

VOL. III.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., OCTOBER, 1905.

No. 4.

The Princeton Theological Review.

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Philadelphia:

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY

MacCALLA & COMPANY Incorporated, 237-9 DOCK STREET.

\$3.00 a Year.

80 Cts. a Copy

THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

No. 4—October, 1905.

I.

TERTULLIAN AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

FIRST ARTICLE.

IT is exceedingly impressive to see Christian Latin literature Athena-like spring at once into being fully armed in the person of an eminently representative man, in whom seem summed up the promise and potency of all that it was yet to be. This is what occurred in Tertullian, whose advent and career provide a remarkable illustration of the providential provision of the right man for the right place. Seldom has one been called to a great work who was better fitted for it by disposition and talents as well as by long and strenuous preparation. Ardent in temperament, endowed with an intelligence as subtle and original as it was aggressive and audacious, he added to his natural gifts a profound erudition, which far from impeding only gave weight to the movements of his alert and robust mind. A jurist of note, he had joined to the study of law not only that of letters, but also that of medicine; born and brought up in the camp he had imbibed from infancy no little knowledge of the military art; and his insatiable curiosity had carried him into the depths of every form of learning accessible to his time and circumstances, not even excepting the occult literature of the day. When he gave himself in his mature manhood to the service of Christianity, he brought in his hands all the spoils of antique culture, smelted into a molten mass by an almost incredible passion.

The moment when he appeared on the scene was one well calcu-

lated to call out all his powers. It was shortly after the beginning of the last decade of the second century. Commodus had died and left a trail of civil war behind him, in the midst of which persecution had broken out afresh in Africa. Harassed from without, the African Church was also torn from within by an accumulation of evils; apostasies, heresies, schisms abounded. Up through the confusion were thrust Tertullian's mighty shoulders, casting off the enemies of the Gospel upon every side. He was not formed for defensive warfare. Even against the persecuting heathenism he took the offensive. Not content with repelling its calumnies and ridiculing the popular hatred of Christianity, he undertook to demonstrate, as a jurist, the illegality of the persecuting edicts, and, as a moralist, the absurdity of the heathen superstitions. He broke out a short and easy way for the refutation of heretics, by which he put them out of court at the start, and then followed them remorselessly into every corner of their reasoning. Within the Church itself he pursued with mordant irony the crowding abuses which had grown up in the Christian life. Of course he had the defects of his qualities. This terrible adversary of others was a terrible adversary also of his own peace. The extremity of his temper made him a prey to the fanatical claims of the Montanists and ultimately drove him beyond even them. He died the head of a new sect of his own.

Meanwhile he had rendered a service to the Church which it is no exaggeration to call inestimable. There is certainly discoverable in the writings of his immediate successors little open recognition of the immensity of the debt which Christianity owed to him. Throughout the whole of the remainder of the third century—a period of some eighty years—his name is not once mentioned. In the Greek Church, indeed, no one but the historian Eusebius seems ever to have heard of him. Even in his own West, Lactantius (305–6) is the first to allude to him, and he does so with obvious depreciation. Jerome, it is true, gives free vent to his admiration for the learning and acuteness, the vehemence and elegance of this “torrent of eloquence,” and not only places him formally among the “illustrious men” of the Church, but calls him fondly “our Tertullian.” With Hilary and Augustine, however, he has already taken his place definitely in the catalogue of heretics, and thenceforward he found hardly any who were prepared to do him reverence.* All this appearance of neglect passing into reprobation, however, is appear-

* The generous but qualified praise of Vincent, *Common.*, xviii [46], stands almost alone by the side of Jerome's.

ance only. Men might carefully avoid speaking of Tertullian; they could not escape his influence. Cyprian, for example, never breathes his name; yet the works of Cyprian are filled with the silent witnesses of the diligence with which he studied his brilliant predecessor; and his secretary told Jerome he never passed a day without reading him, and was accustomed to ask for him in the significant formula, "Hand me the Master." This is not far from a typical instance. "The man was too great a scholar, thinker, writer," remarks Harnack,* "and he had done the Western Church too distinguished service during a long series of years for his memory to become effaced."

In modern times the vigor of Tertullian's mind and the brilliancy of his literary gifts have perhaps generally been fully recognized. It is questionable, however, whether the greatness of his initiative in the development of Christian doctrine is even yet estimated at its true value. That many of the streams of doctrinal thought that have flowed down through the Western Church take their rise in him is indeed universally understood. But perhaps it comes to us with a little surprise when Harnack claims for him, for example, that it was he who broke out the road for the formulation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. "When the Nicene formulary is praised," says Harnack,† "it is always of Athanasius that we think; when the Chalcedonian decree is cited, it is the name of Leo the Great that is magnified. But that Tertullian is in reality the father of the orthodox doctrines of the Trinity and of the Person of Christ, and that in the whole patristic literature there is no treatise that can be compared in importance and influence with his tract *Against Praxeas*, it has necessarily been left to the investigations of our own day to exhibit." If such a statement as this can be substantiated it is enough to mark Tertullian out not merely as a man of exceptional gifts and worthy performance, but as one of the greatest forces which have wrought in history.

It is proposed to subject this statement to such testing as is involved in going to the tract *Against Praxeas* and seeking to form a judgment of its value and of the place in the development of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity which it vindicates for its author.

The tract *Against Praxeas*, it must be borne in mind from the

* *Sitzungsberichte d. k. p. Akad. d. Wissenschaften*, 1895, June, p. 546: "Tertullian in der Litteratur der alten Kirche."

† *Loc. cit.*

outset, is not an extended treatise. It is a brief document filling but some fifty pages. Nor is it a calm constructive work in which the author sets himself to develop in its completeness a doctrinal elaboration. It is a vigorous and lively polemic designed to meet an immediate crisis. In other words, it is distinctly an occasional writing, devoted to the refutation of a heresy which was at the moment troubling the churches. Any doctrinal construction which may be found in it is accordingly purely incidental, and rather betrays the underlying conceptions of the writer's mind than forms the calculated burden of the document. If this constructive element, thus emerging, is nevertheless epoch-making for the history of thought, it will redound with peculiar force to the honor of the author. That it so emerges, however, renders it necessary that, for the proper estimate of the tract, we should begin by obtaining a somewhat exact understanding of the circumstances which gave birth to it.

We must not be misled by its title or by the reversion of the discourse now and then to the form of direct address into supposing the tract a personal assault upon Praxeas himself. It is quite clear that Praxeas was a figure resurrected by Tertullian from a comparatively remote past, and given prominence in the discussion, perhaps, as a sort of controversial device. Tertullian, apparently, would represent the teachings he is opposing as a mere recrudescence of an exploded notion, discredited in its vacillating and weak proponent a generation ago.* Of Praxeas himself we know nothing except what Tertullian tells us: there is no independent mention of his name in the entirety of Christian literature. He is represented as an Asian confessor who was the first to import into Rome the type of doctrine which Tertullian calls Monarchianism or Patripassianism.† Evidently he had made himself felt for a time in

* Even were this motive not operative, it would not follow from the use of Praxeas' name that he and the book were contemporaneous. Josephus controverted Apion and Origen Celsus only after a considerable interval of years. The same seems to be true of the use of Fronto's name in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. (See HARNACK, *Chronologie*, II, 326, and note; and compare what is said by HAGEMANN, *Röm. Kirche*, pp. 235-6.)

† HAGEMANN's attempt (*Röm. Kirche*, 234 and sq.) to identify Praxeas with Callistus is only a part of his general attempt so to manipulate the facts as to make Callistus the real protagonist for fundamental Christian truth and Tertullian the real errorist. In the prosecution of this endeavor he gives to Callistus all that belongs rightfully to Tertullian (and more). He speaks of him as setting forth "the doctrine of the unity of nature of the Father and Son and the doctrine of the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ, with a completeness of formal development such as they received later through the instrumentality of the General Councils only after long and bitter controversies," and as thus more than

Rome, and among other things had succeeded in reversing the favorable policy of the Roman bishops with respect to the Montanists. By this achievement he naturally earned from Tertullian a twofold scorn. Tertullian bitingly remarks that thus Praxeas had doubly done the devil's business in Rome,—“he had expelled prophecy and brought in heresy, had exiled the Paraclete and crucified the Father.”* His heresy passed over into Africa,—while the people, says Tertullian, slept in doctrinal simplicity. But God raised up a defender of the truth: and the heresy was exposed and seemingly destroyed; Praxeas himself submitted to correction, and returned to the old faith. Apparently this was the end of it all: *exinde silentium*, says Tertullian, with terse significance. But it is the curse of noxious growths that they are apt to leave seeds behind them. So it happened in this case also. The tares had been rooted up and burned. But lo, after so long a time, the new crop appeared, and the last state was unspeakably worse than the first. The tares had everywhere, says Tertullian, shaken out their seed, and now, after having lain hid so long, their vitality had become only too manifest. It is not then an individual that Tertullian is facing; it is a widespread condition. This tract is not an attempt to silence a heretic menacing the peace of the Church; it is an effort to correct a rampant evil already widely spread in the community, by which the very existence of the truth is endangered.

The tones in which Tertullian speaks of the rise of the heresy in the person of Praxeas and of its prevalence at the time of his writing are noticeably different. Then it was an exotic vagary seeking footing in the West and finding none: now it is a native growth, springing up everywhere. The tares had cast their seed, he says, “everywhere” (*ubique*). Nor can he look with comfort on the task of rooting them up. Though he is not the man to lose courage, and reminds himself of the past success, he yet finds his deepest consolation in the assurance that all tares shall be burnt up at the last day. When a man looks forward to the Judgment Day for the vindication of his cause, he is not far from despairing of success here and now. It looks very much as if Tertullian felt himself in a hopeless minority in his defense of what he calls the pristine faith

a hundred years in advance of the Church at large refuting Arianism and establishing for Rome a “triune creed” (see especially pp. 101 and 128). On the other hand, he represents Tertullian as, under the influence of Hippolytus, so misunderstanding Callistus that, under the nick-name of Praxeas, he treats his epoch-making orthodox definitions as if they were Monarchian.

* *Adv. Prax.*, i, Ita duo negotia diaboli Praxeas Romæ procuravit, prophetiam expulit et hæresim intulit, paracletum fugavit et patrem crucifixit.

(*pristinum*). He does not conceal the difficulty he experienced in obtaining even a fair hearing for his doctrine. Christians at large were impatient of everything that seemed to their uninstructed minds to imperil their hard-won monotheism. The majority of believers he tells us are ever of the simple, not to say the unwise and untaught (*simplices, ne dixerim imprudentes et idiotæ*); and they were nothing less than terrified (*expavescunt*) by the mention of an "economy" within the being of God by virtue of which the one only God may be supposed to present distinctions within His unity. They continuously cast in the teeth of those who inculcated such doctrines the charge of preaching two or three gods, while they arrogated to themselves alone the worship of the one only true God.

If we are to take this literally, it will mean that Christians at large in Tertullian's day—that is, at the time when he wrote this tract—were suspicious of the doctrine of the Trinity and looked upon it almost as a refined polytheism; that they were inclined rather strongly to some form of Monarchianism as alone comporting with a real monotheism. There are not lacking other indications that something like this may have been the case. Hippolytus, in approaching in the course of his great work *On Heresies* the treatment of the Monarchianism of his day, betrays an even more poignant sense of isolation than Tertullian. He speaks of the promoters of the Monarchian views as bringing great confusion upon believers throughout the whole world.* In Rome at least, he tells us, they met with wide consent;† and he represents himself as almost single-handed in his opposition to their heresy. In effect it seems to be quite true that through no less than four episcopates—those of Eleutherus, Victor, Zephyrinus and Callistus—the modalistic theology was dominant and occupied the place indeed of the official faith at Rome. We may neglect here hints in Origen‡ that something of the same state of affairs may have obtained in the Eastern churches also. Enough that it is clear that at the time when Tertullian's tract was written—say during the second decade of the third century§—the common sentiment of the West was not untouched by modalistic tendencies.

It must not be supposed that the mass of the Christian

* *Philosophumena*, IX, 1: μέγιστον ταραχὸν κατὰ πάντα τὸν κόσμον ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστοῖς ἐμβάλλουσιν.

† Do., IX, 6.

‡ See HARNACK, *Hist. of Dogma*, III, 53, note 2; DORNER, *Person of Christ*, I, ii, 3.

§ HARNACK (*Chronologie*, II, 285–6, 296) sets the date of the book at c. 213–218.

population, in the West at least—for it is with the West² that we have particularly to do—held to a modalistic theory as a definitely conceived theological formula. What is rather to be said is that the Modalistic formula when warily presented roused in the minds of most men of the time no very keen sense of opposition, while the Trinitarian formula was apt to offend their monotheistic consciousness. This is by no means surprising; and it is partially paralleled by the situation in the East after the promulgation of the Nicene creed. The difficulty in obtaining assent to that symbol did not turn on the prevalence of definitely Arian sentiments so much as upon the indefiniteness of the conceptions current among the people at large and the consequent difficulty experienced by so definite a formula in making its way among them. Men were startled by these sharp definitions and felt more or less unprepared to make them the expression of their simple and somewhat undefined faith. So here, a century before the Nicene decision, the people in the West found similar difficulty with the Trinitarian distinctions. The naïve faith of the average Christian crystallized around the two foci of the unity of God and the deity of Christ: and the modalistic formulas might easily be made to appear to the untrained mind to provide simply and easily for both items of belief, and so to strike out a safe middle pathway between the Dynamistic Monarchianism of the Theodotuses and Artemodites, on the one hand, and the subtle constructions of Hippolytus and Tertullian on the other. The one extreme was unacceptable because it did not allow for the true deity of the Redeemer: the other seemed suspicious as endangering the true unity of God.

It is not at all strange, therefore, that the unsophisticated Christian should tremble on the verge of accepting Modalistic Monarchianism, especially when presented, in a guarded form, as a simple and safe solution of a vexing problem. It was thus that it was quick to commend itself; and it was on this ground that it was in its most prudent formulation exploited at Rome as the official faith. When it was brought to Rome, we must remember, it was set over against, not developed Trinitarianism, but rather, on the one side, the crude humanitarianism of the dynamistic school of Monarchianism which was at the moment troubling the Church there, and on the other, the almost equally crude emanationism of the Logos speculation, which had held the minds of thinking men for a generation. It was therefore naturally treated as a deliverance from opposite heresies, along whose safe middle way men might walk in the light of the twin truths of the deity of Christ

and the unity of God. When Hippolytus assailed it, therefore, he obtained no hearing and was treated as merely another disturber of the Church's peace. His assault did not, indeed, fail of all effect: he rendered it impossible for Modalism to be adopted in its crudest form, and forced modifications in it by which it was given the appearance of more nearly covering the main facts of the revelation of God in the Gospel. But he could by no means turn the thoughts of men into a different channel; neither, indeed, was he capable of digging a channel into which their thoughts might justly flow. The outcome, therefore, was only that Callistus excommunicated both Sabellius and Hippolytus and set forth as the Christian faith a new doctrine which was intended to declare the central truths of the Gospel as understood by men of moderation and balanced judgment. Hippolytus looked on this new doctrine as itself essentially Modalism, with a tendency downward. And Hippolytus was right. But it commended itself powerfully to the age, and that not merely in Rome, but in Africa. It is this refined Modalism of the Roman compromise, which seemed to be threatening to become the Christianity of the West, that Tertullian attacks in his tract against Praxeas.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to trace the gradual modifications which the Monarchian teaching underwent from its earliest form as taught at Rome by Noëtus and possibly by Praxeas to its fullest development and most advanced adjustment in the hands of Callistus to the fundamental Church doctrines of God and Christ. Suffice it to say that the modifications by which Callistus sought to "catholicize" Monarchian modalism, proceeded by according some sort of recognition to the Logos doctrine on the one hand, and on the other by softening the crass assertion that it was the Father who suffered on the cross. Of course no personal distinction between Father and Son, or God and Logos, was admitted. But a nominal distinction was accorded, and this distinction was given quasi-validity by a further distinction of times. "Callistus says," explains Hippolytus,* "that the same Logos is at once Son and Father, distinguished in name, but really one individual Spirit, . . . and that the Spirit incarnated in the virgin is not different from the Father but one and the same. . . . For that which is seen, which is of course the man,—it is that which is the Son; but the Spirit which is contained in the Son is the Father, since there are not two Gods, Father and Son, but one. Now, the Father being in him,"—*i.e.*, the Son, which is the "man" or the "flesh,"—"seeing that he had

* *Phil.*, IX, 7.

assumed the flesh, deified it by uniting it with Himself, and made it one, so that the Father and Son are called one God, while this person being one cannot be two, and so the Father suffered along with the Son." Hippolytus adds that Callistus worked out this form of statement because he did not "wish to say the Father suffered." The point here, therefore, is that the Son differs from the Father not as the incarnate differs from the unincarnate God, but rather as the incarnating man differs from the incarnated Spirit. As then the flesh is properly designated by the "Son" and it is the flesh that suffers, the Father, who is properly the Spirit incarnated in the "Son," may more exactly be said to have suffered along with the flesh, *i.e.*, the "Son," than Himself to have endured the suffering. The suffering was, in other words, in the "flesh": the informing "Spirit" only partook in the suffering of the "flesh" because joined in personal union with it. The artificiality of this construction is manifest on the face of it; as also is its instability. Hippolytus himself pointed out its evident tendency to fall back into the lower dynamistic Monarchianism; since in proportion as the Father as the Spirit and the Son as the flesh were separated in thought, the reality of the incarnation was likely to give way in favor of a more or less clearly conceived inhabitation. Thus Jesus would become again only a man in whom God dwelt. The formula of "the Father suffering with the Son" was really, therefore, a mediation toward humanitarianism rather than toward full recognition of the deity of the Son; and it is interesting to observe in the later Arians the reëmergence of the mode of expression thus struck out by Callistus. With them of course it was not a question of the Father but of that "Middle Being" which they called the Son of God; but what they affirm of it is that having taken "man" from the Virgin Mary, it "shared in" the sufferings of this "man" on the cross.* The obvious meaning of the Arians will throw light back upon the idea which Callistus meant to convey. This was clearly that the incarnation of the Spirit which was God in the man which was Christ, brought that Spirit into definite relations to the sufferings endured by this man properly in his flesh.

What it concerns us to note here particularly, however, is that it is just this Callistan formula which underlies the Monarchianism

* At the Synod of Sirmium, 357. See HAHN ², § 161. The idea is that the "man" alone "suffers" (*patitur*): the Logos incarnate in the "man" only co-suffers (*compatitur*) with it. The Spirit, say the Arians at Sardica, 343, "did not suffer, but the man (*ἀνθρώπος*) which it put on suffered"; because, as it is immediately explained, this is "capable of suffering." Cf. HAHN ², p. 189.

which Tertullian is opposing in his tract.* The evidence of this is pervasive. It will doubtless be enough to adduce the manifest agreement of his opponents with the Callistan formula in the two chief points to which we have adverted. Tertullian's opponents, it appears, while allowing to the Word a sort of existence, would not admit Him to be a really *substantiva res*, "so that He could be regarded as a *res et persona*" and, being constituted as a second to God the Father, make with the Father "two, Father and Son, God and the Word."† They "sought to interpret the distinction between Father and Son conformably to their own notion, so as to distinguish between them within a single person, saying that the Son is the flesh, that is, the man, that is Jesus, but the Father the Spirit, that is God, that is Christ."‡ Similarly Tertullian's opponents seeking to avoid the charge that they blasphemed the Father by making him suffer, granted that the Father and Son were so far two that it was the Son that suffered while the Father only suffered with Him.§

The special interest of this for us at the moment lies in a corollary which flows from it. Tertullian was not breaking out a new path in his controversy with the Monarchians. He was entering at the eleventh hour into an old controversy, which had dragged along for a generation, and was now only become more acute and more charged with danger to the Church. This, to be sure, is already implied in his reference to an earlier refutation of Praxeas, and in his representation of the error at present occupying him as merely a repristination of that old heretic's teaching. Accordingly, not only is the controversy old, but it is old to Tertullian. The general fact is evident on every page of his tract. It is quite clear that Tertullian is not here forging new weapons to meet novel attacks. On both sides much acuteness had already been expended in assault and defense,|| and the lines of reasoning had already long been laid down and even the proofs *pro* and *con* repeatedly urged. The very exegetical arguments bear on them the stamp of long use and betray the existence on both sides of a kind of exegetical tradition already formed. The emergence of this fact throws us into doubt as to how much even of what seems new and original in the tract may not likewise be part of the hereditary property of the controversy.

* Cf. ROLFFS in the *Texte und Untersuch.*, XII, iv, 94 sq.

† *Adv. Prax.*, C. vii.

‡ C. xxvii.

§ C. xxix. *Filius patitur, pater vero compatitur. Compassus est pater filio.*

|| We are here drawing upon LIPSUS' admirable article, "On Tertullian's Tract Against Praxeas," published in the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, XIII (1868), pp. 701-724. For the present matter see especially p. 710.

Even the technical terms which Tertullian employs with such predilection and which are often thought of as contributions of his own to the discussion, such as *οἰκονομία*, *trinitas*,* for example, need not be new, but may owe it only to accident that they come here for the first time strikingly before us. Indeed, Tertullian does not use them as if they were novelties. On the contrary he introduces them as well-known terms, which he could freely employ as such. He speaks† of "that dispensation which we call the *οἰκονομία*," that is to say, apparently, "which is commonly so called." And in the same connection he joins the "distribution of the Unity into a Trinity"‡ with the *οἰκονομία* in such a manner as inevitably to suggest to the reader that this mode of explaining the *οἰκονομία* belonged to its tradition. Assuredly no reader would derive from the tract the impression that such terms were new coinages struck out to meet the occasion.

Additional point is given to this impression by the circumstance that Tertullian not only puts forward no claim to originality, but actually asserts that his teaching is the traditional teaching of the Church. As over against the novel character of the new-fangled teaching of Praxeas, which falls as such under the prescription which Tertullian was wont to bring against all heresies as innovations and therefore no part of the original deposit of the faith, he sets his doctrine as a doctrine which had always been believed and now much more, under the better instruction of the Paraclete. "We, however, as always, so now especially, since better instructed by the Paraclete, who is the leader into all truth, believe that there is one God indeed, but yet under the following dispensation, which we call the *οἰκονομία*."§ An attempt has been made, it is true, to read in this statement a hint that the doctrine of the Trinity was a peculiarity of the Montanists;|| and to make out that Tertullian

* LIPSIVS, as above, p. 721, instances these two terms as "expressions which meet us here for the first time." Both terms appear in Hippolytus' *Cont. Noët.*, and if that tract antedates Tertullian's this would be an earlier appearance; and each appears once in earlier literature.

† Chap. ii.

‡ Chap. ii. Cf. Chap. iii.

§ Chap. ii.

|| That Tertullian owed his Trinitarianism to Montanism was already suggested by the younger CHRISTOPHER SAND in the seventeenth century—whose *Nucleus Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ* was one of the works which BULL's *Defensio* was intended to meet. See BULL, II, vii, 7 (E. T., p. 203). It was revived vigorously by the Tübingen School (BAUR, *Dreieinigkeitslehre*, 177, and especially SCHWEGLER, e.g., *Nachapost. Zeitalter*, II, 341). LIPSIVS, as quoted, p. 719, opposes the notion, but argues that nevertheless in Africa, at least, there was a connection between Montanism and Trinitarianism. Besides his own paper in the *Zeitschrift für wissenschaft. Theologie*, 1866, p. 194, LIPSIVS refers for information to RITSCHL, *Alt-kathol. Kirche*, Ed. 2, p. 487f, and VOLCKMAR, *Hippolyt.*, p. 115. STIER argues the

means to say only that "we Montanists" have always so believed. The language, however, will not lend itself to this interpretation. Tertullian does say that since he became a Montanist his belief has been strengthened, and elsewhere (chap. xiii) he intimates that the Montanists were especially clear as to the "economy," as he calls the distinction within the unity of the Godhead. Perhaps he means that special prophetic deliverances expounding the Trinity in unity had among the Montanists been added to the traditionary faith. Perhaps he means only that the emphasis laid by the Montanistic movement, in distinction from the Father and Son, on the activity and personality of the Paraclete as the introducer of a new dispensation, had conduced to clearer views of the distinctions included in the unity of the Godhead. But the very adduction of this clearer or fuller view as consequent upon his defection to Montanism, only throws into prominence the fact that the doctrine itself belonged to his pre-Montanistic period also. "We as always, so now especially," contrasts two periods and can only mean that this doctrine dated in his consciousness from a day earlier than his Montanism. We must understand Tertullian then as affirming that the doctrine of the Trinity in unity which he is teaching belongs to the traditionary lore of the Church. His testimony, in this case, is express that what he teaches in this tract is nothing new, but only a part of his original faith.

This testimony is supported by the occurrence in earlier treatises by Tertullian—notably in his great *Apology**—of passages in which essential elements of his doctrine are given expression in his characteristic forms. And it is still further supported by the preservation of such a treatise by the hand of another, as Hippolytus' fragment against Noëtus,† in which something similar to the same doctrine is enunciated. It has been contended indeed that Tertullian borrowed from Hippolytus, or that Hippolytus borrowed from Tertullian. And there may be little decisive to urge against either hypothesis if otherwise commended. But in the absence of such further commendation it seems much more probable that the two treatises independently embody a point of view already traditional in the Church.‡ In any case Hippolytus must be believed to be stating in essence no other doctrine than that which

question in his *Gottes- und Logos-lehre Tertullians*, p. 93, note; cf. DORNER, *Person of Christ*, I, ii, 20, and esp. 448.

* Chap. 21. It seems to have been written about the end of 197.

† *Contra Noëtum*. Cf. *Philos.*, IX.

‡ On Tertullian's relations to the anti-Modalistic writings of Hippolytus, see HARNACK in the *Zeitschr. für d. hist. Theologie*, 1874, 203 sq.

he had striven for a generation to impress upon the Roman Church; and he makes the same impression that Tertullian does of handling well-worn weapons. Indeed we need bear in mind nothing more than the most obvious New Testament data culminating in the baptismal formula, the ritual use of which kept its contents clearly before the mind of every Christian, and the prevalence attained throughout the Christian world by the Logos speculation of the Apologists, to be assured *à priori* that it was not left either to Hippolytus or to Tertullian to work out the essential elements of the doctrine of the Trinity in unity. But this compels us to recognize that something more entered into the naïve faith of the average Christian man as essential constituents of his Christian confession than the two doctrines of the unity of God and the deity of the Redeemer. Even the simple Christian could not avoid forming some conception of the relation of his divine Redeemer to the Father, and in doing so could not content himself with an absolute identification of the two. Nor could he help extending his speculation to embrace some doctrine of the Spirit whom he was bound to recognize as God, and yet as in some way neither the Father nor the Son, along with whom He was named in the formula of baptism. In proportion as the believer was aware of the course of the debate that had gone on in the Church, and was affected by the movements which had agitated it from the beginning—all of which touched more or less directly on these points—he would have been driven along a pathway which, in attempting to avoid the heresies that were tearing the Church, could emerge in nothing else than some doctrine of Trinity in unity. The presence of a Trinitarian tradition in the Church is thus so far from surprising that its absence would be inexplicable. There is no reason, therefore, why we should discredit Tertullian's testimony that Christians had always believed in essence what he teaches in his tract against Praxeas.

If it is very easy to exaggerate the originality of Tertullian's doctrine as set forth in this tract, however, it is equally easy to underestimate it. Let us allow that Trinitarianism is inherent in the elements of the Gospel, and that, under the influence of the Logos Christology and in opposition to Gnostic emanationism, a certain crude Trinitarianism must have formed a part of the common faith of naïve Christendom. It remains none the less true that men were very slow in explicating this inherent doctrine of Christianity, at least with any clearness or concinnity; and meanwhile they were a prey to numerous more or less attractive substitutes for it, among which the Logos Christology long held the field, and its contra-

dictory, Modalistic Monarchianism, as we have seen, at one time bade fair to establish itself as the common doctrine of the Churches. And it remains true, moreover, that no one earlier than Tertullian and few besides Tertullian, prior to the outbreak of the Arian controversy, seem to have succeeded in giving anything like a tenable expression to this potential Trinitarianism. If Tertullian may not be accredited with the invention of the doctrine of the Trinity, it may yet be that it was through him that the elements of this doctrine first obtained something like a scientific adjustment, and that he may not unfairly, therefore, be accounted its originator, in a sense somewhat similar to that in which Augustine may be accounted the originator of the doctrines of original sin and sovereign grace, Anselm of the doctrine of satisfaction and Luther of that of justification by faith. Whether he may be so accounted, and how far, can be determined only by a careful examination of what he has actually set down in his writings.

When now we come to scrutinize with the requisite closeness the doctrine which underlies Tertullian's enunciations in his tract against Praxeas we perceive that it is, in point of fact, fundamentally little else than the simple Biblical teaching as to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit elaborated under the categories of the Logos Christology.

This Logos Christology had been simply taken over by Tertullian from the Apologists, who had wrought it fully out and made it dominant in the Christian thought of the time. Its roots were planted alike in Jewish religion and in Gentile speculation. Its point of origin lay in a conception of the transcendence of God which rendered it necessary to mediate his activity *ad extra* by the assumption of the interposition of intermediate beings. In their highest form, the speculations thus induced gave birth to the idea of the Logos. Under the influence of passages like the eighth chapter of Proverbs and the first chapter of John, the historical Jesus was identified with this Logos, and thus the Logos Christology was, in principle, completed. It will be observed that the Logos Christology was in its very essence cosmological in intention: its reason for existence was to render it possible to conceive the divine works of creation and government consistently with the divine transcendence: it was therefore bound up necessarily with the course of temporal development and involved a process in God. The Logos was in principle God conceived in relation to things of time and space: God, therefore, not as absolute but as relative. In its very essence, therefore, the

Logos conception likewise involved the strongest subordinationism. Its very reason for existence was to provide a divine being who does the will of God in the regions of time and space, into which it were inconceivable that the Invisible God should be able to intrude in His own person. The Logos was therefore necessarily conceived as reduced divinity—divinity, so to speak, at the periphery rather than at the centre of its conception. This means, further, that the Logos was inevitably conceived as a protrusion of God, or to speak more explicitly, under the category of emanation. The affinity of the Logos speculation with the emanation theories of the Gnostics is, therefore, close. The distinction between the two does not lie, however, merely in the number of emanations presumed to have proceeded from the fountain-deity, nor merely in the functions ascribed to these emanations, bizarre as the developments of Gnosticism were in this matter. The distinction lies much more in the fundamental conception entertained of the nature of the fountain-deity itself, and more directly in the conception developed of the nature of the emanation process and the relation of the resulting emanations to the primal deity. The Gnostic systems tended ever to look upon the source-deity as a featureless abyss of being, to conceive the process of emanation from it as a blind and necessary evolution, and to attribute to the emanations resulting from this process a high degree of independence of the primal deity. In direct contradiction to the Gnostic construction, the Logos speculation conceived God as personal, the procession of the Logos as a voluntary act on the part of God, and the Logos itself as, so to say, a function of the eternal God Himself, never escaping from the control of His will, or, as it might be more just to say, from participation in His fullness. The effect of the Gnostic speculation was to create a hierarchy of lesser divinities, stretching from the primal abyss of being downward in ever-widening circles and diminishing potencies to the verge of the material world itself. The value of the Logos speculation to the first age of Christianity was that it enabled Christian thinkers to preserve the unity of God while yet guarding His transcendence; and to look upon the historical Jesus, identified with the Logos, as very God, the Creator and Governor of the world, while yet recognizing His subordination to the will of God and His engagement with the course of development of things in time and space. It is probable that it was only by the help of the Logos speculation that Christianity was able to preserve its fundamental confession in the sharp conflict through which it was called to pass in the second century. By the aid of that speculation, at all events, it emerged from

this conflict with a firm and clear hold upon both of the fundamental principles of the unity of the indivisible God and the deity of the historical Jesus, who was, as John had taught in words, the Logos of God; that is to say, as the leaders of the day interpreted the significance of the term, the pretemporal protrusion of the deity for the purpose of creating the world of time and space and the mediating instrument of the deity in all His dealings with the world of time and space.

Tertullian, now, was the heir of this whole Logos construction, and he took it over from the Apologists in its entirety, with his accustomed clearness and even intensity of perception.* There was no element in it which he did not grasp with the most penetrating intuition of its significance and of the possibilities of its development at the call of fresh doctrinal needs. The demand for a new application of it came to him in the rise of the Monarchian controversy, and he opposed the Logos doctrine to the new construction with a confidence and a skill in adaptation which are nothing less than astonishing. This seems the precise account to give of the scope of the tract against Praxeas. It is in essence an attempt to adapt the old Logos speculation, which Tertullian had taken over in its entirety from the Apologists, to the new conditions induced by the rise and remarkable success of the Monarchian movement. Whatever contributions, then, to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity Tertullian was able to make, were made because of the emergence of need for such new adjustments of the old Logos speculation, and because he met this need with talents of the first order.

We must not underestimate the significance of the rise and rapid spread of the Monarchian Christology; or imagine that it could have filled the place in the history of the late second and early third centuries which it did, if it had found no justification for itself in the condition of Christian thought at the time, or had brought no contribution for the Christian thought of the future. The truth is, the Logos speculation left much to be desired in the formulation of the Christian doctrines of God and the Mediator between God and man; and the Monarchian speculation came bearing these very desiderata in its hands. The Logos Christology put itself forward as the guardian alike of the unity of God and of

* The general dependence of Tertullian on the Apologists is very marked. LOOFS says justly: "Tertullian's general conception of Christianity is determined by the apologetical tradition" (*Herzog*,³ XII, 264, 46); and again: "Novatian and Tertullian were much more strongly influenced than Irenæus by the Apologists: their general conception of Christianity received its color from this influence" (*Sitzungsberichte der k. p. Akad. d. Wissenschaften*, 1902, I, 781).

the deity of Jesus. But the unity it ascribed to God was, after all, apt to be but a broken unity, and the deity it ascribed to Jesus was at best but a derived deity. According to it, Jesus was not the God over all that Paul called Him, but the Logos; and the Logos was not one with the Father, as John taught, and indeed as Jesus (who was the Logos) asserted, but an efflux from the Father—by so much lower than the Father as the possibility of entrance into and commerce with the world of space and time implied. Men might very well ask if this construction did justice either to the unity of God or to the deity of Jesus which it essayed to protect; whether every attempt to do justice on its basis to the unity of God would not mean disparagement of the perfect deity of Jesus, and every attempt to do justice to the deity of Jesus would not mean the erection of the Logos, with whom Jesus was identified rather than with God, to a place alongside of God, which would involve the confession of two Gods. By the rise of Monarchianism, in other words, the traditional Logos-construction was put sharply on its trial. It was demanded of it that it show itself capable of doing justice to the deity of Jesus, while yet retaining in integrity the unity of God, or else give place to a better scheme which by identifying Jesus directly with the One God, certainly provided fully for these two focal conceptions.

The difficulty of the situation into which the assault of Monarchianism brought the Logos Christology by its insistence that Jesus should be recognized as all that God is, becomes manifest when we reflect that every attempt to elevate the deity that was in Jesus to absolute equality with the God over all seemed to involve in one way or another the abandonment of the entire Logos speculation. The simple identification of Jesus with God would be, of course, the formal abolishment of the Logos speculation altogether. But the attempt to retain the distinction between God and the Logos, while Jesus as the Logos was made all that God is, seemed only a roundabout way to the same goal. Since the postulation of a Logos turned precisely on the assumption that God in Himself is too transcendent to enter into commerce with the world of space and time, the obliteration of the difference between the Logos and God appeared to reduce the whole Logos hypothesis to an absurdity. Either the primal deity would need no Logos, or the Logos Himself would require another Logos. The task Tertullian found facing him when he undertook the defense of the Logos Christology over against the Monarchian assault was thus one of no little delicacy and difficulty. It was a task of great

delicacy. For the Monarchians did not come forward as innovators in doctrine, but as protestants in the interest of the fundamental Christian doctrines of the divine unity and of the Godhead of the Redeemer against destructive speculations which were endangering the purity of the Christian confession. They embodied the protest of the simple believer against philosophic evaporations of the faith. Above all they were giving at last, so they said, his just due to Christ. It means everything when we hear Hippolytus quoting Noëtus as exclaiming: "How can I be doing wrong in glorifying Christ" *—a cry, we may be sure, which found an echo in every Christian heart. And it was a task of great difficulty. For what Tertullian had to do was to establish the true and complete deity of Jesus, and at the same time the reality of His distinctness as the Logos from the fountal deity, without creating two Gods. This is, on the face of it, precisely the problem of the Trinity. And so far as Tertullian succeeded in it, he must be recognized as the father of the Church doctrine of the Trinity.

Of course Tertullian was not completely successful in so great a task. On his postulates, indeed, complete success was difficult to the verge of impossibility. The Logos Christology was, to speak shortly, in its fundamental assumptions incompatible with a developed doctrine of immanent Trinity. Its primary object was to provide a mediating being through which the essentially "invisible" God could become "visible"—the absolute God enter into relations—the transcendent God come into connection with a world of time and space. To it Jesus must by the very necessity of its fundamental postulates be something less than the God over all. So soon as He was allowed to be Himself all that God is, the very reason for existence of the Logos speculation was removed. Nor was it easy on the assumptions of the Logos Christology to allow a real distinctness of person for the Logos. On its postulates the Logos must be itself God—God prolate—God in reduction—God, as we have said, on the periphery of His Being: but God Himself nevertheless. On every attempt to sharpen the distinction by conceiving it as truly personal rather than gradual, the whole speculation begins to evaporate. The distinction inherent in the Logos speculation may be a distinction of transcendent and immanent, of absolute and relative, of more or less: a distinction between person and person is outside the demands of its purpose. How can a distinct person be the absolute God become relative? And these difficulties reach their climax when we suppose this distinction to be eternal. What

* τὸ οὐκ ἄκακόν ποιεῖν, δοξάζων τὸν Χριστόν ;

function can be conceived for a relative God in the depths of eternity, when nothing existed except God Himself? A meaningless God is just no God at all. Tertullian, in a word, as a convinced adherent of the Logos Christology, was committed to conceptions which were not capable of holding a doctrine of immanent Trinity. The most that could be expected from him would be that he should approach as closely to a doctrine of Trinity as was possible on his presuppositions,—that he should fill the conceptions of the Logos Christology, the highest as yet developed in the Church, so full that they should be nigh to bursting. We shall see that he did more than this. But in proportion as he did more than this has he transcended what could legitimately have been expected of him; and we shall be forced to allow that, in his effort to do justice to elements of faith brought into prominence in this controversy, he filled the conceptions of the Logos speculation so full that they actually burst in his hands. The Logos Christology, in other words, was stretched by him beyond its tether and was already passing upward in his construction to something better.

A great deal has been said of Tertullian's failure in perfect consistency: a great deal of his indebtedness to the Monarchians themselves for many of his ideas: a great deal of elements of compromise with his opponents discoverable in his construction. These things are not, however, proofs of weakness, but indications of strength in him. They mean that with all his clearness of grasp upon the Logos Christology, and with all his acuteness in adapting it to meet the problem he was facing, he yet saw the truth of some things for which, for all his acumen, it could not be made to provide—and stretched it to make it cover them also. They mean that he was not misled into the denial of positive elements of truth, always confessed by the Church, by zeal against the body of errorists that had taken them under their especial charge. For it is not quite exact to speak of these elements of truth as accepted by Tertullian at the hands of the Monarchians. They were rather elements of truth embodied in the general Christian confession, hitherto more or less neglected by the theologians, but now thrown into prominence by the presently raging controversy. It is the nemesis of incomplete theories that neglected elements of truth rise up after awhile to vex them. So it happened with the Logos Christology. But Tertullian sought to stretch the Logos Christology to cover these truths, not because they were urged with so much insistence by his opponents—he was not quite the man to meet insistence by yielding: but because they were parts of the Rule of Faith and were

universally accepted by Christians as imposed on their belief by the Divine Oracles, and he, for his part, was determined to be loyal to the Rule of Faith and to the teaching of Scripture.

There was one thing, in other words, which was more fundamental to Tertullian's thinking than even the Logos Christology. That was the Rule of Faith—the immemorial belief of Christians, grounded in the teaching of the Word of God.* The insistence on certain truths by his opponent may have been the occasion of Tertullian's notice of them: his attempt to incorporate them into his construction was grounded in recognition of them as elements in the universal Christian faith. This Rule of Faith had come down to him from "the beginning of the Gospel," as he phrased it;† and he recognized it as his first duty to preserve it whole and entire. The Logos Christology had not been able to take up all the items of belief which Christians held essential to their good profession: perhaps it was due to the Monarchian controversy that Christians were enabled to see that clearly. It is to the credit of Tertullian, that seeing it, he sought rather to stretch his inherited Christology to include the facts thus brought sharply to his notice, than to deny the facts in the interest of what must have seemed to him the solidly worked out philosophy of revealed truth. By his sympathetic recognition of these elements of truth he built a wider foundation, on which a greater structure could afterward be raised. To his own consciousness the principle of his doctrine remained ever the data of Scripture embodied in the Rule of Faith and

* This is, briefly, what appears to be meaning of the Rule of Faith, or the Rule of Truth, in the writings of Tertullian as of the other early Fathers. There has been much discussion among scholars as to the exact relation of the conception to Scripture, on the one hand, and to the Baptismal Creed—what we know as "The Apostles' Creed"—on the other. KUNZE, in his *Glaubensregel, Heilige-Schrift und Taufbekenntnis*, seems greatly to have advanced the matter. It seems clear that the Rule of Faith means the common fundamental faith of the Church, as derived from Scripture and expressed especially in the Baptismal Creed. That is to say, it is (1) the authoritative teaching of Scripture as a whole; (2) but this teaching conceived as the common faith of the whole Church; (3) most commodiously set out in brief in the Apostles' Creed. This may be sharply expressed by saying that the Rule of Faith was supposed to be the Scriptures, and the Creed was supposed to be the Rule of Faith. In the East the consciousness that the Rule of Faith was merely the teaching of the Scriptures as drawn from them and confessed by the Church, in the West the consciousness that the Apostles' Creed was a summary setting forth of the Rule of Faith, tended to rule the usage of the term. Accordingly the tendency was in the East to see most pointedly the Scriptures *through* the Rule of Faith, or, if you will, the Rule of Faith *in* the Scriptures; in the West to see the Apostolicum *in* the Rule of Faith, or, if you will, the Rule of Faith *through* the Apostolicum. On Tertullian's conception of the relation of the Rule of Faith to Scripture see especially KUNZE, p. 178.

† He carries back the Rule of Faith to the teaching of Christ (*De Prescript.*, ix, xiii. Cf. xx, xxi. xxvii, etc.).

interpreted under the categories of the Logos Christology. Beyond the Logos Christology he did not purposely advance. It remained for him to the end the great instrument for the understanding of Scripture. But it happened to him, as it has happened to many besides him, that the process of pouring so much new wine into old bottles had an unhappy effect upon the bottles. This great adherent of the Logos speculation became the prime instrument of its destruction.

What is true in this matter of Tertullian is true also in his own measure of Hippolytus. Both stood firmly on the Rule of Faith:* and the instrument for its interpretation used by each alike was the Logos Christology, which both had adopted in its entirety from the Apologists. This accounts for the similarity of their teachings. The difference of their teachings is due very largely to the unequal ability of the two men.† Tertullian was much the abler man and succeeded much better in making room in his construction for the elements of truth embedded in the Rule of Faith which the Logos Christology found difficulty in assimilating. Callistus was not without some color of justification in excommunicating Hippolytus as well as Sabellius, as alike with him defective in his teaching. Only, Callistus was incapable of perceiving that it was the Logos Christology, and not the facile methods of Monarchian modalism, which was seriously seeking to embrace and explain all the facts; that in it alone, therefore, was to be found the promise of the better construction yet to come, toward which it was reaching out honest and eager hands. His own shallow opportunism prevented him from apprehending that what was needed was not denial of all real distinction between God and Logos, Father and Son, and therewith the confounding of the entire process of redemption; but the rescue of this distinction from its entanglement with cosmological speculation, and the elevation of it from a mere matter of degrees of divinity to the sphere of personal individualization, while yet it should be jealously guarded from the virtual division of the Godhead into a plurality of deities. Callistus, the politic ruler of a distracted diocese, intent above all on calming dangerous excitement and discouraging schism, ready to purchase peace at any cost, was not capable of such a feat of sound thinking. Hippolytus was too little independent of his inheritance to be capable of it.

* In Hippolytus the term and its synonyms are of very infrequent occurrence (see KUNZE, p. 129), and except in the *Little Labyrinth* the form "Rule of Truth" is the one he employs.

† A similar judgment is expressed by Mr. BETHUNE-BAKER, *The Meaning of Homoousios, etc.*, pp. 73-4, note.

Even Tertullian was not capable of carrying through such a task^{*} to its end: though he was able to advance it a little stage toward its accomplishment. All the circumstances considered, this was a great achievement, and it could not have been accomplished had not Tertullian united to his zeal in controversy and his acumen in theological construction an essential broad-mindedness, an incorruptible honesty of heart and a sure hold on the essentials of the faith.

That the account thus suggested correctly represents the facts will appear upon a somewhat more detailed investigation of the exact attitude of Tertullian both to the Logos Christology and to the Rule of Faith. To such an investigation we shall now address ourselves.

Even in his earliest writings there occur passages in which full and convinced expression is given to the speculations of the Logos Christology, from which it appears that from the beginning of his activity as a Christian writer these speculations supplied the moulds in which Tertullian's thought ran. When, for example, in the twenty-first chapter of his *Apology*, which was written about 197, he undertakes to expound to his heathen readers the deity of Christ,^{*} he identifies Him out of hand with the Logos of Zeno and Cleanthes,[†] because, as he says, "we have been taught" (*didicimus*) as follows—whereupon he proceeds to set forth the Logos doctrine, thus declared to be to him the traditionary doctrine of the Church.[‡] "We have been taught," says he, that the Logos "was produced (*prolatum*) from God (*ex Deo*) and in [this] production generated, and therefore is called the Son of God and God, because of (*ex*) the unity of the substance, since God also is Spirit. Just as when a ray is put forth (*porrigitur*) from the sun, it is a portion of the whole (*portio ex summa*), but the sun will be in the ray, because it is a ray of the sun, and is not separated from the substance, but stretched out (*non separatur substantia sed extenditur*); so Spirit [is extended]

^{*} *Necesse est igitur pauca de Christo ut deo.*

[†] "Your philosophers . . . Zeno . . . Cleanthes . . . and we too (*et nos autem*). . . ."

[‡] KUNZE, p. 197, has some excellent remarks on the relative places taken by philosophy and Scripture in the thinking of such men as Irenæus and Tertullian. They wished to be purely Biblical; and the influence of philosophy "was exerted only through the medium of their understanding of the Bible, through the filter of Bible interpretation." "This was true, for example," he adds, "of their Logos theory. As certain as it is that in this matter extra-Christian influences are recognizable, it is equally certain that for Tertullian, and especially for Irenæus, the Logos idea and its corollaries would have formed no part of the *regula* had they not found word and thing alike in the Scriptures."

from Spirit and God from God, as light is kindled from light. The *matrix materiæ* (source of the material) remains entire and undiminished (*integra et indefecta*) although you draw out from it many branches of its kind (*trahes qualitatibus*): thus also what is derived (*profectum*) from God is God and the Son of God, and the two are one. In this manner, then, He who is Spirit from Spirit and God from God made another individual in mode [of existence], in grade, not in state (*modulo alterum numerum, gradu non statu fecit*), and did not separate from but stretched out from the source (*et a matrice non recessit sed excessit*). This ray of God, then, descended into a certain virgin, as it had always been predicted in times past”*

What we read in the tract against Praxeas embodies the same ideas in the same terms. We must, however, note in more detail how far Tertullian here commits himself to the forms of the Logos speculation. We observe, then, in the first place, that Tertullian with complete conviction shares the fundamental conception out of which the Logos doctrine grows,—the conception of the transcendence of God above all possibility of direct relation with a world of time and space. So axiomatic did it seem to him that God in Himself is exalted above direct concernment with the world-process, that when discussing the temporal activities of our Lord, he permits himself to say that such things, hard to believe of the Son and only to be credited concerning Him on the authority of Scripture, could scarcely have been believed of the Father, even if Scripture had explicitly affirmed them of Him.† That is to say, the doctrine of the transcendence of God, or as Tertullian phrases it, in Scriptural language which had become traditional in this school, of the “invisibility” of God “in the fulness of His majesty,”‡ stood, as a fixed datum, at the root of Tertullian’s whole thought of God. In the second place, we observe that Tertullian shared with equal heartiness the current conception of the Logos as, so to speak, the world-form of God. It was, indeed, only in connection with the world, and as its condition, both with respect to origin and government, that he was accustomed to think of a Logos at all. The prolation of the Logos took place, in his view, only for and with the world, as a necessary mediator, to perform a work which God as absolute could not perform. It was “*then*,” says Tertullian with pointed emphasis,§ that the Word assumed “His own form,” when God said, “Let there be light!” It was

* Cf. the parallel statements in *De Præscript.*, 13.

† *Adv. Præx.*, c. xvi: Fortasse non credenda de patre, licet scripta.

‡ Chap. xiv.

§ *Loc. cit.*, chap. vii: Tunc igitur etiam ipse sermo speciem et ornatum suum sumit, sonum et vocem, cum dixit deus: fiat lux.

only when God was pleased to draw out (*edere*) into "their own substances and forms" (*in substantias et species suas*) the things He had planned within Himself, that He put forth (*protulit*) the Word, in order that all things might be made through Him.* We observe, in the third place, that Tertullian, with equal heartiness, shared the consequent view that the Logos is not God in His entirety, but only a "portion" of God—a "portion," that is, as in the ray there is not the whole but only a "portion" of the sun. The difference seems to be not one of mode only, but of measure. "The Father," he says, "is the entire substance, but the Son is a derivation and portion of the whole."† He speaks "of that portion of the whole which was about to retire into the designation of the Son."‡ To Tertullian this idea was self-evident inasmuch as the Logos was to him necessarily produced, or, rather, reduced Divinity—Divinity brought to a level on which it could become creator and principle of the world of time and space.§ We observe, in the fourth place, that Tertullian also accorded with the current conception in thinking of the prolation of the Logos as a voluntary act of God rather than a necessary movement within the Divine essence. As there was a time before which the Son was not,|| so He came into being by the will of God,¶ and remains in being to fulfill the will of God, and at last when He has fulfilled the will of God retires once more into the divine unity.** All this, of course, applies only to the

* C. vi: *Nam ut primum deus voluit ea quæ cum sophiæ ratione et sermone disposeuerat intra se in substantias et species suas edere, ipsum primum protulit sermonem, habentem in se individuas suas, rationem et sophiam, etc.* So also chap. xiii, "The first statement of Scripture is made, indeed, when the Son had not yet appeared: 'And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.' Immediately there appears the Word, 'that true light. . . . From that moment God willed creation to be effected in the Word, Christ.' . . ."

† Chap. ix.

‡ Chap. xxvi.

§ The real meaning of this phraseology will be discussed further on in this article.

|| Chap. v: God was alone "up to the generation of the Son." Cf. vi and xiii. Cf. *Against Hermog.*, iii: *Fuit autem tempus cum Filius non fuit . . .* and see BULL'S long discussion of this passage in his *Defensio Fidei Nic.*, iii, x (E. T., p. 509 sq.). The real meaning of this too will be discussed later.

¶ Chap. xvi: "The Scripture informs us that He who was made less (than the angels) was so affected by another and not Himself by Himself." Cf. Chaps. iv, xxiii. The insistence of the Apologists on the origination of the Logos in an act of the will of God was their protest against the blind evolutionism of the Gnostics, and often was but their way of saying that creation was not a necessary process but a voluntary act on God's part; that is to say, it hangs together with their cosmological conception of the Logos. Cf. HAGEMANN, *Rom. Kirche*, p. 194. On the whole subject compare DORNER, *Person of Christ*, I, ii, 460, and BETHUNE-BAKER, *Early Christian Doctrine*, 159, note 2, and 194-5.

** Chap. iv. Cf. Chap. xxii, xxiii.

prolate Logos.* This whole development of the prolate Logos, therefore, is not only a temporal but a temporary expedient, by means of which God, acting voluntarily, accomplishes a work. When this work is accomplished the arrangements for it naturally cease. The Logos mode of existence thus emerges as an incident in the life of God which need not, perhaps, find a necessary rooting in His nature, but only a contingent rooting in His purposes. In the very nature of the case, therefore, the prolate Logos is dependent on the divine will.† It is hardly necessary to make a separate fifth observation, therefore, that Tertullian thoroughly shared the subordinationism inherent in the Logos Christology.‡ To him the Son, as prolated Logos, was self-evidently less (*minor*) than the Father, seeing that His prolation occurred by the Father's will, and in order to do His will. He remains subject to His will,§ and when that will is accomplished returns into the divine bosom. The invisible Father alone possesses the fullness of the divine majesty: the Son is visible *pro modulo derivationis*,—by reason of the measure of His derivation,—and stands related to the Father as a ray does to the sun.|| He is the *second*, in every sense of the term.

Even such a brief survey as this of the natural forms in which Tertullian's thought ran makes it exceedingly clear that the prime instrument in his hands for the interpretation of the facts of the Christian revelation was just the Logos Christology taken over in its entirety from his predecessors.

But if the Logos Christology thus supplied to Tertullian the forms of thought with which he approached the problems now brought into renewed prominence, the matter of his thinking was derived from another source, and from a source that lay even more deeply embedded in his convictions. If the Logos Christology was the instrument by means of which he sought to interpret the Rule of Faith, the Rule of Faith supplied the matter to be interpreted. The question that was always pressing upon him, therefore, was whether this matter in its entirety could be interpreted by the Logos Christology. Certainly Tertullian must be credited with a loyal effort to preserve all its data in their integrity, as even his most cursory reader will at once perceive;¶ and in making this effort,

* The as yet unprolated Logos Tertullian wishes to distinguish from the uttered Logos or Sermo, as the unuttered Logos or Ratio; cf. chap. v.

† Cf. STIER, p. 100. ‡ Cf. STIER, p. 71. § Chaps. iv, xvi, xviii. || Chap. xiv.

¶ The Rule of Faith, which originates in the teaching of Christ and comes to us in the apostolic proclamation, and which is, therefore, "absolutely one, alone, immovable and irreformable," according to *De Vel. Virg.*, 1, "prescribes the belief that there is only one God . . . who produces all things out of nothing through

largely under the influence of the Monarchian controversy, he found himself compelled to enlarge and modify the contents of the Logos speculation, in order to embrace the data of the Rule of Faith.

In the first place, the Rule of Faith imposed on Tertullian the duty of framing a doctrine of the Holy Spirit as well as of the Son of God. For this, of course, the Logos Christology did not necessarily provide. But it pointed out a road to it by way of analogy. The Apologists, accordingly, though they were absorbed in the doctrine of the Logos and did not always know what to do with the Spirit, yet did not leave the subject so entirely to one side but that they handed down to their successors the beginnings of a doctrine of the Spirit framed on the analogy of this Christology.* They had already made it a matter of traditionary doctrine, for example, that the Spirit is related to the Son much as the Son is to the Father, and makes a third alongside of the Father and Son.† Tertullian takes up these somewhat fluid elements of traditional teaching and gives them sharpness and consistency.‡ He looks upon the Spirit apparently as a prolation from the Son, as the Son is from the Father, thus preserving, so to speak, a linear development in the evolution

His own Word first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son . . . was made flesh and . . . having been crucified, rose again the third day, ascended into the heavens, sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe on Him." Or as Tertullian sets forth the items in *Contr. Prax.*, 2, relatively to the matters in hand in that tract, this aboriginal Rule of Faith teaches that "there is one God"; that "this one only God has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded from Himself, by whom all things were made and without whom nothing was made"; and that this Son has "sent also from heaven from the Father, according to His own promise, the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, the Sanctifier of the faith of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son and in the Holy Ghost." Tertullian obviously looks upon the Rule of Faith as originating in the baptismal formula given by our Lord, and as finding its normal succinct expression in the Baptismal Creed, commonly known as the Apostles' Creed.

* On the early opinions as to the Spirit, besides Dr. SWETE's book on this precise subject, see KAHNIS, *Lehre vom heil. Geiste*, 168 sq; NÖSGEN *Geschichte d. Lehre v. heiligen Geiste*, chap. I; HARNACK, I, p. 197, note, and II, 209, note¹; SCOTT, *The Nicene Theology*, Lecture V.

† SCOTT, pp. 274, 284. "The doctrine of the Holy Spirit," says SCOTT, p. 285, note, "was not developed in the second century, but it was plainly present in the Church, both East and West. The theological statement of the Spirit in the second century did not use the term *hypostatic*; but all that was meant later by that term is clearly involved in the teachings of the Apologists and the anti-Gnostic writers." Tertullian "first called the Spirit 'God,' but he only uttered what the Church had ever believed."

‡ On Tertullian's doctrine of the Spirit, see KAHNIS, 255 sq.; SCOTT, p. 284; HARNACK, II, 261, note 4; STIER, p. 92, note. The most distinctive passages seem to be found in *Adv. Prax.*, ii, iii, iv, viii, ix, xi, xiii, xxvi, xxx.

of God:* but he carefully preserves the conception of the Father as *fons deitatis*, and thus frames as his exact formula the assertion that the Spirit, being the third degree in the Godhead, proceeds "from no other source than from the Father through the Son" (chap. iv). In his familiar figures, as the Father and Son are represented by the root and the stem of the tree, by the fountain and the river, by the sun and its ray, so the Spirit, being "third from God and the Son," is as the fruit of the tree, which is third from the root, or as the stream from the river, which is third from the fountain, or as the apex from the ray, which is third from the sun (chap. viii).† All flows down from the Father through colligated and conjoined grades (*per consertos et connexos gradus*, chap. viii, *ad fin.*), but the immediate connection is of the Father in the Son and the Son in the Paraclete (chap. xxv, *ad init.*), and thus it may be truly said that the Son received the Spirit from the Father and yet Himself shed Him forth,—this "Third Name in the Godhead and Third Grade in the Divine Majesty, the Declarer of the One Monarchy of God and yet, at the same time, the Interpreter of the Economy" (chap. xxx). Under the guidance of the Logos speculation Tertullian thus, in the first instance, conceives the Spirit apparently as a prolation of the Son as the Son is of the Father, and as therefore subordinate to the Son as the Son is to the Father: but nevertheless as ultimately deriving from the *fons deitatis* itself, through the Son, and through the Son subject ultimately to it.‡

The consistent extension of the Logos speculation to cover the Third divine Person confessed in the Rule of Faith was, however, only a short step toward embracing the data included in that formula under the categories of the Logos speculation. The really pressing problem concerned the relations in which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit stand to one another. In the Rule of Faith—in the Baptismal Formula—they appear as coördinate persons, to each of whom true deity is ascribed, or rather, to all three of whom the Name is attributed in common. Was the Logos speculation capable of taking up these data into itself and doing full justice to them? Tertullian must be credited with a sincere and a fruitful effort to make it do so. So far as the mere inclusion of the data under a single formula is concerned he found little difficulty. His

* This characteristic of the Apologists' construction is its most marked trait, and is therefore frequently noted. Thus HAGEMANN, p. 139, when speaking of Hippolytus, adverts to the difference between the Church's construction and his, that the one thought of the trinitarian relationships "after the analogy of a circular motion (*Kreishewegung*) and the other as *advancing in a straight line*."

† *Tertius enim est spiritus a deo et filio, sicut tertius a radice fructus a frutice, et tertius a fonte rivus a flumine, et tertius a sole apex ex radio.*

‡ STIER, p. 92, note; HARNACK, II, 261, note.

formula is that the Father, Son and Spirit are one in substance and distinct in person. In this formula he intrenches himself and reiterates and illustrates it with inexhaustible zest. He opens the serious discussion of the tract with a clear enunciation of it drawn out in full detail,—crying out against the Monarchian assumption that the unity of the Godhead implies unity of Person, “as if One might not be All in this way also—viz., in All being of One, by unity of substance, while the mystery (*sacramentum*) of the *οἰκονομία* is still preserved, by which the unity is distributed into a Trinity, ordering (*dirigens*) the three,—Father, Son and Holy Ghost,—three, however, not in status but in grade, not in substance but in form, not in power but in aspect (*species*); yet of one substance, and of one status, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God from whom are reckoned these grades and forms and aspects under the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost.” This is Tertullian’s complete formula of Trinity in Unity, which he promises to explicate more fully in the remainder of the treatise. This promise he very fairly fulfills—now repeating the entire statement more or less fully and now insisting on this or that element of it.* One of his favorite methods of indicating briefly the combined sameness and distinction is by employing distinctively the neuter and masculine forms of the words. “I and the Father are one,” says our Lord; and Tertullian lays stress not only on the plural verb—“I and the Father *are*,” not “*am*,” one,—but on the neuter form of the adjective,—“*unum*,” not “*unus*”—as implying “not singularity of number but unity of essence,” and the like (chap. xxii). “These Three,” he says again (chap. xxv), “are *unum*, not *unus*, in respect of unity of substance, not singularness of number.” So he rings the changes constantly on the unity of substance and distinction of persons.

So far, we shall easily say, so good. For so much the Logos speculation opens the way without straining. It is inherent in it that the divine prolations should be of the very essence of God, while, on the other hand, capable as prolations of acting in some sense as distinct beings. The tug comes when we ask whether this asserted unity of substance provides for the supreme deity of the prolations, so that we can say that Jesus Christ, for example, is all that God is; and whether this asserted distinctness of persons provides for a real individualization of personality, so that each so-called person stands over against the others in permanent distinctness and not in merely apparent and in its very nature temporary objectivation. Certainly the Logos speculation suggests a reduced deity for the pro-

* *E.g.*, chaps. iv, viii, ix, xi, xii, xxi, *sq.*

lations, and that in diminishing grades: and a temporal rather than an eternal—whether *a parte ante* or *a parte post*—distinction between them. Does Tertullian see glimpses beyond? In such glimpses beyond we shall discover whatever approach he has made to constructing a doctrine of a real Trinity. The hinge of the problem turns on the answers we shall be compelled to give to five questions: (1) Whether Tertullian by his distinction of “persons” intends a distinction which is really personal in the philosophical sense of that term; (2) whether Tertullian supposes this distinction of persons to have been constituted by the prolations of the Logos and Spirit which, he teaches, took place in order to the creation and government of the world, or to belong rather to the essential mode of existence of God; (3) whether he succeeds in preserving the unity of God despite the distinction of persons which he teaches; (4) whether he is able to ascribe such deity to Christ as to say of Him that He is all that God is; (5) whether he accords to the Holy Spirit also both complete deity and eternal distinctness of personality. We shall need to look at his response to these five questions in turn.

But we shall reserve this for the next number of this REVIEW.

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