

Three lectures on Theologians, includes Augustine

Week 4: Monday, February 15, 2021

THE ANCIENT CHURCH (A.D. 100–600) Cont'd.

Lecture 1

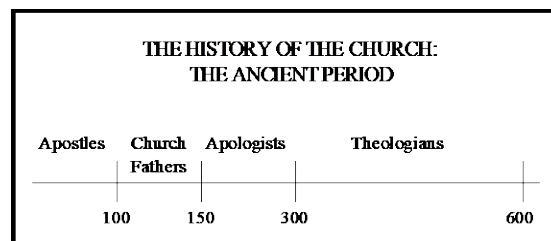
Topic: The Theologians

Due: Gonzalez, 1.105–125

Review

C. The Era of the Theologians - The Church Triumphant (300–600 A.D.).

During this period the Church moves from a persecuted church to a legalized, dominant church. From being in the shadows to being in the open, from holding on to the distinctions from the culture to coexisting and then assimilating the culture.



1. The formulation of ecumenical theology: the work of theologian/bishops.
 - a) The context—a church from oppression to peace and dominance. In 315 punishment was abolished; in 321 Sunday was introduced as a legal festival.

When Diocletian became emperor in 285, he sought to secure his far-flung empire by dividing it into four administrations: Maximilian (West), Constantius (Rhine), Galerius (Danube), and himself (East). Constantine succeeded Constantius and prevailed over the other becoming sole emperor in 325.

- b) The theologians: who were they?
- (1) Augustine (354–430 A.D.).
 - (2) Ambrose (340–97 A.D.).
 - (3) Jerome (340–420 A.D.), secretary to a pope, monastic.
Latin Vulgate.
 - (4) Chrysostom (345–407 A.D.).
 - (5) Theodore of Mopsuestia (350–428 A.D.).
 - (6) Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 263 – 340 A.D.), *Ecclesiastical History, The Chronicle.*
 - (7) Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315–386) wrote *Catechetical Lectures* (ca. 350).

(a) The Scriptures. [Cyril of Jerusalem writes:]

“The process [of translating the Septuagint from the Hebrew text] was no invention of words and contrivance of human wisdom (38). On the contrary, the translation was effected by the Holy Spirit, by whom the Divine Scriptures were spoken. [35] Of these, read the twenty-two books; but have nothing to do with the apocrypha. Study diligently those only which we read publicly in the Church. Far wiser than you, and much more pious, were the Apostles and the bishops of old, the rulers of the Church who handed down these books. You, therefore, being a child of the Church— infringe not on its statutes. Of the Old Testament, as we have said, study the twenty-two books; and if you happen to be desirous of learning, strive to remember them by name as I recite them. Of the Law, the first five are the books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Next, Jesus the Son of Nave; and the Book of Judges together with Ruth, counted as the seventh.

Of the others, the historical books, the first and second Books of Kingdoms are counted by the Hebrews as one book; and as one book also, the third and the fourth. Likewise, with them, the first and second Books of Paralipomenon are accounted as one book; and the first and second of Esdrias are reckoned as one. The twelfth book is Esther. And these are the historical books.

Those, however, which are written in verses are five: Job, the Book of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, which is the

seventeenth book. After these there are the five prophetic books: of the twelve prophets, there is one book; of Isaia, one; of Jeremias, one, along with Baruch, Lamentations, and the Letter; next, Ezechiel; and the Book of Daniel is the twenty-second book of the Old Testament.

[36] In the New Testament there are four only Gospels. The others are falsely written and harmful. The Manicheans have written a Gospel according to Thomas, which, being touched on the surface with the fragrance of an evangelic title, corrupts the souls of the simple. Receive also the Acts of the Twelve Apostles; and in addition to these the seven Catholic Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude; and, as a seal upon all, the last work of the Disciples, the fourteen Epistles of Paul. Let all the rest be put outside as foreign. And whatever books are not read in the churches, do not read even by yourself, as you have already heard me say. So much for these matters” *Catechetical Lectures*, 4.

- (b) The Trinity.
 “The Father gives to the Son, and the Son shares with the Holy Spirit. For it is Jesus Himself, not I, who says, “Everything is delivered to Me by My Father (75);” and of the Holy Spirit, he says, “When He, the Spirit of Truth, shall come,” and so forth, “He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of what is Mine, and shall announce it to you (76).” The Father through the Son with the Holy Spirit gives every gift. The gifts of the Father are not this, and those of the Son that, and of the Holy Spirit the other. For there is one salvation, one power, and one faith. There is one God, the Father; one Lord, His only-begotten Son; and one Holy Spirit, the Advocate; and it is enough for us to know these things. Do not inquire curiously into His nature or substance. If it had been written, we would have said so; but since it is not written, let us not be reckless. It is sufficient for us, in regard to our salvation, to know that there is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (77)” *Catechetical Lectures*, 16.
- (c) Christ.
 “Believe also in the Son of God, the one and only,

our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God begotten of God, who is Life begotten of Life, who is Light begotten of Light, who is in all things like unto the Begetter (22); and who did not come to be in time but was before all the ages, eternally and incomprehensibly begotten of the Father. He is the Wisdom of God, and His Power, and His Righteousness subsisting as a Person (23); and He sits at the right of the Father through all the ages.

“Believe that this only-begotten Son of God came down from heaven to earth on account of our sins, and took humanity of a like condition (24) to ours, and was born of the Holy Virgin and of the Holy Spirit; and was made man, not in appearance or phantasy, but in truth. Neither did He pass through the Virgin as through a channel (25), but was truly made flesh of her, and was truly nourished with her milk (26), and did truly eat as we eat, and truly did drink as we drink. For if the incarnation was a phantasm, so too is salvation a phantasm. The Christ was twofold: man in what was seen, but God in what was not seen. As Man, He truly ate as we do, for His flesh was of a condition like to ours; and as God, He fed the five thousand with five loaves (27)” *Catechetical Lectures*, 4.

(d) Redemption.

“The crown (63) of the cross led into the light those who were blinded by ignorance, loosed all those who were chained by their sins, and redeemed the totality of men. [2] Do not wonder that the whole world is redeemed. It was no mere man, but the only-begotten Son of God, who died on its behalf. Indeed, one man’s sin, that of Adam, had the power to bring death to the world. If by the transgression of one, death reigned over the world (64), why should not life more fittingly reign by the righteousness of one? If they were cast out of paradise because of the tree and the eating thereof, shall not believers now enter more easily into paradise because of the tree of Jesus? If that man first formed out of the earth ushered in universal death, shall not He that formed him out of the earth bring in eternal life, since He Himself is Life? If Phinees in his zeal slew the evil-doer, thereby

staying the hand of God (65), shall not Jesus, who slew not another, but gave Himself a ransom, set aside the anger against mankind?

The Savior endured these things, and made peace through the blood of the cross for things in heaven and things on earth (67). We were enemies of God through sin, and God had appointed the sinner to die. It was necessary, then, that one of two things should happen: either that God, in His truth, should destroy all men, or that in His loving-kindness He should blot out the sentence. But behold the wisdom of God: He preserved both the truth of His sentence, and the exercise of His loving-kindness. Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that by His death we might die to sin and live to righteousness (68). He that died for us was of no small account. He was not literally a sheep; nor was He merely man. Neither was He only an Angel. Indeed, He was God made man.

The transgression of sinners was not so great as the righteousness of Him that died for them. The sin which we committed was not so great as the righteousness worked by Him who laid down His life for us, who laid it down when He pleased, and took it up again when He pleased. Do you wish to know that He did not lay down His life by its being violently wrested from Him, and that He did not give up the spirit unwillingly? He cried to the Father saying, "Father, into your hands I commend My spirit (69); I commend it, so that I may take it up again." And having said these things, He gave up the spirit (70); but not for any great length of time, because He quickly rose again from the dead" *Catechetical Lectures*, 13.

- (e) Faith.
 "As a noun the word **faith** is but one; yet, its meaning is twofold. There is the one kind, dogmatic faith, involving assent of the soul to something or other; and it is profitable to the soul, as the Lord says: "Whoever hears My words, and believes Him who sent Me, has everlasting life, and will not come to the judgment (39)." . . . Do not doubt whether it is possible: for He that on this sacred Golgotha saved

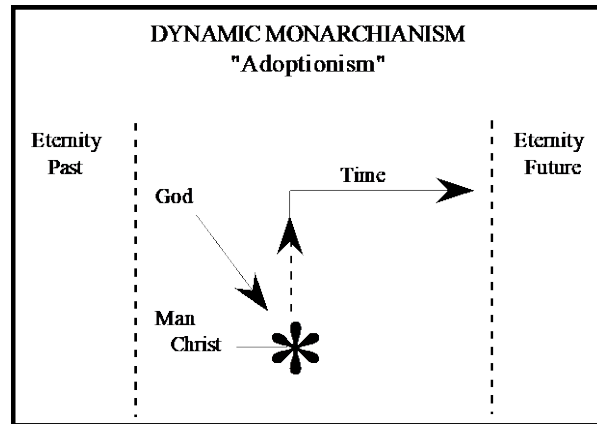
the robber after only one hour of believing, the same will save you, if you believe.

[11] But there is a second kind of faith, which is given by Christ as a kind of grace. “For to one there is given through the Spirit a word of wisdom; but to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; and to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing (40).” This faith, then, which is given as a gift from the Spirit, is not solely doctrinal, but also, it performs works beyond the power of man. For whosoever has this faith shall say to the mountain, “Remove yourself yonder from this place,” and it shall remove itself (41). For whenever anyone says this according to faith, and believes that it will happen, and does not doubt in his heart, then will he be given the grace (42)”
Catechetical Lectures, 5.

- (f) Baptism.
“Since man is of a twofold nature, composed of body and soul, the purification also is twofold: the corporeal for the corporeal and the incorporeal for the incorporeal. The water cleanses the body, and the Spirit seals the soul. Thus, having our heart sprinkled by the Spirit and our body washed with pure water (10), we may draw near to God. When you go down into the water, then, regard not simply the water, but look for salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit. For without both you cannot attain to perfection. It is not I who say this, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who has the power in this matter.

And He says, “Unless a man be born again” —and He adds the words “of water and of the Spirit, —he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (11).” He that is baptized with water, but is not found worthy of the Spirit, does not receive the grace in perfection. Nor, if a man be virtuous in his deeds, but does not receive the seal by means of the water, shall he enter into the kingdom of heaven. A bold saying, but not mine; for it is Jesus who has declared it”
Catechetical Lectures, 3.

- c) The Trinitarian Controversy—the preincarnate nature of Christ.
 - (1) The early development of the doctrine—monarchianism.

(a) *Dynamic or Adoptionistic Monarchianism.*

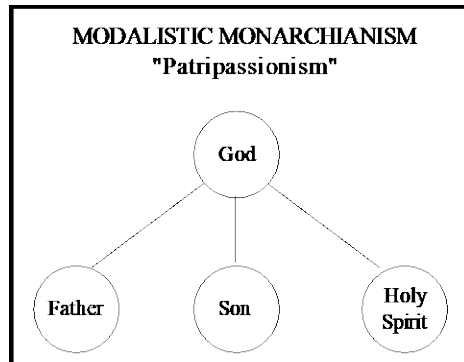
i) Of Theodotus, Hippolytus wrote:

“A certain Theodotus, a native of Byzantium, introduced a novel heresy, saying some things concerning the origin of the universe partly in keeping with the doctrines of the true Church, in so far as he admits that all things were created by God. Forcibly appropriating, however, his idea of Christ from the Gnostics and from Cerinthus and Ebion, he alleges that He appeared somewhat as follows: that Jesus was a man, born of a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, and that after He had lived in a way common to all men, and had become pre-eminently religious, He afterward at His baptism in Jordan received Christ, who came from above and descended upon Him. Therefore miraculous powers did not operate within Him prior to the manifestation of that Spirit which descended and proclaimed Him as the Christ. But some [i.e., among the followers of Theodotus] are disposed to think that this man never was God, even at the descent of the Spirit; whereas others maintain that He was made God after the resurrection from the dead” (*Refutation of All Heresies*, 7, 25, 36).

ii) Paul of Samosota, bishop of Antioch— the

most important adoptionist, —was condemned by a regional synod in his city in 268.

- (b) Modalistic Monarchianism. (Patripassionism).

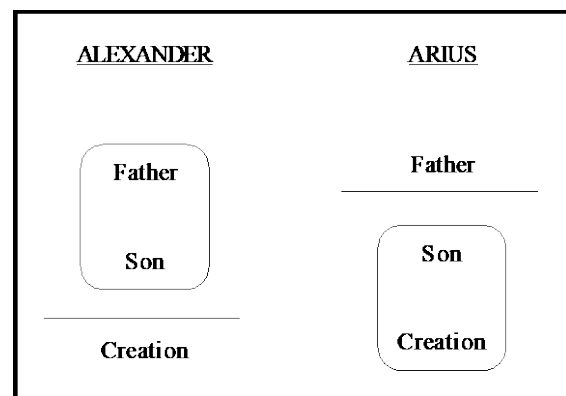


The three persons are simply three ways (modes) in which the one God has revealed Himself. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are simply names. They do not indicate real distinctions.

- i) Of Praxeas, Tertullian wrote: “In various ways has the devil reviled truth. Sometimes his aim has been to destroy it by defending it. He maintains that there is one only Lord the Almighty Creator of the world, that of this doctrine of the unity he may fabricate a heresy. He says that the Father Himself came down into the Virgin, was Himself born of her, Himself suffered, indeed, was Himself Jesus Christ...Praxeas did two pieces of the devil's work in Rome: he drove out prophecy and he brought in heresy; he put to flight the Paraclete and he crucified the Father (*Against Praxeas*, 1).”
 - ii) Sabellius, a resident of Rome in the third century, was the most important teacher of modalism (more commonly designated Sabellianism).
- (2) The Arian Controversy and the Trinitarian Resolution.
- (a) The teachings of Arius, an Alexandrian presbyter. Athanasius (ca. 295–373), Arius’ most prolific opponent, summarized his view of Christ opinion as follows (*Oration Against Athanasius*. I, 2.): “God

was not always Father; but there was when God was alone and was not yet Father; afterward He became a Father. The Son was not always; for since all things have come into existence from nothing, and all things are creatures and have been made, so also the Logos of God Himself came into existence from nothing and there was a time when He was not; and that before He came into existence He was not; but He also had a beginning of His being created.”

- (b) The clash of Arius and Alexander, bishop of Alexandria.



Arius (ca. 250–336) was condemned at the regional council of Alexandria in A.D. 321 and his writings burned; he was subsequently banished to Yugoslavia where he continued to write keeping his views alive through the medium of song. The Council of Laodicea (A.D. 367) reacted to his music by forbidding singing in the churches. The result was an end to congregational singing until the Reformation!!

- (c) The Council of Nicaea (325): the state in the service of the church. It is important to know that the bishop of Rome was not invited to the Nicaea council, the Emperor was the central figure. So much for papal primacy!

THE MAJOR COUNCILS IN THE EARLY CHURCH		
Nicea	325	Arianism
Constantinople	381	Arianism Apollinarism
Ephesus	431	Nestorianism
Chalcedon	451	Eutychianism
Constantinople	553	Monophysitism
Constantinople	681	Monothelism

THE CREED OF NICAEEA (325).
(Creed of 318 Fathers).

We believe in one God, the Father All Governing
[pantokratora], creator [poieten] of all things visible
and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
begotten of the Father as only begotten, that is, from
the essence of the Father, God from God, Light
from Light, true God from true God, begotten not
created, of the same essence as the Father, through
whom all things came into being, both in heaven
and in earth; Who for us men and for our salvation
came down and was incarnate, becoming human.
He suffered and the third day he rose, and ascended
into the heavens. And he will come to judge both
the living and the dead.

And [we believe] in the Holy Spirit.

Key Terms in the Creed of Nicaea.

homousion = the same substance, essence.

hypostasis = person.

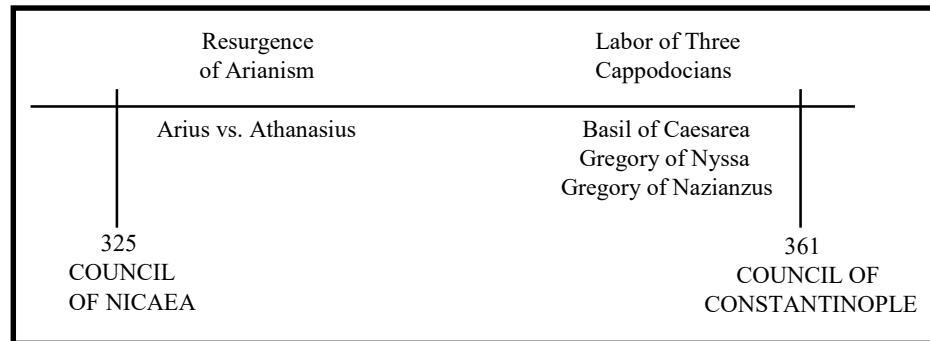
- (d) The resurgence of dispute, the fracturing into
parties, and the Cappadocians.

Key Terms in the discussion following Nicaea

1. homousion = of the same substance Athanasian

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| 2. homoiousios = of like substance | Non-Athanasian,
Non-Arian |
| 3. homoios = like, similar | Moderate Arianism |
| 4. anamoios = unlike | Radical Arianism |

i) The work of the Cappodocians.



They made a clear distinction between ousia and hypostasis. (Basil was the first to affirm and defend the formula that would lead to the definitive solution of the Trinitarian controversy— “one ousia and three hypostases.”)

They explained the distinctions in the Godhead in terms of their interrelationships (The Father is not generated; the Son is generated of the Father; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son).

They gave more attention to the deity of the Holy Spirit than had earlier theologians.

- ii) Basil of Caesarea (d. 379)—He advanced the trinitarian discussion in the East by eliminating the confusion over the terms “essence” and “person”. These were seen as synonymous in the East, distinct and different in the West. The Eastern bishops thought their counterparts were teaching a form of modalism. Kung argued that the East and West discussed the issue from different starting points. “...for the Latins the substantial unity was the clear starting point and the multiplicity was the mystery, conversely for the Oriental the Trinity of divine hypostases was the assured starting point and the unity was the mystery” (*Christianity*, 189). Basil wrote (*Epistle*, 236.6):

“The distinction between essence and persons is the same as that between the general and the particular; as, for instance, between the animal and the particular man. Wherefore, in the case of the Godhead, we confess one essence or substance so as not to give a variant definition of existence, but we confess a particular hypostasis, in order that our conception of Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be without confusion and clear. If we have no distinct perception of the separate characteristics, namely, fatherhood, sonship, and sanctification, but form our conception of God from the general idea of existence, we cannot possibly give a sound account of our faith. We must, therefore, confess the faith by adding the particular to the common. The Godhead is common; the fatherhood particular. We must therefore combine the two and say, “I believe in God the Father.” The like course must be pursued in the confession of the Son; we must combine the particular with the common and say “I believe in God the Son,” so in the case of the Holy Ghost we must make our utterance conform to the appellation and say “in God the Holy Ghost.” Hence it results that there is a satisfactory preservation of the

unity by the confession of the one Godhead, while in the distinction of the individual properties regarded in each there is the confession of the peculiar properties of the Persons. On the other hand those who identify essence or substance and hypostasis are compelled to confess only three Persons, and, in their hesitation to speak of three hypostases, are convicted of failure to avoid the error of Sabellius.”

- iii) Gregory of Nazianzus (329–89) advanced in the clarification that Trinitarianism dealt with the relationship between the persons of the singular essence; that is, that the terms “Father, Son and Spirit” denote relationships (not essence or action). According to Gregory, the only distinction that can be established between the three persons of the Trinity are those which refer to the origin of each of them (no distinctions in substance). He wrote (*Oration on Holy Lights*, 9, 11): “And when I speak of God you must be illumined at once by one flash of light and by three. Three in Individualities or Hypostases, if any prefer so to call them, or persons, for we will not quarrel about names so long as the syllables amount to the same meaning; but One in respect of the Substance—that is, the Godhead. For they are divided without division, if I may so say; and they are united in division. For the Godhead is one in three, and the three are one, in whom the Godhead is, or to speak more accurately, Who are the Godhead. Excesses and defects we will omit, neither making the Unity a confusion, nor the division a separation. We would keep equally free from the confusion of Sabellius and from the division of Arius, which are evils diametrically opposed, yet equal in their wickedness. For what need is there heretically to fuse God together, or to cut Him up into inequality?”
- iv) Gregory of Nyssa (d. 395) was taught by

Basil of Caesarea, his brother. His major gift to the trinitarian debate was that he was able to defend it from a biblical-philosophical viewpoint (*On the Holy Trinity, On Not Three Gods*).

(e) The Council of Constantinople (381).

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The Creed of Constantinople:

“We believe in one God, the Father All Governing, creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the Father before all time, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created, of the same essence as the Father [homoousion], through Whom all things came into being, Who for us men and because of our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and ascended to heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life giver, who proceeds from the Father, Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, Who

spoke through the prophets; and in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. We look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.”