

THE TRINITY

by

Frater Ex Occidente Lux

In a previous paper I have written about the concept of the Trinity in the context of comparative religion, taking account of Hindu and Buddhist concepts as well as those of Christianity. Here I propose to consider the Trinity from a strictly biblical standpoint. So, is their evidence in the Bible for the Trinity as such? The word 'Trinity' does not occur anywhere in the Bible, but if one studies closely it is clear that the Trinity is most certainly implied.

One of the early names of God is Elohim, which is a Hebrew plural noun. However, this does not indicate separateness but rather diversity in unity, for there is only one God. In His act of creation God says, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness" (Genesis 1:26); "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of *us*" (Gen. 3:22). This must imply the Trinity, if God is one and not a pantheon of three separate deities. Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, of which the best simple illustration is probably the shamrock symbolism of St. Patrick.

The word 'Trinity' was first used by Theophilus of Antioch in 180 A.D. Theologians identify other references to the Trinity in the Old Testament, such as the appearance of the Lord God to Abraham as three men (Gen. 18:1-3), and the blessing of Paul to the Corinthians, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14).

A thorough reading of John 1, to v 7, and Matthew 28, v 19 will make the reality very clear. In 1 John 5:7 we read, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one". This section of the Epistle is now generally perceived as not being part of the original text, but not all scholars agree on this.

The doctrine of the Trinity concerns Christ's enlightenment. The Trinity symbolises the Triune God at his baptism. The voice of God, the Father, with the descent of a dove, the Holy Ghost, upon Christ, the Son. The Holy Ghost is the female aspect of God (Sophia: Wisdom), personified by the Virgin as Theotokos (God-bearer), and the Love of God which united the Father and the Son, who in his person reconciles all men to God by his compassion and his enlightenment. The voice from heaven did not enhance or add to the holiness and perfection that were already in Christ, as they are in all men – albeit hidden by desire.

It must be admitted that the Christian Trinity was foreshadowed by the Hindu Trinity, of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva: the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer. Christ is the avatar of all before him and all who will come after him. Christ is the Alpha and Omega: poised on the interface of time and eternity for our preservation by the symbols of his body and his blood. Christ fulfils all scripture as the Eternal Word made flesh, which is not the Word made Book, as with the Jews and the Muslims. Christ is the Word made flesh.

Although the Trinity is not fully explicit in the Bible, yet the Bible is in the Trinity in Christ. Jesus Christ was God incarnate and he knew that this was so. He knew that he was an aspect of God the Father and that he existed before the world was (John 17:5). Consider also these passages: "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58); and "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day" (John 8:56). Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father (John 1:18); the Father is glorified in the Son, and the Father is in the Son just as the Son is

in the Father (John 14:9-11). “I and my Father are One”, says Jesus (John 10:30), and the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ, proceeds from the Father (John 15:26). The Holy Spirit was also known to inspire men long before this, as with Joshua when he succeeded Moses (Deuteronomy 34:9).

The Trinity existed before the world was, and the infinitude of God means that he is everywhere, glorifying everything from a jellyfish to a star. The Holy Spirit is indeed God: “God is a Spirit” (John4:24)

[Insert here the first diagram: a circle divided horizontally into three levels, which are inscribed ‘Holy Spirit’, ‘God’ and ‘Son’, the circle being circumscribed with the words: ‘All one infinite being’]

[Then the second diagram, headed ‘The Trinity: Christian-Hindu’; it shows The Shield of the Trinity with non-standard inscriptions (A triangle with a circle at each point; the circles being inscribed, Father (Brahma)/Creator; Son (Vishnu)/Preserver; and Holy Ghost (Siva)/Destroyer. In the Centre is another circle, inscribed God/Reality. The lines connecting the circles at the apexes are all inscribed ‘is not’, while the lines leading from the outer circles to the central circle are all inscribed ‘is’).]

The above is a diagram of the Trinity, both Christian and Hindu. The ancient idea of God becoming man was known to the Hindus: for them, all being is a manifestation of God. However, I feel that the most perfect incarnation of God in Man came in the person of Jesus Christ, the perfect exemplar of Humanity and Spirit as one.

The Son of God is incarnate and God’s vision of Himself in the Heart of Man. Christ is the prototype, the western Arhat or Bodhisattva. His birth in the heart of the believer is the ‘born-again’ experience. Thus one may say that there is no difference between the chanting of ‘Hare Krishna’ (the 8th incarnation of Vishnu) and the clapping and singing of charismatic, evangelical Christians – for Christ is Krishna.