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The concept of personality in the doctrines of the Trinity taught by Origen, Athanasius, and Augustine.

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THE CONCEPT OF PERSONALITY
IN THE DOCTRINES OF THE TRINITY
TAUGHT BY ORIGEN, ATHANASIUS, AND AUGUSTINE

by
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem of the Thesis

The doctrine of the Trinity is undoubtedly the most important doctrine in the whole of Christian theology. Not only is it the fundamental basis upon which depends the heart of the Christian Gospel, but also it is the precise doctrine which earmarks Christianity as different from all the other various religious and philosophical speculations and formulations throughout the ages. Accordingly, Albert C. Knudson asserts that "the Trinity is the specific Christian doctrine of God."\(^1\) The ancient voice of that early Church Father, St. Gregory of Nyssa, would likewise imply the distinctive nature of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, for he affirms that a "Christian is characterized by his faith in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost."\(^2\)

However, in spite of the primary consideration the doctrine of the Trinity deserves for Christianity, yet it has been the subject of perhaps the most severe controversy and widespread divergency of thought. Robert S. Franks observes that the doctrine of the Trinity


"has been a matter of debate throughout the Christian centuries, and still is so."¹ Nor is this a doctrine that lends itself easily to a simple solution. Accordingly, Knudson quotes Dr. South's classic statement: "As he that denies this fundamental article of the Christian religion may lose his soul, so he that much strives to understand it may lose his wits."² It is this basic problem of how God can be three-in-one or one-in-three which necessarily involves our further study.

The problem of modern Trinitarianism is centered primarily in the question of the personality of God. There are some on the one hand who hold firmly to the view that the concept of personality is properly applicable to each of the three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as distinct Persons of the one Godhead. On the other hand, there are others who hold the position that the concept of personality is properly applicable only to the one God as a unitary divine being, God Himself. Leonard Hodgson is an outstanding representative on the one side of this controversy who speaks of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as being individual persons, or as having selfhood, analogous to human personalities.³ On the other hand there is the position taken by Karl Barth that it is only proper to speak of God as one

² Knudson, op. cit., p. 385.
Personal Being, who has manifested or revealed Himself in three manners or modes as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹ Ultimately, the problem of the Trinity on the modern scene is whether personality should be properly applied to the unity of God, or to each of the distinctions within the Godhead. Hence it is to the examination of this problem especially as this doctrine developed in the teachings of Origen, Athanasius and Augustine, that our investigation is directed for this thesis.

B. Definition of Personality

A precise definition of the concept of personality will perhaps help clarify this basic issue in Trinitarian thought. We shall here establish a basic understanding of the meaning of personality as a preliminary tool to investigate broadly similar concepts in the trinitarian views of the ancient writers. Borden P. Bowne has written that self-consciousness is of primary importance to the concept of personality when he writes: "The essential meaning of personality is selfhood, selfconsciousness, self-control, and the power to know."² Knudson further emphasizes freedom as a second important aspect of the concept of personality when he writes: "Freedom and self-direction is an essential constituent of personality. Wherever we have freedom and selfconsciousness we

¹Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), I.1, 403ff.
have a personal being."¹ Bowne would also agree that freedom and self-direction is included in this concept of personality, for he says: "By freedom in our human life we mean the power of self-direction, the power to form plans, purposes, ideals, and to work for their realization."² Hence, personality is a concept involving both a sense of self-consciousness and free self-direction. As Bowne concludes: "To be a person means to feel, to will; in other words, it implies dynamic determination."³ Therefore, we now have the Trinitarian problem of whether God is a solitary selfconscious being who expresses Himself in free purposive self-direction, or whether the Godhead is three self-conscious beings who express themselves freely, but with some higher bond of unity relating them together.

Both Hodgson and Barth recognize this same concept of personality and yet they stand on opposite sides of Trinitarian thought. Barth clearly defines personality as "selfconsciousness" which is a concept he denies to the distinctions, but affirms for the one Divine Being, God Himself.⁴ To the contrary, Hodgson directly compares the personality of each, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as analogous to individual selfhood or human personality, and as such he claims personality is not applicable to God in His unity. May we especially note

⁴Barth, op. cit., I.1, 403-411.
here that whereas Barth and Hodgson do differ considerably regarding Trinitarian thought, that the difference does not lie within their definition of personality. Rather, their difference is in regard to their understanding of the ultimate category, being or personality. Barth would contend that the ultimate category is the being of God, to which he ascribes the concept of personality in total. On the other hand, Hodgson, while admitting the ultimate being as God, "for by 'God' we mean the transcendent Being,"¹ yet within this Being or God are three Persons, for "God has made himself known to us in three distinct yet interpermeating Persons."² Hence the difference rests not in the definition of personality, but rather in the application of this concept to the ultimate category of the Being of God, or to the three-fold interpermeating divisions within the Divine Being, God Himself. Therefore, it is to the solution of this problem of whether personality defined as self-consciousness or individual selfhood is properly to be attributed to the distinctions of the Trinity or to the unity of the one God.

C. The Limitation of the Thesis

The limitation of this thesis shall be to analyze our definition of personality in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity especially as this doctrine was taught among the early Church Fathers of the

²Ibid.
Patristic period of the Christian Church. The purpose of returning to the records of the early Church to solve a problem which is nearly twenty centuries old is twofold. First of all, the problem had its origin in the ancient past of the early Church. And secondly the authors on both sides of the contemporary problem claim to be orthodox according to the teaching of the Patristic period. Let me validate this twofold limitation further.

On the one hand, to return to the early Church as the beginning of orthodoxy is a valid approach to the problem. It would hardly seem necessary to prove that the belief of these early Church fathers was more likely to be genuine and closer to the Apostolic teaching, and thereby closer to the central core of truth than perhaps more distant speculators. As Edward Burton in his study on the Ante-Nicene Fathers has declared: "That any doctrine is most likely to have been pure and genuine at a period which was not far removed from its first promulgation, is surely as plain and undeniable as that we are likely to find a stream more clear and uncorrupt, the nearer we approach its source." Austryn Wolfson, in his study of the Church Fathers of this same period, likewise verifies this method of returning to the earliest possible source as a necessary step to understanding later developments when he writes: "While this work is primarily a study of the Church Fathers, chapters on the New Testament seemed to be neces-

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sary as background. And so we might conclude that our return to the early Church period as the source of Trinitarian doctrine is a valid procedure for searching out the fundamental truth behind the problem of the Trinity.

On the other hand, the return to the early Church is likewise due to the fact that the authors on both sides of the modern Trinitarian problem claim to be in complete harmony with the orthodox tradition of the past as taught in the Patristic period. According to Donald Baillie, Barth refers to Augustine as a basis for his own view, while Hodgson is even spoken of as an "ultra-Cappadocian" in modern Trinitarian thought. Therefore, keeping in mind this contemporary problem of the personality of God whether applicable to the threefold distinctions of the Godhead, as according to Hodgson, or applicable to the one God in His unity, as according to Barth, it is the main purpose and limitation of this thesis to search primarily among the Fathers of the early Church to determine which of these two contemporary points of view is truly the orthodox teaching of the earliest Christian tradition.

D. Method of the Thesis

The method of this thesis shall first of all be the task of dividing the Patristic thought into its most significant periods of


2Donald M. Baillie, God Was In Christ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 137.
distinct Trinitarian development, and as such the threefold division of Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene periods seems to be the most useful. This form of subdivision is undoubtedly the most widely used system among the outstanding church historians of the past, and as such it lends itself easily and usefully to the task at hand. Knudson refers to the five-stage development of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Patristic period, but even this system falls neatly into this same basic threefold division, beginning first and secondly with the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists, centering around the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 as the high point of Trinitarian conflict, and culminating in the fourth and fifth place with the Cappadocians and Augustine.

However, our method of study shall not only include the historic background of the periods of doctrinal development, but also our method shall center primarily in the teachings of those Patrists who figure most prominently in this development of the doctrine throughout this early period of Church history. As Francis Cunningham points out, a simply historical approach to Conciliar creeds and church developments is not sufficient so far as understanding theological problems is concerned; rather, "an understanding of a theological point can be obtained only if there is joined to the historical approach a profound appreciation of the doctrine in question in the larger context of the intellectual teachings of the man."1 Hence, we shall not study so

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much the historical background of these periods, but rather we shall investigate the doctrinal development through the actual teachings of those men most prominently and significantly involved in this development, namely Origen in the Ante-Nicene period, Athanasius in the Nicene period, and Augustine in the Post-Nicene period. It is the intention of this thesis that from the teachings of these outstanding representatives of Trinitarian thought there may come a better understanding of the concept of personality as they applied it to the Trinity, and thereby establish a basis for further Trinitarian reflection.
CHAPTER II

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

A. Old Testament Premonitions

A study of the Old Testament concept of God is a necessary pre-requisite to a Christian concept of the Trinity, for not only is Christian faith the outgrowth of Judaism; but also Hebrew literature itself became absorbed into Christianity, as Hugh Scott tells us:

"The Old Testament came to be regarded more than ever as a Christian book."¹ Hence it is to the Old Testament that we turn briefly to search for those evidences which might be premonitory signs of that subsequent development of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

1. Personality and the Unity of God.

In the Old Testament period Jewish monotheism is clearly in evidence, and that personality was applied to the Judaistic concept of God seems indisputable. Knudson unhesitatingly asserts that the personality of God is "most conspicuous in the Old Testament."² Hermann Schultz a most prominent Old Testament scholar, emphatically declares: "In the Old Testament conception of God, nothing stands out from the first so strongly and unmistakably as the personality of

¹Knudson, Religious Teachings of the Old Testament, p. 49.

²Knudson, Religious Teachings of the Old Testament, p. 49.
the God of Israel. There is nowhere even the faintest inclination to the thought of a God without consciousness or will. Therefore let it suffice to say that the concept of God in the Old Testament was not only monotheistic, but also personalistic.

(a) Personality and Anthropomorphisms.—However, let us give special attention to the criteria by which Knudson arrives at this conclusion of a personal concept of God in the Old Testament. His method is threefold, the first consideration of which, involving the personal name of Jehovah as God, is not particularly relevant to this discussion any further than just to state it as such. Knudson's second method, however, for determining that personality is a concept applicable to God in the Old Testament is based on a study of Anthropomorphisms, of which he says: "The great purpose actually served by these anthropomorphisms is to emphasize the personality of God." Knudson further defines this anthropomorphic concept of God, as follows:

He is a living, acting, Being, a Being touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He does not stand apart from man, but enters in the most intimate way into their experiences. He counsels them, commands them, blesses them, punishes them. In a word, he is the great outstanding fact of their lives. This truth it is that lies back of the biblical use of anthropomorphisms and is enforced by them. In no other way could the personality of God at that time have been adequately and effectively expressed.

Therefore we see that Knudson uses anthropomorphisms as a proper guide.

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3Ibid.
by which to ascribe the concept of personality to God.

It remains, however, for us to notice two important points from this anthropomorphic criterion for a concept of the personality of God. First of all, this understanding of anthropomorphisms as God's living active representation of Himself in human form, feeling, and operation is in agreement with the definition of personality which has been proposed and accepted in the Introduction of this Thesis. And secondly, on this basis, anthropomorphisms can be properly used as a criterion among the Patristics to determine whether they conceive of personality for the one God, or for each of the distinctions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One caution I must mention, however, with this method, is in regard to whether the use of an anthropomorphism for one of the distinct hypostases of the Godhead is indeed intended to reflect personality for that one hypostasis or whether its use rather reflects the personality of the one God, the one of whom the hypostasis is a mode of being or eternal manifestation of the supreme divine personal being. This is a question which must be dealt with again and again later on, wherever there is a specific instance of an anthropomorphism being used in relation to a particular hypostasis of the Godhead.

(b) **Personality and Freedom.**—The second significant criterion by which Knudson determines whether or not the concept of personality applies properly to the Old Testament concept of God, takes on two aspects, namely, God's free relation to nature\(^1\) and His free relation

to history. By God's free relation to nature or creation, Knudson means to express the idea, as follows:

The heavens and the earth were no necessary emanation from his being. They were his free acts, the work of his fingers. He spake, and the ordered universe began to be. Both animate and inanimate beings were the product of his word. And if so, it was self-evident to the Old Testament writers that he must be not only as free, but also as truly conscious as the beings he has made.¹

Furthermore, regarding God's free relation to history, Knudson says:

This free intelligence of the Deity manifest in the work of creation was, if anything, still more manifest in his relation to history. For in history purpose reveals itself more readily than in nature. . . . It is in history that we are able to trace most easily a divine plan. And so it was here that the free guiding hand of Yahweh manifest itself most distinctively.²

Thus we have a second significant criterion for determining whether or not the concept of personality is applicable to the idea of God, regardless of whether He is the topic of discussion in the Old Testament, or among the early Church Fathers. As formerly, this criterion also of the freedom of God, both in His active relationship to nature and to history, is in complete agreement with the definition of personality as self-consciousness and free self-direction, which has already been proposed as fundamental to the discussion of this Thesis. Therefore, this same criterion can be properly used among the Patristics to determine whether they did actually conceive of personality in relation to the one God, or rather in relation to each of the distinct hypostases of the Godhead. In any case, we might return to this one point, that in

¹Ibid., p. 62. ²Ibid.
the Old Testament at least, the concept of personality was unmistakably attributed to the idea of the one God. Let us now turn our attention to the Old Testament teaching regarding the hypostatic distinctions of the Godhead.

2. Personality and the Hypostases of God

May it be especially noted that not only did Judaism have a monotheistic concept of one personal God in the Old Testament, but also there was the beginning tendency toward the concept of hypostases or distinctions recognized within the divine nature. Franks tells us that even though admittedly the Old Testament concept of God is less developed than in the New Testament, and later periods, yet nevertheless the Divine Spirit, Divine Word, and Divine Wisdom are all viewed in the Old Testament period as being distinct hypostases of the Godhead.¹

Examples of these distinct hypostases are in such passages as when it is said that God sendeth forth His Spirit, sendeth out His Word, or sheweth His Word to Jacob.² Now these passages show the Spirit of God and the Word of God as hypostases of God, as defined by Franks in the sense that the Spirit or Word is "raised to a certain degree of independence"³ or distinction from God Himself. It is thus in this sense that we speak of the Word and Spirit of God as hypostases, or distinctions of the nature of God.

However, Knudson goes a step further than Franks and asserts that

¹Franks, op. cit., p. 20. ²Psalms, 104:30; 147:18; 147:19.
³Franks, op. cit., p. 20.
not only are these distinct hypostases which are evident in the Old Testament, but also Knudson admits that these hypostases are personified. More specifically, Knudson declares that to some extent the Spirit of God is personified in the Old Testament, even more so "the word of God is in a number of instances personified. . . . Still more emphatically is this true of the Wisdom of God."\(^1\) Hagenbach also speaks of the "personifications of the Divine Word and the Divine Wisdom found in the Old Testament."\(^2\) These personifications often took the form of anthropomorphisms, such as the Word is personified as going, returning, accomplishing, prospering, running and making.\(^3\) The Spirit is also personified as making or being sent,\(^4\) and Wisdom is personified in numerous ways as crying, standing, calling, speaking and dwelling.\(^5\) We see, then, that without doubt these anthropomorphic hypostatic distinctions of God have truly been personified.

(a) Evidence by Definition.—Now we come to a fundamental problem of this thesis regarding the testing of our definition of personality against the evidence at hand to determine whether the concept of personality as here attributed to these anthropomorphic hypostases of God is fully intended to remain vested within the hypostasis itself as an individual personal hypostasis, or whether the hypostasis is more truly

\(^3\)Isaiah 55:11; Psalms 147:15; 33:6.
\(^4\)Psalms 33:6; 104:30.
\(^5\)Proverbs 8:1ff.
a manifestation or mode of reflection of the very nature of the being of God the Father Himself. The solution to this problem comes from two areas, both in regard to the basic definition of the term "hypostasis", and also in regard to those very examples of hypostases which we have observed. First of all, we may particularly note that the term hypostasis in its original meaning refers to the "substance" of God, or his nature, and as such it is used in the Old Testament to denote that which is of the essential, substantial nature of God. Therefore, when the term hypostasis is used to denote those distinct aspects of God, it is actually only naming a distinction within the substantial nature of God, and nowhere in the basic definition of the word is there any implication for the concept of personality. Thus if the hypostasis has any hint of personality, it is actually the revelation of the personality of the one God of whom the hypostasis is identical in nature, and there is no individual personality belonging to the hypostasis alone.

(b) Evidence by Example.—Secondly, however, we might notice that not only does the original definition of hypostasis, but also the actual examples of hypostases in the Old Testament point to the fact that the concept of personality is not an inherent meaning of the word hypostasis, but rather is properly attributed to the nature of God, and only manifested in the hypostasis as a reflection or revelation of the divine nature itself. For instance the hypostasis Divine Spirit is the translation of the Hebrew "ruach" which is a term according to Franks meaning

\[\footnote{Franks, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20.}\]
"primarily a power that comes from God . . . . implies that God Himself is Spirit."\(^1\) Hence the Spirit of God is the very nature of God, the very essence of God, even God Himself. Thus when the Spirit is personified, it is actually God Himself as the Spirit who is personified.

Also the Word of God is an interchangeable term in some instances with the Spirit of God,\(^2\) and as such it likewise refers to the very breath, vitality, even the very essence of God Himself, and as such any personification of the Word is actually a personification of the essence of God, which is God Himself. Furthermore the Wisdom of God is personified as living with God. God loves her, and indeed wisdom sits on the very throne with God.\(^3\) As such the Wisdom of God is apparently the same as God Himself on the throne, distinct from God in the aspect of Wisdom, but yet identical to the very essential substantial nature of God.

Therefore, we might conclude that the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and the Wisdom of God are distinct hypostases of the nature of God, and so when these hypostases are personified it is actually a personification of God, of the very nature of God, which actually is God Himself in His unity. The three hypostases of Spirit, Word, and Wisdom are merely names to denote the various distinctive aspects of the one essential divine being, and it is this one God only to whom is properly attributed the concept of personality in the Old Testament.

\(^{1}\text{Ibid., p. 9}\)
\(^{2}\text{Psalms 33:6.}\)
\(^{3}\text{Apocrypha, Widdom 8:3, 9:4.}\)
B. New Testament Reflections

As we turn to the New Testament period we must inevitably give attention to the influence which was exerted upon the New Testament from its Judaistic predecessors. While the concept of God does take on a peculiarly Christian flavor in the New Testament, yet this new revelation in the Son must primarily be understood in the sense of a further progress of revelation consistent with the same basic core of truth which had already been previously revealed in the Old Testament, only to a limited extent, but is now further elucidated without contradiction within the New Testament period. On the basis therefore of progressive revelation it becomes necessary that we view the New Testament in the light of its foregoing background so as to understand better the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity in relation to the influence exerted upon it from the Old Testament period.

1. The Influence of the Old Testament

There are two very basic Old Testament doctrines which are fundamental to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and which can be directly traceable to the influence of the Old Testament premonitions, namely the concept of monotheism and the concept of mediation. The Old Testament concept of monotheism had a direct influence upon the unity of God, and the Old Testament concept of mediation of the hypostases had a direct influence upon the distinctions of the Godhead as these concepts molded together in the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity. Let us
turn first to the monotheistic concept of the Old Testament to determine what its effect was upon the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity.

(a) Monotheistic Concept of One God.—Whereas early Israelite history reflects the recognition by the Hebrews of the existence of other gods, yet from the time of Moses these gods had not been the object of worship, and by the time of Christ they were remarkably a monotheistic nation of believers.¹ Indeed, in the New Testament period, no other Judaistic concept influenced the Christian Church more than the monotheistic doctrine of the one God. That monotheism became firmly established in Israel is attested to by Franks, who says: "A fervent belief in One Only God, exalted in righteousness was the absolute foundation of Jewish religion."² That this same concept was absorbed fully into Christian faith without contradiction is confirmed by such a writer as Walter Marshall Horton who declares: "In the Trinitarian and Christological controversies, the centrality of the new revelation in Christ was clearly established, without abandoning the old revelation in Israel or compromising its monotheism."³ We can therefore conclude this important point that the Judaistic concept of one God was accepted wholeheartedly by the Christian Church in its formulation of the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity.

(b) Mediation concept of Three Hypostases.—Moreover, the New

²Franks, op. cit., p. 7.
Testament concept of mediation in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity can be directly traced to the influence of the Old Testament doctrine of God. Whereas Judaistic monotheism had influenced the Christian concept of the unity of God, also the Old Testament concept of the hypostases as mediators had a direct influence upon the Christian concept of the distinct mediation of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Franks points out that each of the hypostases of the Old Testament, such as the Divine Word, Divine Spirit, and Divine Wisdom, had the same purpose which was to mediate between God and the Creation.\(^1\) Hagenbach further explains what is meant by mediation in the Old Testament:

We are obliged to conceive of God, on the one hand, as a purely spiritual essence exalted above all that is finite, and on the other hand, since he reveals and imparts himself to the world, as having a definite relation to the created universe. This double necessity, in the progress of thought led to the idea of an "organ" (medium) by which God creates the world, works upon it, and reveals himself to it. This organ was supposed on the one hand to have its ground in the divine nature itself, to stand in the most intimate connection with it, and on the other hand, to be somehow or other distinct from it.\(^2\)

And to this explanation Hagenbach adds that examples of this mediation include the hypostases of the Word and Wisdom in the Old Testament.\(^3\) Horton adds to this a long string of such mediators to be found in the Old Testament, for he writes:

Jews are proverbially strict in their monotheism; yet they have filled the space between the ultimate transcendent God and the human plane with such concrete entities as the Word, Wisdom, Spirit, Will, Presence

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\(^1\) Franks, op. cit., p. 20.  
\(^2\) Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 113.  
\(^3\) Ibid.
(Shekinah) of the Lord, supplemented by angelic messengers and finally by the Messiah conceived as the Son of Man from heaven.1

Judaism had a thoroughgoing concept of mediation, expressed consistently in terms of hypostases of the very nature of God Himself.

Furthermore, that this Old Testament concept of mediation was of primary importance in its influence upon the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity can clearly be seen. Hagenbach expressly declares that the Trinity can be traced in a definite and concrete form to the hypostases of the Divine Word and the Divine Wisdom found in the Old Testament.2 Horton refers to the Old Testament Messiah explicitly as a mediator,3 as does Franks also, who goes on to indentify the Old Testament conception of the Messiah as identified in none other than Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament.4 Richardson, whose entire Trinitarian concept revolves around the basic idea of God's transcendence and immanence, has especially stressed that the emphasis on the transcendence of God in the Old Testament likewise produced the need for mediators, a need which was exactly fulfilled in Jesus Christ.5 Therefore we can without doubt see that the Old Testament concept of mediation not only had a direct influence upon the New Testament concept of the Trinity, but also indeed, the Old Testament concept

of the need for mediators never even became fully realized until it was completely fulfilled in the New Testament by Jesus Christ, the second Person or hypostasis of the Trinity.

2. The Teaching of the New Testament

Having established that the Old Testament monotheism influenced the New Testament doctrine of the unity of God, and that the Old Testament doctrine of mediation influenced the New Testament doctrine of the distinctions of the nature of God, it thereby remains to be shown exactly how these two concepts could possibly be harmonized into a consistent Christian doctrine of the Trinity. As Franks expresses it: "It is here that we first see the troubling of the waters of Jewish monotheism by the advent of Jesus Christ."¹ Knudson further explains the basis for this problem, for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world extended "the divine essence beyond the strictly monotheistic limits to which it had previously been confined. Deity as a result took on a new range .... Jesus as well as the traditional God came to be regarded as Divine; and out of this expanded idea of Deity there grew eventually the doctrine of the Trinity."² Hence the early Church was faced with the problem of harmonizing the one concept of God with the concept of the distinct divine hypostases of God; a problem which according to Franks "sprang from the reaction upon Jewish monotheism of belief in the Divine mission of Jesus Christ and the experience of the

¹Franks, op. cit., p. 3.
²Knudson, Doctrine of God, p. 370.
power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Church."¹ Charles Lowry squarely sums up the problem:

The religious formula of the Trinity—that God is to be believed in and worshipped as both one and three—is implicit in the New Testament adherence on the one hand, to Hebraic monotheism (the Shema of Israel) and, on the other, to the distinct religious significance of Jesus Christ "The Lord," "The Only-begotten Son," and of the Spirit, "another comforter."²

Consequently we see that the New Testament period is faced with the problem of how God can be three and one, how He can be the One Divine Being, and yet three at the same time. Let us therefore turn to the explicit teaching of the Apostles to examine their answer to this problem.

(a) The Son as Mediator; Reveals the Father.—Regarding the relationship of the Son to the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity may we notice first of all that the Apostles viewed Christ as a Mediator, and even further as the incarnate mediator of God Himself come into the world through Jesus Christ to fulfill a redemptive plan for mankind. Knudson declares that the basic concept behind the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity is the firm belief that "God became man that man might become God."³ Only an incarnate Son from the very essence or nature of the Father and yet fully united to humanity could make possible this union for Christian believers. Baillie strongly

¹Franks, op. cit., p. 20.


³Knudson, Doctrine of God, p. 411.
exhorts: "Christology stands for a Christian interpretation of history, but it can stand for that only because it stands for the conviction that God became man in the historical person of Jesus. We must have a Christology in that sense or we have no Christology at all."\(^1\) Hence we see that the concept of Christ as the incarnate mediator of God to man is a basic concept in the New Testament.

Second of all, however, may we notice that Christ as the incarnate mediator of the Father thereby reveals the Father to mankind. Richardson declares that not only was the Son incarnate, but also Christ was and is God, and as such He revealed The Father to the world.\(^2\) Baillie further declares that what appealed primarily to the ancient world regarding Christianity was the revelation of the Father which Christ made possible, for He "gave them a new view of God, which nothing else could do, and which could not be fully expressed except by the doctrine of divine Incarnation."\(^3\) William Newton Clarke expresses this revelation of the Son quite clearly: "The crown and fulness of revelation came in the appearance among men of Jesus Christ, through whom the Father of men made his clearest self-expression."\(^4\) And so we can conclude this second point that Christ as the mediator of God thereby revealed the Father to the world.

\(^1\)Baillie, op. cit., p. 79.  
\(^2\)Richardson, op. cit., p. 27.  
\(^3\)Baillie, op. cit., p. 71.  
However, we must now turn to the third point regarding the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity, namely that wherein the Son does reveal the Father, he thereby reveals the personality of the Father. Hagenbach affirms that the Father is a personal God, and the Son is the revelation of that personal Being, for he declares:

Christianity stood on the basis of the Old Testament idea of a God—now purified and carried beyond the limits of national interests,—as a Personal God, who, as the creator of heaven and earth, rules over the human race; who had given the law, sent the prophets, and manifested himself most perfectly, and in the fulness of his personal presence, in his Son, Jesus Christ.¹

That the Christian concept of God is definitely more personalistic than in Judaism is confirmed by Knudson, for he claims that it was the revelation of Jesus Christ which gave "the personality of God a depth and inwardness that it had previously lacked."² Clarke also quite emphatically declares regarding Christ's revelation of the personality of the Father, that Christianity "assumes and affirms this more distinctly and positively than any other religion in the world has ever done."³ Hence we can conclude that Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and man not only reveals the Father to us, but even more specifically He reveals the Personality of God, the one and only Divine Person, God Himself.

(b) The Spirit as Mediator; Reveals the Father.—Regarding the

¹Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 99.
²Knudson, Doctrine of God, p. 380.
³Clarke, op. cit., p. 114.
relationship of the Holy Spirit to the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity may we notice first of all that the Apostle's view of the Holy Spirit was similar as to the Son, namely as Mediator. Even though, as Franks declares, the New Testament doctrine of the Spirit was less developed than its Christology,1 yet the close relationship of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ seems to stand out quite clearly. Hagenbach points out such passages as show the Holy Spirit "given to Christ without measure," and the Holy Spirit "proceeds from Christ," and other passages which refer to the "Spirit of Christ."2 Richardson goes so far as to report that the term "Spirit is synonymous at times with the term Son,"3 a report which is confirmed also by Franks.4 However this is not to say that the Spirit is identical with Christ, for that the Holy Spirit is yet distinct, though inseparable, from Christ as Richardson emphasizes, can be shown in the activity of the Holy Spirit to raise Jesus Christ from the dead, or in the power of the Spirit by which Jesus Christ was adopted as Messiah, or even more so in that creative energy of the Holy Spirit by which Jesus Christ was created in the womb.5 Hence, while not identical, yet being closely associated, even inseparable, it would seem rather to be expected that the Spirit would likewise be viewed as a mediating agency from the Father, along with the Son.

1Franks, op. cit., p. 34. 2Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 125. 3Richardson, op. cit., p. 47. 4Franks, op. cit., p. 34, 54. 5Richardson, op. cit., p. 47.
Second, however, may we further notice that the Holy Spirit as a mediator thereby reveals the Father to mankind, as does the Son. Franks points out those Scriptural passages which portray the Spirit as sent from the Father or as proceeding from the Father; and other passages which even refer to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God.\(^1\) Richardson even declares explicitly that the term Spirit is identical at times with God's inner being.\(^2\) However, that there is a distinction must be safeguarded, and that the Holy Spirit is truly distinct from the Father while yet inseparable from the inner being of God, can be shown in the activity of God which is performed by the Holy Spirit, the mediator, in relation to the world. As Richardson further indicates, it was the Spirit who breathed over the chaos of the waters to form the earth, as in Genesis 1:2. The distinction of the Holy Spirit from the nature of God was recognized in the New Testament period, which speaks of the Spirit as the One who creates the Church, and also who creates a new life in the Christian.\(^3\) Therefore, we can conclude that while the Holy Spirit is distinct from the nature of God, yet He also is closely associated with the very inner being of God, and thereby the Holy Spirit does reveal the Father to mankind.

However, in the third place, may we notice that regarding the Apostle's view of the Holy Spirit in relation to the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity, namely, that wherein the Holy Spirit does re-

\(^1\) Franks, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 54-7.

\(^2\) Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 45
veal the Father, He likewise thereby also reveals the personality of the Father. The Holy Spirit as the agency of the Father's activity in the world, does not thereby reveal any personality of His own, but rather as the agent of the Father, reveals the Father's personality.

(c) The Son and Spirit with Father as a Trinity.—Although the Old Testament concept of God did influence the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity, yet the primary source for this doctrine is in the New Testament itself. As Gavin asserts: "The sources of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity are in God's supernatural Revelation of Himself in Holy Writ."\(^1\) Even more specifically, William Shedd would look to a certain portion of the New Testament as a basis for this doctrine, for he says: "The foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Primitive Church was the baptismal formula, and the doxologies in the Epistles."\(^2\) Wolfson likewise traces the origin of this Trinitarian concept in the New Testament to the Baptismal formula and the salutary phrases of the Epistles.\(^3\) Philip Schaff refers to the baptismal formula as an officially recognized Creed of the Church, which he quotes from Matthew 28:19, as follows:

Disciple (make disciples of) all the nations, baptizing them INTO THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST; teaching them to observe all things

\(^1\)Gavin, op. cit., p. 106.


\(^3\)Wolfson, op. cit., I, 141ff.
whatsoever I have commanded you.¹

Knudson suggests more than a score of New Testament passages which imply a Trinitarian formula,² and J. L. Neve especially emphasizes those Scriptural passages which reveal the doctrine of the Trinity as "a conviction also which is in harmony with the self-consciousness of Christ."³ Hence we see that a definite Trinitarian formulation did begin to take shape among the Apostles in the New Testament period. As Richardson points out, there are many symbols for God, but all are reducible to three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all of which does "point to the fact that early Christian thinking and experience centered itself in three dominant ways of considering God and his operation."⁴ Therefore, with the Trinitarian formula established, and the Biblical background to this doctrine complete, let us now turn our attention to its subsequent development in the Patristic period.

²Knudson, Doctrine of God, p. 384.
⁴Richardson, op. cit., p. 28.
A. The Teaching of the Earlier Patristic Period

Preliminary to our examination of the teaching on the Trinity in the early period of Patristic thought, may we notice that the Apologists did definitely equate the eternal logos with Christ Himself. Knudson reports that the process of identifying Jesus Christ with deity consisted first "in the equating of Christ with the Logos by the Apologists of the second century." Franks informs us that Irenaeus in his work *Adversus Haeresis* clearly implies that the logos is equated with the historical Jesus, even to the point where Irenaeus states: "So also it was the Logos Himself that hung on the Cross (V, 18, 1)." The Apologists identified logos with the preexistent Christ as well, for according to Hagenbach, "the orthodox Church identified the idea of the Logos and that of the Messiah." Wolfson also reports that in Philo's philosophy, as well, "the preexistent Messiah is identified with the Logos." Franks further confirms that the Son is equated with the Logos, for as Justin Martyr writes in his *Dialogue with Trypho*: "It was the logos that conversed with men, where theophanies are recorded in the Old Testament. (128)." Hagenbach interprets Justin likewise as

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1 Knudson, *Doctrine of God*, p. 397.
2 Franks, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
3 Hagenbach, *op. cit.*, I, 118.
4 Wolfson, *op. cit.*, I, 177.
5 Franks, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
identifying "the logos, by whom God has created the world, and manifested himself in the theophanies, with his incarnate Son, even Christ Jesus."¹ Further, in Justin's commentary on John 1:14, Etienne Gilson interprets him as stating that "the Word is Christ."² Also in Justin's First Apology, as well as restated in the Second Apology, Gilson declares that a central theme is the Logos who became incarnate "and became man, and was called Jesus Christ."³ Franks adds that in general among all the Apologists there is the doctrine of the "Christ—in whom the Logos became man."⁴ Hence the point is made that the teaching of the earlier Patristic period includes this basic doctrine of the identification of the Logos concept with the eternal Son of God who became incarnate in Jesus Christ.

This basic identification of the Logos with the incarnate Jesus Christ had important consequences for the subsequent development of the doctrine of the Trinity. First of all it established further the conviction of the faith the Apologists already had in the deity of Jesus Christ. Wolfson explains this development, for "the preexistent Christ now identified with the Logos, was not merely divine, he was God."⁵ And secondly, with this expanded concept of the Godhead, the door was opened for an eventual trinitarian doctrine. It was precisely this problem of how to reconcile the inherited belief in one God with the

¹Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 119.
³Ibid.
⁴Franks, op. cit., p. 69.
new belief in three divine beings each of them God that next occupies our attention. There is a twofold treatment of the subject which especially lends itself well to the ultimate problem of this thesis. First we shall investigate the doctrine of the Trinity in terms of its distinctions, secondly in terms of its unity, and finally in terms of the concept of personality whether applicable to each of the distinctions or to the unity of the Trinity.

1. Regarding the Distinctions of the Trinity

   The threefold formula of the Trinity was already established and well recognized by the Apologists, having had its origin in the New Testament period, as Wolfson had suggested it having its primary source in the baptismal formula and the doxology phrases of Paul's Epistles. However, it now remained for the Apologists to develop this formula further into a systematic doctrine. This development took at least two forms in the thinking of these Apologists, namely the distinct relationship between the Father and the Son, and also the further distinction between the Son and the Holy Spirit, the former of which we shall now examine.

   (a) The Distinction of the Father from the Son.—In the early Patristic period the Apologists came to a clear understanding of a definite distinction between the Father and the Son. From the earliest Apostolic Fathers as Clement of Rome and Ignatius to the later Apologists as Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, as well as Tertullian, we find this same consistent theme on the basic distinction of the Son.

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1 Ibid., I, 14ff.
from the Father. Clement of Rome, one of the very earliest of the Apostolic Fathers, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians during a written form of a prayer he expresses himself thus:

Let all the Gentiles know that Thou art God alone, and Jesus Christ is thy Son, and we are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture.

The distinction here is evident on two scores, namely that not only by the specific designation of Jesus Christ in sequence after the Father but also due to the fact that Clement is obviously addressing the prayer to the Father alone. Scott further mentions the statement of Clement of Rome in which "he describes Christ as at the right hand of God" which is clearly a place of distinction from the Father Himself, although closely associated and inseparable from Him.

This idea of Christ who "sits on the right hand of the Father" is also expressed by Ignatius of Antioch in his Epistle to the Trallians, to which Schaff comments that this passage "shows what facts of the gospel history were most prominent in the mind of the famous bishop and martyr Ignatius, of Antioch, and the Church of his age." Furthermore, in his Epistle to the Philadelphians he begins: "Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father and of Jesus Christ, which is in Philadelphia of Asia." Also in his Epistle to the Smyrnaeans Ignatius likewise uses the phrase: "to the Church of God the


2Scott, op. cit., p. 143

3Schaff, op. cit., p. 11.

Father and of Jesus Christ the Beloved.\textsuperscript{1} And also in his Epistle to St. Polycarp he repeats the phrase: "God the Father and Jesus Christ, abundant greeting."\textsuperscript{2} Hence the twofold distinction is clearly evident in the writings of Ignatius regarding the relationship of the Father and the Son.

Justin Martyr, a great champion of orthodoxy in the second century echoes this same theme of the distinction between the Father and the Son, perhaps even more clearly than Clement or Ignatius of the first century. Hagenbach refers to an exact quotation from Justin in his Dialogue with Trypho where Justin explicitly states that "The Father and the Son are distinct (c. 56)."\textsuperscript{3} Shedd also quotes Justin further along in the same work (c. 128, 129) as declaring that the "Son is numerically distinct" from the Father.\textsuperscript{4} Also Franks again refers to a statement of Justin that the "Logos is a second God, other in number, though not in will."\textsuperscript{5} According to Shedd, "Justin further affirms that the person who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush was the Logos or Son, and not the Father."\textsuperscript{6} Thus Justin carries on this same basic theme quite explicitly regarding the distinction of the Father from the Son.

Others followed consistently within this tradition. Hagenbach refers to a statement of Theophilus regarding the Logos as "going forth," from the Father.\textsuperscript{7} Franks mentions that Athenagoras in his Legatio (10) speaks of the Logos as being with the Father, alongside from the be-

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., p. 156. \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 160. \textsuperscript{3}Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 130.
\textsuperscript{4}Shedd, op. cit., I, 272. \textsuperscript{5}Franks, op. cit., p. 71
\textsuperscript{6}Shedd, op. cit., I, 268. \textsuperscript{7}Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 120.
ginning. Furthermore, according to Franks, Irenaeus in his *Adversus Haeresis* declares that "it was the Logos who was the subject of the Old Testament theophanies, not the invisible Father Himself." Hagenbach sees in Clement of Alexandria an especially clear emphasis on "the individuality of the Logos." Hence, the Apologists of the early Patristic period are not a few in their testimony regarding the distinct relationship of the Father and the Son.

(b) The Distinction of the Son from the Holy Spirit.—Regarding the distinction between the Son and the Holy Spirit, the precision of formulation is lacking in comparison to the theme on the differentiation of the Father and the Son. In religious faith the belief in the Holy Spirit was evident, but in the systematic formulation of the distinction between the Son and the Holy Spirit, often a cloud of confusion seemed to arise, especially during the earliest period after the Apostles. According to Hagenbach, the difference between confusion or the distinction of the Son and Spirit is a matter of practical religious faith and speculative systematic formulation, for he declares:

The doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost, like that of the Son, was considered important from the practical point of view. . . . As soon, however, as the attempt was made to go beyond the Trinity of Revelation (i.e., the Trinity as it manifests itself in the work of redemption), and to comprehend and define the nature of the Holy Spirit and the relation in which he stands to the Father and the Logos, difficulties sprang up, the solution of which became problems of speculative theology.

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2 Ibid., p. 75.  
3 Hagenbach, *op. cit.*, I, 121.  
4 Ibid., I, 125.
It was precisely this distinction between the Son and the Spirit which became a major problem in the early Patristic period. Indeed, Hagenbach reports that many "historians of doctrines have supposed that the Fathers in general, and Justin in particular made no real distinction between the Logos and Spirit."¹ Wolfson deals extensively with this problem of the identification of the Spirit and the preexistent Christ.² Richardson makes this identity a fundamental conclusion to his entire doctrine, declaring that "the idea of the Logos as God in his active relations with the world, covers all that can be said of the Holy Spirit."³ Hence he concludes throughout that the Spirit is identical with the Logos. However that this is the only conclusion is not so readily accepted by others. Hagenbach strongly asserts that even though there is admittedly a confusion of the ideas and a lack of clear distinction within the teaching of the earlier Patristic period, yet this does not positively justify the alleged complete identification,⁴ especially as accepted by Richardson. However, realizing that there is a real problem here, and a real confusion on this point in the early Church, let us examine the particular Fathers and their teachings more closely.

The source of this confusion between the Son and the Holy Spirit had its origin as early as in the Old Testament. It will be remembered from our former discussion on the "Biblical Background," that the hypo-

¹Ibid., I, 127.  
²Wolfson, op. cit., I, 155ff.  
³Richardson, op. cit., p. 62.  
⁴Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 127.
tases of the Word, Wisdom and Spirit were often interchangeably used in the Old Testament. As a result, according to Wolfson, St. Paul often equated the Spirit with the preexistent Christ or the Word, as well as with the Wisdom of God. He further points out this lack of clarity in Paul who assigned the performance of the same functions to both the Son and the Spirit, for instance, "indiscriminately he speaks of 'the Spirit of God' and of 'the Spirit of Christ' and of 'Christ' as dwelling in Christians."¹ However Wolfson does further conclude that in spite of the lack of distinction between the Son and Spirit in the writings of Paul, yet the threefold formula is repeatedly expressed "consisting of God, the Holy Spirit, and the glorified body of Christ. It is to this Trinity that Paul refers whenever he happens to speak of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit."² Therefore, we see in Paul, on the one hand this lack of clear distinction between the Son and Spirit, and yet on the other hand a precise threefold formula which does distinguish between the Son and Spirit. It seems apparent that such a confusion is perhaps more a lack of precision than an intentional contradiction. Let us turn to the Apostolic Fathers more specifically to see how this problem is handled in the later period.

The earliest of the Apostolic Fathers were such as Clement of Rome, Barnabas, and Hermas. Scott reveals that these men lived early enough to know the Apostles personally and "from whom they received

¹Wolfson, op. cit., I, 166. ²Ibid., I, 167.
orally the words of Christ and their own explanation of them.1 Barnabas was known to have travelled with Paul on part of his missionary journeys;2 Hermas is likewise possibly considered to have known Paul personally and the one whom Paul greets as a member of the Roman Church.3 Scott further asserts that Clement of Rome probably even wrote his Epistles before the death of the Apostle John.4 We might note further that these same three Apostolic Fathers, who knew the Apostles first hand, are likewise designated by Wolfson as especially confusing the relationship of the Son and the Holy Spirit, the same theme we found in St. Paul, for Wolfson asserts:

An identification of Paul's preexistent Christ with the Holy Spirit characterizes the harmonizations in other writings of the period of the Apostolic Fathers, namely, the First Epistle of Clement (ca. 93-97), the Epistle of Barnabas (ca. 130-131), the Second Epistle of Clement (ca. 150), and the Shepherd of Hermas (ca. 140-155).

In all these works, there is mention of a preexistent Christ, but, as in Paul, he is identified with the Holy Spirit.5 Franks likewise affirms this identification, especially in Hermas, of whom he says: "by identifying the preexistent Christ with the Holy Spirit he sets the pattern for a doctrine of Two Persons only in the Godhead instead of three: this doctrine has been called Binitarianism."6

However, Wolfson does not leave the issue here as a complete identification of the Son and Spirit, but further points out that it was only

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1Scott, op. cit., p. 142.
2Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 139.
3Ibid., p. 293.
4Scott, op. cit., p. 143.
5Wolfson, op. cit., I, 187.
6Franks, op. cit., p. 66.
the preexistent Son who as the Logos was identified with the Holy Spirit, and subsequent to the incarnation the differentiation of the Son and Spirit does begin to take place, for he concludes:

And so by the end of the period of the Apostolic Fathers there was no belief in a preexistent Trinity. The Trinity of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit began, to them, with the birth of Jesus and continued after his resurrection and ascension. Before his birth there were only two preexistent beings, God and the Holy Spirit, the latter identified with the preexistent Christ.¹

But after the birth of Christ, and especially after the resurrection the Apostolic Fathers did come to recognize a threefold distinction of the Trinity, although a further delineation of the doctrine was still to be desired, especially as was gradually done by the Apologists.

In Justin Martyr, one of the earliest of the Apologists, perhaps writing before the death of the afore-mentioned Apostolic Fathers, we find a trace of both identification and differentiation between the Son and Holy Spirit. That Justin Martyr did identify the Son and Holy Spirit is attested to by Hagenbach, who says that Justin does lack clear distinction admittedly between the Son and the Spirit, especially the preexistent Son. For instance, regarding the inspiration of the prophets, Justin at times ascribes this to the Logos, and sometimes to the pneuma (Apology, 1:36).² Richardson also finds in Justin Martyr much evidence for an identification of the Son and Spirit, referring above all to Justin's regard for the Spirit at the birth of Jesus as none other than the Logos.³

¹Wolfson, op. cit., I, 191. ²Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 127.
³Richardson, op. cit., p. 62.
However may we notice, according to the careful delineation which Wolfson has suggested, that in both of the above instances of identification, it is the preexistent Logos who is identified with the Holy Spirit. That Justin did not identify the Spirit with the Son after the birth of Christ, but clearly recognized their distinction is affirmed and defended by Hagenbach who declares Justin did clearly recognize the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. ¹ Hence we see that in Justin we have both sides of the issue spelled out, both identification and differentiation of the Holy Spirit and the Son.

It is with the later Apologists in general, subsequent to Justin, that there is a more definite trend away from any confusion of the Son and Holy Spirit both before and after the incarnation. Hagenbach asserts that with the Apologists, the pressure of logical consistency led gradually to the view of a definite distinction of the Son from the Spirit, even as both were distinct from the Father. ² Wolfson also corroborates this testimony, for he writes:

Beginning with the Apologists, however, a distinction is made between the preexistent Logos and the preexistent Holy Spirit, the former alone being identified with the preexistent Christ. The Holy Spirit becomes a third preexistent incorporeal being, with the result that the Trinity now a Trinity of God, the Logos, and the Holy Spirit, no longer begins with the birth of Jesus; it has its existence prior to his birth and even prior to the creation of the world. ³

Hence, for the Apologists the distinction of the Son from the Holy Spirit

¹Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 127. ²Ibid., I, 125. ³Wolfson, op. cit., I, 191.
gradually did take shape, not only in their view of the Trinity subsequent to the birth of Jesus Christ, but it became an eternal distinction since before the creation of the world. The later Apologists even more so definitely differentiate between the eternal Son and the eternal Holy Spirit. According to Franks, all of the Apologists in general recognized this sharp distinction, and "regarded the Holy Spirit as preexistent,"\(^1\) including Athenagoras who "calls Him an effluence from God, (leg. 10), while Theophilus, identifying the Spirit with Wisdom clearly distinguishes Him from the Logos."\(^2\) Hagenbach likewise reports that Theophilus shows the Holy Spirit as a coordinate of the Son, and not an equivalent, thereby affirming a trinity of three coordinate beings, and not a Dyad with the Son and Spirit confused.\(^3\) Shedd refers to a statement by Irenaeus in *Adversus Haeresis* (III, xix,3) where the Son and Spirit are regarded as the two hands of God, signifying that they are differentiated and not identified.\(^4\) Franks\(^5\) and Hagenbach\(^6\) also refer to this same analogy of Irenaeus as suggesting the distinction of the Son from the Spirit. Tertullian likewise is recorded by Hagenbach as making a definite distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Logos, although a subordinate position is assigned to the Spirit.\(^7\) In fact, any such subordination is only further evidence of the distinction between

\[^{1}\text{Franks, op. cit., p. 72.}\]
\[^{2}\text{Ibid., p. 73.}\]
\[^{3}\text{Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 125.}\]
\[^{4}\text{Shedd, op. cit., I, 284.}\]
\[^{5}\text{Franks, op. cit., p. 75.}\]
\[^{6}\text{Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 134.}\]
\[^{7}\text{Ibid., I, 128.}\]
the Spirit and Son for if they were identified then logically one could not be subordinate to the other.

Therefore, even though an earlier identification did exist between the Son and the Spirit in the earlier Patristic period, yet their differentiation gradually became more systematically formulated, until an eternal distinction between the two became the accepted orthodoxy among the later Apologists. Therefore, having established thus far the orthodox teaching of the earlier Patristic period regarding the differentiation of both the Father and Son and the Son and Holy Spirit, let us now go on to the Patristic doctrine regarding the unity of the Trinity.

2. Regarding the Unity of the Trinity

Regarding the unity of the Trinity, we must recall that heretofore, this has not been entirely a neglected theme. Rather to the contrary in all of our discussion on the distinctions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their relationships to one another, yet the unity of these relationships has been an inevitable implication. Indeed we were but emphasizing one aspect of a relationship which exists simultaneously as both a distinction and a unity. In numerous instances where an Apologist was quoted as distinguishing the Father from the Son, yet their inseparability was likewise equally as apparent. Furthermore, the entire discussion on the gradual differentiation between the Son and Holy Spirit, which were formerly confused into an identity all the more points out that the Apologists in their logical thinking as well as religious motivation could not help but hold the Son and Spirit in
an inseparable fellowship with one another. The entire foregoing discussion might perhaps be reread as an account on the unity of the relationships within the Trinity, but even more can this unity be particularly emphasized in further investigation of the teaching of this patristic period.

(a) The Formula of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.—From the earliest Apostolic Fathers to the later Apologists a definite and precise Trinitarian formula was clearly expressed, signifying at once both the distinctions of the Trinity and also its unity. It will be remembered that the Trinitarian formula, according to Wolfson and others, had its origin in the baptismal formula and the doxology phrases of the Apostles.¹

It is to the Apostolic Fathers we now turn.

Among the Apostolic Fathers, Clement of Rome was perhaps the earliest, knowing the Apostles in personal friendship for many years. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians (c.46) he expresses the Trinitarian formula, according to Shedd, in this manner: "Have we not one God, and one Christ? Is there not one Spirit of grace, who is poured out upon us."² The threefold distinction is self-evident, but also the unity is apparent in this formula, for Franks refers to this same passage as one which "combines the one God and the One Christ with the Holy Spirit."³ Thus we see that the Trinitarian formula is both an expression of the distinctness and the unity of the Trinity.

¹Wolfson, op. cit., I, 1ff.
²Shedd, op. cit., I, 267.
³Franks, op. cit., p. 65.
Ignatius, a second Apostolic Father, is likewise quoted by Hagenbach as describing this same threefold formula where in his Epistle to the Ephesians (c.9) he writes: "We are raised on high to the Father by the cross of Christ, as by an elevating engine, the Holy Spirit being the rope."¹ Shedd quotes Ignatius from his Epistle to the Magnesians (c.13) where he exhorts the people to "study, that whatsoever ye do ye may prosper both in body and spirit, in faith and charity, in the Son, and in the Father, and in the Holy Spirit."² Polycarp, also is quoted by Shedd as one of the last of the so-called Apostolic Fathers, in his Letter to the Smyrna Church (c.11) as praying: "For this and for all things, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, together with the eternal and heavenly Jesus, thy beloved Son; with whom to thee and the Holy Ghost be glory, both now, and to all succeeding ages. Amen."³ Hence there was a definite and clear Trinitarian formula among the Apostolic Fathers.

Among the Apologists as well, there is both abundant and clearly defined Trinitarian formulation, which inherently implies both the distinctions and the unity of the Trinity. Hagenbach points out that Theophilus was the first Apologist to use the Greek word Trias in relation to the Christian concept of the Trinity.⁴ Irenaeus also mentions this Trinitarian formula, when according to Franks he says: "The Spirit prepares man for the Son of God, the Son leads him to the Father,

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and the Father bestows on him life eternal through the vision of God."¹

Shedd quotes Irenaeus in a more distinctly Trinitarian expression where Irenaeus refers to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as "He who anoints, He who is anointed, and the unction with which the anointing is made. The Father anoints, but it is the Son who is anointed, in the Spirit who is the unction."² Hyppolytus according to Shedd, who was a disciple of Irenaeus, explicitly defends the charge by some that the orthodox believe in two gods, by saying: "I will not say two Gods, but one God, and two Persons . . . and the third Person is the Holy Ghost."³ Hence the patristic period is clearly expressive of the Trinitarian formula. There are yet two more voices which must be heard.

Clement of Alexandria offers a most precise Trinitarian formula, when according to Shedd, he assures: "There is one Father of the universe; there is also one Word of the universe; and one Holy Spirit, who is everywhere."⁴ Clement also gives to us a classic example of the Trinity in unity when he writes: "Let us give thanks to the only Father and Son, Son and Father, our Teacher and Master, together with the Holy Spirit, one God through all things."⁵ Tertullian offers us a second splendid testimony of the Trinitarian formula in what Schaff includes as a Creed of Christendom, for Tertullian writes:

But we believe always, and now more, being better instructed by the Paraclete, the leader into all truth, in one God: but under this dispensation which we call economy and the Son of the one God, his Word (Logos)

¹Franks, op. cit., p. 75. ²Shedd, op. cit., I, 284. ³Ibid., I, 285. ⁴Ibid., I, 274. ⁵Ibid., I, 275.
who proceeded from him, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made . . . . He thence did send according to his promise, from the Father, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.¹

Franks reminds us also that it was Tertullian who first used the word Trinitas in relation to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which Tertullian further defines: "The Trinity consists of Father, Son and Spirit, three not in status, but in degree."² Tertullian further points out according to Hagenbach that "the Holy Spirit is the principle which constitutes the unity of the Persons, or the spiritual substance common to the persons,"³ thereby recognizing the problem of the distinctions and how to relate them into an essential unity. Having demonstrated the patristic testimony regarding the distinctions, into a definite Trinitarian formula, let us note further how they attempted to unite them together.

(b) The Unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.—Regarding the express testimony of the patristic period on the unity of the Trinity there is an abundant source of material. This concept of unity might seem almost too obvious from Judaistic monotheism to need further explanation, but it was precisely the addition of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Godhead which required this further explication as absolutely necessary. Even more, it was in defense against the charges alleging tritheism that the orthodox Fathers were earnestly striving to

formulate an orthodox Trinitarian formula of the unity of God. There­
fore, to these express testimonies we shall now turn our attention.

Among the earliest Apostolic Fathers, Franks tells us that "the
unity of God and His creatorship is the prime article of faith for
Hermas."¹ Also Clement of Rome in his First Epistle to the Corinthians
directly expresses the unity of the Father and the Son by directly ap­
plying the term God to Jesus Christ, thereby assigning him to the God­
head.² In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians Clement similarly
states: "Brethren, we ought to conceive of Jesus Christ as of God, as
the judge of the living and the dead," which Shedd interprets as an
expression of the deity of Christ whereby He is united to the Father
in an inseparable relationship within the Godhead.³ Ignatius further
implies the inseparableness of the Father and Son in his Epistle to
the Magnesians, according to Franks, when he writes of Christ: "He
was with the Father before the world and appeared at the end of time."⁴
Burton refers to the innumerable instances where Ignatius uses the
phrase over and over again: "Jesus Christ our God."⁵ Shedd also re­
fers to the Letter of Ignatius to the Church at Smyrna where he writes:
"I glorify Christ, even God, who has given you such wisdom," and his
letter to the Church at Rome where he writes: "Jesus Christ our God," and again adds, "even our God, Jesus Christ being in the Father, is
more glorified than when on earth."⁶ Hence even in this earliest

¹ Franks, op. cit., p. 85.
² Burton, op. cit., p. 6.
³ Shedd, op. cit., I, 265.
⁴ Franks, op. cit., p. 67.
⁵ Burton, op. cit., p. 29.
⁶ Shedd, op. cit., I, 265.
patristic period, the Apostolic Fathers had a definite belief in the unity of God, even the unity between the Father and Son.

Among the Apologists as well, Gilson affirms that in general they were "clear on the idea of one God."¹ Justin Martyr, for instance, according to Gilson was firm in his declaration of "the existence of one God."² Tatian, a disciple of Justin's also carries through this same theme of the unity of the Father and the Son, for according to Hagenbach, he taught that "the Logos was immanent in the Father (God) but derived his existence from his will."³ Gilson further attributes to Tatian this creditable thought: "Tatian realized that by ascribing to one Being and Lord the government of the whole universe," he was thereby solving the problem of the Greeks and their polytheistic concepts of national deities.⁴ Furthermore, Gilson declares that Athenagoras was "very insistent" on proving the monotheism of Christians, particularly against the accusation of their being atheists for not worshipping the national gods of the Roman Empire.⁵ Likewise Theophilus stressed the unity of God, for according to Gilson: "Like his predecessors, Theophilus starts from the faith in one God, creator of heaven and earth, orderer of the universe, which he rules by his providence."⁶ Irenaeus no less asserts his testimony, according to Gilson, against such Gnostic doctrines that distinguished Christ as a second separate God, for says Gilson: "Irenaeus maintains that there is only one God,

¹Gilson, op. cit., p. 26. ²Ibid. ³Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 120. ⁴Gilson, op. cit., p. 15. ⁵Ibid., p. 16. ⁶Ibid., p. 19
who is both the God of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament, meaning that Jesus Christ was not a second God in the New Testament.

Horton makes this ecumenical evaluation of Irenaeus:

That God the Creator and God the Redeemer are really one God, not two, was stoutly maintained by Irenaeus, the first great ecumenical theologian, against the dualistic denials of Marcion and the Gnostics; and it has been the cornerstone of Christian thinking about God ever since.

Hence we find Irenaeus to be a milestone in the orthodox formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, with his chief emphasis on the unity of God rather than the distinctions of the Trinity. Two more significant testimonies remain yet to be heard, namely those of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian.

According to Shedd, Clement of Alexandria asserts the unity of essence between the Father and the Son in the most explicit manner, for he quotes Clement: "The two are one, namely God." Also speaking of the Son, Clement describes him as "the Divine Word, who is most manifestly true God, who is equalized with the Lord of the Universe."

Furthermore, in Tertullian we find perhaps the most extensive treatment of all regarding the Unity of the Trinity. Tertullian, in his writing of Adversus Praxean (cap.2), according to Shedd, carefully affirms the unity of God as follows:

"One is All, in that All is One: by unity of substance, that is... placing in their order three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—three however... not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect;

\[\text{\cite{Shedd, op. cit., p. 274.}}\]

\[\text{\cite{Ibid., p. 274.}}\]
yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power."

Thus it is from this statement of Tertullian that we can understand what Franks terms the two fundamental contributions of Tertullian to the doctrine of the Trinity. On the one hand we see that Tertullian clearly recognized and struggled with the problem of three-in-one, and on the other hand he supplied the terms "one substance" and "three persons" in which, Franks declares "the subject has been discussed for centuries in Western theology." Tertullian speaks of the "Persons" as cohering in the unity of the "substance" (Adv. Pr., 25), and according to Franks, Tertullian means to roundly deny that he means at all to speak of two Gods. Shedd goes on to quote Tertullian's defense against the charge of ditheism, for "everything that issues from another thing is a second thing in relation to that from which it issues, but it is not for that reason separate from it (Adv. Pr., 8-9)." It is to further explain how two can be related as distinct and yet inseparable that Tertullian employs his numerous analogies. Shedd further quotes Tertullian at this point:

I assert that there are two, God and his Word, the Father and His Son. For the root and the trunk are two things, but conjoined, and the fountain and stream are two phenomenal appearances (species), but undivided; and the sun and ray are two forms (formae), but coherent. (Adv. Pr., cap. 8-4).

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1Ibid., p. 280
2Franks, op. cit., p. 83
3Ibid.
4Shedd, op. cit., p. 279
5Shedd, op. cit., p. 278
Shedd comments that these analogies emphasize more the Unity of God, rather than the distinctions, although both are evident, for "a river which is never separated from its source" and "a ray which is never separated from the sun" certainly do illustrate, says Shedd, "the doctrine of the unity of the divine nature."¹ Thus Franks comments that "the unity of God is preserved (monarchic), since there is no separation."² We might keep in mind that this same terminology as used by Tertullian regarding the "distinctness of the Trinity, yet not separate" are to become watchwords of orthodoxy in all subsequent ages. Tertullian finally rounds out the full Trinitarian formula according to Franks, in this one concluding passage:

> And so the Trinity is complete. The Spirit is third from the Father and the Son, "as the fruit from the stem is third from the root, and the stream from the river is third from the source, and the point of a ray is third from the sun." (Adv. Pr., cap. 8)³

Thus we find in Tertullian a classical testimony regarding the distinctness of the Trinity, but even more so its unity; the same theme which again and again has been the major emphasis throughout all this Patristic period. While the Apologists were affirming the distinctions of the Trinitarian formula, they never lost sight of the unity of the Trinity; indeed it ever remained their chief emphasis. Therefore we now come to the main problem of this thesis, namely, having established the two fundamental themes of the differentiation and the unity of the

¹Ibid.  
²Franks, op. cit., p. 82.  
³Ibid., p. 81.
Trinity, to which aspect of the Trinity did the early Church Fathers apply the concept of personality.

3. Regarding the Personality of the Trinity.

Regarding the concept of the personality of the Trinity, we are primarily concerned with the problem of whether the Fathers of the early Church thought in terms of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each having a distinct personality, each his own, or did they rather conceive of one Divine Person who distinguished Himself in three manners or modes. First of all may we keep in mind that a completely satisfactory answer cannot be expected from just this one short space of history, as crude as the doctrine was at this time. Yet that there were important implications and significant trends we cannot overlook.

(a) Personality and the Unity.—That the concept of personality was applied to the total being of God was the conclusion of our investigation of the Biblical background to the patristic period. Not only in the Old Testament was there a firm conviction of the personality of the one God, but also in the New Testament this same theme was shown to be carried through consistently, in that the Son and Holy Spirit were mediators who revealed the personality of the one Divine Being, God Himself. Therefore it would seem reasonable for the Apologists to carry on this tradition. That such Apologists as Justin Martyr did ascribe personality to the One Divine Being can be seen, for as Scott remarks, Justin speaks as a Greek philosopher when he refers to the transcendent God, but "as a Christian he emphasizes the Divine Personality."¹

¹Scott, op. cit., p. 173.
This precise problem of the concept of personality was not at all a customary point of thinking, as such, for this early patristic period, and so the concept of personality as applicable to the unity of the One God usually must be arrived at indirectly. Rather than to find direct quotes on the concept of personality, it is rather the indirect method of looking for evidences of personality that we shall primarily have to pursue. Such evidences of personality include those normal activities of a person such as reveal him as a self-conscious free-willed, self-directing person. This precise definition has been defined at the outset of this thesis, and it is evidences of personality consistent with this definition which need to be examined among the teachings of the early Church Fathers if the concept of personality is properly to be applied to the one Divine Being.

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians by Clement of Rome, he freely repeats those anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament which suggest the concept of personality as belonging to the one being of God.\(^1\) Clement further speaks of the "will" of God that we be obedient to Him;\(^2\) the "will" being an evidence of personality. Ignatius likewise refers to the "will of the Father and of Jesus Christ our God."\(^3\) This passage especially points out the implication that the will of Christ is actually the will of the one God and does not belong distinctly to Christ alone. Polycarp speaks of "the will of God through Jesus Christ"\(^4\) which

\(^1\)Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 58.  \(^2\)Ibid., p. 61.  
\(^3\)Ibid., p. 137.  \(^4\)Ibid., p. 177.
again implies that it is the will of God alone, but expressed through the
distinction of the Son, Jesus Christ. The implication here is clear that
even as the "will" belongs primarily to the Father, then the personality
which it represents is applicable to the Father, and the Son is a revela-
tion of that will and personality.

Moreover, among the Apologists, there is further expression of the
personality of the one God in his unity. Schaff quotes Irenaeus in what
is a form of a creed from his _Adversus Haeresis_ (10.1) in which Irenaeus
speaks of God as making heaven and earth, the "good pleasure of the
Father."¹ Here again we see the implication of a self-directing activity
of creation and good pleasure attributed to the Father specifically, ex-
clusive of the Son and Spirit.

That the Christian concept of God demands the concept of personality
is evident throughout the Biblical and patristic period. Also that per-
sonality is not attributed to the distinctions of the Godhead can likewise
be shown. Let us turn therefore to the study of personality and the
distinctions.

(b) Personality and the Distinctions.—Regarding the concept of per-
sonality and the distinctions of the Trinity, we will remember that the
hypostases of the Old Testament were personified, but this was actually
their activity of revealing the Father. Furthermore in the New Testament
period we saw that Christ primarily was viewed as the revelation to men of
the personality of God. With this in mind let us now take a look at the

implications of the patristic period.

Hagenbach reports that even with the first of the Apostolic Fathers we find repeated this same theme of the Apostles, that Christ is primarily the revelation of the Father. Clement of Rome writes that "the Logos is the face of God, by which God is seen,"¹ suggesting in analogy form that the Son is the mode or face by which God is revealed to man. Ignatius is quoted by Worcester as saying "that there is one God, who has manifested himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is the eternal Word."² Hence, for Ignatius, the Son is the manifestation of the Father. Irenaeus likewise is reported by Franks as teaching the idea that "the Logos was eternally with the Father, and revealed Him from the beginning."³ Thus we see the Son as the revelation of the Father, especially we might say, the revelation of the personality of the Father, and not at all is there any suggestion that the Son has a distinct personality, not even a distinct being, all his own. Irenaeus further affirms this theme, for according to Franks, he declares that "the Father is the invisibility of the Son, the Son is the visibility of the Father,"⁴ whereby we again see clearly that the Son is viewed in the patristic period as the revelation, the manifestation, the visible mode of divine expression of the personality of the Father, and the invisibility of the Father

¹Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 121.
³Franks, op. cit., p. 74.
⁴Ibid.
is revealed to man through the Son.

Shedd refers to an analogy of Clement of Alexandria that the Son is to the Father as a ray is to the sun, in that it is a light which streams forth revealing the source or nature from whence it comes.¹

Realizing the shortcomings of analogies when taken too far, yet this does seem to be a clear illustration that in Clement's thinking he does mean to show the Son as the reflection or revelation or manifestation of the essence of the Father. Shedd further comments regarding this analogy that "in like manner the Reason or Wisdom of God manifests and mediates God's absolute essence, without any subtraction from it."² Therefore the conclusion seems to be clear that the Son and Holy Spirit have no separate personality of their own, but rather they are modes of revelation, revealing the Father, even the personality of the Father to the world.

B. The Teaching of Origen

Having reviewed the teaching of the earlier patristic period, in general, we shall now turn our investigation to Origen in particular, as perhaps the leading representative of Ante-Nicene thought regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. Shedd, in his treatment of the patristic period likewise deals with Origen more specifically than with the other Apologists, wherefor he writes: "The speculations of Origen mark an epoch in the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, and we shall, therefore

¹Shedd, op. cit., I, 276-276. ²Ibid.
examine them by themselves. Scott further observes that the earlier Apologists had not yet solved satisfactorily the problem of the relation of Christ to God, and thus it remained for Origen especially to resume the discussion and further mold the thought of the Church. Shedd further comments also that "Origen joined on where his cautious and practical predecessors had left off." That Origen, however, stood well above the other Apologists in his treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly attested to by Schaff, who writes of Origen that he "was the greatest divine and one of the noblest characters of his age, equally distinguished for genius, learning, industry, and enthusiasm for the knowledge of truth." Thus it is with Origen that we shall pursue further our investigation into the development of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Knudson observes that Origen had two primary motives in his Trinitarian speculation. First of all, Origen was interested in emphasizing the unity of the Trinity by identifying the relationship of Christ to the Father more closely than the earlier apologists. The monarchians in some instances had denied all deity to the Son in their endeavor to preserve the divine monotheism, and Origen felt the earlier Apologists had failed to preserve adequately this basic unity of the Father and Son, as well as the Holy Spirit. And secondly, Origen had a primary purpose,

1Ibid., I, 288.
2Scott, op. cit., p. 188.
3Shedd, op. cit., I, 288.
4Schaff, op. cit., II, 21-2
5Knudson, Doctrine of God, p. 399.
according to Knudson, in emphasizing as well the distinctions of the
Trinity with greater clarity than had previously been done. 1 Although
this double interest of Origen in both the unity and the distinctions
might seem contradictory, yet in fact it points out that Origen real-
ized well enough the basic problem of Trinitarian thought, and was de-
termined from the outset to contribute something important to both
sides of the issue. Let us turn our attention first of all to Origen's
emphasis on the distinctions of the Trinity.

1. Regarding the Distinctions of the Trinity.

(a) Distinction of the Father from the Son.—Origen had a clear
concept regarding the distinctions between the Father and the Son.
Shedd maintains that "Origen's great endeavor" was to show the hypostat-
ic distinction of the Father and Son, for Shedd asserts: "It was his
aim to show that the Son was as truly and distinctly an hypostasis as
the Father." 2 Hagenbach mentions that this chief emphasis of Origen
was maintained in opposition to the Sabellians who identified the Son
and Spirit completely into the one Monarchia, with no distinct relation-
ship existing among them. 3 Shedd further observes on this point that
"the hypostatical distinctions in the nature of the Godhead would conse-
quently be the side of the subject that would be most considered and
urged by an opponent of Monarchianism." 4 That the emphasis therefor
by Origen was on the distinctions of the Trinity is easily recognized.

1 Ibid.
2 Shedd, op. cit., I, 291.
3 Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 243.
4 Shedd, op. cit., I, 291.
Wolfson gives this theme in Origen on the distinctions of the Trinity considerable attention, for he quotes Origen in his De Principiis as definitely applying the term hypostasis to the preexistent Christ, as distinct from the Father.\(^1\) Also in another passage he points out Origen's explicit statement that the Father and Son are "distinct numerically."\(^2\) And still in another passage, Origen describes the Father and Son as "two things in hypostasis."\(^3\) Hagenbach also refers us to a further passage in Origen where the Son is called "deuteros theos" or a second God, in distinction to the Father. Thus we see that Origen's writings abound in this sort of explicit statement regarding the distinct hypostatic relationship of the Father and the Son.

Oulton as well, gives particular attention to this same theme in the writings of Origen, especially as it centers around the subject of prayer. According to Oulton, Origen in his Treatise on Prayer, characteristically speaks of prayer to the Father alone, compared to Tertullian, who, on the other hand, at the very outset of his own treatise, De Oratone (Ch. II)\(^4\) places prayer in the context of the Father and Son as one. To the contrary, Origen taught that prayer is to be offered to God alone, and not to Christ, for as Oulton says, "he does not allow 'prayer' as he defines it to be offered to Christ, but to the Father only."\(^5\) Origen clearly admits to just this sharp distinction between the Father and Son, for he writes: "the Son is different from the Father in person and in subject, we must pray either to the Son, and not to the Father, or to both, or to the Father alone."\(^6\)

\(^1\)Wolfson, op. cit., I, 318. \(^2\)Ibid. \(^3\)Ibid.


\(^5\)Ibid. II, 188. \(^6\)Ibid. II, 269.
Origen, of course, takes the final view, which he further defends:

If we understand what prayer is, perhaps we ought not to pray to anyone born (of woman), nor even to Christ himself, but only to the God and Father of all, to whom also our Saviour prayed, as we have mentioned before, and teaches us to pray. For when he heard "Teach us to Pray," he did not "teach" them "to pray" to himself, but to the Father, saying "Our Father which art in heaven," and so forth.1

Hence the distinction between the Father and Son is clearly and definitely explained, indeed more so than any other Apologist had yet dared to declare. Insofar as Origen does proclaim this distinction of Father and Son, he certainly is carrying forward the orthodox tradition of the Church, but perhaps Origen has carried this emphasis a little too far. Let us investigate Origen further.

That Origen has carried his emphasis on the distinctions of the Father and Son too far in one extreme is firmly attested to by Shedd, who notes that Origen had thoroughly shown the distinction, but at the same time he has subordinated the Son to the Father.2 By distinguishing the Father and the Son too much apart, Origen saw the possibility of two Gods, and so he subordinated the Son to preserve the monotheism which was the prior orthodoxy of the Church. Gilson further explains this subordinationism in Origen, as follows:

Jesus Christ, who came into the world, was born of the Father, before all creatures, but since he was made flesh, and became visible, he cannot be said to be equal with the Father. This is the reason why Origen says that God is higher than Christ and consequently that Christ is by no means comparable to the Father.3

1Ibid. 2Shedd, op. cit., I, 293. 3Gilson, op. cit., p. 38.
Hence, Origen has allowed his orthodox emphasis on the distinction of the Father and Son to slip into the pitfall of heterodoxy, subordinating the Son to the Father. Origen also speaks of the Father as "Ho Theos" whereas the Son is only "Theos" without the article, which Hagenbach interprets as a sign of subordination. Likewise the calling of the Son a deuteros theos, according to Hagenbach suggests not only distinction but also subordination. Shedd expresses this view: "The Son is not God in the primary and absolute sense," but as a second and subordinate God. Oulton further finds this doctrine of subordination in Origen's concept of prayer where Origen teaches that we should pray only to the Father, for the Son is inferior and not deserving of our prayers. As Origen himself states:

Now, everyone without exception will agree that it would be most absurd to pray to the Son and not to the Father, and that to maintain this would be contrary to revealed truth. If we were to pray to both, this would involve making our requests in the plural, saying in our prayers "provide ye," "do ye God," "supply ye," "save ye," and so on: this would be in itself incongruous, nor can anyone give an instance from the Scriptures of any persons using this mode of expression.

It seems quite clear from this, according to Oulton, that Origen conceived of prayer to the Father and Son in some polytheistic figure, and since this is clearly unscriptural, and contrary to revealed truth, he dis-

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1Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 132.  
2Ibid.  
3Shedd, op. cit., I, 293.  
4Oulton, op. cit., II, 269-70.  
5Ibid.
counts these two views of praying either to Christ or to Christ and the Father as equal and thereby concludes that prayer is properly expressed to the Father alone.\(^1\) Hence if the Son is not fit to be prayed to equal with the Father, he must be subordinate, and actually not true God in the absolute sense after all, but a secondary God, a "deuteros theos." That Origen did actually subordinate the Son entirely out of the Godhead is clearly affirmed by Shedd, who writes: "Origen, we have seen, rejected the doctrine of identity of essence between the Father and Son, and took the ground that the Son is of another essence, or nature, than the Father."\(^2\) Thus Origen has drawn the doctrine of the distinction between the Father and the Son to such an extreme as completely to subordinate and separate him from the Father. Let us now turn to see his view of the Holy Spirit.

(b) Distinction of the Son from the Spirit.—That a similar relationship is affirmed of the Spirit as of the Son is clearly taught by Origen. Wolfson observes that Origen usually speaks of only the Father and Son in dealing with the unity and distinctive aspects of the Trinity, and yet he comments: "Still, what he says of the Son would be true also of the Holy Spirit."\(^3\) We have already noted Origen's orthodox position in regard to the Son as distinct from the Father, and likewise Origen held an orthodox position in regard to the Holy Spirit as distinct from the Son. Franks points out Origen's insistence on the

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{2}\text{Shedd, op. cit., p. 306.}\)

\(^{3}\text{Wolfson, op. cit., I, 317.}\)
distinctness of the Holy Spirit, for as Origen expresses it: "The Trinity is not whole without the Holy Spirit."\(^1\) Origen's threefold trinitarian formula is likewise referred to by Wolfson as designating the distinction of the Holy Spirit, where Origen says: "the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father through the Son."\(^2\) And according to Shapland,\(^3\) Origen's teaching on the Holy Spirit as a distinct hypostasis along with the Father and Son eventually gained universal acceptance among the Church Fathers and remained orthodox throughout the patristic period.

However, there is another aspect of Origen's teaching on the Holy Spirit not nearly so well accepted. Origen emphasized the distinctions of the Trinity, including the Holy Spirit, but when he subordinated the Spirit to both the Father and Son he passed from orthodoxy into heterodoxy. Even as Origen's concept of the subordination of the Son was heterodox, accordingly Franks observes that "when we come to Origen's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the subordinationism and inferiorism are even more marked."\(^4\) It is in this sense also that Shedd declares that Origen's concept of the Holy Spirit is even further removed from orthodoxy than his concept of the Son, even to the point where "those who would defend his orthodoxy in regard to the Son, hesitate to do so in regard to the Spirit."\(^5\) The subordination of the Holy Spirit is two-

\(^1\)Franks, op. cit., p. 93
\(^2\)Wolfson, op. cit., I, 317.
\(^4\)Franks, op. cit., p. 93.
\(^5\)Shedd, op. cit., I, 303.
fold, being subordinate not only to the Father, but also even more so to the Son. Whereas the distinction of the Holy Spirit was properly designated, yet as Hagenbach points out, this strict distinction of the hypostasis of the Trinity "led in the first instance to that system of subordination in which the Son was made inferior to the Father and the Holy Spirit to both the Father and the Son."\(^1\) Origen further explains this doctrine when he writes:

> The God and Father who holds all things together, reaches by his influence each one of the things that are. . . . One of these things is the Son who is less than the Father. . . . Still inferior is the Holy Spirit. . . . so that in this way the power of the Father is greater than that of the Son, but that of the Son is more than that of the Holy Spirit.\(^2\)

Hence the doctrine of the subordination of the Holy Spirit is complete. Whereas Origen is heterodox on this concept of subordination, yet it must not be forgotten that basically this was a secondary development to his primary purpose of emphasizing the distinctions of the Trinity. Having seen what a thorough job Origen did in distinguishing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, let us now see how he preserved the unity of God.

2. Regarding the Unity of the Trinity.

Origen taught a clear and unmistakable doctrine of the unity of God. Since Origen made his distinctions so completely definite, it might seem perhaps that any emphasis at all on the unity would be a

\(^1\)Hagenbach, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 130

\(^2\)Franks, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 93.
sure contradiction. However, we will remember that Knudson describes this emphasis of Origen on the unity of God an equal motive to the emphasis on distinction in developing the doctrine of the Trinity.\(^1\)

In actuality this is merely Origen's method of facing both sides of the same Trinitarian problem which had already been with the Church. Let us investigate further Origen's doctrine of the unity of the Trinity.

(a) **Unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**—It would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of Origen's doctrine of the divine unity, as a unity of the one God the Father, rather than a unity of the Trinity, for in reality, by subordinating the Son and Spirit, the Father remains for Origen the one and only true God. Shedd would corroborate this view, for according to Origen, "the first Person in the Trinity, alone, possesses the absolute and eternal essence of the Godhead."\(^2\) It is in this sense likewise that Gilson asserts for Origen that God is an "absolute spiritual unity."\(^3\) Gilson goes on to explain that because God is spiritual, he is simple, that is, that "there are in Him no divisions, nothing that can be said to be 'higher' or 'lower.' Such is the import of his 'oneness' and of his 'unity.'\(^4\) In this sense God the Father is a unity alone, and the Son and Spirit are excluded from the primary essence of the Godhead. Therefore, in one sense it is more appropriate to speak for Origen of the unity of the One God the Father, rather than

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\(^1\)Knudson, *Doctrine of God*, p. 399.

\(^2\)Shedd, *op. cit.*, I, 294.

\(^3\)Gilson, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

\(^4\)Ibid.
the unity of the Trinity.

However, it is not to be overlooked that Origen also did have a doctrine of the unity of the Trinity. Whereas, on the one hand, it is proper to speak of the unity of the one God, signifying the Father alone, yet, on the other hand, Origen did also emphasize the unity of the Trinity, signifying the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even though the Son was subordinated to the primary essence of the Father, yet Origen strove closely to associate the two. Burton mentions that even though the Father is a unity, yet the Son cannot be ignored entirely; rather, as Origen says: "concerning the Father, that being incapable of division and partition, he is yet Father of a Son."\(^1\) Thus a relationship between the two certainly is not to be overlooked. Even though the Son is subordinate, yet he is still related as Gilson comments: "We would perhaps not betray his intention in saying that according to Origen, the Word is divine, but not God."\(^2\) Therefore, although the Son is not fully God in the same sense as the Father, nevertheless, the relationship between them is necessarily a primary emphasis for Origen.

Wolfson further asserts that this relationship is more than just one of association, rather it is a relationship of essential unity. He explains that even though admittedly the Son is declared by Origen as a secondary essence or "ousia," yet Wolfson points out this significant clarification, that Origen went still further in uniting the Father and the Son by using the "term homoousia, that is to say, in the sense of

\(^1\)Burton, op. cit., p. 286. \(^2\)Gilson, op. cit., p. 39.
being the same second ousia, as a description of the oneness of the Son with the Father.\(^1\) Thus the Son was not just a similar ousia with the Father, but a second same ousia with the Father. Certainly this is a creditable attempt on the part of Origen to preserve the unity of the Trinity, after distinguishing them so far apart.

That this relationship of essential unity is further taught by Origen to include the Holy Spirit can likewise be illustrated. First of all we are reminded of Wolfson's observation that Origen's remarks on the Son can often be considered to similarly include the Holy Spirit.\(^2\) Furthermore, that Origen expressly includes the threefold Trinity in an essential unity is also evident. According to Franks, Origen recognized that even though the Son and Spirit were inferior, yet they were likewise eternal, and coexisted eternally with the Father, even though the Father alone is truly God.\(^3\) Hagenbach further quotes Origen regarding the unity of the Trinity, as follows: "The three persons of the Trinity are the three sources of salvation, so that he who does not thirst after all three, cannot find God."\(^4\) Hence we see that Origen meant for the three to be held in an eternal intimate relationship of oneness or unity of the Trinity, along with his doctrine of the unity of the one divine God, the Father alone. Origen has also emphasized the distinctions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit apart from each other. Thus it is to the question of personality that we now turn.

\(^1\) Wolfson, op. cit., I, 322.  \(^2\) Ibid., I, 317.  \(^3\) Franks, op. cit., p. 94.  \(^4\) Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 132.
(b) **Personality and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**—The problem of the concept of personality for Origen is fundamentally the same as for the other Apologists. On the one hand, that Origen recognized the sharp distinction of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is to be readily affirmed, but the question is whether these were actually for Origen each a personal being, that is three beings each with a distinct and separate personality of its own. On the other hand, a second alternative is the possibility of ascribing personality to the one divine being, to the primary essence or ousia of the one God and Father, who stands alone and above the Son and Holy Spirit. The solution to this problem, however, seems to stand out much more clearly in Origen than in any other Apologist of the Ante-Nicene period.

Primarily this is due to a significant development that we find in Origen regarding his application of the terms hypostasis and ousia in a definite way to the distinctions and unity of the Trinity. Scott affirms that "Origen first distinguished the words ousia and hypostasis to make the first apply to the one divine essence and the second to the personal mode of existence of Christ."\(^1\) Wolfson further corroborates this designation in Origen, for according to his usage of the term hypostasis, it is suggested he understood this term to mean "a distinct individual species."\(^2\) Also, according to Wolfson, the term ousia is adopted by Origen to designate "the common unity underlying the Trinity."\(^3\) However, even though this designation is clear, yet the distinction in

\(^1\)Scott, op. cit., p. 189 \(^2\)Wolfson, op. cit., I, 319-321. \(^3\)Ibid., I, 321.
meaning between the two terms is not nearly so clear-cut. Indeed both terms literally mean the same thing, and it is merely their designation or usage that is differentiated. That ousia literally means substance or essence is confirmed by the unabridged Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon, which defines ousia as "the being, essence, true nature of a thing."\(^1\) Also that hypostasis likewise means "subsistence, reality, real-being... hence, substance, nature, essence" is also confirmed by Liddell and Scott.\(^2\) Moreover, though it is clear that they are used differently, yet Franks points out that for Origen both of these terms were understood in just this way as meaning substance or essence in their basic literal definition.\(^3\) Therefore, even though these two terms were used to designate separate aspects of the Trinity, yet their meaning was basically the same.

The conclusion that the terms hypostasis and ousia basically have the same meaning is a significant development for the doctrine of the Trinity. First of all it suggests that whether we are speaking of the one God or the hypostases of God, in either case we are referring to the essence of God. The term ousia designates the one and only underlying essence of God, and the term hypostasis refers to this same essence, only in a threefold distinction of relationships within the one essence. Fundamentally, however, whether the essence of God is designated in its

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\(^2\) Ibid., p. 1576

\(^3\) Franks, op. cit., p. 89
unity or in a threefold distinct relationship, yet it is still the one essence which is meant and referred to. Therefore, whether the concept of personality is attributed to the ousia or the hypostasis of God, yet in either case it is being attributed in reality to the one essence, the basic meaning of both terms. To speak of personality in relation to ousia is to speak of the one personal essence, or one Person Himself. To speak of the personality of the three hypostases is actually to speak of the personality of the one and only essence that there is as seen in its threefold relationship, that is, to speak of the one Person in a threefold manifestation or revelation of Himself. Therefore, we can conclude, from the basic meaning of both terms, that whether speaking of the ousia of God or the hypostases of God, the concept of personality is applied in either instance to the one essence of God, that is to say, the one personal essence, or one Divine Person, God Himself.

However, not only from the basic definition of Origen's terminology can we conclude that the concept of personality is properly applicable to the one Divine God, but also, in his actual usage of these terms in explaining the Trinity the same conclusion is likewise inevitable. In his De Principiis Origen speaks of the power and operation of the Trinity belonging exclusively to the Father, and merely attributed under the various names of Son and Holy Spirit, for he declares:

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all... from which it most clearly follows that there is no difference in the Trinity, but that which is called
the gift of the Spirit is made known through the Son, and operated by God the Father.\textsuperscript{1}

Hence, the operation of the Trinity is specifically designated to the Father alone. Although variously diversified under the names of the Son and Holy Spirit, yet it is all the one operation of the one God the Father. Again Origen asserts that "the power of the Trinity is one and the same"\textsuperscript{2} thereby emphasizing these characteristic indications of the concept of personality as operation and power as being properly attributed to the one God alone, the Father Himself.

Also in the instance of creation, Origen understood this to be an act of the one God, for he declares that "there is one God, who created and arranged all things,—and who, when nothing existed, called all things into being." Although the Son and Spirit were present at creation, yet Origen specifically ascribes this creative activity, as well as all directive power of the Trinity throughout subsequent ages as belonging to the Father alone; for Origen explicitly declares:

\begin{quote}
This just and good God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself gave the law, and the prophets, and the Gospels, being also the God of the Apostles and of the Old and New Testaments.\textsuperscript{4}
\end{quote}

Hence, for Origen, the creative activity as well as all directive operation of the Trinity belongs to the Father alone, the one and only Divine Person, God Himself.


\textsuperscript{2}\textit{Ibid.} \quad \textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 240. \quad \textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}
Furthermore, not only can it be affirmed that Origen's usage of these terms leads to the conclusion that he applied the concept of personality to the one Divine essence, but also that Origen did not apply personality to each of the hypostases separately can likewise be shown. First of all, according to the basic meaning of the term hypostasis as essence, it would have been a contradiction of the meaning of the term to speak of three essences, and thereby three personalities. Essence is inherently a term which implies oneness, or unity; hypostasis refers to the threefold distinction, but yet always within the context of one essence. To speak of the personality of a distinct aspect of the one essence is a logical absurdity, and thereby, Origen could not have logically spoken of the personality of any one hypostasis of the one personal Being, God Himself. To put it plainly, God could not be One Person, and three Persons at one and the same time. That Origen did ascribe the concept of personality to the essence of God, that is to the one Personal essence, or God Himself has been demonstrated, and thereby he could not in any sense, due to the literal meaning of these words as he understood and used them have possibly ascribed personality to any single distinct hypostasis separate from the Father.

However, apart from the literal meaning of these terms, that Origen did not ascribe personality to any of the distinct hypostases of the Trinity can further be illustrated by two instances of Origen's actual usage of these terms in his writings. On the one hand, Wolfson points out that according to the actual usage of this term hypostasis in the writings of Origen it is most accurately defined as meaning not "a distinct
individual" as some would suppose, thereby to prove the view of the dis-
tinct personality of each hypostasis; but rather, for Origen the term
clearly means "a distinct individual species."¹ This latter definition
with the term "species" included clearly suggests the idea of the basic
underlying meaning of hypostasis as the subsistence, nature, or essence
of the individual. Therefore, Wolfson concludes that for Origen:

The members of the Trinity are not simply individuals,
but rather individual species and so also the term
hypostasis which he applies to each of them is used
by him not simply in the sense of individual but rather
in the sense of individual species.

Origen is quite definite in his own assertion that even though the Son
and Spirit are distinct from the Father, yet they are distinctions
within the essential Unity of the One God, and that the concept of per-
sonality is applicable only to the Divine Unity, God Himself. In his
treatise Contra Celsum Origen defends the unity of the Father and Son
as one God, for he writes, "we worship one God, the Father and the Son,"²
to which he adds a thorough Scriptural argument, as follows:

To this we reply, that if Celsus had known that saying,
"I and my Father are one,"³ and the words used in
prayer by the Son of God, "As Thou and I are one,"⁴
he would not have supposed that we worship any other
besides Him who is the Supreme God.⁵

Origen goes on to defend this unity in relation to the analogy of "truth,"

¹Wolfson, op. cit., I, 319-321.
²Origen, op. cit., p. 643.
³John, 10:30.
⁴John, 17:22.
⁵Origen, op. cit., p. 643.
for he declares:

We worship, therefore, the Father of truth, and the Son, who is the truth, and these, while they are two, considered as persons or subsistences, are one in unity of thought, in harmony, and in identity of will.¹

Origen has given us here an especially clear picture of his concept of the unity of the one God in three persons. Notice first of all that according to the grammatical construction of the sentence above, "person" is equated with "subsistences" which suggests that "persons" does not refer to the concept of personality, but rather to the essential hypostatic nature of the Trinity. Thus we have one further evidence that for Origen the concept of personality is not applicable to each individual hypostatic distinction. Not only is this evidenced in the one passage above, but also this is the identical meaning of the use of the word "person" by Origen throughout his entire writings.

A further instance illustrating that Origen did not ascribe personality to the distinct hypostases of the Trininity is pointed out by Oulton, the translator of the actual text of Origen's writings. According to Oulton, whenever Origen does speak of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by the term hypostasis, which is translated person, thereby suggesting a Trininity of three persons; this usage of the term does not actually imply the concept of personality.² Even though each distinction or hypostasis is translated by the word person yet Oulton asserts

¹Ibid., p. 643-644.
²Oulton, op. cit., II, 269.
that the term hypostasis is used merely to denote what is distinct for the Trinity, and in distinguishing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by the term hypostasis he is showing them in their distinct relationship to one another. Thus, the term hypostasis as used by Origen is used primarily to denote a threefold distinction of the one essence of God and the translation of this term by the word person is merely using the word person as a tool to designate the distinctions. The concept of personality is not at all meant to accompany the word hypostasis or person, as used by Origen for the distinctions of the Trinity.

However, the above passage where Origen identifies person with subsistence not only denies the concept of personality for the distinct hypostases of the Trinity, but also affirms that the concept of personality is properly applicable to the divine unity of the one God. May we notice again that Origen refers to the "unity of thought" and the "identity of will" of the one God. Now both of these expressions are indications of the concept of personality, and at least in the thinking of Origen we can conclude that the implication seems to be that both thought or intelligence as well as will or free self-direction belongs to the Father alone, the one Divine Being, God Himself. Origen so clearly emphasizes this unity of the Divine Person as to immediately go on to explain as follows:

So entirely are they one, that he who has seen the Son, "who is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person," has seen in Him who is the image of God, God Himself.

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1Origen, op. cit., p. 644. 2Hebrews, 1:3. 3Origen, op. cit., p. 644.
Therefore, having established not only that for Origen, the concept of personality is applicable to the one essential Being, God Himself, and also that Origen never did ascribe the concept of personality to each of the distinct hypostasis of the Trinity, let us further illustrate how the hypostases, as not individual persons, do reveal the divine personality of the one essential personal Being, the one God Himself.

Franks reports that according to Origen, "God is revealed in Christ, who is His Image."¹ Scott also refers to Origen's view that "Christ was the expression of the life, the love of the Father, as well as His creative word."² Origen resorts to analogies which further illustrate the Son as revealing the Father, for according to Hagenbach, Origen writes that "as light cannot be without its brightness, so God can never have been without the Son, the brightness of his majesty."³ A similar analogy of a torch and ray is used by Origen, in which according to Scott,—the ray proceeds from the torch revealing its source, even as Christ proceeds from the Father, and thereby the Father is revealed in Christ.⁴ One further example is furnished by Origen, according to Franks, who quotes Origen: "The Son is begotten of the will of the Father, the Image of the Invisible God, the effluence of His glory, the representation of His substance (hypostasis), the first born of all creation."⁵ Wherein we see that Christ is clearly illustrated as not

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¹Franks, op. cit., p. 90.  
²Scott, op. cit., p. 189.  
³Hagenbach, I, 124.  
⁴Scott, op. cit., p. 189.  
⁵Franks, op. cit., p. 92.
the one individual person who reveals the Father, but rather the very embodiment of that revelation itself, revealing the personality of the Father, as His express image, the brightness of his majesty, and not the representative, but the very representation of His substance or essence.

Thereby we can conclude, that for Origen, the concept of personality is applicable to the one supreme divine essence, God Himself, the Father, and not in any particular sense properly applied to the Son or Holy Spirit. This same tendency has been evident in the Old Testament; the implication was similar in the New Testament; and the earlier Apologists likewise continued this same teaching. In Origen we find its first fairly definite formulation. Let us now turn to the subject of Origen's influence upon his successors.

C. The Influence of Origen on His Successors

The influence of Origen followed in two very divergent directions, one being orthodox and the second being heterodox. Concerning Origen's emphasis on the unity of the Trinity, and the distinctions of the hypostases, he was acclaimed as orthodox throughout all the later ages. Nevertheless, where Origen did carry the emphasis on the distinctions too far until he resorted to subordinationism, he has ever since been proclaimed a heretic. However, Gilson offers this evaluation of the total work of Origen: "Despite his many errors, Origen has always been considered one of the great names in the history of Christian thought. Let us notice further the influence of these trends in Origen as they take shape in his successors."
1. Orthodox Influence of Origen

(a) Emphasis on the Unity of the Trinity.—Regarding Origen's emphasis on the unity of the Trinity, it was not long before its influence was to be felt. A certain student of Origen, namely, Dionysius of Alexandria, continued to teach Origen's doctrine on the distinctions of the Trinity, especially its subordinationist aspect and according to Hagenbach was strongly leaning to Arianism.\(^1\) However, a certain Bishop of the Church in Rome, with the same name Dionysius, wrote to his namesake in Alexandria and rebuked him for his lack of emphasis on the divine unity, which his former teacher had so clearly emphasized. According to Franks, the answer came back to Dionysius of Rome saying "that he had never denied that Christ was of the same essence with God."\(^2\) Hence the tension between these two emphases continued and the proper balance between them had to be set up. However the two guiding principles had been set up by Origen and the emphasis on the unity was not to be neglected. Franks observes that throughout the Nicene period the orthodox "emphasis remained on the unity of the Word and the Holy Spirit with the God of the universe."\(^3\) Hence this one basic motive and purpose of Origen has not been faded out nor neglected but has become a bulwark to orthodoxy for all subsequent ages.

(b) Emphasis on the Distinctions of the Trinity.—Regarding

\(^1\)Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 243.
\(^3\)Ibid.
Origen's emphasis on the distinctions of the Trinity, the influence of this concept was especially felt upon his successors. As we have seen in the case of Dionysius of Alexandria, a pupil of Origen, this emphasis on the distinctions appeared to be his central theme. And even though he clarified his position in regard to the unity of the Trinity, yet this did in no sense negate his stand on the distinct relationship of the hypostases within the Trinity. Scott asserts that this doctrine of the hypostatic distinctions between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit indeed became a point of general agreement throughout the orthodox Christian Church.\(^1\) Hence this second main emphasis of Origen, who stressed it perhaps as far or farther than any other Christian Apologist, has become a further safeguard for orthodoxy in the ongoing development of the doctrine of the Trinity.

2. Heterodox Influence of Origen

The work of Origen in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity was accepted by the later Church Fathers as orthodox on at least two points. However, that a heterodox influence also was inherent in Origen's teaching likewise became evident. Indeed, as Franks points out, "The day came when the great theologian was adjudged a heretic."\(^2\) Let us examine further this heretical influence of Origen upon his successors.

(a) Negative value of Origen's heterodoxy.—That Origen was orthodox on some points has been clearly confirmed, but that he was heterodox on other points cannot be denied. The major influence which Origen had

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\(^1\)Scott, op. cit., p. 191.  
\(^2\)Franks, op. cit., p. 96.
as a heretic was due to his subordinationism. Even those who would attempt to defend him on the relationship of the Father and Son, would concede his heresy on the relationship of the Holy Spirit as subordinate to both the Father and Son.

Perhaps the greatest and most direct influence of Origen's subordinationism is to be seen in the view of Arius, a presbyter of the Church at Alexandria. Origenism is the direct source from which sprang Arianism. According to Neve this influence can be seen as when Origen wrote to Celsus saying that the Logos is "intermediate between the nature of the uncreated and that of all created things."\(^1\) Shedd likewise interprets a passage from Origen which seems especially close to Arianism, as when Origen declares that the Son is "of a secondary substance. The Son consequently does not participate in the Father's primary essence. The nature of the second Person is not identical or equal with that of the first. It is another nature, and inferior to that of the Father."\(^2\) A further example of Origen's influence toward Arianism is seen in the instance of Dionysius of Alexandria, who emphasized the subordinationism of Origen to such an extent, that according to Hagenbach, he at least appeared to be close to Arianism.\(^3\) Neve quotes a remark from Fisher to this same effect that "Arianism was not a new doctrine. The Springs of it can easily be seen in one class of

\(^1\) Neve, op. cit., I, 111.
\(^3\) Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 243.
Origen's statements, taken apart from his teachings as a whole and in expressions like those of Dionysius of Alexandria. Therefore we see that in a very real way the influence of Origen did have a definitely negative value, especially as that influence became clearly spelled out eventually in the great Arian controversy of the fourth century.

(b) Positive Values of Origen's Heterodoxy.—Having established Origen as orthodox on the one hand, and heterodox on the other hand, it remains to be shown that Origen's heretical tendency was not altogether negative in its influence upon the subsequent development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Whereas some have aimed at establishing the sole orthodoxy of Origen, and others have roundly accused him of heresy, yet according to Oulton, neither of these is entirely accurate. Rather Oulton would caution us that before branding Origen thoroughly as a heretic, we should remember at least this one thing: Origen was a pioneer and a daring one at that. Gilson likewise exhorts: "In judging Origen let us not forget that he was doing pioneering work in theology." Oulton further explains this pioneer concept:

Origen lived before the controversies and the great conciliar decisions of the fourth and fifth centuries had given formal expression to the Catholic Faith. At the beginning of the third century thought was fluid on these matters.

Hence we see that a strict orthodoxy in all points is more than ought

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1 Neve, op. cit., I, 114.  
2 Oulton, op. cit., p. 189-190.  
3 Gilson, op. cit., p. 39.  
4 Oulton, op. cit., p. 189.
fairly to be expected of Origen. Schaff insists even further that "in strictness not a single one of the ante-Nicene fathers fairly agrees with the Roman standard of doctrine in all points."\textsuperscript{1} Therefore it is evident that wherein these early Church Fathers were lacking in thoroughgoing orthodoxy as subsequently developed, it was due primarily to their work as pioneers and not an intentional deviation from established standards.

Furthermore, we might observe that Origen’s influence did have a definite positive for the ongoing development of the doctrine of the Trinity. For according to Hagenbach, the Trinity was a doctrine which was shaped characteristically by the controversies with heresy.\textsuperscript{2} That heresy has often been a positive factor in the formulation of correct doctrine can clearly be illustrated. Hordern offers a prime example regarding the "Apostle's Creed, which is still repeated in many Churches, arose at this time, and can best be understood as a refutation of Gnosticism."\textsuperscript{3} Likewise the Nicene Creed, according to Nagler, was written with specific reference against the Arian heresy.\textsuperscript{4} Even in the early patristic period throughout, Shedd observes that "the orthodoxy of the Primitive Church is demonstrated by the heterodoxy which it combatted and refuted."\textsuperscript{5} Hough offers this especially delightful

\begin{itemize}
  \item ^{1}\textit{Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church.} (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1892), II, 628.
  \item ^{2}\textit{Hagenbach, op. cit.}, I, 242.
  \item ^{5}\textit{Shedd, op. cit.}, I, 252.
\end{itemize}
analogy:

Men once thought of heresies as undiluted evils, inspired by the Prince of Evil. Now we have learned better. A heresy is usually a genuine hunger eating the wrong fruit.¹

Thus, heresies contain great truths, only with an imperfect bent. Better than flatly to condemn Origen, or his teachings, it is rather far better to realize the positive value and influence, both orthodox and heterodox, which Origen exerted upon his successors. We might say that it is equally as important to understand a heresy as to condemn it.

Shedd offers this final sketch of the importance of Origen's influence on his successors in the words of Meier:

The meaning and importance of Origenism in the history of the doctrine of the Trinity does not lie in the intrinsic worth of the system, so much as in its connections, and relations, and general influence.²

¹Athanasius, Athanasius, the Hero, biography of Athanasius by Lynn Harold Hough (Cincinnati: Jennings & Grahm, 1906), p. 44.

²Shedd, op. cit., I, 303.
CHAPTER IV

ATHANASIUS: NICENE PERIOD

A. Historical Background of the Nicene Period

The historical background of the Nicene period is especially marked with theological controversies related to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Since Christianity had adopted the Judaistic doctrine of one God, it was beset on one hand with the necessity of defending itself, as Hagenbach points out, against the polytheistic ideas of the pagans, the dualism of Zoroastrianism, and the Gnostic theory of emanation which unfolded God into a multiplicity of aeons. On the other hand, with the recognition by the Christian Church of the distinct hypostases of God, namely the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, united into a triune Godhead, the controversies raged more bitterly. Furthermore, the Church faced not only theological attacks from the Christian world, but also political persecutions from the Roman Empire. Thus Jones writes: "The successors to the first Apostles passed their entire lives in an unbroken struggle with heresies and divisions." Hence, strife and controversy were the earmark of the age, and to those most specifically dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity we shall now turn our

1Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 102.

attention.

1. Monarchian Heresies

(a) Dynamic Monarchianism.—The doctrine of the Dynamic Monarchians is significant for the development of the doctrine of the Trinity in at least two major aspects, namely regarding its conception of the Father and also of the Son. Regarding the Monarchian view of God, the major purpose was to preserve the unity of God. However, the route they took to accomplish this unity of God was by subordinating the Son. According to Latourette, "the Dynamistic Monarchians believed that Jesus Christ was a man born of the Virgin Mary, and that in him was an impersonal power (dynamis) which issued from God."¹ Thus God's unity was preserved, but as for Christ, Blackburn declares that these Dynamists "were little more than humanitarians."² In actuality, for them Christ was no more than a mere man upon whom came the power of God. Theodotus, a scholar who came to Rome from Byzantium about A.D. 190, was a strong adherent of this view. According to Franks, Theodotus is said to have actually admitted "that Christ was a 'mere man' and that he supported this view by the assertion that it was the original teaching of the Apostles and the Primitive Church."³ Franks further notes that Eusebius even charged these Monarchians, as Theodotus "with falsifying the

³Franks, op. cit., p. 77.
Scriptures, so as to adapt them to their purposes.¹ Hagenbach informs us that a later Dynamist named Artemon likewise denied the divinity of Christ.² Hence their theological position regarding the Father and Son suggests the name by which they are known. They were called Monarchians due to their emphasis on the monarchy or sole sovereignty of the one God; and they were known more specifically as Dynamists because they regarded Jesus as merely endowed with a Divine power (dynamis) and not as a distinct person of the Trinity, of the deity of the Father Himself.

(b) Modalistic Monarchianism.—The doctrine of the Modalistic Monarchians is significant for the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, but much differently than the Dynamists. Whereas, on the one hand, the Dynamicistic Monarchians subordinated Christ to the one God, and thereby preserved the unity of God; on the other hand the Modalistic Monarchians equated the Son with the Father, but thereby identified the two, even the Holy Spirit as well, so as to deny any and all hypostatic distinction and thence they likewise preserved the unity of God. Franks defines the distinctive feature of "Modalistic Monarchianism: its adherents held that the one God, remaining in Himself the same, successively manifested Himself under different aspects as Father, Son and Holy Spirit."³

This basic concept of God had important consequences for Jesus

¹Ibid. ²Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 117. ³Franks, op. cit., p. 78.
Christ, who was not a mere human, but rather, as Mellone puts it: "The Cardinal principle of this Christology was that during his earthly life, Jesus Christ was a direct embodiment of God."\(^1\) Thus their consistency on the unity of the Father, especially leads to an identification of the Father and the Son. Birkhaeuser asserts that it was precisely this emphasis on the identity of the Father and Son which led to their declaration that the Father Himself assumed flesh in Mary, manifested temporarily in the incarnate state as the Son and indeed more so, it was the Father himself who suffered and died upon the Cross, by which tenet they likewise became known as Patripassianists signifying the suffering of the Father.\(^2\) Thus we see that Sabellius deserved the title ascribed to him, for in his preservation of the unity of God, he was designated a Monarchian, and more specifically, by holding the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be three temporary successive modes of the one divine being, God Himself, he became known also as a Modalist and consequently as a Modalistic Monarchian.

2. Arian Heresy

The Arian heresy is a direct outgrowth to a large extent from the Monarchian heresies which preceded it, although not entirely, following also in the shadow of Origenism. Even as the Monarchians preserved the unity of God, and denied the distinctions, either by subordination or

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identification, so also Arius likewise affirmed the unity of the one God, and denied any hypostatic distinctions within the Godhead. Whereas on the one hand, Arius preserved the unity of God similarly as the Dynamic Monarchians had done, by subordinating the Son to a place of inferiority beneath the primary Godhead, yet on the other hand, he differed from the Dynamistic Monarchians by not allowing Christ to have been merely a human being, but rather said the Son was an intermediate being between God and man. Furthermore, whereas Arius on the one hand was in agreement with the unity of God as held by the Modalistic Monarchians, yet on the other hand he differed here also in that the Son and Spirit were not merely temporary aspects or modes of God, but rather for Arius the Son and Spirit were actual beings, though subordinate, and were held to have been eternal since before the world began. Thus we see that the smallest intricacies of detail between one heresy and another, or more so, between heresy and orthodoxy are often so slight as to be nearly inconspicuous, yet in full consequence they can reveal any two similar views to be actually and literally poles apart. This was precisely the case between Arianism and Athanasianism. Let us examine now the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity.

B. Emphases of Athanasius

It was especially due to the Arian heresy that the Roman Emperor Constantine called together in A.D. 325 the first so-called Ecumenical Council of the Christian Church to meet at Nicea. As Neve describes
this event: "To the scene of battle journeyed Alexander, and with him came his archdeacon Athanasius who was to become the mighty champion and bulwark of orthodoxy in the Arian controversy."\(^1\) Indeed it was just three years after the Council that the Bishop of Alexandria died, succeeded by Athanasius in A.D. 328, being less than thirty years of age, and according to Franks from this time on Athansius became undisputably the central figure for the orthodox position during the many years of Arian controversy.\(^2\) It was due to this prominent place of Athanasius as the outspoken representative for the orthodox position of the Church that Hagenbach refers to him as the "father of Orthodoxy."\(^3\)

1. Emphasis on the Son

   (a) Deity of the Son.—The emphasis of Athanasius upon the deity of the Son, was in direct contrast to and defense against those Monarchian and Arian concepts which preserved the unity of God by subordinating the Son to the Father. However, in turn Athanasius realized that in affirming the equality and deity of the Son, he was simultaneously faced with the problem of how yet to preserve the unity of God. That both sides of the coin must be equally affirmed was precisely the problem.

   Athanasius full well realized that insofar as God is one being, this very concept of the Monarchians was both Scriptural and orthodox. Indeed, Shedd reports that "Athanasiu3 insisted as earnestly as ever Sabellius did, that there is but one Essence in the Godhead; that there

\(^1\)Neve, op. cit., I, 115. \(^2\)Franks, op. cit., p. 103. \(^3\)Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 231.
is but one Divine Substance, or Nature, or Being.¹ It was indeed this recognition by Athanasius that the Monarchians were not so far from the truth so far as they went, that led him to employ the same term used by Sabellius, namely the term "homoousios," denoting the conception of the unity of God, but also including for Athanasius the concept of the deity of the Son as of the same essence with the Father. Hence the introduction of the term homoousios into the Nicene controversy.

The importance of this single word to the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity can hardly be over-emphasized. Hagenbach declares that this term was essential to the affirmation of the equality and deity of the Son.² Shedd further points out that it was here in the formation of the Nicene Creed that the terminology became prominent regarding "homoiousios" of the Arians, who claimed that Christ was only similar to the Father, and the Athanasians with "homoousios" by which they firmly declared that Christ was of the same substance as the Father.³ Blackburn makes this comment:

A Satirist might say that the words differed only in an iota. But the difference between homoousian and homoiousian convulsed the world for the simple reason that, in that difference lay the whole question of the real truth or falsehood of our Lord's actual divinity.⁴

Thus the importance for the deity of Christ rested not just on a single word, but on a single letter as well. Baillie contends that this was not just a hair-splitting theological point, but more so it determined

¹Shedd, op. cit., p. 309. ²Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 256. ³Shedd, op. cit., I, 310. ⁴Blackburn, op. cit., p. 76.
precisely the deity of Christ.\(^1\) Whereas the Arians had believed in the divinity of Christ as a heavenly being, the term "homoousios" now established the full deity of Christ; not subordinate to the Father, but equal with him, not similar to him, but the same as the Father, of the same identical essence, nature, and being. The Athanasian view became the accepted doctrine of the Nicene Council, where according to Hagenbach, "a confession of faith was adopted, in which it was established as the inviolate doctrine of the Catholic Church that the Son is of the same essence (homoousia) with the Father."\(^2\) Hence, in the words of Hough, the biographer: "As a theologian Athanasius lives as the great defender of the doctrine of the deity of our Lord."\(^3\)

(b) **Unity of the Son with the Father.**—Athenasius emphatically declared that the Father and Son were One in essence, nature, being. Neve observed that according to Athanasius, "If Christ is in any sense divine, as Arius taught, then he belongs to the unseparated and un­divided monad of the deity."\(^4\) Athenasius, while clearly recognizing the three hypostases of the Godhead, yet firmly insisted that they are not to be separated from one another. The homoousios doctrine was important in a twofold sense, observes Baillie, "not only because of what it tells us about Jesus, but because of what it tells us about God."\(^5\) Not only was the deity of the Son affirmed by the homoousios,

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\(^1\)Baillie, *op. cit.*, p. 70.  
\(^2\)Hagenbach, *op. cit.*, I, 251.  
\(^3\)Hough, *op. cit.*, p. 156.  
\(^4\)Neve, *op. cit.*, I, 117.  
but also the unity of the Father and the Son. Athanasius resorted to an analogy to illustrate further this concept of the unity of the Father and the Son in his *Contra Arius* (III,4) where according to Neve:

> The relation between the Father and Son is like that between a fountain and stream that gushes from it. Just as a river springing from a fountain is not separated from it, although there are two forms and two names so neither is the Son from the Father, nor the Father from the Son.¹

Athanasius further illustrates the unity of the Father and the Son by the analogy of light and its brightness, for Athanasius himself declares in his work, *On the Opinion of Dionysius*, as follows:

> But what can it mean to call him Prince of Life, Son of God, brightness, express image, on an equality with God, Lord, and Bishop of Souls, if not that in the body He was Word of God, by whom all things were made, and is as indivisible from the Father as is the brightness from the light?²

Thus, even as the brightness is of the same essence as the light itself, so also is the unity of the Father and Son an essential unity, entirely indivisible from one another. Also in his *Discourse Against the Arians* Athanasius further declares:

> But let the other heresies and the other Manichees also know that the Father of the Christ is One. . . .the only Son proper and genuine from His Essence, and having with His Father the oneness of Godhead indivisible, as we said many times, being taught it by the Saviour Himself.³

¹Neve, op. cit., I, 117.
³Ibid., p. 370.
Hence, the essential unity of the Father and Son is clearly and unequivocally taught by Athanasius, and defended according to the Scriptures. Athanasius clearly understood that the Father and Son while distinct yet were inseparable. Therefore in summarizing Athanasius Hough proclaims "the unanimous verdict. . .that Jesus Christ was in the most complete and fullest meaning of the word divine—'very God'—the eternal Father's eternal Son,—He is God."¹

2. Emphasis on the Trinity

(a) Unity of the Trinity.—The unity of the Trinity was equally as important to Athanasius as it was for him to recognize the distinctions of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Whereas the Monarchians "had seized only upon that class of texts which teach the unity of God," Shedd points out that they "neglected that other class which imply His real and not modal trinity."² Shedd goes on to say that "it remained for the Catholic scientific mind to employ an all-comprehending exegesis of the Biblical data, and assert both unity and trinity."³ This two-fold emphasis was clearly recognized by Athanasius, for according to Burns, the Athanasians "held that Father, Son and Holy Ghost were all absolutely equal and composed of identical substance."⁴ Hence in Athanasius there is a recognition of both the distinctions and the unity of the Trinity.

¹Hough, op. cit., p. 156.
²Shedd, op. cit., I, 309.
³Ibid.
However, although both sides of the issue were recognized by Athanasius, yet the emphasis was more so on the unity of God. Due to the Arian view on the one hand emphasizing extreme distinction and leading to subordination; Athanasius on the other hand was forced to emphasize especially the unity of the Trinity. Shapland explicitly declares that "his concern is not so much with the equality of the Three Persons in the Godhead as with their unity."\(^1\) Hough likewise asserts that primary for Athanasius was his belief in "one God," the one to whom he ascribed all possible qualities of greatness, might, righteousness and beneficence.\(^2\) It was not quite so important to Athanasius that each hypostasis was precisely distinct according to Shapland so much as that "each person is God and Lord and the divine unity is maintained by the coinherence of each Person in the rest."\(^3\) It is particularly against those who would declare three separate Gods that Athanasius writes:

\begin{quote}
But let this never even come into our mind. For there is but one form of Godhead, which is also in the Word; and one God the Father, existing by Himself according as He is above all, and appearing in the Son according as He pervades all things, and in the Spirit according as in Him He acts in all things through the Word. For thus we confess God to be one through the Triad.\(^4\)

For there is One God, and not many, and One in His Word, and not many; for the Word is God, and He alone has the Form of the Father.\(^5\)
\end{quote}

\(^1\)Shapland, op. cit., p. 97.
\(^2\)Hough, op. cit., p. 145.
\(^3\)Shapland, op. cit., p. 42.
\(^4\)Athanasius, op. cit., p. 402.
\(^5\)Ibid., p. 403
Thus, Athanasius is quite clear in his defense of the unity of the Trinity, even to where the Father alone is God who acts alone in all things through the Son and Spirit. Hence, while Athanasius recognized the threefold distinctions of the Trinity, yet his primary emphasis was on the unity of the Trinity, and from here Athanasius leads us directly to the problem of the personality of God.

(b) Personality of the Trinity.—Regarding the personality of the Trinity, may it be suggested first that the emphasis of Athanasius on the unity of the Trinity certainly does imply in a definite direction the solution of the problem of personality. It will be remembered that the homoousios doctrine signifies the sameness of essence of the Son and also that the Athanasian doctrine of the Holy Spirit emphasizes his unity with the very being of God Himself; as Hagenbach himself points out, "he must be one with the divine being,"¹ and again, "nothing that is foreign to the nature of God, but one and the same nature, which is in perfect accordance, identical with itself."² Thus, for Athanasius the Son and Holy Spirit are united to the Father, God Himself, in essence, even so as to be identical to his being. Athanasius understood that there was only one essence, even one being, indeed only one individual being in the Godhead, even God Himself. Athanasius was explicit in his denial that the Son was a second being or creature from the Father. This view of a second being was precisely the Arian view which in his Discourse Against the Arians

¹Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 260. ²Ibid.
Athanasius declares:

They must of necessity say that there are two Gods, one Creator, the other creature, and must serve two Lords, one unoriginate, and the other originate and a creature. . . And with such sentiments, they will certainly be going on to more Gods, for this will be the essay of those who revolt from the One God.¹

Thus, Athanasius was especially positive to declare that there is only one divine Being, the Father alone, God Himself.

Also that Athanasius did ascribe the concept of personality to this one Being can further be shown. In the first place, there was for Athanasius no other being in the Godhead upon whom to properly apply the concept of personality except only that one divine essence of being, God Himself, the one Person of the Godhead. Since the Son and Spirit only have their existence in relation to the Father, according to Athanasius, therefore they only have personality in relation to the Father; not their own distinct personality, but a sharing of the one divine personality of the Father alone.

Furthermore, it will be remembered as Shapland points out that for Athanasius, not only is the Trinity a unity in essence or being, but also it is a unity of activity, for "The action of the Godhead . . . derives from the Father and is accomplished through the agency of the Son in the Spirit."² Such a view by Athanasius in the unity of activity does in itself imply a single divine Person who is doing the acting. Notice also that in the passage above, the activity is precisely attributed to the Father, and only to the "agency" of the Son

¹Athanasius, op. cit., p. 402. ²Shapland, op. cit., p. 36.
and Holy Spirit. Also in his Discourse Against the Arians Athanasius directly attributes the operation of the Godhead to the Father alone and specifically not to the Son as a separate second being, but the Son only has his being or Godhead or all else in the Son's name in the Father, for Athanasius declares:

> For the Father, having given all things to the Son, in the Son still hath all things; and the Son having still the Father hath them; for the Son's Godhead is the Father's Godhead, and thus the Father in the Son exercises His Providence over all things.¹

All that the Son has is actually the Father's, for they are one God, and their activity is one activity, the operation of the Father Himself, personally directing and governing over all things according to His Providence. Thus we see in the Athanasian view regarding not only the unity of essence, but also regarding the unity of activity that the implication leans toward the conclusion that personality is properly applicable to the One Divine Personal Being, God Himself.

Moreover, not only is there the reasonable implication that the concept of personality for Athanasius is properly applicable to the one Divine Being, but also that Athanasius did not apply the concept of personality to the distinctions of the Trinity can also be shown. Shapland points out that Athanasius did use the word hypostasis at the time of the Nicene Council to designate the unity of the Trinity,² although the term did undergo a subsequent change in its application to the threefold distinctions of the Trinity. It will be remembered also

¹Athanius, op. cit., p. 402. ²Shapland, op. cit., p. 36
from our former discussion regarding Origen's concept of personality, that hypostasis means basically the same as ousia, namely essence, nature, or being. It was further concluded at that time, as we can again conclude for Athanasius, that since both terms mean basically essence or being, and were so understood and used by their author, that in either case personality is applied to essence or being, hence, one personal essence or Divine Personal Being, God Himself. Therefore, Athanasius conceived of personality as properly belonging to God in his unity, and not to each distinction of the Godhead.

A further shadow of doubt whether Athanasius conceived personality for each of the distinct hypostases of the Trinity is cast upon the subject by Hough. Now Hough is the author of a biography, *Athanasius, the Hero*. It is a fairly well acceptable assumption, I believe, that a biographer knows the inner thoughts and moods of a man, knows them like a brother perhaps, compared to the systematic theologian who studies primarily the written text of a man's writings. That is to say, a biographer, to a certain extent more than a theologian, depending upon his sources and personal skill, is qualified to offer a subjective viewpoint concerning the inner feelings and thoughts of a man. It is from just such an intimate relationship with the man Athansius, compared with the theologian Athanasius, that Hough raises the very question: Did Athanasius keep three distinct individual persons in the Godhead? Hough even admits that he would prefer to think that an affirmative answer is the right one, and he further comments that "from inferences" it has been ably contended that Athanasius certainly
did hold just such a view. However, in the final analysis Hough finally adds: "The present writer... at present does not feel certain that he did." Hence one further shadow of doubt, from one qualified to make just such a subjective analysis, that Athanasius did not conceive of three individual persons in the Godhead.

One further observation is yet to be made in regard to the conclusion that for Athanasius the concept of personality is properly applicable to the one Divine Being, God Himself, and not to the hypostatic distinctions. It is in regard to a basic difference between Athanasius and Arius that we see further implication for the theme that the concept of personality is not properly to be attributed to the Son as a distinct personal hypostasis of God. It will be remembered in Arianism that the Son was viewed as an intermediate-being; a being neither God, nor man, but an individual being just the same. The basic difference between Athanasianism and Arianism is here seen in the fact, as Baillie points out, that Athanasius did hold the Son to be a Mediator, yet not an intermediary being. The precise difference here is that for Arius the Son is an individual being separate from the Father, whereas for Athanasius, the Son is not an individual and separate being or separate essence, but rather one in being and essence with the Father and inseparable from Him. It only follows therefore, that since the Son is not a distinct individual being, he is also not a personally distinct being, and the concept of personality is not properly applicable to the

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1Hough, op. cit., p. 155. 2Baillie, op. cit., p. 80.
Son as a distinct hypostasis of the Trinity. Rather, in that the Son as mediator does reveal the Father, he thereby reveals the personality of the Father, the one Divine Personal Being, God Himself. Therefore on the basis of the foregoing evidence, we can conclude that personality was not a concept which Athanasius applied to each distinct hypostasis of the Trinity; but rather the concept of personality for Athanasius is only properly applicable to the one supreme Divine Being, God Himself.

C. The Influence of Athanasius upon His Successors

The influence of Athanasius upon his successors has been of inestimable value throughout the centuries. As for the outcome of the struggle between Athanasius and Arius at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 it may be summarized according to Ferguson and Bruun that "the Council condemned the Arians and drew up the Nicene Creed maintaining the full divinity and humanity of Christ, which with a few alternatives has been accepted ever since by most Christian Churches as the orthodox statement of faith."\(^1\) However, Neve observes that "although the Nicene victory seemed complete, it was nevertheless far from permanent."\(^2\) Athanasius was himself forced into exile on numerous occasions, so that it seemed the great truths for which he had fought had been completely defeated. Nevertheless, after sixty


\(^2\)Neve, *op. cit.*, I, 118.
years of conflict a Second Ecumenical Council was held in Constantinople in A.D. 381 which according to Latourette, "confirmed the Nicene formula and anathematized those who would not accept it, meaning specifically, among others, the Arians and Semi-Arians."¹ The influence of this so-called Athanasian Nicene Creed has reached through the centuries directly to the present age, as Horton observes:

It is remarkable how unbroken is the loyalty of most Christian denominations, even yet, to the Nicene and Chalcedonian doctrine. . . . One God in three distinguishable expressions, "hypostases," or "persons"—Father, Son and Holy Ghost.²

Thus the victory of Athanasius became both complete and permanent and the orthodoxy which he established has been acclaimed almost universally in the Christian Church as a fundamental landmark to the ongoing development of the doctrine of the Trinity.

However, while recognizing the primary value of Athanasius and the Nicene Creed, there is one critical evaluation which cannot be overlooked at this time. Whereas, on the one hand, the Athanasian viewpoint of the Nicene Creed is certainly orthodox regarding the deity of Christ; yet on the other hand, the humanity of Christ is clearly a neglected theme. Frequently the Nicene Creed is considered by some to be a complete and well rounded statement of the whole of Christian doctrine, but this is hardly the case. Hagenbach quotes Dorner as confirming the narrowness of the Creed as excluding some areas of theology, as

¹Latourette, op. cit., p. 163.
²Horton, op. cit., p. 177.
follows: "The Nicene Creed showed to Christian theology the end at which to aim, even if it did not perfectly realize that end."¹ It must be remembered that the Nicene Creed was primarily formulated as a defense against Arianism, and as such it naturally emphasized those aspects of theology which needed the greater defense from heresy. Thus, the Nicene Creed while orthodox insofar as it goes, is not to be considered as the final authority on the full range and scope of Christian theology. Horton further analyzes the Nicene Council and its Creed in a proper perspective:

It cannot be said that all obscurities in the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation were cleared up at Nicea and Chalcedon, nor that all serious dissent was ended. That is not the effect of any ecumenical consensus, whose function is rather to exclude destructive extremes and define a general area of agreement, within which many rival themes still exist.²

Hence, the Nicene Creed had its purpose in the ancient world as a safeguard of orthodoxy and it has a positive value for the modern world primarily as a directive guide for further theological speculation, but it cannot be considered to be the final authority for our present age on all matters of Christian Faith. However, the influence of Athanasius and the Nicene Creed did have a significant effect upon their own era for the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, and it is to that development we now turn.

¹Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 252.
²Horton, op. cit., p. 176-177.
1. Influence on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

The influence of Athanasius upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was of major importance, primarily due to the fact that Athanasius offered the very first significant theological treatment on the Doctrine. Prior to Athanasius there had been very little attention given primarily to the doctrine in particular, as Hurst declares: "There was no emphatic and general discussion of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost before the fourth century."¹ Schaff further confirms that "the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was far less developed, and until the middle of the fourth century was never a subject of special controversy."² Whatever gradual doctrinal formulation there was on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it was seldom as easily distinguished in the early Church as were the Christological concepts. Jones offers this comment that "while almost every Christian leader had a well-defined theory of the nature of Christ, and, particularly in the West, an equally specific theory of the origin of sin, very few had any carefully formulated doctrine of the Holy Spirit."³ One reason perhaps that the early Church was rather slow in the formulation of this doctrine according to Allen is that "the ancient Fathers found a difficulty in defining the work and office of the Holy Spirit, partly because they

² Schaff, History of Christian Church, II, 560.
³ Jones, op. cit., p. 131.
were preoccupied with the office and work of the Son of God. This absence of serious speculation on pneumatology is explained further by Mellone, who declares that "the explicit formulation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, with systematic consideration of the theological problems involved could hardly have been undertaken until the doctrine of the Person and work of Christ had been carried at least as far as the Nicene declaration of A.D. 325." Hence the established orthodox doctrine of the Son was necessarily a prerequisite to speculative development on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and thereby prior to Nicea the doctrine had been largely a neglected theme.

However, this lack of precise and thorough formulation on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit does not also mean that there was a complete absence of belief on this doctrine prior to Athanasius. Quite to the contrary Hagenbach indicates that for the early church "the doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost, like that of the Son was considered important from the practical point of view, in reference for his prophetic agency, to the witness which he bears in the hearts of believers, and in fine, to his living power in the church." Therefore, that an established doctrine to a certain extent was gradually under development is further confirmed by Bethune-Baker who asserts


3Hagenbach, *op. cit.*, I, 125.
that from earliest times, the Church "has had no hesitation in de-
claring that in the Christian conception of the existence of the One
God there are included three persons—that Father, Son, and Holy
Spirit are alike and equally essential to the idea of the one God-
head."\(^1\) Hence, with this basic starting point of departure for the
doctrine of the Holy Spirit, let us notice more specifically how it
developed in the period immediately after the Nicene Council under
the Athanasian influence.

(a) Heterodox Concepts Proposed.—Of all the heterodox specula-
tions in the Early Church regarding the Holy Spirit, none was so
damaging as Arianism. Even as Arianism had denied the deity of the
Son, so likewise had it denied the deity of the Holy Spirit. This was
almost an inevitable conclusion for the Arians, for as Birkhaeuser ex-
plains: "Arianism, in rejecting the consubstantiability of the Son,
necessarily led to the denial of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost."\(^2\) Thus
we see that this doctrine of the Holy Spirit as well as the whole
Trinitarian concept was in danger of being fundamentally undermined at
its roots by Arianism. The Nicene Creed did not settle the doctrine
of the Holy Spirit; rather it was on this doctrine that attention was
now focused as the battleground for orthodoxy. According to Orr, it
was directly "as a consequence of the Arian controversy that the doctrine

\(^1\) J. F. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of

\(^2\) J. A. Birkhaeuser, *History of the Church* (New York: Fr.
of the Spirit came formally to be discussed.\textsuperscript{1}

(b) Orthodox Doctrine Established.—Therefore having seen the heterodoxy which the Church faced, let us also notice further its struggle to establish orthodoxy. Before a final orthodoxy could be established, Arianism under many cloaks and disguises must be dealt with on every hand. The chief group of contestants to the arena of theological struggle were known by numerous titles, as Arians, Semi-Arians, Pneumatomachists, but especially as Macedonians, named after their foremost representative, Bishop Macedonius of Constantinople.

In opposition to Athanasius, Neve informs us, "Bishop Macedonius of Constantinople opposed this position and declared that the Holy Spirit is a creature subordinate to the Son."\textsuperscript{2} Moeller also asserts concerning the orthodox position: "But against this some of the Semi-Arians strove, who received the name of Macedonians from the eminent Bishop Macedonius."\textsuperscript{3} Birkhaeuser further says concerning the Semi-Arians: "On account of their denying the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, they were called 'pneumatomachists,' or adversaries of the Holy Ghost; they were also known as Macedonians from Macedonius, the intruding bishop of Constantinople, who was the founder of this heresy."\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1}James Orr, The Progress of Dogma (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), p. 126.

\textsuperscript{2}Neve, op. cit., I, 119.


\textsuperscript{4}Birkhaeuser, op. cit., p. 195.
The primary importance of their doctrine was its theological basis in Arianism. According to McSorley, "about the year 360 some Arian bishops, starting from the false premise that the Second Person of the Trinity is inferior to the First Person, argued that the Holy Ghost must also be inferior."¹ Foakes-Jackson adds that "the Arians taught that the Holy Spirit was a creation of the Son."² Birkhaeuser further declares: "Separating the Holy Spirit from the unity of the Father and the Son, they inferred that he was not a Divine Person, being wholly dissimilar to the Father and the Son; that he was but their servant and a mere creature, though more perfect than other creatures."³ However, Neve gives us the orthodox view of Athanasius who taught that "the Spirit cannot be a creature. If the Spirit is a creature, then something of a different nature is introduced into the Godhead, and we have a Diad instead of a Trinity. The Spirit, like the Son, must be homoousios (co-essential, consubstantial, same-natures)."⁴ Hagenbach makes this further observation:

Though the term homoousios itself was not applied to the Spirit in the canons of this council, yet, by determining that he proceeds from the Father, they prepared the way for further definitions, in which honor and power equal in every respect to those of the Father and the Son were ascribed to him.⁵

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⁵Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 258.
Hence, the Athanasians and the Arians were clearly and firmly opposed to each other.

It was exactly this extremely divergent point of view between the Athanasians and the Arians which led to numerous hostilities between the two groups. Moeller reports that "in the stormy episcopal elections of Constantinople, which had often led to tumult and bloodshed, this Macedonius had frequently played a part as rival to the orthodox candidates."¹ Bethune-Baker also records that "the chief representative known to us of the Arian teaching with regard to the Holy Spirit is Macedonius, who had been appointed Bishop of Constantinople after the deposition and subsequent murder of Paul (a Nicene)."² Blackburn informs us that actually "Macedonius was not confirmed as bishop until a later time, when the soldiers cut their way into the Church through a dense crowd, rode over hundreds of dead bodies, and secured his installation."³

However these acts of violence on the part of the Arians to gain ascendancy in the church did not get far and Macedonius "himself in turn was deposed by the Synod of Constantinople in 360."⁴ According to Neve, a short while later, "a synod at Alexandria (362), presided over by Athanasius, established the homoousia of the Holy Spirit who was declared to be a person like the Father and the Son."⁵ Shapland

³ Blackburn, op. cit., p. 84. ⁴ Bethune-Baker, op. cit., p. 212.
⁵ Neve, op. cit., I, 119.
further declares that in 362 the Council of Alexandria anathematized those 'who say that the Holy Spirit is a creature and separate from the essence of Christ.'\textsuperscript{1} Birkhæuser offers this concluding comment in regard to the Athanasian influence upon this heretical conflict:

Under his presendency, the Council of Alexandria, A.D. 362, declared the "consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son." This doctrine was confirmed by the Roman Synods held later under Pope Damasus, which declared the Holy Ghost to be increate, and of one essence and power with the Father and the Son; and anathematized Arius, Macedonius, and all others who refused to assert the Holy Spirit's eternity, His procession from the Father, and His perfect unity with the Father and the Son.\textsuperscript{2}

Hence the Athanasian influence is officially established, to which McSorley adds that this position was even further strengthened a few years later in A.D. 381 when "these bishops—'Macedonians' after their leader, Bishop Macedonius of Constantinople—were condemned by the Second Ecumenical Council."\textsuperscript{3} Therefore we have this prime example of major importance to the doctrine of the Trinity in which Athanasius exerted an immediate influence for the preservation of orthodoxy regarding the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

2. Influence on the Trinitarian Doctrine of the Cappadocians

The influence of Athanasius upon his Cappadocian successors is evidenced on the one hand by the proximity of their theological conclusions regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, especially the Holy Spirit, and on the other hand, also due to their proximity in time.

\textsuperscript{1}Shapland, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 19. \textsuperscript{2}Birkhæuser, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 195.

\textsuperscript{3}McSorley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 96.
Having been born in or around A.D. 298, Athanasius was a young man at the time of the Council of Nicea; being not yet thirty years of age. Whereas the approximate date of birth for each of the Cappadocians is after A.D. 325, but before A.D. 331, being about one generation removed from Athanasius. However, due to the hard years of exile which Athanasius had endured at the hands of the Arians and Semi-Arians, he never lived to see the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381 for he died eight years earlier in A.D. 373. The Cappadocians, however, were in their prime at this second Ecumenical Council, the death of the two Gregories coming ten to fifteen years later, except for Basil who died two years before the Council, but his writings nevertheless lived on and had their significant influence on the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381. That the Cappadocians, like Athanasius, had lived in a time of theological struggle of divergent theories, according to Hagenbach is expressed by one of them, Gregory of Nazianzen, as follows:

Some of the wise men amongst us regard the Holy Spirit as an energy, others think that he is a creature, some again that he is God Himself, and lastly, there are some who do not know what opinion to adopt, from reverence, as they say, for the sacred Scriptures, because they do not teach anything definite on this point.1

Hence the Cappadocians lived under similar circumstances as Athanasius, especially due to their proximity in time to one another.

Moreover, not only were the three Cappodocians, successors to Athanasius in point of time, but also in point of theological influence

1Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 259.
as well. Hagenbach suggests the relationship between Athanasius and the Cappadocians regarding the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as follows:

Athanasius correctly inferred from his premises the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and was followed by Basil, surnamed the Great, as well as by Gregory of Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa. At last the General Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381), influenced by Gregory of Nazianzen, adopted more precise doctrinal definitions concerning the Holy Spirit.1

According to Knudson, the primary importance of the Cappadocians is their recognition of the significance of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and for the first time we find a thorough treatment of the whole Trinity, with the Holy Spirit emphasized equally as the Father and the Son.2 Gregory of Nazianzen clearly acknowledged that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit before his time had been a neglected theme, which according to Hagenbach he explains in his Oration (30:1) as follows:

The Old Testament sets forth the Father in a clear but the Son in a somewhat dimmer light: the New Testament reveals the Son, but only intimates the Divinity of the Spirit; but now the Spirit dwells in the midst of us, and manifests himself more distinctly. It was not desirable that the divinity of the Son should be proclaimed, as long as that of the Father was not fully recognized; nor to add that of the Spirit, as long as that of the Son was not believed.3

Hence we have Gregory of Nazianzen's view regarding the gradual development of Trinitarian doctrine. As for Gregory's own position regarding

1Ibid., I, 258.
2Knudson, Doctrine of God, p. 403.
3Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 261.
the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Hagenbach affirms that "He himself developed it principally in his controversy with Macedonius, and showed, in opposition to him, that the Holy Spirit is neither a mere power nor a creature, and accordingly, that there is no other alternative except that he is God Himself." 1

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit for Basil the Great was likewise patterned after that of Athanasius as well as Gregory of Nazianzen, his elder by a few years. According to Shapland, Basil wrote his Epistle in A.D. 360 in which he directly attributed credit for his views to both Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzen. 2 Furthermore Basil wrote under the same circumstances as his two predecessors, for according to Hagenbach, his chief importance is his role as defender against the Arian and Macedonian heresies. 3 Shapland further declares that Basil's eighth Epistle was directly written against those as the Arians and the Pneumatomachi who held the Son and Spirit to be mere creatures, and throughout his Epistle he finds no difficulty in extending the homoousian concept to the Holy Spirit. 4 Hagenbach offers this detailed statement regarding the theological position of Basil as follows:

He too maintained that the name God should be given to the Spirit, and appealed both to Scripture in general, and to the baptismal formula in particular, in which the Spirit is mentioned together with the Father and the Son. He did not however, lay much stress upon the

1Ibid.
2Shapland, op. cit., p. 21.
3Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 231.
4Shapland, op. cit., p. 19-23.
5Ibid., p. 21.
name itself, but simply demanded that the Spirit should not be regarded as a creature, but be considered as inseparable from both the Father and Son.¹

Hence Basil's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is identical in emphasis and precise terminology to both Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzen.

Gregory of Nyssa is the third contemporary to Basil and Gregory of Nazianzen; indeed, he happens to be Basil's brother. Although the youngest of the Cappadocians and one of the latest of all the significant Nicene Fathers, yet he was not the least among them in importance, for as his editors have commented: "In the roll of the Nicene Fathers there is no more honoured name than that of Gregory of Nyssa."² As for Gregory of Nyssa's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Graef declares that he was primarily "concerned with proving the identity of nature (homoousia) of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son."³ Hagenbach expressly relates Gregory of Nyssa to the Athanasian theology, as follows:

The Spirit is not to be considered as anything foreign which enters from without into the Deity (compare Athanasius); to think of the Spirit of God as similar to ours, would be detracting from the glory of the divine omnipotence.⁴

This similarity to the statement of Athanasius against Arianism that the Holy Spirit is not foreign to the nature of God certainly suggests the

¹Hagenbach, I, 261


familiarity that Gregory of Nyssa probably had with the writings of Athanasius. Hence, that each of the Cappadocians reflects an influence from the teachings of Athanasius regarding the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is readily seen. Let us turn now to investigate this influence further regarding the Cappadocian doctrine of the entire Trinity.

(a) Doctrine of Trinitarian Distinctions.—The Cappadocians have been interpreted by and large as having emphasized far more the distinctions of the Trinity than its unity. Whereas on the one hand they were orthodox in affirming both the distinctions and unity alike, yet on the other hand they have frequently been presented as being the great champions of the past in regard to the Trinitarian distinctions almost to outright Tritheism. Franks for instance, refers to the Cappadocians' emphasis on the distinctions as a departure from the Athanasian emphasis on the unity, an emphasis which was again returned to us by Augustine and John of Damascus.1 Baillie likewise confirms this allegation that the Cappadocians were extremists in their emphasis on the distinctions of the Trinity, for he asserts:

In the Patristic age it was the Cappadocian Fathers, the two Gregories and Basil, that went farthest in this direction, illustrating the Trinity by the analogy of three individual men, and thus we might speak of the "ultra-Cappadocian movement in modern Trinitarian thought."2

Hence the Trinitarian emphasis on the distinctions would seem to be positively confirmed.

1Franks, op. cit., p. l11h. 2Baillie, op. cit., p. 100.
However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Cappadocians did in actuality never deny the unity, indeed on the whole they equally emphasized the unity and furthermore always meant to qualify their admittedly direct emphasis on the distinction by likewise safeguarding the unity as well. For instance the very description by Baillie of the Cappadocian analogy "of three individual men," is based on such expressions as Franks points out as when Gregory of Nazianzen declares:

There are three individuals, but only one human nature.¹

May it first be noted here that both distinction and unity are likewise affirmed at the same time, and neither one to the denial of the other. To see this statement as primarily ultra-triteistic is to take the first portion out of its context. Also it needs to be shown further exactly what Gregory of Nazianzen actually meant by the phrase "three individuals." Franks explains that Gregory means "three individuals" in the sense that Adam, Eve, and Seth are three individuals or hypostases having one common unity in their humanity or human nature.²

The very use of the term hypostasis which was translated "individual" suggests that Gregory is using the term "individual" in the sense of individual or single distinctions of one nature, and not as three separate individual personalities with three human natures. The use of "individual" is similar in this instance as to where Wolfson points out that Origen used this same term "individual" as meaning "individual

¹Franks, op. cit., p. 115. ²Ibid.
As was the case for Origen, so it was with the Cappadocians, that individuality is meant to designate the distinction within the unity of essence, or the unity of humanity or human nature, as in the case of Adam, Eve, and Seth. J. N. D. Kelly likewise interprets this analogy of three individuals as an appeal to the analogy of universal and particulars. He refers to this same analogy of individual men in Basil, which he interprets as follows:

From this point of view each of the divine hypostases is the ousia or essence of Godhead determined by its appropriate particularizing characteristic, or identifying peculiarity, just as each individual man represents the universal "man" determined by certain characteristics which mark him off from other men.2

Thus the distinctions of the Trinity or individual particularizing characteristics of the Trinity, such as paternity, sonship, and sanctifying power, are all grounded in one unity or essence or God. Their individuality is in terms of their mutual relationship, but the essence itself is indivisible. May we further note that the specific analogy of three individuals or even three individual men as being compared to Adam, Eve, and Seth ought not to be interpreted as designating separate personalities in any sense whatever. Since the use of these three is strictly as an analogy, first of all, we should understand that the mere use of this particular analogy proves nothing; rather its purpose is to illustrate a point according to its context. We have already seen

1Wolfson, op. cit., p. 319-321.

that its context was in relation to the phrase of "three individuals," which is a phrase denoting the distinctions within the common unity of essence. Therefore the use of the analogy Adam, Eve, and Seth likewise is meant to illustrate only how three individuals can have a common unity of essence, namely in this case, a common humanity. To interpret more than this and ascribe personality to each is to commit the fallacy of carrying the analogy too far, as well as to take it out of its context. Furthermore, the fact that the analogy does include such three individuals who are so closely identified in their humanity as to be Father, Mother and Son is significant in comparison to any other three such unassociated individuals who could have been named. Hence I find it necessary to conclude that the specific use of the phrase three individuals or three individual men, according to the basic meaning of the term, namely hypostasis, suggests the inseparability of the distinctions within the unity of essence, or by comparison, humanity or human nature. Furthermore it seems evident that the analogy of Adam, Eve, and Seth, according to its context implies no more than to illustrate by comparison how three individuals can have a common essence or unity of nature; only in this instance, human nature. Therefore, although a brief glance at this analogy could be misleading, yet a careful analysis of its context and basic meaning of terms leads to the inevitable conclusion that for the Cappadocians, as expressed by Gregory of Nyssa,

There are not three Gods with a common divinity but one God with three modes of being.¹

¹Graef, op. cit., p. 188.
Hence, while declaring the distinctions of the Godhead, yet the Cappadocians have been careful to likewise preserve the unity of the Trinity.

(b) **Doctrine of Trinitarian Unity.**—Whereas the Cappadocians on the one hand did clearly emphasize the distinctions of the Trinity, yet on the other hand they likewise fully intended to preserve the divine unity. Basil the Great, himself perhaps the most extreme of all the Cappadocians on the distinctions, yet says this regarding the unity:

> It was natural to speak of the three hypostases of the Trinity, as the term safeguarded the unity of the Divine ousia, (undifferentiated being) while admitting the difference of the relations between Father, Son and Holy Spirit with the Triune Godhead.¹

Thus we have in Basil's own words the testimony that the unity is preserved by viewing the divine ousia as "undifferentiated being."

Gregory of Nyssa goes into much detail regarding exactly in what way the distinct hypostases of the Trinity are united. He deals extensively with the unity of the Father and Son in their activity and power, and concludes they are especially united in one nature, which he explains as follows:

> Now it is absolutely necessary if two are by nature conjoined to one, that they are in no wise different from each other. That is to say, if the Son is by nature united to the Father, and if the Holy Spirit has been shown not to be alien to the nature of the Son, on account of the identity of operations, it necessarily follows I say, that the nature of the Holy Trinity has been shown to be one.²

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¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188  
Therefore, Gregory of Nyssa finally concludes his argument that if the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of one nature, then the entire trinity is shown to be one, and the emphasis is not at all on the distinctions only.

(c) Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.—Whereas the Cappadocians often did speak exclusively concerning just the distinctions or just the unity of the Trinity, yet on the whole they understood these two emphases as inseparable. Thus they held a doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, relating the two emphases into one harmonious whole. Gregory of Nazianzen offers a variety of statements expressing this same view of the inseparable relationship of the oneness and threeness of the Trinity, as follows:

For they are one, not in Person, but in Godhead, unity adored in Trinity, and Trinity summed up in unity.¹

Gregory of Nazianzen goes on further to explain the Trinity in unity, and the unity in Trinity, the two emphases molded together, as follows:

For both the unity of the Godhead must be preserved, and the Trinity of persons confessed, each with his own property.²

To us there is One God, for the Godhead is One and all that proceedeth from Him is referred to One, though we believe in three persons. For one is not more and another less God, nor is one before and another after nor are they divided in will or parted in persons.³


²Ibid., p. 212

³Ibid., p. 322.
And one final example, Gregory offers, namely:

If thou overthrow any one of the three, thou wilt have overthrown the whole. Better to take a meagre view of unity, than to venture on a complete impiety.¹

Thus it is that Franks concludes that "they stressed the unity in God as well as the distinctions."² Although at times they did speak exclusively of the one emphasis or the other, yet in actuality they never lost sight of the two emphases as inseparable to each other.

Furthermore, regarding the concept of personality, the Cappadocians remained consistent with the tradition which came down to them from their predecessors. Even as the earlier Patristics had ascribed the concept of personality to the one Divine Being, God Himself, so likewise did the Cappadocians. We have seen in regard to the discussion of the analogy of Adam, Eve, and Seth, that the distinctions of the Trinity are not individual separate personalities, but rather united into one common essence or being as one God. That the Cappadocians understood the one God to be one being or one nature or one essence is seen for instance in the Theological Orations of Gregory of Nazianzen who writes concerning the nature of God:

We are inquiring into a nature whose being is absolute . . . . being is in its proper sense peculiar to God, and belongs to him entirely, and is not limited or cut short.³

Gregory of Nazianzen not only speaks of the one being of God in this

passage but also Gregory of Nyssa entitles an entire treatise That We Should Not Think of Saying There are Three Gods, in which he corroborates the unity of the divine nature or being, as follows:

But the divine nature is in every way understood to be without distinction or difference. For this reason we rightly say there is one Godhead and one God, and express all the other attributes that befit the divine in the singular.¹

Thus observing the Cappadocian view of the one nature or one being of the one God, and having already observed that the concept of personality is not applicable to each of the individual distinctions of the Trinity, let us now observe that the concept of personality is explicitly attributed to the one divine being, God Himself. For instance, Gregory of Nyssa contends that the unity of the Godhead is not only a unity of essence or being, but also a unity of operation, for he asserts:

The Father is God and the Son is God; and yet by the same affirmation God is One, because no distinction of nature or of operation is to be observed in the Godhead.²

Even more specifically regarding the precise hypostasis of the Trinity, Gregory of Nyssa yet contends for a complete unity of operation, as he writes:

It is for this reason that the word for the operation is not divided among the persons involved. For the action of each in any matter is not separate and individualized. But whatever occurs, whether in reference to God's providence for us or to the government and constitution of the universe, occurs through the three Persons, and is not three separate things.³

¹Ibid., p. 267. ²Ibid., p. 266. ³Ibid., p. 262
Thus the holy Trinity brings to effect every operation in a similar way. It is not by separate action according to the number of the persons; but there is one motion and disposition of the good will which proceeds from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit. ¹

Hence, according to the Cappadocian view of the unity of being as well as unity of operation it would seem conclusive that the concept of personality as evidenced by the divine action is thereby attributed to the one divine Being, even God Himself.

¹Ibid., p. 262.
CHAPTER V
AUGUSTINE: POST-NICENE PERIOD

A. Historical Background

The historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity had been an extremely gradual and highly controversial subject up to the time of Augustine. The Apostolic Church clearly recognized the distinct existence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, whom they placed alongside of the Father in the Godhead, but the systematic formulation of this beginning concept became the task of the Patristic Church. The further development of this doctrine in the early church began with the apologists who struggled to equate Christ with the eternal Logos, as well as to distinguish between the Logos-Christ and the Father. Origen, while admitting the distinction of the Son from the Father, yet denied the Equality of the Son and subordinated Him to the Father. Thus it was at Nicea in A.D. 325 that the full equality and deity of the Son was fully substantiated by Athanasius as the fundamental basis of orthodoxy. However, with this previous attention having been almost exclusively focused on the Son, the Cappadocians now set forth their thoughts on the Holy Spirit. There was a slight tendency among the Cappadocians, however, to subordinate the Son and Spirit, especially in their view of the Father alone as the ground of the Trinity, and it was not until Augustine that the absolute equality of the three distinctions of the Godhead was consummated. Knudson offers this concluding
comment that "Trinitarian thought did not rest content until every trace of subordination on the part of the Son and Spirit was removed . . . . which Augustine did."\textsuperscript{1}

Hence the conclusions arrived at by Athanasius and the Cappadocians in the Nicene Period were by no means completely satisfactory to Augustine. Franks refers to Augustine's writings as "a highly original and largely independent treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in Latin theology."\textsuperscript{2} Augustine was not content with easy answers, but rather earnestly sought to understand the Trinity from a point of view which was not only philosophical, but also religious. Neve asserts that "even Augustine, a real philosopher and a dialectician, in discussing the Trinitarian 'relations' was prompted after all not by the speculative but by the religious interest. This is an unfailing impression received from the reading of his De Trinitate."\textsuperscript{3} It is particularly regarding Augustine's concept of the Trinity in relation to the accompanying terminology that we face head on one of the knottiest problems of semantics perhaps ever to have occurred in the history of the Church. Therefore, let us first of all trace the development of this terminology as it relates to this problem, regarding the concept of personality as Augustine ascribed it to the Godhead.

1. Terminology of the Greeks

It was during the debates at Nicea in A.D. 325 that the Greek word

\textsuperscript{1}Knudson, Doctrine of God, p. 404.  
\textsuperscript{2}Franks, op. cit., p. 123.  
\textsuperscript{3}Neve, op. cit., I, 106.
homoousia first came into historical prominence, as when Athansius used it to describe the Son as same-natured with the Father, thus emphasizing the equality and deity of the Son with the Father. However, it was the Arians who stressed the word homoioussia to describe the Son as not same-natured, but only like-natured with the Father, thereby allowing for the Son's subordination and inferiority to the Father.

It ought carefully to be noted here that homoousia when referring to the identical nature of the Father and the Son actually is describing their substance or essence as the bond of unity which binds the Father and the Son together.

Now the Greeks also had another significant term of similar meaning, namely hypostasis, which in its literal Greek meaning was understood as that which underlies as substance or essence of being, and thus it is little wonder according to Knudson that at the Council of Nicea the term hypostasis was used synonymously with homoousia in reference to the Son as being same-natured with the Father.\(^1\) Also this identity of meaning between hypostasis and ousia was not only apparent in the Council of Nicea but also is frequently evident according to Graef in the personal writings of such men as Cyril of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Epiphanius and Athanasius himself.\(^2\)

However, subsequent to the Nicene Council there occurred a significant new development in which the term hypostasis took on a new

\(^1\)Knudson, *Doctrine of God*, p. 372.

\(^2\)Writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa, Edited by Graef, p. 188.
and distinctive meaning of its own. Athanasius was among the first to recognize the confusion of these two terms having nearly identical meanings, and so after the Council was over, he became somewhat instrumental in the clarification of this terminology by associating the term hypostasis with the number three when he referred to the distinctions within the Godhead, and the term ousia was associated as formerly with the number one referring to the essence or unity of the Godhead.

Even more so, the greatest development came with the Cappadocians of whom Franks declares: "The great technical advance of the Cappadocian theology over that of Nicea is in the separation of the terms ousia and hypostasis. No longer are they to be used interchangeably: ousia applies to the Divine unity and hypostasis to the threefold distinction within the unity." Hagenbach further summarizes this new development, which became generally accepted throughout the entire Eastern Church in this manner: "According to this usage the word ousia denotes what is common to the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. . . . The word hypostasis denotes what is individual, distinguishing one from another." Thus Knudson concludes that in regard to the Greek terminology we herein see the Trinitarian formula of one essence and three hypostases.

2. Terminology of the Latins

However, this transition of meaning, although well understood in

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1 Franks, op. cit., p. 114.  
2 Hagenbach, op. cit., I, 264.  
3 Knudson, loc. cit.
the Eastern Church became grossly misunderstood among the Latins. Although the Greeks were quite clear among themselves in their terminology, yet Graef asserts that nevertheless their use gave rise to considerable confusion on the part of the Latin Fathers, especially Augustine.\(^1\) Barth offers this explanation of the confusion, that Augustine would naturally translate hypostasis not according to its modified meaning as designating the distinctions of the Trinity, but rather according to its literal meaning designating the substance or essence of the Trinity. So if Augustine meant by hypostasis the literal meaning of substance, and the literal meaning of ousia as essence he would obviously have a complete misunderstanding of the Greek definition of the Trinity as one ousia and three hypostases, as meaning literally one essence and three substances.\(^2\)

Indeed, not realizing the difference the Cappadocians had made of the term hypostasis, Augustine admits his own confusion at this point when he writes:

> They indeed use also the word hypostasis; but they intend to put a difference, I know not what, between ousia and hypostasis: so that most of ourselves who treat these things in the Greek language are accustomed to say, mian ousian, treis upostaseis, or in Latin, one essence, three substances.\(^3\)

Thus Augustine admits his confusion and clearly shows his error when

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\(^1\)Gregory of Nyssa, loc. cit. \(^2\)Barth, op. cit., p. 409. 
he translates three hypostases as three substances which is a fine literal translation but far from the modified meaning which hypostasis had undergone by Athanasius and the Cappadocians between A.D. 325 and 400. However, Augustine immediately comes to realize the trouble with this former translation, for he goes on to explain away this contradiction of terminology by asserting:

But because with us the usage has already obtained that by essence we understand the same thing which is understood by substance; we do not dare to say one essence, three substances, but one essence or substance and three persons.¹

Thus Augustine has arrived at a definition of the Trinity which historically and linguistically would seem to be absolutely accurate, implying both unity and trinity at once.

Furthermore, may it be noticed that for Augustine, the word translated "person" actually comes from the Latin word Persona. That Augustine did not use this Latin word persona to indicate the concept of personality can be illustrated in two instances. On the one hand, Augustine explicitly states that the word persona is not a word used so much to express what he does mean, but rather as a tool to fill an empty gap or to keep him from an awkward silence. For when asked exactly what he does mean by the definition of one essence, three persons, he explains:

The answer, however, is given three persons, not that it might be spoken, but that it might not be left unspoken.²

¹Ibid., p. 155. ²Ibid., p. 156.
Barth offers this appraisal of the situation:

It is somewhat of a relief to find that a man of Augustine's standing declared openly that to call the thing "person" was a matter of a necessitas or consuetudo loquendi. A really suitable concept for it does not exist. Certainly by the three divine Persons something quite other was intended than a juxtaposition like that of three human persons, and for this reason, that a juxtaposition of human persons denotes a separation of being (diversitas essentiae), which in God is completely excluded.\(^1\)

Hence, as Barth has shown, Augustine used the word persona out of necessity for a term, rather than to express an idea or concept, as of personality, and furthermore to have conceived of any juxtaposition of three persons would have divided the essence of God, a view which is inherently contradictory and unorthodox according to the history of the Church.

On the other hand, that persona did not imply the concept of personality as understood by Augustine can be further shown by an examination of the history and etymology of the word. The Latin Church, as early as Tertullian, had likewise been faced with the same problem as the Eastern Church regarding the attempt at expression in human language of the distinctions and the unity of the Trinity. Accordingly, Tertullian expressed the distinctions of the Trinity with the Latin word persona which according to Hagenbach, was a word used especially against those Modalistic Monarchians, especially Sabellius, who identified the hypostases and denied their distinctions.\(^2\) Hence, historically the word persona had been used to show how one essence as the

\(^1\) Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 408.  
\(^2\) Hagenbach, *op. cit.*, I, 26h.
Modalists viewed it could still have a threefold distinction within the one essence as the orthodox maintained. That the word persona designated the distinctions within the essence of God is shown further not only in its historical use, but in its very etymology. Barth reports that the basic meaning of this Latin term persona means "substantia individua" suggesting the idea not only of substance or essence, but also including the concept of individual substance or individual essence.\(^1\) Hence persona is a term which basically means essence, but it further designates a single aspect or a distinct individual relationship within the one essence.

The similarity between this Latin use of Persona and the Greek use of hypostasis seems apparent. Both terms basically mean essence, and yet they are designated to show the distinctions within the one essence. Barth also mentions the ancient meaning of persona as used by the Sabellians to indicate an actor on a stage who changed different faces, but the actor himself remained the same. As such these Modalists were pronounced as heretics for this concept implies that a fourth entity exists behind the three masks, and Barth adds that this meaning of persona was never used by the orthodox.\(^2\) Rather, persona was used to designate not the one essence behind and different from its threefold distinctions or manifestations as the Modalists, but rather to designate that one essence which was itself individually distinguished and manifested in three eternal modes, not successively as masks being put

\(^1\) Barth, op. cit., I.1, p. 409

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 408-409.
on and off. Thus it was that Augustine used this particular word per-
sona, for it suggested exactly the same thing as hypostasis had like-
wise come to mean for the Greeks, namely the threefold distinctions
within and a part of the one essence, and as such this was completely
consistent with the direction orthodoxy had been aiming at all along.
Furthermore, it can be concluded that no more than the Eastern Church
meant hypostasis to mean the concept of personality, as has already
been shown, so no more did Augustine mean for persona to imply the con-
cept of personality for the distinctions of the Trinity. Rather, if
Augustine had meant to show distinct personality, he would have used a
word other than persona itself, which is a term both historically and
etymologically signifying the essence of a being, or the distinctions
within the essence, but not used to designate the concept of person-
ality to that distinct individual. Indeed, we shall now go on to ex-
amine more precisely what Augustine does clearly affirm about the per-
sonality of the one divine being, God Himself.

B. Emphases of Augustine

1. Emphasis on the Unity of God

Augustine appears upon the scene of history in complete harmony
with his Eastern predecessors. From pre-Christian times of the
Judaistic concept of one God up until Augustine we find again and again
numerous significant treatments on the unity of God. However, Franks
declares that Augustine "more than any other theologian of the Ancient
Church has united the Christian doctrine of the Trinity with the Old
Testament emphasis on the Divine unity.\textsuperscript{1} Indeed Augustine might well be considered the very finest and most important champion of the concept of a real and unqualified unity in the Trinitarian doctrine of the early Church. Neve is quite explicit regarding the view of Augustine: "With Augustine the emphasis lay upon the unity of God. The Trinity is the one God. In substance, nature, energy, and will, God is one."\textsuperscript{2} Furthermore Augustine speaks for himself at the outset of \textit{De Trinitate} in declaring that "the Trinity is the one and only and true God, and also how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are rightly said, believed, understood, to be one and the same substance or essence."

Hence, Augustine's primary emphasis in his doctrine of the Trinity, as Gilson defines it, is as follows: "In Augustine's Trinity, there is equality of the three persons, and unity in essence... the three divine persons are one single being, one single God."\textsuperscript{4}

However, not only is Augustine's major emphasis on the unity of the Godhead, but also the concept of personality for Augustine is attributed to the one divine being, God Himself. As Gilson has stated above, Augustine held that there was only one divine being in the Godhead, not three beings, and thus there can only be one divine personal being, or one Divine Person, God Himself. Furthermore, Augustine ascribes the attributes of personality to the one God and not to each of the three hypostases or personas, as for instance when he describes

\textsuperscript{1}Franks, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 126. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{2}Neve, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 121.
\textsuperscript{3}Augustine, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{4}Gilson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 70.
the Trinity as "the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, alone, great, good, omnipotent, just, merciful, creator of all things."¹ Such attributes of personality as greatness, goodness, omnipotence, justice, mercy, and creative power, all are designated to the one God alone, the one Person of the Godhead.

For Augustine the distinctions are real, but inseparable from the greater unity of the one divine Person or God, for says Augustine: "One is as much as the three together, nor are two anything more than one. And they are infinite in themselves. So both each are in each, and all in each, and each in all, and all in all, and all in one."² For Augustine each person or persona was totally and absolutely God, and the concept of true self-consciousness or personality properly should be applied only to God in His unity, rather than to the distinctions or personas of the Trinity. Therefore we might conclude that while Augustine did recognize the distinctions of the Godhead, yet he emphasized more the unity of the Trinity, to which he attributed the concept of personality. Let us further examine more specifically this unity of the Trinity as viewed by Augustine.

(a) **Unity and the Son.**—In Augustine's treatment of the Son as related to the Father, he is quite careful to remain consistent to the basic theme of the unity of God as a single being or Person. And thus inevitably the distinctions as persons can likewise be seen not to exist in the thinking of Augustine. Augustine begins his specific

¹ Augustine, op. cit., p. 198. ² Ibid.
discussion directed toward the relationship between the Father and the Son with a quotation from the Apostle Paul, as follows: "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 From this Augustine argues:

If the Son of God is the power and wisdom of God, and God was never without power and wisdom, then the Son is co-eternal with God the Father. . . . a man must be senseless to say that God at any time had not power or wisdom; therefore there was no time when the Son was not. 2

Augustine goes on to say that the Son is not only equal to the Father in power and wisdom, but also in terms of greatness and goodness, in all things regarding substance, 3 and also in all virtues of courage, prudence, temperance, and justice. 4 Indeed, Augustine concludes that "the Son is equal with the Father in all things, and is of one and the same substance." 5 May it be noticed that when Augustine affirms that the Son is the wisdom or power or greatness or goodness of the Father, these attributes are the Father's attributes, and the Son is only the expression of these attributes of the Father. The same might be said of the attribute of personality, that the Son is the personality of the Father, not his own personality but only the expression or manifestation of that one Divine personality of the Father alone, God Himself. So also the Son is the wisdom of the Father, not the wisdom alone distinct and separate from the Father, but explicitly that wisdom which is the Father's and only the Son's in relation to the Father.

1I Corinthians 1:24.
2Augustine, op. cit., VII, 160.
3Ibid., VII, 167. 4Ibid., VII, 170. 5Ibid., VII, 171.
Hence Augustine clearly unites the Son with the Father as inseparable as God's wisdom is inseparable from Himself, for the Son is the wisdom of the Father, as well as the Father's power, greatness, or the expression of His goodness, or omnipotence, eternity and even His personality. Indeed Augustine states that "when I mention any one of these, I am to be taken as if I mentioned all,"¹ and that all is consummated in total as the Son, the full expression of the Father, God Himself.

(b) Unity and the Holy Spirit.—Having found Augustine to deny for the Son all distinction as an individual personal being, we are now to find a similar situation in regard to the Holy Spirit. And in fact this is entirely to be anticipated, for if Augustine is to preserve his forgoing conclusions and his forgoing alignment with orthodoxy then it is inevitable that the Holy Spirit while united to the Father, yet is not a distinct personality apart from the Father. Augustine is clear to emphasize especially the inseparability of the Holy Spirit with both the Father and the Son, for he writes:

The Trinity is called one God. . . . but the Trinity cannot in the same way be called the Father. . . . neither can the Trinity in anywise be called the Son, but it can be called, in its entirety, the Holy Spirit, according to that which is written, "God is a Spirit;" because both the Father is a spirit and the Son is a spirit and the Father is holy and the Son is holy. Therefore, since the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God, and certainly God is holy and God is a Spirit, the Trinity can be called also the Holy Spirit.²

¹Ibid., VII, 180. ²Ibid., VII, 157.
Thus the Holy Spirit is the Trinity, the entirety of the Father and the Son, indeed there is no distinct individuality as a person that could be attributed to the Spirit except as He represents the Father Himself, even also in relation to the Son as well. The three are united into an inseparable whole, so that it is impossible to speak of one except in relation to the others. Thus if there is any personality for the Godhead, it must be attributed to the Godhead as a whole, and not distinctively to each persona of the Godhead, even as Augustine further concludes:

And so the Father is wisdom, the Son is wisdom, and the Holy Spirit is wisdom, and together not three wisdoms, but one wisdom: and because in the Trinity to be is the same as to be wise, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one essence. Neither in the Trinity is it anything to be and another thing to be God; therefore, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God.\(^1\)

Even as Augustine asserts that the Father is Wisdom, also the Son and Holy Spirit, yet not three, but one wisdom; so with personality, each partakes of personality, yet not three personalities, but one Person who expresses Himself in three distinguishable manners or modes. Thus the unity of the Trinity is established for Augustine, not only in regard to wisdom as the Son and Holy Spirit, but also in regard to personality as it is attributed to the one God, one Person in three modes of being.

2. Emphasis on the Distinctions of the Godhead

Augustine had now well established and fortified his position

\(^1\)Ibid., VII, 189.
regarding the unity of God as a Person, a single unitary being, and all
distinctions as individual persons are entirely foreign to Augustine's
view of the Trinity. However, Augustine understands well enough that
he dare not cancel out entirely all distinction within the Godhead, for
it was because Sabellius said this that he fell into heresy. Equal
with his emphasis on the personal unity of God, Augustine must now
fully substantiate a threefold distinction within the Godhead. August-
tine clearly recognized this problem, and masterfully solves it, with
a very definite stand on the distinctions, as follows:

It must be devoutly believed, as most certainly known from
the Scriptures, and must be grasped by the eye of the
mind with undoubting perception, that there is both
Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; and that the Son is not
the same with the Father, nor the Spirit the same with
the Father or the Son.¹

Thus recognizing that there is certainly a threefold distinction within
the Godhead, Augustine goes on to explain further his views.

(a) Distinctions as Impersonal.—Augustine would understand that
when one speaks of the Trinity he should do so with this two-fold dis-
tinction: either according to substance or according to relation. The
substance of God pertains to His unchangeableness, and in this regard
God is said to be not accidental. Augustine defines his term accident-
al: "That which is accidental commonly implies that it can be lost by
some change of the thing to which it is an accident."² Augustine goes

¹Ibid., VII, 193.           ²Ibid., V, 4.5, p. 148.
on to explain that the color black is accidental to the feather of a raven for "the feather loses that color, not indeed so long as it is a feather, but because the feather is not always."\(^1\) Thus in this sense the accidental is never said in respect to God, for "in God nothing is said to be according to accident, because in Him nothing is changeable."\(^2\) Thus according to His unchangeableness, God is rightly referred to in terms of substance.

However, God is not always spoken of only in terms of substance but also according to relationship, for Augustine further adds:

And yet everything that is said, is not said according to substance. For it is said in relation to something, as the Father in relation to the Son and the Son in relation to the Father, which is not accident; because the one is always Father, and the other is always Son.\(^3\)

Thus it is legitimate to speak of both Father and Son as related and not only as substance, for Augustine further explains:

Because the Father is not called the Father except in that He has a Son, and the Son is not called Son except in that He has a Father, these things are not said according to substance; because each of them is not so called in relation to Himself, but the terms are used reciprocally and in relation each to the other.\(^4\)

Having thus established the proper use of relationship as being not according to substance, he adds: "Nor yet according to accident, because both the being called the Father and the being called the Son is eternal and unchangeable to them."\(^5\) Thus Augustine has established

\(^1\)Ibid. \(^2\)Ibid., V, 5.6, p. 149. \(^3\)Ibid. \(^4\)Ibid., p. 150. \(^5\)Ibid.
this basic position that it is proper to speak of God in terms of substance and also in terms of relation, but not accidentally, nor any other way, as he concludes:

Wherefore, although to be the Father and to be the Son is different, yet their substance is not different; because they are so called, not according to substance, but according to relation, which relation however, is not accidental, because it is not changeable.\(^1\)

Thus Augustine has carefully introduced the foundation for his logical superstructure on how God can exemplify both unity and trinality at one and the same time. When we speak in terms according to relationship we refer to the distinctions of the Godhead; however, when we speak in terms according to substance or essence we refer to God in his unity. Thus Augustine has solved with great cleverness and precise systematic formulation that persistent problem of how three can be one and one can be three by simply referring to the logic that God is a unity according to essence, and the distinctions are merely in terms of the relationships within the one essence, God Himself.

However, may it be noted further that wherein Augustine has admitted the distinctions of the Godhead in terms of relationship, yet he has at the same time denied all true individual personality to each of the distinctions which are mere inner relationships of the one personal Being, God Himself.

(b) Distinctions as Personal.—However, even though Augustine never did allow for these Trinitarian relationships as distinct

\(^1\)Ibid.
persons, or as self-conscious beings each in themselves, yet to the extent that each distinction did represent the activity of the whole Godhead, to this extent personality can rightly be ascribed to each. For according to Augustine any divine operation is participated in by the whole Trinity at work simultaneously, and no one event belongs solely to the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. As Augustine has expressed it: "All three are equally and indistinguishably involved in all events. If we say the Father does 'this' while the Son does 'that' we are not speaking literally and properly. The only fitting thing to say is that the Trinity does both this and that. God operates as one."\(^1\) Hence, in the Lord's Prayer, when one says "Our Father," his address is not to the Father alone, but to the Trinity.\(^2\) Similarly in the incarnation all the three persons are involved, according to Augustine,\(^3\) as also in the baptism of Jesus,\(^4\) and in the beginning of creation.\(^5\) Richardson clearly recognizes this unity of the personal being of God in these activities for he writes: "Any distinctions of these operations of God would imply a schism in the simple divine essence."\(^6\) Neve also recognizes this unity of divine operation for the distinctions of the Trinity for he points out that according to Augustine:

The Son is represented as taking part in His own sending and incarnation. The Persons of the Trinity are not different from one another; with respect to the entire divine substance they are identical with each other. . . . Each of

\(^1\)Ibid., V, 11.12, p. 157.  
\(^2\)Ibid.  
\(^3\)Ibid., II, 5.9.  
\(^4\)Ibid., IV, 21.30.  
\(^5\)Ibid., V, 13.11.  
\(^6\)Richardson, op. cit., p. 75.
the three Persons is equal to the entire Trinity, and the entire Trinity is not more than one of the persons. Augustine spoke as though the essence is after all a Person.¹

Hence, for Augustine, the personality of God is ascribed to his essence or his unity. The distinctions are not personalities in themselves, but only in the sense that they are related to the one divine Personality, God Himself.

Furthermore, regarding Augustine's use of analogies it likewise seems to be indicated that he understands the concept of personality as properly ascribed to the one God in unity, and not to each of the distinct hypostases. Eugene Portalie lists twenty-two various analogies used by Augustine to express his view of the Trinity, such as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit compared with Supreme Being, Highest Wisdom, and Greatest Good. There are seven of these analogies which seem particularly pertinent to Augustine's view of the personality of God. These include such triads as Memory, Vision and Will; or Being, Understanding and Life; or Mind, Knowledge and Love and several other triads following this same basic pattern.² Now these particular analogies are especially appropriate in that they group together such elements as might well be considered to be constituents of personality itself. For instance, memory, vision and will as a whole or any of the other such analogies could be taken as an indication of personality, for ac-

¹Neve, op. cit., I, 121.
cording to our basic definition of personality from the outset of this thesis, self-consciousness and free self-direction do certainly indicate a personality. However, may it be especially noted that any one factor alone, as memory alone does not constitute an entire personality, but rather is one of several constituents which go together to make up a personality. Therefore, on the basis of these analogies of Augustine, each of the constituents memory, vision, and will are not three persons, but together they could be said to make up one personality, suggesting that at least in the inner thinking and trend of Augustine's thought, according to these analogies, he did think of the Trinity in terms of a threefold differentiation or distinction within one Person, God Himself.

C. Influence of Augustine Upon His Successors

Augustine had perhaps the most far reaching influence of any Church Father. Gilson reports that the Trinitarian doctrine of Augustine agreed with the decisions of the Council of Nicea and followed within the orthodox tradition.¹ Wolfson likewise concludes after a three point comparison between Augustine and the Cappadocians that Augustine in every detail is in essential agreement with the views of his Eastern predecessors.² Hence Augustine stands in the important position of having consummated the development of the doctrine of the Trinity for his age.

However, Augustine not only summed up the past, but also he set

¹Gilson, op. cit., p. 70.
²Wolfson, op. cit., I, 355-359.
forth the lasting tradition of orthodoxy for the doctrine of the Trinity for the future, even up to modern times. Franks asserts that "our study of the doctrine of the Trinity may now be said to be complete, so far as the orthodox doctrine with the accompanying Christology is concerned." Cunningham also declares that throughout the period immediately following Augustine through to the eleventh century and on into the scholastic period there were no significant contributions on the doctrine of the Trinity, for "actually the early Scholastics have little or nothing to offer on the subject. . . . the theological tradition will find its primary source in St. Augustine." Cunningham further reconfirms that "in all matters he is the Scholastics' primary patristic authority," and also: "He is their authority par excellence." Gilson corroborates this testimony:

The work of Saint Augustine has always remained a landmark in the history of Christian thought. Anselm of Canterbury will pride himself on saying nothing that Augustine had not said before him; in the thirteenth century, the so-called "Augustinians" will strive to maintain his main philosophical positions against the rising tide of Aristotelianism, and even their opponents will proclaim their intention to restate his doctrine in a more accurate way. . . . Even Thomas Aquinas would have considered himself a true disciple of Augustine.

Cunningham likewise confirms that St. Thomas' doctrine of the Trinity is dependent upon "above all, St. Augustine—from whom Scholastic tradition receives its inspiration and the authority for its traditional facts."

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1 Franks, op. cit., p. 130.  
2 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 70.  
3 Ibid., p. 46.  
4 Ibid., p. 48.  
5 Gilson, op. cit., p. 80.  
6 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 35.
Augustine's influence extends, however, far beyond the Scholastic period into the Reformation and Modern times. This influence can be especially noticed throughout the medium of the Athanasian Creed, which according to Franks, had nothing to do with Athanasius, but originated in Gaul about the fifth or sixth century A.D., "being mainly taken from Augustine's teaching on the Trinity and the Incarnation." Neve also remarks that the fundamental features of Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity were crystallized in the Symbolum Quicunque, popularly known as the Athanasian Creed. Franks quotes a short passage from the Creed:

It is said that the Catholic faith is to worship one God in Trinity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the substance. The Three Persons are distinct from one another, co-equal and co-eternal; but their Godhead is one. Each Person is God, yet there are not Three Gods, but only one God. The Father is of none, the Son of the Father only, the Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son.

The proximity of this creedal statement to the doctrine of Augustine is quite evident, and it follows therefore that those Churches which have accepted as their standard of belief, the Athanasian Creed along with others, have thereby accepted the fundamental teaching of St. Augustine himself at this point. Franks informs us that not only has the Roman Catholic Church accepted this Creed and thereby its theological implications, but this also applies "to the great Lutheran and Reformed Protestant Churches on the continent as well as to the Church of England and the Church of Scotland." Horton also reports concerning the doctrine

1Franks, op. cit., p. 127.  
2Neve, op. cit., I, 122.  
4Ibid., p. 137.
of Augustine on the Trinity that "the Protestant reformers never rejected this doctrine, while rejecting so much else in Catholic teaching."¹

Thus we see the importance of Augustine, not just in his consummation of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity up to his own time, but also for the doctrine he set forth for the future orthodox tradition of the Church, both Roman and Protestant. Having briefly sketched Augustine's doctrine and shown its importance, we now turn to the more specific task of pointing out the exact theological issues of Augustine's doctrine of the Trinitarian which influenced subsequent periods and various aspects of Christian thought.

1. Augustine's Influence Regarding the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

(a) Procession of the Holy Spirit.—One of the most direct influences arising out of Augustinian Trinitarianism was seen in less than a century after the death of Augustine, concerning the Filioque controversy. The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit had been a topic of prime importance to Athanasius immediately following the Council of Nicea of A.D. 325; especially in defense against the Macedonian heresy which subordinated the Holy Spirit. However, the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381 A.D. thoroughly condemned the Macedonians and officially established the orthodox position of the deity and equality of the Holy Spirit in unity with the Father and Son. It now only remained on this subject for Augustine to work out the theo-

¹Horton, op. cit., p. 177.
logical implications of this official position, and other than a general clarification of the doctrine there was no significant new development at this point of the doctrine since that time.

However, regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit, the battle was only just beginning. As Bethune-Baker states: "From this time forward it was only in connection with the procession of the Spirit that any fresh development of the doctrine is to be noted."\(^1\) Hagenbach makes this observation about the decision of the second ecumenical council:

> The formula of the council of Constantinople, however, did not fully settle the point in question. For though the relation of the Spirit to the Trinity in general was determined, yet the particular relation in which he stands to the Son and the Father respectively, still remained to be decided.\(^2\)

According to Orr, "the only important addition to the Nicene-Constantinople Creed since 381 A.D. has been the insertion by the Synod of Toledo in 589 A.D. of the *filioque* clause, which marks the difference between East and West on the subject of the procession of the Holy Spirit."\(^3\) Schaff also asserts: "The Filioque-controversy relates to the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit, and is a continuation of the Trinitarian controversies of the Nicene age."\(^4\)

From the theological aspects of the controversy, Neve reports:

> "The West conceived the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son in like manner as from the Father. Gradually this teaching, without


official act, caused the insertion of the 'filioque' into the Nicene Creed.\footnote{1} According to Hurst, "the Eastern Church contended that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father only."\footnote{2} Neve gives the theological basis for the Eastern position: "Their theologians contend that the Western conception of a double procession degrades the deity by admitting two active principles, which is dualism."\footnote{3}

However, the Eastern Church objected to the Western position for other than theological grounds. Nagler informs us: "The insertion into the Western creed of the 'filioque' clause was an abomination to the orthodox East because it meant an addition to the authoritative Nicene Creed.\footnote{4} Neve also remarks concerning this correction by the Western Church of the Nicene Creed by inserting the "filioque", that: "This was abhorred by the Eastern Church—not only because of the implied doctrine—but also because the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed as a formula is regarded as a sacred part of the Holy Liturgy."\footnote{5}

Hagenbach defends the position of the West in this manner: "Inasmuch as the formula declared that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, it did not indeed expressly deny the procession from the Son; but yet it could be taken in a negative sense."\footnote{6} Hagenbach further indicates that

\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item Neve, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 122.
\item Hurst, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 122
\item Neve, \textit{Churches and Sects of Christendom} (Blair, Nebraska: Lutheran Publishing House, 1944), p. 56.
\item Nagler, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 385.
\item Neve, \textit{loc. cit.}
\item Hagenbach, \textit{op. cit.}, I, 262.
\end{enumerate}
either position is actually allowable from the original Nicene formula, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, or from the Father and Son. Yet the Eastern position, that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father was maintained especially as a safeguard of prestige for the Holy Spirit against the Macedonians who attempted to deny entirely the deity of the Holy Spirit. ¹

Hurst asserts that the Western view was largely based upon the teachings of Augustine, who "had been chief defender of this view, he having carried the doctrine of the Trinity to its logical sequence. If Christ were divine, then the Holy Ghost must proceed from Him not less than from the Father. The Argument is complete."² Hagenbach also states it: "The Latin Fathers... and Augustine in particular taught the procession of the Spirit from both the Father and the Son."³ Bethune-Baker further defines the position of Augustine as follows:

It is certain that the procession of the Holy Spirit is from both Father and Son apart from time. We neither say the Holy Spirit is begotten nor do we say he is unbegotten (for the latter term, though not found in the Scriptures, is conveniently applied to the Father alone); and we abhor the idea that he is begotten of both Father and Son. What we say is that he proceeds eternally from both, without any kind of interval of time between the generation of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Spirit from the Father and Son.⁴

May it be especially noticed that this view of Augustine regarding the double procession of the Holy Spirit from both the Father and the Son

is an inevitable conclusion for Augustine, considering his basic concept of the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity. As Augustine expressed it himself:

The Holy Spirit is a certain unutterable communion of the Father and the Son; and on that account, perhaps, He is so called, because the same name is suitable to both the Father and the Son. For He Himself is called specifically that which they are called in common; because both the Father is a Spirit and the Son a Spirit, both the Father is holy and the Son holy. In order, therefore, that the communion of both may be signified from a name which is suitable to both, the Holy Spirit is called the gift of both.¹

Hence, Augustine conceived of the Holy Spirit as the gift of both the Father and the Son, thereby leading to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.

Fisher reports that "at a council at Toledo, in Spain, held in 589, filioque was inserted in the creed, by which it was made to affirm the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, instead of from the Father as the formula had stood before."² McSorley also notes that this was "the council that anathematized everyone who refused to believe 'that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son.'"³ Hagenbach further declares: "This doctrine became so firmly established in the West, that at the third synod of Toledo (A.D. 589) the clause filioque was added to the confession of faith

¹Augustine, op. cit., VII, 158.


³McSorley, op. cit., p. 163.
of the council of Constantinople, and so the dogmatic basis was laid for a schism between the eastern and western churches.¹

Thus, according to Neve, "the filioque, though never popularized became the accepted formula of the West, while it was roundly condemned in the East."² Fisher likewise agrees that "this addition to the Creed was not acceptable to the Eastern Churches, and is one of the standing points of disagreement between the Greeks and the Latins."³ Numerous attempts have been made at reuniting these two groups, but all have failed. Blackburn records this event, as follows:

In the fourteenth century Pope John XXII invited the Greeks to unite with the Latins; they returned this answer: "Exercise your authority over your own creatures. As for us, we can neither bear your pride nor satisfy your avarice. So the devil be with you; the Lord is with us."⁴

Nevertheless, although there were non-theological factors involved as well in this schism, yet on a theological basis it can be concluded that Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity did have a significant influence in the Latin Church regarding their teaching that the Holy Spirit does proceed from both the Father and the Son.

(b) **Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.**—Not only has Augustine's concept of the procession of the Spirit been part of the orthodox tradi-

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¹Hagenbach, *op. cit.*, I, 263.
tion of the Latin Church through the years, but also his concept of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit has also found equal acclaim in the Roman Church of today. Cunningham points out that it is this same Augustinian theory of appropriations in the doctrine of the Trinity which is held as official dogma by the Roman Catholic Church of today. He quotes a passage from Augustine's so-designated 187th Letter, Ad Dardanum, De Praesentia Dei, as follows:

But who dares to think—unless someone is completely ignorant of the inseparability of the Trinity—that the Father or Son can dwell in someone in whom the Holy Ghost does not dwell, or the Holy Ghost in someone in whom the Father and Son do not dwell?1

From this passage of Augustine, Cunningham summarizes the two following pertinent points, as follows:

The entire Trinity, and each member thereof really and substantially and personally dwells in man. . . .It is in no way proper to any one Person.2

Cunningham further summarizes the two following points from the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Magisterium:

The three divine persons really, personally and substantially dwell in man. . . .It is not exclusive to the Holy Ghost, but because of His personal property it is appropriated to him.3

The especially close proximity of these two summary statements of belief certainly seem to suggest the lasting influence of Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity in the modern Roman Catholic doctrine of the

1Cunningham, op. cit., p. 49.
2Ibid., p. 49-50.
3Ibid., p. 36.
indwelling presence of God. Nor is the Church likely ever to move outside of this Augustinian framework. Cunningham refers to a certain Jesuit Father who proposed in 1928 that perhaps the Holy Spirit did have a certain sanctifying power which was special to the Spirit alone, a doctrine which Cunningham refutes as unorthodox as well as inconsistent to Augustine, and can easily be reconciled as a case of simple appropriation. Thus the Church in this modern period is still careful to remain consistent with this basic theme on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as taught by Augustine and accepted in the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church even up to this present time.

2. Augustine's Influence Regarding the Doctrine of the Son

Another of the more direct influences arising out of Augustinian Trinitarianism is to be seen in Augustine's doctrine regarding the second person of the Trinity. Augustine's doctrine at this point has had a far-reaching influence in relation both to the incarnation and the atonement of Christ, and it is to these two aspects of Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity that we now turn.

(a) Incarnation of Christ.—The Church's doctrine of the incarnation was fairly well established at the Council of Nicea, so that by the time of Augustine, it remained primarily for him to interpret and clarify the concept and relate it to the doctrine of the Trinity, which was still largely in a state of development. Augustine's doctrine of the incarnation is directly related to his doctrine of the Trinity, especially regarding the teaching on Appropriations, as Augustine fur-
In any divine operation, it is argued, the whole Trinity is at work, and it is at work in such a way that we cannot say that one event belongs to the Father and another to the Son... all three are equally and indistinguishably involved in all events. If we say the Father does "this" while the Son does "that," we are not speaking literally and properly. The only fitting thing to say is that the Trinity does both this and that. God operates as one. ¹

Richardson points out that according to Augustine it follows hence that in the Lord's prayer, when we say "Our Father," our address is not to the Father alone, but to the Trinity. Similarly, in the incarnate Christ, all the three persons are involved,² as also in the baptism of Jesus,³ and also in the beginning of creation.⁴ Richardson comments that "any distinctions in these operations of God would imply a schism in the simple divine essence."⁵ Neve further suggests that in Augustine: "The Son is represented as taking part in His own sending and incarnation. The Persons of the Trinity are not different from one another; with respect to the entire divine substance they are identical with each other."⁶ To this subject Augustine does explicitly express himself: "Wherein the Son is understood as sent, which has been wrought by and the same operation of the Father and the Son indivisibly; the Holy Spirit certainly not being thence excluded."⁷

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¹ Augustine, op. cit., V, 11.12. ² Ibid., II, 5.9
⁶ Neve, History Christian Thought, I, 121.
⁷ Augustine, op. cit., I, 5.9.
Richardson further clarifies this concept of Augustine that to speak of the Father does this, and the Son does that is metaphorical. When Scripture speaks thus, it is symbolic, not literal. It is valid to make the distinctions, as Father is omnipotent, but actually this means the whole Trinity, not just one person. To say the Father does this or that is actually to appropriate the act to Him, "though it really belongs equally and indivisibly to the whole Trinity."¹ Thus in the incarnation the whole Trinity was actually involved, while only appropriated to the Son.

(b) Atonement of Christ.—It would be difficult indeed to designate any one theory of atonement as the official orthodox position of Christendom, for such various concepts have actually been held throughout the history of the Church as to make this readily impossible. However, Augustine certainly did add his contribution, which is to be seriously considered with any adequate theory of the atonement for the modern day.

Similarly as for the incarnation, so also for the atonement, according to Augustine the whole Trinity is involved, while yet appropriated to the Son. There have been some theories of atonement, as Calvin's penal satisfaction theory, which makes the atonement chiefly the work of Christ alone, who satisfied the divine justice of the Father by being the substitute offering for the rest of mankind. There have also been some moral influence theories which suggest the significance

¹Richardson, op. cit., p. 75-76.
of the atonement is mainly due to its power through the Holy Spirit alone to impress men and overcome their opposition to the Father's will by moral influence. However, there has been a third view, the ransom theory of atonement, which Bishop Gustaf Aulen reports was the prevailing opinion in the Greek Church from Irenaeus to John of Damascus, and also in the Latin Church through the time of Augustine. Even though this theory as popularly preached left much to be desired, yet it did have this merit in that it represented the work of Atonement as from first to last a work of God Himself, a continuous divine work of the whole Godhead as well as of each member of the Trinity.

It seems quite clear how Augustine's doctrine of appropriation to each member of the Trinity is in harmony with this ransom theory of the atonement, for Augustine's view does certainly preserve this concept of the entire Trinity, or God as a whole effecting the Atonement and not just Christ alone, to whom it is merely appropriated. Aülen holds the view that the place of God as participating in the atonement is vital, and thereby the ransom theory, along with Augustine's harmony with it, according to Aülen, is a theory of the atonement still to be reckoned with as one which embodies truth which must find place in any adequate doctrine of the Trinity. The particular merit of the ransom theory, along with Augustine's interpretation is especially seen in that


2 Ibid.
it preserved the unity of the Trinity, and reveals the work of atonement as much the operation of the Father as the Son, for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."¹

Augustine had a further influence as well on modern theology, especially regarding the doctrine of the Trinity as a whole in relation to the concept of personality. It is to this final problem of the Trinity to which we now turn.

¹II Corinthians 5.19.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

There are two major trends of Trinitarian thought in contemporary theology. On the one hand, there is the position held by Hodgson with its emphasis on the distinct personality of each member of the Trinity; whereas, on the other hand, there is the position held by Barth with its emphasis on the unity of God's personality expressed in three modes of being. The contrast here centers around Barth's and Hodgson's interpretation and application of the concept of personality to the being of God. Let us examine further the exact views of each, and thereby draw some conclusions in the light of Augustine's own doctrine of the Trinity as well as the rest of the patristic period.

Hodgson holds what Baillie speaks of as a social view of the Trinity\(^1\) in which he conceives of God not as one personality, but as three persons in some high type of personal and social unity. Hodgson would rather speak of God as a trinity in unity, than as a unity in threeness.\(^2\) Barth holds what Baillie speaks of as a psychological view of the Trinity\(^3\) in which Barth conceives of God not as three per-

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\(^1\)Baillie, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 139.  
\(^2\)Hodgson, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 89ff.  
\(^3\)Baillie, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 139.
sons but as one person in three modes of existence. Barth clearly maintains that "it is better to speak of three 'modes of being' in the Godhead than of three persons."¹

A. Hodgson's Emphasis on Personal Distinctions

Historically, Hodgson's view would apparently seem to have much support, for the Cappadocians, a bulwark of orthodoxy in the early Church, had similarly held a doctrine of emphasis upon the distinctions of the Trinity. However, there was one basic difference between the ancient orthodox Cappadocian view and that contemporary view held by Hodgson, namely that the Cappadocians never lost sight of the essential unity of God, a unity relative to the very being and essence of God. For the Cappadocians the distinctions were very real, but yet quite inseparable from the essential unity of the one divine being, God Himself. To the contrary Hodgson goes so far in his emphasis upon the distinctions as to say that the operations of each Person of the Trinity are "clearly distinguishable as separate activities of the same self."²

This is actually a very major and serious departure from the orthodox Cappadocian position of the distinct, but inseparable relation of each member of the Trinity, as likewise for Athanasius and Augustine as well.

A further departure of Hodgson from the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity is in regard to the concept of personality. As has been shown throughout, Augustine represents clearly the orthodox position of the Western Church, as well as being consistent with his Eastern predecessors.

¹Ibid., p. 134. ²Hodgson, op. cit., pp. 89ff.
sors regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. Now Augustine, while acknowledging the validity of the threefold distinctions within the Godhead yet understood that the concept of personality belonged to the one divine Being, God Himself. C. J. Webb, who was the forerunner of Hodgson, declares what Baillie calls the "surprising conclusion that it is historically quite unorthodox to speak of God as a Person, or even to speak of the personality of God."¹ This certainly is a surprising conclusion in the light of the fact that throughout the entire history of Christian thought, the concept of personality has been directly attributed to God, and this is so especially in the case of Augustine, as well as Athanasius. Aulen declares that from primitive Christianity onward, the concept of the one God was always personal.² Therefore, it would seem that Hodgson stands poles apart from Augustine as well as from the entire orthodox tradition of the Church on two very basic points of orthodox Trinitarian doctrine, namely the inseparability and the personality of the Trinity.

Let us notice how Hodgson is viewed in the writings of other contemporary theologians. Horton observes regarding Hodgson that "he comes perilously close to tritheism,"³ and even though Hodgson would resort to expressions of high type social unity, yet Knudson declares that this does in no way constitute nor explain metaphysical unity, for to understand an adequate concept of unity in the Trinity we must lay hold of

the idea of a sole self-conscious personal being.¹ Franks objects to Hodgson's assertion that we "experience" the three self-conscious personalities of the Godhead, on the basis that this is completely unfounded in the orthodox tradition of the Church, as follows:

John of Damascus, summing up Patristic thought, says that what we know first is the divine unity, not the hypostases. Augustine would agree.²

It would further seem that it is epistemologically impossible to experience the three hypostases at one and the same time, except as we know them in the essential unity of the personality of the one God.

Hodgson further states that "God is known to us in Christian experience as three self-conscious personalities, the unity of which we can only dimly imagine."³ Frank strongly rejects Hodgson's view:

It must be denied that Christian experience is an experience of three distinct Divine Personalities. It is an experience of the One God through Christ in the Spirit. Theology can analyse out of the experience the mediation of Christ and the power of the Spirit, but in the actual experience all is fused into communion with God.⁴

Franks deals a further devastating blow when he rejects Hodgson's view as irrational and incomprehensible,⁵ to which Baillie also adds regarding Hodgson's concept of the Trinity that "this appears to me to be an oversimplification of a mystery, or an over-rationalization of a paradox."⁶

¹Knudson, Doctrine of God, p. 405.
²Franks, op. cit., p. 196.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid.
⁶Baillie, op. cit., p. 114.
B. Barth's Emphasis on Personal Unity

Historically, Barth's view of the Trinity might seem at first glance to be far less acceptable, in comparison to Hodgson, for the emphasis of Barth upon the unity of the Godhead has all too often led to the monarchian heresies, especially the modalists, of whose terminology Barth freely avails himself. However, Barth escapes the pitfall of Sabellian modalism, for according to Baillie the "modes" of Sabellius referred to temporary modes of successive revelation, whereas the "modes of Existence" for Barth refer to the very eternal being or essence of God. Barth himself explicitly rejects Sabellianism on the basis that behind the three temporary modes of revelation or manifestation there must be a fourth essence, who is revealed in the modes.

Barth's view is actually very similar to that doctrine of the Trinity of St. Augustine, and indeed, Barth even acknowledges that he stands within the Augustinian tradition. Augustine had a very explicit doctrine of the manifestations of the hypostases of the Trinity. In fact Cunningham reports that a most significant and profound contribution of St. Augustine to the theological concepts of the Church regarding the Holy Trinity was in terms of his description of the mission of Christ and the procession of the Holy Spirit, as manifestations of the one whole God.

According to Augustine the mission of Christ to earth was as a

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1 Ibid., p. 136.  
2 Ibid., p. 134.  
3 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 56.
visible manifestation of a single person or hypostasis of the Trinity, even though the Father and Holy Spirit were invisibly present always with him. Also, regarding the Holy Spirit's procession and mission into the world, especially as an indwelling presence to the just, Augustine would name this as an invisible manifestation of a single person, even as Christ's mission was a visible mission and manifestation, and always the other two persons are present with the one manifestation in all things. Cunningham concludes: "For Augustine, therefore, a mission necessarily implies some sort of manifestation of a proceeding person."¹

This concept of the manifestations of the Trinity is a direct correlative of Augustine's other doctrine of appropriations; hence the manifestation is appropriated to one person of the Trinity, even though the other Persons are likewise ever present. In the light of this doctrine of manifestations for St. Augustine it would certainly seem that Barth's concept of three eternal modes or manifestations of the one personal God was in harmony. In fact, Baillie's evaluation of Barth's position might just as well have been written about Augustine, when he writes:

Plainly Barth does regard the doctrine of the Trinity as standing for real distinctions in God, and, moreover, for the kind of distinctions of which orthodox belief has always insisted: the three Persons are not three parts of God, and yet they are not mere attributes, or shifting aspects, relative to our apprehension, or arbitrarily selected from among others,

¹Ibid., p. 51.
but are of the eternal being of the God who has revealed Himself to us in Christ and dwell in us by the Holy Spirit.¹

However, not only is Barth in complete harmony with Augustine on every important point, but furthermore, on the basis of our entire investigation of the patristic period, from Augustine back to the Biblical era, the conclusion has been throughout in accordance with Barth, rather than Hodgson. On the basis of the foregoing, therefore, the final conclusion is inevitable that the concept of personality is properly applicable to the one Divine essence or Being, God Himself, who manifests Himself in three eternal manners or modes, namely as the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, in spite of these conclusions regarding the personality of God, yet there are problems which arise demanding further reflection. First of all, the conclusion that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit represent those three distinct modes of revelation whereby God has chosen in the past to reveal Himself to mankind, yet the possibility is suggested that perhaps a fourth mode of revelation may some day be chosen by God, at which time the distinctive Christian doctrine of the Trinity will be endangered. Whereas the probability is perhaps slight in this direction in the light that it has never yet been so done, yet the absolute possibility of a fourth mode seems hardly to be denied.

Furthermore, a question arises concerning the final standing of the human person, Jesus of Nazareth. As we have previously concluded,

¹Baillie, op. cit., p. 137.
the Godhead is one person, according to Barth, and there is no second
or third person as such of the Godhead. The person, Jesus of Nazareth,
therefore, was not a second person of the Trinity. Thus, the question
arises regarding just what place the human Jesus does hold in heaven.
The answer which is suggested according to Barth's view is that Jesus,
while not being a person of the Godhead, was yet fully a human person,
only possessing a dual nature, both divine and human. This is con-
sistent with the proclamation of the Ecumenical Councils of the early
Church that Jesus Christ, while having two natures, was yet only one
person. Furthermore, it was this human person who died on the cross,
was resurrected by the Father, and caused to ascend into heaven, not
as a second person of the Godhead, but rather similarly as Elijah
and Enoch of old, he stands in heaven as a great saint, even the greatest
of all the saints, even more so, our great High Priest, our Special
Mediator and Advocate who stands before the Father, the one and only
Person of the Godhead, even God Himself. This same opinion is ex-
pressed by Athanasius who speaks of Jesus as having a relationship to
the Father as an "angel of great counsel...the giver of blessing
and deliverer from evil."¹ Hence, the human person, Jesus of Nazareth,
resides in heaven, not as a second person of the Trinity, in the sense
of a distinct and separate Divine personality, but rather in the sense
of a human person, ascended in a glorified state to a place of highest
esteem, even to the right hand of the Father, revealing the Father to

¹Athanasius, op. cit., p. 400.
the world, "being the Brightness... of His Glory, and the express Image of His Person, the one and only Divine Person, the Father, God Himself."
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is primarily to investigate the concept of personality as it properly applies to the doctrine of the Trinity. On the one hand there are those who hold firmly to the view that the concept of personality is properly applicable to each of the three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three distinct Persons of the one Godhead. On the other hand, there are those who hold the position that the concept of personality is properly applicable only to the one God as a unitary divine Being, God Himself. Hodgson is an outstanding representative on the one side of this controversy who speaks of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as being individual persons, or as having selfhood, analogous to human personalities.¹ On the other hand there is the position taken by Barth that it is only proper to speak of God as one Personal Being, who has manifested or revealed Himself in three manners or modes as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.² Ultimately the problem involved is precisely whether the concept of personality, that is, a self-conscious, free self-directing person, is properly understood for each of the distinctions of the Trinity, namely the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or for only the unity of God as a singular


²Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), I.1, 403ff.
being or sole Person of the Godhead.

The scope of investigation centers primarily in the patristic period of the Early Church, not only due to the fact that both Hodgson and Barth claim to be orthodox in accordance with the teaching of the patristic period, but also it is assumed that the closer we get to the first promulgation of this doctrine in the early tradition of the Church the closer we will be to the fundamental core of kerygmatic truth as the doctrine was understood and meant to be taught in the New Testament period. Indeed our investigation begins with the Biblical background of the doctrine, where the concept of a personal God is readily apparent in both the Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament it was also found that even though the hypostases as the Divine Word, Divine Wisdom, and Divine Spirit were personified, yet they were actually understood as distinct hypostases of the nature of the one God, and as such they represented or manifested the personality of one God, and not any individuality of their own. It was precisely with the advent of Jesus Christ and the experience of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Church that the troubling of the waters of Jewish monotheism first became apparent. In the New Testament period Jesus Christ was primarily viewed as revealing the Father to the world. Jesus was not God alone, in and of Himself, but rather "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (II Cor. 5.19)."

In the Ante-Nicene period the full Trinitarian formula was not entirely and clearly formulated with systematic precision and yet the implications seem to follow in alignment with the foregoing Biblical
concept. The Apostolic Fathers and Apologists recognized the threefold distinctions of the Trinity, but yet emphasized more the unity, to which they clearly ascribed the attributes of personality. Origen, the foremost spokesman of this period, on the one hand emphasized the distinctions of the Trinity to the point of subordination, but yet on the other hand he likewise emphasized the unity of the Godhead. Origen clearly taught that the hypostases were distinctions, not as individual beings, for there was only one Divine Being, God Himself, but rather the hypostases were distinctions of essence within the very nature of the one Being. Since Origen understood the Trinity to be one in essence or being, hence this was one personal being or one Person, God Himself. And even if the concept of personality were attributed to a particular distinct hypostasis, yet according to Origen's definition of hypostasis as basically essence only particularly distinguished, even so personality is thereby ascribed to the one essence itself, which is God. Thus whether personality is applied to the one being or to a particular hypostasis of the being, yet in both cases it is applied to the essence of the being which is God Himself, for according to Origen, there is only one divine essence or being which is none other than God Himself.

In the Nicene Period, Athanasius denounced all forms of subordinationism and proclaimed the full equality and deity of the Son with the Father, thereby while recognizing their distinction, yet emphasizing more their unity. In keeping with the foregoing tradition, he attributed the concept of personality to the one Divine Personal Being, God Himself, both as a unity of essence and also as a unity of activity,
the Son and Spirit being agents of the one Divine Person, God Himself. Furthermore, that Athanasius did not ascribe personality to each of the distinctions of the Trinity is established by the definition of his homoousian concept of the Son having the same nature as the Father, as well as testified to by his concept of Jesus Christ, not as an intermediary being, but rather as a mediator of the one divine being, whom the Son Jesus Christ reveals to the world as the one Person, God Himself. Even the Cappadocians renowned for their emphasis on the distinctions of the Trinity, yet conceived of these hypostases not as distinct individuals or distinct beings, but rather as distinctions within a common essence, and it was to this unity of essence or being that they ascribed the concept of personality.

In the post-Nicene period, Augustine stands as the great spokesman culminating the Trinitarian tradition of the past and setting the pattern for their future. The primary emphasis of Augustine is on the unity of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one in all and all in one. For Augustine, the Son is the Wisdom of God, and not at all in any sense an individual being. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is the communion of fellowship between the Father and Son, and the Spirit of love of the Father to His creation, and as such not in any sense an individual being. Hence the Son and Spirit, as the Wisdom and Love of the Father, are primarily viewed by Augustine as modes of revelation of the one and only Divine Being, God Himself, to whom he does clearly attribute the concept of personality. Therefore, on the basis of the teachings primarily of Origen, Athanasius, and Augustine, it is con-
cluded on the one hand that Hodgson's view of three individual personal beings of the Trinity has virtually no support in the patristic period, but rather on the other hand, Barth's concept of One Person in three modes of revelation is perhaps as clear an expression of the actual teaching of the New Testament and patristic period as can be found in modern orthodox theology.