

# THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Triune God

## ARIUS'S THEOLOGY

- Soteriology
  - The Son suffers in a way that God cannot
  - "First, the human limitations and weaknesses of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, were a sign of his divine inferiority; his divinity was reduced enough to be able to encounter suffering without ceasing to be divine. And secondly, they insisted that in becoming incarnate the Son had taken to himself, not a complete human individual, but what they called a *σῶμα ἀψυχόν*, a body without a soul." (Hanson, 25)
  - This provided a way of talking about a God who could suffer and thus who could not be the Father (Hanson, 26)
  - He could not be a mere man (*ἀνθρώπος ψιλός*), a man with a human soul, but had to be God (Hanson, 26)

## COUNCIL OF NICEA (325)

### POSITIONS (SEE RUSCH, INTRODUCTION)

- Arians
- Alexander and Athanasius
- Bishops who espoused the traditional Logos theology without the precisions of either Arius or Alexander

### CREED

We believe in one God Father Almighty Maker of all things, seen and unseen:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten as only-begotten of the Father, that is of the substance (*ousia*) of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten (*gennethenta*) not made (*ou poiethenta*), consubstantial (*homousios*) with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, both things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and became man, suffered and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead:

And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say, "there was a time when he did not exist", and "Before being begotten he did not exist", and that he came into being from non-existence, or who allege that the Son of God is of another *hypostasis* or *ousia*, or is alterable or changeable, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church condemns.

## EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

Letter to His Church concerning the Synod at Nicea (Rusch, chapter 8)

- "When this document was composed by them, so that the phrases 'from the substance of the Father' and '*homousios* with the Father' were stated by them, we did not grant this to them without examination. Therefore, interrogations and responses occurred, and the discourse tested the sense of these phrases. Then, 'from the substance' was confessed by them to be indicative of the Son's being from the Father, not as if he is part of the Father. In this way it seemed good also to us to agree with the sense of the pious teaching suggesting that the Son is from the Father, not part of his substance. We also agreed with the sense, not even refraining

from the expression *homoousios*, since the object of peace and the aim of not deviating from the true sense was before our eyes." (9-10)

- "'Homoousios with the Father' indicates that the Son of God bears no resemblance to originated creatures but that he is alike in every way only to the Father who has begotten and that he is not from any other *hypostasis* and substance but from the Father." (13)
- "Still it did not appear outrageous to anathematize 'before he was begotten, he was not,' for the confession of all is that the Son of God was before the generation according to the flesh. Already our emperor, the most beloved of God, affirmed in a discourse that even according to his divine generation he was before all the ages, since even before he was begotten in actuality, he was in the Father ingenerately in potentiality, since the Father is always the Father, both as King always and as Savior always, in potentiality being all things and being always in the same respect and in like manner."

## POST-NICEAN DEVELOPMENTS

### EVENTS

There is little discussion of Arianism between 328 and 340

- 335 Council of Tyre
- 338 Council at Alexandria
- 340 Council at Rome
- 341 Council at Antioch
- 343 Council at Sardica
- 351 Council at Sirmium
- 358 Council at Ancyra
- 359 Councils at Selucia and Arminum
- 359 Council at Constantinople
- 362 Council of Alexandria
- 381 Council of Constantinople I

### EVOLVING POSITIONS

- Homoians — ὁμοιος
- Semi-modalists
- Homoousians — ὁμοουσιος ←
- Pneumatomachians
- Anomians (heterousians) — ἑτεροουσιος
- Homoiousians — ὁμοιουσιος

### HOMOIANS

The general position of many bishops; the "traditional" position

"Dedication Creed" of Antioch

- The three persons are particular hypostases, not mere names, and have a particular order
- They are three in hypostases, one in agreement
- Nothing existed before the Son
- The Son is not a creature like other creatures or a product (*gennema*) or something made
- He is an image of the substance of the Father
- It counters Sabellian readings of Nicea

## SEMI-MODALISTS

### MARCELLUS OF ANCYRA

- Deposed in 336
- God is a single *prosopon*, a monad
- The Logos is generated only for the Incarnation
- The Spirit is breathed forth only at Pentecost
- Thus the monad becomes a triad for our salvation
- When evil has been conquered, the Son will “deliver the Kingdom to the Father” and God will become a monad once again

## HOMOOUSIANS

Athanasius and most of the western bishops

### ATHANASIOS OF ALEXANDRIA

- Life
  - Born c. 297
  - Accompanied Alexander to Nicea as a deacon in 325
  - Was elected bishop of Alexandria at the death of Alexander in 328
  - Exiled several times throughout his episcopacy
- Theology
  - “The Logos became man in order that we might become God” (*On the Incarnation*, 54)
  - The Son and Spirit must be divine in the same way that the Father is
  - Same *ousia* or *hypostasis*
  - One cannot say that Jesus and God are two gods.
  - There was not a time when the Son did not exist.
  - Everything that the Father is, he is.
  - The Logos did not take on a human being but became a human being
  - The divine acts in the human and the human is attributed to the divine: *communication idiomatum*
  - “We appeal not to something which has come into existence or to some ordinary human being but to the true Son who is by nature derived from God, and to this Son as he has become human and yet remains nothing other than our Lord and God and Savior.”
  - The flesh says, “I am indeed mortal by nature, taken from the earth. In the latter days, however, I have become the flesh of the Logos, and he himself has borne my passions, impassible though he is. So I am free of them. I am no longer enslaved to them, for the Lord has set me free from them.”
  - The Son is distinct from the Father, in contrast to what Sabellius argued
  - “We ought to understand that this is so [analogy of light and radiance] in the case of the Son, only more so, for when the Father has given everything to the Son, he still possesses everything in the Son, and when the Son possesses the, the Father still possesses them. The Son’s deity is the deity of the Father, and in this way the Father carries out his providential care for all things in the Son.”

## PNEUMATOMACHIANS

Or Macedonians, or Semi-Arians

- Theology
  - While the Son is divine, the Spirit is not divine, nor even a subsisting reality
  - The spirit is the power of God

## ANOMIANS

### EUNOMIUS

- Life
  - Born 335
  - Secretary of Aetius in 356-8
  - Bishop of Cyzicus 360-361
- Theology
  - The mind can attain an adequate knowledge of God
  - This is expressed in the preciseness of philosophical language rather than the vagueness of Scriptural language
  - Father, Son, and Spirit are better expressed as the unoriginated, the second originated from the first, and the third originated from the first in essence and the second in power.
  - Only the unoriginated can be truly called God
  - The Son and Spirit are of a different essence than the Father

## HOMOIOUSIANS

Basil of Ancyra

- The Son is like in substance to the Father
- The "like" was seen to preserve the difference between Father and Son

## THE CAPPADOCIANS

### BASIL OF CAESAREA

- Life
  - 320s—379
  - Bishop of Caesarea
  - *Against Eunomius*
  - *On the Holy Spirit*
- Theology
  - Sought to be faithful to Nicea
  - Became convinced that *homousios* can be used properly
  - Eunomius submits the faith to reason rather than the other way around
  - God is unknown in his essence
  - God is known through names which lead to God but do not give control over him:  
We know God through *epinoia*, a conceptual knowing that establishes our interaction with a thing but does not say something inherent about the thing itself.
  - Names of God spring from God's activities, not his essence
  - We do not even know creatures, much less God

- Theology is an activity of God; to understand the words of God is to allow God to act upon oneself.
- The Holy Spirit is equal to Father and Son
- The Spirit sanctifies and is thus God
- The three are distinct, but one monarchy

## GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

- Life
  - c. 330—390
  - Born in Nazianzus
  - Studied with Basil in Athens and became life-long friends
  - 380 July—November: five orations known as the *Five Theological Orations*
- Theology
  - Theology can only be engaged in by those who are being purified.
  - Humans have no capacity to relate to God; our relationship to God depends on God's coming to us.
  - The ecstasy of God brings about an ecstasy in humans.
  - The generation of the Son is not an overflowing
  - The three differ in number but not in substance.
  - The will and activity of the Father is the will and activity of the Son and the Spirit.
  - The Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son

## GREGORY OF NYSSA

- Relevant works
  - Basil's younger brother
  - *Contra Eunomium*
  - *Against the Macedonians*
  - *On Why Not Three Gods*
- Theology
  - Mystical journey in knowledge
  - Dependence upon the Holy Spirit
  - Personal knowledge of the Son
  - Eunomius avoids the language of Scripture and uses other words than Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
    - For this reason, he substitutes human language for God's own choice of words and thus substitutes a human concept for the reference to God himself
  - Eunomius's words remove the name of God from its relational context
  - If the Son and Spirit are divine, then they must be equal to the Father
  - Numerical rank does not mean difference of being
  - The casting of a difference of being of Father Son and Spirit is against scripture
  - To make the Son less than the Father is to question the nobility of creation
  - Distinguishes *hypostasis* from *ousia*
    - This remains analogical
  - Names of God apply to each of the persons of the Trinity
  - Only the causes / relationships are distinct
  - The three are distinct by their relations to one another: Unbegotten, Begotten, Proceeding. The Logos is from the Father; the Spirit is from the Father through the Logos.

## COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (381)

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## THE DOGMA OF THE TRINITY

- God is one substance (*ousia*) in three persons (hypostases)
- Everything the Father is the Son is, except being Father and being Son
- Everything the Son is the Spirit is, except being Son and being Spirit
- Everything the Father is the Spirit is, except being Father and being Spirit
- The Son and Spirit each have a Mission, but share in all that it is to be divine

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