THE ORTHODOX CHURCH CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA

THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

AND

THE DOGMAS

**8**

**PROCESSION**

**OF THE**

**HOLY SPIRIT**

2005

**FR. TADROS Y. MALATY**



OUR PRACTICAL FAITH

God, as lover of man, grants unto us His divine mysteries, not just **for mere pleasure of thought, but the enjoyment of** the practicality of His divine love, and the acknowledge of the divine “Truth” in our actual and future life for our eternal salvation, development and glorification.

The “Word of God” unveils to us oneness of the essence of God, the Truine. The one essence affirms oneness and the internal relation between the three Hypostases. The Father, as the “Cause” or “Being,” eternally generates the Son without separation, because He is His Word, Wisdom and Power; the Spirit eternally proceeds without separation from neither the Father nor from the Son because He is the Spirit of God. The Father is unique only in being the Cause, the Son in Generation and the Spirit in Procession. By this we understand oneness of God with the distinction of the Hypostases without mingling; we find in the Father Divine Fatherhood, we enjoy in the Son Sonship and in the Holy Spirit participation with the Father in His Son.

The Council of Ephesus prohibited addition or removal of any item in the Creed, therefore, the Church of Alexandria rejects the *Filioque* (i.e. “from the Son’) which the West added in the Creed: “proceeds from the Father and the Son” not on scriptural, traditional or theological basis but under the pressure of Charlemagne.

I have indicated these points in my paper presented at the theological dialogue of the International Joint Commission of the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. I quoted some comments from Dr. Emile Maher which we hope to be published in full, and some comments from the inspiration of the dialogue, especially H. G. Anba Bishoy Metropolitan of Damiette and El-Barari, and the Secretary of the Holy Synod, and H. G. Bishop Moussa, Bishop of Youth.

**5**

**PROCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**The** Alexandrian Church was not part of the dispute between the Byzantine and the Western Churches regarding the

“procession of the Holy Spirit” known as the *“Filioque controver­*9’

~y.

**HISTORY OF THE FILIOQUE CONTROVERSY**

The Latin word *“Filioque”* means *“and from the Son.”* This dogmatic formula expresses the double procession of the Holy Spirit, and was added by the Western Church to the Nicene-Con­stantinopolitan Creed immediately after the words, “who proceeds from the Father...”

Although the *“Filioque”* was officially added to the Creed throughout the Western Church only in the eleventh century, its history goes back to the sixth century. It was originated in Spain as a means of strengthening the anti-Arian position of the Spanish Church1. It implied that the Son -equal to the Father- is the source

2

of the Spirit, and in no sense inferior to the Father

The draft of the “anathema3” of the Spanish Council Reccared’s of Toledo *(589* A.D.) states, “Whoever does not believe in the Holy Spirit, or does not believe that He proceeds from the Father and the Son and denies that He is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son, let him be anathema.”

From Spain the addition spread to France and, thence to Germany where it was welcomed by Charlemagne (c. 742-814) and adopted at the semi-Iconoclast Council of Frankfort in A. D.

794. It was writers at Charlemagne’s court who first made the *‘filioque’* into an issue of controversy. The Greeks accuse them of

6

heresy, and the writers of the court accuse the Greeks the same,

*4*

because they recite the Creed in its original form

According to Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople in the ninth century, the *‘flhioque”was* introduced by the Frankish mis­sionaries in Bulgaria, as a weapon of anti-Byzantine propaganda among the nearby Bulgarians, who had recently been converted to Christianity by the Greeks and for whom the Byzantine

*5*

patriarch considered himself directly responsible

*6*

Rome acted as mediator between Germany and Byzantine In A.D. 808 Pope Leo III (A.D. *795-8* 16) wrote a letter to Char­lemagne that, although he himself believed the *‘filioque”* to be doctri nally sound yet he considered it a mistake to temper with the wording of the Creed.

Pope Benedict VIII (A.D. 1012-1024) finally authorized and approved the *“flhioque,”* that made a great schism between the Western and Byzantine Churches.

The last hundred years have brought many fresh contacts between the Eastern and Western Churches that allowed a new dialogue between them. In this new atmosphere, the possibility of reverting to the original wording of the Creed has suggested itself to more than one Western Church. The Old Catholic Chur­ches had begun to make this change in the nineteenth century; the Lambeth conference of 1978 has asked the Churches of the Anglican communion to consider doing the same; other Churches

*.7*

too are exploring the question

**THE ARGUMENTS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**CONCERNING THE REFUSAL OF THE ADDITION OF**

**THE FILIOQUE**

1. The Lord assured us that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father (John *15:26),* therefore, the Orthodox Churches (the

**7**

Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedoniafls) believe in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone. It is not because of Christ’s humility that He did not mention the Spirit’s procession from the Son, as Christ declared in the same verse that He would send Him. As He mentions the sent of the Holy Spirit by Him, why He does not refer to His procession from Him, but from the Father?!

2. The Orthodox Church insists on refusing the addition of the *Filioque* because of the early Church’s experience and teach ing about the Holy Spirit are reflected on her creeds. None of the ancient creeds and liturgies embraced the Filioque notion. The Epistola Apostolorum, the Old Creed of Alexandria, the so-called Egyptian Church Order, the fourth century Alexandrian and Antiochene Creeds, the Creeds of Capadocia etc... All con­nect the Holy Spirit with the Church. Until late in the fifth century, no Gallican Creed or liturgy - including that of Faustus of Riez in his de “Spiritu Sancti” - has any evidence of the *Filioque.* In other words, the universal tradition of the early Church.

The notion of a double procession was first adopted by the Synod of Toledo (477) which appears to have followed Augus­8

tine

The ecumenical councils anathematized any addition to the Church Creed.

3. Regarding the hypostatic existence, the early Fathers as­sure thai~ the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone:

+ The Holy Spirit Himself also, which operates in the proph ets, we assert to be an effluence of God, flowing from Him and

9

returning back again like a beam of the sun

Athenagoras

8

+ **The Holy Ghost is truly Spirit, coming forth from the Father indeed, but not after the manner of** the **Son, for it is not by**

10

**generation but by procession**

St. **Gregory of** Nazianzus

+ **Thus, the characteristic of the Father’s Person cannot be trans­ferred to the Son or to the Spirit. It is** the **characteristic of** the **Father to exist without cause.** This does **not apply to the** Son **and the Spirit, for the Son “went out from** the **Father” John 16:28. The scripture states,** “and the **Spirit** proceeds **from God” and “from the Father” John 15:26...11**

**St. Gregory of Nyssa**

 **12** 13

**St. Athanasius of Alexandria** and **St. Basil clearly state that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father** without **mentioning the Son.**

**4. The addition of the** *Filioque* **is not acceptable theologi cally. During the** *“Fdioque* ***Controversy”*** many **latter** Greek writ **ers were involved in defending the** traditional formula -Nicene­**Constantinoplitan Creed** -: **the Spirit proceeds from the Father. They concentrated on the distinction** between the proces **sion” of the Spirit from the Father alone, and the** eternal **“manifesta­tion” of the Spirit through the Son. Among those** writ **em Pbotius (c.810- c. *895),* Gregory the** Cypriot (13th century), **Gregory** Palamas **(c.1296-1359**) and Mark **of** Epbesus. **Their main argu­ment runs thus: The faculty of** proceeding **of the Holy Spirit is a hypostatic property of the Father and not the** common divine **nature14**, therefore, the double procession from the Father and **the Son means:**

**~A confusion of the** hypostatic properties, the Son shares the **hypostsis of the Father or** stands **for** it. According **to the Joint Orthodox** - **Old Catholic** Theological Commission, LThe **Father is distinct from the other** Persons (Hypostases) inasmuch as **from His nature and from** all eternity **He** begets **the** Son and sends forth

**9**

the Holy Spirit. The Son is distinct from the other Persons inas­much as He is begotten of His Father; the Holy Spirit inas much as He proceeds from the Father. Thus the Father is unbegot ten, without ground (anaitios) and without origin, but at the same time is “the one origin and the one root and spring of the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Basil the Great, hom. 24.4 - PG 31, 609). He alone is their ground (aitiios) who from eternity begets the Son and sends forth the Holy Spirit... The Father, therefore, is without ground (anaitios) and Himself the ground (autoa titios), whereas

15

the Son and the Holy Spirit have their ground in the Father .]

16

\* The Holy Trinity have two causes or two principles . This

17

cannot be reconciled with the divine monarchy of the Father

H. H. Pope Shenouda III says that this dogma makes two

Fathers in the Holy Trinity, for there would be two origins.

\* The Father’s procession of the Holy Spirit is imperfect’8

\* It makes the Son cause and caused at the same time, which

19

is absurd

\* It makes the Father both a direct and indirect cause of the Holy Spirit’s procession. The Father is a direct cause because He begets the Son directly and proceeds the Holy Spirit. He is an indirect cause because He proceeds the Holy Spirit through the

20

Son

\* If the Son has the power of origination, but the Spirit is denied it, He is inferior in power to the Son, which was the insanity of Marcion.

Many contemporary theologians have felt that the *Filioque* subordinates the Spirit to the Son, and thereby depersonalized the Spirit.

10

The addition of the *Filioque* clause has been occurred without the authority of an ecumenical council, as it is declared by the agreed statement issued by the Anglican Orthodox Commission in Moscow, in 1967:

[“21”. The Anglican members therefore, agree that:

a. because the original form of the Creed referred to the origin of the Holy Spirit from the Father;

b. because the *fihioque* clause was introduced into this Creed without the authority of an ecumenical council and without due regard for Catholic assent; and

c. because this Creed constitutes the public confession of faith by the people of God in the Eucharist, the *fihioque* clause

21

should not be included in the Creed ].

6. This dogma causes a great division between the Greeks and the Catholics for many centuries and till to day. It also causes the same thing even among the Catholics themselves.

\* It is worthy to note that the discourse attributed to Be­ssarion, Archbishop of Nicaea, delivered at the Council of

Florence, does not represent the Orthodox point of view, for he was separated from the Orthodox Church and was admitted to the Catholic Church.

ARGUMENTS **OF THE WESTERN CHURCH**

**1. Biblical arguments**

The western Churches tried to support the twofold proces­sion of the Holy Spirit by the following biblical passages:

a. “He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you” John 16:14. According to them, in the Inner-Triniterian relations the one Person (Hypostasis) cannot “take” or “receive” anything from

22

either of the others except by the way of procession . But accord-

11

ing to Photius these words do not mean that the Holy Spirit receives from the Son, but from the Father. Christ did not say,”of Me,” but “of what is Mine;” the first expression implies Him who utters the phrase, while “of what is Mine” reveals another person,

23

united with bonds of kinship to the speaker . The Lord adds, “all things that the Father has are Mine,” so that when the Spirit

24

receives the things that are Mine, He received from the Father

Receiving here does not concern the divine essence but the characteristics of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may be con­formed to the image of the Son (Rom. 8:29).

Moreover, the meaning of “receiving” is not the same as that of “proceeding.”

b. The Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of (His) Son” Gal. 4:6, “the Spirit of Christ” Rom. 8:9 and “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” Phil. 1:19.

St. Paul does not suggest that the Son is the cause of the Holy Spirit’s existence, but simply that the Holy Spirit is consubstantial and invariably of the same nature as the Son. The Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of the Son” because of His homoousion with the Son.

Photius states: [‘The Spirit of His Son”: He certainly could never have phrased it better; for the Spirit has a nature identical to the Son’s and He is of one essence with the Son and pos sesses the same glory, honor, and dominion. Therefore, when he says, “the Spirit of His Son,” Paul is demonstrating the identity of the nature, and in no wise does he imply the cause of procession. He acknowledges the unity of essence, but incontrovertibly does not proclaim that the Son brings forth a consubstantial hypostasis;

*25*

indeed, he does not even hint concerning the origin

Also, Gregory Palamas states, [the Spirit is the “Spirit of Christ” and comes from Him, being breathed and sent and

**12**

manifested by Him, but in His very being and His existence, He is the Spirit of Christ but is not from the Son~].

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of knowledge (Isa. 11:2); the Spirit of love, the Spirit of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7); the Spirit of adoption (Rom. *8:15)* etc... and it is not said that He proceeds from wisdom, understanding, knowledge, love, sound mind, adoption etc...

The Johannine texts on the sending of the Holy Spirit by Jesus

(14:16; 15:26; 16:7):

A distinction between “His sending” and “His procession must be made. The procession from the Father is an eternal ac tion, while sending the Holy Spirit upon the disciples is an action in time, a divine promise that was realized in the Pente cost.

2. Patristic texts:

Some Western theologians support the doctrine of the double procession (ekporeuma) of the Holy Spirit by the follow­ing patristic expressions:

a. “He proceeds from the Father through the Son,” used by

 27 28 .29

Origen , Tertullian , St. Athanasuis and St. Basil~

b. The Council of Florence praised St. Didymus the Blind for his support of the double procession of the Holy Spirit by the following expressions:

“(He) proceeds from the Father and remains divinely in the

31

Son

‘The Holy Spirit is the image of the Son, as the Son is the

 32

image of the Father .“

‘The Spirit of the Son,” “the Spirit of the Logos,” and “the Spirit of the Savior33.”

As the Son is homoosios to the Father~o the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son

13

c. St. Epiphanius uses similar expressions; he says that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son35 and is out of the same substance of the Father and the Son~ He is out of the Father and the Son37. St. Gregory of Nyssa also states that the Spirit proceeds out of the Father and receives out of the

38

Son

d. St. Cyril of Alexandria is usually considered by the Western Churches as one of the most important witnesses of this doctrine[[1]](#footnote-1).He says that the Spirit is poured substantially out of both, that is out of the Father through the Son[[2]](#footnote-2). He is the unvaried image of the Son[[3]](#footnote-3). He derives intrinsically and substantially from the Father in the Son[[4]](#footnote-4).

We give the following arguments:

a. The Fathers do not mean the double procession of the Holy Spirit by the expression: “He proceeds from the Father through the Son.” On the contrary they state sometimes that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. As an example St. Athanasius in

 43 44

his letter to Bishop Serapion and also St. Basil

b. The Council of Florence used the expressions of St. Didymus the Blind, and some Western scholars (like J. Quasten) consider that this father progresses the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, at the same time Quasten himself says that Didymus does not go further than the above mentioned statements, he does not write plainly that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son. Quasten also was in doubt about the accuracy of the Latin translation of the texts of Didymus by St. ~ Another scholar, Stanley M. Burgess, says, [Here Didymus appears to come very close to the Western doctrine of the *filioque...* Whether this is due to Jerome’s translation, or to textual corruption, or actually reflects Didymus’s theological position we cannot determine. Didymus also deals with the mat­ter of procession in Book Two, On the Trinity. He argues that the

14

Second and the Third hypstases (the Son and the Holy Spirit) (beget or) proceed from the First, not as the result of creative energy, but rather because of the nature of God~.]

c. From these texts-around which the battle raised between the Western and Byzantine Churches- the main concern of the Fathers who were mentioned was anti-Arian polemics, i.e., the establishment of Christ’s identity as the eternal and preexisting divine Logos. The *Filioque* was not in their minds; it is not an issue at all[[5]](#footnote-5).

d. The procession of the Holy Spirit through the Son does not designate the hypostasis existence but God’s revelation, that is the perpetual revelation of God’s splendor in the Godhead, and the Spirit’s economic sending through the Son or the gifts of the Spirit[[6]](#footnote-6). St. Basil states that as the Father is seen in the Son, so the Son is seen in the Holy Spirit[[7]](#footnote-7).. St. Gregory of Nyssa also states that the Father cannot be conceived apart from the Son, nor can the Son be apprehended apart from the Spirit, the Son is ever in the Father, and the Holy Spirit is ever with the Son[[8]](#footnote-8).

e. A clear distinction must be drawn between the eternal procession of the Spirit within the Godhead, and His procession (i.e., mission) in the “economy” of our salvation. As the Joint Orthodox - Old Catholic Theological Commission states, [His eternal procession from the Father is here to be distinguished from His temporal revelation and sending into the world, which takes place through the Son. When we understand the procession of the Holy Spirit in the sense of His eternal being and procession without beginning, we confess the procession from the Father alone, and not also from the Son. But when we understand it in the sense of the temporal procession of the Holy Spirit and of his sending into the world, then we confess the procession from the Father through the Son or even from both Father and Son.]

15

f. Concerning the statement of St. Cyril of Alexandria, the Western Churches add the *Filioque* as a principal doctrine which represents a text in their Creed, depending principally on a misunderstanding of the words of one father, used in a way that oppose the Holy Bible, the holy tradition and theology. In fact, St. Cyril as the majority of the Alexandrian Fathers used to speak in theology within the circle of “redemption” and the “Savior.” They speak about the divinity of Christ in a soterioligical way, and they assert the unity of the work between the Son and the Spirit in the view of the economy of salvation. Therefore St. Athanasius says, ‘The Spirit is in the Son as the Son is in the Father[[9]](#footnote-9).” Through the same attitude St. Cyril was speaking about the relationship between the Son and the Spirit to assert that He grants His own Spirit. His texts that were used as hints of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son was speaking about the Spirit as an energy of sanctification[[10]](#footnote-10).

When Theodoret of Cyrus misunderstood the text of Cyril, saying, “if by his expression, Cyril meant to say that the Holy Spirit is consubtantial with the Son and proceeds from the Father, this was a pious assertion that could be accepted; but that, if he meant to say that the Holy Spirit draws His existence from the Son or through the Son, this was ungodly blasphemy that must be rejected53.” St. Cyril was not angry about Theoderet’s criticism; on the contrary he explained his theological position and Theoderet was satisfied as St. Cyril explained that he did not believe in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son.

St. Cyril asserts his teaching concerning the procession, saying, [The Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father, as from a fountain, but the Son sends Him to the creation[[11]](#footnote-11).]

g. Palamas writes, [When you understand that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the two, because it comes essentially from the Father through the Son, you should understand this teaching in this sense: it is the powers and essential ener~es of God which pour out, not the divine hypostasis of the Spirit ].The hyposta sis

**16**

f. Concerning the statement of St. Cyril of Alexandria, the Western Churches add the *Filioque* as a principal doctrine which represents a text in their Creed, depending principally on a misunderstanding of the words of one father, used in a way that oppose the Holy Bible, the holy tradition and theology. In fact, St. Cyril as the majority of the Alexandrian Fathers used to speak in theology within the circle of “redemption” and the “Savior.” They speak about the divinity of Christ in a soterioligical way, and they assert the unity of the work between the Son and the Spirit in the view of the economy of salvation. Therefore St. Athanasius says, ‘The Spirit is in the Son as the Son is in the Father51.” Through the same attitude St. Cyril was speaking about the relationship between the Son and the Spirit to assert that He grants His own Spirit. His texts that were used as hints of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son was speaking about

*52*

the Spirit as an energy of sanctification

When Theodoret of Cyrus misunderstood the text of Cyril, saying, “If by his expression, Cyril meant to say that the Holy Spirit is consubtantial with the Son and proceeds from the Father, this was a pious assertion that could be accepted; but that, if he meant to say that the Holy Spirit draws His existence from the Son or through the Son, this was ungodly blasphemy that must be

*53*

rejected .“ St. Cyril was not angry about Theoderet’s criticism; on the contrary he explained his theological position and Theoderet was satisfied as St. Cyril explained that he did not believe in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son.

g. Palamas writes, [When you understand that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the two, because it comes essentially from the Father through the Son, you should understand this teaching in this sense: it is the powers and essential energies of God which pour out, not the divine hypostasis of the Spirit j.The hyposta sis

**16**

St. Cyril asserts his teaching concerning the procession, saying, [The Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father, as from

*54*

a fountain, but the Son sends Him to the creation

*21. C. Davey:Angilican-Orthodox Dialogue: The Moscow statement Agreec by the Angilican-Ortlzodox Joint Doctrinal Commission, 1967, SPCK 1977, p*

*4-37.*

*22. Cross: Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1985, p.423.*

*23. Photius: De S. Spiritus Mystagogia, 22.*

*24. [bid 29.*

*25. Ibid 51.*

*26. J. Meyendorfft Byzantine Theology p. 92.*

*27. Euseb. 3:6:1-3.*

*28. Adv. Prax. 4.*

*29. Ad. Serapion 3:5.*

*30. De Sp. Sanct. 45.*

*31. De Trinitate 1:31.*

*32. Ibid 2:5.*

*33. Ibid 1:18; 2:6; 3:1.*

*34. Ibid 1:27; 1:19.*

*35. Anor. 7.*

*35. Ibid.*

*37. Ibid 8.*

*38. Adv. Maced. 10.*

*43. Ep. ad Serapion 1:24.*

*44. Ep.38:4.*

*45. Quasten: Patrology, vol. 3, p. 96.*

*46. Stanley M. Burgess: The Spirit and the Church: Antiqui ty, Hendricks Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1984, p. 114.*

*47.*

*48.*

*51.*

**18**

*52.*

*53. Mansi. 5:124 Pg 76:432.*

*54.*

*55. Apodictic Treatise, II, fol. 41 (ed. Constantinople, 1627, p. 63); J. Meyendorffi A Swdy of Palamas, 1964, p. 14.*

*56. Thid fol. 51 (p. 86);*

*57. Lukas Visher: Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, SPCI( 1981, (WCC Faith and Order, Paper No. 103), p. 15.*

FR. TADROS Y. MALATY

19

**QUOTATIONS FROM:**

**A COPTIC ORTHODOX CRITIQUE OF THE FILIOQUE**

**Presented by:**

DR. **EMILE MAHER ISHAK**

**1. THE HISTORY OF THE “FILIOQUE” CONTROVERSY**

*+* The insertion of the *Filioque* in the Creed of Constantin pie is the West’s unilateral decision. Therefore, this interpola tio is uncanonical, i.e, not based upon ecumenical council decisions and hence, according to the wording of Andre’ de Halleux, i reflects “a regrettable ignorance of the conciliar tradition.” Thu the formal and procedural objection to the *Filioque* is a decisiv one all by itself. (Part 1, p.58.)

*+* The theology of interpolation developed by Paulinus o Aquileia in the Synod of Friuli (796 A.D) cannot be accepte Since the Creed had been issued by an ecumenical council, onl another ecumenical council had the right to introduce modific tions or explanations of it. To temper with or to change the Cree in any way could only lead to a charge of heresy, quite apart fro approval by the Pope. (p *58-59.)*

*+* Pope Leo **III** *(795-8* 16 A.D) did not presume coequali with the authority of the council of Fathers, and declared unlawful to insert the Filioque clause to the Symbol of Fait either in singing or writing *(G.B. Howard, the Schism between the Orient and Western Churches, London 1892 p.27)* Consequently he caused th Creed in its original form to be engraved on two silver shiel deposited at the tomb of St. Peter. His firm resolution not t accede to Emperor Charlemagne’s request to include the *Fili que* seems to have preserved the Roman Church for the next t centuries from the liturgical use of the interpolated Creed. (

*59.)*

20

*+* Even if St. Augustine and some other early Latin Fathers expressed the teaching summed up in the *Fiioque,* it remains the expression of a personal and hence provisional theological inves tigation. (p. *59-60.)*

*+* Although the issue of the *Filioque* is a theological one, the development of the controversy has all along been mixed up with temporal policy and embittered by spoliation, rivalry and worldly ambition.

The imposition of the Frankish will in ecclesiastical mat ters and the highhandedness of their insistence on insertion of the *Filioque* into the Creed and retention in spite of Pope Leo’s advice in the ninth century, and its final adoption in Rome by Pope Benedict VIII under pressure from Emperor Henry II in the eleventh century made the issue a stone of stumbling and led to the Schism of *1054* A.D between Rome and Constantinople.

When the Council of Lyons (1274 A.D) gave it the force of law and dogma and furnished the decree with anathema, the Byzan tine legates yielded under pressure of their emperor who desired union for the sake of his throne. The motive of the Latins to have been mainly the assertion of Papal supremacy. But the people in the East never accepted the dogmatic definitions of the Coun cil of Union, in spite of severe pressure from the civil and religious authorities.

And again at the Reunion Council of Florence (1438-9 A.D) the acceptance of the doctrine, though not of the addition, was imposed on the Greeks as a condition of the short lived union and the Western military and financial support to the Greeks against the Turks. However the popular feeling aroused was not less than after the Council of Lyons. And although the Council of Florence tried to establish union with other Oriental Churches { namely the Armenians (1439), the Copts (1442), the Syrians (1444), and certain Chaldeans, and Meronites of Cyprus} all these efforts were in vain { *Oxford Dict. oft/ic Christian Ghurch, 2nd edition, by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, London/N. Y, 1974, Flor ence, touncil of* -“. } *[p. 61-62.]*

21

THE “MORAL’ ASPECT OF THE FILIOQUE

*+* By arrogating this right (of modifications or explanations of the Creed to itself, one part of the Church, Khomiakov says,” was destroying the equality of rights between the various com­munities, and the central importance of unity of spirit and love, on which were based all the concepts of the primitive Christian community.” ‘This pride of the separated Churches...was a crime before God and before Holy Church.” *{Bobrinskoy in Visher: Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, WCC, p139}* p. 64.

*+* [Bobrinskoy then refers to S. Bulgakov who “comments that in the *filioquist* controversy the dogmatic problem had be­come an instrument of domination and of self-defence, so that the *filioque* became the symbol of papal absolutism or, on the other side, that of its negation; that is why, for the Greeks at Florence, the question of the insertion of the *filioque* in the Creed was more important than its dogmatic content.” *{Bobrinskoy in J/ischer, p. 140.}* [p. 64-65]

**2.BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL** AND PATRISTIC EVIDENCE **OF THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**St. Ambrose:** Although Haugh quotes one text which in his view “certainly implies the procession of the Spirit from the Farther and the Son,” yet Kelly is in the opinion that all the texts of St. Ambrose refer to the Spirit’s external mission. (p.1 1)

St. Augustine: St. Augustine, however, “was aware of the distinction between essence and hypostasis (person) in God but he did not, by his own admission, quite understand it. He clearly distinguished between the generation of the Son and the proces sion of the Spirit, but was confused about why the Spirit who is also derived from the Father is not another ‘Son’ because Augus tine thought that the manner of generation and the manner of procession might possibly be rationally explained (although he in the end admitted that he was himself unable to do it)... Thus, while

**22**

affirming throughout his work the unity as well as the individuality of the persons of the Trinity, Augustine neverthe less unsuspect­ingly confuses their individual properties accord ing to the ter­minology of the second Council”

Hanson also says, “I do not think that Augustine was wise in suggesting that the Son and the Spirit derive from the substance or essentia of the Trinity and not from the Father’s hypostasis. In Augustine’s theology the theory did not produce happy results.” (p. 15, 16)

**Mark of Ephesus:** On the other hand, certain Fathers, says Mark, have suggested by the formula ‘through the Son’ “not the Holy Spirit’s origin, but his procession which is simultaneous with the begetting of the Son from the Father. Therefore ‘through’ here means not ‘from’ but ‘with’ or ‘together’ as Gregory of Nyssa makes clear.” (p.29)

Photius: Photius also, following suit to other fathers, inter­prets the patristic formula ‘through the Son’ on the grounds of ‘economia’ and not ‘theologia.’ For he distinguishes between the essence and the energies of God, but he restricts these energies to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. By opposing the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father (alone) to the Spirit’s temporal mission from the Son, he had accepted the procession of the Holy Spirit through the Son as a consequence of the economy of Incarnation. (p. 29)

**St. Athanasius:** In the authentic works of St. Athanasius,”he nowhere states explicitly that the Holy Spirit proceeds Divinity rather than the origin of the Holy Spirit, so he stresses the inseparability of the Spirit from the Son.

In the Athanasian teaching, says Shapland,”the Spirit de rives His existence from the Father and receives His mission from the Son; and the former relationship is manifested in and appre

**23**

hended from that latter”. God the Father is the unique princi~ and source. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, althou~ he belongs to the Son and is given to mankind by the Son. T Holy Spirit is neither the Son of God nor the Son of the Son. TL notion is very important. It means that there is no passive derN tion neither from the Father nor from the Son. “Since the Son the Wisdom, the Truth, and the Power of the Father, and sin the Spirit of the Son, He is therefore the Spirit of Wisdom, Tru and Power. The Holy Spirit is therefore the Image of the Son. Bi and quite importantly, if the Holy Spirit is the Image of the Sc the Son is *the Image of the Father, and* therefore the Father the prototype of both. The Son abides in the Spirit. The I-Ic Spirit is the perfect, holy, illuminating Energy and Gift of the Sc This Energy proceeds from the Father but it shines from, is se by, and is given from the Son, who is from the Father....” (p. *2*

32)

St. Didymus **the Blind:** In his *Trinitate* which is extant in **t** original Greek, Didymus speaks of the Spirit who proceeds fr the Father and, of course, remains in the Son. The proces sion the Spirit is strictly parallel to the generation of the Son.

Second and Third Persons derive their essence from the Fath In this work, Didymus teaches the common Greek patristic vi of the procession of the Holy Spirit through the Son. (p.33)

St. Cyril of Alexandria: G. Barady rejects the view which 1 St. Cyril with those who support the double procession. He prepai”~d to admit that for Cyril the Son possesses the Spin proper, that the Spirit is of Him, and substantially in Him, **t** He is substantially of the Father and the Son, essentially of and the other... But he does not think that St. Cyril taught that Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. He wo presumably interpret the much-quoted texts in the sense of “economy” not the immanent life of the Trinity.

**24**

Haugh also studied this point in depth and says, “two prob lems chiefly concern Cyril, (1) the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and (2) the Spirit’s belonging by nature to the Son of God... Cyril insists that the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with both the Father and the Son...”.

‘There are many texts which show that Cyril did not believe that the Spirit derived his very existence from the Son. The problem is that Cyril unites his teaching with the essence of God...etc. Another problem is that Cyril often speaks of the procession (using several Greek words for procession) of the Spirit without clarifying whether it is an eternal procession or a temporal mission.” (p.36, 38)

**John** of Damascus: The following are the main lines of his teaching concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit:

1. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father as the beginning *(arche),* the cause *(aitia),* the source of the Godhead. *(De Recta Sentenita, 1.)*

2. He is not from the Son in this sense, although He is the Spirit of the Son. *(De Fide Orthodoxa, i, 8.)*

3. Yet He proceeds from the Father through the Son ‘The

Spirit is the Spirit of the Father... but He is also the Spirit of the

Son, not because He proceeds from Him, but because He

proceeds through Him from the Father, for there is only one

Cause, the Father.” *(Ibid i, 12.)*

4.Further, the Spirit proceeding from the Father rests in the Son as the power radiating from Him, and is the image of the Son as the Son is the image of the Father, and the agent by whom the Son impresses His own image on man. *(Ibid i, 1, 7, 12, 13.)*

*5.* The Holy Spirit “links the Unbegotten with the Begotten and through the Son is united with the Father.” *(i, 13.)*

(p. 43, 44)

**25**

***COMMENTS ON THE PAPER OF***

**FR. JOHN F. LONG**

**THE FILIOQUE IN THE SYMBOL OF NICENE** -

**CONSTANTINOPLE**

**H.G.** Metropolitan Bishay, H.G. Bishop Moses, and I have our comments on the above-mentioned paper.

*1. FROM MY FART I HAVE THE FOLLOWING COM­*

*MENTS:*

a. Fr. Long stresses that the varieties of the formulae of the creeds that were used in liturgical worship in the East and West vindicated the addition of the *Filioque.* In fact, these varieties confirm the falsification of the *Fiioque.* We ask why we never find any mention of it in even one creed among those used in different traditions and cultures through the first five centuries.

Fr. Long replied that Christians did not face the problem of Arian communities like that of the Spanish. Rome used the *Fiioque* to confirm the equality of the Son and the Father.

We say that Alexandria was the pioneering leader in refuting arianism all over the world, but Alexandria never used the *Filio­que.* Secondly, the *Filioque* cannot serve the Church on refuting Arianism. - As Hanson says, the Arians had their own kind of *Filioque* as they believed that the Holy Spirit is in subordination to the Son...

b. Rome, or Leo **III,** refused to chant the Creed in the mass to solve the problem occurred between the Frankish monks and those of Jerusalem. I ask why after 200 years Rome accepted the *Filioque* officially and thus it made a separation between Rome and the Greeks, between herself and all other apostolic and Orthodox Churches?

**26**

means just “cause”. Now do you guarantee that the people who are not professors in Language will not be in confusion when they recite the Creed, and think that the Son also is the Primal cause?!

This does not mean that we accept that there are two causes in the Holy Trinity, one is primal and the other not primal.

**28**

***INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION OF DIALOGUE***

***BETWEEN***

***THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH***

***AND THE***

***CATHOLIC CHURCH***

***ST. BISHOYMONASTERYAPRJL*** *24-2~* ***1990***

Questions concerning Father Andre de Halleux’s Paper:

I - In relation to the phrase on page 11 article 16, which states:

‘The participation of the Son in the Communication of the divine substance to the Spirit”.

We put the following Questions:

a) If we accept the idea expressed in that statement, can we explain the separation that might result between the Father and the Holy Spirit?; the direct link between them would be obviously imperfect!

b) Is that idea also not contradicting with the Catholic con­cept that the Holy Spirit is the bond between the Father and the Son in the Holy Trinity?

How can the Son communicate what is supposed to be the bond between Himself and the Father from the origin (the Father) to the Holy Spirit (the bond itself)?

c) If the Holy Spirit according to the Catholic concept, is the love in the Holy Trinity that links the Father to the Son eternally, can the hypostasis of the Son communicate the physis and essence to the Hypostasis of love, who is responsible to link them together?

**29**

How can we say that the Father and the Son love each ot eternally, if the Son is requested to communicate this love to t Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of love in itself?

In other words, according to that idea, the Son is request to love eternally the Father by the Holy Spirit, and at the sa time, to communicate this love to the Holy Spirit by whom can love the Father eternally? How can we explain this contrad tion?

Where was the eternal love between the Father and the S if the same love needs to be communicated?

II. In relation to the phrase on page 7- Article 10 stati “(According to Photius) All that the New Testament and t Fathers say about the Spirit of the Son hold only for economy salvation, and does not apply at all to the inter-divine proces si Such a radical separation of the *“economia”* from *“theologia”* hardly compatible with the conviction of the ~Bible and t Fathers. They believe that, even if God reveals himself wi sovereign and unfathomable liberty, he does not reveal hims as other than he is, and hence the gift of the Holy Spirit throu the Son through the economy of Salvation reflects norma something of their interdivine relation”.

If we are going to follow the same nile, what will our beli be in the begetting of the Son from the Father eternally in vi of his birth for our salvation from Virgin Mary by the Holy Spi in the act of incarnation?

Can we say - according to that rule - that the only begott

Son is born from the Father and the Holy Spirit, or from t

Father through the Holy Spirit, or from the Father by the Ho

Spirit?

We have to be faithful to our belief in the Holy Trinity declared by God Himself in the Bible and not to destroy o

30

understanding of what is eternal and divine by putting human assumptions to describe according to it, the Holy Trinity and its inter-relations according.

*(H. C. Metropolitan Bishoy)*

A sketchy answer from Fr. de Halleux

to his grace Anba Bishoy’s questions

I. The first question is concerned with the difficulty of finding a logical coherence between the two models:

(a) communication of the divine essence through the Son, i.e.

Father - Son - Holy Spirit, and

(b) the Holy Spirit as the bond of love between Father and Son, i.e.,

Father H oly Spirit

Son

The first scheme responds to an old patristic idea, which was then corrected with the notion of consubstantiality:

no Subordination of a Person under another, but only an “order” *(taxis).*

The second model comes out of the experience of the liturgi cal prayer and spirituality of the Latin Church. (See also Epiph anius, or Gregory Palamas.)

For both those models, God’s absolute and infinite simplici ty forbids any idea of an ontological priority or chronological anteriority. Thus, a priori, the two models cannot be contradic tory.

31

But can we also find some kind of an analogy, albeit impe fect, which could help our human mind to get a glimpse into **t** mystery of Trinity?

Such an image was used by St. Gregory of Nazianzus. It is **t** image of the family, the Father responding to the man, the So to the woman, and the Holy Spirit to the child. The Father by the Son, and the Son answers to this love by his own love to th Father, in the same way as in the mutual love between husban and wife. And together, they make their common love fruitful, to say, in the Holy Spirit, as husband and wife in their child, wh is like the bond of their common love made a person.

II. The second question is concerned with the difficulty finding a logical coherence between the two models:

(a) in the so-called “immanent Trinity,” the Holy Spi’ proceeds from (the Father and) the Son, i.e.

Son - Holy Spirit, and

(b) in the so-called “economical Trinity,” the Son was bo from (the holy Virgin Mary and) the Holy Spirit, i.e.

Holy Spirit - Son.

But it must be observed that there are two different ques tioli involved here.

Of course, we speak about the two births of the Son: the firs one before all ages, in the “immanent Trinity”, ? and the seconi one “in these last days,” as the Incarnate Logos of God.

Nevertheless, at the eternal birth, the Father causes th existence of the eternal hypostasis of the Son, whereas in tb second birth, the Holy Spirit makes this same hypostasis becom human without ceasing to be the eternal Son of God.

**32**

Thus the incarnational model, i.e., Holy Spirit - Son does not apply to the hypostatic being of the Son as such.

Here, the Holy Spirit rather causes the hypostatic union of the human flesh and soul born out of the holy Virgin with the nature and hypostasis of the Logos, the Son of God.

So, in this case, there must be no inference from the *~~economy”* into the *“theology.”* Could we, however find also here, some analogy, even if not received as a dogma of the Church? Perhaps, because some Fathers developed the idea of a pre-tem­poral unction of the Son by the Holy Spirit.

 Anba Bishoy Monastery *A. de Halleux*

April 26, 1990

**33**

*CONCERNING THE TOPIC OF PROCESSION*

1. Our Catholic brothers see that there is no “dual procession of the Holy Spirit,” but it is one single process issued by the Father as the Primary Cause, and the Son participates in it being a mere Cause...and that that participation of the Son is an affirmation of non-separation of the Son from the Father.

H.G. Metropolitan Bishoy responded that duality is clear. As regards affirmation of non-separation, this is not realized through a hypostatic property, which is unique to the Father being the Cause, but is realized strongly through the oneness of the essence.

Moreover, if there is a need for the participation of the Son in the procession to realize unity between the Father and the Son, why then is there no participation of the Holy Spirit in the ~generation of the Son to realize unity between the Father and the Holy Spirit?

2. Some Catholic theologians depend in this doctrine on existence of mysterious order: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, although there is neither ontological nor chronological priority before or after among the hypostases. The response is:

a) This order was said about Baptism, because the act of salvation is realized through the Father who offers His Son be Sacrifice of Love (John 3:16), and this has been realized by the Incarnate Son by the cross, then the Holy Spirit came to grant us salvation as an act of the Holy Trinity... this is an order that is related to the *“economia,”and* not an order related to *“theologia”* and eternal relations between the hypostases.

b) St. Paul the Apostle uses a different order in the Apos tolic blessing (2 Cor 13:14), and our Lord Jesus Christ uses another order in John 14:26.. “But Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name...” (the Holy Spirit, the

**34**

Son and the Father] and another different order is found in Luke 1:35 tThe Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and power of Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that Holy one who shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”. [the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son]

3. Some justify the use of *“Filioque”* by the West by saying that the East defended the divinity of the Holy Spirit against Eunomius and the Macedonians and refer it to the Father, while the West defend the divinity of the Son in Spain against the Arianism, therefore they wanted to point out the reality of equality of the Son to the Father *[Father Iskander Wadie: A reconciliato~y attempt* - *topic of procession of the Holy Spirit]*

The response is that the East defended divinity of the Sort before the West because Arianism appeared in Egypt and wa refuted by the Fathers of Alexandria, especially St. Athanasius, and despite this, they did not use the formula of *“Filioque.”* On the other hand, in their defense of divinity of the Holy Spirit and His equality to the Father and the Son, they did not mention that He is the Cause of the generation with the Father.

4. Fr. Iskander (Catholic) says that all the Fathers of the Council of Constantinople believe in the Filioque.

H. H Pope Shenouda III says that the Catholic Church uses some quotations from some fathers who were present in the Coun cii; if they believed in the Filioque why they did not admit it to the Creed?

H. H. Pope Shenouda III also says:

“What is the benefit of this doctrine that causes the great schism between the Byzantine and Western Churches. If the Son is the Wisdom of God and Holy Spirit is the Life of God; How can the Life proceeds from the Wisdom?

35

1. *Cross: Dict. of the Christian Church, p. 423.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Thassaurus PG 48:148 A.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Ibid 33:336 A.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Ibid 34:340 A* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *J. Meyendorfft Byzantine Theology p. 93.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit by Saint Photius, translated by Holy Transfiguration Monastery, p.1] ff.* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *De Sp. Sanct., 64.* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Adv. Maced., 12.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Ad Serapion, 3:4.* [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Paul Evdokimov: L’Espirit Saint Dans La Tradition Orthodoxe, Paris 1969, ch. 6, article 2.* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *PG 77:316 D.* [↑](#footnote-ref-11)