

THE *FILIOQUE* CLAUSE IN HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

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I INTRODUCTION: A LIVE ISSUE?

The *Filioque* clause, properly understood, is the addition to the Latin text of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed which was first made in Spain at some time in the late fifth or early sixth century. In English translation it appears as follows in the clause relating to the Holy Spirit:

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of life who proceedeth from the Father *and the Son*...¹

The addition of the clause to the creed spread fairly rapidly across Western Europe but it was not finally adopted at Rome until about 1014, and it has never been sanctioned by an Ecumenical Council of the universal church.² The Eastern Orthodox churches have never received it and regard its insertion as a canonical irregularity which involves fundamental principles of authority and church government. As they put it, is a doctrinal statement to be accepted on the sole authority of the Bishop of Rome, or is a synod of bishops representing the whole Church necessary to establish a

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1. The same words in the next clause, 'who with the Father *and the Son* together is worshipped and glorified' appear in the original text, but probably did not influence the insertion of the preceding clause.
 2. It should be said that this is the view taken by the Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Roman Catholic Church explicitly, and the churches of the Reformation implicitly hold that the *Filioque* clause was sanctioned by two such councils, that of Lyons in 1274 and that of Florence in 1439. On both occasions the Eastern delegates accepted the *Filioque* as a doctrine, though not the insertion of the actual words into their own version of the Creed, only to see this compromise repudiated by the rank and file of their own churches.

point of faith? The Protestant churches have rejected Papal claims to authority³ and give only qualified approval to the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils, retaining in principle only those doctrines which can be proved by the teaching of Scripture.⁴

The Protestant appeal to Scripture is a reminder that the canonical dispute is only one aspect of the *Filioque* controversy. Admittedly, it is an aspect which has been given a great deal of attention, and the tendency to regard it as of the same order as arguments about the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, clerical celibacy or even the propriety of allowing priests and monks to shave, has always been strong. Even leading historians are not immune to this temptation,⁵ and its influence has been painfully apparent in recent ecumenical discussion. Nevertheless,

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3. Even *The Final Report* of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (London, 1982), though it speaks of a 'universal primacy' attached to, but not inherent in, the office of the Bishop of Rome, does so in the context of a collegiality of bishops.
 4. This is plainly stated, e.g., in Article 21 of the Church of England. This article is extremely interesting because its theory of Ecumenical Councils which 'may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes' combines an extraordinarily Byzantine understanding of conciliar legality with a Protestant, and most un-Byzantine, estimation of their authority: '...they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.' This statement must be supplemented by Article 8, which affirms that the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed and the Apostles' Creed '...ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.' This means that the Church of England believes that the *Filioque* clause is true to Scripture, since it appears in both the Nicene and the Athanasian Creed.
- Other Protestant Churches are less explicit in their reception of pre-Reformation teaching, but the evidence of their creeds and confessions is consonant with the position of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.
5. Cf. Sir Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford, 1955) 31-32.

responsible theologians on all sides have felt bound to insist that behind the canonical issue there lies the more obscure but fundamental question of the doctrine expressed by the so-called double procession of the Holy Spirit. Its importance has been described by the Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky in the following terms:

Whether we like it or not, the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit has been the sole dogmatic grounds for the separation of East and West. All the other divergences, which, historically, accompanied or followed the first dogmatic controversy about the *Filioque*, in the measure in which they too had some dogmatic importance, are more or less dependent upon that original issue. This is only too easy to understand, when we take into account the importance of the mystery of the Trinity and its place in the whole body of Christian teaching. Thus the polemical battle between the Greeks and the Latins was fought principally about the question of the Holy Spirit. If other questions have arisen and taken the first place in more recent inter-confessional debates, that is chiefly because the dogmatic plane on which the thought of theologians operates is no longer the same as it was in the medieval period. Ecclesiological problems increasingly determine the preoccupations of modern Christian thought. This is as it should be. However, the tendency to underestimate and even to despise the pneumatological debates of the past which may be noticed among certain modern Orthodox theologians (and especially among Russians, who are too often ungrateful to Byzantium) suggests that these theologians, so ready to denounce their fathers, lack both dogmatic sense and reverence for the living tradition.⁶

Lossky, it must be remembered, was an exile whose intellectual milieu was that of Parisian Catholicism between the wars. Under the influence of Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson, this milieu had spearheaded a revival of Thomistic scholasticism. For Lossky, the West and Western theology meant above all the thought of Thomas Aquinas, and this fact has clearly governed much of his polemic. We should not forget that Thomas died *en route* to the Council of Lyons in 1274, a council to which he had been summoned in order to present a defence of the *Filioque* clause.

6. V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (London, 1975) 71-72.

Lossky's appreciation of Western theology, which he sees as being essentially hostile to his own tradition, is one-sided, but it does reflect the general condition of official Roman Catholic theology before the Second Vatican Council. Gilson apparently regarded the medieval Western rejection of Byzantine mysticism as an act of divine providence⁷ and this attitude was reflected even among the most prominent Roman Catholic Byzantinists, of whom Martin Jugie and Joseph Gill are the outstanding examples. 'It seemeth good to St. Thomas and to us' is a not wholly inappropriate way of describing the Roman approach to controversies about the Holy Spirit for much of the past century.

Since Vatican II a new spirit of openness has prevailed, and a few positive steps toward reconciliation have been taken. The new climate became apparent in 1965 when Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I Constantinople withdrew the anathemas of their respective predecessors of as long ago as 1054. This has not had any real effect on the schism so far, but optimists hope for renewed intercommunion, if not reunion, by the end of this century. As a result there has been some renewed writing on the *Filioque* clause in more progressive and ecumenical circles within the Roman Catholic church. Scholars like Jean-Miguel Garrigues have attempted to have their cake and eat it too by claiming that whilst the *Filioque* clause must be accepted as the legitimate extension in credal and liturgical terms of the common heritage of patristic trinitarianism, it does not canonise Western trinitarian theories or diverge in substance from the Orthodox faith of the East.⁸ Roman Catholics who hold this position may reasonably be accused of defending the clause solely in order not to compromise

7. E. Gilson, *A History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955) 113-128.

8. J. M. Garrigues, in *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ* (ed. L. Vischer) (London, 1981) 149-163. In conversations between Roman Catholics and Orthodox, the *Filioque* has not had a very prominent place. However, at the first conversations between Catholic and Orthodox theologians, held at Vienna from 1-7 April 1974, Fr Garrigues remarked: 'Pour ce qui est de la confession de foi trinitaire, Rome devrait reconnaître la version grecque du Symbole de Nicée-Constantinople comme la plus normative pour la foi; en même temps, le côté orthodoxe devrait renoncer à qualifier le *filioque* d'hérétique.' Cf. *Koinonia* (published as a special number of the review *Istina*) (Paris, 1975) 158.

Papal authority in matters doctrinal. If this is the case, it would confirm the recent trend in Roman Catholic theology to regard Papal authority as the most fundamental question of all. The outside observer is left with the strong impression that if this is removed, modified or reinterpreted, the *Filioque* clause would soon be relegated to theological oblivion. In any event, Roman Catholic scholars generally do not accept Lossky's belief that the *Filioque* clause is the fundamental obstacle (*impedimentum dirimens*) to the reunion of the churches, and regard the theological issue as of little real importance.

The Protestant scene, as one might expect, cannot be summarised as neatly as the Roman Catholic one. Much of what Lossky says in criticism of his fellow Orthodox could be applied with equal force to many modern Protestants, who regard the issue either as closed or as irrelevant in the contemporary world.

A conservative dogmatician like Louis Berkhof could write that the issue had been settled - in favour of the *Filioque* of course - as long ago as the Third Council of Toledo in 589,⁹ an attitude which is not atypical of the conservative Reformed tradition, though it is by no means universal. Even in the seventeenth century, the great masters of Lutheran and Reformed dogmatics, including Cocceius, Quenstedt and Turretin, were prepared to regard the issue with a certain openmindedness towards the Eastern Church. Turretin even said that it was not heretical to omit the *Filioque* from the Creed, but that it was better to include it.¹⁰ Once again it would appear that nothing fundamental is at stake, and that the centuries of controversy were not really worth the effort.

More liberal scholars have sometimes shown a greater appreciation of the history of debate, though this has not

9. L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London, 1958) 96-97.

10. See K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I.1 (Edinburgh, 1936) 547, for a discussion.

always extended to an understanding of the importance of the underlying theological issue. Professor C. F. D. Moule for example, in a recent book on the Holy Spirit, discusses the *Filioque* at some length, but finally dismisses it as '... a lamentable dissension, constituting one of the most deplorable chapters in the history of hair-splitting theology.'¹¹ However, this is mild criticism, compared with the condemnation of the late G. W. H. Lampe. Lampe, though a practising Anglican, revealed his underlying unitarianism when he wrote: 'The Son is God subsisting in the mode of filiation, or begotten, the Spirit is God subsisting in the mode of procession: distinctions which are tautologous and lacking in content. There can be no relations where there are no distinguishable entities to be related and there is but one and the same being.'¹² In other words, says Lampe, the controversy has quite literally been about *nothing* at all!

Serious consideration of the *Filioque* clause as an important element in Protestant theology belongs above all to the work of Karl Barth. Barth's main concern was to reassert the claims of traditional Christian theology, and in particular, of the doctrine of the Trinity against the tendency of nineteenth-century German liberalism to denigrate classical dogmatics. He was not primarily interested in the theology of the Eastern Church, and devoted no more than twelve pages of his *Church Dogmatics* to a consideration of the issue, but he clearly thought it was an important element in the fabric of Western trinitarianism.¹³

Barth's position on the *Filioque* was attacked by George Hendry as long ago as 1954.¹⁴ Like Barth, Hendry has little interest in the Eastern Church and betrays no understanding of its theology. Nevertheless the theological issue which he believes to be at stake is of

11. C. F. D. Moule, *The Holy Spirit* (London, 1978) 47.

12. G. W. H. Lampe, 'The Essence of Christianity. IV,' in *ExpT* 87 (1975-76) 135.

13. K. Barth, *Dogmatics*, I.1, 546-557.

14. G. S. Hendry, 'From the Father and the Son: The *Filioque* after Nine Hundred Years,' in *TT* 11 (1954) 449-459.

such importance to him that he returns to the attack with renewed vigour in his book, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* (London, 1957). His argument is that whilst the *Filioque* may be of use in relating the work of the Spirit to the redemptive work of Christ, it fails to do justice to the work of the Spirit in creation. Hendry maintains that creation and redemption must be distinguished as separate works of God against Barth's well-known insistence that creation must be interpreted in the light of revelation. He concludes by saying that the *Filioque* 'was a false solution to a real problem'.¹⁵

Hendry's position is interesting because it reflects an opposition to the doctrine which is of purely Western origin. It depends on a radical distinction between creation and redemption which is as foreign to Eastern theology as it is to Barth, though for very different reasons. Hendry makes an admirable attempt to set a difficult and obscure doctrine in a wider theological context, but it would be going too far to suggest that his rejection of the clause reveals any real appreciation of the controversy or of the issues at stake. The Eastern Church might welcome the formal conclusion to his work, but it could never accept, or even understand the principles which led him to it.

More recently the question has been tackled with vigour by the Scottish theologian T. F. Torrance¹⁶ and by his disciple and admirer, Alasdair Heron.¹⁷ Both men recognise the importance of securing the link between the Son and the Spirit within the Trinity; both are

15. G. S. Hendry, *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology* (London, 1957) 52.

16. T. F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* (London, 1965) 192-239.

17. A. I. C. Heron, 'Who Proceedeth From the Father and the Son': The Problem of the *Filioque* in *SJT* 24 (1971) 149-166, and 'The *Filioque* Clause' in *One God in Trinity* (ed. P. Toon) (London, 1980) 62-77.

convinced that Barth's answer, rooted as it is in the theology of Anselm of Canterbury, must be superseded. Heron believes this can be done by returning to Augustine; Torrance is more radical and goes back beyond both Augustine and the Cappadocians to Athanasius. He appears to believe that an affirmation of the consubstantiality of the Spirit with the Son and the Father would affirm what the *Filioque* clause is trying to say without forcing a choice between two inadequate triadologies. The importance of the *Filioque* clause is that it points this out. It stands as a monument to the inadequacy of our theological reflection and of our susceptibility to err on the side of mere logic. In other words, the *Filioque* raises fundamental questions for theology without itself being one.

Most recently of all, the issue has been taken up by Jürgen Moltmann,¹⁸ who seeks to reconcile both Eastern and Western formulations by modifying each in the direction of the other. Moltmann is the first major German theologian in this century to have taken Eastern theology seriously, but his solution to the *Filioque* dispute is not likely to be successful. Moltmann argues that *ex Patre Filioque* should be changed to *ex Patre Filii*, 'from the Father of the Son'. This would concede the monopatrism of the East but recognise, in the Augustinian tradition of the West, that the Father does not subsist or act apart from the Son. It is an ingenious formula, but fails to answer the question at the heart of the dispute, viz. what role, if any, does the Son play in the procession of the Holy Spirit?

Thus it would appear that the revival of serious theological interest in the *Filioque* clause is largely confined to Reformed circles influenced by the theology of Karl Barth. Yet it would be wrong to interpret this as no more than an offshoot of one man's work. The *Filioque* clause has never been the exclusive preserve of speculative theologians and current interest in the subject owes far more to the ecumenical, confessional and spiritual issues which it raises.

18. J. Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (London, 1981) 178-190, and 'Theological Proposals towards the Resolution of the *Filioque* Controversy', in *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ* (ed. L. Vischer) (London, 1981) 164-173.

At the ecumenical level, the persecution of Christians in Eastern Europe and the theological work of members of the Russian diaspora have brought to the West a new sympathy for, and knowledge of, the Eastern Church. The adherence of the Orthodox to the World Council of Churches in 1961 was greeted as a major breakthrough in ecumenical relations, and this has certainly helped to make the *Filioque* clause a matter for current debate. The logic of ecumenism favours the Eastern Church whose credal formula, or lack of it, reflects an earlier, more universally accepted position. Ecumenism preaches a gospel of unity, and the fact that the addition of the *Filioque* clause has provoked division is sufficient to condemn it. A recent statement from the Council's Faith and Order Commission adopts the substance of the Eastern position and recommends deletion of the *Filioque* to the Western churches, not only as a step towards ecclesiastical unity but also as a means of making a restored Nicene Creed the basis of spiritual renewal for the whole Church.¹⁹

Roman Catholic participation in this ecumenical dialogue has been much less ambitious, partly because the Roman Church is not a member of the World Council, but largely because of the problem of the so-called Catholics of the Eastern Rite, or Uniates. These have existed since the abortive Council of Florence in 1439, although the major groups are the result of more recent missionary work among the Orthodox. In outward appearance the Uniates are scarcely distinguishable from their Orthodox cousins, but they accept the Pope as Head of the Church. Permission to use their own customs extends to the privilege of being allowed to recite the Creed without the *Filioque* clause, though Uniates are expected to believe the doctrine it contains. In this way, Roman Catholics have been able to accommodate the sensitivities of Eastern Christians without compromising their own position. On the other hand it should be pointed out that most Orthodox regard the existence of the Uniates as an ecumenical scandal, and condemn Rome

19. *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 18.

for what they see as its duplicity. After the Second World War the Uniates of Eastern Europe were forcibly reintegrated into the Orthodox Church by the Communists - a reminder of the depth of feeling against them, which has political and social overtones that often outweigh purely religious factors.

Among non-Roman churches of the West ecumenical attitudes vary considerably. The Old Catholic Church, constituted in 1870 by those who rejected the proclamation of Papal Infallibility, had a vested interest in finding common ground with the Orthodox churches. Discussions of the *Filioque* clause at Bonn in 1874-5 led to a common acceptance of the Eastern position as expressed by John of Damascus in the early eighth century. Continuing conversations led in 1970 to a decision to accept the Eastern understanding of trinitarian relations and to abandon the *Filioque* altogether. It can therefore be said that the Old Catholics now accept an Eastern theological pattern, though they do not go as far as to repudiate or condemn the Western tradition as heretical.²⁰

Also present at Bonn in 1875 were fifty Anglicans, including the Bishop of Gibraltar, whose jurisdiction extended to Anglicans living in the Orthodox countries of southern Europe. Their participation in the discussions was quite unofficial, but they offered the results to Convocation for an opinion. This produced a declaration stating that the Bonn Resolutions do not contain '... anything contradictory to the Formularies of the Church of England, or contrariant to sound doctrine, or that may not be held with a safe conscience.'²¹

This extraordinary decision, which in its reference to the Formularies at least is patently false, was cited at the Lambeth Conference in 1888 in favour of a proposal to drop the *Filioque* clause from both the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds, though nothing was done. The matter has been raised in ecumenical dialogue over the years; most recently at the Moscow Conference in 1976, where the

20. *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 97-109.

21. As quoted in H. B. Swete, *History of the Doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit* (Cambridge, 1876) 239.

Anglican delegates unanimously recommended that the *Filioque* clause be deleted from the Nicene Creed. This was done on the basis of an agreement that the canonical question favoured the Orthodox position and was of sufficient importance to warrant such action. The Moscow decision was referred to the Lambeth Conference in 1978 but no further action has been taken.²² Subsequent reflection has confirmed that Anglicans are divided about the proper interpretation of the relevant passages of Scripture and would not be prepared to condemn the Western tradition, even if the *Filioque* were dropped.

Anglican interest in the question has seldom ventured beyond the canonical dimension, and it has been more or less confined to a particular group of Anglo-Catholics, who have sought to justify a non-Roman type of Catholicism by an appeal to the Eastern Church. Unfortunately this group has not been able to escape the romanticising tendencies of some splendid English eccentrics, and it remains a minority interest.²³ A

22. K. Ware and C. Davey (ed.), *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue. The Moscow Agreed Statement* (London, 1977) 62-68, 87-88. The *Filioque* is retained in the Alternative Service Book 1980, though other changes have been made to the Nicene Creed. In particular, the new translation reads that Jesus Christ was 'conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit', a gloss whose implications are far more serious than anything contained in the *Filioque*.

23. Prominent among the eccentrics was William Palmer, a nineteenth-century Oxonian who tried to persuade the Russian Orthodox Church to receive him into full communion on the ground that, as an Anglican, he was a confirmed member of the Church Catholic. Canon Allchin takes Palmer seriously, but the Russians do not. For a damning account by an Orthodox, see G. Florovsky, *Collected Works 4: Aspects of Church History* (Belmont, Mass., 1975) 227-238. Another Anglican who belongs in this category is the late Dr. Derwas Chitty. Infinitely more sophisticated than Palmer, Chitty was nevertheless convinced that Orthodoxy was the key to the conversion of England. The tradition has been maintained by a

moderate expression of its views can be found in the writings of Canon A. M. Allchin, who has investigated the Anglican past in support of his views.²⁴ He has combed sixteenth and seventeenth-century writings for evidence that Anglicans of that time showed some sympathy with the Eastern position and a certain readiness to drop the *Filioque* clause. In the event, results have been meagre, and he cannot find anything substantial which might point in this direction. Like other High Churchmen he makes the mistake of assuming that anti-Puritans were necessarily less than fully Reformed in their theology, with the result that he does not appreciate that the attitude of John Pearson or of Edward Stillingfleet to the *Filioque* clause is virtually the same as that of their contemporary Turretin. There is no reason to suppose that modern opposition to the *Filioque* among Anglicans owes anything to Anglican tradition. On the contrary, it is plain from the writings of Canon Allchin and others that this opposition stems from a more general attraction to the spiritual life of the Eastern Church. It is in their belief that the *Filioque* clause has important consequences for the worship and devotion of the church that these Anglicans have contributed to a revival of interest in the doctrine.

As far as other Protestant churches are concerned, the *Filioque* clause occupies only a minor place, if it is consciously thought of at all. An exception is the Church of Scotland, which debated the matter at the General Assembly of 1979. It adopted a vaguely-worded resolution which accepts that the Eastern Orthodox churches have a case, but states that the *Filioque* clause will continue in use until a general ecumenical agreement is reached.²⁵ Nevertheless, the report of the Panel on Doctrine shows a sophisticated awareness of the spiritual issues at stake and serves as a useful reminder that even a non-liturgical church cannot afford to remain indifferent to a question which has profound implications for evangelical spiritual life.

small group of highly intellectual people in the ancient universities, many of whom have become converts to Orthodoxy in recent years.

24. *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 85-96.

25. *Ibid.* pp. 116-117. For the full discussion, see *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (1979) 139-145.

In this connection there is a growing awareness of the importance of the charismatic movement in all the Western churches.²⁶ Spiritual renewal of this kind has brought with it a new emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit which is both welcomed and feared. In particular it is frequently observed that the charismatic experience of the Spirit has many of the marks associated with spirit-possession, and that those enjoying this experience do not appear to have a noticeably deeper understanding of Christ. Fears have been expressed that the end result is a mysticism scarcely distinguishable from that of the non-Christian religions of Asia. In this context, the relationship of the Spirit to Christ has become a matter of pastoral urgency. Is it possible to have a deep experience of the Holy Spirit and yet know little or nothing of the atoning work of Christ? Is it true that the *Filioque* clause has led to a subordination of the Holy Spirit to the Son so complete that a Christocentric faith has become Christomonism? Does it mean that the only work of the Spirit is to convince the mind of the truth of Christ's saving work to the point that sanctification is no more than a progressively deepening understanding of justification by faith?

These issues stand at the heart of Christian life and practice. That they have not usually been linked to the *Filioque* clause is a sad reflection on our tendency to compartmentalise dogmatics in a way which fails to include practical application within the bounds of systematic theology. Yet it is a legacy of the Reformation, and especially of Calvin, that reason and faith, doctrine and experience must be held together as they are in Scripture. The Evangelical mind has a great contribution to make to a theological appraisal of the *Filioque* clause.

II THE TWO TRIADOLOGIES

To understand the theological issue behind the *Filioque* dispute, we must first consider the development of trinitarianism up to the time of Augustine. It is well known that neither the New Testament nor the

26. *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 17.

sub-Apostolic writings offer us a systematic presentation of the Trinity, though by the same token there is plenty of evidence which points in that direction. It is no part of our study to examine the claims of those who deny the occurrence of trinitarian teaching in the New Testament, or who insist that the doctrine as it emerged in the third century is a corruption of the primitive material. Nor can we examine the thesis of those who would claim either that the doctrine of the Trinity is no more than one possible interpretation of Biblical evidence or that it is the valid understanding of only parts of the canonical texts. For our present purposes we must assume that the Church's trinitarian faith as proclaimed at Nicaea in 325, at Constantinople in 381 and at Chalcedon in 451 is the right interpretation of the Biblical data.²⁷

Systematic theology begins in the third century, with Origen in the Greek-speaking East and Tertullian in the Latin-speaking West. Tertullian is somewhat earlier in date and his work has a more apologetic character, although it contains the seeds of later dogmatics, especially in its vocabulary. But despite the fact that he is somewhat later in date, it is more convenient for us to begin with Origen, whose theology in any case owes nothing to Tertullian. Origen explained the Trinity by using the term *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις). This term belonged to the common vocabulary of philosophy at that time, but it also occurs in the New Testament, most significantly in Hebrews 1:3, where it is used to describe the Person of Christ.²⁸

As Origen understood it, the term meant 'an objective reality capable of acting'. As far as Origen could see, there were three such realities which Christians

27. This is a great and often-contested claim, but despite liberal attacks in recent years, it has always been ably defended. See, e.g., A. W. Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament* (London, 1962); J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London, 1958); H. E. W. Turner, *The Pattern of Christian Truth* (London, 1954).

28. The other instances are II Cor. 9:4; 11:17 and Heb. 3:14; 11:1.

worshipped as God. But as there was only one God, these realities had the same nature or being (οὐσία). The influence of Middle Platonism is not discernible until we consider how these *hypostases* were related. Origen placed them in hierarchical order, one on top of the other. The Father was God in Himself (αὐτόθεος), the Son was the exact image of the Father brought forth by an eternal generation, and the Holy Spirit was in turn the image of the Son. Origen's trinitarianism did not exist in a void but formed the centrepiece of a complete spirituality. It is seldom remembered today, but he was a great master of the mystical life and used his trinitarian scheme to explain the ascent of the soul to God. The indwelling Spirit conforms us to the Son who takes us to the Father in an upward movement into the divine reality.²⁹

After his death, Origen's theology became the standard foundation of Greek Christian thought. As long as this stayed within a broadly Platonic framework, there was no problem. But, as everyone knows, that did not happen. An Alexandrian priest by the name of Arius, trained in the philosophical method of Aristotle, applied a different logic to Origen's system and revealed its fundamental weakness. Arius held that a difference of name implied a difference of being. It was not possible for three beings to be the same if they had to be distinguished from each other. If the Father was God-in-Himself, then He was God *tout court*; the Son and the Spirit were creatures.

This position was denounced at Nicaea in 325, when it was declared that the Son was of the same being (ὁμοούσιος) as the Father. There then followed a period of jostling between those who sympathised with Arius and those who did not. The first tried to argue that the Son's being was identical to that of the Father but numerically distinct; the second, led by Athanasius, said that the being of God was one, which prevented any separation. The distinction of hypostases was real, but it was also to be discerned inside the one Godhead.

29. The same teaching is found in Basil of Caesarea, *De Spiritu Sancto* 18.

This was the doctrine inherited by the Cappadocians and elaborated by them into a full-blown theological system. The Arian controversies had raised questions about the status of the Holy Spirit within the Godhead. The impersonal sound of the name placed Him in a different category from that of Father and Son, who clearly belonged to and complemented each other. But whilst it was relatively easy to demonstrate from this complementarity that the Son was fully God, it required a painstaking analysis of the Scriptural data to say the same about the Holy Spirit. Basil of Caesarea had to contend with the Macedonians³⁰ or Pneumatomachi who placed the Father and the Son on an equal footing but subordinated the Spirit to both on the ground that he was an inferior being. Then again there was Eunomius, who apparently maintained that the Holy Spirit came exclusively from the Son.³¹

In answer to these charges, Basil developed an understanding of the Trinity which owes much to Origen while at the same time going some way beyond him. Basil accepts the three *hypostases* in God, but defines them more precisely as the modes of existence of a single divine Being.³² The Father's hypostasis is the hypostasis of the divine Being itself, so that it is inconceivable that there should be any reality beyond the Father. The Father exists in a way which reveals what God is. The Son is begotten of the Father and the Spirit proceeds from Him. This is because both the Son and the Spirit, being fully God must find their origin in the Godhead. But the Godhead is hypostatized in the Father. Therefore, the Father is the cause (αἰτία) of the other two hypostases.

When it comes to establishing a relationship between the Spirit and the Son, Basil agrees with Origen's teaching that the Spirit is the image of the Son who is the image of the Father.³³ But in order to counter the Platonizing tendencies of Eunomius, who would have placed the Holy Spirit third in the

30. Named after their leader Macedonius.

31. Basil, *Adv. Eunom.* 2,33.

32. *De Spiritu Sancto* 46.

33. *Adv. Eunom.* 5.

great chain of being extending from God the Father at the top down to the lowest creature at the bottom, Basil states that the Holy Spirit derives his cause from the Father, from whom He proceeds (ἐκπορεύεται).

It was Basil's method in controversy to win over his opponents by using the most cautious and conciliatory language possible. He even refrained from calling the Holy Spirit God, in case it might offend those whom he was trying to convince of that fact by a more circuitous route. It is therefore difficult to know just exactly how he harmonized the procession from the Father with Origen's hierarchical scheme. It appears that he never went further than saying that the Holy Spirit proceeded from (ἐκ) the Father through (διὰ) the Son, from whom He 'received' (συγκαταλαμβάνεται). On the other hand, he was quite clear, in his arguments against the Anomoeans, that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and that this fact is not compromised by the statement that He proceeds from the Father.³⁴

What is not clear in Basil becomes more definite in the writings of his contemporaries. Epiphanius in particular, writing about 374, expresses a doctrine almost identical to that of the *Filioque*. The clearest statements read as follows:

I dare to say that . . . (nobody knows) the Spirit except the Father and the Son, from whom he proceeds and from whom he receives. And (nobody knows) the Father and the Son, except the Holy Spirit who is from (παρά) the Father and from (ἐκ) the Son.³⁵

34. *Hom. adv. Sabell. et Anom.*

35. *Ancoratus* 73: τολμῶ λέγειν ὅτι... (οὐδεὶς ἔγνω) τὸ Πνεῦμα, εἰ μὴ ὁ Πατὴρ καὶ ὁ Υἱός, παρ' οὗ ἐκπορεύεται καὶ παρ' οὗ λαμβάνει. καὶ οὐδὲ τὸν Υἱὸν καὶ τὸν Πατέρα, εἰ μὴ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, ὁ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ.

Elsewhere he writes:

The Spirit is always with the Father and the Son. He is not the Father's sibling, nor is he begotten or created or the brother of the Son or the offspring of the Father. He proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son. He is not different from the Father and the Son but of the same being, of the same Godhead, of the Father and the Son, with the Father and the Son. The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of the Father.³⁶

There is little doubt that Basil would have agreed with Epiphanius, and not a few Western commentators have accepted this evidence as proof that the *Filioque* forms an integral part of Cappadocian theology. Nevertheless, the language of Epiphanius - to say nothing of Basil - is extremely subtle, and the following points must be borne in mind.

First, although Epiphanius speaks of the Holy Spirit as from the Son as well as from the Father, and even goes so far as to use the expression 'from both',³⁷ he does so in reference to the divine being (οὐσία). But the *Filioque* dispute is not about the shared divinity of the Holy Spirit, on which all are agreed. Rather, it is about the relationship of the Holy Spirit, to the other two Persons, a relationship which the Western tradition says is the same and which the Eastern tradition says is different. Seen in this light, Epiphanius and Basil belong to the East and not the West.

This brings us to the second point, which is that Epiphanius and Basil, following the precise words of Scripture, reserve the language of procession (ἐκπορεύσις) for the Spirit's relation to the Father (John 15:26) and use the language of reception (λήψις) when describing His relation to the Son (John 16:14).

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36. *Panar. haer.* 62. ἀεὶ γὰρ τὸ Πνεῦμα σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ, οὐ συνάδελφον Πατρὶ οὐ γεννητὸν, οὐ κτιστὸν, οὐκ ἀδελφὸν Υἱοῦ, οὐκ ἑγγονον Πατρὸς. ἐκ Πατρὸς δὲ ἐκπορευόμενον καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ λαμβάνον, οὐκ ἀλλότριον Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς οὐσίας, ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς Θεότητος, ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ, σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ. Πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ, Πνεῦμα Πατρὸς.
37. *Ancoratus* 67, παρ' ἀμφοτέρων.

Whether they discerned any real difference between these two may be doubted, but that does not mean that they thought the distinction could be abandoned. Gregory of Nazianzus could not explain how the procession of the Spirit differed from the generation of the Son, but he regarded the distinction as essential in distinguishing the hypostases of the Godhead.³⁸ It would be safer to say that Epiphanius and Basil were convinced that *some* distinction must be maintained, but left open the question of *what* that distinction might be.³⁹

Thirdly, we must take account of the testimony of Gregory of Nyssa, who clarifies Basil's thought in a way which probably reflects his thinking. Gregory follows his namesake, Gregory of Nazianzus, in maintaining that the *hypostases* represent the three states of God's being - the unbegotten, the begotten and the proceeding. Gregory of Nyssa tightens this up by saying that the begotten is the only-begotten and that it fulfils a mediatorial role with regard to the Spirit. In other words the Holy Spirit is transmitted through the Son, who as mediator gives Him to men.⁴⁰

38. *Orat. theol.* 31,8.

39. This question was asked by Hilary of Poitiers, who learned of Cappadocian theology during his exile in Phrygia (356-359) and transmitted it to the West. He answered (*De trin.* 8, 19-20) by reducing the procession to the level of receiving. The Spirit receives equally from both, therefore the question is superfluous. Nevertheless, though he speaks of a double mission, he does not speak of a double procession. The former appears to imply the latter, but Hilary stops short of saying so.

At the same time it should be noted that nobody in the fourth century noticed any difference between ἐκ and παρὰ. In the Fourth Gospel παρὰ is used to describe the origin of the Spirit in Jn. 15:26 as well as the origin of the Son (Jn. 1:14). 'Εκ appears only in the verb ἐκπορεύεται (Jn. 15:26). Does this mean anything? Many modern scholars hold that παρὰ refers only to a temporal mission. But if that is so, a linguistic distinction between temporal mission and eternal procession was not discerned in the fourth century.

40. *Ep. ad Ablabium*, PG 45, col. 133.

In making statements of this kind, the two Gregories naturally wished to do no more than clarify the teaching of Basil, and thus ultimately of Origen. But in the process, a subtle shift may be observed. Where Basil speaks of the one which proceeds (ὁ ἐκπορεύεται), the Gregories speak of 'the proceeding' (τὸ ἐκπορευτόν), a process of abstraction scarcely noticed at the time but which was to have momentous consequences. From there it was but a short step to the further abstraction of the modes of existence, which in their classical form appear as unbegottenness (ἀγεννησία), begottenness (γέννησις) and procession (ἐκπόρευσις).⁴¹ Without actually saying so, Cappadocian theology turned the modes of existence into qualities, and thus effectively into properties, of the divine hypostases, by which they were distinguished from each other. Gregory of Nazianzus is careful to point out that unbegottenness is not to be understood as a property of the divine Being,⁴² but this distinction was bound to be obscured in a theology which made the Father the hypostasis of that same Being.

Thus it comes about that the classical trinitarianism of the Eastern church has objectified the relations of the Trinity by making them properties of the hypostases. From this it follows that the Father, as the source (ἀρχή) or fount (πηγή) of divinity cannot stand in the same relation to the Holy Spirit as the Son because the property which determines his ability to relate is different. To say that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father is to make the Son a second Father, a second source of the Godhead, and thus to split God in two.

The careful logic of this trinitarianism is extremely subtle and not easily grasped by those untrained in Greek philosophical thought. The Syriac and Coptic

41. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orat. theol.* 25, 16. Gregory has ἔκπεμψις instead of ἐκπόρευσις but his contemporary Caesarius of Nazianzus uses the latter (cf. *Dial.* 3).

42. *Orat. theol.* 25, 16. This is repeated by Gregory of Nyssa, *C. Eun.* 12 and by Cyril of Alexandria, *De trin.* 8.

churches of the East are totally dependent on the Greek model even for a part of their theological vocabulary; their separation from the Orthodox Church, in so far as it had a doctrinal cause, can be explained only in terms of controversies in the Greek-speaking world and owes nothing to native tradition. When we look to the Latin Church of the West we find a situation at once similar and different. Greek philosophical concepts were in widespread use among the Latins, but the Greek language was not. From a high point in the mid-second century when Latin literature was almost submerged, the Greek language retreated steadily. By 250 it was no longer used in the Roman liturgy⁴³ and by 350 it was no longer properly taught as a second language, since even the great Augustine never mastered it.

Long before this, however, there had emerged a Latin theological language to rival the Greek and a way of thinking quite different from that of the East. The key term is once again *hypostasis*, translated into Latin as *substantia*.⁴⁴ The translator, who may well have been Tertullian, did not intend to use the word in a sense different from that of the Greek. For him too, it was 'an objective reality which is an active subject'. The difference comes at another level altogether. For Origen there were three objective realities in God, but for Tertullian there was only one. The monotheistic leaning of Latin theology, which may have owed something to Jewish influence,⁴⁵ is well-known, as is its propensity to subsume the persons of the Trinity in the unity of the divine Being. Nevertheless, this tendency has always been regarded as an aberration, and Latin theology is no less trinitarian in structure than its Greek counterpart.

43. Apart from fossilised expressions like *Kyrie eleison*.

44. The accuracy of this translation has often been questioned, but on etymological grounds there can be no doubt. On the other hand *substantia* is a less precise term, since it includes 'an objective reality which is not an active subject', a distinction which in Greek must be rendered by ὑπόστασις, or more usually, by ὑποκείμενον.

45. The thesis of the late Cardinal Jean Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity* (London, 1977).

The differences however are apparent straightaway. Tertullian uses the word *persona*⁴⁶ to indicate the threeness in God, but this word does not possess the objective quality inherent in *substantia*. It is often thought that Tertullian conceived of God as a divine material out of which the various persons proceeded, and that this view has survived through all the developments of Latin theology. As a result, claim these critics (not a few of whom are Orthodox), Western trinitarianism posits the unity of God in His impersonal essence, so that in worshipping Him we are worshipping a thing rather than a person. This is an attractive explanation from the standpoint of Greek trinitarianism but it scarcely does justice to Tertullian's thought.

For a start, Tertullian identified the Father with the whole substance (*tota substantia*) of God,⁴⁷ a way of thinking not unlike that of Basil of Caesarea. The Son and the Spirit were portions (*portiones*) of this substance which proceeded from the Father, though not in such a way as to separate themselves from the Father's substance. This confusing way of putting it can only be properly understood when we realize that Tertullian inherited a view of God which identified the Godhead with the Father and regarded the other members of the Trinity as properties of the Father - His Word and His Spirit - which had emerged from the undifferentiated Being of God at the beginning of the creation. This so-called economic trinitarianism was widely shared by all Christians of the time, and was not superseded until Origen. But Tertullian was aware of its weaknesses and sought to overcome them.

What he lacked was a second level of objectivity

46. Of dubious origin, but probably linked to the mask of the drama; cf. Greek πρόσωπον, with which it is equated. Tertullian picked up the term from Roman law, where a *persona* was the subject of a court action.

47. *Adv. Hermog.* 3.

which could accommodate the plurality of God.⁴⁸ To the end, he was forced to discern the Son and the Spirit inside the one God, who is not an impersonal divine substance, but the Father. Thus he is able to write:

I do not deduce the Son from anywhere but from the substance of the Father . . . nor do I think the Spirit comes from anywhere but from the Father through the Son. Be careful not to destroy the monarchy.⁴⁹

From this we must conclude that the divine monarchy is inherent in the substance of the Father within which the Son and the Spirit subsist. It is precisely this trinitarian indwelling in the one substance which the phrase 'from the Father through the Son' is meant to reinforce. The Spirit comes 'from the Father' because He is the divine substance, but 'through the Son' because the Son dwells inside and not outside that substance. What Tertullian is saying is that when the Spirit came forth the Son was already subsistent in God, and therefore a necessary collaborator in the bringing forth of a third divine person.

Tertullian's theology was tidied up slightly by Novatian in the mid-third century, most significantly in the recognition that the Son was a substance in His own right.⁵⁰ Novatian was obviously sensitive to Origen's use of the word *hypostasis* but ended up with a confusing picture of three substances in one substance! This may sound odd to the untrained ear,

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48. To his credit it must be said that Tertullian realised this and spoke of the Person of the Son as 'substantial' (cf. *Adv. Prax.* 7). This is important, but it must be recognised that he is only enhancing the difficulty by leaving open the possibility that the Persons were somehow manifestations of God fixed in the substance itself. It remains an open question as to how far he realised that persons and substance belonged to different levels of objectivity in God.
49. *Adv. Prax.* 4: *Filium non aliunde deduco sed de substantia Patris... Spiritum non aliunde puto quam a Patre per Filium. Vide ergo ne tu potius monarchiam destruas.*
50. *De trin.* 16.

but it makes good sense if we say 'three objective realities in one objective reality'. Where Novatian was unable to make real progress was in his continuing insistence that the one reality was to be equated with the Father. Novatian did not see that in calling the Person of Christ a substance, he was making this view of the Father untenable. For if the Father were the one at the level of unity and at the same time one of the three at the level of Trinity, both the Son and the Spirit would have to be subordinate to the Father.⁵¹ If the Son were then a substance in His own right, He could not be God in the full sense, and we find ourselves logically forced into Arianism.

After Novatian there is little or no development in Latin theology until the late fourth century. The great Christological controversies were fought by Greeks in the East with no significant Western participation until 430, the year of Augustine's death, when Rome took the side of Alexandria in the dispute between Cyril and Nestorius. By then, however, it had acquired a theology worthy of high debate, and it was this theology which in time would become as classical in the West as that of the Cappadocians was in the East.

Augustine's is undoubtedly the outstanding name in Western trinitarian thought, so much so that his *De trinitate*, written between 399 and 419, is often regarded as the standard work on the subject. Augustine's ideas come from three main sources. First, he follows Tertullian in his fundamental monotheism, but abandons the ambiguous term *substantia* in favour of *essentia*, which corresponds to the Greek οὐσία.⁵² He also accepts the Trinity of persons, despite some unhappiness with the name 'person'.⁵³

His appreciation of this legacy was determined by two distinct though related influences from the Greek East.

51. A point on which Novatian insists (*De trin.* 18, 22, 26, 27, 31).

52. *De trin.* 5,8; 7,5.

53. *Ibid.* 7,4.

The first was the Neoplatonism of Porphyry, mediated through the converted philosopher Marius Victorinus. The second was Cappadocian theology, mediated through Hilary of Poitiers. The Neoplatonism of Porphyry differed from that of Plotinus and Iamblichus, whose ideas influenced the young Cappadocians. They regarded Being, Intelligence and Soul as three separate *hypostases*, a belief which was not uncongenial to Greek Christian trinitarianism,⁵⁴ but Porphyry regarded them as contained within a single *hypostasis*.⁵⁵ Victorinus taught this kind of Neoplatonism and after his conversion to Christianity discovered that it fitted quite well into the traditional trinitarianism of the Latin Church.

Victorinus further accounted for the eternal generation of the Son and the eternal procession of the Spirit by saying that to be is to move (*esse = moveri*), which meant that there could be motion without change in the Being of God. Augustine took this over and concluded that the Persons of the Trinity were modes of being in God. Where the Cappadocians had two levels in God, being and existence, both of which were equally eternal, Augustine had only one. But this did not mean that the Persons were no more than different names for the same thing. Still less were they distinct substances. The Persons explained the pattern of motion within the Being of God. They were not objective realities in their own right, but expressions of real relations which are subsistent in the divine Being. It is at this point that Augustine's trinitarianism becomes contradictory and confusing. For in defining the term Person, he refuses to identify it with relation. The reason is that he wishes to

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54. Though it is by no means identical with it either. The Cappadocians liberated themselves from Neoplatonism by declaring that the three hypostases constituted one Being. They were not ranked in a hierarchical order with the One, or Ultimate Unity, being at times equated with the First Hypostasis and at times transcending the hypostases in a mystical world of 'Non-Being'.
55. The Second Hypostasis. The First was the world of 'Non-Being'.

avoid the suggestion that a single Person is less than fully God. It is therefore necessary to refer the term to the divine essence, with the result that strictly speaking there is only one Person in God. A literalist might wish to accuse Augustine of modalism but this is unfair to him. In fact he is edging toward a new understanding that although there are two levels of objective reality in God, each manifests the other. This was also understood by the Cappadocians and expressed in their doctrine of coinherence (*perichoresis*). What Augustine lacked was a theological vocabulary precise enough to escape contradiction.

Augustine also said that names of the Persons explain to us the nature of God's being. The Father and the Son represent opposite poles of attraction, drawn to each other by this very contrast. Because of his name, the Father is logically prior to the Son, but by the same token the Son must exist in order for the name Father to have any significance. It is therefore impossible to imagine the one without the other. Binding the two together is the Holy Spirit, who as the *vinculum caritatis* is the full expression of the Love which flows between the Lover and the Beloved. Augustine is therefore obliged to say that because the Holy Spirit is the *mutual* love of the Father and the Son,⁵⁶ He stands in the same relation to both. This relation is expressed as procession; therefore He proceeds equally from both. At the same time, a single relation implies a single movement, or operation, so that the double procession of the Holy Spirit is really a single operation common to the Father and the Son.⁵⁷

The end result is a trinitarianism quite different from that of the Cappadocians.⁵⁸ Yet it should not

56. *De trin.* 15, 27.

57. *Ibid.* 5, 15.

58. It is important to stress this point in the face of arguments which maintain that a false verbal equation of the Greek ἐκπορεύεσθαι with the Latin *procedere* has played a significant part in misunderstanding between the churches. The

be forgotten that the two traditions of East and West were still moving in the same mental universe and were not regarded by anyone as mutually exclusive, or even as very different. A sign of this is that both traditions thought of relations as hypostatic properties. In the case of the Cappadocians, each *hypostasis* was distinguished by a single relation; in the case of Augustine the one *hypostasis*, now rebaptised *essentia* but still hypostatic in a way in which the Persons were not, possessed three relations. It was only when the common universe of discourse broke down and the differences already apparent were accentuated, that the incompatibility was noticed and a theological controversy erupted.

III THE CONTROVERSY

One of the more remarkable features about the *Filioque* controversy is the length of time which it took for it to grow and become a major factor in the division of the Church. If we reckon that the doctrine had made its first appearance by the time Augustine's *De trinitate* was published in 419 and that it was not finally rejected by the Eastern Church until 1454, we can see that it took more than a millennium for the respective positions to be defined. Why was this? Other controversies like Arianism and monophysitism came to the fore quickly and were openly debated in councils of the Church. The *Filioque* by contrast remained quiescent as a dispute for centuries, and was not officially debated until 1274.

The explanation for this must lie partly in the political turmoil which enveloped Western Europe in

argument maintains that ἐκπορεύεσθαι points to a relation of origin in the Father, whereas *procedere* emphasises a relation of function (cf. J. M. Garrigues, in *Spirit of God* [ed. L. Vischer] 158-159). That the two words are not identical may be agreed (cf. *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue* [ed. K. Ware and C. Davey] 63), but that this has affected the theological position seems far-fetched. First of all, *procedere* is meant to signify ἐκπορεύεσθαι, as in Jn. 15:26; secondly, Augustine denied the distinction between essence and existence in God on which such a difference in meaning must depend (*De trin.* 7, 5).

the fifth century and further isolated the Greek and Latin Churches from each other, and also in the subtle nature of the dispute. Nevertheless an examination of the historical evidence allows us to discern the four logical stages of its evolution.

- At stage One the problem was not recognised
- At stage Two the problem was recognised but not understood
- At stage Three the problem was recognised and understood, but not thought to be fundamental
- At stage Four the problem was recognised, understood, thought to be fundamental but not fully explained in the context of a systematic theology and spirituality.

Stage One was reached by the mid-fifth century. In a letter to Turibius, the bishop of Asturica (Astorga) in Spain, dated 21st July 447, Pope Leo I includes the *Filioque* as part of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity to be upheld against the modalist tendencies of the Priscillianists and the Arianism of the Visigoths.⁵⁹ It was to this same Leo, barely fifteen months later, that Flavian, the Patriarch of Constantinople, wrote asking for support in his struggle against Eutyches. Leo's reply, his famous *Tome*, was read out at the Council of Chalcedon on 22nd October 451 and hailed as the authentic expression of orthodoxy. It does not contain the *Filioque* clause, but Leo's orthodoxy as a systematic theologian was

59. Ep. 15, 2. The *Filioque* was intended for proclamation at a Council to have been held at Toledo in 447. Whether this council (the Second Council of Toledo) ever met is uncertain; cf. H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila* (Oxford, 1976) 216-217.

accepted without question.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the same council also authorised the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed in its final form, and the *Filioque* clause is conspicuously absent from it.⁶¹

In Spain, however, it was added to this Creed, in its Latin translation, at a very early date. How and why this happened is unknown, but by the time of the Third Council of Toledo in 589 it was a *fait accompli*. By that time also it had appeared in the so-called Athanasian Creed, which was apparently composed around the year 500 in Southern Gaul.⁶² If that is the case, it is the earliest confessional document in which the *Filioque* clause is known to appear. It must be stressed of course that the addition of the word to the Creed in the one case and its inclusion in the Creed in the other occurred without reference or prejudice to the Eastern position which was simply unknown. In confessing it the Western Church was doing no more than expressing the logical conclusion of Augustinian trinitarianism.⁶³

60. There are, however, modern Orthodox who regard Leo's *Tome* as a bumbling intrusion into an Eastern theological debate. Cf., e.g., J. Romanides, in *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite?* (Geneva [WCC], 1981) 50-75. Professor Romanides was an Orthodox delegate to the Moscow Conference in 1976.

61. The earlier history of the creed is uncertain. At Chalcedon it was claimed to have been the creed of the Council of Constantinople in 381, but whilst its theology would not rule this out, there is no positive evidence for it. The Council of Ephesus in 431 forbade the composition of another creed (ἑτέρον πύστις) than that of Nicaea, and this has been sometimes invoked by Orthodox writers against the *Filioque*. Scientific research has invalidated this objection (cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* [London, 1972, third edition] 296-331), and it is now thought that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed was first composed at or near Constantinople sometime after 381.

62. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Athanasian Creed* (London, 1964) 109-124. For the history of this creed in the East, see Kelly 44-48.

63. This point is fully conceded by prominent Orthodox

Stage Two makes its appearance in the seventh century. On a visit to Rome, Maximus the Confessor recognised that the Latin Church spoke of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son, but did not understand what this was supposed to mean and put it down to the poverty of the Latin language, which did not possess the same theological subtleties as Greek.⁶⁴ An outright denial of the *Filioque* first appears in John of Damascus, writing sometime around 745, but there is nothing to suggest that he knew of the Western insertion in the Creed and his remarks show none of the signs of controversy.⁶⁵

Only very late in *Stage Two*, and then in peculiar circumstances, is a note of controversy sounded. The rise of the Carolingian Empire in Western Europe in the late eighth century, culminating in the proclamation of Charlemagne as Roman Emperor on Christmas Day in the year 800, provoked a diplomatic crisis in Europe which was fuelled by theological controversy. To support his position against the Byzantines, who regarded him as a usurper, Charlemagne commissioned his theologians to defend him and provide ammunition against the Greeks. This they did in two ways. First, they claimed that the Pope had the right to make and unmake Roman Emperors; second, they claimed that the Eastern Emperor had been deposed in the West because of heresy. What this heresy was can only be imagined - the Eastern Church had *deleted* the *Filioque* clause from the Creed!

This extraordinary combination occurs in the

theologians, e.g., B. Bobrinskoy, 'The *Filioque* Yesterday and Today' in *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 140, and even V. Lossky in *Spirit of God* 73, who writes: '... We shall even admit the possibility of an Orthodox interpretation of the *Filioque*, as it first appeared at Toledo for example.'

64. *Ad Marinum*, PG 91, col. 133.

65. *De fide orth.* I, 8, 12.

so-called *Libri Carolini*, an anonymous work written about 792,⁶⁶ and led to the anti-Byzantine Synod of Frankfurt in 794, the Synod of Friuli in 796, at which Paulinus of Aquileia delivered the first in a long series of defences of the *Filioque*,⁶⁷ and the Synod of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) in 809, when the clause was formally introduced into the Creed throughout the Western Empire. By that time Frankish and Greek monks in Jerusalem had already clashed over the inclusion of the clause in the Creed, and even Pope Leo III had asked Charlemagne to desist.

The Synod of Aachen gave Charlemagne the leverage he wanted to persuade the Pope to change his mind, but at a synod in Rome in 810 Leo III managed to declare the clause orthodox without including it in the Creed. He reinforced this decision by having the Creed inscribed in both Greek and Latin on two silver plaques which were hung in St Peter's. At the scholarly level, the *Libri Carolini* were soon to be highly inadequate for their purpose and they were superseded by two treatises of a much higher standard, one by Theodulf of Orléans⁶⁸ and another by Alcuin of York.⁶⁹ In one particular, however, their influence was to linger until the present day. The notion that the *Filioque* clause was somehow bound up with the doctrine of Papal supremacy was taken up and embellished by a number of Eastern theologians. A modern analysis is given by Timothy Ware.

Orthodox writers also argue that . . . two consequences of the *Filioque* - subordination of the Holy Spirit, over-emphasis on the unity of God - have helped to bring about a distortion in the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Church.

66. For discussion see R. Haugh, *Photius and the Carolingians* (Belmont, Mass., 1975).

67. PL 99, coll. 9-683.

68. *De Spiritu Sancto*, PL 105, coll. 185ff.

69. *De processione Spiritus Sancti*, PL 101.

Because the role of the Spirit has been neglected in the event, the Church has come to be regarded too much as an institution of this world, governed in terms of earthly power and jurisdiction. And just as in the Western doctrine of God unity was stressed at the expense of diversity, so in the Western conception of the Church unity has triumphed over diversity, and the result has been too great centralization and too great an emphasis on Papal authority.

Two different ways of thinking about God go hand-in-hand with two different ways of thinking about the Church. The underlying causes of the schism between east and west - the *Filioque* and the papal claims - were not unconnected.⁷⁰

Stage Three begins in the ninth century, when in both East and West there was a renewed interest in pneumatology. In the West this took the form of the trinitarianism of Gottschalk and Ratramnus. Gottschalk started from the premiss that God is Spirit, and concluded that there was a Trinity of Spirits whose unity was consummated in the third person. There is a clear affinity here with Augustine, but Gottschalk went much further than his master in making the Holy Spirit the focus of unity in God. Augustine had struggled with the Biblical evidence that God is Spirit and that God is Love, and only reluctantly did he conclude that the Spirit is identifiable with Love.⁷¹ But he never went so far as to link this with the essence of God. Gottschalk's theory produced an abstract divinity, and he was condemned at Soissons in 853. Nevertheless, his theology is an indication of what was happening to Augustinianism and was a portent of things to come.

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70. T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London, 1963) 222-223. See also S. Bulgakov, *Paraklet* (in Russian) (Paris, 1936) 137.
 71. *De trin.* 15, 27.

In the East, further reflection was spurred on by the Patriarch Photius,⁷² who found himself confronted with Western attempts to evangelise Bulgaria. The Frankish missionaries there naturally included the *Filioque* clause in the Creed, and this gave Photius the opportunity to denounce the Pope and the West generally as heretical. Photius was the first person to go anything like as far as this, and he was careful to rest his case on the age-old teaching of the Roman pontiffs as well as the Greek fathers.⁷³

Photius sets out his case with great thoroughness. He repeats the Cappadocian idea that the modes of existence are the properties of the hypostases, not of the divine essence (οὐσία) and reinforces the contrast between these two levels of objective reality which Augustine could not understand.⁷⁴ He then goes on to say that the Father as cause (αἰτία) is distinguished from the Son and the Spirit, both of whom are caused (αἰτιατά), albeit in different ways.⁷⁵ Here Photius reflects Gregory of Nazianzus who was unable to establish any clear distinction between the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, there is the same curious tendency towards abstraction which was apparent in Gottschalk's treatment of Augustine.

He continues with a denunciation of the idea that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son. If this is to be accepted, says Photius, is the second procession the same as the first or different? If it is the same, then the Son transmits the hypostatic property of the Father and dissolves his individuality. If it is different, then there is an opposition between the Father and the Son which splits the Godhead in two.⁷⁶ Then again, an

72. He wrote two major works on the subject, *De Spiritus Sancti Mystagogia*, PG 102, coll. 280-400, and a letter circulated to the Eastern Churches in 867, PG 102, coll. 721-742.

73. *Mystagogia* 5.

74. *De trin.* 5, 8.

75. *Mystagogia* 11.

76. *Enc. ad Arch. Thronos*, 17.

involvement of the Son in the procession of the Holy Spirit would imply that the procession from the Father is imperfect.⁷⁷ If the ability to emit the Spirit is a property common to the Father and the Son, then it must be common to the Spirit as well, with the result that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Himself.⁷⁸ The argument that two Persons of the Trinity cannot share a property denied to the third is justified by saying that shared properties belong to the divine essence, though this idea appears to stand in contrast, if not quite in contradiction, to the denomination of both the Son and the Spirit as αὐτὰρ᾽ over against the Father.

Furthermore, says Photius, if the Son is a cause of the Holy Spirit, then the Father is both a direct and an indirect cause, by virtue of the fact that He is the cause of the Son as well. To Photius this suggests that the Holy Spirit is the Father's Grandson, an idea which is a bit far-fetched, even for him!⁷⁹ Finally he takes up the Biblical evidence that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son, and denies that proceeding and receiving are the same.⁸⁰

Photius recognises that the Scriptures speak of the Spirit of the Son and of the Spirit of Christ, but of course he denies that these expressions have anything to do with the Spirit's origin, and indeed he separates them from one another. The Spirit of the Son is, for Photius, no more than an expression of the *homoousion*, of the shared essence,⁸¹ whilst the Spirit of Christ refers to the anointing of the human nature of Jesus at his conception and baptism.⁸² On the positive side,

77. *Mystagogia* 7, 31, 44.

78. *Ibid.* 44.

79. *Ep. ad Arch. et Met. Aquileiensem* 9, PG 102, col. 801.

80. *Mystagogia* 21-23.

81. *Ibid.* 51.

82. *Ibid.* This idea is found, in a different way, in Karl Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1, 546-557.

Photius admits that both Father and Son participate in the temporal mission of the Spirit into the world, though he draws a careful distinction between this and the eternal procession.⁸³

Photius concludes by making his own gloss on the Creed, though of course he never included it in the actual text. For him, the words 'who proceedeth from the Father' imply 'from the Father alone' (ἐκ μόνου τοῦ πατρός) and the argument from silence at this point is now universal among the Orthodox.⁸⁴

What estimation can be made of Photius? His logic is almost impeccable, but it is also completely self-contained. He did not know Augustine's arguments nor did he reflect seriously on the Western tradition. He is carried along by his own arguments in a way which would not have been recognised by his Latin contemporaries, who in any case could not read his work. More seriously still, he never answers the positive challenge of the *Filioque*, which is to say how the Son and the Spirit are related. In the end, his work must be regarded as an academic exercise above all else. Certainly it is true that it has always been the starting-point of Orthodox arguments against the *Filioque* but its usefulness in that respect came centuries later. In his own time, his arguments were quickly forgotten. The Bulgarian crisis blew over and by 880 the churches of East and West had once more patched up their differences and were in full communion, with no mention made of the *Filioque*.⁸⁵

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83. *Mystagogia* 23. • This distinction was accepted as valid by the Anglican delegates at the Moscow Conference in 1976, and is regarded as 'vital' by Canon Allchin (in *Spirit of God* [ed. L. Vischer] 87). It is curious to reflect that Gregory of Nazianzus used 'sending' (ἐκπεμψις) as the equivalent of 'procession' (ἐκπόρευσις), which indicates that he did not make the distinction with anything like the same precision.
84. Even Lossky (in *Spirit of God* [ed. L. Vischer] 78) obscures the issue and does not answer the question.
85. Cf. J. Meijer, *A Successful Council of Union. A Theological Analysis of the Photian Synod of 878-880*

No more was heard of the issue until the eleventh century. The *Filioque* clause was finally added to the Roman version of the Creed in 1014 as part of the reform of the Roman church instigated by the German Emperor Henry II and his Cluniac advisers.⁸⁶ Forty years later the Pope and the Patriarch excommunicated one another for jurisdictional reasons, and the Patriarch, Michael Cerularius, recalled the 'blasphemous dogma' of the *Filioque* which he added to his denunciations, without a detailed explanation.⁸⁷

The schism of 1054 was never properly healed, but it did not mean that the two churches were no longer in communion with each other at the local level, still less that they regarded each other as schismatics. That awareness came only slowly, and was in no small measure the result of the actions of the Crusaders, who in 1100 set up Latin bishops in Antioch and Jerusalem to rival their Greek counterparts.⁸⁸ The *Filioque* clause, as it happens, re-emerged at about the same time. To be precise, it was at the Council of Bari in 1098 that the crusader Pope, Urban II, asked Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, to refute the position of Photius, a discourse which Anselm later wrote up as a treatise.⁸⁹

Anselm takes up the standard position of Augustinian trinitarianism in his response to the Greek arguments, but

(Thessaloniki, 1975) 184-186. Meijer says that the *horos* of reunion, by denouncing all changes and additions to the Creed, implicitly condemned the *Filioque*, but it is striking that the theological content of the clause, so important to Photius in 867, was not even discussed twelve years later.

86. This reform was long overdue. Meijer, following Romanides, claims that the Papacy 'fell into the hands of the Franks' (cf. *Successful Council* 184) but this is a gross exaggeration.

87. PG 120, coll. 737-738.

88. For the history, see S. Runciman, *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford, 1955).

89. *De profectione Spiritus Sancti*, PL 158, coll. 285-326.

is more precise, both in dealing with the theses of Photius and in his own understanding of trinitarian relations. Anselm denies Photius' contention that the two levels of objective reality in God have no link with each other. On the contrary, the relations express to human minds how the three Persons possess the common essence. The Son's possession is completely defined by his relationship to the Father. This is not true of the Spirit, however, since He is the Spirit of Christ as well as the Spirit of the Father. Anselm cannot understand how, if the Spirit is fully God and also the Spirit of Christ according to the *homoousion*, He could be said *not* to proceed from the Son as well as from the Father. The distinction which Photius made between the temporal mission and the eternal procession is invalid, since in God time and eternity merge into one.⁹⁰ Nor will Anselm allow that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son.⁹¹ To him 'through the Son' is linked to the words of the Creed, 'by whom all things were made', and teaches in effect that the Holy Spirit is a creature. Anselm sees no difficulty at all in saying that the Son is the source of the Holy Spirit, since the Father had given it to the Son to have life in Himself (Jn. 5:26).⁹² In the language of Photius, the procession from the Son was the same as the procession from the Father because the Father had shared His hypostatic property with the Son.

Most importantly, though, the double procession, far from dividing the Trinity in two, seals the union of the Father and the Son. He denies the Augustinian teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds principally from the Father⁹³ and discovers the unity of Father and Son in the single spiration rather than in the common Spirit.⁹⁴ In saying this, Anselm leaves the level of the divine essence and moves to the level of the objective, or real, relations. The Holy Spirit participates fully and equally in the mutual love of the Father and the Son and conveys both to the heart of the believer. This may seem but a slight change from saying that the Holy Spirit is the *product* of their mutual love, but it

90. *De processione Spiritus Sancti* 6, 7.

91. *Ibid.* 9.

92. *Ibid.* 20.

93. *Ibid.* 24.

94. *Ibid.* 18.

makes all the difference. For the mutual love of the Father and the Son is the love of the atoning sacrifice of Calvary. In it the divine forgiveness and the divine self-offering come together. Anselm does not say so explicitly, but for him a denial of the double procession would mean a denial of the Son's saving love in the life of the Christian, or at best a relegation of this love to second place. It is this, more than anything else, which constitutes the difference between Eastern and Western concepts of man and his salvation.

Anselm's contribution to the debate is also significant at the level of New Testament exegesis. Unlike his Eastern opponents, he does not confine himself to the proof-texts, John 14:26 and John 15:26. It is true that he discusses these at length in Chapter Nine, arguing that the *quem ego mittam vobis a Patre* of 14:26 is the logical counterpart of the *mittet Pater in nomine meo* of 15:26. If the sending of the Spirit can be interchanged in this way, argues Anselm, the ontological basis for the sending must be identical. The Father sends the Spirit because the Spirit proceeds from Him. If the Son sends the Spirit, the Spirit must also proceed from the Son. If it were not so, it would not make sense for the Son to add that the Father sends the Spirit *in nomine meo*. He could, and therefore would have done it independently.

But Anselm broadens the debate to consider the whole compass of the farewell discourses of John 14-17. In Chapter Eleven he takes up John 16:13-14, verses which had been used to justify the use of the language of reception when speaking of the Holy Spirit's relation to the Son. Anselm argues that because *quaecunque audiet, loquitur* (v.13) is paralleled by *de meo accipiet et annuntiabit vobis, audire and accipere* mean the same thing. The fact that the Holy Spirit will not speak from Himself (*non loquitur de semetipso*) means for Anselm that He cannot speak from Himself, but only on behalf of Him from Whom He hears and receives. Yet the Holy Spirit is not a mouthpiece; He is a Person in His own right. Therefore, argues Anselm, the One from whom He hears and receives is the one from Whom He is and proceeds.

Anselm broadens the Scriptural argument still farther by arguing from other passages that the Father and the Son are One. Chapter Twelve is taken up with a discussion of Matthew 11:27, which he uses to support

his earlier arguments. From there he extends himself to the Psalms and beyond. Anselm's use of Scripture is certainly open to question, but his basic assumption remains valid. This is that the exegetical basis for the *Filioque* clause does not stand or fall on John 15:26. This verse must be read in its context. On this score, Anselm claims that the farewell discourses in John, the other Gospels, and finally Scripture as a whole all support his argument.

Stage Four begins in the generation after Anselm. The Crusades renewed a living contact between East and West, and academic differences now acquired vital importance. The Papacy was asserting claims to universal jurisdiction, and the East could not escape the pressure from Rome to fall into line. The first sign of this new attitude appears in the writings of Anselm of Havelberg. This younger Anselm went to Constantinople in 1135 and entered into dialogue with Nechites, Archbishop of Nicomedia. We cannot be sure what really transpired, but Anselm's account, written for home consumption, is clear. The aim of the journey was to worst Nechites in debate, and to convert as many Greeks as possible to the Roman faith.⁹⁵

As a piece of theological writing, Anselm of Havelberg's *Dialogus* is the most technical to date on the *Filioque* clause, though it lacks both the depth of his earlier namesake and the conciliatory approach. From now on we are in a period of verbal aggressiveness, aided and abetted by military aggression. In 1204 the Fourth Crusade captured Constantinople and the Eastern Church was forcibly integrated with Rome. The Byzantines recaptured their city in 1261, but there were still large tracts under Latin rule and their position was far from secure. In the circumstances the Emperor Michael VIII thought it best to seek a formal reunion of the Churches. This was promulgated at the Council of Lyons in 1274 and it lasted until Michael's death in 1282.

At Lyons, the Greeks were forced to accept the *Filioque*

95. Anselm of Havelberg, *Dialogus* (ed. P. Salet) (Paris, 1966) PL 188, coll. 1163ff.

clause as orthodox. Latin influence, already pervasive, was to penetrate to the heart of Eastern spirituality. Not surprisingly, there was resistance, led by the monks of Constantinople and Mt Athos. At the intellectual level, however, things were rather different. The thirteenth century was the golden age of Latin scholasticism, which was in full flower at Lyons. This intellectual renaissance attracted many Greeks, and for the first time in history, Latin works of theology and philosophy were translated into Greek. Not surprisingly this activity attracted some support for Rome and from then until the fall of Constantinople there was always a party of Westernizers, or *Latinophroni* at the Byzantine court. It was they who challenged the monks and sought to win acceptance in the East for the *Filioque* clause.

The Westernizers were fortunate in that they had at their disposal a theological system which had been perfected by the application of the most up-to-date Aristotelian metaphysics. The old problem of the relations in the divine essence had been solved by Gilbert de la Porrée in the mid-twelfth century. Gilbert said that it was necessary to distinguish the essence of a thing (*id quod est*) from the means whereby it came to be (*id quo est*). Since the objective value of a thing could hardly be less than that of the means whereby it came to be, the means also entered the realm of objective reality. In theological terms it could be said that the relations constituted the essence, since it was by these that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit acquired their substantiality. The relations were therefore subsistent in God.⁹⁶

Gilbert's philosophical outlook did not do full justice to the persons, who in his view were constituted by the relations which were logically prior. This imbalance was corrected by Thomas Aquinas, who maintained that *the persons are themselves the relations*.⁹⁷ This equation effectively removes the Orthodox complaint that in scholastic theology the persons are somehow dependent on the relations for their being⁹⁸ but it merely confirms

96. On Gilbert, see E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy* 140-144, 620-621.

97. *Summa Theol.* I, 40, 2.

98. V. Lossky in *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 76-80.

their suspicion that Western trinitarianism sees nothing more than the relations in the persons of the Trinity and thereby compromises their hypostatic individuality. If the persons are no more than the relations, it is argued they need each other to exist and therefore lack the self-sufficiency of God. Such a doctrine merely confirms the Orthodox in their belief that the God of the Western churches is really no more than an impersonal essence.⁹⁹

When the Greek Westernizers sought to translate this theology into their own tradition, they came up against two obstacles. First, the West did not distinguish between being (essence) and existence, and therefore regarded the relations not as hypostatic *properties distinct from* the essence, but as hypostatic *principles of* the essence. Secondly, the West distinguished *principle* from *cause* in a way which the East could not grasp.¹⁰⁰ It was this problem which was to be the undoing of the Westernizing Patriarch John Beccus (1275-82). Beccus began as an anti-Latin writer, but after Lyons was converted to the Roman cause and appointed Patriarch in order to implement the Union of 1274.

Beccus naturally tried to express the double procession in terms of causality by saying that there is a Sonly cause (υἱκὴ αἰτία) of the Holy Spirit but that this leads up to the Fatherly cause (πατρικὴ αἰτία) so that there is only one cause of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰¹ This however obscures the hypostatic individuality of the Father and the Son, whose actions are confused in a single cause. There is in fact no way in which this can be avoided. Beccus, it appears, follows Augustine as far as he understands him, but is unable to integrate the subsequent Latin tradition into a Greek framework of thought.

99. *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 88.

100. This is apparent in Thomas Aquinas, cf. *Summa Theol.* I, 33, 1-2.

101. PG 141, coll. 396ff.

Beccus' great opponent was Gregory (George) of Cyprus, Patriarch of Constantinople from 1283 to 1289. Gregory understood that the arguments of Photius, though sound in themselves, were no longer enough to counter the Latins. On two points in particular he advanced beyond Photius in an attempt to plug the holes in his theology. First, Gregory modified the traditional opposition between essence and existence to the extent of saying that the Son and the Holy Spirit received the divine essence from the hypostasis of the Father.¹⁰² This sounds like the Western doctrine and is in fact very close to it. But just when we feel that he has surrendered to the Latin position, he draws us back with a jolt. For there is no *necessary* link between the hypostases and the divine essence, and the two concepts are quite separate after all. The essence which the Father communicates to the Holy Spirit is the same essence that he shares with the Son, but the Holy Spirit receives this from the Father only. In effect, we are back to the position of Photius. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son according to essence (this is the *homoousion*) but not according to his hypostasis.¹⁰³

The second point which Gregory establishes is the eternal relation of the Son to the Spirit. We have already seen that Photius did not answer this question, thereby leaving an embarrassing gap in Orthodox trinitarianism. Gregory transcends Photius' doctrine of the temporal mission of the Spirit and says that this is the fruit of an eternal manifestation (αἰώνιος ἔκφανσις) of the Spirit through the Son.¹⁰⁴ Thus when Beccus states that the expression 'through the Son' implies a double procession, Gregory retorts that it is not a procession but a manifestation.

This subtle argument may seem trivial and obscure but in fact it is crucial, since it was on this that the spiritual revival in the East in the fourteenth

102. PG 142, coll. 270-1.

103. Ibid. col. 271.

104. Ibid. col. 250.

century came to depend. Gregory believed that the Holy Spirit could be called the Spirit of the Son and the Spirit of Christ, because he held that the Holy Spirit came forth from the Son as the active power or energy of God. This happens, not because the Holy Spirit receives his existence from the Son, but because, having proceeded from the Father, He rests in the Son and acts or proceeds from him into the world of men.¹⁰⁵

This important distinction was further refined by Gregory Palamas (c. 1296-1359), the greatest Byzantine theologian and in many respects the Greek answer to Thomas Aquinas.¹⁰⁶ Palamas effectively shifted the traditional basis of Orthodox theology away from a duality between essence and existence to a duality between existence and energy. At the level of hypostatic existence, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, as Photius had said. But at the level of energy, He proceeds from the Father through the Son, or from the Father and the Son together.¹⁰⁷ What is extraordinary about this is that Palamas then takes up, for the first time in Greek theology, the Augustinian analogy of love and applies it to the level of energy, on the ground that the love of God can be known and therefore cannot belong to His incomprehensible essence.¹⁰⁸ In this way Palamas makes the brilliant deduction that the expression 'God is Love' is not parallel to the saying 'God is Spirit', since the former is a knowable energy whilst the latter is the unknowable essence.

Palamas' systematisation of Greek theology acquires even more importance when we realise that it was the basis of a mystical spirituality whose revival in

105. PG 142, coll. 275-6.

106. He was Archbishop of Thessalonica from 1341 and played a major part in the defence of hesychasm at the Synod of Constantinople in 1351.

107. *Logos apodeiktikos*, 2, 20.

108. *Capita physica theologica* 36, PG 150 col. 1145.

the twentieth century has been such a distinctive feature of Eastern Orthodox theology. Just as Palamas countered the influence of Western Thomism by renewing the Greek patristic tradition, so modern Orthodox like Vladimir Lossky and Dumitru Staniloae of Romania have turned to Palamas for an answer to Western humanism and Marxism.¹⁰⁹

According to this way of thinking, the Holy Spirit rests on the Son as His energy. At the Incarnation the human nature of Christ received the Holy Spirit and thereby participated in the uncreated grace of God. This participation is a real one and forms the basis of the transformation of man which in Greek theology is called *θέωσις*, or deification. But at the same time, it is a participation by grace, not by nature, in the divine realities. If the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son at the level of existence, human participation in Him would have to be by nature. But this is not possible. Therefore, either the Holy Spirit is reduced to the level of a creature,¹¹⁰ in whom we can participate as fellow-creatures, or there is no genuine and immediate participation in Him at all. The grace which we receive is a created grace, made by, but not essentially part of, the Holy Spirit.¹¹¹ The combination of procession from the Father and manifestation by the Son is designed to overcome this dilemma. In His procession from the Father the Holy Spirit remains ineffable in the hidden being of God. In His manifestation by the Son He becomes knowable and known as the divine energy at work in the world for the salvation of mankind.

This is expressed by Fr Staniloae as follows:

. . . this lack of interest (in the West) in the

109. See D. Staniloae, 'The Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and his relation to the Son as the basis of our deification and adoption', in *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 174-186.

110. Mark of Ephesus, *Capita Syllogistica* 1.

111. V. Lossky in *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 96.

sending of the Spirit into the world, as uncreated energy, comes from the loss in the West of the doctrine of man's deification and adoption by God. In the West the relations between the divine Persons are seen almost exclusively as an inner-trinitarian question, and thus as a question of speculative theology without consequences in practical life, or in the salvation of man understood as his transformation.

In the East, the trinitarian relations are seen as the basis for the relation of the Trinity to creation and for the salvation of creation. . . . In the West, on the other hand, one avoids drawing from the eternal relation of the Spirit to the Son, the conclusion that the Spirit is sent to men for a work which consists essentially in the deification and adoption of man.¹¹²

The nature of the Holy Spirit's relation to the Son is of particular importance in understanding the doctrine of the Church, and in particular, the sacramental life. Because of the *Filioque*, the Roman Catholic Church is obliged to regard every work of the Spirit as the work of Christ. The consecration of the sacramental elements is therefore no longer a spiritual energizing of bread and wine by the invocation (or *epiclesis*) of the Holy Spirit to use created objects as the vehicle of this uncreated grace. On the contrary, it is a transformation, a genuine transubstantiation of created objects, in what amounts to a reenactment of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary.¹¹³ These objects then become elements of created grace, which is physically infused into the recipient.

112. In *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 178.

113. Modern Roman Catholic theology is at pains to deny a repetition of Christ's sacrifice in the Eucharist, but it still speaks of making the one historical sacrifice 'real in the present'. Cf., e.g., *The Final Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission* (London, 1982) 12-16.

In Roman Catholic theology, as the Orthodox see it, this created grace is an extension of Christ's sacrifice, not its pentecostal fruit. The Church is therefore the Body of Christ whose earthly head is the visible replica or Vicar of Christ Himself, rather than the Kingdom of the Spirit in which all Christians share equally, even though they may hold different offices in the government (economy) of the Kingdom.¹¹⁴

It can thus be seen how Palamite theology, in responding to the Thomistic criticism of Photian monopatristism has managed to further the integration rather than the disintegration of Eastern spirituality, in a way which opposed Western thinking at more than one point. Palamas' own admission that it was possible to speak of a procession 'from the Son' or 'through the Son' at the level of the divine energy allowed the Greek delegates at the Council of Florence in 1439 to agree with the Latin West that the two expressions were in fact identical. The pressing political need for military aid to save Constantinople from the Turks undoubtedly influenced the Emperor John VIII in his determination to procure the signatures of all his delegation.

In the end he obtained all but two - that of the Patriarch Joseph, who prudently died before the negotiations were completed,¹¹⁵ and that of Mark Eugenikus, titular Bishop of Ephesus, who saw through the false compromise, and dedicated what remained of his life to the disruption of the superficial union. Mark understood clearly that the Greeks admitted *Filioque* only at the level of

114. V. Lossky in *Spirit of God* (ed. L. Vischer) 169-194.

115. Not a trivial point. Later opponents of the council were able to argue that the Patriarch had never approved its decisions. On the Council, see J. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, 1961).

energy, whilst the Latins confessed it at the level of hypostatic existence.¹¹⁶ As long as the political need to preserve the Union remained, his views were unsuccessful, but the Fall of Constantinople on 29th May 1453 changed the situation dramatically. The first act of the reconstituted Eastern Church was formally to abandon the Union of Florence, and with it the spurious acceptance of the *Filioque* clause.¹¹⁷

IV THE DIVIDED CHURCH

The repudiation of the Council of Florence by the Eastern Churches effectively set the seal on the division of the Church and closed active discussion of the *Filioque*. When Martin Luther broke with Rome he took little interest in the Greek Church and it was some decades before the Lutherans established effective contact with Constantinople.¹¹⁸ Eventually, however, they did manage to induce the Patriarch Jeremias II to make a response to the *Confessio Augustana*.¹¹⁹ This reply was not encouraging to the Lutherans, but Jeremias did not dwell on the *Filioque*. In his response to Chapter I of the *Confessio* he points out that the Nicene Creed should be the text officially approved by the Ecumenical Councils but his reasons are mainly canonical. He does not denounce the *Filioque* by name, nor does he offer a defence of monopatristism.¹²⁰ The general impression must be that as far as Jeremias was concerned, the issue was not worth a lengthy argument.

Half a century later the Calvinists tried once again to make contact with the East, and they had much greater success. Not the least of their triumphs was the conversion of Cyril Lucaris, Patriarch of Alexandria

116. *Confessio Fidei* 7.

117. On 6th January 1454.

118. For the history of these contacts, see S. Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity* (Cambridge, 1968) 238-258.

119. I. Karmiris, *Τὰ δογματικά καὶ συμβολικά μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας* (Athenai, 1960) Vol. I 444-503. The letter is dated 15th May 1576.

120. *Ibid.* 445.

from 1601 to 1621 and then Patriarch of Constantinople, with interruptions, until his death in 1638.¹²¹ While still at Alexandria he corresponded with leading Calvinists in Holland and accepted their interpretation of the faith to a surprising extent. On the question of the *Filioque*, however, he remained a firm supporter of Palamas and even argued against the Western position in a long letter to Uytenbogaert dated 10th October 1613.¹²² He maintained this position in his *Confession of Faith*, first published in Latin at Geneva in March 1629.¹²³

The evidence we have from then on is sparse and academic in tone; the controversy, though clearly unresolved, is also a thing of the past. Does this mean that the Reformation and the Protestant Churches are indifferent to the issue? Are the Orthodox right in supposing that their quarrel over the *Filioque* is with Rome alone, and that the failure of Protestants to drop the clause when they broke with the Papacy was an oversight and an inconsistency?¹²⁴

Great caution is needed here. Cyril Lucaris may not have been converted to the *Filioque*, but Calvin had no doubts on the matter. Commenting on the traditional proof-text, John 15:26, he writes: '... it is Christ who sends the Spirit, but from the heavenly glory; that we may know that He is not a human gift but a sure pledge of divine grace. From this it is clear how idle

121. S. Runciman, *Eastern Schism* 259-288; G. Hadjiantoniou, *Protestant Patriarch* (Richmond, Virginia, 1961).

122. J. Aymon, *Monuments authentiques de la religion des Grecs et de la fausseté de plusieurs confessions de foi des Chrétiens* (La Haye, 1708) 137-142.

123. S. Runciman, *Eastern Schism*. An abbreviated English translation appeared at London in the same year.

124. Cf. the charge made by Archbishop Stylianos at the Moscow Conference in 1976 (*Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue* [ed. K. Ware and C. Davey] 65).

was the subtlety of the Greeks when, on the basis of these words, they denied that the Spirit proceeds from the Son. For Christ, according to His custom, names the Father here, to raise our eyes to the contemplation of his divinity.¹²⁵

Admittedly Calvin says almost nothing else on this subject, and the *Institutes* are remarkably barren.¹²⁶ What little there is seems to follow Augustine almost word for word. But although Calvin may not have said much about the controversy, it does not follow that he regarded the issue as unimportant. On the contrary, set within the general framework of his theology, the doctrine of the *Filioque* is so obvious and fundamental that it is hardly worth arguing about. Without it there would have been no Evangelical faith at all.

Like Palamas, Calvin also rejects the framework of Thomistic philosophy. God cannot be contemplated as an abstract essence, but only in His existence as three Persons.¹²⁷ Furthermore, Calvin agrees with the Cappadocians in saying that the Persons are hypostases which are distinguished from each other by incommunicable properties.¹²⁸ At this point we expect to be told that the properties are the relations, but Calvin does not say this. In fact he does not say what the properties in themselves are, though he distinguishes them quite plainly from the relations.¹²⁹ It appears in fact that Calvin does not conceive of relation as an objective category of thought. Instead it is the subjective disposition of a hypostasis. This does not mean that it is necessarily voluntary, although that is the prerogative of God's freedom, nor that it is temporal, which in the case of God is an impossibility.

125. Calvin's *New Testament Commentaries*. *The Gospel According To St. John 11-21* (F.T. by T. H. L. Parker) (Edinburgh, 1961) 110.

126. There are two places where he mentions the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son (*Institutes*, I, 13, 18-9; III, 1, 2-3) but on neither occasion does he discuss the *Filioque*, preferring to leave Augustine (*De trinitate* 5) as the final word on the subject.

127. *Institutes*, I, 2,3; 13,2.

128. *Ibid*, I, 13, 6.

129. *Ibid*.

God's relations are eternal, but they are also free. The properties of the hypostases do not circumscribe their relations within the Godhead or without.

Furthermore Calvin understood the relation of a man to God to be possible because of the hypostatic character of human beings. Augustine believed that men were created in the image and likeness of the Trinity, without a special connection with any one of the Persons.¹³⁰ But for Calvin, men are created in the image of the Son, who took on our humanity and died that we might become His brethren and children of the same heavenly Father.¹³¹ Moreover Calvin insisted that in the Son we see the fullness of God, as Paul declares in Colossians 2:9.¹³²

Our relationship with the Son is secured by the Holy Spirit, who is the bond by which Christ effectually binds us to himself.¹³³ In language which might have been borrowed from Palamas, Calvin says that '... by means of him we become partakers of the divine nature, so as in a manner to feel his quickening energy within us.'¹³⁴ What else can this mean but that by the Holy Spirit we share in the uncreated grace of God? At this point Calvin is undoubtedly nearer the Eastern Orthodox than the Thomist understanding of nature and grace, a fact which may well have attracted Lucaris.

Why then did Calvin uphold the *Filioque*? Was this no more than an inconsistency in his thought which would have been removed had he known anything of Palamas and his theology? Calvin's spiritual development parallels that of Palamas in many striking ways, but it takes place on a different level. For Palamas, as for all Greek theology since Origen, the image of God in man was the soul,

130. *Serm.* 52, 17-9; *De trin.* 11, 1.

131. *Institutes*, I, 15, 3; *Comm. in Gen.* I, 26.

132. *Institutes*, I, 15, 3.

133. *Ibid.* III, 1, 1.

134. *Ibid.* I, 13, 14.

an immaterial substance which shared the properties of the divine nature, though in a finite degree. God became man in order to release the soul from the limitations imposed by its finitude and transform the flesh by pouring out the divine energy of the Spirit upon it and making it divine.

Not so with Calvin. Although he does not express himself in these terms, for him the image of God in man was the human hypostasis or person, the reflection of the Person of the Son, implanted in us by a free act of God's grace.¹³⁵ It is true that Calvin did not deny that the image was seated in the soul, but his insistence on its spiritual nature precludes a simple identification of the image with the soul itself. This image was broken by the fall, which removed the relation of obedience which has sustained it. At the Incarnation the Son restored the image by becoming a man, Jesus Christ. However, He did not do this by Himself, but with the aid of the Holy Spirit. As a man, says Calvin, Jesus was both conceived and baptised by the Holy Spirit.¹³⁶

But now a curious fact emerges. Jesus, though filled with the Spirit, does not pray in the Spirit or rely on the Spirit for illumination and comfort. On the contrary, He dispenses the Spirit and indicates that the Spirit will take His place as comforter. It may be possible to believe this within a Palamite framework, but Calvin clearly believed that the energy of the Spirit was known by Christians, not by virtue of being manifested as the energy of Christ, but by virtue of the hypostatic relation which the Holy Spirit has established with believers by His indwelling in them.

Furthermore, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is a special gift from God quite distinct from the work of the Spirit or of the divine energy in creation.¹³⁷

135. *Institutes*, I, 15, 3.

136. Calvin does not deny Photius' interpretation of the Spirit of Christ; indeed he confirms it (*Institutes*, III, 1, 2). But at the same time he integrates it into the theological context of the atonement.

137. *Institutes*, III, 1, 2.

The work of creation is external to the Trinity, but the work of redemption is internal. This is why the unregenerate man can have some knowledge of God even to the extent of acknowledging Him as a personal being, yet remain in ignorance of the Trinity. The work of the Holy Spirit is to remake us in the image of Christ, so that we might enjoy the benefits of Christ's relationship to the Father. We are not being transformed into God by nature, but being raised into the fellowship of the Trinity as persons united with Christ by faith. If the Holy Spirit is the one who makes this possible, it is obvious that he must have the capacity to do so. If He were remaking us in the image of Christ's nature, as Palamas and his followers maintain, it would not be necessary for Him to share in Christ's hypostasis. But according to Calvin He is remaking us in the image of Christ's person, so that we too may be sons of God by adoption. To do this, the Holy Spirit must share in the hypostasis of the Son, and therefore proceed from Him.

From this, the rest of Evangelical faith flows naturally. Why do we confess the Scriptures as the Word of God written and regard them as the voice of Christ? Because the inner witness of the Holy Spirit reveals that it is so.¹³⁸ How can we be sure that we know Christ? Because the Holy Spirit dwelling in us gives us the mind of Christ, so that we may interpret the Scriptures in a spiritually edifying way. How do we receive Christ in the sacraments? Not by the consecration of created elements, but by the confirmation of the Spirit actively binding us to Him. Without a living appreciation of the *Filioque* clause within the context of a personal as opposed to a natural theology, Evangelical faith becomes incomprehensible. When this happens, the temptation

138. In Evangelical Protestant theology, the inspiration of Scripture is a Christological issue (cf. J. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible*, London, 1972). An insistence that those who do not hold to plenary verbal inspiration are heretical is not an aberration. It is completely consistent with a dogmatic affirmation of orthodox Christology, and must be judged in that light.

to retreat into Roman Catholicism becomes strong indeed, and the spiritual tension between the medieval West and the Byzantine East emerges once more. In opting for the East, modern Catholics are trying to make up for something lacking in their own tradition, though in the process they are discovering that they cannot do this and maintain their own tradition intact.

It is the tragedy of modern historical theology that it has not recognised the revolutionary character of Calvin's trinitarianism. Too often it is assumed that Reformed dogmatics left the patristic and medieval doctrinal synthesis intact, changing only the pattern of Church government, the locus of authority and the interpretation of the sacraments. It is not fully appreciated that these changes would not have been possible without a profound shift of emphasis at the level of pure theology. Evangelical Protestants confess the same creeds as Roman Catholics, but the words do not convey the same faith. The belief that a Christian is seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), sharing with Him in the inner life of the Godhead, is the distinctive teaching of Evangelical Christianity. In it the *Filioque* doctrine finds a logical and necessary place. Without pride in our own tradition or prejudice against other forms of Christianity, we must surely proclaim that the experience of a personal relationship with God, sealed by the Spirit in the finished work of the Son from Whom He proceeds, is a deeper and more satisfying faith than any other known to man.

V CONCLUSION

And so to conclude. The *Filioque* dispute did not split the Church because the addition of the clause to the Creed was canonically irregular. When division finally hardened it was because rival and mutually incompatible theologies had been constructed around it. The history of the dispute has many sad and obscure chapters, and the desire of Christians to forgive and forget the uncharities of the past must surely command our sympathy and respect. At the same time, however, it is our duty to share with the Church universal the spiritual life which has been given to us, even though we be less than the least of all saints. The Reformation also brought division to the Church, but it was a division caused by the refusal of large sections of that Church to recognise and respond to its authentic message. Evangelical

Protestants are not wrong in insisting that theirs is a deeper, more vital experience of Christ than that enjoyed by Christians of other traditions. We have not received the grace of God in vain and we must not be ashamed to own the Christ we know as the only Lord and Saviour of men.

In making our confession the part of the Holy Spirit is central. It is He who gives us the life of Christ and who dwells in us as the pledge of our redemption in Him. In confessing the *Filioque* we are neither Thomists nor Byzantines. All the teaching of Palamas is found in Calvin, as is the teaching of Anselm and the Western tradition. Calvin and the Reformed faith which followed him achieved a higher synthesis than the medieval theologians, because they moved from the level of nature to the level of faith, from the concept of incorporation into Christ to the concept of a personal relationship with Him. In so doing, the Reformed tradition has achieved the integration which eluded the medieval controversialists. The reunion of the churches, if it is to come, cannot take place by denying one side of the controversy in favour of the other. The spirituality of the Reformation, we humbly submit, provides the necessary key to the reconciliation required. It is offered here as the way forward both to a resolution of the *Filioque* dispute and to a renewal of Christian spirituality in the Gospel of Christ.