

EAST IS EAST AND WEST IS WEST? ANOTHER LOOK AT THE *FILIOQUE*¹

by Robert Letham

Introduction

THE EASTERN AND WESTERN churches had their origins in the ethnic and linguistic differences in the Roman Empire. The Western church was based in Rome and today includes not only the Roman Catholic Church but also those churches that broke with Rome in the sixteenth century. The Eastern church was originally based at Constantinople and today consists of a range of autocephalous jurisdictions largely rooted in Russia, the eastern Mediterranean and southeast Europe. Communion was ruptured in 1054. A number of serious disagreements had developed, including some relating to the jurisdiction of the Roman church and the concomitant papal authority, the use of leavened bread in the eucharist (which the East allows), clerical marriage, and a range of theological issues. Of the latter, by far the most important single question of all was, and is, the *filioque* clause added by the West to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed (C).

The *filioque* clause

The first record of C is from the Council of Chalcedon (451), which describes it as the faith of the fathers gathered at the Council of Constantinople (381), which brought about the trinitarian settlement. There is no record of it at Constantinople but that does not mean it was not used there. Original records of the Council

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were lost. It is *not* the creed adopted at the Council of Nicea (325) (N), for it is longer and in effect a different creed entirely. C includes a statement about the Holy Spirit that he “proceeds from the Father.” There is no mention of his proceeding from the Son as well. However, beginning in Spain and due to the threat of a continued Arianism, in localized Western liturgies an addition crept in, a *Patre filioque*, “from the Father *and the Son.*” This addition spread and was adopted by local councils, particularly the Council of Toledo (589), was accepted by the French church in the late eighth century, but was not inserted into the Creed by Rome until 1014 under Pope Benedict VIII. The fourth Lateran Council of 1215 mentioned it and the Council of Lyons in 1274 proclaimed it as dogma.

The East objects to this development on ecclesiastical grounds. Such a change (more a development, the West argues, since C did not deny the *filioque* but simply did not comment, as it was not an issue) should require an ecumenical council akin to Nicea, Constantinople and Chalcedon. As Theodore Stylianopoulos puts it: “Can a clause deriving from one theological tradition simply be inserted in a creed deriving from another theological tradition without a council?”²

The East also objects to this development on theological grounds. We shall examine the reasons for this in a moment. Essentially, East and West tend to understand the Trinity differently and, on Eastern premises, this Western development appears to undermine the church’s teaching on the Trinity heretically.

If one is to appreciate the significance of this question and not to dismiss it as sterile, one must, as Dietrich Ritschl observes, “let one’s thought sink into the classical trinitarian modes of argumentation,”³ for as Stylianopoulos comments: “at stake was not an abstract question but the truth of Christian salvation.”⁴ In

²Theodore Stylianopoulos and S. Mark Heim (eds.), *Spirit of Truth: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Holy Spirit. Papers of the Holy Spirit Consultation. Communion on Faith & Order, NCCCUSA October 24-25, 1985 – Brookline, Massachusetts* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1986), 32.

³Dietrich Ritschl, “Historical Development and the Implications of the Filioque Controversy,” in Lukas Vischer (ed.), *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ* (London and Geneva, 1981), 46.

⁴Theodore Stylianopoulos, “The Biblical Background of the Article on the Holy Spirit in the Constantinopolitan Creed,” *Etudes Théologiques 2: Le*

Pelikan's terms, the Greek fathers and the early councils did not construct a science of divine ontology but one of divine revelation.⁵ The questions to ask are whether the clause is consistent with C and also with the teaching of Scripture.

Biblical Teaching on the Procession of the Holy Spirit

John 14:16—The Son will ask the Father, and the Father will give to the disciples another Paraclete [at Pentecost]. The Father gives the Spirit in connection with the Son's request.

John 14:26—The Father will send (πέμψει) the Spirit in the name of the Son (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου).

John 15:26—The Son will send the Paraclete (a reference to Pentecost, the historical sending), who in turn *proceeds from* (ἐκπορεύεται) the Father (denoting a continuous sending). Much modern New Testament scholarship argues that the procession here refers to economic activity only—the relations between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in human history—and not at all to eternal antecedent realities in God himself. Robert L. Reymond thinks that referring this to immanent realities in God is to go beyond the bounds of Scripture. De Margerie calls this restriction to the temporal mission “a simplistic exegesis that lacks a theological background and is the work of exegetes who fail to reflect on the logical and metaphysical presuppositions of the scriptural texts.”⁶ It has the effect of undermining the reality and truthfulness of God's revelation by positing the idea that what God does economically does not necessarily indicate who he is.

John 16:13-15—The Holy Spirit depends on and receives from another, he hears from the Word (the Son), who has himself received all things from the Father.

Ile Concile Oecuménique (Chambésy-Geneve: Centre orthodoxe du Patriarcat Oecuménique, 1982), 171.

⁵Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition, Vol. 2: The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 33.

⁶Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 331f.; Bertrand de Margerie, S.J., *The Christian Trinity in History* (Petersham, Massachusetts: St. Bede's Publications, 1982), 169.

John 16:7—The Son will send (πέμψω) the Paraclete to the disciples at Pentecost. The Son sends the Spirit.

John 10:30—Jesus says “I and the Father are one.”

John 20:22—Jesus breathes and says to the disciples, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Jesus gives the Spirit.

Overall the Bible paints a complex picture of the relations of the Spirit to the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit hears the Father, receives from the Father, takes from the Son and makes it known to the church, proceeds from the Father, is sent by the Father in the name of the Son, is sent by the Son from the Father, rests on the Son, speaks of the Son, and glorifies the Son.⁷

The Trinity according to the Eastern Church

Dominant influences in Eastern trinitarianism were the Cappadocians (Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa) and John of Damascus. These place primary stress on the Father as the fountainhead of deity, the source of the personal subsistence of the Son and the Holy Spirit and thus the guarantor of unity in the Godhead. The Father is the sole principle (ἀρχή), source (πηγή), and cause (αἰτία) of divinity. Thus the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.

The Trinity according to the Western Church

Here Augustine has exerted an overpowering influence up to the present day. He made the divine essence, not the person of the Father, the foundation for his doctrine of the Trinity. Western theology has followed by starting from the unity of the essence. The continued threat of Arianism in the West, particularly in Spain, led the church to stress the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. The *filioque* was intended to undergird this—the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father *and the Son* served in Western eyes to safeguard the identity of substance of the Son and the Father. Following Augustine's psychological analogy, the Holy Spirit was seen as the bond of union between the Father and the Son.

⁷John 16:7, 13-15; 15:26; 14:26; Mt. 3:16 (cf. Mk. 1:10; Lk. 3:22).

The Western Church according to Photius

Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople (858-867, 880-886), confused the situation further.⁸ He insisted that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, the Son having no part to play, although he did not require this to be accepted by Rome. His intent was not to deny the intimate relations between the Son and the Spirit but to make very clear that the Father alone causes the existence of the other two persons. In turn, Photius attributed to the Western church an arrangement whereby the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from two separate principles. He regarded this as heresy because there would then be two separate principles in the Trinity, thus destroying the unity of God.

The Origin of the Western View in Augustine

However, Photius's understanding of Western trinitarianism had been explicitly repudiated by Augustine four hundred and fifty years earlier:

... yet there is good reason why in this trinity we call none Word of God but the Son, none Gift of God but the Holy Spirit, none of whom the Word is begotten and from whom the Holy Spirit originally (*principaliter*) proceeds, but God the Father. I add the word "originally", because we learn that the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Son. But this is part of what is given by the Father to the Son, not as already existing without it, but given to him as all that the Father gives to his only-begotten Word, in the act of begetting. He is begotten in such a manner that the common gift proceeds from him also, and the Holy Spirit is Spirit of both.⁹

For Augustine, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son *as one principle of origination*. The Father is the sole principle of deity, the Son proceeds from the Father, and *from their common love*

⁸Photius, Περὶ τῆς τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μυσταγωγίας in J.P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca* (Paris: 1857-66), 102:280-391.

⁹Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 15:26:47.

*proceeds, as a single principle, the Holy Spirit a Patre filioque.*¹⁰ The Holy Spirit thus proceeds firstly from the Father and by the Father's gift at no temporal interval from both in common.¹¹ Photius rejected this also, for reasons that I will mention later.

The Western View according the Eastern Apologists

Eastern objections to the *filioque* were not that it implied two separate sources for the Holy Spirit, although this did loom large in Photius. As we saw, Augustine taught that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as from a single source. Nor was it that the clause might subordinate the Holy Spirit to the Son, another point of issue for Photius, since the Western affirmations of consubstantiality offset that possibility. The main point of the theological concern was, and is, that the *filioque* posits that not only the Father but also the Son is a source or origin or cause of the Holy Spirit. Thus the Western view, in Eastern eyes, compromises the monarchy of the Father. The Greek fathers held that the Holy Spirit is the treasure and the Son is the treasurer—the Son receives and manifests the Spirit but he does not cause its existence as such, since only the Father is the source or origin or cause of both the Son and the Holy Spirit through ineffably different but united acts.

Another related problem is that the clause confuses the Father and the Son. The Father is not the Son. This is evident in that the Father begets the Son, while the Son is begotten by the Father. Thus, the relation between the Spirit and the Father differs from the relation between the Spirit and the Son. Since the Son and the Father are not the same, their respective relations to the Holy Spirit cannot be the same either. Therefore to talk of the Spirit proceeding from the Father *and* the Son without differentiation is to confuse the two. This is underlined by Augustine's teaching that the Spirit proceeds from both as from a common source. By avoiding the suggestion that there are two separate sources of the Spirit (which would divide the Trinity), the West has confused the distinctiveness of both the Father and the Son. According to the East, all three persons are one God by hypostatic *perichoresis* and consubstantial unity but are never to be confused in their personal distinctiveness (as in the modalistic heresy).

¹⁰Ibid., 15:17:27.

¹¹Ibid., 15:26:47.

What can we say to this? The West has never intended to compromise the monarchy of the Father and has consistently affirmed it.¹² The monarchy is not a point in dispute, although it has come to expression in differing ways in East and West. The *filioque* was never directed against this. Stylianopoulos agrees but adds: “the *que* (and) of the *filioque* does not seem to relinquish the ‘monarchy’ of the Father in the Augustinian context but unintentionally does relinquish it in the Cappadocian context.”¹³ However, the claim that the *filioque* confuses the Father and the Son is, I submit, of greater weight. We will consider it shortly.

One other objection can be dismissed quickly. According to Eastern apologetes, the *filioque* led in the West to ecclesiasticism, authoritarianism and the dogma of the Pope. This is as far-fetched as some Western polemics.

The Eastern View according to Western Apologists

According to the West the Eastern repudiation of the *filioque* leaves no clear relation between the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is in odd contrast to the patristic teaching of *perichoresis*, whereby the persons of the Trinity indwell and interpenetrate one another. The West holds that this exhibits subordinationist tendencies reaching back as far as Origen, for in the East the Son and the Holy Spirit are commonly said to derive their deity from the Father. In contrast, the *filioque* affirms the intimate relation between the Son and the Spirit, and thus between the Word and Spirit. The East’s position, the West claims, has led to a gulf between theology and piety. Speculative theology, grounded on the Logos, has been separated from worship, mediated by the Holy Spirit. Thus Eastern piety, so Western observers like Bavinck claim, is unduly dominated by mysticism.¹⁴

Neither of these two arguments bears much scrutiny. In the first place, let us look at the claim that the East, by rejecting the *filioque*, holds apart the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is simply wrong. Throughout, the Eastern church has accepted terminology such as “from the Father through the Son” as a valid expression of

¹²See, e.g., Calvin, *Institutes*, I:xiii:1-20.

¹³Stylianopoulos and Heim, 50.

¹⁴Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God* (reprint; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977), 313-317.

the intent of C. It maintains a mediating role for the Son in the procession of the Spirit, while insisting that the Father is the sole source, cause or origin. Again, the East argues the Holy Spirit rests on the Son (as at Jesus' baptism) and is received by him, and in turn is sent by the Son.¹⁵ In saying that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, the East presupposes the relation existing in the Trinity between the Father and the Son, for the Son is eternally in and with the Father and the Father is never without the Son.¹⁶ For Western theologians to make such a claim ignores the Cappadocian teaching on *perichoresis* or mutual indwelling, first taught by Gregory of Nyssa. This is a crowning affirmation of the close relations of the Son and the Holy Spirit, as we shall see in a moment. Besides, C minus the *filioque* clause (the original version of C) is not silent on the relation of the Holy Spirit and the Son, for the Spirit is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, and is the author and giver of life together with the Father and the Son, "by whom the Father made the worlds." In short, the East consistently affirms that the Son participates in the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father both immanently and economically.

On the second point, one of the most famous elements of Eastern piety, the Jesus prayer, is thoroughly Christocentric—"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner" can hardly be more evangelical or Christological in tone. That the East has no monopoly on unbridled mysticism is evident by the Toronto blessing and other similar phenomena, which are distinctly Western in effect. This claim is, in short, akin to the Eastern argument about a supposed connection between the *filioque* and the papacy. There are reductionist dangers in attributing all perceived ills to a single cause.

A third objection, however, carries much greater weight. Following John of Damascus, the East tends to consider that the essence of God is unknowable, only God's energies or operations being revealed, the things around him ("all that we can affirm concerning God does not shew forth God's nature, but only the

¹⁵See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 1: 317-319.

¹⁶See the references to Athanasius below. Jürgen Moltmann's proposal that the Spirit proceeds "from the Father of the Son" assumes a consensus would form in the East in support; see his volume *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 182-87.

qualities of his nature”— τὰ περὶ τῆν φύσιν).¹⁷ This dichotomy is used to offset some of the Biblical evidence for the joint and coordinate involvement of the Son in relation to the Holy Spirit. As a sympathetic critic like T. F. Torrance argues, it drives a wedge between the inner life of God and his saving activity in history, ruling out any real access to knowing God in himself.¹⁸ It also departs from earlier Greek patristic thought, which rejected this distinction.¹⁹ Besides opening a yawning chasm between the economic and the ontological, the tendency seems to be towards a quarternity rather than a trinity—the unknowable divine essence plus the three revealed persons.

The Early Eastern View

Basil the Great, in his *De Spiritu Sancto*, writes that true religion teaches us to think of the Son together with the Father (14). The good things that come from God reach us “through the Son” (19). The Son’s will is in indissoluble union with the Father without any note of time (20). Thus, the Holy Spirit is in all things inseparable and wholly incapable of being parted from the Father and the Son (37). Moreover:

the way of the knowledge of God lies from one Spirit through the one Son to the one Father, and conversely the natural goodness and the inherent holiness and the royal dignity extend from the Father through the only-begotten to the Spirit (ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς διὰ μονογενοῦς ἐπὶ τὸ πνεῦμα).²⁰

Hence, the Spirit shares in the operations of the Father and the Son (κοινωνὸν ἐστὶ τὸν ἐνέργειον πατρὶ καὶ υἱῶ).²¹ In short, the Father is the sole principle of deity. From the Father the Holy Spirit proceeds through the Son. The deity communicates itself from the Father through the Son to the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷John of Damascus, *De Orthodoxa Fidei* 1:4, in NPNF Second Series, 9:2:4.

¹⁸Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 187.

¹⁹Athanasius, *De Decretis*, 22.

²⁰Basil the Great, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 47.

²¹*Ibid.*, 53.

John of Damascus, in *De Orthodoxa Fidei*, says that the Spirit of God is “the companion of the Word and the revealer of His energy . . . proceeding from the Father and resting in the Word, and shewing forth the Word, neither capable of disjunction from God in Whom it exists, and the Word Whose companion it is . . . being in subsistence the likeness of the Word.”²² Never at any time was the Father lacking the Word, nor the Word the Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son, is communicated through the Son, is inseparable and indivisible from the Father and the Son, possesses all the qualities the Father and the Son possess, except not begetting or being begotten. Both the Son and the Spirit have their being from the Father. The three are in each other, having the same essence and dwelling in each other, being the same in will, energy, power, authority, and movement. They cleave to each other and have their being in each other, without coalescing or commingling. The Son and the Spirit, therefore, do not stand apart. It is like three suns cleaving to each other without separation and giving out light mingled and conjoined into one. Thus, the Spirit is manifested and imparted to us through the Son.²³

As De Margerie points out, Photius ignored this. He cites Bulgakov, who commented (*Le Paraclet*, Paris, 1946) “It is stupefying that the very learned patriarch, who knew the Greek Fathers much better than many of his predecessors and contemporaries, did not know that the patristic doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit . . . differed radically from his own.”²⁴

Common Problems

(1) Criticism has been made that the *filioque* debate centers on the persons defined in terms of relations of origin. In contrast, Pannenberg points to the rich complexity in the New Testament that indicates these relations are far more subtle than the simple formulas of East and West give us to believe. This is true, and we have seen something of this complexity in passing. However, there seems to me no good reason why relations of origin should be

²²John of Damascus, *De orthodoxa fidei*, 1:7, in 9:2:5.

²³Ibid., 1:8, in 9:2:6-11.

²⁴de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, 166.

excluded from consideration. Are we to conclude that relations of origin are other than eternal relations?

(2) Western theology has often said that the East exhibits a tendency toward tritheism by starting with the Father rather than the one divine essence. There is little evidence for this. The monarchy of the Father, consubstantiality, and *perichoresis* were the preservatives.

(3) On the other hand, the Eastern split between God's essence and his energies is a reality, certainly after John of Damascus. In this case, the earlier criticisms we made apply. By this means, Eastern apologists can say that references to the Son sending the Spirit apply only to the energies, to the purely economic.

(4) In the West, the danger of modalism is very real, evident in all Western theology down to Barth and Rahner. If we start with the divine unity, the three become problematic as real, personal, permanent and eternal ontological distinctions. Colin Gunton has argued forcibly that the Augustinian model has bred atheism and agnosticism.²⁵ As I shall argue in my essay on the Trinity and Christian worship, most Western Christians are practical modalists. Certainly, the Trinity is little more than an arithmetical conundrum to Western Christianity.

(5) The *filioque* clause is misleading for three possible reasons. First, if the Spirit were to proceed from two separate sources, the monarchy of the Father would be undermined. That is not the way it has been understood but, having said that, it must be admitted that the clause lends itself to that kind of untutored interpretation. Second, if in the Augustinian sense (the way the West has consistently understood it) the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son *as a single source*, the distinction of the Father and the Son is blurred. The Son is not the same as the Father—he is begotten, and the Father is not. The Son is forever the Son, and the Father is forever the Father. Thus, the Son does not have the identical relation to the Holy Spirit the Father has. The doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit must take this distinction into account. Third, there appears *some* evidence of a *tendency* to the subordination of the Holy Spirit if the *filioque* is needed to support the consubstantiality of the Son. If the deity of the Son requires him to be the spirating source of the Holy Spirit, where does that leave

²⁵Colin Gunton, "Augustine, the Trinity, and the Theological Crisis of the West," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 43 (1990):33-58.

the Spirit, who is the source of no other hypostasis? The argument for the *filioque* comes with a price, a subtle undermining of the Trinity. In this connection, is not a basic principle of trinitarian theology flouted by the West? The attributes of the divine nature are shared by all three persons while the divine properties are held by one person. Here a property (spiration) is shared by two persons while the third is excluded.²⁶

Towards Solutions

(1) *Mutual Recognition*

For a resolution of this long-standing problem to occur, the East will need to recognize that the *filioque* was used in the West in support of teaching the East fully accepts, viz., the consubstantial unity of the Trinity, the divine status of the Son, and the intimacy between the Son and the Holy Spirit. For its part, the West must recognize that Augustine's teaching that the Father and the Son are the common cause of the eternal being of the Holy Spirit unintentionally compromises the monarchy of the Father in the eyes of those who share the Cappadocian paradigm.

(2) *Historical Reconstruction*

When lost while walking in the countryside it may help to retrace one's steps to the last place where one's location was precisely known. Then one can make progress towards the intended destination. On the question of the *filioque* help can be found by turning not to Cappadocia or Hippo, where the paths diverged, but instead to Alexandria. Before the Cappadocians and Augustine set the stage for future discussion, Athanasius made some crucial points that were forgotten in the ensuing conflict. He was followed in a similar direction the next century by Cyril of Alexandria.

In his four letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit, Athanasius deals at length with the trinitarian relations. The Son is

²⁶Photius argues that "everything not said about the whole, omnipotent, consubstantial, and supersubstantial Trinity is said about one of the three persons. The procession of the Spirit is not said to be common to the three, consequently it must belong to one of the three." (*Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, 36).

consubstantial with the Father, out of the being of the Father (ὁμοούσιον καὶ ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς τὸν υἱόν). Whatever the Father has, the Son has.²⁷ The Trinity is indivisible, so wherever the Father is mentioned the Son should also be understood; and, by the same token, where the Son is the Holy Spirit is in him (καὶ τὸ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ πνεῦμα).²⁸ The Spirit is never apart from the Word, the Son, a point Athanasius repeats time and time again.²⁹

Moreover, as the Son has his particular property in relation to the Father, so does the Holy Spirit in relation to the Son.³⁰ The Son is the image of the Father, but so also the Holy Spirit is the image of the Son (ὁ υἱὸς εἰκὼν ἐστι τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῦ ἀοράτου, ἐστὶ δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα εἰκὼν τοῦ υἱοῦ).³¹ Athanasius denies an obvious rejoinder that there are consequently two sons, maintaining the distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit in doing so, but the fact that he feels obliged to make such a point indicates how close he understands the relation of the Son and the Spirit to be. Indeed, the Holy Spirit has the same order (τάξις) and nature (φύσις) towards the Son as the Son has towards the Father. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son and so also the Holy Spirit is in the Son and the Son is in the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Spirit cannot be divided from the Word.³² So also the Spirit is in God the Father and from the Father (ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ).³³ As the Son comes in the name of the Father, so the Holy Spirit comes in the name of the Son.³⁴ There is one efficacy and action of the holy Trinity, for the Father makes all things through the Word by the Holy Spirit.³⁵ Nothing could be clearer than the intimate, unbreakable relation between the Son and the Holy Spirit in Athanasius' thought. The three persons indwell one another, are in each other. This applies as much to the Son and the Spirit as to the Son and the Father or the Father and the Spirit.

²⁷Athanasius, *Ad Serapion*, 2.5, PG 26:616.

²⁸Ibid., 1:14, PG 26:566.

²⁹Ibid., 1:14, 17, 20, 31, 3:5, 4:4; PG 26:565-6, 572, 576-7, 601, 632-3, 641.

³⁰Ibid., 3:1, PG 26:625.

³¹Ibid., 4:3, PG 26:640-1.

³²Ibid., 1:20-21, PG 26:580.

³³Ibid., 1:25, PG 26:588.

³⁴Ibid., 1:20, PG 26:580.

³⁵Ibid., 1:20, 28, 30, PG 26:580, 596, 600.

Similar lines of thought are evident in Cyril. In the *Dialogus II de SS. Trinitate* he explains that the whole divinity is common to each person, so the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of one, identical substance (κοινὰ γὰρ . . . τῆς ὅλης Θέοτητος). The Son and the Spirit are no less than the Father equal in all things except for their relations, in which, *inter alia*, the Spirit proceeds from the Father, flowing or pouring forth *through* the Son (‘Ἅγιον δὲ Πνεῦμα πρόσπειρεις τὸ ἐκ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς δι’ Υἱοῦ προσεχόμενον φυσικῶς’).³⁶ In his *Thesaurus de Sancta et Consubstantiali Trinitate* he unfolds his thinking on the matter at length. The Holy Spirit is according to nature God, from the being of the Father (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς). The creation was made through the Son by the Holy Spirit.³⁷ The Spirit is not alien from the divine essence (οὐσία) according to the working in his nature; he is of the essence, for he *inexists* (ἐνυποστατος), proceeding from it and remaining in it.³⁸ So the Spirit is from the Father *and* the Son, since it is clear that he is of the divine being (or essence) proceeding essentially *in* it and *from* it.

. . . προέισι δὲ καὶ ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ. Πρόδηλον ὅτι τῆς Θείας ἐστὶν οὐσίας οὐσιωδῶς ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς προῖόν.³⁹

Hence, the Spirit is from the being of the Son as well as the being of the Father.⁴⁰ While he naturally proceeds from the Father,⁴¹ because of his enhypostatic relations he is *in* the Son and *from* the Son (ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐξ αὐτόν)⁴² and so can be said to proceed from the Father *in* the Son.⁴³ Cyril can also say that the Son is sent from the Father *through* the Son (citing both John 15:26 and John 14:26!)⁴⁴ and also

³⁶Cyril of Alexandria, *Dialogus II de SS. Trinitate*, PG 75:721-3. πρόσειμι means to go towards or proceed, while προσέχω means to pour forth or to pour forward.

³⁷Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus de Sancta et Consubstantiali Trinitate*, PG 75:565.

³⁸Cyril of Alexandria, PG 75:577.

³⁹Cyril of Alexandria, PG 75:585.

⁴⁰Cyril of Alexandria, PG 75:587, 589.

⁴¹Cyril of Alexandria, PG 75:597.

⁴²Cyril of Alexandria, PG 75:581.

⁴³Cyril of Alexandria, PG 75:577.

⁴⁴Cyril of Alexandria, PG 75:581.

that he proceeds from the Father *and* the Son (προέεισι δὲ καὶ ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ).⁴⁵

(3) *Theological Parameters*

A number of essential trinitarian parameters must be held in balance as equally ultimate. Violation of any one leads to major problems. These must also find combined expression in terms of the relations between the Holy Spirit and the Son.

1. *The three persons.* As Bray recommends,⁴⁶ we should begin here. We have seen the Western tendency to blur the three in a modalist direction under the pressure of the masterful unity of God.

2. *Consubstantiality.* The one identical divine essence is shared by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The whole God is in each of the persons, and each of the persons are the whole God, both individually and together. The whole God is in all three of the persons. All three persons are the whole God. To speak very crudely, there is nothing of God left over, additional to what is in each of the three. There is no more of God than there is in the Father, nor is there more of God than there is in the Son, and *mutatis mutandis* in the Holy Spirit.

3. *Perichoresis.* All three persons indwell one another, mutually contain one another. This is the thrust of Cyril's use of *enhypostatos*. The union of the three is unbreakable and the three are inseparable. Here divine and human persons differ, as the *Leiden Synopsis* explains. Human persons do not exist in one another as the divine persons do.⁴⁷

4. *The monarchy.* In terms of the *relationes* between the three, there is a clear order: *from the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit*. These relations cannot be reversed: the Son does not send the Father, the Father does not proceed from the Holy Spirit. In this sense, the Father is the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Spirit the third. However, some Eastern theologians following Basil and

⁴⁵Cyril of Alexandria, *PG* 75:585.

⁴⁶Gerald Bray, *The Doctrine of God* (Leicester/ Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 197-224.

⁴⁷Doctorum et Professorum in Academia Leidensi: Iohannes Polyan-drus, Andreas Rivetus, Anthonius Walaeus, Anthonius Thysius, *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* (Leiden, 1625), 77.

Gregory of Nyssa referred to the Father as the source or origin of the deity of the Son and the Spirit, language with disturbingly subordinationist overtones. T. F. Torrance's argument that the monarchy should be seen as that of the whole Trinity rather than the person of the Father—on the grounds that all three persons are co-equally God—while retaining the distinctive relations for the persons, has sound Cappadocian roots,⁴⁸ and was a basis for agreement between Orthodox and Reformed Churches recently.⁴⁹

If these four parameters are mutually observed, we will avoid heretical imbalance. It is within these poles that the vexed question of the *filioque* will eventually be resolved.

Moltmann's proposal—*from the Father of the Son*—is regarded by Stylianopoulos as too speculative. It appears to concede the case to the East, while trying to make allowance for Western concerns that the Son be seen to be involved directly.⁵⁰ For myself, the phrase *from the Father through the Son* has the merit of a firm biblical foundation, and is known to be acceptable to the East. It proved a bridge between Orthodox and Reformed in recent discussions. It avoids some of the drawbacks of the undifferentiated *filioque*, although *from the Father in the Son* seems to me to express more satisfactorily the main parameters I indicated.

⁴⁸Gregory Nazianzen, *Orationes*, 29: 6, 11-12, 17-18, 30:20, 31:16, 40:43.

⁴⁹Thomas F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Towards Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 110-143.

⁵⁰Moltmann, loc.cit.