CHAPTER II
THE CONCEPT OF ULTIMATE REALITY IN THE NT

The official formulation of the Christian faith accepted by practically all the Christian denominations begins with the following statement: "I believe in One God, the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible." This formula goes back to the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea held in 325 A.D. The present chapter is concerned about the NT basis of this profession of one and only God who is the maker of everything. To make our treatment parallel to the one made on the BG, the term God will be substituted by 'Ultimate Reality' (UR).

Though this treatment is on the NT concept of the UR, it must be noticed that, because of the intimate connection between the OT and NT it would be wrong to deal with this subject independently of the former. However, the following remark of Jacques Guillet cannot be overlooked: "One must first reject the heretical opposition between the vindictive God of the OT and the God of love of the NT. One must then likewise hold fast that only Jesus unlocks the secret of the one God of the two Testaments." In other words, with regard to the connection between the contents of the two testaments, both continuity and discontinuity have to be stressed.

In the NT there is no ex professo treatment about the nature of God though from the various statements and narrations of events we can arrive at some conclusions about it. The treatment of the UR both in the Old as well as New Testaments is limited to its consideration only in so far as it is involved in human affairs, especially in man's UL."
The Bible is not a treatise on God; it does not withdraw and stand apart as if to describe an object; it does not invite us to speak of God. Rather the Bible calls us to hear Him and to answer Him by acknowledging His glory and serving Him.4

Another remark to be made is concerning the use of the word Ultimate Reality (UR) for God. This concept with its philosophical connotation does not occur at all in the NT. Nor is the word 'God' adequately translated in UR. In fact, the word 'theos' in Greek, standing for God, represents not the UR in all its intention and comprehension but rather God the Father, as scholars like Karl Rahner point out.5 The UR of the NT cannot be accurately expressed either by 'Yahweh' of the OT nor by the 'Theos' of the NT but by the Triune (one-three) God or Trinity. Since the concept 'God' is used in English to signify the UR, the same use will be continued here.

In the first part of this chapter a brief study will be made on the Biblical use of the terms to designate the UR and then the OT background of the NT concept of the UR. In the second part how the UR is the total cause of everything will be shown. The third part is meant to point out the trinitarian nature of the UR on which depends the Christian doctrine of incarnation.

A: THE OT BASIS OF THE NT CONCEPT OF THE UR

1. Some Conceptual Clarifications

Since the NT accepts without questioning most of the attributes of the OT God it is important for this chapter to have a clear understand-
The common Hebrew words for the Divine Being are El, Elohim and Eloah. 'El' with minor variations is the common word for the deity in the Semitic languages, as 'Ilâ' in Akkadian and 'Ilah' in Arabic. About the relation between the concepts 'El' and 'Elohim' and their particular meanings XLD writes:

In practice, El is the archaic and poetical equivalent of Elohim. Like Elohim and our word God, El is simultaneously a common name designating the divinity in general and a proper name designating the individual and definite person who is God. Elohim is a plural; not a plural of majesty. Hebrew was unaware of that - nor further polytheistic survival, unlikely in the Israelite mentality on this particular point. But the idea is probably a trace of a common Semitic conception that perceived the divinity as a plurality of forces.6

The name most commonly used in the OT is Yahweh. This is the exclusive name of the God of Israel, the God of the OT. According to the OT, this name was revealed by God himself to Moses (Ex. 3:14). God tells Moses his name as "I am who I am." When referred to God in the third person it means "He who is", i.e. Yahweh. By some authors this name is considered only as the first word of a longer designation for God, viz. Yahweh aser-yilew (He brings into being whatever comes into being).7 XLD gives the following explanation to this concept:

The verb tobo, to which certainly the name of Yahweh alludes, if it does not immediately express the metaphysical concept of absolute existence, designates an existence always present and efficacious, a being present rather than a being. But this pre-
sence embraces the universe from its first to its last day, unifying past, present, and future: 'He who, since the beginning, calls forth the generations, I, Yahweh, the first, with the last will be the same.' Is. (41:4)

In the official Greek version of the OT known as Septuagint, Yahweh is translated as 'Theos'. The common word used in the Greek original of the NT for God is this one. Mittel is right when he said that the "Theos is the normal word for God and is one of the commonest terms in the NT." In the Hellenistic world, however, this word was used in the polytheistic sense. Zeus, Apollo, Athena, Eros and so on were called 'theos'. The etymology of this word is not certain.

2. Yahweh as the One and Only God

The Judeo-Christian faith in one and only God has its basis in the OT. There are however, some evidences to show that the OT religion was not Monotheistic at its beginning but rather Henotheistic. That is to say, the Israelites believed that Yahweh their God is the one and only God worthy of obedience and worship without however, denying the existence of other gods for other peoples. The Patriarchs (Abraham, Issac, Jacob, Joseph) do not seem to have been strict monotheists. In Gen. 14 Abraham is represented as present at the worship of a Canaanite deity. Jacob lived for seven years in the household of Laban (Gen 29) from where his wife Rachel stole some household gods giving us a clue to Jacob's religion. Joseph was very much Egyptionized accepting the Egyptian religious habits and customs (Gen. 37-50).
Moses was the greatest of Law-givers of Israel. Yahweh gives the ten commandments to Israel through him. The first commandment is "I am Yahweh your God... You shall have no gods except me" (Ex. 20:1-2). This commandment does not necessarily imply theoretical monotheism. In Dt. 6:4 too there is an affirmation of Yahweh as the one God to whom wholehearted love and loyalty are due. But in the same chapter verses 14 onwards seem to accept the existence of other less powerful 'gods'.

In the NT (Mt. 12:29-30) Jesus seems to interpret this passage monothetically. Referring to the first commandment McKenzie says: "Other gods are totally rejected as simply irrelevant for Israel; they are not recognised as possessing any power or as active in any way, and Yahweh is not engaged in a combat with them." 11 Referring to the abolition of images and image-worship as an extension of the first commandment the same author says: "The prohibition of images is most easily explained as an expression of the Israelite belief in the unique character of the reality of Yahweh; He was like nothing in the heavens or the earth, but He was also like no other god." 12 From these considerations what is most obvious is that the Mosaic religion in the OT was monotheistic for all practical purposes with the strong insistence on monolatry.

In the ninth century Elijah demonstrates the powerlessness of Baal the Canaanite deity in contrast to the omnipotence of Yahweh (1 K. 18). But a more explicit expression of Monotheism is found in Deutero-Isaiah (Is. 40-55). With reference to the affirmation of monotheism in Deutero Isaiah R. Butterworth points out: "The most striking element which emerged in Second Isaiah's faith in God was one which could only emerge in Israel's encounter with foreign gods: there was in fact no God other
than Israel's own God. Israel's God alone exists and has the power to act.\textsuperscript{13} The following is a very striking text:

Assemble, come, gather together, survivors of the nations. They are ignorant, those who carry about their idol of wood, those who pray to a god that cannot save. Speak up, present your case, consult with each other. Who foretold and revealed it in the past? Am I not Yahweh? There is no other god besides me, a God of integrity and a saviour; there is none apart from me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God unrivalled (Is. 45: 20-23).

In this text, as McKenzie points out "the gods of the nations are said to be nothing, nonexistent.\textsuperscript{14} This is monotheism in so far as to Yahweh all power and causality for the origin of the world is attributed, and the other gods of other peoples are said to be false, powerless and meaningless. But is it not a tribalistic concept of God? True, one and only God is affirmed; but by the denial of any reality to other gods, Israelite Monotheism proves itself somewhat tribalistic in spite of its universalistic attitudes. On the other hand the following Vedic Statements\textsuperscript{15} seem to be more profoundly Monotheistic with no trace of tribalism:

"To what is One sages give many a title"(Rg. 1:164:46)

"Only one in nature but wise singers with songs shape in many forms"

(Rg. 10: 114:5)

From these statements however we cannot conclusively affirm that the Vedic religion was purely Monotheistic. It must be remarked in conclusion that in trying to trace monotheism in ancient scriptures like the
Arveda or the OT we are to a great extent superimposing a modern problematique on the ancient writings. These scriptures are not philosophical treatises with clear-cut and precise definitions.

The NT accepts fully the idea of one and only God. The NT interprets the first commandment Monotheistically (Mk. 12:29). The statement "No one is good but God alone" (Mk. 10:18) seems to take for granted Monotheism. A solemn affirmation of this doctrine is found in the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians. He says: "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all" (4:6). Though this statement has a Trinitarian connotation, as the God of the NT is a trinitarian God, this could be taken as a Monotheistic profession of faith. There is another explicit statement in St. Paul. He writes: "Is God the God of Jews alone and not of the pagans too? Of the pagans too, most certainly, since there is only one God and he is the one who will justify the circumcised because of their faith and justify the uncircumcised through their faith." (Rom. 3:29-30).

There are numerous other texts which explicitly or implicitly speak of the oneness of God. But what is to be noted is that in the NT this is not a serious issue and could be taken for granted. However, the NT God is not a monolithic one-God but a Triune God. It is rather the final revelation of Godhead in the Biblical religion beginning with polytheism, passing through Monotheism and tribalistic Monotheism to Trinity where the fundamental philosophical question of the One and Many seems to find an answer.
5. Creator of Heaven and Earth

The God in whom the Biblical religion believes is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. 'Heaven and Earth' is an expression to indicate totality. And so, by the expression 'creator of heaven and earth' implies the creator of everything, both the visible and the invisible as the next phrase shows. And the word 'creation' used in the Creedal formula has a more specialized meaning that the original Hebrew word bara to express the creative activity of God. When the question of the total causality of the Biblical God is dealt with, the special meaning of creation too will be considered. Here our concern is to look into the OT texts which affirm that Yahweh is the creator of everything.

Genesis, the first book of the OT, opens up with two parallel narrations of creation of the cosmos in the first two chapters. The account in the first chapter considered to belong to later tradition, known as the Priestly tradition, than the account in 2:4-25. The earlier account is primarily concerned with the creation of the first human couple while the other describes God's creation of various things in six days. Today hardly any Biblical scholar doubts the influence of the Mesopotamian myths of creation, especially that of the epic known as Enuma Elish. The second account is conjectures to have been written as late as the fifth century B.C. The life of the Israelites in Babylon as captives must have influenced this creation account as these accounts have great similarity with the Babylonian myths.

The second account which is earlier than the first is centred on the creation of man. The author of this narration betrays his rural
background. Yahweh works like a potter when he forms man from the
dust of the ground and like a farmer when he plants his garden in
Eden. Unlike plants, birds and beasts man receives life directly from
the life of God (Gen. 2:7). The account in the first chapter is more
systematized. "Eight 'works' of creation are spread over six 'days'
of creation. The first four 'works' in the first three 'days', form a
group in which God separates the main parts of the universe from one
another. The second four 'works' in the second three 'days' form another
group in which God furnishes the universe he has prepared." On the
seventh day, according to this narration God rests (2:2). In this account
man is said to have been created in God's own "image" (1:27) and in the
earlier one man is said to share God's own life-breath (2:7). In both
of the accounts man's supremacy over other created things is clear.

Though this account must have been influenced by the Mesopotamian
myths the differences between these two traditions of myths show the
different concepts of God and his creative activity. Both the traditions
hold the existence of an initial chaos, toho boho in the Bible and a
personified chaos with the male (Apsu) and female (Tiamat) principles.
Marduk, the original offspring kills Tiamat and out of the dead body
creates everything. But in the Biblical myth God creates everything by
his very word without using any third material independent of him. "God
said, 'Let there be light', and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). The hea-
venly bodies are just God's creations to help man to ascertain time
whereas in the Mesopotamian myth they are the abodes of gods with direct
influence on human affairs. The Biblical author affirms the initial
goodness of everything that has been created whereas there is dualism between the good and evil principles in the Mesopotamian myth.20

The Genesis account is the most graphic and picturesque narration of creation in the Bible. But Israel believed in a creator-God from much earlier times. The very name, Yahweh (He who is), as has been explained above, implies his creative causality. Psalm 104, is a poetic and devotional expression of Yahweh's overlordship of the world as creator. This psalm must have a very ancient origin as many of the verses of which are parallel to those of the Hymn to Aton, an ancient Hymn to the Egyptian Sun-god.31 Psalms 8 and 10 too glorify God the Creator. Among the prophets, Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah could be specially mentioned, as teacher of this doctrine. From both a passage each could be cited as samples.

Yahweh gives the following message to Jeremiah for the warring kings: Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this: 'You must tell your masters this: I, by my great power and outstretched arm, made the earth, man, and the animals that are on earth. And I can give it to whom I please. For the present, I have handed all those countries over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, my servant; I have even put the wild animals at his service (Jer. 27:4-6).

Here Yahweh not only affirms that He is the author of the whole universe but also that his dominion continues, that he can dispose of the world as he likes, and so man should acknowledge his dominion and supremacy in humble obedience. More or less the same message is contained in the following passage from Deutero-Isaiah:
Listen to me, Jacob, Israel whom I have called: I am the first, I am also the last. My hand laid the foundations of earth and my right hand spread out the heavens. I summon thee and they all come forward together. (Is. 48:12-13).

In one of the latest books of the Old Testament (ca 135 -104 BC) known as the Book of Maccabees, there is a passage which is of great importance for us to understand the concept of creation. Here the OT faith in God the Creator is asserted firmly and the nature of the creative activity of God is hinted at. It contains in the words addressed by a mother to her seventh son about to be martyred by the men of Antiochus during his persecution of the Jews. She encourages her son in the following words:

I do not know how you appeared in my womb; it was not I who endowed you with breath and life. I had not the shaping of your every part. It is the Creator of the world, ordaining the process of man's birth and presiding over the origin of all things, who in his mercy will most surely give you back both breath and life, seeing that you now despise your own existence for the sake of his laws.... I implore you my child, observe heaven and earth, consider all that is in them, and acknowledge that God made them of what did not exist, and that mankind comes into being in the same way. (2 Mac. 7:22, 23, 28).

In the Bible this is the only place where the expression creation ex nihilo (creation out of nothing) occurs explicitly. Of course, the term bara (to create) is attributed only to God's activity in the OT. It is a causality by the mere willing and uttering of his word. In the very first verse of the Bible this word occurs to explain the creative activity of God.
The OT doctrine that God is the creator of the world is taken for granted in the NT. R. Butterworth brings out how the NT accepted this truth in a matter of course giving number of references. He says:

There was little room for the further development of Israel's faith, so deeply had it taken root by New Testament times in the religious consciousness of the Jews. Naturally faith in God the Creator was already part of the beliefs of those who first witnessed in writing to the truth of Christ. So it is simply taken for granted that creation had a beginning (Mt 10:6; 13:19; Mt 19:4) and that the world underwent a 'foundation' at God's hands (Jt 13:35; 25:54; Lk 11:50; Jn 17:24; Eph 1:4; Heb 4:3; 9:26; 1 Pet 1:20; Apoc 13:8; 17:8). In the preaching of the early Church there was nothing excepted from God's creation (Act 4:24; 14:15; 17:24; cf. 1 Cor 10:26; 1 Tim 6:13; Apoc 10:6). God 'calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Rom 4:17).

The chief contribution of the NT in the concept of creation is the place of Christ in creation, and this question has to be treated in connection with our study of incarnation. Suffice to say that in the NT the whole cosmos is Christocentric and was created in, for and through Christ (Eph. 1:3-10; Col. 1:15-20).

4. God Involved in History

Often it is said that in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition the transcendence of God is overemphasized to the detriment of His immanence, unlike Hinduism where both the aspects are stressed though with greater emphasis on immanence. To some extent this opinion can be accepted provided that it may not be taken exclusivistically but only in terms of emphasis. But the Biblical God is a far cry from the deistic
god. Instead of a philosophical concept of an immanent God the Bible speaks of God fully involved in history directing the numerous events that constitute history towards a definite goal according to a definite design. Yahweh intervenes in the history of Israel on numerous occasions to lead the "chosen people" to a definite eschaton, definite goal. In the NT the immanent teleology of history, directed by God's special presence will be further stressed.

Yahweh, the God of the OT intervenes in the life of the people in manifold ways. One of the most common names used of Yahweh in the OT is that of a Saviour. He saves Noah from flood (Gn. 7:23) liberates the Israelites from the Egyptian captivity (Ex. from chapter four on). He saves his people using such persons as Gideon (Jg 6:14) Samson (Jg 13:5), Samuel (1 S 7:8) Saul (1 S 11:13) and David 2 S 3:18. He punishes the people for their sins by causing 'universal flood' (Gn 6, 7 and 8) and by destroying cities (Gn. 19). The most significant interventions of Yahweh in the lives of the people of Israel were by sending his special emissaries known as prophets like Elija, Isaiha, Jeremiah, and Eze-chiel. These prophets interpreted Yahweh's will before the people.

Here, three important interventions of Yahweh in the history of Israel could be specially considered, viz. the promise He makes to Abraham and his posterity, the election of the people of Israel as His own people and the covenantal relationship he establishes between this chosen people and himself. Brief consideration of these three interventions are of paramount importance to understand the OT religion and the God of the OT.

Abraham is known as the Father of the Jewish people. Yahweh calls
Abraham from a polytheistic milieu to become the Father of a nation (Gen 11:28-31). Yahweh tells Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you: I will curse those who slight you. All the tribes of the earth shall bless themselves by you." (12:3). Then Yahweh promises that he will make his "descendants like the dust on the ground" (Gen 13:16) meaning the great number of his descendants. Abraham and his wife Sara did not have children even when they were advanced in age. But they trusted in Yahweh's promise. Sarah at last conceived and bore a son whom they called Isaac (Gen 21:1-7). Yahweh tests Abraham's faith in his promise of having a numberless descendants and of becoming the father of a nation, by asking him to sacrifice his one and only son. When he was about to sacrifice Isaac, Yahweh intervenes and saves Isaac. Pleased by Abraham's obedience and faith Yahweh confirms his promise saying: "I swear by my own self - it is Yahweh who speaks - because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessing on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore... All the nations on earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience" (Gen 22:16-18). From now on the history of Israel, as a special people begins. This is further confirmed by another event by declaring the Israelites as a race specially chosen by Yahweh, by a special election.

Whereas the Promise of Yahweh was centred on the person of Abraham, Election was centred on another towering figure in the history of Israel, namely Moses. The election of Israel as a special people, with more historical tangibility and organizational cohesion, began with the deli-
verance of the people of Israel from slavery to the Egyptian Monarch, as described at length in the book of Exodus. The prophet Ezekiel says in the words of Yahweh himself:

On the day when I chose Israel, when I raised my hand over the descendants of the House of Jacob, I told them then in the land of Egypt; I raised my hand over them and said: I am Yahweh your God. On that day I raised my hand over them and swore to lead them into the land I had chosen for them, a land where milk and honey flow, and the noblest of them all (20:5-6).

However, the text which speaks very explicitly of Israel as a specially chosen people is found in the book of Deuteronomy as follows:

For you are a people consecrated to Yahweh your God; it is you that Yahweh our God has chosen to be his very own people out of all the people on the earth. If Yahweh set his heart on you and chose you, it was not because you outnumbered other people; your are the least of all people. It was for love of you and to keep the oath he swore to your fathers that Yahweh brought you out with his mighty hand... from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt (7:6-8).

In both of these texts the belief that the choice of Israel as a special kind of people begins with the Exodus events. The election of this people is not because of their special merits but because of Yahweh's love for them for his own reasons. It is beside the point of our study to go into the details as to how this election of a particular people is not because of his particular, partial love for a people but for his love for all the peoples. Our interest here is the belief of the OT religion that it has been the special work of Yahweh by his intervention in their life-situation.
The OT religion believes also that Yahweh made special covenants or contracts with Israel as two parties of a contract do. The whole of the history of Israel is interspersed with various covenants with Yahweh. Yahweh makes a covenant with the first man, Adam (Gen 3:16 ff) with Noah, the survivor after the universal flood (Gen 9:8 ff) and with Moses (Ex. 24:6). But the covenant which may of special interest to our study, because of its stunning concreteness and because of Yahweh's intention of dealing with me on their own grounds taking them as they are. The covenant between Israel and Yahweh was much similar to the pacts made between different kings in the Middle East. The whole ceremony of this covenant or pact is narrated in Exodus chapters 19-24. A rather long passage may be quoted to have some idea about the meaning of this pact.

Moses went and told the people all the commands of Yahweh and all the ordinances. In answer, all the people said with one voice, 'We will observe all the commands that Yahweh has decreed'. Moses put all the commands of Yahweh into writing, and early next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve standing-stones for the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he directed certain young Israelites to offer holocausts and immolate bullocks to Yahweh as communion sacrifices. Half of the blood Moses took up and put into basins, the other half he cast on the altar. And taking the Book of the Covenant he read it to the listening people, and they said, 'We will observe all that Yahweh has decreed; we will obey'. Then Moses took the blood and cast it towards the people. 'This' he said 'is the blood of the Covenant that Yahweh has made with you, containing all these rules. (Ex 24:3-8).
The symbolism of this ceremony is quite clear. By sprinkling the blood on the altar, which represents Yahweh, and on the people, Moses shows of the special blood-relationship that is going to exist between the two contracting parties, viz. Yahweh and the people of Israel. Yahweh stipulates that Israel should follow his commandments and in return the people of Israel will have the almighty protection and unshakable love of Yahweh. According to the faith of the OT religion it consists of a holy nation "a kingdom of priests, a consecrated nation" (Ex. 19:6; Dt. 14:2). And this covenant relationship with Yahweh was considered as deep as between a husband and wife (Hosea 2).

From the above considerations it is clear that according to the faith of Israel Yahweh was present with his specially chosen people more intimately and concretely than that of a king with his subjects. All the same the emphasis is still on Yahweh's transcendence and supremacy over everybody and everything. The feeling of having been elected by Yahweh himself gave the people of Israel a feeling of being a privileged race of people exclusively possessing the special favours of God.

The NT takes up the question of Yahweh's presence in a more intimate way within the trinitarian scheme. The author to the letter to the Hebrews writes: "At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our time; the last day, he has spoken to us through his son" (Heb. 1:1). So far God has spoken to the Israelites through prophets but by the incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus Christ, God spoke through the Word Incarnate (Jn 1:1). In the Trinitarian scheme of the NT God is present in the world
through the Word from the moment of creation and in the Holy Spirit, making thereby everyone the "temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19).\(^\text{25}\)

**1. God's Total Causality**

In the NT there is no direct statement or systematic treatment of this question. Nor is such a treatment of any interest for the NT. On the other hand, the religion both of the OT and the NT which demands total and whole-hearted surrender to God, presupposes this doctrine.

The key concept to explore the question of total causality is the one of creation *ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing). This is a biblical concept as we found in 2 Mac 7:28. Besides, the use of the term *bara* (to create) already in the very first verse of the OT (Gen. 1:1) implies a causal activity for which no external material except of the word of Yahweh is implied. "God said 'let there be light', and there was light" (Gen 1:3). There is no explicit statement about creation *ex nihilo* in the NT. Perhaps the following statement "Abraham is our father in the eyes of God, in whom he put his faith, and who brings the dead to life and calls into being what does not exist" (Rom. 4:17) could be interpreted in this sense. For here a causality more than giving life to the dead is involved. The expression *me onta ws onta* seems to touch the causality in the order of being itself (*onta*). All the same one has to be cautious to impose a philosophical question on a text which is not very speculative though this apparently ontological statement is made to connect the dependent doctrine of total self-surrender to God.
in wholehearted faith like Abraham.

In our study of the total causality of the OK in the BG, we pointed out how the Lord is the efficient, material, formal and final cause of everything. Such a study of the NT too would be somewhat misleading since it was written mostly in the Semitic tradition where no such causal questions were treated though influenced by the Hellenistic one. All the same, for the sake of clarity, using these concepts as tools we could approach the NT too in this way. One of the expressions in the NT is that God (\textit{Apoc. 1:8; 21:6}) and Christ (\textit{Apoc. 22:12}) as the \textit{Alpha} and \textit{Omega} of creation. Commenting on this Kittey says:

"The meaning of \textit{alpha} and \textit{omega} is fixed in conjunction with \textit{arkhe} and \textit{telos} (beginning and end), \textit{proto} and \textit{eschatos} (first and last). It shows that God or Christ is the One, who begins and the One who ends, the Creator and the Consumator, the One from whom and to whom are all things".24

Solely on the basis of the sense of the texts if these passages are interpreted in terms of efficient and final causality it would be going against the spirit of the Bible which is not interested in abstract speculations. But it is known from the numerous passages in the Bible that God is believed to be both as the creative cause and that man has to find his final destiny (final cause) in God. Hence the following statement of Augustine is not only a philosophical statement but also a statement based on Biblical revelation: 

"...You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in you."26
Usually the Christian thinkers fight shy of considering God also as the "material cause" of the world due to the fear of unenlightened concepts of Pantheism and Emanationism. They emphatically do stress the omnipresence, immanence and immensity of God. On the other hand, if the things of the world are constituted of the four causes (efficient, final, material and formal), and if God is the total cause why shouldn't he be the material cause as well? Of course, the question is not as simple as that as the history both of the western and Indian philosophy shows. All the same, it must be pointed out that if this causality is not stressed without falling into the unenlightened theories of Pantheism and Emanationism, one might easily land up into Deism which is even more against Christian dogmas than certain theories of Pantheism. In the Indian tradition, the cause par excellence is material cause (upadāna-kārnam).

Does the doctrine of creation out of nothing (ex nihilo) against the philosophical axiom that out of nothing nothing can come out (ex nihilo nihil fit)? Certainly not. Creation out of nothing primarily means that God is the total cause of everything that comes into being, that he created everything without making use of any of the already existing material as the creation-myths of Mesopotamia indicate. Contrasting the efficient causality of finite beings and of God Aquinas writes: "The whole of subsisting being is produced by his action, to this action nothing is presupposed. He is principle of being entire according to his entire simplicity; for which reason he can produce something out of nothing."27
If God is the total cause of everything and if there is nothing that is independent of him how to understand the reality of the world? It is not God nor part of God. From where did the world-stuff come? This question will be studied in connection with the study of the vedantic view of the world.

2. Some Dependent Doctrines on God's Total Causality

a) The Omnipotence of God

One of the themes running right through the Bible is that God is omnipotent. One might say that the experience of the omnipotence of God is responsible for the affirmation of God's creation of the universe. The NT affirmation that "Nothing is impossible to God" (Lk. 1:37; Cfr also Mt 19:26) is an echo of the affirmative question that "Is there anything too wonderful for Yahwe?" (Gen 18:14). The Bible just takes for granted that God is omnipotent, be it in the description of creation (Gen. 1-2) of the universal flood (Gen. 6-8) or in describing the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian captivity (Ex. 7-10) in narrating the conception of John the Baptist by Elizabeth, in her advanced age (Lk 1:5-25) in the conception of Jesus by Mary without sexual intercourse (Lk 1:26-38) in giving life to the dead (people like the widow's son (Lk 7:11-17) and Lazarus (Jn 11) or in asking for mountain-moving prayers (Mt 17:20). Jesus implicitly shows how he shares the omnipotence of God by showing his power over the natural forces by calming the tempestuous sea by just a command (Mt 8:23-27) by giving life to the dead (Lk 7:11 ff and Jn 11). And by total commitment in faith in God, the
devotee too shares this omnipotence in a sense (Mt 21:21). Indeed, St. Paul would say: "In Him who strengtheneth me I can do everything" (Phil. 4:13).

The connection between the concept of total causality and omnipotence is too obvious for further clarification. With regard to the question of omnipotence, the following clarification given by Aquinas is enlightening: "Whatever can have the nature of being is counted among the possible and God is called almighty with respect of these. Whatever implies contradiction does not fall within the scope of omnipotence, for it cannot begin to look possible. It is more appropriate to say that such things cannot be done, rather than God cannot do them." For instance, a square circle is not possible in itself as it is a contradiction, as it is a non-entity. Hence to say that it is impossible for God to draw a square circle is tantamount to say that nothing (square circle) is impossible to God.

b) Total self-surrender

The God of the Bible is one who demands absolute self-surrender. The summarized form of the ten commandments given by Jesus as the following shows this demand for wholehearted self-surrender: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind." (Lk 10:27, cf. also Dt. 6:5). Yahweh says of himself: "I am a jealous God" (Ex 20:5). This could be interpreted as his demand for wholehearted submission and surrender without yielding our hearts to anybody else. Yahweh
would even ask to sacrifice the one and only son of Abraham, the offspring of his own promise (Gen. 22). This demand for total surrender is very emphatic in the Book of Job. In this book man's total helplessness, God's omnipotence and man's obligation for totally surrendering to God are graphically described.

In the midst of numerous calamities Job began to complain especially when his relatives began to accuse him of great sins. Yahweh assenting his total dominion over man and the whole world asks some terrifying questions as follows:

Who is this obscuring my designs with his empty-headed words... Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Who laid its cornerstone when all the stars of the morning were singing with joy and the Sons of God in chorus were chanting praise? Have you ever journeyed all the way to the sources of the sea, or walked where the Abyss is deepest? (Job 38:2,4,6,7,16).

Yahweh thus goes on asking numerous questions about his supremacy. At last in humble submission Job answers:

I know that you are all-powerful: what you conceive, you can perform, I am the man who obscured your designs with empty-headed words. I have been holding forth on matters I cannot understand, on marvels beyond me and my knowledge... I retract all I have said, and in dust and in ashes I repent (42:1-3 and 6).

There are quite a number of passages like the above where God in OT looks somewhat despotic and even tyrannical. True, there are many statements where Yahweh's love is emphasized (Is 5:1-7; 49:15; Ez 34:16; Ho 2:16). But in comparison with the NT such passages are few. In
the NT too God demands absolute self-surrender but as a loving Father. If man fails to obey him, he will wait for them patiently and with great expectation as is shown in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32). In the NT this total self-surrender is expressed chiefly in following Christ, considered to be The Way to the Father (Jn 14:6). Following Jesus would mean a commitment to total insecurity in such matters as home or money (Mt 8:19-22). It might mean the total surrender of one's attachment to one's family relations like the parents, wife and children and so on (Mt 10:37; 19:16-22; Lk 14:25-27). To follow Jesus one has to sacrifice not only one's own possessions but also one's own person. Jesus says: "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24). . .

The total and wholehearted surrender to God demanded by the Bible is dependent on the concept of the total causality of God. If he is the total cause total submission to him is his due. Man finds his self-realization by this surrender precisely because of the truth of man's total dependence on God. "For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt 16:25). The following statements by Jesus too could be interpreted in the sense of achieving self-realization or human fulfilment by submitting oneself wholly to God: "Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well" (Mt 6:33).
c) **God as Transcendent**

It would be pedantic to treat elaborately such an obvious Biblical view as the transcendence of God. In fact, the usual complaint is that in the Bible the transcendence of God is too much stressed to the detriment of his immanence. He is the "Most High, whose home is eternity, whose name is holy" (Is 57:15). And in the NT he is the "Father in heaven" (Mt 6:9 *passim*). He is "wholly other", "To whom could you liken me and who could be my equal?" (Is 40:25), asks the God of the Bible. The running theme in the Bible of God's holiness (kadosh) and glory (kabod) is indicative of his transcendence. It is precisely because God is transcendent he is the God of history, and this concept is one of the central themes of the Bible. The doctrine of divine providence, which has been touchingly described by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 6:25-34), and which is another important theme both of the OT and the NT, presupposes a transcendent God. The creative cause is easily understood as transcending the created effect. Of course this transcendence is quite different from that of the potter over the clay since in this causal operation the potter is only the efficient cause (nimittakāraṇa) whereas in the creative cause the creator is the total cause. Hence, this transcendence necessarily implies immanence.

d) **God is Immanent**

Before the question whether the NT God is immanent or not, is discussed, the Christian concept of immanence needs certain clarification. Augustine in his usual epigrammatic style puts the idea of immanence and transcendence of God in a crisp and precise statement, the translation
of which is as follows: "But you were more inward than my inward self, and superior to my highest being," Elsewhere in his Confessions he further clarifies this concept as he talks with God as follows:

Therefore, my God, I would not be, I would in no wise be, unless you were in me. Or rather, I would not be unless I were in you, 'from whom, by whom, and in whom are all things'... To what place do I call you, since I am in you? 32

Aquinas further clarifies this concept of immanence through a cold, prosaic style as follows:

God is in all things, not, indeed, as part of their essence, or as a quality, but in the manner that an efficient cause must be in touch with the product of its action immediately, and this by its own power. Now since God's very essence is his existence, created existence is his proper effect. This effect God causes, not only when things first begin to be, but so long as they continue to be. While a thing endures, therefore, God must be present to it according to its mode of being. Existence is most intimate to each and deepest in all reality since it is the heart of all perfection. Hence, God is in all things, and intimately. 33

Here Aquinas contrasts the finite efficient causality with the creative divine causality. In the former, say in the case of making a pot, the efficient cause (potter) is present (in the pot) while the process of pot-making lasts. But in the creative causality, the causal action is not in the level of giving shape to a pre-existing material but in giving existence itself to a non-existent, the creator is present as long as it exists.
Does the NT contain such an idea? Is it even legitimate to look into the Bible for such a concept result of the speculation of a later philosophical tradition? Certainly this drawback cannot be overlooked. All the same, since it is normal for us to understand certain traditions of thought, this procedure has some justification.

In the NT there is a Pauline statement, under the influence of Greek thought, bringing out this idea. St. Paul in his speech to the Athenians says: "Yet in fact he is not far from any of us, since it is in him that we live, and move, and exist." (Acts 17:28) This text seems to indicate that we live and move in God because he is the author of our existence itself, and so it can be interpreted in the philosophical sense of immanence. We are in him and he is in us because, as Paul says elsewhere "all exists comes from him; all is by him and for him" (Rom 11:36; Cfr. also 1 Cor 8:6).

When the question of immanence is discussed it must be distinguished from immanence or "indwelling of God" in the order of grace. The philosophical concept of immanence refers to first creation, an immanence about which the NT is not very much concerned, while the latter type of immanence refers to the second creation in Christ through his incarnation. And the NT is much more concerned with this latter than with the former kind of immanence. It is according to this latter kind of immanence a man in grace is said to be the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19; Rom 8:11). It is in this sense Jesus speaks of the immanence of the Trinity in the believers (John 14:23) and also of the Holy Spirit (John 14:17). Later on we have to deal more with this latter kind of immanence due to
the second creation and shall see whether the immanence in the BG is of the former or the latter kind from the NT point of view.

Conclusion:

There are only a few direct statements about the total causality of God in the Bible. On the other hand there are ample evidences to show that the NT takes for granted this truth. Some of the fundamental Christian doctrines like the Omnipotence of God, God's providence, Divine immanence and transcendence, and above, the doctrine of salvific faith by total self-surrender to God depends on this truth. Indeed, the whole of the religious attitude demanded by the NT presupposes the total causality of God and of the total dependence of the world on God.

C: THE NT GOD AS A TRINITARIAN GOD

Another NT doctrine as important as that of the total causality of the UR is that of the "Triune Nature" of the UR. The NT God is a "Triune" (three-one) God or Trinitarian God. The trinitarian revelation seems to indicate that reality is fundamentally neither one nor many but one in many and many in one.

This apparent arithmetical monstrosity of "one in three and three in one" has been and still is one of the most controverted of all Christian doctrines. However, belief in this doctrine, with minor variations, has been upheld uninterruptedly from the inception of Christianity until now by Christians practically of all denominations. Indeed, practically all the doctrines of Christianity which have some bearings on God's dealings with man depend very much on the Trinitarian dogma. Danielou rightly
wrote: "Christianity is the appeal addressed to man by the Father, inviting him to share in the life of the Son through the gifts of the Spirit. This constitutes the very essence of Christianity."

Here a treatment of this antinomical and much involved doctrine with certain amount of depth and perspective is out of question. Our consideration will be limited to certain general aspects in so far as they have some bearing on the doctrine of incarnation. To have an idea as to what are the elements of this doctrine which the Christians believe, first a few official pronouncements by the Ecumenical Councils will be cited. Then some of the main texts in the NT where the names of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit come together indicating the triadic unity will be cited and after that some texts which are indicative of the nature and functions of each of the trinitarian persons will be considered. Before trying to have a philosophical understanding of this doctrine a brief survey will be made of similar doctrines in other world religions.

1. Some Official Pronouncements and Confessional Formulas on the Trinity

One of the earliest confessional formulas (probably the end of the second century) on the Trinity is contained in what is known as the Der-Balizeth Papyrus discovered in Upper Egypt in the sixth century. This formula was used in public worship. It runs as follows:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, and in His only-begotten son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, and in the resurrection of the flesh (in the) Holy Catholic Church.
Another ancient (325 A.D.) and very official formula is the one promulgated by the Council of Nicea. Here the "natures" of the Father and the Son are explained somewhat in detail while with regard to the Third "person" (hypostasis) only a mention of his existence as third 'member' of the Trinity is made. Since this Council took place in the context of Arian controversy which denied divinity to the Son, great emphasis is given in describing his nature. This formula known as the Nicene Creed is as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten generated from the Father, that is, from the being (ousia) of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being (homoios) with the Father, through whom all things were made, those in heaven and those on earth. For us men and for our salvation He came down, and became flesh, was made man, suffered and rose again on the third day. He ascended to the heavens and shall come to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit.

Practically every word in this formula is the result of much prayer, much hair-splitting speculation and many heated controversies. After examining the scriptural basis, the meaning of this formula will be examined. Now we shall cite another formula promulgated by the First Universal Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) where the nature of the Holy Spirit is explained rather elaborately. It was occasioned chiefly because of the denial of divinity to the Holy Spirit by Eunomius and the Macedonians, known as Pneumatomachs. Since it only further
affirms the doctrine of the Council of Nicea in teaching the doctrine about the Father and the Son, we shall cite below only that part where the nature of the Spirit is described in detail:

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

Even this superficial glance at the above three formulas of the Christian belief in the doctrine of Trinity can give us some ideas of some of the problems involved in it. Our present concern is to see on what ground do the Christians believe in this doctrine. It is only through the Christian experience in the NT we can go deeper into this dogma of Christian revelation. For our consideration we shall chiefly concentrate on the four Gospels and then on the Pauline writings.

2. The Trinitarian Texts in the NT

In the text which describes the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist we have one of the earliest descriptions of the Trinitarian experience of the immediate followers of Christ. We shall cite the Markan text (1:9-11) which is considered to be the earliest. And its parallels in Matthew (3:13-17) and in Luke 3:21-22) do not differ much.

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descended on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'
This text introduces Father, Son and Spirit as three distinct "Persons" and the Father is indicated as one who reveals the divine mysteries through Jesus, and the Spirit as the power of God, as the symbol of water, baptism, spirit in the form of dove etc. signifies. The baptism is a symbol of the delivery of Israel from the Egyptian captivity bypassing through the Red Sea by God's special, miraculous intervention. Thus baptism stands as a ritualistic symbol of liberation. This ritual symbolises a new liberation under the leadership of the "New Moses". Apart from the central Matthean theme of considering Christ as a New Moses who liberates the whole of humanity, there are a number of passages where Moses the leader of Israel and the New Moses, the liberator of a New Israel, viz. the Church, are compared as "typical and anti-typical" figures (Jn 1:17; 3:14; 6:52; Heb 3:1 ff; 8:8 ff; 9:11-22 passim). In this event Jesus, the sinless one, the one who is one with the Father, stands on the side of humanity in the bondage of sin to liberate them by reconciling them with God.

The Christian baptism is an initiation ritual which symbolically represents that the baptized person is entering into the liberation movement inaugurated by the New Moses contrasting it with the liberation-baptism achieved by Moses (1 Cor 10:2). In the Christian baptismal symbol too the trinitarian involvement as at the time of Christ's baptism, is symbolically represented. The following final commission by Jesus to his disciples bears witness to this: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Mt 28:19). Here we have another trinitarian formula.
in the baptismal context taking its inspiration from the trinitarian revelation at the baptism of Christ.

A Johannine text can be cited for further enlightenment before getting into some of the Pauline texts which are earlier than the Johannine.

If you love me you will keep my commandments. I shall ask the Father and he will give you another advocate, to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him (Jn 14:15-17).

Here the three persons of the Trinity are involved. Jesus speaks here of "another advocate" for according to John Jesus is also an advocate or mediator between God and man (1 Jn 2:1). In this text, the Divine person called "the Father" is obvious. Jesus has already spoken a little earlier about his, so to say, 'ontological unity' with the Father. "To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say 'Let us see the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?" (Jn 14:9-10). About the nature and function of the Holy Spirit too there is mention here as he is called "Advocate" with the Father and the "Spirit of truth". 1 Jn 3:23 is another text where the three persons are enumerated together. Since there are a number of texts in Paul with the explicit enumeration other texts in the Gospels can be overlooked.

St. Paul writes in his epistle to the Galatians some 25 years after the resurrection of Christ:

Now before we came of age we were as good as slaves to the elemental principle of this world, but when the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law to redeem the subjects of the Law and to enable us to be
adopted as son. The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. The Spirit that cries 'Abba, Father,' 43 and it is this that makes you a son, you are not a slave any more (4:4-7).

This text is important not only because the three divine persons are enumerated together but also it indicates the different functions of these persons in the total liberation of humanity. Both the Son and the Spirit are considered as emissaries from the Father, and the liberation of man is considered as the deep experience of being God's 'sons' by identification with Christ in his Spirit which makes man call God 'Father' as Christ would call him so. To express this idea of God's love coming to man through Jesus as grace and man's appropriation of this grace through the Spirit thereby letting man enter into the trinitarian life and to be called 'sons' in Christ, the following Pauline blessing explicitly enumerating the three persons of the Trinity is enlightening: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:13).

There are various other passages in the NT especially in the letters of St. Paul which bear witness to the trinitarian faith of the early Church. 44 Our intention, however, has not been to make an exhaustive survey of the trinitarian statements in the NT but rather to give a few sample passages as basis for the Christian belief in the triune God as officially taught by the Church.

3. The Trinitarian Experience of the NT Writers

From the few texts cited above it is clear that the NT writers
were aware of some sort of triplicity in God without however spelling out the precise nature of the different 'persons' of the God-head. In the context of the strict monotheistic background of these writers, the above passages should have an explanation: How could these Jews who forbade even the making of images to represent God for fear of polylatent if not polytheistic implications, affirm this 'triplicity' in God? For instance, Paul belonged to the most orthodox of the Jewish sects, viz. the Pharisees; yet the whole of his religious philosophy found in the NT is based on the trinitarian doctrine. The answer to this question which the NT gives is that the NT writers had deep trinitarian experiences which could go against their earlier beliefs. We have already cited the trinitarian experience of the witnesses of the baptism of Christ. It is quite unlikely that these witnesses understood in depth the trinitarian implications of the manifestation of the Father and of the Holy Spirit before Jesus whom they might have taken as an extraordinary prophet sent by God, not as a divine person. For the sake of clarity separate treatments in brief of the Father-experience, the Son-experience and the Spirit-experience of the early Church as bore witness by the NT writers could be made.

a) The Father

The concept of God as Father is not something peculiar to the NT. The Greek god, Zeus and the Roman God Jupiter were known as father-gods. In the oldest of the scriptures, viz. in the Hymeda we have statements about father gods. In the OT too God is often referred as Father (Ex 4:22; Dt 32:5; Mal 2:10; Is 1:2). But this conception has very little to do
with the trinitarian doctrine. God as the creator or as one who 'fa-
thers' humanity could easily be conceived as a universal father without
any trinitarian implication. But our question is whether God as the
Father of a Unique Son, of one and only Son, is conceived in the NT.

Scholars like Karl Rahner\(^3\) and McKenzie\(^4\) point out that the term
'God' (ο̂ Θεός in Greek) refers to God the Father, the first person of
the Trinity, at least in most of the instances. This could be agreed.
But our question is whether the term 'God' or even the term 'Father' in
the NT could be interpreted as the first person of the Trinity without
knowing from the context that this term is referred exclusively of Jesus'
filial relationship. When the paternal love and providence of God is
mentioned (Mt 6:5-8, 26 ff; 7:11; 18:14 Lk 11:13); when God's love as a
model for us his children in loving our enemies (Mt 5:43-45) or when the
forgiveness of the heavenly Father is mentioned (Mt 6:14; 18:35; Mt 11:25;
Lk 15:11-32) can we from these texts themselves conclude that the term
'Father' means that He is the first person of the Trinity? Just as a
wife qua wife cannot be understood independently of the husband so too
father qua father (of course, in the Trinity) cannot be understood inde-
dependently of the relationship with a special and unique kind of offspring
who could be called Son.

But in the NT there are texts where this exclusive relationship
with a unique kind of son is mentioned. In Mk 14:36 during the agony
of Jesus in Gethsemane he calls God "Abba", the Aramaic equivalent to
'daddy' in English. This could be interpreted as a special kind of
relationship Jesus had with God. This exclusiveness is implied when Christ says that no one knows the Father except the Son and no one knows the Son except the Father (Mt 11:27). Jesus's statement about God as "my Father" which very frequently occurs in Matthew (15:13; 16:17; 18:10, 19, 35; 20:25) seems to indicate his exclusive, special kind of filial relationship. In St. John we have numerous references of this type of relation. Jesus is the only begotten son of the Father (1:14, 18) and the object of a special kind of love of the Father (3:35; 5:20; 10:17). Jesus alone knows the Father (1:18; 5:46; 10:15), and Jesus and the Father are one (10:30). To know and to see Jesus is to know and see the Father (14:7-9), since Jesus is in the Father and the Father in Jesus (10:36; 14:10). Indeed, no one can come to the Father except through Jesus (14:6). For Paul, God is the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 1:3; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:3; Col 1:3) with a unique kind of relationship (2 Cor 1:3; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:3; Col 1:3). There are, therefore certainly a number of instances in the life of Jesus from which his disciples could conclude to a unique, peculiar and mysterious kind of relationship between God and Jesus, though Jesus was preaching also that God is the Father of all. The deeper the disciples knew Christ, the deeper their knowledge of the special relationship of Jesus with the Father grew.

b) The Son as Son

Since our thesis is on the incarnation of the second persons of the Trinity, here only a passing reference to the question of the Son is intended. As has been said about the term 'Father' that there is a
general sense to this concept and an exclusive sense, so too the concept "Son of God" has two senses, namely referring to the whole of humanity and referring in a special way to Jesus.

There are other specialities too to this concept. In many of the ancient religions the kings were called sons of God. For instance the Egyptian Pharaohs were called the sons of the sun-god Re. The Roman Emperors were addressed as Sons of God (Divi filius). In Hellenism all the miracle workers were known as sons of God. In the OT too kings were called sons of God (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7).

It is quite probable that the NT authors were quite aware of the "sons of God" in the Graeco-Roman and Semitic worlds. Then why do they introduce Jesus as the "Son of God" as though some new revelation from above surrounding the term with great amount of mysteriousness? The confession of St. Peter at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Son of God could be taken as an example. Jesus asks his disciples who do people say he is. "And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. 'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ' he said, 'the Son of the living God'. Jesus replied, 'Simon, son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven.' (Mt 16:14-17; Mk 8:27-30; Lk 9:18-21). According to Jesus this confession was made by Peter not on the ground of human resources (flesh and blood) but on the ground of a special revelation from God, on the ground of a divyam caksu (BG 11:8) to use a Gita' expression. At that time John the Baptist, Elijah and
Jeremiah were considered to be three of the greatest emissaries of God. But according to Jesus his status as the Son of God is far more sacred, mysterious, and divine than that of these great men of God. In other words, Jesus is a Son of God in a very different sense from the sonship of other men.

Another striking reference to Christ as the Son of God is in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Mk 12:1-12; Cfr also Mt 21:33 and Lk 20:1-8). Here Jesus, the Son of God is contrasted with the prophets who are considered as special 'servants' of God. Mt 11:25-27 is another passage where the special relation of Christ to God is clearly spelled out. The very virgin birth of Christ "by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit" as described by St. Luke stands for the special kind of Christ's divine sonship (1:26-38).

Sts. John and Paul speak of this divine sonship of Christ with greater clarity and directness than the Synoptics. John says: "If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God" (1 Jn 4:15). There are numerous passages in Paul where Christ's divine sonship is given a very special meaning. The following text will give a further understanding of Luke's text where the scene of the conception of Jesus by Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit:

"This news is about the Son of God who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendent of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord, who in the order of the spirit (kata pneuma) ... was proclaimed Son of God, in all his power through his resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:3-4).

Oscar Cullman's following statements about the human sonship and divine
Thus we can trace the following developments. Originally Davidic Sonship (kata sarka, according to flesh) and divine Sonship (kata pneuma, according to the Spirit) were contrasted without further attempt to explain the latter (Rom 1:3). The writers of Matthew and Luke, on the other hand, combine the two, by using the virgin birth to explain how Jesus is the Son of God, and by understanding Davidic Sonship (kata sarka) as Jesus' adoption.

Thus the above considerations lead us to the view that there were numerous experiences or statements by Jesus from which they could affirm a special kind of relationship between Jesus and the Father. And these experiences and the statements of Jesus, together with the identification of Jesus with the hypostatized 'Word' and 'Wisdom' of the OT, led the NT writers to affirm that Jesus belongs to one of the 'hypostases' (subsistences, persons) of the Trinity.

c) The Holy Spirit

What are the reasons that led the NT authors to consider the Holy Spirit as one of the Hypostases ('persons') of the Trinity? First of all the OT and the Graeco-Roman religio-cultural situation gave sufficient ground for making conjectures if not for firmly asserting the reality of the power of God operative in persons and events. Secondly the experiences of the disciples of Christ on the work of the Spirit especially with regard to the resurrection, Pentecost and the later charismatic powers in so many people were overwhelmingly great to affirm this.
doctrine. As in the case of the other two hypostases no systematic explanation or precise definition of the nature of the Spirit is attempted by the NT authors. All the same, they knew enough to include the Spirit in the Divine Trinity.

In the Greek tradition the Spirit (pneuma) had much significance. Pythia, the Delphic oracle was believed to have been filled with the Spirit to do her prophetic work. The stoic philosophers speculated much on the nature and functions of a cosmic, subtle force whom they called spirit (pneuma). In the OT, the term ‘ruah’ like the Greek pneuma and the Sanskrit ‘pran’ signifies the spirit. In the OT there are striking instances of the manifestation of the spirit of God. Unexpectedly and irresistably the simple, young peasants like Gideon (Jud 6:39), Samson (Jud 14:6) and Saul (1 Sam 16:13) were raised to become the leaders of the Israelites. The prophets were seized by the divine Spirit to prophesy in the name of Yahweh (Is 6:11; Jr 1:9, Ez 3:14). The prophets like Isaiss (42:1; 61:1) and Joel (2:28 ff) kindled the hope among the Israelites of the restoration and reawakening of Israel by the power of the Spirit. In short, for the authors of the NT the reality signified the terms ruah in Hebrew or pneuma in Greek was not very unfamiliar, as the consideration of just few instances point out.

The most striking experience of the Spirit the disciples of Christ had, is the Pentecostal event narrated at length in the second chapter of the Acts. St. Luke vividly narrates the powerful storm from heaven, the tongues of fire that settled on the heads of the disciples gathered together in the cenacle, the gift of talking in different languages
the disciples received, the great enlightenment they had in knowing the truths preached by Christ, and above all the courage the disciples had to preach publicly about Christ in spite of the opposition by the religious and political authorities. Peter who denied Christ in cowardice for fear of a servant maid (Mt 26:69-75 and parallels) could give such a bold and stirring speech to the pilgrims assembled from many parts of the world for the Pentecostal feast (Act 2:14-36) that some three thousand people followed the path of Christ as shown by Peter (Acts 2:41). The other disciples who were hiding in the cenacle for fear of the Jews came out on this day with Peter and began to proclaim boldly and publicly with great enthusiasm.

Practically the whole book of the Acts is a saga of the courage of the disciples especially of Peter, Paul, Stephen and Barnabas in proclaiming the message of Christ at the teeth of deadly opposition. They possessed great power over persons and events. The disciples communicated the power of the Spirit to those who believed in Christ by the imposition of hands (Act 3:17). To understand the power of the Spirit the episode of Simon the magician could be mentioned (Act 8:9-25). As a great magician he used to astound the Samaritans (Act 8:9). But he too was astounded by the power of the disciples of Christ exercised on people especially in healing the diseases and also in communicating this Spirit (Acts 8:19). Peter gives him the following devastatingly ruthless yet well deserved reply: "May your silver be lost forever, and you with it, for thinking that money could buy what God has given for nothing... Repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord;
you may still be forgiven for thinking as you did" (Acts 8:20 and 22). From the Pauline epistles especially from 1 Cor 12 we can make out the spectacular ways the Spirit of God manifested Himself in the Christian communities of the first century.

The spectacular manifestations of the Spirit in the events like the baptism and resurrection of Christ and the Pentecost were enough for the writers of the NT to attribute divinity to this extraordinary power, to include Him in the Trinity. It was after the enlightenment by the Spirit during Pentecost the disciples fully understood the meaning of the divine "Advocate" promised by Christ (Jn 14:16) to give insight into the teaching of Christ (14:26).

4. Philosophical Reflections on the Trinitarian Doctrine

The above factual and unsystematic considerations on the formulas of the Christian profession of faith in the Trinitarian God and their NT basis gave an overall view of the Christian doctrine of the Triune God. Making use of some of the categories familiar to the students of philosophy we shall try to have a systematic understanding of this doctrine without forgetting its mysterious anirvacanīya nature. Here too, in order to be faithful to our dialogical methodology, the Christian point of view will be followed.

To indicate a line of argument for affirming the Trinitarian a priori in man some sketchy remarks will be made on the beliefs in other world religions similar to that of the Christian belief in the Trinity. Then making use of some of the key concepts from the Christian religious
thinkers we shall make some philosophical reflections to have a deeper understanding.

a) **Trinitarian a Priori in Man?**

It is beyond the scope of this chapter and of not much use to our thesis to enter into an elaborate treatment on the question of Trinitarian a priori in man. However, since the question seems to be as obvious as the one of God a priori it would not be out of place to indicate briefly a line of argumentation which could be profitably pursued.

True, the trinitarian doctrine is usually considered as one of the most abstruse of Christian mysteries but on that account it should not be counted out as irrelevant to Christian existence. If the argument for seeing it as a priori is convincing one would not say that this doctrine is a mathematical absurdity unless one gives cognitive value to the theoretical reason alone forgetting the function of the unconscious, and the intuitive and experiential faculties of knowledge.

The trinitarian patterns in the Religious experience of mankind are so many and so varied that we have to rest content with giving references to such literature and with the mention of a few patterns for samples. Jung writes: "Triads of gods appear very early, at a primitive level. The archaic triads in the religions of antiquity and of the East are too numerous to be mentioned."54

Among the various Mesopotamian trinitarian religious patterns the most known is the triad of Anu, Bel and Ea. "Ea, personifying knowledge, if the father of Bel (Lord), who personifies practical activity."55
another tradition Ea transfers his power to his son Marduk who eventually becomes a mediator between God and man. The best known of Egyptian triads is the Osiris, Isis and Horus. Being taken up with the procreative power represented by Ka-matef in another Egyptian triadic pattern Jung says: "I shall only emphasize that Egyptian theology asserts, first and foremost, the essential unity (homousia) of God as father and son both represented by the King. The third person appears in the Ka-matef ("the bull of his mother") who is none other than the Ka, the procreative power of the deity. In it and through it father and son are combined not in a triad but in a trinity."56 In the Trikāya doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhism (Dharmakāya, Vīramakāya and Sabhogakāya) scholars see a triadic pattern. Even in a strict monotheistic religion like Islam, especially in its popular form of piety, some scholars see a trinity implicit in the concepts of Allah, Quran - his eternal word, and Maḥommed-His prophet. In the incarnationalism advocated by some of the sects as mentioned earlier, one could find this pattern.

In the Hindu religious experience there are quite a number of trinitarian patterns58. Here a few remarks will be made only about two of the most popular of these patterns, namely the Trimūrti, consisting of Brahma, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara, and of the concept of Śakti as the unifying and activating power between Śiva the unmanifest and the world the manifest. In the Maitri Upaniṣad(4:6) the names of Brahma, Rūdra and Śiva occur together with those of Fire, air, sun, time, breath and food as the chief forms of the Supreme Brahman. In the same Upaniṣad(5:2)
the theological Trinity, Rūdra, Brahmā, and Viṣṇu are identified with the cosmological triads of tāmas, rājas and sattva respectively. In the following text from the Mbh (3:272:48) where Viṣṇu is replaced by the term Puruṣa, we have the explicit mention of the Trimūrti with their respective functions: "His form of Brahmā creates; his Puruṣa body protects, by his essence as Rūdra he dissolves - such are the three states of Prajāpati."

Though in the concept of Śiva-Śakti no third name occurs it does imply a third. Swamy Chīḍānanda writes: "We are told how the Para-Brahman and His Mysterious Power of World-Illusion, whom we call Māyā or Devī or the Supreme Divine Mother is the link between the manifest and the Unmanifest." In Tātric philosophy the concept of Śakti is elaborately treated. What is to be specially remarked is that in this concept the female member of the triad stands for the unifying force between the manifest and the Unmanifest (kṣara and akṣara), a function similar to that of Kā-mutef of the Egyptian triad.

b) Triads from philosophical Speculations

(i) Saccīdānanda

This is one of the most known philosophical concepts about the Absolute in the Indian Philosophy. Both the Indian philosophers like Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja and saints like Tulsidas and Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa loved this appellation of the Absolute. This compound noun does not occur in the earlier Upaniṣads though it occurs in its independent components. In the Tait. Up (2:1) Satīsatyaṁ is compounded not with cit but with a concept with more or less the same meaning, viz. Ākāśāmy and with a
very different concept viz. anantam (infinite) to form a similar triad.
In the later Upanisads with sectarian leanings like Nyāsa-puravatapani (5:8) and Rāmottaratapani (2:4:5) and Tejobindu (3:11) the Absolute either as Śiva or Śiva is considered as Saccidānanda.

'Sat' is the present participle of 'Ās, to be, and so its literal meaning is 'Being' or 'Existent', 'Sat' in its abstract philosophical sense is found in several places in the Ṛg Veda especially in the famous creation hymn known as the Nāandiya Sūtra (10:129) and in the Upanisadic literature especially in the Chāndogya dialogue between Uddālaka and his son Śvetaketu in chapter six. Sat stands for Being in its totality or as Chānd Up. puts it, eka evādvitiyam (One without a second) (6:2:1).

The second of the triad Cit is not found in the early Upanisads though its equivalents jñāna, vijñāna and prajña are found. This concept indicates that the Absolute is self-conscious in the sense that in that self-consciousness there is no subject-object duality but an identity with all the knowables. The third concept Ānanda comes from the root ānand, to rejoice, to be strengthened, combined with the prefix ā suggestive of interiorization. This is a noun very much predicated of Brahma of Upanisads. Indeed Sat-Cit-Ānanda could very well be equated with the transcendental 'predicates' of 'being', esse-Verum-Bonum (being-true-good) held by the medieval philosophers.

(ii) Yin and Yang

In the Chinese thought there is a tried consisting of the female principle of Yin and the male Yang united by the principle Tai-Ky. It
must be noted that Yin and Yang are two 'poles' of reality so to speak, and are united in terms of polar attraction. The trinitarian pattern Augustine points out in his great work De Trinitate in the relationship between the lover (yang) and beloved (yin) by the bond of love (Tai-Ky) is very similar to this Chinese pattern. Man and woman as such are not united but are literally poles apart until the undeniable reality of love (in its varying degrees of intensity and spirituality) binds them together as lover and the beloved. The relationship between Yin and Yang could be understood in this sense.

(iii) The Problem of 'One and Many'

As it is well-known among the students of philosophy, this is a central problem both of the Indian and of the Western Philosophies. Here we shall make some passing references to the triadic solution suggested by certain schools of thought. The following passage in the Ch. Upanisad can give a clear idea of the Indian understanding of this problem:

In the beginning, my dear, this was Being alone (sad eva) one only without a second. Some people say in the beginning this was non-being alone, one only, without a second. From that non-being, being was produced. But how, indeed, my dear, could it be thus? said he, how could being be produced from non-being (asatah)? On the contrary, my dear, in the beginning this was being alone, one only, without a second. It thought, May I be many, (bahu syam prajaye-yeti), may I grow forth. It sent forth fire. That fire thought, May I be many, may I grow forth. It sent forth water. Therefore, whenever a person grieves or perspires, water is produced from fire. (S.2.1-3).

The Upanisad points out how from the Absolute (ekam evaditiyam)
many' come out. From the Upanisadic point of view the problem is not posited as One and many but rather many from one, which many would remain in the One and the One in the many. The difference that exists in the various Vedantic schools is precisely in explaining the relationship between the One and Many. But none of the schools, not even the Dvaita school of Madhva would put the One and many as parallel realities. Dr. Panikkar considers the Advaita Vedantic solution of the problem by the triadic concepts of Brahman(nirguna) Íśvara(saguna) and the world as a trinitarian pattern.

In the Western philosophy this problem was posed chiefly by two Greek philosophers. Parmenides and Heraclitus, the former affirming the One with the denial of the Many and the latter affirming the Many with the denial of the One. The controversy arose in the context of change. Both accepted the principle that from nothing nothing can come out. Parmenides denied change or becoming since it would mean accepting something other than being which is pure non-being. Heraclitus denied being and permanence since what is obvious is becoming and from becoming being cannot take its origin. Plato in his Timaeus tries to make a synthesis showing how "the Thought of God made God in the image of a perfect body having intercourse with himself". For Plato, the world created in the image of God is another God, and the world soul is a mean between God and the world. For "two terms must be united by a third which is a mean between them". Aristotle tries to solve the problem of One and many by proposing the theory of Act and Potency which implies a common substrate underlying the process
of change. However, this theory could only explain the problem of change not of the coming to be of the many from the primordial one in spite of his theory of *Motor Immobilia* (the unmoved Mover). For the *Motor Immobilia* has to be the total cause. The Neo-Platonists with greater systematic rigour than Plato, their master, propose the triad of the initial Good as One, its product the world-soul as One and Many and the connecting link between the two, the Intelligence, as One-Many.

Hegel's solution to this problem seems to share the insights of the Greek Philosophers especially of Plato and of the Indian Philosophers, and the Doctrine of the Trinity of Christian revelation. The triadic concepts he proposes are Being, Non-Being and Becoming explaining their unity through his well-known triadic method of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. When he explains the origin of the world and its process or evolution he enters into the trinitarian domain. He says about the Primordial Being "Eternal Being, in-and-for-itself, is something which unfolds itself, determines itself, differentiates itself, posits itself as its own difference..." Then he points out the nature of the first differentiation which he call the "Son" in terms of the trinitarian doctrine. He says:

Regarded from this side, we have to think of the judgement or differentiating act of the Idea as implying that the Son gets the determination of the other as such, that He exists as a free personality, independently or for himself that He appears as something real outside of and apart from God, as something, in fact, which actually is.

In the dialectic unfolding of the Absolute Being, the Absolute idea
that Objectifies itself in the Father and the objectification of the absolute idea in the objective nature which we call the Other, according to him is the Son. The absolute must return to itself with the fullness of the objective nature in the absolute spirit. He says:

"The Being of the world means that it has a moment of Being, but that it annuls this separation and estrangement from God, and that it is true nature to return to its source, to get into a relationship of Spirit or Love."\(^70\)

c) Some concluding reflections on the non-biblical trinitarian patterns

For reasons already mentioned our study on the non-Biblical trinitarian patterns has been factual and very sketchy. The instances pointed out above are what might be called, random samples. Besides these samples are mostly theocentric patterns in the sense that they are control on the UR. The cosmocentric trinitarian patterns like the Upaniṣadic Ṛṣa-ṛūpa-karma (Dr. Up. 1:6:1) the sattva-rajas-tamas of Śaṅkhu, the triadically formed world-soul of Plato, and the electron-proton-neutron triad of the physicist have been completely overlooked. So too with regard to the anthropocentric triads too have been omitted except for a passing reference to the Augustinian lover-beloved-love triad. Such anthropocentric triads like memory-understanding-will\(^71\) knower-known-knowledge and i-thou-we can shed much light in the matter of the Christian doctrine of man being the image of a Trinitarian Creator. However, it seems to us that even within this limited scope a line of argumentation for the Trinitarian a priori could be indicated without any pretence for establishing an argument.
Since we are more indebted to Jung than to Kant for the peculiar meaning of a priori in our thesis, the view of the former in this matter too could be preferred. Jung first explains his concept of an architype saying that it is a "disposition which starts functioning at a given moment in the development of the human mind and arranges the material of consciousness into definite patterns." Then he affirms that the Trinitarian pattern is such an architype as follows:

That is to say, man's conceptions of God are organized into triads and trinities, and a whole host of ritualistic and magical practices take on a triple or trichotomous character, as in the case of thrice-repeated apotropaic spells; wherever we find it, the archetype has a compelling force which it derives from the unconscious, and whenever its effect becomes conscious it has a distinctly numinous quality. There is never any conscious invention or cogitation, though speculations about the Trinity have often been accused of this.

According to Jung the basis of the Trinitarian patterns in religiosity and in thinking have their origin in the human unconscious and not in Asia Minor and they could arise anywhere at any time. But from the point of view of Christian faith, one might say following the Augustinian tradition that if man was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26) who is Trinitarian, in man there should be the Trinitarian stamp. And going a step further, taking into account of the whole of creation it could be said that in so far as the Total causality of the whole cosmos is the Trinity, the whole of the cosmos should have a Trinitarian stamp as the whole cosmos exists in total dependence on and by participation from the Trinity. Aquinas says: "Whatever is from God imitates him, as causal things imitate the first cause."
This sketchy and suggestive rather than affirmative consideration of the Trinitarian a priori gives us certain advantages in trying to understand this doctrine. First, just because this doctrine is incomprehensible (anivacana) to the theoretical reason, one won't leave it aside as irrelevant. These 'truths' should be weighed on the totality of the human psyche, as far as it is possible, which includes the conscious and the unconscious, the intuitive and the discursive powers of the human cognitive faculties. What can be an arithmetical absurdity for the theoretical reason, can be true to the other cognitive faculties in man. Or to put it in the current psychological jargon, religious truths like that of the Trinity should be judged not only on the head-level but also on the gut-level. The Trinitarian experience of the whole of mankind is a living proof to it. This study gives us another advantage too though not disconnected from the above. The Christians need not consider the trinitarian revelation as an aerolith falling on man to crush him due to its rational incompatibility. But rather when it is presented to the totality of the human cognitive faculties, which has a trinitarian pattern, it will be like a seed falling into a fertile ground producing abundant fruits.

d) Certain Philosophical Considerations of the Doctrine

(i) The problem that faced the early Christian communities

The trinitarian faith in the NT has already been pointed out. The other first and second century Christian sources like the Didache, the writings of the Acaryas like Ignatius, Justin and Origen and Ireneus strongly affirm this doctrine. They believed that the Father, Son and
the Holy Spirit are the three Divine 'Persons' (hypostases) of the One God. As the Christian communities began to spread far and wide in the Graeco-Roman world, and as the second and third generations of Christians began to emerge and as the spectacular and the miraculous began to be less and less in these communities, people began to reflect on the exact meaning of the faith they professed especially the faith in the Triune God. They were faced with this problem: on the one hand there is one and only one God, and on the other hand, this God is Tri-one (Three-one) God.

Without getting into the numerous controversies that raced in the early Christian communities, two extreme positions shall be pointed out here to focus sharply the Trinitarian problem. These two schools of thought are generally known as Modalists or Monarchians in so far as they overemphasized the oneness of God without taking into account the distinctions of the "Persons" in the Trinity, and the Subordinatianists in so far as they emphasized the distinct 'Persons' of the Trinity subordinating the two other Persons to the Father. For the Modalists the Son and the Holy Spirit are like the heat and light of the rays of the sun. It was God the Father Himself who became incarnate. The Subordinationists start from the Trinitarian experience of God as consisting of three distinct persons. This school too upheld the oneness of God. So logically they were led to affirm that the Son and the Spirit are subordinate to the Father. Arius, one of the chief proponents of this theory, said that the Son is a special kind of creature. The Universal Council of Nicea was convoked to settle this controversy.
What are the solutions found in the Christian tradition to answer the trinitarian problems like the above? Since the Universal Councils of Nicea and Constantinople were convened to solve the trinitarian controversies and the teachings of these two Councils are accepted by all the Christian denominations, we could try to have an understanding of the Christian interpretation of the NT doctrine of Trinity through the documents of these councils. Another source of interpretation of this religious experience is the document prepared by the Eleventh Council of Toledo (A.D. 675). Having been a local Council, the documents of this Council are not as authoritative as the other two, though more elaborate and clearer. In order to remain within the limited scope of this chapter, we shall consider a few of the key expressions accepted in the Christian tradition mostly based on the official documents.

(ii) **The ontological and economic Trinity**

These two concepts, accepted in the Christian tradition though not found in the early official documents, are of great importance to begin a discussion on the Christian interpretation of the Trinitarian experience of the NT. The term 'economic' must be understood in the sense in which it was used by the early Greek ἀρχοντες of the Church. It is derived from the compound word ὀικονομία which would literally mean household management (οἶκος = house). Economic Trinity would mean the Trinitarian Persons in so far as involved in the affairs of man and his surroundings, especially in the affairs of man's UL. Ontological Trinity would mean the trinitarian persons considered in themselves independently of their involvement in human history, in the human affairs.
If rightly understood these two concepts could be looked upon mutatis mutandis in analogy with the concept of Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman, who is Isvara. Of course, as Karl Rahner emphatically states “The 'economic' trinity is the immanent (i.e. ontological) Trinity”. But doesn't it mean that there are divisions in the UK which is affirmed to be 'simple' (i.e. indivisible and undivided)? About simplicity (non-composition or non-division) in God Aquinas writes, on the basis of his earlier theses on God:

For there is neither composition of quantitative parts in God, since He is not a body; nor composition of form and matter; nor does His nature differ from His sumsumum; nor His essence from His existence; neither is there in Him composition of genus and difference, nor of subject and accident.

According to Aquinas if God were composite, the component parts should have preexisted God the First cause, which is contradictory. Besides, the coming together of these dissimilar parts presupposes a causal action previous to the First cause. This leads us to the question of Trinitarian relations.

(iii) Trinitarian 'Persons' as Subsisting Relations

Certainly the anirvacaniya mystery of the doctrine of the Triune God, the doctrine of the simple (distinctionless) Godhead with three distinct 'persons' cannot be left to the judgment of the speculative reason alone independently of other cognitive faculties. All the same, reason must be used as far as it can take us. The doctrine of the Trinity as Subsisting Relations is the result of such a speculation.
about which a few informative remarks could be made without getting into the highly specialized and involved theories about it. This theory has been upheld by the Universal Council of Florence and the provincial council of Toledo.

It is interesting to note how this theory tries to safeguard the oneness of Godhead, and thus keeping the wholeness of God one, considering the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit Divine, and on the other hand, allows the distinction of 'persons'. Aquinas would say that "relation, in its own proper meaning, signifies only that it refers to another". That is to say relation is not something but to something. Hence in the level of being, of reality (nature, subsistence) God is one, but in the level of relatedness, there are distinctions. But these relations are not like the "accidental relations" which would be an addition of 'perfection' in the one who relates, like the fatherhood in the father among the human beings. But in the persons of Trinity, relations are 'subsisting' in the sense that they constitute 'the persons'. The Council of Florence declares: "These three persons are one God and not three gods, for the three are one substance, one essence, one nature, one Godhead, one infinity, one eternity, and everything (in them) is one where there is no opposition of relationship."

The trinitarian doctrine is often illustrated through the example of a magnet which is constituted of the negative and positive poles and the magnetic field. The relations of the one pole to the other is not an addition but constitutes the magnet, and each pole is totally magnetic possessing the total power of the magnet. Yet both poles are distinct.
Another example could be developed in the modern view that the most fundamental unit of matter (subatomic particles) are at once 'mass' and 'waves'. Or an idealistic conception of a family, taking it as the most fundamental unit of man's existence as persons, could shed some light on the trinitarian relations. A wife, as wife, being one with the husband in the physiological, emotional and spiritual levels, constitutes the family even as the husband, and the child. The child is the blossoming forth of the love bond between the husband and the wife. Yet all the three are distinct. Hegel's view of the inner constitution of the Absolute Being with inner relations and the unfolding of this Being through dialectics can furnish us with further reference to get closer to the mystery of the trinity on the level of theoretical reason. All the same, without deep religious experience like that of the NT authors, any speculation on this mystery can only lead us to a very partial, one-sided view. The formulations of the Councils were primarily meant to save people from extreme errors which were leading either to Tritheism making the three persons into three gods or to Modalism making God a Monad without personalism but merely with shadowy, foundationless Trinitarian manifestations.

(iv) The Generation of the Son

As has been pointed out earlier the whole question of the Trinity occurred to the NT authors in the context of their experience of Christ as Divine and the Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son too as Divine, on the one hand, and on the other hand, their Jewish belief, based on the OT, that there is only one God. The second person of the
Trinity began to be known as 'Son' chiefly because of Christ's continual reference of himself as 'Son' with a unique kind of relationship with God. Though there are other terms by which Christ was known, viz. the Word (logos) and Wisdom, both of which have references in the OT. When we speak of the ontological Trinity, we have to remove all the anthropomorphisms implied in calling the second person, Son. Since the whole question of the Son will be treated later on, as it is one of the central themes of our thesis, here a few remarks will suffice.

Aquinas treats this question after giving the following definition of generation: "The origin of a living being from a conjoined living principle... by way of similitude of nature." This definition is applicable to any animal or human generation. Applying the same definition to the eternal generation of the Son by the Eternal Father, Aquinas says:

So in this manner of procession of the Word in God is generation; for He proceeds by way of intelligible action, which is a vital operation: "by way of similitude, in such as the concept of the intellect is a likeness of the object conceived: and exists in the same nature, because in God the act of understanding and His existence are the same." Here Aquinas uses the term 'concept' to signify the Son taking the scriptural statement that the Son is the "Word of God". He also insists that the Son is not of the similar nature (homoiousios) but of the same nature (homoousios) by pointing out how in God the act of existence and the act of understanding are the same, and the "Word...proceeds as subsisting in the same nature." This idea of generation of the Son is well explained in the document of the Council of Toledo (675 A.D.) part
of which could be cited here:

We also confess that the Son was born, but not made, from the substance of the Father, without beginning, before all ages, for at no time did the Father exist without the Son, nor the Son without the Father. Yet the Father is not from the Son, as the Son is from the Father, because the Father was not generated by the Son but the Son by the Father. 38

(v) The procession by spiration of the Holy Spirit

"The Procession by spiration" is even more ambiguous than the "procession of the Son by generation". Spiration comes from the Latin verb spiro—spirare (to breathe) and it is used with the etymological sense of 'pneuma' (spirit) the meaning of which is wind, breath etc. The statement that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son by spiration does not say much more than what the etymology does. The Council of Toledo tries to give some intellectual content to this expression of spiration as follows:

We also believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, is God, one and equal with God the Father and the Son, of one substance and of one nature, not, however, begotten or created but proceeding from both, and that He is the Spirit of both. Of this Holy Spirit, we also believe that He is neither unbegotten or begotten, for if we called Him unbegotten we would assert two Fathers, or if begotten we would appear to preach two Sons. Yet He is called the Spirit not of the Father alone, nor of the Son alone, but of both Father and Son. 39

Augustine and Aquinas with their extraordinary mystical insights and intellectual depth try to communicate certain ideas on the nature
of the Spirit grounding them in human experience basing on the fundamental Christian belief that man is the image of the Trinity. One of the trinitarian patterns in man's self according to Augustine is the mind itself, its knowledge of itself and its love of itself. Aquinas' elaboration of this pattern is quite enlightening:

The mind, by actually understanding itself, produces its word within itself; this word is the intelligible reflection of the mind, and is called the idea, existing in the soul. And when it loves itself, it reproduces itself in the will as loved. Further than this it does not proceed within itself, but completes the circle, when by love it returns to the very substance whence the procession began in the idea... Thus there are three things in the mind: the mind itself in its natural existence, which is the starting point of the procession; in the intellect the conception of the mind; and in the will the mind loved.01

According to the well known theory of Aquinas two actions specific to a spiritual being (of a person) are knowledge and love through the intellect and the will.02 It is interesting to see how he tries to explain the inner life of the Ontological Trinity through these two actions, the end result of which remains in the agent himself though knowledge is called centripetal and love centrifugal. He says:

For when a thing is understood by anyone, there results in the one who understands a conception of the object understood, which conception we call word; so when anyone loves an object, a certain impression results, so to speak, of the thing loved in the affection of the lover; by reason of which the object loved is said to be in the lover; as also the thing understood is in the one who understands.03
The Word (logos) of God, the second Person of the Trinity, known chiefly as the Son, is the inner Word that eternally emerges from God's knowledge of Himself. He 'proceeds' according to the divine act of understanding. The Spirit of God is the inner impression that results from God's love of himself. He proceeds according to the divine act of love.

It goes without saying that the human trinitarian pattern when transposed to the Trinity, undergoes radical changes.

(vi) The three persons in the Trinity

It has been shown above that the members of the Trinity are subsisting relations differing from each other only in their relative opposition. And it has been explained that the procession of the Son and the Spirit have to be understood in terms of knowledge and love. But does this view do justice to the traditional belief sanctioned by the official pronouncements of the Church through the provincial Council of Rome (A.D. 552) or through the Universal Council Lateran IV, that the members of the Trinity are three distinct persons? Indeed the experience of the early church communities was that of the interventions of God as Father, Son and Spirit as distinct divine 'persons' whose help and protection they received in distinct ways, and to whom they prayed as persons who understood and loved them. What sort of persons are the trinitarian members?

The Greek ἅγιας of the Church like Origen and Basil called each of the members (hypostasis) meaning thereby substantial nature contrasting to mere appearances or modes. This term they emphasized
the early Christian faith-commitment to each of the divine hypostases as their baptismal commitment "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19, Didache 7) or the blessing in the name of the three persons calling upon them individually (2 Cor 15:3) indicate. This term was translated into Latin as 'persona' which is 'person', in English. Certainly at that time this concept did not have the such evolved meanings as it has at present. Even the early Acaryas were aware of the inadequacy of the human language to give a right name to these 'members' of the Trinity. Augustine who speculated more than any of the early Church Acaryas on the divine members of the Trinity expresses his dissatisfaction in using the term 'persona':

The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father; the Holy Spirit...is neither Father nor the Son. They are therefore three
...But if someone were to ask 'three what' human language shows how poor it is. Someone, however, has answered: three persons, not so much to give a precise answer but in order not to remain silent.

After bringing out the various difficulties connected with the use of the term 'person' to signify the trinitarian hypostases Karl Rahner says:

At any rate, if we wish to understand the use of "three persons" correctly (this supposes that we forget the usual meaning of the words), we must always return to the original experience of salvation history. Here we experience the Spirit, and we experience him as God (who is only one); we experience the Son, as God; and the Father, as God. When we generalize and say that we experience "three" persons, we do subsequently to our experience.
Certainly 'person' is an inadequate category to identify the members of the Trinity. So too are any other predications of the Un. Indeed, the predication of God as One or the statement that there are 'three' members in the Trinity are even more inadequate. It is precisely because of this reason why the Advaita prefer to use the word 'advaita' (non-duality) to express that the Un is one and only one. The 'three' in the Trinity are not recognizable by the ordinary mathematicians who are not prepared to go beyond the Euclidian realm. The point to be noted is that there is an individualistic as well as a dynamic concept of person. The Boethian-Thomistic definition of person as the Individual and incommunicable substance of a rational nature is a rather static. In fact, until quite recently, person had been defined very statically in philosophy. Referring to Western Philosophy Jefferies rightly writes:

Each person is first fully-constituted as an individual person in his own right and then, as a secondary and peripheral moment of his existence, becomes related to the persons. This aggregate view of persons-in-relation can be seen in the early modern social-contract theory of society in Descartes' conception of personhood as cogita and in the Aristotelian-Scholastic definition of man as a rational substance in which relation is merely an 'accident'.

According to Jefferies in this individualistic concept of person, human society is an aggregate where the individual members are only extrinsically related.

A static concept of the finite things in general and of human persons in particular seems to go against science as well as philosophy.
When Zeno of the Irenaenidian school attacked the school of Heraclitus, pointing out numerous contradictions, antinomies and riddles involved in the concept of change and multiplicity, he had a very static concept of the material reality. Though the theory of continua did solve these antinomies or riddles, it was a far cry of the modern physics which has experimentally proved that the fundamental unit of matter has both the corpuscular and wave properties. The material universe of modern physics is like the dynamically and mutually tending loop and hook, socket and ball, lipra and yoni. If this is true of the material universe we can make a hypothesis with confidence that the human personality who is structured on the dynamic material base (or who evolved from matter if one would, advocate an evolutionary theory) also has to be essentially dynamic.

Without getting into an elaborate analysis of man in existence, man in action and growth, as acting and growing, we affirm that man is basically or essentially a dynamic being, having been related and getting related with other human persons. Hence, the view expressed below by Jeffke contrasting the individualistic understanding of the person with that of the dynamic is very much according to our own mind:

On the other hand there have been other currents of thought, especially in the twentieth century, which are strongly anti-individualistic. Thinkers such as Buber, Marcel, and Macmurray, not to mention the behavioural sciences, have emphasized the mutuality of the personal. According to this view, interpersonal relatedness pertains to the core or essence of personhood; the unity of personal existence is not 'I' but 'You and I'; and the fundamental human reality is the entire field of persons-in-relation.
Hence within the limits of the human language to express the Trinitarian 'members' the concept of person seems to be fairly satisfactory.

(vii) Some concluding remarks on the Trinitarian doctrine in the NT

The first remark is about the over-mystification of this doctrine. Christianity holds that God reveals himself, reveals his very inner life to man in order to invite him to share this very life in man's ultimate destiny; and so, the value of the revealed 'truths' is dependent on their salvific relevance. But in Christianity, this doctrine is treated as a dish indigestible even to intellectual giants, and so, something from which ordinary people should be kept away. How did then an ordinary military general like Ignatius of Loyola see the Trinitarian patterns everywhere after a religious experience of the Trinity, an experience which gave him the lasting feeling and conviction that this doctrine is the very fountain-head of all other truths? How could a humble nun called Elizabeth, have had such deep knowledge of this doctrine so as to inflame the hearts of her bearers, thus to be known later on as Elizabeth of the Blessed Trinity?

However limited the function of the human intellect in grasping the religious truths, it must be given its full share. But usually man imprisons it with one or the other schools of logic. Certainly the Aristotelian logic unlike the oriental paradoxical logic, is a very poor organon to get some insight into this mystery. If this doctrine was a "Psychic revolution in the West" as Jung said, it was chiefly because of the constraints the Aristotelian logic had imposed on the Western man. Besides, the effort to grasp this doctrine solely by
the discursive theoretical reason is no less futile than the effort of the little boy of the Augustinian legend who tried to empty with a conch-shell the whole of the sea-water into a hole dug at the sea-shore. What about the gut-level knowledge made so much of by the Gestaltists? At present, science is beginning to have a little peep, though with utter dismay, into the manifold dimensions of, what often goes by the name of Oriental Occultism, to get out of the narrow confines of theoretical reason. Besides, as in the BG, the NT too believes in the need of 'Divya caksu' to have an experience of the inner life of God. For this by way of preparation man can do much on his part as the Yogic and Vedantic tradition teaches apart from the cultivation of the theoretical reason.

Another remark to be made is with regard to the speculations on relations. Vedantins seem to fight shy of speculating on the question of relation on the ground that the concept of relation is false as it seems to lead to infinite regress. But the question should be asked: How does the world remain a cosmos rather than a chaos with the innumerable kinds and varieties of things mostly with incompatible characteristics? Indeed the subatomic world, the macrocosm at large and the microcosm that man is, are mysteries of relations. And this experience is an occasion to ask the question whether the UR can be explained in terms of sajatiya-vijatiya-svagata-bheda-sunya. It is through the theory of subsisting relations that Aquinas tried to clear the theory similar to that of the Advaitins on the 'simplicity' of God out of contradiction. In point of fact in the Indian religio-philosophi-
cal tradition one could detect more trinitarian patterns especially theo-centric and cosmo-centric ones than in the Western religio-philosophical tradition.

II: FINAL CONCLUSION

In this chapter an effort was made to have an overall view of the concept of the UR in the NT. Since according to the Christian belief that the UR in the NT is a deeper, and more intimate and down-to-earth revelation of the same UR of the OT, and since the NT takes for granted many of the OT attributes of God, in the first part an effort was made to relate the UR of the OT with that of the NT. In the second part, we were preoccupied with the question whether the metaphysical concept 'total causality' can be applied to the UR in the NT. The Biblical belief that God created everything out of nothing has been pointed out as a conclusive argument for the affirmation of the total causality of God in the NT. It is but fitting that the God who is the total cause of everything be worshipped with total self-surrender.

The third part of this chapter was devoted to the study of the Triune or Trinitarian nature of the UR. Since the concept of incarnation in the NT has a direct bearing on this doctrine, our treatment of this topic had to be somewhat elaborate. Besides, it is this doctrine which is the basis of Christian personalism especially the doctrine of inter-personal sharing in love as one of the most fundamental requirements for salvation which could be understood as the interpersonal life of the Trinity for eternity. Our treatment on the Trinitarian a priori was to give an atmosphere and breadth of
perspective for an overall understanding of this doctrine, and also
to give a human grounding to this doctrine to make it meaningful and
relevant for man's religious life.