

THE LITURGICAL THEOLOGY OF NICOLAS CABASILAS*

BY

CONSTANTINE N. TSIRPANLIS
Professor Ph. D.

II. Confirmation — Chrism.

The second Sacrament of the Orthodox Church is the Confirmation-Chrism, *Theotaton Myron*¹⁴⁷, seal of the Spiritual gift, *pneumatikis doreas sphragis*¹⁴⁸. It is the solemn ceremony of the consecration of Holy-Chrism, *Myron*, composed by pure oil mixed with precious balsam. This «flavoured unction» is mentioned at the end of the 5th century.

Dionysios was the Church Father who mainly developed the symbolism of the *suavitas odoris Christi*. According to ancient rites, this oil mixed with balsam «represents the union of the divinity and the humanity in One Christ»¹⁴⁹. It should not be forgotten, however, that for the early Church this perfume was also inseparable from the sensible revelation of the Holy Spirit. W. Gass very justly wrote: «Demgemäss hat die künstliche Zusammensetzung des Myron die Bedeutung den Reiz des geistigen Wohlgeruchs, deraus einer anderen Quelle fliesst, symbolisch wiederzugeben»¹⁵⁰. Furthermore, it was always inseparable from Baptism, even though the early Church Fathers stressed Baptism more than Chrism, the *unctio post fontem*. Finally, it was in the person of Nicolas Cabasilas that the theology of Chrism was carefully developed. The ancient close connection of both these Sacraments is conserved in the Eastern Church of our day. The 48th canon of the Council of Laodicea enforces this connection as well. Saint John of Damascus considered Chrism as an integral part of the ritual initiation of Baptism in

* Συνέχεια ἐκ τῆς σελ. 445 τοῦ προηγουμένου τεύχους.

147. De Vita in Christo, II, 521Cf; III, 573CDf, 577CDf, 569Af.

148. Ibid., III, 569BC.

149. L. A. M o l i e n, La priere de l' Église (Paris, 1924), II, p. 370.

150. Mystik des Cabasilas..., p. 124.

the same model of Epiphanius¹⁵¹. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, particularly, distinguished between the two aspects of *Sphragis*, «characterization», and indelible¹⁵². Then, in *Thesaurus* and *De Trinitate*¹⁵³ we find the whole thought of St. Cyril of Alexandria¹⁵⁴.

The preparation of this great Sacrament, common in the East and the Latin West, from the ancient times until today is the exclusive privilege of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. It is accepted as such by the entire Orthodox Church. All the other local churches receive the *Holy Myron* from that Patriarchate and this custom expresses, certainly, a payment of gratitude and respect to their Mother Church.

The consecration of Holy Myron takes place by a secret prayer pronounced only by the Patriarch invoking the descendance of the Holy Spirit upon the «holy oil that sanctifies souls and bodies».

The rite of Cabasilas, inspired by the dionysian hierurgy, is intimately connected with the traditional Christology and Pneumatology. He begins with the close relationship between the Sacramental aspect and the redemptive economy. «The Incarnation of Christ», he writes, «purified our sinful nature, and His crucifixion abolished the corruption and perversion of our *gnome* (disposal, will); Baptism causes both these effects. Consequently, we may proceed to the communion of the Holy Spirit; by the chrism of *Holy Myron* — the communication with the Holy Spirit, τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος Κοινωνίαν, is achieved, since nothing more separates us from God. And this happens in the present life. Regarding the direct communication, *sunaulia*, with God, (the *theia makariotis*) we would not have enjoyed this ultimate union if Christ had not been resurrected, since the resurrection of our Saviour destroyed the tyranny of death (of sin) — the third serious obstacle, and granted the possibility to contemplate and enjoy in this life also the eternal «Beatitude»¹⁵⁵.

This significant passage, obviously, contains a profound theological elaboration of man's salvation. Our theologian always emphasizes the intimate relationship of the economy with the Sacramental real-

151. De Fide Orthodoxa, IV, 13, PG. 94, 1141B-1144A; comp. Ibid., 4,9, Col. 1125B.

152. See Catechesis 21 or III Mystagogical Catechesis.

153. PG. 75, 24-656; 657-1189.

154. Cf. the art. of P. Mahé, in the revue d'histoire ecclesiastique, 1909, p. 467 ff.

155. De vita in Christo, III, 572CD; II, 544BC; Cf. 1 Cor. 15,26,50.

ity. Christ, he insists, raised the three obstacles which did not permit to anyone to enter again into the eternal life: the natural deficiency, the perversion of *gnome* (will), and the death-result of sin. That is why the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection are imitated and inter-connected in the Sacrament of Baptism, since it is the new nativity, *anagenesis*, *paligenesia*¹⁵⁶ ἡμερινὴ γέννησις καὶ πλάσις¹⁵⁷, and the entrance into eternal life¹⁵⁸. Cabasilas always insists on the *descendance* of God, Who destroys today also, the wall of our separation from His divinity through the Sacraments. He repeats: «We did not move towards God: it is He that descended and came to us—making the earth heaven, and establishing in us the heavenly life»¹⁵⁹. G. Horn, in his study on the DE VITA IN CHRISTO, very rightly remarks that for Cabasilas *this descendance* is not a mere «divine con-descendance», *synkatavasis*, but mainly an «intimate *immixture*, *syngrasis*, of God, of the Holy Spirit in our life»¹⁶⁰.

But if Baptism is the beginning, the new nativity or *aparche* (Dionysius and Maximus), Holy Chrism, which follows immediately, grants force and movement, *energia* and *kinesis*¹⁶¹, the absolutely necessary energy for the realization of the virtual grace that we received in Baptism.

In the Sacrament of *Myron* there is no mere virtual grace, an *augmentum* of grace, but the «active» *charismata* and *energieae* of the Holy Spirit Who nourishes the «natural embryo» of Baptism¹⁶². In the image of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, Christ Himself acts and operates, the living Christ, to Whom the universal salvation as well as the whole hope of any good is due¹⁶³. This is, certainly, the traditional conception and definition of Chrism: *Christos*, *Christoi*, *Christianoï*, expressions referring to the particular character of Christians as soldiers or athletes of Christ, which Cabasilas adopted and profoundly developed¹⁶⁴.

Here, also, the *synergism* is absolutely necessary since without

156. De vita in Christo, II, 524CD.

157. Ibid., 532AB.

158. Ibid., I, 504ABf.

159. Ibid.

160. Revue d'ascétique et de Mystique, III (1922), p. 33.

161. De vita in Christo, II, 521Cf.

162. De vita in Christo, III, 573AB.; comp. Ibid., 569AB; IV, 581AB.

163. Ibid., III, 573AB.

164. Ibid., I, 516-517A; III, 569ABf., 573CDf.; II, 529Df.

it the Sacrament itself remains ineffective¹⁶⁵. Cabasilas recalls St. Paul, who urged Christians to be careful against the danger of neglecting the received grace (2 Tim. 1, 6, 13). There is not any antinomy in the Cabasilian thought:

On the one side, «only the virtue of the Sacraments grants the treasure of their benefits;» on the other side, the personal effort is absolutely indispensable in order to safeguard these benefits; not to betray «the treasure»; a pure evangelical inspiration.

To penetrate to the bottom itself of the Cabasilian thought, we should see how he justifies the rite of *Myron* as a substitution of the apostolic imposition of the hands¹⁶⁶. For him, as well as for the whole Church, these two rites—pledge of the Holy Spirit—are not only equivalent but identical, and here is the given reason: «In the Ancient Law kings and prophets were equally anointed; if the disposition of the Church were to consecrate kings using unction, then according to the same disposition she ordains priests by the imposition of the hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit deducing from the assignment the same effect, since the same virtue is conveyed in the case of the unction as in the imposition of the hands. Moreover, these two rites are identical concerning their sacerdotal names: Chrism, *Chrisis*, communion of the Holy Spirit, *pneumatosis koinonia*, (the *Myron*)»¹⁶⁷.

Certainly, Cabasilas in the above passage tries to emphasize the uninterrupted continuity and the traditional origins of both these rites. The imposition of hands causes the Holy Spirit's descendence upon the new Christians. It had been, unconsciously, the original type of the Sacrament of Confirmation (Acts 8,17,18. 28,8).

The Cabasilian doctrine of *Myron*, which reflects the priority of his Soteriology and Christocentric mysticism in his entire theology, also displays itself entirely in the sacerdotal perspective depicted in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 2, 11) and is viewed through the prism of Dionysius¹⁶⁸. According to the latter, Chrism replaced the apostolic *chirotonia* because the *agion Myron* contains Christ Himself, Who

165. Ibid., III, 576Bf.

166. In the Eastern Church, this substitution—approximately in 200, according to L. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chretien* (Paris 1889), p. 321, only partial in the West according to which the bishop lays his hands on the confirmed Christian—is general: anointing only in the *Myron* and imposition of hands (*chirotonia*) only in the Sacrament of Priesthood.

167. *De vita in Christo*, III, 569ABf.

168. *Divinae Liturgiae interpretatio*, Ch. 12, 393BC.

renders superfluous the imposition of the hands¹⁶⁹. Such is the profound identity of these rites, assuming the character of the Byzantine *mysteriosophy*.

Finally, Cabasilas considers the virtue of Confirmation somehow as higher than that of the altar itself. Describing the ceremony of Church Dedication, *Engacnia*, he gives us a brilliant illustration of both the virtue and power inherent in the Confirmation, and in the Engacnia ceremony. It forms a natural transition, a prelude to the great *discourse* on the Mystery of the Eucharistic Union, as much as the temple is the body of the Sacramental Christ and the Holy Table is the place of the unbloody sacrifice of His heart. And just as Christ's humanity was confirmed by the divinity — *echristhe te theotiti* — so the new Christian being anointed by the *Myron* becomes *Christos*¹⁷⁰. A further proof is that the all-holy Chrism, as stated by the blessed Dionysius¹⁷¹, is in the same category as Holy Communion, which is also consecrated and sanctified by prayer¹⁷².

3. Eucharist.

In addition to the traditional names applied to the Holy Eucharist, Nicolas Cabasilas uses also the following: Sacred Banquet, *to dipnon to ieron*¹⁷³, remedy, *pharmakon*¹⁷⁴, holy table, *iera trapeza*¹⁷⁵, holy things, *ta agia*¹⁷⁶, holy gifts, *iera dora*¹⁷⁷, *akeraton sona*¹⁷⁸, hierourgy, *hierourgia*¹⁷⁹ and the divine hierourgy of Eucharist, *theia tis Eucharistias hierourgia*¹⁸⁰.

Our liturgist's most favorite name is that of Eucharist, *Eucha-*

169. Ibid. In the Roman Catholic rite, the head of a bishop is anointed at his consecration.

170. De vita in Christo, V, 635-637. comp. Ibid., II, 529D. 532A.

171. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, De Eccl. Hierarch, Ch. 3-4, PG., vol. 3.

172. Divinae Liturgiae Interpretatio, Ch. 29, PG. 150, 429Cf.

173. De Vita in Christo, IV, 593Df. 601Df.; VI, 684AB; IV, 608A; Divinia Liturgiae Interpretatio, Ch. 34, 445AB.

174. De Vita in Christo, IV, 596Df.

175. Ibid., 596Df; Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 42, 460B; Ch. 44, 464CD.

176. Ibid., Ch. 42, 457CD; Ch. 46, 468CD.

177. Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 43, 461CD; Ch. 44, 464CD; comp. Ibid., Ch. 42, 460B; Ch. 46, 465CD, 468Df; Ch. 49, 477BC.

178. Ibid., Ch. 42, 460Cf.

179. Ibid., Ch. 49, 477Cd.

180. Ibid., Ch. 45, 465BC.

ristia. The theologian gives us three basic reasons for his preference: 1. In the Sacrament of Communion, — the most perfect and intimate of our conversations with God—we do not mention any particular request, but speak in general terms of the benefits bestowed upon us by God. It was right, therefore, that its name should be taken from God's infinite generosity, not from the supplication to which our wretchedness has condemned us. 2. In the holy sacrifice, thanksgiving far outnumbers supplication. That is why the Sacrament was called the Eucharist; it takes its name from the greater and better elements. 3. One final reason — our Lord, Jesus Christ, did not make supplication when he instituted this Sacrament; He gave thanks to the Father. So the Church, which received it from Him, has called it the Eucharist, or Thanksgiving¹⁸¹.

There is in Cabasilas a profound theological explanation of the order of the three Sacraments: Baptism, Chrism, Eucharist.

In the Eucharist he sees the ultimate sacramental effectiveness and perfection, the perfect Sacrament, *teleion mysterion*, since the ultimate and perfect union with Christ takes place here, *tin enosin tin teleotatin*¹⁸². Therefore, we reach the pinnacle of all good and the ultimate end of any human effort, *pasis anthropeas spoudis to eschaton telos*. It is the fulfillment and the perfection of Baptism and Chrism, since it adds to their perfection and regeneration by its unique recreation and re-transforming light, which is absolutely necessary for the post-baptismal athletes of Christ, since Baptism and Chrism are not repeated¹⁸³. This is why, in the Greek Orthodox Church, Holy Communion is given to the new Christian immediately after the baptismal rite as the last and ultimate force and dwelling of the Man-God in him. Because our Creator Himself and the source of every good is united with us, He deifies our nature and makes it *omotimon and omotheon, already from this life, with the divine nature*¹⁸⁴. Is there any higher benefit and «beatitude» in our life? Do we need any additional blessing from God? Certainly not: For this precise reason, Holy Eucharist comes third in the order of the three first Sacraments¹⁸⁵.

Moreover, Cabasilas justifies this order by applying to the Eucharist an eschatological extension and meaning. The Eucharist is a

181. *Divinae Liturgiae Interpretatio*, Ch. 52, 488CD.

182. *To anakrathinae Theo.*, Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 44, 464CD. cf. John of Dam., *De Imaginibus Orat.*, III, 26, PG. 94, 1348BC; comp. PG. 95, 408ABf.

183. *De Vita in Christo*, IV, 585BCf.

184. *Ibid.*, I, 505BC; IV, 584B-Df.

185. *De Vita in Christo*, IV, 581ABf; 584B-Df.

Pascha, a passage through the earthly life to the heavenly city, from the visible Holy Table to the Table of the Kingdom of God¹⁸⁶. It is impossible to be partaker of the heavenly banquet without first the sacramental experience of the Eucharist as we cannot fully appreciate the experience of light without being blind. In other words, the Sacrament of the Eucharist is the necessary requisite and the unique entrance into the eternal Eucharist or Banquet. It is because of this exceptional importance of the Eucharist that Holy Communion to those who are at the point of death is absolutely necessary¹⁸⁷. On the other hand, the effectiveness and power of both these tables is one and the same, since the caller officiating and offering in both these Banquets is identical: Christ¹⁸⁸. According to Cabasilas then, we participate already in the Kingdom of God by Holy Communion¹⁸⁹.

At the altar, the sacrifice is an earthly shadow of the action of the eternal High Priest in the heavenly places¹⁹⁰. Nicolas is familiar with the view of St. John Chrysostom¹⁹¹ and like him, he insists that Christ is the Consecrator and High Priest of every offering¹⁹², and on that account he maintains in chapters 34¹⁹³ and 46¹⁹⁴ that no sin of the priest at the altar can mar the efficacy of the sacrificial offering. He maintains like St. Cyril of Jerusalem¹⁹⁵ that the Intercession after the Consecration is an earthly share, however small, in the Intercession of our High Priest who appears on our behalf before the Father in heaven and who pleads our cause: «For He did not make His offering and sacrifice once, but forever He performs this priestly office by which He is our Advocate before God for ever»¹⁹⁶. The sacrifice at the altar is not a repetition of Calvary; nor does it effect a change in the Person of Christ, but it is a sharing in and representation of that offering at Golgotha because this sacrifice once offered has eternal significance and is an abiding reality for us¹⁹⁷. And if we are to receive the fruits of this sacrifice, we must not be merely

186. *Ibid.*, 624-625.

187. *Ibid.*, 624-625; comp. *Ibid.*, col. 621Df.

188. *Ibid.*, 624-625; comp. *Ibid.* II, 580A-C; IV, 601AB, 612Df, 613Cf.

189. *Ibid.*, 624-625; cf. Luke 17,20.

190. *Div. Lit. Int. Ch.* 43, 460-461AB.

191. *De Sacer.* VI, 4; III, 4,5. PG. 48, 681, 642, 645.

192. *De Vita in Christo*, II, 580AB; VI, 684Df.

193. *Div. Lit. Int.*, Ch. 34, 445AB.

194. *Ibid.*, col. 469/AB.

195. *Catech.* 23. 8,9. PG. 33, 1116ABf.

196. *Div. Lit. Int.*, Ch. 28, 428ABf.; cf. *Hebr.* 7,17; *Ps.* 109,4.

197. *Ibid.*, Ch. 27, 425BCf; Ch. 32, 440-441A.

spectators at the Eucharist, but we must share in the Eucharistic sacrifice both actually and morally¹⁹⁸.

Cabasilas does not try to define too closely the relation between the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacrifice of Christ. He relies on the authority of the Words of Institution and Administration by saying that since these sacred gifts are the body of Christ and the blood of the New Covenant, then the offering at the altar becomes a sacrifice. To consecrate is to offer the sacrifice. His words are: «the sacrifice (at the altar) proclaims His death... whenever the precious gifts are changed into the body of the Lord»¹⁹⁹.

On the subject of the *Epiklesis*, Cabasilas has an interesting and clear viewpoint. He does not relegate the Words of Institution to a position of insignificance in the rite. Nor does he regard Christ as the passive Victim, as Gregory Dix implies in his strictures on Cabasilas²⁰⁰. One must take all the passages, not just a short extract from a single chapter as Dix has done, in order to understand the full and comprehensive view of the Invocation which Cabasilas has in mind. And in this comprehensive view there are four factors which are not irreconcilable but which fit into a balanced Trinitarian theology. In fact, there is nothing in it that a Westerner could reject. The four factors are: first Christ is the Consecrator, the great High Priest in relation to whose heavenly priesthood every celebration of the Divine Liturgy must be referred²⁰¹. Second, the Words of Institution are of sacred and special significance for the consecration. Third, the consecration is «completed» when the words of the *Epiklesis* have been pronounced. Fourth, the author's view has been of great merit regarding the Eucharistic Invocation in the context of the recitation of the saving acts of God in the

198. Ibid., Ch. 42, 457Df. 460A-C; comp. Ch. 43, 461AB; cf. St. Chrysos. In Eph. Hom., III, 4, PG. 62, 530.

199. Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 16,404ABf; comp. Ch. 32, 440ABf; Cf. 27, 425B-Df. cf. Masure, *The Sacrifice of the Mystical Body*, p. 153.

200. Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London, 1947), p. 293.

201. Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 30, 436CD: Christ is «Himself both priest and altar and sacrifice;» Ch. 49, 477BC: The Lord «may be spoken of as the offerer and the offering and the recipient of the offering;» Ch. 43,60-461AB: «The eternal priest (Christ);» Ch. 30, 437CD: Why is it that in order to consecrate the gifts, the priest does not invoke the Son (of God) who is both priest and sanctifier, as has been said but he invokes the Father...» (to whom the whole Anaphora is addressed, Ch. 49, 477Df. Or as the Liturgy of St. Basil expresses it: «Thou, O Christ, art He that offers the sacrifice and Thou art the offering».

*Anamnesis*²⁰². He stresses the Eucharistic Invocation, because of the many activities of the Divine Spirit who dwells in the Church and who is operative in all her ministerial acts²⁰³. Calvary was brought to fulfillment in the Pentecost. The sacrificial offering at the altar is «completed» when it «receives» its fulfillment by the Descent of the Holy Spirit²⁰⁴.

Our author follows the same line as St. John of Damascus, who considered the Words of Institution effective through the *Epiklesis* or Invocation of the Holy Spirit²⁰⁵. R.N.S. Craig²⁰⁶ is of the opinion that «St. John of Damascus was the first to deny that the Words of Institution are the instrument of consecration». This seems to me an inadequate understanding of the Damascian sources and spirit since both deny the consecratory force of the Words of Institution insofar as they are considered in themselves and as fructified and applied only by the Invocation²⁰⁷.

Cabasilas also follows the tradition of «the great doctors of the Church, Basil the Great, and St. John Chrysostom». Thus, explaining St. John Chrysostom's original illustration of the word of Creation, Nicolas writes: «Let us begin with the words of Saint John Chrysostom²⁰⁸... Let us see whether this word of the Saviour (The Word of Institution) is operative like that creative word when God said 'Be fruitful and multiply'. What then? After that word of Creation have we no need of anything else for this purpose of increasing the race? Is it not necessary for humanity both to marry and unite in wedlock and make other careful plans without which it would not be possible for the race to survive and progress? Therefore, just as we regard marriage a necessity for the procreation of children and after union, again pray for this result so that we do not account our action a slight on the creative word of God because we know that that is the basic cause of generation but comes to have this effect by marriage, by feeding and other such functions; in the

202. Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 37, 452ABf; Ch. 26, 424BC.

203. Ibid., Ch. 28, 428BC; Ch. 29, 452AB; Ch. 27, 425B-Df.

204. Ibid., col. 425B-Df; comp. ch. 16, 404BC.

205. De fide Orth., 4,13. PG. 94, 1140-II 41AB; comp. In sabb. Sanc., PG. 96 637-640AB.

206. In his article, «Nicolas Cabasilas: An Exposition of the Divine Liturgy», in *Studia Patristica*, Vol. II (1957), p. 23.

207. St. John of Dam., De Fide Orth., 4,13. PG. 94, 1140-1141AB. Cabasilas, Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 27,425B-Df; Ch. 29,432AB.

208. J. Chrysostom, De Proditione Judae, Hom. 1,6.

same way we believe (in the case of the Liturgy) that the word of the Lord ("This is my Body") completes the Sacrament but it does so through a priest and by his intercession and prayer. The basic word of the Lord at the Institution is not always functioning absolutely or indiscriminately, but several conditions are required without which it will not perform its function²⁰⁹. Further, Cabasilas devotes a good deal of space on the same effect²¹⁰. We might sum up his position as follows: The Words of Institution were spoken once and for all by our Lord in the Upper Room and they are always the basic instrument of consecration but they need to be «applied» or «adopted» through the Invocation; but this is not the same as saying that the celebrant's iteration of the Words of Institution is all that is required for consecration²¹¹. The Words of Institution are the words of predisposing consecration of the Eucharistic elements in general and the words of the Invocation are the particular consecration of the elements on the altar, since there is not in the Words of Institution themselves any magic power or automatic effectiveness²¹², but they are effective through the Invocation and prayer of the priest including the state of his consciousness and intention, *prothesis*, in the same way as Christ's death becomes effective and salvatory to those only who by faith, repentance and confession adapt its fruits: the remission of sins and eternal life²¹³. Nicolas Cabasilas cites the same principle in the usage of the Roman Catholic Church, in which the Latin Mass contains a prayer that the elements may be brought up to heavenly altar and completes the act of Consecration by an Invocation²¹⁴. The Eastern Church, at the Council of Florence in 1439, did little more than repeat the views of Nicolas Cabasilas on the subject of the *Epi- klesis*²¹⁵.

Nicolas Cabasilas pinpoints the action of Consecration as being «completed» after the words of Invocation have been said and he, therefore, attaches special importance to the office and work of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist²¹⁶. Is it possible to reconcile this with what he has

209. Cabasilas, Div. Lit. Int. Ch. 29, 433Bf.

210. Ibid., Ch. 29, Ch. 30. PG. 150, 429-437.

211. Cabasilas, Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 29, 433Bf.

212. Ibid.

213. Ibid. Also see Ch. 29, 429BCf and Ch. 28, 428BC.

214. Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 30, 436-437Bf.

215. Héfélé, Conciles, vol. XI, p. 455.

216. Cabasilas, Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 27, 425B-Df; 477.

said elsewhere of Christ as the Consecrator?²¹⁷ Dix thinks not²¹⁸ and confesses that he cannot understand the spirit of Cabasilas in what he calls as a «very embarrassed passage»²¹⁹. The passage in question is as follows:

« When the priest has made mention of that awful Supper and how the Lord delivered it to His Holy Disciples before His passion and that He received the cup and took bread and hallowed the Eucharist, and that He spoke the Words by which He manifested the Mystery, and when he in turn has uttered the same Words, he bows down and prays and implores God, applying those divine Words of His only begotten Son, our Saviour, to the Gifts offered on the altar, that they receiving His all-holy and almighty Spirit may be changed, the bread into His precious and Holy Body itself, and the wine into His stainless and Holy Blood itself. And when this has been said, the whole of the priestly rite has been accomplished and completed, and the Gifts have been consecrated, and the sacrifice has been perfected, and the great sacrifice and victim which was slain for the sake of the whole world is seen to lie on the Holy Table; for the bread is no longer a figure of the Lord's Body, nor an offering which bears an image of the real Gift, nor an offering which gives us a pictorial memorial of the sufferings which save us, as a picture might do, but it is the real Gift itself, the Body itself of the all-holy Master, which really experienced all the insults, violence and stripes, which was crucified, which was slain, which witnessed before Pontius Pilate the good confession, which was flogged, which was tormented and spitted upon, which tasted the gall. In like manner also the wine is the Blood itself which leapt out of the slain Body, this Body, this Blood which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, which was born of the Holy Virgin, which was buried, which rose of the third day, which ascended into heaven, which sitteth on the right hand of the Father»⁴.

217. *Ibid.*, col. 428; 469.

218. Gregory Dix, *op. cit.*, P. 282,293.

219. *Div. Lit. Int.*, Ch. 27, 425B-Df.; 437.

Nicolas Cabasilas reiterates the usual Eastern analogy of the Incarnation for the Eucharistic Invocation²²⁰. In chapter 27 he says:

«The Holy Spirit 'formed' the body and blood of the Infant in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and so, also, in the Eucharist the Gifts are overshadowed by the same Holy Spirit so as to be 'made' the body and blood of Christ». (But he does not stress this analogy of the Incarnation²²¹).

In this same chapter, I believe, is the clue to much of our author's thought. It has been the subject of favourable comment by theologians of different schools of thought and in recent times by French liturgical scholars such as De La Taille, H. Bouessé, and Salaville²²². And if Cabasilas' statements about the Liturgy and the *Epiklesis*, in particular, have been criticized because of a different emphasis in other passages in his writings, it is true, I think, that chapter 27 gives coherence to his teaching and there is nothing here which a Westerner should reject.

His point here is that our consciousness of the Holy Trinity must be maintained through the entire Liturgy and he refuses to distinguish the operations of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit in the Liturgy: To the Father we give thanks because we receive all blessings of grace from Him; to the Son, because He gave His life a ransom on the Cross, and instituted the Eucharist; to the Holy Spirit, because He came to vitalize («energise»-St. John of Damascus), the Church at Pentecost. Thus, the Eucharist is an opportunity for the Trinitarian God to bless the souls of the worshippers in and with the Gifts on which God's grace is invoked²²³.

But once we begin to separate the operations of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist as if they were unrelated, we fall into the Latin thought. Cabasilas, however, refuses to follow this tendency, i.e. to divide between their saving acts and to separate Pentecost from Calvary; to say this is the work of the Son, or that in this the Son is «passive»²²⁴ and the Holy Spirit is active—that kind of westernizing tendency

220. St. John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.*, 4,13. PG. 94, 1144A-1145Af.; PG. 95, 409B-D.

221. *Div. Lit. Int.*, Ch. 27, 425D; Ch. 37, 452AB.

222. See the last named, *Explication de la div. Lit.* (Paris, 1943), pp. 144-148.

223. Cabasilas, *Div. Lit. Int.*, Ch. 26, 424CD; Ch. 10, 388BC; comp. Ch. 30, 437 CD; IV, 589CDf, Ch. 27, 425AB.

224. Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

is alien to the mind of our author²²⁵. Our Eucharist is offered, he says, not to the Father alone but also to the Son and to the Holy Spirit²²⁶. He sees the liturgical action as a Trinitarian ought to see it, as one who believes that the Son was conceived in the womb of the Virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit and that the Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world²²⁷.

Dix cannot fully comprehend²²⁸ Cabasilas, yet the latter is not «illogical» as it is maintained, because he speaks of the working of the Son and of the Spirit in the Consecration. But his thought ranges between the basic generating Words of Institution and the Words of Invocation. To segregate them is alien to his Eastern mind and to his spiritual experience.

To Cabasilas, and perhaps even more for the great writer of the next century (XV), Simeon of Thessalonica, the celebration of the Liturgy is an occasion of the Triune action by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As Cabasilas states later: «God appropriates these Gifts (of bread and wine) that He may make them the Body and Blood of the only begotten Son by the agency of the Holy Spirit»²²⁹. Elsewhere he similarly says: «Now and always the Mediator is one and the same and always it is the same Holy Spirit Who communicates to us His Gifts»²³⁰. This is almost identical with the words of St. Cyril: «Every grace and every perfect Gift comes upon us from the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit» (Luke, XXII, 19).

Nicolas takes the view that the joint operation of the Trinity in the Sacrament is a part of the general Trinitarian action in promoting the salvation of mankind; and if he speaks of the Holy Spirit as taking part in the Consecration, he refers to Him as the immediate agent²³¹ of the Father and not as the ultimate source of sanctification.

(To be continued)

225. Div. Lit. Int., PG. 150, 333A; comp. de Vita in Christo, IV, col. 539CDF.

226. Ibid., col. 477.

227. Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 27, 425Df.

228. Dix, op. cit., pp. 301,302.

229. Cabasilas, Div. Lit. Int., Ch. 47, 469BCf.

230. Ibid., Ch. 37, 333A.

231. As Waterland says in his Works, Vol. IV, (Oxford, 1843), p. 530.