Modern Christians generally trust this development; and all of them must admit that it seeks to answer a question arising out of the elements of New Testament belief. There is one God; but also there is one Lord ; how are the two related? The strongest claim that can be put forward for the doctrine of the Trinity is that it is loyal to Christ without being disloyal to the Divine unity. Concurrently, there was a speculative or philosophical interest; and some prefer to defend Trnitarianism as a reconciliation of the personality with the infinity of God. But the biblical materials worked up in the doctrine betray little sign of any except a religious interest. We may take it as well established that St Paul (2 Cor. viii. 9: Phil. ii. 5-11) taught the personal pre-existence of Christ. A. Μ. Fairbairn (*Phil. of Christian Religion,* p. 476) has argued that Paul could not have given this teaching unless he had known of Christ’s advancing the claim. Fairbairn barely refers to the Fourth Gospel in this connexion, and it is doubtful whether Matt. xi. 27 will bear such weight as he puts upon it. Of course, we might seek to infer an unwritten tradition of Christ’s words; but without pedantic ultra-Protestant devotion to written scripture, one may distrust on scientific grounds the attempt to reconstruct tradition by a process of inference. If such records as John vi. 36, viii. 58, xvii. 3, 4 can be taken as historical, we may feel certain that Jesus taught his pre-existence. If not, modern Christian minds will hardly regard the doctrine as more than a speculation. Yet we should mention another argument of some weight. There is no trace that any Jewish Christian critics challenged St Paul’s Christology. This may point to its being the Christology of the whole Church. If so, who could first teach it except the one Master?

W Bousset has suggested that the title “ Son of Man" (Dan. .vii. 13), used by Jesus, may have come to imply for all early Christians personal pre-existence. W. Wrede and others have more boldly conjectured that the Christ’s pre-existence had become an accepted element in Jewish Messianic—it certainly occurs in one portion of the Book of Enoch and in 4 Ezra@@1—and chat Paul merely trans­ferred to Jesus a doctrine which he had held while still in the Jews’ religion. “Son of God” might seem to carry us further still; but the Old Testament makes free use of the title as a meta­phorical honour, and we have no proof that any Jewish school interpreted the phrase differently.

The rival type of early theology is known as Adoptionism or Adoptianism *(q.υ.).* According to it, the man Jesus was exalted to Messianic or divine rank. It has been argued that the narrative of Christ’s baptism points to an Adoptionist Christology, and that the genealogies of Jesus (through Joseph) presuppose this type of belief, if not a still lower view of Christ's person. It has further been argued that the narratives of the Virgin birth (Matthew, Luke) are an intermediate stage in Christology. When pre-existence is clearly taught (Paul, John), virgin birth, it is suggested, loses its importance; another theory of Divine Sonship has established itself. This trenchant analysis is, however, not universally admitted. Further development of doctrine weeded out the last traces of Adoptionist belief,@@2 though Christ’s exaltation continued to be taught in correlation to His humilia­tion (Phil. ii. 8), and became in due time a dogmatic locus in Protestantism.

The lineaments of Greek Christian theology show themselves more clearly in Justin Martyr than in the other Apologists, but still more plainly in Irenaeus, who, with little specu­lative power, keeps the safe middle path. Tertullian’s legal training as a lawyer was a curious coincidence, if nothing more, and those legal concepts which show themselves strongly in him have done much to mould the Western type of Christian theology. He had great influence on the course of Latin theology, partly through his own writings, but still more through the spell he cast upon Cyprian. At Alexandria, Clement and his great pupil Origen state Chris­tianity in terms of philosophy. Origen’s treatise, *De Principiis,* is the first and in some respects the greatest theo­logical system in the whole of Church history. The Catechetical school was primarily meant for instructing adult inquirers into Christianity. But it had attained the rank of a Christian university; and in this treatise Origen does not furnish milk for babes; he writes for himself and for like-minded friends. Wildly conjectural as it may seem, his thinking—though partly Greek and only in part biblical—is

completely fused together in his own mind. Nor does it ever suffer from lack of thoroughness. It may be summed up in one word as the theology of free will.

Unfaltering use is made of that conception as a key to all religious and moral problems. Usually, apologists and divines are hampered by the fact that, beyond a certain limited range, men cannot be regarded as separable moral units. A new world, after death, may be called in to redress the balance of the old ; but anomalies remain which faith in a future immortality does not touch. Origen called in a second new world―that of pre-existence. All souls were tried once, with equal privilege; all fell, save one, who steadily clave to the Logos, and thus merited to become in due time the human soul of Jesus Christ. No higher function could be given to free will; unless, by an extravagance, some theologian should teach that the Almighty Himself had merited His sovereignty by the virtuous use of freedom. On the other hand, a shadow is cast upon the future by Origen’s fear that incalculable free will may again depart from God. Human birth in a grossly material body is partly due to the pre-temporal fall of souls; here we see in Origen the Greek, the dualist (mind and matter), the ascetic, and to some extent the kinsman of the Gnostics. But he breaks away again when he asserts that God ever wills to do good, and is seeking each lost soul until He find it. Even Satan must repent and live.@@3

It was not possible that this brilliant *lour de force* should become the theology of Christendom. Origen contributed one or two points to the central development of thought; *e.g.* the Son of God is “ eternally ” begotten in a continuous process. But while to Origen creation also was a continuous process, an unspeculative orthodoxy struck out the latter point as incon­sistent with biblical teaching; and we must grant that the eternal generation of the Divine Son adds a more distinctive glory to the Logos when it is no longer balanced by an eternal creation. While the Church thus lived upon fragments of Origen’s wisdom, lovers of the great scholar and thinker, who had dominated his age, and reconciled many a heretic to his own version of orthodoxy, must submit to have him branded as a heretic in later days, when all freedom of thought was falling under suspicion.

For a time, freedom in scholarship lingered in the younger rival of Alexandria, the school of Antioch; though speculation was never so strong there. Alexandria, on the other hand, tended to be unduly speculative and allegorizing even in its scholarship. The antagonism of the two schools governs much of the history of doctrine; and behind it we can trace in part the contrast between Church Platonism and what churchmen called Aristotelianism.

Arius, a Libyan by birth, of Antioch by training (though earlier than the greatest days of that theological school), and a presbyter of Alexandria, represents the working of Aristo­telianism. His chief opponent, Athanasius, is probably the greatest Christian, if Origen is the greatest thinker, among all the Greek fathers. Few will deny that Athanasius stood for the Christian view of the questions at issue, upon the prin­ciples held in common by all disputants. Arius repre­sented a shallow if honest intellectualism. He found it necessary to think clearly and define sharply; but Athanasius found it necessary to believe in a divine redemption. According to Harnack, Athanasius simplified the faith of his time by fastening on the essential point—human immortality or . “ deification ” through the Incarnation of true God. Cosmic theories of the work of a Logos subordinate to the Father fell into the background. *'0μοούσιος,* successfully discredited earlier as a Sabellian formula by Paul of Samosata, was now found to be the one unambi­guous term which asserted that Christ was truly God (Council of Nicaea. a.d. 325) and ύπδστασιs (Lat. *persona)* became the technical name for each of the Divine Three.. Athanasius himself tried to draw’ a distinction between affirming the Son σμοούσιος*,* and calling Him *μovooύσιos.* Yet it seems plain that he considered Sabellianizing reduction of the Divine Persons to phases or modes in the unity a lesser evil than regarding the Logos (with Arius) as a creature, however dignified. This was made plain by the leniency of Athanasius towards Marcellus of Ancyra. In those days there was no word for “ Person ” as modern philo­sophy defines it; perhaps no word would have served the purpose of the Church if precisely so defined. The result is, however, that a critic of doctrine sometimes questions whether Athanasianism offers a definition of the mystery at all, or only

@@@1 The passages referred to have sometimes, but with no great probability, been regarded as Christian infiltrations.

@@@2 Adoptionism is one species of Monarchianism.. The other species, Modalism, has its most important type historically in Sabellianism. And the name Sabellianism is often loosely applied (*e.g.* to Swedenborgianism) to any modalistic Monarchianism (Christ one phase of God. Not three persons in the Godhead, but a threefold revelation of a God strictly one in person).

@@@3 Harnack takes a different view of Origen ; the certainty of ultimate salvation overbears free will with a sort of physical neces­sity. He also thinks that in Origen’s esoteric doctrine the historical Christ becomes unimportant. That is a severe judgment.