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I.

TERTULLIAN AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

THIRD ARTICLE.

IN a discussion printed in the two immediately preceding numbers of this REVIEW* it has been pointed out that there is discoverable in Tertullian's modes of statement a rather distinct advance towards the conception of an immanent Trinity. We wish now to inquire how far this advance is to be credited to Tertullian himself, and how far it represents modes of thought and forms of statement current in his time, and particularly observable in Tertullian only because he chances to be dealing with themes which invited a fuller expression than ordinary of this side of the faith of Christians.

We have already seen that there is a large traditional element in Tertullian's teaching; that even the terms, "Trinity" and "Economy," in which his doctrine of the distinctions within the Godhead is enshrined, are obviously used by him as old and well-known terms; and that he betrays no consciousness of enunciating new conceptions in his development of his doctrine, but rather writes like a man who is opposing old truth to new error.

* THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, October, 1905, pp. 529-557; January, 1906, pp. 1-36.

Indeed he openly asserts that this is the case. If we are to take his own point of view in the matter, we cannot hesitate to assert, then, that he has himself made no advance, but is simply enforcing the common Christian faith against the innovations of destructive heresy. Of course this common Christian faith, which he is zealous thus to enforce, is fundamentally the Rule of Faith. But it can scarcely be denied that it is more than this; Tertullian's own view clearly is that his expositions embody also the common understanding of the Rule of Faith. He is not consciously offering any novel constructions of it, or building up on his own account a higher structure upon it. No doubt he is doing his best to state the common faith clearly and forcibly, and to apply its elements tellingly in the controversy in which he was engaged; and he may certainly in so doing have clarified it, and even filled it with new significance, not to say developed from it hitherto unsuspected implications. How far, however, this can be affirmed of him can be determined only by some survey of the modes of thought and statement of his predecessors and contemporaries who have dealt with the same doctrines.

What first strikes us when we turn to the Apologists with this end in view is that most of Tertullian's modes of statement can be turned up, in one place or another, in the Apologetic literature. We say "in one place or another" advisedly, for the peculiarity of the case is that they do not all appear in the pages of a single writer, but scattered through the writings of all. Thus if the term *τριάς* appears in Theophilus, it is in Tatian that the term *οἰχονομία* meets us in a sense similar to that in which Tertullian uses it. If Athanagoras seems to struggle to carry back the divine relationships into eternity,* and Theophilus by the use of the distinction between the *λόγος ἐνδιάθετος* and the *λόγος προφορικός* at least seeks a basis for the distinction of God and His Logos prior to the prolation of the Lógos, Justin leaves us uncertain whether he thought of the Logos as having any sort of being before the moment of His begetting. The simile by which the relation of the Logos to God is compared to the relation of the light to the sun is already found in Justin: but it is to Tatian that we must go to discover such a careful exposition of the relation of the Logos to God as the following: "He came into being by way of impartation (*κατὰ μερισμόν*) not of abscission (*κατὰ ἀποκοπήν*); for what is cut off is separated from the primitive (*τοῦ πρώτου*), but what is imparted, receiving its

* Cf. BETHUNE-BAKER, *Early History of Doctrine*, etc., p. 129.

share of the Economy,* does not make him from whom it is taken deficient." The result is that while we could from fragments, derived this from one and that from another of the Apologists, piece together a statement of doctrine which would assimilate itself to Tertullian's, we could verify this statement from no one of the Apologists, but, on the contrary, elements of it would be more or less sharply contradicted by one or another of them. There are, in other words, hints scattered through the Apologists that men were already reaching out toward the forms of statement that meet us in Tertullian, but only in him are these hints brought together. We assent, therefore, when Harnack† says: "We cannot at bottom say that the Apologists possessed a doctrine of the Trinity." Only we must in this statement emphasize both the terms "at bottom" and "doctrine." There are everywhere discoverable in the Apologists suggestions of a trinitarian mode of thought: but these are not brought together into a formulated doctrine which governed their thinking of the being of God.

The phenomena are such, in one word, as to force us to perceive in the writings of the Apologists—as has been widely recognized by students of their works—a double deposit of conceptions relative to the mode of the divine existence. There is their own philosophical construction, which is, briefly, the Logos-speculation. And underlying that, there is the Christian tradition,—to which they desired to be faithful and which was ever intruding into their consciousness and forcing from them acknowledgment of elements of truth which formed no part of their philosophical confession of faith. This divided character of the Apologetic mind is by no one more clearly expounded than by the late Dr. Purves in his lectures on *The Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity*. Justin was, as Harnack remarks,‡ "the most Christian among the Apologists," and this feature in his dealing with doctrine is perhaps especially marked in him: but it is shared also by all his congeners. Dr. Pur-

* This is a very obscure phrase: *οἰκονομίας τὴν αἴρεστν προσλαβόν*. CLERICUS declared that in his day it had never been successfully explained. DANIEL (p. 164) explains: "What has arisen through participation, as one light is kindled from another, has of course part in the nature of the thing from which it is derived, and is of the same nature with it; but does not make the thing from which it is taken any poorer in this nature." BAUR translates the whole passage thus: "What is cut off is separated from the substance, but what is distinguished as a portion, what by free self-determination receives the œconomy, the plurality in the unity, causes no loss to that from which it comes." BETHUNE-BAKER (p. 126) renders: "Receiving as its function one of administration," and explains: "The part of *οἰκονομία*, administration of the world, revelation."

† II, 289, note¹ at the end.

‡ II, 203 note².

ves fully recognizes that Justin was, in his thinking about God, first of all the philosopher: and that his "own thought strongly tended away from the doctrine of a Trinity"**—toward a sort of ditheism which embraced a doctrine of "the consubstantiality of the Logos and the Father of all." And yet there crops up repeatedly in his writings testimony to the worship by the Christians of three divine persons. This testimony is particularly remarkable with reference to the Spirit. For "Justin's own theology had really no place for the Spirit," and yet "Justin speaks of the Spirit as not only an object of worship but as the power of the Christian life." "Thus Justin," concludes Dr. Purves,† "in spite of himself, testifies to the threefold object of Christian worship. He even finds in Plato an adumbration of the first, second and third powers in the universe, though in doing so he misunderstands and misinterprets that philosopher. Justin's own conception is vague, or, when not vague, unscriptural in certain important points. . . . But he effectively testifies to the traditional faith of the Church in the Father, Son and Spirit as the threefold object of Christian worship, and the threefold source of Christian life." What was true of Justin was true, each in his measure, of the other Apologists. "Two conceptions of deity were struggling with each other"‡ in their minds. Dominated by their philosophical inheritance, they could only imperfectly assimilate the Christian revelation, which therefore made itself felt only in spots and patches in their teaching. What was needed that the Christian doctrine of God should come to its rights was some change in the conditions governing the conceptions of the leaders of Christian thinking by which they might measurably be freed from the philosophical bondage in which they were holden.

The appearance of juster views precisely in the expositions of Tertullian would seem thus to be connected ultimately with a certain shifting of interest manifested in Tertullian as compared with the Apologists. The Apologists were absorbed largely in the cosmological aspects of Christian doctrine.§ In Tertullian these retire into the background and the soteriological interest comes markedly forward. In their cosmological speculations, the Apologists, for example, scarcely felt the need of a Holy Spirit; all that they had clamantly in mind to provide for, they conceived of as the natural function of the Logos. Their recognition of the Holy Spirit was therefore

* *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

† P. 279.

‡ P. 145.

§ General discriminations like this must, of course, not be pressed to extremes. See e.g., Purves, *The Teaching of Justin Martyr*, p. 277. Cf. BETHUNE-BAKER, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 125.

largely conventional and due to allegiance to the Christian tradition. A new point of view has been attained when Tertullian, out of his soteriological interest, thinks of the Spirit profoundly as the sanctifier of men, the "vicarious power" of the Logos for applying His redemptive work. This shifting of interest inevitably led to a new emphasis on the distinctive personalities of the three persons of the deity, and to their separation from the world-process that justice might be done to their perfect deity as the authors—each in his appropriate sphere—of salvation.* It is instructive that in his *Apology*, addressed like the chief works of the Apologists to the heathen, Tertullian still moves, like them, largely within the cosmological sphere: whereas in his tract *Against Praxeas*, addressed to fellow-Christians, the soteriological point of view comes more to its rights. And it is equally instructive that among preceding writers it is in Irenæus who, with emphasis, eschewed philosophy and sought to build up a specifically Biblical doctrine, that we find forms of statement concerning the three persons whom Christians worshiped as the one God most nearly approaching the construction adumbrated by Tertullian. Perhaps it is not too much to say that the supplanting among Christian thinkers of the Logos-speculation by a doctrine of immanent Trinity was largely mediated by the shifting of interest from the cosmological to the soteriological aspect of Christian truth, and that in Tertullian we see for the first time clearly marked the beginning of the process by which this change was wrought.

This suggestion receives notable support from a comparison of Tertullian's modes of statements with those of his contemporary Hippolytus, in his treatise against Noëtus—a treatise which, as it arose out of conditions remarkably like those which called out Tertullian's tract against Praxeas, contains so much that is similar to what we find in that tract that it is hard to shake ourselves entirely free from the illusion that one borrows from the other.

* For the point of view of the text cf. e.g., NÖSGEN, *Geschichte der L. v. d. h. Geiste*, pp. 24 sq.: "Precisely with this writer (Tertullian) there begins, on the ground of Christian experience, to break through the recognition of the inner necessity of the Holy Spirit for the nature of the Triune God. . . . His interest in the third Person of the Trinity hangs on the fact that the Holy Spirit leads the children of God (*credentes agat*). . . . Accordingly it must not be made a reproach to him that he permits the immanent relation statedly to shine through only as the background of the self-revelation of the Triune One. It is precisely because he does this that he first marked out definitely the point of departure from which the peculiarity of the Holy Spirit as God and as trinitarian Person could be really grasped." Cf. KAHNIS, p. 296.

Hippolytus' relation as a pupil to Irenæus,* whose language in regard to the Trinitarian relationships approaches that of Tertullian most nearly of all previous writers, and from whom Tertullian himself frankly draws, is doubtless another factor of importance in accounting for the resemblance between the two tracts. But as we have already suggested, we are persuaded that this resemblance, so far as it is real, is mainly due to the fact that Tertullian and Hippolytus, alike heirs of the Logos-speculation, and alike determined to do justice to the deposit of truth in the Rule of Faith, were alike called upon in the new conditions of the early third century to uphold the common faith of Christendom against the subtlest form of the Monarchian attack. If this be true, nothing could hold out a better promise of enabling us to discriminate in Tertullian's statements the traditional element from his personal contribution than a comparison of them with those of Hippolytus.

The first thing that strikes us in attempting such a comparison is the extent of the common element in the two. We meet in Hippolytus the same terminology which we have found in Tertullian. He, too, employs the term Trinity;† and, as well, Tertullian's favorite term, "the Economy";‡—although perhaps not with the same profundity of meaning; even Tertullian's phrase, "the mystery of the economy."§ We almost feel ourselves still on Tertullian's ground when we read in Hippolytus: "For who will not say there is one God? Yet he will not on that account deny the Economy."|| This feeling is increased by the occurrence in Hippolytus of similar illustrations of the relations of the Logos to the primal Godhead. "But when I say another," he remarks, "I do not mean that there are two Gods, but that it is only as light from light, or as water from a fountain, or as a ray from the sun."¶ Even the same proof-texts are employed in the same manner. Thus the declaration in John x. 30, "I and the Father are one," is treated quite in Tertullian's manner. "Understand that He did not say, 'I and the Father *am* one, but *are* one.' For the word 'are' is not said of one person, but it refers to two persons and one power."** So again, like Tertullian, Hippolytus insists strongly on the true deity of Christ and supports it after much the same fashion. He calls Him "God,"†† "the Almighty,"‡‡ appeals just like Tertullian to Matt. xi. 27, and like Tertullian even applies to Him the great text, Rom. ix. 5, commenting: "He who is over all, God blessed, has been born; and

* Cf. e.g., HARNACK, *Chronolog.*, II, 213 and 223.

† Chap. 14.

‡ Chaps. 3, 4, 8, 14.

§ Chap. 4, no fewer than three times.

|| Chap. 3.

¶ Chap. 11.

** Chap. 7.

†† Chap. 8.

‡‡ Chap. 6.

having been made man, He is God for ever.”* His doctrine of the Person of Christ, moreover, is indistinguishable from Tertullian’s. “Let us believe, then, dear brethren,” he says, “according to the tradition of the apostles, that God the Word came down from heaven into the holy Virgin Mary, in order that, taking the flesh from her, and assuming also a human, by which I mean a rational soul, and becoming thus all that man is, with the exception of sin, he might be . . . manifested as God in a body, coming forth, too, as a perfect man: for it was not in mere appearance, or by conversion, but in truth that He became man.”† Underlying and sustaining all these detailed resemblances, moreover, is the great fundamental likeness between the two writers arising from their common application of the Logos-speculation to the facts of the Christian tradition, and their common opposition to the Monarchian heresy.

With a little closer scrutiny, however, marked differences between the two writers begin to develop.

In the first place, we observe that Hippolytus does not very well know what to do with the Holy Spirit. He repeats the triune formula with great emphasis: “We cannot think otherwise of one God,” he says, “but by believing in truth in Father and Son and Holy Spirit.” “The Economy of agreement is gathered up into one God: for God is One: for He who commands is the Father, and He who obeys is the Son, and that which teaches wisdom is the Spirit.”‡ “We accordingly see the Word incarnate, and through Him we know the Father, and believe in the Son and worship the Holy Ghost.”§ He manifestly desires to be led in all things by the Scriptural revelation: from no other quarter, he declares, than the oracles of God will he derive instruction in such things, and therefore as they declare to us what the Father wills us to believe, that will he believe, and as He wills the Son to be glorified, so will he glorify Him, and as He wills the Holy Spirit to be bestowed, so will he receive Him.|| Nevertheless it is quite clear that he can hardly assimilate the Biblical doctrine of the Spirit, and when he comes to speak out his mind upon Him, he makes it apparent that he does not at all think of Him as a person. It is curious to observe, indeed, the circumlocutions he employs to avoid calling Him a person. “I shall not indeed say there are two Gods, but one; two persons, however, while the third economy is the grace of the Holy Spirit. For the Father indeed is one, but there are two persons, because there is the Son also: and then

* Chap. 6.

† Chap. 17.

‡ Chap. 14.

§ Chap. 12.

|| Chap. 9.

it is not of a personal Logos as the eternal Companion that Hippolytus is thinking, but of the ideal world, the *κόσμος νοητός*, as constituting an eternal "plurality" of God. Accordingly when in another place* he is again describing the origin of the Logos, the eternal existence which he attributes to Him is not an existence as a personal Logos, but only as the "indwelling rationality of the universe." The Logos thus for Hippolytus exists from all eternity only ideally. From this ideal existence He came into real existence for the first time when God, intending to create the world, begat Him "as the Author and Fellow-Counsellor and Framer of the things that are in formation,"† and "thus," says Hippolytus,‡ "there appeared another beside Him"—thus and then only. Here it must be remarked is a doctrine of the absolute origination of the Logos by the will of the Father, so that the Logos appears distinctly as a creature of the Father's will.§

Nor does Hippolytus in the least shrink from this conception. When explaining that Adam was made a man with the characteristics and limitations of a man, not by inadvert-

* *Philosoph.*, x, 33 (xxix)—ἐνδιάθετος τοῦ παντός λογισμός.

† *Adv. Noëtum*, chap. 10—ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σύμβουλον καὶ ἐργάτην.

‡ Chap. 11.

§ On the extreme emphasis put by Hippolytus on the divine will, cf. HAGEMANN, *Röm. Kirche*, p. 197: "No one of the earliest representatives of Christian science lays such stress on the will of God as Hippolytus. With great emphasis, often several times in succession in almost identical phrases, he repeats, when speaking of the origin of the Logos or of creation in general, the formula in which he expresses his proposition that the whole revelation of God *ad extra* is grounded in His will, that He can create or not create, retain the Logos in Himself or permit Him to proceed out, as He wills. He even speaks once of the Logos himself as a product of the divine will (c. 13; cf. c. 8, 9, 10, 11)." For the fundamental significance of this see *ante*, October, 1905, p. 552 note ¶, and the references there given. Natural as this stress on the voluntariness of the divine action, even in the prolation of the Logos, was on the lips of the Apologists in protest against the natural processes of emanation taught by the Gnostics, there underlay it in its application to the prolation of the Logos a view of the relation of the Logos to the Father which scarcely did justice to the real state of the case, and was near to a conception of the Logos as absolutely originating in this act of the divine will, and hence as of creaturely character. This point of view was that of some of the Apologists, and was revived by the Arians. In opposition to it the Nicene Fathers (Athanasius, *Or. cont. Ar.*, iii; *de Decret. Nic. Syn.*; Ambrose, *De Fide*, IV, 9) learned to go behind the will of God in the generation of the Logos. There is a sense, of course, in which, as DÖLLINGER points out (*Hippolytus and Callistus*, E. T., 198), God as voluntary subject does all He does voluntarily; but after all said and done as the Arian contention that the Son owed His being to an act of will on the part of the Father was meant to imply that the Son was a creature, this mode of speech is Arian in tendency and it is best frankly to say—taking will in its natural sense—that the act of eternal generation is not an act of will but a necessary movement in the divine being. (Cf. DORNER, I, ii, 460.)

tence or because of any limitation of power on God's part, but by design, he says: "The Creator did not wish to make him a God and failed in His aim; nor an angel—be not deceived—but a man. For if He had wished to make thee a God He could have done so : *you have the example of the Logos.*"* To Hippolytus, therefore, the Logos is distinctly a created God, whom God made a God because, shortly, He chose to do so. He has indeed preëminence above all other creatures, not only because He was made a God and they were not, but also because He alone of creatures was made by God Himself while all other creatures were made by Him the Logos; and because they all were made out of nothing, while "Him alone God produced from existing things (*εξ τῶν δύτων*)," and, as God alone existed, that means from His own substance.† The Logos is therefore only in this sense of the substance of God, that He was framed out of the Divine substance; although what the process was by which God thus "begat Him as He willed," Hippolytus declines to inquire as too mysterious for human investigation.‡ He has no hesitation, however, in speaking of him as a creature who came into existence at a definite time, is only what His maker willed, and is God and possessor of the power of God and therefore almighty only by gift and not by nature.§

It is not necessary to pursue this inquiry further. Enough has been brought out to show that Hippolytus' Trinity consisted in a transcendent God who produced at a definite point of time a secondary divinity called the Logos, to whom He subjected all things; and along with these a third something not very definitely conceived, called by the Church the Holy Spirit. Here is not one God in three persons; here is rather one God producing a universe by steps and stages, to the higher of which divinity is assigned. In other words, we see in Hippolytus a clear and emphatic testimony indeed to a rich deposit of Christian faith, but overlying and dominating it a personal interpretation of it which reproduces all the worst defects of the Logos-speculation. In this he forms, despite the surface resemblance of his discussion to Tertullian's, a glaring contrast with that writer. In Tertullian the fundamental faith of the Church comes to its rights and is permitted to dominate the Logos-speculation. And it is just in this that his superiority as a theologian to Hippolytus is exhibited. Hippolytus' thought remains in all essential respects bound within the limits of the Logos-

* *Phil.*, x. 33 (xxix).

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Adv. Noëtum*, chap. 16.

§ Cf. also chap. 6, where Christ is said to have been "appointed almighty by the Father."

speculation. Tertullian's has become in all essential respects a logical development of the Church's fundamental faith. It is, therefore, that it is he and not Hippolytus who became the Father of the doctrine of an immanent Trinity.

A comparison of Novatian's treatise *On the Trinity** will still further strengthen our respect for Tertullian. Novatian seems to have been a diligent student of Tertullian;† it might be presumed, therefore, that in this treatise he has drawn upon the master whom he honored by his imitation but never names. Despite, however, Jerome's declaration that the book is only "a kind of epitome"‡ of Tertullian's work, and the repetition of this judgment by a whole series of subsequent writers,§ we find ourselves doubting whether the presumed fact is supported by the treatise itself. Novatian goes his own way, and it is questionable whether there is much common to his treatise and Tertullian's tract against Praxeas which may not be best accounted for on the ground of the traditional elements of belief underlying both.|| No doubt Novatian must be supposed to have known Tertullian's treatise and his own thinking may have been affected by its teaching. But there seems little or no evidence that he has drawn directly upon it for his own work. Novatian's tract, unlike those of Tertullian and Hippolytus, is not in the first instance a piece of polemics with only incidental positive elements; but is primarily a constructive treatise and only incidentally polemic: moreover, its polemic edge is turned not solely against Monarchianism, but equally against Tritheism. In point of form it is an exposition of the Rule of Truth,¶ which requires us

* There seem no real reason for doubting the authorship of this book by Novatian, though HAGEMANN (p. 371 *sq.*) doubts it, and QUARRY even ascribes it to Hippolytus. Cf. HARNACK, *Chronologie*, II, 396, note 1, and 400, note 2. HARNACK dates it c. 240 (p. 399).

† Cf. HARNACK in the *Sitzungsberichte der k. p. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1895, II, p. 562, and *Chron.* II, 399–400. ¶ *De virr. inlust.*, 70.

§ E.g., LOOPS' *Leitfaden*, p. 105: "There is scarcely a thought that cannot be pointed out in Tertullian." But HARNACK, *Chronolog.*, II, 399–400, recognizes that in any event Jerome's statement is overdrawn, though he finds a real connection between the two books.

|| We have the support in this, at least, of HAGEMANN, *Röm. Kirche*, p. 379.

¶ Novatian's own phrase is always Rule of Truth, although the title of his treatise has Rule of Faith, whence KUNZE infers that the title is not from his own hand (pp. 5–6). Novatian, remarks KUNZE (p. 178), makes use of the Roman Baptismal Creed (*Apostolicum*), but evidently "only the Trinitarian formula stood to him as a Formula, and we may even say that to him the notion of *regula veritatis* belonged only to it and not to the 'Apostles' Creed,' ; and to the 'Apostles' Creed' only so far as it is built up upon the Trinitarian Formula." This is, however, in effect the essential conception of all the early Fathers: that is to say, the Apostles' Creed to them is not the Rule of Faith, but only a commodious summary of it.

to believe in God the Father and Lord Omnipotent, in the Son of God, Christ Jesus, the Lord our God, and in the Holy Spirit, once promised to the Church; and its disposition follows these three fundamental elements of the faith (chaps. i-viii; ix-xxviii; xxix; with a conclusion, xxx-xxxii). To its expository task it gives itself with a conscious effort to avoid wandering off into the refutation of heresies, farther than may be necessary to subserve the purpose in view. "I could set forth the treatment of this subject," he remarks on one occasion when a heresy is engaging his attention, "by all the heavenly Scriptures . . . except that I have not so much undertaken to speak against this special form of heresy as to expound the Rule of Truth concerning the person of Christ."*

The positive exposition Novatian has set himself to give is very richly worked out and quite justifies Jerome's admiration of the book. In particular the exegetical demonstration of the divinity of Christ which it offers is very thorough and noble and can scarcely find its superior in ancient literature. Alongside of its zeal for the deity of Christ, its zeal for the unity of God burns warmly, and its Trinitarian doctrine seems to be dominated by the interaction of these two factors. The key to the whole is revealed by Novatian himself when he declares our chief duty to be to contend earnestly that Christ is God, but in such a way as not to militate against the Scriptural *fundamentum* that there is but one God.† It is indeed Tritheism rather than Monarchianism which causes Novatian the deepest anxiety and though he argues stoutly against the latter, it is his opposition to the former which most decisively determines his own forms of statement. Thus, although he exhibits little vital interest in the Logos-speculation for its own sake, and writes rather from the standpoint of the traditional faith, he is thrown back strongly upon the linear development of the Trinity which is the product of the Logos-speculation.‡ Laboring to secure the unity of God at all hazards, he feels that he can do this only by emphasizing the origination of the Son; and not attaining to a clear grasp of the conception of eternal generation, he is led to protect the origination of the Son by emphasizing His posteriority to the Father.§ Amid these ideas, it must be confessed, he somewhat flounders. He is earnestly desirous of doing full justice to the deity of Christ, and he feels that in order to do so he must assimilate Him to the eternal God. But he does not know quite how to do this consistently with a fitting proclamation of the unity of God.

* Chap. 21.

† Chap. xxx, near the beginning.

‡ See above, October, 1905, pp. 554-5.

§ Chap. xxxi.

Accordingly he tells us, on the one hand, that the Son "was always in the Father" because the "Father was always Father": but he at once turns to argue, on the other hand, that the Father must in some sense precede the Son, because it is "necessary that He who knows no beginning must precede Him that has a beginning"; and to insist over and over again that there would be two Gods, if there were two who had not been begotten, or two who were without beginning, or two who were self-existent. The doctrine of "eternal generation" is here struggling in the womb of thought: we do not think it quite comes to the birth.

And thus Novatian seems to us to fall back essentially upon the Logos-construction, but on the Logos-construction so far purified that it is on the point of melting into Nicene orthodoxy. In order to protect the unity of God, in other words, he was led to emphasize not the sameness of the Son and Spirit with God the Father, as Tertullian did with his developed doctrine of the numerical unity of substance, but their difference from Him. The nerve of Novatian's Trinitarianism thus becomes his strong subordinationism. Though he knows and emphasizes the difference between creation and procession* and urges as few others have urged the true divinity of Christ, yet our Lord's deity is to Him after all only a secondary deity. He had a beginning; He was not self-originated; He was the product of His Father's will; He exists but to minister to that will; though He be God, He is not God of Himself, but only because "He was begotten for this special result, that He should be God"; and though He is Lord, He is Lord only because the Father so willed and only to the extent the Father willed.† When He says "I and the Father are one," therefore, "He referred to the agreement, and to the identity of judgment, and to the loving association itself, as, reasonably, the Father and Son are one in agreement and love and affection."‡ Tertullian would here have referred to sameness of substance: even Hippolytus would have referred to sameness of power: Novatian's zeal for the unity of God holds him back, and though he believes the Son to be consubstantial with the Father in the sense that as the son of a man is a man so the Son of God is God,§ yet he must believe also that He is second to the Father in the strongest sense of that word.

* Cf. HARNACK, II, 259, note 3.

† All these phrases are from c. xxxi.

‡ Chap. 27.

§ Cf. BULL, III, 17, and see NÖSGEN, 26, note 2. Novatian is treated by BULL, especially pp. 131, 297, 479, 511, 528, 582, 597, 607, E. T. The best that can be said for him is there said.

This subordination of the Son to the Father is repeated, in his view, in the similar subordination of the Spirit to the Son. So clear is it that, with all his good intentions and upward strivings, Novatian remains, in his theoretical construction of the relationships of the three persons he recognized as God, under the domination of the Logos-speculation and fails to attain the higher standpoint reached by Tertullian. Revolting from the tritheism of Hippolytus, he yet does not know any other way to secure the unity of God but Hippolytus' way—that is, by so sharply emphasizing the subordination of the two objects of Christian worship additional to God the Father as to exalt the Father into the sole Self-Existent, Beginningless, Invisible, Infinite, Immortal and Eternal One. That he guards this subordination better than Hippolytus is a matter of degree and does not erect a difference of kind between them. Novatian marks, no doubt, the highest level of Trinitarian doctrine attainable along the pathway of subordinationism. That this level is lower than the level attained by Tertullian is only evidence that Tertullian's organizing principle had become no longer subordinationism but equalization. It is, in other words, Tertullian's formula of numerical sameness of essence with distinction of persons, not the formula of the Logos-speculation in which the stress was laid on subordinationism,* that had in it the promise and potency of the better things to come.

From such comparisons as these we obtain a notion of the nature of the step toward the formulation of the Church's ingrained faith in an immanent Trinity which was made by Tertullian. The greatness of this step is fairly estimable from the fact that Tertullian's statements will satisfy all the points on which Bishop Bull laid stress in his famous effort to show "the consent of primitive antiquity with the fathers of the Council of Nice." These points he sums up in four: † "first, that Christ our Lord in His higher nature existed before [His birth of] the most blessed Virgin Mary, and, further, before the creation of the world, and that through Him all things were made;

* Speaking of the Logos-doctrine, Prof. L. L. PAINE says truly: "In this view the subordination element is vital, and it became the governing note of the whole Logos-school" (*Evolution of Trinitarianism*, p. 31). Where Prof. PAINE is wrong is in not perceiving how deeply this subordinationism was contrary to the fundamentals of the Christian faith: and by this failure he is led to do grave injustice alike to Athanasianism—in which he discerns more subordinationism than really existed in it—and to Augustinianism—whose reproach to him is that it is determined to be rid of subordinationism. Prof. PAINE, in other words, misconceives both the historical development and its meaning.

† BULL, *Defence*, etc., Conclusion, *ad init.*, E. T., p. 655.

secondly, that in that very nature He is of one substance with God the Father, that is[that] He is not of any created and mutable essence, but of a nature entirely the same with the Father, and consequently very God; thirdly, which is a consequence of this, that He is coeternal with God the Father, that is a divine Person, coexisting with the Father from everlasting; lastly, that He Himself is, nevertheless, subordinate to God the Father, as to His Author and Principle." Tertullian teaches, in other words, the preëxistence, consubstantiality, eternity and subordination of the Son, and likewise of the Spirit. What, then, lacks he yet of Nicene orthodoxy? It is this question which Bishop Bull presses; but, as he presses it, he only makes us aware that Nicene orthodoxy cannot quite be summed up in these four propositions. Meeting these four tests Tertullian yet falls short of Nicene orthodoxy, retaining still too great a leaven of the Logos-speculation. But that he is able to meet Bull's tests, which none of his predecessors or contemporaries can meet, indicates the greatness of the step he marks toward the Nicene orthodoxy.

That we may fairly call Tertullian the father of the Nicene theology there seems to be wanting nothing but some clear historical connection between his work and that of the Nicene fathers. It is over-exigent no doubt to demand an external proof of connection. The silent influence of Tertullian's discussion supplemented by that of Novatian* supplies a sufficient nexus. But we naturally desire to trace in some overt manifestations the working of this influence. A step toward providing this is afforded by the episode of the "two Dionysii," in which the Roman Dionysius out of his Western Trinitarian consciousness corrects and instructs his less well-informed Alexandrian brother, who had permitted himself to speak of our Lord after a fashion which betrayed the most unformed conceptions of the relations of the distinctions in the Godhead. The letter of Dionysius of Rome (259–269 A.D.) *Against the Sabellians*, a considerable portion of which has been preserved by Athanasius in his *Letter in Defense of the Nicene Definition*,† is very properly appealed to by Athanasius as an instance of Niceneism before Nice. It seems clearly to be dependent on Tertullian, though, as Harnack puts it, "no single passage in it can be pointed out which is simply transcribed from Tertullian, but Dionysius has, rather in opposition to the

* On the great influence of Novatian's treatise see BETHUNE-BAKER, *Early History*, etc., p. 191.

† Chapter vi or §§ 26–27 (*Post-Nicene Fathers*, II, iv, 167–168).

formula of Dionysius of Alexandria, developed further in the direction of orthodoxy Tertullian's Trinitarian doctrine."* Quite in the Roman manner† Dionysius turned the edge of his polemic as much against Tritheism as against Monarchianism, and thus, by insisting on "the gathering up of the Divine Triad into a summit," preserved the unity of the common essence and so helped forward to the formulation of the *homoousios*. Similarly by his insistence that the Son was no "creature" (*ποιημα*) and was not "made" (*γενόνται*) but "begotten" (*γεγενῆσθαι*), he laid the foundations of the Nicene formula of "begotten, not made," which also thus goes back through him to Tertullian. Nothing could be more instructive than the emergence into the light of history of this instance in the latter half of the third century of the greater readiness of the West to deal with the Trinitarian problem than the East.

We need seek no other historical link, however, between Western orthodoxy and the East than that provided by "the great Hosius" himself, who was the channel by means of which the formulas beaten out in the West, primarily by Tertullian, were impressed on the East in the Nicene symbol. We are credibly told by Socrates‡ that Hosius disputed in Alexandria on "substance" (*οὐσία*) and "person" (*ὑπόστασις*) prior to the Nicene Council; and his dominant influence with the emperor as well as the prominent place he occupied in the Council itself afford sufficient account of the successful issue of that Council in establishing Tertullian's formula of "one substance and three persons"—the *δμούσιος* in effect—as the faith of the whole Church.§ If despite Athanasius' hint that it was Hosius who "set forth the Nicene Faith,"|| we cannot quite say that Hosius was the "draftsman" of the Nicene Creed,¶ since that Creed was formally framed by a series of amend-

* *Sitzungsberichte* of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, 1895, II, 563.

† Callistus, Novatian, Dionysius. ‡ *Hist. c. iii* 7.

§ Cf. HARNACK, iv, 5, 11 and 50, 121, and *Sitzungsberichte*, etc., p. 364, especially the former references where the matter is argued. See also GAMS, *Kirchengeschichte von Spanien*, II, i, 140. When Socrates (iii. 7) tells us that on Hosius' visit to Alexandria in 324 *τὴν περὶ οὐσίας καὶ ὑποστάσεως πεποίηται ζήτησιν*, we are tempted to see not only a priming of the Alexandrians for what was to come, by this Westerner, the heir of the Western Trinitarianism, but in the choice of the term 'hypostasis' for 'person' a reflection of Tertullian's *substantiva res*,—especially as we are told that Hosius was on this occasion especially zealous in guarding against Sabellian tendencies. We must not, however, push the details of Socrates' report too far.

¶ *History of the Arians*, c. 42.

|| Mr. BETHUNE-BAKER, *Homoousios*, etc., p. 11, note: "That Hosius—for many years previously the most influential bishop in the West, the intimate friend and trusted adviser of Constantine—was the real 'draftsman' of the Creed seems

ments out of a formula offered by Eusebius of Cæsarea, yet what is implied in such a statement is essentially true. Hosius was the effective author of the Nicene Creed, and that is as much as to say that in its fundamental assertions that Creed is a Western formulary,* and its roots are set in the teaching of Tertullian. It was thus given to Tertullian to mark out the pathway in which the Church has subsequently walked and to enunciate the germinal formulas by means of which the Arians were ultimately overcome.

It would be wrong, of course, to derive from these facts, striking as they are, the impression that Tertullian's influence was the only important force operative in the Church for the formation of the doctrine of the Trinity. It would be truer to see in Tertullian and in his definitions only one manifestation of a universally working tendency making steadily toward this end. Wherever the Rule of Faith, which was rooted in the formula of the baptismal commission, formed the fundamental basis of Christian belief, and wherever the data supplied by this Rule of

certain." LOOFS, *Herzog*³, VIII, 378: "That Hosius, the confidant of the emperor, was of great influence at the Synod of Nice lay in the nature of the circumstances, . . . and the statement of Athanasius that 'he set forth (*ξέθετο*) the faith at Nice' (*hist. Ar.*, 42), although not exact in its affirmation—for the Nicænum was framed by amendments out of a draft offered by Eusebius of Cæsarea—nevertheless is in essence true." ZAHN, *Marcellus von Ancyra*, p. 23: "Hosius from the beginning of the Arian controversies exerted the most decisive influence on the course of external events, i.e., on the Emperor. It was due to him that Constantine came forward so positively for the *ὁμοούσιος*, that Eusebius could speak as if the Emperor were the actual originator of that term. Hosius is said to have raised the question concerning *οὐσία* and *ἰπέστασις* on the occasion of his visit to Alexandria, and Athanasius makes his enemies declare of him, 'It was he that set forth the faith at Nice' (*hist. Arian. ad men.*, 42)—by which he assigns him not merely a share in the development of the Nicene faith, as HEFELE supposes (I, p. 280), but a controlling influence in the debates on the faith which took place at Nice, and that means nothing less than in the choice of the formula." ZAHN adds that Socrates' statement of what happened in Alexandria finds support in the independent report of Philostorgius (I, 7), that Alexander had come to an understanding with Hosius as to the *ὁμοούσιος* before the Synod. It seems clear, in any event, that antiquity thought of Hosius as bearing the prime responsibility for the homoousios in the Nicene Creed.

* LOOFS, *Herzog*³, II, 15. 16: "The Nicænum became what it is under Western influences"; II, 14. 54: "The positive declarations of the symbol can be historically understood only when we remember that the emperor was a Westerner and . . . was directed by the advice of Western counsellors, especially Hosius"; IV, 45–46: "Only the influence of the West—Constantine (although he understood Greek) had Western counsellors—explains the acts of the Synod of Nice: the characteristic terminology of the Nicænum fits, in its entirety, only Western conceptions."

Faith were interpreted in the forms of the Logos-speculation, there was constantly in progress a strenuous effort to attain clarity as to the relations of the distinctions in the Name designated by the terms Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And this is as much as to say that every thinking man in the Church was engaged with all the powers of construction granted to him in working out this problem. Even the Monarchians themselves, to whom in the providence of God it was given to keep poignantly before the eyes of men the items of the faith which were likely to be neglected by the Logos-speculation, were yet apt to express themselves more or less in its terms.* Accordingly from the very beginning Christian literature is filled with adumbrations of what was to come. Already in Athenagoras Tertullian's doctrine of eternal pre-prolate distinctions in the Godhead almost came to birth; already in Theophilus Origen's doctrine of eternal generation seemed on the verge of conception. Least of all did the great Alexandrian divines wait for Tertullian's initiative. Origen, for example, his younger contemporary, and at once the calmest and profoundest thinker granted to the Church in the Ante-Nicene age, went his own independent way toward the same great goal. Only, Origen sought the solution of the problem not with Tertullian by separating the Logos from the cosmic processes and thereby carrying the distinctions in the Godhead, freed from all connection with activities *ad extra*, back into the mysteries of the innermost modes of the divine existence, but by pushing the cosmic processes themselves, along with the Logos, back into, if not the immanent, at least the eternal modes of the divine activity. Thus he gave the Church in full formulation the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son of God, indeed, but along with it also the doctrine of eternal creation: and by his failure to separate the Son from the world, with all that was, or seemed to be, involved in that, he missed becoming the father of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity by becoming instead—well or ill understood, but at least not unnaturally—the father of Arianism. It was not along this pathway that the Church doctrine of the Trinity was to be attained, but rather along that beaten out by the feet of Ter-

* The same is true also of the Montanists—to whom the function was committed of emphasizing the doctrine of the Spirit in the Church—if we can judge by the example and trust the testimony of Tertullian. HARNACK (E. T., iv, 108) is right in assigning to them an important place in the development of the doctrine of the Spirit: he is wrong in the specific function assigned them in this development. If we can judge by the example of Tertullian, the effect of their movement was to elevate and deepen the conception of the Spirit and His work.

tullian.* And this, simply because the Church doctrine of the Trinity could not come to its rights within the limits of the Logos-speculation, and Origen's construction preserved the essential elements of the Logos-speculation while Tertullian's prepared the way for transcending it.

To put the matter into somewhat abstract form, the immanent movement of Christian thought, we conceive, took some such course as the following. The Logos-speculation laid its stress on the gradations of deity manifested in the Logos and the Spirit, and just on that account did less than justice to the Church's immanent faith in which the Father, Son and Holy Ghost appeared as equal sharers in the Name. That justice might be done to the immanent faith of the Church, therefore, it was essential that the stress should be shifted from gradations of deity to the equality of the persons of the Godhead. This correction carried with it the confession not merely of the eternity of these persons, but also of their unchangeableness, since not only eternity but also unchangeableness is an essential attribute of deity, and must belong to each person of the Godhead if these persons are to be seriously conceived to be equal. That justice might be done to these conceptions, it obviously was not enough, then, that a basis for the prolations should be discovered in the eternal existence form of God, nor indeed merely that personal distinctions underlying these prolations should be carried back into eternity, nor merely that the prolations themselves should be pushed back into eternity. In the last case the eternal prolates must further be conceived as in no sense inferior to the unprolate deity itself, sharers in all its most intimate attributes—not only in its eternity and unchangeableness, therefore, but also in its exaltation, or in the speech of the time, its "invisibility," including self-existence itself. But so to conceive them involved, of course, the evisceration of the entire prolation speculation of its purpose and value—as may be readily perceived by reading in conjunction the chapters of Tertullian (who is still so far under the control of the Logos-speculation) in which he argues that "invisibility" is the peculiarity of the Father in distinction from the Son, the very characteristic of the Son being His "visi-

* HARNACK (E. T., iv, 110), speaking of the development of the doctrine of the Spirit, although he recognizes that in his doctrine of the pre-temporal *processio* of the Spirit Origen is in advance of Tertullian, for Tertullian does not teach this *explicitly* (see above, pp. 27-8), yet remarks that "by the *unius substantiae*, which he regards as true of the Spirit also, Tertullian comes nearer the views that finally prevailed in the fourth century."

bility,"* and the discussion of Augustine† in which he solidly argues that the Son and Spirit are, because equally God with the Father, also equally "invisible" with the Father.‡ The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity could not become complete, in other words, until, under the pressure of the demand of the Christian consciousness for adequate recognition of the true and complete deity of the Son and Spirit, the whole conception of prolations of deity for specific functions had been superseded by a doctrine of eternally persisting personal distinctions in the Godhead itself. The way was prepared for this historically, no doubt, in large measure, by pushing the idea of prolation back into eternity, as Origen did, where it took the form of a doctrine of eternal generation and procession, and in so doing lost its primary significance and grew nigh to vanishing away,—

* *Cont. Prax.*, xiv-xvi.

† *de Trinitate*, II.

‡ There is, of course, a stream of better teaching running through the very fathers who denied "invisibility" to the prolate Logos in the interests of the Logos-speculation. The passage in Ignatius, *Ad. Ephes.* (end of c. iii) sets the norm of this better mode of speech. See also Melito, *Frag.*, 13 (Otto, p. 419), and Tertullian himself who, despite his elaborate "distinction of the Father from the Son by this very characteristic, that the Son is visible and the Father invisible," nevertheless, "in the very same book and chapter"—viz., the fourteenth chapter of the *adv. Prax.*, remarks "that the Son also, considered in Himself, is invisible" (BULL, IV, iii, 9). But the doctrine of the like invisibility of the Son with the Father came to its rights only with Augustine. On the whole subject of the patristic ideas of the "visibility" of the Logos and the "invisibility" of God as such, the discussions—which certainly involve no little special pleading—of BULL, Book IV, chap. iii, are well worth consulting. To the general student of doctrine these discussions of BULL have an additional interest, inasmuch as—although it doubtless would have shocked him to have had it suggested to him—his defense of the subordinationism of the fathers on the ground that they conceived it due not to any difference between the Father and Son in essence or attributes but to an "economy," is equivalent to attributing to the fathers and adopting for himself the essential elements of what is known in the history of doctrine as the "Covenant Theology"—a theology that was being taught by many Reformed theologians in BULL's day. When BULL says of the fathers (IV, iii, 12, E T., I, p. 615): "They by no means meant to deny that the Son of God, equally with the Father, is in His own nature immeasurable and invisible; but merely intimated this, that all such appearances of God, and also the incarnation itself, had reference to the economy which the Son of God undertook,"—he has only in other words enunciated the Covenant idea. When he adds: "Which economy is by no means suited to the Father inasmuch as He had not His origin from any beginning and is indebted for His authorship to none"—apart from his unwonted phraseology, he does not necessarily go beyond the Covenant theologians, who were quick to contend that the terms of "the Covenant" are themselves grounded in the intrinsic relations of the three persons. These, they taught, are such as made it proper and fit that each person should assume the precise functions He did assume—as, in a word, made it alone suitable that it should be the Son and Spirit who should be "sent" and not the Father, and the like. The alternatives, in a word, would appear to be either an Arianizing subordinationism or the Covenant theology: all other constructions are half views and inherently unstable.

for what is the value of an essential, eternal and unchangeable prolation of deity which, just because essential, eternal and unchangeable, can have no inherent relation to activities *ad extra*? But the real goal was attained only when the whole idea of prolation, thus rendered useless and meaningless, had fallen away, and the Logos-speculation gave place to something better. And it was Tertullian's definitions, not Origen's speculations, which prepared the way for the attainment of this goal. So that it was not Origen but Tertullian who became the real father of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

It is, of course, quite possible to exaggerate the measure in which this revolution of thought is traceable in the pages of Tertullian. It is first discernible in its completeness in the expositions of Augustine two centuries later. But it seems sufficiently clear that the beginnings of the line of development which ended in Augustine are perceptible in Tertullian.* Their mark is his insistence on the equality of the Son and Spirit with the Father, an insistence in which he fairly enunciated the great conception afterward embodied in the term *homoousios*. Tertullian, however, still lived and moved and had his being under the spell of the Logos-speculation; he did not even perceive, as did Origen, that the notion of prolations before time must give way to the higher conception of eternal generation and procession—much less that even this latter conception is of doubtful utility. Athanasius himself, indeed, did not perceive this last—and therefore the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, worked out under his inspiration, still preserves these shells of outlived speculation, the kernel of which has withered away.† The phraseology in which they are embodied keeps its place even in the forms of statement of Augustine. The hold which the Logos-speculation had on the minds of men is in nothing made more manifest than in such persistence of its forms in subsequent thought, after they had lost all their meaning. In very truth the Logos-speculation provided the common ground on which the whole world of fourth-century Christian thought still stood; and Arian differed from Athanasian largely only as the left wing differs from the right wing

* Even DORNER, who does not perceive that Tertullian had in principle separated the Divine Persons as such from the world-process, yet admits that in his "conception of the Three Persons as inwardly connected (as *concertos, cohaerentes*)" Tertullian's view "includes a speculative element, to which the later doctrine of the Church was long in attaining" (*Person of Christ*, I, ii, 76–77).

† Cf. the very judicious remarks of DORNER (*Person of Christ*, I, ii, 327 sq.) on the survivals in the Nicene construction: see also pp. 184, 203–4, 491.

of the same fundamental type of thinking.* The merit of Tertullian is that his definitions, though still adjusted to the forms of the Logos-speculation, had in them the potency of a better construction and were sure sooner or later to burst the shell in which they were artificially confined. In his recognition of the eternity of the personal distinctions in the Godhead apart from all questions of prolation, and in the emphasis he laid upon the equal deity of these persons, he planted fruitful seed which could not fail of a subsequent growth. Men might still cling to the old forms and seek merely to match the downward development which emphasized the distinction of the prolations from the frontal deity until it had degraded them into temporal creatures of the divine will, by emphasizing for themselves rather their eternity and their equality with God.† But by this very movement upward it was inevitable that the very idea of prolation, which was the core of the Logos-speculation, should lose its significance and be pushed first out of notice and then out of belief,—until the whole conception of a linear trinity should disappear and there should emerge the completed Trinitarianism of an Augustine, to whom the persons of the Trinity are not subordinate one to another but coördinate sharers of the one divine essence.

It is, of course, not the close of this process of thought that we see in Tertullian, but its beginning. But in him already appears the pregnant emphasis on the equality rather than the graded subordination of the personal distinctions in the Godhead, by the logical

* Cf. HAGEMANN, p. 134: "When the origin of the Son out of the essence of God is placed in immediate connection with the creation of the world, there is needed in the way of great logical acuteness only a single unimportant step to set the Son in the sense of an Arius alongside of the world, as creature and Creator. No doubt Origen had guarded against this by ascribing not to the Son only but to the world as well an eternal origin: but the latter necessarily fell away as an open contradiction to the creed, and so nothing remained except either to join the Son so essentially with the Father that now the idea of His deity would come to its full rights and He should be recognized as in His Being wholly independent of the origin of the world, by which there would necessarily be raised again the problem of the unity of essence of the Father and the Son; or else so to connect Him with the temporal origin of the world that He should fall thereby out of the circle of the divine life and be conceived as a kind of created God in Plato's sense, as an Under-God by the side of or rather beneath the Father, who would embrace the whole divine world in Himself, the one God over all. Already in the case of Dionysius of Alexandria we have noted in *theory* a tendency to this latter development, even though his faith-consciousness remained free from this evil. In the case of Arius the theory, however, obtained a decisive victory over the faith. . . ." In this passage, we conceive, the essential logical relations of Orthodoxy and Arianism to their common basis in the Logos-speculation are lucidly set forth. Cf. DORNER, as cited, pp. 267-80, and pp. 454-5.

† Cf. DORNER, as cited, p. 328.

inworking of which the whole change in due time came about. So far as we can now learn it was he first, therefore, who, determined to give due recognition to the elements of the Church's faith embodied in the Rule of Faith, pointed out the road over which it was necessary to travel in order to do justice to the Biblical data. Say that he was in this but the voice of the general Christian consciousness. It remains that it was left to him first to give effective voice to the Christian consciousness, and that it was only by following out the lines laid down by him to their logical conclusion that the great achievement of formulating to thought the doctrine of the Triune God was at length accomplished.

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