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I.

TERTULLIAN AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

SECOND ARTICLE.

IN the last number of this REVIEW* it was pointed out that any approach which Tertullian may have made toward formulating a doctrine of a really immanent Trinity will be revealed by attending to the responses he makes to five questions. These questions are: (1) Whether he intends a real distinction of persons, in the philosophical sense of the term, by the distinction he makes between the divine "persons"; (2) Whether he supposes this distinction of persons to belong to the essential mode of the divine existence, or to have been constituted by those prolations of the Logos and Spirit which, according to his teaching, took place in order to the creation and government of the world; (3) Whether he preserves successfully the unity of God in the distinction of persons which he teaches; (4) Whether he conceives deity in Christ to be all that it is in the Father; and (5) Whether he accords to the Holy Spirit also both absolute deity and eternal distinctness of personality. We shall endeavor now to obtain Tertullian's responses to these questions.

(1) The interest with which we seek Tertullian's answer to the

* THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, October, 1905, pp. 529-557.

first of these questions, great enough in itself, has been largely increased by a suggestion made by Dr. Charles Bigg, which has been taken up and given additional significance by Prof. Adolf Harnack. Dr. Bigg suggested* that Tertullian may have borrowed the word "persona" which he applies to the distinctions in the deity, not from the schools, but from the law courts. Harnack added to this the further suggestion† that the term "substantia" in Tertullian may well have had a similar origin. On these suppositions it was thought possible that Tertullian by his formula of three persons in one substance may have meant very little more than the Monarchians themselves might supposedly be able to grant. In his *History of Dogma* Harnack returns to the matter‡ with some persistency and, we might almost say, dogmatism. Tertullian he asserts, (iv, 144),§ was not dealing with philosophical conceptions, but employing rather "the method of legal fictions." "It was easy for him," continues Harnack, "by the help of the distinction between 'substance' and 'person' current among the jurists, to explain and establish against the Monarchians, not alone the old, ecclesiastical, preëminently Western formula, 'Christus deus et homo,' but also the formula, 'pater, filius et spiritus sanctus—unus deus.' 'Substance' (Tertullian never says 'Nature') is, in the language of the jurists, nothing personal; it rather corresponds to 'property' in the sense of possession, or 'substance' in distinction from appearance or 'status'; 'Person,' again, is in itself nothing substantial, but rather a subject having legal standing and capable of holding property (*das rechts- und besitzfähige Subject*), who may as well as not possess various substances, as, on the other hand, it is possible that a single substance may be found in the possession of several persons." "Speaking juristically," he remarks again (iv, 122),|| "there is as little to object to the formula that several persons are holders of one and the same substance (property), as to the other that one person may possess unconfused several substances." That is to say, apparently, when Tertullian describes God as "one substance in three persons," we may doubt whether any other conception floated before his mind than that one piece of property may very well be held in undivided possession by three several individuals; and when he speaks of our Lord as one person with two substances, we may question whether

* *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 165.

† *Theolog. Litteraturzeitung*, 1887, 5, 110.

‡ See especially E. T., Vol. II, p. 257 note, 282; Vol. IV, p. 57, 122 sq., 144 sq.

§ German, ed. I, 1887, Vol. II, p. 307. || German, as above, p. 288.

he meant more than that the same individual may very well appear in court with two distinct "properties."

The theory certainly lacks somewhat in definiteness of statement,* and leaves us a little uncertain whether its application to Tertullian's teaching results in lowering the conception we suppose him to have attached to the term "person" or that we suppose him to have attached to the term "substance." The fact seems to be that Harnack, at least, himself vacillates in his application of it. Despite the passages already quoted, he sometimes speaks as if when Tertullian says that "Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three persons in the unity of the Godhead," we should raise the question whether by "persons" he means anything more than "capacities"—that is, whether the persons were conceived by him as much more than simply "nomina" (Harnack, iv, 57; *Adv. Prax.*, 30), and whether, therefore, his doctrine was not at least as nearly related to Monarchianism as to Nicene Trinitarianism (so Harnack, iv, 57; note). On the other hand, when he says that "God and man, two substances, are one Christ," we seem to be expected to raise the question whether by "substance" he means much more than "status, virtus, potestas"—that is, whether he really conceived the individual Jesus Christ as including in Himself two unconfused natures, or only two aspects of being. The sense of confusion produced by this attempt so to state the theory as to make it do double duty—and that, in each instance of its application—is already an indication that it is not easy to adjust it precisely to the facts it is called in to explain. What we are asked to do apparently is not merely to presume that Tertullian derived his nomenclature from the law courts; but to suppose that he was not quite sure in his own mind in what sense he was borrowing it. In other words, we are to suppose that he began by borrowing the terms, leaving the senses in which he should employ them to be fixed afterward; instead of beginning, as he must have done, with the conceptions to express which he borrowed or framed terms.

The real difficulty with the theory, however, is that it seems to be entirely without support in Tertullian's own usage of the words, and much more in his definitions and illustrations of their meaning. Harnack urges in its support little beyond the two somewhat irrelevant facts that Tertullian is known to have been a jurist,

* Mr. BETHUNE-BAKER, in his *The Meaning of Homoousios in the 'Constantinopolitan' Creed*, pp. 21 sq., and especially in his *Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 138 sq., gives a lucid statement of the theory, and adopts it up to a certain point, but remarks that "it is going too far to describe Tertullian's conceptions as in any way controlled by juristic usage."

and so might well be familiar with juristic language, and that he used by predilection the term "substance" rather than "nature."* On the other hand, that Tertullian is here speaking as the heir of the Apologists and is dealing with conceptions not of his own framing, that, moreover, the whole drift of his discussion is philosophical, and that, above all, his own explanations of his meaning—as, for example, in the illustrations he makes use of—fix on the terms he employs a deeper sense, put this whole theory summarily out of court. It has accordingly made very few converts, and has

* The introduction of "substance" instead of "nature" appears to have been due to an attempt to attain greater precision of terminology. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book VII, chap. vi, §11 (*Post-Nicene Fathers*, I, iii, 112), explicitly testifies that this use of "substance" was of comparatively recent origin: "The ancients also who spoke Latin, before they had these terms, that is, 'essence' or 'substance,' which have not long come into use, used for them to say 'nature.'" In an earlier treatise, *De Moribus Manich.* (388), chap. ii, §2, Augustine had made the same remark (*Post-Nicene Fathers*, iv, 70): "Hence the new word which we now use, derived from the word for being—essence, namely, or, as we usually say, substance—while, before these words were in use, the word nature was used instead." The whole matter is exhibited again in *De Haer.*, xlix: "The Arians, from Arius, are best known for the error by which they deny that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of one and the same nature and substance, or to speak more precisely, essence, called in Greek *οὐσία*"; and again, in the *Contra Sermon. Arian.* xxxvi, "The Arians and Eunomians dub us Homoousians, because against their error we defend the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by the Greek word *ὁμοούσιον*, that is, as of one and the same substance, or to speak more precisely, essence, which is called *οὐσία* in Greek; or, as it is more plainly (planius) expressed, of one and the same nature." That is Nature is the *common* word; Essence the *exact* one but stilted; Substance the nearest natural equivalent of Essence. The word "essentia" was as old as Cicero (*Sen.*, *ep.* 58 *ad init.*; cf. *Quint.*, 2. 14. 2; 3. 6. 23; 8. 3. 13), but never commended itself to the Roman ear, which esteemed it harsh and abstract: it was left, therefore, to an occasional philosopher to employ and then scarcely without apologies (*Sen.*, *ep.* 58. 6; *Quint.*, 2. 14. 1. 2). The more concrete "substantia" (apparently a post-Augustan word, cf. *Quint.*, 2. 15. 34) became, therefore, the usual term in careful writing. The two are constantly used as exact synonyms: *e.g.*, Apuleius, *Dogm. Plat.*, I, vi, writes: "The *οὐσίαι* which we call *essentiae*, [Plato] says are two, by which all things are produced, even the world itself. Of these one is conceived by thought only, the other may be attained by the senses. . . . And *primæ quidem substantiæ vel essentiae*. . . ." Nature was simply the popular term and was held to be less exact, and was therefore avoided by careful writers. HARNACK'S notion that Tertullian's preference of *substantia* has some deep theological significance seems, therefore, peculiarly unfortunate. For a refutation of it on its merits see STIER, *as cited*, pp. 76 sq. Mr. BETHUNE-BAKER (*The Meaning of Homoousios*, etc., pp. 16 and 65; cf. also *Journal of Theological Studies*, IV, 440) also appears to overstrain the distinction between 'Substance' and 'Nature' in Tertullian and his successors. Their preference for 'substantia' is sufficiently accounted for by the greater precision of the word and its freedom from *qualitative* implications (cf. Quintilian's distinction of 'substantia' and 'qualitas' in 7. 3. 6) The 'natura' of a thing suggests implications of kind; 'substantia' raises no question of kind and asserts merely reality.

more than once been solidly refuted.* In the aspect of it in which it comes especially before us in our present discussion, it certainly seems impossible to give it a hospitable reception.

If there is anything, indeed, that seems clear in Tertullian's exposition it is that he deals seriously with the personality which he attributes to the three distinctions of the "economy."† This is indeed the very hinge on which the whole controversy which he was urging so sharply against the Monarchian conception turns. Whatever care he exhibits in guarding the unity of the divine substance, therefore, by denying that any *separatio*, or *divisio*, or *dispersio*‡ has taken place or could take place in it, is necessarily matched by the equal emphasis he places on the reality of the *distributio*, *distinctio*, *dispositio*§ that has place in it, and by virtue of which He who is eternally and unchangeably one (*unum*) is nevertheless not one (*unus*), but three,—not, indeed, in status, substance, power, but in grade, form, species, aspect.|| The point of importance to be noted here is not merely that Tertullian calls these distinctions "persons" (which he repeatedly does),¶ but that he makes

* *E.g.*, briefly, by SEEBERG, *Lehrbuch d. DG.*, 1895, I, 85–87; and very copiously by J. STIER, *Die Gottes- und Logos-Lehre Tertullians*, 1899, pp. 74–78. Even LOOFS says (*Leitfaden z. S. d. DG.*, Ed. 2, p. 87): "These formulas show that Tertullian learned something in the course of his polemics, but are so thoroughly explicable as formalistic reworking of the Apologetic and Asian Tradition, that there is no need to derive them artificially from the juristic usage (against HARNACK)."

† Cf. DORNER, *Person of Christ*, I, ii, 59: "As he gazed on the incarnate Logos, he felt certainly convinced of His personality. For it was not a mere impersonal power, but a divine subject that had become man in Christ," etc. Cf. also p. 24, note 2.

‡ Chaps. iii, viii, ix.

§ Chaps. ix, xiii.

|| Chap. ii: "Custodiatur *οικονομία* sacramentum, quæ unitatem in trinitatem disponit, tres dirigens, tres autem non statu sed gradu, nec substantia sed forma, nec potestate sed specie, unius autem substantiæ et unius status et potestatis."

¶ Mr. BETHUNE-BAKER, *Early History of Doctrine*, etc., p. 139, note² (cf. *Homœousios*, etc., pp. 17–18), remarks, to be sure: "Tertullian seems, however, to avoid the use of *personæ* in this connection"—that is to say, when "speaking as regards the being of God of one substance and three persons"—"using *tres* alone to express 'the three' without adding 'persons' in the case of the Trinity; just as later Augustine, while feeling compelled to speak of three 'persons,' apologized for the term and threw the responsibility for it upon the poverty of the language (*de Trinitate*, V, 10, vii, 7–10). Tertullian has the definite expression only when it cannot well be omitted—*e.g.*, when supporting the doctrine of the Trinity from the baptismal commission, he writes, 'nam nec semel, sed ter, ad singula nomina in personas singulas tinguimur' (*Ad. Prax.*, 26)." There seems, however, to be as frequent use of the term as there would be any reason to expect, and Tertullian explains (ch. xii) that when he speaks of the distinction as "one" or "another" it is on the ground of "personality." See the long list of passages in HARNACK, IV, 123.

them persons by whatsoever designation he marks them. The whole of Scripture, he declares, demands this of its readers: it attests clearly the existence and distinction of the Trinity, and indeed establishes the Rule that He who speaks and He of whom He speaks and He to whom He speaks cannot possibly be the same; nor does it fail to place thus by the first and second the third person also.* Only on the basis of this tri-personality of God, he urges, can the plural forms in which God speaks of Himself in Scripture be explained:† and how can one issue what can justly be called a command except to another? "In what sense, however, you ought to understand Him to be another," he adds, "I have already explained—on the ground of personality, not of substance—in the way of distinction not of division."‡

In this whole discussion, Tertullian's watchword was necessarily *the economy*: and the economy was just the trinity in the unity. Had he not felt bound to assert the economy, there had been no quarrel between him and the Monarchians, whose watchword was the unity. As it was, he required to begin his polemic against them with the distinct positing of the question: and this involved the distinct enunciation of the doctrine of plural personality in the Godhead. We have always believed and do now still believe, he says,§ that there is One only God—but—and it is in this "but" that the whole case lies—but "under the following *οἰκονομία*, as it is called,—that this One God has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself . . . who also sent from heaven, from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Ghost." This is Tertullian's anti-Monarchian Confession of Faith. His complaint is that men behaved as if the unity of the Godhead could be preserved in no other way than by representing the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost as the very selfsame person, thus in their zeal for the unity neglecting the *sacramentum οἰκονομίας*,|| which distributes the unity into a Trinity. On the contrary, he insists,¶ although the true God is one only God, He must yet be believed in with His own *οἰκονομία*—which with its numerical order and distribution of the Trinity is a support to, not a breach of, the true unity; because, he explains,** such a Trinity, flowing down from the Father through intertwined and connected steps does not at all

* Chap. xi.

† Chap. xii, *ad initium*.‡ Chap. xii, *ad finem*. Cf. xxi, near the beginning. Cf. DORNER, I. ii, 24 note².

§ Chap. ii.

|| Chap. ii.

¶ Chap. iii.

** Chap. viii, end.

disturb the monarchy, while it at the same time guards the state of the economy. Men must not be permitted to extol the monarchy at the expense of the economy, contending for the identity of the Father and Son, whereas the very names, Father and Son, plainly declaring their distinct personality, proclaim the economy*—lest under pretence of the monarchy men come to hold to neither Father nor Son, abolishing all distinctions in the interest of their monarchy.† Thus the discussion runs on, upholding the economy against the falsely conceived monarchy, to end in the same note,‡—in the declaration that the Son, the second name in the Godhead, and the second degree of the Divine Majesty, has shed forth on the Church in these latter days “the promised gift, even the Holy Spirit—the third name in the Godhead and the third degree of the Divine Majesty, the Declarer of the one Monarchy of God, but at the same time the Interpreter of the Economy to every one who hears and receives the words of the new prophecy; and the Leader into all truth such as is in the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost, according to the mystery of the doctrine of Christ.” To reject the economy is, in effect, he charges, to revert to Judaism,—for to Jews not to Christians it belongs “so to believe in one God as to refuse to reckon besides Him the Son, and after the Son the Spirit”§ The distinctive mark of Christianity to him, thus, is that the unity of God is so held that God is now openly known in His proper names and persons.||

Among the passages in which Tertullian exhibits with especial emphasis the distinction which he erects between the Father, Son and Spirit under the name of persons there is a striking one¶ in which he is replying to the Callistan formula which made the Father not indeed suffer in and of Himself, but participate in the suffering of the Son. He makes his primary appeal here to the impassibility of God as such, and then falls to magnifying the distinction between the Father and the Son. “The Father,” he asserts, “is separate from the Son, though not from God.” The meaning seems to be that the Son is the name specifically of the incarnated Logos, and the incarnated Logos—as God, indeed, one in substance with the Father—is, as incarnated, something more, viz., flesh as well; and on this side of His being, which is the only side in which He suffered (for the Son, under the conditions of His existence as God, Tertullian allows, is as incapable of suffering as the Father) is not one with God, but separate from

* Chap. ix.

§ Chap. xxxi.

† Chap. x.

|| Chap. xxxi

‡ Chap. xxx.

¶ Chap. xxix.

Him. The Monarchian might certainly reply that on this showing the Father Himself, if conceived to be incarnate, might be as truly said to share in the sufferings of the Son, or the flesh, as the Son, incarnated, could be said to have suffered. If the sufferings of the flesh were not of the flesh alone, but the incarnated Deity stood in some relation to them, this would be, on Tertullian's own showing, as conceivable of the Father, deemed incarnate, as of the Son. Tertullian, therefore, attempts to help his answer out by means of a simile. If a river, he says, is soiled with mud, this miring of the stream does not affect the fountain, though the river flows from the fountain, is identical in substance with it, and is not separated from it: and although it is the water of the fountain which suffers in the stream, yet since it is affected only in the stream and not in the fountain, the fountain is not contaminated, but only the river that has issued from the fountain. We are not concerned now with the consistency of Tertullian: how he could say in one breath that the Son as God is as impassible, being God Himself, as the Father, and in the next that it is the very water from the fountain—the very substance of God in its second distinction—that is affected by the injury which has befallen it. What it concerns us to notice is, that in this illustration Tertullian very much magnifies the distinction between the persons of the Godhead. The Son is so far distinct from the Father that He may be involved in sufferings which do not reach back to or affect the Father. The stream may be the fountain flowing forth: but the stream is so far distinct from the fountain, that what affects it is no longer felt in the fountain. Here is the individualization of personal life in an intense form, and an indication of the length to which Tertullian's conception of the personal distinction went.

In another passage* Tertullian announces the same results without the aid of a figure. He is engaged in discriminating between mere effluxes of power or other qualities from God and the prolation of a real and substantial person: in doing this, he magnifies the distinction between the original source and the prolation. Nothing that belongs to another thing is precisely that thing: and nothing that proceeds from it can be simply identified with it. The Spirit is God, no doubt; and the Word is God; because they proceed from God, from His very substance. But they are not actually the very same as He from whom they proceed. Each is God of God: each is a *substantiva res*; but each is not *ipse Deus*; but only

* Chap. xxvi.

“so far God as He is of the same substance with God Himself, and as being an actually existing thing, and as a portion of the Whole.”

In still another passage Tertullian is repelling the Monarchians' scoff that as a word is no substantial thing, but a mere voice and sound made by the mouth, merely so much concussed air, intelligible to the ear as a symbol of thought, but in itself nothing at all: therefore (so they argued) the Word of God—the Logos—is to be conceived not as a substantial thing distinguishable from the Father, but only as a symbol of intelligible meaning. Tertullian reproaches them for being unwilling to allow that the Word is a really substantive being, having a substance of its own,—an objective thing and a person,—who, by virtue of His constitution as a second to God, makes, with God, two, the Father and the Son, God and the Word. He argues on two grounds that the Logos must have this substantial existence. The one is that He came forth from so great a substance: God who is Himself the fullness of Being, cannot be presumed to prolate an empty thing. The other is that He is Himself the author of substantial things: how could He, who was Himself nothing, produce things which are realities, with substantial existence? Whatever else this argument proves, it certainly proves that Tertullian conceived of the distinction between God the Father and God the Son as attaining the dignity of distinct individuality. “Whatever, therefore,”—he closes the discussion with these words—“whatever, therefore, has the substance of the Word, that I designate a Person. I claim for it the name of Son, and, recognizing the Son, I assert His distinction as second to the Father.”

(2) It may remain, no doubt, a question whether Tertullian did not conceive this distinction of persons to have been the result of those movements of the divine substance by which successively the Logos and the Spirit proceeded from the fountal source of deity, so that the economy was thought of as superinduced upon a previous monarchy. It is thus, indeed, that he has been commonly understood.* In this case, while certainly he would take the personal distinctions seriously, he might be supposed not to look upon them as rooted essentially in the very being of God. God in Himself would be conceived as a monad: God flowing out to create the world and to uphold and govern it, as becoming for these purposes a triad. The “invisible God” would be a monad; the “visible God”—the God of the world-process—would become a triad.

It may be that it was after a fashion somewhat similar to this

* So, *e.g.*, DORNER, HAGEMANN, HARNACK, STIER.

that Tertullian was naturally inclined to think of God and the distinctions he conceived to exist in His being; that is to say, his thought may have run most readily in the moulds of what has come to be called an economic as distinguished from what is known as an immanent Trinitarianism. It was along these lines that the Logos-speculation tended to carry him, and his hearty acceptance of that speculation as the instrument with which to interpret the deposit of Christian truth might well lead him to conceive and speak of the Trinitarian distinctions as if they were merely "economical." But the deposit of truth subjected to interpretation by the Logos-speculation was not quite tractable to it, and it is interesting to inquire whether Tertullian betrays any consciousness of this fact,—whether in his dealing with the data embedded in the Rule of Faith he exhibits any tendency to carry back the distinction of persons in the Godhead behind the prolations by which the Logos and Spirit proceeded from it for the purpose of producing the world of time and space. So loyal an adherent of the Rule of Faith might well be expected to deal faithfully with its data, and to seek to do something like justice to them even when they appeared to be intractable to his ordinary instrument of interpretation. And so bold a thinker might well be incited by the pressure of such data to ask himself if there were nothing in the *fons deitatis* itself which might be recognized as a kind of prophecy or even as a kind of predetermination of the prolations which ultimately proceeded from it—if the very issue of these prolations do not presuppose in the Godhead itself a certain structure, so to speak, which involved the promise and potency of the prolations to come,—if, in a word, the distinctions brought into manifestation by the prolations must not be presumed to have preëxisted in a latent or less manifest form in the eternal monad, out of which they ultimately proceeded.

That some indications exist of such a tendency on Tertullian's part to push the personal distinctions behind the prolations into the Godhead itself is perhaps universally recognized. It is frequently denied, to be sure, that this tendency goes very far. Harnack's form of statement is that it gives to Tertullian's teaching "a strong resemblance to the doctrine of an immanent Trinity, without being it."* Tertullian, he says, "knew as little of an immanent Trinity as the Apologists," and his Trinity "only *appears* such because the unity of the substance is very vigorously empha-

* *Op. cit.*, iv, 122.

sized."* Johannes Stier holds essentially the same opinion. "Of an immanent Trinity in Tertullian,"† he argues, "there can be no talk, because he is absolutely explicit that a plural personality came into existence for the purpose of the world. Without the world, the primal unity would have abided. It is indeed true that the Logos and the Spirit were immanent in the unity of the divine original essence from the beginning, but nevertheless not—and this is the point—in a *personal* manner. From the beginning God, the divine original-essence, was alone; alone precisely as person (cf. *Adv. Prax.*, 5). From this (first) person, no doubt, absolutely immediately, the Logos (*ratio, sermo*) was distinguished as *subject*, but not yet as (second) person—he became person only pretemporally-temporally. And as for the Spirit, the matter is perfectly analogous in His case (cf. *Adv. Prax.*, 6). The Trinity of Tertullian is purely (against Schwane, p. 164, and others) economical, conceived solely with reference to the world; nothing is easier to see if we have the will to see it (cf. also Gieseler, p. 137; Harnack, I, 536; Huber, 117)." Nevertheless Harnack not only can speak of Tertullian as "creating the formulas of succeeding orthodoxy," but can even declare that "the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity already announced its presence in him even in its details."‡ And Stier is forced to acknowledge that Tertullian came within a single step of an immanent Trinity.§ "There needed, we must admit," he remarks, "only a single step more to arrive at the eternal personal being of the *sermo* in God, to establish an eternal, immanent relation between the divine original-essence and His Logos as two divine personalities, to advance thence to the immanent Trinity. But Tertullian stopped with conceiving the *sermo* from eternity, it is true, along with the *ratio*,—and the discernment of this already itself means something,—but still only as the impersonal basis (*Anlage*) of a future personal *sermo*." The reason of Tertullian's failure to take the last step Stier, like Hagemann|| and others before

* *Op. cit.*, ii 261. Similarly Loors remarks: "These formulas anticipate the later orthodoxy: it is all the more necessary to emphasize how strongly subordinationist they are: the 'economical' trinity here is just as little an eternal one as in the case of the older theologians of Asia Minor" (*Leitfaden*, etc., 2d ed., p. 89)

† *Op. cit.*, p. 95, note.

‡ iv, 121.

§ P. 81.

|| *Die Römische Kirche*, etc., pp. 173 sq. On p. 175 HAGEMANN writes as follows: "With the last idea"—the idea namely that the *sermo* is inseparable from the *ratio*, and therefore even *before* creation God was not "alone," but His "Word" included in his "reason" was with him—"Tertullian was advancing on the right road to the recognition of the eternal and personal existence of the Word in God. The Word has its ground in the Being of God, falls in the circle of His inner life, is

him, finds in the fact that Tertullian connected the personal *sermo* so intimately with the world that had he conceived the one as eternal, he must needs have conceived the other as eternal also: and as he was not prepared to think of the world as eternal, neither could he ascribe eternity to the personal Logos (cf. *Adv. Prax.*, 6 sq.).

Possibly there is a *petitio principii* embedded in the terms in which this reason is stated. Tertullian certainly connected the prolate Logos so closely with the world that we could scarcely expect him to separate the two. But whether that involves a similar inseparable connection between the personal Logos and the world is precisely the question at issue. The prolation and the personality of the Logos seem to be for the moment confused by our critics, doubtless because it is judged that the two went together in Tertullian's mind: but this judgment cannot be justified by merely repeating it. Meanwhile we note that it is allowed that Tertullian did conceive the *sermo* as eternally existent along with the *ratio*, and this is rightly regarded as a matter of some significance and as equivalent at least to the postulation of something in the eternal mode of existence of God which supplies the basis (*Anlage*) for a future personal Logos. What this something was Stier does not indeed tell us, contenting himself merely with denying that it amounted in Tertullian's thought to a *personal* distinction, prior to the prolation of the Logos. He uses a German term to designate it—*Anlage*—which might be fairly pressed to cover all that Tertullian expresses as to his personal Logos, when he speaks of it as a *distributio*, *distinctio*, *dispositio*, *dispensatio*: and Stier can scarcely mean less than that Tertullian recognized in the eternal mode of existence of the Godhead such a distinction, disposition, distribution, dispensation, as manifested itself in the outgoing from Him of a *portio* into a truly personal distinction when He was about to create the world. Less than this

inseparably given with Him. But he had shut himself off from the full and right understanding of the matter itself, by introducing into the investigation from the start the world-idea. He could not maintain, therefore, the full and eternal existence of the Word, without at the same time admitting the full and eternal existence of the world itself; and since this was to him an impossible idea, he could not carry through the former in its whole strictness. To him the Logos hung together with the world, and his conception of the latter was decisive for the conception of the former also. To be sure, he came near to the conviction of the eternity and the full divine nature of the Logos; but just as he was about to reach the goal, the world-idea hinderingly intruded in the way. No doubt it is to be said that his insight in this matter was injuriously affected by too great dependence on the Apologists." Again, on p. 177, summing up: "Enough: in order not to allow also the eternity of the world, he had sacrificed the eternity of the Son and taught, as a progressive realization of the world-idea, so also a progressive hypostatizing of the Logos."

would come perilously near to saying merely that the Son was potentially in the Father before He actually came into existence from the Father, which, as George Bull repeatedly points out, is no more than can be said of all created beings, all of which (according to Tertullian also), before they were produced actually, preëxisted in the thought and power of God.* By as much as Stier cannot mean that Tertullian recognized in the original mode of the divine existence no deeper basis for the personal prolation of the Word than there was for the production of the creature-world, by so much must he be supposed to mean that Tertullian recognized that the very structure, so to speak, of the Godhead, from all eternity, included in it some disposition by virtue of which the prolation of the Logos, and afterward that of the Spirit, were provided for as manifestations of an eternal distinction in the Godhead. This certainly leaves only a short step to the recognition of an inmanent Trinity; so short a step, indeed, that it is doubtful whether it does not lead inevitably on to it. The question is narrowed down at any rate to whether distinctions eternally existent in the Godhead, and afterward manifested in the prolate Logos and the prolate Spirit as truly personal, were conceived as already personal in the eternal mode of existence of God or as made such only by the acts of prolation themselves. We imagine that the average reader of Tertullian, while he will not fail to note how much the prolations meant to Tertullian's thought, will not fail to note, on the other hand, that these prolations rested for Tertullian on distinctions existent in the Godhead prior to all prolation, as the appropriate foundations for the prolations; nor will he fail to note further that Tertullian sometimes speaks of these ante-prolation distinctions in a manner which suggests that he conceived them as already personal.

The whole matter has been solidly argued, once for all, in the

* *E.g., Defensio, etc.*, III, ix, 3 (E. T., p. 486). DORNER does not shrink from this assimilation of the preëxistence of the Logos and of the world: to Tertullian, he affirms explicitly, "the Son has in the first instance a mere ideal existence, like the world-idea itself" (I, ii, 64), and therefore "became a person for the first time at, and for the sake of, the world" (74). "There is no place," in Tertullian's view, he says, "for a real hypostatic sonship in the inner, eternal essence of God: all that he has tried to point out, is the existence in God of an eternally active potency of Sonship" (63), "a real potency of Sonship, . . . impersonal but already a personific principle" (69). It does not appear what purpose these latter phrases serve beyond exhibiting a possible doubt in DORNER's own mind whether it is quite adequate to Tertullian's thought to represent him as assigning no more real preëxistence to the Logos than to the world—whether, in other words, the Logos, in his view, did not exist in some more real form than mere potentiality.

tenth chapter of the third book of George Bull's *Defense of the Nicene Creed* (written in 1680, published in 1685). That this notable book is marred by special pleading, and that Bull shows a less keen historical conscience, as Baur puts it,* or as we should rather say, a less acute historical sense, than Petavius, his chief opponent in this famous debate, we suppose can scarcely be denied. In the main matter of dispute between these two great scholars, we can but think Petavius had the right of it. The position which Petavius takes up,† indeed, appears to involve little more than recognizing that the literary tradition of the Church, prior to the Council of Nice, was committed to the Logos Christology: while Bull undertakes the impossible task, as it seems to us, of explaining the whole body of ante-Nicene speculation in terms of Nicene orthodoxy. The proper response to Petavius would have been to point out that the literary tradition, running through "Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus, Tertullian, Lactantius," together with "certain others, such as Origen,"‡ is not to be identified at once with the traditionary teaching of the Church, but represents rather a literary movement or theological school of thought, which attempted with only partial success a specific philosophizing of the traditionary faith of the

* *Die christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit*, I, 110, where a sober estimate of the value of the work may be found. Cf. also SCHAFF, *Hist. of the Christian Church*, II, 544. MEIER (*Die Lehre von der Trinität*, etc., II, 76-77) looks upon BULL's effort to save the doctrine of the Trinity as a counsel of despair in the midst of a general decline of faith in this doctrine. Under the feeling that the doctrine could not be based on Scripture, since it is nowhere taught explicitly in Scripture, BULL undertook to show that it had for it at least the consistent testimony of antiquity. Even so, however, it was only a curtailed doctrine that he undertook the defense of. "BULL found himself also forced to make concessions; he perceived himself that he could maintain only the consubstantiality and the eternity of the Son, while allowing that differences existed as to special points—as e.g., whether the Son was begotten from the Father as respects substance: and he considers that the ground of the differences among the Fathers which PETAVIUS adduced was due to an attempt to find scholastic definitions among them. In his own faith he reverts to the pre-Augustinian period, . . . and sees himself driven back upon the Logos-idea, . . . and in this driftage we see the beginning of the destruction of the dogma even in the Church itself." It probably is a fact that every attempt to revert from the Augustinian to the Nicene construction of the Trinity marks a stage of weakening hold upon the doctrine itself. With all BULL's zeal for the doctrine, therefore, his mode of defending it is an indication of lack of full confidence in it, and in essence is an attempt to establish some compromise with the growing forces of unbelief. The same phenomenon is repeating itself in our own day: cf. Prof. L. L. PAINE's *The Evolution of Trinitarianism*, the assault of which on the Augustinian construction of the doctrine is a sequence of a lowered view of the person of Jesus gained from a critical reconstruction of the Bible.

† *De Trinitate*, I, 5, 7, quoted in BULL, *Introduct.*, 7 (E. T., p. 9).

‡ This is the enumeration given by PETAVIUS, *de Trinitate*, i, 5, 7.

Church. The measure of success which Bull achieved in explaining this literary tradition in harmony with the traditional faith of the Church—which was rather to be sought in the Rule of Faith and the naïve Christian consciousness of the times—is due to the constant reference which the writers with whom he dealt made in their thinking to the Rule of Faith, of which they were always conscious as underlying their speculations and supplying the norm to which they strove to make their conclusions as far as possible conform; as well as to the survival in the final product which we know as Nicene theology of such elements of the Logos-speculation as could be assimilated by it. He was able, therefore, to show repeatedly that the very men whom Petavius adduced as teachers of the inadequate formula betrayed here and there consciousness of elements of truth for which this formula, strictly interpreted, left no place; and also that language much the same as theirs—and conceptions not far removed from theirs—might easily be turned up in writers of unimpeachable orthodoxy living after the Council of Nice. In both matters he has done good service. It is unfair not to remember that these earlier writers wished to be and made a constant effort to remain in harmony with the Rule of Faith; and that we do not obtain their whole thought, therefore, until we place by the side of their speculative elaborations the elements of truth which they also held, for which these speculations nevertheless made no place. They were in intention, at all events, orthodox; and the failure of their theory to embrace all that orthodoxy must needs confess was an indication rather of the inadequacy of the theory to which they had committed their formal thinking, than of any conscious willingness on their part to deny or neglect essential elements of the truth. And it is useful, on the other hand, to be reminded that their unwearying effort to do justice—as far as their insight carried them—to the whole deposit of the faith bore its appropriate fruit, first, in the gradual, almost unnoted passing of their theory itself into something better, as the Nicene orthodoxy supplanted because transcending it, and next in the projection into the Nicene orthodoxy itself of many of the characteristic modes of thought and forms of expression of the earlier theory—conditioning both the conceptions and the terms used to embody them which entered as constituent elements into the new and better construction. Meanwhile, to fail to appreciate this historic evolution, and to attempt to interpret the inadequate conceptions of the earlier thinkers as only somewhat clumsily expressed enunciations of Nicene orthodoxy, is a grave historical fault, and could not fail to fill Bull's book with expositions

which give it as a whole the appearance of an elaborate piece of special pleading. Only when the writer with whom he chances in any given passage to be dealing had become sharply aware—or at least uneasily conscious—of one or another of the elements of truth embodied in the Rule of Faith for which the speculation he had adopted as yet provided no place, and was really striving to take it up into his theory, make even by violence a place for it, and do justice to it, is Bishop Bull's exposition altogether admirable. This is the case with Tertullian in the matter of the eternal distinctions in the Godhead, and the result is that Bishop Bull, in the chapter in which he deals with this subject, has performed a delicate piece of expository work with a skill and a clearness which leave little to be desired.

He begins the discussion by adducing what is perhaps the most striking of the passages in which Tertullian appears explicitly to deny the eternity of the personal distinctions in the Godhead. It is to be found in the third chapter of his treatise against Hermogenes and runs as follows: "Because God is a Father and God is a Judge, it does not on that account follow that, because He was always God, He was always a Father and a Judge. For He could neither have been a Father before the Son, nor a Judge before transgression. But there was a time when there was no transgression, and no Son, the one to make the Lord a Judge, and the other a Father." Here certainly, apart from the context, and that wider context of the author's known point of view, there appears to be a direct assertion that there was a time before which the Son was not: and this falls in so patly with the Logos-speculation which assigns a definite beginning to the prolated Logos, that it is easy to jump to the conclusion that Tertullian means to date the origination of the Logos at this time. Such a conclusion would, however, be erroneous; and it is just in the doctrine of the prolation of the Logos at a definite time that the passage finds its juster explanation. (It emerges that the term "Son" in Tertullian's nomenclature designates distinctively the prolate Logos.) He therefore asserts nothing in the present passage concerning the eternity or non-eternity of personal distinctions in the Godhead. He affirms only that God became Father when the Logos was prolated, seeing that the Logos became Son only at his prolation. Bishop Bull animadverts not unjustly on a tendency of Tertullian exhibited here to overacuteness in argument and to readiness to make a point at some cost: but he fairly makes out his case that in the present instance Tertullian is to be interpreted in this somewhat artificial sense—as if one should say there was a

time when God was not the Creator, because creation occurred at a definite point of time, before which therefore God was existent indeed, but not as Creator.* So God became Father, not when the Logos came into existence, but when He became a Son. By this neat piece of exposition Bishop Bull seeks to remove the antecedent presumption against Tertullian's admission of eternal distinctions in the Godhead, which would arise from an explicit assertion on his part that there was a time before which the Logos was not—that is to say, the prolate Logos. He shows that this is only Tertullian's way of saying that the Logos was not always prolate.

He then wisely proceeds at once to a discussion of the principal passage, wherein Tertullian seems to recognize personal distinctions in the Godhead prior to the prolations of Logos and Spirit. This is, of course, the very remarkable discussion in the fifth chapter of the tract *Against Praxeas*, in which Tertullian gives, as it were, a complete history of the Logos.† In this passage Tertullian begins by affirming that “before all things”—alike before the creation of the world and the generation of the Son, that is to say, the prolation of the Logos—God was alone (*solus*). He immediately corrects this, however, by saying that by “alone” he means only that there was nothing extrinsic to God by His side: for not even then was He really alone (*solus*), seeing that He had with Him that which He had within Himself, namely His Reason. This Reason, he continues, is what the Greeks call the Logos, and the Latins are accustomed to call Sermo—though Sermo is an inadequate translation, and it would be better to distinguish and say that Reason must antedate Speech, and that God rather had Reason with Him from the beginning, while He had Speech only after He had sent it forth by utterance—that is to say, at the prolation. This distinction, however, adds Tertullian immediately, is really a refinement of little practical importance. The main thing is that “although God had not yet sent His Word, He nevertheless already had Him within Himself, with and in Reason itself, as He silently considered and determined with Himself what He was afterward to speak through the Word.” Thus even in the silence of eternity, when God had not yet spoken, the Word in its form of Reason was with God, and God was therefore not alone. To illuminate his meaning, Tertullian now introduces an illustration drawn from human consciousness. He asks his readers

* See above, October, 1905, p. 551.

† This passage is discussed by BULL in Book III, chap. x, §§ 5-8. At an earlier point—III, v, 5—he had expounded the same passage more briefly, but not less effectively.

to observe the movements that go on within themselves when they hold silent converse with themselves; whenever they think, there is a word; whenever they conceive, there is reason. Speaking thus in the mind, the word stands forth as a "conlocutor," in which reason dwells.* "Thus," adds Tertullian, "the word is, in some sort, a second within you, by means of which you speak in thinking, and by means of which you think in speaking: this word is another."† Now, he reasons, all this is, of course, carried on in God on a higher plane (*plenius*), and it is not venturesome to affirm that "even before the creation of the universe‡ God was not alone, seeing that He had within Him both Reason and, intrinsic in Reason, His Word, which He made a second to Himself by agitating it within Himself." This Word, having within Himself Reason and Wisdom, His inseparables, He at length put forth (*protulit*) when it at length pleased Him to create the universe, that is, to draw out (*edere*) into their own substances and kinds the things He had determined on within Himself by means of this very Reason and Word. §

Nothing can be clearer than that in this passage Tertullian carries back the distinction manifested by the prolate Logos into the depths of eternity. It already existed, he says, within the silent God before the generation of the Word, that is, before the prolation of the Logos. He explicitly distinguishes its mode of preëxistence from that of things to be created, which "having been thought out and disposed," by means of that Word who was also the Reason of

* There may be a reminiscence here, and there certainly is a parallel, of the passage in PLATO'S *Sophist*, 263 E, where thought is called "the unuttered conversation of the soul with itself," and we are told that "the stream of thought flowing through the lips is called speech."

† Ita secundus quodammodo in te est sermo, per quem loqueris cogitando, et per quem cogitas loquendo; ipse sermo alius est."

‡ Ante universitatis constitutionem.

§ It is interesting to observe how closely Marcellus of Ancyra, in this portion of his system, reproduced the thought of Tertullian in this chapter. To Marcellus, says LOOFS (*Sitzungsberichte d. k. p. Akad. d. Wissenschaften*, 1902, I, 768-9), "the Logos is eternal. . . . And this Logos of God is without any *γένεσις*. Before the time of the creation of the world, He was simply in God; the one God, along with whom was nothing, 'had not yet spoken' (*ἡσυχία τις ἦν*). When, however, God addressed Himself to create the world, τότε ὁ λόγος προσελθὼν ἐγένετο τοῦ κόσμου ποιητής, ὁ καὶ πρότερον ἔνδον νοητῶς ὀνομάζων αὐτόν. This προσελθὼν in sequence to which came in the πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εἶναι of which John i. 1 speaks, did not, however, bring to a close the ἐν Θεῷ εἶναι: the Logos remains *δυνάμει ἐν τῷ θεῷ*, and only *ἐνεργεία* was He πρὸς τὸν θεόν; προσῆλθεν δραστηκῆ ἐνεργεία. How this is to be understood, Marcellus—with all sorts of cautions—has illustrated by the analogy of the human Logos: ἐν γὰρ ἔστι καὶ ταῦτδ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ λόγος καὶ οὐδενὶ χωριζόμενος ἑτέρῳ; ἢ μόνῃ τῇ τῆς πράξεως ἐνεργεία." This reads (so far) almost like an exposition of the fifth chapter of the tract *Against Praxeas*.

God, existed "in Dei sensu," and only needed to be drawn out in their substances and kinds,—whereas He, the Word, from eternity coexisted with God as "a second," "another." All this Bishop Bull points out with great lucidity. He directs attention first to Tertullian's sharp discrimination at the outset between God's eternal existence "alone," so far as external accompaniment is concerned, and his inner companionship—so that He was never "alone," but ever had with Him, *i.e.*, within Him, His "fellow," the Logos. He next calls attention to the fact that by Reason in this context Tertullian does not mean God's faculty of ratiocination, by virtue of which He was rational, but a really subsisting *ἔννοια*—the *verbum mentis* of the schools. Still further, he animadverts on Tertullian's admission that the distinction he was drawing between the Reason and the Word was not drawn by Christians at large who, translating the Greek word "Logos" in John i. 1 by the Latin *Sermo*, were accustomed to say simply that "the Word was in the beginning," *i.e.*, eternally, and that "with God." In doing this he adverts to Tertullian's admission that he lays little stress on this distinction himself, and is fain himself to allow that the "Word" is coeternal with "Reason"—that is to say, of course, the "inner Word," not yet uttered for the purpose of creation: and further, that he allows that the Word consists of Reason, and existed in this His hypostasis or substance before He became the Word by utterance. Then, arriving at the apex of his argument, he points out that "Tertullian teaches that the Word, even anterior to His mission and going out from God the Father, existed with the Father as a Person distinct from Him." This, (1) because God is said not to be "alone"; but He only is not alone with whom is another person present. If through all eternity God was unipersonal, and there was not in the divine essence one and another, then God was alone. (Hence God was not unipersonal, since He is affirmed not to have been alone.) (2) Because in the illustration from human experience Tertullian distinguishes between the quasi-personality of the human inner word and the real personality of the divine inner Word. The whole drift of the illustration turns on the idea that "what occurs in man, God's image, is merely the shadow of what occurs really and in very fact in God." Finally, Bull argues that Tertullian clearly identifies the "Reason that coexisted with God from eternity with the Word prolated from Him at a definite point of time, and makes one as much personal as the other, conceiving nothing to have occurred at the prolation but the prolation itself,—the Word remaining all the while, because God, unchangeable. This argument is expanded in a supplement-

ary reason which Bull gives for his conclusion by the help of a passage which occurs in the twenty-seventh chapter of the tract *Against Praxeas*. In this passage Tertullian argues that the Word, because God, is "immutabilis et informabilis"—unchangeable and untransformable: since God never either ceases to be what He was or begins to be what He was not. How, then, Bull asks, can Tertullian have believed that the Word, who is God, began to be a person only at His prolation, or, indeed, for that is what is really in question, began at that time only to be at all?* From such passages, Bull justly suggests, we may learn that by all that Tertullian says of the prolations of the Logos and Spirit he does not mean to detract in any way from the unchangeableness of the divine persons concerned in these acts: nothing intrinsic was, in his view, either added to or taken from either of the two, seeing that each is the same God, eternal and unchangeable. "Tertullian does indeed teach"—thus Bull closes the discussion—"that the Son of God was made, and was called the Word (*Verbum* or *Sermo*) from some definite beginning; *i. e.*, at the time when He went out from God the Father, with the voice, 'Let there be light,' in order to arrange the universe. But yet that he believed that that very hypostasis, which is called the Word (*Sermo* or *Verbum*) and Son of God, is eternal, I have, I think, abundantly demonstrated."†

(3) There has been enough adduced incidentally in the course of the discussion so far, to make it clear that Tertullian in insisting on the distinction of persons in the Godhead—and in carrying this distinction back into eternity—had no intention of derogating in any way from the unity of God. If in his debate with the Monarchians his especial task was to vindicate the *οὐνομωμία*, the conditions of that debate required of him an equal emphasis on the "monarchy." And he is certainly careful to give it, insisting and insisting again on the unity of that One God whom alone Christians worship. This insistence on the unity of God has come, indeed, to be widely represented as precisely the peculiarity of Tertullian's doctrine of God. Says Loofs:‡ "Tertullian's Logos doctrine waxed into a

* In support of this take such a statement as the following from the thirteenth chapter: "You will find this," says Tertullian, "in the Gospel in so many words: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.' He who was is One: and He with whom He was is another." As it is probable that by the words "in the beginning" Tertullian understood eternity, here is an explicit assertion of a distinction of persons in eternity. Again, in chap viii, he says: "The Word, therefore, was both in the Father always, as He says, 'I am in the Father,' and with the Father always, as it is written, 'And the Word was with God.'" † E. T., p. 545. ‡ *Leitfaden*, etc., p. 88.

doctrine of the Trinity (*trinitas* occurs first in him) because Tertullian sought to bring the Apologetic traditions into harmony with the stricter monotheism of the Asiatic theology." Similarly Harnack supposes that Monarchianism exercised a strong influence on Tertullian, "spite of the fact that he was opposing it," and remarks in proof that "no thought is so plainly expressed" by him in his tract against Praxeas "as this, that Father, Son and Spirit are *unius substantiæ*, that is *ὁμοούσιοι*";* and again, that he "expressed the *unity* of Father, Son and Spirit as strongly as possible."† We may attribute the influence which led Tertullian to lay the stress he did on the unity of God to whatever source we choose, but we must acknowledge that Tertullian himself did not trace it to the Monarchians. Though, no doubt, the necessity he felt upon him not to neglect this great truth was intensified by the fact that it was just with Monarchians that he was contending, yet Tertullian is not himself conscious of indebtedness to them for either his conception of it or his zeal in its behalf. To him it is the very principium of Christianity and the very starting-point of the Rule of Faith. Though he recognizes a monadistic monarchy as rather Jewish than Christian, therefore, and is prepared for a certain pluralism in his conception of God, all this is with him conditioned upon the preservation of the monarchy, and he has his own way of reconciling the monarchy, in which all his Christian thinking is rooted, on the one side, with the economy, which he is zealous to assert, on the other.

This way consists, briefly, in insistence not merely that the three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, are of one substance, but that they are of one undivided substance. Though there is a *dispositio*, *distinctio* between them, there is no *divisio*, *separatio*. It is not enough for him that the Three should be recognized as alike in substance, condition, power.‡ What he insists on is that the Father, Son and Spirit are inseparable from one another and share in a single undivided substance—that it is therefore "not by way of diversity that the Son differs from the Father, but by distribution; it is not by division that He is different, but by distinction."§ "I say," he reiterates, they are "distinct, not separate" (*distincte, non divise*).¶ They are distinguished "on the ground of personality, not of substance,—in the way of distinction, not of division,"¶¶ "by disposition, not by division." The ill-disposed and perverse may indeed

* Vol. IV, p. 57, note: cf. II, 257, note, p. 259.

‡ Chap. ii.

¶ Chap. xii; cf. xxi, xxi i.

§ Chap. ix.

† II, 257 note.

¶¶ Chap. xi.

press the distinction into a separation, but the procession of the Son from the Father "is like the ray's procession from the sun, and the river's from the fountain, and the tree's from the seed"*—and thus the distinction between them may be maintained "without destroying their inseparable union,—as of the sun and the ray, and the fountain and the river."†

By the aid of such illustrations Tertullian endeavored to make clear that in distinguishing the persons he allowed no division of substance. His conception was that as the sun flows out into its beams while yet the beams remain connected inseparably with the sun, and the river flows out of the fountain but maintains an inseparable connection with it, so the Son and Spirit flow out from the Father while remaining inseparable from Him. There is, in a word, an unbroken continuity of substance, although the substance is drawn out into—if we may speak after the manner of men—a different mould. The conception is that the prolation of the Logos—and afterward of the Spirit proximately from the Logos—is rather of the nature of a protrusion than an extrusion: the Godhead is, now, of a new shape, so to speak, but remains the Godhead still in its undivided and indivisible unity. As Tertullian expresses it sharply in the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Apology*: "Just as when a ray is shot forth (*porrigitur*) from the sun, it is a portion of the whole, but the sun will be in the ray because it is a ray of the sun, and is not separated from the substance but is extended (*extenditur*), so from Spirit [is extended] Spirit, and from God, God, as light is kindled from light. The *materia matrix* remains *integra et indefecta*, although you draw out from it a plurality of *trades qualitatibus*; and thus what has come forth (*profectum*) out of God is God, and the Son of God, and the two are one. Similarly as He is Spirit from Spirit and God from God, he is made a second member in manner of existence, in grade not state, and has not receded from the matrix but exceeded beyond it (*et a matrice non recessit sed excessit*).” In a word, the mode of the prolation is a stretching out of the Godhead, not a partition of the Godhead: the unity of the Godhead remains *integra et indefecta*.

The unity of the Godhead is thus preserved through the prolations themselves, which are therefore one in a "numerical unity," as it afterward came to be spoken of—though in Tertullian's usage this language would not be employed, but he would rather say that the persons differ in number, as first, second and third, while the substance remains undivided. It is precisely on the ground that

* Chap. xxii.

† Chap. xxvii.

in their view the prolations involved a division and separation of substance that he separates himself from the Valentinians.* “Valentinus,” says he, “divides and separates his prolations from their author. . . . But this is the prolation of the truth, the guardian of the unity, wherein we declare that the Son is a prolation of the Father without being separated from Him. For God sent forth the Word (as the Paraclete also declares†) just as the root puts forth the tree, and the fountain the river, and the sun the ray. For these are *προβολαί* of the substances from which they proceed. . . . But still the tree is not severed from the root, nor the river from the fountain, nor the ray from the sun; and neither is the Word separated from God. . . . In like manner the Trinity, flowing down from the Father, through intertwined and connected steps, does not at all disturb the monarchy, while it at the same time guards the state of the economy.”‡

Harnack, therefore,§ does considerably less than justice to Tertullian’s conception, when he represents it as substantially the same as that of Valentinus, differing only in the number of emanations acknowledged—because, as Hippolytus certifies, the Valentinians “acknowledge that the one is the originator of all” and “the whole goes back to one.” Nor does he improve matters when he adds in a note that “according to these doctrines, the unity is sufficiently preserved, (1) if the several persons have one and the same substance, (2) if there is one possessor of the whole substance, *i.e.*, if everything proceeds from him.” Tertullian, on the contrary, is never weary of asseverating that his doctrine of unity demands much more than this,—not merely that it is out of the one God that all proceeds—nor merely that what thus comes forth from God is of His substance, so that all of the emanations are of the substance of God,—but specifically that this going forth from God of His prolations is merely an *extension* of the Godhead, not a division from it. Thus the unity, he says, is preserved through the prolations; and no separation from God is instituted by the prolations. These abide unbrokenly “portions” of the deity, not fragments broken off from the deity. Nor is Harnack much happier when he goes on|| to say that Tertullian conceived God up to the prolation of the Logos “as yet the only *person*.” According to his explicit exposition of the life of God in eternity, Tertullian held that there never was a time when God was alone, except in the sense that there

* Chap. viii.

† *I.e.*, this is a doctrine supported by the Montanistic prophecies.

‡ Chap. viii.

§ II, 258.

|| P. 259.

was no created universe about Him: in the beginning itself that Reason which the common people, simply translating the Greek of John's Gospel, call the Word, was with Him, though within Him, as Another. Thus in the unity of the Godhead there always was a distinction of persons, even before, by the prolations of Son and Spirit, this distinction was manifested *ad extra*.

The distinctions of persons in the Godhead, accordingly, as Tertullian conceived them, were not created by the prolations of Son and Spirit. These prolations merely brought into manifestation the distinctions of persons already existing in the Godhead. Neither did he suppose that these distinctions would cease on the recession of these prolations back into the Godhead,—as Tertullian anticipates will take place when their end is served. It is the prolations, not the personal distinctions, which in his thought have a beginning and ending; and when he teaches that these prolations come forth at the Father's will, fulfill their purpose and retire back into the Godhead, this cannot in any way affect his doctrine either of the unity of God or of the Trinity in the unity. In all this process, rather, he is tracing out only an incident in the life of God, a temporary outflowing of God to do a specific work. The whole exposition which Harnack gives of this transaction is colored by misapprehension of Tertullian's import. It is indeed more infelicitous than even this circumstance would indicate. No doubt Tertullian's subordinationism is very marked. Though he conceives the prolate Logos and the Spirit as truly God, they are, in his view, God at the periphery of His being, going forth, in a certain reduction of deity, for the world-work.* But to speak of even the prolate Logos as a "Being which must be a derived existence, which has already in some fashion a finite element in itself, because it is the hypostatized Word of creation, which has an origin"; and to add, "From the standpoint of humanity this deity is God Himself, *i.e.*, a God whom men can apprehend and who can apprehend them, but from God's standpoint, which speculation can fix but not fathom, this deity is a subordinate, nay, even a temporary one"—is to go beyond all warrant discoverable in Tertullian's exposition. It is of the very essence of Tertullian's thought that there was no "finite element" in the Logos, or in the Spirit

* Cf. DORNER, *Person of Christ*, I, ii, 460, 186, 108. DORNER somewhat misses the point by failing to see that Tertullian recognized the eternity of the personal distinction and so distinguished between the unprolated and the prolated Logos (see *below*, p. 26 *sq.*): but even Dorner perceives that there was some limit to Tertullian's subordinationism: "An Arian subordinationism was foreign to his mind" (p. 74; cf. p. 108).

which constitutes the third in the Godhead—"as the fruit of the tree is third from the root, or as the stream out of the river is third from the fountain, or as the apex of the ray is third from the sun";* that these prolations are, in a word, nothing but God Himself extended for the performance of a work—nothing, if the simile can be allowed, but the hand of God stretched out for the task of bringing a world into existence and guiding its course to its destined end. As such the Logos mediated between God and the world; but to make Tertullian teach, to use words of Bull's,† that "the very nature of the Son is itself a mean between God and the creatures," that is to say, is something distinguishable alike from the supreme nature of God on the one side, and from the rest of created beings on the other,—is to confound his whole conception. He not only did not teach that the Logos is a creature of nature different from that of God, of a derived existence, having an absolute origin, and destined to reach an end: but he explicitly teaches the contradictory of these things. The Logos existed eternally, he asseverates, in God: the prolation of the Logos, indeed, had a beginning and will have an end; but the Logos Himself who is prolated, is so far from being a derived existence, which has a finite element in it, and has an origin and is to make an end—that He is just God Himself prolated, that is, outstretched like a hand, to His work. And what is true of the Logos is true of the Spirit. He is not, as the Arians imagined, the creature of a creature, but just the still further prolated God—the tips of the fingers of the hand of God.‡

(4) With this conception of the relation of the prolations to the divine essence Tertullian was certainly in a position to do complete justice to the deity of our Lord. Had the prolate Logos been to him a "middle substance"—something between God and man in its very nature—then it no doubt would have been impossible for him to do full justice to our Lord's deity as the incarnation of this Logos. But seeing that the Logos was to him God Himself prolated, one in substance with the primal deity itself, no question of the complete deity of the incarnated Logos could arise in his

* Chap. viii, *ad fin.*

† III, ix, 11 (E. T., p. 503).

‡ Irenæus makes use of the simile of God's hands to explain his conception of the relation of the Son and Spirit to God. Cf. IV præf. § 4: "Man was moulded by God's hands, *i.e.*, by the Son and Spirit to whom He said, Let us make," etc. Cf. also IV, 20, 1; V, 1, 3; V, 5, 1; V, 28, 4. At a later date the Sabellians employed the figure of the alternately outstretched and withdrawn arm and hand as a figure of their notion of the successive movements of the divine revelation (DORNER, I, ii, 155, 159, 168). Augustine *in Joann.*, 53, 2-3, in criticising this Sabellian use of it, recognizes the propriety of the figure in itself.

mind. "We shall not approximate," he says,* "to the opinions of the Gentiles, who if at any time they be forced to confess God, yet will have other Gods below Him: the Godhead has, however, no gradation, for It is only one" and can, therefore, "in no case be less than Itself." Accordingly he is constant in declaring the Son, as He is God, to be "equal with" the Father.† All that is true of the Father, therefore, he would have us understand, is true also of the Son: they are not only of the same substance, but of the same power also; and all the attributes of the one belong also to the other. "The names of the Father," he says‡—"God Almighty, the Most High, the Lord of Hosts, the King of Israel, He that Is—inasmuch as the Scriptures so teach, these, we say, belonged also to the Son, and in these the Son has come, and in these has ever acted, and thus manifested them in Himself to men. . . . When, therefore, you read Almighty God, and Most High, and God of Hosts, and King of Israel, and He that Is, consider whether there be not indicated by these the Son also, who in His own right is God Almighty, in that He is the Word of God Almighty." Again,§ "'All things,' saith He, 'are delivered unto Me of the Father'. . . . The Creator hath delivered all things to Him who is not less than Himself,—to the Son: all things, to wit, which He created by Him, *i.e.*, by His own Word." Accordingly, Tertullian does not hesitate to speak of the Son as God or to attribute to Him all that is true of God. He does not scruple, for example, to apply Rom. ix. 5 to Him—affirming Him in the words of that text to be God over all, blessed for ever.||

If it be asked how Tertullian made this recognition of the full equality of the Son with the Father consistent with the subordinationism which he had taken over from the Apologists along with their Logos Christology, the answer appears to turn on the identification of the Son with the prolate Logos. The strong subordination of the Son belongs to Him as prolated, not specifically as second in the Godhead. "It will, therefore, follow," says Tertullian in an illuminating passage,¶ "that by Him who is invisible, we must understand the Father *in the fullness of His majesty*, while we recognize the Son as visible *by reason of the dispensation of His derived existence (pro modulo derivationis)*; even as it is not permitted us to contemplate the sun in the full amount of his substance which is in the heavens, but we can only endure with our eyes a ray by reason of

* *Adv. Hermog.*, VII (BULL, p. 580).

† *Adv. Praxean*, VII, xxii; *De Resur. Carn.*, VI.

‡ *Adv. Prax.*, chap. xvii (BULL, p. 198).

§ *Adv. Marc.*, iv, 25 (BULL, *loc. cit.*).

|| *Adv. Prax.*, xiii, xv.

¶ xiv.

the tempered condition of this portion which is projected from him to the earth. . . . We declare, however, that the Son also, *considered in Himself*, is invisible, in that He is God, and the Word, and the Spirit of God." In this passage it is affirmed that in Himself, because He is God, the Son shares all the qualities of God, and becomes "reduced God," if we can be allowed such a phrase, only *pro modulo derivationis*, that is to say, as the result of the prolation by virtue of which He is extended outwards for the purpose of action in and on the world. This passage will aid us also in apprehending how we are to understand Tertullian when he speaks of the Son as a "portion" only of the Godhead. Again it is, of course, only as prolate Logos that He is so spoken of: and as prolate Logos He is conceived under the figure of the ray which as a "portion" of the sun is "tempered" to the eyes of men. Similarly the prolate Logos is a "portion" of the Godhead, that is to say, not a separated part or even a particular part of the Godhead, but the Godhead itself "tempered" for its mission relatively to the world. This "portion" is not to be conceived, then, as a fragment of Godhead; it is in and of itself all that God is. Tertullian not only distinctly affirms this on all occasions, but expressly explains that it is neither separated from the Godhead nor in anything less than it, but is "equal to the Father and possesses all that the Father has."* Nay, Tertullian

* We are here quoting BULL, II, vii, 5 (p. 200), where, as well as pp. 536 *sq.*, the meaning of "portio" is discussed. It is discussed also in HAGEMANN, pp. 182 *sq.*, cf. p. 283: who suggests, with a reference to *De virg. vel.*, c. 4, *ad fin.*, that it is a technical logical term, and imports the 'specific' as distinguished from the 'general,' in which case the Logos as a *portio* of the deity would rather be a "particularization" of deity than a "fragment" of deity. DORNER (I, ii, 78) thinks that the employment of such "inappropriate physical categories of the Son" is due to the "somewhat physical character of Tertullian's view of God," and "should be set to the account rather of his mode of expression than of his mode of thought": it "really disguised Tertullian's proper meaning" (cf. p. 121-2). From the manner in which Tertullian uses the term "portio" it would seem probably to be a technical term in the Logos Christology and that would imply its currency in the debates of the day. It is interesting to observe in a *Sermon of the Arians* which was in circulation in North Africa early in the fifth century what looks very much like a repudiation of the phraseology by the Arians—for Arianism was very much only the Logos Christology run to seed, the "left" side of the developing schemes of doctrine. In this document, at c. 23, it is said: "The Son is not a part or a portion of the Father, but His own and beloved, perfect and complete, only-begotten Son. The Spirit is not a part or a portion of the Son, but the first and highest work (*opus*) of the only-begotten Son of God, before the rest of the universe." Augustine (*Contra. Serm. Arian*, XXVII, 23) answers only: "But what Catholic would say the Son is a part of the Father or the Holy Spirit part of the Son? A thing they [the Arians] think is to be so denied as if there were a question between us and them on it." It looks very much as if the whole past history of the use of this phraseology was out of memory in the opening fifth century.

tells us with crisp directness that this "*portio*" of the Godhead is Itself "consort in Its fullness" (*plenitudinis consors*). "If you do not deny," he argues with Marcion,* "that the Creator's Son and Spirit and Substance is also His Christ, you must needs allow that those who have not acknowledged the Father have likewise failed to acknowledge the Son, seeing that they share the same substance (*per ejusdem substantiæ conditionem*): for if It baffled men's understanding in Its Plenitude, much more has a portion of It, especially since It is consort in the Plenitude."†

It cannot surprise us, therefore, when we observe Tertullian representing a distinctive way of designating our Lord as in part due merely to a desire to be clear and to avoid confusion in language. He is speaking‡ of the habit of distinguishing between God the Father and the Son by calling the former God and the latter Lord. There is no foundation for the distinction, he tells us, in the nature of things. Any one of the persons of the Godhead may with equal propriety be called either God or Lord. He "definitely declares that *two* are God, the Father and the Son, and with the addition of the Holy Spirit, even *three*, according to the principle of the divine *οἰκονομία*, which introduces number." He will never say, however, that there are two Gods or two Lords, yet "not as if," he explains, "it were untrue that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and each is God." This apparently can only mean that the three are all together the one God,—and, indeed, one of his characteristic phrases is the famous *deus ambo* or even *tres*.§ But though Christ is thus rightly called God, it is best, he thinks, in order to avoid mistakes, to speak of Him as Lord when the Father is mentioned at the same time, and to call Him God only when He is mentioned alone. For there is no gradation in the Godhead, as Tertullian elsewhere remarks,|| although there are three "grades" in the Godhead: which is as much as to say that considered in themselves, those who are distinguished as first, second and third—that is to say, in the modes of their existence as source and prolations of the first and second order—are yet consorts in the plenitude of God.¶

* III, 6, near the end.

† Cf. BULL, II, vii, 6.

‡ *Adv. Prax.*, chap. xiii.

§ xiii, *med.*

|| *Adv. Hermog.*, 7 (quoted above).

¶ BULL, IV, ii, 5 (E. T., p. 581) treats with great care the apparent contradiction between Tertullian's assertion in *Adv. Hermog.*, 7, that "the Godhead has no gradations," and the assertion in *Adv. Prax.*, 2, that the persons of the Godhead are three "not in state but in gradation." Tertullian, BULL tells us, "means in the latter passage by 'gradation,' *order*, but not greater or less Godhead." "For," continues BULL, "whom he acknowledges to be three in gradation, them he denies to

On this basis Tertullian, in developing his doctrine of the person of Christ in the formula of "Deus homo, unus Christus," could strenuously insist on the complete deity as well as perfect humanity of this one divine-human person. And in this insistence we may find the culminating proof that he sought to do full justice to the true deity of Christ. He approaches this subject* in the course of a confutation of the Monarchian attempt to find a distinction between Father and Son by understanding the Father to be the divine Spirit incarnated and the Son to be the incarnating flesh. Thus, says Tertullian, while contending that the Father and Son are one and the same, they do, in fact, divide them and so fall into the hands of the Valentinians, making Jesus, the man, and Christ, the inhabiting Spirit, two. Proceeding to expound the true relation between the incarnated Spirit and the incarnating flesh, he next argues that the process of incarnation was not that of a transformation of the divine Spirit into flesh, because God neither ceases to be what He was nor can He be any other thing than what He is. Accordingly when the Word became flesh, this was accomplished not by His becoming transmuted into flesh but by His clothing Himself with flesh. No less is it insupposable, he argues, that the incarnation was accomplished by any mixture of the two substances, divine Spirit and flesh, forming a third substance intermediate between the two.† At that rate Jesus would have ceased to be God while not becoming man: whereas the Scriptures represent

be different in state. But with Tertullian, as we have seen, for a thing to be different from another in state, means not to be set under it, but to be on a par and equal to it. Hence in the same passage, presently after, he expressly says, that the three Persons of the Holy Trinity are all of *one power*; and consequently that no One of Them is more powerful or excellent than Another. Therefore the Godhead 'has no gradation,' that is, 'is in no case less than Itself,' as Tertullian distinctly explains himself: yet there are gradations in the Godhead, that is, a certain order of Persons, of whom One derives His origin from Another; in such wise that the Father is the first Person, existing from Himself; the Son second from the Father, while the Holy Ghost is third, who proceeds from the Father through the Son, or from the Father and the Son." This is a very favorable specimen of BULL's reasoning: and Tertullian's language may be made consistent with itself on this hypothesis. On the whole, however, it seems more likely that the real state of the case in Tertullian's thought was that indicated in the text. In the Godhead there are no gradations: but after prolations grades of being are instituted.

* Chap. xxvii.

† Accordingly we must not understand the phrase "Homo Deo mixtus," which occurs in the *Apol.*, c. 21, to imply that the two substances were "mixed," so as to make a *tertium quid*. What he means to say is only that Jesus Christ was neither man nor God alone, but the two together. Cf. BETHUNE-BAKER, *Homousios*, etc., p. 22, note.

Him to have been both God and man. Accordingly we must believe that there was no confusion of the two in the person of Jesus, but such a conjunction of God and man that, the property of each nature being wholly preserved, the divine nature continued to do all things suitable to itself, while the human nature, on the other hand, exhibited all the affections that belong to it. Jesus, thus, was in one these two—man of the flesh, God of the Spirit: and in Him coexist two substances, viz., the divine and the human,* the one of which is immortal and the other mortal. Throughout this whole discussion the integrity of the divine nature—immortal, impassible, unchangeable—is carefully preserved and its union in the one person Jesus Christ with a human nature, mortal, passible, capable of change, is so explained as to preserve it from all confusion, intermixture or interchange with it. We could not have a clearer exhibition of Tertullian's zeal to do full justice to the true deity of Christ.

(5) It scarcely seems necessary to add a separate detailed statement of how Tertullian conceived of the Holy Spirit. While we cannot say with Harnack† that Tertullian exhibits no trace of independent interest in the doctrine of the Spirit, it is yet true that he speaks much less fully and much less frequently of Him than of the Logos,‡ and that his doctrine of the Spirit runs quite parallel with that of the Logos. He has spoken of Him, moreover, ordinarily in connections where the doctrine of the Logos is also under discussion and therefore his modes of thought on this branch of the subject have already been perhaps sufficiently illustrated. The *distinct personality* of the Spirit is as clearly acknowledged as that of the Logos Himself. In the *oikonomia* the unity is distributed not into a duality, but into a trinity, providing a place not for two only but for three,—the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; who differ from one another not in condition, substance or power but in degree, form and aspect.§ And everywhere the third person is treated as just as distinct a personality as the second and first. There is no clear passage carrying this distinct personality back into *eternity*. That Tertullian thought of the personality of the Spirit precisely as he did of that of the Logos is here our only safe guide. On the other hand, there is no lack of passages in which the *unity of substance* is insisted upon relatively to the Spirit also.|| After explaining that

* Chap. xxix, *ad init.*

† II, 261, note.

‡ Cf. NÖSGEN, *Geschichte der Lehre vom heiligen Geiste*, p. 21.

§ ii *ad fin.*, cf. iii near end, viii, xi *ad fin.*, xiii, xxx. Cf. STIER, *op. cit.*, 92 note.

|| ii *fin.*, iii *fin.*, iv *init.*, viii, ix *init.*, etc.

the substance of the Son is just the substance of the Father, he adds: "The same remark is made by me with respect to the third degree, because I believe the Spirit to be from no other source than from the Father through the Son."* So again: "The Spirit is the third from God and the Son, as the fruit from the tree is the third from the root, and the stream from the river is third from the fountain, and the apex from the ray is third from the sun. Nothing, however, is separated from the matrix from which it draws its properties; and thus, the Trinity flows down from the Father through *consectos et connectos gradus* and in no respects injures the monarchy while protecting the economy."† On this view the *true deity* of the Spirit is emphasized as fully as that of the Logos, and Tertullian repeatedly speaks of Him likewise shortly as God,‡ as "the Third Name in the Godhead and the Third Degree of the Divine Majesty."§ Accordingly when he "definitely declares that two are God, the Father and the Son," he adds,|| "and with the addition of the Holy Ghost, even *three*, according to the principle of the divine economy, which introduces number, in order that the Father may not, as you perversely infer, be believed to have Himself been born, and to have suffered." To Tertullian, therefore, the alternative was not the complete deity of the Spirit or His creaturehood; but the unity of Monarchianism or the Trinity in the unity of the economy. He never thinks of meeting the Monarchian assault by denying the full deity of the Spirit, but only by providing a distinction of persons within the unity of the Godhead. The most instructive passages are naturally those in which all three persons are brought together, of which there are a considerable number.¶ To quote but one of these, he explains that "the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, [distinct, nevertheless] one from the other: these three are one [substance,—*unum*], not one [person,—*unus*], as it is said, 'I and my Father are one [*unum*],' in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number."** There can, in short, be no question that Tertullian had applied to the Spirit with full consciousness all that he had thought out concerning the Son, and that His doctrine of God was fully settled into a doctrine of Trinity. His mode of speak-

* iv *init.*† viii *fin.*

‡ He seems to be the first in writings which have chanced to come down to us to apply the name "God" to the Spirit; but this is mere accident.

§ xxx *fin.*|| xiii *med.*¶ *E.g.*, ii *init. et fin.*, iii *fin.*, viii *fin.*, ix *init.*, xiii *med.*, xxv, xxx.** Chap. xxv *init.*

ing of the Spirit introduces no new difficulty in construing his doctrine—which is something that cannot be said of all his predecessors.

By such expositions as these, Tertullian appears, in seeking to do justice to the elements of doctrine embalmed in the Rule of Faith, fairly to pass beyond the natural reach of the Logos-speculation and to open the way to a higher conception. A symbol of this advance may not unfairly be discovered in the frequent appearance in his pages of the new term "Trinity." The Greek equivalent of this term occurs in his contemporary Hippolytus,* but scarcely elsewhere, at this early date, to designate the distinctions in the Godhead,—unless indeed we account the single instance of its employment by Theophilus of Antioch a preparation for such an application of it.† In any event, there is a fine appropriateness in the sudden apparition of the term in easy and frequent use,‡ for the first time, in the pages of an author whose discussions make so decided an approximation toward the enunciation of that doctrine to denote which this term was so soon to become exclusively consecrated. The insistence of Tertullian upon the *οὐνονομία* in the monarchy—on unity of substance, with all that is implied in unity of substance, persisting in three distinct persons who coexist from eternity—certainly marks out the lines within which the developed doctrine of the Trinity moves, and deserves to be signalized by the emergence into literature of the term by which the developed doctrine of the Trinity should ever afterward be designated.

It is possible that something of the same symbolical significance may attach also to Tertullian's use of his favorite term *οὐνονομία*. Of course, *οὐνονομία* is not a new word; but it is used by Tertullian in an unwonted sense,—a sense scarcely found elsewhere except in his contemporary Hippolytus,§ and, perhaps as a kind of preparation for their use of it, in a single passage of Tatian.|| Tertullian constantly employs it, as we have seen, to designate, as over against the monarchy, the mystery of the Trinity in the unity. There can be no question of its general implication in his pages; but it is, no doubt, a little difficult to determine the precise

* *c. Noët.*, 14.

† *Ad Autol.*, II, 65. Here the term *τρίαις* first occurs in connection with distinctions in the Godhead; and it is customary, therefore, to say that here first it is applied to express the Trinity. So *e.g.*, KAHNIS, HARNACK, LOOFS, SEEBERG. As NÖSGEN (pp. 13-14) points out, however, it is by no means certain that the word here has any technical import.

‡ *E.g.*, *Adv. Prax.*, 2, 3, 11, 12, etc

§ *con. Noët.*, chaps. 8 and 14.

|| *Ad. Græc.*, 5.

significance of the term itself which he employs. The fundamental sense of the word is "disposition"; but in its application it receives its form either from the idea of "administration," or from that of "structure." If it is used by Tertullian in the former shade of meaning, its employment by him need not have great significance for his Trinitarian doctrine. He would, in that case, only say by it that the monarchy of God is administered by a disposition of the Godhead into three several personalities, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through whom the single Lordship is carried on, as it were, by deputy; while the precise relation of these personalities to one another and to the Godhead itself would be left to the context to discover.

An argument which occurs in the third chapter of the tract against Praxeas seems to many to suggest that it was in this sense that the term was employed by Tertullian. Tertullian here explains that "monarchy has no other meaning than single and unique rule"; "but for all that," he adds, "this monarchy does not preclude him whose government it is . . . from administering his own monarchy by whatever agents he will": and much less can the integrity of a monarchy suffer by the association in it of a Son, since it is still held in common by two who are so really one (*tam unicis*)." Applying these general principles to the monarchy of God, he argues that this monarchy is therefore by no means set aside by the circumstance that it is administered by means of legions and hosts of angels"; and much less can it be thought to be injured by the participation in it of the Son and Holy Spirit, to whom the second and third places are assigned, but who are inseparably joined with the Father, in His substance. "Do you really suppose," he asks, "that those who are naturally members of the Father's own substance, His congeners,* instruments of His might, nay, His power itself, and the entire system of His monarchy, are the overthrow and destruction thereof?" It seems tolerably clear that Tertullian is not here comparing the economy with the administrative agents of a monarchy: with them he rather compares the hosts of angels through whom the divine monarchy is administered. The economy is rather compared to the sharing of the monarchy itself between father and son as co-regents on a single throne. In that case, so far is economy on his lips from bearing the sense of administration that it is expressly distinguished from it, and referred to something in the Godhead deeper than its administrative functions. The illustration, therefore, emphasizes, indeed, the

* *pignora* = pledges of his love, *i.e.*, his close relations.

personal distinctions of the economy—they are comparable to the distinction between father and son in a conjoint rule—but it suggests equally the penetration of this distinction behind all matters of administration into the Godhead, the Ruling Being, itself.

Nor is this impression set aside by the implication of the other figures employed by Tertullian to explain the relations of the persons in the Godhead. When he compares them to the root, the tree and the fruit, or to the fountain, the river and the stream, or to the sun, the ray and the apex, his mind seems undoubtedly to be upon the prolated Logos and Spirit; these figures indeed, so constantly upon his lips, seem inapplicable to eternal distinctions, lying behind the prolations. But it must be remembered, first, that these illustrations are not original with Tertullian, but are taken over by him from the Apologists along with their Logos-speculation—although they are doubtless developed and given new point by him; next, that the precise point which he adduces them to illustrate is not the whole import of the economy, but the preservation of the unity of substance within the economy of three persons; and finally, that the ordinary engagement of his mind with the Trinity of Persons, in what we may call its developed form—its mode of manifestation in God acting *ad extra*—need not by any means exclude from his thought a recognition of an ontological basis, in the structure of the Godhead itself, for this manifested Trinity. And if in one passage he presses his illustrations to the verge of suggesting a separation of the Son from the Father—intimating that the Son may be affected by the sufferings of the God-man while the Father remains in impassible blessedness;* in another, on the other hand, he seems expressly to carry back the distinction of persons into the eternal Godhead itself—affirming that God was never “alone” save in the sense of independence of all external existence, but there was always with Him, because in Him, that other self which afterward proceeded from Him for the making of the world.† The fullest recognition, therefore, that Tertullian habitually thought of the Trinity in, so to speak, its developed form—with the Logos and the Spirit prolate and working in the world—by no means precludes the possibility that the very term *οὐζωνομία* connoted in his hands something more fundamental than a distinction in the Godhead constituted by these prolations.

And certainly the word was currently employed in senses that lent it a color which may very well have given it to Tertullian the deeper connotation of internal structure, when he applied it to the

* Chap. xxix.

† Chap. v.

Godhead. To perceive this, we have only to recall its application to express the proper adjustment of the parts of a building, as Vitruvius, for example, uses it,* or to express what we call the disposition, that is the plan or construction of a literary composition, as it is used, say, by Cicero, when he speaks of the *οἰκονομία perturbata* of his letter,† or by Quintilian,‡ when he ascribes to the old Latin comedies a better *οἰκονομία* than the new exhibited.§ A very interesting instance of the employment of the word in this sense of "structure" occurs in the *Letter of the Church of Smyrna*, giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp.|| The martyrs were so torn by the scourge, says this passage, that "the *οἰκονομία* of their flesh was visible even so far as the inward veins and arteries." Lightfoot translates here, "*the internal structure and mechanism*," and refers us to Eusebius' paraphrase, which tells us the martyrs were so lacerated that "the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view."¶ There can be no doubt that this very common usage of the term was well known to Tertullian the rhetorician, and it may very well be that when he adopted it to express the distribution of the Godhead into three persons it was because it suggested to him rather the inner structure, so to speak, of the Godhead itself, than merely an external arrangement for the administration of the divine dominion.

That Tertullian's usage of the term implies as much as this is recognized, indeed, by the most of those who have busied themselves with working out the interesting history of this word in the usage of the Fathers.** Dr. W. Gass, for example, after tracing the word

* i, 2.

† *ad Att.*, C. 1.

‡ *Inst.*, I, 8.

§ This sense is discussed by DANIEL, as below, note **, under his division 4, where a number of examples are given. See also LIGHTFOOT, on Eph. i. 10, and the Lexicons.

|| Chap. ii. See the note of Lightfoot on the passage in his great work on Ignatius (II, ii, 950).

¶ *Hist. Ecc.*, iv, 15; McGiffert's Translation, p. 189a.

** An account of the several attempts to trace the history of the word is given by GASS in the article referred to in the next note. The more important are: VON CÖLLN in Ersch and Gruber sub. voc. *Œconomia*; H. A. DANIEL in his *Tatian der Apologet.* p. 159 sq.; MÜNSCHER in his *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 137 sq.; GASS' own extended article; and LIGHTFOOT in his posthumously published volume entitled *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 319 (on Eph. i. 10), with which should be compared his notes on Col. i. 25, *Ign. ad Eph.* xviii, (II, i. 78), and *Martyr. Polycarp.*, ii (II, ii, 950). The discussion of GASS is by far the fullest, but needs the preceding ones to supply the earlier philological development, and LIGHTFOOT'S clear statement as a supplement. See also the Bishop of Lincoln's (KAYE'S) *Justin Martyr*, 176, and BAUR'S *Dreieinigkeit*, I, 178 note. HAGEMANN (*Röm. Kirche*, pp. 136, 150, 167, 175, etc., as per index) constantly represents the *οἰκονομία* as (even in Tertullian) merely "the sum of the divine acts which have reference

up to Tertullian and finding it employed up to that point to express "the outward-going revelatory activity of God, whether creative and organizing or redemptive,"* remarks upon the sudden change that meets us in Tertullian. "It has been justly thought remarkable," he continues, "that this same expression is applied by Tertullian to the inner relations of the Godhead itself. He employs 'economy' as an indispensable organon of the Christian knowledge of God, in his controversy with Praxeas." Then, after quoting the passages in the *Adv. Praxean*, chaps. 2 and 3, he proceeds: "Monarchy and economy are therefore the two interests on the combination and proper balancing of which the Trinitarian conception of God depends; by the former the unity of the divine rule, by the latter the right of an immanent distinction is established, and it is only necessary that the latter principle should not be pressed so far as to do violence to the former." Without laying too much stress on so nice a point, it would seem not unnatural therefore to look upon Tertullian's predilection for the term *οικονομία* as, like his usage of the term *Trinitas*, symptomatic of his tendency to take a deeper view of the Trinitarian relation than that which has in later times come to be spoken of as "merely economical."

We derive thus from our study of Tertullian's modes of statement a rather distinct impression that there is discoverable in them an advance toward the conception of an immanent Trinity. The question becomes at once in a new degree pressing how far this advance is to be credited to Tertullian himself, and how far it represents only modes of thought and even forms of statement current in the Christianity of his time, which push themselves to observation in his writings only because he chanced to be dealing with themes which invite a rather fuller expression than ordinary of this side of the faith of Christians. We shall hope to return to this question in the next number of this REVIEW.

to the government of the world," "the sum of the external revelations of God," "the internal distributions of the original unitary Godhead into a purely divine and a finite substance, and the division of the latter into a graded plurality of beings which make up the *pleroma*"—which last is the Gnostic way of expressing it.

* In an article on *Das patristische Wort οικονομία*, in Hilgenfeld's *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftl. Theologie*, xvii (1874), p. 478 sq.