Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:

https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology

https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb

PayPal   https://paypal.me/robbradshaw

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

ARTICLE III.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY AS HELD BY THE OLD LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS.

BY REV. FRANK S. ADAMS, READING, MASS.

[THE following article is a translation from the seventh edition of Hase's " Hutterus Redivivus." Hahn's " Lehrbuch des christlichen Glaubens" (2d ed.), Schmid's " Dogmatik " (3d ed.), and Bretschneider's " Handbuch der Dogmatik " (4th ed.), have been consulted, and additional statements have been taken from these authors for the purpose of explaining the doctrine more fully. With these works the translator has compared the " Dogmatik " of Dr. Martensen (rendered into English by Rev. William Urwick, M.A., Edinburgh, 1866) ; " The Conservative Reformation and its Theology," by Dr. Krauth (Philadelphia, 1871), and Hagenbach's " History of Doctrine " (2d ed.). The text is the translation of Hase ; enclosed in brackets will be found quotations from the authorities mentioned above.]

THE HOLY TRINITY.

The General Conception according to the Holy Scriptures, History, and the Church.

GOD has revealed himself in Christianity as the triune God ; that is, as God reconciling fallen humanity with himself through his own person. Therefore faith in the triune God is essentially one with faith in that reconciliation by which alone salvation is secured. Consequently, in the Old Testament, and generally in ancient times, it was indicated only so far as faith in the atonement was typically indicated in the sacrifices. On the other hand, the old church dogmatists, as Quenstedt, say : " As the mystery of the holy Trinity has been set forth in the books of the Old Testament with sufficient clearness, so likewise from the same alone the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and thus the whole mystery of the Trinity, can be proved against any opponents who hold the books of the Old Testament to be divinely inspired."

They appeal to passages where God speaks of himself in the plural number (Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; xi. 7; Isa. vi. 8). This is without regard to the plural of majesty, אֱלֹהִים. They appeal also to passages where he distinguishes in himself a subject and an object (Gen. xvi. 7–13; xviii. 1 seq.; xix. 24; Ex. iii. 2–15) and to passages in which he is addressed in a threefold manner (Num. vi. 24 seq.; Isa. vi. 3; cf. Ps. xxxiii. 6; Isa. xlviii. 12). Of more weight than these passages, which may be explained as grammatical forms or as poetic parallelisms, are those in which divine power or the divine name is ascribed to the Messiah (Isa. ix. 6; Jer. xxiii. 5 seq.; Micah v. 2; Ps. cx. 1); also to the Holy Spirit, divine efficiency (Gen. vi. 3; Exod. xxxi. 3; Num. xi. 29; xxiv. 2; 1 Sam. x. 10; Isa. xi. 2; xlii. 1; xlviii. 16; lxi. 1; lxiii. 10; Ezek. xxxvi. 26 seq.; Ps. li. 11 seq.). The conceptions of σοφία, πνεῦμα, and λόγος in the Apocrypha seem to waver between an actual person and a personified attribute of God (Wisd. vii.–x.; xviii. 14 seq.; Sir. i. 4; xxiv. 3–10; cf. Prov. viii. and ix.).

The assertion of Calixtus, that in the Old Testament the holy Trinity is not clearly revealed, though received with universal opposition, is now universally acknowledged. But the reason given by Hahn (I. p. 277) is erroneous: " This doctrine could not be revealed in the Old Testament on account of the great inclination on the part of the people to the worship of idols; since they could safely hear only those doctrines which are grounded in the faith in one God." If this were true, this doctrine would likewise have been withheld from the great number of heathen who were converted to Christianity. On the other hand, the Greek church fathers boasted that through the Trinity was the tendency to Polytheism actually neutralized, and notwithstanding it Monotheism was asserted.

[Bretschneider, I. 566: " The theologians of our church believed that the Trinity was clearly taught in the Old Testament. They believed this the more in proportion as they held more firmly to this doctrine as a fundamental article,

which could not be ignored without loss of blessedness. Therefore as soon as Calixtus at Helmstadt, with Calvin, the Socinians, and Arminians asserted the contrary in our church, it led the entire body into commotion. He had no followers until in later times Töllner, Döderlein, Hufnagel, Von Ammon, and others, took up his view." [1]

Gerhard, Loci III. 218: " We do not say that the testimony concerning the Trinity in the Old Testament has the same clearness and exactness as that in the New, because the clearer revelation of this mystery was left to the New Testament. . . . . . But we merely affirm this, that certain evidences can and ought to be brought from the Old Testament for building up the doctrine of the Trinity, since God always, from the beginning, has so revealed himself that in all times the church might recognize, worship, and adore God as three distinct persons in one undivided essence" (Quoted by Schmid, 118).

Hahn, I. 281: " Even the disciples of the ancient church answered the question (whether the mystery of the Trinity is really contained in the Old Testament or not) in very different ways: (1) Tertullian declared the revelation of this mystery to be absolutely new (adv. Prax. c. 31). (2) Others find in the Old Testament also many and various intimations of the doctrine, yet they are those not easily discerned; and, moreover, veiled on account of the prevailing tendency to Polytheism. They become fully comprehensible only through the gospel. (3) Others, however, and in fact the majority, find very clear testimony to the doctrine in the Old Testament. This view prevailed in the church."]

The triad of the Hindoos is a symbol of Nature, creating, preserving, and destroying or again withdrawing into itself. The threefold deity of the Egyptians is, God in himself, God the Creator, and God the Worker. The triad of the Platonists, or rather of the Neo-Platonists is, God in himself, God the

---

[1] Bretschneider divides the proof-texts used by the old church theologians into three classes: (1) Those that indicate a trinity, or at least a plurality, of subjects in God. (2) Those that relate to the Son of God. (3) Those that relate to the Holy Spirit. — i. 566 seq.

Thinker, and God the Creator, τὸ ἀγαθόν, νοῦς, and ψυχή. In the Cabala God is represented as the First Cause, as Reason thinking and Reason building. And in the seven numerical parts (Sephiroth) of the Cabalistic tree, or representations of God (according to a misunderstanding of Isa. xi. 2), there is set forth the striving of material and spiritual existence to return to God, from whom it emanated in the creation of the world. In the triad of the old Norsemen were Odin, Thor, and Freya, — the supreme deity, the creating and the preserving power.

The doctrine of the Trinity is revealed first in the New Testament, not scientifically as the doctrine of the holy Trinity, but really by the fact that the three divine persons reveal themselves in the work of redemption according to their separate active agencies. God reveals himself as the Father who has planned the redemption : " God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life " (John iii. 16); " This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent " (John xvii. 3).

He reveals himself as the Son, who accomplishes it: " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God " (John i. 1); "All things were made by him " (John i. 3); " And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us " (John i. 14) ; " Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me " (John xiv. 11). To him are ascribed, existence before the world was (John viii. 56 seq. ; xvii. 5 ; Phil. ii. 6 seq. ; Heb. i. 10 seq.) ; omniscience (Matt. xi. 27 ; John vi. 46 ; xvi. 15, 30) ; omnipotence (Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 18 ; Luke x. 22) ; creation and government of the world (Col. i. 16 seq.; 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; Heb. i. 2 seq. ; i. 10) ; raising the dead and judging the world (John v. 21 seq. ; Matt. vii. 22 seq. ; xxv. 31 seq. ; Phil. iii. 20 seq.); divine honor (Acts i. 24 ; vii. 59 ; Rom. ix. 1 ; x. 12 seq. ; 1 Cor. i. 2 ; 2 Cor. xii. 8 ; Heb. iv. 16 ; Rev. v. 8–14 ; vii. 12). On the contrary, the passages in which Christ is called

Θεός are somewhat doubtful, partly on exegetical grounds, as Luke i. 16 ; Rom. ix. 5 ; Titus ii. 13 ; Heb. i. 8 ; 1 John v. 20 ; Rev. xxii. 6 seq., — at least John xx. 28 ; partly on critical grounds, as Acts xx. 28 ; 1 Tim. iii. 16.   Moreover, according to the ordinary speech of that time they would not be decisive ; cf. Ps. lxxxii. 6 ; John x. 34–36.

Von Ammon distinguished four significations of the phrase "Son of God" in the Scriptures : (a) In a physical sense — a human being, in so far as he was created by God (Gen. v. 1 ; Luke iii. 38). (b) In a political sense — kings and magistrates being representatives of God (Ps. ii. 7 ; Matt. xxi. 9). (c) In an ethical sense — the holy being like unto God (Gen. vi. 2 ; Matt. v. 45). (d) In an ideal sense — superhuman spirits (Job i. 6 ; Wisd. ix. 1 seq. ; John i. 18).

God reveals himself as the Holy Spirit, who to the church in all periods imparts its effect, which is the new divine life. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I go away, I will send him unto you"(John xvi. 7) ; "Howbeit when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John xvi. 13) ; "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is within you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own" (1 Cor. vi. 19) ; "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts. xv. 28) ; cf. 1 Pet. i. 10 seq. ; John iii. 5 ; Rom. viii. 14 ; 1 Cor. ii. 12 ; iii. 16 ; Eph. i. 13 ; Gal. iii. 14 ; Acts. xx. 28).   He is called God (Acts v. 3 seq ; 1 Cor. vi. 19 ; cf. iii. 16 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16).   To him are attributed divine properties (1 Cor. ii. 10 seq. ; xii. 8 seq.), divine operations (Matt. xii. 28 ; John xvi. 8 seq ; Rom. viii. 9 seq. ; Gal. iii. 26 ; 1 Pet. i. 10 seq.), divine honor (Matt. xii. 31 seq. ; 1 Cor. iii. 16) ; in general, divine personality through association with the other divine persons and distinction from the same (1 Cor. xii. 4–6 ; 1 Pet. i. 2).

[Hahn, i. 275 : "After that in the time of the old covenant the faith in the one true God had been awakened and established, and thereby the ground of the true religion had been laid down, it pleased God to allow to mankind, which

had become more mature and able to receive it, a deeper look into his being and the unfolding of it. He revealed himself then as the Father in union with his Son and the Holy Spirit."

Schmid, Part I. c. ii. p. 94 : " The Holy Scriptures teach us that God is one, but at the same time they declare the existence of three divine beings, the Father, Son, and Spirit ; and thus we learn from them that there is one God, but this one God is Father, Son, and Spirit."]

The common admission of the New Church theologians that the Holy Spirit is. spoken of not simply in a metaphysical sense as a divine person, but also dynamically as the active agency of God, or subjectively and ethically as the Christian life, without doubt leads to unbelief. For were this admitted in any case, other instances could also be looked upon as mere personifications. Furthermore, the active agency of God may be designated as the Holy Spirit, simply because in its activity it actually is the Holy Spirit; and as the Christian life, because that actually is the Holy Spirit dwelling in man. Moreover, his divine personality may not in all places be expressed with equal clearness. Particularly is this true in the Old Testament, where in this sense the doctrine was not yet fully made known ; but it is everywhere in the other sense.

[Bretschneider, after discussing the arguments for the Trinity derived from the New Testament, says (I. 576): " That the Father, Son, and Spirit are separate persons appears not only from the passages cited, but also, as far as the Father and Son are concerned, from very many other passages. Consequently no one has ever doubted their personality or separateness. But not so in the case of the Holy Spirit. Since the word πνεῦμα is so multifarious in meaning that it is often difficult to arrive at its sense, many would understand by πνεῦμα ἅγιον no independent being, but at one time an attribute of God, at another a mode of the divine working, or even man's subjective condition."]

Therefore the belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

has been declared in the formula of baptism the sum of
Christianity : " Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, bap-
tizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and
of the Holy Ghost " (Matt. xxviii. 19).   Compare with this
2 Cor. xiii. 14 : " The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and
the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be
with you all."   On the other hand, the words enclosed from
1 John v. 7 seq. are a gloss, which originated in a mystical
interpretation, and since the sixth century gradually became
introduced into the text : " For there are three that bear
record [in heaven, the Father, the. Word, and the Holy
Ghost; and these three are one.   And there are three that
bear witness in earth], the spirit and the water and the
blood ; and these three agree in one."

[Martensen, p. 103 : " The first simple, historical faith in
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is expressed in the directest
possible form in the apostolic formula, which is still used by
the church in the performance of the rite of baptism."

Krauth, p. 168 : " The faith has been embodied in a creed
the origin of whose present shape no man knows, which,
indeed, cannot be fixed ; for it arose from the words of our
Saviour's baptismal commission."

Bretschneider, I. 573 : " From the baptismal formula, whose
genuineness has been questioned without reason, it was be-
lieved that the following propositions could be derived : (1)
The Father, Son, and Spirit must be subjects existing by
themselves, not attributes or qualities of one and the same
Being. ..... (2) These three subjects must be distinct, since
each is separately named, and each considered as a separate
person (a single ὄνομα). ..... (3) But these three, as the
objects whom Christians are to worship in common, must
also have some communion, must be bound closely in a union
of natures, not merely in a moral one with respect to their
purposes."]

Thus it has everywhere come to pass that Christianity as
a religious spirit actually went forth into the world.   It
remained for the church to transmit its conception as doc-

trine.   The church builded herself upon the formula of
baptism, which developed into the Apostles' Creed.   This
development took place opposed by the Ebionites, who either
wholly denied the divine nature in Christ, or regarded it
merely as that of an angel or archangel; opposed by the
Sabellians, who considered the divine persons only as separate
modes of the divine operation; and even under many fluc-
tuating theories of the church fathers, which were occasioned
in part by the ancient signification of λόγος and πνεῦμα, re-
sulting in a confusion of both persons; and in part by pas-
sages of the Holy Scriptures concerning the subordination of
Christ, freely chosen with reference to his redemptive work
and his human nature, resulting in a subjection of his divine
nature under the Father (Matt. xix. 17; John viii. 28; xiv.
28; xvii. 3; 1 Cor. xi. 3; xv. 28; Eph. i. 17; Heb. v. 8).

But there was also always recognized in the church the
truth that the Son and Spirit had proceeded from the being
of the Father.   Tertullian, indeed, designated their relation
as a Trinity.   Against Arius, who had declared the Son to
be the first created being and the creator of the world, the
consubstantiality (ὁμοουσία) of the Son with the Father was
proclaimed at Nicea in 325.   This was defended against the
semi-Arian doctrine of a mere similarity of natures.   The
like relation of the Spirit was acknowledged at Constantinople
in opposition to the Pneumatomachoi in 381; and both
doctrines were stated in the Nicene symbol.   Especially by
Augustine was the inner relation of the three divine persons
set forth with completeness in a system of the Trinity.   It
followed from this as a necessary conclusion that there is
only one God, and yet three divine persons revealed them-
selves in the Christian dispensation.   The procession of the
Holy Spirit from the Son also (filioque) was taught in the
Roman church, and since the eighth century, notwithstanding
the objection of the Greek church, it has been inserted in the
Nicene symbol.   The entire system was laid down in the
Athanasian creed (8–26) as follows:

" This is the Catholic faith, that we should worship one

God in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor separating the substance. For the Father is one person, the Son is another, the Holy Spirit another. But the Father, the Son, and the Spirit have one divine nature, equal glory, co-eternal majesty. As the Father is, such is the Son, such is the Holy Spirit. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord, and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord. Because, just as we are compelled by Christian truth to confess each one of the persons severally to be God and Lord, so are we prohibited by the Catholic religion from saying three Gods or three Lords. The Father was by no one made or created or begotten. The Son was begotten by the Father alone, not made nor created. The Holy Spirit was not made nor created nor begotten, but proceeds from the Father and the Son. And in this Trinity nothing is before or after, nothing is greater or less; but all three persons are co-eternal and co-equal with each other: so in all respects there is to be worshipped both a Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity. Therefore let him who wishes to be saved thus judge concerning the Trinity." This was incorporated unchanged into the symbolic books of the evangelical church.

Confessio Augustana (Augsburg Confession) 9 : " The churches among us teach with great unanimity that the ordinance of the Council at Nicea concerning the unity of the divine essence and concerning three persons is true, and to be believed without any doubting. Namely, that there is one divine essence, which is both called and is God, the eternal Creator and Preserver of all things; and nevertheless there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of essence and power the same, and co-eternal. And the name person they use with that signification which ecclesiastical writers have employed in this relation, meaning by it not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists in itself."

Apologia Confessionis Augustanae, 50 : " One divine essence, indivisible, and yet three distinct persons of the same essence."

The Schmalcald Articles, 303: "The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one divine essence and nature, three distinct persons, are one God, — he who created the heavens and the earth. The Father was begotten by no one, the Son was begotten by the Father, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Not the Father nor the Holy Spirit was made man, but the Son."

[Bretschneider, I. 543: "The Formula of Concord expressly declares that our church accepts unchanged the dogmas of the three general confessions of faith, the Apostolic, the Nicean, and the Athanasian, ... and rejects all opinions opposed to them as erroneous."

Schmid, p. 96, says the church collects the declarations of Scripture concerning the unity, plurality, and distinction in the Godhead into the following summary: "One divine essence subsists in three persons; or (which is the same thing), in the Divine Being are three persons and one essence; or also, God is one in essence, but the same God who is one in essence is a threefold unity (*triune trinus*) as to persons."]

This was defended as the most sacred mystery of orthodox Christendom against all opposition. The adversaries of the doctrine are:

(1) Anti-trinitarians or Unitarians, who openly denied the Trinity. (*a*) Ebionites, Jewish Christians, who considered Jesus the Messiah a man or an angel; (*b*) Socinians, who considered Jesus a mere man, but moved by the Holy Spirit, taught of God, entrusted with the rule of the world after his ascension as a reward of his virtue; (*c*) Rationalists, regarding Jesus as a mere man and archetype of humanity, who submitted to human destiny.

(2) Tritheists, who in the excess of opposition appeared to teach that there are three Gods, — as the Monophysites, John Ascusnages (circ. 560), and John Philoponus, a disciple of Aristotle at Alexandria (d. circ. 610); also Roscellinus and Abelard, who perhaps were more like the Modalists.

(3) Modalists or Sabellians, who regarded the persons as

merely modal forms and modes of operation of the Godhead. Thus the Trinity is only ideal, without real distinction of persons. This theory was held under manifold modifications: (*a*) Praxeas, toward the end of the second century, and his followers — Patripassians, Theopaschites, Monarchians; (*b*) Noetus of Smyrna, Sabellius of Ptolemais, Paul of Samosata (Bishop of Antioch in the third century, whose deposition, resolved upon 269, carried out 273, concerned his conduct, rather than his faith); (*c*) Photinus, Bishop of Sirmium, deposed 351; (*d*) Anabaptists and Philosophers, like Servetus at the time of the Reformation; (*e*) Most of the later pantheistic philosophers.

(4) Subordinationists, regarding the divine persons as of like substance, but the Son and Spirit as subordinate to the Father, their First Cause. Many fathers before the Council of Nicea, the Arminians, and the most of the New Church theologians, who intend, indeed, to maintain the Deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; but a Deity subordinated and delegated in monotheism has no meaning.

(5) The Arians. The Logos is the Creator and Ruler of the world, but was himself created in the beginning by the Father. The successors of Arius divided into the Semi-Arian party (called ῾Ημιάρειοι, Homoiousianists, and after their leader Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, Eusebians), who maintained that the Logos was not indeed of the same nature with the Father, but of a similar nature; and the strict Arians (called ᾿Ανόμοιοι, and after their leaders, Aëtians, Eunomians, Acacians), who regarded the Logos as of unlike or a different nature. From the first (through Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople), there went forth the Pneumatomachoi or Macedonians, who, Semi-Arian as respects the Son, declared the Holy Spirit to be the subordinate creation of the Father and the Son —a διάκονος, ὑπηρέτης, κτίσμα.

The Dogmatic Development.

That is triune which in essence one has three modes of subsisting.

Hollazius, p. 283: "That is threefold which is composed of three. We say God is triune, but we are forbidden by the Christian religion to say he is threefold. The more correct term in the German is *Dreieinigkeit*, rather than *Dreifaltigkeit*."

The divine essence (*substantia, natura, οὐσία, φύσις, θειότης*) is that infinite power in which God is. Quenstedt defines it as "that certain somewhat (*quidditas*) of God, through which God is that which he is." Hollazius: "The spiritual and independent nature of God, common to the three divine persons." Baumgarten: "The complex of the divine perfections, by which he is distinguished from all other things." Reinhard distinguishes as follows: "Substance is that nature in which inheres the infinite power of doing; essence is the complex of all infinite perfections."

The scholastics and theologians of the old church are scrupulous in regard to the expression "substance," partly because it includes as its opposite the conception of accident, which is inadmissible in God; and partly because οὐσία, as well as ὑπόστασις, is denoted by *substantia*. However, this term has been given and conditioned through its relation to ὁμοουσία, — consubstantiality.

[Gerhard, Loci III. 251: "They preferred to use the name essence, rather than substance: (*a*) That they might indicate that God is a supersubstantial essence (οὐσία ὑπερούσιος), not included in the categories, first among which is substance; (*b*) Because God does not sustain (*substat*) accidents, as do the essences of created things, but his attributes are his very essence; (*c*) Because the name 'substance' is ambiguous, for sometimes it is put for οὐσία, and sometimes even for ὑπόστασις."

Hollazius: "The word 'essence' (οὐσία), is not, indeed, contained in the Bible in so many letters, yet is derived from it by an easy inference. For (*a*) in the Old Testament God is called יהוה, *essentiator;* therefore he has an essence, and that independent, etc.; (*b*) In the New Testament God is called ὁ ὤν (Rev. i. 8). From this comes οὐσία or essence.

(c) A synonyme of divine essence is φύσις θεία, *divine nature* (2 Pet. i. 4)."]

Divine person (πρόσωπον, ὑπόστασις, ὑφιστάμενον) is divine self-consciousness, acting freely through itself, sharing in all perfections, subsisting in the divine essence. The Augsburg Confession, 9 (4), says: "Not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists in itself." Melanchthon: "Substance: individual, intelligent, incommunicable, sustained in another nature." Gerhard: "That which subsists individually, of intelligence incommunicable, not sustained by another; or divine essence itself distinguished by a certain hypostatic character, and distinct from the others by a peculiar mode of subsisting." Baumgarten: "An intelligent suppositum in God." Reinhard: "An individual of incomplete subsistence, acting freely through itself, and sharing in the divine perfections. Moreover, incomplete subsistence is that form of existence by which something individual cannot be without another something by which it subsists."

[Martensen, p. 102: "Father, Son, and Spirit are not qualities, not powers or activities of the nature of God; they are hypostases, that is, distinctions in the divine nature, expressing not merely single aspects, single rays of that nature, but each expressing by itself the entire essence: they are momenta, each of which for itself at the same time, and in equal degree, reveals the whole of God, the whole of love, though each in a different way."

Bretschneider, on Reinhard's definition, says (I. 546): "The discussion here is concerning personal subsistence, not natural (essential). That is, the persons are not thought of with reference to their essence (*natura*), but their personalities, — so dependent upon each other that no one can be a person without the others. For, as they are persons in and through each other, and since personality is the relation (*Beziehung*) of these three to each other, so this relation cannot be thought of as to one person singly, because each person is a person only in so far as there are two other *supposita* which are also persons."

Hollazius (Schmid, 108) : " *Intelligent* suppositum,— this stone, this tree, this horse are called supposita, indeed, but not persons, because they are without intellect."

Selneccer (Schmid, 188) defines incommunicable as applied to an hypostasis as follows : " It is called incommunicable on account of the distinction of persons, because the Father does not communicate his hypostasis to the Son or to the Holy Spirit, but each person has his own hypostasis and being (ὕπαρξις), although essence itself may be said to be communicable."

Chemnitz (Schmid, 110) says : " But if any one shall desire to object that the words ' essence ' and ' person ' are not sufficiently peculiar for setting forth that secret mystery of unity and trinity, let him take to himself this expression of Augustine : ' Speech labors from its extremely great poverty. Nevertheless, the expression " three persons " is used not to express this, but to avoid being wholly silent.' "]

The divine Trinity is that relation of the Godhead by which three divine persons subsist in one divine essence. The three divine persons are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, — one God. The Trinity is regarded by all the old church theologians as an inner relation (*relatio*) in God, not as an attribute, since it does not belong as an essential characteristic to the idea of perfect being. On the other hand, Reinhard says : " Trinity is such an attribute of the divine nature that it is common to the three personalities, while they exist together, indeed, but verily distinct. Existence and subsistence are thus distinguished : existence is spoken of in so far as each divine person is God through himself, because he has a share in the divine essence ; subsistence, in so far as each divine person is a definite person only through the others. The former is abstract, the latter concrete ; e.g. the Son exists in himself as God ; as he is the Son he subsists in the divine essence through the Father. This distinction is indispensable since each person must be conceived of as absolute God and yet as a person in a definite relation."

God denotes, (*a*) essentially (*substantialiter*, οὐσιωδῶς)

the community of all three persons, — the Godhead, the divine essence (John iv. 24) ; (*b*) personally (ὑποστάτικως) a single person (John i. 1) so far as the divine essence is perfectly contained in it.   Hence the Father is God, the Son is God, etc. ; but there are not three Gods, but one God, for in each person there is the same divine essence.   God is one in number, defined by hypostases.

[Martensen, p. 105: " If God reveals himself to us in a threefold personal form as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he must also be from eternity manifest to himself, and must love himself, in the threefold relation of Father, Son, and Spirit."   p. 110 : " There are three eternal acts of consciousness, and the entire divine Ego is in each of these acts."

Schmid, p. 97 : " Father, Son, and Spirit are God in this sense, that entire Deity is predicated of each of the three. There is one undivided essence which is predicated of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.   The one undivided divine essence is wholly contained in each (*tota in singulis*)."]

This relation is fully comprehended (*absolvitus*) by equality, distinction, and immanence.

I. Equality of persons is consubstantiality ; i.e. sameness of nature (ὁμοουσία), by which one, the same and an undivided divine essence belongs to (*competit*) each divine person.   The persons are of the same nature.   The addition, " coeternal and coequal," is needlessly made, for in like manner could all the divine attributes be subjoined.   But it lies in the equality of being that they all alike belong to each divine person.

II. Distinction, not diversity, is the hypostatic or personal character ; that is, the complex of characteristics (*notae*) by which the individual divine persons are objectively and mutually distinguished.   They are distinguished, (*a*) not essentially, as three physical subjects (Tritheism), for their essence is the same; nor (*b*) nominally, as three subjects logically related (Sabellianism) ; but (*c*) objectively, by actual, personal distinctiveness.   According to the usual formula upon this point, they are three moral subjects, which differ mutually

by reason of certain acts. When God is considered con-
cretely the three acts are within his nature, objectively
distinguished each from the others. With reference to this
formula it must be noticed that these acts are not regarded
as mere outward activities, manifestations, but as those
through which the subsistence of the persons themselves is
reciprocally conditioned. The characteristics (γνωρίσματα)
are either internal, which designate the manner in which
the divine essence subsists (τρόπον ὑπάρξεως); or external,
which designate the manner of revelation in the universe
(τρόπον ἀποκαλύψεως).

[Bretschneider, I. 549: "All the characteristics by which
the three persons are distinguished from each other, taken
together, are called the hypostatic character, i.e. the personal
character (since ὑπόστασις, in distinction from οὐσία or φύσις,
is often used by the church fathers to denote the persons
in the Godhead), or γνωρίσματα, ἰδιώματα σχετικά. The
internal characteristics are the ever-existing relations of the
divine persons to each other through which their subsistence
as persons is fixed from eternity. They may be treated of
in a threefold manner, as actions, as properties, and as
general conceptions." p. 551: "The external characteristics
which pertain to the hypostatic character of the three persons
are such of their actions, having relation to the universe,
which in the Scriptures are attributed to them singly, and by
which they are objectively, i.e. with reference to the world,
distinguished from each other."]

1. The internal characteristics or immanent operations —
operations within the divine nature (opera ad intra) are the
eternal reasons of the three persons, by which their subsist-
ence is defined. They are thought of either as acts or as
conceptions.

[Hahn I. 301: "There must of necessity in the being of
the ever-living God be supposed eternal expressions or move-
ments of this life. They must also have no reference to the
world, upon which God, absolutely eternal and perfect, is to
be thought of as in nowise dependent. So through these

internal operations hypostatic relations also are established, which in the concrete and abstract we may denote as personal properties and conceptions; those properties and conceptions through which the personal distinction is defined and expressed."]

a. Those operations in God are called personal acts by which the reason of the subsistence of the three persons is defined. They are two, generation and emission (*spiratio*).

[Bretschneider, I. 550: "'The Father generates the Son' means that in the Father is the reason why divine perfections from eternity belong to the Son. . . . . . The Father emits the Spirit means that in the Father is the reason why divine perfections belong from eternity to the Spirit."]

a. The Father begets the Son and emits the Holy Spirit. That is, the reason was from eternity on account of which the Son and the Holy Spirit exist as such in the divine essence (Ps. ii. 7; Acts xiii. 33). The usual formula of the church fathers, accepted by most of the old church theologians; "Generation is that act of the Father by which he shares divine essence with the Son," is less accurate, because the divine essence belongs to each person through himself, and therefore not through a sharing of the Father only. The operation is not conceived of as a past act; moreover it is not thought of as having taken place from eternity until now, but as one absolutely independent of time, for which the fixed present is at least the most correct representation. Quenstedt (I. p. 330) says: "Generation does not take place by derivation, nor by transfusion, nor by action which begins or ends, but by unceasing emanation, like which there is nothing in the nature of things. The Father begot the Son from eternity, and always begets him, nor will he ever cease to beget." Concerning the distinction between generation and procession, Baumgarten (p. 191) says: "It is certain that the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit are different. The manner in which they differ, however, we cannot more fully define."

[Martensen, 111: "The entire Trinity stands in one

present now, three eternal flames in one light." Cf. Martensen, p. 105.

. Bretschneider, I. 550 : " This (i.e. generation) is not to be misunderstood of the Son's existence or of the production of his being, but of his existence as a person ; and thus generation is that eternal relation of the Father to the Son by which the reason of the Son's subsistence is in the Father."

Hahn, I. 302 : " Generation is not creation in time, but a communication of numerically the same divine essence from eternity. And ' to generate' means, to contain the reason or principle upon which the Son partakes of the divine·nature." Cf. Schmid, p. 115 seq.]

β. The Son is generated by the Father. With the Father he breathes forth the Holy Spirit.

γ. The Holy Spirit proceeds (ἐκπορεύεται, *spiratur*) from the Father and the Son (John xv. 26).

[Hollazius, 337 : " The Holy Scriptures teach, word for word and expressly, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father (John xv. 26). That he proceeds from the Son may be correctly inferred from the name " Spirit of the Son " (Gal. iv. 6) ; the ὁμοουσία of the Father and Son (John xvi. 15) ; the reception of omniscience from the Son (John xvi. 13, 14) ; the vision in the Revelation of the river proceeding from the throne of the Lamb (Rev. xxii. 1) ; from the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Son (John xv. 26) ; from Christ's breathing on his disciples (John xx. 22), and from the order and distinction of the divine persons.]

b. The personal conceptions are both significative and constitutive. The significative are those which belong to the individual persons : to the Father, underived existence and paternity ; to the Father and Son, emission in an active sense (*spiratio activa*) ; and to the Holy Spirit, procession in a passive sense (*processio, spiratio passiva*).

The constitutive, or personal, properties are those which establish the hypostatic character itself of each person. They are paternity, filiation, and procession. On the other hand, since Baumgarten this classification has ordinarily been given

as threefold, and merely as a logical formula. That is, the same characteristic is given as a verb—a personal act; as an adjective — a personal property; and as a personal concep-. tion — a substantive; e.g. the Father generates the Son; the Father is the generating One; paternity belongs to the Father.

[Hahn, I. 302: "Personal properties, ἰδιώματα, involve the manner in which each person differs from the others in subsisting. They are the personal acts, expressed in the concrete, or as adjectives. Personal conceptions are internal relations of the persons, considered in the abstract."

Quenstedt, I. 830: "Some personal properties are absolute, having no relation to another person, e.g. underived existence of the Father; others are relative, having respect to another person, and constituting an order of things producing and being produced, e.g. paternity, filiation, and procession."]

2. External characteristics, or operations passing out of the divine nature (*ad extra transeuntia*) are acts by which God has made known a trinity of persons in the universe.

[Bretschneider, I. 551: "They are called operations ad extra, operations external or transeuntia, and are operations concerning the universe by which the three persons made themselves visible. They are called *transeuntia*, because in their action they pass over into objects out of God (*extra Deum*)." Cf. Hagenbach, History of Doctrines, IV. 317 seq.]

a. Operations in the economy, i.e. those which God performed to secure the salvation of the human race (Eph. i. 10). The usual definition : " What God did through Christ " is too limited. For the prophets, also, who foretold the Messiah as well as the Holy Spirit, who rules the church, have a share in the work of redemption which is not something past, but something continuing. For the external characteristics belong, indeed, to time, but embrace all time ; while the internal are entirely out of time.

a. The Father deputed the Son to the work of redeeming men (John iii. 16), and sends the Holy Spirit to regenerate and sanctify them (John xvi. 7 seq.).

β. The Son redeemed the human race and sends the Holy Spirit.

γ. The Holy Spirit is sent into the souls of men, and renders them partakers of the salvation secured by Christ.

Some add also : The Holy Spirit formed (Matt. i. 18 seq.), anointed, i.e. furnished with extraordinary gifts, the human nature of Jesus (Matt. iv. 1 ; John iii. 34 ; Acts x. 38 ; cf. Ps. xlv. 8). But, although the fact is established, yet it does not appear suitable to make conspicuous every single activity, where the three great facts of redemption are treated of. For with the same right others, as the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, etc., must be mentioned.

b. Attributed operations or appropriated operations, i.e. those which, although common to the three persons, are usually in the Holy Scriptures assigned to the individual hypostases.

There can be no reason thought of for this except, on the one hand, that the Holy Spirit has condescended to our capacity of understanding, according to which a definite, divine activity appears to us most suitable to one or another divine person ; on the other hand, that by this means he has willed to teach us, so that, although the Trinity reveals itself only through the work of redemption in actual distinctiveness, yet also in the general revelation, as well as in the single fact of redemption, God works as a triune Being. These operations are :

a. The Father created, preserves, and governs all things through the Son (Gen. i. 1 seq. ; Ps. xxxiii. 6 ; John i. 3 ; Eph. i. 4 ; Rom. viii. 29).

β. The Son created the world, will cause the dead to rise, and will pronounce the final judgment (Col. i. 16 ; John v. 27 seq. ; Matt. xxv. 31).

γ. The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets (2 Sam. xxiii. 2 seq. ; 2 Pet. i. 21).

[Gerhard, Loci I. 199 : " These works are undivided, because in them the three persons are together, and work together. ..... In God is such perfect unity, such great power of one

and the same essence, that individual and peculiar works, which are wrought separately and among creatures, ought by no means to be assigned to individual persons. Wherefore the principle follows, that where one person is named in operations *ad extra* the entire Trinity is understood."

Quenstedt adds (I. 328) that the order and distinction of persons must be preserved; for since the Father derives his essence from himself, therefore he acts from himself; the Son acts and operates from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from both (John v. 19).]

III. From equality and distinction flows that immanence or circulation ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) by which one person exists in another on account of unity of essence.[1]

The fuller system of Quenstedt (I. 328) thus sets forth the results of consubstantiality : (1) Circulation ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) or participation of natures ($\dot{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\upsilon}\pi\alpha\rho\xi\iota\varsigma$, *circumcessio*), immanence, mutual and most distinct existence, by which one person exists in another on account of unity of essence (John xiv. 11; xvii. 21). (2) Equality of persons; no person being greater; none less. (3) The most complete share in all essential perfections. (4) Sameness or identity, both as to those external (*ad extra*) divine works, and also in the manner of doing, so that they do the same things even in like manner (John v. 19).

Quenstedt gives the following principal definitions :

(1) The Father, who from eternity begat the Son, is the first person of the Deity. With the Son he caused the Holy Spirit to proceed within the most simple complex of the divine essence. In time, with the Son and the Holy Spirit he creates all things, governs them, sending the Son as the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier of the human race.

(2) The Son is the second person of the Deity. He is from the Father from eternity, by communication (?) of

---

[1] Hase distinguishes $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ *essentialis*, that immanence of the three persons in the Trinity from $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ *personalis*, that relation of the divine and human natures in Christ to each other.

essence, numerically one and the same. He is truly, properly begotten, yet in a superhuman and ineffable manner; sent, however, in time by the Father into the world, sending also the Holy Spirit.

(3) The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Deity. He is from the Father and the Son by communication (?) of essence, numerically one and the same; produced by one indivisible and eternal act, in an ineffable manner. He was sent in time by the Father and the Son to regenerate and sanctify the hearts of those who are to be saved. Baier says: "The Father is the first person of the Godhead, not begotten nor proceeding; but from eternity begetting the Son from his own substance, and with the Son from eternity emitting the Holy Spirit. The Son is the second person of the Godhead, begotten from eternity by the Father. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, not begotten, but proceeding from eternity from the Father and the Son."

God, considering at the same time the essence and persons in their relation (i.e. the Trinity), can be described as a spiritual entity, subsisting by himself in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[Hollazius, 301: "I. God the Father is the first person of the Deity, neither begotten nor proceeding, but from eternity begetting the Son of his own substance and image, and from eternity with the Son breathing forth the Holy Spirit; creating, preserving, and governing all things, sending the Son as the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier of the human race.

"II. The Son of God is the second person of the Deity, begotten from eternity by the Father, and of the same essence and majesty with the Father, who with the Father from eternity breathes forth the Holy Spirit, and in fulness of time assumed human nature in his own person, that he might redeem and save the human race.

"III. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Deity, of the same essence with the Father and the Son, and in time is sent by both to sanctify the hearts of those who are to be saved."]