

Summary Notes by T.A. Noble from:

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**Foreword**

Based on Warfield Lectures at Princeton in 1981.

I have tried to let the patristic theologians (Greek) speak for themselves. It has been my principal concern to bring to light the inner theological connections which give coherent structure to the classical theology of the ancient Catholic Church, particularly as it was brought to formulation during the fourth century. Significant differences between the Athanasian and Cappadocian traditions, but the general consensus reached at the Council of Constantinople (381) provided the Church in East and West with its one authentically ecumenical Confession of Faith.

The basic decision taken at Nicaea made it clear that the eternal relation between the Father and the Son in the Godhead was regarded as the supreme truth upon which everything else in the Gospel depends.

Following the Council of Nicaea, it became clear through further controversy that the reality of the full humanity of Christ must be stressed as much as the reality of his Deity. The *vicarious humanity* of Christ thus became integral to the doctrine of the 'atoning exchange' effected by him between God and man.

Stress must also be laid on the teaching of the New Testament that it is only through the communion of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son that we may share in the saving regenerating and sanctifying work in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ... But if the Spirit is not fully and perfectly divine, our participation in Christ has no divine efficacy and is empty of saving reality. If the Spirit of the Father and the Son is not divine, then even their Deity is called into question and with it the validity of our baptism into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

It became indubitably clear to the Church in the fourth century that it is only when the Gospel is understood in this fully trinitarian way that we can really appreciate the New Testament teaching about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and appreciate the essential nature of salvation, prayer and worship. In the Gospel, God has revealed himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in such a way that we know that what he is eternally in himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit he is toward us. His one activity was *from the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit* in God-manward relations, and *in the Spirit, through the Son and to the Father* in man-Godward relations. All this would fall apart if the divine nature of the Son and Spirit were called into question.

A guide to the content of the chapters.

## 1. FAITH AND GODLINESS

**Thus believes the Catholic Church: ‘We believe...’**

Unique place of the Council of Nicaea (325 AD): normative. It secured the apostolic and catholic faith against disrupting distortions of the Gospel.

Comments from Gregory of Nazianzus and from Athanasius on its significance.

An outstanding mark of the Nicene approach was the association of faith with ‘piety’ (*eusebeia*) – a mode of worship, behaviour and thought in which worship and faith, godliness and theology, went inseparably together.

**We believe:** the primacy of faith understood not as subjectively grounded (*epinoia*), but objectively grounded (*dianoia*) in the reality (*hypostasis*) of God’s own being as made known to us in Jesus Christ (19).

Through faith our minds are in contact with the inherent intelligibility of things known *kata physin* (in accordance with their nature). Faith was cognitive, conceptual, involving acts of recognition, apprehension and conception. It reposed upon ‘truth’ (*alētheia* = objective reality). (20)

Double force of ‘We believe’ (22):

- (a) exclusiveness
  
- (b) open range (24): apprehending and comprehending (26)
  - The use of a non-biblical term.
  - Heuristic affirmations (27)

‘Godliness’ (*eusēbeia* or *theosēbeia*) (28)

The ‘deposit of faith’ (*parathēkē*) as understood by:

- (a) Irenaeus (31) – concrete embodied form of truth in the Church
  
- (b) Origen
  - Dualist framework of thought (35)
  
  - Knowing God in a way appropriate to his revealed nature: the Scriptures (38)

*Lex orandi, lex credendi* (41)

Hilary (43)

The matrix for the theological intuition and godly judgment was the Church (45).

## **2. ACCESS TO THE FATHER**

**...in One God the Father Almighty...**

Radical Dualism

*Access to the Father:*

Athanasius (49): Knowing God from his Son and calling him Father, rather than knowing him from his works and calling him Unoriginate. We must approach God as Father through the Son.

Why we cannot speak of God in empty negative conceptions.

Scientific knowledge is knowing something *kata physin*

1. Point of access (52) – the Incarnation
2. God exceeds our knowing of him (53) – apprehending / comprehending

Therefore piety and precision belong together (54)  
Irenaeus: only through God may God be known (54)

The role of the *humanity* of Jesus in our knowledge of God (55)

The role of the Spirit in our knowledge of God (56f.)

The use of the Bible in knowledge of God (57f)

‘All Nicene theology was built upon the worshipping Church through biblical interpretation and meditation’ (58).

The particular significance of Matt. 11:27 // Luke 10:22

Christocentrism and Theocentrism are coincident (59f.)

The *vicarious humanity* of Christ (62)

Trinity (63f.)

### **(1) The Contrast with Judaism**

Nicene doctrine Hebraic: the Face and Word of God. Eph. 2:18

Utter transcendence of God in Judaism.

Christian faith: a real conceptual grasp of God in his own internal relations.

### **(2) The Contrast with Hellenism**

Harnack on Athanasius

*Image (eikon)*

*Word (logos)*

*Activity (energeia)*

Very different from what they meant in Platonist, Aristotelian or Stoic thought

### **3. THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR ...Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible**

Our understanding of the Creator taken from the Son (76f.)

'Father' understood in a twofold way (78-84)

Father = Godhead, and as such, Source (*arche*) of all that is (See Hilary, p. 81f. )

Father (*aitios*) of the Son (the Son as the created *arche*)

#### **(1) God was not always Creator**

Father and Maker: always Father but not always Maker (*contra* Origen and Arius)

Creation by the *will* of God, i.e. out of nothing – baffling!

Time relations not to be read back into God (87f)

Creation and Incarnation decisive acts of God's will – new to God! (88f.)

#### **(2) God does not will to exist for himself alone**

God 'always was' must not be understood in a time-related way (89)

No necessary relation between God and the cosmos (90)

Christocentric doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* (91)

But not an arbitrary relation either (92): not accidentally, but freely

The universe as a 'temporal analogue of the Holy Trinity' (93)

The *raison d'être* of the universe that God wills not to be without us.

#### **(3) The universe was created by God out of nothing**

Development of doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*: Genesis, Maccabees, The Shepherd, etc.

Fourth century confusion between the eternal generation of the Son and the creation (97)

##### **(a) The contingency of creation**

Created 'out of nothing' means 'not out of anything'

Created things neither necessary nor accidental (by chance), but 'what happened'

Contingence a difficult concept (100): free, distinct from God; its own reality

An independence which is dependent upon God

In the Incarnation, God united a precarious world to himself.

##### **(b) The intelligibility of the creation**

Contingent intelligibility – an even more difficult concept. Created *logoi*.

So Athanasius had to reject the idea of divine *logos* as an immanent cosmological principle

Time and space created along with the universe: relational concepts of time and space

##### **(c) The freedom of the creation**

Contingent freedom of the universe dependent upon God's freedom

Unique interlocking of the concepts of dependence and independence in the notion of contingency

A double contingency: (a) God need not have created the universe at all

(b) the universe might have been other than it actually is (105 & 109)

Contrast the ancient idea of the world a necessary (hence implacable destiny)

This concept of the freedom of the world arose from the Gospel of redemption (106)

A limited freedom (107): correlated to the unlimited freedom of God

Owing to its contingent relation to God, there are inexhaustible possibilities in the created universe

John Philoponos

Contingency and constancy; flexibility and reliability

### **4. GOD OF GOD, LIGHT OF LIGHT And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all ages, Light from**

**Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father, through whom all things were made**

The relationship between the Father and the Son (110)

Dualism of sensible and intelligible realms – led to ‘Ebionite’ and ‘Docetic’ types of Christology (111)

‘Ebionite’ types ‘from below’, ‘Docetic’ types ‘from above’ (111-113)

The fundamental datum of the Gospel: the undivided wholeness of the divine-human reality of Christ as God become man (114-115)

The decisive issue for saving faith was the nature of the relation between Jesus Christ the incarnate Son and God the Father: one and the same being – the *homoousion*. Crucial point: how we are to understand the Biblical expressions, *by, from or of God?* Was he Son of the Father by an act of will or grace, or was he *from the being (ek tēs ousias)* of the Father, from his essential reality and nature, so that the Father-Son relationship falls *within* the one being of God, so that they inhere and coexist eternally, so that there is perfect and eternal mutuality between them? (116-119)

Analogies unsatisfactory, yet employed by divine revelation: the Biblical paradigm of light (*phōs*) and radiance (*apaugasma*). As the light is never without its radiance, so that the Father is never without his Son or Word. Christ is the true and natural Son of the Father, proper to his being (*idios tēs ousias autou*), himself true God of one being (*homoousios*) with the Father (120f.).

*Homoousios* and *homoiousios* (122f). *Homoousios* expresses the identity of being: it is the self-same God who is revealed to us as the Son and the Father. *Homoousios* also expresses the distinction between the Father and the Son: a bulwark against both Arianism and Sabellianism (124f.).

**(1) The hermeneutical significance of the *homoousion***

Constant interplay between the canon of truth (the deposit of faith) and the canon of Holy Scripture.

By clarifying the inner structure of the Gospel through subordinating its mind to the meaning (*dianoia*) of the Holy Scriptures...and by giving that structure authoritative expression in the creed, the Nicene Council established the primacy of the Holy Scriptures in the mind of the Catholic Church. The *homoousion* was an exegetical and clarificatory expression, shaped within the believing worship of the Church, and forged under the impact of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ, to help the Church grasp the meaning (*dianoia*) and truth (*alētheia*) of Biblical images - statements and conceptions (128).

Terms to be understood in the light of realities. *Ousia, hypostasis, logos, energeia* underwent a radical change in this new hermeneutical context (130)

The *homoousios tō Patri* was revolutionary (130). It expressed the fact that

**what God is towards us in the Word made flesh he really is in himself, in the internal relations of his transcendent being.**

*Ousia* and *hypostasis* modified, *ousia* to have an ‘inward reference’ to inward reality, *hypostasis* to have an ‘outward reference’ to objective otherness. They are both given a personal meaning which they did not have in classical Greek. The being (*ousia*) of God is understood in a very un-Greek way as not mute or static, but eloquent and dynamic – ‘speaking being’. His very being is ‘Word’.

## (2) **The evangelical significance of the *homoousion***

Not metaphysical debates at Nicaea, but debates about the integrity of the Gospel.

What would be implied if there were no oneness in *being* between the incarnate Son and the Father? (133) God would remain unknowable and we would only have *mythologia*, human self-understanding projected on to God (133f). There would be no ontological or epistemological connection between the love of Jesus and the love of God. A dark unknown God behind the back of Jesus (135).

What would be implied if there were no oneness in *act* between the incarnate Son and the Father? (137) Then he would not embody for us the saving grace of God, the actions of Jesus are cut off from the actions of God, and the bottom falls out of the Gospel. *Theōsis* (139). Nicene theology rejected the idea that grace is a created medium between God and man (140). Rather grace is the self-giving of God to us in his incarnate Son in whom the Gift and the Giver are indivisibly one. Grace is not a detachable and transferable divine quality which may inhere in or be possessed by the human being to whom it is given in virtue of which he is somehow 'deified' (140).

Unless there is unbroken unity between the Son and the Father, the saving essence goes out of the Gospel. How could the great reconciling exchange take place unless it was *God himself* who came in Jesus Christ to make our nature, sin and death his own in order to save us? Atoning reconciliation in the ontological depths of our creaturely existence. 'God crucified' (Nazianzen)!

The *homoousion* as an irreversible insight into the truth of the Gospel (144).

## 5. **THE INCARNATE SAVIOUR**

Fully, completely and entirely *man* as well as *God*: *soteriological* concern.  
The mediation of Christ involved a twofold movement, from God to man and from man to God (149).

### 1. **The Incarnation**

The whole man: not a created intermediary: God comes *as man* and acts *as man* (*contra* Apollinaris).  
 His humanity not merely instrumental: *vicarious* humanity: the human *agency* of the incarnate Son.  
 Athanasius: the whole life of Christ a continuous vicarious sacrifice and oblation.  
 The form of a servant: utter self-abasement and humiliation: actual form of existence ‘from the lump of Adam’ (Basil). *Kenosis* – self-abnegating love.  
 Texts used by the Arians to indicate creatureliness, human weakness, mortality of Christ taken up by Athanasius to show that it was deliberately in this servile condition that the Son of God came amongst us.

## 2. The Atonement

Atoning mediation and redemption *within* his own being and life. In complete somatic solidarity he acted instead of all (*anti panton*) and on behalf of all (*hyper panton*).  
 Decried as a theory of ‘physical redemption’. Athanasius: ‘He became man that we might become divine.’ But a serious misrepresentation to miss the point that Christ acts *personally* on our behalf: ‘recapitulation’, ‘economy’. Irenaeus: He is ‘Salvation and Saviour and Saving Act.’  
 Athanasius: the *personal* and the *ontological*: he made our death and penalty his own in order to destroy sin and hell. Profound interlocking of creation and redemption, of incarnation and atonement.

Basic issues:

(1) Dualist thinking tears this unitary approach apart. If Jesus Christ were not God Incarnate, he would be no more than a created and temporal centre ontologically external to God. The atoning sacrifice could only be understood as some kind of superficial socio-moral or judicial transaction between God and mankind. ‘Theories’ of the atonement. But it is not merely done *ab extra* upon man, but *ab intra*. The atoning reconciliation took place *within* the personal being of Jesus Christ. It is worked out ‘*in the Logos himself*.’

(2) Christ has substituted himself for us in making our sin and death his own that we may partake in his divine life and righteousness (161f.). The concrete likeness of sinful flesh. Adamic humanity: our perverted, corrupt, degenerate, diseased human nature enslaved to sin; but he was not contaminated. Quotations from Hilary and Gregory Nyssen (160).  
 Included the redeeming and sanctifying in Christ of the mind and affections of the ‘inward man’ (163)  
 Quotations from Origen, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa. Emphasis on the redemption of the human mind where sin is entrenched (164).  
 Two important implications: first, recovery of true knowledge; secondly, this takes place through the incarnate life. He shared all our experiences, sanctifying each stage of human life. Hebrews.

(3) Representation and substitution. Pattern disappears when torn out of unifying ground in his assumption of sinful humanity and interpreted through dualist thinking as merely external relations. Ransom (*lytron*) and redemption (*apolytrōsis*) to be understood from OT: *padah*, *kipper* and *go’el* (169f.). A rich complex: none of these should be isolated (174). Athanasius: the dramatic, the priestly and the ontological held together (175f.). Cyril of Alexandria (176). Gregory Nazianzen (177). Gregory Nyssen.

(4) The ‘wonderful exchange’ (*antagalē, katallagē* – 179f.): incarnational redemption through the descent and ascent.

- (a) Boundless significance: universal atonement (181)
- (b) The redemption of suffering (184)
- (c) *Theopoēsis* (188): still human; the reception of the Holy Spirit (188f.)

## 6. THE ETERNAL SPIRIT

*Qadosh. Ruach*: The ‘Holy’ ‘Spirit’ on the OT is clearly God himself.

### I

Trinitarian frame: the *one name*: God is Spirit: *Spirit* is the specific nature of God’s eternal being (*ousia*)  
 Athanasius: Christ is the *eidos* of the Godhead

The Spirit is the *eidos* of the Son – imagelessly  
The *homoousion* of the Spirit: denial of the deity of the Spirit divides the Holy Trinity  
and undermines holy baptism (196)

Mt. 28:19      Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
II Cor. 13:14    Christ, God, the Holy Spirit  
I Cor. 12:4-6    Spirit, Lord, God  
Other triadic texts

Athanasius: the Spirit known from the Son (200)  
The *self*-giving of God (201)

## II

### (1) God is Spirit and the Holy Spirit is God

‘God is Spirit’: ‘Spirit’ = Deity  
Incomparable – no creaturely or material images (207)

The Spirit known from his unique *internal* relation to the Father (208)  
The objectivity of the Spirit

The Giver and the Gift

Didymus’ rejection of the divine ‘energies’ (210)  
The *Trisagion*

Two implications (211):

- (i)      The Holy Spirit guards the ultimate mystery and ineffability of God
- (ii)     He is also the pledge that while God is ineffable, he is intelligible

### (2) The Holy Spirit is distinctively personal reality along with and inseparable from the Father and the Son

The *Tropici*: the Holy Spirit an impersonal creaturely force from God (216)  
*Treis hypostaseis, mia ousia*

Basil: the Holy Spirit has real personal subsistence in God (218)  
*Tropos hyparxeōs* (219)

Epiphanius: The *homoousios* implies distinction of Persons (220)

The whole undivided Trinity is the *Monarchia* (223)

Each Person is wholly and perfectly God (224)

Cyril of Jerusalem: The Holy Spirit perfects rational beings – the ‘perfecting cause’ (228f.)

We are each *persona personata* : he is *persona personans* (230)

### (3) The Procession of the Holy Spirit

Hesitancy of Basil and Cyril of Jerusalem on the *homoousios* of the Spirit and the open declaration of deity

Gregory Nazianzen: *Homoousios!* He is God! (232)

Coinherent relations between the Holy Spirit and the Son.

Nazianzen: The Holy Spirit intermediate between the Father and the Son (cf. Augustine: the mutual love) (234)

Issue of the Procession of the Spirit (235)

Athanasius considered it irreverent to ask how the Spirit proceeded from God.

But he implied that he proceeded from the being (*ousia*) of the Father, not from the *hypostasis* (236)

Cappadocians: generic concept of *ousia*. Attempted to secure unity by single *arche* (Principle) or *aitia* (Cause) of the Father. Better if the Cappadocians had paid less attention to the concept of causality.

Problem whether the Son and Spirit come from the *Person* of the Father. Gregory Nyssen: the Son and Spirit derive not their Deity from the Father, but only their Person (*hypostaseis*) or distinctive modes of existence (*tropos hyparxeōs*), for the *ousia* of Deity is one and the same.

Cappadocians left the Church with a twofold problem: the significance of the Fatherhood of God, and the oneness of the Trinity (240f.)

Didymus: tended to replace 'from the being of the Father' with 'from the Person of the Father'.

But little hint of the idea of procession from the Father *only*.

Constantinople

The Cappadocian middle path between unipersonalism and tritheism gave rise to a serious impasse.

Western Churchmen said the Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as the Father, otherwise the Son could not really be regarded as fully God. Eastern Churchmen felt that any idea of the procession from the Son as well as the Father seemed to imply two ultimate Divine Principles in God, and opted for procession from the Father *only*.

III

'Who spoke by the prophets' – unity of God's self-revelation through Israel and in the Incarnation

- inspiration of the Scriptures

The *epiclesis*

The Paraclete (Rom.8)

The bond of the Holy Trinity

Personalizing, incorporating activity of the Spirit – community of reciprocity - *koinonia*

## **7. THE ONE CHURCH**

No separate *pisteuomen* for the Church in the creed:

- Not an independent belief: holy Church is the fruit of the Holy Spirit
- The clauses on the Church have to do with the Gospel

Basic convictions drawn from

- Paul's teaching about the Church as the Body of Christ
- Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

Not a human institution

No writings devoted to the nature and function of the Church (except one): Christocentric

Irenaeus: "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church" (157)

The deposit of faith: two levels:

- The whole saving economy of the incarnate, crucified, risen Son of God
- The faithful reception and interpretation of the Gospel under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit taking definitive form in the apostolic foundation of the Church and thus in the New Testament Scriptures

By its very nature the latter could not be resolved into a set of normative doctrines abstracted from the embodied form.

The Church embodies the 'union and communion between God and man' brought about through the incarnation of the Lord and the atoning redemption he effected for all mankind (261).

Instruction in the faith and baptism (261f).

One Church, one faith, one baptism bound up with belief in one Father, one Son, one Holy Spirit, a Trinity in Unity

The key-concept: the internal relation of the Son to the Father.

Incarnation and Atonement *within* the incarnate Person of Christ: 'Christ in us' and 'Christ for us' interlocked (266f.).

The Church not as viewed in itself but hid with Christ through his Spirit in God the Father (268)

Hilary: Christ constituting the Church in himself

Nothing affirmed about structure or organization (270f): the episcopate

Was the incarnation a temporary episode (Marcellus of Ancyra): 'of his kingdom there shall be no end'

Radically dualist modes of thought – distinction between the visible Church and the invisible Church

Arianism: external moral relations – hence the Church was a voluntary association of like-minded people

Nicene Theology: internal ontological relations – the Church as the Body of Christ

(1) The Oneness of the Church

(2) The Holiness of the Church

(3) The Catholicity of the Church

(4) The Apostolicity of the Church

## **8. THE TRIUNITY OF GOD**

(1) Athanasius

It is through the Trinity that we believe in the Unity. Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity.

Athanasius' approach to the knowledge of God was strictly through the Son (303).

The Deity of the Son and the Deity of the Father are the same

To know God in the *internal* relations of his eternal being

Two: the Father is the Father and not the Son, the Son is the Son and not the Father (304).

Indivisible Godhead. The supreme truth of the Gospel is that God himself is the content of his revelation... (305) *Theopoiesis*. Coinherence.

*Letters to Serapion*: Rejection of the deity of the Spirit threatened baptism and tore the unity of God asunder.

Our knowledge of the Spirit also from our knowledge of the Son.

Unless in the Spirit we have a divine and not a creaturely relation to God, the substance drops out of the Gospel (306)

The Holy Trinity homogeneous and unitary in the individuality of his one eternal being.

An inseparable ontological relation between the Son and the Spirit: thus while it is ultimately from the Father that the Holy Spirit proceeds, 'he is *given* from the Son to all.' (309)

A profound revision of the meaning of *ousia* and *hypostasis*:

In God one and the same identical 'substance' or object, without any division, substitution, or differentiation of content, is permanently persented in three distinct objective forms' (G.L. Prestige).

Far from being an abstract or general notion, *ousia* as applied to Godhead an intensely personal and concrete meaning (311)

Eternal distinctions and internal relations in the Godhead as wholly and mutually interpenetrating one another in the one identical perfect being of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The divine *Monarchia*

## (2) Basil, the Gregories and Didymus

A rather different approach: theological motivation not so much from soteriological and ontological convictions as from spiritual and moral conceptions of an Origenistic kind... (313)

Basil's hesitation to say 'The Holy Spirit is God' or that the Spirit was *homoousion* with the Father. Clear distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* (315). The general (*to koinon*) and the particular (*to idion*) (316). Modes of existence (*tropoi hyparxeos*).

But this equated *ousia* with *physis*, the nature common to the three. Charge of tritheism: establishing the unity by anchoring it in the Father as Principle or Origin (*arche*) and Cause (*aitia*). (317)

Generic concept of *ousia* led them to say that the Son and Spirit owed their being (*to einai*) to the Person (*hypostasis* or *prosopon*) of the Father. A strange lapse from the Nicene doctrine that the Son proceeds from the being of the Father (*ek tes ousias tou Patros*).

Gregory Nazianzen closer to Athanasius: worried about the element of Origenist subordinationism (320). His answer: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit must be thought of as *relations* eternally subsisting in God, not just 'modes of existence'. The *Monarchia* not limited to one Person (321). Mind, Word and Spirit.

Didymus: made the *homoousion* central: equality, co-inherence. He said that the Son and Spirit proceeded from the Person of the Father, but this did not refer to the causation of their being, only to the mode of their hypostatic differentiation.

## (3) Epiphanius and the Council of Constantinople

Soteriological and ontological concerns.

The Nicene *homoousion* implies real distinctions of Persons in God. Each is whole and perfect God.

Accepted the *treis hypostaseis, mia ousia*. Understood *ousia* not in the Basilian generic sense, but in the earlier Nicene meaning of the concrete personal being of God in his internal relations. His understanding of the *homoousion* as applying to the inner relations of the Trinity deepened his notion of the coinherence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore he would have nothing to do with any Origenist subordinationism in God, for whatever the Father is, the Son is, and the Spirit is, in the Godhead.

Hence he could refer to the Son and Spirit as the one ultimate source (*pege ek peges*) with the Father. He abhorred any partitive thinking of God.

He presented the whole undivided Trinity, and not just the Father, as the *Monarchia*. Each is fully and perfectly Lord and God. No one of the Persons is prior to, or greater than, another.

‘There are not three Gods, but only one true God, since the only Begotten is one from one, and one also is the Holy Spirit who is from one, a Trinity in Unity, and one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.’

‘There is one Trinity in Unity, and one Godhead in Trinity.’

The doctrine of the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381) reflects the teaching of Epiphanius. There is no suggestion here of a doctrine of the Unity of God as grounded in the Person of the Father. Through grounding the unity of the Godhead in the Father, the Cappadocian way of steering between unipersonalism and tritheism led to serious differences between East and West. In view of the idea that the Spirit proceeds from the *Person* of the Father, i.e. by implication from the Father *only*, Western theologians found themselves constrained to maintain that the Holy Spirit proceeds ‘from the Son also’.

Cyril of Alexandria adopted Nazianzen’s idea of a Trinity of hypostatic relations and Athanasius’ emphasis on co-inherence.

The basic concept governing his understanding of the procession and mission of the Holy Spirit, and of all the distinctive operations of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in creation, revelation and salvation alike, was the oneness and identity in being and nature, will and activity, perfectly expressed in each divine Person. The *One Being of the Godhead in Trinity and the Consubstantial Trinity in Unity*.