

"We believe in one God the Father Almighty...and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God...And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life."

Here is the summary of this chapter taken from the Foreword.

In the final chapter an attempt is made to draw together the various emphases within the Church as they reached a general consensus on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as 'one Being, three Persons'. Attention is first given to Athanasius' conception of the Triunity of God as Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity. For him theology in its deepest sense as the knowledge and worship of God was identified with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The key to the Triunity of God he found in the Nicene *homoousion* (ὁμοούσιον) which pointed to eternal consubstantial relations within the Trinity and thus to the consubstantiality of the Trinity as a whole. It was he who developed the doctrine of completely interpenetrating or co-indwelling relations between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, which was later called the doctrine of divine coinherence. This carried with it a revised conception of *ousia* (οὐσία) as being considered in its internal relations, and of *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις) as being considered in its objective inter-relations. It was in that sense that he accepted the formula 'one Being, three Persons', which carried with it a doctrine of the *Monarchia* (Μοναρχία) as identical with the one indivisible being of the Holy Trinity. Attention is then given to the Cappadocian contribution to the doctrine of the Trinity, notably to the greater emphasis given by Basil to the distinguishing properties of the three divine Persons, and his attempt to preserve the unity of the Trinity by referring the particular modes of being of the Son and the Spirit to the Person of the Father, which operated with an abstract generic notion of God's being. The reservations of Gregory Nazianzen about the subordinationist implications of this approach led him to move back closer to Athanasius, but with a doctrine of eternally subsistent relations within the Holy Trinity which deepened and strengthened the Athanasian conception of the Triunity of God.

Didymus, who stood closer to Basil, moved away from Nicene formulation, Epiphanius offered a powerful development of that Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity, or the consubstantial unity of three perfect co-equal enhypostatic Persons in the one indivisible being of the Godhead. It was this Athanasian and Epiphanian doctrine of God that provided the foundation on which the Nicene-Constantinopolitan understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Triunity of God was brought to firm theological expression.

Chapter 8 - The Triunity of God

The general consensus

Athanasius - Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity
Key to the knowledge and worship of God

Key found in the ὁμοούσιον - the consubstantial relations within the Trinity and so to the consubstantiality of the Trinity as a whole

Divine coinherence implied οὐσία as being considered in the internal relations
ὑπόστασις considered in its objective inter-relations

Cappadocian fathers -

Basil - distinguished properties of the three divine Persons
-modes of being of the Son and Spirit in relation to the Father

-Gregory Nazianzen
-thought this had subordinationist tendencies

Didymus

Epiphanius - three perfect co-equal enhypostatic persons in one indivisible Godhead.

Cyril

1-ATHANASIOS

"There is one eternal Godhead in Trinity, and there is one Glory of the

Holy Trinity...If theological truth is now perfect in Trinity, this is the true and only divine worship, and this is its beauty and truth, it must have been always so"

Athanasius: Contra Arianos 1.18.

"There is one Form of Godhead, which is also in the Word; and one God the Father, existing in himself as he transcends all things, and manifest in the Son as he pervades all things, and in the Spirit as in him he acts in all things through the Word.

Thus we confess God to be one though the Trinity, and claim that our understanding of the one Godhead in Trinity is much more godly than the heretics' conception of Godhead with its many forms and its many parts"

Athanasius: Contra Arianos 3.15

[1] These words take us to the very heart of [a] the Christian belief in God and [b] worship of him as triune. Since there is only one Form of Godhead in the indivisible unity of his revelation as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we believe that he is eternally triune in himself. It is through the Trinity that we believe in the Unity of God. This is theology [θεολογία] in the deepest sense.

[2] Athanasius approached the knowledge of God strictly through the Son, and not otherwise. He certainly would not start on the creaturely side of the equation as Arius did.

The Son is different from [ἐτέρος] the Father, but as the Offspring of the Father's being and homoousios with him, the Deity of the Son and the Deity of the Father are one and the same.

[3] True knowledge of God is knowledge of him as he is intrinsically Father and Son in his own being. The Form of the Godhead of the Father is the being of the Son, it follows that the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son.

"How can you say "Show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words which I am speaking to you, I am not speaking from myself; the Father residing/abiding in me is working his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me...John 14.9b-11a db translation

Athanasius understood this text to

- show the identity of the Godhead
- show the oneness of the being.
- They are two, for the Father is the Father and not the Son, and the Son is the Son and not the also Father
- But, the nature is one and all that is the Father's is the Son's also.

τουτο φρονειτε εν υμιν ο και εν Χριστω Ιησου, ος εν μορφη θεου υπαρχων
... Let this mind be among/in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God....[Philippians 2.5] db

[a] Since the Son is the Father's Image, we are required to understand that the Godhead and propriety [ἡ ἰδιότης] of the Father is the being the Son. This is the meaning of the above expressions 'being in the form of God' and 'the Father is in me'.

[b] Neither is the "form of God" a partial matter; but it is the fulness of the Father's being that is the being of the Son. For the propriety of the Father's being is the Son and the form of the Father's Godhead is the Son.

db The use of this word 'propriety', which is now a fairly unused word in modern speech, speaks of a being proper to a person. It points to what is his ownness; what is his nature.

[4] In his thinking, Athanasius started

[i] with the revelation and the saving acts of God done in the 'incarnate presence' of his only begotten Son in Jesus Christ.

[ii] Then he moved through the "of one being with the Father" [homoousios]

[iii] to the ultimate ground in the eternal relations and distinctions within the one "being" of the Godhead.

Step [ii] in this procedure of thinking was the 'controlling centre' of his thought and formed the bridge between [i] and [iii]. For, on the one hand, it gave a clear account of the oneness of being between the incarnate Son and the Father, upon which everything in the Gospel depended. On the other hand, at the same time it carried within it the conception of the inherent relations within the one being of God to which the 'saving economy' pointed and upon which they were grounded.

The co-inherence of the Trinity, although not a word that Athanasius used, spoke of the idea that

"three divine Persons who, while retaining their distinct existence and condition, 'reciprocally contain one another, so that one permanently envelops, and is also permanently enveloped by, the other, whom yet he envelopes" See TFT footnote 12, page 305.

[5] This Christological understanding of the Holy Trinity was clearly used in Letters to Serapion, [Ad Serapionem] the Bishop of Thmuis in 356-61. The SemiArians had rejected the Deity of the Holy Spirit on the ground that he was a different being [ἐτερούσιος] from the Father and the Son. this threatened the integrity of baptism since it tore apart the Unity of God. Athanasius answered along the same line he had used concerning the Father and the Son.

[i] As we take our knowledge of the Father from the Son, so we take our knowledge of the Spirit from our knowledge of the Son, and in Him from the knowledge of the Father - that is, from the inner relations of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, which the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit had with one another in the one indivisible being of the Trinity.

[ii] If the Holy Spirit is a creature, then the substance drops out of the Gospel.

Athanasius showed that

[a] the same things said of the Son are said of the Father

[b] the Son and the Father co-inhere in one another [for the Son is of the same being as the Father]

[c] It is on this inner, divine basis - and not a creaturely basis, external to God - that the life and work of the incarnate Son are to be understood.

[d] having fulfilled his human economy, the incarnate Son now sits at the right hand of the Father, being in the Father and the Father in him, as always was and is forever. [It was no transient matter- but eternally so.]

In this way the homoousion was the point of reference for understanding God's self-revelation, from the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit, and of the eternal oneness of God in the Holy Trinity.

[iii] This is the basis on which we understand the mission of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the gift of the Holy Spirit by the Son.

[6] The doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

In the 3rd and 4th letters to Serapion, Athanasius took up two sections from John's Gospel.

26 ¶ "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning. John 15:26-7 NASB 1960

13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.

15 "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you. John 16.13-15 NASB

Athanasius said that:

[a] The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father [παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται] and belonging to the Son is given from him to the disciples and all who believe on him.

[b] The Holy Spirit 'receives from [ἐκ] the Father and gives.

[c] The Spirit also receives from [ἐκ] the Son.

[d] If the Son is of [ἐκ] the Father and is proper to his being, the Spirit who is said to be of God must be proper to the Son in respect of his being. So the Spirit is not foreign to the Godhead.

So, while it is ultimately from the Father that the Holy Spirit proceeds, it is due to his proper relation to the Son that he is given from him to all.

The revision of the terms οὐσία and ὑπόστασις as they were used at the Council called by Athanasius in 362 found expression in the formula 'one οὐσία, three ὑπόστασεις.

The expression ὑπόστασις lays stress on the concrete independence. It expresses a reality towards others [*ad alios*]. It also is used to denote God as manifest or showing himself.

Whereas the expression οὐσία stresses the intrinsic constitution. It speaks of the reality with regard to itself [*in se*] and connotes God as being.

db What we have to remember here is that such words as 'being' can be used in the simplest and common sense of something that subsists/ exists of itself. This common usage of the word had to be changed when used in respect of God. For we are not simply saying that God "exists" and has 'being' and so giving that a meaning that it has for us as creatures.

For God's own self-revelation is far beyond all created being, and He alone is being in the strict sense. He is the only One who really and truly "is".

So, there needed to be a revised understanding of these terms:

"when associated with God's self-revelation in three distinct objective ὑπόστασεις as Father Son and Holy Spirit, οὐσία signifies the one eternal being of God in the indivisible reality and fullness of his intrinsic personal relation as the Holy Trinity." TFT p.311

And, we need to remember that for Athanasius, when he spoke of the being of God that the concept of Trinity was already embedded in the homoousion.

Through the Trinity then, Athanasius believed in the Unity of God as being one [μονάρχια]. Since the Father and the Son cannot be thought of except as co inhering in each other. So the one ἀρχή is identical with the Trinity.

2 - BASIL OF CAESAREA, GREGORY NAZIANZEN, GREGORY OF NYSSA

[1] Turning from Athanasius to **Basil**, we see a different approach. Basil's theological motivation came not so much from soteriological and ontological convictions as from a spiritual and moral ideas. Following Origen, he was really interested in how the Christian life was transformed by God's energy and his deifying activity [making us like the Son] through the Holy Spirit.

[2] His thinking was concerned to undergird the baptism in the one name of Father Son and Holy Spirit; paying attention how the Holy Spirit must be numbered with the Father and the Son.

[3] He made clear that the Holy Spirit was inseparably, although distinctively Creator with the Father and the Son in being the one Cause of all that is. The Holy Spirit is indivisibly linked to and comes from the communion [κοινωνία] of the Father and the Son. In this way He is the immediate Source of our communion with the Holy Trinity.

[4] The Letters of Basil opened up more of his thought in relation to the Holy Trinity as “Three Persons and one Being”. Although in full agreement with the Council of Nicaea, he thought that

- the defence of the Nicene theology needed a clear distinction to be made between the terms οὐσία and ὑπόστασις. This was so for the identity of these terms could be used by the Sabellians [👤, p.33] and the Eunomians [👤, p.77] in support of their heretical ideas.

- Consequently, Basil

[a] distinguished οὐσία from ὑπόστασις by relating them to one another as the general to the particular on two different levels

[b] distinguished the three ὑπόστασις from one another on

[i] one and the same level in accordance with their peculiar modes of existence [τρόποι ὑπάρξεως] and

[ii] particular characteristics, their Paternity, Sonship and Sanctity

Basil's brother **Gregory** [of Nyssa] resorted to more Athanasian language to state how the three divine Persons are inwardly and inseparably interrelated.

“All that is seen in the Father is seen in the Son, and all that is the Son's is the Father's, since the whole Son dwells in the Father and on his part has the whole Father Father in himself. Wherefore the Person ὑπόστασις of the Son is, as it were, Form and Face μορφή καὶ πρόσωπον of the knowledge of the Father; and the Person ὑπόστασις of the Father is known as the Form μορφή of the Son, while the particularities ἰδιότῃα contemplated in them are due to the clear distinction of their Persons [ὑπόστασις].” Gregory Ep.38.8

The effect of Basil wanting to treat οὐσία as an abstract general term is that tended to equate it with φύσις [nature] common to the three Persons. This change is at the expense of the more personal concrete understanding of οὐσία used to refer to intrinsic inner relations.

When we put this with Basil's distinction between the transcendent being of God as quite unknowable, and the divine energies by which He reveals himself to us we find Basil's thought

[a] is moving towards shifting the weight of emphasis from identity of being to equality between Persons

[b] and transferring the element of concreteness in the doctrine of God almost entirely on to differentiating particularities of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3 - GREGORY NAZIANZEN

We had noted earlier in these notes, [👤, p.74-76] relating to TFT's sixth chapter, that the Cappadocian fathers had, in trying to answer the charge of Tritheism [three gods], attempted to defend the unity of God by anchoring it in Father as the principle Cause αἰτία or Origin ἀρχή of the Son and the Spirit. The trouble with this was that it:

[a] established a hierarchy in the Godhead through a chain of dependence on the Father.

[b] led on to assert that the Son and the Spirit owe their existence to the Person [ὑπόστασις] of the Father. [This smacks of Subordinationism - Origen]

[c] clearly affected the doctrine of the procession of the Spirit. He is seen to be known after and with the Son, and that he derives his subsistence from the Father.

In this light we find both Gregories worried. Gregory Nazianzen stated that Father is not a name for being [οὐσία] but of the relation [σχέσις] that the Father bears to the Son, or the Son has with the Father.

“The Godhead is one in three, and the three are one, in whom the Godhead is, or to be more precise, Who are the Godhead” Gregory Naz. Orat, 39.11

"When you read 'I and the Father are one', keep before your eyes the oneness of being [οὐσία]; but when you see 'We will come to him and dwell with him', remember the distinction of πρόσωπα; and when you see the names, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, think of the three ὑπόστασεις." Gregory Naz. 34.13

For Gregory Nazianzen to subordinate any of the three divine Person to on another was to overthrow the doctrine the Trinity. So, he clarified in these debates that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit must be thought of as relations [σχέσις] and substantially subsisting in God which are strictly before all time [ἀχρόνος], beyond all origin [ἀνάρξις] and beyond all cause [ἀναιτίως]. [He avoided altogether Basil's terms τρόπος ὑπάρξεως [modes of existence].

Here we are given a more dynamic and satisfactory view of the Trinity of God than that of the other Cappadocians, for the Μοναρχία is not limited to the one Person of the Father; it is a Unity constituted in and by the Trinity. This means that the Trinity as a whole must be thought of as the one divine Principle or ἀρχή. And there is no partition of the being οὐσία.

[Gregory Nazianzen's concept of subsistent relations within the Trinity came with his hint of an analogy of Mind Word and Spirit as one kindred Deity. Augustine De Trinitate later developed this].

So Gregory thought of the Holy Spirit as proceeding [ἐκπόρευσις].

"...He issues from the Father not as a son, nor an offspring, but by way of procession; which is an altogether unique and ineffable way in accord with his distinctive nature of Person as he who is intrinsically Holy and indeed Holiness Himself." Greg Naz. Or 25.16, 29.2ff; 31.8ff

4 - DIDYMUS OF ALEXANDRIA

Applying the ὁμόουσιον to the Trinity as a whole, Didymus held that the three ὑπόστασεις are wholly alone and perfectly equal in power and honour, for the Father is not greater than the Son, so we find that in the Holy Scriptures each may be mentioned first.

The Father is in Himself the whole divine nature, but this is true of the son and also of the Holy Spirit. The Godhead is intrinsically a Unity in Trinity and a Trinity in Unity.

To combat a Sabellian unipersonalism [there is really only one person, who keeps adopting three different modes of appearance/existence]; Didymus stressed, similar to Gregory Nazianzen, the distinctive, peculiar characteristics of the three Persons [ὑπόστασεις] and their inter-personal relations [σχέσις] in the one Being of God.

He thought of the Holy Spirit, along with the Son, as 'enhypostatic' [👤, p.67,73,101] reality who, while dwelling eternally in God, is directly present among us in his own being, and personally subsists in all God's self-giving to us in such a way that in him the Gift and the Giver are identical.

He thought of the Holy Spirit deriving consubstantially and eternally from the Person of the Father and of the Person of the Son. He wants it to be clear that our experience of the Holy Spirit and our filial relation to the Father through the Son are inseparably associated. Here, alas, he begins to blur the Unity of the Trinity in the same way that we saw in Basil because he reverts to the Father as, not so much a Cause, but in that the Spirit and the Son derive their peculiar properties from the Father with respect to their mode of their hypostatic differentiation within the one being of the Godhead.

5- EPIPHANIUS, BISHOP OF SALAMIS AND THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Epiphanius is the clarifier of the trends we have been examining. He was a Jewish-Christian theologian with a strong slant, which related the "I am" of God to the one Being of God that Scriptures spoke about. He thought into each one of the Trinity the ideas of πρόσωπον face, ὄνομα name and ὑπόστασις differentiated Personal being.

Epiphanius made clear:

[a] that the Nicene ὁμοούσιον implies a real distinction of Persons in God for one Person cannot be ὁμοούσιον with himself.

[b] So he readily accepted the formula μία οὐσία, τρεῖς ὑπόστασεις. Although he did not understand οὐσία in the way Basil did - as a generic term - but the way Athanasius did, as expressing the being of God in the internal relations and as having concrete personal meaning.

[c] Unlike Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Amphilochius, he did not speak of the divine Persons as 'modes of existence' but as 'enhypostatic' - [■, p.67.73] as having real, objective personal being in God and as co-inhering consubstantially and hypostatically in him. This way of applying the [homoousios] to the Trinity as a whole had already been done by Athanasius [Ad. Serapion 1.27; Contra Arianis 1.9].

[d] This strengthened appreciation of the notion of coinherence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit meant that Epiphanius could speak of the Holy Spirit as 'in the midst [ἐν μεσῷ] of the Father and the Son'.

[e] He made clear that he would not have

[i] subordinationist ideas applied to the Persons of the Trinity and also was

[ii] Arian ideas: he was insistent that there never was a time when the Holy Spirit was not.

[iii] partitive thinking either as He is in Himself or as He is towards us. The Gift and the Giver are one and the same. There is only one grace and one Spirit. God is present in all his acts of creating, revealing, healing, enlightening and sanctifying.

[iv] the Cappadocian way of tracing back the source of Being of God to one Person.

"In proclaiming the divine μοναρχία we do not err, but confess the Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, one Godhead of Father, Son and Holy spirit. The Son did not beget himself, neither does the Father cease to be Father in order to be Son, nor does the Holy Spirit ever name himself Christ. But he is the Spirit of Christ who is given through Christ, who proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son. The Father is enhypostatic, the Son is enhypostatic, and the Holy Spirit is enhypostatic, but there is no confounding of them, as Sabellius thought, nor is there any change in their eternity and glory, as Arius vainly declared, for the Trinity is always Trinity, without any addition, one Godhead, one Lordship, one Doxology, yet numbered a Trinity, Father Son and Holy Spirit." Epiphanius Haer. 62.3; 62.4-7

The procession of the Spirit

Athanasius had made it clear that the Spirit is ever in the hands of Father who sends and of the Son who gives him as his very own, and from whom the Spirit on his part receives.

Since the Holy Spirit is God he proceeds from the very being of God inseparably from and through the Son.

Epiphanius thought of the Holy Spirit as

[i] not only having his personal subsistence 'out of the Father through the Son'

[ii] but also as out of the same being, out of the same Godhead.

So the Holy Spirit may be said to proceed, as Light from Light, from both the Father and the Son. This was the way that Epiphanius filled out the Athanasian statement that 'the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son'. Yet he does this in such a way that the

distinct enhypostatic realities and distinct properties of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit always remain the same in the perfect equality and consubstantiality of the Holy Trinity.

It was the Athanasian development of Nicene theology through Epiphanius that proved decisive at the Council of Constantinople and later at the Council of Chalcedon 451.

Our sources for what Constantinople accomplished

The Tome sent out in support of the Council of Constantinople is no longer with us.

We do have

[1] the official text of the Council of Chalcedon 451.

[2] The interchange of Synodical Letter between Eastern and Western bishops following the Council in 382.

[3] Confession of the Catholic Faith put out as the Encyclical of Damasus of Rome against the Macedonian and Apollinarian heresies.

[4] We do have the Oration of Gregory Nazianzen when he resigned as Archbishop of Constantinople and President of the Council.

Damasus' Encyclical of the Western Synod

The Trinitarian structure remained the same as Nicaea.

"According to this faith there is one Godhead, power and being of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, equal in honour and dignity and coeternal sovereignty in three most perfect hypostases, that is in three perfect Persons"

"...there is no room for the Sabellian disease in confounding the hypostases or doing away with their properties, and no force left to the blasphemy of the Eunomians and Arians, and of the Pneumatomachians, which divides the being, nature or Godhead, and imposes on the uncreated, consubstantial, coeternal Trinity some nature subsequently generated, created and of a different substance. And we preserve inviolate the doctrine of the incarnation of the Lord, keeping to the tradition that the economy of the flesh was neither without soul or mind nor imperfect, for we are fully aware that God's Word was perfect before all ages, and became perfect man in the last days for our salvation."

This language;

[1] reflects the teaching of Epiphanius and of Epiphanius and Gregory Nazianzen

[2] shows no acceptance of the Cappadocian ideas of the Unity of God grounded in the Person of the Father, and there is a return to the Athanasian conception of the Trinity.

[3] demonstrates that the Council of Constantinople accepted the distinction between one Being and three Persons. It did not take the one being in the generic sense of the Cappadocians, who were present at the Council.

[4] Rather, its understanding of οὐσία and ὑπόστασις or πρόσωπα went with the Athanasian and Epiphanian concrete personal meaning.

Concerning the Holy Spirit

What we learn from Damasus is helpful about the Holy Spirit.

[1] The express the belief in the Holy Spirit in a way corresponding to those about belief in the generation of the Son 'from the Father' and his indivisible oneness with the Father.

[2] Concerning the Son, the Council omitted the clause 'from the being of the Father'. This cut out the excuse for any equivocation of the Arius and the Eusebians.

[3] The Holy Spirit proceeds from the being of the Father. But did not speak of the Holy Spirit as homoousios however.

[4] Holy Spirit is affirmed as of the same Godhead, power and being as the Father and coequal with him and the Son in honour and dignity and sovereignty.

[5] Damasus' document, taken from Theodorus' Greek text, speaks of the Holy Spirit as of one and the same being as the Father and the Son.

[6] Far from being a creature the Holy Spirit is the Creator along with the Father and the Son.

[7] Echoing the Encyclical from Constantinople, Damasus wrote:

"This is the salvation of Christians, that believing in the Trinity, that is in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and being baptised into it, we may indubitably believe the Trinity to have the same one true Godhead and power, majesty and substance".

[8] At the Council of Constantinople the Triunity of God, "one Being, three Persons" was totally recognised and accepted by both Western and Eastern groups alike.

The re-definition of οὐσία as a generic concept, abstracted from the Godhead, meant that there was a loss of the realistic sense as applied to God Himself. So, we cannot relate what God is towards us in his economic self-revelation and self-giving to whatever he is in himself.

db The issue here, as we have seen earlier, is that if you speak of being in a creaturely way, then you may simply imply existence, and further, we mean 'being' in a way that a creature comes into existence out of nothing. So it is very difficult to think generically, as an abstract concept, of 'being' without these creaturely ideas being projected onto it. So a confusion sets in to its use; and there is ground for misunderstanding. With the Godhead however, when we speak of the three Persons as homoiouios - of the same being - we mean that they have the very Being of God which is the being appropriate to Him. So we mean a being that "is as it always was, so it now is; as it is now, so it always was". When TFT means that this generic idea is an idea of 'being' that 'loses its realistic sense', he means that the word 'being', when applied to God, is no longer attached to the realities of which it is being used to speak about.

This was the danger in Basil's distinction between divine 'being' and divine 'energies'. Notice the footnote 160 on page 336 where TFT shows where this went later in Pseudo Dionysius.

Double procession of the Holy Spirit - the filioque clause

Basil, in steering between the unipersonalism of the Sabellians and Tritheism of Eunomians had grounded the Unity of the Godhead in the Father [👤, p.74-76]. This now led to a divide between East and West. For the Eastern idea, wanting to preserve the monarchy of the Trinity, meant that the idea was stated that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Person of the Father - and so by implication the Father only. Western theologians, if they were to believe in the Holy Spirit as 'true God of true God' - as they did of the incarnate Son - were constrained to add that the Holy Spirit proceeds 'from the Son' also.

TFT wonders how such a misunderstanding should have flourished in the light of the Nicene and Athanasian doctrine of the procession of the Son from the being of God the Father.

Cappadocian contribution

The Cappadocian fathers, when Athanasius was no longer alive, were the means of securing the understanding of the Nicene faith as a triumph for the Church. They:

[1] steered a middle path between the Sabellian and Arian deviations to bring about the consensus concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, which arose from the Lord's teaching about baptism.

[2] They concentrated thought on "one οὐσία and three ὑποστάσεις so as to bring out the objective particularities and personal characteristics of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in their dynamic unity and community with one another.

[3] In centralising the concept of divine unity in the Father - while we have seen the dangers of that - it nevertheless intensified personal relationships with God the Father in worship.

[4] Gregory Nazianzen's teaching, in particular about the Fatherhood, Sonship and Procession as being dynamic and objective relations, subsisting in the one being of the Godhead, combined with the Athanasian idea of the mutual indwelling of the three divine Persons, led to a rich doctrine of co-inherence.

Cyril of Alexandria

[1] would have nothing to do with the generic concept of the divine *ousia*.

[2] He backed up Gregory Nazianzen's teaching on the hypostatic relations in the Godhead, and Athanasius' teaching of mutual indwelling. [See Cappadocians [4] immediately above].

[3] Cyril held the principle that 'the Son has all that the Father has except being called 'Father''. He held firmly that when the Father is said to be greater than the Son it was to be 'economically' understood; so he left no room for Subordinationism in the Holy Trinity.

[4] What was said in [2] above, governed Cyril's understanding of the procession of the Holy Spirit "from the Father through the Son". Everything here, for Cyril, depended upon the truth that the three divine Persons inhere inseparably in one another and are of one and the same being and nature. So he said,

"As the Spirit is of God, of the Father and of the Son, he derives substantially from both, proceeding from the Father through the Son" Cyril De amor. MPG 68.148

[5] He thought of the historical mission of the Spirit from the incarnate Son and the eternal procession of the Spirit from the one being of God as linked. For in the sending of the Spirit out of his own fullness he sent him as he who is eternally his own and in consubstantially and naturally one with him in the Godhead of the Holy Trinity.

[6] Cyril would not back the Cappadocian way of resolving the issues of tritheistic division or Sabellian confusion between the divine *ὑποστάσεις* through the use of a consecutive causal hierarchic structure in the trinitarian relations of the Godhead. So his statement that the procession of the Holy Spirit

[a] "from the Father and the Son" cannot be interpreted as the same as the Western *filioque*.

[b] nor his expression "from the Father through the Son" be seen as an agreement with Basil and his brother Gregory that the Spirit derives his being from the being of the Son, and through him from the being of the Father.

"Cyril's conception of the interrelation of the three perfect, coequal, coeternal, enhypostatic Persons through their wholly reciprocal indwelling and containing of one another, in which they are inconfusedly united and inseparably distinguished, was very different, for it carried within it the combined notion of μία οὐσία and μία ἀρχή. Thus 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, power and sovereignty, of the Consubstantial Trinity, perfectly expressed in each divine Person." TFT [1988] p.340

