

"And in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come"

Here is the summary of this chapter taken from the Foreword.

other words, the Spirit creates not only personal union but corporate communion between us and Christ and through Christ with the Holy Trinity, so that it is the Holy Spirit who creates and sustains the being and life of the Church, uniting the Church to Christ as his one Body. Regarded in this way, the doctrine of the Church is a function of the doctrine of the Spirit who proceeds from the Father through the Son, for it is in him and through the Son that we are brought near to God and are given to share in his divine life, light and love. Just as we have to regard the incarnation of the Son and Word of God as a movement of the saving love of God which penetrates into the ontological depths of our creaturely existence in order to redeem us, so we must regard the activity of the Holy Spirit as actualising our union and communion with God through Christ in the actual structure of our human, personal and social being. The Church as the Body of Christ is not to be regarded as merely a figurative expression, but as expressing an ontological

reality within humanity, which affects the whole of the human race. The Church is thus the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church which took its rise from the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and took its shape from the foundation laid by Christ once for all upon his apostles, and as such reaches throughout all peoples and all ages to the consummation of Christ's Kingdom.

1- EARLY UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE CHURCH

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

Did not repeat the expression, "We believe" before the article on the Church: this implied [a] the clauses on the Church do not constitute an independent set of beliefs, but follow from belief in the Holy Spirit. For the Church is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and to believe in the Holy Spirit is to believe in the existence of one Church in the Spirit.

[b] the clauses on the Church have to do with 'saving faith' for they have to do with the Gospel. As there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, so there is one body [Ephesians 4.5].

Through baptism, the Church has imprinted upon it the seal and character of the Trinity, and so it is honoured and revered.

Body of Christ and those baptised in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The Church is based on Paul's teaching about the body of Christ and also the baptism into the Name of the Trinity. It is also found in the Johannine writings of the NT, where the Christological [study of Christ] and the Pneumatological [study of the Spirit] conception of the Church are blended together. It is:

Chapter 7 - The One Church

The Spirit creates not only a personal union but also a corporate one. He sustains the being and life of the Church, uniting out to Christ as his one Body.

Doctrine of the Church is a function of the doctrine of the Spirit Who proceeds from the Father through the Son. So we are brought near to God.

As we think of the incarnation as penetrating into our actual depths of existence so the Spirit makes actual our union and communion with God.

Church is an ontological reality effecting the whole race.

Church is One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic.

[a] called into being by the proclamation of the Gospel
[b] indwelt by the Holy Spirit, in whom it is united to Christ and through him joined to God.

[c] not a human institution but founded by the Lord Himself and rooted in the Trinity.

[d] made of members of the Church are united to Christ just as He is with the Father

[e] what it is everywhere in the world, manifesting the saving union with God incarnate Jesus Christ. Ignatius of Antioch "wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the universal Church [ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία]

[f] holy Church because it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit

[g] this body, and it is what it is

[i] through the incarnation of the Son of God in Christ who has gathered up and reformed the human race in himself, and then,

[ii] through the event at Pentecost, God poured his own Spirit upon the apostles and disciples of the Lord Jesus giving birth/or re-birth to the Church and

[iii] making it participate in his own divine life and love.

Early centuries

Due to conflict with Gnosticism, the Church was focussed on its evangelical mission as one, catholic and apostolic, and thinking of itself as a believing and worshipping community centred on the apostolic preaching [κηρύγματα was Irenaeus' term].

Apart from Cyprian, 'On the Unity of the Church' there was not much written in the nature and function of the Church. The Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit occupied their centre of interest, both for faith and life, empirically as well as spiritually.

Paul's "body of Christ" teaching and trinitarian baptism gave a trinitarian context to belief. Belief in

"the Father, the Pantocrator [Almighty], and in Jesus Christ our Saviour, in the Holy Spirit the Paraclete, in the holy Church and in the remission of sins" Epistola Apostolorum.

"Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and in the holy Church, and in the resurrection of the flesh?" Hippolytus, Apost. Trad. 21

"As the second century advances, we come across more detailed citations of 'the rule of faith' i.e. the teaching inherited from the apostles and set out in freely worded summaries...An illustration may be quoted from a treatise of Irenaeus's which gives the very fair picture of intelligent catechetical instruction at this period. It is trinitarian without reference to the Church, but does make its statement of the 'rule [canon] of faith' J.N.D.Kelly, [1960] page 88-89

Irenaeus [130-202] - Church constituted by Holy Spirit: rejuvenating deposit

Irenaeus was preoccupied with the one and only God the Father Son and Holy Spirit; he was not so much thinking of the Church. And the Church was simply the place in 'space and time' where the knowledge of God becomes grounded in humanity.

[1] Expressing this the other way around, the Church is constituted by the Holy Spirit as the empirical [verifiable by experience] counterpart of his sanctifying presence and activity in our midst. For, in the Spirit we are made members of Christ the incarnate Son and through him have access to the Father. So the 'one holy Church' is the counterpart of the 'one Holy Spirit'.

[2] The Church is also understood by Irenaeus as the receptacle of the Gospel; proclaimed and handed on by the apostles. So the Church has the deposit, a continuous 'rejuvenating deposit', according to Irenaeus. It has "the faith, once for all delivered to the saints" Jude 3. This was the 'canon of truth' to all the witness and teaching to the Church. Irenaeus said:

This, then, is the order of the rule of our faith. . . . God the Father, not made, not material, invisible; one God, the creator of all things: this is the first point of our faith. The second point is this: the Word of God, Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, Who was manifested to the prophets according to the form of their prophesying and according to the method of the Father's dispensation; through Whom (i.e. the Word) all things were made; Who also, at the end of the age, to complete and gather up all things, was made man among men, visible and tangible, in order to abolish death and show forth life and produce perfect reconciliation between God and man. And the third point is: the Holy Spirit, through Whom the prophets prophesied, and the fathers learned the things of God, and the righteous were led into the way of righteousness; Who at the end of the age was poured out in a new way upon mankind in all the earth, renewing man to God.

Paul's teaching - Church entrusted with the deposit of faith

1 Tim 6.20; 2 Tim 1.12ff; 2.2,4; 4.3; Tit 1.9,13cf 2 These. 2.15; 3.6; Gal 1.9; 2.2,9; 1 Cor 11.23; 15.3; 2 Cor 11.3f; Rom 6.7; 1 Tim 4.6; Hebrews 3.1; 4.14; 10.23.

The Church is entrusted with a sacred deposit [παράθηκη] enshrined in the apostolic foundation of the Church, laid by Christ himself and empowered through his indwelling Spirit of truth, which the Church was bound to guard inviolate, and for which it had to render an account before God.

This expression 'deposit of faith' is understood in two ways,

[1] In a primary way: The whole deposit of faith was equated with the whole living act of Christ and his saving acts.

Pentecost was the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, where Christ clothed with his Gospel indwell the Church and united it to himself as his Body, the Word and Truth of the Gospel embodied uniquely in Christ also became embodied.

[2] In a subsidiary way: The deposit of faith was also connected with the apostolic foundation of the Church.

While this does not equate the apostolic witness with deposit of faith, it does mean that people may now have access to the deposit of faith only in the form, under the creative impact of the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit, that it has assumed once and for all in the apostolic foundation and tradition.

These two levels were held together, because they were inseparably coordinated in the deposit of faith. So, the NT kerugma [the preached message] referred not simply to the proclamation about Christ but also to the reality proclaimed, who is Jesus Christ who continues to be present and savingly at work through the kerugma. This was the treasure the Church had to preserve and defend against all misunderstanding; it was also the ground of its continuity and renewal. It was not reducible to a system of truths, normative doctrines or formulated beliefs.

Christ clothed with his Gospel - integrating the message with the Saviour

The truths about Christ, and who He is and what He has done for us, can't be separated from what is embodied in the Saviour Himself. As the word of God, even as proclaimed, He remains the saving act of God Himself. So, while the preached message of Christ can be preached, but He remains more than a message. He is the saving power of God and so He anchors the Church and gives the Church its own substance based on his Person as Saviour and Lord.

In the face of dualistic attempts to separate the two elements, Irenaeus saw the importance of holding the embodied nature and the truth of the Gospel together. So, there is an integration of the Gospel with Christ, And so, the doctrine the Church as a community called to believe in

Jesus Christ as its Saviour while it is brought into union and communion with God by its baptism into the Trinitarian Name.

Church tied to apostolic deposit

So the Church is tied to the apostolic message [Gospel] and so to the instruction in the faith delivered to the saints. Irenaeus, and particularly his making clear the contents of the deposit of the faith, set the Church up for later credal statements; and committed the Church to understand itself more and more within a Trinitarian base.

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all." Ephesians 4.4-6

Primary facts of the church are therefore;

- [a] one faith and one baptism
- [b] set in relation to the activity of one Spirit, the one Lord and one Father.
- [c] Church is marked by unity and holiness ,
- [d] and fidelity to the Trinity.

Christocentric doctrine of the Church

While the three witnesses attest to the truth of the matter [Deuteronomy 19.15; Matthew 17.16; 2 Corinthians 13.1]; it is the Word made flesh, the incarnate Son, who is the 'regulative centre' with reference to all the worship, faith and mission the Church.

This Christocentric doctrine of the Church, which came almost as a by-product whilst considering the Father and the Son, was crystallised as the Greek theologians of the 4th century did battle to preserve the evangelical substance of the faith.

At Nicea, in 325, the Church was not given a place in the Creed, but when it became clear that the nature of the church was at stake in consideration of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, then Constantinople in 381, added clearly to the belief in "one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church".

The doctrine of Church based on the internal relations between Father and Son

The key concept used in resolving the doctrine of Christ was the 'internal relation of the Son to the Father'. This aspect for consideration:

- [a] came to govern the doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ the incarnate Son.
- [b] Since the Sonship of the Christ falls within - and not outside - the Godhead, everything we say of the Church must be consistent with oneness in being [homoousion] between the Father and the Son
- [c] and so be an expression of the union and communion between God and man effected in the incarnate life and work of the Mediator. Athanasius had pointed to this union of God and man in Christ when he spoke of our 'deification' [θεωποιήσις] or adoption as 'sons of God in Christ'.
- [d] So the doctrine of the Church must be expounded in terms of its internal relation, and not some external relation, to Jesus Christ: for it is in Christ - and his inherent relation to the Father and the Holy Spirit - that the essential nature of the Church is found. See for e.g. the oneness between believers and the Lord as parallel to that between the Son and the Father [John 17.21-23].

The union between us and Christ; in incarnation and atonement

[i] There is a caveat to be aware of here: while the relation between Christ and the Father is the grounds for the relation between us and Christ, there is no identity in nature or equality between us and Christ, as there is between Him and the Father.

...I am ascending to my Father and your Father...

[ii] The union between us and Christ - is not one of being - but is one of adoption and grace made real to us in the gift of the Holy Spirit who comes to dwell in us as He dwells in God.

See **Athanasius** on the true Vine [John 15] -

"As the branches are of one substance [homoousion] with the vine, so we also having bodies that are connate [Lat. being born together] [ὁμογενῆ] with the Lord's body, receive our of his fullness and have that body as the root of our resurrection and salvation" Athanasius De sent. Dion. 10

[a] the body of Christ, which He took from us - as son of Mary, - is the first fruit of the Church which has already been raised up with him and made to sit with him in heavenly places

"since then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated... [Colossians 3.1a -"NIV].

[b] Union between us and Christ was established by incarnation [Christ in us] and atonement [Christ for us]. Since, for Athanasius, the atonement took place within the incarnate Person of Christ as one Mediator between God and man, then His high priesthood and his incarnation function together [Hebrews 10.5-7,10,18-20.]. Christ's merciful and deliberate identification with us means that, in his identification with us in our flesh of sin, in order to make our misery, death and judgement his own, and then through identifying reconciliation, he healed, renewed and sanctified us restoring us to union with God [Philippians 2.7-9].

It is in this light Athanasius dealt with Proverbs 8.22, a major text of the Asrians which they used to speak of Christ being merely a creature.

"The Lord created me a beginning [ἀρχήν] of his ways, for his works." Proverbs 8.22

- This, he said, had to do with the humanity of Jesus Christ who was specifically brought into being by God for our sakes to be the one Principle and Head of the whole economy of incarnation, redemption, regeneration and sanctification.

- He was made the ἀρχή [first principle, origin, source] of the new humanity

- He became one body with us to gather up our corrupt humanity into bodily existence in himself, healing and renewing it within himself through the perfection and holiness of his own human nature and life.

- He makes our humanity, in himself, to partake of the Holy Spirit with which he has been anointed and sanctified as man for our sakes and thereby unites our humanity, through himself, with the Godhead.

- So the Church is regarded as constituting all who are reconciled to God in one body through the cross and are made one in Christ. They are united with his humanity in such a way that he now comprises both in himself, their humanity and his own, as 'one new man' for he is in them as they are in him [Ephesians 2.14-22].

Little more was added about the doctrine of the Church by the Cappadocian fathers. Although **Basil** offered an understanding of the Church as he dealt with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Hilary of Poitiers was influenced by Athanasius, the Cappadocian fathers and Irenaeus. He thought of Christ as

- 'he is himself, the Church, embracing it all in himself through the mystery of his body.'

- Hilary begins to make a distinction - which will later be picked up by Rome - between the Church as a mystical body of Christ and as an external fellowship of believers. Nothing much is said about the organisation of the Church - except against the background of the North African legalist conception of the Church in the face of laxity and schism. When

Cyprian writes of this matter he was not concerned with ecclesiastical structure but with the unity of the Church being preserved.

In the Greek fathers, primacy was given to the truth of the Gospel. They thought in terms of *κοινωνία* [communion] and less in terms of ecclesiastical structure.

2 - THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN DOCTRINE AND STRUCTURE [FAITH AND ORDER].

As the Church expanded into the Mediterranean world, how was it to take root and develop within societies that were shaped by patterns of culture and codes of law?

This is the same question really, that we have been considering as to how the Gospel was to be brought into faithful expression in Graeco-Roman culture. It raised the same issues which led to penetrating into ways of knowing [epistemology], human ways of thinking and speaking [anthropology] and world views [cosmologies]. This clash had brought about Gnosticism from without and heresy from within.

Throughout the 4th century, we see that what gave concrete shape to the church was incarnation, the economic condescension of God in Jesus Christ to be one with us in the concrete realities of our own human and social life. And that He had come to save us within the structures of our creaturely existence in space and time.

Was the incarnation a temporary episode in the purpose of God or permanent?

Although he supported the homoousion, Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra [d.374], thinking no doubt of 1 Corinthians 15.22-28,

'held that the kingdom of Christ would eventually be handed over to the Father, who would then be "all in all", which implied that the whole incarnation economy would come to an end' TFT 274

- This would call into question the co-eternity and co-equality of the three divine Persons.

- It would also strike at the very root of the belief that the Church is the Body of Christ, who will come again and make all things new.

- So, it was rejected at Constantinople with the words "whose kingdom shall have no end".

- It also struck at the awareness that the Church was incorporated into Christ as his body as being the dwelling place of the Spirit of the Father and the Son. The place [*χώρα* and *τόπος*] where the one God brings us into union with himself and so constitutes as a sanctified community.

How far did the Catholic Church manage to translate its victories over the dualistic thinking?

Up to Nicaea and Constantinople rarely well. The 'homoousion' had made way for a realistic and unitary basis of the interpretation and proclamation of the gospel of the incarnation

of the Son of God in Jesus Christ. And this led to a clear understanding that it was precisely the visible, empirical Church in 'space and time' that was held to be the Body of Christ.

However dualistic thinking about the world and the so-called difference between a physical and a sensible gospel, a spiritual and eternal gospel, and these made way for a distinction to be drawn between the visible [earthly] Church - seen as a passing similitude of the real thing - and invisible Church of enduring spiritual reality, which Origen spoke of as the mystical 'bride of Christ'.

If the 'homoousion' was ignored however, and the realist and empirical doctrine of the Church was not fully grasped, then a door opened for the identification of the Church with:

- a spiritualised, timeless and spaceless magnitude and
- for the on going life and mission of the empirical Church to be regarded as subject to the laws that control human society this world.

Such a state of affairs entangles the Church with the institutions of society and law and eventually entangle the Church in a distinction between a juridical Society on the one hand, and the mystical body on the other hand. In this way, rejecting that the Church is, through the sanctifying and renewing presence of the Holy Spirit, the empirical Church is the Body of Christ.

To Clarify:

- The basic principle in the doctrine of the Church, upon which it depended was its internal relation to Jesus Christ, for it is in Him that the Church is rooted.
- In confronting Arianism which held that:
 - the relation between the Father and the Son was merely of an external kind, based on unity of will and not internal to the one being of the Godhead
 - this implied an external relation between the saving work of Christ and the Person of Christ and so, an external and moral relation between Christ and the Church
 - hence the Church was not regarded as the Body of Christ, but as a community formed through the voluntary association of like-minded people

Nicene theology however, held that the relation between the incarnate Son and the Father was internal to the one eternal being of God, and was not an external creaturely or moral relation but one which was intrinsic to the essential nature of God.

"And in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. ..."

The continuing actualisation of the Church takes place through holy baptism, where, by the power of the Spirit people are initiated into union with Christ, sealed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and re given to share in the communion of the Trinity.

[1] The Oneness of the Church

The visible or empirical Church which has come down from the apostles. It was called into being by the Word of God and traced back to the self-giving of God in his Holy Spirit. It is not made by human hands but by God Himself.

So, due to its divine origin, throughout space and time the Church is one. It is constituted as Church by the presence the Christ and his Spirit.

It embraced the people of God under the old covenant and well as the new. For the Holy Spirit spoke through the apostles and the prophets. 'Through one Head in their midst the two

peoples scattered to the ends of the earth are assembled into one God' [Irenaeus]. So there is one church stretching from Adam to Christ, but gathered up in Him as its Head.

[2] The Holiness of the Church

The Church is separated from secular society for fellowship with God. Its holiness does not derive from its members, but from the holiness of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is objectively grounded in the glory and purity God's being; yet as the God who comes into the midst of creatures without annihilating them. God sanctifies Himself in the midst of his people. He is worshipped as "Holy Lord".

The Church is brought into being through Our Lord's assumption of our fallen and enslaved humanity into himself, and the self-sanctification of Christ the Holy One in its midst brings the holiness of the Holy Spirit to bear upon it in conviction and judgement and righteousness; yet, nevertheless the Church is justified in Christ and made holy with his holiness.

The holiness of the Church derives them from Christ - who is our righteousness - and the church is

[a] chosen by God and set apart as a spiritual house and a royal priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ

[b] therefore, attracting awe and veneration to itself as the community in which Christ has set his name and as the unique place God is present to us by his Spirit.

[c] careful to not usurp the place of Christ or arrogate to itself any holiness and authority that belong to him alone.

[3] The Catholicity of the Church

- Catholic = universal, and for the church to be catholic she must be one and holy for unity and holiness interpenetrate one another. This is so because as the body of Christ, with Christ as her organising Head, with the Holy Spirit, is united to one God and Father.

- Embraces the all dimensions people and their existence throughout space and time. For the Church must ever be the same in all ages and places.

- Catholicity and the apostolic faith went together; and since the apostolic faith cannot change its objective nature as the self-revelation of God in through the Son and in the Spirit, it can never alter its nature.

- The Creed was setting out to restore to the Church its ancient health and true godliness.

- It is rightly called "church because it calls forth and assembles together all men" Cyril.

- The catholic church has to do with the universal range of the incarnation and the atonement, for he who became flesh in Jesus Christ was identical with the very Word of God by whom all things were created and consist. Implies that the Gospel of redemption through the life, death and resurrection of Christ proclaimed by the church has a universal range. To separate the creation from redemption was to limit the saving range of the incarnation and atonement and so to destroy the essential message of the gospel. Catholic here then, describes people faithful to this message.

- Catholicity refers to the wholeness and fullness of the Church in Christ.

- It seeks to fulfil the mission to proclaim the Gospel to mankind.

[4] The Apostolicity of the Church

- Refers back to the original foundation of the Church once and for all laid by Christ upon the apostles,

- It also refers to the interpenetration of the existence and mission of the Church in unswerving loyalty to that apostolic foundation. "As the Father sent me, so I send you". Jesus is the Apostle in the absolute sense.

- Apostles are 'witnesses' who He promised to empower. So the apostles are the "hinge" on which the incarnation revelation, objectively given in Christ, is linked to the continuing membership of the Church.

- The apostles have the 'deposit of faith' - it is not however, the church which is the pillar and ground of truth, but the Gospel and the Spirit of Life [1 Timothy 3.15?].

Irenaeus realised that the apostolic deposit of faith spanned two levels

[a] the authoritative reception and interpretation of it embodied in the apostolic foundation of the Church

[b] the objective and life-giving reality on which it rested, the whole saving fact of God himself.

Here, [a] is subordinate to [b] because it is only in Christ - and not out of itself - that the Church is continuously sustained.

This grounding and rooting of the Church in Christ came through the foundation that He laid for it in his apostles, to whom

[a] he gave magisterial [masterful, lordly] authority over the Church.

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 27.18

28 "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials;

29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you

30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Luke 22.28-30

17 ¶ "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

John 17.17-19

21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

*22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and *said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.*

23 "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained." John 20.21-23

[b] and through whom the Word and truth of the Gospel were to be transmitted

8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Acts 1.8

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28.19-20

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. Mark 16.15-16

To say that the Church is 'apostolic' means

[i] that it is one and the same with the Church founded once for all by Jesus Christ in the apostolate. Apostolicity has to do with the continuing *identity* of the Church.

[ii] it is continuously occupied with the interpretation, exposition and application of Holy Scripture, for that is the way the Church opens its mind - in every generation - to the life, direction and correction of the Word of God.

At Nicaea, the assembled bishops and theologians wanted to yield themselves to the control of the apostolic tradition; wrestling with the Holy Scriptures to express what they were compelled to think and hold within the context of apostolic tradition. And all this was under the impact of God's self-revelation made known through the Word and Spirit of Christ.

3 - THE IMPACT OF THE BELIEF IN DAILY LIFE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

"...We confess one baptism..."

When they confessed "**one Baptism**" they acknowledged that

[a] It was through baptism, that the "rule of truth" was received by the Church to be retained unchanged. This was the command of the risen Lord.

[b] The inner connection between baptism and the wholeness of the apostolic and catholic faith - not least in the belief in the Holy Trinity into Whose name people were baptised - the lay behind the confession 'one baptism'.

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4.4-6

[c] the whole Gospel could be regarded as concentrated in "one baptism of the remission of sins".

[d] It is in baptism, according to Athanasius, that "the fullness of the mystery is lodged, for it is given in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

[e] baptism pointed to

- Jesus Christ

[i] Jesus Christ as the one Lord of his own Body. So, baptism meant the incorporation of the baptised into Christ as members of his Body

[ii] a relation in being is understood between Christ and his Body. this was understood as somatic [body-wise] and not just pneumatic [spirit-wise] because the Church is not the Body the Spirit but of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. For the mystery of the Church has to do with the deep, ontological relation to Christ

"in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily." [ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς] [Colossians 2.9]

- the one Spirit

[i] for it is in one Spirit that the Church has access to the Father and through the *κοινωνία* [fellowship] of the Holy Spirit the the the Church shares in the incarnate mystery of Christ.

[ii] for the church is the temple of God, in which the Spirit dwells. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the Church is progressively actualised - constantly made really what it is - among the people of God.

[ii] Jesus promised his disciples that he would return as the risen and ascended Lord to dwell in the Church, along with God the Father.

16 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

18 ¶ "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

19 "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.

20 "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

22 Judas (not Iscariot) *said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me. John 14.16-24

20 ¶ "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. John 17.20-21

So the Holy Spirit is not only the bond of unity between the divine Persons in the one being of God, but the bond of unity between God and human beings as they are baptised into the one Lord and are united with him and one another in their faith.

...for the remission of sins;

When they confessed "**for the remission of sins**" they acknowledged that:

[a] baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit initiated people into all the divine blessings of forgiveness of sins, resurrection and eternal life; they become effective. We may consider this in two, quite proper, ways:

[i] Along with Cyril of Jerusalem, who stressed the subjective event, we can focus on the mystical replica of what took place in Christ, an inner awareness of the spiritual reality of baptism.

[ii] Or, as with Athanasius, who stressed the objective event, we can think of our adoption in Christ to be sons of God as taking place in the Spirit. We are thinking not so much what is taking place in ourselves, but we are viewing it as taking place in the Spirit who is in God. This is consistent with the vicarious work of Christ. When He received the Spirit it was not for his sake; but for ours. So, our humanity was baptised, anointed, sanctified and sealed in him.

[b] When we are baptised we are baptised in him. So, our baptism is a partaking, through the Spirit, in the one unrepeatable baptism of Christ which he underwent, not just in the Jordan river, but throughout his life, death resurrection, all on our behalf. It is that vicarious baptism which is what is behind the "one baptism" of the Creed.

New Testament word is βάπτισμα and not βαπτισμός

The New Testament uses its own word for what is meant by Christian baptism. It avoided the word βαπτισμός for that meant repeatable rites of ablution [washings] or ceremonial cleansing. But

βάπτισμα referred not to the rite but to the reality signified by baptism - which was the unique saving event in Christ upon which the rite rested.

We see a similar thing in the word κήρυγμα [the effect of the act of preaching] which refers not to the proclamation so much as at the reality that is proclaimed, for it was not the proclamation [the preaching] that was the saving event but the Jesus Christ himself.

The New Testament even used the word βάπτισμα for John the Baptist's baptising action. For that too, was a rite that was transformed and fulfilled by Christ, when he submitted himself to John for baptism to fulfil all righteousness and to be consecrated by the Spirit as the Lamb of God come to bear away the sins of the world through the atoning sacrifice of the Cross.

This is surely what Paul has in his mind when he wrote:

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Romans 6.3-10

Here Paul is teaching on baptism and its significance.

[a] It was not the rite of baptism that he had uppermost in his mind, but what it was that we were initiated into when baptised. It was what had taken place in Christ vicariously on our behalf: for, as to was at the Jordan that there our humanity was baptised in him, so it was our humanity that was crucified and resurrected in him. When he died and was buried, we died and were buried with him; and when he rose from the grave we rose in him. All this is the truth sealed upon us in "one baptism" that the Creed speaks about.

[b] The central truth of baptism is lodged in Jesus Christ himself. Baptism is the sacrament of that reconciling and atoning exchange in the incarnate Saviour. This is the objective way of understanding baptism where we are directed away from ourselves to what took place in Christ in God. So it is necessarily once for all and is not repeated. When ideas of re-baptism or a second baptism were thrown up in the Church they were always emphatically rejected - for they were seen to be re-crucifying the Son of God afresh.

...one faith, one baptism... Ephesians 4.4-5

It was on the grounds of the "one faith" was linked to the "one baptism" that the Nicene theologians refused to accept Arian 'baptism' as Christian: for it was not baptism into the name of the Triune God. It was baptism into the name of the Father and two creatures, or in the Semi-Arian sense it was baptism into the name of the Father and the Son and a creaturely Spirit. So repentant heretics were required to undergo Christian baptism and in that sense their baptism into the Trinity was not a second, but their first baptism. The seal of the Spirit at baptism was understood to be unrepeatable and indelible.

Baptism's gospel "content" - forgiveness...resurrection...life

Irenaeus had made it clear that the incarnate Son may be called "Salvation, Saviour and Saving Activity" and he is 'salvation made flesh'. That is saving grace is not detachable from his Person, Word and Act. It is through "one baptism", which we have in common with Christ, or rather, that He has in common with us, that we share in all that God has for us.

12 ¶ giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1.12-14

For baptism into Christ is, at the same time, to be also to be delivered out of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, in whom we have forgiveness.

Saving benefits:

[a] flow from union with Christ through the one baptism and one Spirit and are enjoyed in one Body.

[b] They are not benefits that we can have outside of Christ but only in Christ and so they may not be experienced in separation from one another, for they cohere invisibly in him.

[c] Nor can they be enjoyed by separated individuals, but only as individual share together in one baptism of Christ and his Spirit. Hence these statements are in the Creed in relation to the belief in the one Church.

we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come"

Forgiveness is not in word only but is enacted in concrete reality of human existence by the resurrection.

[a] For He had come in the flesh and he rose in flesh or in body from the dead. So the Son of God established a binding relation between his divine reality and mankind. He did not just bridge the gap between the Creator and creature, he triumphed completely over the separation between man and God due to sin and alienation.

[b] Further, Christ's resurrection in body demonstrated that the saving work he accomplished was fulfilled within the reality of our bodily existence and in such a way that it set that reality on an entirely new basis in regeneration or renewal of human being in the risen Lord.

[c] To be so united with him is to share in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

"Our resurrection is stored upon the Cross" Athanasius Contra Arianos 1.43

So there is no longer any place for corruption and death.

"Now that the Saviour is risen in his body, death is no longer terrible; for all who believe in Christ trample over it as if it were nothing, and choose rather to die than deny their faith in Christ. They know that when they die, they are not lost, but live and become incorruptible through the resurrection."

Athanasius, De Incarnatione 9

It is not so much a promise for the future, but is a declaration now what has already taken place in Christ. What we know now, includes his consummation when he returns to judge the quick and the dead, and unveil the great regeneration [παλιγγενεσία] he has accomplished of all creation - visible and invisible alike.

Apostolic witness: one advent, one kingdom

Strictly speaking there is one saving advent [παρουσία] of the incarnate Son which reached from his coming in great humility to his coming in great glory - 'whose kingdom shall have no

end'. The word παρουσία speaks of all three: the coming, the arrival. and the presence of Christ. By this last we mean the presence of the one who has come and who is to come again.

So as we live in the Church, we live in the advent-presence of Christ, already partaking of the the great regeneration of the future, and share in its blessings with one another.

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