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ONE IN HYPOSTASIS

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

The main contribution of the OT to the doctrine is to emphasize the unity of God. God is not Himself a plurality, nor is He one among many others. He is single and unique: "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Duet. 6:4), and He demands the exclusion of all pretended rivals (Deut. 5:7).

Yet even in the OT we have clear intimations of the Trinity. The frequent mention of the Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2) may be noted, as also, perhaps, the angel of the Lord in Exodus 23:23. Again, the plural in Genesis 1:26 and 11:7 is to be noted, as also the plural form of the divine name and the nature of the divine appearance to Abraham in Genesis 18. (See appendix A)

The importance of the term Trinity (Psalm 33:6), and especially the wisdom, of God (Proverbs 8:12) is a further pointer, and in a mysterious verse like Isaiah 48:16.

In the New Testament there is no explicit and brief statement of the doctrine of the Trinity but the evidence is overwhelming. God is still preached as the one God (Galatians 3:20). Yet Jesus proclaims His own deity (John 8:58) and evokes and accepts the faith and worship of His disciples (Matthew 16:16; John 20:28). As the Son or Logos, He can thus be equated with God (John 1:1) and associated with the Father, that is, in the Pauline salutations (I Corinthians 1:3). But the Spirit or Comforter is also brought into the same interrelationship (John 14-16).

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

In the fully developed doctrine of the Trinity, insisting that there is only One essence or substance of God safeguards the unity of God. Yet the deity of Jesus Christ is fully asserted against those who would think of him as merely adapted to divine Sonship, or preexistent, but in the last resort created. The individuality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is also preserved against the notion that these are only modes of God for

the various purposes of dealing with man in creation or salvation. GOD IS ONE, yet in Himself and from all eternity He is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the triune God.

Rationalist objections to the Trinity break down on the fact that they insist on interpreting the Creator in terms of the creature, i.e., the unity of God in terms of mathematical unity. More scientifically, the Christian learns to know God from God Himself as He has acted for us and attested His action in Holy Scripture. He is not surprised if an element of mystery remains which defies ultimate analysis or understanding, for He is only man and God is God. But in the divine work as recorded in the Bible the one God is self-revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and therefore in true faith he must "acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity."