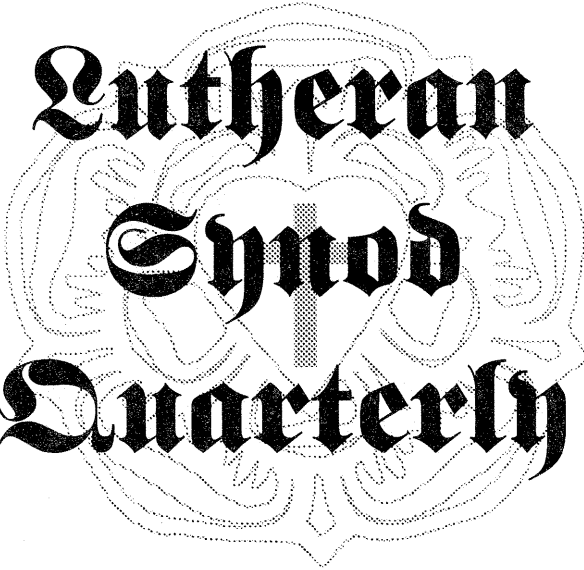


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Quarterly

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Foreword

By: President Wilhelm W. Petersen

This issue begins with the first part of Pastor Gaylin Schmelting's dissertation on *The Lord's Supper in Augustine and Chemnitz*, written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for his STM degree. It contains interesting information about Augustine's early life as found in his *Confessions*, as well as a thorough treatment of his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Augustine is especially remembered for his defense of the doctrine of original sin against Pelagius. He is also known for his classic statement, as quoted in our Lutheran Confessions, namely, "*Accedit verbum ad elementum fit sacramentum*," as it applies to the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is his exposition of the latter that is the focus of this article. The Reverend Schmelting is pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Okauchee, Wisconsin.

Also included in this issue is an exegetical study of the use of *λόγος* among the early Eastern church fathers. According to the exegete his purpose is "to explore the doctrine of the preexistence of the Son of God in pursuit of defining His eternal generation as well as what *λόγος* implies about the character of the Son." He shows that while the early Church clearly confesses the preexistence of the *λόγος* in the Nicene Creed, it is also thoroughly discussed in the theological writings of the early church fathers. This study by Jon Bruss was presented in partial fulfillment of his Master of Divinity degree at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. The second section of this study will be presented in a subsequent issue.

We conclude with a sermon by Pastor Daniel Sabrowsky, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Windsor, California, delivered to the 1993 graduating class of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

We also take this opportunity to wish our readers a blessed Epiphany and a truly happy, healthy, and faith-strengthening new year in the precious Name of the Christ Child in whom alone we have lasting peace and joy.

Augustine and the Lord's Supper

By: Gaylin R. Schmeling

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Nashotah House
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology
April 1993

The Life of Augustine of Hippo (354 AD – 430 AD)

• Augustine's Early Life and Conversion

At the Easter Vigil in 387 Augustine was baptized. He did not come to that moment easily. Most of his years to that point had been a struggle between belief and unbelief. But, finally he was graciously gripped by the arms of the crucified and risen Christ. Of this struggle he wrote, "You stimulate him to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they can find peace in you" (Augustine, *Confessions*, 1, 1 trans. Warner, 17). His whole life from then on — as well as the life of the whole Western Church — was influenced by the splashing baptismal water of that moment.

Augustine was born to a Christian mother (Monica) and a pagan father in 354 at Tagaste, a small town in modern day Algeria. The main source for our knowledge of his youth and his conversion is his *Confessions*, a spiritual autobiography in which he shows how God guided his life in spite of his rebellion and unbelief. Influenced by his Christian mother, young Augustine was enrolled as a candidate for Baptism, but due to his lack of spiritual inclination, he went no further. At the age of seventeen he went to Carthage to study rhetoric. Here he read Cicero's *Hortensius* which led him in a search for truth. This search for truth led young Augustine not to the orthodox Christian faith, but rather to Manicæism.[†] His fascination with Manicæism cooled when Faustus, one of the leading

[†] See: *Augustine's Struggle Against Manicæism*, below.

Manicæan teachers, was unable to put his anxieties concerning the sect to rest.

In 383, fed up with the rowdy students at Carthage, Augustine decided to go to Rome where he lost his faith in Manicæism and became an enthusiastic Neo-platonist. Neo-platonism would be an influence in his life even after he became a Christian, so much so that some have held that he was more a Neo-platonist than a Christian. This view, however, is an extreme one. He became a Christian through and through, but he often expressed his Christianity in Neo-platonic categories. Neo-platonism removed the two main hurdles that stood in the way of his intellectual acceptance of the Christian faith — the incorporeal nature of God and the existence of evil. Neo-platonism provided Augustine with a means of understanding the incorporeal nature of God and a way of explaining the existence of evil without having recourse to dualism as was the case with Manicæism. From Neo-platonism he came to understand evil not as a nature or as a something. It is not a creature, rather evil is only a negation of good (Gonzalez, 21).

After being in Rome for a time, he was appointed to the post of public teacher of rhetoric at Milan. Here he came under the influence of Ambrose's preaching. While Augustine did not find the reserved Ambrose very approachable, he found a spiritual father in the church elder, Simplicianus, who had also greatly helped Ambrose. Augustine's conversion is dated in September of the year 386. While he walked in the garden of Villa Cassiciacum, not far from Milan, amidst violent struggles of mind and heart, he heard a child's voice saying, "Take it and read it," which led him into St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (13:13 – 14; Augustine, *Confessions*, 8, 12 trans. Warner, 182). Augustine said that at that point the light flooded in and all the difficulties in accepting Christ were ended. On Holy Saturday in 387 he was baptized with his friend, Alypius, and his son, Adeodatus, to the great joy of his mother who had recently joined him from Africa and who died shortly after this.

- **Augustine's Struggle Against Manicæism**

In 391, Bishop Valerius of Hippo constrained Augustine to become a priest. Four years later he was consecrated as Valerius' coadjutor bishop and succeeded him as bishop shortly thereafter. While bishop of Hippo, his church was beset by a number of different heresies as has been the case in the church in every age. From the beginning of his ministry until around 400 he was on the offensive against Manicæism, the sect to which he himself had once belonged.

Manicæism, founded by Mani, was essentially eclectic, drawing elements from at least three religions. From Zoroastrianism of Mani's native Persia came dualism which was the foundation of his doctrine, from Buddhism came the belief in reincarnation, and from Christianity the reverence for the name, Jesus, whose apostle Mani claimed to be. Like Gnosticism, Manicæism taught that the human soul was part of the divine substance and must be returned to it in order to fulfill its destiny. In this life the soul endures frightful anguish as a result of its union with matter, the principle of evil. Salvation then is the liberation of the human spirit from the bonds of matter. Augustine fought against Manicæism upholding the goodness of God's creation (Bonner, 157 – 192).

- **Augustine's Struggle Against Donatism**

For the next twelve years of his life (after 400) Augustine's efforts intensified in the controversy with Donatism. The Donatists were orthodox in their teachings, but they did not recognize the Catholic Church (the official church). They separated themselves from it because of the ordination of Caecilian as bishop of Carthage. The Donatists claimed that Caecilian's ordination was invalid since one of the individuals who participated in the ordination, Felix of Aptunga, was accused of surrendering holy things to the Roman persecutors. The Donatists held that Sacraments administered by an unworthy minister or by one who was ordained in an unworthy manner were invalid. The keystone of Donatist theology was its doctrine of the church. The church was the congregation of holy

people. Since this was the case, no sinner could effectively administer the Sacraments.

In his writings against the Donatists, Augustine set forth his doctrine of the church and the Sacraments. Augustine attacked the Donatists on several different fronts. He pointed out that the Donatists themselves were far from the saints they claimed to be. Bands of Donatists, named Circumcellians, burnt and pillaged the North African countryside which was not only sub-Christian, but also illegal. On a theological level, Augustine argued that until judgment day the outward visible church remains a mixed multitude, containing both good and bad. His most important argument was his insistence that the unworthiness of a clergyman does not nullify the benefits of his ministry for believing Christians. Augustine emphasized that the validity of the Sacraments does not depend on the character or faith of the individual performing the Sacrament. If the proper form is used in accord with Christ's Word and institution, the Sacraments are valid even when administered by immoral priests and heretics. He explained that it is the Word of God that makes a Sacrament (Augustine, *Tractate on John* 80, 3).

- Augustine's Struggle Against Pelagianism

Today Augustine is perhaps best remembered for his part in the controversy with a Celtic ascetic by the name of Pelagius. Jerome described Pelagius as a Scotchman dulled by eating too much Scotch porridge. In 405 while at Rome Pelagius first came into contact with Augustine's theology and reacted violently against it. He could not accept the teaching that the salvation of man was dependent entirely on the grace of God — a view which left no room for human efforts and participation. For example, in the *Confessions* Augustine wrote, "Grant us what You command, and command us what You will" (Augustine, *Confessions*, 10, 29 trans. Warner, 236). Pelagius and his supporters had no time for this kind of theology. Pelagius taught that while God provides the resources, salvation is a matter of personal effort. If man simply uses the mind that God has given him and bends his will to follow God's rules, he will certainly be saved. The theology of Pelagius may not only have

been a response to Augustine, but also a reaction against the moral determinism of the Manichees with which he thought Augustine was still imbibed.

For Augustine the teachings of Pelagius contradicted both the Scripture and his own religious experience. Augustine had a much deeper concept of sin and human depravity than Pelagius did. Sin is not just evil actions that man might be able to control, but it consists in an evil nature inherited from Adam. All men without exception are born with this evil nature called original sin. From this bondage no one can set himself free. Salvation and redemption are a result of God's grace in Christ. This controversy deepened Augustine's understanding of the depravity of man and the need for God's grace. It increased Augustine's emphasis on infant Baptism, but it also led him into a doctrine of predestination that would cause more controversies in later church history.

- Augustine the Bishop and Pastor

In 396 Augustine became the Bishop of Hippo. For the rest of his life he served as a faithful shepherd to his flock writing a voluminous amount of material on virtually every theological topic. He died on August 28, 430, at the age of 76 as the city of Hippo was being seized by the Vandals. Within a few short years, it seemed that all Augustine's efforts had come to nothing. The barbarian tribes swept across North Africa leaving a path of destruction. Islam followed shortly thereafter, making Augustine's homeland Muslim as it remains to this day. Pelagianism arose in a new form, Semi-Pelagianism. Yet, Augustine's great writings have remained a powerful lasting influence in the church.

Besides his many commentaries on the Scripture and his polemical writings, a number of other works of Augustine merit special attention. The *Confessions*, the best known of Augustine's writings, are autobiographical, pointing out his spiritual odyssey which concluded in a revelation of the grace of God. The *Enchiridion*, written at the request of a friend, is a commentary on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. It is a short handbook of the Christian faith. The *Treatise on the Holy Trinity*

(*De Trinitate*), which took Augustine sixteen years to write, deals with the doctrine of the Trinity. The *City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*), occasioned by the sack of Rome in 410, sets forth Augustine's view of history and its meaning. It indicates that no human achievement lasts forever. Therefore, we look to the *City of God*, the New Jerusalem, which comes down from heaven. Finally, the Retractions, written toward the end of his life, explain issues where he may have changed his mind, or where he had not been sufficiently clear.

The Background and Foundation for the Lord's Supper

- **The Old Testament and the Sacraments**

Augustine's doctrine of the Sacrament is not to be found in a vacuum. It is built on the powerful testimony of Tertullian and Cyprian, the great fathers before him in Africa, and on the witness of Ambrose of Milan through whose preaching the Holy Spirit brought about his conversion. In the tradition of these fathers, Augustine employs many Old Testament pictures or types of the Sacrament. One such Old Testament picture is the Melchizedek type.

The fathers were particularly fascinated by the Melchizedek type. Because the Old Testament Scriptures were viewed as a prophetic whole, it was desirable to find in them a figure who would foreshadow the coming of Christ, and anticipate the end of the animal sacrifices and their replacement through the all-sufficient sacrifice of the cross and through the Sacrament instituted by Christ, which is a presentation of His sacrifice under the forms of bread and wine. Such a figure was found in the person of Melchizedek, king and priest of Salem referred to in the books of Genesis and Hebrews. The influence of this type of Christ on theology in general and on the Eucharist in specific was immense in Africa, especially in Cyprian and Augustine. For Augustine Melchizedek, who was without beginning and end (Hebrews 7:3) prefiguring Christ, confirms the truth that Christ's priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:17) and the New Testament Sacraments are superior to and the fulfillment of the whole Old Testament ritual and priesthood.

But he (Abraham) received at that time a public blessing from Melchizedek, who was the priest of the Most High God. Many important things are written about Melchizedek in the epistle entitled *To the Hebrews*, which the majority attribute to apostle Paul, though some deny the attribution. Here we certainly see the first manifestation of the sacrifice which is now offered to God by Christians in the whole world, in which is fulfilled what was said in prophecy, long after this event, to Christ who was yet to come in the flesh: 'You are a priest for all eternity, in the line of Melchizedek.' Not, it is to be observed, in the line of Aaron, for that line was to be abolished when the events prefigured by these shadows came to the light of day Augustine, *City Of God*, 16, 22 trans. Bettenson, 680; Augustine, *Sermon Denis 3* trans. Sheerin, 103).

Another Old Testament picture which Augustine employs is the Exodus type. One of his sermons preached during Easter week is built totally around the Exodus theme. The sermon compares Baptism to Israel's crossing the Red Sea. Having passed through the Red Sea of Baptism, the Christian is now in this present wilderness where he is fed with the heavenly manna, the Holy Supper, until he reaches the heavenly Canaan beyond the Jordan of death.

Regard yourselves as delivered out of Egypt from a harsh servitude, where iniquity ruled over you; and as having passed through the Red Sea by baptism, in which you received the seal of Christ's bloody cross. Prune yourselves therefore of past sins, those enemies of yours which pursued you from the rear. For as the Egyptians perished in the very waters traversed by the people of God, so your sins were blotted out in the waters in which you were baptized.

Seek now the heavenly kingdom, the land of promise to which you have been called, and be vigilant in resisting temptations throughout this earthly life, which is nothing else than a desert wherein you are sojourners. By partaking of the holy Altar, you receive your manna along with the drink that flows from the rock. All this the Apostle Paul has in mind and inculcates in his preaching when he says, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud, and in the sea. And did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink; and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ" (Augustine, *Sermon Mai 89* trans. Weller, 124).

- The Biblical Basis for the Sacrament

Augustine, as the fathers before him, finds many types of the Eucharist in the Old Testament. However, Augustine's doctrine of the Sacrament has its basis in the institution narrative of the Gospels. The proper foundation for the doctrine of the Supper is to be found in the *Verba*. In summary, Augustine teaches concerning the institution of the Supper in a sermon for the newly baptized:

At the time His Passion was near at hand, while eating the Passover with His disciples, He took bread and blessed it, saying, "This is my body which shall be delivered for you." In like manner He blessed the chalice, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." You have read this or have heard it in the Gospel, not knowing at the time that the Eucharist is the Son of God. Now, however, having your hearts cleansed of an evil conscience and your bodies washed in clean water, "Come ye to him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be confounded." If you receive it worthily and keep the new commandment of love for one another, then you have life in you, as promised in the New Testament through which you hope to attain the eternal inheritance. You eat the very flesh of which He who is life itself declared, "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world," and again, "Except you eat my flesh and drink my blood you shall not have life in you" (Augustine, *Sermon Denis 3* trans. Weller, 113).[†]

- The Form of the Eucharistic Liturgy

The celebration of the Divine Liturgy in North Africa was the principle Sunday activity in the Christian community. The liturgy consisted of two parts: the service of the catechumens (*missa catechumenorum*) which was mainly didactic and meant for all, and the service of the faithful (*missa fidelium*) which was only for the communicants. At the conclusion of the first part of the Divine Liturgy all but the communicants were dismissed. This dismissal (*missus*), which indicated that the Eucharist proper was about to begin,

[†] The reference to Psalm 34 should be noted in this quotation. This Psalm was often associated with the Lord's Supper probably because of verse 8, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him." This reminded the Church of the great privilege we have in tasting all the Lord's blessings in the Supper. Having tasted the Lord in the Sacrament, Christians are indeed enlightened and their faces are not confounded.

became the appellation for the entire service — the *missa* from which the English word “Mass” is derived. The service of the catechumens, the public worship, consisted of various lections from the Gospels, Epistles, and the Prophets. Usually a portion of the Psalms was sung. Here too the sermon was to be found. The sermon held a much more important position in the Eastern Church than in the Western Church because in the West the preaching was often poorly done. Chrysostom was an example of preaching at its finest in the East, and Augustine and Ambrose were examples of the same in the West.

The second part of the service began with the prayers of the faithful, prayers for the various needs of the church. After this the gifts to be offered were brought to the altar, possibly by the people themselves in the form of an offertory procession. These gifts included the bread and wine for the Sacrament. The eucharistic prayer was ushered in by the Preface which Augustine explains in one of his Easter sermons.

First, after the prayer, you are admonished to lift up your hearts. This is fitting for the members of Christ. For if you have become members of Christ, then where is your Head? Members have a head, and unless the head has gone before, the members would not follow. Where has our Head gone? ... Our Head, then, is in heaven. So, at the words “Lift up your hearts,” you respond “We have lifted them up to the Lord.” And, lest you attribute your having your hearts to the Lord on high to your own strength, your own merits, your own efforts, since it is God’s gift to have one’s heart lifted up, for this reason the bishop or the priest who is offering the sacrifice, immediately after the people have replied “We have lifted our hearts up to the Lord,” continues “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,” that we have our hearts lifted up. Let us give thanks, for, were it not for His gift, we would have our hearts on earth. And you bear witness, saying “It is fitting and right” that we give thanks to Him who has caused us to raise up our hearts to our Head (Augustine, *Sermon 227* trans. Sheerin, 97).

The Preface was followed by the *Sanctus* in most of the liturgies. Then came the central action of the Eucharist, the recitation of the Words of Institution, the consecration, together with the signing

of the elements with the holy cross (Augustine, *Tractate on John* 118, 5).

After the Words of Institution the eucharistic prayer continued with the anamnesis and epiclesis. It is believed that the *Pater Noster* was preceded by the fraction.[†]

The Blessed Sacrament was given under both species at the altar (Augustine, *Sermon* 56.15 trans. Weller, 210). The Lord's body was placed in the communicant's hands. As the host was given, the priest would say, "The body of Christ" (*Corpus Christi*) and the communicant responded "Amen." Likewise, when the chalice was offered the priest said, "The blood of Christ" (*Sanguis Christi*) and again, the communicant responded "Amen." Following the distribution the service came to a rather abrupt end with a final prayer of thanksgiving and the dismissal.

The Essence of the Lord's Supper

- Augustine's Figurative Concept of the Sacrament

At the outset it must be said that during this period the doctrine of the eucharistic presence was one of unquestioned realism, that is, the consecrated bread and wine were considered to be the body and blood of the Lord. No one would have questioned that in the Sacrament one received the body and blood born of the Virgin Mary which was sacrificed on the cross for the salvation of the world and raised again the third day. There was a definite confession of the real presence. Did Augustine's doctrine of the Eucharist conform with this virtually universal dogma of the period? Did Augustine believe that the body which came forth from the Virgin Mary and died on the cross is present in the Sacrament to be received by the mouth of the communicant? There are a number of statements in Augustine which would cause one to answer this question in the negative.

If, then you wish to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle as he says to the faithful "You are the body of Christ, and His members" (1Co 12:17). If, therefore, you are the body of Christ and His members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord's table, you

[†] *Fractio* — the breaking of the consecrated bread for the distribution.

receive your mystery. You reply "Amen" to that which you are, and by replying you consent. For you hear "The Body of Christ," and you reply "Amen." Be a member of the body of Christ so that your "Amen" may be true (Augustine, *Sermon 272* trans. Sheerin, 95).

What is meant by "one bread"? He explained it concisely, "We, though many, are one body." This bread is the body of Christ, to which the Apostle refers when he addresses the church: "Now you are the body of Christ and His members" (1Co 12:17). What you receive, you yourselves are by the grace by which you have been redeemed. You show agreement when you respond "Amen." What you see here is the sacrament of unity (Augustine, *Wolfenbüttel Sermon 7* trans. Sheerin, 100).

If a word is prescriptive, forbidding a thing that is disgraceful or evil or ordering some good thing, it is not to be understood figuratively. If however it appears to order something which is disgraceful or evil or to forbid something which is good, then the language is figurative. The Lord says, "Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, you will not have life in you." This appears to order us to do something disgraceful or evil. Therefore it is symbolic [lit., "a figure": *Figura ergo est*], commanding us to communicate in the Passion of the Lord and to remember pleasantly and usefully that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us (Augustine, *Doctrina 55* in CSEL 80, 93; O'Connor, 53).

Understand what I (Jesus) have said spiritually. **You are not going to eat this body which you see, nor are you going to drink the blood which those who will crucify me are going to shed.** I have given you a sacrament. Understood spiritually, it will give you life. Although it must be celebrated visibly, yet it should be understood invisibly (Augustine, *Enarratio on Psalm 98* trans. Sheerin, 184).

On the basis of passages such as these, F. van der Meer writes concerning Augustine and the Sacrament, "It is perfectly true, however that there is nowhere any indication of any awareness of the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament or that he thought very much about this subject or made it the object of devotion; that was alien to the people of that age — at any rate in the West" (F. van der Meer, 313).

Before one can make a proper evaluation of Augustine's view of the presence in the Eucharist (whether it is realistic or

figurative), one must review the concept of Sacrament (*sacramentum*) in Augustine's thought. Augustine holds to the broad concept of Sacrament which was prevalent throughout the Ancient Church. Not only could he designate certain rites, such as the exorcisms which preceded Baptism, as Sacraments, but upon occasion he even calls the great events of the church year Sacraments. For Augustine a Sacrament is a "sacred sign" (*sacrum signum*) Augustine, *City Of God*, 10, 5 trans. Sheerin, 43). A Sacrament is a sacred sign of a hidden reality (*res*) and power (*virtus*). He says, "These things, my brothers, are called sacraments for the reason that in them one thing is seen but another is understood. That which is seen has physical appearance, that which is understood has spiritual fruit" (Augustine, *Sermon* 272 trans. Sheerin, 94). Augustine lays particular stress on the contrast between the sign and the reality or power in the Sacrament. "The Sacrament" he declares, "is one thing, the virtue of the sacrament another" (Augustine, *Tractate on John* 26, 11 in Schaff, 7, 171).

Augustine's concept of Sacrament is influenced by Neo-Platonism. Neo-Platonism maintains that there are two "worlds", the world of ordinary experience (that which one sees, feels and touches), and a world behind or beyond ordinary experience. The world beyond is considered the real world, while the world of ordinary experience is an image, sign, figure, or type of the real world lying behind it. The world beyond gives meaning to the world of ordinary experience. These worlds are not simply parallel to each other. Rather, one could participate in the real world through the sign or image present in the world of ordinary experience. When early Christians expressed their concept of Sacrament in theological terms, they at times used the model of Neo-Platonist philosophy. The bread and the wine are designated "signs", "types" or "figures" which signify the reality which lies beyond them, namely the body and blood of Christ. **The sacramental signs, however, not only point to and represent the reality that they signify, they also participate in it and render it present. The signs are not mere signs, but signs filled with reality.** Therefore, when the early

fathers speak of the Eucharist as a sign of Christ's body and blood, they are not denying the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist. Rather, they are speaking of the bread and the wine as signs which cause the heavenly reality of Christ's body and blood to be present for the communicant. This is evident from the fact that many of the fathers speak of the Sacrament as Christ's body and blood and as a figure of the same in virtually the same breath.

Augustine uses this Neo-Platonic framework in his interpretation of the Sacrament. Yet, he tends to see a certain distance between the Sacrament as such (the outward sign) and the gift which it is meant to communicate, a danger that is inherent in Neo-Platonic philosophy. Neo-Platonism sees a definite chasm between the material and the spiritual. **Augustine makes a greater separation between the sign and the reality in the Eucharist than did most of the early fathers, possibly in opposition to the Manicæans who held exaggerated physical concepts of the presence of Christ.** Thus, at times one can get the impression that the communicant receives the sacred sign, the elements of bread and wine, but the hidden reality, Christ's body and blood with all the blessings of redemption, is so distant from the sign that it is not received in the same way or at the same time. This is the reason that some have considered Augustine's view of the presence to be basically figurative. However, it will be seen below that this does not do full justice to Augustine's view

- **Augustine's Realistic Concept of the Sacrament**

Throughout his writings, Augustine sees himself in agreement with the other fathers of the church who confessed the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. If Augustine did not adhere to this doctrine, he would have found himself at variance with the teachings of Ambrose, from whom Augustine himself had received his catechesis on the Supper before his Baptism. Ambrose clearly taught that the Sacrament was the "true flesh of Christ which was crucified" (Ambrose, 9, 53). There was nothing in Augustine's own writings or in those of his immediate contemporaries

that indicates that anyone perceived any difference in the eucharistic doctrine of the two men.

As the other church fathers, Augustine teaches that the sacramental sign is never separated from the sacramental power and reality, that the sacramental sign conveys the reality which it pictures or symbolizes. He says, "The word comes to the elements and it becomes a Sacrament" (*Accedet verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*) (Augustine, *Tractate* 80, 3). Before the Word of God comes to the element it is a mere sign, but when the Word is united to the element then it is a sacred sign which conveys that which it signifies. One will always find this tension in Augustine's sacramental theology. On the one hand he at times seems to separate the sacred sign from the hidden reality following the presuppositions of Neo-Platonism, and on the other hand he continually tries to hold the two together in accord with the traditional use of these terms.

There are many places in Augustine where he uses realistic language concerning the presence of Christ's body and blood, showing that he was in agreement with the concept of the real presence found in Ambrose and the other fathers. While Augustine often speaks of the bread in the Eucharist as being the **body of Christ, the church**, after the consecration with the Words of Institution he definitely considers the elements to be **Christ's body and blood given for the forgiveness of sins**. "The bread which you see on the altar, sanctified by God's word is the body of Christ. The cup or, rather, its contents sanctified by God's word is the blood of Christ. Through these Christ our Lord wished to bequeath His body and His blood which He shed for us for the forgiveness of sins" (Augustine, *Sermon* 227 trans. Sheerin, 96). Here he indicates that the bread and wine are the body and blood born of Mary which won the redemption of the world.

Augustine speaks of Christ's flesh and blood in the Sacrament as being adorable. This is the case because it is flesh from the Virgin with which the preexistent Logos united Himself for our salvation. "For He took earth from earth, because flesh is from earth, and from the flesh of Mary He took flesh. And because He walked

here in that flesh, He also gave us that flesh to eat for our salvation. But no one eats that flesh unless he has first adored it" (Augustine, *Enarratio on Psalm 98* trans. Sheerin, 183).

In his commentary of Psalm 33 (34) Augustine gives one of the most interesting examples of his belief in the real presence. The inscription of this Psalm states that it was composed by David at the time of the episode in 1 Samuel 21:10 – 15. Giving the background of this Psalm to his hearers, Augustine comes across an exegetical difficulty. His Old Latin translation of 1 Samuel 21:13 reads, He carried Himself in His own hands. (*Ferebatur in manibus suis*) Augustine explains that this expression, unintelligible of David or any mere mortal, is fulfilled by Christ in the Last Supper.

And he was carried in his own hands. Now, brothers, who can understand how this can happen to a man? Who can be carried in his own hands? A man is able to be carried in the hands of others, but no one is carried in his own hands. How this is to be understood in a literal way of David himself we cannot discover; however, we can discover how this happened in the case of Christ. **For Christ was carried in his own hands when, entrusting to us his own Body, he said: "This is my Body."** Indeed he was carrying that **Body in his own hands** (Augustine, *Enarratio on Psalm 33* in CCSL 38, 280 and trans. O'Connor, 57).

In the third book of *De Trinitate* Augustine writes:

It is like infants who have no knowledge of what is placed on the altar and of what is consumed when the holy celebration is completed or whence or how it is confectioned [Lat. *conficiatur*], or whence it is assumed for a religious use. If they never learn through their own experience or that of others and never see that form [Lat. *speciem*] except when it is offered and given during the celebration of the Sacraments, and it is told to them by very great authority whose Body and Blood it is, they will believe nothing other than that the Lord has appeared to the eyes of men in that form and that the liquid has certainly flowed from the side pierced in such a way (Augustine, *Trinitate*, 3, 4).

Here Augustine asserts that the chalice in the Sacrament contains the blood which flowed from Christ's side on the cross even though the form (*species*) may be different. In summary, therefore, a balanced verdict must agree that Augustine accepts the current

realism of his time. One could multiply texts like these which show that Augustine takes for granted the traditional identification of the elements with Christ's body and blood.

The Effectual Cause of the Lord's Supper

- The Eucharistic Prayer and the Sacrament

Augustine leaves his readers in the dark concerning the form of the eucharistic prayer which was used at his time in Africa. One can, however, assume that the Words of Institution were embedded in such a prayer here as elsewhere. The form of these prayers varied greatly in the different geographical areas of the church. The outline of these prayers was influenced by the Jewish table blessings. The prayers usually begin with the thanksgiving which praises and thanks God for the creation and redemption. In the prayers the *Verba*, the Words of Institution, hold the predominant position. They explain why the church has such a eucharistic meal and they are the words which the Lord gave to His church for blessing in the Supper so that the elements may be His body and blood. The *Verba* are followed by the anamnesis, the remembering of Christ's death and resurrection for salvation, and by the epiclesis which is usually the calling down of the Holy Spirit. There are times when the epiclesis is an invocation of the second person of the Trinity, the Divine Logos.

- The Consecration and the Sacrament.

For Augustine, the Words of Institution embedded in the eucharistic prayer are the consecration of the Holy Sacrament. Augustine definitely teaches that the Words of Christ, the Words of Institution, cause the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. "For not all the bread, but that which receives the blessing of Christ becomes the body of Christ" (*Non enim omnis panis, sed accipiens benedictionem Christi fit corpus Christi*) (Augustine, *Sermon 234.2* in *PL 38*, 1116). Augustine explicates the blessing further, "At the time when His passion was near at hand, while keeping the Passover with His disciples, He took bread, blessed it, and said: 'This is my body which shall be delivered up for you.'

(1Co 11:24) In like manner he blessed the cup and gave it to them saying: "This is my blood of the New Covenant which shall be shed for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mat 26:28; Augustine, *Sermon Denis* 3 trans. Sheerin, 104).

What you see here on the Lord's table, beloved, is bread and wine. But once the word is pronounced over them, this bread and this wine become the body and blood of the Word. For that very Lord, who "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Joh 1:1), because of His mercy through which He did not disdain what He created in His own image, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (Joh 1:14), as you know. The same Word assumed human nature, that is, the soul and body of man, and became man, remaining God. Because of this, and because He also suffered for us, He left us, in this sacrament, His body and blood which He has also caused us to be. For we too have been made His body, and through His mercy we are the very thing which we receive. . .

Next come those things which are done in the sacred prayers which you are about to hear, so that by the presence of the word the body and blood of Christ may come to be. For take away the word, and there is simply bread and wine, but add the word, and it is something else. What is that something else? The body of Christ and the blood of Christ. Take away the word, and it is only bread and wine. Add the word, and it will become a sacrament. To this you say "Amen." To say "Amen" is to agree. "Amen" is translated in Latin as "True" (Augustine, *Sermon Denis* 6 trans. Sheerin, 105).[†]

For Augustine the blessing of Christ, the Words of Institution, is the effectual cause of the presence in the Sacrament. The Word who was in the beginning with God and who was God, became flesh for our salvation and now that Word gives us that flesh for our salvation when His Word is pronounced over the elements. If the Word is taken away there is nothing but bread and wine, yet add the Word, and it is something else, namely, the body and blood of the Lord. It is the all-powerful Word of the Word made flesh that effects the presence in the Sacrament. Notice that while Augustine speaks of the consecration causing the presence just as Ambrose

[†] See also *Sermon* 227; *Guelf. Sermon* 7; *De Trinitate*, 3, 4.

did, he does not use the “change” terminology employed by Ambrose. (*transformatio, transfiguratio, mutatio*).

The Adoration of the Lord's Supper

The attitude of reverence toward the Holy Eucharist and the practice of adoring the Lord present in the Sacrament are occasionally referred to in the time of Augustine. In a commentary on Psalm 98 [99:5] delivered to the people of Carthage, Augustine offers the following remarks:

It says here **adore the footstool of his feet**, but explaining to me what the footstool of His feet is, it says “but the earth is the footstool of my feet.” I am in a dilemma: I am afraid to worship earth, lest He who made heaven and earth (Psa 133:3) condemn me; but I am afraid not to adore the footstool of the feet of my Lord, because the Psalm says to me **adore the footstool of his feet**. I ask what is the footstool of His feet, and scripture says to me “the earth is the footstool of my feet.” In my doubt I turn to Christ, for it is He whom I seek here, and I discover how earth may be worshipped without impiety. **For He took earth from earth, because flesh is from earth, and from the flesh of Mary He took flesh. And because He walked here in that flesh, He also gave us that flesh to eat for our salvation. But no one eats that flesh, unless he has first adored it.**

We have found out how such a footstool of the feet of God may be worshipped, and how we not only do not sin by worshipping it, but even sin by not worshipping it. But flesh does not give life, does it? The Lord Himself said, when He was speaking about the legacy of this very “earth”: “It is the spirit which gives life, the flesh profits nothing” (Joh 6:64) And so, when you bow down and prostrate yourself before any “earth”, do not revere it as earth, but as that Holy One whose footstool is that which you adore (Augustine, *Enarratio on Psalm 98* trans Sheerin, 183).

The context of Augustine's remarks suggests that he is referring to the popular custom among North African Christians of adoring the consecrated elements during the liturgy. He defends the custom by relating it to the verse in the Psalm, “Adore the footstool of His feet.” The elements may indeed be worshipped because they are the flesh and blood of the Divine Logos.

Augustine reminds the people that while the custom of adoring the Sacrament is praiseworthy, it must not be understood in a carnal or fleshly manner. He puts these words on Jesus' lips:

Understand what I (Jesus) have said spiritually. **You are not going to eat this body which you see, nor are you going to drink the blood which those who will crucify me are going to shed.** I have given you a sacrament. Understood spiritually, it will give you life. Although it must be celebrated visibly, yet it should be understood invisibly (Augustine, *Enarratio on Psalm 98* trans. Sheerin, 184).

Here Augustine is not denying the real presence as some believe, rather he is rejecting a concept of carnal or Capernaite eating. Augustine defends the legitimacy of reverence toward the consecrated elements in the liturgy and the importance of understanding that Christ's body and blood are received orally in the Supper, but in a sacramental or supernatural manner.

The Sacrifice and the Lord's Supper

- The Commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Cross

The earliest concept of sacrifice connected with the Lord's Supper was confined to the offering of praise, gifts, and one's whole life of sanctification. (Romans 12:1) The congregation gave its offering of praise, thanksgiving, and the first fruits offering from which the earthly elements for the Supper were taken (Weller, 52). Likewise, in harmony with the institution narrative, the Sacrament was at times referred to as a sacrifice because it was a presentation of Christ's sacrifice in the midst of His people in which they received that which had been sacrificed once and for all on Calvary with all its blessings.

From these biblical concepts grew three different expressions of eucharistic sacrifice in later patristic literature.

- The first line of reflection connects the Eucharist with the sacrifice of the cross by way of the eucharistic memorial. The Eucharist is identified with the sacrifice of Christ, because the Eucharist celebrates the anamnesis or remembrance of Christ's death. It is a commemoration of Christ's all-sufficient offering upon the cross.

- The second line of reflection connects the Eucharist with the eternal pleading of Christ's sacrifice in heaven. The concept of the eternal pleading of Christ's sacrifice is based on the Epistle to the Hebrews (7:25). In this view the eucharistic liturgy is a participation in the heavenly liturgy.
- The third line of reflection connects the Eucharist with the sacrifice of Christ by way of His body, the church. The congregation is drawn into His one body, the church, by receiving His one body in the Eucharist and the church is offered up as a sacrifice to the Father in union with Christ, its head. The sacrifice of the Eucharist then is Christ's body, the church (Crockett, 70ff).

The African church at Augustine's time viewed the Eucharist as a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice on the cross where the benefits of that sacrifice are made present for the congregation. In a sermon ascribed to him (there are some who question its authenticity) Augustine follows this line of thought.

We must tell you the meaning of so great and godly a sacrament such an excellent and noble remedy, such a clean and ready sacrifice, which is offered now, not in one city on earth, Jerusalem, ... but from the rising of the sun even to its setting ... No longer is a bloody victim selected from the herds of cattle, ... but the sacrifice of our times is the body and blood of the Priest Himself ... Christ our Lord, who offered for us in His Passion what He received from us at His birth, was made the chief of priests forever, and gave us the sacrificial rite which you are witnessing, that of His body and blood (Augustine, *Sermon Denis 3* trans. Sheerin, 102).

Here Augustine seems to be saying that the Eucharist is a true sacrifice of Christ's body and blood in and of itself and not only a commemoration of the all-sufficient sacrifice of the cross. This, however, militates against Augustine's understanding of the cross.

It must be said at the outset that for Augustine the one true, perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction is, of course, that once and for all offering of Himself which the Redeemer made on Calvary:

By his death, which is indeed the one and most real sacrifice offered up for us, he cleansed, abolished and extinguished whatever guilt there was by which the principalities and powers lawfully detained us to pay the penalty; and by his resurrection he called us whom he had predestined to new life, those whom he had called he justified, and those whom he had justified he glorified (Romans 8:30; Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 4, 13, 17 in *CCSL* 50, 183).

This is the sacrifice which all the sacrifices of the Old Testament foreshadowed, and it is a memorial of this sacrifice that Christians celebrate today in the Sacrament (Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 6, 5; 20, 18). The Eucharist can only be spoken of as a sacrifice because of its relation to Christ's all-sufficient self-offering as propitiation for human sin.

It appears then that Augustine does not look upon the Eucharist as a sacrifice of Christ's body and blood in and of itself, but rather as a commemoration or a presentation of the sacrifice of the cross. Augustine says, "A visible sacrifice, therefore, is the sacrament, that is, the sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice" (*sacrificium ergo visibile invisibilis sacrificii sacramentum, id est sacrum signum est*) Augustine, *City Of God*, 10, 5 trans. Sheerin, 43). The Supper, the visible sacrifice, is a sacred sign of the invisible sacrifice, the cross. It is this understanding of the relationship between Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the Supper which underlies this famous passage in Book 10 of the *City of God* which is one of the finest short statements of Augustine's thought in the whole of his writings.

Hence it is that the true Mediator, insofar as he took the form of a servant and was thus made the mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus [1Ti 2:5], receives the sacrifice in the form of God [Phi 2:6, 7], in union with the Father, with whom he is one God. And yet in the form of a servant he preferred to be himself the sacrifice than to receive it, to prevent anyone from supposing that sacrifice, even in this circumstance, should be offered to any created being. Thus he is both the priest, himself making the offering, and the oblation. This is the reality, and he intended the **daily sacrifice of the Church to be the sacramental symbol of this**; for the Church, being the Body of which he is the Head, learns to offer herself through him. (*Cuius rei sacramentum cotidianum esse voluit ecclesiae sacrificium, quae cum ipsius capitis corpus sit, se ipsam per ipsum discit offerre*). This is the

true sacrifice, and the sacrifices of the saints in earlier times were many different symbols of it. This one sacrifice was prefigured by many rites, just as many words are used to refer to one thing, to emphasize a point without inducing boredom. This was the supreme sacrifice and all the false sacrifices yielded place to it Augustine, *City Of God*, 10, 20 trans. Bettenson, 400).

Augustine teaches that the Eucharist, the daily sacrifice of the church, is a sacrament of the reality, the sacrifice of the cross. It is not the sacrifice itself, but a presentation of the sacrifice where all the blessings of the cross are made present in the church through Christ's body and blood.

• The Ecclesial Concept of Eucharistic Sacrifice

Augustine's favorite eucharistic theme is incorporation into the body of Christ: "You are what you receive." He says, "So that there may be no division among you, **eat that which binds you together** so you may not appear to yourselves to be of little worth, drink your ransom. Just as this, when you eat and drink it, becomes part of you, so also you are changed into the body of Christ when you live in obedience and devotion" (Augustine, *Sermon Denis 3* trans. Sheerin, 103). Augustine teaches the newly baptized that as they were united with Christ and His body, the church, in Baptism so in the Eucharist they are strengthened and preserved in the unity by receiving His body and blood. This is preliminary to Augustine's principle concept of eucharistic sacrifice. Because the church becomes Christ's body by receiving His body born of Mary, **His body, the church, is the sacrifice of the Eucharist**. This ecclesial interpretation of eucharistic sacrifice is Augustine's distinctive contribution to eucharistic theology.

Augustine bases this ecclesial interpretation of eucharistic sacrifice on St. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:17: "For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread." The people of God become the body of Christ, His church, by receiving His body and blood in the Sacrament, thus being united with Him. God's people become members of the body of which Christ is the head. (1Co 12:27) Augustine says, "**If you received worthily, you are what you received**" (Augustine, *Sermon*

227 trans Sheerin, 96). The primary purpose and benefit of the Sacrament in Augustine's theology is unity. It is the Sacrament of unity for it unites God's people to Christ, their head, and to each other in His body.

Since the church is united with Christ, its head, in the Sacrament, it is offered up through Him in the eucharistic sacrifice. The sacrifice of His body born of Mary once and for all on the cross makes valid and pure the sin tainted sacrifice of His body, the church. Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the cross makes the offering of His church acceptable to the Father. This is Augustine's point when he writes, "Next, after the sanctification of God's sacrifice, for He willed that we ourselves should be His sacrifice, as was shown when first was presented the idea that we too are God's sacrifice, that is, it is a sign of the reality which we are — after the sanctification of the divine sacrifice has been effected, we say the Lord's Prayer, etc" (Augustine, *Sermon 227* trans. Sheerin, 98).

In the *City of God*, Augustine defines the true and perfect sacrifice (10:6). "Accordingly, a true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united to God in a holy fellowship, and which is referred to that final Good in which alone we can be truly blessed" Augustine, *City Of God*, 10, 6 trans. Sheerin, 45). This comprehensive definition of sacrifice is typical of Augustine's thought. He sees it as an action directed to union with God which alone makes us truly blessed. There is no happiness or blessedness without God. That which makes one blessed is the final Good Himself. Furthermore, the only way one can be united with God is through the mediation of the God-man, Jesus Christ.

The Christian's whole life of sanctification is an offering to God as St. Paul says, "I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1) Augustine emphasizes that if our body is a sacrifice to God which is an inferior servant or instrument, then how much more should our soul be a proper sacrifice to the Lord. These sacrifices are pleasing to God not because they have a value in themselves. Rather, these

things are a sign of what God truly desires, **a heart bruised and humbled in the sorrow of penitence.**

The sacrifices of believers are valid only on the basis of the mediation of the God-man, Jesus Christ. Augustine, therefore, connects our sacrifice with Christ by way of the Eucharist which is a presentation of the sacrifice of the cross.

Since, therefore, true sacrifices are works of mercy to ourselves or our neighbors, done with reference to God; and since works of mercy have no other object than that we be freed from distress, and that, thereby, we become happy; and since there is no happiness apart from that good of which it is said, "It is good for me to cling to God" (Psa 73:28), it comes about, accordingly, that the entire redeemed City, that is to say, the congregation and society of saints, is offered to God as a manifold sacrifice through the Great Priest, who also offered Himself to God in His Passion on our behalf, that we might be the body of so great a Head, according to the form of a servant (Phi 2:7). For it was this form He offered, in this He was offered, because it is according to this that He is Mediator, in this He is the priest, in this the sacrifice Augustine, *City Of God*, 10, 6 trans. Sheerin, 46).

Augustine writes, "It comes about, accordingly, that the entire redeemed City, that is to say the congregation and society of saints is offered to God as a **manifold sacrifice through the Great Priest.**" (*universale sacrificium offeratur Deo per sacerdotem magnum*) The interpretation of this statement hinges on the meaning of the phrase "through the Great Priest." The Latin preposition *per* can mean "through, by means of, for the sake of." This statement could simply mean that the Church's sacrifice, which is all that we are and all that we have, is acceptable to the Father **for the sake of Christ's once and for all sacrifice on the cross.** The Father accepts the sin tainted offering of the Church because of Christ's great sacrifice on the cross. The *per sacerdotem magnum* in itself really means no more than this.

However, one must also look at the wider context of this statement. The One, through whom the church is offered, is the one "who offered Himself to God in His passion on our behalf, that we might be the body of so great a Head according to the form of a

servant.” (*ut tanti capitis corpus essemus, secundum formam servi*) Here Augustine introduces the concept that the church is the body of Christ in the form of a servant. Christ won this great privilege for His people through His sacrifice on the cross. There He shed His blood for the church so that it could be washed clean from every stain and mark through water and the Word in Baptism. (Ephesians 5:27)

In the next paragraph of Book 10, 6, Augustine has more to say about the church as the body of Christ.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another, having gifts which differ according to the grace that is given to us (Rom 12:3 – 6). This is the sacrifice of Christians: “We, though many, are one body in Christ” (1Co 10:17), and this is the sacrifice which the church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the faithful, in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the offering she makes Augustine, *City Of God*, 10, 6 trans. Sheerin, 46).

Augustine quotes Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 10 where St. Paul speaks of the church as the body of Christ, and then he equates this body of Christ with the sacrifice of the Eucharist. **According to this statement, the sacrifice of the Eucharist is Christ's body, the church.**

This certainly enlarges on Augustine's early statement, “that the entire redeemed City, that is to say, the congregation and society of saints, is offered to God as a manifold sacrifice **through the Great Priest.**” The *per sacerdotem magnum* means more than that the sacrifices of the church are acceptable to God for the sake of the redemptive work of the great High Priest. Remember that Augustine on the basis of Romans 5 sees all people seminally in the first Adam (Bonner, 371). He also sees the church seminally in the second Adam, Christ Jesus, incorporated into Him through Baptism and the Eucharist. With this in mind the concept *per sacerdotem magnum* also seems to include the idea that the church, the body of which Christ is the head, is offered up through its head and together

with its head to the Father. **The Church in the form of a servant is offered up in the sacrifice of the Servant of Servants.**

In Book 10 of the *City of God*, Augustine summarizes his interpretation of eucharistic sacrifice. The Eucharist is a sacrament or a commemoration of Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice on the cross where the benefits of the sacrifice are made present in the midst of the congregation through His body and blood Augustine, *City Of God*, 10, 20 trans. Bettenson, 400). However, his primary emphasis is that the sacrifice of the Eucharist is the body of Christ, the church. "This is the sacrifice of Christians: 'We, though many, are one body in Christ' (1Co 10:17), and this is the sacrifice which the church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar" (Augustine, *City*, 10, 6 trans. Sheerin, 46). By receiving Christ's one body in the Supper, the assembly is incorporated into Christ's body, the church. The church, the body of which Christ is the head, is a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, on the basis of the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ's body, born of Mary. All that the church is, and all that it has, is offered up through its head, and together with its head to the Father. "This is the sacrifice of Christians."

- **The Sacrifice and Those Who Died in the Lord**

Because the whole church is united with Christ, its Head, and offered up to the Father in the Eucharist, for Augustine the sacrifice is beneficial not only for the living, the church militant, but also for the faithful departed. In the Early Church, the Eucharist offered for the dead was stressed in Africa, in particular. As his mother Monica was dying, she was not concerned about where she would be buried, but only that Augustine would remember her at the Lord's altar, and at Augustine's own death, the holy sacrifice was offered and he was buried (Augustine, *Confessions*, 9, 11; Possidius, 31, 5). Augustine continually teaches that the sacrifice of the Eucharist is a great benefit to the faithful departed. In fact, the confidence in the eucharistic sacrifice was so great in Africa that it was necessary to forbid the practice of putting the Sacrament on the lips of the

departed at burial, because the Lord said, "Take and eat," but a corpse could not take and eat (Sykes, 111).

The Proper Preparation for the Lord's Supper

For Augustine, as for all the early fathers, St. Paul's admonition concerning unworthy participation in the Sacrament is an extremely serious matter. He urges his flock to approach the Lord's altar with fear and trembling. Those in a state of impenitence receive the Lord's body and blood, but not the grace of the Sacrament (Augustine, *Sermon 71.17* in *PL 35*, 343). Augustine writes concerning St. Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 11:27:

Great mysteries are these, very great indeed! Would you like to know what importance is assigned to them? The Apostle says: "Who-soever eats the body of Christ or drinks of the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1Co 11:27). What is it to receive unworthily? To receive in contempt, to receive in mockery. Let it not seem common to you because you can see it. What you see is transitory, but the invisible reality signified does not pass away, but abides (Augustine, *Sermon 227* trans. Sheerin, 98).

Not only did immorality exclude one from the Lord's table, but also false doctrine. Augustine declares, "But you receive worthily when you are on your guard against the leaven of false doctrine, so that you may be the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1Co 5:8; *Sermon Denis 3* trans. Sheerin, 104). The Sacrament is the sign of the unity of church and more than that, it makes that unity. Because this is the case, the Sacrament may be received only with those who confess the doctrines of the faith. This truth Augustine put into practice in his dealings with the Donatists. He was continually dialoging with them hoping to reach agreement in doctrine and faith, but he did not commune with them because they were not one in the faith.

The unworthy guest does not merely receive bread and wine. He indeed receives the body and blood of the Lord, but it is to his harm rather than to his benefit.

For just as Judas, to whom the Lord gave the morsel, not by receiving an evil thing, but by receiving it evilly, provided an

opportunity in himself for the Devil (Joh 13:26 – 27), so also whoever receives the Lord's sacrament unworthily (1Co 11:27) does not bring it about, because he himself is evil, that it is evil, or, because he did not receive it unto salvation, that he has received nothing. **For it will be the body of the Lord and the blood of the Lord nonetheless**, even to those to whom the Apostle said "He who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation for himself" (1Co 11:29). Therefore, let heretics seek in the catholic church not what they have, but what they do not have, that is, the end of the commandment, without which many holy things may be held, but they cannot be of profit (Augustine, *Concerning Baptism*, 5.8.9 trans. Sheerin, 273).

The Blessings of the Lord's Supper

- The Sacrament as the Forgiveness of Sins

The blessings received in the Supper are so marvelous and manifold that they cause Augustine to refer to the Sacrament as "Life". He argues the necessity of Baptism and the Eucharist for children because here they receive forgiveness, life, and salvation. This he maintains in opposition to the Pelagian doctrine which denied the transmission of original sin and, therefore, the child's need for forgiveness of sins.

Quite rightly do the Punic Christians call baptism nothing other than "Salvation," and the sacrament of the body of Christ nothing other than "Life." Why do they do so except, as I think, because of an ancient and apostolic tradition, on the basis of which they hold it to be an inherent principle of the church of Christ that without baptism and the sharing of the Lord's Table, a man is able to arrive neither to the Kingdom of God nor to salvation and eternal life? Scripture also bears witness to this, according to what we have already said. For what else are those who call baptism "Salvation" maintaining, except what is written: "He has saved us through the bath of regeneration" (Tit 3:5), and what Peter says: "Thus has baptism saved you also, by a like pattern" (1Pe 3.21)? **In addition, what are they maintaining who call the sacrament of the Lord's Table "Life," except the statements: "I am the living bread who have come down from heaven" (Joh 6:52), and "The bread which I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Joh 6:51), and "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you will not have life in you" (Joh 6:53)?** If, then, as so many and such weighty divine testimonies agree,

one can hope neither for salvation nor for eternal life without baptism and the body and blood of the Lord, in vain are these promised to children without them. Furthermore, if it is sin alone which separates man from salvation and eternal life, then it is the guilt of sin which is forgiven children through these sacraments. It is written that no one is free of this guilt, "not even if his life be of one day's duration" (Job 14:5). On this account, there is also the passage in the Psalms: "For in sin was I conceived, and in sin did my mother nurture me in the womb" (Psa 50:7), for either this is said by human nature in general, or, if David said it as applying to his own person, he is not speaking of fornication, for he was born of lawful wedlock. **And so, let us have no doubt that also for the baptizing of infants that blood was shed which, before it was shed, was given and handed on in a sacrament, in such a way that it could be said: "This is my blood, which shall be shed for many for the forgiveness of sins"** (Mat 26:28; Augustine, *On the Merits and Remission of Sin*, 1.34 trans. Sheerin, 274).

The person who receives the Eucharist receives the forgiveness of sins because here is distributed the blood which was shed for the remission of sins. Elsewhere Augustine writes, "The bread which you see on the altar sanctified by God's word, is the body of Christ. The cup or rather, its contents sanctified by God's Word, is the blood of Christ. Through these Christ our Lord wished to bequeath His body and His blood which He shed for us for the forgiveness of sins" (Augustine, *Sermon 227* trans. Sheerin, 96). The communicant is offered the very ransom money that delivered him from the domination of sin and obtained life for all people. **Thus, the Sacrament is designated "Life."** Augustine connects the Eucharist to John 6 as Ambrose did and indicates that the Eucharist is "Life" since in it one partakes in the life-giving flesh and blood of the Son of Man. The faith-life begun in the rebirth of Baptism is maintained and strengthened with the Bread of Life.

Augustine, a man who felt deeply his great sin and recognized his need for a sacrificial victim, meditates on the sacrifice of the cross and its connection with the Holy Eucharist as he prays in his *Confessions*:

How greatly have you loved us, good Father, who sparest not
Thine only Son, but deliverest Him up for us ungodly! How you have

loved us ... for us He was to you both victor and victim, and victor became victim: for us He was to you both priest and sacrifice, and priest because sacrifice: and He made us sons to you instead of slaves by being born of you and by becoming your slave. With reason, then, my hope in Him is strong, that Thou wilt heal all my infirmities by Him who sitteth at Thy right hand and maketh intercession for us; otherwise I should despair. For many and great are my infirmities, many they are and great; but your medicine has more power still. We might have thought that your Word was far from any union with man, and we might have despaired, unless it had been made flesh and dwelt among us. ... See, Lord, I cast my care upon Thee, that I may live and consider wondrous things out of Thy law. You know my unskillfulness and my weakness; teach me and heal me. **He, your only Son, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, has redeemed me with His blood. Let not the proud speak evil of me, for my thoughts are on the price of my redemption; I eat it and drink it and give it to others to eat and drink, and, being poor myself, I desire to be satisfied by it among those that eat and are satisfied, and they shall praise the Lord who seek Him** (Augustine, *Confessions*, 10, 43 trans. Warner, 255).

Here Augustine asserts that he eats the price of his redemption. Jesus' body and blood offered on the cross are the one all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, the price of redemption for all human iniquity. By receiving them in the Supper Augustine and all Christians are satisfied, for within them they have the very ransom money for sin, the very thing that saved them from hell's destruction. What a treasure that a Christian can say, "I eat the price of my salvation, I drink it."

- The Sacrament as Life-Giving Nourishment and Salvation

The Holy Supper is the nourishment and food which sustains the Christian in this life and prepares him for the next life.

The sacrament of this thing, namely, of the unity of the body and blood of Christ, is prepared on the Lord's Table in some places daily, in some places at certain intervals of days, and from the Lord's table it is taken, by some to life, by some to destruction: **but the thing itself of which it is the sacrament is for every man to life** ... we are made better by participation of the Son, through the unity of His body and blood which thing that eating and drinking signifies. We live then by Him, by eating Him; this is, by receiving Himself as the eternal life,

which we did not have from ourselves (Augustine, *Tractate 26*, 15 – 19 trans. Schaff, 173).

And so this food is likewise something new. Until now, as you see, it is simply bread and wine. But once the Consecration takes place, this bread will be the body of Christ and this wine will be the blood of Christ. It happens in the name of Christ and by the grace of Christ, and even though it looks like it was before, yet its worth is not what it was before. Had you eaten thereof before [the Consecration], it would have supplied food to the stomach, but now when you partake, it gives nourishment to the soul (Augustine, *Sermon Guelf. 7* trans. Weller, 100).

In these selections, Augustine points out that the Eucharist is the nourishment for the Christian's faith-life. As our bodies need food, so our spiritual life needs sustenance or it will wither and die. The nourishment that is needed is to be found in the Sacrament of the Lord's body and blood. This Sacrament, therefore, is the food for the way in this life and the pledge and assurance of eternal salvation.

There are times in Augustine's writings when he appears to come close to the deification theme of the Eastern Church. In a Christmas sermon he states, "He who was God became Man in His effort to make godlike those who were men (*Deos facturus qui homines erant, homo factus est qui Deus erat*, literally: To make those gods who were men, He was made man who is God); without relinquishing what He was, He desired to become what He had made. He Himself fashioned what He would become, in that He added man's nature to God without losing God's nature in man" (Augustine, *Sermon 192.1* in *The Fathers of the Church*, 38, 32). The doctrine of deification in Augustine is for the most part equivalent to the New Testament idea of sonship by adoption through faith. This does not mean that human nature is changed in its essence. It remains something created, but the human nature is raised to a new relationship with the Creator by adoption. This deification process takes place within the communion of the church, and therefore is an ecclesial process. The Christian is incorporated into Christ's body in Baptism and nourished and sustained in that body

through the Eucharist. It is this nourishing and deification or **theosis** through the Eucharist which Augustine seems to have in mind when he put these words on the lips of our Lord in the *Confessions*: “I am the food of the grown men. Grow and you shall feed upon me. And you will not, as will the food of the body, change me into yourself, but you will be changed into me” (Augustine, *Confessions*, 7, 10 trans. Warner, 149).

In a sermon for the Easter Season, Augustine relates the Eucharist to the account of the Emmaus disciples. (Luke 24) “Nevertheless my dearly beloved remember how the Lord Jesus wished those whose ‘eyes were held, that they should not recognize him’, to acknowledge Him in the breaking of bread. (The faithful understand what I am saying; they know Christ in the breaking of bread. For not all bread, but only that which receives the blessing of Christ becomes the Body of Christ.)” (Augustine, *Sermon 234.2 in The Fathers of the Church*, 38, 224). As the Lord made Himself known to the Emmaus disciples in the breaking of bread so **He manifests Himself to us in the breaking of bread**. In the Eucharist the arisen Lord is present for His people with all His joy and blessings.

- The Sacrament as the Bond of Unity

The primary purpose and benefit of the Sacrament in Augustine's theology is unity. This is the great contribution of the Bishop of Hippo to the dogma of the Eucharist. “O sacrament of unity, O bond of charity!” exclaims Augustine as he considers that the real purpose of the sacrament is to further and complete the bond existing between Christ and His Church, between Him and the individual, and between all members in loving reciprocity” (Weller, 26). It is the Sacrament of unity because it unites God's people to Christ, their head and to each other in His body, the church. Augustine says, “**If you received worthily, you are what you received**” (Augustine, *Sermon 227* trans. Sheerin, 96). “Because you have life through Him you will be one body with Him, for this sacrament extends the body of Christ, and by it you are made inseparable from Him” (Augustine, *Sermon Denis 3*, trans. Weller, 114). As we were united with Christ and His body, the church, in Baptism, so in the

Eucharist we are strengthened and preserved in that unity by receiving His body and blood. In this Sacrament the Lord comes to the believer with His body and blood and unites him with Himself. He remains with us and we with Him ever undivided both here in time and forever in eternity. The Sacrament then is an intimate union with the gracious Savior who brings all the blessings of salvation.

This incorporation into Christ which the Lord's Supper grants, constitutes at the same time a true communion among all members of His body. One cannot be united with Christ without also at the same time existing in communion with all the other members of His body. As He comes into us with His flesh and blood uniting us with Himself, so He comes into all the other communicants drawing us together as His church. Receiving His one body in the Sacrament, we become His one body, the church.

Augustine illustrates this unity with Christ and the incorporation into His body which occurs in the Eucharist, building on St. Paul's words, "For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of the one bread" (1Co 10:17). He applies St. Paul's concept of the church being one bread and compares Christians to seeds of grain being milled. "Remember that bread is not made from one grain, but from many. When you were exorcised you were, after a fashion, milled. When you were baptized you were moistened. When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit you were baked. Be what you see, and receive what you are" (Augustine, *Sermon 272* trans. Sheerin, 95).

John 21:12 – 19 is given a eucharistic interpretation by Augustine to again illustrate that the Supper is a Sacrament of unity. In the text Jesus urges His disciples, "Come and dine" (Joh 21:12). The fish that was roasting on the fire as the disciples came ashore is Christ Himself who suffered on the cross. The fish the disciples brought to add to the meal symbolize the disciples and all Christians who become part of the eucharistic meal by being united with Christ's body in the Sacrament. "With Him is incorporated the church, in order to participate in everlasting blessedness. For this reason it is said, 'Bring of the fish which ye have now caught,' that

all of us who cherish this hope may know that we ourselves... partake in this great sacrament, and are associated in the same blessedness" (Augustine, *Tractate* 123, 2 trans. Schaff, 444).

On that first Good Friday when the Roman soldiers came to break the legs of those crucified to hasten their death, they found that Jesus was already dead. Therefore, they did not break His bones. "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (Joh 19:34). This statement indicates that Jesus truly died a natural human death, but the fathers found far more significance in this statement. They understood this passage in the light of the words of Zechariah, the Prophet, "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a first born (12:10). ... In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (13:1). The God-man Jesus Christ, the Almighty Himself, was pierced on the cross for our salvation. The blood and water from His wounded side has provided that wonderful cleansing fountain for sin and uncleanness of which Zechariah speaks. It can wash away each stain and mark, each spot and wrinkle. His holy precious blood is the source of redemption for the whole world. (1Jo 1:7; 2:2)

Because John's words in 19:34 were considered to be a fulfillment of Zachariah's prophecy concerning the fountain, the fathers interpreted the water and the blood to be the water of Baptism and the blood of the Lord's Supper which bring to us all the blessings of the cross. From the cross where salvation was accomplished there flows the two Sacraments through which the treasure of the cross is brought to us. From the Savior's wounds come the Sacraments by means of which the church is formed.

This same interpretation of John 19:34 is found in Augustine. Augustine, however, added another dimension to the imagery. As the first Adam's bride was taken out of his side while he slept, so

the Second Adam's bride, the church, was formed by the Sacraments flowing from His side as He slept in death.

Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear laid open His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. A suggestive word was made use of by the evangelist, in not saying pierced, or wounded His side, or anything else, but "opened"; that thereby, in a sense, the **gate of life might be thrown open, from whence have flowed forth the sacraments of the Church**, without which there is no entrance to the life which is the true life. That blood was shed for the remission of sins; that water it is that makes up the health-giving cup, and supplies at once the laver of baptism and water for drinking. This was announced beforehand, when Noah was commanded to make a door in the side of the ark, whereby the animals might enter which were not destined to perish in the flood, and by which the Church was prefigured. **Because of this, the first woman was formed from the side of the man when asleep, and was called Life, and the mother of all living. Truly it pointed to a great good, prior to the great evil of the transgression (in the guise of one thus lying asleep). This second Adam bowed His head and fell asleep on the cross, that a spouse might be formed for Him from that which flowed from the sleeper's side.** O death, whereby the dead are raised anew to life! What can be purer than such blood? What more health-giving than such a wound? (Augustine, *Tractate* 120, 2 trans. Schaff, 434)

Because Augustine considers the Eucharist to be such a great benefit and blessing for the life of the Christian, he regards it as part of the "daily bread" for which the Christian prays in the Lord's Prayer.

Of course, this request for daily bread is to be understood in two ways: for the necessity of fleshly sustenance, and for the necessity of spiritual nourishment. There is need of fleshly food for our daily sustenance, without which we cannot live. There is sustenance, and shelter too, but we understand all of that from the single aspect. When we ask for bread, we include everything. The faithful [i.e. baptized Christians] know also a spiritual nourishment, which you **too will come to know and receive from the altar of God**. That too will be your daily bread, quite necessary for this present life (Augustine, *Sermon* 57.7 trans. Scheerin, 314).

The Eucharist is necessary for this life since it is the nourishment and sustenance for both the body and soul of the Christian. Thus, it is indeed the “daily bread” of the church. Following this logic, that the Sacrament is the “daily bread” of the church, Augustine urges that the Eucharist be received daily (Augustine, *De Serm. Dom. in monte*, 2, 7.26). For Augustine the Blessed Sacrament is indeed a great treasure for body and soul.

Abbreviations

Confessions — Augustine. *The Confessions of St. Augustine*.

Doctrina — Augustine. *De Doctrina Christiana*.

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The Son of God as ΛΟΓΟΣ in the Eastern Church Fathers

Introduction

The Gospel of Saint John ends on the triumphal note of Christ's resurrection from the dead. According to the schema of St John's Gospel and other passages in Scripture (e.g. Rom 1:4: [περι]; τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιοσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν), it is precisely in the power of this resurrection that the Christ is conclusively held out as the Son of God. The resurrection is the doorway into the mystery of the theanthropic Second Person, and even more than that, the doorway into the mystery of the Holy Trinity. And it is on the basis of Christ's sonship to God the Father that the Church finds Her right — and Her ministers their authority — to the proclamation of forgiveness of sins.[†]

But just as St John's Gospel ends with this affirmation of Christ's divine sonship, so also does it begin with an extensive (the most extensive in Scripture, by any measure) asseverative narratio concerning the divine provenance of the Son (Joh 1:1-3, 15, 18). Here the μονογενῆς υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ is called the λόγος. This same λόγος is said to have been in the beginning πρὸς τὸν θεόν. But even more, John claims that θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. St John's Gospel is unique among the Gospels in asserting the divine sonship of the pre-incarnate Christ, and alone in asserting the preexistence of the Son of God.^{††}

† *N.B.* The arrangement of the Johannine material which postpones the account of the mission of the Twelve Apostles until after the resurrection of Christ (cf. John 20.19-23).

†† However, the preexistence of the Son is not unique to St John's gospel-writing. Cf. I John 1.1. Tangentially related at this point is David Scaer's apologetic, *Christology*, p. 23, that "The charge that Lutheran theology depends exclusively on John and Paul for its doctrine of the preexistence of Christ is without foundation. Werner Elert [The Structure of Lutheranism, p. 230] correctly says of Luther: 'One need read only a few of Luther's nearly 1,200

It would be wrong in any way to consider the prologue to the Gospel of St John as a quasi-philosophical, somewhat theological proof of Christ's eternal divine sonship. Rather, St John begins with an assertion, with several assertions; in fact, that the history of the Christ bears out. The proof for Christ's divine sonship is not to be found in the philosophical language of the prologue of the Maverick Gospel, but in the signs, the σημεῖα, of the Son of God, the greatest of which is His resurrection from the dead. The prologue is the assertion which the rest of the Gospel proves. Hence the resurrection of the Christ from the dead and its concomittant proclamation and establishment of Christ's divine sonship is the doorway, so to speak, into the doctrine of preexistence of the Son and so also into the ineffable mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

This paper explores the doctrine of the preexistence of the Son of God in pursuit of defining His eternal generation from the Father as the Father's Word, and what that implies concerning the mode of the eternal generation as well as what λόγος implies about the character of the Son. The orthodox theologians who explore this facet of the mystery of the Holy Trinity have tended to approach the topic with a bit of reserve, in some instances. And we will not always be satisfied with what we have heard from them, either because their explanations raise more questions in our minds, or broach, but do not answer, questions which we would deem necessary of consideration in this matter. In other instances, it may appear that they

sermons on texts from the gospels to realize that although he let Paul sharpen his view of Christ dogmatically, he took the picture of Christ Himself from the gospels and the basis of this picture brought proof that Christ was something different from the angry judge.” However true this statement might be in its original context, it is certainly not applicable to the doctrine of the preexistence of the Son of God. Luther's sermons are informal, not systematic, expositions of doctrine. A greater deal of lee-way is permitted in preaching than in systematic exegesis. And merely because Luther may find fit to mention in a certain connexion the preexistence of the Son of God, such mention must be understood as implied in the text, not explicit. Furthermore, I have done a good deal of reading in Luther's sermon material and have failed to find that Luther derives the doctrine of Christ's preexistence from other than Johannine and Pauline New Testament texts.

have asserted wildly and groped about for analogies and proofs and explanations. In short, the orthodox tradition shows a great deal of variety in approaching the issue. Yet, as we sort out the strands of thought in this great mystery of the Holy Trinity, we will come to a better understanding of the intricacies of this doctrine and its treatment, and together with that, to a better understanding of That Which was in the beginning, That Which was the content of the Apostolic kerygma, and That with Which the catholic Church still brings us into contact, that we might have fellowship with It, and thus with the Father (1Jo 1:1-5).

The Ecumenical Creeds

At the risk of ignoring several hundred years, innumerable personalities and thoughts, and various doctrinal movements within the Ancient Church, we pass now to two of the three great Ecumenical Creeds: the Apostles' Creed and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The focus will be primarily on the latter, since it bears many of the marks of Johannine christological thought.

The Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed originated around Rome, or at least on Italian soil, at the end of the first century or the beginning of the second. Unfortunately it is almost frustratingly devoid of any asseverances concerning the preexistence of the Son of God. In the Greek reconstruction supplied in *BLK* it merely states:

[πιστεύω ...] εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν, τὸν γεννηθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου ...

or in the received Latin text:

[*Credo ...*] *et in Jesum Christum, filium ejus unicum, Dominum nostrum: qui conceptus est de spiritu sancto, natus ex Maria virgine...*
(*BLK*, 21).

The Apostles' Creed seems to have no concern for the preexistence of Son of God. Stated in another way, the Apostles' Creed is concerned only with God's gracious revelation of Himself in the

θεανθρώπου.[†] The Creed expresses in most terse terms both His divine sonship and His human origin, stating of His divine origin merely that He is υἱὸς αὐτοῦ μονογενῆς, *filius ejus unicus*. Furthermore the Latin text makes clear that any possibility that the Greek word μονογενῆς could mean “only-begotten” is at best ambiguous and at worst completely incorrect. David Scaer, in his *Christology*, has clearly favored the way the Latin version of the text reads, so much so that even in his translation of John 1:14, μονογενῆς becomes empty of any sort of “genital” connotations that it might otherwise have (Scaer, 22).^{††} Hence the Apostles’ Creed may or may not have anything to say about the generation of the Son of God. If not, then it says nothing explicitly about His preexistence. If it does, then it says a great deal about His preexistence and His relation to the Father. At any rate, it is clear that the Apostles’ Creed is concerned primarily with the salvational work of the God-Man Jesus Christ. But it is frustrating that the Creed remains at worst silent and at best ambiguous, on the Church’s confession of the preexistence of the Son, not to mention any connection that His preexistence might have with His name λόγος.

† The Lutheran Confessions decidedly follow this line of interpretation. The Third Article of Confessio Augustana, a statement of allegiance to the catholic confession concerning the Son of God, is a thinly disguised statement concerning the Lutherans’ concern that a connexion be drawn closely between the Person and His Work. CA III §3: “daß er ein Opfer wäre nicht allein für die Erbsünde und Gottes Zorn versöhnet [ut reconciliaret nobis patrem et hostis esset non tantum pro culpa originis, sed etiam pro omnibus actualibus hominum peccatis] ... item daß er alle, so an ihne glauben, durch den heiligen Geist heilige, reinige, stärke und troste, ihnen auch Leben und allerlei Gaben und Guter austerte und wider den Teufel und wider die Sünde schütze und beschirme [Latin text does not follow German here]... lauts des *Symboli Apostolorum* [iuxta Symbolum Apostolorum]” (BLK, 54). Cf. also (CMin, II, §4).

†† Scaer’s reasoning for favoring “unique” over “only-begotten” as the best way to handle μονογενῆς in the Johannine text (Joh 1:14) is that “only-begotten” seems to him to be redundant. “The traditional phrase, ‘only-begotten Son of God,’ is somewhat redundant since a son is by very nature ‘begotten.’”

The Niceno–Constantinopolitan Creed

Turning the pages of church history ahead two hundred years, we now consider the Niceno–Constantinopolitan Creed. Originally a facet of Church initiation, the Niceno–Constantinopolitan Creed is in fact a layered baptismal creed — the layers came to the text over time to protect the integrity of the Church’s confession against Docetism, Gnosticism, and finally Arianism. The basic form of the Creed, including the layering, was developed and used primarily in Syria and Palestine. For this reason no ascription of particular authorship — even to an Ecumenical Council — is a satisfactory explanation of its origin. We are concerned here primarily with the very text of the creed, and will find only passing opportunity to mention some of the names and events comprising the crucible of its ecumenical acceptance, since they are only an aid in understanding the words of the Creed. The final form of the Creed, as it is presently confessed throughout the Christian Church (with the addition of *filioque* in the Latin West) receives its earliest textual support from the year 451, the year in which the Synod of Chalcedon convened. The text was purportedly first established at the First Synod of Constantinople in 381 on the basis of the earlier text from the Synod of Nicæa in 325. In 451 the text of the Niceno–Constantinopolitan Creed was read aloud as an affirmation and acceptance of the confession of the Nicene Fathers. We now turn our attention to the Chalcedonian text of 451:

[πιστεύομεν ...] καὶ εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ, δι’ οὗ πάντα ἐγένετο ...

There are several important concepts concerning the preexistence of the Son of God, which are expressed by these few lines.

- Christ is clearly called ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. However, this terminology obviously needs some clarification. Sonship can be granted despite natural circumstances or can be used to express the very φύσις of one person in relation to another. Therefore the term is clarified by the following participial phrase, τὸν ἐκ

τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα, which clearly expresses the natural relationship between father and son. However the function of the Father in the generation of His Son is not one of instrumentality (which would have been expressed by ὑπό or διά). Rather the Father is pictured here as the source of the Son. But the Father's function is described no further than that. The mode of "begetting" is still not explained. "Πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰωνῶν" is crucial in the description of the generation of the Son. This is the primary confession of the Church; φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ, δι' οὗ πάντα ἐγένετο elaborate and explain this clause. The Son is the ever-existent divine Light from ever-existent divine Light. He is genuine God from genuine God. There is no difference in substance (ὑπόστασις) or essence (οὐσία) between the Generated and the source from which He is generated, neither according to quality or quantity. Because of this one-to-one identity of the substance or essence of the Generated and Him from whom He is generated, the Generated is rightly said to be οὐ ποιηθείς. He is not, according to οὐσία, ἄλλο τι, as anything "made" or "produced" is something other than that which makes or produces it. The same way of thinking is applied to the Second Person's generation. In this way, He is of (ἐκ) the Father, not through (διὰ) or by (ὑπό) the Father. The Second Person's generation from the Father as the source of His generation and the Second Person's existence πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰωνῶν lead to the important and foundational conclusion that the Second Person is ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρὶ. In relation to His creation, the First Person stands as its ποιητής; in relation to the Second Person, the First Person is ὁ ἐξ οὗ.† The juxtaposition of διά and ἐκ, πάντα, and εἰς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, and ἐγένετο and γεννηθείς is effective in sharply distinguishing the relationship of the Son to the Father from the relationship of the creation to the Father.

† This is the first clause of the Creed; also implied in the relative phrase δι' οὗ πάντα ἐγένετο.

- There is a remarkable textual variant between the 325 text and the 381 text in the Second Article of the 451 Creed (Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 304).[†] In the place of *πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰωνῶν* in the later form of the creed, the 325 Creed reads *μονογενῆ, τουτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς*.^{††} The question here arises, “In relation to which portion of the preceding clause does the explanatory clause, *τουτέστιν κ.τ.λ.*, stand, or does it stand as explanatory of the whole preceding clause?” The answer to this question surely prompts yet another question concerning the ramifications of its omission in the later Constantinopolitan text. As to the first question:
 - If it refers to *γεννηθέντα* then it explains that the idea of the Second Person being begotten by the First implies a generation according to *οὐσία*.
 - If the clause refers to *ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς*, it serves to narrow the focus of the source of the generation of the Second Person to the very being of the Father.
 - If the clause refers to *μονογενῆς*, then we are to assume that *μονογενῆς* connotes or is intended to connote the relation of

† Kelly maintains that the Nicene Creed of 325 cannot be the textual *Vorlage* of the Constantinopolitan Creed of 381. “If [the Constantinopolitan Creed] had a direct relationship with any fourth-century creeds, it was certainly not with [the Nicene Creed of 325] but with certain others which have not so far been mentioned.”

†† In Athanasius’ mind, this clause was utterly necessary. *De decretis*, §19 (NPNF, v. 4, p. 162): “The Council wished to do away with the irreligious phrases of the Arians, and to use instead the acknowledged words of the Scriptures, that the Son is not from nothing, but ‘from God,’ and is ‘Word’ and ‘Wisdom,’ and not creature or work, but proper offspring from the Father. Eusebius and his fellows, led by their inveterate heterodoxy, understood the phrase ‘from God’ as it belongs to us, as if in respect to it the Word of God differed nothing from us, and that because it is written, ‘There is one God, from whom all things’ But the Fathers, perceiving their craft and the cunning of their irreligion, were forced to express more distinctly the sense of the words ‘from God.’ Accordingly, they wrote ‘from the essence of God,’ in order that ‘from God’ might not be considered common and equal in the Son and in things originate, but that all others might be acknowledged as creatures, and the Word alone as from the Father.” Cf. also *De synodis*, §33 (NPNF, 4, 468).

the Son to the Father according to essence, or very being, unlike any other being outside of the Holy Trinity.

- If the clause explains the whole preceding clause, then the whole preceding clause is ambiguous, and the structure and relationship of the dependent parts of the clause itself need to be held together by and understood in the light of *τουτέστιν κ.τ.λ.*
- However, the presence of the clause *τουτέστιν κ.τ.λ.* is obviated by the fact that the Constantinopolitan version of the creed explains what *ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς* means with the words *φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ*. Secondly, *γεννηθέντα* is explained by the clause *γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα*, as is the term *μονογενής* — *i.e.*, all other things were made; the Second Person was begotten, and in this sense is unique, or alone; among all beings that have source of being, the Second Person is “begotten.” The explanatory phrase thus becomes superfluous. And if there is any question concerning the relationship of First to Second Person according to essence, the Son is said to be *ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρὶ*. Perhaps the 381 Council viewed the phrase *τουτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς* as simply stating too much (Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 302).[†]

The early Church — especially in the Nicene Creed — clearly confess the preexistence of the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. As noted, profession of the Christ as the Son of God, as proven by His resurrection from the dead, is the critical entry-point of ecclesiastical kerygma. In recognition of this, the early Church was again and again compelled formally to defend the thesis

[†] Kelly is stunned by the absence of *τουτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς* in the Constantinopolitan Creed so much that he is led to his conclusion cited in the note above concerning the provenance of the Constantinopolitan Creed. The explanatory clause does, indeed, “comprise [a] key-formul[a] of Nicene orthodoxy.” However, as stated in the body of this paper, the formula under question is well-covered by *ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρὶ*. Perhaps the explanatory phrase led to misunderstandings concerning the unity of the Divine Essence, the [primary] possession and possessor of the Divine Essence, and so on. But this is conjecture.

of the Son's essential or hypostatic divinity — at Nicæa in 325, at Constantinople in 381 and again at Chalcedon in 451.

Nevertheless, the affirmation of the Second Person's generation and divine essence is not limited merely to the sphere of polemics and apologetic credal formularies. Both the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, as we have them today, are fundamentally the Church's kerygma not its apologetic. They and their clauses concerning the Second Person's generation and divinity are part of the initiation rites of the early Church. They proclaim boldly; they go on the offensive. They are not merely fortresses of retreat, although they sometimes serve as such. While declaring with all certitude, the Creeds nevertheless remain satisfied with terse formulae concerning the heart of the Christian faith. They declare that God is Creator; He created the earth and heavens, all things seen and unseen. Yet they do not explain that the Father created all things in six days. Likewise, they assert the divinity of the Second Person of the Trinity, His divine Sonship to the Father, and His being of one essence with the Father. They explain how this can be: He is generated from the Father, before all worlds. Nevertheless, they remain silent on **how** the Second Person is generated; they do not explain the intra-Trinitarian workings of generation.

The Eastern Fathers

Even if the how of the Second Person's generation is passed over in the formal creeds, the question nevertheless entered into the theological writings of the early Church. The focus of this paper now turns to that aspect of the Church's confession of the Trinity.

The whole patristic period is rich in expression concerning the mystery of the Second Person's generation from the Father as His λόγος. This is especially true of the ante-Nicene Fathers, such as Dionysius Alexandrinus, Athenagoras, and Justin Martyr, as well as the Western Fathers, from Tertullian to Hilary to Augustine. Nevertheless, during and after the Arian controversy there is an overarching reticence in the Eastern Fathers' approach to theological speculation concerning the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and

especially the eternal generation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, although this reticence comes to the fore in varying degrees in their writings. Much as the creeds that both informed their thought and were informed by their thought, they boldly assert the positive evidence concerning the Son's provenance as Word, but devote somewhat less time to explaining "how this can be so."[†]

As for the Greek Eastern Fathers, the players on the stage where the Trinitarian dilemma was acted out to its catholic catharsis with little or no help or influence from an alien orthodox party from the West, one would perhaps expect that they would to a greater degree have taken refuge in theological-speculative arguments for defense (as Irenaeus one hundred years before had done in *contra Haereses*, where in his defense of catholic Christianity against gnosticism, he drew extensively on his knowledge of Greek theological and cosmological speculation). One would also perhaps expect a greater degree of systematic thought and systematic arrangement of those thoughts, along with a greater degree of precision of expression, in the writings of the Orthodox Fathers. And while the Trinitarian controversy serves to settle the use and definition of many terms, such as οὐσία, ὑπόστασις, ἐνδιάθετος, προφορικός, it does not always leave us with the impression that there is a great degree of precision and uniformity beyond those terms and their correct uses. This lack of precision and this freedom of thought also happens to be one of the great attractions of patristic and evangelical-catholic theology, lending a great deal of texture to the following discussion. The organization of the following presentation is such that it begins with the greatest name in Eastern Trinitarian theology, St. Athanasius, in order to grasp the issues and vocabulary focusing on the generation of the Second Person. We expand from there first by examining other major authors of Athanasius' era, ending with the eighth century capstone of the Greek Eastern patrology, the Damascene St. John. Finally, from the perspective of that well-ordered thought system developed by the

† Editor's note: See the Annunciation account in Luke 1:34. The author intends here to allude to the mystery of the Second Person.

Nicene Fathers and culminating in the Damascene, we revert to the Apologists, Athenagoras and Justin Martyr, by way of contrasting Nicene and post-Nicene formulae with ante-Nicene Christian thought.

The Conciliar Period

Sts. Athanasius and Dionysius of Alexandria, Bishops

We are now interested in how, precisely, the Fathers describe the γέννησις of the Son from the οὐσία of the Father. The primary positive testimony which the Fathers rely on for discussing the manner of the Son's generation is the first verse of the Fourth Gospel, where the Son, as He is later called in the *narratio* (v. 14), is called the λόγος. Athanasius states, *Expositio Fidei* §1:

πιστεύομεν ... καὶ εἰς ἓνα μονογενῆ λόγον, σοφίαν, υἰόν, ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀνάρχως καὶ αἰδίως γεγεννημένον, λόγον δὲ οὐ προφορικόν, οὐκ ἐνδιάθετον, οὐκ ἀπόρροιαν τοῦ τελείου, οὐ τμησιν τῆς ἀπαθοῦς φύσεως, οὔτε προβολήν, ἀλλ' υἰόν αὐτοτελεῆ, ζώντα τε καὶ ἐνεργούντα, τὴν ἀληθινὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Πατρὸς, ἰσότημον καὶ ἰσόδοξον (MPG, 25, 20).[†]

This rather formal confession penned by Athanasius sheds a great deal more light on Nicene Christian thought concerning the Second Person. Unlike the Ecumenical Creeds, which do not as much as mention λόγος in connection with the Second Person, here the Second Person is confessed primarily as Word (λόγος), then as Wisdom (σοφία), and only thirdly Son (υἱός). We do not find the expressions λόγος and σοφία in the ecumenical conciliar

† Translation: "We believe. . . also in one Only-begotten Word, Wisdom, Son, begotten of the Father without beginning and eternally; word not pronounced nor mental, nor an effluence of the Perfect, nor a dividing of the impassible Essence, nor an issue [a word with decidedly gnostic and Sabellian overtones]; but absolutely perfect Son, living and powerful. . . , the true Image of the Father, equal in honour and glory" (*NPNF*, 4, 84). This confession of Athanasius' faith is dated to the time of his accession to the Episcopate in 328. Text in [] supplied from footnotes in *NPNF*. The words προφορικός and ἐνδιάθετος can, in catholic theology, "correct the defective sense of either." (*NPNF*, 4, 463). *N.B.* Unless otherwise noted, all following translations are my own.

confessions, because both words, as they carry noetic connotations, have certain problems endemic in their usage; this is alluded to here in a very pointed fashion by the inclusion of the explanatory phrase, “not pronounced [προφορικός] nor mental [ἐνδιάθετος].” But how then, can the Word properly be called the Word if He does not possess even one of the two properties — essential, not accidental, properties — of “word”?

Without even arguing that the analogy of human word to divine Word must fail in many places (especially since human word is by virtue of its source and by virtue of its limitation by time evanescent — an accidental property of human word) Athanasius declares that the divine Word can be neither προφορικός nor ἐνδιάθετος. The Divine Word must thus be Word in name only; or in other terms, the meaning of λόγος must be severely limited to exclude what λόγος denotes. Perhaps Athanasius in his confession intends to say that the Word is **not only** προφορικός or ἐνδιάθετος, especially since He does not reject the name λόγος. However, he censures sharply the so-called Macrostich of the semi-Arians of 344 which anathematizes those who abuse the word λόγος by saying that it is merely προφορικός or ἐνδιάθετος (*MPG*, 25, 729).[†] The authors of the Macrostich go on to explain that their position regards “Him not as simply God’s pronounced word or mental, but as Living God and Word, existing in Himself, and Son of God, and Christ ...” (*NPNF*, 4, 463).^{††} From these two evidences, we get a glimpse into

† *De Synodis*, §26: βδελυσσόμεθα δὲ πρὸς τούτοις καὶ ἀναθεματίζομεν καὶ τοὺς λόγον μὲν μόνον αὐτὸν ψιλὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἀνύπαρκτον ἐπιπλάστως καλοῦντας· ἐν ἑτέρῳ τὸ εἶναι ἔχοντα, νῦν μὲν ὡς τὸν προφορικὸν λεγόμενον ὑπὸ τινῶν, νῦν δὲ ὡς τὸν ἐνδιάθετον. Translation: “We abominate and anathematize those who call Him only ‘simple word of God’ and not existing, having been made; that He has His being in Another, called by some pronounced word, by others, mental.”

†† *De Synodis*, §26. There are, however, other reasons for which Athanasius may have censured the Macrostich other than for its content. The inveterate duplicity and wavering of the Arians and semi-Arians is evidenced throughout *de Synodis* as Athanasius traces the foibles of the Arian and semi-Arian confessions, and their uncanny ability to blow with the political winds even in such matters as weighty as their confession.

the Trinitarian logic of Athanasius, but we are still met with a wonderful wall of silence concerning what λόγος actually does imply. But Athanasius sheds more light on his Trinitarian logic in reference particularly to the relationship of the λόγος to the Father in *contra Arianos Oratione IV*, §§1 and 2:

ὡς γὰρ ἐκ θεοῦ θεός ἐστι, καὶ ἐκ σοφοῦ καὶ ἐκ λογικοῦ λόγος, καὶ ἐκ Πατρὸς υἱός· οὕτως ἐξ ὑποστάσεως ὑπόστατος, καὶ ἐξ οὐσίας οὐσιώδης καὶ ἐνούσιος, καὶ ἐξ ὄντος ὄν. ἐπεὶ εἰ μὴ οὐσιώδης σοφία, καὶ ἐνούσιος λόγος, καὶ ὄν υἱός, ἀλλὰ ἀπλῶς σοφία, καὶ λόγος, καὶ υἱός ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ· εἴη ἂν αὐτὸς ὁ Πατὴρ σύνθετος ἐκ σοφίας καὶ λόγου...εἰ...ὄνομα μόνον ἐστὶ ὁ λόγος, καὶ σοφία, καὶ υἱός, οὐχ ὑφέστηκε δέ, καθ' οὗ λέγεται ταῦτα, μᾶλλον δὲ ὅς ἐστι ταῦτα. εἰ οὖν οὐχ ὑφέστηκεν, ἀργὰ ἂν εἴη καὶ κενὰ τὰ ὀνόματα, ἐκτὸς εἰ μὴ ἂν τις εἴποι αὐτοσοφίαν εἶναι καὶ αὐτολόγον τὸν θεόν (MPG, 25, 469).[†]

A critical point in Athanasius' defense against Arianism is the idea expressed throughout this passage which speaks of the Second Person in relation to His source. But as the Second Person is identified by various appellations such as Word, Wisdom, and Son, so the essential and substantive source of Him must likewise be identified as a correlate to each of those terms that identify the Second Person. What is generated as Word must not be incongruous with that from which it is derived. And yet it cannot be the thing itself from which it is derived. Thus "Father" is not said of the First Person κατ' οὐσίαν ἢ καθ' ὑπόστασιν (in its earlier, broader connotation), nor "Son" of Second Person according to His essence. Rather they share the same essence without that essence being divided or in any way diminished by the essential περιχώρησις. And since both Persons participate in the other according to essence, their relationship to one another must be expressed in such a way that the expression

[†] Partial translation supplied from *NPNF*, 4, 433: "For as He is God from God, and Wisdom from the Wise, and Word from the Rational, and Son from the Father, so is He from subsistence subsistent and from essence essential and Substantive, and Being from Being. Since if He were not essential Wisdom and substantive Word, and Son existing, but simply Wisdom and Word and Son in the Father, then the Father Himself would have a nature compounded of Wisdom and Word."

correlates a **relational** attribute of the one to a similar **relational** attribute of the other. Thus as the biblical evidence clearly demonstrates that the First Person's relationship to that of the Second Person is that of Father to Son — not in an earthly, physical way by division of substance and essence, but in an ineffable, mysterious way by περιχώρησις of essence in τῷ γεννᾶσαι and τῷ γεννηθῆναι — by correlation, the Son, Whose source is the Father, as the λόγος, must find His source in that which is substantively λογικός; as σοφία He must find His source in that which is essentially σοφός; and as ὁ θεός, He must find His source in that which is essentially θεός.

The argument concludes that if the Second Person were not οὐσιώδης σοφία and ἐνούσιος λόγος, “then the Father Himself would have a nature compounded of Wisdom and Word.” This guards the doctrine of the simplicity of the Divine Essence. Bringing this to bear upon what was said above, that the Father must be λογικός, σοφός, and θεός, one would misread Athanasius if one were to maintain that being rational, being wise, and being divine would indicate a complex within the simple Divine Essence. The Essence does not first form and then have the above attributes added to that Essence as accidents; nor is the Divine Essence a by-product of a combination of any of those attributes. Rather, the Father is according to His very Essence λογικός, σοφός, and θεός.

The substance λόγος, σοφία, and ὁ θεός is brought forth from that which is essentially λογικός, σοφός, and θεός as a necessary and immediate generate.

- This substance is brought forth necessarily since, for example, what is λογικός cannot by definition be without λόγος. Nevertheless, the λόγος and the attribute λογικός are not *idem* (much as we say that sanctification is necessary where there is justification, although sanctification is not justification). λόγος is a derived substance from being λογικός. This safeguards against a confusion of Persons in the Trinity.
- The substance λόγος, σοφία, and ὁ θεός is brought forth immediately (*immediate*) for two reasons:

- the Essence of God is ἀπαθής, and cannot be moved by forces not part of the Essence; and
- the Essence of God itself is simplex, not an amalgam of several conflicting substances (as in man, soul, desire, will, mind, etc.).
- Thus it cannot be said that there is a mediating rôle played by any one substance with another within the Godhead. For example, λόγος is not the product of νοῦς with an intermediary or even co-causal rôle played by θέλημα. Rather λόγος is simply generated from simple λογικός essence simply because such an essence is just that. Note also that if λόγος is a necessary and immediate generate of a λογικός essence, in the case of the Divine Essence whose primary property is “being” itself, and who is perfectly and eternally λογικός, then λόγος must of necessity always, that is eternally and perfectly, accompany the Divine Essence. But the λόγος is not an element which comprises the Father’s Substance, rather it is Another, an ἄλλο τι. He Himself is not the Father for then, as Athanasius says, “the Father Himself would have a nature compounded of Wisdom and Word.” Rather he is within, from and with (πρός, Joh 1:1) the Father.

St Athanasius’ Defense of St. Dionysius

Most of the writings of St. Athanasius tend to be more conservative in respect to what we might call “constructive theology.” Caught up in the Arian controversy as he was, Athanasius operated by and large within a very restrictive framework which called for a great deal of precision. However, Athanasius’ orthodox predecessors, free from the strictures of Nicene dogma, while conscious of many of the issues which precipitated the Arian controversy, were not bound by the same stringent philosophical and logical modes of expression as later orthodox theologians were to be.

Part of the work of Athanasius against the Arians was focused on his defense of the orthodoxy of the Alexandrine Bishop, St. Dionysius (in *de Sententia Dionysii*), whose life came to an end at the

threshold of the Arian controversy in the late third century. Dionysius was subsequently claimed as a proponent both by the Arians and the orthodox party.[†] For this reason, he is interesting as an historical figure. But even more interesting for the purpose we are pursuing is Athanasius' defense and use of Dionysius, who appears here to be a subordinationist, there to be trinitarian. Athanasius' defense of Dionysius is made all the more curious in light of the fact that the Arian party grasps at λόγος-passages from Dionysius, which, at least upon a superficial reading, appear to teach a subordination of the Second Person *extra essentiam Patris*, thus upholding the Arian position (καὶ ταῦτα ὁ [Ἄρειος] λέγων ἀρχεῖ παρὰ τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν, ὡς καὶ ἐν τούτοις ἔχων ὁμόδοξον τὸν Διονύσιον) (MPG, 25, 513).^{††} We are now interested in seeing how Athanasius deals both with the accusations leveled by the Arians against Dionysius Alexandrine, and what Dionysius himself has to say which would vindicate his ante-Nicene orthodoxy, especially as concerns the Arian claim that κατ' ἐπίνοιαν δὲ μόνον λέγεται λόγος, which is as much as to say that οὐκ ἔστι μὲν κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ἀληθινὸς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος (MPG, 25, 513). First of all, Athanasius does not reject Dionysius' *sententia* out of hand. In fact, Athanasius quotes Dionysius freely, letting the latter explain himself:

ἀπόρροια γὰρ νοῦ λόγος· καὶ ὡς ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων εἰπεῖν, ἀπὸ καρδίας διὰ στόματος ἐξοχετεύεται, ἕτερος γενόμενος τοῦ ἐν

† For more on the Alexandrian Dionysius and his theological posture in general concerning the Trinity, cf. Luise Abramowski, "Dionys von Rom (gest. 268) und Dionys von Alexandrien (gest. 264/5) in den Arianischen Streitigkeiten des 4. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 92/2-3, (1982). pp. 255-265.

†† *de Sententia Dionysii* §25. Arius had contended that ὁ λόγος οὐκ ἔστιν ἴδιος τοῦ Πατρὸς, ἀλλ' ἄλλος μὲν ἔστιν ὁ ἐν τῷ θεῷ λόγος· οὗτος δὲ ὁ Κύριος ξένος μὲν καὶ ἀλλότριός ἐστι τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσίας· κατ' ἐπίνοιαν δὲ μόνον λέγεται λόγος, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι μὲν κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ἀληθινὸς τοῦ θεοῦ υἱός, κατὰ θέσιν δὲ λέγεται καὶ οὗτος υἱός, ὡς κτίσμα. Translate: "The Word is not is not the Father's own; rather, the Word within God is other. And this Lord is foreign and a stranger to the Father's essence. It is only a mental picture that He is called Word, and He is not according to nature and genuinely Son of God. But even this one is called 'Son' by adoption, as a creature."

καρδία λόγου, ὁ διὰ γλώσσης νοῦς προπηδῶν. ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἔμεινε προπέμψας, καὶ ἐστὶν οἴος ἦν· ὁ δὲ ἐξέπη προπεμφθεὶς, καὶ φέρεται πανταχοῦ· καὶ οὕτως ἐστὶν ἐκάτερος ἐν ἐκατέρῳ, ἕτερος ὢν θατέρου· καὶ ἐν εἰσιν, ὄντες δύο· οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἐν, καὶ ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἐλέχθησαν εἶναι (MPG, 25, 513).[†]

Using the touchstone of the logic and vocabulary of Nicea and the anti-Arian party, this passage from Dionysius would certainly not pass the test of orthodoxy. Dionysius here clearly teaches a λόγος both ἐνδιάθετος (with the concept of νοῦς) and προφορικός, as well as an ἀπόρροια νοῦ, concepts which we have seen Athanasius roundly censures (MPG, 25, 200).^{††} However it is much to his credit that Athanasius can recognize the expression above as one not made under the strictures of Nicene dogma, not tempered in the furnace of the Arian controversy, and thus also not necessarily heterodox. He does not subject Dionysius to an unfair litmus test to check for Nicene terminology and categories. Rather when taking his expression fully into account, Athanasius sees in Dionysius one who — despite his terminological and categorical difficulties and inconsistencies — nevertheless is an orthodox confessor of the Holy Trinity and the Son of God.

Terminological and categorical difficulties aside, we must now examine the content of Dionysius' statement above, putting the best construction on each element, as Athanasius has done in his defense of him. Throughout his formulation, Dionysius plays with the idea of νοῦς and λόγος. At first, λόγος is an ἀπόρροια νοῦ, that is, the source of λόγος is νοῦς. But in the very next sentence, Dionysius says that νοῦς itself is poured out through the tongue and mouth, and differs from the λόγος in the heart, the place whence its

† *De Sententia Dionysii* §23. Translate: "For word is an emanation of the mind, and, humanly speaking, it is poured forth from the heart through the mouth. The mind springing forth through the tongue becomes numerically other than the word in the heart. For the one which sent forth remained, and is the same as it was. But the one which was sent forth is cast out, and is borne about everywhere. And in this way, each is in the other, each being numerically other to one another. And they are one, although they are two. For thus both the Father and the Son are One and have chosen to exist within each other."

†† Cf. above, *Expositio Fidei* §1

existence is derived, relationally establishing λόγος as the source of νοῦς.

It is precisely this apparent lack of precision and this tension throughout the statement between “νοῦς is source” versus “λόγος is source” that is the redeeming quality of the formulation. For it is in this paradoxical character of the generation of the λόγος that it can rightly be said οὕτως ἐστὶν ἑκάτερος ἐν ἑκατέρῳ, ἕτερος ὢν θατέρου; that is, whatever is generated is *numero alter* of the one from which it is generated. And if we are to understand from Athanasius’ arrangement of the material here that it was to this statement that the Arians appealed for their assertion that according to essence ἄλλος μὲν ἔστιν ὁ ἐν τῷ θεῷ λόγος· οὗτος δὲ ὁ Κύριος ξένος μὲν καὶ ἀλλότριός ἐστι τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσίας.[†] Despite the fact that Dionysius states explicitly that ἓν εἰσιν, ὄντες δύο (“they are one although they are two” — the central paradox involved in Trinitarian logic), the Arians refuse to tip their hats to the paradox, and are forced to confess that the λόγος is *alienus* to the Father’s essence.

While it is proper to censure the Arians for asserting more than is allowed, it is at the same time much to the credit of St. Athanasius that he is indulgent and constructive enough — if not simply politically motivated to keep his own episcopal seat untarnished from essentially Arian succession — to allow and to use to his benefit a certain imprecision of expression. In fact, this is Athanasius at his best: a creative and provocative theologian who does not remove himself from the fray, who indulges to the fullest extent in creative and speculative exegesis thereby to explore and to elucidate to the utmost the positive *testimonia* while remaining within the bounds catholic teaching and giving flesh and vitality to the skeleton of conciliar dogma.

But this is not the end of Athanasius’ discussion of Dionysius Alexandrine. He goes on to commend and defend the following statement of Dionysius:

† Read *alius quidam*, not *numero alter quidam*, as the Dionysian statement reads.

ὡς γὰρ ὁ ἡμέτερος νοῦς ἐρεῦγεται μὲν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τὸν λόγον, ὡς εἶπεν ὁ προφήτης, ἐξερεῦξατο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν· καὶ μὲν ἑκάτερος ἕτερος θατέρου, ἴδιον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ κεχωρισμένον εἰληχῶς τόπον, ὁ μὲν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς γλώττης καὶ τοῦ στόματος οἰκῶν τε καὶ κινούμενος· οὐ μὴν διεστήκασιν, οὐδὲ καθάπαξ ἀλλήλων στέρονται, οὐδὲ ἐστὶν οὔτε ὁ νοῦς ἄλογος, οὔτε ἄνους ὁ λόγος· ἀλλ' ὁ γε νοῦς ποιεῖ τὸν λόγον ἐν αὐτῷ φανείς· καὶ ὁ λόγος δεῖκνυσι τὸν νοῦν ἐν αὐτῷ γένομενος· καὶ μὲν ὁ νοῦς ἔστιν, οἷον λόγος ἐγκείμενος· ὁ δὲ λόγος νοῦς προπηδῶν· καὶ μεθίσταται μὲν ὁ νοῦς εἰς τὸν λόγον, ὁ δὲ λόγος τὸν νοῦν εἰς τοὺς ἀκροατὰς ἐγκυκλεῖ. καὶ οὕτως ὁ νοῦς διὰ τοῦ λόγου ταῖς τῶν ἀκούοντων ψυχαῖς ἐνιδρύεται, συνεισιῶν τῷ λόγῳ· καὶ ἐστὶν ὁ μὲν οἷον πατὴρ τοῦ λόγου, ὢν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ· ὁ δὲ καθάπερ υἱός, ὁ λόγος τοῦ νοῦ...οὕτως ὁ Πατὴρ ὁ μέγιστος καὶ καθόλου νοῦς, πρῶτον τὸν υἱὸν λόγον ἐρημνεῖα καὶ ἄγγελον ἑαυτοῦ ἔχει (MPG, 25, 513; 516).[†]

Commenting on this passage from Dionysius, Athanasius asks:

οὐχ ὁ μὲν Ἀρειὸς κατ' ἐπινοίαν λέγει τὸν λόγον, ὁ δὲ Διονύσιος ἀληθινὸν καὶ φύσει λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὁ μὲν ἀποξενεῖ τὸν λόγον ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς, ὁ δὲ ἴδιον καὶ ἀδιαίρετον τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐσίας αὐτὸν εἶναι διδάσκει· ὡς ἔστιν ὁ λόγος πρὸς τὸν νοῦν, καὶ ποταμὸς πρὸς τὴν πηγὴν (MPG, 25, 516).^{††}

† *De Sententia Dionysii* §23. Translate: “For as our mind spews forth from itself its word (as the Prophet has said, ‘My heart has spewed forth a good word’), and each is numerically other to each, each having obtained its own place separated from the rest, the one in the heart, the other dwelling and moving upon the tongue and in the mouth. Indeed, they are not separated, nor for a moment are they deprived of one another, nor is either the mind without word, or the word without mind. But even the mind, when it is laid bare in its word, produces its word; and the word, having come into being in the mind, brings to light the mind. The mind is such that it is hidden word, and the word, mind springing forth. And while the mind retires into the word, the word circulates the mind to those who hear it. And thus, through the word, the mind takes its seat in the souls of those who hear it, penetrating inside by means of the word. And the one is, so to speak, the father of the word, existing of itself, while the word of the mind is just like a son Thus the Father, the utterly great and universal Mind, possesses His Son, the first Word, as His own Interpreter and Messenger.”

†† *De Sententia Dionysii* §24. Translate: “Does not Arius call Him ‘the Word’ only as a mental picture, while Dionysius calls Him the genuine Word of God by nature? And while Arius alienates the Word from the Father, Dionysius teaches that He is proper of and inseparable from the Father’s essence, as the

For Athanasius, there is no problem in understanding Dionysius Alexandrine correctly. But the latter must be understood on his own terms, not in light of the Arian heresy and consequent controversy. In teaching a noetic generation of the Son, Dionysius neither divides the essence, nor does he state that the Son is anything less than God. Rather he teaches that He is a thing proper of, and inseparable from, the Divine Essence, as a river from its spring. As concerns orthodoxy as defined by the Nicene Council, the danger of expressing the generation of the Second Person as λόγος from νοῦς is not to be found in merely exploring the implications of such expressions. Rather excesses must be avoided. Logical deductions can be applied only as long they remain cognizant of the central paradox of trinitarian logic. It is not without good reason that we find a paucity of expressions concerning the Second Person's generation as λόγος in the private and public writings of Athanasius. Such expression is fraught with logical, terminological, and categorical difficulties; this is evidenced

- by Athanasius' careful exposition of what the generation of the λόγος does **not** imply concerning the λόγος in *Expositione Fidei* §1
- by his reluctance to discuss outside of the context of his defense of Dionysius what it does imply about the Second Person and
- by his close correlation in every respect of what the Second Person is to what His being implies about the Father in *contra Arianos Oratione IV*, §§1 and 2.

Athanasius is reluctant to use the term λόγος any further than this in discussing the generation of the Son, and his position on this may be well summarised by the following:

ὁ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος οὐχ, ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι, προφορικός ἐστιν, οὐδὲ ψόφος ῥημάτων, οὐδὲ τὸ προστάξει θεόν, τοῦτο ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός· ἀλλ' ὡς φωτὸς ἀπαύγασμα, οὕτως ἐστὶ γέννημα τέλειον ἐκ τελείου, διὸ καὶ θεὸς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ· καὶ θεὸς γὰρ ἦν, φησὶν, ὁ λόγος, καὶ οἱ μὲν λόγοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲν εἰσὶν εἰς ἐνέργειαν· διὸ οὐδὲ διὰ λόγων, ἀλλὰ διὰ χεῖρων ἀνθρώπος ἐργάζεται, ὅτι αὐταὶ μὲν ὑπάρχουσιν, ὁ δὲ λόγος αὐτῶν οὐχ ὑπίσταται, ὁ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ

word is to the mind, and a river to its source.”

λόγος, ὡς εἶπεν ὁ ἀπόστολος, ζῶν ἐστὶν καὶ ἐνεργῆς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομην καὶ διϊκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος, ἁρμών τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας· καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνά καὶ τετραχλησιμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος. ... οὐ δεῖ δὲ ζητεῖν, διὰ τί μὴ τοιοῦτος ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος οἶος καὶ ὁ ἡμέτερος· ἐπεὶ μὴ τοιοῦτος ὁ θεὸς οἶοι καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὡς προεῖρηται· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πρέπει ζητεῖν πῶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος, ἢ πῶς ἀπαύγασμά ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ, ἢ πῶς γεννᾷ ὁ θεός, καὶ τίς ὁ τρόπος τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ γεννήσεως· μαίνοιτο γὰρ ἂν τις τοιαῦτα τολμών, ὅτι πρᾶγμα ἄρρητον καὶ φύσεως ἴδιον θεοῦ, μόνω τε αὐτῷ καὶ τῷ υἱῷ γινωσκόμενον, ἀξιῶσι λόγοις αὐτὸ ἐρμηνευθῆναι... βέλτιον γὰρ ἀποροῦντας σιωπᾶν καὶ πιστεῦειν, ἢ ἀπιστεῖν διὰ τὸ ἀπορεῖν' (*MPG*, 26, 221-224).

What the Second Person is, His relationship to His Father, and what the Father is in relation to the Second Person are all elements in the trinitarian theology of Athanasius. But what exactly is implied concerning the mode of generation (τρόπος τῆς γεννήσεως) of the λόγος from that which is λογικός, or how exactly what is λογικός brings into being λόγος, these are matters concerning which Athanasius dares not speculate. And while the defense of Dionysius demonstrates the flexibility of Athanasius, it also clearly shows the problems that may arise when the meaning and implication of λόγος

† Athanasius, *contra Arianos Orat.* II §§35, 36. Translation supplied in (*NPNF*, 4, 367): "But God's Word is not merely pronounced, as one may say, nor a sound of accents, nor by His Son is meant His command; but as radiance of light, so is He perfect offspring from perfect. Hence He is also God, as being God's Image; for 'the Word was God,' says Scripture. And man's words avail not for operation; hence man works not by means of words but of hands, for they have being and man's word subsists not. But 'the Word of God,' as the Apostle has said, 'is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword and cuts even unto the separation of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and judges the heart's desires and intentions. ... Nor must we ask why the Word of God is not such as our word, considering God is not such as we, as has been before said; nor is it right to seek how the Word is from God, or how He is God's radiance, or how God begets, and what is the manner of His begetting. For a man must be beside himself to venture on such points; since a thing inef-fable and proper to God's nature, and known to Him alone and to the Son, this he demands to be explained in words. ... For it is better in perplexity to be silent and believe, than to disbelieve on account of perplexity."

are pressed beyond a certain point. Yet it is unfortunate that Athanasius, in the last analysis, feels that he must be so careful that he cannot indulge in further investigation concerning this facet of the mystery of the generation of the Second Person.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Archbishop

For Athanasius it is unacceptable that the λόγος be either προφορικός or ἐνδιάθετος.[†] However, we get a much different idea from St. Cyril of Jerusalem, whose relative anonymity and separation from the great Arian debate of his age lend some freshness, originality, and independence to his thought.^{††} It appears that for Cyril the main focus in logos-theology is upon the distinction between λόγος προφορικός and λόγος ἐνυπόστατος (*MPG*, 33, 465).^{†††} The prior term carries with it some undesirable logical extractions from its analogy with human λόγος (*MPG*, 33, 465).^{††††}

† Athanasius, *Expositio Fidei* §1, (*NPNF*, v. 4, p. 84): "... And in one Only-begotten Word, Wisdom, Son begotten of the Father without beginning and eternally; word not pronounced nor mental ..." St. Athanasius seems to supply his reasoning for this in the statement (*De Sententia Dionysii*, §25, *MPG*, 25, 517): "οὐδὲ πάλιν ἐκ πολλῶν εἰς ἐστὶν οὗτος λόγος, ἀλλὰ μόνος ἐστὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς υἱός, ἀληθινὸς καὶ φύσει γνήσιος, ὁ καὶ νῦν ὢν ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ αἰδίως καὶ ἀδιαιρέτως ὢν ἐξ αὐτοῦ. — And again that Word that proceeded forth is not Father, nor again is He one word of many; but He alone is the Father's Son, the true and genuine Son by nature, Who both now is in Him, and is eternally and indivisibly from within Him" (*NPNF*, 4, 186). The reasoning here seems to be that as οἱ προφορικοί τε καὶ ἐνδιάθετοι λόγοι of men, or any being for that matter, are many, then it cannot follow that the Divine λόγος is either ἐνδιάθετος or προφορικός, since He is not one of many such λόγοι.

†† We here rely primarily upon his *Catechetical Lectures*, composed before, and delivered in, Lent of 348, during which time it was customary for a Bishop to expound the doctrine of the most Adorable Holy Trinity to those who would be baptised that Easter (*NPNF*, 7, "Introduction," xliii-xlvi). Catechetical lectures were thus an integral part of the more formal credal confession of the Church, since they fleshed out terse statements found in the creeds. Thus, what we have before us as Cyril's *Catechetical Lectures* should not in any way be devalued as a more informal, less precise exposition of the catholic faith.

††† Cf. *Catechesis* IV. viii: λόγος οὐ προφορικός εἰς ἀέρα διαχεόμενος, οὔτε λόγοις ἀνυποστάτοις ἐξομοιούμενος — "Word not pronounced, poured out into the air, nor likened to any anhypostatic words"; and XI. x (*MPG*, 33, 701):

However St. Cyril's treatment of logos-theology is more free than Athanasius'. Cyril effectively uses the limping analogy between Divine λόγος and human λόγος. With this analogy he refutes false notions about the generation of the divine λόγος and reflects upon the positive implications of the divine λόγος.

In *Catechesis* XI. x, Cyril outlines four ways in which Divine λόγος differs from human λόγος (*MPG* 33, 710).^{††} First of all, while human νοῦς is ἐνυπόστατος (subsisting), human λόγος, λαληθεὶς καὶ εἰς ἀέρα διαχυθεὶς ἀπόλλυται. Human λόγος has no hypostasis and as such is unable to subsist of its own. The Divine λόγος, however, is both ζῶν and ἐνυπόστατος, because the same is called υἱός. As such this λόγος is not λαληθεὶς, but γεννηθεὶς.

In the second place, as human λόγος is uttered and poured forth through the lips, which takes place in time and does not confer subsistence upon such λόγος, Divine λόγος is born, not προφορικός, but eternally and without speech (ἀνεκφράστως) ἐν ὑποστάσει (*MPG* 33, 701).^{†††} Both of these assertions are proved by the first verse of St. John's Evangel.

ἡμεῖς δὲ οἶδαμεν τὸν Χριστὸν γεννηθέντα λόγον οὐ προφορικόν, ἀλλὰ λόγον ἐνυπόστατον καὶ ζῶντα — “But we know that the Christ was begotten as Word — not pronounced, but as Word enhyposstatic and living.”)

† *Catechesis* XI.x (*MPG*, 33, 465): οὐχ ὡς ἐν ἀνθρώποις γεννᾷ νοῦς λόγον — “not as the mind of humans begets word”.

†† ἐγέννησεν ὁ Πατήρ τὸν υἱόν, οὐχ ὡς ἐν ἀνθρώποις γεννᾷ νοῦς λόγον. ὁ μὲν γὰρ νοῦς ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνυπόστατός ἐστιν· ὁ δὲ λόγος, λαληθεὶς καὶ εἰς ἀέρα διαχυθεὶς ἀπόλλυται. ἡμεῖς δὲ οἶδαμεν τὸν Χριστὸν γεννηθέντα λόγον οὐ προφορικόν, ἀλλὰ λόγον ἐνυπόστατον καὶ ζῶντα. — “The Father begat the Son, not as the mind of humans begets word. For, while our mind is enhyposstatic, our word, having been spoken and poured out into the air, becomes naught. But we know that the Christ was begotten as Word — not as pronounced, but as Word enhyposstatic and living.”

††† οὐ χεῖλεσι λαληθέντα καὶ διαχυθέντα, ἀλλ' ἐκ Πατρὸς αἰδίως καὶ ἀνεκφράστως καὶ ἐν ὑποστάσει γεννηθέντα. ἐν ἀρχῇ γὰρ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος ἐν δεξιᾷ καθεζόμενος — “Not spoken by the lips and poured out, but begotten from the Father eternally and without speech, and in an hypostasis. For ‘the Word was in the beginning, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,’ having His session at the right hand.”

Thirdly, expanding on the cue supplied by the first verse of St. John's Gospel, the Divine λόγος has these personal properties: He is both intelligent and effective (*MPG 33, 701*).[†] Athanasius, *contra Arianos Oratio* II §35, digresses similarly, making the point that since human λόγος οὐχ ὑπίσταται, it can effect nothing. Arguing conversely here, Cyril attributes to Divine λόγος actions which can only be carried out if He is ἐνυπόστατος.

And finally, arguing according to the pattern expressed in Ephesians 4.10 (ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς) and John 3.13 (καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς), the Divine λόγος descends and ascends, unlike human λόγος which neither descends nor ascends, but once it is spoken, ἀπόλλυται (*MPG 33, 701*).^{††} Only such a λόγος, furthermore, can be said to speak (λόγος λαλῶν καὶ λέγων), a strange twist on the typical way of picturing “word,” namely, as spoken (λαλούμενος). προφορικός λόγος is spoken, but Divine hypostatic λόγος Himself speaks.

St. Cyril — although dealing extensively with the idea of the generation of the Second Person in only one place — is much more constructive than St. Athanasius — aside from Athanasius' defense of Dionysius. While the Divine λόγος is not begotten from the νοῦς, Cyril maintains that He is nevertheless, as λογικός τις, Himself capable of carrying out the action normally attributed to νοῦς, τὸ νοεῖν. While the Divine λόγος is not προφορικός, He Himself προφορεῖ λόγον τε καὶ λαλίαν. And while Divine λόγος does not

† λόγος νοῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς βούλημα, καὶ δημιουργῶν τὰ πάντα τῷ ἐκείνου νεύματι. — “Word mindful of the Father's will and effecting all things at the nod of [His Father].”

†† λόγος ὁ καταβάς καὶ ἀναβάς· ὁ γὰρ προφορικός, λαλούμενος οὐ καταβαίνει οὐδὲ ἀναβαίνει· λόγος λαλῶν καὶ λέγων — “The Word who has descended and ascended — for pronounced [word], once it is uttered does not descend and ascend — word uttering and speaking). St. Cyril presents the same way of looking at the λόγος in Book Four of *Catechesis*, viii: λόγος ἀκούων τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ λαλῶν αὐτός — “Word listening to the Father, and Himself speaking” (*MPG, 33, 465*).

proceed merely to be dispersed and destroyed, He actually subsists, *ὑπίσταται*, drawing His substance from the Father.

St. Gregory Nazianzene, Theologian

Oratio theologica IV of the Nazianzene was composed and delivered some time shortly after 380 in Constantinople, whence he had received a call to serve as Bishop after a long period of Arian domination and doctrinal confusion (*NPNF*, 7, 196ff). In this brave and orthodox defense of the full Godhead of the Second Person, the Nazianzene lists all of the names by which the Second Person is known, including *υἴος*, *σοφία*, *εἴκων*, *ζωή*, *δικαιοσύνη*, *δύναμις*, *ἀπολύτρωσις*, and *λόγος*, supplying for each a well-reasoned and tightly composed exposition of the rationale behind each term, using every one of them to buttress orthodox catholicity against the mania of the heretics (*MPG*, 36, 128ff). Concerning the *λόγος*, he writes:

λόγος δὲ ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ὡς πρὸς νοῦν λόγος· οὐ μόνον διὰ τὸ ἀπαθὲς τῆς γεννήσεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ συναφές, καὶ τὸ ἐξαγγελτικόν· τάχα δ' ἂν εἶποι τις, ὅτι καὶ ὡς ὅρος πρὸς τὸ ὀριζόμενον, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τοῦτο λέγεται λόγος, ὁ γὰρ νενοηκώς, φησί, τὸν υἱὸν (τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ ἑωρακώς) νενόηκε τὸν Πατέρα· καὶ σύντομος ἀπόδειξις καὶ ῥαδία τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς φύσεως, ὁ υἱὸς· γέννημα γὰρ ἅπαν τοῦ γεγεννηκότος, σιωπῶν λόγος, εἰ δὲ καὶ διὰ τὸ ἐνυπάρχειν τοῖς οὐσι λέγοι τις, οὐχ ἁμαρτήσῃ τοῦ λόγου· τί γὰρ ἐστὶν, ὁ μὴ λόγῳ συνέστηκεν (*MPG*, 36, 129).†

The relationship of the Second Person to the Father is that of *λόγος* to *νοῦς*, for three reasons.

† Translation: And [He is called] Word because He is to the Father as word to mind; not only because of the impassibility of His generation, but also because of the union and the annunciatory aspect. And perhaps (someone might say) because He is like a definition to the thing defined, since this also is called “word.” For it says, “He who has known the Son (for that is what ‘has seen’ means), has known the Father. And the Son is a concise and simple display of the Father’s nature, for any begotten thing is a silent word of its Begetter. And if one should [that He is called Word] also because He exists in those things that have being, he would in no way slight the Word. For what is there that has being that is not held together by Word?”

- Because of the ἀπαθής property of the Divine Essence, the same cannot admit of a passible generation (*MPG*, 36, 77).† νοῦς generates λόγος simply because the former is λογικός. There is no intermediary effective cause.
- Secondly, in the whole Trinity there is a mutual περιχώρησις, so that the Son can say ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἓν ἔσμεν, and again, ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ πατήρ κἀγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ. Human offspring cannot remain within that which has begotten it. But the λόγος, being the eternal Offspring, and eternally being the Offspring of νοῦς, is correctly said to be πρὸς, παρά, ἐν and ἐκ in relation to the Father.
- Surprisingly, the view of the Nazianzene concerning the λόγος is broad enough to take into consideration and to assert the revelatory character of the word λόγος, even as it refers to the λόγος ἐνυπόστατος — something we have detected also in the catechetical lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the Nazianzene has not gone so far as to speak of λόγος προφορικός, a term rightly rejected during the conciliar period by the orthodox catholic party for its subordinationist overtones in Arian thought.

Gregory then posits two more interpretations of the Second Person as λόγος. In my opinion, he espouses them both, despite the fact that he offers them as possibilities. Both of these two interpretations are meant to serve as an elucidation of the last point. First of all, he argues, the term λόγος is used also as “definition.” Since a definition (ὄρος) is nothing more than an exposition of particular denotations which a σημεῖον, or here, τὸ ὀρίζομενον, has, in this way precisely a ὄρος ἐξαγγέλλει τὸ ὀρίζομενον. Thus, a ὄρος is also said to give cognitive mental knowledge of τὸ ὀρίζομενον, as the Son gives cognitive mental knowledge of the

† *Oratio theologica* III. iv: πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἐμπαθής ἡ γέννησις· ὅτι ἀσώματος. εἰ γὰρ ἡ ἐνσώματος ἐμπαθής, ἀπαθής ἡ ἀσώματος...οὐ γὰρ θεὸς τὸ κτιζόμενον. — “How then is the generation not passible? Because it is incorporeal. For if corporeal generation is passible, incorporeal generation is impassible. ... For God is not creature.”

Father. In this manner the Second Person is rightly said to be an ἀ-πόδειξις of the Father's nature, as anything generated from a genitor is said to be a "silent word" or definition of that from which it is (imperfectly among humans, perfectly within the Divine).

Gregory then appeals to a thought-stream of Late Antiquity, Stoicism, which posits a unity of substance through the αἰδιος νοῦς, the eternal essence, for all things that are. Gregory can be comfortable in using this stepping stone. However, were he to follow this thought through to its neo-Platonic conclusion, he would have to admit an impersonal Divinity, a certain cosmic dualism, and with that, the attribution of eternal existence also to forms, or material reality (Thilo, 355-366). But he goes on to expound peculiarly Christian teaching when he asks, "τί γάρ ἐστιν, ὁ μὴ λόγῳ συνέστηκεν." In neo-Platonism, all things that are are said to ὑφιστάσθαι, that is, they are subsistences, having being in and of themselves. However, in Christian thought all things that are outside of God have their existence in and through and by Him, having been created λόγῳ ὑποστατικῶ.[†]

There are several elements present in the Theologian's exposition of the implications of λόγος which we do not find (or find only germinally) in the other thinkers of his era.

- First of all, Gregory adduces the Second Person's generation as Word from mind to support the doctrine of impassibility — a striking defense, since we have seen with Athanasius that there

† Cf. Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, locus 5, §9: "*Etsi proinde non infitiamur, Deum praecipiendo et efficaciter mandando omnia condidisse Psalm 33, v.9 (id quod quibusdam ansam dedit, ut statuerunt saltem mandatum et jussum Dei verbo DICENDI proponi), tamen non excludendum est Verbum ὑποστατικόν, id est, Filius Dei, quia in illo praecipiendo et mandandi verbo inerat virtus altissimi, et Verbum substantiale, quia Pater non operatur absque Filio Joh. 5, v. 17.*" — "And furthermore, even if we do not confess that by commanding and effectively mandating God created all things, Psalm 33:9 (which some use at least to maintain that the word 'to say' expresses the mandate and ordering of God), nevertheless, the hypostatic Word ought not to be excluded, that is, the Son of God, since the power of the Most High was in that commanding and mandating Word, as well as the substantive Word, since the Father does not work apart from the Son, John 5.17."

are some complicated issues involved in identifying the Genitor as νοῦς, and the Generated as λόγος, especially as concerns aberrations toward identifying λόγος as ἐνδιάθετος, or as an ἀπόρροια τοῦ τελείου. As concerns St. Athanasius, these concepts seem much more to speak to a πάθος in the Divine Begetting.

- Secondly, generation of λόγος from νοῦς upholds the doctrine of intra-trinitarian περιχώρησις, something we have not seen before explicitly stated.
- Thirdly (and this is where Cyril and the Nazianzene are so close), Gregory identifies a proclamatory character in the generation of the λόγος, and in the λόγος Himself. But Gregory's way of stating this proclamatory character is much different from Cyril's. For the strength of his argument, Cyril relies primarily upon the absurdity of a λόγος **doing** what is normally **done** to produce it. Gregory, by contrast, does not pursue the absurd, but the natural. Athanasius, too, relies on the absurdity of a λόγος ἐνυπόστατος to prove the divine personhood of the Second Person. However, we find that Gregory is much more constructive in pursuing the natural connections and implications of the λόγος as the Second Person.

Byzantine Scholasticism: St. John Damascene

Saint John of Damascus, the great systematizer of the Patristic period, writing from the perspective of the eighth century, has the unique ability of being able to combine a rigorous scholastic approach to theology with a broad overview of the foregoing Patristic period. His system is neatly organized, and because of this, his terminology is uniform, taking full note of the pitfalls and victories of earlier attempts to attach terms to Trinitarian logic and certain intra-Trinitarian workings.

Because of the Damascene's well-thought standardized terminology, we perhaps receive a clearer picture of his model of salvation as a whole, especially the link between theology *qua* theology, and anthropology. In the Damascene's system, although

he begins with anthropology, the subject of anthropology, man, ultimately reflects — albeit in a diminished way — attributes of the Divine. And so, for example, since man is λογικός and νοερός, it is completely appropriate that the Divine λόγος should assume and restore precisely such human nature (*MPG*, 94, 1072).[†]

At the same time that the Damascene has centuries of theological wisdom to draw on, his concerns are certainly not the same as those of his theological predecessors. As a result, his thoughts on the generation *per se* of the Divine λόγος will certainly be less interesting, since these thoughts are not primarily oriented toward maintaining the eternal and perpetual generation of the Son. For this reason, the discussion of St. John's contribution will be less extensive than those above.

Interestingly enough, the Damascene's first constructive use of the idea of the Son of God as λόγος comes in a section where he is discussing the unity of the Divinity, in a syllogistic proof to uphold the Divine μονάς as well as the personhood of the Son (*MPG*, 94, 801ff).^{††} Following on the heels of this proof comes another syllogistic proof for the Divine μονάς, but this time in relationship to the Spirit (*MPG*, 94, 804ff).^{†††} Three extremely telling comparisons between these proofs can be made.

- First of all, whereas in the proof concerning the Son the Damascene relies almost exclusively on the idea of Son as λόγος to make his point concerning the Divine μονάς, in the second proof concerning the Holy Spirit, he has no such positive biblical *testimonia*, no specific biblical terminology concerning the Holy Spirit, which in and of themselves and on their strength alone, lead him to conclude the same about the Holy Spirit.

† *De fide orthodoxa* III. xviii

†† *De fide orthodoxa* I. vi. The column bearing [Migne's?] Latin translation is unsatisfactory in its rendering of the title of the proof, *περὶ τοῦ λόγου καὶ υἱοῦ θεοῦ συλλογικὴ ἀπόδειξις*, with "*De Verbo ac Dei Filio, probatio ducta a ratione.*" The syllogism involved here basically attempts to follow out the thought of what it means for the Divine μονάς that the Son is called λόγος.

††† *De fide orthodoxa* I. vii.

- As a result, the bulk of the argument concerning the Holy Spirit's procession from the Father is built on the analogy of the Son's generation from the Father.
- Both of these observations add up to the distinct impression that the proof for the Divine μονάς in relationship to the Spirit is not as convincing as the proof for the μονάς in connection to the Son.

What is so convincing about the syllogistic proof for the Oneness of the Divinity in relationship to the Son is the constructive use the Damascene makes of the concept of the Second Person as λόγος:

οὗτος τοίνυν ὁ εἷς καὶ μόνος θεὸς οὐκ ἄλογός ἐστι. λόγον δὲ ἔχων, οὐκ ἀνυπόστατον ἔξει, οὐκ ἀρξάμενον τοῦ εἶναι, οὐδὲ παυσόμενον. οὐ γὰρ ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ὁ θεὸς λόγος, αἰεὶ δὲ ἔχει τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεννώμενον, οὐ κατὰ τὸν ἡμέτερον λόγον ἀνυπόστατον, καὶ εἰς ἀέρα χεόμενον, ἀλλ' ἐνυπόστατον, ζῶντα, τέλειον (MPG, 94, 801, 804).[†]

Since God is by definition not ἄλογος (which may, in fact, beg the question: since God has the λόγος, He is not ἄλογος), then the fact that He has the λόγος with Him should not come as any surprise, nor should it destroy the notion of the Divine μονάς. Possession of λόγος is definitive of God's being.

The Damascene continues by averting a potential problem concerning the implications of an hypostatic λόγος. There are essentially two threads running through the Damascene's discussion which he uses to disarm the objection against the Divine μονάς on the basis of the presence of an hypostatic λόγος.

- First of all, οὐκ ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ὁ θεὸς λόγος. If this is true, then Divine λόγος differs from human λόγος in respect to the eternity of the former's generation. Since we know, on the basis of its

† *De fide orthodoxa* I. vi Translation: "Furthermore, this one and single God is not without word. And while He does possess word, He does not possess it as anhypostatic, since it never began, nor ceased, to be. For there has not been a time when God the Word was not. But He eternally possesses His Word as He is begotten from Him, not like our word, anhypostatic and poured into the air, but enhypostatic, living, and complete."

evanescence, that human λόγος is ἀνυπόστατος, then it may be fair to assume, since Divine λόγος is not ephemeral, that He is actually ἐνυπόστατος.

- Secondly, since “our nature is waxen and easily dissoluble, for this reason, our word, also, is anhypostatic. But God, since He eternally is and since He is perfect, has His Word both perfect and enhypostic, and eternally being, and living, and having all things whatsoever His Genitor has” (MPG, 94, 804).†

However there are several problems with this line of reasoning. First of all, God is also not without will (or any number of other “mental”) capacities. To concede that “will” is an accident, or not part of the Divine essence, would allow for passion [suffering] on the part of God, destroying one of the central attributes of His essence. However to say that God has will eternally, and to say that this will is perfect, since its Source is perfect, would, by analogy to the syllogism above, imply that the Divine will is also hypostatic. If this is conceded, then one would have a Divine “Quadrinity” instead of a Divine Trinity. Unfortunately since there is nothing built into the Damascene’s system to avert this problem, his system falls short on this point. However it is also clear that the Son’s attributes of living and having all things the Father has rest squarely on the biblical testimony. These two attributes lend credence to Personhood of the λόγος every bit as much as eternity and perfection. But unlike eternity and perfection, they cannot be attributed to divine will.

Still, we have not really got into the bulk of the implications of the generation of Second Person as λόγος from the First in the Damascene’s system, except to point out that a God who is not ἄλογος must be said to have λόγος (although this tack is fraught

† *De fide orthodoxa* I. vi: ἡ ἡμετέρα φύσις ἐπικηρός ἐστι, καὶ εὐδιάλυτος, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ἀνυπόστατος. ὁ δὲ θεὸς αἰεὶ ὢν, καὶ τελειὸν καὶ ἐνυπόστατον ἔξει τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον, καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντα, καὶ ζῶντα, καὶ πάντα ἔχοντα ὅσα ὁ γεννήτωρ ἔχει. The Damascene clearly has in mind here λόγος προφορικός, and throughout his discussion of the Divine λόγος, it is quite obvious that he conceptualizes the Divine λόγος as προφορικός. On this distinction in *De fide orthodoxa*, cf. II. xxi, where he handles the distinction between προφορικός and ἐνδιάθετος at least anthropologically.

with several problems). As the Damascene continues in his proof, he sheds more light on what the Son's generation from the Father implies about the Son's generation (*MPG*, 94, 804).[†]

St. John's basic argument is that the way the human mind begets λόγος is the same way that the Divine mind begets λόγος. But his argument is not as simple as that, either. The point of comparison at which the Damascene is driving is the mode of existence of the λόγος in relation to the source of existence. His thesis is that the λόγος οὔτε δι' ὅλου ὁ αὐτός ἐστι τῷ νῶ, οὔτε παντάπασιν ἕτερος — “the word is neither wholly the same as the mind, nor is it altogether another.” In this simile of the human word and mind, the Damascene is essentially tackling the issue on two levels. On the one hand, he is dealing with λόγος as a distinct Person within the Trinity. And on the other hand, he is asserting the interpenetration of Divinity both Persons. Inasmuch the **relationship** between the Second Person (λόγος), and the First Person (νοῦς), is expressed as thing derived from source (ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ μὲν γὰρ ὢν, ἄλλος ἐστὶ παρ' αὐτόν), the λόγος is **relationally different** from His Source. However, on the level of divine interpenetration — inasmuch as the

† *De fide orthodoxa* I. vi: ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ ἡμέτερος λόγος ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ προερχόμενος, οὔτε δι' ὅλου ὁ αὐτός ἐστι τῷ νῶ, οὔτε παντάπασιν ἕτερος· ἐκ τοῦ νοῦ μὲν γὰρ ὢν, ἄλλος ἐστὶ παρ' αὐτόν· αὐτόν δὲ τὸν νοῦν εἰς τοὺς φανεροὺς ἄγων, οὐκέτι παντάπασιν ἕτερός ἐστι παρὰ τὸν νοῦν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἐν ὢν, ἕτερόν ἐστι τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ· οὕτως καὶ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, τῷ μὲν ὑφιστάμενος καθ' ἑαυτόν, διήρηται πρὸς ἐκείνον παρ' οὐ τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχει· τὸ δὲ ταῦτα δεικνύειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, ἃ περὶ τὸν θεὸν καθοράται, ὁ αὐτός ἐστι κατὰ τὴν φύσιν ἐκείνου. ὡσπερ γὰρ τὸ ἐν ἅπασιν τέλειον ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς θεωρεῖται, οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγεννημένου λόγου θεωρεῖται — “For just as our word, once it comes forth from the mind, is not wholly the same as the mind, nor is it completely an other. For being from the mind, it is other in relation to it. And since bears the mind itself to light, it is not yet completely an other in relation to the mind. But being one according to nature, it is an other to its object. Thus also the Word of God, by virtue of subsisting by Himself, is distinguished from [the Father] from whom He has His hypostasis. And since those things which are perceived about the Father, He shows in Himself, He is the same as [the Father] according to nature. For just as one perceives from God perfection in all things, in the same way, one sees this from the Word begotten from Him.”

λόγος is the bearer of Divine νοῦς — the λόγος is not altogether an other. Still, although in respect to interpenetration the two are one (ἐν), grammatically, and again relationally, the subject (λόγος) which bears a direct object (νοῦς) must be **an other**, that is, *numero alter*.

The new twist that St. John of Damascus puts on the use of understanding the Second Person of the Trinity as λόγος is to express the paradox of the Three Persons in relationship to the Divine μονάς. Unlike those from the Conciliar Era who have gone before him, his concern is not to defend the idea of λόγος from subordinationist Arian errors, but to use the idea of λόγος to help define the Unity of the Trinity. Also, we note that because of his relative distance from the controversies of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries, the Damascene is much more likely to slip into ways of speaking which would have received the full censure of Athanasius, but are more reminiscent of the Nazianzene and St. Cyril. For the Damascene, though he does not state it in so many words, the relationship of the λόγος to the νοῦς is that of an ἀπόρροια, and the λόγος has the distinct characteristic that He bears τὸν νοῦν εἰς τοῦμφανές, the prophoric [προφορικὸς] function of λόγος. And so the feeling we may have gotten earlier in comparing the “uncareful” expression of Cyril and the Nazianzene to Athanasius’ warnings concerning the impropriety of certain expressions such as ἀπόρροια, προφορικὸς, and ἐνδιάθετος — that such terms and ways of expressing the relationship between First and Second person are not in and of themselves wrong if handled properly — receives the final stamp of approval from the great capstone of the Greek Patrology, St. John of Damascus.[†]

The Apologists

We have noted above that the Nicene and post-Nicene Greek theologians tend to approach the generation of the Second Person as God’s λόγος with a certain amount of reserve, lest they say too much or in their pursuit of the full implications of the word λόγος

† Cf. *supra*, *Expositio fidei* §1 regarding Athanasius’ warnings.

become blind to the central Trinitarian paradox. Likewise, it has been noted that the earlier theologians such as Dionysius Alexandrinus, unrestricted by Nicene dogma, tend to be more free-wheeling in drawing the full implications λόγος into their theology.

Such also is Athenagoras. Before embarking into a more detailed analysis of his classical statement concerning the λόγος of God, it is necessary to make a few remarks. During the period when Athenagoras lived (Second Century), Christian theology was yet **in Werden**. The Second Century Period is typically described as the Era of the Apologists, a period when Christianity and Christian thought were still struggling to gain an intellectual foot-hold in a sophisticated Hellenised world (Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 95ff).

It was stated above that Athanasius was an indulgent and constructive theologian partly because of the fact that he could understand, use, and defend a certain amount of imprecision in Dionysius' logos-theology. Likewise, as we approach the Apologists, and Athenagoras in specific, we should indulge them in much the same manner. It would be improper to go searching for every manner of heresy, so-classified by the later conciliar period; while at the same time it would do violence to them to attempt to fit their expression into a Nicene mold.†

† The editor of Athenagoras' *Legatio (Supplicio) pro Christianis* (MPG, 6, 907ff), notes that various commentators contemporary to himself have used Athenagoras' classical expression of logos-theology to accuse the author of everything from confusing Father and Son, to adoptionism, to subordinationism. Cf. also Robert W. Jenson, "The Triune God" (1, 79ff), in his *Christian Dogmatics*, where on p. 120 he proposes the ill-conceived notion that the apologists taught a "sophisticated subordinationism." He even goes so far as to misread the classical passage from Athenagoras, understanding πρώτον γέννημα as "'first creature,' over against the Father, who has no beginning" (121), and not as is befitting of the locution, 'first begotten.' J.N.D. Kelly also, despite his warnings to the contrary, finds a subordination taught in the Apologists (*Early Christian Doctrines*, 100): "They all, Athenagoras included, dated the generation of the Logos, and so His eligibility for the title 'Son,' not from His origination within the being of the Godhead, but from His emission or putting forth for the purposes of creation, revelation, and redemption." However, when we ex-

Athenagoras, Christian Philosopher

Athenagoras relies heavily upon Philonic theosophy to express what is implied about the Second Person by His appellation λόγος: ἔστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐν ιδέα καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ (MPG, 6, 908).[†]

Above we have seen with Dionysius to a great degree, and St. Cyril to a lesser degree, that there is a certain lack of precision in their discussion of the relationship between νοῦς and λόγος which ultimately benefits their discussion. We find a similar such imprecision in Athenagoras as well. At one time, he can feel quite comfortable calling specifically the Son νοῦς καὶ λόγος τοῦ Πατρὸς. And in the same breath, he calls the Father (ὁ θεός) νοῦς ἄϊδιος which

amine Athenagoras more closely, *Legatio X*, we find that for him there is no difference between the Son and mind and Word, νοῦς καὶ λόγος τοῦ πατρὸς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (MPG, 6, 909). And later, Athenagoras has no problem saying about the λόγος which is nothing other than the υἱός (as we have seen) that ὁ θεὸς εἶχεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν λόγον. For more on anachronistic treatment of the Apologists, cf. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 100f.

† *Legatio X*. The commentary supplied in Migne's edition reads: *Nam Verbum in idea et operatione, sive Verbum prodiens ut omnium sit idea et effectio, nihil aliud est quam Verbum in quo mundi exemplar descriptum fuit, et per quod mundus creatus fuit. Notissima est antiquis haec loquendi ratio. Verbum apud Philonem lib. De mundi opificio, p. 5, dicitur esse mundus intelligibilis, sive mundi exemplar, quod idem est ac idea. Vocatur idea apud Clementem [Alexandrinum]. ... Sic etiam Verbum apud antiquos scriptores vocatur, effectio, sive operatio, quia per eum omnia facta sunt. ... Docet ergo Athenagoras Filium nec modo corporeo genitum esse, nec Patris efficientem aut proprietatem esse, sed veram et coaeternam Genitori personam* — "For the Word in idea and operation, or the Word coming forth to be the idea and cause of all things, is nothing other than the Word in which the pattern of the world is described and through which the world was created. This manner of speaking among the ancients is most notable. In Philo, in his book *De mundi opificio*, p. 5, Word is said to be the comprehensible world, or pattern of the world, which is the same as the 'idea.' It is called 'idea' in Clement [Alexandrinus].... Thus even the Word among the ancient writers is called 'cause' or 'operation,' since through it all things were made. ... Therefore Athenagoras is teaching that the Son was neither born in bodily fashion nor that He is the agent or a property of the Father, but that He is a Person, truly and coeternally with His Genitor."

has in Himself τὸν λόγον (MPG, 6, 909).[†] Is there a problem here with a confusion of persons? Clearly not. Rather, it is in this paradoxical ambiguity that the ineffable mystery of the procession of the Second Person from the Father is best expressed. The Son is hypostatic νοῦς, to use later terminology. However, to say that the Son is as much is not to deny the categorical classification of the Father as νοῦς. Nevertheless, Athenagoras must return to the term λόγος since νοῦς, while it might reflect, does not correspond to the biblical terminology. Still, for Athenagoras, νοῦς must be predicated of God or else the title λόγος cannot stick. He sets up the following relationship:

- God is νοῦς ἄδιος.^{††}
- If He is νοῦς ἄδιος, He must also be ἀιδίως λογικός.
- If ἀιδίως λογικός, then εἶχεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν λόγον (MPG, 6, 909).

Furthermore, for Athenagoras, this way of correlating the Son to the Father serves as a guardian:

- against understanding the generation of the Son from the Father in the crass way of the poets (καὶ μή μοι γελοῖόν τις νομίση τὸ υἱὸν εἶναι τῷ θεῷ. οὐ γάρ, ὡς ποιηταὶ μυθοποιοῦσιν, οὐδὲν βελτίους τῶν ἀνθρώπων δείκνυντες τοὺς θεοὺς, ἢ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς ἢ περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ πεφρηνίκαμεν) (MPG, 6, 909).^{†††}
- against misunderstanding the Second Person not as an Offspring of the Father (πρῶτον γέννημα), but as a creature (οὐχ ὡς γενόμενον) (MPG, 6, 909).^{††††} Thus the Second Person as

† For the usage θεός = πατήρ, there is a hendiadys shortly preceding this which equates the two (ἢ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἢ περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ) (MPG, 6, 908).

†† A concept he has borrowed from Neoplatonism. Cf. Thilo, *Kurze pragmatische Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie*. 345-348.

††† “... Lest anyone think it laughable of me [to say] that God has a Son. For we have not been so minded concerning the God and Father or concerning the Son as the poets have contrived when they show the gods to be nothing better than humans.”

†††† Cf. MPG, 6, 908, where Athenagoras clearly distinguishes between the Se-

λόγος is used as a defense, unlike λόγος is used by the catholic theologians closer to the Nicene Synod, as something defended or quite narrowly defined.

St. Justin, Philosopher and Martyr

As we turn to St. Justin, we will indulge him in much the same fashion as Athenagoras, realizing that his goals and aims are not to define narrowly what is worthy to be said of the Second Person, but to defend the new Christian faith from attacks from without. But while we have seen that Athenagoras' interest in pursuing the idea of the Second Person as λόγος is mainly used as a defense against misunderstanding the Divine generation of the Son and against misunderstanding the Son as a creature, we must also recognize that Justin's purpose, on the other hand, in pursuing the term λόγος is to show why that expression is befitting and proper.

Justin's *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* is this early Christian apologist's attempt to defend Christianity against Judaism. Throughout the work, Justin relies mainly on the Old Testament to refute the opinions of the Jews claiming that Christianity is an addition to, not a part of, Old Testament revelation. In *Dialogus* §§127-130, Justin is attempting to demonstrate that the Old Testament theophanies in the histories from Abraham through the Exodus are more easily correctly understood if the interpreter of these theophanies allows for a Second Person within the Godhead (*MPG*, 6, 771ff). In fact as his argument essentially concludes, these theophanies dictate that a Second Person was involved.

About midway through this argument, Justin wants the reader to imagine that an objection against the various Christian names for the Second Person has either been made or is anticipated. He does so giving a short list of the various appellations by which the Second Person is called by the Christians, among them: ἀνὴρ, ἄγγελος, δύναμις, δόξα, and finally λόγος (*MPG*, 6, 773ff).[†] For

cond Person and the creatures (πρὸς αὐτοῦ γὰρ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐγένετο).

[†] *Dialogus* §128. As far as I was able to find, this is the only reference to λόγος in the work of Justin which makes constructive use of the name.

each of these appellations, he then also gives a reason why the name is appropriate, using the immediate context of the Old Testament theophanies to aid in understanding them.

Using what he has observed about the Old Testament theophanies, Justin concludes that the name of the Second Person, λόγος, is appropriate ἐπειδὴ; καὶ τὰς παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὁμιλίας φέρει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις (MPG, 6, 776).[†] It is obvious from this rather anti-climactic explanation what a pioneer Justin is in this area. His explanation of λόγος, in comparison to what we have seen, lacks any real perceptive analysis of the implications of the term.

However, we do see some of the kernels of later thought here. First of all (as with his explanations of the terms ἀνὴρ, ἄγγελος, δύναμις, δόξα), the term expresses a two-fold relationship: παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς and τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.^{††} But even more than expressing a relationship, for Justin λόγος implies a function for the Second Person.^{†††}

It is easy to understand why the Fathers from the later Conciliar Period used λόγος primarily to demonstrate the relationship between the Father and the Son and not to describe the function of the Son, since if the term is tied too closely to a particular function, the next step into negating the existence of the thing which the term denotes while not functioning is an easy one to make. From there a subtle subordinationism, or outright Arianism, can easily creep into the system, at which point truly trinitarian logic ceases to exist. Nevertheless, some of the theologians from the Conciliar Period do

† *Dialogus* §128. Translation: “Since He bears also those instructions from the Father to humans.”

†† It is worth commenting here that the pattern used by Justin in the explanation of λόγος is essentially, if not verbatim, the same as that used for ἄγγελος: ἄγγελον καλεῖσθαι ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἀνθρώποις προόδῳ, ἐπειδὴ δι’ αὐτῆς τὰ παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀγγέλλεται (MPG, 6, 776). Translation: “He is called an Angel in His approach to humans, since through [this approach] He brings announcements from the Father to humans.”

††† For more on this, cf. Abramowski, “Dionys von Rom (gest. 268) und Dionys von Alexandrien (gest. 264/5) in den Arianischen Streitigkeiten des 4. Jahrhunderts,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 92/2-3, 1982, 240-241.

manage to make pious and constructive use of λόγος both as a term denoting intra-Trinitarian relationships and the function *in operibus ad extra*.

Conclusion

The Greek Fathers show a surprising amount of variety in how they handle the implications of the generation of the Second Person as Word. Their interpretations range from almost none (Athanasius) to rather extensive explanations concerning the various connotations and shades brought out in the generation of the λόγος (the Nazianzene, Dionysius, Cyril), to the fresh and almost naïve approach of the Apologists which seems as though it would concede nearly any point about λόγος as long as that served to elevate the Divinity above the sphere of mortal passions (Athenagoras), or to explain somehow why λόγος is a significant name (Justin). In the pænultimate analysis, we must ask, "Is the doctrine of the Second Person as λόγος necessary to complete the theology of the Fathers?" and as a correlate, "How does the doctrine of the Second Person as λόγος function in their theology?" And ultimately, the focus of these questions must zero in on the significance of the Patristic authors for our own work as theologians in the 20th century.

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**Sermon at the
1993 Seminary Graduation
of Kent Dethlefsen
and Mark Tuffin**

By: Pastor Daniel Sabrowsky

Text: Isaiah 6:1 – 8

¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the Temple. ²Above him were seraphs, each with six wings; with two wings they covered their faces, with two wings they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the Temple was filled with smoke.

⁵“Woe to me!” I cried, “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”

⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” [NIV].

Theme: Preparation for the Pastorate

President Orvick, members of the faculty, members of the graduating class, Christian friends.

“Pastor Kent Dethlefsen, Pastor Mark Tuffin,” — that sounds good doesn’t it. It is almost a reality. In just a few weeks you will be ordained and you will both be pastors. That is something which

you have desired for a long time, and for which you have spent a long time preparing.

Today has to be for you a day of happiness, a day of fulfillment, and yet a day of apprehension. You have learned all the things which meet the requirements for entrance into the ministry. You are graduating tonight, and the synod says that you are ready to assume the highest office to which anyone can aspire. But do you feel ready?

I remember the day well that I sat where you are sitting. I had received my call, and was about to receive my diploma. There was a congregation waiting for me, and much work to be done. But I had a feeling of inadequacy and trepidation. I wished that I could spend a year or two more in preparation. There was so much I did not know, and people were going to be looking to me for their answers. There was so much I needed to learn, and people were going to look to me for leadership. In short, I was scared to death. I didn't feel prepared, no matter what the faculty and the synod said.

I wonder how well you feel that you are prepared today for the ministry which you will shortly begin. Yes, you have taken and passed all the courses which the experts say you will need to be effective in the ministry. You know about homiletics, symbolics, dogmatics, isagogics, catechetics and a number of other important subjects. You have spent a year in practical training as a vicar. All those things should have prepared you for the ministry. But, I would dare to say that all of those courses have not prepared you for the ministry. They may have equipped you for it, but they have not truly prepared you. I would further venture to say that you were already nearly prepared for the ministry before you even began your seminary training. True preparation for the ministry is spiritual, not academic. Our text shows us a clear example of a man being prepared for the work of the Lord. As you heard, it is an experience from the life of the Prophet Isaiah. We consider what took place in his life, and apply it to yours. Consider then this evening — "Preparation for the Pastorate."

You will find that it involves three things:

- Conviction
- Cleansing
- Calling
- Conviction

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the Temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings; with two wings they covered their faces, with two wings they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the Temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried, "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

A Christian pastor is a man with strong conviction. He has a conviction about the truth of God's word. He has a conviction about the need for people to hear what the Word of God says. He has the conviction that he has the gifts to do that proclaiming of God's Word. He has the conviction that he, with God's help can make a difference in the lives of God's people. There is also another group of people with convictions. Those are the people who have run afoul of the law, been arrested and put on trial, and then have been found guilty, perhaps a number of times. They have a list of convictions. That is quite different from the other kind of convictions. But it is this kind of conviction which is an indispensable part of the real preparation for the ministry.

Isaiah in our text was given an awesome vision. He was transported to heaven itself. There on an exalted throne he saw the Lord himself. He was surrounded by the holy angels whom God had created to do his bidding. He heard the hosts of heaven break forth in the praise of God. So powerful was the holiness of the Lord, and

the song of the angels that heaven itself seemed to shake, and smoke filled God's Temple.

Not many people have been privileged to see a sight like Isaiah saw that day. He was singularly blessed — or was he? He did not react with words of awe or marvel at the impressive sight. Rather he was convinced that this day was going to mean his ruin and destruction. He was filled with terror, just as Adam and Eve had cowered in fear in the bushes when they heard the voice of the Lord God as he walked in the garden.

The reason for Isaiah's reaction is clear. He says "I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips." He did not feel worthy to stand before the Holy Lord of all creation; and indeed he was not worthy to be there. The Psalmist asks the question about who shall be able to stand in God's holy place; and the answer comes immediately "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol, or swear by what is false." Isaiah had neither clean hands nor a pure heart, and he readily admitted that his lips were far from clean. That day he was truly convicted of his sin. His conviction was that he was a sinful man who did not deserve to receive anything but punishment for his sins.

Isaiah was not the only person to serve in the ministry who had the conviction about himself that Isaiah was brought to that day. Peter came to that conviction when the rooster crowed for a second time and Jesus turned and looked at him. He too felt he was undone, and went out and wept bitterly. the Apostle Paul came to that conviction when Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and he later called himself "chief of sinners." Certainly Martin Luther felt that way about himself, and was tormented because of his sin.

All of those just mentioned had been convicted by the Lord of their sin. They not only had an academic knowledge that they were sinners. They were made to feel it. They were brought to their knees by the realization that they were lost, condemned sinners. That was the first step in their preparation for the Lord's service.

But conviction alone is not enough. Judas also was convicted of his sin; but he went out and hanged himself.

I don't think that you would be here today if you also had not been led to the conviction that you are a sinner and deserve nothing from God. I pray that you can truly say with Paul that you are "chief of sinners," and with Isaiah: "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips." But like all the rest of those servants of God who have gone before you, you need to have, with that conviction, only been brought part of the way in "Preparation for the Pastorate." You also needed the second step which is described in our text."

- Cleansing

Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Here we see God's grace in action. God sees and knows our sin, and he sees and knows our need for cleansing from that sin. By himself Isaiah knew he was ruined. He knew that he could do nothing in order to rid himself of his sin. That had to come from outside himself. It had come from the one against whom he had sinned. And, as our text reveals, it is God's desire that we receive our cleansing from sin.

God's angel touching his lips was symbolic of the cleansing which would come from the Son of God suffering our punishment on the cross, just as all the Old Testament sacrifices which God had prescribed were symbolic of the coming Messiah. We cannot rely on sacrifices which we make, nor even on angels with hot coals to purge us. Our only hope is the innocent lamb of God taking our sins upon himself, and his proclamation of "it is finished" when his suffering on the cross was complete.

The point which God makes here is that, for a man to be truly prepared for the Lord's service, he needs to both be convinced of that sin, and to be relieved of its guilt and its curse by God acting in

his life. Only when he has been cleansed, and then assured that his sin has indeed been taken away, can he go out and tell others of God's grace to them.

The story is told of a man who came to visiting doctors in Africa, who performed a cataract operation which successfully restored his sight. When he recovered he left the compound, and the doctors throughout thought that they had seen the last of him. It wasn't two long, however, before he came walking out of the bush holding the end of a rope. Hanging on to that rope behind him were a number of other men who could not see. He had brought them to the doctor so that they too might receive the sight restoring operation. That was something which he could not have done if his sight had not first been restored.

So we, when we minister to others, will not be able to lead them to the great physician who can remove the speck from their eyes, unless we first have had the log removed from our own. To be prepared to be ministers of the Gospel, we must first have had our hearts cleansed and our lives transformed by the message of forgiveness through faith in Christ who shed his blood to provide us with God's forgiveness.

Consider for a moment what Isaiah was after the angel had touched his lips with the hot coal. He was a cleansed man, a forgiven man, a transformed man; but he was not yet God's man.

When Jesus assured Peter that he was forgiven, he too was forgiven and cleansed. but he was not yet an apostle. He was just a forgiven disciple. So also with you. You have been convinced by God's Law that you are a sinner. You have been assured by the Holy Spirit's bringing you to faith that your sin has been taken away through Christ's atonement. That makes you a forgiven Christian. But it does not yet make you one of God's servants. You are almost prepared to be one, but one ingredient remains which will make you truly prepared. Our text reveals what it is.

- Calling

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

A convicted and cleansed man here heard some marvelous words from the lips of God. This was the "call" of God to be a prophet of the Lord. This is different than the call to faith. This is the kind of "call" which Peter received when Jesus, having forgiven him said, "Feed my lambs and feed my sheep." This is the kind of call which Paul received when God gave him that vision in a dream in which a man from Macedonia stood and said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us!" This is also the kind of "call" that you received a few weeks ago when you received your assignment and your "call" to serve the congregation in which you will soon be ordained and installed. Then you will truly be Pastor Dethlefsen and Pastor Tuffin.

So, you have been properly prepared because God has convicted you and cleansed you. You are prepared, because your seminary training has equipped you with the knowledge and the skills you will need for the work. And you are prepared, because you have in your possession God's own call to the field he has chosen for you. Go then dear brothers, as you have been called. Be instant in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine, and be ready at all times to give and answer to anyone who asks you, the reason for the hope that is in you. And may the Lord of the Church bless you through your service, and make you a blessing to those you serve. Amen.

Errata

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- “Cosmology Challenges Theology: A Biblical Response”
 - p. 45 §1 last full line — for territorial rights of over ever-increasing turf, well illustrated by ~~main~~ many quotes.
 - p. 49 §3 last full line — ~~not~~ been contaminated ...
 - p. 50 §3 line 9 — that ~~gives~~ gave us modern science,
 - p. 54 §4 line 2 — ~~nebular~~ nebulae were organic ...
 - p. 55 last paragraph line 4 — ~~for living things to flourish is a result as well as a cause~~ [words were repeated]
 - p. 56 §1 line 8— Or using a different emphasis, science ~~regulates~~ relegates itself to ...
 - p. 61 §2 line 5— He has promised to us ~~in~~ is His Word
 - p. 61 last paragraph line 1 — How lamentable it is ...