

SACERDOTIUM ET IMPERIUM: THE CONSTANTINIAN RENOVATIO ACCORDING TO THE GREEK FATHERS

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MUCH HAS been written in recent years about the Byzantine Christocracy. Byzantine studies in the West date from the seventeenth century, but the "political theology" of East Rome has not received the attention it deserves. Erik Peterson's *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem: Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum* (1935) was probably the first serious attempt to understand the intellectual, religious, and political dimensions of the Byzantine political theology. Thereafter followed such works as K. M. Setton's *Christian Attitude towards the Empire in the Fourth Century* (1941) and H. Berkhof's *Kirche und Kaiser: Eine Untersuchung der Entstehung der byzantinischen und theokratischen Staatsauffassung im vierten Jahrhundert* (1947), and five years ago Francis Dvornik published his two-volume *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* (1966). Specialized journals also began to include scholarly analysis of the subject. The conclusion of these studies has consistently been that the Constantinian *renovatio* perpetuated Hellenistic kingship and its link between monarchy and monotheism. The task of translating that kingship into Christian terms, it is said, was accomplished by Eusebius of Caesarea, while the Greek Fathers, as his disciples, merely extended his thinking.

It appears to me, however, that this conclusion is not justified by the evidence. First, modern scholarship prejudices the evidence by a restrictive and positivist method which elicits an interpretation of the "facts," excluding thereby the genuine and Christological context of the patristic political theology. Moreover, the judgment of so many historians and patrologists has been biased by various undemonstrated but predetermining assumptions, such as the ostensible dependence of the Christian *paideia* in general upon pagan thought and the supposed effort of the Fathers¹ to create a Christian philosophy à la Origen, that is, a Christian-

¹ The attitude of many historians and patrologists that all prominent Christian writers of the first nine centuries of Christianity deserve the title "Father" is not shared by the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. Yet, to apply "Father" only to those writers with the "marks" of orthodoxy, holiness, ecclesiastical sanction, and antiquity is to exclude some of the most distinguished theologians of the early Church, e.g., Origen, Clement of Alexan-

pagan synthesis. The invariable mistake of modern scholars has been to ignore the unspoken epistemological and metaphysical dogmas of their discipline in the treatment of the Greek Fathers. Thus it is that they are led to place all Christian thought within the narrow history of Western philosophy and consequently to insist that the Fathers adopted Hellenistic political philosophy, the "facts" establishing that Eusebius took the lead.

In truth, the Greek Fathers developed no political philosophy but merely converted the Hebrew theocracy to Christian use. Accepting this premise, A. V. Kartasheff, professor at the Saint Sergius Russian Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris, in his highly suggestive *The Restoration of Holy Russia* (1946), believes that the key to the understanding of the Byzantine Christocracy is the doctrine of the Incarnation; or, more precisely, the eventual formulation of that doctrine by Chalcedon (451): "one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the distinction of natures in no way annulled by their union. . . ." ² The political embodiment of this dogma is found in Justinian's *Symphonia*:

Maxima quidem in hominibus sunt dona dei a suprema collata clementia sacerdotium et imperium, illud quidem divinis ministrans, hoc autem humanis praesidens ac diligentiam exhibens; ex uno eodemque principio utraque procedentia humanam exornant vitam. Ideoque nihil sic erit studiosum imperatoribus, sicut sacerdotum honestas, cum utique et pro illis ipsis semper deo supplicent. Nam

dria, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Tertullian. Most, if not all, writers recognized as Fathers have erred in some way, e.g., the chiliasm of Irenaeus or the apocatastasis of Gregory of Nyssa. And why should the "patristic era" be limited to the first eight or nine centuries? Why is no "father" possible to day? See G. Florovsky, "Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 5 (1959-60) 123-24. Who, then, is a Father? Any Christian author whose life and literature, in their spiritual and general content, express the faith and piety of the Church. His thought must display no fundamental opposition to the orthodoxy of the Christian tradition, his life show no conflict with the corporate piety of the Church. By "orthodox" we mean adherence to the teachings of Scripture, the doctrines defined by the ecumenical councils and held in common by preceding Fathers, and the beliefs of the Church embodied in her public worship. All other Christian theologians must be called "ecclesiastical writers": Christian theologians whose writings, though not entirely heterodox and sometimes useful, are generally, in content and spirit, not accepted by the Church as her own. Thus, Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea confused the apostolic faith and the classical *paideia*. The Christian-pagan "synthesis" which such men created led the Church to admit them neither to her liturgical calendar nor to her hagiographies.

² Actio 5 (J. D. Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* 7 [Venice, 1759] 116 f.).

si hoc quidem inculpabile sit undique et apud deum fiducia plenum, imperium autem recte et competenter exornet traditam sibi rempublicam, erit consonantia (*sympḥōnia*) quaedam bona, omne quicquid utile est humano conferens generi.³

In other words, the Christian commonwealth is to be governed by two "ministries," the *imperium* and the *sacerdotium*, for there are two natures in the one person of Christ. The "primacy" belongs to the *sacerdotium* by virtue of its spiritual character and purpose.

Of even greater importance, however, was that which the *symphonia* implied, that is, the Christian vision of history. The Byzantine Christocracy was the political explication of the Incarnation, expressing the theandric synergism which the Greek Fathers said informed the whole course and nature of history. Likewise, Eusebius, denying the actual "enfleshment of God," necessarily maintained a view of history, and consequently the Christian *politeia*, different from that espoused by the Fathers. His political theology perpetuated the pagan idea of kingship and thereby brought with it a tacit return to pagan rationalism: the problem of "first principles," the metaphysical dualism which described time as cyclical, multiform, and incarcerating, and eternity as permanent, simple, and supersensible. Against his teachings, the Greek Fathers set traditional ontology and Christology: the vision that reality was analogous to the Incarnation, the union of linear time and mysterious eternity, the created and the Uncreated, the visible and the invisible.⁴

Examining the religio-political thought of the Greek Fathers from the fourth to the ninth century, therefore, we ought to come to the conclusion that any theory which considers Eusebian political theology to be patristic and the theoretical foundation of the Christian Roman Empire must be open to serious question. We suggest that this contention can be defended by comparing Eusebianism in all its ramifications with patristic ontology and Christology, the result being at every level of discourse (and necessarily at the political level) clear opposition between them. In other words, Eusebius was not the political master of the Fathers, because he was not their intellectual and religious *magister*; and since the Christological basis of the Byzantine Empire was Chalcedonian, the Fathers were the real creators of East Roman political theory and not Eusebius. His political theology depended upon assumptions which could not be reconciled with the Christian revelation.

We hope to support our argument with evidence generally not taken into account by most historians. After describing the pagan Roman idea

³ *Corpus iuris civilis: Novellae 4* (ed. R. Schoell; Berlin, 1959) col. 1, tit. 6.

⁴ On the difference between Christian and classical Greek conceptions of history, see the important work by Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time* (Philadelphia, 1950).

of empire—upon which Eusebius constructed his own view—we will begin to trace the Christological development of the Roman *imperium christianum* inaugurated by Constantine the Great. Our study, then, in each of its sections, will seek to link that which will prove to be its unity. There will be chronological progression, to be sure, but the unity will be found primarily in the simple equation “ontology: Christology: *politeia*.”

I

The Augustan reconstruction was more than a political renewal. It was a complete religio-philosophical vision, a vision of the *urbs aeterna*, the ultimate solution to the human predicament. The *pax Romana* was to be an everlasting, universal order, a cosmopolis which “marked, indeed, the rededication of the imperial city to her secular task, the realization of those ideals of human emancipation towards which the thought and aspiration of antiquity had pointed hitherto in vain.”⁵ As a gift from Jove, Rome was destined to bring enduring justice, unity, and peace to the anarchic multiplicity of nations which from the beginning of history had known nothing save disorder, conflict, and suffering. Augustus, then, would accomplish this end through the exercise of power and reason. He would reintegrate the ancient world, salvaging and amalgamating those elements in it which had proved most useful, beneficial, and excellent, and, by infusing them with the great ideals of the Roman people, create ecumenical happiness. It was the genius of Augustus that he could utilize the nostalgia of Cato and Cicero as well as the imagination of Caesar and Antony.

The vision of Augustus, however, had first been divined by Alexander the Great. It was Alexander, Plutarch tells us, who discovered the formula that a world state required for its success that its citizens possess not a common blood but a common mind, *homonoia*. Moreover, the ruler of this world state must be the living symbol and source of all the dreams of those he governs. He must be a father with the profoundest concern (*philanthrōpia*) for the welfare of his subjects. He must be their Savior and Benefactor (*Sōtēr kai Euergetēs*), discharging, in imitation of God, the function of an earthly providence. Thus Toynbee finds the origin of the *pax Romana* in Alexander’s belief that “God is the common father of men—a truth which argues that if the divine father of the human family is left out of the reckoning, there is no possibility of forging any alternative bond of purely human texture which will avail of itself to hold mankind together. The only society that is capable of embracing the whole of mankind is a superhuman *Civitas Dei*. . . .”⁶ Alexan-

⁵ C. N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New York, 1961) pp. 27–28.

⁶ *A Study of History* (Somervall abridgment; Oxford, 1951) pp. 495–96.

der, therefore, linked monarchy, monotheism, and peace. Augustus put the head of Alexander on his signet ring.

The Hellenization of the Roman *imperium* was a process consciously initiated by Augustus Caesar himself. The unfolding of his "sacral kingship" was achieved through the mobilization of all those public agencies within the Empire which could transform him from a man into a demigod. He concentrated upon himself "the yearnings of his contemporaries (which one may call almost messianic) for a deliverer, a savior, and a benefactor."⁷ Through art, literature, cultus, and cunning, he strove to make the *imperium Romanum* the definitive religio-political *ordo*, with himself the veritable father of humanity. He took the title and functions of *pontifex maximus*. He was a sacred *monarchos* with a "genius"—the Greek *daimōn* and the Persian *fravashi*. Augustus was more than a constitutional *princeps*; he was the representative of Jove, the giver of every good gift and every perfect endowment. He was *hominum pater, pater orbis, praesens et conspicuus deus, lex animata*. He did not presume to be a god as Pharaoh did, but he would not refuse the various solar ascriptions of Hellenistic and Near Eastern kingship.⁸ Again, he was *pater patriae* who summoned the Roman people to a rejuvenation of their ancient duties and virtues; but, of course, in terms of the new circumstances, a people who through him would bring peace to the entire world (*oikoumenē*).

Augustus had wished to use the Hellenistic monarchies as a model, but after his death the Empire was Orientalized beyond his expectations. Perhaps it was the desire for power by some of his successors, or perhaps a reaction to something within Roman society that incited the rapid growth of despotism. Already in 38 A.D., Caligula demanded the Persian *proskynēsis* from those who came into his presence. Later Nero placed his image with the Oriental nimbus on Roman coins. Domitian styled himself *dominus et deus*, and even the "good emperors" heard themselves hailed as *Hēlios, Sôtēr, Phylax, Ktisēs*. Varius Avitus Basianus became a priest of the Syrian god Elagabal and consequently is known to history as Elagabalus. After recovering most of the Empire lost during the third century "military anarchy," Aurelian called himself *restitutor orbis* and appeared in public with the diadem of Oriental and Hellenistic kings in his crown. It was not difficult then for Diocletian to become an Oriental *despotēs*, his court replete with Persian ceremonial, eunuchs, *proskynēsis*, sacred meals, etc. He became "the friend of the

⁷ C. G. Starr, *Civilization and the Caesars* (New York, 1956) p. 34.

⁸ See E. R. Goodenough, "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship," in *Yale Classical Studies* 1 (1928); and L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Caesars* (Middletown, Conn., 1931).

Logos," *theos epiphanēs*, *Sol invictus*, the ecktype of Jove. He confirmed the extinction of the "old order" by the removal of the imperial residence to Nicomedia and thereby prepared the way for Constantine's historic enterprise.

Constantine the Great (312-37) arrested the progress of the Roman *despotismos* and placed the Empire under the protection of the Christian God. If we may believe Eusebius of Caesarea, a statue of the Emperor holding the cross was erected in Rome with the words "senatui populoque Romano in libertatem asserto pristinum decus nobilitatis splendoremque restitui."⁹ Henceforth he would work to convert the *Romanum imperium* into a Christian commonwealth. It is true that he did not eliminate the diadem, sacred vestments, the purple mantle, *paladumentum*, the scepter with the eagle, the *proskynēsis*, the titles of solar theology and *pontifex maximus*, but as a Christian he rejected their presuppositions.¹⁰ The city of Constantine was the dramatic symbol of the Empire's new adventure. If one believes, as I do, that he was a genuine Christian, then that adventure must have involved a revolutionary break with the religio-political traditions of pagan antiquity. He accepted neither the fiction of *aeterna Roma* nor the pretensions of Hellenistic kingship. The Edict of Milan was certainly a departure from anything found in the ancient world. Its declaration of religious liberty, the "formal and explicit abandonment of any attempt" on the part of the state "to control spiritual life," was utterly irreconcilable with the whole conception of "divine kingship."¹¹ His *Ad coetum sanctorum* evidences an attitude towards his role and the uniqueness of Christianity that must have been a scandal to the Hellenists and an offense to the Romans. Constantine was a Christian, and between his religion and the world he recognized a fundamental antithesis. To be sure, he could take from the world whatever truth God had deposited in history for the preservation and enlightenment of mankind, but the classical *Weltanschauung* could have no place in the life of the saints.

II

The choice of Constantine to create a Christian *politeia* probably changed the course of history. Eusebius, recognizing the cruciality of

⁹ *Vita Const.* 1, 40 (PG 20, 995D-996A). For convenience, we will rely upon Migne almost entirely for the Greek texts of Fathers and ecclesiastical writers; the more critical editions do not affect our arguments.

¹⁰ A natural deduction from the belief in Constantine's genuine conversion to Christianity. An interesting summary of various scholarly opinions about that "conversion" is to be found in A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* 1 (Milwaukee, 1964) 45-54.

¹¹ Cf. Cochrane, *op. cit.*, pp. 179 f.

that choice and perhaps taking upon himself the role of biographer and hierophant, sought to interpret the significance of Constantine's accession.

Eusebius believed that the providence of God elevated Constantine to the dignity of emperor. He perfected the work begun by Augustus. Eusebius, like Origen, thought that "the two roots of blessing, the Roman Empire and the doctrine of Christian piety, arose together for the benefit of mankind" (*De laud. Const.* 16, 5). The triumph of each, however, was not completed until the coming of God's "good and faithful servant" Constantine, who was rewarded by his virtue (*eusebia*) "to such a degree that he alone of all the rulers pursued a continual course of conquests, unsubdued and invincible" (*Vita Const.* 1, 6-7). Moreover, with the consolidation of the Church (*ekklesia*) and the Empire (*basileia*), God created under Constantine a Christian society. According to Eusebius, then, the Empire had a critical place in God's plan of salvation (*oikonomia theou*). Unlike Origen, who saw the Empire as merely providing the Church with a stage for the spreading of the gospel (*Contra Celsum* 2, 30), Eusebius, by confounding the Church with the destiny of the Empire, imputed to Constantine and his successors the divine right and power to conquer and evangelize. This was the Hellenistic notion which identified the kingdom and its ruler with the imperialistic ambition of their god. Neither did the Bishop of Caesarea fail to see the correspondance of such a tenet with the Christian missionary task which was to bring not only individuals to Christ but all the kingdoms of the earth.

As any good Hellenizer, Eusebius related monarchy, monotheism, and peace.¹² Thus, Constantine rendered powerless all his enemies, just as God through His Logos reduced all the evil spirits to impotence.¹³ In fact, he received his sovereignty from the Logos of God, "receiving, as it were, a transcript of the divine Sovereignty" and directing "the administration of world affairs" in "imitation of God Himself." Moreover, Constantine was victor in war as he was victor in truth, having vanquished his enemies and his passions. "His character is formed after the divine Prototype, the Supreme Sovereign, and his mind reflects the radiance of God's virtues." By the mediatory instruction of God's

¹² See E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus* . . . (Leipzig, 1935) p. 81.

¹³ *Praep. evang.* 1, 4 (PG 21, 37A). Compare the teaching of the Byzantine Church as expressed by the Second Tone of the Christmas Liturgy: "When Augustus became supreme ruler of the earth, the multiplicity of governments among men ceased. And when thou became human form out of the spotless Virgin, the worship of many heathen gods also ceased. The cities came under one worldly rule, and the nations believed in one divine Supremacy; but we believers were enrolled in the name of thy Divinity, O our incarnate God . . ." (Kassias, ca. 800).

Logos—in Platonic fashion, Eusebius separated power and its source¹⁴—the Emperor seeks to “recall the whole human race to the knowledge of God, proclaiming clearly in the ears of all with a loud voice the laws of truth and godliness to everyone who dwells on earth.” “Our Emperor” imitates “his divine Prototype by the divine philanthropy of his own imperial acts” (*De laud. Const.* 1, 16). His will illuminates his subjects “like the radiant sun . . .” (*ibid.* 1, 7).

By connecting monarchy and monotheism and coupling the Emperor with the Logos and these with the Christian religion, Eusebius, Dvornik says, “laid the foundations for the political structure and for Eastern policies on the relationship between Church and state.”¹⁵ This judgment may seem correct because it is so often repeated; but is it right when we consider what the Eusebian “Rome ideology” must have implied for the Church and her claim to revealedness? It does not seem logical that the Fathers, who “philosophized like fishermen, not Aristotelians,” as St. Gregory the Theologian observed (*Orat.* 23, 12), would have followed a man whom they condemned as a crypto-Arian and at the same time adhered to a political philosophy they knew to be pagan. And does it not appear curious that the Fathers should turn to the classical *scientia* for the principles of Christian kingship when at their disposal they had the Davidic monarchy of the Old Testament for a model? It seems to us that the Greek and Latin Fathers, no matter what their rhetoric suggests for some scholars, understood as clearly as Charles Norris Cochrane that Eusebius of Caesarea had proclaimed the Constantinian *renovatio* to be nothing less than “a realization of the secular hope of men, the dream of universal and perpetual peace which classical Rome had made her own. . . .”¹⁶

Neither logic nor the facts justify the conclusion that the Byzantine Fathers ever recognized Eusebius as their political teacher. If we may turn to the sixth and seventh centuries, when the composition of the Byzantine liturgies was nearly completed, the attitude of the Church toward Constantine, though similar at first glance, will be seen to be fundamentally different from the theory of Eusebius. Her position is found in the Menaion of the saints for May.¹⁷ Everywhere may be observed the reference to the Bible. The author(s) chose to compare Constantine to David and Solomon rather than pagan kings. There is also an unexpected allusion to St. Paul. Of particular interest must be the way in which the author(s) interpreted the idea of *Isapostolos*. St. Constan-

¹⁴ Cf. Peterson, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁵ *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* 2 (Washington, D.C., 1966) 617.

¹⁶ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

¹⁷ *Menaion of the Saints* (Athens, 1961; in Greek) pp. 175–86.

tine is "equal to the apostles," because "having beheld with his own eyes the sign of thy Cross in the heavens, and like Paul having accepted thy call not from man, was given the reigning city."¹⁸ Again, as "the pious servant of God," he "was granted the wisdom of Solomon and the meekness of David, and the orthodoxy of the apostles."¹⁹ Like the apostles, too, Constantine "despised idols, erecting on earth a temple to the One who was crucified for our sakes."²⁰ He was granted the "sceptre of kingship," because he brought all nations to Christ through the Cross, which he implanted everywhere.

Constantine is the "benefactor" (*euergetēs*) of mankind. He is "the superior of every sovereign."²¹ He is unvanquished, because he freely offered "the *oikoumenē* to God."²² He was "anointed priest and king" (*hierēus te christheis kai basileus*), that he might "sanctify a people and a city" and because he "established with mercy the Church of God."²³ He gives the *oikoumenē* to God as a "dowry" (*proikos*). As a "priest," he "offers" his kingdom to God and "heals" the people with the truth.²⁴ He rules a "priestly commonwealth" (*ieras politeias*) as "a prize from heaven," from the "transcendent in essence Lord and Logos who anointed thee with the Spirit."²⁵ Thus did "David my servant" destroy "the error of idolatry and confirm the cosmos in Christ." "The King of creation . . . having foreseen the goodness of thy heart's submission" did enlighten "thy mind with the knowledge of true worship and declare thee to the cosmos to be the sun, enlightening and shining."²⁶

The Byzantine liturgists connected Constantine with the victorious Christ, the Lord of history. Therefore, the apparent allusions in their texts to Hellenistic kingship, especially "solar theology" and "sacral kingship," are better understood not so much as the adoption of Hellenistic political theology as the Christian adaptation of Hebrew kingship.²⁷

¹⁸ Vespers: Eighth Tone, p. 179.

²² Vespers: Second Tone, p. 176.

¹⁹ Vespers: Fourth Tone, p. 175.

²³ Vespers: Eighth Tone, p. 179.

²⁰ Vespers: Fourth Tone, p. 178.

²⁴ Vespers: Second Tone, p. 176.

²¹ Vespers: Fourth Tone, p. 178.

²⁵ Matins: Third Tone, p. 180.

²⁶ Matins: Eighth Tone, p. 186.

²⁷ The prophets announced the epiphany of the person called *Oriens, Anatolē*: cf. Za 7:8; 6:12; Mal 4:2; and in the NT, Lk 1:78. The Christmas Liturgy of the Byzantine Church also includes like ascriptions, such as Christ, "the supersensual Sun of Justice" (Sixth Tone); He "has risen as the light of knowledge over the ecumene" (Fourth Tone); Christ is also called "the glorious *euergetēs*" (Katabasias of the Nativity); *anatolē anatonōn* (Ex-apostelation); and the "royal Psalms" of the Christmas Hours compare Christ to the King of Israel. In the Epiphany Vespers, Christ is "our God who is Light of Light, *theos epiphaneēs*, who has shone forth upon the cosmos" (Idiomelon). On Hebrew and Byzantine "solar theology" and the "solar character" of Christian emperors, see E. Kantorowicz, "Oriens-Augusti-Lever du Roi," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (Cambridge, 1963) 117-62.

In other terms, because the Church is "the body of Christ" (Eph 1:23), the solar theology ascribed to Christ by Scripture was communicated to the Church to which the Empire was joined and of which the emperor was the "political" head. Again, there is no doubt that the emperors claimed to be the successors to the Hebrew kings and even Moses and Melchizedek.²⁸ Thus the "priestly character" of the Byzantine rulers was something which followed naturally from the nature of the *societas christiana* which they governed. Inasmuch as the Empire was united to the Church, the new Israel (1 Pt 2:9), the emperor, albeit a "priest," was a "lay priest," the leading member of the *basileion hierateuma*.²⁹ Finally, the idea of the Empire as a "dowry" given to God suggests a conjugal relationship between Christ and the commonwealth—an analogy of that relationship between ancient Israel and Jehovah, Christ and the Church (Song of Songs; Eph 5:22-32)—thus further supporting the patristic teaching of the emperor as the *mimēsis* of Christ-Homo.

If, then, we believe that the Greek Fathers were men of faith as well as men of learning, it is fair to assume that they, recognizing the portent of Eusebianism, rejected the equation of the *imperator* and God the Father. Peterson informs us that they were acquainted with the religious, political, and philosophical tradition which the political philosophy of Eusebius presupposed. He assures us, too, that those Fathers who accepted the mating of the Church and the Empire did not hesitate to employ *mutatis mutandis* the pagan arguments of one kingdom, one king,

²⁸ Dvornik is hard pressed to avoid calling Saul, David, and Solomon "the ideal predecessors" of the Byzantine emperors; he wants them to be the successors of the Hellenistic kings—perhaps by virtue of some political or historical bias. See his *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* 1, 300-304. No doubt the elements of Hellenistic, Roman, and Persian kingship can be found in the Byzantine *imperium*, but its prototype is the kingship of old Israel. On the Hebrew monarchy, see especially 1 S 8; 2 S 22; 1 K 8 (Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple). Note the parallel between Jerusalem and Constantinople and Justinian's exclamation at the completion of Hagia Sophia: "Glory be to God, who has deemed us worthy of this deed! Solomon, I have conquered thee!" The Troparion (First Tone) for the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross also compares the Christian Roman Empire to old Israel: "O Lord, save thy people and bless thine inheritance, granting our believing emperors victory over the barbarians and by thy Cross preserving thy *politeuma*." On the artistic evidence which relates Hebrew leaders with the emperors, see D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West* (New York, 1966) p. 63. That Chalcedon greeted the Emperor Marcian with the words "May your empire be eternal" (Mansi 7, 169 f.) might very well not display anything Hellenistic but Hebrew. God promised David—the Council also called Marcian "the new David"—an everlasting house (2 S 16) and a dynasty that would exist forever (3 K 2:45). See P. Heinisch, *Theology of the Old Testament* (St. Paul, 1955) pp. 28, 368 f.

²⁹ G. Florovsky, "Empire and the Desert: Antinomies of Christian History," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 3 (1957) 142 f.

one world.³⁰ Also, they were cognizant of Origen's teachings—Eusebius' master—with whom "Hellenism attempts to creep into the Church."³¹ In this very important connection, then, it is also true that the Greek Fathers in particular were concerned with the refutation of the pagan conception of time (i.e., cyclical becoming) and eternity (i.e., the perpetual nowness to which the disembodied spirit of man escapes); for it was the metaphysical dualism which lay behind Eusebius' conception of Christian kingship. In other words, the attitude of the Fathers towards the unity of Church and state was determined precisely by their "theology" and their understanding of the relationship between God, Christ, and history. Such facts, incidentally, lead us to consider the Hellenistic appellations given to the Christian emperors as the kind of rhetoric which characterized the literature of the so-called patristic era.

III

We have seen that logic keenly suggests the conclusion that the Eusebian and Christian political theologies were opposed. They differed for very specific reasons: not only did Eusebius seek to make the Constantinian *renovatio* a quasi-Christian extension of the Augustan revolution, while the Church viewed it as a Christian version of the Hebrew theocracy, but, as we shall see, the ontological principles involved in the debate were mutually exclusive. The intellectual clarification of those differences began with the Arian heresy and would be consummated with the Church's victory over iconoclasm—and, curiously, Eusebius was "present" at the beginning and the end. The centuries of theological controversy were instrumental in pointing up divergent views of history and salvation which the variant political theories assumed.

The essential incompatibility between Eusebianism and the Fathers was clear almost at once. The association between Eusebius and Arius³²

³⁰ Peterson states that in the fourth century Homer's "the rule of many is not good, let there be one dominion" and Alexander of Aphrodisias' alteration "one rule, one source, one god," the basic assumptions of Hellenistic kingship, were familiar to the Fathers. These political ideas were expostulated in the anonymous but highly influential political treatise *De mundo*, which appeared in Alexandria around 40 B.C. It is noteworthy that the Alexandrian Fathers, e.g., Sts. Timothy, Athanasius, and Cyril, had very little to say about kingship. Peterson mentions Cyril's *Contra Julianum* 4, 7 (PG 76, 700D-701A), but concedes that this Father discusses kingship "doch ohne monotheismus zu sprechen" (p. 147); and Dvornik (Vol. 2) cannot offer a single quotation from Cyril on the subject.

³¹ V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London, 1957) p. 32.

³² The evidence re the orthodoxy of Eusebius tends not to support it. The testimony of the Christian writers of the early Church which favors it does not generally relate to his doctrine, with the notable exception of Socrates (*Eccl. hist.* 2, 21). He was accused of Arianism by Athanasius, Epiphanius of Salamis, Jerome, Augustine, Nicetas of Remesiana,

—not an unnatural alliance, since both had Origen as their master—brought into prominence those opposing ontologies. Although Eusebius did not openly espouse all the doctrines of Arius, they were one in their political theology. They both connected monarchy and monotheism, a theory which decidedly involved an unorthodox Christology. In common they held that the Logos was “a lesser being, however close to God,” and were thereby prepared “to bow to the will of the emperor, as also God’s vicegerent on earth.”³³ In other terms, since theology (the doctrine of God in Himself) and Christology (the doctrine of Christ) were necessarily interrelated, a difference in theology must dictate a difference in Christology. As G. H. Williams says, “two Christologies gave rise to, or at least were associated with, two main views of the Empire and the relationship of the Church to it. . . .”³⁴ The dispute between the orthodox and the Arians was a clash over the nature of the Incarnation: whether it was an event which brought the transcendental, absolute God into the very course of the time which He created or whether it was the epiphany of a Christian Apollo. Had God entered history as a man or had the *deuteros theos* merely leaped from eternity to speak for the Unknown God who remained sequestered in the abyss of the *apeiron*?

The central word in the controversy between the Fathers and the Arians was *homoousios*, “equal in essence,” or, as the Nicene Creed stated, *homoousios tō patri*, “equal to the Father.” The Son of God, the Logos of the Father, is true God from true God. The Arians and Eusebius wanted to designate Him *homoiousios tō patri*, “like the Father in essence.” The Bishop of Caesarea conceived the Son to be infinite and be-

Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople, the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787), and Photius in the thirteenth chapter of his *Bibliotheca*. J. Quasten, *Patrology* 3 (Westminster, Md., 1961) 309–10, and L. Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church* 2 (4th ed.; London, 1931) 98–152, assert that Eusebius’ continual intervention in behalf of Arius, his excommunication by the Synod of Antioch (325), his ambivalent theology, and his Origenism put his orthodoxy in doubt. H. Kraft, *Kirchenwörter Lexikon* (Munich, 1966) pp. 199 f., believes the accusation against Eusebius was really guilt by association. R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* 2 (2nd ed.; Leipzig, 1910) p. 30 f., calls Eusebius a subordinationist but not an Arian. The argument that Eusebius signed the declaration of Nicaea and that his post-Nicene works are orthodox (Valesius, *Annot. on Life and Writings of Eusebius Pamp.*, in *Eccles. History*, tr. S. E. Parker [Grand Rapids, 1962] pp. xxi–xxiii) is unconvincing. The *Theophania* (PG 24, 609–90) and *Contra Marcellum* (PG 24, 707–826) are as pro-Arian as they are anti-Sabellian.

³³ Introduction to *Christology of the Later Fathers* (Vol. 3 of *The Library of Christian Classics*, ed. E. R. Hardy and C. C. Richardson; Philadelphia, 1954) p. 22.

³⁴ “Christology and Church-State Relations in the Fourth Century,” *Church History* 20 (1951) 9.

gotten of God, but not equal to Him. The Incarnation, therefore, was not the historical revelation of God in the flesh, but the apocalypse of a lesser deity. The man Jesus was not an organ, a *mousikos anēr*, a lyre of the Logos (*Dem. evangel.* 4, 13, 7). The orthodox believed Christ to be true man and true God. These teachings were converted into political terms. The Arians equated the emperor with the Father and the priesthood with the inferior Son. The Emperor was *rex et sacerdos*, head of the *imperium*, *sacerdotium*, and *ekklēsia*. On the other hand, the orthodox proclaimed the equality of the Logos and the Father, hence subordinating the *imperium* to the *sacerdotium*, having related the former with the "humanity" of Christ and the priesthood with His "divinity." Together they governed the Christian commonwealth, which was virtually identified with the *ekklēsia*. The Arians saw the Christology (and theology) of the orthodox as a threat to their political theology, a "rebellion" on the ontological level.⁵⁵

Neither Eusebius nor the Arians were able to construe history as the vehicle of salvation. They were unprepared to make the Incarnation—the irruption of eternity into time—the center of their *oikonomia*. The Arian-Eusebian axis was a tacit return to Hellenism. The Logos was for them "the intermediate being of Neoplatonic theology, neither 'very God' nor 'very man,' but through the Spirit which in turn he was believed to engender, a 'link' between the two."⁵⁶ Like Origen, they would not refer to the Logos as *autotheos* or *anarchos archē*, but "after the Father." They permitted the Father no contact with "multiplicity." The Logos mediated the "one and the many," He who "comes between the Unbegotten and the being of things made" (Origen, *Contra Cels.* 3, 34). Origen, Eusebius, and the Arians, Hellenists as they were, sought to discover the mystery of the universe in scientific unity, compulsively reducing multiplicity to Euclidean simplicity. Occasionally, the writings of Eusebius display an attempt to break with Origenism, but he seems unable to turn the corner.

The Origenist mentality of Eusebius is nowhere more palpable than in

⁵⁵ Arian monotheism, says Peterson, "ist ein politische Forderung, ein Stück der Reichspolitik" (p. 95). In this connection he states that the "orthodoxe Trinitätlehre bedrohte in der Tat die politische Theologie des Imperium Romanum" (p. 96).

⁵⁶ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 223. The fact that Eusebius seems not to have rejected the eternity of the Son or that perhaps he was attempting to mediate the heresies of Sabellianism (of which he thought orthodoxy a version) and Arianism and fell inadvertently into error, fails to touch our argument. Among other things, his Hellenism is manifest by his inability to think outside its categories, e.g., the Son is "after" the Father, who is "first of all"; and the Holy Spirit is "in third order" (*Dem. evang.* 4, 4, 2).

his letter to Augusta, the sister of Constantine.³⁷ The entire work is written in Origenist idiom. He replies to Augusta's desire to have an ikon or sacred image. He tells her that the ikon is pagan and it is wrong for a Christian to possess one. She must not think that ikons have any religious value. In any case, it is impossible for the divine to be artistically rendered in a "perishable frame." There is an infinite disparity between the reality (*ousios*) and the image (*eikōn*).³⁸

It is unworthy of the divine to be depicted in "the fashion of beasts," Eusebius continues.³⁹ God, Christ, and the saints must be "contemplated" in "the purity of the human heart."⁴⁰ For Eusebius, then, as for Strabo, Lucian, and Plutarch, the divine, anything spiritual, could not be embodied in matter, and all art was simply a creature of the human imagination. Moreover, as the disciple of Origen, he inherited a spiritualism which demanded that one must look beyond "symbols" for "truth." Temporal and sensual things were vastly inferior to, and profoundly less interesting than, the immaterial realities. Eusebius looked upon time as something accidental and relentless, with even the Incarnation only a moment in the continuous story of divine theophanies. In other words, the Eusebian ontology, the Origenist Middle-Platonic dualism, meant the Hellenization of Christianity, something which was reflected in his political theology.

The rejoinder of the Greek Fathers to the Eusebian philosophy was to insist that the Logos-God became man and that this unity represented a *coincidentia oppositorum*. The importance of God in history was not something "philosophical" but essentially and crucially soteriological. "For man would not have been deified if he were joined to a creature or if the Son were not true God," wrote St. Athanasius. "Nor would man have been brought in to the presence of the Father unless the Deifier were His

³⁷ PG 20, 1545-49. The letter seems to have received little attention until the eighth century, during the iconoclastic controversy, when it was condemned for its Hellenism. The common idea that iconoclasm was a "Semitic objection" to "Hellenizing iconodulism" is quite erroneous. See G. Florovsky, "Origen, Eusebius and the Iconoclastic Controversy," *Church History* 19 (1950) 77-96, and G. Ladner, "Origen and the Significance of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *Medieval Studies* 2 (1940) 11-20. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Nicephorus, wrote his *Antirrhetici tres adv. Const. Cor.* (PG 100, 206-534) in rebuttal to the Eusebian letter, which he viewed as iconoclastic and Origenist.

³⁸ *Ep. ad Aug.* (PG 20, 1548B). Of not incidental importance was the fourth-century debate between some Arians and the Fathers over the "image of the emperor." Athanasius asserted that the reverence paid to the image of the emperor passed necessarily to him, just as he who adores the Son adores the Father with whom He is coeternal (*Contra Ar.* 3, 5 [PG 26, 332B]). Cf. Basil the Great, *De Spir. sanc.* 45 (PG 32, 149C); Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 12, 5 (PG 33, 723A); Gregory of Nyssa, *De hom. opif.* 4 (PG 44, 136C); Gregory the Theologian, *Orat.* 4 (PG 35, 629B); John of Damascus, *Orat. imag.* (PG 94, 1405C).

³⁹ Eusebius, 1548B. ⁴⁰ Eusebius, 1546A.

natural and true Logos who had taken to Himself a body. And we would not have been delivered from sin and its course... For the union was necessary that He might unite what is man by nature to Him who is God by nature and through deification secure our salvation."⁴¹ In a word, if there were no human participation in the divine, man would yet be subject to sin, death, and Satan. Salvation was precisely the union of God and man (*henōsis*).⁴² Gregory of Nyssa makes it very clear that this "union" is not figurative: "He who sustains creation is commingled in us and is being fused to our nature in order that we might become divine through our mixing (*epimixia*) with God. For Christ's return from death commenced the very principle by which our mortal race gains immortality."⁴³

Deification is both a process and an actuality, a becoming and a being. The *telos* of history is already present in the process. This teaching was expressed by "the dogma of Chalcedon," which "provides a basis of the theology of history, which otherwise is liable to founder in a doctrine of endless Becoming, or to dissolve in a timeless Ideal."⁴⁴ The awareness of

⁴¹ *Contra Ar.* 2, 70 (PG 26, 296D). This is a basic theme of patristic Christology, e.g., 2 *Clement* 14, 5; Ignatius of Antioch, *Ep. ad Magn.* 14, 1; Irenaeus, *Contra haer.* 5, praef. (PG 7, 1120); Methodius of Olympus, *Conv. dec. virg.* 1, 5 (PG 18, 45B); Gregory of Nazianzus, *Poem. dog.* 10, 5-9 (PG 37, 456 f.); Gregory of Nyssa, *Orat. catech.* 25 (PG 45, 65D); Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thal.* 60 (PG 90, 921AB), etc. In anticipation of certain objections, it should be observed that there are essential differences between the patristic teaching on deification (*theōsis*) and the pagan idea of it. The differences relate to that which separated the Church from Hellenism: time, grace, and the resurrection of the body. Hellenism believed that deification meant the absorption of soul, which had escaped the prison of the body, into the divine, beyond time. The "escape" was achieved by human effort, asceticism, and special knowledge (*gnōsis*). For the Greek Fathers, however, deification or salvation begins in time, body and soul, through grace *en Christō*. The patristic *gnōsis* is the gift of the Holy Spirit. See Jules Gross, *La divinisation du chrétien d'après les Pères grecs* (Paris, 1938). Following Origen, Eusebius apparently believed "deification" to be "spiritual perfection" and not the ontological transformation of human nature. See E. Mersch, *The Whole Christ* (London, 1956) pp. 253 f.

⁴² The Fathers employed many words to describe the union of God and man, such as *koinōnia*, *methexis*, *parousia*, etc.—often borrowed from Hellenic philosophy. Their use of them, however, is unlike that to which they were put by the pagans. "Union," according to the Fathers, meant the uniting of the *total man* with God in Christ, in the Church, in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit. "Union" is a process which begins now, a process initiated by Christ's resurrection; it was something accomplished by grace. See G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, fasc. 4 (Oxford, 1964) 837-38. Plato, on the other hand, attempted, by the use of such words, to describe "the relation of an Idea to its group," the Idea being the supersensible cause (*aitia*). Things are mirrors reflecting their original. See the discussion in F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy* (New York, 1957) pp. 253-63.

⁴³ *Orat. catech.* 25 (PG 45, 65D-68A).

⁴⁴ J. Daniélou, *The Lord of History* (London, 1958) p. 185.

this truth led the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon to subdue the heresies of Nestorianism (which sundered the divine and the human in Christ) and Monophysitism (the divine absorbing the human). The first made the deification of man impossible, the latter abrogated his humanity; and, at the same time, the consequence of Nestorianism for history was to utterly secularize it, while the end of Monophysitism was to extinguish the integrity of the created order, that is to say, it was a form of pantheism.

The defenders of the traditional Christology, however, maintained a balance of the divine and the human in history. They used Aristotelian language and concepts in their refutation of the Christological extremes. The "realism" was very effective against the sporadic revival of Origenism and growing influence of Neoplatonism.⁴⁵ Both were dualist systems, while Aristotle proved compatible with the Chalcedonian doctrine of Christ, i.e., the philosophers' idea that "form" and "matter" were joined not unlike the "two natures" in Christ, the two dimensions of history. Of course, the "two natures" were not "confused" and the "divinity" of Christ was not really the "form" of His "humanity." Nevertheless, the relationship was accurately defined by Chalcedon. It was Leontius of Byzantium (485-543) who attempted to resolve the question with his idea of the *enhypostasis*—the humanity of Christ inhered in the single divine hypostasis of the Logos without a loss of identity.⁴⁶ The Fathers after Leontius, consequently, transposed his Christology into cosmological terms. In the words of Dionysius the Areopagite (ca. 550), the cosmos is "manifest" and "demonstrable," "unspeakable" and "hidden," both aspects fully "intertwined."⁴⁷ Such a concept strikes at the very heart of Neoplatonism.⁴⁸ Following Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor (580-662) taught that not only do we see "through phenomena what are not phe-

⁴⁵The sixth-century revival of Origenism may be related to the work of Neoplatonic teachers who, after Justinian closed the Academy of Athens (529), fled to Persia, but finding themselves unwelcome there returned to the Empire (see A. von Harnack, "Neoplatonism," *Encycl. Brit.* 19 [11th ed., 1911] 377). At the same time, the use of Aristotelian language and concepts by the Fathers was a means by which to "philosophically" oppose the Platonic and Neoplatonic hypostatization of time: Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Thal.* 65 (PG 90, 757D); Gregory of Nazianzus, *In theoph.* (PG 36, 317B); Gregory of Nyssa, *De oct.* (PG 44, 609B); John Chrysostom, *De comp. ad Stel.* 2, 4 (PG 47, 415-16), etc. On Maximus in particular, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Die kosmische Liturgie* (Einsiedeln, 1961).

⁴⁶*Contra Nest. et Eutych.* (PG 86, 1277D-1281A).

⁴⁷*Ep ad Tim.* 9, 1 (PG 3, 1105D-1108A).

⁴⁸Dionysius is defended against the charge of Neoplatonism by Vladimir Lossky in his *Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, pp. 23-43, and in *The Vision of God* (Clayton, Wis., 1963) pp. 99-110. The garb may have been Neoplatonic, but the *didascalía* of Dionysius was Christian.

nomena,"⁴⁹ but the physical cosmos is intelligible through the spiritual reality which illumines and upholds it.⁵⁰ There is a unity without the confusion of its dimensions.⁵¹ He drew this conclusion from the fact that the Church is an analogy of the "diophysitic Christ" and the cosmos an "image of the Holy Church of God."⁵²

The incarnational ontology and cosmology of the post-Chalcedonian Greek Fathers were a reply to Origenism and Neoplatonism, which appear to have passed together into the next century and into the iconoclastic controversy. It is not without significance that the iconodules or advocates of "sacred art" saw their task to be "a direct refutation of Origenism."⁵³ Iconodulism was also a rejection of Neoplatonism, to which historians believe the Church was obliged for her iconological assumptions, that is, the *eikōn*-prototype concept.⁵⁴ But the iconodules never taught that the ikon was an earthly *mimēsis* of a heavenly archetype. The ikon was not the mirror of a timeless world. It was, in fact, a sensual form to an abiding spiritual reality, a reality which was not separate from its visible representation. Unlike the pagan Greeks, who recongized no basic connection between the transitory and the permanent, the iconographer depicted sanctified individuals as present in their ikon. The dualism between time and eternity, Bowra says, "provided Greek art with its guiding ideal,"⁵⁵ whereas the iconographer struggled to create a vessel worthy of holding "the other world."⁵⁶ Thus, in painting the saints, for example, he never portrayed them as physically and humanly beautiful but as deified.⁵⁷

By virtue of the Chalcedonian Christology and the patristic ontological explication of it, John of Damascus likewise contended that no insuperable barrier existed between time and eternity. The supreme demonstration of this fact, he said, was the Incarnation. Therefore, the making of an ikon of God is possible. He became "truly man, living upon the earth and dwelling among men..." (*De fid. orth.* 4, 16). His arguments in *De fide orthodoxa* and *De imaginibus* were subsequently ratified by the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787).⁵⁸ This position is Chalcedonian, not Origenist or Neoplatonic or Eusebian; for it states that "honor" is directed

⁴⁹ *Myst.* 2 (PG 91, 669C). ⁵¹ *Ibid.* 24 (705B).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 5 (680B). ⁵² *Ibid.* 3 (672A).

⁵³ Cf. Florovsky, "Origen . . .," p. 87.

⁵⁴ See G. B. Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 7 (Cambridge, 1953) 1-55.

⁵⁵ C. M. Bowra, *The Greek Experience* (New York, 1959) p. 172.

⁵⁶ L. Ouspensky and V. Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Basel, 1952) p. 35.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵⁸ Cf. Actio 7 (Mansi 13, 378). See Nilus of Sinai, *Ep. ad Olymp.* (PG 79, 577); Theodore of Studium, *Ref.* 3, 2, 3 (PG 99, 417C); also the other patristic witness cited in n. 38 above.

to the prototype through the ikon, implying thereby their unity. More importantly, however, the Council was the culmination of the Fathers' effort to define the place of the Church's Greek heritage, a heritage which Origen, Eusebius, and those like them sought to give an impossible status. The Christianization of Hellenism was a triumph of the Church, a triumph of supernatural faith over natural reason.

IV

It is probably fair to say at this point that a necessary connection exists between Christology and ontology. May we say also that because patristic thought is Chalcedonian and Eusebian thought Platonic, therefore they hold opposing "political" theories? Is there anything in the way of further empirical evidence that the Greek Fathers did not follow the political theology of Eusebius? We believe there is—a matter central to the very conception of Hellenistic kingship: caesaropapism. We must consider now whether the Fathers recognized the Christian emperor as theologically and juridically the head, *kephalion*, of the *ekklēsia* and the *basileia*. Was he the God-appointed organic head of the Church (as well as the Empire) in matters pertaining to doctrine and piety? Was the Empire in any sense "divine"? Did the Fathers think of him as a successor to King David or Augustus Caesar spiritually?

Those Fathers who accepted the mating of the Christian Church and the Roman Empire did in fact reject the idea of the emperor's preternaturality. They consciously busied themselves with severing all ties between monarchy and monotheism. They did everything possible to personalize, historicize, and biblicize him and his authority. Indeed, the Fathers contrived "to hold the Emperor under specifically Christian judgment."⁵⁹ They placed him *within* the Church and declared his *kratos* (sovereignty), *kratēsis* (civil power), and *exousia* (= *imperium*) as a ruler to be "legitimate" only under that condition. His "legal status" within the commonwealth depended upon his "good standing in the Church," his orthodoxy, and his obedience to ecclesiastical canons.⁶⁰ His reign was pleasing to God, said Basil the Great, so long as it was not sinful.⁶¹ As a member of the Church, he must submit to those means by which any man is saved.⁶² The emperor may be *autokrator*, but he is also *therapōn*, a servant, an attendant of God and wholly subject to the divine truth.⁶³

⁵⁹ G. H. Williams, *art. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶⁰ Florovsky, "Empire and Desert . . .," p. 142.

⁶¹ *In ps.* 32, 9 (*PG* 29, 344-45).

⁶² Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eun.* 1 (*PG* 45, 293A).

⁶³ Athanasius, *Apol. ad imper. Const.* 12.

The emperor, asserted the Fathers, is neither "absolute" nor "divine." Although Christians were to obey him, their first duty was to the gospel. It is true that he was addressed as *pietas*, *sacratissimus*, *sanctissimus*, even *dominus*, but when he was unorthodox he was called *tyrannos*, *antichristos*, *christomachos*.⁶⁴ Again, the familiar phrase "quod principi placuit, legis habitu vigorem" (usually taken from Justinian's *Digest* 1, 4, 1) is often lifted from its very important context: "ut postea cum lege regia, quae de imperio ejus lata est populus ei et in eum omne suum imperium et potestatem conferat."⁶⁵ This was a description of imperial power originally stated by the Roman jurist Ulpian, the friend and adviser of Emperor Septimius Severus. It was a legal dictum which clearly announced that the authority of the emperor was conferred upon him by the Roman people. Both Augustus and Constantine claimed to have restored the Republic and thereby secured the rights of the people. Justinian, too, learned that the Roman political structure carried within it the implicit right of rebellion (e.g., the Nika Revolt of 532). And in a Christian *politeia* his powers were further curtailed by ecclesiastical law, doctrine, and morality. In 491, at the coronation of Anastasius I, the emperor took a vow of obedience to the decrees of Church councils.⁶⁶ It was the first such oath in Roman history.

Again, the emperor was not a "minister of the word and sacrament," nor could he impose doctrine upon the *sacerdotium*, let alone Christian society. To be sure, he wore vestments similar to those of the bishop and had a special place in the worship of the Church, such as censuring the sanctuary at the Christmas liturgy, offering the sermon during the Vespers at the beginning of Lent, and receiving Holy Communion directly from the altar as the clergy; nevertheless, he was not a priest and many Fathers disapproved of even these privileges.⁶⁷ Emperor Marcian, as we know, was hailed as priest-king at the Council of Chalcedon, but this did not give sacerdotal status to him or any Byzantine *imperator*.⁶⁸ The quasi-sacerdotal functions of the emperor were "in fact a continuation of the fiction of *privilegium* which dispensed with certain laws in favor of Julius Caesar and Octavius, and which, in later days, recognized the

⁶⁴ Athanasius, *Hist. Arian.* 67 (PG 25, 773B).

⁶⁵ On this matter see R. W. Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West* 1 (New York, 1903) 64 f.

⁶⁶ Florovsky, "Empire and Desert . . .," p. 155.

⁶⁷ Canon 69 of Quinisext permitted no "layman" but the emperor to enter the sanctuary to make an offering to God. Yet the commentator mentions that many theological writers disapproved. See *The Rudder* (or the book of the sacred canons), tr. D. Cummings (Chicago, 1957) pp. 372-73.

⁶⁸ F. Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* 1, 301.

special position assigned to the Christian Emperor.”⁶⁹ Yet he, as the ruler of a Christian kingdom, had the obligation to intervene in some religious matters, for the state of religion had definite political and social ramifications; conversely, the clergy in such a kingdom had the right to advise and even defy the emperor when his policies affected the spiritual welfare of Christians.

The emperor was “bishop of the outside.” Constantine is supposed to have said to a group of bishops: “You are indeed bishops of all which pertains to things within the Church, but I have been appointed a bishop also, a bishop of the outside.”⁷⁰ The meaning of his remark (if indeed he made it at all) has been keenly debated. According to some historians, this expression (*episkopos tōn ektos*) indicated that Constantine claimed to possess authority over the organization and administration of the Church.⁷¹ J. Staub believes that “bishop to or of the outside” extended the emperor’s competence to everything in the Church save those things bearing directly upon the soul.⁷² Dvornik rejects these theories and also the idea that the emperor’s words applied only to pagans and heretics (i.e., those outside the Church). He prefers to think that by “assuming the title of bishop, Constantine recognized his role in the Christianization of the state, in helping Christianity to become victorious over other religions and in enforcing Christian precepts among all his subjects.”⁷³ This opinion has merit, but it does not clarify for us what were the limitations of the emperor’s powers and responsibilities.

The evidence suggests to us that the Emperor was *epi-skopos*, “overseer” of all things within the commonwealth whether “religious” or “secular.” He provided the clergy with the machinery for the evangelization of the *oikoumenē* and the *ethnē*. He also must have had the right to watch over their effort and to ensure their success by every measure available to him. His “episcopacy” was a necessary part of his *philanthrōpia* (loving concern for mankind) and must have involved more than “secular matters.” East Rome was a Christian society, which means that religious doctrine, piety, and law were the business of everyone. The emperor had not only to build orphanages, hospitals, and temples, pay the missionaries, etc., but he had to create an atmosphere in which the individual might work out his salvation in fear and trembling. He must de-

⁶⁹ J. Hussey, *The Byzantine World* (New York, 1961) p. 89.

⁷⁰ *Vita Const.* 4, 24 (PG 20, 1172AB).

⁷¹ P. Sherrard, *Greek East and Latin West* (London, 1955) p. 93; D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, p. 64.

⁷² “Kaiser Konstantin als *episkopos tōn ektos*,” in *Studia patristica* 1 (Berlin, 1957) 687.

⁷³ *Early Christian and Byzantine* . . . 2, 753–54.

clare and disseminate the truth of Christianity and, whenever possible, enforce the decrees and discipline of the Church. Thus, he did in fact have a religious commission from God.

In his letter to Constantius, Cyril of Jerusalem exhorted him "to emulate your blessed father Constantine, who was rewarded by finding the true Cross." He must erect "the trophy of the Cross before all men" if he wishes to defeat his enemies and bring peace to his realm and happiness to his house.⁷⁴ The historians Sozomen and Socrates tell us that the emperor was commonly referred to as "Moses,"⁷⁵ whose authority in ancient Israel, as we know, was not restricted to organizational and social matters. Finally, as a "new David," the emperor must commit himself and his people to the truth, "for truth is the protection of the emperor, especially the Christian emperor. With it, he may rule in safety," Athanasius told Constantius. "As the Scriptures say, 'Mercy and truth safeguard the king, and with righteousness is his throne surrounded' (Prv 20:28). Therefore was the wise Zorobabel victorious and all the people cried: 'Great is the truth which must prevail' (3 Esd 4, 41)."⁷⁶ In other words, the Fathers understood the emperor to be not the fountain of truth but the servant of the gospel.

The truth must rule the emperor and he must rule by it. He must be *fidei defensor*. "Knowing that nothing serves the man-loving God more than that all Christians have one and the same mind towards the true and immaculate faith," Justinian proclaimed, "and that no schism injure the Holy Church of God, it is necessary for us to take the lead on every occasion to prune the scandalizers from her. They scandalize the confession of the orthodox faith, which was delivered to the saints of God's Church. It is manifest from our edict that we have sought to protect her from dissension and to protect those professing the orthodox religion by opposing the truth to the contentious and above all to pursue diligently the unity of God's people."⁷⁷ Thus, in the case of Justinian, his condemnation of the "Three Chapters" was not entirely presumptuous. Nor may his action be viewed as the intrusion of the "secular power" into spiritual matters—there was nothing "secular" in Byzantium. Yet he did arrogate to himself authority which properly did not fall within his own sphere of power: he presumed to enter the doctrinal aegis of the *sacerdotium*, the Church from the "inside." However, his error is understandable, since the line between "inside" and "outside," often obscured by circumstance, could not always be clearly seen. And indeed, Justinian and other Byzantine

⁷⁴ *Ep. ad Const. imper.* 5-7 (PG 33, 1172A-1173B).

⁷⁵ See Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 1, 19 (PG 67, 920); Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7, 42 (PG 67, 832).

⁷⁶ *Apol. ad imper. Const.* 11 (PG 25, 906A).

⁷⁷ *Conf. rect. fid.* (PG 86, 993CD).

emperors may have forgotten from time to time that they were not Hellenistic theocrats.

The Greek Fathers consistently rejected caesaropapism. The emperor was admonished many times that his *imperium* did not comprehend "the things of God." In his *Historia Arianorum*, Athanasius mentions the letter of Hosius of Cordova to Constantius:

Intrude yourself not into ecclesiastical matters, neither give any command to us concerning them; but learn from us. God has put into your hands the Empire, but to us He has entrusted the Church. If anyone should steal the Empire from you, he would be resisting the ordinance of God; similarly, be fearful to usurp to yourself the things which appertain to the Church and avoid that which would make you guilty of a great offense. It is written, "Render unto Caesar the things of Caesar, but unto God the things of God" (Mt. 22:21). Therefore, as we have no right to exercise earthly rule, so you, O Emperor, have no authority to burn incense.⁷⁸

Athanasius wrote to the same Emperor:

For if a judgment is made by bishops, what business has the emperor with it? Or if a threat by the emperor is decisive, what need for bishops at all? When was such a thing ever heard from the beginning of the world? When did the decision of the Church receive its validity from the emperor? There have been many councils and many judgments by the Church; but the fathers never sought the consent of an emperor to make them; nor did the latter presume to meddle with the affairs of the Church.⁷⁹

Conciliar decrees, therefore, restricted imperial power with regard to religious matters. It is clear that neither Hosius nor Athanasius believed the emperor could make dogma or canon law.⁸⁰

John Chrysostom (344-407) had more to say about the state. His attitude may have been determined by the great stress he placed on spirituality, asceticism, and personal responsibility, but whatever the case

⁷⁸ In *Hist. Arian.* 44 (PG 25, 745D-748A). Hosius was Constantine's adviser at the Council of Nicaea.

⁷⁹ *Hist. Arian.* 52 (PG 25, 756C).

⁸⁰ "We find in the Fathers the consciousness that the Church has its own laws and principles," writes R. W. Carlyle, "its own administrative authority, which is not at all to be regarded as dependent upon the State, but as something which stands beside it and independent of it; that the relations between the Church and the State are those of two independent though closely related powers, relations which it becomes necessary, as time goes by, to understand and define" (*A History of Medieval Political Theory* 1, 175-76).

may be, he contributed nothing to the so-called "Rome ideology."⁸¹ Chrysostom attached no importance to any particular government or to any ruler:

What are you saying? That every ruler is elected by God? This is not what St. Paul said. Nor am I now speaking about individual rulers, but the very idea of government. For that there should be rulers, rule, and ruled is not to be doubted. They exist to prevent confusion, the people swaying like the waves of the sea in every direction. . . . Hence Paul does not say "for there is no ruler but from God," but rather it is the fact of government of which he speaks and says "there is no power but from God."⁸²

In another place John says that no ruler governs "his fellow servants by natural authority and therefore he often loses his authority. In a word, things which do not inhere naturally must readily admit to change and transposition."⁸³

John is really saying no more than that no particular government is necessary for the realization of the divine plan, and certainly no empire is eternal. He asserts that the course of history proves that kingdoms rise and fall, each playing its part in the purpose of God. The Roman Empire, therefore, exists for the same reason. It is the last of "the four empires" mentioned by Daniel the prophet. Rome exists to "withhold" (*katechein*) the Antichrist.⁸⁴ But just as "the Medes fell before the Babylonians, the Babylonians to the Persians, the Persians to the Macedonians, and the Macedonians to the Romans," so will Rome eventually fall before the Antichrist, who will commence an era of evil and lawlessness. Consequently, John placed little trust in the Empire as a means by which universal peace and justice would come; and assuredly he found nothing about Rome which could be viewed as "holy." The Constantinian *renovatio* was a failure because it was *ab initio* misbegotten. It was foolish to unite the Church with a sick *Romanum imperium*. There should have been no alliance with a government whose malady might very well prove to be contagious. As Carter says, "the implication was [for Chrysostom] that the Roman Empire was a tyranny and the Church a true kingdom."⁸⁵

Whatever John's appraisal of the Empire, he was not ungrateful for the

⁸¹ S. Verosta, *Johannes Chrysostomus, Staatsphilosoph und Geschichtstheologe* (Graz, 1960) p. 189. Dvornik takes the opposite point of view, asserting that the political thought of Chrysostom was dependent upon the Stoics (*Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* 2, 692-99).

⁸² *Ep. ad Rom.* 23 (PG 60, 615). ⁸³ *Hom. de stat.* 7, 2 (PG 49, 93).

⁸⁴ *Ep. 2 ad Thess.* 4, 1-2 (PG 62, 485-87).

⁸⁵ R. E. Carter, "Saint John Chrysostom's Rhetorical Use of the Socratic Distinction between Kingship and Tyranny," *Traditio* 14 (1958) 369.

good it did bring.⁸⁶ Since Rome was a monarchy, he saw the blessings of the kingdom as the direct result of the emperor's rule, a rule which depended upon his character. John drew from precepts of the Old Testament and the language of Stoicism so popular in his day to describe "the good emperor." He insisted that he must rule with "temperance," "justice," and for "the common good," none of which would be possible for the ruler unless he first possessed "self-control." Moreover, in matters of religion, the emperor must seek the advice of the priests and monks. In particular, the bishop "has received authority to loose sins committed against God," John said; "much more will he be able to remit those committed against man. For the sacred laws take place under his hands and even the emperor is subject to them. Hence, when there is need for a good from God, the emperor is accustomed to fly to the priest and not the priest to the emperor."⁸⁷ He defined the jurisdiction of the emperor as cities and armies in comparison to the power of the *sacerdotium* and monks over doctrine and "the inward man." The Empire chastises evildoers, while the Church, in anticipation of the kingdom of God, sanctifies all earthly life.⁸⁸

Chrysostom seems not to have approached the question of Church and state ideologically.⁸⁹ His thinking was more practical, more pastoral. Not unlike him, Basil the Great was alarmed by the Constantinian *renovatio*. In fact, he went further than the Patriarch of Constantinople and openly repudiated it by becoming the central figure in the monastic resistance.⁹⁰ He placed the Roman Empire among the "barbarians," the pagan *ethnē*,⁹¹ and called for an immediate withdrawal of believers from the disastrous alliance contracted by the Church. Not that Basil was not greatly concerned with the problems of social reconstruction, but he refused to permit Christianity to substitute for the bankrupt culture of Greco-Roman civilization. Hence, the attitude he wished the Church to take with regard to the Empire was a spiritual one, that is, to convert its citizens. In any case, he declared, the Church is the *oikoumenē*, the Empire only a parody of it. Ecumenicity is a spiritual and eschatological concept, not a political one.⁹² The Church is the only "country" for the followers of Christ. If the world is to be converted, it must be done without the Roman *imperium* and its earthly power.

⁸⁶ *In Is.* 2, 2 (PG 56, 33).

⁸⁹ *In. Is.* 2, 4 (PG 56, 72-73).

⁸⁷ *Ad pop. Antioch.* 3, 2 (PG 49, 50).

⁹⁰ Florovsky, "Empire and Desert . . .," p. 150.

⁸⁸ *Hom. in Mt* 19, 5 (PG 57, 388).

⁹¹ *In. ps.* 68, 2 (PG 29, 433BC).

⁹² *In ps.* 48, 1 (PG 29, 433B); *Ep.* 66, 2 (PG 32, 425B). On Basil's attitude towards the Empire, see Dom Amand, *L'Ascèse monastique de saint Basile de Césarée* (Maredsous, 1948) pp. 13 f.; S. Giet, *Les idées et l'action sociales de saint Basile le Grand* (Paris, 1955) pp. 166 f.

The separation from the world which Basil advocated did not imply "civil disobedience," particularly not to Christian monarchs. Believers must "render unto Caesar."⁹³ The state exists for the "common good" and nothing ought to pervert its legitimate ends.⁹⁴ Moreover, the withdrawal for which he called did not always mean flight into the desert—Basil himself took the See of Caesarea in 370. On the occasion of the Feast of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, therefore, he exhorted his listeners to make the *oikoumenē* their home and to have no attachments to any city or province.⁹⁵ Writing to Amphilochius after his consecration, Basil reminds him that he is no longer a Cappadocian; he is now a bishop and "all believers in Christ are one people, a people called by God from many regions to be one in the Church; and so our former country rejoices at the economy of the Lord. . . ."⁹⁶ "Detachment," withdrawal," then, meant for Basil primarily indifference to all earthly pleasures, which alone could release the individual to pursue the glory of God.

Basil was not contemptuous of marriage, children, and domestic routine, but he was convinced that these lead to the anxiety and ambition which must inhibit spiritual perfection. That life "brings a thousand earthly cares" which make it enormously difficult to gain "detachment of the soul from the sympathies of the body." Perfection will come only when we are "cityless, homeless, vagabond, asocial, without property. . . ."⁹⁷ Therefore, he concluded that the sure path to salvation is the monastery: the monk alone is "the true and authentic Christian."⁹⁸ Basil and his followers must have been persuasive, for under his leadership cenobitic monasteries sprang up everywhere in the Empire and remained an essential characteristic of Byzantine life until the end. It is interesting, too, that the monks were the strongest opponents of the sometime imperial ambition to control the priesthood. Since most bishops were taken from the monasteries, we can understand, in part, sacerdotal resistance to the Hellenistic nostalgia of the emperors.

V

That Eusebian and patristic ontology, Christology, and political theories are irreconcilable should now be evident. But did the teachings of the Greek Fathers in fact affect the *Romanum imperium* itself? Did Byzantium indeed become Christian through those very centuries in which the theological controversies raged and the Fathers were giving intellectual form to the Church's faith?

We have observed already that in the fourth century Eusebius and the

⁹³ *In ps.* 32, 9 (*PG* 29, 344C).

⁹⁶ *Ep.* 161, 1 (*PG* 32, 629B).

⁹⁴ *Hexa.* 8, 4.

⁹⁷ *Ep.* 2, 2 (*PG* 32, 225B).

⁹⁵ *Quad. martyr.* 2 (*PG* 31, 509B).

⁹⁸ *Reg. fus. tract.* 35, 3 (*PG* 31, 1008A).

Arians thought to perpetuate the Hellenistic idea of empire: the idea of the *imperator* or *basileus* as *caput mundi*, the voice of God on earth, the *pontifex maximus*, *pater humanitatis*. They interpreted the Constantinian *renovatio* as the Christian stage of the *pax Romana*. They were as opposed to the orthodox teaching of the Trinity as they were to the orthodox doctrine that the emperor was a "layman" and subject to the law and dogma of the Church. With the triumph and spread of Arianism after the Council of Nicaea, the Eusebian "political theology" also won the day. The pagan "reaction" of Julian the Apostate was inevitable. It may or may not have been a coincidence that at the center of his religious and political convictions was "the cult of the sun" and a crude form of Platonism. He fought zealously to wipe out Christianity in the name of paganism. Yet, orthodoxy (and to some extent Arianism) persisted and after the death of Julian (363) the tide began slowly to turn. The path to a Catholic kingdom was the arduous road through "the Valens-Valentinian compromise." Valens and Valentinian I tried to straddle two worlds, but the untenability of such a position brought the Roman *imperium* to exhaustion. The enervation of the government was graphically demonstrated by the defeat of the Roman army and the death of Valens at the battle of Adrianople (378). The failure of the "reaction" and the "compromise" demanded a quick and effective solution if the Empire was to be saved. The way was open for the "Christian revolution" of Theodosius the Great (379-95).

One of Theodosius' major problems was the relationship which must exist between *imperium* and *sacerdotium*. "As the real prototype in history of the 'Christian prince,'" says Cochrane, "he was profoundly concerned to work out the logic of his position; and it is this fact, more than anything else, which determined the scope and character of his effort to bring about a radical readjustment to the existing relationship between the temporal and spiritual powers."⁹⁹ His solution was implicit in his decision to transform the *Romanum imperium* into a Christian empire, to consummate the work of Constantine. His policy to Christianize Roman law, to create "godly and righteous legislation," and to support the clergy and implement canon law began with the edict of Thessalonica (380):

We desire that all peoples who fall beneath the sway of our imperial clemency should profess the faith which we believe to have been delivered to the Romans by the Apostle Peter and maintained in its traditional form to the present day . . . by the pontiff Damasus and the bishop Peter of Alexandria . . . namely, that, following apostolic discipline and evangelical doctrine, we should believe in one

⁹⁹ Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

God, the blessed Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, adored with equal majesty. And we decree that those who follow this rule of faith should embrace the name of Catholic Christians, adjudging all others to be madmen and order them to be designated heretics . . . condemning them to suffer Divine punishment and, also, the vengeance of that power, in accordance with the Will of Heaven, which we shall decide to inflict.¹⁰⁰

Thus, the new basis of the Roman order was Nicene-Constantinopolitan Christianity. Making the religion of Christ the legal as well as the spiritual foundation of the Empire, Theodosius necessarily subordinated the *imperium* to the *sacerdotium*. His monarchy was "sacred," but not by virtue of any direct and explicit connection with monotheism. Its "sacredness" followed from the nature of the religion which supported the whole structure of the Byzantine Empire.

The primacy of the *sacerdotium* is shown by the sensational incident which occurred in 390, the massacre of the riotous population at Thessalonica by order of Theodosius. The results of his encounter with Ambrose (333-97)¹⁰¹ are an indication of how far the Emperor was willing to carry his "solution." Ambrose told him that the *imperium* was subject to the *sacerdotium* "in the cause of faith."¹⁰² Thus he refused Theodosius Holy Communion unless, like King David, he made public penance for the death of the Thessalonians.¹⁰³ He humbled himself and was forgiven. Now, whether the posture of Ambrose was related to the political theology maintained by the Arians with whom he was struggling in Milan, we cannot say; and whether it was Ambrose who induced Theodosius' son Gratian, the Western Emperor, to discard the old imperial title, *pontifex maximus*, we are unable to determine.¹⁰⁴ But the coincidence of all these facts must encourage us to believe that Rome under Theodosius was indeed changing and that the teachings of the Fathers were being felt. No doubt, too, the humiliation of the Emperor made a

¹⁰⁰ In *Documents of the Christian Church*, ed. H. Bettenson (Oxford, 1947) pp. 31-32.

¹⁰¹ In his attempt to extend and correct "the Setton thesis" (i.e., Ambrose best exemplifies sacerdotal defense against the imperial pretensions to control the hierarchy of the Church), G. F. Reilly (*Imperium and Sacerdotium according to St. Basil the Great* [Washington, D.C., 1945]) demonstrates that it was the powerful influence of Basil which led Ambrose to elaborate his political opinions. Thus Ambrose belongs to the Greek patristic stratum, despite his love for Cicero. The influence of Origen on his biblical exegesis, and Athanasius, Basil, Cyril of Jerusalem, Didymus the Blind, and Gregory of Nazianzus on his Christology and theology, is sufficient evidence for this contention. Among the Western writers, Ambrose used only Hippolytus of Rome, "the most Greek of them all" (Tixeront). And, of course, Ambrosian antiphonal music is Eastern (Kraft, p. 22).

¹⁰² *Ep.* 51, 13 (*PL* 16, 1046A). ¹⁰³ *Ep.* 51, 7 (*PL* 16, 1021B).

¹⁰⁴ Duchesne believes the influence of Ambrose to have been very strong (*Early History* . . . 2, 498).

vivid and practical contribution to the demise of Eusebian political theory.

While Ambrose was wrestling with the problems of Milan and Italy, a new Christological storm was gathering in the East. Out of the school at Antioch came Diodore of Tarsus, whose doctrine about Christ infected Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople. He preached that between the humanity and divinity in Christ no intrinsic connection may be said to exist. Theodosius II (408–50) convened an ecumenical council at Ephesus (431). The Emperor sent a letter to Cyril of Alexandria and the assembled bishops:

The stability of the Commonwealth depends upon the religion by which we honor God. They are bound closely together. Indeed, their relationship is such that the growth of the one is dependent upon the other. If true piety is perfectly observed, the Commonwealth will flourish. Since, then, the reins of government have been given to us by God and, also, the means by which piety and fidelity to doctrine are to be maintained, we seek to keep undivided the association which exists between them and thereby oversee the interest of both God and man. It is for us to provide for the prosperity of the Commonwealth and, so to speak, keep a watchful eye upon all our subjects. It is our responsibility to insure orthodoxy in faith and morality by exhorting all to fulfill their calling . . . to the extent of their ability . . . Above all, we are most anxious that such ecclesiastical conditions exist that are most pleasing to God. We desire, therefore, that unanimity and concord produce peace which eliminates religious controversy, riot and sedition; and that our holy faith be known to be above reproach everywhere; and, finally, that the priesthood be always invested with the highest dignity, without stain or blemish.¹⁰⁵

The pronouncement by Theodosius II is probably the first to openly announce the separation of “powers,” a separation which clearly implied their association. He asserts his intent to “oversee,” to insure—for the honor of God and the stability of the Empire—domestic tranquility through the exclusion of “religious controversy, riot and sedition.” He does not act by imperial fiat, but provides the bishops with the opportunity to resolve the matter at hand.

The Council of Ephesus, led by Cyril of Alexandria, responded by condemning Nestorius and adopting the “Cyrillian formulation” of the two natures in Christ. In his *Anathemas* Cyril acknowledged that the Logos is true God, who united Himself to man *kath' henōsin physikēn*.¹⁰⁶ In 451 the Council of Chalcedon reaffirmed the teachings of Cyril. Its

¹⁰⁵ Mansi, 4, 1112 f. Cf. the Emperor Zeno's *Henotikon* (482), especially the words “And we write this to you for your assurance, not as producing a new formula of faith” (Bettenson, pp. 125–28).

¹⁰⁶ In Bettenson, pp. 65–66.

famous definition taught that Jesus Christ was one person with two natures. Subsequently, Justinian convoked the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553), which, interestingly enough, condemned the Nestorian "Three Chapters" and Origen.¹⁰⁷ The Emperor also gave expression to "Cyrilian Christology" in his sixth Novel:

The *sacerdotium* and the *imperium* are the greatest gifts to man from God, a bestowal of His supernal *Philanthropia*. The former governs divine matters, the latter presides over and has the diligent care of men. Both proceeding from one and the same source do adorn life. Hence, nothing ought to be more zealously pursued by the Emperor than the dignity of the *sacerdotium* even as priests should make constant petition to God for him. For if the *sacerdotium* is in every way blameless, acting with full confidence before God, while the *imperium* rightly and justly adorns the *politeia* entrusted to him, there may be expected a certain good *symphonia* from which arises all that is beneficial to humanity. Consequently, we have the greatest anxiety for the truth of the dogmas of God and the honor of the *sacerdotium* which, if faithfully upheld by it, can only result in the greatest good from God. And we will secure, also, whatever more good might be added to that which we already possess. This, indeed, will ensue if the beginning of our endeavors is appropriate and pleasing to God. We believe this will occur if unconditional observance is paid to the sacred canons which the glorious and venerable Apostles, eyewitnesses and ministers of the Divine Logos, have transmitted and the Holy Fathers of the Church have preserved and explained.

Justinian did not refer to "Church" and "state"—*ekklësia* and *basileia*—but to *imperium* and *sacerdotium*, the government and the priesthood or leaders of the churches. Two ministries direct the affairs of the commonwealth or *politeia*. They have a common origin and purpose. The priesthood governs spiritual matters and the government has "the diligent care of men." Hence, one life with two dimensions, one society with a *symphonia* or *consonantia* of powers.

Prof. Kartasheff finds in Justinian's *symphonia* a repudiation of Nestorianism and Monophysitism, both outlawed by Chalcedon. The Chalcedonian doctrine forces us, he says, to apply "the principles of Christology to sociology." Thus, the rejection of Nestorianism is likewise a rejection of any essential dichotomy between *sacerdotium* and *imperium*; and the rejection of Monophysitism is the rejection of the absorption of one power by the other. There are "two powers of one and the same organism." The "moral primacy" belongs to the *sacerdotium*, as "the spirit has necessary primacy over the flesh."¹⁰⁸ It may be true that

¹⁰⁷ See Justinian, *Ep. ad Theod.* (PG 86, 1045 f.); Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* 2, 824-25.

¹⁰⁸ *The Restoration of Holy Russia* (Paris, 1946) pp. 53-54.

many of the Byzantine emperors behaved as if they were the religious heads of the Church, priesthood as well as the government, but caesaropapism in Byzantium was "Christologically" impossible and, in fact, cannot be proven to have existed.¹⁰⁹ Despite the triumph of an emperor during his lifetime, none of the heresies or errors espoused by him ever prevailed; and though he was able to manipulate the hierarchy and "pack" the councils, the orthodoxy of the Church remained an organic and unaltered continuum.

Resistance to imperial tyranny after Chalcedon came usually from the leaders of the people, the monks. Perhaps the most important monastic Fathers were Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus. The former was the principal figure in the conflict between the *sacerdotium* and Constans II (641-88), an adherent of Monotheletism (i.e., the idea that in Christ but one will existed, the divine). According to Maximus, the imperial law exists to check the divisive and destructive tendencies in man.¹¹⁰ The Catholic faith, which gives humanity the truth, alone can bring peace among men. Consequently, in doctrinal matters "it belongs to the priesthood to inquire after and define the saving dogmas of the Church." When Maximus was asked: "Are not all Christian emperors also priests?" he replied: "The emperor does not stand at the altar, nor after the consecration of bread does he raise it and cry 'Holy Things to the Holy.' Nor does he baptize or consecrate the myrrh, nor elevate bishops nor ordain presbyters and deacons. . . ."¹¹¹

In the following century, Emperor Leo III (717-41) sided with the iconoclasts and began to persecute the iconodules. John of Damascus protested, saying: "It is not for the emperor to legislate for the Church."¹¹² He reminded Leo that he was a member of the Church and under obedience, in matters of faith, to the *sacerdotium*. When Leo retorted: "I am a priest," John answered that in his description of the Church St. Paul did not mention rank of "emperor" (1 Cor 12). Then he says that Christians are obedient "in those things which pertain to our daily life . . . but in those things relating to the structure of the Church we have our shepherds who speak to us the word of God and who have shaped the

¹⁰⁹ Kartasheff, p. 75. Against the idea of caesaropapism in Byzantium, see D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, pp. 55-83; J. Hussey, *The Byzantine World*, p. 92; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, tr. J. Hussey (New Brunswick, 1957) p. 218; H. Gregoire, "The Byzantine Church," in *Byzantium: An Introduction to East Roman Civilization*, ed. N. H. Baynes and H. St. L. B. Moss (Oxford, 1962) pp. 86-87. Such eminent scholars as Diehl, Baynes, and Runciman believe that caesaropapism was characteristic of Church-state relations in the Christian Roman Empire. It is curious that neither group maintains its position on Christological grounds.

¹¹⁰ *Ep.* 10 (PG 91, 524A). ¹¹¹ *Rel. mot.* 4 (PG 90, 117B).

¹¹² *De imag.* 2, 12 (PG 94, 1296C).

ecclesiastical legislation. We do not alter the eternal decrees which the Fathers have established for us, but maintain the tradition we have received”¹¹³ “I am not persuaded,” he concludes, “that the Church is governed by imperial laws, but only the canons of the Fathers”¹¹⁴ Thus John placed the emperor within the Church and under obedience to the Bible, the Fathers, the tradition, the canon law, as well as the *sacerdotium*. He makes these remarks in the teeth of a Eusebian revival.

After the defeat of the iconoclastic emperors, their successors became more restrained and the strength of the *sacerdotium* increased. That increase of strength may be seen in the East by the greater centralization of ecclesiastical authority in the hands of the “ecumenical” patriarch of Constantinople. He became the symbol of the unity of the episcopate. Perhaps the most important witness to the changed relationship between *sacerdotium* and *imperium* in the ninth-century document known as the *Epanagōgē*, usually attributed to the Macedonian Emperor Basil I (867–86). It states:

Titulus II, 1: The emperor (*basileus*) is a legal authority, a blessing common to all people, who neither punishes with antipathy nor rewards with partiality, but acts without prejudice in all matters which come before him. (2) The aim of the emperor is to guard and secure by his power that which belongs to his office; to recover by sleepless care those that are lost; and to draw by wisdom and justice those that yet remain outside his dominion. (3) The purpose set before the emperor is to confer benefits; hence, he is called benefactor. Yet, should he fail to be beneficent, he becomes, to use the words of the ancients, a forgery (*paracharaxis*) of the royal stamp. The emperor is expected to enforce and maintain not only what is declared in the holy Scriptures, but the dogmas established by the Seven Ecumenical Councils; and, to be sure, the Roman laws of his predecessors.”

Section 5 contains a brief exposition of the Chalcedonian Christology, and Titulus II, 6 states that “the emperor must act as the law when there is none written, save that his actions do not violate the canon law.” Then Titulus III, 1 announces:

The patriarch is the living and animate image of Christ by deeds and words typifying the truth. (2) The patriarch must, first, guard those whom God has put into his care, piously and soberly; then, he must bring to the unity of orthodoxy, as far as he can, all heretics; and, finally, through the awe which he inspires, through shining and admirable conduct, to lead unbelievers to follow the faith. . . . (5) The patriarch alone must interpret the canons passed by the Fathers and the decrees enacted by the holy councils. (6) The patriarch must explain and decide those things which have been negotiated and set in place by the early

¹¹³ John of Damascus (*PG* 94, 1297C).

¹¹⁴ John of Damascus (1301D).

Fathers of the ecumenical and provincial (local) councils. . . (8) As the commonwealth consists, like man, of parts and members, the greatest and most necessary parts of it are the emperor and the patriarch. Wherefore the peace and happiness of subjects, in body and soul, is achieved when the emperor and the priesthood find agreement and concord (*symphōnian*) in all things. . . (11) The supervision of all spiritual matters is reserved for the patriarch, but it is delegated to others to which he determines such authority should be given. Also, he himself and he only (or those whom he may appoint) is the arbitrator and judge of all matters concerning repentance, turning from sin, heresy. . . .¹¹⁵

Because it seemed to ignore the ecclesiology of confederated episcopal authority,¹¹⁶ this document is actually subpatristic. It ascribes to the patriarch the title "living and animate image of Christ," which many emperors had previously claimed for themselves and which the Greek Fathers continuously resisted from the very inception of the Constantinian *renovatio*. The Hellenistic title was a vestige of the Empire's pagan past, a past which Eusebius was unwilling to surrender and from which many Byzantines could not entirely escape. Nevertheless, such an ascription to the patriarch does illustrate the capitulation of the *imperium* to the *ekklēsia*.

CONCLUSION

The fight against the Eusebian political theology was for the Greek Fathers in fact the struggle against Hellenism and for the Christian economy. The foundation of Hellenistic kingship was the classical ontology or metaphysics, which compelled the inferior Logos of God to mediate being and becoming, timeless simplicity and temporal multiplicity. The king, *basileus*, *imperator*, as the *mimēsis* of the Divine, ruled the earthly replica of the heavenly kingdom of God. According to this theory, the Divine sent intermediary beings, most especially the *deuteros theos*, the Logos, to instruct His creatures. Thus, with Eusebius, the *imperium Romanum christianum* merely raised the standard of Hellenized Rome, to which was added the *labarum*. In other words, Constantine and his successors ruled the Church established by the Son of God. The emperor, as the analogy of God the Father, is necessarily the superior of the priesthood, which represents only the inferior Logos. If Eusebius was right, the Constantinian *renovatio* implied the utter devastation of the Christian economy.

On the other hand, the Greek Fathers taught that the Incarnate Logos was true God and true man, the two natures united without confusion or change. Since Christ as God was the equal of the Father, then, politically

¹¹⁵ In *Jus Graeco-Romanum* 4, ed. K. E. Zachariae von Lugenthal (Leipzig, 1852) 181 ff.

translated, this Christology meant that the Christian Roman Empire was a religio-political organism governed by a *symphōnia* or “dyarchy of powers”: the spiritual and doctrinal power of the Empire the Fathers put into the hands of the *sacerdotium* representing the divinity of Christ, while they placed within the competence of the emperor, as representing His humanity, all things pertaining to the “political” and civil matters. The priesthood was superior to the *imperium* by virtue of the former’s spiritual (divine) function within the Empire. Thus the Fathers snapped the link which the ancients conceived to exist between monarchy—which many Fathers considered the best form of government¹¹⁶—and monotheism. The Emperors were the Christian equivalent of the Hebrew kings. Not an unlikely comparison, since the Fathers believed the Church—to which the Empire was united as one society—to be the New Israel. Indeed, East Rome was a “holy empire” with a transcendental purpose and hope which the Hellenizers never understood—the proclamation of the abiding and redeeming presence in history of the resurrected Christus-Deus.¹¹⁷

These are the ideas we tried to support with several arguments: that the “development” of Christology was accompanied by greater definition of sacerdotal and imperial authority. We did not find it irrelevant to note that some Fathers completely rejected the mating of Church and empire. These were the most sensitive about the limitations of the *imperium* and the dignity of the *sacerdotium*—indeed, about the antithesis between the Church and the world. Again, the elaboration of Christian ontology and Christology appeared together, and both contradicted the theology

¹¹⁶ According to Greek patristic ecclesiology, each bishop and his flock constitute “the Body of Christ.” Each bishop “recapitulates” in himself the flock which he paternally governs. Each bishop is “the image of Christ.” The unity of the churches is essentially a mystery analogous to the unity of the persons of the Trinity. They are ontologically one while empirically many. Historically, they are united by a common origin, faith, law, and love. Yet, for administrative purposes, the churches were grouped into districts or dioceses, while “primacy” belonged to the great and ancient sees of Christianity. “The first throne belongs to the bishops of Rome,” wrote Theodore of Studion, “the second, to Constantinople, then, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. This is the pentarchic authority of the Church. These compose the tribunal of divine doctrine” (*Ep.* 129 [PG 99, 1417BC]). Therefore, the exalted place given to the patriarch of Constantinople by such documents as the *Epanagōgē* must be explained by circumstance rather than ecclesiology. Dvornik suggests that the ascendance of Constantinople in the Byzantine Empire was the result of many things, e.g., its competition with Rome, which led some to oppose to the See of Peter the claim that St. Andrew, “the first-called,” was the evangelizer of ancient Byzantium; the desire to give the capital of the Empire apostolic origin; and, probably, the Carolingian *renovatio* (*The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* [Cambridge, Mass., 1958]).

¹¹⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Theol. orat.* 2, 2 (PG 36, 76AB).

and ontology of Eusebius and his teacher Origen. Is it not curious, we asked, that when Origenism (i.e., Hellenized Christianity) ceased to be a serious problem to the Church, such a document as the *Epanagōgē* appeared to proclaim the patriarch of Constantinople "the living and animate law" of the *societas christiana*? Is it not also true that the victory of the patristic political Christology also meant the defeat or, more accurately, the Christianization of Hellenism? Is it not true, moreover, that the Byzantine *exousia* evolved away from the political theology of Eusebius, which had for many of the early Byzantine emperors defined the Constantinian *renovatio*? In a word, we do not think that the evidence sustains the opinion that Eusebius was the "author" of Christian Rome's political theory. There is simply no logic to the idea that the Church which feared and incessantly denounced the classical *scientia* would accept as her political theorist the philosophy of a man who was threatening to put the asp to her bosom.



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