

Religions of the World

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15. Eastern Orthodoxy (pp. 382-426)

Eastern Orthodox writers justly complain that for over a thousand years Christianity has been identified with Europe. In the eyes of Asiatic and African people, Christendom is a Western religion and its culture equated with the civilization of Western Europe. Yet almost one-fourth of all contemporary Christians do not belong to the West but call themselves Eastern and their religious position Orthodoxy.

Geographically the Eastern Oriental Churches form a vast triangle, whose base is twelve thousand miles long, reaching across the Russo-Siberian plain from Petzamo in the West on the Arctic Ocean, to Alaska in the East where the Indians were evangelized by Russian missionaries in the last century. The western side of the triangle cuts through Finland, Estonia and Latvia, goes south towards Galicia and the Carpathian mountains, divides Yugoslavia in half, touches Albania on the Adriatic Sea and reaches the southern apex of the triangle in Egypt. On its eastern side, it passes across Palestine and reaches all the way to Japan and Korea. The great majority of Eastern Christians now live within this area with substantial numbers in other countries, including the United States, as descendants of immigrants from the original Orthodox triangle.

It seems that historically the term "Orthodox" was coined to distinguish Christians who believed in the Council of Chalcedon (451), which defined Christ's divinity against the Monophysites. Originally the word was used to describe the Eastern Churches, in communion with Constantinople, who were orthodox or "right-believing," as against the heterodox, "wrong-believing," separated bodies like the Nestorians and Jacobites. Recently, however, the latter and also the Copts in Egypt have taken to adding "Orthodox" to their names.

In modern parlance, the Orthodox are those Christians who separated from Rome in the eleventh century through the great Eastern Schism, and whose distinctive liturgical feature is the Byzantine rite and doctrinal basis the acceptance of the first seven ecumenical councils, up to the second Council of Nicea in 787.

ORIGINS OF THE SCHISM

There are two views on the origin of the Eastern Schism, the Western and the Oriental, and their very divergence is symbolic of the difference in religious posture between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. According to the Latin version, it was not heresy but political issues that led the Greek Church to separate from Rome. The patriarchs of Constantinople had gradually acquired a dominant influence in the Byzantine Empire, by comparison with the patriarchate of Jerusalem, which was never of great importance, and of Alexandria and Antioch whose prestige had been all but lost because of heretical innovations. Moreover, they had fallen under the control of Islam in the seventh century.

Constantinople, therefore, became the official Church, and its dominance slowly developed into a disregard of Rome. Several schisms racked the capital between the fourth and

seventh centuries, either because of administrative differences or as the result of the Eastern emperors' patronizing doctrinal error. This was aggravated by the invasion of the barbarians in the West, the independent growth of each church under the nominal tutelage of Constantinople, and especially by the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire of the West at the opening of the ninth century.

Then came the unfortunate conflict between Photius (810-895), Patriarch of Constantinople, and Pope (St.) Nicholas I. The latter decreed to excommunicate Photius, while admitting he was "a man of great virtue and world-wide knowledge," unless he gave up his see to St. Ignatius, the rightful occupant. Ignatius had been driven out by the emperor Michael III for refusing communion to Bardas Caesar, the emperor's uncle, who was living in notorious incest with his daughter-in-law, Eudokia.

Instead of yielding to the pope, Photius proceeded to condemn Nicholas on five charges, all but one of which arose from legitimate differences between Greek and Latin discipline. He urged these Latin "heresies": fasting on Saturdays in Lent, beginning Lent on Ash Wednesday instead of Monday, disapproval of a married clergy, objection to confirmation administered by a priest, and insertion of the *Filioque* (and from the Son) in the Creed. The last objection has made theological history and marked the beginning of Eastern accusations of heresy against the See of Rome. When Michael III died in 867, Photius fell from power and later retired to a monastery at Armeniaki where he died.

With mutual confidence between Rome and Constantinople thus shaken, the formal breach less than two hundred years later took place almost without opposition. Michael Caerularius, patriarch of Constantinople, suddenly attacked Pope (St.) Leo IX on charges of doctrinal innovation, regarding clerical celibacy, fast on Saturdays as well as Fridays, the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, and *the Filioque* in the Nicene Creed.

Personally ambitious, Caerularius defied pope and emperor, and struck Leo IX's name from the diptychs, or commemoration in the Liturgy. When negotiations broke down, the legates sent from Rome solemnly excommunicated Caerularius in the Church of St. Sophia on July 16, 1054. As the Liturgy was about to begin, the Roman Cardinals Humbert and Frederick and Archbishop Peter of Amalfi passed through the congregation, entered the sanctuary and laid Pope Leo's document of excommunication on the altar. "May God see to it and pass judgment," they pronounced, and departed.

The Greek version is quite different. Orthodox writers admit the foregoing facts but say they are not enough to explain the separation. No doubt the immediate cause for the first cleavage, under Photius, was due to his appointment to the See of Constantinople. But the real origins of the schism lay in the great political conflict that occurred at the beginning of the century, when in the year 800 Charlemagne restored the Western Roman Empire. In the eyes of the Greeks the pope was guilty of a grave insult to the East when he agreed to crown a barbarian like Charlemagne emperor of the West. Perforce the Byzantine ruler had to bow to the inevitable and recognize his imperial rival in Rome, but the Greeks strongly resented the pope's action—Two competitive political powers came into being, and their respective close associations with the ecclesiastical authorities drew the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople into the vortex.

Photius precipitated the earlier crisis by calling the West heretical; the Latins retorted by producing a similar list of Eastern heresies. In a short while, the original charges grew into a formidable indictment that covered more than fifty topics. Differences in custom and teaching which had been treated as legitimate expressions of religious diversity suddenly became outrages and ground for mutual incrimination.

Even the dramatic excommunication of Caerularius was not definitive. No one at that time had any idea that this was the beginning of a schism which would last for many centuries. It took two hundred years for the tension to become hardened into formal separation, due to the coming of the Crusaders.

If the Crusades are stripped of their romantic elements, they are revealed as mass exploitations of the Eastern Christians under the guise of a Holy War. The worst evil was that Crusaders used military aggression to advance Christianity, and believed the sword can more effectively serve the Gospel than preaching the word of God. They countenanced the idea that robbery, murder and rapine are permitted, if the victim has erroneous beliefs.

At the outset of the Crusades, the East was alarmed. It had lived in peaceful co-existence with the Moslems, and under their rule, for half a millenium. It was surprised, even irritated, at the sudden burst of zeal against the infidel generated by the Christian West. These fears developed into hostility when Eastern Christians came under the rule of the Crusaders. Heedless of the warnings and exhortations of Rome, they pillaged and oppressed, trying to convert the Orthodox to Latinism, confiscating church buildings, imprisoning the clergy, and treating them as though they professed a wholly foreign religion.

The sack of Constantinople, say the Orthodox historians, dealt the final blow to brotherly relations between these two branches of the Christian Communion. It was an occasion of plunder seldom equalled for horror in world history. The riches of its churches were unsurpassed in the whole world. Soldiers and Latin clergy vied with each other in their attempts to seize some part of these riches for themselves; even the precious Holy Altar of St. Sophia was polluted, broken in pieces and sold.

This day, April 3, 1204, marks the end of the fellowship between Eastern and Western Christians, which means that the split was brought about, not by quarrelsome theologians or ambitious prelates, but by the greed and lust of those who had embarked upon a war of aggression and conquest.

The two explanations have this in common: they both admit the historical events that finally caused the break were not basically dogmatic, and the severance of Constantinople from Rome was not due to irreconcilable positions in theology but to external factors in which personalities and emotions played the major role.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Eastern Orthodox history from the beginning of the thirteenth century is the story of trial and conflict with the civil powers that have no parallel in Western Christianity.

Russia was the first to suffer oppression at the hands of the Mongolian tribesmen, called Tartars because of their ferocity, "the detestable race of Satan, rushing forth like demons loosed from Tartarus."¹ The Mongols under their great leader, Genghis Khan, swept across China, Bokhara, Georgia and Persia. They captured the principal cities of Central Asia and after three devastating campaigns (1237-1241) conquered Russia and for the next two and a half centuries kept her in submission, at first abject then relaxed, but always sufficient to keep the Russian people from exercising religious liberty beyond the measure determined by the political rulers.

Nevertheless the Mongols showed marked respect for certain Orthodox prelates, notably those of Kiev, whom they exempted from taxation. Alternately Russians and Greeks were appointed by the government to the key ecclesiastical posts and one churchman, Theognost (1325-1352), decided to fix his residence at Moscow, which by then had become a leading

national center. Due to the courageous support given by the abbot Sergius of Radonezh (1314-1392), the Russians defeated the Tartars at the battle of Kulikovo Pole, September 8, 1380. The resulting relaxation of control by the Mongols inaugurated the first period of Russia's spiritual renewal. Religious houses were founded all over the country, learning was revived and ikon painting reached its golden age. Over fifty monasteries were founded by the disciples of Sergius during his lifetime,

Ivan III, surnamed the Great (1462-1505), succeeded in so strongly welding the nation under his rule that the final liberation of the country from the Mongols was achieved without bloodshed. The obvious balance of power so favored Moscow that the Tartars were unwilling to oppose the Russians. Periodic attacks from Mongolian nomads continued until the absorption of the Crimea in 1783, but from 1479 (when Moscow's rival, Novgorod, was subdued) Russia became independent of the Mongols.

Yet almost simultaneously two new subjugations to the State took sudden effect, one in Russia under the Tsars, as Ivan III and his successors came to be called, and the other in Asia Minor under the Moslems.

The Russian Church's domination by the Tsars was occasioned by a split in the ranks of the churchmen, one party called the Possessors" and the other "Non-Possessors." Those who were nick-named Possessors emphasized unity in preaching and worship, beauty and dignity in ritual service and favored possession of material property by the monasteries and convents. Non-Possessors, on the other hand, were more concerned with freedom in religious practice and taught that God is most pleased with a simple, contrite heart, even in the absence of an elaborate Liturgy. They were the scholars and mystics, who upheld evangelical poverty and maintained that monks should support themselves by the labor of their hands.

As long as the two parties were equally divided and influential, religion prospered. But early in the sixteenth century a crisis arose which tipped the scales in favor of the Possessors. Tsar Basil III had no children by his first wife and wanted to marry another woman. He was opposed by the Metropolitan, Varlaam (1511-1521), a Non-Possessor, but supported by the Possessing prelates whose leader, Daniel, was put into Varlaam's place as Metropolitan and Basil had his second marriage blessed by the Church. The offspring of this union was Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584), the most despotic ruler in Russia until the Communist Revolution in the twentieth century.

This marked the turning point in Russia's religious history. For years the Possessors had upheld the political autocracy and allowed the State to take a leading role in the government of the Church. They preached the doctrine that the Tsars should be loved and obeyed as fathers, no matter how harsh or oppressive their rule. Now, with Basil's support, they avenged themselves on the Non-Possessors, whose leaders were imprisoned and their monasteries closed. At a time when the country most needed the saving influence of men who could withstand political tyrants, the leadership of Church and State fell into the hands of a single party. With periodic exceptions, this continued into modern times.

In the southern portion of Orthodoxy, Constantinople fell to the Moslems after the city had been largely depopulated by civil war and the ravages of plague. With only 10,000 men, the emperor Constantine IX (1449-1453) defended his capital against a powerful army of more than 150,000 Mohammedans. A renegade, Urban, aided the Turks to break through the wall and on May 29, 1453, the Eucharist was celebrated for the last time in the *Hagia Sophia*. The Islamic soldiers poured into the city, pillaging its treasures and destroying its people, including the emperor and patriarch. According to legend, the Eucharistic liturgy at St. Sophia's was not

completed when Constantinople fell, and the Eastern Christians still believe the temple will one day be restored to Christian worship, when the divine service interrupted by the Moslems will again be sung in the Cathedral of Holy Wisdom.

It is impossible to read the story of the Orthodox Church under Turkish rule without admiration and pity. True to Mohammed's teaching about Christians being "People of the Book," the Turks tolerated the Orthodox while enslaving them according to the most advanced Oriental standards of despotism.

Allowed to survive and practice their religion, the Eastern Christians suffered under a thousand disabilities. They were obliged to pay tribute, wear a distinctive garb, and conform to a list of humiliating regulations. In practicing their religion, external profession had to be curtailed to the minimum set by the ruling monarch or ruling magistrate. For long periods they were forbidden to use crosses on their churches or ring bells on feast days.

Worse still, the Moslem policy appears to have been one of slow annihilation. New churches were not to be built, the systematic training of the clergy was severely restricted, higher education made impossible, and the schooling of children reduced to a few rudimentary facts. Bribery and treachery wreaked havoc with the clergy; the Sultan had to be provided with Christian slaves.

Every five years, Christian boys between eight and fifteen were inspected by the Moslem overlords. Those who were strongest and most intelligent were chosen, taken from their parents, converted to Islam and impressed into the Sultan's service. Most of them were drafted into a special army corps, the Janissaries, and used for centuries as the main instrument of oppression at home and of conquest abroad.

For administrative purposes, the Orthodox Church under the Moslems was made into a *Rum Millet* (Roman nation) with the patriarch of Constantinople at the head and all other church officials under him. He was completely subject to the Sultan, yet given civil jurisdiction over his own people within the Turkish Empire. Before the Moslem ruler, he was responsible for the conduct of the Orthodox who could approach the government only through him.

As might be expected, the result was a mixture of political and religious power that tended to secularize the Church or, if the patriarch resisted, to oppress the Christian believers. A climax was reached in the eighteenth century when the churches of Rumania, Bulgaria and Serbia came under the Turkish sway, and with it the patriarchate of Constantinople was extended from Asia Minor into the heart of Europe.

Historians of the Orthodox Church graphically describe the price their leaders had to pay for maintaining some semblance of religious authority over the people.

The patriarch received his *berat*, or confirmation of spiritual and secular authority, from an infidel source. He could be removed and, often more than once, reinstated at the Sultan's will, with consequent loss of dignity and the temptation to cater to the Moslem prince for the sake of recognition and prestige. There were notable exceptions, where some patriarchs suffered prison and death rather than compromise on religion. But the over all picture is depressing. Out of one hundred fifty-nine patriarchs in Constantinople from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, the Moslems on one hundred and five occasions drove the prelates from their see. There were twenty-seven abdications, often involuntary; six patriarchs suffered violent deaths, and only twenty-one died natural deaths while in office. In one short span, from 1625 to 1700, Constantinople had fifty patriarchs, or an average of a year and a half for each.

Since nominees for patriarch were promoted by a party, those who financed his promotion later expected to be reimbursed, at the expense of the suffragan sees subject to the

Metropolitan. They in turn taxed the clergy, who obtained the necessary funds from the people. And behind this whole mechanism stood the power of Islam, which dominated Orthodoxy in Asia Minor until the opening of the twentieth century.

The current oppression of Orthodoxy in Soviet Russia and allied countries is unparalleled in religious history. After half a century of tension, conflict and compromise, the future is still uncertain, but the broad lines of contact between the Russian Church and the Soviet State fall into four distinct periods: from the October Revolution in 1917 to the revolt within the Church in 1922, from the revolt to the outbreak of the second World War in 1939, during the war years, and after the war to the present day.

In the first phase, following the Communist seizure of power, Orthodox churchmen reacted strongly against the wave of persecution waged against the Church by Lenin and Uritskii. Exactly a year after the Revolution got under way, the Moscow Patriarch, Tikhon, issued a ringing message to the Council of People's Commissars, in which he summarized twelve months of Soviet rule: a country running with blood in which "no one feels himself in safety; all live in fear of search, plunder, dispossession, arrest, shooting." He charged the government with inhuman armies against defenseless citizens, of ruthless execution of bishops, priests, monks and nuns "not guilty of anything, but simply on the wholesale accusation of some sort of vague, indefinite 'counter-revolution.'"

"Where," he asked, "was freedom of preaching in church? Already many bold preachers have paid with the blood of martyrdom." He closed with a powerful indictment.

It is not our work to judge the earthly power; all power permitted by God would draw upon itself our blessing, if it truly showed itself to be "God's servant," for the good of those under it.

Now, then, to you, who use power for persecuting your neighbors and for wiping out the innocent, we extend our word of admonition. Celebrate the anniversary of your taking power by releasing the imprisoned, by stopping bloodshed, violence, havoc, restriction of the faith. Turn not to destruction, but to organizing order and legality, give to the people their wished-for and deserved respite from fratricidal strife. Otherwise all righteous blood shed by you will cry out against you, and with the sword will you perish who have taken up the sword.²

Tikhon paid for his criticism by being placed under house arrest, although the Soviets took no other action against him. He further issued a solemn decree excommunicating those who attacked Christians and profaned church buildings, but he soon discovered that such a weapon was useless. The new masters of Russia assaulted not the Church, but God, and the threat of divine punishment only aroused worse anti-religious fervor.

In August 1922, Tikhon was arrested and kept in prison until June of the next year, at which time he published a retraction, declaring his loyalty to the Soviet government and his regret for opposing the confiscation of the sacred vessels. Till his death in 1925, Tikhon was acceptable to the Church and State, although some Christians were shocked by his act of repentance.

A more intransigent position was shown in the manifesto composed by a group of Russian churchmen who were exiled to the concentration camps on Solovetski Island. With calm dignity they explained that they had no political grievance against the Soviet State, that their only concern was over the teaching of materialism by the Communist Party which controlled the

government.

The Church recognizes the existence of the spiritual principle; Communism denies it. The Church believes in the living God, Creator of the world, Guide of its life; Communism does not admit His existence. The Church believes in the steadfast principles of morality, justice and law; Communism looks upon them as the conditional results of class struggle, and values moral questions only from the standpoint of their usefulness. The Church instills the feeling that humility elevates man's soul; Communism abases man through pride.³

Meantime a major revolt within the Orthodox Church shook its government to the foundation and split the leaders into opposing factions: Tikhon and the monastic, celibate prelates and clergy on one side, and the "white" married clergy, on the other. The monastic bishops were charged by their confreres with reactionary measures against the State, with ultra-conservative positions in worship and polity and, above all, with intransigence regarding Communism. The Living Church movement, as the progressives styled themselves, met in congress to depose Tikhon, decree that married priests might become bishops and widowed priests might remarry, and issue an appeal to the people, saying that capitalism was the highest form of godlessness.

The reform clergy soon split into dissenting parties, but the effect of their State-encouraged opposition to the bishops (all monastics) was to inflame the masses against their ecclesiastical leaders and weaken the Church's stand against Communism.

In spite of internal weakness, however, the conservative element rallied around their new leader, the Metropolitan Sergius, who was first imprisoned by the Soviets, then made his peace with the government and released. He was allowed to register the Orthodox Church in 1927, for the first time in five years, on the theory that since physical extermination was impossible legal control by the State was better policy. Soon after, on April 8, 1929, a revised law on religion was published by Stalin. Every form of religious propaganda became a civil offense. In addition, Article 17 of the Constitution forbade every kind of philanthropic and educational activity under Church authority.

"Religious unions (parishes)," the law read, "are forbidden: to establish mutual aid funds, cooperative and productive unions, and in general to use the property at their disposal for any other purpose than the satisfying of religious needs; to give material aid to their members, to organize either special meetings for children, youth or women, for prayer and other purposes, or general meetings, groups, circles, departments, biblical or literary, handwork for labor, religious study and the like, and also to organize excursions and children's play-grounds; to open libraries, reading rooms, to organize sanatoria and medical aid. Only such books as are necessary for the performance of services are permitted in the Church building and houses of prayer."⁴ These prohibitions were reinstated in Article 124 of the 1936 Constitution and still remain effectively unchanged.

This new legislation marked a radical change in the Church's status. It was now faced with a crusade of anti-religion, while allowed under government supervision to conduct religious services for the people. An unequal competition opened between the inarticulate Church and the Soviet program of indoctrination, which centered on the public schools.

The war years, 1939-1945, proved a boon to the Orthodox Church. With the outbreak of hostilities the antireligious campaign was softened to a low key: churchmen published statements

of support of the government against the Nazi aggressor; and even the State promoted friendlier relations with ecclesiastical authorities. A climax was reached in 1943, when the Patriarchate of Moscow was re-established, after a lapse of two hundred years. Tsar Peter the Great had abolished the patriarchate in 1721 on the grounds that many Russians thought the patriarch was equal or superior to the emperor. A "holy governing synod," modeled on the German Lutheran synods, replaced the patriarchate. Reestablishing this office was a master-stroke of strategy to win the support of the Church for Soviet political needs.

At the Sobor (congress) which followed Sergius's death, the metropolitan Alexii was chosen patriarch in 1944. Next February at his investiture, the Sobor issued a warm message of approval of the government, praying God "to increase the strength, health and years of life of our beloved Leader of the Soviet State. Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin."⁵ After the defeat of Germany, Alexii published a statement to the effect that, "the most important thing the Russian Orthodox Church did in wartime was to demonstrate to the whole world its complete unity with its government."⁶

Since the war, the condition of the Orthodox Church in Russia has been precarious, in spite of ostensible growth. Honors and benefits have been conferred on dutiful churchmen by the Soviet government, and a *modus vivendi* marked out that gives the appearance of progress. But all the evidence points to a radical decline in religion among the people, due mostly to the steady pressure of Marxist teaching in the schools and control of available media of communication.

A recent survey made by the government showed there is still a widespread religious survival among the peasantry, partly explained by the concentration of women on the farms and of atheist propaganda in the cities. "Precise data on the sex ratio among the Orthodox do not exist. However, on the basis of various facts available to researchers in this field, it may be stated that about 75 to 80 per cent of all the faithful are women."⁷

This poses a new problem for the Church, to save itself and survive the Communist State by strengthening the religion of its women and, as far as possible, using their services in the interests of the faith. Aware of this fact, the government is more than ever stressing the need of teaching atheism in the homes. "The most effective form of anti-religious propaganda is systematic individual work with the faithful within their homes, particularly with the mothers. Since religion is most widespread among women, attention must be directed chiefly to anti-religious work among them. Women must be drawn into public affairs as active participants. This is the most important condition for liberating them from the narcotic of religion," and through them the next generation.⁸

SOURCES OF FAITH

It is not easy to specify the doctrinal principles of Eastern Orthodoxy. The very name, Orthodox, designates both "correct doctrine" and "correct worship." In Slavonic, Orthodoxy is rendered by the work *Pravoslavie*, which means "true glory," so that when a Russian, Serb, or Bulgarian calls himself Orthodox he proclaims his belonging to a community which praises and glorifies God in the right way.

Consequently for the Orthodox the Church's purpose is mainly to worship God, and to teach its members how to glorify Him in the right spirit. This de-emphasis of doctrine affects the importance given to different types of doctrinal positions, whether they belong to dogma, theologumena, or theological opinion. In the absence of an infallible defining authority, there is considerable overlapping of dogmatic teaching among churchmen, and numerous areas of

uncertainty not found in Roman Catholicism. Dogmas are universally binding among the Orthodox, as emanating directly from divine revelation; theologumena are traditionally held doctrines hallowed by the authority of ancient and respected Church teachers; theological opinions are the vast body of disputed theories and explanations that scholars have devised over the centuries.

Until the seventeenth century, the Orthodox accepted the same books of the Old and New Testaments as are found in the Catholic canon. Then Cyril Lukaris (1572-1638), patriarch of Constantinople, followed the Protestant pattern and denied the inspired character of the so-called deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament, namely, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and the two books of Maccabees. This innovation was at first resisted, but closer relations with Calvinism confirmed many, if not most, Orthodox theologians in reducing the Old Testament canon to its Protestant form.

While the concept of biblical inspiration differs among the authors, a common notion is to consider it “an immediate movement and instruction of the sacred writers by the Holy Spirit. As a result, they are not only preserved from error but positively receive a revelation of God’s truth, though without violence to their natural faculties. The biographers therefore become organs for transmitting divine revelation, while retaining all their native powers and activities.”⁹ So exalted is this type of inspiration that the sacred authors are said to have received and communicated divine truths even as the man Christ understood and expressed revelation by means of the Word which assumed His human nature.

Tradition as distinct from Scripture is a valid source of Christian doctrine in Orthodoxy. In general “sacred tradition is that form of preserving and propagating revelation whereby the faithful and worshipers of God, by word and example transmit one to the other, the predecessors to those who follow them, the doctrine of faith, law of God, the sacraments and sacred rites.”¹⁰ The significant feature of this concept is the essential part played by the faithful in forming and conserving tradition.

However, in spreading doctrinal tradition among all the faithful, the Orthodox recognize certain monuments of special import which differ in dogmatic value according to their greater or less respect among the people.

Highest in dignity are the Creeds: the Nicene, the Athanasian and the Symbol of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (213-270). In the Nicene they do not include the *Filioque*, which declares the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son. The Athanasian Creed, known as the *Quicumque* (Whosoever), from its opening words, differs from other summaries of faith in embodying anathemas against those who deny the Trinity, Incarnation and other doctrinal essentials. Though dating from the time of St. Ambrose, it was not recognized as a standard of faith in the Eastern Church until the seventeenth century, when it began to appear in the Greek *Horologium* (liturgical manual) and in Russian service books. Surprisingly the Apostles' Creed lacks “ecumenical authority” among the Eastern Orthodox.¹¹

Gregory Thaumaturgus' Creed is entirely Trinitarian, and has no reference to Christology. It owes more to tradition than to the Bible, and practically typifies the character of Eastern religious thought.

One God, Father of the living Word, of subsistent wisdom, eternal power and likeness. Perfect source of the perfect One, Father of the only-begotten Son. One Lord. one alone from the only One, God of God, likeness and image of the Deity, active Word, wisdom comprehending the structure of the universe, and effective virtue of every creature. True Son of true God, Invisible of invisible,

Immortal of immortal, Eternal of eternal.

And one Holy Spirit, having substance from God, and who appeared to men through the Son. Image of the Son, perfect of the perfect, life which is the cause of the living, holy well-spring, sanctity which dispenses sanctity, in whom God the Father is manifested, who is above all and in all things, and God the Son who is through all things.

Perfect Trinity. undivided and unseparated in glory and eternity and reign. Nothing created nor subservient nor introduced in the Trinity, as though it were absent before and had later come in. In like manner, the Father was never without the Son nor the Son without the Spirit; but always the same unalterable and unchangeable Trinity.¹²

Second in authority to the Creeds are the first seven general councils: two of Nicea, 325, 787; three of Constantinople, 381, 553, 681; Ephesus, 431; and Chalcedon. 451. The eighth council, of Constantinople in 869-870, deposed Photius as patriarch and by Orthodox standards marked the beginning of Western Christianity apart from the Eastern Church. All the future general Councils recognized by Rome, from First Lateran in 1123 to Second Vatican in 1962, have been held in the West, and are not accepted by the Orthodox.

The first seven councils dealt almost exclusively with the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin and the veneration of sacred images. As a result, doctrinal principles in Orthodoxy show little of the dogmatic development found in the West, through the clarifications and definitions of such major conclaves as the Council of Trent (1545-1563) or First Vatican (1869).

The Fathers of the Church most respected and followed by the Orthodox are Athanasius, the three Cappadocians (Basil, Gregory Nazianzen and Nyssa), Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, Leo and Gregory the Great. It is of more than passing interest that two Roman Pontiffs are among the highest patristic authorities in the Eastern Church.

Below the Fathers but still within the concept of tradition are the symbolic books, described as “professions of faith of particular churches in recent times, especially those coined against Catholics and Protestants,” or “professions of faith by certain enlightened persons in the churches, succinctly and clearly written to teach the faithful all or some of the doctrines contained in the Creeds.”¹³

Among the more famous symbolic authorities are the *Confessions* of Gennadius (died 471), of Peter Mogila (1597-1646) and of Dositheus (1640-1707), and the *Catechism* of Philaret (1553-1646); Gennadius, however, is not acknowledged by many theologians. Mogila was a Wallachian theologian whose comprehensive survey of the Greek Orthodox Church was formally approved by the foremost patriarchs in 1643, re-approved by the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672, and is now a primary witness of Eastern Orthodoxy. Dositheus, as Patriarch of Jerusalem, wrote strenuously against Calvin and Bellarmine, and was a prime mover in combating Western influences in Orthodox theology.

Theodore Romanov Philaret, the Patriarch of Moscow, founded the Romanov dynasty. Under his cousin, Theodore I, the last Tsar of the Runik family, he fought against the Swedes and was later banished to a monastery. After his son Michael was elected Tsar, he became patriarch (1619) and until his death remained virtual ruler of Russia. A zealous reformer, he established a seminary in each diocese, promoted the study of theology and composed his famous *Catechism*.

Other writings of lesser authority are sometimes called symbolic, but their value varies and practically depends on the following they have in contemporary circles. Thus a man like Vladimir Solovieff (1853-1900) is highly regarded by the Orthodox, but his later entrance into the Catholic Church naturally colors the acceptability of his doctrines.

DOCTRINAL VARIATIONS

Consistent with the undefined nature of dogmatic sources, there is considerable fluidity among Orthodox teachers on many points of doctrine that have become defined dogmas in Roman Catholicism.

According to Eastern thought, nothing which has no direct bearing on divine worship should be made a matter of absolute belief. Confessions of faith for the Orthodox are mainly a part of doxology or liturgy. At most, dogmas safeguard the beatific vision of God and the Incarnation, and are enshrined in the Creeds and dogmatic pronouncements of the first seven councils. Catholicism has a doctrinal system which includes the nature of man, the constitution of the Church, the primacy, sin, grace and the ways of salvation. All these are “problems” for Eastern Christians, in the sphere governed by Theologumena. Even such basic issues as the concept of the supernatural and the real presence in the Eucharist are open to discussion and controversy in Orthodox theology.

Nevertheless, beyond the Trinitarian and Christological teaching of the early councils are many areas of substantial agreement among the Orthodox. These form their “deposit of faith,” about which, however, opinions may vary.

SUPERNATURAL LIFE. Until very recent times, the influence of Protestant theology on Orthodoxy was notable but sporadic. Since the nineteenth century, the effect has been more profound and shows itself especially in the median position between Catholicism and Protestantism that Eastern churchmen have adopted on the subject of man's elevation to the supernatural order.

Current writings indicate that many Orthodox theologians do not admit a strict elevation of man to a supernatural destiny. They variously describe this elevation as suprasensible. Transcendent, what is above the common mode of action of the forces of nature, or above the natural capacity of man. While apparently subtle, their concept allows for an exigency or demand for the beatific vision, which goes beyond mere tendency or desire.

The issue became crucial for the Orthodox through their frequent relations with the continental Reformation and since the sixteenth century has given rise to opposing parties within the Eastern churches. About 1400 A.D. translations of Latin works, including St. Thomas, made Catholic writings available to the Orthodox and divided them into Latinizers and Anti-Latins, Palamites and Anti-Palamites (generally Latinizers). With the advent of the Reformation, the lines were further sharpened. Cyril Lukaris, Greek patriarch, was ardently pro-Calvinist: his *Confessio* is a thoroughly Reformed interpretation of the Greek Orthodox faith and allows for no supernatural elevation in the Catholic sense.

Twentieth-century ideas are in a state of flux, with perhaps the majority favoring the Catholic position, without clearly distinguishing between grace as absolutely gratuitous and in no sense due to any creature, and grace as an exalted sublimation of human nature.

PROCESSION OF THE SON. Historically the principal divergence from Catholicism is on the

procession of the Third Person of the Trinity. Symbolized in the term, *Filioque*, it has been the main object of Orthodox theological writing for centuries. Two attitudes are discernible: that the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone is a dogma, and therefore the Latin *Filioque* is heresy; or that the procession from the Father is a dogma which the Roman Church admits, so that procession from the Son is only a theological opinion which may be professed by the Orthodox.

Historically the problem goes back to the insertion of the words *Filioque* in the Nicene Creed, begun in Spain in the sixth century and later adopted by the whole West as the official expression of the revealed truth that the Holy Spirit proceeds at once from the Father and the Son, as from one principle. Photius and after him the Orthodox objected to what they called either a heretical tampering with the Creed, or an unjustified exercise of papal authority approving the insertion without an ecumenical council.

Since the turn of the century, Orthodox sentiment has been in the direction of considering the *Filioque* more irenically. In 1907 the Moscow Synodal Commission published a statement declaring that the *Filioque* had not been the cause of separation of the Churches; that the theory of Photius on the procession of the Spirit from the Father alone was a theological opinion and not a dogma: that the true meaning of the Greek Fathers who said the Holy Spirit proceeds *from* the Father *through* the Son corresponds to the Latin formula.

The Synod suggested that the two formulas concur essentially: the co-ordinating version (*Filioque*) and the subordinating (*per Filium*), since they both attest that Father and Son are the one Principle of the Holy Spirit. They also complement each other. While the former stresses the unicity and indivisibility of the Principle, the latter emphasizes that the Father is Prime Principle, while the Son as "God from God" is a Derived Principle, since with His essence He also receives from the Father the power of spirating the Holy Spirit.

More recently a leading theologian, Sergius Bulgakov, gave a critical judgment on the whole question, "The controversy about the Holy Spirit has been conducted in an atmosphere lacking in love and actuated by the spirit of schism; it has been therefore a pointless dispute."¹⁴ Current writers ask themselves: if the controversy was so futile, why has it persisted for so long? They answer that the issue is not doctrinal but moral. A grave breach of mutual trust was committed by changing the Nicene Creed: all other factors are minor or irrelevant.

CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH. Orthodox ecclesiologists believe their concept of the Church is a balanced mean between the Reformation idea of an essentially invisible society and the Catholic definition of the Church as a visible, hierarchical institution. Within the Orthodox system, however, two quite different notions prevail: the traditional and conservative, which is perfectly consistent with Orthodox professions of faith: and the liberal concept especially prevalent among the Slavophiles.

Representative of the conservative theorists is Philaretus (Gumilevsky), who describes the Church of Christ as the assembly of believers in Christ, instituted by the Lord and united by the divine word, sacraments and the hierarchy under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to lead people to eternal salvation."¹⁵ This earthly society is united with the heavenly, the angels and saints, in one and the same Church of Christ. A heavy stress on the unitive character of the dual society is a feature of Orthodox ecclesiology. It is unlike the Protestant notion by its recognition of a hierarchy, and similar to the Catholic in conceiving the Church as visible in bodily structure and invisible as regards its soul.

Within the conservative camp, however, are different schools of thought, one in the

direction of Rome and the other of the Reformation. Macarius Bulgakov defines the Church in terms reminiscent of Bellarmine, except for including the word “Orthodox” and excluding the Roman Pontiff. “The Church,” he says, “is the orthodox society of the believers and the baptized in Jesus Christ, founded immediately by Him and through the holy apostles, and animated by Him; which is directed visibly through spiritual pastors, and by means of a teaching authority, the administration of sacred rites and a ruling body: and at the same time is led invisibly to eternal life through the most efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁶ Theophylact Gorskii, on the other hand, gives an almost Lutheran definition, calling the Church “the assembly of true believers and saints, rightly called together by the preaching of the divine word to attain eternal life through the great goodness of God. Only those really belong to the Church who possess the true faith, by which they are united with Christ the Head. Hence they are called members of the Body of Christ, so that the wicked, the unbelieving and hypocrites are certainly excluded from membership.”¹⁷ This differs only in detail from the classic Protestant Church of the believers and the predestined.

Slavophil ecclesiology antedates Alexius Khomjakov (1804-1860), but his theory on the Church has deeply affected Orthodox thought and found expression in the unity movements now current in the Eastern Churches. He began by conceiving the Church in its broadest possible extension, including the Mystical Body of Christ in its triple form of militant, suffering and triumphant. Then he explained that only the Eastern Orthodox Church is the True Church. Western Churches, namely Catholicism and Protestantism, do not differ essentially as sects outside the true fold of Christ. The Catholic Church fell into rationalism in the ninth century, when it introduced the *Filioque*, Protestants when they embraced private interpretation of the Scriptures. In Khomjakov’s vocabulary, the Church is “a living principle,” or the Church is the universal life of love and unity, along with organic and living solidarity.”¹⁸

Not the least value of this expansive notion of the Church has been the function it served those who sought a rapprochement with contemporary Marxism. It also gave men like Nicholas Berdyaev (1874-1948) the principles required for adapting religion to the demands of the modern mind. This “spiritual Christianity,” it is felt, has no need of doctrinal definitions, bourgeois morality, and set worship.

In the absence of an ultimate juridical authority to pass judgment on the relative value of these concepts, it is difficult to know which ideas are prevalent. Certainly those most closely approximating the standard manuals of doctrine are also nearest to Catholicism, in which the Church is not so spiritualized as to include almost anyone who calls himself a Christian even though he disbelieves what the first seven councils made mandatory on all the faithful.

Although the Eastern Orthodox generally admit that the Church is a visible institution, they say that Christ alone is the head, since a visible head would be irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Mystical Body. One body can have only one head, not two, as found in Catholicism. Christ, they teach, so reserves to Himself the whole life and government of the Church that no vicar can take His place, Ministers in the Church can assist in the activity of the Head, but they cannot share in it; otherwise Christ’s function would suffer encroachment and the Church which is divine would become subject to a human person.

No mortal man, they argue, can be head of the Church. He cannot exert influence over the scattered peoples of the earth; his action would supplant that of Christ and introduce into an indefectible society the fallibility and weakness of a human being. Most importantly, if the Church were to have a human head, it would cease to be celestial and become as one of the many secular kingdoms of earth.

The dominant principle in Orthodoxy is that Church authority is diffused among its members, and not as in the West, isolated in a definite source. This was strikingly illustrated in an exchange of letters between Pius IX and the Patriarchs of the East. In 1848 a reply of the Orthodox prelates, signed by thirty-one bishops and three patriarchs, informed Rome that “the Pope is greatly mistaken in supposing that we consider the ecclesiastical hierarchy to be the guardian of dogma. The case is quite different. The unvarying constancy and the unerring truth of Christian dogma does not depend upon any of the hierarchical orders: it is guarded by the totality of the people of God, which is the body of Christ.”¹⁹

This answer reflects the common attitude of Orthodox towards the primacy and infallibility of the Roman See. “Does any one in the Church,” they ask, “possess of himself infallibility in his judgment of dogma? No, he does not; every member of the Church is liable to error, or rather to the introduction of his own personal limitations in his dogmatic studies.” According to this view, neither the hierarchy nor the councils are organs of doctrinal inerrancy. “Only the Church in its identity with itself can testify to the truth. It is the Church which agrees or not, with the council. There are not, and there cannot be, external forms established beforehand for the testimony of the Church about itself.”²⁰

Such corporate authority, however, is compatible with a hierarchical structure. Bishops and clergy have clearly defined functions in the ministry and norms of orthodoxy to maintain in their teaching. Councils on a local or provincial basis may be called, but when dealing with matters of conscience their decisions must have the approval of the whole community to take juridical effect, and even then there is no claim to infallibility.

SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM. Orthodox churchmen recognize seven sacraments, and stress the fact so solemnly they charge anyone who diminishes the number with trifling with Christian revelation. As one writer expressed it, “There are as many sacred mysteries or sacraments among the Greeks as among the Latins, namely, seven. And no one in either Church has ever called this into question.”²¹ The exceptional Orthodox who departs from this norm is considered outside the stream of Eastern tradition.

Nevertheless occasional doubts arise. Thus a prominent theologian in Europe, Jerome Tarasij, suggested that other rites should be added to the sacramental system, for example, entrance into monastic life, solemn blessing of water and funeral ceremonies; but matrimony could well be dropped because there was nothing spiritual about it.²² Tarasij has since been supported by at least one metropolitan, Antonij Chrapovickij, whose diocesan catechism allowed considerable freedom on the subject. His comment that the Church has never defined the number of the sacraments is correct from the Orthodox viewpoint, although few would doubt that the number is seven.

Eastern commentators repeatedly say that the sacraments are not mere symbols or pure signs of grace, received independently of the rite and only occasioned by its administration. They use terms like “effect grace” or “give grace” and describe the sacraments as instruments, organs or means of divine sanctification.

Yet again there are sporadic dissenting voices. The same Tarasij explicitly teaches that the causality of the sacraments does not depend on special external rites but on union with the whole Church. In the same way, the “matter” and “form” of the sacraments, which in Latin terminology stand for the material rite and the ritual words, have never been clearly defined among the Orthodox and therefore variations appear among different churches. But in general there is a remarkable consistency between Eastern and Western beliefs and practices with regard

to the sacraments.

The Orthodox always place baptism in the first place among the sacraments, and recognize its institution by Christ or, as some prefer. "by the words and actions of the Lord." Pure and natural water is required along with the Trinitarian formula and a triple immersion, using the words, "The servant of God (name) is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Symbolically this signifies the death of the sinner, and his redemption and resurrection as a Christian.

The ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop or priest, but in case of necessity even a lay person (man or woman) may baptize. Some Orthodox canonists question the validity of a baptism performed by laymen, unless the latter are Orthodox and have the intention of conferring the true sacrament. Very like Catholic doctrine, the effects of baptism are said to be remission of sin, imprinting of a character, entering the fold of Christ, and receiving a title to heavenly glory. Consequently, with rare exception the necessity of baptism for salvation is taken for granted, and therefore children are normally baptized in infancy.

Confirmation, or holy chrismation, follows immediately after baptism. Although the priest confers the sacrament, the holy oil or chrism must have been blessed by a gathering of bishops of a self-governing church presided over by their senior. While anointing the various parts of the body, actually the whole body, the priest recites the formula, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." However, the Orthodox do not believe that an indelible character is imprinted; and only two sins can efface it, heresy and schism. As a consequence, confirmation is the regular way that converts to Orthodoxy (or fallen-aways) are received into the Church.

Orthodox theologians stress that chrismation is not a renewal of baptismal vows, but a kind of lay ordination, by which the laymen obtain special graces to participate in the life of the Christian community and receive the other sacraments. One important consequence of confirming infants is that from childhood they are considered full-fledged members of the Church, with all the rights and privileges of adults, including the reception of Holy Communion.

Confession of sins is an ancient practice among the Orthodox, which they base on three considerations: that people are normally responsible for their actions and can have their conscience trained, that their responsibility is a corporate affair that requires corporate means to cultivate and may not be left to each individual indiscriminately, and that sincere reconciliation with men secures divine forgiveness with a consequent removal of guilt.

A familiar custom is to have the penitent first visit his relatives and close friends before going to the priest. He asks their pardon, with or without specifying how he may have offended them. They answer. "God forgives you." Behind the practice is the centuries-old tradition of confessing one's sins publicly, which has now been largely abandoned, although early in the present century a certain John of Cronstadt revived in Russia the practice of public confessions.

Instead of kneeling before the priest, the penitent stands facing East, as a symbol that the confessor is not absolving in his own name but as a witness of the Christian community. At least this is the custom among many Orthodox churchmen. After the penitent tells his sins, he may be asked a few questions and then hears a brief exhortation.

O Lord God of the salvation of Your servants, merciful, gracious and longsuffering, You offer repentance for evil and will not the death of a sinner but rather that he should be converted and live. Forgive now, O Lord, this Your servant (by name). Grant him the assurance of repentance, pardon, and remission of his sins, and absolve him from all his offences, voluntary and involuntary.

Reconcile and unite him to Your holy Church through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom be power and glory ascribed to You, now and for ever, even unto ages of ages. Amen.²³

After this prayer follows the absolution, of which there are two main forms, one common to Russia and the other to the Greek Orthodox Churches. The Russian formula appears to have been influenced by Catholic divines in the seventeenth century. It is expressly indicative, i.e., the priest declares he is forgiving the sins in the name of God. "May our Lord and God Jesus Christ, through the grace and compassion of His exceeding love, forgive you, my son (here follows the Christian name), all your transgressions, and I, an unworthy priest, by the power that is given to me by Him, forgive and absolve you from all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen."²⁴

The Greek version is more deprecative, i.e., the priest declares that God forgives the penitent. "May God, who pardoned David through the prophet Nathan when he confessed his sins; who received Peter bewailing the denial, the harlot weeping at His feet, and who took back the publican and prodigal; may the same God, through me a sinner, pardon you everything in this world, and cause you to stand uncondemned before His awful tribunal."²⁵

After absolution the penitent is seldom required to say or perform a penance prescribed by the confessor. Its function is said to be only a subjective one, to strengthen the will of the penitent against future lapses or act as a salutary remedy for bad habits. Many Orthodox theologians do not consider satisfaction for sins necessary for the remission of punishment incurred, on the theory that Christ perfectly satisfied for our sins, so that the absolution of the priest delivers us from all penalty both eternal and temporal.

The frequency of confession differs. Four times a year is a common practice, although in the Russian Church no one may receive the Eucharist unless he has first confessed his sins. Other Eastern Churches have no set rules and may even prescribe confession only when grave sins have been committed. The same with faculties to hear confessions: some bishops restrict the privilege to a select group of priests, others allow all priests under their jurisdiction to absolve anyone who comes to them.

Holy Orders are almost, but not quite the same as in the Catholic Church. The Orthodox distinguish (as do Catholics) between major and minor orders, but they do not consider any of the minor, as well as the subdiaconate, sacraments; only the episcopate, priesthood and diaconate are called sacraments, the rest are merely sacramentals. However even the subdiaconate is regarded sufficient to make the law of continence binding: so that subdeacons, as well as deacons and priests, are traditionally forbidden to marry or to contract a second marriage if their first wife dies.

In the ceremony of ordination, the actual conferral of orders is quite simple, although the surrounding liturgy is very elaborate. Essentially the sacrament is conferred by the imposition of hands (in the Byzantine ceremonial only the right hand) by the bishop on the ordinand; this is the same for all three major orders. The form of ordination is also practically the same for bishop, priest and deacon, except for a single phrase. "The grace of God, that always strengthens the weak and fills things that are empty, advances the most devout subdeacon N.N. to he deacon. Let us therefore pray for him that the grace of the Holy Spirit may come upon him."²⁶

There follows a long prayer with biblical allusions to the deacon St. Stephen, while the bishop continues to hold his hand on the subject's head. The deacon is then vested in the sanctuary and given a horarion or stole decorated with crosses and placed over the shoulders. In

the ordination of priests the same formula is used, except for the words. “the most devout deacon N.N. to be priest,” and for bishops, “appoints the most devout elect N.N. to be Metropolitan of the most holy Metropolis N.” A priest receives the vestments and sacred vessels, the bishop is given a miter and insignia of his office.

In the Russian Church a theory prevails that ordained clerics lose their sacerdotal character when they ask for reduction to the lay state or the same is imposed on them for a grave crime. The result is that reordinations to the priesthood and reconsecrations to the episcopate are not rare in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The sacrament of matrimony is called the Crowning in the Eastern Churches. Its purpose is to bestow the Church's blessing upon husband and wife, and assist them to remain faithful to each other and their respective duties until death. Husband and wife wear crowns during the ceremony, and in some places for a week afterwards. Marriage vows are pronounced during the Eucharistic Liturgy, with appropriate readings from the Gospel of St. John about the marriage feast at Cana and from St. Paul's classic epistle to the Ephesians, that “a husband is head of the wife, just its Christ is head of the Church.”

Although in the marriage formula words are used to suggest a permanent union, and this is still considered the ideal, divorce with the right to remarry is commonly recognized among the Eastern Orthodox. A few dogmatists still hold that only adultery gives the privilege of a perfect divorce, but canonists and the normal practice extend this condition to a broad variety of causes. A divorce law promulgated in Russia after the Communist Revolution typifies the general attitude of the Church, which juridically reserves to itself the right to dissolve the marriage bond.

Among other grounds for dissolving marriage, besides antecedent physical impotence, are abandonment of the Orthodox faith by either party, adultery whether of one or both parties, voluntary mutilation which makes marital relations impossible, grave disease like syphilis, prolonged absence of one partner for two or three years, physical violence or injury to the spouse or children or threat of death, incurable mental illness, malicious neglect of duty proved before an ecclesiastical tribunal. In practice the two most common grounds urged before the Church are prolonged absence and malicious neglect, with the dissolution taking automatic effect after a specified time and previous adjudication by Church authorities.

Provisions are made for marriage ceremonies following a divorce. They are much different from the Crowning at a first nuptials, and contain a clearly penitential note to emphasize that those who enter on a second union have failed to preserve the purity of their first intention. A salutary prayer is read over the couple by the priest “O Lord Jesus Christ, cleanse the iniquities of Your servants because, being unable to bear the heat and burden of the day and the hot desires of the flesh, they are now entering into the bond of their second marriage, as You did render lawful by Your chosen vessel the Apostle Paul, saying for the sake of us humble sinners, ‘It is better to marry in the Lord than to burn.’”²⁷

The penitential ritual is used both for divorcees remarrying, and for those who were widowed. However no permission is given to deacons and priests to marry more than once, and they are required to espouse a virgin. If they contract a second marriage, they must give up the active work of the priestly ministry and may continue to function in some subordinate position.

There is an Orthodox equivalent of the Catholic sacrament of extreme (or “final”) unction called “Holy Unction,” to distinguish it from the idea of a final anointing in grave sickness or at the time of death. Holy unction has a broader significance, since it is administered in cases of bodily and mental illness, even when there is no danger of death, and may be received by anyone seeking spiritual renewal and purification.

Generally the priest is invited to the sick person's home and administers the unction there, but recently the practice has arisen of offering the benefit of the *Euchelaion* to everyone who presents himself at the church during certain seasons, as in Lent, or who visits some place of pilgrimage. In a few localities anointing becomes a special preparation for Holy Communion.

There are seven lessons or readings which deal with the healing ministry of Christ each followed by an anointing, whose original form was. "Holy Father, Physician of bodies and souls, You sent Your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to cure every ill and to deliver us from death. Heal also this Your servant N.N. of the sickness which afflicts his body and enliven him through the grace of Your Christ."²⁸ This formula has since undergone many additions and changes, including invocations of the Blessed Virgin and Saints Cosmos and Damian. Seven priests are recommended to perform the unction, although one is sufficient in case of necessity. A brush is used to anoint the various parts of the body: the forehead, chin, cheeks, hands, nostrils and chest. However the practice is not uniform among the churches. Each priest performs the same ritual with an amalgam of olive oil which, at least in Russia, is mixed with wine, in memory of the Good Samaritan.

SAINTS AND FAITHFUL DEPARTED. Among the saints, the Orthodox reserve a special place for the Blessed Virgin. "Warm veneration of the *Theotokos* (Mother of God)," writes one of their theologians, is the soul of Orthodox piety."²⁹ Priests and people invoke her name constantly in liturgical and private prayers; they love her not only as the Mother of Christ but as the spiritual mother of all men. Her ikons are worshiped everywhere, and the majority of Orthodox prayers and hymns are addressed to Mary under a variety of titles and with a profusion of feast days that has no counterpart in the rest of the Christian world.

In their theological reflection on this Marian piety, Eastern writers are quite technical, distinguishing between the kind of worship offered to God and to His Mother. "We worship our Lady, the Virgin-Mother of God, with hyperdulia, but not as God; as the Mother of God, but not with latria. God forbid, that would be blasphemy. For God only do we worship with latria and make our intercession with Him for sins committed after baptism, and by her we hope for remission from Him."³⁰

Underlying the devotion to Mary is a profound veneration for the saints, who are considered bound to the faithful on earth by ties of grace and through a common bond in Christ. This was brought out forcefully at the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches, at which the Orthodox delegates took issue with the prevalent opinion that the Church is only a community of wayfarers en route to their destiny.

It is misleading to describe the Church simply as "the pilgrim people of God" and forget that the Church Triumphant and Church Militant are but one Body. It is precisely in this unity that the Christian hope is grounded. The Church is the great Communion of Saints. We upon earth live and strive in communion with the glorious "cloud of witnesses" revealed through the ages and are strengthened by the intercessions of the *Theotokos* and the Saints with whom we join in adoration of Christ our Redeemer.³¹

The Russian Catechism explains how the faithful who belong to the Church Militant on earth, in offering their prayers to God, call at the same time to their aid the saints who belong to the Church in heaven. Since the saints stand on the highest steps of the approach to God, by their

prayers and intercessions they purify, strengthen, and offer before God the prayers of the faithful living upon earth, and by the will of God work graciously and beneficently upon them, either by invisible virtue, or by distinct apparitions and in divers others ways.”³²

Recognizing that their devotion to Mary and the saints is a major obstacle to the acceptance of Orthodoxy by the Protestants, Eastern churchmen have gone to great lengths in clarifying what to them is an essential part of Christianity, “The Orthodox Church asks nothing of the saints except the acting as ambassadors towards God for us and the supplicating for all things needful--not even of the Holy *Theotokos* herself. Inasmuch as of her own power she can do nothing except act as an ambassador, we ask nothing of her except that, and to plead with her Son and her God for us.”³³

It comes somewhat as a surprise that the Immaculate Conception should not be admitted. Actually the Orthodox had always venerated Mary's absolute sinlessness, but since the definition by Pius IX spokesmen for the Eastern Churches have denied the doctrine, at any rate in Catholic terms. Anthimos VIII of Constantinople officially declared against it in 1895. The more common Orthodox opinion is that Mary was freed from original sin at the Annunciation.

The subject of an intermediary state between earth and heaven has been controverted among the Orthodox for centuries. They offer the Holy Sacrifice for the faithful departed and pray for the dead, but their theologians insist they do not accept the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. A measured statement about the condition of the dead occurs in the highly respected Confession of Kritopoulos.

The Church teaches that their punishment is not material, nor in their members, nor by fire nor any other material thing, but by the pain and sorrow of conscience which come to them from the remembrance of those things which in the world they did in violation of reason and against sanctity. Therefore we pray for the departed by name for each. As often as the Lord's Supper is celebrated, no matter on what day, they are remembered in common. For all who have compiled the prayers of that Sacrament, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, make mention of them who are fallen asleep. It is not for us to fix the time of their purification.³⁴

Other writers further speculate on the lot of the souls in purgation, but their main difference from the accepted Catholic position is a denial of the name, “purgatory,” and the existence of a purgatorial fire. The latter is common teaching in Catholic theology, but at the reunion Councils of Lyons (1274) and Florence (1438-1445), out of consideration for the separated Greeks the official declarations speak only of purifying punishments (*poenae purgatoriae*), not of purifying fire.

CHURCH AUTHORITY AND MONASTICISM

The most characteristic feature of the Eastern Churches is their constitutional organization as a visible society. Many Orthodox agree that the Church is essentially hierarchical; they admit that bishops are the successors of the Apostles and visible heads of particular churches; and they invest the universal Church (including the faithful) with supreme transitory authority during an ecumenical council. But in the absence of a permanent, divinely instituted visible head, endowed with immediate jurisdiction over each diocese, they have

developed a system of government known as autocephalism.

SELF-GOVERNMENT. Literally autocephalous means “self-headed” and was used in the early Church to describe bishops who were under no superior authority in their metropolitan area. Eventually the term came to describe the whole juridical structure of Eastern Orthodoxy, which may be compared to the United Nations in contrast to a monarchy such as the Catholic Church. In theory there may be as many autocephalous churches as there are dioceses or bishops, because the Orthodox recognizes no ultimate primate, and individual bishops by equal right succeed the first Apostles. But in practice there are as many autocephalous churches as distinct political units or racial bodies speaking the same language. even though not united politically.

The interior government of each autocephaly is synodal or collegial, since a monarchical form of jurisdiction is excluded not only from the universal Church but also from each autocephaly. Instead the supreme authority is vested in a college or synod. The principle holds good even in autocephaly presided over by a patriarch or exarch (lower metropolitan primate), where the real governing power is a synod of bishops together with the primate. Without the synod, the latter can do little or nothing of his own accord.

Yet even the synod is only partially authoritative because the supreme jurisdiction governing each autocephaly is twofold: the Church and State. In the territory where the synod is located, the civil government has extensive power, comparable to the rights of ecclesiastical superiors in the Catholic Church.

In defense of the synodal system, Orthodox writers appeal to Sacred Scripture, which shows that the Apostles settled controversies and treated questions of moment by means of synods. Collegial government, they add, is also more in conformity with fraternal charity. The dogmatic foundation for this system is found in the text of the Byzantine Nicene Creed. In the Slavonic version of the Creed, the word *Katholike* is translated *subornaiia*, which etymologically means synodal or conciliar. Orthodox theologians say that the ancient translators by this version wished to show that the true Church of Christ is recognized by its collegial character.

At the convention of all Patriarchal Churches held in Moscow in 1927, the assembly declared that the term *sobornost* must be understood of the conciliar form of the Church. It means “conciliarity;” and stands for the joint possession by all the members of the Church of all its gifts and properties. Thus the prerogatives of ultimate authority and infallibility belong to the whole ecclesiastical community. *Sobornost*, from the Russian *sobor*, “assembly.” has no exact English equivalent, but generally denotes the quality needed for charitable collaboration, with stress on the cooperation of the people. It is a feature of their Church, say the Russians, in contrast with the emphasis on authority in Roman Catholicism and the individualism of the Protestant communions.

Theoretically national autocephalism precludes anything like a real primacy of jurisdiction on the part of any prelate. Even the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople has only a primacy of honor and precedence, but not of ultimate authority. In practice, however, the autocephalous churches do acknowledge a kind of primacy of jurisdiction, whether to their local prelate or the metropolitan or the patriarch. Yet the acknowledgment fluctuates and differs with the regions and the degree of autonomy from State control.

Mutual relations between the autocephaly vary. On principle they enjoy equal rights, like politically independent nations. They call each other sister churches, and are urged to practice fraternal love and ecclesiastical unity, which they manifest in several ways. When a new prelate is elected, he informs each autocephaly of his appointment. The prelates of each autocephaly

inscribe each other's names in the diptych and make a commemoration during the Sacred Liturgy. Those admitted into communion by one autocephaly should be accepted by the others; those excommunicated by one are to be ostracized by all. Doctrinal or disciplinary decisions should be communicated to all the Orthodox churches; and in the same spirit correspondence on problems and methods of procedure is encouraged. and when a council is convoked, each autocephalous body is to be represented.

A midway theory of government. between autocephalous and monarchical. was strongly advocated in Orthodox circles until modern times, and has recently found favor among Eastern theologians. The idea is basically an ecclesiastical oligarchy, founded on the notion that the Apostles were of equal authority but they gave supreme jurisdiction not to one of their number but to a number of prelates equal in power. Two forms have been advocated, the pentarchy and tetrarchy, each within the limits of authentic Orthodox ecclesiology.

According to the pentarchical theory, supreme authority in the Church would be ascribed to five mutually independent Patriarchs, equal in authority and simultaneously governing the universal Church, namely Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Just as the body is ruled by five senses, so God is said to have willed His Church to be directed by five Patriarchs, among whom is included the Roman Pontiff.

Theologians who exclude the pope from the universal Church on account of schism and heresy logically adopted the tetrarchical theory, which consigns the supreme jurisdiction of the Church to the four Oriental Patriarchs, minus the pope, whose primacy of honor passed from Rome to Constantinople with the change of empire at the time of Charlemagne.

MONASTIC LIFE. Monasticism is an essential feature of Eastern Orthodoxy. Yet its concept is quite different from the religious life in the West, where a great variety of rules and apostolic needs has produced a corresponding variety of communities dedicated to following the Christian counsels. Harnack once remarked that an Orthodox monastery is the most perfect relic of the fourth century left in the world. Its spirit and ideals are still those which St. Benedict found and developed in Europe, but which the Orthodox have inherited from St. Basil and retained practically unchanged.

With rare exception, Orthodox monks do not engage in teaching, preaching, or the ministry. That is the concern of the bishops and secular (white) clergy, as distinct from the black clergy in monasteries, who are only a small fraction of the total monastic population. Practically all of them follow the Rule of St. Basil; the monastery on Mt. Sinai and some others in Lebanon and on the Red Sea prefer the Rule of St. Anthony the Hermit.

Each monastery (*laura*) is independent of all the rest, with no ultimate superior like a provincial or general; although most lauras are under the jurisdiction of the local Metropolitan or even the Patriarch. However daughter monasteries (*kellia*) are subject to the abbot of their parent *laura*. The abbot (*Hegumenos*) is elected by his own monks, approved by the Metropolitan, enthroned in a special ceremony and governs for life in cenobitic monasteries.

Of the thousand or more Orthodox monasteries scattered throughout Europe and Asia, the most famous is the monastic republic on the Holy Mountain, Athos, at the northernmost of the three peninsulas that jut from the Chalcis in Greece. There are twenty monasteries on the mountain, eleven following the cenobitic rule and nine the idiorrhythmic.³⁵ The word cenobite is derived from the Greek *koinos* (common) and *bios* (life); idiorrhythmic comes from *idios* (one's own) and *rhythmos* (fashion or mode).

The cenobitic rule insists on perfect obedience to the abbot, elected for life by monks

who have been in religion at least six years. He is spiritual master of the community, but has the assistance of others in external administration. Monks receive property, clothing and food from the abbot; they eat their meals in common.

Idiorrhhythmic monasteries first appeared in the fifteenth century and are directed by two annually changed trustees, elected from the ten or fifteen senior monks, whose decisions they enforce. A spiritual father (*pneumatikos*) has charge of the interior life of the monks. Individual members retain their property, eat meals in their own cells, which may be two or three rooms, and are left to their own judgment on matters of austerity. The cenobites consider the idiorrhhythmic rule lax; but they are answered that personal initiative in the spiritual life is not stifled under the broader discipline. Actually the cenobitic are more austere and cater to a more hardy type of ascetic.

Before entering one of the monasteries on Athos, a man "from the world" visits several and chooses one, at which he presents his application. He must be at least eighteen, a member in good standing of the Orthodox Church and entering without coercion. After about three years of probation, he has the option of remaining a "beginner" without vows, or seeking advancement by taking the four vows of stability, obedience, poverty and chastity. In token of his new status, he receives a first name identical in initial with the rejected Christian name. The new name is that of a deceased saint, who serves as an inspiration; the surname is that of the monastery. Religious on this level are called "monks of the little habit." Those who seek greater perfection may do so after years of experience. to become "monks of the great habit," with duties of more prayer, stricter fasting, and more severe discipline.

The monks on Mount Athos are generally called from bed at eleven at night for an hour's private prayer, and later in the small hours for Matins and the chanting of communal hymns. There are two meals a day, with household duties interrupted by regular community prayers. Supper and Compline are between six and seven. Monks are to occupy the stalls assigned to them, and are regularly checked by the abbot to note any absentees.

Two characteristic practices in Orthodox monasteries are keeping the liturgical vigils and fasts. There are more than fifty vigils a year, which call for continuous services throughout the evening, night and following morning. Fasting varies between the cenobitic and idiorrhhythmic rule. One meal without oil is taken about noon in the *coenobia* on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year; and two meals on other days. No meat is served, but fish is allowed. The idiorrhhythmic rule requires abstinence from cheese, butter and meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, with a stricter diet during the season of Lent, which begins on Quinquagesima Sunday, and on certain fast days before the great feasts of the year.

The general principles of Orthodox monasticism apply equally to men and women, except that before the Russian revolution "unenclosed" nuns were practically unknown. But now they engage in active works of mercy among the sick and indigent. The same change has affected some monasteries of men, who were pressured by the government and public opinion to undertake teaching in schools, conducting agricultural colleges, preaching missions and otherwise becoming involved in secular affairs. However, the number of monks and nuns who have made the turn over is fractional, and one of the major tensions they experience is the conflict of ancient ideals with the increased demands, often under severe sanction from civil authorities, to abandon what the Fathers of Eastern monasticism call the "angelic life" of separation from the world and contemplation of God.

LITURGY AND WORSHIP

The liturgy and ritual of the Eastern Churches are the product of a long process of development reaching back to the early centuries, and find their roots in the traditional doctrine of the Eucharist. Although their writers avoid the term “transubstantiation,” they commonly believe in a very real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In fact their ecumenical efforts with the Protestants often reach an impasse in the unequivocal insistence on a complete change taking place at the consecration of the elements at Mass.

We believe that the substance (*ousian*) of bread and wine remain no longer, but the very Body and Blood of the Lord, under the form and figures of bread and wine, that is under the accidents (*sumbebekosin*). Also that under every part or smallest bit of the bread and wine there is not a part of the Lord's Body, but the entire whole Lord Christ according to His substance: that is with the soul and divinity as He is perfect God and perfect Man.

So that though there be many Eucharists celebrated in the world at one and the same hour, there are not many Christs, or many bodies of Christ, but one and the same Christ is present in all and every Church of the faithful, and there is one Body and Blood. Not that the Body of the Lord which is in heaven descends upon the altar; but because that Bread which is laid on the altar, and there offered in every Church, is by consecration changed and transubstantiated and made one and the same with that which is in heaven.³⁶

When modern Orthodox theologians balk at the word “transubstantiation,” their objections may be generally reduced to an unwillingness to accept the Latinized version decreed by the Council of Trent. They prefer the Greek *metousiosis* or “traselementation,” but the concept behind the term is practically the same.

THE EPIKLESIS. A more serious problem concerns the moment at which the Eucharistic change takes place. With the doubtful exception of the Nestorian Christians, all the Eastern liturgies contain the words of institution in the Holy Sacrifice, “This is my Body,” and “This is the chalice of my Blood.” But they consider these words either nonessential or inadequate, on the score that another prayer, the Epiklesis or invocation of the Holy Spirit, is necessary. In the Orthodox liturgy, the Epiklesis is that ritual prayer in which God the Father is asked to send down the Holy Spirit and to effect the Eucharistic conversion, changing the sacred gifts by His divine power.

In the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, after the words of institution, the priest recites the prayer, “We offer You this reasonable and unbloody sacrifice, and we pray You, beg You, and implore You to send down Your Holy Spirit on us and on these present gifts; and to make this bread the precious Body of Your Christ, and what is in this chalice the precious Blood of Your Christ, changing them by Your Holy Spirit.”³⁷ Similar prayers are found in the other Eastern liturgies.

Three schools of thought exist among the Orthodox on the Epiklesis. One group attributes the consecration to the words of institution and the Epiklesis taken together; another says the Epiklesis fructifies what is only seminally expressed in the previous formula; and a third holds that the entire consecratory power is in the Epiklesis. In the last theory, the words of institution are taken as a mere historical narrative. The trend in recent years has been away from the

intransigence previously shown on the subject towards an acceptance of the Catholic doctrine which identifies the form of consecration with Christ's words instituting the Sacrament.

STRUCTURE OF THE LITURGY. Orthodox writers summarize the differences between Western and Eastern celebrations of the Eucharistic Liturgy by saying that the Eucharist for an Orthodox Christian is not so much a sudden intervention of the divine from above, as a gradual revelation of the divine presence which is always here but remains hidden because of the sinfulness of men. A mystical union of the soul with God, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, also typifies the Eastern approach to the Liturgy.

Special emphasis is placed on the Eucharistic Sacrifice as a re-enactment of the whole life span of Christ, in which priest, deacon and the laity have essential roles to play. The service itself is divided into three parts, corresponding to three phases in the life of the Savior. In the *Prothesis* or preparation, the infancy and hidden life of Christ are commemorated; the *Synaxis* or assembly, which in Catholic terms is the Mass of the Catechumens, reminds the faithful of the teaching and healing ministry of the Redeemer; while the third part, the *Anaphora* or offering of the gifts, properly speaking the Liturgy of the Faithful, recalls the final events of the Gospel narrative: the Last Supper, the Cross, Resurrection, Ascension and descent of the Holy Spirit.

Among other functions during the Prothesis, the round loaf of leavened bread is cut into particles, placed on the diskos and repeatedly incensed; litanies are recited for various causes like peace, the Church, bishop, civil rulers, and fruits of the earth; and a series of antiphons is sung by the choir and ministers.

In the Mass of the Catechumens, the Trisagion is sung daily, invoking "holy God, holy strong One, holy immortal One, have mercy on us," three times, followed by the *Gloria Patri* and then again, "Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us," and finally the whole invocation, "Holy God." While the choir sings, the priest is reciting other prayers; a reader sings the Epistle, and the deacon the Gospel, after incensation. When the deacon announces, "All catechumens go out; not one catechumen shall stay," the Synaxis is over.

Although the Anaphora is strictly speaking the Canon of the Mass, the Mass of the Faithful begins with the invitation to the faithful to "pray to the Lord in peace," along with other prayers and the famous *Cherubikon* when the choir sings, "Let us, who mystically represent the Cherubim, and who sing to the life-giving Trinity the thrice-holy hymn, put away all earthly cares so as to receive the King of all things escorted by the army of angels." At the word, "King," the Great Entrance takes place, which is the dramatic moment of the Orthodox Liturgy. The royal doors are opened and after prayers and incensation a solemn procession through the church, carrying the elements to be consecrated.

The sequence of prayers from the Creed to Communion is not unlike that familiar to Catholics of the Latin rite, but the external ceremonies are quite different. Choir and priest alternate more frequently, the doors separating celebrant from people are closed and shut several times, special litanies are said, a little hot water is added to the consecrated chalice, and the consecration takes place behind the *Ikonostasis* or screen which divides the sanctuary from the nave. It is pierced by three doors, the central or Royal Door admitting to the altar, and those on the right and left corresponding to the sacristy and place of preparation of the elements for Mass.

Holy Communion is received by priest, deacon and people under both species. However in administering to the sick or front the tabernacle, the consecrated Host is dipped into unconsecrated wine. Practice differs, but the Orthodox laity receive the Eucharist only rarely; one custom is four times a year on the major feasts. In the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the

priest takes with a spoon part of the Host which is in the chalice, soaked in the consecrated wine, and gives it to the communicant, saying, "The servant of God. N.N., receives the holy and precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, Lord, God and Savior, for the forgiveness of his sins and for life everlasting."

The final part of the Liturgy includes a short litany with the singers, a prayer to the image of Christ. consuming the remnants of the consecrated elements, blessing and distribution to the people of the unconsecrated bread and concluding orations. At the end the doors are again shut to separate the celebrants from the congregation.

rites and offices. Besides the Eucharistic Liturgy and the sacraments. Orthodox prayer books contain more than forty other rites and sacred blessings, covering every need and phase of human life. In all these ceremonies the stress is on the Church, which the people believe has power to sanctify and purify all life, both matter and spirit, and that whenever a benediction is received the blessing comes through the assembly from the Holy Spirit who animates the body of His faithful.

The Divine Office is held in high respect, although its full recitation and chant are limited to religious communities. Unlike the Roman Breviary, it is not combined into a single set of books but various parts must be drawn from different sources. Consisting essentially of the Psalms, it also contains numerous hymns, prayers, litanies and antiphons. Secular priests say as much as devotion and time allow, because the complete office (in at least one rite) is said to take eight hours to complete.

Prayers to the Virgin are featured in the office, addressing her. "Honored above the Cherubim, hearing the incarnate Word, Mother of God, we praise you. Hail, cause of our joy; hail, end of the curse of Adam; hail, throne of the King; hail, bearer of Him who bears all things. Spouse and Virgin, hail." An evening hymn that dates from at least the third century, the *Phos hilaron* (Kindly Light), was Newman's inspiration for the prayer he wrote shortly before his conversion. "Kindly Light of the Father's glory, blessed and holy Jesus Christ, now that we see the setting sun and light the evening lamps, again we worship God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At all times it is right to praise You, Son of God and Life-giver, and so the whole world shall always tell Your glory."

Current services of the Orthodox Church follow a complex system of cycles, of which the first is the seven days of the week. Sunday is dedicated to the Resurrection, Monday to the angels, Tuesday to John the Baptist and the prophets, Wednesday and Friday in honor of Christ's Passion, Thursday is in honor of the apostles, St. Nicholas and all the saints, and Saturday commemorates all the faithful departed, especially the martyrs. Another cycle is based on the eight musical modes, each with its own set of hymns. A new mode is introduced on Saturday night and dominates the offices of the Church for the rest of the week. After eight weeks the cycle is repeated.

The annual cycle is the most comprehensive, with each day commemorating its own saints and some important event in biblical or Christian history. A special book, the *Typicon*, gives the rules and rubrics for conducting services and choosing prayers and hymns for each day. For two periods of the year the liturgical tempo changes. Lenten services are unusually long and penitential, calling for kneeling and prostration; whereas Easter is celebrated with signs of joy and festivity. The Royal Doors are not closed for seven days, and no one kneels during the six weeks following Easter Sunday. To care for all these liturgical needs, the Church provides a variety of books, in addition to the Missals and books of the Divine Office. Besides the *Typicon*

at least seven are commonly used: the *Horo/ogion* covers the unchangeable parts of the services and serves as a scaffolding for the rest of public worship, the *Octoekhos* incorporates the eight modes of musical chant, the *Menaia* (in twelve volumes) gives the hymns for daily commemoration, the *Triodion* and *Pentikostarion* serve the Lenten and Easter seasons, the *Litourgion* and *Euchologion* are used for conducting Easter worship. Manuals of prayers are also designed for the laity, and may include daily Bible lessons for private recitation.

Orthodox liturgical worship is designed to inspire by appealing to all the senses: the eyes by beholding the sacred painting of ikons, the ears by hearing the songs, the incense surrounds the worshiper with aromatic fumes, the palate is served by tasting both species of the Eucharist and the sacred bread (*antidoron*), the body joins in prayer by means of symbolic gestures. More than in any other branch of Christendom, Orthodox liturgy stresses the element of mystery and sense of community in public worship, based on the principle that religion is primarily a raising of the mind and will to God and that communal prayer is most pleasing to the Trinity, which itself is a social concept of the Divinity.

HETERODOX EASTERN CHURCHES

Although the Orthodox Christians represent by far the majority membership in the Eastern Churches not in communion with Rome, two other groups, the Monophysites and Nestorians, are also called Eastern and follow much of the Oriental ritual but their theology is heterodox by traditional Christian standards.

The Monophysites, from the Greek *monos* (one) and *phusis* (nature), hold, in general, that Christ had only a divine nature, as opposed to the orthodox teaching that He was true God and perfect man.

The essentials of Monophysite doctrine go back to Apollinaris of Laodicea (c. 310-390), for whom the man-Christ had no human spirit, which was replaced by the divine Logos. But the real foundations of Monophysitism were laid by Eutyches (c. 374-454), archimandrite of a monastery at Constantinople, who said he was only repeating the doctrine of St. Cyril of Alexandria. His opposition to Nestorianism led Eutyches to the other extreme of claiming that the manhood of Christ was transformed into or absorbed by the divine nature. On this theory the redemption of the world by the passion and death of Christ became theologically impossible.

While there is some question of how unorthodox Eutyches was personally, the doctrine attached to his name and developed by his followers was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. In the classic form of Eutychian Monophysitism, the two natures of Christ are considered mixed or blended to produce a composite who is not properly God nor really man, but one and the other simultaneously, much as a drop of water dissolves in wine or as the elements of hydrogen and oxygen combine to make water.

A dominant type of Monophysitism was started by Julian of Halicarnassus (died after 518), who so spiritualized the man Christ as to make Him incorruptible and immortal from the moment of incarnation. Dubbed the Phantasiasts. Julian's followers were like the earlier Docetists, for whom the humanity and sufferings of Christ were only apparent and not real.

The Julianists were opposed by Severus, patriarch of Antioch (c. 464-538), who rejected Eutychianism and ostensibly professed that Christ was both God and man. Yet he and his disciples were not orthodox because they accused the Council of Chalcedon of Nestorianism, refused to accept the Church's terminology to describe the Incarnation, and explained the union of the two natures of Christ by analogies and in language that openly favored Monophysitism.

The adversaries of Chalcedon were soon divided into opposing sects and later formed churches which catered to their respective beliefs. They finally consolidated into three principal bodies: the Copts and Abyssinians; the Syrian Jacobites, named after their leader, Jacob Baradacus (c. 500-578), and the Armenians. All three bodies still exist and accept the Fathers of the Church prior to Chalcedon, but they differ among themselves, partly in doctrine and mainly in liturgical practice.

Coptic Christians number about a million and are concentrated in Egypt. Their liturgy is derived from that of St. Mark, and a characteristic custom is the five great fasts: of Nineve before Lent (14 days), Lent (55 days), Advent (28 days), before the Ascension (9 days), and before the Assumption of the Virgin (15 days). In 1948 the Monophysites of Abyssinia became independent of the Egyptian Copts, and today the Ethiopian Church counts the majority of that country's sixteen million population.

Syrian Jacobites number less than half a million, and follow the Antiochean liturgy of St. James. One of their customs is to make the sign of the cross with one finger, to express belief in the one nature of Christ. However the term "Jacobites" is also used to describe the Monophysite Christians in Egypt.

Unlike the Copts and Jacobites, the Armenians were not represented at Chalcedon, but around the year 500 for political reasons they repudiated the council and formed a church which has a current membership of three million. The Armenians never entered into full communion with religious bodies that are professedly Monophysite.

Present-day Monophysites are closer to the mitigated variety of Severus than the radical form of Eutychianism. Their churchmen consistently oppose the latter as heresy, and in their creedal formulas approximate the wording if not the full doctrine of traditional Christianity.

Nestorianism was a fifth century heresy which held there were two distinct persons in the incarnate Christ, one human and the other divine, as against the orthodox teaching that Christ was a divine person who assumed a human nature.

Its name was taken from Nestorius (died c. 451), a native of Germanicia in Syria. As a monk in Antioch he came under the influence of that school of exegesis, with its emphasis on the literal instead of the spiritual or merely typical sense of Scripture. A powerful speaker, he became bishop of Constantinople in 428, but in the same year gave offense by his preaching against the expression then popular in the city, of *Theotokos* (Mother of God), as applied to Mary. When his chaplain, Anastasius, forbade the use of the term as savoring of heresy, Nestorius supported him, but soon came into conflict with St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Egyptian monks.

Both sides appealed in 430 to Pope Celestine I who sustained Cyril and threatened Nestorius with excommunication. When he refused to submit, an ecumenical council was summoned at Ephesus through the intervention of the emperor Theodosius II (431). Nestorius was promptly condemned and told to retract. Complications arose when John, the Patriarch of Antioch, led forty bishops to side with Nestorius. However, on arrival of the papal legates from Rome, 198 prelates upheld the first condemnation, deposed Nestorius, and repudiated the rebel council of John of Antioch. After two years of negotiation, a "creed of union" was adopted by the dissenters and in 435 Nestorius himself was forced into exile where he died not long afterwards.

The theology of Nestorianism can best be understood as a reaction to Apollinarianism, which separated the two natures in Christ to the point of denying His humanity. While properly insisting against Apollinarius that Christ had a perfect human nature, Nestorius could not

conceive a complete existing nature that was not also a person, namely, an autonomous subject of existence and its own activity. Consequently, though he admitted that in Christ there was a divine person, he claimed there was also a human personality.

Postulating two separate persons in Christ, when Nestorius came to describe their union, he could not have them joined ontologically (in their being) or hypostatically (constituting one person), but only morally or psychologically. They would be united only by a perfect agreement of the two wills in Christ, and by a harmonious communication of their respective activities. This harmony of wills (*eudoxia*) and the communion of action to which it gives rise, are what forms the composite personality (*henosis*) of Christ.

In the Nestorian system, therefore, we cannot speak of a true communication of idioms, i.e., that while the two natures of Christ are distinct, the attributes of one may be predicated of the other in view of their union in the one person of Christ. Accordingly it could not be said that God was born, that He was crucified or died; Mary is not the Mother of God, except in the broad sense of giving birth to a man whose human personality was conjoined to the Word of God.

Nestorianism did not disappear with the Council of Ephesus. Twenty years later the Council of Chalcedon (451), which condemned Eutyches for confounding the two natures in Christ, also took issue with Nestorius. In the next century, the II Council of Constantinople (553) again rejected the Nestorian theory while extolling the orthodoxy of Cyril of Alexandria.

Through the efforts of Ibas, Bishop of Ephesus from 435, and Barsumas, Bishop of Nisibis from 457, Nestorianism was developed into a rounded theology and transported to Persia and Asia Minor where a small but influential sect was founded. The Nestorian Church survives to the present day under the name of Assyrian Christians.

Among other divergences from the Eastern Orthodox, the Nestorian Church has dropped a number of the sacraments. Confirmation was at first identified with baptism and then omitted altogether; the sacrament of penance has gone out of use except in the rare case of reconciliation of an apostate; holy unction has also practically disappeared. An unusual fact about the Nestorian celebration of the Eucharist is that their original liturgical books had omitted the words of institution; and, in spite of efforts by certain missionaries of the Anglican Church to have books printed which include the words of Christ at the Last Supper, some Nestorian priests still omit the formula of consecration.

A studied comparison of the orthodox and heterodox Oriental bodies would further reveal the cleavage that separates these two segments of Christianity. It would also show how much the majority of Eastern Churches have in common with one whom they call the "Mother Church of the West."

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