

Classification of the Attributes.

in re. the order of revelation, or instruction; that is another question. But this is the case in theological construction. Our concept of the unity must never be an abstract one which has the 3 merely tacked on. Our concept of unity cannot be framed except as it is conditioned by the 3 which belongs to the unity. This is just saying that it is as sensible to ask why God is true. There is nothing more ultimate than can be said than that God is (I AM). It is just as ultimate that God is Father, Son & H. S. Therefore in this unity & diversity are equally ultimate. Before this mystery, the reverence & humbly & adoringly bows.

c. Trinitarian distinctions. If there is 3, there must be some distinction; there are between Father, Son & H. S. There must be something that differentiates; some property that belongs to one and not to the other. These are incommunicable properties. The difference adverbs in the very titles, Father, Son & H. S. The Father alone is Father, the Son alone is Son, & the Spirit alone is Spirit. Paternity is the peculiar property of the Father, Sonship the peculiar property of the Son, & procession is the peculiar property of the Spirit.

To be of none; neither begotten nor proceeding is the differentiating property of the Father. To be of the Father by generation is the distinguishing property of the Son. To be of the Father & the Son by procession is the differentiating property of the H. S. Hence the mode of subsistence. This is an order that can't be revised & a property that can't be changed or communicated from one to the other. Personam igitur voce substantivam in Dei essentia, quae ac alios ubi proprietate incommunicabiliter distinguitur. (Calvin, Inst. I 13:6). "A person therefore I call a subsistence in the essence of God, which is related to the others & distinguished by an incommunicable property."

d. Immanent distinctions. The incommunicable properties are immanent & eternal; not *opera ad extra*, but *opera ad intra*. This means they do not refer to the mode of operation in the economies of creation & prov. They are closely related. The Father is eternally Father: