

1918 *Handwritten note at top of page*

The Jewish and the Christian Trinity

When we look back at Jews and Christians, at the church and Israel, nothing stands between them as firmly and stubbornly as the doctrine of the trinity. The Christians have a dogma which the Jew likes to ridicule, the dogma of the triune God. Don't laugh, but don't revile the Jew either as merely callous, but try to comprehend that the Jewish doctrine of the trinity and the Christian doctrine of the trinity exclude each other. ~~HOWEVER~~ however, The Jews, believe in a trinity as well. and must do so as long as they are capable of being Jews. I believe the difficulty which the triune appellation of God provides for the Jew will be resolved and attenuated as soon as he looks about himself, and admits that, he too, in his heart recognizes a parallel ^{Three} image, a doctrine of the triple birth of the truth.

For Christians the trinity provides security against ^{The} idolatry of ^a man, against Hitlerism, against Neroism, against the cult of imperialism, against dictatorships. Why? In the dogma of the trinity the second Adam is called like unto God. This defeats the similarity to God of worldly emperors. When Constantine, the Roman emperor, the victor of the battle of the Milvian Bridge, recognized over himself ^{cross as he} the sign by which he would conquer, ~~it was no longer the emperor's own name, his personal divinity. He~~ ^{he} recognized that he was winning this victory ~~in~~ ^{truer} overshadowed by a higher divine humanity, ^{the} likeness unto God. ~~the~~ ^{of the} ~~thus~~ ^{suffering servant (Isaiah 53)} Thus from the time of Constantine for the entire ensuing century the Christian church ^{had to wrestle} ~~was~~ ^{with} the trinity. It was an imposing battle.

dogma of the

Repeatedly St. Athanasius of Alexandria went into exile for the sake of the one word homo-ousious i.e. of the same nature, equal, with which the second article of the Nicene creed has equated "the son to the father". As far as I could ascertain it has never been stated in the history of the dogma that only in this way a reconciliation between the emperors and the church could occur without corrupting Christianity.

The mausoleo did not offend ~~over~~ mortality,
Christ, had to appear clearly and distinctly, not merely similar but equal to ^{our} the creator - he had to appear as the creator of the entire human spirit. *Record over vitality and mortality!*
For our spirit is born from our mortality!
Only then could the church dare to recognize the world-ly emperors as Christians in its rank. For the ^{Roman} emperors had been gods. *After has been in our times so as* Alexander the Great, ~~the great kings of Persia,~~ and of course the pharaohs of Egypt were all deified. They were the gods bringing heaven onto earth, imparting heavenly wisdom and heavenly gifts to all and sundry. Constantine had to administer the heritage both ~~the~~ ~~king~~ ~~of~~ Cleopatra and ~~that~~ of Alexander the Great. All his predecessors had been deified. How could the one God-man who had suffered on the cross be elevated above these many god-emperors? Merely by - in the triple, or triune creed of God - outbidding the resemblance to God of these emperors. Thus to a Christian ^a no sovereign, ^a no ruler, or dictator who strives to live a godly life on earth may ⁱⁿ never deem himself more eminent than he who was crucified.

The peoples, in their fear and in their wish to do homage, cast themselves into the dust before the filth of earthly beings before his "illustrious majesty", Thus the ministers of the German emperor

Wilhelm II were wont to do when they wrote to the emperor, signing themselves literally as "perishing with awe" - the flowery phrase quite superfluously introduced into Prussian Germany in the 1890's. This "perishing with awe" before a terrestrial despot always recurs whether he be called Stalin or Wilhelm II. Therefore it became necessary for the People of God, the New Israel which took its place among the peoples and which was sent "among all peoples", as stated in the Gospel according to Luke and Matthew - to slide home a bolt against the temptation to declare any given ruler similar to God or more similar to him than the suffering ~~xxx~~ ^{Son} of man. Thus for the Christian the entire freedom of the church and ~~the~~ his entire humanity is contained in this equation of God and man. If God has not become man ^{the} ~~in the~~ Cross, the future has ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~in the~~ ^{superseded} all vested interests; we are all marching ~~through~~ fog, at the mercy of every tyrant, of every freak of fashion, of every radio address, of every idiocy, of every malady of the intellect. The fear of death would ~~cease~~ ^{slave us}. The doctrine of the trinity is still more comprehensive, however. It also ~~contains~~ ^{articulates} the third article of faith, in the Holy Spirit the "fertility" of the son of man". Here the fertility of man who reveals God in his suffering not in his might, and ^{who} from his followers creates a ^{new} people, is ~~described~~ ^{proclaimed}. In his frailty he better represents the power of God, the creator, than do all the sovereigns and all the Cadillac and Mercedes owners with their infinite horse power totals taken together. God becoming man ^{and woman in one} has born a new people, the church. The fertility of the son ~~is~~ revealed in the Holy Ghost, and whole peoples ^{in Ehrfurcht ersterben."}

can pretend to have

rather say - we can describe or ~~experience~~ his creative power, his vitality, his directness, his inevitableness, his working and ^{infecundity} fertility.

For me, therefore, from my youth onward, the trinity has been the most ~~normal~~ ^{obvious} way of grasping the divine working as a form of breathing.

"Inhale," "hold your breath," "exhale" it could be paraphrased. In anything that happens there is a beginning, a middle and an end. Thus ~~the~~ the trinity attempts to describe God's engaging in a fullness of life uncomprehensible to our poor human ~~power~~ of reasoning only. God is no geometric concept, for he is the one who makes us speak. God intervenes, and speaking takes time. The master thinkers, the Greeks, and those who have learnt to think from the Greeks and like the Greeks, our academicians, deny ~~that~~ speaking takes time. Thus they cannot grasp the humility of the trinitarian doctrine. In two volumes, the "Sprache des Menschengeschlechts" (^{the} Speech of the Human Race, 1963-65) I have championed the temporal character of the names of our gods. ~~And the~~ ^{and the} Old Israel should not have ~~been~~ ^{known} this also? It has. However, the Old Israel ~~has~~ ^{has} established a ~~second~~ ^{first} ~~fruition~~ ^{fruition}. The Jews say: One God alone, ^{is Israel's first command. And they should use} Your trinity is defection, is paganism. But also the Jews come ~~after~~ ^{among} the pagan peoples. In the midst of history Abraham appears, looks about, sees the many peoples, and the confusion of peoples, and comes to believe that out of all these peoples one single one will arise. He believes that he himself will have to at least ~~plant~~ ^{plant} the seed thereof. He comes in the midst of time; God has already created the peoples and permitted them to proceed into a state of con-

Only thing.

fusion. Now Abraham appears and after him, even into the final epochs of history, his effect is to continue. In this there is trinity also. There, too, is a beforehand, a middle and an end in which God reveals himself in different ways. Only the ^{el} ratio of individual to ^{pe}ple is inverse. ~~The Jewish people and the individual Jew are in inverse ratio to the Christian and the Holy Ghost. In every Christian the cross must be newly implanted, newly accepted, and suffered anew personally. Then he can found a people, a community, can undertake to convert. Thus the missionaries, thus the apostles went to the ends of the earth, im-~~ ^{the} ~~bing and inspiring one people after~~ other with the Holy Spirit. Thus did the religious orders spring from the spiritual loins of these brothers of Abraham, God's people, such as the Benedictines, Franciscans, Redemptorists, but also ^{as} (Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Lutherans and many, many more. For the Jew it is the reverse: the individual Jew is born into Israel, into ~~the~~ the People of God. That people already exists, and the Jew hence does not have to occupy himself further with the origin of this Jewish people which on Mount Sinai received the revelation and the indication of its proper course. Thus ~~to~~ ^{the individual Jew} God appears as one only. But for the other peoples which look at Jewry the Jew seems only a member of his people. The individual Jew? - is simply also a Jew. So are they all, it is said; all Jews are cast into the same basket without exception. Why? Because in the Old Alliance the second person of the Divine Revelation came about in the form of "the people." Not an individual was summoned, not an in-

dividual suffered, but the Jews suffer and they are still suffering today; the Jews were cursed, and they are still being cursed today; the Jews suffered pogroms and are harassed and hounded from one country to the next, and their temple is destroyed and they are scoffed at. "The" Jews. The individuals - Hitler carried that out at absurdum - even without distinction of ^{These} personal religious faith, ^{racially} ~~was~~ as ~~of~~ Jews massacred, gassed, murdered, tortured, tormented, jeered at.

Is ^{it} that no trinity? Is not also God there first who created the world, and ~~Adam and Eve~~, who then engages himself in the history of peoples and summons ~~anyone~~ ^{one} who believes in him, and ^{believes} him that eternity will now be upon his side, that he will have endless time. And with this act in the history of ^a creation that had already been created by God, there comes into force, also for the Old Alliance, an actual trinity; for the individual Jew now knows as a Jew that God is his Father, and the others, - the goyim, the Gentiles, the "peoples" - , they know nothing of that. Israel does not recognize at all that among the "others" that same road - God, people, individual - can be trodden; that ~~road~~ ^{road} is reserved for the Jews. The others? - they are addressed individually that they must behave well; but they do not share his previous history, they do not share his being called ^{out} ~~(common)~~ they do not share his salvation. I believe, therefore, that there are two trinities involved - for the Jews the sequence is: God, ^{the people of} (Israel, one ^a Israelite; for the Christians the sequence is: God, (Soul, People.

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"others" that same road - God, people, individual - can be trodden; that ~~road~~ ^{may be} is reserved for the Jews. The others? - they ^{are} addressed individually that they must behave well; but they do not share his previous history, they do not share his being called ^{out} ~~summoned~~, they

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^{the single} ~~De. Actus.~~ God, the single soul, a new people,

When ~~pious~~ ^{Prosper} Arnobius in the ^{4th} fourth century wrote his ~~treatise~~ ^{commentary} on ~~the "Vocation of the Peoples"~~ ^{on the Psalms}, he used the ~~139th~~ ^{143rd} Psalm in order to say that, as King David, every Christian who assigned himself a new ^{and} task was embarking upon a task commanded by God, that this Christian was founding a new people. Thus there is, in a very beautiful manner, interpreted in a trinitarian sense this verse from the ¹⁴³ 139th psalm: "My Protector, in you I have placed my hope; ~~you~~ ^{you} subdue my people for me." ~~Arnobius~~ says: "this is valid for every spiritual leader, it is valid also for every spiritual founder." I was very moved to find that this bishop from the era of the great migrations of the Germanic tribes in his doctrine ~~of the annihilation of peoples~~ ^{vision} had been brought to the point of applying the ~~idea~~ ^{idea} of the trinity to

Jews and Christians alike without discriminating between their faith. ^{Prosper} ~~Arnobius~~ saw both testaments as one! He transferred from the Old Testament this trinitarian doctrine of

David and his people to all spiritual "generals", as he called them ^{field marshals of God's Spirit ("bellatores spirituales")}. I believe it is time now for the ~~translation into~~ ^{translation} Greek, i.e. ~~the~~ ^{the}

^{use of} ~~the~~ philosophizing ^{of} Judaism and ^{by} Christianity to ~~subside~~ ^{cease}. Philosophy ~~has~~ kept the past millenium from getting anywhere with the trinity.

^I have never understood how one could be a Christian without taking the trinity in dead earnest in this tremendous spiritual struggle of the centuries. Now I have understood, however, that it is probably only possible to get ahead and to retrace our steps into the genuine tradition of our faith from the beginning of the world, if we bring the Jewish and the Christian trinity ^{off} into harmony, and if we dis-

cern that also to David was given his people, and to Abraham was given his people, and to Moses was given his people by the Spirit of God. Every individual Jew, therefore, when he looks at these, his founders, will have to acquire an understanding for the necessity of defending the People of God among the peoples, ^{the Gentiles} with the doctrine of the trinity. Nothing else ^{will} ~~works~~ in opposing the primordial dream of the peoples which makes ^{every one of} them say: we have always been with God, and hence we need not perceive any other voice. This dream must be opposed by saying that in the bright light of history ^{and is continuing} God has ^{US} continued to create ^{over} and beyond the old peoples and their dispersion.

The Old and New Testaments agree that God ever continues to create.

The humans, which he finds existing mostly believe to have been created much earlier than in their own time. They limp along behind God's new acts of creation; they are pre-Jewish, pre-Christian. It can be said of the Nazis that they tried very hard to live in an age three thousand years before Christ, hence before Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt. ^{Hitler was a pre-Homeric poacher} Today many would like to march back to Egypt just as if the entire revelation had never taken place. The trinity is ^a call that God in the midst of history is creating amazingly anew, is creating a new people in addition to the old dreaming peoples who claim to have been on this earth from time immemorial.

I shall make this clear by telling ^{the clash of two Eras} a story. When Paul ~~turned~~ turned around before Damascus, gripped by the new truth which he had fought against previously, this happened in such a way that in the language of the

as Christ gathered the Jews, Israel, etc

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Biblically the scion of David calls out to him: "Saul, my Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He recognizes suddenly that he is playing the part of ~~Saul~~ King Saul in the Old Testament, and that Jesus ~~is~~ the David who as in the Bible, in the Old Testament, asks his king: Why do you persecute me? You have to admit that I am ahead of you in the spirit of peace and in the spirit of piety!" And the moment Saul of Tarsus recognizes himself as King Saul of the Old Alliance he suddenly comes to see God does not simply do one thing after another. ~~That~~ person, Jesus of Nazareth, who died yesterday, whose followers he had persecuted until now, is as yet to come and therefore far ahead of him, of Saul of Tarsus ~~living~~ on that day.

Only here the doctrine of the trinity regains its full power. When we see that thanks to this doctrine the relationship of ^{the} (time) between God and man ^{maybe} is reversed. What for us follows, comes later - the younger human being, the new born generation, the vintage ^{of} beatniks, or the semi-strong" (die Halbstarcken), as the Germans call them - , all this can be quite outmoded and quite old in relation to God's time in history; "later" does not mean "better", nor means "previously" "worse" Neither does "previously" mean "better", but God's engagement in time poses to you and to me the question - and that holds for both, Jews and Christians - : Is only he who was created after me superior to me, or ~~is it~~ ~~xxx~~ he whom God already created before me and already let suffer ~~and let live?~~ *who really is alive?*

The reconciliation of the trinitarian dispute between Jews and Christians *is* *one* *observation*, to my Dutch friend Bastiaan Leenman.

stians seems to depend on this: both sides must see that through God's
 intervention something that did long since occur is revealed to be
 still awaiting us in the future. Thus time takes on a different quali-
 ty than it had before, when it consisted merely of yesterday, today
 and tomorrow. Such a naive clock division has nothing to do with the
 actual "today" of ^{our} God. ~~There~~ ^{in Him} the most splendid event has already
 happened, and is awaiting fulfillment by us. The revelation on Mount
 Sinai proclaiming one single God for all peoples, forbidding to trans-
 fer his name on the delusions, on the idolatry of an individual myth
 of a people or of an empire is stated in the Old Testament for all
 times ~~and~~ - and the Jew believes fervently that some day all peoples
 will accept this. In Christ there has already appeared the revelation
 of how this faith in the living God must be ^{incarnated} ~~lived~~ and suffered unto the
 last. In him is revealed how, in the attitude of suffering, ~~it is~~
^{we may become} ~~it is~~ ^{may} ~~it is~~ (so fertile that a new people ~~will~~ originate therefrom,
~~through his fall~~ ^{how thus} ~~death is~~ ^{may} ~~turned into~~
~~life~~ ^{from being} ~~life,~~ ^{from} ~~the boundary,~~ ^{the end,} ~~leading to the grave~~ ^{next}
~~is~~ ^{to being} the bearer of the ^{(fruit,} ~~the~~ ⁾ seed. All this is
 associated with the reversal of the time concept which Jews and Chri-
 stians share. The ten commandments - as every Jew believes - await re-
 cognition by the pious heathen today as at that time. No different the
 trinity signifies that the salvation which has long since appeared has
 not yet been recognized as our future by us who live much later. This
 remarkable inversion of the time relationship, as I have illustrated it

by the story of Saul and Jesus before Damascus may be an opening, a gate through which the reconciliation between the doctrine of the trinity and the old doctrine of the only God of the Old Testament ~~may~~ start.

When Jesus was baptized, the evangelist tells us, a dove hovered over Jesus. This dove symbolizes the Holy Ghost. ^(ever since) Very few people seem to know today that up ~~to~~ to the baptism of Jesus the dove ~~was~~ had been the symbol of the Old Israel. Every Jew at the time of Herode knew this, however. The dove hovering over Jesus tells us therefore also that in Jesus the whole of Israel is now incarnated, The evangelist's change of symbol clearly indicated the advent of a new day of history. If Israel can be symbolized by the dove, just as the third person of the trinity the Holy Ghost, is symbolized by the dove, then also Israel has a trinitarian faith. As a people, in the symbol of the dove, it represents the Holy Spirit of God and imparts it to its individual corporate members, to every Israelite.

If our gospel commentaries and our elucidations of the Old Testament were ~~more~~ ^{more} symbol minded they would have long since grasped the unity implied by Israel being symbolized as a dove, and the Holy Ghost being symbolized as a dove as well. Surprisingly, I have found this expressed only in the invaluable commentary on the Book of Genesis by Benno Jacob published in 1934. This very remarkable work deserves much wider acclaim. In this work the unity ~~of the unity~~ of the Old

Testament is wonderfully presented. What I have now attempted, complementing Benno Jacobs's teaching, is to put before you the unity of the Old and the New Alliance in the ^{experience} ~~experience~~ God as a ~~trinity~~ ^{of the} trinity. Elsewhere, I have shown that "three" is the largest extension of oneness that our mind is able to fathom, whereas "four" is the smallest expanse of manifoldness. But this, anybody interested in the working of the mind may look up for himself. 1)

But the Jew who says that all the Jews of all times have been present at Sinai, solves his trinitarian difficulty with the same hyperbolic salto as the Cherubinis Wandergemann Angelus Silesius formulated the Christians: "If Jesus was born a hundred times and was not born for you, yet would you be lost."

But what a story it is in retrospect! Before the Exodus of Moses the Egyptians worshipped the falcon, this falcon God Horus who swept all Egypt before him, on his passage from the first cataract of the Nile down to the Delta. Horus the falcon and Pharaoh the King of the Great House of Horus were one and the same, the creator God of Egypt. In the Mosaic protest the Old Testament translated the annual Horus journey into the one time Noah event. It replaced the annual flood of the Nile by the once for all times flood of Noah. And in describing pointedly this replacement, the divine falcon of Egypt became the Raven of the Noah story. The narrator of Genesis must have had a wonderful time

1) Die Übermacht der Räume (= Soziologie I, 1956) deals explicitly with these facts.