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The Evangelical Quarterly

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THE TRINITY

I

INTRODUCTION

IN this article we shall attempt to set forth in as clear language as possible the basic truths which the Church holds concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. We shall first present the Scripture evidence on which the doctrine rests and then we shall present the credal statements and formulations that have been set forth by church councils and by individual thinkers as they have applied themselves to the interpretation of that evidence through the two thousand years of the Christian era.

The doctrine of the Trinity is perhaps the most mysterious and difficult doctrine that is presented to us in the entire range of Scripture. Consequently we do not presume to give a full explanation of it. In the nature of the case we can know only as much concerning the inner nature of the Godhead as has been revealed to us in the Scriptures. The tri-personality of God is exclusively a truth of revelation, and one which lies outside the realm of natural reason. Its height and depth and length and breadth are immeasurable by reason of the fact that the finite is dealing with the Infinite. As well might we expect to confine the ocean within a tea-cup as to place a full explanation of the nature of God within the limits of our feeble human minds. It is not our purpose to engage in metaphysical subtleties, nor to speculate on the implications which may be drawn from this doctrine. We do hope, however, that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall be enabled to set forth in a plain simple way, yet as fully as the limitations of our finite minds and language will permit, the truth concerning it, and to guard it against the errors and heresies which have prevailed at one

time or another in the history of the Church. While we are not able fully to comprehend the Divine mind, we nevertheless have been created in the image of God and therefore have the right, within limits, to conceive of God according to the analogy of our own nature, and we should be able to grasp enough of this sublime revelation which God has been pleased to give concerning Himself to make a considerable advance in our spiritual growth. Since in the study of this doctrine we are absolutely dependent on revelation (there being nothing else quite similar to or analogous with it in our own consciousness or in the material world), and since the subject of our study is transcendently sacred, that subject being the innermost nature of the infinitely righteous and transcendent God, our attitude should be that of disciples who, with true humility and reverence, are ready to receive implicitly whatever God has seen fit to reveal.

Since God is the Creator, Preserver and final Disposer of all things, the One in whom we live and move and have our being, our knowledge of Him must be basic and fundamental to all our other knowledge. In answer to the question, "What is God?", the Scriptures reveal Him to us, in the first place, as a rational and righteous Spirit, infinite in His attributes of wisdom, being, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; and in the second place they reveal Him to us as One who exists eternally as three "Persons", these three Persons, however, being one in substance and existing in the most perfect unity of thought and purpose. It is evident, moreover, that if God does thus exist in three Persons, each of whom has His distinctive part in the works of creation, providence, redemption and grace, that fact governs His activity in all spheres of His work and, consequently, the doctrine which treats of the nature of His Person must seriously affect all true theology and philosophy. Doctrines vital to the Christian system, such as those of the Deity and Person of Christ, the Incarnation, the Atonement, etc., are so inextricably interwoven with that of the Tri-unity of God that they cannot be properly understood apart from it.

We should notice that the doctrine of the Trinity is the distinctive mark of the Christian religion, setting it apart from all the other religions of the world. Working without the benefit of the revelations made in Scripture, men have, it is true, arrived at some limited truths concerning the nature and Person of God. The pagan religions, as well as all philosophical

speculations, are based on natural religion and can, therefore, rise to no higher conception than that of the unity of God. In some systems we find monotheism with its belief in only one God, and in others we find polytheism with its belief in many separate gods. But none of the pagan religions, nor any of the systems of speculative philosophy have ever arrived at a trinitarian conception of God. The fact of the matter is that apart from supernatural revelation there is nothing in human consciousness or experience which can give man the slightest clue to the distinctive God of the Christian faith, the triune, incarnate, redeeming, sanctifying God. Some of the pagan religions have set forth triads of divinities, such as, for instance, the Egyptian triad of Osiris, Isis and Horus, which is somewhat analogous to the human family with father, mother and child ; or the Hindu triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Schiva, which in the cycle of pantheistic evolution personifies the creative, preservative and destructive powers of nature ; or the triad set forth by Plato, of goodness, intellect and will,—which are not examples of true and proper tri-personality, not real persons who can be addressed and worshipped, but only personifications of the faculties or attributes of God. None of these systems have anything in common with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity except the notion of “ threeness ”.

Before undertaking the more detailed study of the doctrine of the Trinity it may be well to remind ourselves that man's knowledge of God has been progressive. The most general revelation of the existence of God has been given through nature and is therefore common to all men. The existence of God is an intuitive truth universally accepted by the unprejudiced mind. Man knows himself to be dependent and responsible, and therefore posits the One on whom he is dependent and to whom he is responsible. He attributes to this One in an eminent degree all of the good qualities which he finds in himself, and thus comes to know God as a personal Spirit, infinite, eternal, and perfect in His attributes.

The Second stage in the revelation concerning the nature and attributes of God was that given through the Old Testament period. There a great advance is made over the revelation given through man's intuition and through nature, and God is disclosed as particularly the God of grace and the redeemer of sinners. The third stage, the one in which at present we are

particularly interested, is that given in the New Testament in which God is represented as existing in a trinity of Persons, each of whom performs a distinctive part in the works of creation, providence, and redemption. As Dr. Warfield has pointed out :

“ God is not represented in the Scriptures as forgiving sin because He cares so little about sin; nor yet because He is so exclusively or predominately the God of love, that all other attributes shrink into desuetude in the presence of His illimitable benevolence. He is rather represented as moved to deliver sinful man from his guilt and pollution because He pities the creatures of His hand, immeshed in sin, with an intensity which is born of the vehemence of His holy abhorrence of sin and His righteous determination to visit it with intolerable retribution; and by a mode which brings as complete satisfaction to His infinite justice and holiness as to His unbounded love itself. . . . The mystery of grace resides just in the impulse of a sin-hating God to show mercy to such guilty wretches; and the supreme revelation of God as the God of holy love is made in the disclosure of the mode of His procedure in redemption, by which alone He might remain just while justifying the ungodly. For in this procedure there was involved the mighty paradox of the infinitely just Judge Himself becoming the sinner's substitute before His own law and the infinitely blessed God receiving in His own person the penalty of sin.”

And further :

“ The elements of the plan of salvation are rooted in the mysterious nature of the Godhead, in which there coexists a trinal distinction of persons with absolute unity of essence; and the revelation of the Trinity was accordingly incidental to the execution of this plan of salvation, in which the Father sent the Son to be the propitiation for sin, and the Son, when He returned to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, sent the Spirit to apply His redemption to men. The disclosure of this fundamental fact of the divine nature, therefore, lagged until the time had arrived for the actual working out of the long-promised redemption; and it was accomplished, first of all in fact rather than in word, by the actual appearance of God the Son on earth and the subsequent manifestations of the Spirit, who was sent forth to act as His representative in His absence” (*Studies in Theology*, pp. 112, 113).

We believe that the cosmological, teleological, ontological, and moral arguments for the existence of God are valid for any one with an open and unprejudiced mind. Perhaps they will not convince a rationalist or an atheist, but at present we are not particularly concerned with that class of persons. That theism alone is capable of solving the riddle of the universe is the firm conviction of present day scientific and philosophical thought as we have it set forth in the writings of the most outstanding leaders in these fields, such as Eddington, Jeans, Millikan, Whitehead, Hocking, Brightman, etc. The materialistic concept which held almost undisputed sway a few decades ago has been replaced with the idea that behind all that we see there is a personal God who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

The writer assumes that his readers are convinced theists. Others could hardly be expected to have an interest in theology, much less to be concerned about the doctrine of the Trinity. The psalmist gave the divine appraisal of Atheism in the words, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (xiv. 1). As a recent writer has pointed out, Atheism is

"the very quintessence of absurdity, folly raised to the *nth* degree. In view of the manifold proofs of His power and wisdom on every hand, it is hard to see how any open mind can deny the existence of a Supreme Being who rules over all. To maintain that this far-flung universe is the result of an accidental juxtaposition of atoms, a fortuitous confluence of cosmic forces, is a hypothesis too nonsensical for refutation. As has been pointed out more than once, as well expect a million monkeys banging away on typewriters accidentally to produce a *Paradise Lost*. An atheistic explanation of the origin of the world (the sum total of all that is) calls for an immeasurably greater credulity than the tenets of Theism. If there be no God the cosmos is a hopeless riddle" (Dr. C. Norman Bartlett, *The Triune God*, p. 36).

But while it is so widely recognized that Theism alone offers an adequate explanation of the universe, the fact remains that many theists who firmly believe in the existence of a personal God deny just as strongly that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead as is set forth in the trinitarian faith. In the Christian doctrine of the Trinity they see only tritheism, or some one of the myriad varieties of polytheism which have been so common in both ancient and modern times. They look upon it as an absurdity or as a contradiction of terms, and are never tired of asserting that if God is one He cannot be three. But when we give more careful thought to the theistic problem we find that the absurdity and irrationality lie on their side of the fence, and that the conception of God as an eternally lonely, solitary person is utterly out of the question. And while we do not go so far as to say that the personality of God necessarily implies the doctrine of the Trinity, we do believe that the personal traits of love, honour, fellowship, trust, sympathy, etc., cannot flower forth in their full beauty and fragrance unless there are objective personal relationships, and that this is true of Deity as well as of humanity.

The theory that God is superpersonal is, of course, an absurdity. In the nature of the case Divine personality is an infinitely greater thing than human personality; but the only alternative to a personal God is an impersonal God. And when we assert that God is impersonal we assert the primary tenet of atheism. If God exists, He must be personal. We

cannot worship the Principle of the Absolute, nor hold communion with a Cosmic Power ; and to assert that God is super-personal is but to deceive ourselves with a high-sounding phrase.

II

STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE

Assuming that Theism is the accepted form of belief, and that God is personal, we would state the doctrine of the Trinity under the following heads :

1. *There is but one only living and true God.*

One of the most common objections alleged against the doctrine of the Trinity is that it involves tritheism, or a belief in three Gods. The fact of the matter, however, is, that it stands unalterably opposed to tritheism as well as to every other form of polytheism. Scripture, reason and conscience are in perfect agreement that there is but one self-existent, eternal, supreme Being in whom all of the divine attributes or perfections inhere and from whom they cannot be separated. That both the Old and the New Testament do teach the unity of God is clearly set forth in the following verses :

“Hear, O Israel : Jehovah our God is one Jehovah ” (Deut. vi. 4). “ Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts : I am the first, and I am the last ; and beside me there is no God ” (Isa. xlv. 6). The Decalogue, which is the foundation of the moral and religious code of Christianity, as well as of Judaism, has as its first and greatest commandment, “ Thou shalt have no other gods before me ” (Exod. xx. 3). “ I and the Father are one,” said Jesus (John x. 30). “ Thou believest that God is one ; thou doest well ” (Jas. ii. 19). “ We know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one ” (1 Cor. viii. 4). There is but “ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all ” (Eph. iv. 5, 6). “ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end ” (Rev. xxii. 13). From Genesis to Revelation God is declared to be one.

That the universe is a unit is the settled conclusion of modern science and philosophy ; and with this, of course, goes the corollary that the God who created it and who rules it is

One. Astronomers tell us, for instance, that the same principles which govern in our solar system are also found in the millions of stars which are trillions of miles away. Physicists analyze the light that comes from the sun and from the distant stars and tell us that not only are the same elements, such as iron, carbon, oxygen, etc., which are found on the earth also found on them, but that these elements are found in practically the same proportion as here. From the law of gravitation we learn that every material object in the universe attracts every other material object with a force which is directly proportional to their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between their centres. Hence every grain of sand in the desert and on the sea-shore is linked up with every sun in the universe. The sluggish earth mounts upward to meet the falling snowflake. The microscope reveals marvels just as wonderful as those revealed by the telescope, and everywhere it is the same unified system.

Certainly the Unitarians have no monopoly on the doctrine of the unity of God. Trinitarians hold this just as definitely. The unity of God is one of the basic postulates of theism, and no system can possibly be true which teaches otherwise.

2. *While God in His innermost nature is One, He, nevertheless, exists as three Persons.*

The best concise definition of the doctrine of the Trinity, so far as we are aware, is that found in the Westminster Shorter Catechism : " There are three persons within the Godhead ; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost ; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. " We would prefer, however, to use the term " Spirit " rather than " Ghost ", since a ghost is commonly understood to be a disembodied spirit, and the Holy Spirit has never possessed a body of any kind.

We have seen that the Scriptures teach that there is but one true and living God. They teach with equal clearness that this one God exists as three distinct Persons, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit :

(a) The Father is God : " To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things " (1 Cor. viii. 6). " Paul, an apostle . . . through Jesus Christ, and God the Father " (Gal. i. 1). " There is . . . one God and Father of all " (Eph. iv. 6).

“ At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth . . . ” (Matt. xi. 25). “ For him (the Son) the Father, even God, hath sealed ” (John vi. 27). “ According to the foreknowledge of God the Father ” (1 Pet. i. 2). “ That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ” (Phil. ii. 11). “ I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God ” (John xx. 17). “ But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth ” (John iv. 23). Jesus prayed to God the Father (Mark xiv. 36 ; John xi. 41 ; xvii. 11, etc.).

(b) The Son is God : “ Christ . . . who is over all, God blessed for ever ” (Rom. ix. 5). “ For in him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ” (Col. ii. 9). “ Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God ” (John xx. 28). “ I and the Father are one ” (John x. 30). “ Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ” (Titus ii. 13). “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ” (Matt. xvi. 16). Christ assumed power over the Sabbath, and “ called God his own Father, making himself equal with God ” (John v. 18). He assumed the prerogatives of God in forgiving sins (Mark ii. 5). “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ” (John i. 1).

The attributes which can be ascribed only to God are ascribed to Christ : Holiness—“ Thou art the Holy One of God ” (John vi. 69) ; “ Him who knew no sin ”, (2 Cor. v. 21) ; “ Which of you convicteth me of sin ? ” (John viii. 46) ; “ Holy, guiltless, undefiled, separate from sinners ” (Heb. vii. 26). Eternity—“ In the beginning was the Word ” (John i. 1) ; “ Before Abraham was born, I am ” (John viii. 58) ; “ But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ” (Heb. i. 8) ; “ The glory which I had with thee before the world was ” (John xvii. 5). Life—“ In him was life ” (John i. 4) ; “ I am the way, and the truth, and the life : no one cometh unto the Father but by me ” (John xiv. 6) ; “ I am the resurrection and the life ” (John xi. 25). Immutability—“ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever ” (Heb. xiii. 8), “ They (the heavens) shall perish ; but thou continuest. . . . They shall be changed : but thou art the same ” (Heb. i. 11, 12). Omnipotence—“ All authority hath been given unto me in

heaven and on earth " (Matt. xxviii. 18) ; " The Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty " (Rev. i. 8). Omniscience—" Thou knowest all things " (John xvi. 30) ; " Jesus knowing their thoughts " (Matt. ix. 4) ; " Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him " (John vi. 64) ; " In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden " (Col. ii. 3). Omnipresence—" I am with you always " (Matt. xxviii. 20) ; " The fulness of him that filleth all in all " (Eph. i. 23). Creation—" All things were made through him ; and without him was not anything made that hath been made " (John i. 3) ; " The world was made through him " (John i. 10) ; " For in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers ; all things have been created through him, and unto him ; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist " (Col. i. 17) ; " Upholding all things by the word of his power " (Heb. i. 13). Raising the dead—" And he (God the Father) gave him (Christ the Son) authority to execute judgment . . . for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment " (John v. 27-9). Judgment of all men—" But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all the nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats ; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . And he shall say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into eternal life " (Matt. xxv. 31-46). Prayer and worship are ascribed to Christ—" If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do " (John xiv. 14) ; " He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, and they worshipped him " (Luke xxiv. 51, 52) ; " Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit " (Acts vii. 59) ; all

are to "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent him" (John v. 23); "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31); "Let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. i. 6); "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 10, 11); "Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18); "Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever" (Heb. xiii. 21);—and when we compare these verses with statements such as we have in Isaiah, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (xlv. 22), and Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and that maketh flesh his arm" (xvii. 5), we are faced with this dilemma: either the Christian doctrine of the Trinity must be true, or the Scriptures are self-contradictory; either the Scriptures recognize more Gods than one, or Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is that one God.

All of these ascriptions of holiness, eternity, life, immutability, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, creation, providence, raising the dead, judgment of all men, prayer and worship due to Christ, most clearly teach His Deity. Such attitudes of mind if directed toward a creature would be idolatrous.

It is further to be kept in mind that the Scriptures teach that at a definite time in history this divine Person became incarnate by taking into His personality a germinant human nature, so that He was and continues to be both God and man, in two distinct natures and one Person forever. He was born in the flesh, lived as a perfectly normal human being would live, suffered, and died. It was not with another man that the second Person of the Trinity united Himself—for that would have given Him a dual personality—but with impersonal, human nature. In this union the Divine was, of course, basic and controlling, so that this was not a case of a man being exalted to Deity, but of God voluntarily humbling Himself and descending to the plane of man, in order that as man's substitute and in man's nature He might assume man's guilt, suffer the penalty which was due, and thus accomplish man's redemption. Here, again, we are face to face with impenetrable mystery, and cannot go beyond the historical facts recorded in Scripture. We do,

however, find an analogy for this in our own persons, in that we have two natures, the spiritual and the material, each of which is perfectly distinct, yet with the spiritual taking precedence over and controlling the material. In a way somewhat analogous to this the Divine and human natures exist in Christ, each continuing to have its own properties and to fulfil its own functions.

(c) The Holy Spirit is God: "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Spirit? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts v. 3, 4); "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11); "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me" (John xv. 26). In the Baptismal Formula, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. xxviii. 19), and in the Apostolic Benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 14), the Holy Spirit is placed on a plane of absolute equality with the Father and the Son as Deity and is regarded equally with them as the source of all power and blessing.

There are many, even among professedly Christian people, who have no higher conception of the Holy Spirit than that of an impersonal, mysterious, supernatural power or influence of God. It is true that in the Old Testament, where the emphasis was upon the unity of God, the references to the Spirit, while not incapable of being applied to a distinct person, were more generally understood to designate simply God's power or influence. But in the more advanced revelation of the New Testament the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit is clearly seen. No longer can He be looked upon as merely a divine power or influence, but as a divine Person. Some people, even among those in the Christian Churches, because they are very thoughtless, speak of the Holy Spirit as *it*, when a little reflection would show them that the proper term is *He* or *Him*.

That the Holy Spirit is a Person is clearly taught in the following verses: "The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot" (Acts viii. 29). "The Spirit said

unto him (Peter), Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, go with them, nothing doubting : for I have sent them " (Acts x. 19, 20). " The Holy Spirit said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them " (Acts xiii. 2). " The Holy Spirit shall teach you in that hour what ye ought to say " (Luke xii. 12). " When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth : for he shall not speak from himself ; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak : and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me : for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you " (John xvi. 13, 14). " And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may be with you for ever even the Spirit of truth : whom the world cannot receive ; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him : ye know him ; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you " (John xiv. 16, 17),—here the Holy Spirit is called a " Comforter " (marginal reference Advocate), that is, one called to stand by our side as our Guide, Teacher, Instructor ; and in the nature of the case, therefore, He must be a Person. In a parallel passage Christ is similarly spoken of,—“ We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ” (1 John ii. 1). " The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered " (Rom. viii. 26). " Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God " (Eph. iv. 30). " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches " (Rev. ii. 17). " Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men ; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come " (Matt. xii. 31, 32)—the language here used implies that it is impossible to commit a sin against a more divine personage than the Holy Spirit, that of all possible sins the sin against the Holy Spirit is the worst, both in its nature and consequences, and thus implies His eternal dignity and Deity.

Words which in the Old Testament are ascribed to God are in the New Testament more specifically said to have been spoken by the Holy Spirit,—compare Jer. xxxi. 33, 34 with Heb. x. 15-7 ; Ps. xcvi. 7-11 with Heb. iii. 7-11 ; Isa. vi. 9, 10 with Acts xxviii. 25-8. In the Old Testament we read that the

Holy Spirit brought order out of the primeval chaos (Gen. i. 2) ; that He strove to lead the ante-diluvians in the ways of righteousness (Gen. vi. 13) ; He equipped certain men to become prophets (Num. xi. 26, 29) ; He instructed the Israelites as a people (Neh. ix. 20) ; He came upon Isaiah and equipped him to be a prophet (Isa. i. 1), and caused Ezekiel to go and preach to those of the captivity (Ezek. iii. 12, 15). In the New Testament the miracle of the virgin birth of Christ is wrought through His power (Luke i. 35) ; He descends on Jesus at the baptism and equipped Him for the public ministry (Matt. iii. 16) ; He was promised as a Comforter and Teacher to the disciples (John xvi. 7-13) ; He came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost and equipped them to be world missionaries (Acts ii. 1-42) ; He kept Paul from going in one direction and sent him in another (Acts xvi. 6-10) ; He equips different individuals with different gifts and talents (1 Cor. xii. 4-31) ; He performs the supernatural work of regenerating the souls of men (Titus iii. 5, John iii. 5) ; He inspired the prophets and apostles so that what they spoke or wrote in God's name was truly His word to the people (2 Pet. i. 20, 21) ; in the works of regeneration and sanctification He applies to the heart of each of the Lord's people the objective redemption which was wrought out by Christ, and in general He directs the affairs of the advancing Church. He is thus set forth as the Author of order and beauty in the physical world, and of faith and holiness in the spiritual world.

Throughout the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is thus set forth as a distinct Person, with a mind, will and power of His own. Baptism is administered in His name. He is constantly associated with two other Persons, the Father and the Son, whose distinct personalities are recognized,—a phenomenon which could lead only to confusion if He too were not a distinct Person. The personal pronouns, " He ", " Him ", " I ", and " Me ", are applied to Him, pronouns which can be used intelligently only when applied to a person. They occur so repeatedly through the prose narratives and cannot be set aside as a tendency to personify an impersonal force. That two and two make four does not appear more clear and conclusive than that the Holy Spirit is a living Agent, working with consciousness, will and power.

After the personality of the Holy Spirit is established there are but few who will deny His Deity. It is certain that He is

not a creature, and consequently those who admit His personality accept His Deity readily enough. Most of the heretical sects that have maintained that Christ was a mere man have, in accordance with that, maintained that the Spirit was only a power or influence. This was the opinion held by the Gnostics and Socinians, as well as that held by present-day Unitarians and rationalists.

That there should be any doubt at all concerning the personality of the Spirit may seem strange; and yet, as Dr. A. H. Strong has pointed out :

“ It is noticeable that in Scripture there is no obtrusion of the Holy Spirit’s personality, as if He (the One who inspired the prophets as they wrote) desired to draw attention to Himself. The Holy Spirit shows, not Himself, but Christ. Like John the Baptist, He is a mere voice, and so an example to Christian preachers, who are themselves ‘made . . . sufficient as ministers . . . of the spirit’ (2 Cor. iii. 6). His leading is therefore often unperceived; He so joins Himself to us that we infer His presence only from the new and holy exercises of our own minds; He continues to work in us even when His presence is ignored and His purity is outraged by our sins ” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 324).

3. *The terms “ Father ”, “ Son ” and “ Holy Spirit ” designate distinct Persons who are objective to each other.*

The terms Father, Son and Spirit do not merely designate the different relations which God assumes toward His creatures. They are not analogous to the terms Creator, Preserver and Benefactor, which do express such relations, but are the proper names of different subjects who are distinct from one another as one person is distinct from another. That this is true is clear from the following personal relations which they bear toward each other :

(a) They mutually use the pronouns I, thou, he and him when speaking to or of each other. “ This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him ” (Matt. xvii. 5). “ Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee ” (John xvii. 1). “ I came out from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father ” (John xvi. 28). “ When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth : for he shall not speak from himself : but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak : and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come ” (John xvi. 13).

(b) The Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father. The Spirit glorifies the Son. “ The Father loveth the Son,

and hath given all things into his hand " (John iii. 35). " I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love " (John xv. 10). " He (the Holy Spirit) shall glorify me ; for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you " (John xvi. 14).

(c) The Son prays to the Father. " And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was " (John xvii. 5). " And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever " (John xiv. 16).

(d) The Father sends the Son, and the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit who acts as their Agent. " He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me " (Matt. x. 40). " As thou didst send me into the world " (John xvii. 18). " And this is eternal life, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ " (John xvii. 3). " But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and shall bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you " (John xiv. 26). " It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I go I will send him unto you " (John xvi. 7).

Thus we see that the Persons within the Godhead are so distinct that each can address the others, each can love the others, the Father sends the Son, the Father and the Son send the Spirit, the Son prays to the Father, and we can pray to each of them. They act and are acted upon as subject and object, and each has a particular work to perform. We say they are distinct persons, for a person is one who can say I, who can be addressed as thou, and who can act and be the object of action.

The doctrine of the Trinity, then, is but the synthesis of these facts. When we have said these three things,—that there is but one God, that the Father and the Son and the Spirit is each God, and that the Father and the Son and the Spirit is each a distinct Person,—we have enunciated the doctrine of the Trinity in its fulness. This is the form in which it is found in the Scriptures, and it is also the form in which it has entered into the faith of the Church.

III

FURTHER SCRIPTURE PROOF

While there is no single passage in Scripture which sets forth the doctrine of the Trinity in formal, credal statement, there are numerous passages in which the three Persons are mentioned in such a manner as to exhibit at once their unity and their distinctness. Most important of these is the Great Commission given in Matthew xxviii. 19, in which baptism is commanded "in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". In this, the initiatory rite of the Christian religion, the doctrine of the Trinity is purposely set forth in such a manner as to keep it before the minds of the people as a cardinal doctrine of the faith.

"What we witness here," says Dr. Warfield, "is the authoritative announcement of the Trinity as the God of Christianity by its Founder, in one of the most solemn of His recorded declarations. Israel had worshipped the one only true God under the Name of Jehovah; Christians are to worship the same one only and true God under the Name of 'the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit'. This is the distinguishing characteristic of Christians; and that is as much as to say that the doctrine of the Trinity is, according to our Lord's own apprehension of it, the distinctive mark of the religion which He founded" (*Biblical Doctrines*, p. 155).

The Apostolic Benediction—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2 Cor. xiii. 14), which is a prayer addressed to Christ for His grace, to the Father for His love, and to the Holy Spirit for His fellowship—is designed to serve the same purpose. In this formula, as in that of baptism, the divinity, and consequently the equality, of each of the persons in the Godhead is taken for granted; and no other interpretation is rationally possible except that which the Church has held down through the ages, namely, that God exists in three Persons and that these three are one in substance, equal in power and glory.

In the account of our Lord's baptism we find as clear teaching concerning the reality of the Trinity as any one can reasonably ask for,—Christ the Son stood there in human form and was visible to all the people, the voice of God the Father spoke from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ was seen as that of a dove (Matt. iii. 16, 17).

In the announcement of the birth of Jesus three divine Persons come into view : " And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee : wherefore the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God " (Luke i. 35). Here we read of the coming of the Holy Spirit, of the power of the Most High, and are told that the Child is to be known as the Son of God. Also, in the parallel account of Matthew i. 18-23 the three persons of the Trinity are named.

The distinction between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is announced by Jesus when He says : " But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, He shall bear witness of me " (John xv. 26).

In the final discourse and prayer (John, chs. xiv-xvii), Christ spoke to and of the Father and promised to send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would guide, teach, and inspire the disciples. Here again the personality and Deity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are recognized with special clearness.

The following are a few verses out of a multitude of others which might be quoted to prove that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead : " For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life " (John iii. 16). " For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son ; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent him " (John v. 22, 23). " The glory which I had with thee before the world was " (John xvii. 5). " Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ " (Gal. i. 3). " I came out from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father " (John xvi. 28). " Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me he will keep my word : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him " (John xiv. 23).

The teaching of Jesus is, of course, trinitarian throughout. In accordance with the Hebrew idea of sonship,—that whatever the father is, that the son is also,—He claimed to be the Son of God (Matt. ix. 27 ; xxiv. 36 ; Mark viii. 31 ; Luke x. 22 ;

John ix. 35-37 ; xi. 4) ; and the Jews, with exact appreciation of His meaning, understood Him to claim that He was "equal with God" (John v. 18), or, to put it more briefly, they understood Him to claim that He was "God" (John x. 33). He claims that He knows the Father and that the Father knows Him with perfect mutual knowledge : "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father : and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father ; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Luke x. 22 ; also Matt. xi. 27). The title, "Son of God", in such a sense that it involves absolute community with God the Father in knowledge and power, is attributed to Him and accepted by Him (Matt. viii. 29 ; xiv. 33 ; xxvii. 40, 43, 54 ; Mark iii. 11 ; Luke iv. 41 ; xxii. 70 ; John i. 34, 39 ; xi. 27). But while He thus asserts that His eternal home is in the depths of the Divine Being, He sets forth in equally clear language His distinctness from the Father : "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me : for I came forth and am come from God ; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me" (John viii. 42). And to His disciples He said : "In that day ye shall ask in my name : and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you ; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came out from the Father, and am come into the world ; again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father" (John xvi. 26-8).

It is even more important in this connection to notice that in the teaching of Jesus this interrelationship is not confined to the Father and the Son, but that it also extends with full force to a third Person, the Holy Spirit. Immediately after a passage in which the distinction, and also the unity, of the Father and Son is set forth we read ; "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth : whom the world cannot receive ; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him : ye know him ; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. . . . But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John xiv. 16-26). And again, "But now I go unto him that sent me. . . . It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the

Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I go, I will send him unto you. . . . Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth " (John xvi. 5-13).

Hence our primary reason for believing the doctrine of the Trinity is, as we have stated elsewhere, not because of any general tendency of human thinking to go in that direction, nor because of any analogies in nature, but only because it is a clearly revealed doctrine of the Bible. For those who accept the authority of the Scriptures the evidence is conclusive. We do not here attempt to argue with those who deny that authority, but refer them to the Christian doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scriptures. Unless we are agreed that the Scriptures are an authoritative revelation from God, it is useless to argue over the doctrine of the Trinity. The Christian finds the proofs for the trustworthiness of the Bible so convincing that he is compelled to accept its teaching concerning the Trinity even though his finite mind is not able to comprehend its full meaning.

Yet while it is true that the evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity is found in the Bible, it is also true that, as in the case of the other doctrines in the Christian system, there is no place where this doctrine is set forth in a complete and systematic form. The different elements of the doctrine, such as the unity of God, the true and equal Deity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, their distinct personality, the relationship which they bear to each other, to the Church, and to the world, etc., while expressed most clearly in the New Testament are found scattered through all parts of the Bible from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelation. It is only by proving these elements separately, as we have attempted to do, that the truth of the whole doctrine is most satisfactorily brought out. The doctrine is given in Scripture, not in formulated definition, but in fragmentary allusions ; and it is only as we assemble the *dissecta membra* into their organic unity that we are able to grasp its true meaning. It lies in Scripture as it were in solution, and comes into clear view only when it is crystallized out from its solvent. The Bible is not a work on Systematic Theology, but only the quarry out of which the stone for such a temple can be obtained. Instead of giving us a formal statement of a theological system it gives us a mass of raw materials which must be organized and systematized and worked up into their organic relations. Nowhere, for instance, do we find a formal statement of the doctrine of the

Inspiration of the Scriptures, or of the sovereignty of God, or of the Person of Christ. The Bible gives us an account of the creation of the world and of man, of the entrance of sin, and of God's purpose to redeem man from sin. It tells particularly of God's merciful dealings with one group of people, the Israelites, and of the founding of Christianity ; and the doctrinal facts are given with but little regard to their logical relations. These doctrinal facts therefore need to be classified and arranged into a logical system and thus transformed into theology. That the material in the Bible is not arranged in a theological system is in accordance with God's procedure in other realms. He has not given us a fully developed system of biology, astronomy, economics, or politics. We simply find the unorganized facts in nature and experience, and are left to develop them into a system as best we may. And since the doctrines are not thus presented in a systematic and formal way it is, of course, much easier for varied and false interpretations to arise.

That even in the New Testament the doctrine of the Trinity is not set forth with anything even approaching systematic treatment, but rather in the form of incidental allusions, may occasion some surprise. But while not presenting the doctrine with argumentative reasoning, nor in credal statements, the New Testament everywhere assumes it ; and the unstudied naturalness and simplicity with which it is given makes it all the more impressive and illuminating. We find not merely a text here and there, but such a wealth of trinitarian implications that, as Dr. Bartlett says :

"They blossom forth everywhere in such profusion that the reverent and unprejudiced reader seeking light upon this subject is troubled, not by a paucity of proof texts, but by an embarrassment of riches" (*The Triune God*, p. 22).

Dr. Warfield points out that the whole book is saturated with Trinitarianism :

"Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are the fundamental proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. This is as much as to say that all the evidence of whatever kind, and from whatever source derived, that Jesus Christ is God manifested in the flesh, and that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, is just so much evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity; and when we go to the New Testament for evidence of the Trinity we are to seek it, not merely in the scattered allusions to the Trinity as such, numerous and instructive as they are, but primarily in the whole mass of evidence which the New Testament provides of the Deity of Christ and the Divine personality of the Holy Spirit. When we have said this, we have said in effect that the whole mass of the New Testament is evidence for the Trinity. For the New Testament is saturated with evidence of the Deity of Christ and the Divine personality of the Holy Spirit" (*Biblical Doctrines*, p. 146).

That a doctrine which to us is so difficult should, even in the hands of a people who had become fiercely monotheistic, take its place silently and imperceptibly among accepted Christian truths without struggle and without controversy, is certainly one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of human thought. We have not far to seek, however, for the explanation. Marvellous developments had taken place between the closing of the Old Testament and the opening of the New. To quote Dr. Warfield again :

“ It may carry us a little way to remark, as it has been customary to remark since the time of Gregory of Nazianzus, that it was the task of the Old Testament revelation to fix firmly in the minds and hearts of the people of God the great fundamental truth of the unity of the Godhead; and it would have been dangerous to speak to them of the plurality within this unity until this task had been fully accomplished. The real reason for the delay in the revelation of the Trinity, however, is grounded in the secular development of the redemptive purpose of God; the times were not ripe for the revelation of the Trinity in the unity of the Godhead until the fulness of the time had come for God to send forth His Son unto redemption, and His Spirit unto sanctification. The revelation in word must needs wait upon the revelation in fact, to which it brings its necessary explanation, no doubt, but from which it derives its own entire significance and value. The revelation of a Trinity in the Divine unity as a mere abstract truth without relation to manifested fact, and without significance to the development of the kingdom of God, would have been foreign to the whole method of the Divine procedure as it lies exposed to us in the pages of Scripture ” (*Biblical Doctrines*, p. 145).

The revelation that God exists in three Persons, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is, in fact, the only basis on which the Christian doctrine of redemption can be intelligently set forth. Hence the revelation concerning the plurality of Persons in the Godhead is not given for the mere purpose of presenting something which shall be puzzling and inscrutable to human minds, but as a necessary step in the much fuller revelation concerning the plan of salvation. The incarnation of God the Son and the outpouring of God the Holy Spirit at Pentecost marked two tremendous advances in the divine plan. The revelation of the Trinity was incidental to, and the inevitable effect of, the accomplishment of redemption, and at the time of the writing of the New Testament books the doctrine was already the common property of Christian believers. Hence in speaking and writing to one another they assumed this common trinitarian consciousness rather than instructed one another about something concerning which there was no disagreement, and the result is that we find the doctrine everywhere pre-supposed, presented in the form of allusion rather than in express teaching.

IV

THE TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In regard to all of the great doctrines of the Bible we find that revelation has been progressive. What is only intimated at first is set forth clearly and fully as time goes on. The obscure hint in the Old Testament is found to coincide perfectly with the fuller revelations in the New. As with our physical eyesight God does not cause the sun to rise with a sudden flash, lest such strong and glorious light should blind us, so He has also borne with our immature spiritual eyesight; He did not at first manifest Himself in the wonderful personality of the Messiah, the sun of Righteousness, and in the personality of the Holy Spirit, but revealed Himself gradually, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little, until our understanding was prepared to receive the whole truth. Since the doctrine of the Trinity is one which arises out of the completed redemption as it is presented to us in the New Testament and cannot be intelligently comprehended apart from that redemption, we should not expect to find it set forth with any clearness in the Old Testament. And yet, if the doctrine is a vital and necessary part of the Christian system we would expect that at least some foregleams or intimations of it might be given. And this we find actually to be the case.

“The Old Testament,” says Dr. Warfield, “may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but only dimly or even not at all perceived before. The mystery of the Trinity is not revealed in the Old Testament; but the mystery of the Trinity underlies the Old Testament revelation, and here and there almost comes into view. Thus the Old Testament revelation of God is not corrected by the fuller revelation which follows it, but only perfected, extended and enlarged” (*Biblical Doctrines*, p. 142).

The orderly, progressive way in which these doctrines are revealed, through the successive writings in the sixty-six books and over a period of approximately fifteen hundred years, is one of the strongest arguments for the Divine origin of the Bible. As all that is in the full grown tree was potentially in the seed, so we find that the clearly revealed doctrines of the New Testament were given in rudimentary form in the earliest chapters of Genesis. This is true of doctrines such as those of redemption, the Person and work of the Messiah, the nature of the Holy Spirit, and the future life. But in regard to no other

doctrine is this more true than in regard to that of the Trinity. Indirect allusions to the Trinity were permitted by the Holy Spirit who presided over the writing of the books, but there is no reason to believe that the truth was apprehended in any adequate way even by the prophets themselves. The doctrine itself was veiled and held in reserve until the accompanying work of Christ in redemption made it intelligible to the human mind.

Hence the Old Testament emphasizes the unity of God and special care is taken not to aggravate the constant tendency of Israel toward polytheism. A premature revelation of the Trinity might have been a hindrance to religious progress ; for the race then, like the child now, needed to learn the unity of God before it could profitably be taught the Trinity. Otherwise it might have fallen into tritheism. Abraham in Chaldea, and the Israelites in Egypt and later in Palestine, needed to be guarded against the almost universal urge toward polytheism. The first and greatest commandment of the Decalogue was directed against polytheism, and the second and next most important was directed against idolatry with its strong tendency toward polytheism. For centuries this was drilled into the consciousness of Israel and established as a primal truth ; then at long last a new day dawned, the Messiah came personally to live among and instruct His people, and the Holy Spirit was manifested in power in the early Church. The Church was then ready for the further truth that while God is One, He, nevertheless, exists as three Persons. Even after the New Testament revelation men have found it extremely difficult to state the doctrine of the Trinity without verging on Tritheism on the one hand, or Modalism or Unitarianism on the other.

Plural Names and Pronouns

In the very first chapter of Genesis, as well as in many other places, we find that the names of God are in the plural, *Elohim*, also *Adonai* ; and with these plural forms of the divine name singular verbs and adjectives are usually joined,—a remarkable phenomenon in view of the fact that the Hebrew language also contained the singular term, *El*, meaning God. Along with the plural name, God sometimes uses plural pronouns in referring to Himself : “ Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ” (Gen. i. 26, 27) ; “ And Jehovah God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil ” (spoken of

Adam after the fall) (Gen. iii. 22) ; " Come, let us go down, and there confound their language " (at the tower of Babel) (Gen. xi. 17) ; " And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? " (Isa. vi. 8). In these verses we have counsel within the Trinity, God speaking with Himself. He is not taking counsel with, nor asking advice of, the angels, as some have suggested ; for the angels are not His counsellors, but His servants, and, like man, infinitely below Him in knowledge. In the Divine nature itself, the Bible teaches us, is to be found that plurality of personal powers which polytheism separated and sought to worship in isolation.

The words of Moses which are so often quoted by the Jews to-day, " Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah " (Deut. vi. 4), are in the English translation an unmeaning repetition of words, but in the original Hebrew they contain much sound instruction. " Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah " the word Elohim being plural shows that God the Lord, in covenant engagement and manner of existence, is more than one, yet is " one Jehovah " as regards essence of being.

The Angel of Jehovah

Very important is the fact that, beginning with the book of Genesis and continuing with ever-increasing clearness throughout the remainder of the Old Testament, we find a distinction made between Jehovah and the Angel of Jehovah who presents Himself as one in essence with Jehovah yet distinct from Him. Such an event, in which God assumes the form of an angel or of a man in order to speak visibly and audibly to man, is commonly known as a " theophany ". As the revelation is unfolded by the procession of the prophets we find that divine titles and divine worship are given to this Angel and accepted by Him, that He is revealed as an eternal Being, the Mighty God, the Prince of peace, the Adonai, the Lord of David, that He is to be born of a virgin, that He will be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that He will bear the sin of many, and that he will, above all, set up the kingdom of righteousness which is to increase until it fills the whole earth. These prophecies, as the New Testament makes clear, were fulfilled in Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, who in His Divine-human capacity wrought redemption for His people and who is to rule until all enemies have been placed under His feet.

In Genesis xvi. 7-13 we have an account of a theophany in which the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Hagar out in the wilderness, commanded her to return to her mistress, and promised that He would multiply her seed exceedingly. Now it is clear that no created angel, speaking in his own name, could have claimed such authority. Here we are face to face with God Himself under a different manifestation ; and Hagar, realizing this great truth, "called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth : for she said, Have I even here looked after him that seeth me ?"

In Genesis xviii. 1-xix. 29 we have a remarkable revelation of God to Abraham with the idea of the Trinity in the background. There we read : "And Jehovah appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre . . . and he looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him . . . and when he saw them . . . he bowed himself to the earth, and said, My lord (not lords), If now I have found favour in thy sight . . . And they said unto him, where is Sarah thy wife ? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he (Jehovah) said, I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round ; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age. . . . And Sarah laughed within herself. . . . And Jehovah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh ? . . . Is anything too hard for Jehovah ?" Although the visitors appear as three men, that is, three persons, Abraham addresses them in the singular, and throughout this passage the singular references to Jehovah and the plural references to the three men are used interchangeably. And after the two "men" had gone on toward Sodom, Jehovah still stands before Abraham who pleads with Him to spare the city. Yet when the two men appear before Lot in Sodom it is Jehovah who speaks to him. "And he (Jehovah) said, Escape for thy life . . . And Lot said unto them (plural) . . . Let me escape thither (to Zoar). . . . And he (Jehovah) said, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city of which thou hast spoken". In other words, Jehovah who appeared to Abraham and the three men that Abraham saw apparently were the same, and Jehovah who appeared to Lot and the two men that Lot saw apparently were the same.

In Genesis xxii. 1-19 we have references to God and also

to one who is "the angel of Jehovah". In verse 2 God commands Abraham : "Take now thy son . . . and offer him there for a burnt offering," while in verse 12 the Angel of Jehovah retracts and nullifies the command of God, with the words : "Lay not thy hand upon the lad." In verses 15-18 this angel of Jehovah swears by Himself as Jehovah, saying that He is Jehovah, and gives Abraham the promise of threefold blessing.

In Genesis xxxii. 22-32 Jehovah appeared to Jacob under the guise of a mysterious person who wrestled with him all the night. In the morning Jacob realized that he had been face to face with God, and asked for His blessing. He called the name of the place "Peniel", "for", said he, "I have seen God face to face".

The Angel of Jehovah appeared to Moses in the burning bush and commissioned him to go back to Egypt and deliver the Israelites. He gave Moses the promise that He would be with them and that He would lead them out (Exod. iii. 1-22). In this passage the terms "God" and "Angel of Jehovah" are used interchangeably. A little later God talked with Moses on Mount Sinai and gave him the Ten Commandments. In the New Testament Stephen tells us that it was the Angel who spoke to Moses on the Mount (Acts vii. 38), and Paul tells us specifically that Christ was the spiritual "rock" which followed the Israelites throughout their wilderness journey (1 Cor. x. 4).

In Exod. xxiii. 20-23 God, speaking through Moses, promises to send His Angel before the children of Israel to keep them and to bring them into the promised land. In regard to this Angel they were especially warned : "Take ye heed before him, and hearken unto his voice ; provoke him not ; for he will not pardon your transgressions : for my name is in him." Here we find that the Angel of Jehovah has power to forgive sins ; and this in itself identifies Him with Jehovah, for we are taught that only God can forgive sins. In the New Testament we find that this power and authority belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Deuteronomy xviii. 18, 19 we find a most wonderful prophecy given through Moses. "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee ; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak

in my name, I will require it of him." Concerning this prophecy ex-Rabbi Leopold Cohn says :

"Every Jewish scholar will admit that there has not been any other prophet like unto Moses outside of the Lord Jesus, who was even greater than Moses. That this promised future prophet is identical with the Angel of Exodus xxiii. 21 is proven by God's command to obey Him. In addition to all these previous names and characteristics God calls Him here prophet and tells us that He will be born of a woman and be like one of our brethren. (And) notice, please, the particular punishment for disobeying this wonderful Person. 'I will require it of him.' That means that in case of Israel's disobedience to the Messiah, God is going to punish continually until they will repent and obey" (Pamphlet, *The Trinity in the Old Testament*, p. 8).

In Joshua v. 13—vi. 3 another strange appearance is recorded. "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand : and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries ? But he said, Nay ; but as prince of the host of Jehovah am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant ? And the prince of Jehovah's host said unto Joshua, Put off thy shoe from off thy foot ; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. . . . And Jehovah said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. . . ." This "man", this "prince of Jehovah's host", whom Joshua discovered to be Jehovah Himself, is quite plainly the promised Angel who was to go before the children of Israel and lead them into the land.

In the light of the New Testament this Angel of Jehovah who appeared in Old Testament times, who spoke as Jehovah, exercised His power, received worship and had the authority to forgive sins, can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who comes from the Father (John xvi. 28), speaks for Him (John iii. 34 ; xiv. 24), exercises His power (Matt. xxviii. 18), forgives sin (Matt. ix. 2), and receives worship (Matt. xiv. 23 ; John ix. 38). God the Father has not been seen by any man (John i. 18), neither could He be sent by any other ; but God the Son has been seen (1 John i. 1, 2), and has been sent (John v. 36). Apart from Christ the puzzling question would be, Who can this mysterious personality be ? These qualities can be found in no other apart from God Himself.

read in the light of the New Testament, however, there are a number of places in which He is seen to be a distinct Person. Examples are : " Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counsellor hath taught him ? " (Isa. xl. 13) ; " Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them " (Neh. ix. 20) ; " My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever " (Gen. vi. 3) ; " Take not thy holy Spirit from me " (Ps. li. 11) ; " Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? " (Ps. cxxxix. 7) ; and in Isaiah lxiii. 7-11 we may say that the Trinity actually comes into view, for here we have a reference to " Jehovah " who is the God of Israel and who bestows great blessings upon His people, to the " angel of his presence " who " was their Saviour ", and to the " holy Spirit " who was in their midst and who was " grieved " at their rebellion. Three times He is called the " holy Spirit " (Ps. li. 11 ; Isa. lxiii. 10, 11). Some theologians have understood the threefold ascription of praise in the seraphim's song, " Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory " (Isa. vi. 3), with its close parallel in the angelic chorus of Revelation iv. 8, " Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come ", as having reference to the Trinity. Certainly the divinely given formula which the priests were to use in blessing the people, " Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee : Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee : Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace " (Num. vi. 24-26), finds its counterpart with explicit reference to the Trinity in the Apostolic Benediction of the New Testament Church : " The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all " (2 Cor. xiii. 14).

Yet it is beyond question that, apart from the New Testament revelation, these intimations of the distinct personalities of the Son and of the Spirit were obscure,—and purposely so, we may say, since the people were not then ready to grasp the meaning of such a revelation. No scholars using the Old Testament alone have ever arrived at a trinitarian conception of God. In fact Jews unite with Mohammedans in accusing Trinitarians of polytheism. At New Testament times those who had been trained under the law, the Pharisees, for instance, appear to have thought of the Spirit of God and the power of God as equivalent terms.

But while not fully revealed and not recognized until Pentecost, the Holy Spirit as the executive of the Trinity was

Indirect allusions to a complexity of persons within the Godhead are found in numerous other places. Examples are : " Jehovah saith unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, Until I make thine enemies thy footstool " (Ps. cx. 1), a passage which in the New Testament Christ applies to Himself (Mark xii. 35-37). " Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son ; This day have I begotten thee " (Ps. ii. 7), which Paul tells us was fulfilled in Christ (Acts xiii. 33). " Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever " (Ps. xl. 6) ; and the writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that this relates to Christ and His kingdom (i. 8).

The fact of the matter is that the Old Testament predictions of the coming Messiah,—such as that He should be born of a virgin (Isa. vii. 14), born in Bethlehem of Judaea (Mic. v. 2), the son of David and heir to his throne (2 Sam. vii. 12-6 ; Isa. ix. 7), that the government should be upon His shoulder, and His name should be called wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isa. ix. 6), that He should work miracles in opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, healing the lame, and causing the dumb to speak (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6), that He should be a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, having no special beauty, that He should be a suffering Messiah, wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, our substitute as a sacrifice to God (Isa. liii. 1-12), that He should suddenly come to His temple (Mal. iii. 1), that in His official entry into Jerusalem He should come in meekness, riding upon an ass (Zech. ix. 9), etc.,—taken in connection with the descriptions of the One known as the Angel of Jehovah, were designed to make it possible for the people to recognize the Lord Jesus Christ at once by comparing these descriptions with His works, and, accepting Him, to receive forgiveness for sins. But alas, that the very people to whom the Scriptures were entrusted were so blind that they not only failed to recognize Him, but rejected Him entirely with the most abusive and shameful treatment !

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Ordinarily the Old Testament references to the Spirit were so indistinct that they were understood to refer only to an energy or influence which proceeded from God. Nowhere is the Spirit specifically called a person ; yet when He is spoken of it is in terms that may properly be applied to a person. As

from the beginning the sustainer and moulder of the laws of nature, the One who inspired the prophets and who could be sinned against and grieved. In the second verse of the very first chapter in Genesis we read that "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters",—the marginal reading says, "was brooding upon".

"Amid the darkness that surrounded the primeval chaos," says Dr. J. Ritchie Smith, "the Spirit of God is discovered, brooding upon the face of the waters, like a bird upon its nest" (*The Holy Spirit in the Gospels*, p. 34).

Just as electricity was present in nature and played a vitally important part in the lives of men long before they discovered it and learned to make it serve so many wonderful purposes, so the Holy Spirit was living and active as a distinct Person in the Godhead from eternity and moulded the affairs of men without His distinct personality being known to them.

"Even in the first chapter of Genesis," says Dr. Charles Hodge, "the Spirit of God is represented as the source of all intelligence, order, and life in the created universe; and in the following books of the Old Testament He is represented as inspiring the prophets, giving wisdom, strength, and goodness to statesmen and warriors, and to the people of God. This Spirit is not an agency, but an agent, who teaches and selects; who can be sinned against and grieved; and who, in the New Testament, is unmistakably revealed as a distinct person. When John the Baptist appeared, we find him speaking of the Holy Spirit as of a person with whom his countrymen were familiar, as an object of divine worship and the giver of saving blessings. Our Divine Lord also takes this truth for granted, and promises to send the Spirit, as a Paraclete, to take His place; to instruct, comfort, and strengthen them, whom they were to receive and obey. Thus, without any violent transition, the earliest revelations of this mystery were gradually unfolded, until the Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, appear in the New Testament as the universally recognized God of all believers" (*Systematic Theology*, I, p. 447).

Jewish Misunderstanding of the Doctrine

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity has been generally misunderstood among the Jewish people, with the result that they believe we worship three Gods. To set forth this idea and the reason for its strong hold on the Jewish people to-day we propose to quote rather extensively from the writings of one who is in a position to really understand the problem,—from the writings of Ex-Rabbi Leopold Cohn. Says he :

"The reason that the Jews have become estranged from the doctrine of the Triune God is found in the teachings of Moses Maimonides. He compiled thirteen articles of faith which the Jews accepted and incorporated into their liturgy. One of them is 'I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is an *absolute one*' (Hebrew, 'Yachid'). This has been repeated daily by Jews in their prayers, ever since the twelfth century, when Moses Maimonides lived. This expression of an '*absolute one*' is diametrically opposed to the word of God

which teaches with great emphasis that God is not a 'Yachid', which means an only one, or an 'absolute one', but 'achid', which means a *united* one. In Deuteronomy vi. 4 God laid down for His people a principle of faith, which is certainly superior to that of Moses Maimonides, inasmuch as it comes from God Himself. We read, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is ONE', stressing the sense of the phrase 'one' by using not 'yachid', which Moses Maimonides does, but 'achid', which means a *united* one.

"We want now to trace where these two words, 'yachid' and 'achid', occur in the Old Testament and in what connection and sense they are used, and thus ascertain their true meaning.

"In Genesis I we read, 'And there was evening and there was morning, *one* day'. Here the word 'achid' is used, which implies that the evening and the morning—two separate objects—are called *one*, thus showing plainly that the word 'achid' does not mean an 'absolute one', but a *united* one. Then in Genesis ii 24 we read, 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be *one* flesh'. Here too the word 'achid' is used, furnishing another proof that it means a *united* one, referring, as it does in this case, to two separate persons.

"Now let us see in the Word of God where that expression 'yachid', an 'absolute one', is found. In Genesis xxii 2 God says to Abraham, 'Take now thy son, thine *only* son'. Here we read the word 'yachid'. The same identical word, 'yachid', is repeated in the 12th verse of the same chapter. In Psalm xxv. 16 it is again applied to a single person as also in Jeremiah vi. 26, where we read, 'Make thee mourning as for an *only* son'. The same word, conveying the sense of one only, occurs in Zechariah xii. 10, 'And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his *only* son'.

"Thus we see that Moses Maimonides, with all his great wisdom and much learning, made a serious mistake in prescribing for the Jews that confession of faith in which it is stated that God is a 'yachid', a statement which is absolutely opposed to the Word of God. And the Jews, in blindly following the so-called 'second Moses' have once more given evidence of their old proclivities of perverting the Word of the living God. The Holy Spirit made that serious complaint against them through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'For ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God' (Jer. xxiii. 36).

"This is therefore the belief of the true Christian. He does not have three gods, but 'one', a Scriptural one, which is in Hebrew 'achid', and which consists of three personal revelations of God as we shall see in the following Scriptures.

"In the very first verse of the Bible we find two manifestations of the God-head. 'In the beginning God created . . . and the *Spirit of God* moved.' Here we see plainly that God taught us to believe that He is the creator of all things and that His Spirit is moving upon this world of ours to *lead, guide* and *instruct* us in the way He wants us to walk. So here in the first chapter of the Bible are *two* manifestations of God.

"It will interest the reader to know that the most sacred Jewish book, the Zohar, comments on Deuteronomy vi. 4—'Hear O Israel, Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one', saying, 'Why is there need of mentioning the name of God three times in this verse?' Then follows the answer. 'The first Jehovah is the Father above. The second is the stem of Jesse, the Messiah who is to come from the family of Jesse through David. And the third one is the way which is below (meaning the Holy Spirit who shows us the way) and these three are one.' According to the Zohar the Messiah is not only called Jehovah but is a very part of the Triune Jehovah" (Pamphlet, *The Trinity in the Old Testament*, pp. 3, 4).

(to be continued)

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