulating the 'Creed of the Council', the position of Arius was condemned. In the condemnation all the disputed expressions of Arius were separately and clearly taken and condemned. The formula of condemnation goes as follows.

Those who say i) there was a time when he was not and ii) that before he was born he was not and iii) that he was made out of nothing or out of some other substance or essence or iv) that the Son of God is changeable or mutable, those the catholic Church anathematizes.

7.4 Council of Constantinople I

The situation that necessitated a second council, the First Council of Constantinople was the developments in the theology of the Trinity

after the Nicene definition. The development can be understood as taking place in two directions. One is political direction and the second is doctrinal direction i.e., the different understanding of the expression, *homo ousios* that was the key word in Nicene definition.

1.The Political situation⁵⁰

As stated above the Council of Nicaea was convoked by the emperor and not the Pope. The emperor was present all through the proceedings and even controlled them. This political involvement was felt more clearly in the following years. The Arian supporters had more influence with the emperor than the other party. As a result, slowly the exiled bishops could return to the empire. Moreover, when Constantius came to power the Arian side gained more power. Constantius was the ruler of the East alone from 337-50. During this time he tried to subdue the bishops of the Nicene doctrine. Then from 350-61 he was the ruler of the whole empire and during this time Arianism was prevailing in the Roman world under the sponsorship of the emperor.

2.The Doctrinal Development

Though outwardly there was a great unanimity among the bishops of Nicaea who signed the document, there was real difference among them. Some signed it not out of personal conviction, especially the bishop's with Arian tendency. Even among the Catholic party, there was doubt about the appropriateness of the terminology used in the definition. Particularly important was two problems concerning the terminology. The key term in the definition was *homo ousios*. Both the Arians and the Catholic bishops realized the confusion invited

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by this term. First of all it was a term coined by the Latin Fathers. But in the Council the majority was Eastern bishops. This means the Council used the terminology of the minority.

Tertullian had introduced the word *consubstantialis* into the Latin vocabulary and it was acceptable to all catholic theologians. In the council this term was translated into Greek as *homo ousios* and made the key expression.

The word was somewhat new to the Easterners though Origen and his disciples had used it. Moreover, Greek writers to indicate quite a different thing used the very same word. Paul of Samosata had used it but in exactly opposite meaning. For him to say that the Father and Son are *homo ousios* did not mean that both possessed the same divine nature but that the Father and Son are simply two different names for the one God, the one and only divine person. The local synod of Antioch had condemned Paul of Samosata. But the Nicene Council as its key expression uses the very same expression condemned by a local Council.

In the development that followed the Council of Nicaea, Athanasius was the leader of the Catholic position and Eusebius was the leader of the Arian faction. In the definition and explanations that followed, there emerged four groups of theologians – one catholic and the other three different forms of Arianism.

- 1) The *Homo ousions* :-this is the catholic group which was led by Athanasius. They insisted on the meaning given to the expression in Nicaea i.e., Christ is of the same substance as the Father.

- 2) The *Anomeans* :- this is one group of Arians. They clearly opposed the decision of Nicea. They said that the Word (Logo) was entirely unlike the Father. So they are called *anomeans* from *a (an)* (not) and *homoios* (same -like). This group is also called Eunomeans from the name Eunomius who was their leader.
- 3) The *Homoeans* :-this word comes from *homois*, which means similar. These people objected to the use of *homoousios* and suggested the simple expression *homoios* leaving out the *ousios*. This will mean, “The Son is like the Father” instead of the Nicene expression ‘the Son is of the same essence or substance as the Father. This was suggested as a compromise to the debate that was going on. They said the Catholics may understand it as they wanted i.e., the Son is like the Father means he is of the same substance as the Father and the Arians may understood it in their own way as the Son is only similar to the Father. This group was politically strong. Therefore, this group is called the Politicals.
- 4) *Homoi-ousians* :- This was the largest Arian group. This group is today called also as the Semi-Arians. They wanted to add an ‘i’ to it and changed the *homoousios* into *homoiousios*. *Homos* means “same” and *homoios* means “similar”. Thus it will mean Son was only of a nature similar to that of the Father and not of the same nature. In writing the difference was only a ‘i’(iota) but in meaning there was wide difference. In this sense the Son is not true God.

In 373 Athanasius who was the leader of the Catholic side of the debate died and the leadership passed to Basil. Then after some

time St. Gregory Nazianzus became the leader of the Catholic party. Theodosius became the ruler of the Roman Empire. He had Arian inclinations. He rehabilitated the exiled bishops and priests. As a result Constantinople was totally filled by the Arians. Those people who followed the Catholic position had no bishops or churches. Therefore, Pope Liberius, the then bishop of Rome suggested that another Ecumenical Council should be convoked to settle the disputes.

Finally the Emperor Theodosius decided to convoke the Council. But when it was actually convoked it showed many peculiarities.

1. It seems that only the bishops of the East were invited. Any way not a single bishop from the West attended it.
2. The then Pope was Damasus and he was not contacted. He did not take part in the proceedings nor did he send any representatives.

In fact only much later the Council got recognition from the Pope. We have no evidence that Damasus gave any approval even after the Council was over. But from the sixth century, Constantinople I is listed among the other general councils in the papal documents.

The council opened in May 381 and ended in July. Three people presided over the meeting by turn –Meletius, Gregory Nazianzus and Nectarius.

The Arian bishop of Constantinople was not ready to accept the decision of Nicea and therefore, another bishop for Constantinople had to be elected. Gregory Nazianzen was selected for this office.

In the doctrinal discussion the bishops with Arian standing did not participate, rather some 36 of them left before the discussion began. The bishops had a new task this time. It was concerning a heresy about the Holy Spirit. This was a heresy preached by the so-called Semi-Arians. As they said about the Word, their stand was that the Spirit is only a creature and not God.

When the Arian bishops left the 150 bishops who remained proceeded to reaffirm the faith of Nicaea. There was much dispute about the terminology of Nicaea. Yet the bishops simply repeated the terminology of Nicaea, because as they understood it, “The profession of faith of the holy fathers who gathered in Nicaea in Bithynia is not to be abrogated, but it is to remain in force”⁵¹ The expression *homo-ousia* also was repeated. The formula they used was the Jerusalem Creed already in practice. This creed was substantially made in the light of the Council of Nicaea⁵². This formula had the following point about the Spirit in addition to the Creed of Nicaea:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the given of life; he proceeds from the Father, is adored and honored together with the Father and the Son; he spoke through the prophets.

In this way, the doctrinal quarrel was finally settled. Yet a new problem was created by the third canon of Constantinople I. It reads: “Because it is New Rome, the bishop of Constantinople is to enjoy the privileges of honour after the bishop of Rome”⁵³. This clause paved the way for fights for power between the Roman bishops and Constantinople bishops and finally to the great schism.

7.5 After Constantinople I

The doctrine of Trinity was almost finalized in the Second ecumenical council, namely, Constantinople I. Yet certain additions were made to this creed, the so-called Nicene–Constantinople creed in the later councils of the Latin Church. One of these is the addition known as *Filioque* (and the son) about the precession of the Holy Spirit. This development and the consequences in the relationship among the Churches will be discussed in a later section of this study. Another development in Trinitarian doctrine was introduced in the fourth Lateran council. It was about the inter-relationship among the three persons of the Trinity. The theory that formulated this relationship is known as the theory of *Perichoresis*. This theory proposed for the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches and known as the decree for the Jacobites speaks about the interpenetration of the three persons. The theory may be explained as follows.

7.5.1 The Theory of perichoresis⁵⁴

Perichoresis is a term used in Trinitarian theology from the sixth century. It is used for the relation among the three persons of the Trinity. The Latin translation is *circumincessio* or *circuminsessio*. *Cessio* means the active interpenetration of each of these persons with others. *Sessio* means to be ecstatically in one another. But these translations are not very useful in bringing out the exact meaning of the Greek expression.

This theory is based on the words of Jesus in Jn. 10:30, where he says, “The Father and I are one (*hen*) (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἐσμέν). *Hen* is the neuter of *heis* – one. Therefore the expression means that both of them together make one substance and not one person i.e., it

is not a numerical oneness. This was later explained in 10:38, by saying, “The Father is in me and I am in the Father, (οτι εη εμοι ο πατερ καγω εν τω πατρι). This means the oneness in 10:30 is an oneness created by the mutually penetrating existence. The union of Father and Son does not blot out the difference and individuality of each of them.

This difference and individuality carries with them the risk of tri-theism. But it is avoided through *perichoresis*, the eternal communion existing from the beginning between the three persons.

In the three persons, nothing is anterior, superior, greater, lesser or posterior. They are co-equal, co-eternal, and co-almighty. This is so because there is unity of nature, substance or essence shared by all the three. Because of this one nature, each of the persons is wholly in the others (*circumincessio*) penetrates and is penetrated by the others (*circumincessio or perichoresis*). The council of Florence in 1442 promulgated this theory as a decree for the Jacobites. The council expressed the communion between the three persons in clear terms and said that this is the basis for a clear understanding of the Trinity. The text of the decree is as follows:

On account of this unity the Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit, the Son wholly in the Father and wholly in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son. None precedes the other in eternity, nor exceeds the other in greatness, nor exceeds the other in power. For it is from eternity and without beginning that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

All that the Father is or has, He has not from another but from Himself. He is the origin without Origin. All that the Son is or has, he has from the Father; He is origin from origin. All that the Holy Spirit is or has, He has at once (*simul*) from the Father and the Son. But the Father and the Son are not two origins of the Holy Spirit but one origin, just as Father Son and Holy Spirit are not three origins of creation but one origin⁵⁵.

Conclusion of the Historical study

The doctrine that came out as the final result of the disputes and settlements in the councils may be summarized as follows:

God is one and only one. Yet God is three hypostaseis or *personae*. The Father is never without the Son. Therefore, the Son is co-eternal with the Father, so also the Holy Spirit.

The Son is unmade and so fully shares in the deathlessness of the Father. His birth is necessary. Origin and relation of the Son to the Father does not mean change. There is no division in God by the birth of the Son, because it is a spiritual birth and not like the birth in a human and material sense.

Homo ousios is understood not as identity of persons as the Sabellians did, but as perfection in equality.

The Son is other than the Father as his offspring but as God he is one and the same. He and the Father are one in intimate union of their nature and the identity of their Godhead.

CHAPTER - 8

THEOLOGICAL FORMULATION OF THE DOCTRINE

The Trinitarian faith that was formulated in Nicaea and Constantinople received theological embellishment and intellectual embodiment in the subsequent years in both the West and the East. The leading theologians of the West who interpreted this faith in the light of existing philosophies are St. Augustine of Hippo and St Thomas Aquinas.

8.1 St. Augustine

St. Augustine's full name is Aurelius Augustinus. When the Council of Nicaea was convoked he was not yet born, and when the Council of Constantinople was in progress, Augustine was still young and in his enslavement to sin. But when he was converted, he learned the decisions of the Council and gave them theological explanation.

Augustine was born on 13 November, 354, in the province of Numidia in North Africa, not far from Hippo Regius. In spite of the early training he received from his mother and her example he became a manichaen and lead a sinful life. But the influence of St. Ambrose on

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him was slowly changing him. It finally resulted in his conversion, a thorough and fruitful conversion, next to that of Paul on the way to Damascus, when in a garden of the Villa Cassiciacum, not far from Milan, in September 386, in the midst of a most violent struggle of mind and heart, the birth throes of the new life, he heard the divine voice of a child. "Take heed and 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ'" (Rom 13:14). He received baptism from Ambrose of Milan on the Easter Sunday of 387. By the voice of the people he was chosen presbyter and in 395 he was elected bishop. For 38 years he worked in the City of Hippo until his death and made it the intellectual center of Western Christendom⁵⁶.

Augustine's labours extended far beyond his little diocese. He was the intellectual head of North African and the entire Western Church of his time. He was the orthodox theologian against Manichaeism, Donatism and Pelagianism.

8.1.1 The Main writings of Augustine

His writings before his conversion are mostly extinct. But they were also of very great value. One such work was *De Pulchro et Apto* a philosophical treatise on beauty and Aptness. The other works may be classified and listed as follows:

Autobiographical – *Confession, Retractations*

Philosophical – *De Vita Beata, De immortalitate animae* etc

Apologetic – *De Civitate Dei*

Religio-Theological – these are most important sources for the history of Christian Doctrine in the Patristic period — *De heresibus ad Quodvultdeum, De vera religione*

8.1.2 Augustine's Treatise on the Trinity

His treatise on the Trinity is a work written in 15 books. The main contents of these 15 books relevant for a doctrine of the Trinity may be summarized as follows⁵⁷.

Book I: In the first book he establishes the unity and equality of the Supreme Trinity with references from the sacred scripture. He also gives the correct explanation for the texts, which are used by the heretics against the Catholic Trinitarian faith.

Book II: Here he explains the equality of the Trinity. He says he who is sent is not less than he who sends because the one has sent, the other has been sent. But the Trinity being equal in all things, and alike in its own nature, works indivisibly in each sending or appearance.

Book III: Though there are different appearances of God, the essence itself of God is never seen.

Book IV: Here he speaks of the sending of the Son out of the supreme love of God

Book V: The arguments put forward by the heretics are not from the scripture but from their own reason. Here he argues, to beget and to be begotten, to be begotten and unbegotten, being diverse, are diverse substances, according to the heretics.

But in fact, says Augustine, not everything predicated of God is predicated according to substance in such manner as he is called good and great according to substance, or anything else that is predicated of him in respect to himself.

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But some things are also predicated of him relatively i.e., not in respect to himself, but in respect of something not himself, as he is called Father in respect to Son, and Lord in respect to the creatures that serve him. In these cases such predications are predicated as happening in time. E.g. Lord, you are my refuge in the day of trouble (Jer 16:19)

Book VI: In this book the following ideas are given: Paul calls Jesus the power of God and the Wisdom of God (1Cor 1:24). From this, Augustine asks: Is not the Father himself wisdom. Truly the Father is wisdom. Therefore, we can say, wisdom begot wisdom. From this he proves the unity and equality of the Father, Son and Spirit. Therefore, we ought to believe in a Trinity and not in a threefold God.

Book VII: The question asked in the previous book is explained and answered in this book. God the Father who begot the Son, his power and wisdom is not only the Father of power and wisdom, but also himself power and wisdom. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is himself power and wisdom. Yet these three are not three powers and three wisdoms but one power and one wisdom, as there is but one God and one essence. Then he explains the terminology of the Latin Fathers and the Greek Fathers concerning the Trinity.

Book VIII: Here another aspect of the Trinity is given. The Father is not greater than the Son, nor both of them together greater than the Spirit. Not any two of them together greater than the other one. All three together is not any greater than each separately. Then he explains how God's nature can be understood from our understanding of Truth and from our knowledge of the Supreme Good and from the innate love of righteousness. A righteous soul is loved

even by a soul that is itself not righteous. The knowledge of God is to be sought by love because God is said to be love in the Scriptures. In this love itself there is some trace of Trinity.

Book IX: In this book Augustine says that there is a kind of Trinity in man himself because man is the image of God. The Trinity in man is this: the mind, the knowledge by which the mind knows itself and the love with which it loves itself and its own knowledge. These three are mutually equal and of one essence.

Book X: There is another Trinity in the mind of man. This Trinity is much more clear than the previous one. Man's memory, understanding and will form a Trinity.

Book XI: Here a kind of Trinity is pointed out outside man and the way the outside object affect man. The object, which is seen; the form of it that is impressed upon the mind of man; the purpose of the will, which combines both, all these together form a Trinity But these are not equal and do not form one substance. Another example for Trinity is: The image of the bodily object, which is in the memory, the impression formed from there when the eye-of-the thinker is turned to it, the purpose of the will, which combines both. These three are somewhat of one substance

Book XII: In this book Augustine starts with wisdom and knowledge and says that they are distinct. Then he proceeds to give an example of the Trinity, the mind, - knowledge and wisdom. This knowledge is not the knowledge of the beasts but the **rational** knowledge by which we know things rationally. Neither is it the supreme knowledge of God. Thus this rational knowledge, wisdom and mind belong to a nature other than and superior to that of the beasts.

Book XIII: In this book he starts from the data given in the previous book. Then he commends on Christian faith, which is blessedness. Then he says when the words of faith are committed to memory, there is in the mind a kind of Trinity – the memory of the sounds of the words (even when the man is not thinking), the mind's eye or his reflection formed upon it when he thinks of them; and the will which when he so thinks and remembers, combines both.

Book XIV: In this book Augustine speaks of the true wisdom of man. He says man is God's image in that he has a mind. But it is not in the transitory things of the mind that the image of God is placed. He gives examples of transitory things – memory, understanding, love, etc. It is in the things that are permanent. This wisdom is perfected when the mind is renewed in the knowledge of God and attains to wisdom where in that which is contemplated is eternal

Book XV: In this chapter he gives a summary of the previous 14 chapters. Then he speaks of God the Trinity and says we are promised a blessed life as a result of contemplating on the Trinity. This Trinity is seen in us who are God's image. Then he says some kind of likeness can be seen for the Word of God from our word, which proceeds from our mind. Then for the Spirit we can see a likeness in the love that is joined to the Word by the will.

8.1.3 Summary of Augustine's Understanding of the Trinity

Augustine's treatise on the Trinity gives expression to the true faith of the Catholic Church. He has taken the dogmas of Nicaea and Constantinople giving them a correct philosophical foundation. Augustine's approach is typically the Western approach to the Trinity though there are some great Eastern theologians also who take this

approach (e.g. Gregory Nazianzen, Epiphanius). In this approach the starting point is the absolute unity of God. But here there is a difference.

For the Eastern Fathers God in the absolute sense means the Father. For Augustine God in the absolute sense means the Trinity of persons. He says in a place “The Trinity is the only True God.” From establishing Trinity as the only True God he proceeds to consider each of the persons. For Augustine the inner relationship of God is not coming after the persons or modifications or determinations of God’s essence rather the relationship itself is the immanent inherent and eternal essence of God. The absolute relationship makes up that one God who is called Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In other words, Augustine’s Trinitarian idea is this: **unity in Trinity and Trinity in unity.**

This faith was expressed by a creed, which was popular in the West especially in the 5th century. This creed is known as the *Quicumque Vult Creed* (i.e., who so ever will be saved) or Pseudo-Athanasian Creed). In fact Augustine did not formulate it though Augustine’s idea of the Trinity is properly represented here. It is attributed to Athanasius. But it is a wrong attribution and therefore it is known as the Pseudo-Athanasian Creed. It was formulated and Published by an anonymous author in the South of France between 430-500. It reads as follows:

Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all, keep the Catholic faith; for unless a person keeps this faith whole and entire he will undoubtedly be lost forever. This is what the Catholic faith teaches:

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We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity. We distinguish among the persons, but we do not divide the substance. For the Father is a distinct person; the Son is a distinct person; and the Holy Spirit is a distinct person. Still, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have one divinity, equal glory, and eternal majesty. What the Father is, the Son is, and the Holy Spirit is. The Father is uncreated, the Son is Uncreated and the Holy Spirit is Uncreated. The Father has immensity, the Son has immensity, and the Holy Spirit has immensity. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal. Nevertheless, three are not three eternal beings, but one eternal being. Thus there are not three uncreated beings or three beings having immensity, but one uncreated being and one being that has immensity.

Likewise, the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, and the Holy Spirit is omnipotent. Yet there are not three omnipotent beings, but one omnipotent being. Thus the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God. But there are not three Gods, but one God. The Father is Lord.... There are not three Lords, but one Lord.... The Father is not made by anyone, nor created by anyone, nor generated by anyone. The Son is not made nor created, but the Father alone generates him. The Holy Spirit is not made nor created, nor generated, but proceeds from the Father and the Son.

There is the one Father, not three Fathers, one Son, not three sons, one Holy Spirit, nor three Holy Spirits. In this Trinity, there is nothing that precedes, nothing subsequent to anything else. There is nothing greater, nothing lesser than anything else. But the entire three persons are co-eternal and co-equal with one another, so that, as we

have said, we worship complete **Unity in the Trinity and the Trinity in the Unity....**

8.1.4 An Evaluation of Augustinian Theology of the Trinity

Augustine's interpretation of the Trinity is based on the fact that the entire world is created by God and therefore does reveal the vestigia of the Trinity. But it is in man that this vestigia is impressed fully, for the scripture says that man was created in the likeness and image of God (Gen 1:26). Here the plural is used in the words spoken by God as "Let us" and not let me. Augustine sees a teaching on the Trinity in this use of plural. From this he argues to the Trinitarian structure in man.

In the process of perception: there is the object, the seeing and the attention of the mind. Then after the passing of the object we have a triad of the following: impression, inner vision and will. Then he goes on to the image in man's mind, namely, memory, intellect, will or mind, idea, and love.

All these Trinitarian aspects in man he explains it this way: As they are two, the mind and its love when it loves itself, so too mind and knowledge are two if one knows himself. Thus mind, knowledge and love are three and the three are one, and when they are perfect they are equal, because if one loves oneself less than he/she is... he/she is deficient and his/her love is not perfect. Similarly if one's knowledge is less than the object that is known, it is not perfect.

Augustine's intention in explaining the Trinity by means of the Trinitarian structure in man is much more than a theological explanation. It is something of his spiritual theology.

8.2 St. Tomas Aquinas

Thomas was born in Aquino midway between Rome and Naples. His early studies were in the school of Monte Cassino and in the university of Naples. He joined the Dominican Order in 1225. He did his higher studies under Albert the Great first at Paris and then at Cologne. During his short lifetime of just 49 years he did more than what a distinguished intellectual could do in a period of three lifetimes. After a very busy life of teaching and writing he died in 1274⁵⁸.

St. Thomas' procedure is first to treat the divine essence in its unity and then to proceed to treat what pertains to the Trinity of persons in God. This distinction is on the basis of the origin of the persons. Therefore, in his treatment of the Trinity, he first, considers what it means when we say 'to proceed' when the word is used in reference to God.

8.2.1 The Divine Persons

Thomas establishes the existence of the three persons in God by way of proving that there are two distinct internal processions in God. There is procession in God This procession is not like an effect proceeding from the cause. If it were like that then it would mean Arianism because the Son and Holy Spirit will only be effect of God the cause. But in Christian faith the Son and Holy Spirit are not made or caused.

In 1Jn 5:20, Jesus is God's true Son. In 1Cor 6:19, Holy Spirit is true God because he has a temple. Only God has temple. Now both the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father. But neither of these processions is like the cause proceeding to the effect

impressing its own likeness in the effect. If it were so then we will have only an idea of God like that in Sabellianism. In other words there will not be any real distinction between the Father on the one hand and the Son and the Spirit on the other

But what does Scripture tell us? In Jn 5:19, we have a statement that points to the real distinction between the Father and the Son. There we read: "The Son can do nothing on his own accord." If he is unable to do anything on his own, then he cannot be the same, as the Father i.e. there has to be real distinction between the Father and the Son. Now the fallacy with Arianism and Sabellianism is that they understand procession as an outward act. In fact procession in God is an act existing in God himself⁵⁹. It is not an outward action. An example from the internal acts of humans will be enough to explain it. Let us take the action of understanding. This is an action, which remains in the agent himself. When we understand, a procession takes place. This procession is the conception of the thing understood, a conception issuing from our intellectual power and proceeding from our knowledge of that thing. This conception is signified by the spoken word. This spoken word is the word of the heart signified by the word of the voice.

Thus in God procession is not an outward movement as in material beings. It is an intelligible emanation. It is like the intelligible word (word of God) proceeding from the agent. The next point is to prove that one of these processions can be called generation. In scripture the procession of the Son is called begetting. Ps 2:7 says "this day I have begotten you." Therefore it is clear that one of the processions from God, the procession of the Son from the Father is a begetting or generation⁶⁰.

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Generation has two meanings. 1) The meaning given to every thing that is subject to generation and corruption. In this sense generation means change from non-being to being. As an example we can take the growth of hair from the body. This is in a sense a generation. But here there is no likeness. The body is living while hair is not. 2) In the second sense generation is proper to living beings. It means the origin of a living being from a conjoined living principle.. E.g. worm from corrupt flesh. In a sense this also is generation. The flesh was living and it appears to be the source of the worm. Now we have to understand Thomas from his context. His was a time when science was not yet developed. But today we know that the flesh itself is not the cause of the worms, but it only provides a medium for the worms to grow. In this example there is likeness because both of them are organic matter. But they are not of the same species.

True generation is a procession in which likeness is ensured as well as that both of them belong to the same species. A child born of a human being is an example. Here the newborn child has likeness as well as it belongs to the same species. Yet this is the case of a being that passes from potency to act. But in God there is no potency. Therefore, it is much more than the birth of a child from the parents. In God's generation of the Son there is likeness, there is also the same species; yet there is no change from potency to act.

In God, his act of understanding and his act of being are the same. Therefore, the understanding remains in the same nature as God. Hence the procession of the Word from God is called generation and the Word proceeding from God is called the Son. This is one procession.

There is also the procession of the Holy Spirit. But what does the scripture say about the Holy Spirit? It is said in the scripture that the Spirit proceeds from the Father (Jn 15:26) and that he is distinct from the Son, "I will ask my Father, and He will give you another Paraclete" (Jn 14:16). Since the Spirit is **another** paraclete, we have to understand Jesus the one who asks the Father as the first paraclete and the Spirit as a second paraclete. Therefore they cannot be the same; they are distinct. So we can conclude about the processions this way. There are two processions ad intra in God. One of these processions is generation. This the procession by means of which the Son is born from the Father. There is another procession. This is how the Spirit proceeds.

The Son is also called the Word of God (Jn 1:1). We know that the procession of the Word is by way of an intelligible action. But in man, there is not only the intellect but also the will. The operation of the intellect results in the procession of the word and the operation of the will involves another procession. This procession results in love. By this act the thing loved is made to exist in the agent (the lover). The same way as the thing understood by the intellect is in the understander, the thing loved is in the lover.

Thus in God there is the procession of the Word of God and another procession, which is called the procession of love. This procession of love is not generation. We can explain it in the following way:

The intellect and the will differ in their operations and the result of the operations. The thing, which understands i.e., the understanding is of the same kind as the thing understood. But the

will and the thing loved need not be of the same kind. The will acts because of an inclination to the thing willed, while the intellect acts by impressing a likeness of the thing understood in the mind

Thus the procession of the intellect is by way of likeness and is called generation. The procession of the will is not by way of likeness but by way of impulse and movement towards an object. This procession may be called spiration and it is the procession of the Spirit. Thus there are two processions in God. But are there only two processions?

There are many attributes in God like, power, knowledge, will etc. Now the procession from the knowledge is Son and that from will is Spirit. What about the procession from other attributes?

In God there are only two processions – the Son and Spirit. Divine processions are from the actions, which remain within God. In a nature, which is intellectual, there are only two actions, which remain within the agent. They are understanding and willing. Others may seem to be remaining within, but they actually do not remain within. E.g. sensing. It is outside the intellectual nature. It is not removed from the genus of external actions. So in God there are only two processions. The same way power cannot be an internal action because power is the principle by which one thing acts on another. So it is of an external nature. So there are only two internal operations in God. But still a question can come up in our minds

Now can there be further processions form the two processions? In other words, can there be not some more processions from the understanding and from the willing? No, there cannot be. This is the

reason: God understands all things by one single act. So there is no need of another understanding i.e., no procession from the Word. The same way God wills all things by one act of willing. Therefore, no need of another willing proceeding from the first willing i.e., no procession from the Spirit (love).

8.2.2 The Divine Essence

As we have proved there are two processions in God and these processions explain the existence of the Son and Spirit in God along with the Father who is the source. But what is the essence of God, that which constitute God, that which is common to all the three persons and make them one true God? According to Thomas the divine essence is the divine relationship. He explains it in the following way.

This question is considered in four aspects. They are (1) what relation is? (2) In God relation is real. (3) In God relation is the same as essence. And (4) in God relation and distinction exist together.

8.2.2.1 What is Relation?

First St. Thomas defines relation itself and makes a distinction in relations. All relations are not of the same kind. Then he establishes that the relations in God are real and not simply logical.

Relation is not something inherent in the subject. It is unlike quality or quantity. Relation in its proper notion signifies only what refers to another. Such relation exists in certain beings by their own very nature. For example, in a heavy body there is an inclination to the center. Such relations are real relations. But there are relations, which

are only in the apprehension of the human reason. E.g. when we compare an animal to a man because of the fact that they are different species of the same genus we comprehend a sort of relationship between them. This relation is there in our apprehension. But there is no real relation. Therefore, this is only logical relation. But when something proceeds from a principle of the same nature, then both are really related.

8.2.2.2 There is Real Relation in God

In God the relation is not what we apprehend through a mere logical thinking but it is a relation that exists objectively in God himself. We only perceive through the intellect what exists objectively. In the above considerations we have proved that there are two real processions in God and also that the two are distinct among themselves. Since these are real processions from God, the relation is real relation not simply logical. In God such is the relation and so it is real.

8.2.2.3 Relation is the essence of God

This relation in God is the same as his essence. In creatures real relation is an accident existing in a substance. But in God there is no accident. Whatever exists in God is his essence; therefore, the relation in God is his essence. Thus it is manifest that relation really existing in God is really the same as His essence and only differs according to the mode of intelligibility. Thus in God relation and essence do not differ from each other, but are one and the same. He says, "Thus it is manifest that relation really existing in God is really the same as His essence...it is clear that in God relation and essence do not differ from each other, but are one and the same"⁶¹

8.2.2.4 Relations and Distinction of persons

The next question is whether the relation in God is really distinguished from each other. We have shown above that the notion of relation necessarily means in respect of one to another. In God there is a real relation. Therefore, there should be a real one-to-another-ness. Therefore, there must be a real distinction in God. But this distinction is not according to that which is absolute namely the essence in which there is supreme unity and simplicity but according to that, which is relative. This means from relation itself we can understand both the unity and distinction in God. In the absolute sense relation itself is the essence of God. But relation itself implies a one-to-another-ness. Therefore there is distinction of the persons involved in the relation.

8.2.2.5 A summary of Thomistic Theology of the Trinity

St. Thomas completed the Western thinking on the Trinity started by St. Augustine. In many places he quotes St. Augustine and interprets him correctly against the erroneous understanding of the heretics. St. Thomas follows the route opened up by Augustine. This is based on the working pattern of the mind. Accordingly, the mind is, the mind knows and the mind loves. These processions of the mind are distinct from each other. After establishing this structure of the mind, he proceeds to consider the relationship in God i.e. the relationship among the three persons in the Godhead. Since this relationship is a relationship in God it is the essence of God because there cannot be any accidents in God. Therefore he concludes that it is the relationship itself, which constitutes the inner reality of the Trinity. These relations are subsistent and permanent because in God there is nothing fortuitous or accidental.

This thinking is a step higher than Augustine's thinking. Augustine already said that the persons in the trinity are related subjects. Augustine had also shown that their relationship coincided with their essence. But he did not clearly state that the relationships were substantial. St. Thomas, for the first time declared that the divine persons are subsistent relationships. Just as in the humans, a person means a distinct subsistent being, (in the rational nature), so in God person means by analogy, a distinct subsistent being in the divine nature. Person is an individual substance of a rational nature according to the Thomistic definition⁶².

This person (divine Person) who is a subsistent being always exists in eternal relationship with the other subsistent beings. So we have the divine persons as subsistent beings permanently and eternally related, forming one God or One divine nature. Thus Thomas completed the speculative quest begun by Augustine.

8.3. Another Theological Trend of the middle Ages

Here we will consider another school of theology and the main representative of this school, who has given substantial contribution to the theology of the Trinity.

The twelfth century saw a renewal in theology in almost all countries of Europe. But theology did not diffuse to the common people because most of the ordinary people could not read and write. In 1114 a monastery and school of theology was opened in Paris and was dedicated to St. Victor. The basis of the theology of this school was the theology of St. Augustine. In this school a new development of Trinitarian theology happened. The attempt of these theologians

was to make theology more popular on the one hand and to correlate the doctrines of the Church with the spiritual life of the people.

8.3.1. Richard of St. Victor

Richard was a member of the theological school of St. Victor. He was born in 1123 and died in 1173. He went to the school of St. Victor and became a disciple of Hugh. During his life in the school he wrote many books and letters. His works can be divided into three categories: 1) Philosophical – theological 2) Exegetical – exhortative and 3) Letters.

One of the important books of the first group is *De Trinitate* in six books. The intention of writing this book was to give instruction to the members of the monastery. He appears as a spiritual father guiding a group of religious in order to reform their life. The procedure he adapted for explicating the Trinity is as follows:

1. Proofs for the existence of God
2. There is only one God.
3. The Divine attributes.
4. God is Lord and Lord means omnipotent. He does not serve any one, neither is he under anyone. Lord should be having all perfections. The one having all perfections is *Summum Bonum*.
5. If he is *Summum Bonum*, he must have Supreme happiness in himself because happiness is the fullness and perfection of all goodness.

6. If God is *Summum Bonum* he must have the perfection of goodness. Love is the perfection of goodness. Therefore, God should have in him Supreme Love. This love should be supreme love because egoistic love is an imperfection and no imperfection can exist in God. So the love in God should be altruistic or fraternal love. If that love is there in God, then it demands some sort of plurality in God because fraternal or altruistic love demands at least two persons, the lover and the loved.

Abelard had already given a thought in this line. According to him, God is love. Now this love should be directed to somebody. Therefore, creation is a necessity for God to express and direct his love. But this line of thinking is dangerous because it makes creatures necessary which is a false doctrine.

Richard refutes this argument. Supreme love should be well ordered i.e., it should have a worthy *terminus ad quem*. Creatures cannot be a worthy *terminus ad quem* of God's supreme love. Also the perfection of love is measured by the perfection of the object of love. Consequently the supreme love must have another person who has the same dignity as the lover. Moreover, supreme love should be responded in the same measure i.e., the beloved should be able to respond to the supreme love in the same measure, as he is loved. So there must be a plurality in God so that the supreme lover has a worthy person to love and get a corresponding supreme love from the beloved. In other words, the fullness of charity in God can be understood only in the plurality of persons in God.

Now should there be more than two persons for love to exist? It is possible for love between two persons to be a perfect love. But Richard searches for the higher love of friendship. This perfect love is not only to love the other as oneself, but it is in the desire that the other loves another person with the same love. The proof of a real love is the wish to share his joy of loving with his object of love. Without this sharing in delight, love is not yet perfect.

In short, the existence of a third person in mutual love is a sign of great perfection, because love is more perfect when the lover can communicate the delight of love to the person whom he loves.

The perfect love is different from particular friendship. But it is loving with the desire (not that the beloved loves back) that the person who is loved, loves the other persons and is loved by the other persons as he loves him. In other words, the perfection of supreme love requires the existence of the other person, "the common friend." This person is called the *condilectus*. *Condilectus* associates in the love, in the joy of being loved by the other person who is loved by yet another.

So there are two *condignus* and the *condilectus*. *Condignus* is in the order that God can communicate his richness to the person. *Condilectus* is in the order that God can share the delight of love.

Condignus has the same dignity with God, and consequently he has the same power, as the source of all that exists. Consequently the production of the third person is from both, the first and the second persons. This third person is the *condilectus*. It seems that Richard supports the so-called *Filioque* position. Thus for Richard, Trinity is the communion of love.

8.4. Three Tendencies in Trinitarian Understanding

There are three basic tendencies in the development of Trinitarian thought. Those three tendencies have arisen not spontaneously, but in answer to situations in which the Trinity has to be thought of in a certain way in order to combat errors prevalent at the time.

1. From Unity of Nature to Trinity of Persons: - in the general climate of polytheism prevailing in the Roman Empire in which the Latin Fathers had to work, they had to start their theology of the Trinity from the oneness of God. If they started from the three persons, the hearers would have understood it as polytheism.

In the creed we pray, I believe in One God. It serves to express a genuine spiritual experience centered on the oneness of God. When the faithful pray like this, they are not addressing a tri-unity, a Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but simply the Supreme Mystery. This supreme mystery is intensely personal, spiritual, and accessible to human wants.

How to move from this unity to Trinity? Two ways were found.
1) God is an absolute and most perfect spirit. It is proper to all spirits (even created ones) to think and to love as a concretization of their essence. The most perfect spirit is *reflexivus sui* i.e., it thinks of itself in the most perfect way, thereby producing an absolutely perfect expression of itself, begetting what faith calls the Son or Word. By begetting this expression, God reveals himself as Father, capable of begetting an eternal and only begotten Son.

Father and Son do not only think each other reciprocally, but also love each other eternally. This love for each other is so perfect

that it is called the Holy Spirit. This Trinity of persons does not multiply the most perfect spirit, but manifests its internal and eternal dynamic.

So the persons are this same one and only Spirit in its eternal process. So we can say the persons have no individual essence but one common essence, the most perfect Spirit. In Trinitarian Theology this most perfect Spirit is called the one substance or nature.

2. The second way is a platonic thought Christianized by Augustine and Bonaventure and is continued in the writings of many modern theologians. Here God is considered not simply as a perfect Spirit but as the highest Good –*Summum Bonum* or Supreme Love. The very property of Good is that it diffuses. So is love. It diffuses and communicates with others. Revelation teaches that God is love (1Jn 4:8, 16). As loving principle expands, it reveals itself as Son or Word. This Word is one with the Father. The self-giving relationship between the Father and Son is so supreme and perfect that it gives rise to the Holy Spirit. Thus Spirit is the expression of communion between Father and Son.

Unity is assured in this pattern of thought, because the starting point is unity. The next step is to see that this Supreme Reality is such that its inner dynamic produces an internal differentiation. So the three persons emerge as three ways of really embodying and truly possessing the same divine nature. This same is the line followed by St. Thomas. He says, In the first place we have to consider what concerns the divine essence; in the second what pertains to the differentiation of the persons; in the third all that deals with the process of creation of creatures by God.

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Yet we have to subject this method of starting with the unity to serious investigation. There is the danger of modelism in this method. The idea we get is that the persons are simply modes of the same Being, not truly three in one God. This is no better than monotheism. To overcome this danger of modelism, Latin theology (St. Thomas) said that the modes of embodying and possessing the same essence are really distinct modes. They are not modes of expressing to us; not a mere verbal question. The way the Father possess the essence is really distinct from that of the Son and Holy Spirit. The difference is in the different ways in which the persons relate to each other and to origination.

The distinction is real, therefore, one is not another, though each is always related to the others. Here the distinction between persons and essence cannot be real because otherwise we will have a four-fold God—one essence plus three persons, making four realities. This distinction cannot purely be in the mind because it will mean modelism. So how to understand this distinction. Theologians say it is a virtual distinction or formal distinction which avoids fusing the three into unity and at the same time a differentiation within the divine identity. In this formal distinction, the reality is not multiplied, but it is possible to grasp three distinct modes in which this same reality subsists. These three modes do not originate in our mind but in the reality itself. This is precisely what is meant by formal distinction i.e., the same essence, nature or reality is mediated through different formalizations.

These explain why the three divine persons together have the one and same nature, why they share in the same attribute (e.g. eternity, infinity, etc.) and why they act outwardly in union (the divine persons

act inseparably together in history, redeeming, divinizing, etc.). Finally it gives the idea; though each person is truly God, all three persons are one God.

3. From Unity of Substance of the Father to Trinity of Persons

In the creed we pray, "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty...." Here we start the personal character of God and then God appears as Father. This is a line of thought followed by some of Greek theologians. For them Father is God by *Antonomasia*. I.e., He is the source and origin of everything (*Antonomasia* is the English noun coming from the Greek *antonomazein* to call by a new name)

Here unity is not understood so much as the equality of divine nature in three persons as the unity of the Father, from whom and through whom the other persons are counted.

There is one God because there is only one divine source. This source is Father Almighty. There is only one principle of Divinity, the Father. In this line of thinking the most absolute monarchy controls everything. The Father communicates all his divine substance to the Son; alone or through (or together with) the Son, he also hands over all his substance to the Holy Spirit. Everything stems from one begetting and communicating principle: the Father. Unity consists in the communicated substance of the Father. The three persons are consubstantial because they share absolutely in the substance of the Father.

In this line of thinking, the relationship between the persons of the Trinity is not one of opposition or separation, but of differentiation in communion with the Father. The Father communicated all his

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wisdom, all his love, all his will, all his eternity to the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, three are not three eternal beings but one, one Holy One, One Lord.

An advantage with this line of thinking is that at the very outset the nature of God is personalized because it is the Father, the person who establishes the relationship out of Himself. He is the only source and origin of all relationships. But there is distinction. This distinction does not simply exist in saying that they are distinct i.e., the Father is not the Son etc. In other words distinction should be understood against the positive possibilities. The distinction exists to make communion possible. The three persons are enveloped in an eternal movement of love. This love makes them inseparable from one another.

St. John Damascene is one of the theologians of this line of thinking. He says, the three persons are like three suns fusing together in one light. Each of the person is God by reason of consubstantiality. God is, in other words, these three persons existing in complete and eternal communion.

This communion is so complete that the number three transcends all mathematical numbers. Basil says, we do not count simply from one to many, adding and saying one, two, three or first, second and third. In confessing the three persons (*hypostases*) without dividing their nature into many, we remain with the unity of the Father. The triad of hypostases, united by distinction and distinguished by union designates a difference that does not oppose. This line of thinking is more biblical because in the NT each of the persons is spoken of as a subsistent reality, each with a character whose purpose is the salvation and divinization of humankind.

Here all essentialist abstraction and formalism is avoided. The first idea of God, here, is not a divine essence, a mystery without name. It is precisely God whom we call Father. There is no depersonalizing of God. The idea of the unity of God is not of a single nature, the identical basis of each person but the concept of Father communicating his whole substance to the other persons. The Trinity is one because it stems from the One who is the Father.

Yet here also there is a danger. It is the danger of subordinationism. The monarchy of the Father is so absolute that everything has its being in Him. Son and Spirit form expressions of the one principle, the Father. In the final analysis, the Father is everything. The other persons are eternal derivations of him.

The way to avoid the danger of subordinationism is to bear in mind that the relationship is between divine supremely loving Persons. We humans can define our relationship against one another. But in God the relationship is for, by, with and in one another. St. Gregory Nazianzen puts it this way: The glory of the Principle (Father) never consists in lessening those who proceed from him.... God is the Three considered together; each is God by reason of consubstantiality; the three are God by reason of monarchy (of the Father).

3. From Trinity of Persons to Unity of Nature – communion. This tendency has arisen from a situation of too much of individualism where the inter-relations between people had to be properly emphasized. Here the starting point is the specific experience of Christian faith that puts the Trinity first. Accordingly, what really exists is not a nameless absolute nor a Father but Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yet they are not three Gods but one God because there is eternal communion and unity between the three persons. It is not

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enough to say that three persons exist, but to say that each is fully and completely in the others. This is *Perichoresis*, which can be explained as the intimate and perfect inhabitation of one person in the other. The three persons are reciprocally interpenetrating. Jesus expresses this interpenetrating inhabitation in the other in two levels. In the first level, it is expressed as an interpenetrating inhabitation between the divine persons. "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (Jn 14:11). In the second level Jesus wishes the same interpenetrating inhabitation to exist among his disciples. "Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I in you, so that the world may believe it was your who sent me" (17:21).

There is such an exchange of love among the three persons. Love is life. So life flows completely between them. This communion is so infinite that each bestows on the other all that he is and has. The three possess one will, one understanding, and one love.

We should not imagine them as three individuals who come together in communion and unite. It would be tritheism. We cannot say that they establish relationship between themselves, but that they exist as persons precisely because of their mutual bestowal of life and love. So they are distinct in order to unite, and unite not in order to fuse into each other, but so that one may contain the other. Their unity is a unity of persons by reason of the reciprocal communion between them.

This eternal *perichoresis* of love and life between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit forms the original pattern of love, life and communion, in creation, made in the image of the Trinity.

CHAPTER - 9

THE CAPPADOCIAN CONTRIBUTION⁶³

Cappadocia is a place, which lies in the heart of Asia Minor. It is a place evangelized by St. Paul. Christianity spread so rapidly in this area and this church gave many martyrs to Christianity. It also sent 7 bishops to the Council of Nicaea in 325. The three main theologians of the Church are: 1. St. Basil the Great (330-397); 2. St. Gregory of Nyssa, brother of Basil (330-394) and St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390). They started not with the one divine and undivided Nature, but from the three divine persons⁶⁴.

9.1.The Historical context of the Cappadocian theology

There were many heretical groups in this church. They were mainly the sabellianists, and the Eunomianists. The Cappadocian contribution to Trinitarian theology does not consist in giving any new analogy for the Trinitarian mystery, but in providing a new philosophical foundation for making it possible to answer the heretics.

The doctrine of Trinity in Cappadocia emerged against this heretical background. There was also the feeling that the Greek Fathers are more or less Platonic or Aristotelian. The Cappadocians,

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on the other hand, wanted to express their distance from the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies. So they introduced a new philosophy. The main characteristics of their approach are: 1. They rejected first of all the understanding of God as a container, which overflows with goodness and love. They rejected it especially because it implies a process of natural or substantial and necessary generation of other persons. Gregory Nazianzus, in particular, rejected this type of the procession of the Son or Spirit in these terms as happening by way of a substantial growth. According to the Cappadocians the cause of divine existence is the Father. Father means a person. More over the Trinity is a matter of ontological freedom and not necessity.

The Arians accused the Nicene terminology *homo ousios* as implying necessity in God's being. The Cappadocians sensed the danger in this terminology and explained it as freedom i.e., the procession is not necessary but free. They explain it in the following way: Although there is one will concurrent with the divine substance, there is the 'willing one' (*ho thelon*) and that is the Father. The Father is the only cause of divine existence. Thus they understand freedom in ontological terms. This is something the Greek philosophers have never done.

In the creed of Nicaea the Fathers of the council of Constantinople made some changes. This was due to the influence of the Cappadocians, who had upper hand in the decisions of the Council. The change brought about was in the phrase "from the substance of the Father" (*ek tes ousias tou patros*). It was changed to "from the Father" (*ek tou Patros*). This change is a clear proof of the Cappadocians idea that it is the person of the Father and not the divine substance that is the source and cause of the Trinity.

3. Another important point is concerning monarchy. The one *arche* is understood in the Cappadocian theology ontologically. This one *arche* is understood in terms of origination of being. And that one *arche* is the Father. Thus the person of the Father is put in the place of the One God and it suggests a kind of monotheism. This is a strictly biblical and true approach to Trinitarian theology.

9.2. The Philosophical Implications

Greek philosophy from all times—from its very inception to the developed form in neo-Platonism tended to give priority to the ‘one’ over the ‘many’. They said the One is the pre-existing reality. The ‘many’ have come from the one. This basic idea of the priority of the one over the many had taken different forms.

According to neo-Platonism during the first three to four centuries of the Christian era, the one is God Himself. The many are emanations basically of a degrading nature. The purpose and aim of all existence is the return to the one. More or less the same tendency is exhibited by Philo the Jewish philosopher, who said that God is the only true ‘one’ because he is the only one, who is truly alone.

About human existence also the classical Greek philosophy had given priority to nature over particular persons. According to them human nature is the ideal humanity, a *genos hyperkeimenon*. Every individual human being is an image of this *genos hyperkeimenon*. Or according to another group there is the human nature as the substratum of human species from which the human being emerges. In other cases man in his diversity and plurality was subject to the

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priority of his nature. To put in other words nature or substance always preceded the person in classical Greek thought.

The Cappadocian Fathers came out with their theology of the Trinity challenging this Greek Philosophical tendency. Their point was this. The priority of human nature or the substance or of the one over the many is due to the fact that human existence is a created existence, i.e., it is an existence with a beginning. But this should not be made into a metaphysical principle.

True existence, which is the subject matter of philosophy, is to be found in God. In God his oneness does not precede the many. The way in which God exists involves simultaneously the one and the many, and this means that the person has to be given ontological primacy in Philosophy. In classical Greek thought the particular person never had an ontological role. What mattered was the unity or totality of being of which man was but a portion. Plato, in particular speaks about the particular. "The whole was not brought into being for thy sake, but thou art brought for its sake."

Another point of diversity between the Cappadocian position and Greek Philosophy is this: The classical Greek philosophy said that underneath the variety of beings, there is the One Reason (Logos) that gives them their significance in existence. The person who is the particular was only secondary. Moreover freedom, which is characteristic of person, was cherished as a quality of the individual, not in an ontological sense. The Greek thinkers did not understand freedom as posing from the very existence of the person. Freedom had only a restricted moral sense. It did not involve the question of the being of the world.

Cappadocian Fathers, on the contrary, for the first time in history introduced into the being of God the concept of cause, in order to attach it to the person, the Father. By distinguishing carefully and persistently between the nature of God and God as Father they thought that what causes God to be is the person of the Father, not the one divine essence. Thus they gave the person ontological priority, and freed existence from the logical necessity of substance, of the self-existent. So the procession of Son and Spirit are from the person of the Father and therefore free.

9.3. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Man for the Cappadocian Fathers is an image of God. He is not God by nature, since he is created, i.e., he has a beginning. But he is called to exist in the way God exists. They distinguished between nature and person (person is called the mode of existence). Nature points to the simple fact that something exists i.e., the nature of man points to the “what” of man. It can be predicated of many things. Person on the other hand points to the how of it. It can be predicated of only one thing in the world. It is a how in an absolute sense.

The nature is not the important thing. It is common to all – the individuation, dividedness, decomposition etc. are parts of the nature. It is the how of human nature i.e., the personhood that is important. It acquires the role of ontological cause and it determines whether the nature’s limitations will finally be overcome or not. The image of God in man has precisely to do with this how, not with the “what” in man. This means man is free to affect the how of his existence either in the direction of the way God is or in the direction of what he is. Man’s

nature is human. He is never God. Man's how is divine because he can be how God is.

The essence of the anthropology, which results from the Cappadocian theology, lies in the significance of personhood in human existence. They gave to the world the most precious concept it possesses, the concept of the person, as an ontological concept in the ultimate sense.

9.4. Three consequences emerge from this line of thinking.

1. Person is not a secondary concept, but the primary and absolute notion in existence. Therefore, the person cannot be sacrificed or subjected to any idea, to any moral or natural order. In order to be truly yourself, you must be a person i.e., you must be free from and higher than any necessity or objective.
2. The Person cannot exist in isolation. God is person. Therefore, he is not alone. He is communion. As person he loves. As images of God we are persons and real natures. Only when in this life we exist as persons can we hope to live eternally in the true, personal sense. Personal identity can emerge only from love as freedom and from freedom as love.
3. The person is something unique and irreplaceable. Nature and species are replaceable. Persons cannot be reproduced. They cannot be composed or decomposed. Only when nature is personal, as is the case with God, does it exist truly and eternally. For only then it acquires uniqueness and becomes an irrepeatable and irreplaceable particularity in the mode of being which we find in the Trinity.

CHAPTER - 10

THE MODERN THEOLOGIANS

In modern theology there is a serious attempt to reinterpret the theology of the Trinity. This is mainly the consequence of a new awareness of the concept of person. In modern philosophy person has been defined differently from the traditional view. In fact Jerome had already shown doubt about the use of the word person in describing the distinction in God. He said that the language of three hypostases was like honey in which poison was concealed. Even Augustine was conscious of the problem. He asks “three what”? Then he himself answers, “Three persons – not because I want to say this but because I may not remain silent.”⁶⁵ Anselm was not happy with the term person. Therefore, he said, “Three something-or-other (*tres nescio quid*). Aquinas also admits the inadequacy of the term person. He says, it is not in scripture and that it is used in theology because of the need to debate with the heretics. Calvin ridicules the use of the word person and calls it three manikins in the Trinity.

In modern philosophy person is a main subject of investigation and as a result much insight has been gained on the subject. Locke and many modern thinkers look upon person as characterized

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by self-consciousness⁶⁶. For him person is something like this: A person is a thinking, rational being endowed with understanding and reflection and capable of knowing itself as itself and as the same thinking being through different times and in different places. This continuity is possible only by reason of self-consciousness, which is inseparable from and essential to thinking. In this line of thinking the personhood of God is emphasized over against the traditional emphasis on the substance. For example Zizioulas, a modern theologian says, "God "exists" on account of a person...and not on account of a substance"⁶⁷. This preference for the personhood is because, "Person indicates relationship, freedom, ineffability, mystery, the capacity to love and know and the capacity to be loved and known"⁶⁸

Earlier according to the scholastic thinking person was defined as individual substance of a rational nature. This was an ontological definition. In this place Locke gave a psychological definition. Kant who said that a person is a subject who is capable of having his actions imputed to him gave a shift to this definition. According to him, the subject is the 'transcendental ego' whose cognitive activities constitute the object-world of nature and which, for just that reason, cannot be grasped as part of the object-world but only in moral experience as subject of freedom and moral end in itself"⁶⁹ This was a moral definition of person. This new understanding of person was incompatible with the traditional theology of the Trinity. If self-consciousness is characteristic of person, then there cannot be three persons in the Godhead because there cannot be three self-consciousnesses

In the light of this definition certain modern theologians re-interpreted the doctrine of the Trinity. Karl Barth and Karl Rahner are the representative theologians who wanted to reinterpret the

doctrine of the Trinity in the light of the new understanding of person. Karl Barth suggested that instead of calling the distinctions in the Godhead persons it is better to call them modes of being, modes of self-revelation. But he says that what he means by modes of being is the same as what is understood by person in traditional Trinitarian language. He suggests this new expression for clarity and for better expression⁷⁰.

But does it solve the problem or make it more complicated. Such an expression has the danger of being understood along modelist line. In fact Barth uses the very term mode. It was a theory condemned by the Church. In effect it will mean that there is only strict monotheistic unity in God and the plurality is only a mask.

Karl Rahner, a catholic theologian also suggested a new expression in the place of person. Instead of person he says that there are in God "three distinct manners of subsisting". He does not reject the use of person but only explains in the light of modern philosophy to avoid the error of trithéism and to say that the word person is not perfectly clear and obvious in speaking about the distinction in Godhead.

But is it a solution for the problem posed by modern philosophy? It is true that the concept of person is open to misunderstanding. But the concept of "distinct manner of subsistence" is unintelligible. Moreover, Rahner's concern was basically kerygmatic i.e., use of an intelligent word about God in preaching. But this purpose is not served by the use of the phrase "distinct manner of subsistence" because it is more difficult to understand. Besides, the language of the Trinity is meant not only for preaching. It should be useful in liturgy especially

in doxology. The expression “distinct manner of subsistence” is not at all useful for liturgical use. In recent times John Hick has come out with a new understanding of person. For him to be a person is to be related to others⁷¹

10.1 Hegel

Hegel, though he is known widely as a philosopher, his intention was theological. His concern is to revitalize Christianity and save it from becoming meaningless. If the God of faith should not become a meaningless and empty word the Trinitarian faith should be rediscovered. In his own words: “People have only a general knowledge that God is, and they regard him simply as a supreme being that is empty and dead in itself and cannot be grasped as a concrete content, as spirit.” Then speaking about the importance of conceiving God as Spirit he says: “If God as Spirit is not to be simply an empty word for us, then he must be conceived as a Triune God.”⁷²

Therefore, he wants to recover and reestablish the true idea of God as Triune God. Hegel is not happy with the names Father, Son and Holy Spirit. His starting point is the idea that God is Spirit. Since he is Spirit his essence is to make himself an object of himself and then he removes this distinction between subject and object thorough love.

The abstract concept of God as Supreme Being that is the conclusion of Greco-Scholastic philosophy is useless, according to Hegel. Rather he wants to think of God as Spirit. This Spirit by nature cannot be also. He has to make himself his own object. It is

a denial of himself in the object. This is the Son. Now he recovers himself by love and that is the third person.

This idea is simply the repetition of the idea that the divine Trinity is the interpretation of the statement that God is love. In this line of thinking Trinity is a mystery for the imagination and for abstract thought but not for speculative thinking. Religion is reduced to the level of imagination. This is why theologians opposed Hegel.

According to Hegel, at the beginning stands something abstract and general, namely the Father, who first defines himself in another self, namely the Son, and finally, in a third, the Spirit becomes a concrete idea. This process does not produce anything new. The third is also the first. What is produced already exists from the beginning. The process, then, is simply a game of self preservation, or self-confirmation.” It is a fact, however that truth can be identified only with the whole, and that the whole exists only at the end.

This thinking has a merit as well as demerit. Its merit is that it is looking forward to the *eschaton* – the end of time when according to the Bible (1Cor 15:28). God will be all in all when the Son hands the kingdom over to the Father. This eschatological dimension is something the traditional theologians have failed to include in their idea of the Trinity. Its demerit is that what stands at the beginning is simply emptiness. Hegel’s idea of God was condemned in Vat I.

One of the problems with his philosophy is that there is confusion about his idea of the Son and of the world. He does not simply identify the procession of the Son with the act of creation. For Hegel,

the Son is the abstract determination of otherness, while the world is the concrete realization of otherness.

In one place he says, "Apart from the world God is not God. God is creator of the world; it belongs to his being, his nature to be a creator. In another place he says, "Spirit is the divine history, the process of self-distinction, separation and return. This process takes three forms. 1) One in the realm of thought apart from the world. 2) Another in the realm of representation, in the world and in history. 3) Another in the community in and for whose consciousness Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God, and in which therefore, the eternal movement which is God reaches consciousness and God as Spirit is present.

There are many things to learn from Hegel's approach to Trinity, although he is full of ambiguity. The first thing to say about Hegel is that he wants to understand the Trinity just with the help of reason and imagination. But Trinity is a mystery in the strict sense of the term. The strict mysterious character is expressed by Jesus: No one knows the Son, except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him (Mt 11:27; Jn 1:18).

10.2. P. Schoonenberg⁷³

He is representative of another trend in Trinitarian theology. This trend may be called historicist. The line of thinking in Schoonenberg may be summarized as follows⁷⁴. God has revealed himself to be Trinity. In this revelation God has shown himself to be Trinity. This revelation of God in history is God's process. In this

process God becomes Trinity i.e., the One and only God becomes Trinity in the process of penetrating into creation. So in history a process is started whereby there is a “trinification of the one God by reason of his free decision to communicate himself to creatures as happened in Jesus.” In this line of thinking Trinity will not be eternal but only the evolving history of God.

In this approach there is absolutization of history. History is so powerful that it projects not only the evolution of creatures, but also new realities on to the very mystery of God. This approach cannot be accepted by the faithful because it is against all that the church has been traditionally teaching.

10.3. Bernard Lonergan⁷⁵

This is an approach taking inspiration from a new insight into the concept of person. Person is a subject existing as a center of autonomy, gifted with consciousness and freedom. Then if there are three persons, the natural conclusion will be that there are three gods. To avoid this they put stress on relationship. This is characteristic of persons as subject. It is a complete openness of one person to another. Now God is spiritual. Therefore, the divine persons are in constant relationship. Person is essentially consciousness. In the case of God, this consciousness is not only in the psychological level but also in the ontological level. Ontologically this consciousness means the permanent presence of the Spirit to itself. This permanent presence to itself is possible because here the presence is not like subject to object, but subject to subject.

The consequence of this thinking is that the Trinitarian consciousness is an essential act. It is performed by each of the

persons. Thus there are then one consciousness and three conscious subjects. In the words of Lonergan: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are, by means of a real consciousness, three subjects conscious as much of themselves as of each of the others and as much of their national act as of their essential act. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three intelligent and free subjects. But they possess the same intelligence and the same will, like a triangle with three angles but only one area.

All the three persons affirm themselves as I, not in order to close in themselves but in order to be able to give themselves to the other two. Thus a real psychological *perichoresis* emerges and since it is in the Spirit being which God is it is not simply a psychological *perichoresis*, but an ontological *perichoresis*.

10.4. Heribert Muhlen

He has taken a shift to the relationship as I-thou-we relationship. According to him personal relationship exists in two levels. The first relationship produces dialogue. The second produces communion. To explain, the person who knows himself/herself to be a subject relates with another subject. In this relationship an I-thou relationship is produced. The “I” dialogues with the “thou”. So this relationship in the first step produces dialogue between the two. But when this relationship continues, it grows to a communion in which they no more speak simply as thou and I but as ‘we’. This is communion. Thus the pronouns I-thou-we express the three stages of the subject – the subject as such, the subject in dialogue, the subject in communion. According to this approach, Father is the “I.” Son is the “Thou” and Spirit is the “We”. This approach has a merit that it sheds light on the

fact that human beings are created in the likeness of God and so a study of genuine and true human relationships can lead to a deeper understanding of God. This relationship is grounded in the love of the three persons. In our interpersonal relationship we start with “I”, analogous to this the Father is the initiating ground. The Son responds in equal measure and this is analogous with the “thou”. This relationship gives rise to the Spirit. Mulhen speaks about two stages of this love. The love of the Father reciprocated by the Son is called “mutual” while the love from which the Spirit springs up is called “joint” love, because the second is the combined love of the Father and the Son⁷⁶.

10.5. Community and Social understanding of Trinity

Here the starting point is neither metaphysical nor historical. It is a serious thinking on the links that bind people together in community and society. What is society? Earlier it was thought that society was the sum total of individual members that make up the society. Therefore, the problems of the society were understood as the problems of the individual. As solution to the problems of the society, solution to the problems of the individuals was suggested. Though there is much truth in this approach, there is also limitation in it. It is mainly because society is much more than the sum total of individuals. This is the new insight we have gained by new approaches in sociology. Society has its own being woven out of the threads of relationships among individuals, functions and institutions, which together make up the social and political community. In the community the co-operation and collaboration of all people produce the common good. Though there is variety and multiplicity in social and political mediations and instruments and manifestations there is a unity in the social process⁷⁷.

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From this fact of observation, the theologian turn towards the mystery of the Trinity and from an understanding of the Trinity, they turn towards the social life of humans. The social reality is a pointer towards the mystery of the Trinity and the Trinity is a pointer towards social life and its archetype. They say that since the Trinity is a divine society, the human society holds a *vestigium Trinitatis*.

This idea of the Trinity as a supreme society and as a model for any society where equality and participation should exist was proposed by M.J. Scheeben⁷⁸ and developed by Jurgen Moltmann.

In God, each person acts according to its distinctive personality. Yet all the activities of each person is common to the three of them. This shows the co-existence between personal and social realms. This is the ideal, which underlies all social and community life.

According to Moltmann, the basic statement of Christian faith is that God is three persons living in permanent and everlasting reciprocity which is opened out to the whole of creation. God is a community and not a One. God exists in the form of communion (and Communion means common union) with the three persons and with history. There is a Trinitarian history. The missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit have brought creation into the Trinitarian process. So the Trinity becomes an open mystery. Its unity, the fruit of its communion, includes humanity and all creation. Eschatologically everything will be united in the Trinity. According to Moltmann, the Trinitarian history is nothing other than the eternal *perichoresis* of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in their dispensation of salvation, which is to say, in their opening of themselves for the reception and unification

of the whole of creation. The history of salvation is the history of the eternally living, triune God who draws us into and includes us in his eternal triune life with all the fullness of its relationships.

This understanding helps not only a better idea of God but it lays the foundation for a society of brothers and sisters, of equals, in which dialogue and consensus are the basic constituents of living together in both the world and the Church.

10.6. Neo-Economic Understanding of the Trinity⁷⁹

We know God through the divine activity in history. God is the dynamism of process and becoming. In this way God is understood as becoming dipolar. Dipolar means that God in his transcendence becomes also closer to man. This transcendence and immanence considered together is the dipolar aspect of God. Now what about the Spirit? According to these theologians the Spirit is the creative force of God and the presence of Jesus with us

10.7. Eschatological Understanding of the Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is only an adequate doctrine of God if it is more than a mere expression and manifestation of Christian tribalism i.e., just the expression of an experience of the Christian alone. The Trinitarian doctrine must be construed to provide an account of God. If God of Christian faith is not a particular Christian God but God as experienced and worshipped by Christians, any doctrine of the Trinity will be inadequate if it fails to make this clear. This is the first point to be kept in mind in the theology of the Trinity.

Secondly, there is a recovery of the eschatological dimension in twentieth century theology⁸⁰. Eschatology was earlier applied to the doctrine of the last things i.e., the four last greatest things- death, judgment, heaven and hell. Thus they spoke not of *eschaton* but of *eschata*. These four things are not only the last but also the greatest and it means eschatology deals with the fundamental normative orientation of our present life in terms of our final end and ultimate points of reference. By presenting our life as destined to find its fulfillment and completion in God, it introduces a perspective into the Christian theological picture which affects, or should affect, all areas of life and thought.

In modern theology there is a shift from the *eschata* to the *eschaton* and from the *eschaton* to the *eschatos*. The first movement is characteristic of the writings of Paul Tillich. He replaced the talk about *eschata* by *eschaton*. His reason is that eschatology has to deal not with things that will take place at some future time, but with the ultimate meaning of everything in so far as it is historically being moving towards an end. This end is not another event in the series of events, but the transcendent destiny of beings in history. Hence he defined *eschaton* as the transcendent meaning of historical being, a meaning that cannot be spelled out in temporal terms but is equally close to every moment of history where it manifests itself in completion and ultimate decision that leads to fulfillment. From this idea Tillich goes to say that eschatological symbols of religious faith, like life after death, last judgment, resurrection etc. are to be interpreted existentially rather than temporally or cosmologically. Only this will bring out their universal significance and only by correlating history and the *eschaton* in this way will it be possible for

theology to claim the ultimate unity of history and the history of salvation.

But this view of Tillich has two reactions. One was that it influenced the theological thinking of many. The second reaction was that people found the incompleteness in Tillich's thinking. They said in the New Testament there is no phrase as *To eschaton* (neuter). They said loyalty to the NT theology will require us to speak of *ho eschatos* and not of *to eschaton*. It is not the last thing but the last man Jesus who is important. He is the *eschatos* and the enactor of *eschaton*. Hence we must move from Tillich's existential reinterpretation to a christological reworking of eschatology. Eschatology has now one topic and subject matter – Jesus. So theology must expound that one eschatological reality of the risen Christ. So everything acquires value in its relation to this one eschatological reality. Now theologians say, the life of Jesus, his death and resurrection are eschatological events in the full sense. They are unique and final events in which the God beyond history intervened conclusively to reveal his kingdom on earth.

This self-disclosing and self-communicating presence of God's creative love is the complex eschatological reality to which Christian theology refers. It is eschatological in the sense of being the final and ultimate true reality in which and through which we all have our being. Three features are essential to its eschatological character 1. It is divinely constituted 2. It is christologically determined 3. And it is experienced as the break-in of radical newness in our life. Then in the eschatological understanding Trinitarian theology is an inevitable consequence.

10.8. Trans-Sexist Theology of the Trinity

In the last few decades there is a new awareness of an imperfection in theology. It is mainly due to the fact that theology was almost exclusively dominated by male theologians and then male categories to express the mystery of God. Christian theology was thus male-sexist and patriarchal. According to this theology, God is the Father who begets a son who becomes incarnate in the form of Jesus the man, whose work in history, the church is controlled and led virtually exclusively by men. This was the feeling of many theologians both men and women. Therefore, under the influence of the rise of feminist association, theology was looked at with a new understanding⁸¹.

On the level of strict theological understanding God is trans-sexual. The term Father applied to God the Father does not refer to any sexual character in God; it refers only to the fact that he is the source of life from which everything derives and to which everything tends. This is what the Father is in reality. But this reality can be presented only by means of symbols and images. These expressions are produced by particular cultures. In our case these are produced by the culture which was controlled by dominant group which is made up of men.

The result is that God the source of everything is called God the Father. But it has a problem. In our present culture with its significant categories the word Father can hardly indicate what lies beyond it i.e., the original trans-sexual source of life. In normal cases, it is identified with a human father figure, and therefore, it runs the risk

of becoming an idol and it legitimizes the domination of the fathers and bosses over their children, women and anything seen as feminine in nature.

The churches and their theologies have not taken sufficient care over the form in which symbols are used. They have ignored the dangers incurred in discriminating against the feminine and surreptitiously reinforcing male chauvinist and patriarchal domination. Images play a dominant role in moulding consciousness and compartmentalizing society; the predominance of masculine images in Christianity has prevented women from expressing their religious experience from within their proper feminine condition and an adequate symbolism to support them.

In the light of the understanding certain currents of feminist theology have postulated the creation of concepts that cannot be manipulated in favour of either male or female sexist way.

Mary Daly⁸² is one such feminist theologian. According to her we must understand God less as substance and more as process. Yahweh is an active verb and not a noun. God would mean living, the eternal return including the coming into being of the whole of creation, a creation that, instead of being subject to the Supreme Being, would share in the divine living. This God could be expressed by the symbols either of father or of mother or by a combination of the properties of each i.e., God is maternal father and paternal mother. In the Orthodox Christian tradition there is ample example for this line of thinking.

The Council of Toledo (675) spoke of God the Father's womb in which the Son is conceived and from which he is born.

The same method can be applied to the Son. The Son also should not be understood in sexist terms, but inclusively as the final and full revelation of the original source; this can be both masculine and feminine. The humanity taken on in incarnation is both masculine and feminine, though Jesus was a man and not a woman. He was not merely masculine but possessed the feminine dimensions too, as the eternal Word.

The Holy Spirit can be expressed in trans-sexist language. In biblical descriptions it is allied to the feminine dimension of life (*Ruah* in Hebrew is feminine). Creation, animation, consolation, comforting etc. are the functions attributed to the Spirit. These are feminine dimensions of life.

This is not just introducing the feminine figuration into the Trinity but working out the feminine dimension of the whole mystery of the Trinity and of each of the divine persons.

10.9. The Trinity According to Liberation Theology⁸³

God in Christian faith means the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in communion with each other in such a way that they form the one and only God. In this Trinity, doxology precedes theology i.e., first we profess our faith in Father, Son and Holy Spirit in prayer and praise. Only then we reflect on this mystery in terms of theology. In this theological reflection, the Trinity as manifested in human history whether together or separately for the purpose of our salvation precedes Trinity, as it is in itself in its eternal life.

The Trinity is revealed in the life of Jesus of Nazareth and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit as these are witnessed by the

communities of the disciples and recorded by them in the NT. The problem of the doctrine of Trinity is how to express the fact that the divine three are one God and at the same time maintain the distinction among them. Many solutions are proposed. But the solution proposed by modern theology is the one acceptable to liberation theology. According to this solution the starting point is the Trinity of persons. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the three live in eternal *perichoresis*, being one in the others, through the others with the others and for the others. The unity of the Trinity means the union of the three persons by means of their *perichoresis* and eternal communion. Since this union is eternal and infinite we can speak of one God. Now the interpretation may be criticized as tritheism. We answer: But there is no tritheism here because the three do not remain three but one in their complete indwelling in the others. Moreover, this is the datum of faith. According to faith Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist as distinct but in communion. This explanation allows a better understanding of the universe and human society as a process of communication, communion and union through the interpenetration of creatures with one another (*perichoresis*). This interpretation strengthens the cause of the oppressed struggling to liberate themselves so that there can be greater sharing and communion. Boff says, "A society structured on these lines could be the sacrament of the Trinity. It would help us in understanding the communion of the Trinity. But as long as the present social inequalities remain, faith in the Trinity will mean criticism of all injustices and a source of inspiration for basic changes"⁸⁴

The language used in Trinitarian theology is a figurative language and not philosophical language. This is only an approximate language.

For example, the expressions like ‘cause’ referring to the Father, begetting referring to the Son and breathing out referring the Holy Spirit are not explanations of the Trinity in a philosophical sense. The inner meaning of such expressions shows two things –the diversity that exists in the divine reality on the one hand and the perfect communion on the other.

Humanity, both male and female was created in the image and likeness of the Triune God. Male and female find their intimate *raison d’etre* in the mystery of the Trinitarian communion.

From the *perichoresis* communion of the three divine persons derive impulses to liberation, liberation of each and every human person, of society, of the church and of the poor in the double sense -critical and constructive.

Human beings are called to rise above all mechanisms of egoism and live their vocation of communion. Society offends the Trinity by organizing itself on the basis of inequality and honors it the more when it favors sharing and communion for all, thereby bringing about justice and equality for all. The church is more the sacrament of Trinitarian communion the more it reduces inequalities between Christians and between the various ministries in it, and the more it understands and practices unity as co-existence in diversity.

The poor reject their impoverishment as sin against Trinitarian communion and see the inner relatedness of the divine. “Differents” as the model for human society based on mutual collaboration – all on an equal footing – and based on individual difference- that society structures would be human, open, just and egalitarian.

The universe exists in order to manifest the abundance of divine communion. The final meaning of all that is created is to allow the divine persons to communicate themselves. So in the eschatological fullness, the universe will be inserted into the very communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This insertion is in the way proper to each creature, culminating in man and woman in the likeness of Jesus of Nazareth and Mary. Then the Trinity will be all in all.

Holy Trinity is a sacramental Mystery. As Sacramental it can be understood progressively. The Trinity communicates itself and the understanding here assimilates it. As mystery it will always remain the unknown in all understanding since the mystery is the Father himself, the Son himself and the Spirit itself. This mystery will last all eternity.

10.10 Walter Kasper's Theology of the Trinity

The high priestly prayer of Jesus given in Jn. 17 is the clearest NT basis for a doctrine of Trinity according to Kasper⁸⁵. This prayer is the last words recorded of Jesus in his earthly life. It was said in view of the end times, when Jesus says that his hour was coming. From this prayer a doctrine of Trinity can be developed.

10.10.1. Meaning of the Scriptural data

In 17:1-5, we have the meaning of the doctrine. According to this text, the Father is glorified in and through the glorification of the Son. In the glorification of the Son the glorification of the Father himself is made manifest. Then Jesus says his glory is from all eternity. So it means in turn that the eschatological revelation is a

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revelation of the eternal being of God, the revelation of the Godness of God. This Godness is glory in which the Father glorifies the Son and the Son glorifies the Father in turn.

In this eternal glory of God the faithful are incorporated because they accept and acknowledge the revelation of the Father's glory by the Son and of the Son's glory by the Father. "For I have given them the words which thou gravest me and they have received them and know in truth that I came from thee; and they have believed that thou did send me" (17:8). For this reason Jesus is praying for the faithful (17:9). The object of the prayer is that Jesus is glorified in the faithful. Therefore it is clear that the faithful are incorporated into the eternal glory that is God. The Holy Spirit effects this incorporation of the faithful into the glory of God. That is why just before the high priestly prayer Jesus spoke about the Spirit in Chapters 14, 15 and 16 and said that the function of the Spirit is to guide the faithful into the whole truth (Jn 16:12-13). The Spirit is and effects the concrete presence of the eternal glory of the Father and the Son in the Church and in the world. He is the eschatological accomplishment of the glory of God. He is also the presence of this glory within the confines of history.

Why the Spirit is the eschatological accomplishment of glory? Because he proceeds from the Father (15:26) and because he reveals the glory of God (Jesus says He (Spirit) will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you) (6:14).

It follows from this that the doctrine of the Trinity is not simply a teaching about God but it is a glorification of God. It is a doxology. This glorification is at the same time the salvation of the world and its life (Jesus says, "This is eternal life that they know the only true God,

and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent – 17:3). This doxology and soteriology are interconnected. But then they are not the same. Therefore, we can say it is a unity-in-tension.

This unity-in-tension reveals another truth. The acknowledgement of God's glory is no humiliation to man. As also the acknowledgement of God's subjectivity does not mean the suppression of the subjectivity of man. On the other hand the acknowledgement of God's glory and subjectivity redeems and liberates and fulfills humanity. It is the surpassing to the question which we have and which we are. The meaning of humanity and the world and the life and truth of humanity and the world consists in the glorification of the Triune God, and through this glorification we are incorporated into the intra-Trinitarian glorification and we become communion in God. In other words in the Trinitarian confession the meaning of Jesus' message about the coming of God's kingdom (reign) is fulfilled in an anticipatory manner. The doctrine of the Trinity sums up the core of Jesus' message and is the summation of the Christian faith.

10.10.2. Theological Understanding of this Scriptural Data

In the introduction of the high-priestly prayer, Jesus says salvation consists in the knowledge of the only true God. This means two things – the oneness of God as well as the fact that God is true God. In other words, unity and uniqueness of God are predicated of God in this prayer (i.e., “only” means unity and “true” means unique). In other words, the unity of God is a unique unity. Now how to understand this unique unity of God?

It means negatively that this oneness of God is to be distinguished from the philosophical monotheism and from the

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monotheism of the OT. The unique unity of which Jesus speaks includes the knowledge of the Son whom God has sent. In the words of Jesus, "And it is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God and Jesus' Christ whom thou has t sent" (17:3). After qualifying God as the only true God Jesus includes himself in that knowledge, i.e., the only true God is such that in its unique unity Jesus Christ, one whom the God sent, is also included. This means that knowledge of the unity and oneness of God is possible only through knowledge of the unity between Father and Son. Into this unity also the faithful are to be incorporated.

This unity of the faithful among themselves as well as with the Father and the Son is the work of the Spirit, according to John as well as the rest of the NT. This connection is clearly brought out in Jn 14:15-24, i.e., the coming and remaining of the Spirit is at the same time the return of Jesus and his dwelling in the faithful, so that he is in them as he is in the Father. This indwelling is also related to the world because Jesus says, "that the world may believe that you have sent me."

As a conclusion of this interdependent unity, we can say the following: the revelation of the Trinity is the revelation of the deepest and utterly hidden nature of the unity and oneness of God, which in its turn grounds the unity of the Church and through the Church the unity of the world. In other words, the doctrine of the Trinity is the Christian form of monotheism. The oneness of God is a communion of Father and Son; indirectly it is the communion of Father Son and Spirit. It is a unity in love. This unity as a unity in love is to be contrasted with other forms of unity. God's unity consists of relations. St. Thomas says, "The divine persons are subsistent relations."

10.10.3. How to understand it?

This unity is not like the unity in the material world. In the material world we encounter quantitative unity and therefore units that can be counted. Each of these units is composed of various linked entities. Science has not succeeded at least so far, in throwing light to the ultimate and smallest units. In the material world we have quantitative unity and therefore, units can be counted. But this is not possible in the spiritual world.

As far as man is concerned person is a unity. That is why he is able to come to the ultimate units of genus and species. Persons are distinguished from one another by their characteristic properties. Such personal properties in the divine persons are fatherhood, sonship and passive spirition.

Here there is a problem. How can the absolute unity and simplicity of God permit of any numbering, and counting. Numbers have meaning only in the realm of the quantitative. There can be no counting in the sphere of pure spirit. This pure Spirit is the sphere of God. Basil had already said, God is wholly beyond number. Augustine also said since God is not quantitative, he is not tripartite; the three persons cannot be counted up. God is not greater than each individual person. The IInd Council of Toledo said that the Trinity is not without number; yet it is not comprised by number.

10.10.4. In what sense do we speak about the three in God?

In the realm of God number can only be predicated analogously. This means that we can understand unity as a transcendental property of being. We should understand it not as something, which adds

something to the being, but only as a negation of division. This kind of unity belongs to every existent reality. But it exists in different ways depending on its existential rank.

Such unity belongs in the highest degree to the person that is an individual in the sense of possessing an ultimate undividedness and therefore, incommunicability. When we talk of three persons in God, we are saying materially that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are each that kind of individual and indivisible ultimate unity.

10.10.5. How to understand the indivisibility with the unity?

Here, in God the concept of person is not used as a generic concept of person. We should not determine the meaning of the reality from the words used but rather understand the words used in the light of the reality i.e., it is not in spite of the fact that God is absolutely undivided unity that he is three also but precisely because of the fact that God is absolutely undivided unity that he is three (i.e., there is infinite differentiation and permits personal distinctions).

To explain, even though the person is a unity that cannot be communicated to a higher unity, its existence is possible only in co-existence with other persons. The human person is possible only in the plural. It can exist only in reciprocal acknowledgement, and it finds its fulfillment only in the communion of love. Persons thus live only in mutual giving and receiving.

This enables us to understand the unity in love, which according to John exists in God and is the very being of God. But this application

is only a preapprehension. It can be applied to God only analogically. This is the difference between the human and divine realm. In the human realm co-existence of persons is an expression of their finiteness and neediness. Human persons are dependent on each other in a great variety of ways – no single person is wholly identical with himself; none exhausts the nature of humanity and all of its possibilities. Therefore, in the human level communion in love is always erotic as well i.e., it is a love that seeks fulfillment. All this is to be excluded from our understanding of God. God does not possess being; but he is being, absolute perfection, no need is there. He is therefore, absolute oneness, perfect self-identity, and complete self-possession, personal unity in the most perfect sense.

Yet if God is not to be understood as a solitary narcissistic being and become highly imperfect just because of his perfection, God can only be conceived as co-existent.

On the other hand if God should remain God (i.e., not dependent on anything) he must be co-existent within himself. So we come to this conclusion, God is co-existent in himself or within himself.

In other words within the unity and simplicity of his being God must be a communion in love. This love is not love emerging from need for the purpose of receiving something from the other, but a love that gives, a love which gives out of the overflowing fullness of his being. In fact Jesus himself hinted at the fact that this love is love of giving by repeating the word giving in his farewell discourse (17:2,2,4,6,6,7,8,9,etc. i.e., the verbe *didomi* (δίδωμι) occurs 17 times in this chapter.) But what is he to give? God is simple and is

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himself perfect. Therefore, he cannot possess anything. He only is everything. The consequence is that the gift of love in God is not anything which God has but what God is i.e., God gives himself in love. So God's love is a self-giving love. God is one. Now this oneness is his love that exists in the giving of itself.

In consequence we can say, the communion of love in God is not like the communion of separate beings as in the case of man, but it is a communion of a single nature. That is why Jesus says, "All that I have is yours and all that you have is mine" (17:10). Augustine has already alluded to this fact when he said, The trinity is the one and only God and the one and only God is trinity. Thus the doctrine of Trinity is also concrete monotheism. This is the unique unity of which Jesus speaks in 17:3. This Trinitarian understanding of unity has implications for political life and ecclesial life.

God's unity is fullness, even overflowing fullness of selfless giving and bestowing. It is a unity that does not exclude but includes. It is a living loving being with and for one another. In ecclesial life it excludes a rigid, monolithic, uniformist and tyrannical unity that excludes, absorbs or suppresses any kind of otherness. It puts an end to a particular political theology that serves as an ideology to justify relations of domination in which any individual or group tries to impose its idea of unity and order and its interests to the exclusion of others.

On the contrary the doctrine of trinity inspires an order in which unity arises because all pool what they have and make it part of the common store. It has also implications in Christian Spirituality. In the

spirituality the focus is on love and the true love is the love expressed in the self-emptying of Jesus on the Cross. This self-giving God in Jesus Christ is the ground of spirituality. It is also the abiding measure upon which spirituality repeatedly focuses its grace in order to make it (the self – giving love on the Cross) its own measure.

The Mystery aspect of the Trinity

In the above understanding of the Trinity the distinction in persons is to be understood in terms of the movement of giving and receiving. The Father is purely a giver and sender. He is thus the unoriginated origin of the divine love. He is pure soul, a pure out flowing.

The Son receives life and glory and power from the Father. But he receives it not to keep it for himself, to possess it and take full enjoyment of it for himself. If it were the case then the relation between Father and Son will be a closed reality and it would be nothing more than egoism. Rather the Son receives in order to empty himself of it (Phil 2:6ff) i.e., to pass it on to the Father. Thus the Son becomes a mediator or he is pure mediation. The Spirit is nothing by himself; he is a pure receiving, pure donation and gift because in the Spirit the faithful receive the love of the Father coming through the Son. As such the Spirit is pure fulfillment, eternal joy and blessedness.

But there is a problem here. It does not explain everything. There is a question of necessity here i.e., a necessity in love and in freedom, because without this love as explained above God will not

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be. So this love becomes a necessity. Love is understood as freedom otherwise there cannot be love, so this freedom itself is necessary. This is the mystery of the Trinity

Each of the three modes in which the one love of God subsists is conceivable only in relation to the other two. The Father as pure self-giving cannot exist without the Son who receives. But since the Son does not receive something but everything, he exists only in and through the giving and receiving. On the other hand, he would not have truly received the self-giving of the Father were he to keep it for himself and do not give it back. He exists therefore in so far as he receives and gives. As an existence that is wholly owed to another, the Son is therefore pure gratitude, eternal Eucharist. He is pure obedient response to the word and will of the Father. From the mutual love between the Father and the Son, the Spirit receives his being.

Thus the three persons are pure relationality. Now what is the use of this new understanding of the Trinity? How does it help us in our doxological and stereological understanding of the Trinity?

There are mainly two advantages. It is not meant for a rationalistic understanding of faith i.e., it is not meant for an understanding according to the criterion and framework of human reason. We are not making it valid on the basis of human reason. If it were the case then we will be admitting the superiority of human reason over faith.

On the other hand, our aim is *intellectus fidei* i.e., an understanding of faith. It is an attempt to conceptualize faith. So it is

an understanding in faith. It is a deeper initiation into faith. It is not an understanding that leads away from faith to a supposedly higher knowledge. There is no human knowledge higher than the knowledge of faith.

It helps us to understand reality in a new and more profound way. The Trinitarian communion – unity is the model for a Christian understanding of reality. According to this new understanding of reality subject and nature will have no primacy. On the contrary person and relation will have priority. The ultimate reality is not the independent substance but the person. This person is conceivable only in the relationality of giving and receiving. In other words, according to this line of thinking meaning of being is the selflessness of love.

A question is possible. Is such a Trinitarian ontology possible to be established by induction? No. It is not possible because the contrary facts of experience like self-assertion, blind facticity, abstract historicity etc. make it impossible. But this explanation is plausible because it does justice in a greater degree to the human experience of reality. It will also make guilt, loneliness, grief caused by finiteness etc meaningless. It is one proposed in the hope of the eschatology.

This theology of the Trinity yields a model for Christian spirituality of hope and of self-less service that hope inspires. The Trinitarian persons are characterized by this selflessness. They are each in his own way, pure surrender and self-emptying. Their eternal kenotic existence is the condition for the possibility of the temporal kenosis of the Son. It becomes thus the type of Christian humility and selfless service.

The Systematic Understanding

This doctrine is both summation and grammar of the entire Christina mystery of salvation. It is its grammar because it is the intrinsic condition for the possibility of the history of salvation.

The reason is: God is able to deal with what is outside of himself because he is perfect freedom of love within himself, i.e., in other words, what God is is this: He is one with himself through being with and in another. So dealing with others is his intrinsic characteristic. This is the position of the theology of the Trinity in systematic theology. It is both the grammar and summation of systematic theology.

In classical Western theology, the doctrine of the One God preceded the Doctrine of Trinity. They start from the one essence of God and deals with the three persons in terms of this one essence. The problem is, this treatise makes the economy of salvation that has very little to do with the Trinitarian understanding.

In the modern Protestant theology of this century a new method is followed. For them Christ is the basis of theology. They call it *solus Christus*. It says that we can speak of God only through Jesus Christ and his mediation. But the result is it becomes almost a theology without God and atheistic theology.

In neo-Protestantism a new solution is suggested. They regard the Trinity as the crowning conclusion of all dogmatic theology. But in practice the doctrine of the Trinity becomes a mere appendix to theology.

In the method suggested by Kasper, the doctrine of the Trinity is the indispensable beginning of dogmatic theology. But here also when we speak of God we speak of the Father as the Eastern Fathers have taught. We cannot speak in a general way about the being of God. We have to speak of the Father. If we start from the Father as the origin and source of the Trinity we are led to conceive of the one divine nature as love. Then it becomes possible to understand the Trinity as the mystery of perfect love that communicates and implies itself and to that extent it becomes also the grammar and summary of the entire Christian mystery of salvation.

CHAPTER - 11

DEVIATIONS FROM THE CORRECT TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE

11.1. Monistic Tendencies

One of the acute forms of monism is the Islamic faith in God. It is absolute monotheism, which denies the possibility of a trinity in God. There is a plus point in this idea of God and the Council of Vat II acknowledges that. The plan of salvation also included those who acknowledge the creator. In the first place among them are the Muslims, who professing to hold the faith of Abraham along with us adore the one and merciful God who on the last day will judge mankind.

But Muhammad's idea is absolute monism. This was caused by two situations in his life. 1) He lived among the polytheistic Arabs who believed in Allah as the God of creation and providence but beside himself there were other gods with sons and daughters and a host of spirits. In the light of the Biblical account of God, which he got from his contacts with Christians, he rejected this polytheism and

taught strict monotheism. 2) But he did not accept the Christian Trinity as constituted by God the Father with Mary as mother and Jesus as their son. This wrong notion of Trinity still exists among some people. This could not be accepted and therefore, he taught strict monotheism.

11.2. Other Monistic or Unitarian Heresies

There is a heretic Christian sect called Unitarians. A man called Lelio Sozini on rational grounds started it. It was a rationalistic movement. The followers of this heresy were expelled from Italy, the birthplace of Lelio Sozini from where this sect started their teaching. Later they went to Geneva, Poland, Hungary etc. According to the Old Roman Law those who do not accept the Trinitarian doctrine have no protection of the Law, they were expelled from there. Then they went to England. From England they spread into America. In America Josef Priestly was the one who propagated their idea. In India they were closely related to Brahma Samaj. They accepted only the Scriptures and even the Scripture was subjected to the judgment of reason. Paul IV condemned this sect in 1555.

Patromonism :- the heresy that Father alone is the only God. This heresy accepts the strict monism but considers that one God as the Father. The Jehovah witnesses are of this tendency.

Christomonism :- it is a protestant tendency from the over emphasis on the revelation through Jesus Christ. For them Jesus Christ is alone God. They do not go to the Father revealed by Christ.

Pneumatomonism :- it is a tendency among some of the Pentecostals who over-emphasize the role of the Sprit in our salvation and undermine the role of the Father and Son.

CHAPTER - 12

FILIOQUE AND FILIOQUISM⁸⁶

The word *filioque* means ‘and the son’. It is a word which has given rise to much controversy in Trinitarian theology. It has also widened the differences between the Greek and Latin churches.

Filique was a word added to the Nicene Constantinople creed by the Latin church in their liturgy. But it was misunderstood by the Greek church and occasioned the controversy between the churches.

In the creed of the council of Constantinople the procession of the Holy Spirit was expressed in the terms “we believe in Holy Spirit who takes his origin from the Father.” It is in this expression that *filioque* was added. Then it read, “we believe in the Holy Spirit who takes his origin from the Father and the Son.”

The question is whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone or from both the Father and the Son. According to the definition

of Council of Constantinople the Spirit proceeds from the Father only. But what the council meant by origin of both the Son and the Holy Spirit is called the monarchy of the Father i.e., the Father is the only origin without origin (or the unoriginated origin) for the Son and the Holy Spirit.

It means the Spirit has the same source as the Son has.

Thus *proienai* means the commonness and *ekporeusis* signifies the specific origin of the Spirit. In Latin translation of these words there has been some confusion. Both for *proienai* and *ekporeusis* the same word 'proceeded' (proceeds) is used. This caused the controversy between the Latins and the Greeks.

Processio (procession—the noun form of proceed) is a common term. It means the communication of the consubstantial divinity from the Father to the Son and from the Father through the son and with the Son to the Holy Spirit. Thus it means the Son and the Spirit receive their co-substantial divinity from the Father. In this sense the Holy Spirit is related not only to the Father but also to the Son. To express this idea the Latins added the word *Filioque*.

In fact in the pseudo-Athanasian creed *Filioque* was in use from the 5th century. In the synod of Toledo (589-593) *Filioque* was added to show the consubstantiality of the Spirit. In many other synods of the Latin Church this word has been added to the creed. But this was only local development. But Pope Leo III (9th century) did not agree with the addition. His intention was to keep good relations with the Greeks. Only in 1014 the Church of Rome accepted the additional phrase.

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In fact in the Eastern churches also the word *ekporeusis* is used to speak about the communion among the three persons. They used the expression: the Holy Spirit takes its origin from the Father through the Son. *Filioquism* is a not a real heresy, but heresy attributed to the Latin Church on the basis of a misinterpretation of an expression in the creed.

CHAPTER - 13

TRINITY AND LITURGY

The church is a reality made real because of the abiding presence of the trinity. This is clear in Paul's greeting at the end of his second letter to the Corinthians: "The grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you (2Cor 13:14).

This greeting points to the Church's experience as the people of God. This people have their identity in the divine communion – in God as Love as the revealed Word and as the limitless gift. This greeting is extensively used in the Liturgy of the church from the very beginning of her existence. It brings to light the character of the church as the people of God – a people made one by the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In other words, the church is a community. The members of this community co-exist in the mystery of God – the loving initiative of the Father calls it into being; its form and meaning derive from its living union with Christ crucified and risen. Its structure is animated by the Holy Spirit, the principle of its life and growth.

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Trinity is a communion. This communal life of self-giving love holds the church together. That is why Jesus prayed for unity in the church in terms of the love – life of the Trinity. “that they may all be one; even as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be in us.... that they may be one as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one (Jn 17:20-24).

This prayer was interpreted by Vat. II in the following way: it implies that: there is a certain parallel between the union existing among the divine persons, and the union existing among the children of God in truth and love...the human person can only fully discover his true self in a sincere giving of himself (*Gaudium et Spes* no.5).

The love –life of the Trinity is the energy, form and motive of the life of the church. Two consequences follow: 1) Trinity is the impetus to mission because it is the outcome of the experience of the love-life of the Trinity. Mission means the ever wider domain of God. It will be attained only when all lives and all the aspirations of human history are enfolded and transformed in ultimate love. 2) This understanding of the Trinity militates against any secure self-possession of the people of God. For this self-possession should continually prove itself as a self-transcendence into the fullness of Trinitarian meaning and love.

This self transcendence has two aspects: 1) it is to be realized in the Church’s own community life as a continuous growth into more and more of unity after the love life of the Trinity. 2) It also points to a self-transcendence in mission. The church has to realize its identity in a self-transcending outreach to others. This is what Jesus means

by the missionary mandate, “Go therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19)

In the first sense i.e., a self-transcendence in the life itself of the Church the liturgy is the most important thing especially the Eucharist, because the liturgy is the self-expression of the church. In the liturgy itself the Eucharist is the “summit and source” of the ecclesial life. This Eucharist is a Trinitarian sacrament in a fundamental sense. In this sacrament there are clearly three movements – there is the *eucharistia*, the *anamnesis* and the *epiclesis*. In the *eucharistia* sacrifice of praise and thanks giving is offered to God the Father. In *anamnesis* Christ Jesus is called into mind sacramentally. In *epiclesis* the creativity of the Spirit is invoked.

The mystery of the Trinity does not simply intrude into the Christian sacramental awareness; rather it pertains to what is lived and breathed, eaten and imbibed in the Eucharistic liturgy. “We will offer to you and to your only Son and to your Holy Spirit praise and thanks giving now and for ever. Amen.”

The Eucharist starts with the doxology of the Trinity, it proceeds with the doxology of the Trinity and ends with the dismissal of the people in the name of the Trinity. In this whole mystery three great actions are realized – the thanksgiving of the Father (it includes thanksgiving for sending Jesus and for the sending of the Spirit) anamnesis of the Son (specially the institution of the Eucharist, the second coming and the new life. So it includes the Father Son and Spirit.) and the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit (which starts with a prayer

to the Father proceeds with a prayer to the Holy Spirit and the result envisaged is that the body of the incarnate son is realized in it. Thus the liturgy is fundamentally a celebration of the Holy Trinity and in the Liturgy it is the Eucharist which being the realization of the identity of the church celebrates the Trinity.

13.1. The Economic Trinity and the Immanent Trinity⁸⁷

In the context of the connection between the Liturgy and Trinity we have to consider two concepts about the Trinity. These are the concepts of economic Trinity and immanent Trinity. These are two technical terms used in the history of Christian theology to refer to two aspects of our concept of the Trinity.

Economic Trinity: Economic Trinity means the trinity as present within the history of salvation. The history of salvation is a serious phase of divine plan. This plan is being progressively revealed and realized by the Triune God. The history of salvation is what is called *economia* in the writings of the early Fathers of the Church. In this *economia* God revealed himself and realized his plan of salvation through the sending of his Son Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word and by the action of the Holy Spirit in history. In these two most important events in salvation history God reveals himself to us and God's plan of salvation is realized in the world. Thus in the Christian experience God appears as Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Trinity as revealed in this historical and salvific process is called the economic Trinity.

Immanent Trinity: What God reveals is his actual being. In the revelation God appears to us as Trinity or as Triune. This means in himself God is Trinity. Otherwise we cannot understand why God

has revealed himself as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In other words we have to understand that God is Trinity not just in his self-revelation for us but in his objective being in himself. In God's revelation God appears as Father i.e., as the unoriginated origin and source of everything, the mysterious source. This happens because in fact in Himself God is Father. God reveals himself as the enlightening Word and Truth, as the eternal Logos, the Son. This is because God is in fact in himself Son i.e., Truth. God is communicated to us as love and power for the purposes of carrying out his plan. This is because God is that power, the Holy Spirit. Thus the immanent Trinity is nothing other than the one true God in himself.

But how are these two interrelated? There is an identification of the immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity in Karl Rahner who says that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa⁸⁸. According to him "The Trinity ad extra and ad intra is identical, because one would not be speaking of a self-communication of God unless he two missions and the two persons thus there for us, in whom God comes to us, were "part" of God himself. If they were purely of the created realm, the communication of God's self would be absent. The missions are real "outgoings" (*processions*) in God himself- the divine decree of self-communication being free, however."⁸⁹ It is because God is Trinity that God reveals himself as Trinity of persons. Father, Son and Spirit. The Trinity understood in itself, the internal relationship between the three persons, the eternal mystery of the Trinitarian process – all this is known as the immanent Trinity. These two are the same. The immanent Trinity is the God revealed as the economic Trinity. As Karl Rahner says "The economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa."⁹⁰

CHAPTER - 14

TRINITARIAN CONCEPTS IN PHILOSOPHY AND NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

14.1. The Trinity in Philosophy

In philosophy the idea of the absolute as Trinitarian is a strong tradition. We can see the traces of it even in Plato.

14.1.1. Plato:

In the writings of Plato there is a strong tendency towards a Trinitarian understanding of reality⁹¹. He does not call it trinity; neither does he have any idea of the simultaneous relations and difference of these triads. But on the whole we can detect the roots of a Trinitarian understanding of reality in Plato.

Plato understands the world as created by God according to the eternal and universal ideas of them, which are essentially related to God. Thus there is God, then there is the eternal ideas according to which the world is created and then thirdly something that relates these two. God in his goodness desired that all things should be like

himself as far as possible. But there could be only one creation fully according to his image. The deity intending to make this world like the fairest and most perfect of intelligent beings formed one visible living being comprehending within himself all other living beings of similar nature.

There must be only one world if the created copy is to agree with the original. There is and will be one only begotten and created heaven. Finally there must be a principle of union. Two things cannot be rightly put together without a third.

14.1.2. Hegel:

Hegel connects the trinity with the dialectical unfolding of the Absolute. There is first the absolute idea prior to the world and independent of it. In this absolute idea is contained the entire universe. Secondly, there is the necessary objectification of the absolute idea. In this objectification the content of the absolute idea is revealed. It is the objective nature. The absolute must return to itself with the fullness of the objective nature, which takes place in the individual consciousness or subjective spirit. The returning takes place in the individual consciousness⁹².

The absolute idea corresponds to the Father; the objective nature to the Son, the individual consciousness corresponds to the Spirit. Hegel deals with the absolute idea in Logic, the objective nature in the philosophy of nature and the individual consciousness or subjective spirit in psychology and anthropology.

This is the objective order of the universal morality and law. This is described in the ethics, which is the objective spirit. Its full return takes place in the absolute spirit.

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This ultimate return also is understood in three ways – first in the contemplation of himself by the absolute ‘spirit’ (in this contemplation he perceives his own essence in art and in the symbols of ultimate union in religion and in the perfect conception of himself in which he comprises everything (i.e., the absolute and universal idea, its objectification in the world and all the degrees and stages of the perfect return. This universal comprehensive perception is philosophy. This perfect return corresponds to the Holy Spirit.

Hence he concludes that the Trinitarian faith is the perfect religion i.e., the perfect expression of God in his threefold manifestation – the father in the absolute idea, the Son in its objectification and the Holy Spirit in the total return to the absolute and comprehensive unity. In his ‘History of Philosophy’ Hegel writes: “this doctrine is contained in the Christian church as the Trinity. God is known as Spirit only in so far as he is known as the Triune. This new principle is the pivot around which the history of the world turns. Up to this moment and from this moment on, the history of the world is developing. In this religion all riddles are solved, all mysteries are manifested. The Christians know of God what he is, because they know that he is triune.

Evaluation: First of all, we have to acknowledge that nowhere else the Trinitarian pattern of creation is understood more deeply than in Hegel. We speak of “*vestigia Trinitatis*”. But it is not merely some occasional indications. But it comprises all beings and the entire process of nature and history. So Hegel’s contribution is really unique.

At the same time there are certain defects in it. 1) Hegel's speculation concerns only the created world and its unfolding. It does not consider trinity as transcendent, as the mystery of the self-existent God. It explains the Trinitarian pattern of the world, but not the divine mystery itself before the world. 2) The consequence is it does not concern itself with the revelation of the transcendent triune God and so it has nothing to speak about our relation with that revealing God.

14.2. Trinitarian tendencies in non Christian Religions

Now it is being discovered more and more clearly that Trinitarian idea is not simply the prerogative of Christianity, but that it is latent in many ancient religions. J.L Seifert has made a research in the history of religions and brought out many hitherto unknown aspects of world religions.

He distinguishes the triadic personification of the god idea in Hawai, in Peru etc. thus in the lunar idea there is triadic elements i.e., the three phases of the moon – crescent, full, decreasing. He thinks that the Indian Trinity is based on it.

Then there are formally triads of Father, mother and child in many religions.

In Egypt there is a triadic understanding of God *Osris, Isis* and *Horus* (Father, Mother, son). There is the triad of the three spheres of the universe – the water, sky and the earth.

In Rome there was some triadic grouping of the three gods – Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto. In china there is the idea of triad. *Yin* is

one God who is paired with *Yang*. But this duality is united by the *Tai- Ky*.

Kant on his part believed that in morality there is a triadic structure. This shows that the universe has a basic triple structure of God as trinity? It does not seem likely. These triadic understanding is fundamentally different from the Christian idea of God as Trinity based on the concept of the unity of three persons. This personal idea is not found in any of these primitive triadic symbols. In their primitive religions the triad is understood as the aspects of the self –same divine reality. In brief they would lead only to a modalistic idea of God.

14.3. The Triadic structure in other religions

The idea of God is expressed in three different ways in three types of cultures – the culture of the shepherds, the culture of the hunters and the culture of the farmers.

1. The culture of shepherds and nomads: here God is basically the sky god. God is not understood as loving father who cares for man but as distant and inert. He is identified with the sky. He is an absolutistic ruler. This same culture had slightly different form. In the Semitic form of nomadic culture God becomes absolute Lord. This position corresponds to the patristic culture and hierarchic society where is supreme power is ultimately vested in the king.
2. In the culture of hunters in the tolemic culture, man encounters not any personal God but with numinous energies which are symbolized in animals. This is also a pantheistic understanding

of God i.e., every animal is god or has the numinous energy in it. Man tries to participate in divine power. The rites of imitation of young people are means of participation in divine powers. *Tapas* in India is understood as a means. Here one can even superceed the powers of God by *Tapas*. The sun is considered as the embodiment of divine powers. This idea of God gives rise to the urban individualistic world.

3. In agrarian cultures the god idea has a different form. It is here that the saviour idea of God has importance. He is a Son of God. He has divine origin. He enters the world through a virgin birth. There are different ideas about how he relates himself with the virgin. Some say he enters the virgin mother as food, as ray of light, as lightening etc. He is bringer of cultures and all the goods needed for our life. He teaches all the arts. In some forms he gives these things not by teaching or bringing these arts to the people but he gives them these goods from his own body by self-sacrifice (this is the idea of the *Purusha* in *Purusha Sukta*). He battles against the adversary and conquers him. This advisory is given in different forms as dragon, etc. He is expected to return after final victory over evil. Dualistic concepts are linked with the saviour idea.

In these cultures the three aspects of God are revealed. The sky god is the distant God the Father, the God of the nomads. The impersonal spirit is the Holy Spirit. The saviour is the second person. This cultural development is also disfiguring of the idea of God because the one aspect of God is divorced from the totality i.e., each culture develops the one aspect of God, which is suited to it and neglects the

other aspects. In Christianity the totality is given. Christ gave us the synthesis, the Triune God.

This analysis does not permit us to say that there was an original revelation of the Triune God and that different cultures developed only one or other aspect of this Triune God which suited their culture.

Critical Evaluation

The Trinity is not merely transcendent reality but is manifest in our world. This is some thing we have to agree. Revelation not only perfects the individual but is also a call to unity, bringing the multitude of nations and cultures into the one kingdom of God. But the conclusion that there was an original revelation is not true. Man can find God in creation. But that does not mean that it is revelation. This is modelism.

14.4. Divine Triad in Hinduism

The number three is a sacred number in the very ancient tradition of India. All the most important things are counted three. 1) Thus originally there were only three Vedas- the *Rg*, *Yajur* and *Sama*. *Atharva Veda* was a later addition. Even after the addition of it, the number 3 with regard to Vedas was continued and it can found in many writings. 2) The world is understood as triple—three is the sky, the earth and ether. 3) The same cosmic potencies are at work in these three spheres. Five becomes sun in the sky, lightening in the ether and sacrificial fire in the earth. 4) The three *gunas* constitute the universe.

14.4.1. The *Trimurti*:

The root of the Hindu conception of the Trimurti can be seen already in the Rgveda where *agni* is presented as a god with three forms-sun, lightning and fire. Basing on this Rigvedic idea, some Hindu scholars speak of three fold character of the sacrificial fire. Then there is the tendency to reduce all gods to manifestations of the chief gods, manifestations of sky, air and earth. The *Trimurti* is usually Brahman, Vishnu and Siva, though there are some divergent characters constituting the *trimurti*. It is a classical form of the divine triad in India. It appears in sculptures, images and figures as one body with three heads⁹³. Now what is the idea of the triad?

There are a few interpretations of the *Trimurty* in India. The oldest of these is in the *Maitreya Upanisad*. There we are told there are two types of the knowledge of God- lover and higher. The higher knowledge is the knowledge of which transcends plurality. "He becomes one who goes beyond the Brahman (the author of the empirical world) and to the state of the Supreme divinity above the gods. He obtains happiness, undecaying and unmeasured, free from sickness, he who knows this and worships Brahman with this triad of knowledge, austerity and meditation. Then freed from these things by which he was filled and affected, this rider of the chariot attains union with the Atman."

There is also other triads. The cosmic triad – fire, air and sun. Triad of life – time, breath and food. The Divine triad – *Brahma, Rudra, Vishnu*.

There is a question in *Maiterya Upanisad*. It is this "Some meditate upon one, some upon another. Tell us which one is the best for us." the answer consists in pointing out the way beyond the limitation of plurality. The plurality of things, all of them contain the Brahman, in its specification and limitation. Man must transcend them. The method is this: first meditate on them and then discard them. It is clearly said, "Verily, this whole world is Brahman. Verily these which are its chief forms are meditated upon worships and discards. For with these one moves higher and higher in the worlds. And when all things perish, he attains unity of the Purusha."

There is a hymn to the Absolute. In this hymn the absolute is identified with all its manifestations. In 5:1 we read, Thou art Brahma, thou art agni, varuna, vayu thou art Indra... thou art the moon... thou art all life and the Lord of all pleasure and delight...

Now what conclusion can be drawn from these texts? The absolute reveals itself in many forms and in many names. These names are at times proposed as triad of Brahman, Vishnu and Siva. So these three are not three manifestations. The same way the world of multiplicity is the manifestation of the absolute. This understanding does not point to a real distinction in the divine essence. So there is no question of relationship among three because the three are not three. But three names of the one and only absolute. In the terminology of Christian history of dogmas this can at the most be called a modalistic Trinity.

In the attempt to pacify the fight between saivites and the vaisnavites the identity of Siva and Vishun is highlighted.

He who is Vishnu is also Rudro

And he who is Rudra is Pitamaha (Brahma)

One form, but three dietics, Rudra, Vishnu

Pitamaha (*eka murtih trayo deva Rudra, Vishnu, Pitamoha*).

Here also the text attempts at the ultimate identity in a sphere which is beyond the empirical grasp of man. We are bewildered at the multiplicity and conflict of creatures but the reality is that the distinction exist only in the superficial or empirical level. So the text *eka murtih trayo deva* cannot be translated as “one God three persons” or as “one substance three persons.” *Deva* never means persons in the strict sense. *Devas* means the subordinate cosmic manifestations of the absolute, constituting and governing the sphere of the empirical world, never the ultimate divine reality itself. The ultimate divine reality is called *Bhagavan, Brahman, Atman or Purusha*.

The word *murti* means reality. So the text speaks of one reality manifesting itself in a triple empirical form. The main problem with this text is that it cannot express the Christian idea of God. In Christianity the divine person is the ultimate reality. It cannot be transcended in a higher realm of indistinct oneness. The one God is not above the three divine persons, but the three persons are the one God.

The origin of Triad or Trimurti

It seems that the *Trimurti* idea is related to the three phases of the moon –crescent, full and decreasing. Corresponding to it one

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god of creation, another of preservation and yet another of destruction. It also comes from the idea of reconciling different traditions. This syncretistic element remains very powerful in Hindu thought and expresses itself today in the idea of the one ultimate reality behind the conflicting appearance of the many religions.

14.4.2. *Succidananda*

Brahma Bandhob Upadhyaya (1861-1907) had very clear attachment to Jesus through Keshab Chandra Sen. He became a member of the church of the New Dispensation in 1887, an Indian non-Christian organization (the Brahma Samaja). In 1891, he received baptism from the CMS Missionaries, without belonging to the Church of England. But in the same year (1891) itself he became a Roman Catholic.

He was very much impressed by the Upanishadic qualification of Brahman as *Saccidananda* and interpreted it in a Trinitarian sense. It was understood as a stepping stone for the Hindu to come to Christianity. For him Hinduism is the highest natural theology and highest rational philosophy just because it has God as *Saccidananda*. Appasamy rejects *trimurti* and takes *saccidananda*.

Jules Monchain (1899) also used the concepts of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya for better relationship with Christianity. The Hindu concept of *Saccidananda* is very dear to him. He says *Saccidananda* is monism and pluralism combined. Sat – the existent principles principle, Father. Cit – the eternal Logos, the intellectual consubstantial image of the Existent, Son. *Ananda* – that which unifies together the Father and Son. It is the result (*ananda*) of the meditation.

Chakkarai (1880-1958) a Hindu of the Chetty Caste, the highest non-brahmin caste in India was also sympathetic to the expression *saccidananda*. In 1903, he was baptized. He was also active in the independence struggle. He was chairman of All India Trade Union of Congress. He was co-founder of the Christosamaj of Madras. He was also founder editor of *The Christian Patriot*. Other books to his credit are *Jesus the Avatar* and the *Cross and Indian Thoughts*. He also Co-authored the book *Rethinking Christianity in India*. Now what is the development of the expression *saccidananda* in these thinkers and religious leaders?

Saccidananda has stronger religio-philosophical ground than *Trimurti*. It expresses the triple aspect of God – *sat* (being), *cit* (consciousness) and *ananda* (bliss). This concept is later than the classical Upanisads. This idea does not occur in the classical Upanisads. Yet the *Taittiriya Upanisad* comes close to this idea. There we read thus:: He who knows the Brahman as the real (*satya*), as knowledge (*jnana*) and as infinite (*ananda*) sets down in the secret place and in heaven, he obtains all desires together with the intelligent Brahman.”⁹⁴

The text speaks of three qualities, but they are different from the *saccidananda*. The words are *satya*, *jnana* and *ananda*. Even if we substitute words of similar meaning we will get only *saccidananta*. Being, mind or knowledge and infinite.

The first correct expression of *saccidananda* is in *Tejobind Upanisad* (3:26). There we read “The form of Brahman is consciousness only. It is being consciousness—bliss (*saccidananda*) undivided. Later this expression was taken as the current expression for the absolute in Vedic philosophy.

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Comparison with Christian Trinity.

The full idea of God has to have all the three qualities. In Christian understanding each person is alone God as much as all the persons together is God. All the persons together are not greater than any one of them alone. *Sat-cit-ananda* can, at its best, be understood, not as expressing the Christian Trinity, but the different attributes of God like power, joy, love etc.

CHAPTER - 15

TRINITY AND DIVINE ACTIONS⁹⁵

According to the theory of *Perichoresis*, there is mutually interpenetrating inhabitation of each person in the other two. This leads to the following conclusions about the divine actions.

The Trinity is the sole Agent of Action, since there is such a total communion among the three. When they act they act together. “The whole divine economy is the common work of the three divine persons. For as the Trinity has only one and the same nature, so too does it have only one and the same operation”.⁹⁶ Thus creation of the universe, of humanity or history, the salvation, judging, the intervention in the course of events, are all done jointly by the three persons of the Trinity.

If we do not affirm this, the truth of the joined action of the three we will be falling into the heresy of tri-theism because each person is infinite and therefore each should be creator, saviour etc. Thus there will be three creators, three saviours etc.

15.1. Appropriated and Proper Action

Though all actions of God are thus the joined actions of all the three persons, there are appropriated and proper actions.

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All actions *ad extra* (i.e., directed outside the trinity within creation) should be attributed to the three persons together. Yet in liturgy and spirituality certain actions are attributed to particular persons, though in fact, they are actions of all the three. Thus creation is attributed to the Father, Revelation to the Son, Redemption also to the Son. Sanctification is attributed to the Holy Spirit. This attribution is because of a certain affinity of that action with that particular person.

Creation is attributed to the Father because within the Trinity he is the begetter and breather-out for the Son and the Spirit respectively. Revelation is attributed to the Son because within the Trinity he is the expression and revelation of the Father. Redemption is attributed to the Son because within the Trinity it is he who became incarnate and set us free. Sanctification is attributed to the Holy Spirit because within the Trinity it is he who above all is called Holy. This special attribution is called in theology Appropriation. The Trinity as supreme efficient cause in relation to the creation acts always jointly and simultaneously and in perfect *Koinonia*; but certain action are appropriated by one or other person because of the affinity. This is what we call appropriation. Examples: Father – 1Cor 12:4-6; Heb 13:4; Rom 5:8. Son – Jn 1:3; 1Cor 8:6; Col 1:16. and Holy Spirit – 1Cor 12:13

15.2. Proper Actions

As there are appropriated actions, there are also proper actions. Certain actions are proper to one or other person of the Trinity. A person of the Trinity can establish a personal relation with a creature. It is not a relation with creation as such, but it is a relation with a

particular creature. The relation with creation as such is a Trinitarian action, but that with a particular creature is proper to that particular divine person. It is something like an assimilation of a creature to bestow on it the divine person personally.

Thus incarnation is the proper action of the Son because in incarnation the creature called the son of Mary was assimilated into the second person to bestow with divine nature and powers. So incarnation is the proper action of the Son and not of the Father or the Holy Spirit. At the same time we cannot rule out the presence of the Father and the Spirit in the Son, who became incarnate. The Father and Spirit came down and formed the Son's humanity in the womb of Mary. Yet effectively the Son alone is incarnated. The same way, the Spirit came upon Mary and bestowed its presence in her. The same way there is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Saints. It is a proper action.

So there are proper actions, appropriated actions and common actions.

15.3. Divine Mission

Divine mission is an idea intrinsically related to divine proper actions. Thus we can speak of the mission of the Son into our history to divinise it. It is the sending of a particular person of the Trinity and the subsequent self-communication of that person to a particular created being. Thus the Son, the Second person communicated himself to the person of Jesus as representative of man and in the person of Jesus, he divinized the whole human race. Thus the sending of the Son by the Father is a mission. The same way the Father sent

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the Spirit to Mary as the representative of humanity so that through her the Trinity could breath the Spirit into humanity and show the maternal face of God.

The missions are not simply attributed to the persons, but are exclusive and proper to them. Only the Son is sent in the flesh. Only the Spirit sent on Pentecost. To understand the difference between the common actions and proper actions, we have to have recourse to the distinction between action and mission.

Actions are common to all the three persons. They can only be appropriated. Mission is proper to the person. The entire order of salvation is based on the divine mission and hence strictly personal, but through these missions the new creation of man and the universe takes place and in the action the entire Trinity is involved.

CONCLUSION

After the foregoing long survey of the doctrine of the Trinity and the many views - heretical and orthodox-expressed by thinkers and theologians we are finally forced to come to a conclusion. The concluding question is this: what are we to keep in mind as the essential dogma of the Trinity. What in human words should we retain as most important to believe without which we will not be believers in the true God revealed through the history of man. But this question as to the essence itself is misleading because according to the Aristotelian Thomistic system of philosophy God is essence and in him there is no accident. Therefore we cannot search for the essence of God by pushing certain other things to the side because everything we can predicate of God is his essence. In that situation what is the way out of the debacle? Or to put it in another way, is there any possibility of a way out? Humbly admitting the limitations of the human intellect we will put down the following ideas.

First and foremost we have to understand the Trinitarian doctrine as fundamental to the Christian faith. Without upholding the Trinitarian doctrine we cannot speak any more of a meaningful Christology because all that we believe about Jesus is that he is God and son of God. Without a Trinity there is no possibility to uphold a faith in the Son of God. If Christology fails, then soteriology also will collapse because if Christ is not God, then we have not been saved. No one can save us except God. So the divinity of Christ is essential for a meaningful soteriology. Without the Trinity Pneumatology will also collapse because we believe that God the Holy Spirit is indwelling and that is how we are adopted as the children of God. Without the Trinity

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we cannot also speak of a meaningful eschatology, because our hope about the end is that the son of man will appear as the final victor. As we said about Christology and so on we can speak also about the Liturgy of the Church and every doctrine and practice of the church. At the foundation stands the Trinity. Without the Trinity, the very church, the house of God will collapse. Therefore what we should believe first and foremost is that faith in the Trinity is essential to the Christian faith.

The next question is how to understand it and formulate it in human language. But is it an important task? Is it not enough that we believe in the Trinity but do not attempt an expression of that faith saying that it is beyond our comprehension? But the human intellect, in spite of its limitations is able to have at least a glimpse of all that are real. To say that it is impossible to know the Trinity is tantamount to saying that Trinity is not real. If Trinity is real, some how we are able to understand it, though not in the same way as we understand material realities. Therefore we have to be on our guard against an intellectual relinquishment which gives up any attempt at a comprehension as impossible. We have to affirm the reality of the Trinity and in affirming we need also to be trying constantly to understand it and formulate it.

Yet in our understanding of the Trinity there are five courses which we have to avoid. Tritheism which sees three ultimate realities, modelism which understands the ultimate reality as a strictly unicit reality which allows only three forms of appearance and consequent comprehension on the part of man; subordinationism which sees one reality superior to the others, an idea of the Trinity which lacks content and finally an idea of the Trinity which is totally unrelated to the practical life of man.

The theological formulations and explanations of the doctrine are only partial attempts at an elucidation of one or other aspect of the mystery. When any of these aspects is over-emphasised we lose the totality and that will result in heretical view. The explanations of the Fathers especially of St. Augustine and later of St. Thomas are not proofs for the Trinity which may bring a person to faith; rather they are explanations for those who already have committed themselves to the doctrine in faith. They also show that faith in the Trinity is not against the human intellect.

Though there is no contradiction in the doctrine of the Trinity, there is tension. But tension cannot be avoided. The very foundation of Christian faith is a tension created by faith in the death of the immortal on the cross. This tension in the intellectual level grows into a tension in the emotional level and in all areas of the Christian existence. Living the tension without leaning to one side or other is the challenge of Christianity. In this challenge the Trinitarian faith functions as the foundation. That is why it is the basis of all Christian life.

End Notes

- ¹ Cf. J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, London, Adam and Charles Black 1960, pp83-84
- ² The Shepherd of Hermas, Book 2, Commandment 1, (see A.C.Coxe, *Fathers of the Second Century*, vol. 2, Grand Rapids, W.B.Eerdmans, 1983, p. 20).
- ³ F.S. Fiorenza and J.P. Galvin (eds), *Systematic Theology*. Vol.1, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1991, p. 160.
- ⁴ Cf. J.L.Mckenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament*, New York, Image Books, 1975, pp 34-36
- ⁵ cf O Hofius, "Father", *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol.1, (ed) C. Brown, Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1980, p. 617.
- ⁶ ibid
- ⁷ cf O.Hofius, art.cit. p. 617.
- ⁸ S. Hemraj, "God the Liberator", *Jeevadhara*, vol 36, no. 1,2. p. 116.
- ⁹ Ibid p. 118.
- ¹⁰ H. Fischer-Barnicol, "Pater Absconditus: The Problem in the Light of the History of Religion" *Concilium*, 143, (3/1981), p. 21.
- ¹¹ H. Fischer-Barnicol, art. Cit. p. 20.
- ¹² Cf. J. Pohle, *The Divine Trinity*, London, B. Herder Book Co., 1946, pp 12-14.
- ¹³ H. Bietenhard, "Angel, Messenger, Gabriel, Michael", *NIDNT*, vol.1, p101.
- ¹⁴ Cf The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitude 9, 1,2. (see A.C.Coxe, op.cit.p. 43).
- ¹⁵ Cf. Pseudo-Clementines, *Recognitions*, II, 42.
- ¹⁶ First Epistle of the Apostles, 14.
- ¹⁷ Cf. Wajurgens, *the faith of the early fathers* Vol. 2, Bangalore, TPI 2002, P. 74 - 76
- ¹⁸ J.O. Akao, "Word- A Potent Extension of Personality in the Old Testament and African Belief System" *Bangalore Theological Forum*, vol 25(1993), nos 2,3, p. 50.
- ¹⁹ J.O. Akao, art. Cit. p. 53.
- ²⁰ C. Draina, "Trinity, Holy (in the Bible)" *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 14, Washington, Catholic University of America, 1967, p. 306.

- 21 Cf. P. Sigal, *Judaism , The Evolution of a Faith*, Grand Rapids, W.B. Eerdmans, 1988, pp.157f.
- 22 Cf. A. Green (ed), *Jewish Spirituality from the Bible through the Middle Ages*, London, SCM Press, 1985, PP 82ff.
- 23 M. Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, New York, The Viking Press, 1961, p. 374.
- 24 cf. Theophilus, *To Autolycus*, 2,15, as given in *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, (tr) W.A. Jurgens, Bangalore, TPI, 2002, p. 75.
- 25 Cf. P.P.Hallie, "Stoicism", *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Vol 8, (ed) P. Edwards, New York, Macmillan, 1967, pp. 19-21.
- 26 R. Haerton-Kelly, "God the Father in the Bible and in the Experience of Jesus. The State of the Question", *Concilium*, 1981/3, p. 98.
- 27 W. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, (tr) G.W.Bromily, Grand Rapids. W.B.Eerdmans, P. 22
- 28 cf. G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol 4, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1979, p.985
- 29 K.H.Bartels, "Son, Son of God, Son of Man, Servant of God, Son of David", in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol 3, op.cit. p. 631.
- 30 R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John XII-XXI*, Garden City NY, Doubleday & Company, 1970, Pp. 710-711.
- 31 R.E. Brown, op.cit. p. 708
- 32 Cf. J. Pohle, op. cit. pp. 43-112.
- 33 Didache, 7,1 as given in W. A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol.1, op. cit. p.2
- 34 cf. Justine, *First Apology*, 61; Tertullian, *Baptism*, 13,3; Cyprian, Letter to Jubaianus, 73,18
- 35 Clememt, *Letter to the Corinthians*, 46, 6 as given in W.A. Jurgens, op. cit. Vol 1. p. 11.
- 36 Justine, *the First Apology*, as given in W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol. 1, Bangalore TPI, 2002, 51
- 37 ibid
- 38 ibid p. 52.
- 39 Justine, *Second Apology*, as given in W. A. Jurgens, op. cit. P. 57.
- 40 Justine, *Dialogue With Trypho the Jew*, as given in W.A. Jurgens, op. cit. p. 60

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- 41 Athenagoras of Athens, *Supplications for the Christians*, 10 as given
in W.A. Jurgens, op cit. p. 70.
- 42 Ibid
- 43 ibid
- 44 Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolicus*, 2, 10, as given in W.A. Jurgens,
op. cit. p. 75.
- 45 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1,10,1 as given in W.A. Jurgens, op. cit. p.
84.
- 46 Ibid 1,10,2, Jurgens, p. 85.
- 47 Cf. L.D.Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787)*,
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- 48 Clement, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, 1,6,41,3;42,1, as given in
W.A.Jurgens, op. c it. P. 178
- 49 cf. N.P. Tanner (ed), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol 1,
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Press, 1990, p. 5. This profession is given in the council as the “faith of
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- 50 Cf. L.D. Davis, op. ci. Pp. 81-115.
- 51 N.P. Tanner op.cit. p.31.
- 52 Cf. L.D. Davis, op. cit. 115-119.
- 53 N.P. Tanner op. cit. p. 32.
- 54 Cf. J. Pohle, *The Divine Trinity*, London, B. Herder Book Co. 1946, pp.
281-290.
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- 56 Cf. Monks of St. Agustin Abbey, *The Book of Saints*, London, Cassell,
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- 57 Cf. Augustine, *On the Trinity (De Trinitate)* (tr) A.W Haddan, in *Nicene
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- 58 Cf. P. Burns, *Butler’s Lives of the Saints New Concise Edition*, London,
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- 59 cf. L. Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Rockford, Tan Books and
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procession by which God exists as Trinity and the procession by which
the creatures are created. The first is called internal procession or *processio
ad intra*. Here the terminus of the procession does not go outside of the
principle. The second is external procession or *processio ad extra*. Here

the terminus of the procession goes outside the principle. It is through the second procession that the creatures are formed. It is a cause-effect relationship.

- 60 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Quest. 27
- 61 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, Quest 27, Art. 2, as given in *Summa*(tr) Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol 1, Westminster Christian Classics 1948, pp, 153.
- 62 Cf. *Summa*, Question 29, art. 1, op.cit. p. 155.
- 63 Cf. C.M. LaCugna, "The Trinitarian Mystery of God", *Systematic Theology*, (ed) F.S. Fiorenza and J.P. Galvin, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1991, pp. 167-169. cf. also J.D. Zizioulas, "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: the significance of the Cappadocian Contribution" in *Trinitarian Theology Today*, (ed) C.Schwöbel Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1995.
- 64 L. Boff, *Trinity and Society*, (tr) P. Burns, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1988, p. 54.
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- 66 For example see Dermot Lane *The Reality of Jesus*, New York, Paulist, 1979, pp 112-116.
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- 68 F.S. Fiorenza and J.P. Galvin (ed), *Systematic Theology. Roman Catholic Perspectives*, vol.1, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1991, p. 180.
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- 71 Cf. J. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, New York, Macmillan, 1989, pp 170ff.
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- 83 Cf. L. Boff, *The Trinity and Society*, (tr) P. Burns, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1988.
- 84 L. Boff, *Trinity and Society*, (tr) P. Burns, Mary Knoll, Orbis Books, 1988, p. 13.
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UNITY and TRINITY

THE GOD OF
CHRISTIANITY

Philip Chempakassery

The Trinitarian doctrine is the central mystery of Christian faith. Though central it is also the most difficult for comprehension and theological elucidation. Difficulty should not be understood as impossibility or should it frighten us. Solving the difficulties is in the very nature of Christian faith. This demand of Christian faith is taken seriously and an attempt is made to solve the difficult problem. And the result is this book - Unity and Trinity : the God of Christianity.