

Map 1 The Roman Empire and the church in the fourth century (note that modern rather than ancient place names are used)

Map taken from McGrath, Alistair E. [1998] Historical Theology, Oxford Blackwell p.21

The Patristic Period [100-451AD]

Important time - creative

Important theologically

- Mainstreams regard it as a landmark period in development of Christian doctrine
 - Lancelot Andrewes [1555-1626] spoke of Orthodox Christianity based upon two testaments, three creeds, four gospels, and the first five centuries of Christian history
- Clarified some major issues:
 - need to sort the relationship between Christianity and Judaism
 - Apologetics - the reasoned defence and justifying the faith against critics
 - survival - limited place for discussion/disputes when might not survive
 - Justin Martyr [100-165] answering hostile pagans
 - Great theologians arose: in the west, Irenaeus of Lyons [130-200] and in the east Origen [185-254] of Alexandria

Changing situation of the Church - from religio illicita to religio licita

- Arose in Palestine
 - flourished early in connection with Judaism, and places where it was established such as Jerusalem
- By 100AD had spread throughout eastern Mediterranean and had a base even in Rome
 - Rome administrative capital and embraced the Mediterranean Mare Nostrum = our Sea

- Palestine spoke Aramaic [close to Hebrew], Latin and Greek, still mark is writing for the Roman audience
- Christianity arrived in Rome about AD 40. Paul writes Romans 57AD and includes some Latin names in the greetings he gives
- Christianity had ambiguous legal status
 - On the one hand it was not legally recognised, so had no special provisions. On the other hand it was not forbidden
 - Began to grow in numbers and this led to periodic efforts to suppress it by force
 - Sometimes these were local, other times they extended throughout the empire
 - Emperor Decius 249
 - January 250 he executed Fabian, bp. of Rome
 - June 250-June 251 Edict of Decius - people required to sacrifice to Roman gods and emperor. If they did they were given a *libellous pacis* [certificate of peace]
 - Widely ignored but carried out fiercely in some localities. 1000's martyred.
 - How to deal with the lapsed?
 - Emperor Valerian 257-258
 - Cyprian of Carthage and Novatian perished in this persecution
 - Emperor Diocletian February 203
 - Destruction of places of worship,
 - Burning of books cessation of worship
 - Christian civil servants reduced to slavery status
 - Prominent Christians forced to sacrifice [inc. Diocletian's wife and daughter]
- The persecution went on until Galerius in 311 ordered it to cease.
 - It had been a failure, Christians were more resolved.
 - Galerius issued an edict which permitted Christians to live normally and to "hold their religious assemblies , provided that they do nothing which would disturb public order." It was explicit in recognising Christianity as a religion and offered it the full protection of the law.

Justin Martyr [100-165] was among the Apologists of the 2nd century rather important for demonstrating the moral and intellectual credibility of the faith to the pagan world. Having searched for truth in pagan philosophies, especially Stoicism, Aristotelianism, Pythagoreanism and Platonism, he became a Christian around 130. For a time he taught at Ephesus where he engaged with Judaism wrote "Disputation with Trypho the Jew" [135]. Later he moved to Rome and opened a Christian school there. He was scourged and beheaded under Marcus Aurelius, having been denounced as a Christian by the Cynic Philosopher Crescens [according to Tatian]. He emphasised that the faith could bring to it the best of classical Greek thinking and also of the Judaistic material. He argued that the Greek philosophers, particularly Heraclitus and Socrates had a partial grasp on the truth. He majored on Christ as the full disclosure of the Logos of Greek philosophy, thinking of the Logos as being available to all , but in a fragmentary manner.

Constantine [288-337]

Maxentius had seized power in Italy and Northern Africa. To gain authority the region Constantine led troops from western Europe . On October 28, 316, at a decisive battle at Milvan Bridge, just north of Rome, Constantine defeated Maxentius and was proclaimed Emperor, declaring himself a Christian shortly after.

- 321 Decreed Sundays would be public holidays
- Christian symbols began to appear on Roman coins

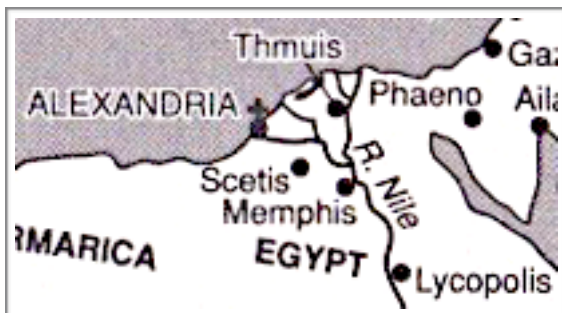
- Becomes the established religion of the Empire

The result was that

- theological debates became public
- the church could count on the support of the state [Apart from Julian the apostate 361-363]
- theology was now a matter of public interest and concern throughout the empire
- Constantine wanted a united church, and was concerned that debates be settled
- Church of Rome becomes increasingly prominent and there was now a rivalry between Rome and Constantinople - foreshadows a schism East and West.
- A number of regions were prominent centres in theological emphases and debate.

Prominent centres of thought

1. Alexandria in Egypt was a Greek-speaking centre of theological education which had a long standing Platonic tradition. Its emphases were very marked:



An Alexandrian style of Christology saw that Jesus Christ was the Redeemer of humanity, where 'redemption' means taken up into the life of God or being made divine [deification]. If human nature is to be redeemed it must be united with divine nature. God must become united with human nature so that the latter is enabled to share in God's life. This emphasis on the soteriological [the saving work of Christ] was strong in Alexandria.

Logos [word of God] assumed human nature at the

incarnation. Prior to the Logos taking flesh, the Logos existed "without flesh" but after the incarnation the Logos united human nature to itself.

Clement of Alexandria [150-215] wrote 8 books called the Stromata [carpets]. He was very concerned to explore the relation between Christian thought and Greek philosophy.

Origen [185-254] was also strong in using the Greek philosophers. He also promoted an allegorical handling of Scripture [in sharp distinction to Antiochene literalism]. His Logos-Christology was very developed.

Athanasius [206-373] was first, as a young deacon attending his bishop and later himself as Bishop of Alexandria [328], a great defender of a proper Christology against the Arian heresy.

Cyril of Alexandria [d.444] wrote, in the setting of the Nestorian controversy, a powerful defence of the two natures of Christ.

2. Antioch of Syria and the Greek-speaking region of Cappadocia were two centres of influence and thought.

From early times there was a strong Christian following in this north-eastern region of the Mediterranean. Not only was Antioch [of Syria] Paul's home base, it became a leading centre of Christian thought. Like Alexandria, it was known for a particular approach to Christology and literal biblical interpretation.



An 'Antiochene' style of Christology was dominated by moral concerns, and unlike Alexandria, they used much less any idea that came from Greek philosophy. The line of thought would be like this:

1. on account of their disobedience, human beings exist in a

state of corruption from which they cannot extricate themselves. If there is to be redemption, it must come through an obedience on the part of humanity.

2. Since they cannot break free, God must and does intervene. So this leads to a coming of the redeemer who unites both humanity and divinity, and thus re-establishes the obedient people of God.

Gregory of Nazianzus [329-389] wrote his "Five Theological Orations" [380] and some extracts of Origen's which he called *Philokalia*. He is writing against Apollinarius, who denied that Jesus had a human soul.

Gregory of Nyssa [330-395] was the younger brother of Basil of Caesarea. Became bishop of Nyssa [371] and being a warm supporter of the Nicaeans, he was deposed by the Arians in 376 and went into exile, until the death of Valens, and then regained his see.

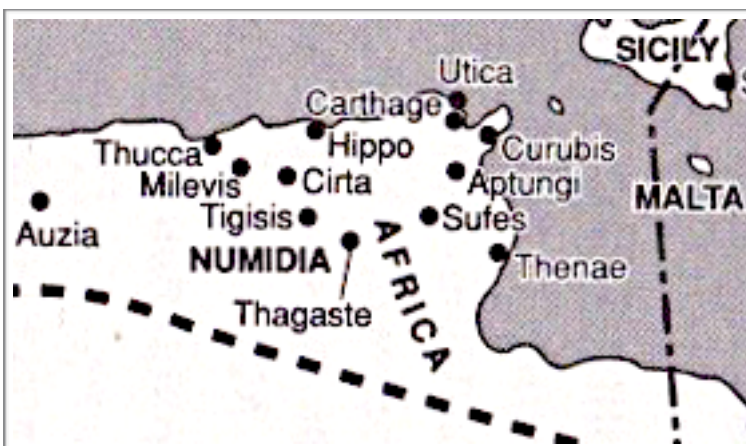
He defended the Nicaea decisions and was very careful in his distinctions between the generation of the Son and the procession of the Holy Spirit. He wrote polemical works against Eunomius [d.395] *Contra Eunomium* 382, Apollinarius [310-390] who denied that Jesus had a human soul, and Abladius [tritheistic teaching].

Basil of Caesarea [330-379] based in the region of Cappadocia, being Bishop of Caesarea [370]. He wrote on the Trinity and particularly on the Holy Spirit.

Theodore of Mopsuestia [350-428] He became Bishop of Mopsuestia in 392. He thought of the union of the humanity and deity of Christ as not so much a union of general humanity [as in Alexandria] as a union with the particular human individual. These Christological views were opposed by the Alexandrian theologians and were condemned at the councils of Ephesus [431] and Constantinople [553]. [Mopsuestia is an ancient city in Cilicia Campestris on the Pyramus River (now Ceyhan River) located approximately 20 km (12 mi) east of ancient Antiochia in Cilicia. (In the present-day it is Adana of southern Turkey).]

Nestorius [d.451] was an important representative of the Antiochene school. He set off a discussion by so defending the humanity of Christ he was thought to have denied his divinity.

3. Carthage in north-western Africa, was a major Mediterranean city, and a competitor to Rome for a time. When Christianity was advancing however, it was a Latin speaking Roman colony. Major writers of this region were Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage, and Augustine of Hippo Regius.



Tertullian [160-225], converted to Christianity in his 30's, a powerful controversialist, he defended the unity of the OT and the NT against Marcion. And in doing that, he laid the foundations for the doctrine of the Trinity. He emphasised, against those who appealed to prevailing philosophies, that the Scriptures were enough to go by. "What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?" He coined Latin terms to translate the Greek ones of the eastern church.

Augustine of Hippo [354-430], was a widely regarded, and very influential, Latin writer. He converted to Christianity in Milan, under the influence of Ambrose, in summer of 386. Returning to Hippo in 395 as its Bishop he was involved in two controversies. The Donatist controversy, which had to do with those who had lapsed under persecution, and wished to return to the church. There were accompanying side issues to this controversy which related to the

sacraments and the church. The Pelagian heresy, which focussed on free will, sin and grace. Augustine made contributions to the Trinity doctrine as well.

Cyprian of Carthage [d.258] was a Roman rhetorician - a clever speaker - who was converted in 246 and elected Bishop of Carthage in 248 and martyred in 258. His writings majored on the unity of the church and the way in which bishops keep order in it. He wrote in the Unity of the Catholic Church 251 that breaking away from church is unjustified and anyway, the unity cannot be broken. For bishops to move away is to lose their ability to administer the sacraments.

Ecumenical Councils [οἰκουμένη] = the whole inhabited world

These are assemblies of bishops and other representatives of the whole world who met together to deal with particular questions, some doctrinal others ecclesiastical. There have been no ecumenical councils since the schism between the eastern and western sectors of the church, the last being the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.

Some councils were local, and there are many of them. But the great councils are listed below with the main issues which caused them to meet. Acts 15 was probably the first council of the church [table fellowship between Christians of Jewish and Gentile origins].

There are seven councils which are held to be, both in the east and west, as ecumenical and therefore binding.

[1] Nicaea 325

[Arianism - the Son is a creature].

[2] Constantinople 381

[Apollinarianism - in Christ there was a human body and soul, but no human spirit, the spirit being replaced by the divine Logos. So while Son had full deity he lacked full humanity.]

[3] Ephesus 431

[Nestorianism - that there are two separate persons in the incarnate Christ, the one divine and the other human. As against the orthodox understanding that while Christ has two natures He is one Person]

[4] Chalcedon 451

[Eutychianism - denied that the manhood of Christ was consubstantial with ours, so He cannot redeem us. Also maintained that there were two natures before the incarnation but only one after it. Founder of Monophysitism.]

[5] Constantinople 553

[The Three Chapters controversy or the three heads τὰ τρία κεφάλια] In 543-4 the Emperor Justinian condemned by an edict [1] the person and writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, [2] the writings of Theodore against Cyril of Alexandria and [3] the letter of Ibas of Edessa to Marius. All three were sympathetic to Nestorius.]

[6] Constantinople 680-1

[Monothelitism - that there was only one will in the God-man. Issues at stake here are similar to Monophysitism.]

[7] Nicaea 787

[Iconoclasm - the veneration of icons agitated the Greek church from 725-842. The iconoclastic movement was strong at this time and contributed powerfully towards the split of East and West.]

SCRIPTURES WE NEED TO HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT BEFORE SEMINAR 2

The setting of the Matthew 10 and 11.

In Matthew 10, we find Jesus sent out the 12 disciples into the surrounding countryside. He told them to speak exclusively to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' [10.6] He prepares them for persecution and a poor welcome and response to their preaching.

In Matthew 11, it is recorded that Jesus himself, went on to preach in the Galilean towns. While doing that he was approached by messengers, sent from John Baptist, asking him whether he was the "one who is to come". He instructs them to consider what they are seeing in what he is doing, and also interprets John's ministry as the messenger who came before himself. As to John's place Jesus makes clear that he is the last of the prophets and the greatest.

Nevertheless, he was not received for who he was by Israel. John was a Nazarite who neither ate excessively nor drank alcohol; yet he was taken as being demonized by the people. Conversely, Jesus came eating and drinking and they called him a glutton and a drunkard. So much for their wisdom and insight!

Anticipating his teaching about Jonah being a sign for this adulterous and sinful generation [Matthew 12.38-45] our author records a statement that Jesus made denouncing the Galilean towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum because they did not repent at the preaching of John Baptist and Jesus [Matthew 11.21-24].

Matthew now records an audible confession Jesus said to his Father. It was made in response to what Jesus was seeing concerning the local response to his teaching.

Only God can reveal God [Matthew 11.25-27//Luke 10.21-22]

25 ¶ At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

26 "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

27 "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Matthew 11.25-27 NASB 1960

17 ¶ The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

18 And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

19 "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

21 At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

22 "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

Luke 10.17-22 NASB 1960

1. There is a hiding, a withholding of revelation by the Father from the wise and the learned, and yet an open revelation taking place to men and women who are seen as 'little children' [νηπιοι] in Jesus eyes. This was, as Jesus understands, purely a matter of the Father's pleasure who, out of his own gracious initiative, shows himself to his own children.

2. Jesus, as a unique Son of the Father, knows that all things have been given to him by his Father for the purposes of the mission he has in coming for our sakes.

3. He asserts that there is an exclusive, mutual and reciprocal knowledge of the Father by the Son and the Son by the Father.

4. No one is able to know the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. This makes clear that it is impossible to penetrate into the knowledge of the Father unless such a revelation is made by the Son and that this is central to the "all things" that have been given to Jesus for his mission.

Jesus speaks an invitation as a rabbi. Matthew 11.28-30

28 *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*

29 *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.*

30 *"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* Matthew 11.28-30 NASB 1960

1 As a teacher, those who are the sorts of people he has in mind are the exhausted lost sheep of the house of Israel. They are weary and burdened by the burdens that have been placed upon them by blind guides whose seemingly authorised keys have locked them out of the kingdom and have bound them with heavy sets of rules and regulations for their lives [Matthew 23]. They desperately need the rest Jesus brings in himself for them.

2 Jesus, like a rabbi, invites them to take his yoke upon them. A rabbi's yoke was his way of life; it is a free invitation to walk together in tandem, like two oxen in a working harness. To take up this yoke means that they will learn from him.

3 What they will learn from him is not a method, or a way to walk. They will learn what is intrinsic to his person – for he is humble and lowly of heart. The outcome of this learning, walking with the humble and unpretentious person of Jesus, is that their life is restful. There will be an absence of striving and ambitious push.

4 Jesus insists that this yoke is an easy one and constitutes a light burden. His commandments are not burdensome because they come with united life and walk with himself. Jesus is easy to walk with when we have become burdened by many matters that have tied up our life that are not Jesus.

Jonah as a Sign

Matthew 12.39-42//Luke 11.29-32 and Matthew 12.43-45//Luke 11.24-26

38 ¶ *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."*

39 *But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;*

40 *for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

41 *"The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.*

42 *"The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*

Matthew 12.38-42 NASB 1960

Matthew records that some burdensome "Pharisees and teachers of the law" asked Jesus for a sign. They wanted to authenticate his teaching to themselves by requiring him to meet their criteria.

Jesus makes clear that:

1. Only a wicked and adulterous [one that is cheating on God] asks for a sign. Back of this idea is that the lack of repentance that is evident in the response to him makes it clear that they

are blind and do not see. This blindness is a result of their own wickedness and spiritual adultery to their God.

2.No sign will be given but one – and we presume because it is a very appropriate one – it is the sign which is Jonah himself. There are two facets to this sign.

3.*The first is with regard to his own person.* Jonah was in the belly of the fish and this will find a parallel in the life of the Son of man, his favourite name for himself. The parallel however, is one of contrast. Jonah as a rebellious prophet who would not accept his commission; he is forced into a hard situation from which his being in the belly of the fish is a merciful deliverance in answer to his desperate prayer. The Son of man will voluntarily find himself delivered out of a death to which he submitted for our sakes. Their attitudes and work, in this sense, is a contrast.

4.The appropriateness of such a sign to such a generation is that the meaning and power of the sign to signify comes after the rejection of Jesus which is the situation leading to his being in the tomb so as to be raised.

5.*The second is with regard to Jonah's ministry and its results.* Sent to foreigners – for whom Jonah had no desire that the intended mercy of God should come to them – he found that they repented of their sins and accepted the offered mercy of God. They believed the prophet/messenger. Not so here among the scribes and Pharisees. But a Centurion had it [8.15-13]!

6.In sharp contrast, Jesus makes clear that he, himself, is a greater issue than Jonah. Similarly with the high accord and honour that the Queen of Sheba – another foreigner – paid to Solomon; Jesus is also greater than Solomon.

Peter Declares that Jesus is the Messiah [Matthew 16.13-16//Mk 8.27-29//Lk 9.18-20]

13 ¶ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

15 He *said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

20 Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ. Matthew 16.13-16 NASB 1960

1.Jesus begins the questioning of his group asking what they have heard others say of him. He already has a second question in his mind however.

2.Their reply is to gather up the local gossip of Jesus, which also reflects the attempts of the crowd to come to term with what they are encountering with Jesus.

3.The crowds' answers are understandable. Some started with John Baptist and thought of Jesus – as we have on record Herod did – that Jesus is really John [resurrected?]. Others think of Elijah, the one prophet who troubled the establishment of his day and was taken up to heaven. Still others think of a troubling prophet like Jeremiah, who was saying counter-intuitive messages to those who saw their future in alliances with political events.

4.Jesus initiates the second question of his disciples. His question seeks for a perception concerning himself which will be peculiar to his own disciples/learners. He does not want to know now what others say. He seems to expect that his own people will have another perception. After all, the crowd are outsiders, and their general reaction of non-repentance and

unbelief indicates they don't know something. This is a question for the inner group. "Who do you say me to be?" They are in relation to him already - to them has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God. Something is possible for his group that is not for others.

5. Peter expresses the secret when he declares Jesus to be [a] the Christ [Messiah] and [b] Son of the living God.

6. It is a declaration concerning Jesus' identity. His own group now know who He is but do they understand it? It is one thing to know who a person is, it is another to know his ways and how he will express who he is - to learn Him [Ephesians 4.20].

7. Peter has told Jesus who he is; Jesus now tells Peter who he is. He tells him a number of things concerning himself:

8. [a] he is a blessed man. This blessing consists in knowing that he has not been the recipient of revelation from flesh and blood; that is, it is not from a source of human ignorance and fleshly understanding [1 Cor 15.50, Gal 1.16; Heb 2.14]. Rather, the source is from Jesus' Father in heaven. This is consistent with only God can reveal God. Jesus has the confidence to state that such revelation about himself only comes from one Source.

9. [b] Further, Jesus does not speak of him as Simon, son of John [which is what John's Gospel makes clear was his father's name Jn 1.42; 21.15-17]. He speaks of him as Simon son of Jonah. This may reflect that Peter is as the OT calls the "sons of the prophets"; that is, he too will become a prophetic person as they were destined to become. It may reflect that Jesus knows of Simon's ultimate destiny for martyrdom [John 21.17-19]. In which case it points to his destiny as a Jonah type experience which will be like Jesus' experience that he will now state is coming. It also may reflect what is that general suffering - of which Peter will be a sample - that Jesus had forecast for his disciples as he sent them out to Israel, and which he will now repeat to Peter that the gates of death will not prevail against his church.

10. [c] He is Peter [Πέτρος] and it is upon this stone/bedrock [ἐπὶ ταύτῃ πέτρᾳ] that Jesus will build his church [μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν].

The building upon the bedrock [πέτρα] is the word used in Matt 7.24 for the wise man who actively does Jesus words and so builds his house upon the bedrock and not on the sand. Here the bedrock are the words of Jesus.

The implication in that parabolic teaching from Jesus was that, anyone who hears Jesus' words and put them into practice was not a foolish builder of his house but a wise builder who built his house [life] upon the bedrock of hearing Jesus' words and practiced them. So a house endured the great shocks that come to it.

Here the exchange between Peter and Jesus is that Peter has uttered words which Jesus makes clear have come to Peter from the Father. And Jesus will take his Father's words, as an obedient householder and build his house. That is, what Jesus will build is his church - the ones he calls out from the world and gathers to Himself. These are the ones who are confessing back to him who He is, on the basis of the revelation of his Father, it is upon these words of men and women Christ's church will be built and will prevail. And even the gates of hell - the collected wisdom and council of the elders of evil at the gates of the city is the image - they will not prevail over the household of God, which is the body of Christ. They "overcame...by the word of their testimony and did not live their lives unto death" [Rev.12.11].

THE FOREWORD OF TORRANCE'S BOOK

Delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary New York as the Warfield Lectures of 1981

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed as the “evangelical and apostolic faith” in the light of the 4th Century eastern Greek fathers is the work of two major councils. One in Nicea and the other at Constantinople.

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed was the fruit of Eastern Catholic theology. It represents the fruit of the Greek fathers as they reached careful expression of the crucial points of the Gospel where it had been misunderstood and distorted due to the influence of dualistic thought derived from Hellenism and Hellenised Judaism.

In this book TFT has

- let the patristic theologians speak for themselves
- has not discussed modern authors
- tried to show the inner coherent structure of classical theology of ancient Church
- while differences arose between Athanasius and the Cappadocia fathers there was a general consensus arrived at at Constantinople in 381 AD.

The first and last chapters are the general aspect of faith and devotion within which the Creed should be approached and understood.

The basic question which confronted the Nicene fathers were:

- The central place of Jesus Christ - was he Lord and God or only a created intermediary between God and man.
- Where was the line of demarcation between God and the creature to be drawn, between God the Father and Jesus Christ or between Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God and the world?

After Nicea [325 AD] the same questions were raised in regard to the Holy Spirit:

- Is the Holy Spirit to be worshipped along with the Father and the Son as himself God?
- Does He have his being with the Son on the divine side of the absolute distinction between the Creator and the creature, or is he to be thought of in terms of immanent forms of rationality in the created universe?

The basic decision made at Nicea

- that in the Godhead, the eternal relation between the Father and the Son was regarded in the Church as the supreme truth upon which everything else in the Gospel depends
- Jesus Christ is the content of what God has actually revealed of his own nature. He is the unique content of God's own self-revelation.
- Everything else about God is grounded on his own nature as revealed in his only begotten Son.
- We can only know God the Father according to his own nature through his Son who shares His own being as God.
- To know Him that way we must enter into a personal, intimate, saving relationship with him in Jesus his incarnate Son.
- We can only draw near to God and have access to Him through the reconciliation to God achieved through the blood of Christ.

- The Son's incarnate reality has been made the supreme principle of all God's ways and works in creation and redemption alike. And so is the controlling principle of our understanding of them.
- The very essence of the Gospel, and the whole of the Christian Faith, depend on the centrality and primacy of the relation in being and agency between Jesus Christ and God the Father.

After Nicaea

[1] Concerning the Father and the incarnate Son

- It became evident that the full humanity of Christ must be stressed as much as his deity.
- If in Jesus Christ, God did not take our actual human nature upon himself, then all that Christ was [being] and did [works] on our behalf is *emptied of its saving content*.
- If He did not assume a human will and mind, as well as a body, then we are unredeemed in the rational essence and wholeness of our human being.

The Incarnation means that He came as man; so both the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ makes him the one mediator between man and God.

- On our human side Jesus Christ acted in our place and in our stead and on our behalf. He ministers not only the things of God to man, but also the things of man to God. His humanity is vicarious.
- This means that he reconciles man with God and does this
 - as God's powerful act of salvation upon our humanity AND
 - vicariously Jesus Christ makes actual in our own human existence a perfect faith, obedience and worship of God. That is, in our response to what God has done from his side, Jesus Christ perfects that response in Himself for us and offers it to God the Father.
 - So, to share in the worship of God the Father, through Jesus Christ belongs to the essence of our reconciliation to God. It is the very substance of the Gospel.

[2] Concerning the Spirit, the Father and the incarnate Son

- It was also clear that stress must be placed how it is "in one Spirit" - as well as through the only begotten Son - *that we share* in the saving, regenerating and sanctifying work that took place in the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and the offering and consecrating of Himself to God the Father.
- However, if the Holy Spirit is no more than a creature of God, and not perfectly and full divine, then our participation has no divine effectiveness and is deprived of any saving reality.
- Further, if the divinity of the Spirit is called into question, so is the divinity of Father and Son. This would mean that baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit is hardly valid.
- So, at Constantinople, when this was seen the clauses in affirmation of the Spirit were added.

What was clear to the Church of the 4th Century was that only as the Gospel was understood in a trinitarian way can we appreciate the New Testament teaching about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and so appreciate the essential nature of our salvation, prayer and worship.

- The central hinge was the oneness of being between Jesus Christ and God the Father.
- In revealing Himself to us as Father, Son and Spirit then we know that what He is in himself is what He has put forward in his historical saving acts for us. Conversely, what he is eternally in Himself as Father, Son and Spirit he is also in his activity towards us through the Son and in the Spirit.

- In considering the movement from God to us, the fathers speak of the activity of God as "from the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit".
- In considering the movement from us to God, the fathers speak of our activity towards God as "in the Spirit, through the Son and to the Father".
- All of this two way movement, from God to us and us to God in response, would fall to pieces if the deity of the Son or the Spirit was called into question.

Here follows a summary of each chapter of the book and these will appear as a basis of each seminar as the appropriate chapter is discussed.

SCRIPTURES USED IN THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY

Use of Scripture in the Arian controversy.

1. All of the parties shared the same exegetical assumptions. eg that Proverbs 8.22 referred to Christ.
2. All regarded the Bible as inerrant as far as it was possible to do so.
3. All sides seem to lack any historical perspective in their application of Scripture. [Gregory of Nazianzus perhaps excluded]. They constantly read the doctrines of their own day into the Scriptures.
4. The Arians were less inclined to use allegory than the pro-Nicenes.
5. The Arians would attempt to reduce the titles given to Christ by showing that they were applicable to others, quite ordinary people or things. eg. 1 Cor 11.7//2 Cor 4.11; the Son = the power of God// so does the locust Joel 2.25LXX and the people Ex 12.44LXX and Ps 46.8. Also, they emphasised the uniqueness of the Father [Roman 16.25, Isaiah 65.16, Jn 17.3, Ex 3.14 and then c/f to the inferior condition of the Son's divinity Jn 17.3, 14.28, Mark 13.32.

Key Texts which repeatedly are dealt with as main issues.

Proverbs 8.22ff.

Did this passage declare plainly that the Son was created?

Did it refer not to the pre-existent Son at all but rather [a] to the human element in the incarnate Son

[b] to the faithful who become his body

[c] some innate power within the Godhead and not to the Son?

Amos 4.12-13

Does it mean that the Holy Spirit is actually created?

Does it refer to the wind as created?

or to men who have become spirit?

or those renewed by the Spirit?

or to the spirit of the Jews?

Is "declaring to men their Christ" the right translation: or shall we, with Didymus "declaring to men their discourse".

Isaiah 53.8

"His generation who shall declare?"

Arians used this text to negate attempts to define the Son's generation in terms of ousia and its cognates.

Arians used it to show that the Son's generation was later than the Father's being; whilst at the same time accusing the Pro Nicenes of saying that the Son is unknowable. The reply of the Nicenes was "not unknowable, but incomprehensible".

Pro-Nicenes used it to show that the generation of the Son had no beginning.

Psalm 45 [44]; 7-8

Arians: proved that God the Father was the God of God the Son: one of their favourite teachings. It showed, in their view, the inferiority of Christ in that he was anointed by the Father, and exalted by virtue of his good life.

Pro-Nicenes countered with texts from John's gospel which found Christ acknowledging the Father's paternal authority, and that as a man.

Psalm 110: 1 and 3

"The Lord said to my Lord" indicated that the Father and the Son were two distinct hypostases. Both sides used it for this purpose.

Verse 3 used in different translations. The Hebrew text runs into English as "From the womb of the morning like dew your youth will run to you"; but the LXX used a strange mistranslation "from the belly before the morning star I have begotten thee".

The Arians used it to show the production of the pre-existent of the Son; reading it to imply that at some time in the past he had a beginning.

Gospel of John:

Was the chief resource of the pro-Nicenes; whilst the Arians found much in the Synoptic Gospels [making much of the fact that Christ was weak, fearful or ignorant Mark 10.18 used much; 13.32, **Mtt 20.23**].

John 1.1

Used by the pro-Nicenes mainly, but even Eusebius of Caesarea used it to express his doctrine of the Logos before the outbreak of the dispute.

Arians "He Who is" cannot be "with" He who is.

John 10.30

Pro-Nicenes: supportive of unity of hypostases.

Arians: moral unity of consent and will [Asterius]

John 14.9-10

Athanasius saw behind the ontological unity the unity of revelation. Arian theology was weakest here; it could allow that God suffered but not that the God who suffered was the full revelation of the higher God.

John 14.28

Arians used this much to show the inferiority of the Son. Marcellus, the first pro-Nicene to apply the text to the incarnate and not to the pre-existent Logos; Athanasius and Hilary follow his example. Basil using Phil 2.6 refers the verse to the incarnate Word.

John 17.3

Arians used this text strongly. The Logos was certainly God but not true God. Athanasius and Hilary refer to an array of texts which shows that Christ is true God [Jn 14.6, 1 John 5.20]; Gregory of Nyssa uses Romans 16.27, 1 Tim 1.17, 6.16 arguing that to accept Jn 17.3 in an Arian way deprives these other texts of meaning.

John 20.17

The Father is the God of the Son, was the later Arian cry always and they used this text to show it again.

The pro-Nicenes reply in this way: God the Father is the God of Jesus Christ as man; but of Jesus Christ as God He was Father in a different and pre-eminent way, by divine generation.

1 Corinthians 15.28

Pro-Nicenes were in a difficult place here. On the one hand, they wanted to avoid appearing to favour Marcellus' idea that the Son's humanity would disappear and the Logos would revert to unity with the Father at the handing back of the kingdom to the Father. On the other hand, they must not give in to the Arian insistence that the Son is permanently and by constitution inferior to the Father.

Athanasius produces proof texts:

[1] for the divinity of the Son: Romans 9.5,

[2] for the eternal pre-existence of the logos Romans 1.20, 1 Cor 1.24, Isaiah 40.28, Ps90[89]. 17,36.10, 145.13.

[3] testimonies to Christ's Godhead OT Gn 19.24 [two Lords in heaven] Ps 110.1,45.6,145.13 NT Jn 6.15,17.10,1.1,Rev 1.8, Jn 8.12,1.3,5.19, Romans 1.20, 1 Cor 8.6, Heb 1.6,Mk 4.11,Mtt 24.31,Jn 5.23, Phil 2.6.

Hilary produces proof texts:

[1] against Sabellianism [the refusal to acknowledge the distinct existence of the Persons of the Godhead] are Mtt 17.5, Jn 14.28,12,11.41, 17.5, Mtt 16.16

[2] for the distinct existence of the Son as seen in the OT he gives us Ps 45.7,Isaiah 43.10,Hosea 1.6-7,Psalm 2.8, Isaiah 45.11ff

[3] for the Son's birth from the Father Jn 10.30, 14.7-12

Basil is a little more careful:

[1] consubstantiality of the Son Jn 6.27, 1.15,Phil 2.6, Jn 14.19,17.10,5.26, Heb 1.3

[2] function and divinity of the holy Spirit he gives us Ps 33.6, Job 33.4, Isaiah 48.16,Ps 139.7, Rom 8.11,15, Mtt 23.10, Jn 1.12,10.27,14.26, 1 Cor 12.4-6, 2.10-11, Acts 21.11, 1 TIm 6.13,

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