

## Trichotomy

emphasis upon wholeness and unity, where even in the Thessalonian proof text Paul prays that they may be sanctified *wholly* and that their *whole* spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless.

Both Tertullian and Augustine held to the dichotomy of body and soul but leaned almost to the threefold analysis of man by making the Aristotelian distinction between the animal and rational soul. Present theological and psychological emphasis is almost altogether upon the fundamental wholeness or unity of man's being as against all philosophical attempts to divide it.

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See also BODY, BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE; DICHOTOMY; MAN, DOCTRINE OF; SOUL; SPIRIT.

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**Trinity.** The term designating one God in three persons. Although not itself a biblical term, "the Trinity" has been found a convenient designation for the one God self-revealed in Scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It signifies that within the one essence of the Godhead we have to distinguish three "persons" who are neither three gods on the one side, nor three parts or modes of God on the other, but coequally and coeternally God.

The main contribution of the OT to the doctrine is to emphasize the unity of God. God is not himself a plurality, nor is he one among many others. He is single and unique: "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4), and he demands the exclusion of all pretended rivals (Deut. 5:7-11). Hence there can be no question of tritheism.

Yet even in the OT we have clear intimations of the Trinity. The frequent mention of the Spirit of God (Gen. 1:2 and *passim*) may be noted, as also, perhaps, the angel of the Lord in Exod. 23:23. Again, the plural in Gen. 1:26 and 11:7 is to be noted, as also the plural form of the divine name and the nature of the divine appearance to Abraham in Gen. 18. The importance of the word (Ps. 33:6), and especially the wisdom, of God (Prov. 8:12ff.) is a further pointer, and in a mysterious verse like Isa. 48:16, in a strongly monotheistic context, we have a very close approach to Trinitarian formulation.

In the NT there is no explicit statement of the doctrine (apart from the rejected I John 5:7), but the Trinitarian evidence is overwhelming. God is still preached as the one God (Gal. 3:20). Yet Jesus proclaims his own deity (John 8:58) and evokes and accepts the faith and worship of his disciples (Matt. 16:16; John 20:28). As the Son or Word, he can thus be equated with God (John

1:1) and associated with the Father, e.g., in the Pauline salutations (I Cor. 1:3, etc.). But the Spirit or Comforter is also brought into the same interrelationship (cf. John 14-16).

It is not surprising, therefore, that while we have no dogmatic statement, there are clear references to the three persons of the Godhead in the NT. All three are mentioned at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:16-17). The disciples are to baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19). The developed Pauline blessing includes the grace of the Son, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost (II Cor. 13:14). Reference is made to the election of the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (I Pet. 1:2) in relation to the salvation of believers.

The fact that Christian faith involves acceptance of Jesus as Savior and Lord meant that the Trinity quickly found its way into the creeds of the church as the confession of faith in God the Father, Jesus Christ his only Son, and the Holy Ghost. The implications of this confession, especially in the context of monotheism, naturally became one of the first concerns of patristic theology, the main aim being to secure the doctrine against tritheism on the one side and monarchianism on the other.

In the fully developed doctrine the unity of God is safeguarded by insisting that there is only one essence or substance of God. Yet the deity of Jesus Christ is fully asserted against those who would think of him as merely adopted to divine sonship, or preexistent, but in the last resort created. The individuality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is also preserved against the notion that these are only modes of God for the various purposes of dealing with man in creation or salvation. God is one, yet in himself and from all eternity he is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the triune God.

Trinitarian analogies have been found by many apologists both in nature generally and in the constitution of man. These are interesting, but are not to be thought of as providing a rationale of the divine being. More pregnant is the suggestion of Augustine that without the Trinity there could be no fellowship or love in God, the divine Trinity involving an interrelationship in which the divine perfections find eternal exercise and expression independent of the creation of the world and man.

Rationalist objections to the Trinity break down on the fact that they insist on interpreting the Creator in terms of the creature, i.e., the unity of God in terms of mathematical unity. More scientifically, the Christian learns to know God from God himself as he has acted for us and attested his action in Holy Scripture. He is not surprised if an element of mystery remains

which defies ultimate analysis or understanding, for he is only man and God is God. But in the divine work as recorded in the Bible the one God is self-revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and therefore in true faith he must "acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity."

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See also GOD, ATTRIBUTES OF; GOD, DOCTRINE OF.

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**Troeltsch, Ernst** (1865-1923). German theologian, philosopher of history, and social theorist. Son of an Augsburg physician, he studied theology at Erlangen, Berlin, and Göttingen (under Ritschl), served as a curate in Munich briefly, and took an appointment at Göttingen in 1890. He then went to Bonn and in 1894 to Heidelberg, where he was named a full professor at age twenty-nine. In 1915 he became professor of philosophy at Berlin. A liberal, he was active in politics as a state legislator and held a post in the Prussian ministry of cultural affairs.

Closely linked with the history of religions school (a movement that questioned the distinctiveness of Christianity and stressed gaining insights from the comparative study of other religions) and profoundly influenced by the historicism of Dilthey, Troeltsch grappled with problems raised by the scientific historical method. He saw the modern awareness of history as the key to understanding our culture, but yet a conflict existed between the ceaseless flux and manifold contradictions within history and the demand of the religious consciousness for certainty, unity, and peace. He concluded that all the world religions were unique and relative to a given historical situation, and conscience is valid for each individual who subscribes to a faith. Although no religion can be shown historically to be absolute or final, Troeltsch functioned as a Christian theologian because he held to a Hegelian perspective of history as movement of the spirit which is on the way back to its home in God. He saw all religion as a reflection and intimation of the ultimate reality of God, and from a rational standpoint Christianity is valid since its ethical

values are shaped by living decisions made by its adherents in the historical setting of Western culture.

His concern with social and political questions led to a sociological treatment of the history of Christianity in his best-known work, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (1912). It examined the areas of family, economics, politics, and learning and revealed Christianity as exhibiting two contradictory but complementary tendencies—compromise and rejection of compromise. This rhythm of accommodation and protest was expressed in three forms of religious institution—the *church* which compromises with society and culture, the *sect* which rejects all compromise with the world, and individual religious spontaneity which expresses itself in *mysticism*. Each type in turn was conditioned by social and cultural variables.

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**Trust.** See FAITH.

**Truth.** Fundamental or spiritual reality. The first Christian theologian to attempt any systematic exposition of the concept of truth was Augustine. His immediate aim was to refute skepticism. If man's mind is incapable of grasping truth, particularly if man is incapable of grasping the truth about God, then morality and theology are impossible. Augustine distinguished four senses of the term "truth." First, truth is the affirmation of what is, e.g., three times three is nine, and David was king of Israel. Second, every reality (particularly the immutable, supersensible ideas) can be considered as an affirmation of itself: it is true when it merits the name it claims. In this sense beauty and wisdom are truth. Third, the Word of God, Jesus Christ, is the Truth because he expresses the Father. And fourth, in the realm of sensible objects, such as plants and animals, there is a resemblance, but only a resemblance, to the primary realities of point two above. Strictly speaking, a visible tree is not a true tree. But as the resemblance is real, even sensible objects have a degree of truth.

Many contemporary students of the Bible,