

THE TRINITY REFLECTED IN MAN

*Et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam: ad imaginem Dei creavit illum,
masculum et feminam creavit eos...*

Genesis I, 27

The secret of God's inner life was not revealed until the coming of Jesus Christ.

*In many and various ways in times past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets
but now, in our own day, He has spoken to us through His Son. (Hebrews I, 1)*

Only with Christ's appearance on Earth did God reveal His own nature as entailing a Trinity of Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost).

God must be one, as St Thomas shows, but nothing in philosophy precludes an opposition of relation of Persons in that One. *Relation* is real, an accident whose whole being is 'be-towards' another person or thing.¹ Relation is, St Thomas teaches, the least of all reality.

English retreat master, Fr Bernard Basset S.J. (1909-1988) used remark in his sermons how experimental psychology confirms the truth that each man, though one, gives every indication of being two. I think, 'I'll go into town'; then I think again, 'No. I'll leave it until tomorrow'. With whom am I conducting this conversation if not with myself? Every moment of the day a man manifests this division when he communes with his soul and reaches decisions. He may do it a thousand times. Shakespeare's plays are replete with monologues illustrating this remarkable characteristic of the human soul, as when Hamlet weighs the question of suicide with his 'to be or not to be'.

And there is a third aspect.

What standard do I use as I conduct this internal discussion with myself; as I make, and act on, the judgements that result—whether to act or not, whether to do this thing or that? What motivates me is, universally, my own good (whether actual or perceived), in other words, the love I bear myself. Every being loves itself, reflecting in this characteristic the love manifested by its Author in giving it *essence* and *existence*. Every being acts to preserve these gifts of God. So does man. We are made in love and love, not hatred, ought to colour the conduct of our lives in perpetual thanksgiving.

Thus man enjoys in his being a trinity of aspects which reflects the Triune nature of his Author. God made us in His own image and likeness

Michael Baker

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¹ So 'owner' and 'owned, and 'teacher' and pupil, designate relations no less than 'father' and 'son'.