

Ware, Timothy (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia). *The Orthodox Church*, 3rd Edition. New York, New York: Penguin Books, 1993. 359 pp.

Born in England and converted from Anglicanism to the Orthodox faith at the age of 24, Timothy Ware became Kallistos Ware upon his entrance to the priesthood in 1966, the same year he began lecturing at Oxford on Eastern Orthodox Studies. Although Ware has become a well received historian in Orthodox studies, he is no mere academician. Since 1982, Kallistos has assisted the Ecumenical Patriarch himself, acting as *metropolitan* Kallistos over the archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain under the title Bishop of Diokleia. Furthermore, he has traveled throughout Greece and therefore is familiar with the monastic life of the East (e.g. Mt Athos and the monastery of St. John at Patmos). Having been educated in the West, Ware's historical and theological overview of Orthodoxy has become a widely used introduction to Orthodox Christianity in Western schools and is written with western sensitivities in mind. This makes his book an excellent starting point for the exploration of Orthodoxy for Christians in the West. The first part of Ware's treatment covers the history of the Orthodox Church, while part two takes up various theological themes and also looks at the worship of the Orthodox Church. With unprecedented ecumenical interests in the West still active, Ware's book is still an indispensable resource. Because Christians in the West are largely unfamiliar with Orthodoxy, rather than a mere book review, I have sought to make available a significant portion of the book's content while giving only brief attention to criticism.

Orthodox History

Early Christianity

The history of the Orthodox Church starts at the same time and place that the history of the Catholic Church begins. Both Catholic and Orthodox tradition share in common many of the early figures of Christianity. For example, St. Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch who wrote seven short letters on his way to Rome to be martyred, emphasized both a hierarchical and sacramental church, calling the Eucharist "the medicine of immortality" (13). Catholics and Orthodox alike have canonized St. Ignatius and have adopted many of his teachings. The same could be said of St. Cyprian of Carthage and his emphasis on the unity and salvific exclusivity of the church (14).

In Ware's estimation, the reign of Constantine, his Christianization of Constantinople, and his instigation of the Council of Nicaea "mark the Church's coming of age" (20). Nicaea, and the six Councils that followed, did not seek to explain the mystery of how God might become man, but simply sought to draw a fence around that mystery by excluding certain misunderstandings (20). These councils were not overly abstract and theoretical, Ware assures us, but were concerned with the message of human salvation (20). The reader is reminded by the author that the doctrine of *theosis* (deification)—a doctrine having centrality only in Orthodox soteriology—was taught by St. Athanasius, a champion of Trinitarian Orthodoxy during this

critical period of doctrinal development in the church. It was Athanasius who proclaimed: “God became human that we might be made god” (21).

Protestants who tend to focus only on the theological declarations of the early Councils should notice Ware’s attention to the Council’s ecclesiastical declarations—all of which assumed a hierarchical structure of church government and singled out certain places for special honor in ecclesiastical affairs, i.e. the Pentarchy: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem (22-23, 26-28). From an Orthodox perspective, Rome’s mistake was to go beyond her place of *pastoral* primacy in the Pentarchy (“the first among equals”) and assume for herself supreme power and jurisdiction (27-28). It was also during the period Ware designates as “The Church of the Seven Councils” that Iconoclasm was vindicated in what is now celebrated as “The Triumph of Orthodoxy” in 843 C.E. (31). Veneration of icons was not merely absolved from charges of idolatry or condoned as tolerable. Rather, the veneration of icons was (and still is) seen as a necessary safeguard for a full and proper doctrine of the incarnation (33). “The Iconoclast controversy,” Ware concludes, “is thus closely linked to the earlier disputes about Christ’s person. . . . about human salvation” (33).

Schisms and Attempts at Reunion

Rather than writing off the non-Chalcedonian Christians as mere heretics, Western historians will notice that Ware calls them “Oriental Orthodox Churches,” and he counts their alienation from Chalcedonian Christians as the first major historic division within Christendom, the second being The Great Schism of 1054 between East and West, and the third being the Protestant Schism of the sixteenth century (4). While Western historians have conveniently dated the Great Schism between East and West as beginning in 1054, Ware is quick to point out that starting in 1009 the Western popes were no longer included in the Diptychs (the Constantinopolitan Patriarch’s lists of other legitimate patriarchs). It does not appear coincidental that this is also the same year Pope Sergius IV is thought to have written a letter to the patriarch of Constantinople including the *Filioque*. Since this sort of omission of the Pope’s name from the Diptychs is probably “tantamount to a declaration that one is not in communion with [the patriarch of Constantinople],” Ware considers this to be the real (or “technical”) date for the Great Schism (57).

Ware urges that this religious schism must also be seen in light of a larger context, for it takes place within a schism of Eastern and Western civilizations that unfortunately alienated Eastern and Western Christians (46). Although the schism was due to different developments in Eastern and Western theology and practice (e.g. different theological emphases, different styles of church government, different worship practices), Ware blames the instigation of the schism on a theologian of Charlemagne’s court who accused Eastern Christians of being “heretics” for not accepting the *Filioque* (51). The East had no choice but to respond. As if it was not enough that the Eastern Christians considered the *Filioque* heresy, tampering with the universal Creed without a universal council was considered a sin against the unity of the church. Even Pope Leo III himself, in his letter to Charlemagne, strongly objected to tampering with the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed by adding the *Filioque* without an Ecumenical Council (51).

It was this tampering with the creed without ecumenical consultation, along with the papal claims of universal jurisdiction, that ultimately caused the irreconcilable differences that led to the incidents that culminated in the mutual anathemas of 1054. Exacerbating this formal schism, Crusaders began setting up Latin Patriarchs in the East. This localized the schism in new

ways for ordinary Christians in the East previously unconcerned with the disputes between the pope and the patriarch of Constantinople (59). This brought the schism down to the popular level. The infamous fourth crusade (1204) would further seal in blood the contentious divisions between Eastern and Western Christendom. Ware's understanding of culpability for the schism, however, is not entirely one-sided. He concedes that the East also shares responsibility for fueling the schism. For example, in the riot of 1182, "many Latin residents at Constantinople were massacred by the Byzantine populace" (61). Ware concludes that the schism was, for both sides, "a great tragedy" (61).

The first attempt at reunion with the West, The Council of Lyons in 1274, came during the restored Byzantine Empire under the auspices of Emperor Michael VIII (reigned 1259-82). But this attempt was—to a significant extent at least—motivated by political factors. Emperor Michael wanted the protection of the pope against the attacks of the Sicilian ruler Charles of Anjou, and ecclesial union was the best way to ensure this help (61-62).

The second attempt at reunion—the Florentine Union (meted out at the Council of Florence, 1438-39)—was accomplished in hopes of military support from the West and thus also largely motivated by political interests. Although its results were more impressive, this council ultimately suffered a similar fate as the Council of Lyons. In an official document, the Orthodox accepted the Papal claims, the Double Procession of the Holy Spirit, and the Roman teaching on purgatory (71). Only one member of the Orthodox party was unable to sign his name to the formula: Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus. Furthermore, both John VIII and Constantine XI (the last two emperors of Byzantium) held fast to the union. The Union was proclaimed publicly at Constantinople in 1452, one year before the Turks began their sack of Constantinople. According to Ware, however, not only were the overwhelming majority of Orthodox clergy and people deeply against the Union, many signatories quickly recanted. The responses of the Orthodox faithful were unmistakable. When Isidore, for example, proclaimed the decrees of Florence to Moscow in 1441 he was thrown into prison by the Grand Duke (103). Orthodox people came to think that the Turkish success in their sack of Constantinople was God's punishment for the heresy of the Florence Union where Byzantine leaders "betrayed the faith" (103-11). As for the Archbishop Mark, he was forever canonized as a saint by the Orthodox Church (71).

More recent attempts at unity have looked very different. Patriarch Athenagoras (in office 1948-72) made "the promotion of world-wide Christian unity" one of his main tasks, one for which he was "attacked by more conservative Orthodox in Greece and elsewhere" (129). His successor, Patriarch Dimitrios (in office 1972-91), however, continued to pursue the same agenda. Today, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (elected 1991) "maintains close links with Western Christians" (129). It would seem, then, that a legacy of ecumenism now exists in the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

The Spread of Orthodoxy

Although The Orthodox Church is often accused of not being missionary minded, Ware is concerned to show that Orthodoxy has a strong tradition of missionary outreach. In his chapter entitled "The Conversion of the Slavs," he explores the explosive missionary activity of the ninth century. The missionary work to the Slavs began to take place on a large scale with Patriarch Photius who sent two Greek brothers among the Slavs (Constantine/Cyril and Methodius) who became known as "The Apostles to the Slavs" (73). Ware unfavorably

compares Rome's insistence on a Latin mass to the missionary practice of the East. "The Orthodox Church," Ware exclaims, "has never been rigid in the matter of languages; its normal policy is to hold services in the language of the people" (74). Although the work of these apostles seemed at first to have ended in failure, Ware considers the conversion of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia, to be the result of their missionary labors (75).

Eastern Orthodoxy especially flourished in Russia, initially in Keiv (before the Mongol invasions brought Kievan Russia to a "sudden and violent end") but centering eventually in Muscovy. When Ivan III "The Great" (reigned 1462-1505) married the niece of the last Byzantine Emperor (Constantine XI), he established a link with Byzantium and began assuming the titles of "autocrat" and "Tsar" (an Eastern adaptation of the Roman "Caesar"). The period from 1350 to 1550 Ware considers to be "the golden age in Russian spirituality" and religious art (86). People began to think of Moscow as "the third Rome," the new center of Orthodox Christendom.

Ware warns, however, that some depictions and impressions of "Holy Russia" from this period place "too much emphasis on externals" (110). Nikon the Reformer (1605-81) would later aim to conform Russian Orthodoxy to ancient Greek practices of worship. He not only persecuted all opposition to his reforms, but also tried to make the Church supreme over the State (113). This went beyond the Byzantium notion of dyarchy (or symphony) between the *sacerdotium* and *imperium*, each supreme in its own sphere, and placed the Patriarch's authority over the authority of the Tsar. Because the church had come to be controlled more and more by the state, Nikon wanted to reverse the situation and intervene in civil affairs—even taking on the title "Great Lord" (previously reserved only for the Tsar).

A Council held at Moscow (1666-67) decided in favor of Nikon's worship reforms but against his political reform, reasserting the Byzantine doctrine of dyarchy (113). Ware believes this attempt at political supremacy ultimately caused future Tsars to suppress the office of Patriarch, for soon Peter the Great (1682-1725) would issue the *Spiritual Regulation* of 1721. This *Regulation* abolished the office of Patriarch altogether and replaced it with "The Spiritual College" or "The Holy Synod" (114). Even then, however, the church was not allowed to choose the members of this Holy Synod. This authority now belonged to the Tsar alone, along with the title "Supreme Judge of the Spiritual College" (114). There are many interesting parallels here with the history of the papacy in the West with its long chronicles of tug-of-war between ecclesiastical and secular politics.

Orthodoxy Under Persecution

Because the Orthodox are so unified in their doctrinal commitments, rather than dividing Eastern Orthodoxy according to various strands of theological camps, Ware helpfully divides the Orthodox according to social location: 1) those living in a dominantly Muslim culture, 2) those still living in the Church-State alliance of the Byzantine type, 3) those who were (until "recently") living under Communist rule, 4) those living in the West that comprise what Ware calls "the diaspora," made up of immigrants and converts (a significant portion of which dwell in North America), and 5) those in various missionary movements in places like East Africa, Japan, China, and Korea. Category three (those recovering from Communist control) are "by far the largest of the five groups, comprising as it does the Churches of Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Poland, Albania and Czechoslovakia, and amounting to over 85 per cent of the total membership of the Orthodox Church today" (126).

Persecution is a common theme in Orthodox history. Since the expansion of Islam, Orthodoxy was not allowed to flourish freely under Muslim rule. This is still true today. For example, in the “anti-Greek” and “anti-Christian” riot of 1955, “sixty out of the eighty Orthodox churches in the city [Istanbul] were sacked or gutted and incalculable damage was done to Christian property, with widespread raping and loss of life” (128). The Patriarchate’s printing press was shut down in the 1960s by Turkish authorities. The theological school of Halki near Istanbul was forced to shut down in 1971. “By the early 1990s the Greek community had dwindled to a mere three or four thousand, mostly elderly and poor” (128).

The history of Orthodoxy under Communist rule is also grim. The beacon of Orthodoxy—Russia—experienced intense persecution during the 20th century. The basic attitude of Communist authorities during this century was hostile to Christianity (along with any other religious belief). This is because, as Ware explains the state of affairs, “Soviet Communism was committed by its fundamental principles to an aggressive and militant atheism” (145). After the Bolsheviks came to power, in Ware’s words, “The Church ceased to possess any rights; quite simply, it was not a legal entity” (146). For example, the Church was excluded from all participation in the education system. Ware gives a shocking example of an injunction given to teachers during this period:

A Soviet teacher must be guided by the principle of the Party spirit of science; he is obliged not only to be an unbeliever himself, but also to be an active propagandist of godlessness among others, to be the bearer of the ideas of militant proletarian atheism. Skilfully [sic] and calmly, tactfully and persistently, the Soviet teacher must expose and overcome religious prejudices in the course of his activity in school and out of school, day in and day out. (147)

Article 13 of the “Law on Religious Associations” (enacted in 1929) granted only “freedom of religious belief and of anti-religious propaganda” (146). “The totalitarian Communist State employed to the full all forms of anti-religious propaganda, while denying the Church any right of reply” (147). Furthermore, after 1943, bishops and clergy were not allowed to engage in charitable or social work. Even “sick visiting was severely restricted” (146). “Not only,” writes Ware, “were churches closed on a massive scale in the 1920s and 1930s, but huge numbers of bishops and clergy, monks, nuns and laity were sent to prison and to concentration camps. How many were executed or died from ill-treatment *we simply cannot calculate*” (148, italics added).

Tikhon, the Patriarch of Moscow, anathematized the “the godless rulers of the darkness of our time,” but was thrown into prison by the Communist regime for his outspoken resistance. “What pressures St. Tikhon underwent in custody we do not know,” but by the time of his release his antagonist tone had become more conciliatory. He died later under “mysterious circumstances” (151). Patriarch Sergius—head of the Russian Orthodox Church under the title *locum tenens* from 1925 to 1943 and Patriarch from 1943 until his death in 1944—would later attempt to segregate political loyalty from ecclesiastical loyalty, arguing that one could be both a Christian and a supporter of the State and demanding a “written promise of complete loyalty to the Soviet government” (152). The “exiled Synod,” however, labeled this “Sergianism” and condemned it as “capitulation of the Church to the atheist government” (153). Others, however, supported the policy of Sergius and “felt that he was sincerely seeking to protect the Church” and taking upon himself the “martyrdom of lying” to save the Church from destruction (154). “Members of the Russian Orthodox Church remain to this day deeply divided in their estimate of Sergius’ conduct” (154).

Over time, political leaders—such as Stalin—eventually realized it was in their best interest to make concessions to the church in order to have the full support of the people for war (155). In 1943, Stalin summoned Sergius and two other metropolitans into his presence and allowed them to elect a new Patriarch. After the war, Stalin also permitted a major reconstruction of the Church. Ware warns the reader, however, not to jump to the conclusion that this was a vindication of Sergius’s policy. According to Ware, this change in the churches’ fortunes was “a historical accident – the war” (156). Furthermore, Stalin’s toleration was limited; the State still combated the church through propaganda, disallowing a response; the State still forbade the Church to do charitable social work or youth work; the State still forbade the “religious” education of children, etc.

Perhaps most importantly, the State expected the church leaders to be loyal to the State and squelch the Orthodox dissidents who openly protested against the State’s intervention with church affairs. The *Open Letter* written in 1965 by two Moscow priests from this movement (Fr Nicolas Eshliman and Fr Gleb Yakunin) addressed to Patriarch Alexis “mentioned in detail the repressive measures taken against the Church by the Communist authorities and the lack of resistance, even the apparent co-operation, of the Church authorities,” and urgently called the Patriarch to act (158). “Sadly, yet perhaps predictably, the Patriarch’s only response was to suspend the two priests from their ministry” (158). Other dissidents were “sent to labour camps and exile” and the KGB discredited many of them in various ways (159). “By 1980 most of the leading Orthodox members had been silenced” (159). The Bolshevik Revolution was the single most important historical event that was a catalyst for the spread of Orthodoxy in the Western world, for it “drove into exile more than a million Russians, including the cultural and intellectual élite of the nation” (173). A significant portion of the Orthodox faithful are now in North America, consisting not only of immigrants, but converts. The Orthodox Church in America (OCA), according to the more generous estimates, has over one million members.

When the Communist regime fell in 1992 and the Church in Russia began her slow liberation, she faced shocking costs of repairs, a gaping need for the supply of religious literature, lack of training in social work or religious teaching. They had to “start from nothing” (163). Furthermore, the Church now faced a pluralistic society—there was now true separation between Church and state. Atheism was no longer the State’s “religion,” but neither was Orthodoxy. Protestant and Catholic missionaries are now free to carry out missionary work in Russia and the Orthodox Church has no power to stop it (163). “Russian Orthodoxy under Communism was in a paradoxical way still to some extent a ‘State Church’, protected by the authorities as well as persecuted. Now this is no longer so.” (163). The power of the state can no longer be used to suppress heretical movements of pretenders to Orthodoxy. There has also been a fragmentation of ecclesial structures in Orthodoxy (174). Perhaps the most crippling impairment, however, to the Orthodox Church in Russia in the post-Communist era, is her tarnished moral authority (163). “With the opening up of the KGB files in 1992, many of the laity have been scandalized to discover the extent of the collaboration under Communism between certain bishops and the secret police” (164).

Orthodox Tradition

The Orthodox accept all ecumenical councils as “infallible” and desire to protect primitive beliefs and practices of the church. However, only the first seven ecumenical councils were truly “ecumenical.” Although Catholics went on to have more councils they would

consider “ecumenical,” the Orthodox do not recognize them as authoritative. The Orthodox often consider the “apparent changelessness” of the Orthodox Church as one of its distinct characteristics: it’s “air of antiquity” and faithful continuation of the ancient practices of the church (195). According to Ware, this is also partly why some of the Orthodox fall into an “extreme conservatism” and fail to distinguish between Tradition and traditions (198). The “outward forms” that express the Orthodox Tradition include the Bible, the seven ecumenical councils (the Creed), later councils, The Fathers, the Liturgy, Canon Law, and Icons.

The Bible is honored and venerated as authoritative *within* the Orthodox Church, but not *over* the Orthodox Church. Within the Orthodox Church, Scripture is considered God’s supreme revelation (199). Therefore, its teaching has authority. However, “it is from the Church that the Bible *ultimately* derives its authority, for it was the Church which originally decided which books form a part of Holy Scripture” (199, italics added). Individual readers will inevitably interpret the Bible as they read it, but individual interpreters will always be “in danger of error” if they do not accept the authoritative guidance of the larger Orthodox Church. Unless an individual’s interpretation is accepted by the broader church, it is not authoritative. In this way, “it is the Church alone which can interpret Holy Scripture with authority” (199). Furthermore, the Orthodox Church does not dichotomize Scripture and Tradition, for they see Scripture as itself a part of Tradition.

Orthodox biblical interpretation is heavily influenced by the readings of the Septuagint because the Septuagint translation is considered “inspired of the Holy Spirit” and therefore constitutes God’s “continuing revelation” (200). This also means the ten additional books of the Septuagint are part of the Orthodox canon, although Ware concedes that many Orthodox scholars now consider the Deutero-Canonical Books of the Septuagint as “on a lower footing than the rest of the Old Testament” (200). Although Orthodox scholars have not enjoyed a prominent role in the critical-historical study of the Bible, Ware assures his readers that Orthodoxy “does not forbid” such study (201).

Even if all the doctrinal definitions of the seven ecumenical councils are “infallible,” the *Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed* is the cornerstone of all the creeds, surpassing all subsequent creeds in its importance (202). Orthodox theology is also heavily influenced by subsequent definitions of certain local councils and letters or statements of faith written by certain influential bishops. Ware conveniently lists the most important of these, sometimes called the “Symbolical Books” (203).

While the theology of the Fathers produced the first seven ecumenical councils, “as with local councils, so with the Fathers, the judgment of the Church is selective” and “Patristic wheat needs to be distinguished from Patristic chaff” (204). The Orthodox do, however, see a consistency of mind in the Fathers. This they call the “Patristic mind” (204). Although there is a particular reverence for writers of the early church—especially the fourth century Fathers—“the Orthodox Church has never attempted to define exactly who the Fathers are,” so Ware is optimistic that unless God has “deserted the church,” more Fathers will come (204). The most recent “Father” mentioned by Ware, however, was the fourteenth century Saint: Mark of Ephesus (the one who refused to sign the Florentine Union document).

Ware claims that “other parts of Tradition do not have quite the same authority” as Scripture, the Creed and the Ecumenical Councils (197). When speaking of the Liturgy, however, he emphasizes that certain doctrines that the Orthodox express in their worship can be “just as binding as an explicit formulation,” even though they have never been defined or proclaimed as dogma by Orthodoxy (197, 204). The maxim *Lex orandi lex credendi* [our faith is

expressed in our prayer] is particularly applicable here. Orthodoxy has made very few dogmatic statements, for example, about “the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, about the next world, the Mother of God, the saints, and the faithful departed,” even though their services and the Liturgy reflect these beliefs (205).

Protestants often appreciate the theological definitions of the early councils, but Orthodox take the ecclesiastical declarations with a similar seriousness. Declarations of the ecumenical councils dealing with Church organization and governance are called *canons*. Certain writers compiled these canons, along with other local canons, and wrote explanations and commentaries. Today, the commentary of St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (1800) known as the *Pedalion* [“Rudder”] is the standard Greek commentary on canon law. Although much of this ancient canon law is outdated and out of use, if and when a new general council of the Orthodox meets, Ware hopes they will “revise” and “clarify” (read: update) Canon Law (205).

The Orthodox Church’s devotion to the veneration of two-dimensional icons is perhaps one of her most striking features. The Orthodox consider them as means to attain to “a vision of the spiritual world” (206). God can be revealed through art, yet because the Holy Icons are an expression of Tradition, “icon painters are not free to adapt or innovate as they please” but only within the limitations of “certain prescribed rules” (206). Their art cannot be a mere reflection of the artists ascetic sentiments but “must reflect the mind of the church” (206).

Orthodox Theology

The Trinity

As one might expect given the centrality of *The Creed* in Orthodox life, the foundation of Orthodox theology is the doctrine of the Trinity. The theological definitions of Nicaea are not simply for high theologians or scholars, but have practical import for every Christian. “Our private lives, our personal relations, and all our plans of forming a Christian society depend upon a right theology of the Trinity” (208). To say God is Trinity is to say God is personal, “a perpetual movement of love” (209). Although it is an Orthodox maxim that “all *true* theology is mystical,” and although Eastern theology is much more apophatic than Western theology, the definitional creeds demonstrate that the “way of negation” must always be a counterpart to the “way of affirmation,” or cataphatic theology (205, 209).

The Orthodox have developed an essential distinction between two aspects of God in order to preserve and protect the mystery and transcendence of God as well as the immanent experiential dimension of God: *the essence-energies distinction*. God’s essence is unknowable, but his energies are ever-present in the created world. As John of Damascus put it: “*That* there is a God is clear; but *what* He is by essence and nature, this is altogether beyond our comprehension and knowledge” (209). On the other hand, God exists within creation and is “everywhere present and filling all things,” permeating the universe and “intervening directly in concrete situations” (209). God’s essence and energies are different dynamics of God himself: two sides of the same *being* of God. Therefore, God’s energies “are God himself,” and “we experience them in the form of deifying grace and divine light” (209). We are not able to ever experience the fullness of God’s essence, but only participate in his energies. “No single thing of all that is created has or ever will have even the slightest communion with the supreme nature or nearness to it” (209). However, in the incarnation, God has surpassed merely being present in

the form of his energies; he has come to the human race as a person. “A closer union than this between God and His creation there could not be” (210).

Ware does a good job explaining why the Orthodox think the *Filioque* is heretical or at least dangerous. It undermines the monarchy of the Father, and therefore the distinctness of the persons of the Trinity. According to early Christian doctrine, the Father is the monarch of the Trinity—he is the only person in the Trinity whose origin is “solely in Himself and not in any other person” (211). The Orthodox uphold the monarchy of the Father as essential to Trinitarian doctrine. This is what makes him “Father.” The Son and the Spirit have their eternal being from the Father. The Son is eternally begotten from the Father and the Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father. The “Double-Procession” doctrine of the West obscures this truth, for it has the Holy Spirit proceeding also from the Son. Yet this tension is apparently reconcilable if one conceives of this procession in this way: “the Spirit proceeds from the Father *through* the Son,” for then the Father is still the source (or as the East might say, then the Father is still the Father). Even then, however, the Father must be understood to be the eternal source of the Holy Spirit, and the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son must be seen as a temporal mission. Undermining the distinctions of persons in the Trinity and what makes each person unique leads inevitably to depersonalizing the doctrine of the Trinity and falling into ditheism or semi-Sabellianism (213).

The Orthodox “hawks” follow the polemical spirit of Photius and consider the *Filioque* heresy, whereas the Orthodox “doves” advocate “a more lenient approach to the question” that focuses more on how the language of the *Filioque* is understood than on the phrase itself. For the latter group, the *Filioque* is still “potentially misleading” and a “confused phrase” (213). Ware suggests that the West has a tendency to overemphasize the unity of the Trinity and points to Aquinas as the example of how Western conceptions of the Trinity tend to depersonalize the Trinity. According to Ware, Aquinas “went so far as to identify the persons with the relations: *personae sunt ipsae relations*,” which appears to turn God “into an abstract idea” (215). The “hawks” think that the *Filioque* has caused the West to subordinate the Spirit to the Son—“if not in theory, then at any rate in practice” (215).

Anthropology

That we are made in the image and likeness of God must be understood primarily in terms of the Trinity. In the Greek Fathers “image” and “likeness” are not mere synonyms. Image refers to man as an icon of God: man’s free will, reason, and sense of moral responsibility. “Likeness” on the other hand, refers to moral likeness and “depends” on each individual’s moral choice and human effort (219). To become more and more like God is to become more and more deified or “assimilated to God through virtue” (219). The deified person has become a “second god” or “a god by grace” (219). As the Scripture says: “You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High” (Psalm 82:6). Disease and death are a result of human sin. The human will is weakened and enfeebled by what Greeks call “desire” (Western theologians call this “concupiscence”), but humanity is not thereby entirely “deprived” of God’s grace. Rather, after the fall grace works on the human from “outside” rather than from the “inside” (223). The Orthodox disagree with Augustine’s belief that after the fall humans lose their “freedom” and sin by a necessity due to a “sin nature” (223). To Orthodox, this would seem to contradict human free-will and deny humanity of the “image” of God. Furthermore, babies do not inherit the “guilt” of Adam, only his mortality and corruption. Guilt is not inherited, but humans are guilty inasmuch as they imitate Adam (224).

The Incarnation

Whereas the West tends to view the incarnation as necessary only because of The Fall, Orthodoxy believes that the incarnation is the logical outworking of God's *philanthropia*: his loving desire to be united with humanity. God would still have become incarnate even if there was no fall of the human race into sin. Ware also wants to cast doubt on the common "assertion that the East concentrates on the Risen Christ, the West on Christ crucified" (227). Ware believes that "representations of the Crucifixion are no less prominent in Orthodox than in non-Orthodox churches," but the Orthodox do not separate the glory of Christ from his crucifixion and tend to hold in contrast "His outward humiliation and His inward glory" (226-27). Even the crucified Christ is "Christ the Victor" (228). "The western worshipper, when he meditates upon the Cross, is encouraged all too often to feel an emotional sympathy with the Man of Sorrows, rather than to adore the victorious and triumphant king" (228).

The Holy Spirit

Whereas Western theology tends to have an inexcusably underdeveloped doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Eastern theology "lays great stress upon the work of the Holy Spirit" (230). In a sense, the Eastern theologians consider the sending of the Holy Spirit as the ultimate aim of the incarnation, and the entire Christian life is "nothing else than the acquisition of the Holy Spirit" (230). This acquisition is a human participation in God; it is *deification*; it is *theosis*; it is salvation; it is redemption. Christians are called to "participate in the divine nature" according to 2 Peter 1:4. "The human being does not become God by nature, but is merely a 'created god,' a god by grace or by status" (232). Practically speaking, this takes place to the degree that the human will is conformed to the philanthropic will of God; it takes place to the degree that the human will loves God and others (232). Our "full deification," however, will take place at the Resurrection when our bodies too will become "deified" as the glorified body of Christ (233). The two-dimensional icons of glorified saints in the Orthodox Church depict this final glorification, and remind Orthodox Christians of the redemption of all creation (234). The Orthodox belief in cosmic redemption is what fuels their "increasing concern about the pollution of the environment" (235). The maxim of St. Silouan of Mount Athos sums this concern up this way: "The heart that has learnt to love has pity for all creation" (235).

Ware suggests six points of clarification necessary for not misunderstanding the doctrine of deification.

1. Deification is not for certain Christians, but all Christians.
2. Deification presupposes a continual repentance (and therefore the presence of sin)
3. The methods for deification are not eccentric:
 - a. Go to church
 - b. Receive the sacraments regularly
 - c. Pray to God in "spirit and truth"
 - d. Read the Gospels
 - e. Follow the commandments
4. Deification is a "social process" for it involves loving one's neighbor.
5. Love for God and neighbor must "issue in action."

6. Deification presupposes the life of the church.

The Church

There are many similarities between Orthodox ecclesiology and Catholic ecclesiology. Orthodoxy insists on hierarchical structure, Apostolic succession, the episcopate, the priesthood, prayer to the saints and intercession for “the departed” (239). However, whereas the Catholic church believes in papal infallibility, the Orthodox “stress the infallibility of the Church as a whole” (239). Ware also adds that “to the Orthodox it often seems like Rome envisages the Church too much in terms of earthly power and organization” (239). Orthodox ecclesiology, while having “many strict and minute rules, as anyone who reads the Canons can quickly discover,” nevertheless is more mystical and thinks of the church more in terms of its relationship to God (240). Ware summarizes the Orthodox doctrine of the church in three major points. The Church is 1) the Image of the Holy Trinity, 2) the Body of Christ, and 3) a continued Pentecost (240).

That the church is an “image” of the Trinity means at least two things. First, this is because the church consists of many persons united in one, yet each retaining their own unique personhood. Second, this also means that just as in the Trinity all three persons are equal, “so in the Church no one bishop can claim to wield an absolute power over all the rest; yet, just as in the Trinity the Father enjoys pre-eminence as source and fountainhead of the deity, so within the Church the Pope is ‘first among equals’” (241).

That the church is “the body of Christ,” means “the church is the extension of the Incarnation, the place where the incarnation perpetuates itself” (241). The Church is the “organ” of Christ’s redeeming work, prophetic utterance, priestly ministry, and kingly power (241). Christ has promised his “perpetual presence” in the Church. In Orthodox ecclesiology, this is especially the case in the sacraments. The Church exists “in its fullness” wherever the Eucharist is celebrated (242). “The Church must be thought of primarily in sacramental terms,” that is, “it’s outward organization, however important, is secondary to its sacramental life” (242).

The Church is a continual Pentecost because the Spirit continues to give himself to the Church. Irenaeus wrote “where the Church is, there is the Spirit, and where the Spirit is, there is the Church” (242). The gift of the Spirit is given to the church, but also “appropriated by each in her or his own way,” making the gift of the Holy Spirit very personal (242). The Church is therefore a place of diversity and variety, yet a precisely because it is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, it is also unified. The Church is the true Holy University (my words, not Ware’s)—united by the Holy Spirit, yet diversely gifted by the Holy Spirit.

This Church is also both *invisible* and *visible, divine* and *human*. It is invisible because it includes all the saints of history and the angels. It is visible because it consists of specific congregations worshipping on earth. It is human and its members are sinners; yet it is divine for it is the Body of Christ (243). While the West has grown accustomed to distinguishing between the visible and invisible church, the Orthodox does not separate these two, “for the two make up a single and continuous reality” (243). The visible church and the invisible church are the very same church. Finally, in Orthodox theology, one can say that individual members of the Church are sinners, but one cannot therefore say that The Church sins, for it is the sinless Body of Christ.

Human sin cannot affect the essential nature of the Church. We must not say that because Christians on earth sin and are imperfect, therefore the Church sins and is imperfect; for the Church, even on earth, is a thing of heaven, and cannot sin. ... St. Ephraim of Syria rightly spoke ... ‘The mystery of

the Church consists in the very fact that together sinners become something different from what they are as individuals; this ‘something different’ is the Body of Christ’.” (244).

The Orthodox believe that the unity of the Church “follows of necessity from the unity of God” (245). “There is only one Christ, and so there can be only one Body of Christ. Nor is this unity merely ideal and invisible” because, as we have seen, for the Orthodox the visible and invisible church are *the same* church. The “undivided church” is not something that existed only at the early stages of Christianity and something we hope to attain in the future. It is a present reality in the here and now. On earth, it exists in a “visible community” (245). Therefore, the Orthodox Church admits of no schism *within* the church, only schisms *from* the Church.

For Catholicism, the Pope is the “unifying principle” of the Church, but for Orthodoxy, the unifying principle is sacramental communion (246). “The act of communion therefore forms the criterion for membership of the Church” (246). In case the reader has not figured it out by this point, Ware explicitly spells out the implication of this aspect of Orthodox ecclesiology: “Orthodoxy, believing that the Church on earth has remained and must remain visibly one, naturally also believes itself to be that one visible Church” (246). The Orthodox Church, according to Orthodox ecclesiology, is not just the “real” Church or the “right” church—it’s the *only* Church. Ware speaks with a tone of disapproval for Orthodox theologians who “sometimes speak as if they accepted the ‘Branch Theory’” that allows for different branches of the Church (e.g. Catholic, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, etc.). Therefore, it is visibly one and there are no divisions within the Church. Ware’s comment that this will probably seem a bit “arrogant” is a humorous and delicate understatement.

Nor is this all. “Orthodoxy also teaches that outside the Church there is no salvation (*Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*). For Orthodoxy this statement is redundant; a tautology. Ware explains: “Outside the Church there is no salvation, because salvation is the Church” (247). Does this mean Catholics and Protestants are outside salvation? Ware answers this question as if the answer were obvious, but he gives a surprising answer: “Of course *not*” (247). This takes some careful explaining:

As Augustine wisely remarked, “How many sheep there are without, how many wolves within!” While there is no division between a “visible” and an “invisible Church,” yet there may be members of the Church who are not visibly such, but whose membership is known to God alone. If anyone is saved, he must *in some sense* be a member of the Church; *in what sense*, we cannot always say.

But Ware’s attempt to explain his surprising answer does not resolve the obvious tension. If the Orthodox Church is the *only* church, and the unity of the Church is *visible*, then the question of how one can be considered a member of the Orthodox Church who does not belong to this visible Church (i.e. those who do not have sacramental communion in an Orthodox Church) is indeed a grand mystery. Furthermore, whoever the Orthodox think these secret members of the Church are, they must certainly not be Catholics or Protestants, for the Orthodox believe that if they alone convened a general council (excluding Catholics and Protestants), it would be a true Ecumenical Council with the same authority of the first seven Councils.

Criticism

One does not need to read between the lines to see that Ware is not writing as a disinterested observer of The Orthodox Church. His book could be considered an enthusiastic and engaging commendation of Orthodox Christianity to Western Christians. At various points throughout the book, his overview of Orthodoxy comes across as apologetical in tone. I will draw out two examples and give a brief critique of them: 1) his insistence that the Orthodox Church is utterly unique from anything Western and 2) his historical representation of Patriarch Photius.

The Uniqueness of Orthodoxy

Ware wants his readers to see that “Orthodoxy is not just a kind of Roman Catholicism without the Pope,” but distinct from any Western “religious system” (2). To Ware, Protestants and Catholics both have more in common with each other than either of them do with Orthodoxy; they are “two sides of the same [Western] coin” (2). Indeed there appears to be a subtle (but noticeable) pejorative use of the word “Western,” along with the assumption that Western influence spells the degradation of Orthodoxy (see esp. 116-117).

Ware also appears to have been influenced greatly by Alexis Khomiakov (the first “original” Russian theologian) and his insistence that all Western theology “betrays the same [wrong] fundamental point of view, while Orthodoxy is something *entirely* distinct” (123, italics added). Ware introduces his readers to Orthodox theology this way:

Christians in the west, both Roman and Reformed, generally start by asking the same questions, although they may disagree about the answers. In Orthodoxy, however, it is not merely the answers that are different—the questions themselves are not the same as in the west. (1)

Ware also emphasizes that the Orthodox Church has never undergone a Reformation or Counter-Reformation like the West, but were only affected by this upheaval in an “oblique” way (1).

As we begin to explore Orthodox theology with Ware, however, it quickly becomes clear that Ware’s claims about the absolute uniqueness of Orthodoxy are exaggerated. For example, thinking of Scripture as existing “within Tradition” and not something entirely distinct from Tradition is one of the ways Catholics have responded to the Protestant position of *sola scriptura* (196-97). Protestants would likely think of Ware’s argument that “it is from the Church that the Bible ultimately derives its authority” as a “Catholic” argument, along with his argument that “individual readers, however sincere, are in danger of error if they trust their own personal interpretation” (199). Ecumenical Councils are binding to both Catholics and the Orthodox, even if they disagree about what would qualify as an ecumenical council. Ware assures his readers that Orthodoxy believes the Church should be a Scriptural Church “just as firmly” as Protestants (199). Although the Orthodox (along with Protestants) think Catholic claims of papal authority have resulted in “too great a centralization” in matters of church government, nevertheless, all Catholics and Orthodox alike share in the assumption that the church is to be governed by an authoritative hierarchy (216). The Orthodox Church may very well be much more than simply a kind of Catholic Church without a pope, but in many areas of church government they are similar enough to cause some Protestants to strain to see what major differences there would be if the pope were not in the governing equation.

Nor is this all. Orthodoxy in fact shares many assumptions and questions in common with other Christian traditions. It would appear Ware himself proves by his overview of Orthodox doctrines that much of Orthodox theology is very close (if not the same) as in other Christian

traditions. If we are to take Ware as fairly representing the Orthodox position on grace and free-will, it is clear the Orthodox Church falls in the Arminian side of the Arminian-Calvinist debate, for even his way of phrasing the issue bears Arminian assumptions and leaves the “synergy” between God and man ultimately dependent upon the human, for “God knocks, but waits for us to open the door” (222). This is an Arminian notion of synergy that attributes the granting of grace to God and the acceptance of this grace to the human person, whereas Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin all wished to attribute even the acceptance of grace to God’s grace itself. That is, much of Western theology—following Augustine—has thought of the human free-will as the proper object of God’s grace, and thus one of the proper functions of grace is to effectively move the free human will to freely accept salvation. As Aquinas put it:

The justification of the ungodly is brought about by God moving man to justice. For He it is *that justifieth the ungodly* according to Rom. Iv. 5. Now God moves everything in its own manner, just as we see that in natural things, what is heavy and what is light are moved differently, on account of their diverse natures. Hence He moves man to justice according to the condition of his human nature. But it is man’s proper nature to have free-will. Hence in him who has the use of reason, God’s motion to justice does not take place without a movement of the free-will; but He so infuses the gift of justifying grace that at the same time He moves the free-will to accept the gift of grace.¹

To present the issue as Ware does—that either one believes in synergy or else that God draws people by “force and violence”—demonstrates Ware’s Arminian notion of free-will (222). This gives the reader the impression that even though the Orthodox Church did not participate actively in the Reformation debates, nevertheless, she not only asks the same sort of questions that the Western traditions have asked, but answers such questions in the same way that many Western theological traditions have answered them. Furthermore, although the Orthodox Church certainly did not participate in the Reformation debates as actively as Protestants and Catholics, they were, however, forced to give their position on many of the fundamental questions that Protestant theologians were raising (see esp. 94-99).

Can we really say that Protestant and Catholic inquiry about papal authority, grace & free-will, the number and nature of the sacraments, the authority of scripture vs. tradition, etc., is *fundamentally* different than Orthodox inquiry? Are we not asking the same questions? If Protestants and Catholics are not generally asking the same questions asked (or answered) in Orthodox theological inquiry (as Ware claims), how can such Protestants and Catholics ever hope to find answers to their deep theological inquiries in the Orthodoxy tradition? Indeed, why have so many Protestants, for example, converted to Orthodoxy because they have found in Orthodox tradition more satisfying answers in their theological quest? Given the degree of overlap between Western and Eastern theology, Ware’s claim that Orthodoxy does not ask the same questions as other “Western religious systems” and is somehow *entirely* unique appears to be considerably misleading.

¹ *Summa Theologica*, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 5 vols., rev. ed. (1948; repr., Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1981), I-II.113.3. Furthermore, any movement of the will toward God is “already informed with grace” because it is the result of grace. *ST I-II.111.3.*

St. Photius The Great

Ware's picture of Photius is much more flattering than the picture we receive of him in Western historical treatments. Rather than explain to the reader that the "schism of Nicolas" began because the rightful Patriarch of Constantinople (St. Ignatius) was forced to resign through the use of torture after he refused to give communion to the Emperor's sexually immoral uncle, Ware chooses his words very carefully:

Soon after his accession [Photius] became involved in a dispute with Pope Nicolas I (858-67). The previous Patriarch, St Ignatius, had been exiled by the Emperor and while in exile had resigned under pressure. The supporters of Ignatius, declining to regard this resignation as valid, considered Photius a usurper. When Photius sent a letter to the Pope announcing his accession, Nicolas decided that before recognizing Photius he would look further into the quarrel between the new Patriarch and the Ignatian party. (52-53)

This account does not give consideration to why Pope Nicholas was determined to "investigate" the situation or why Ignatius's supporters refused to recognize his resignation as valid. It therefore cleverly obscures what many historiographers consider the occasion for the schism. No matter how brilliant of a scholar Photius was (and there is no doubt about his scholarly abilities), the details surrounding his ascension as Patriarch of Constantinople are tainted with questionable politics. Ware, on the other hand, clearly is a great admirer of Photius and delights in painting a flattering picture of him as St. Photius the Great. He borrows Ostrogorsky's word of praise that Photius was "the most distinguished thinker, the most outstanding politician, and the most skilful diplomat ever to hold office as Patriarch of Constantinople" (52). Perhaps Photius was indeed all these things, but perhaps he was also a very shrewd politician, and perhaps Photius's to-be-expected Orthodox position on the doctrine of Papal supremacy was not the deepest matter of concern for pope Nicholas.

Conclusion

All in all, Ware's book is perhaps the most engaging and helpful introduction to Orthodoxy available for the Western world.² His enthusiastic tone and apologetical stance, far from making the book less commendable, will actually help the reader better sympathize with his Orthodox perspective. Ware's occasional explicit criticisms of his own tradition,³ sensitivity to Western concerns, summaries of why the *Filioque* could be considered heresy, frequent contrasts between Orthodox positions and Protestant or Catholic positions, all add to the value of his book and give it a delightful pungency. Although his treatment is terse by design, his last chapter, entitled "Further Readings," conveniently lists numerous sources in topical order for those who wish to do further study. While his introduction to Orthodoxy is enlightening and elegant, much

² It is considered "a classical presentation of The Orthodox Church ever since it first appeared in 1963." Edward G. Farrugia, "The Orthodox Church," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 62, no. 2 (1996), 536.

³ He mentions, for example, that due to the traditional alliance between church and state in many Slavic countries, the Slavs "have often confused the two and have made the Church serve the ends of national politics (77). Nationalism, in Ware's book, has been "the bane of Orthodoxy for the last ten centuries" (77).

of his analysis is now outdated. One can only hope that soon, following Ware's example, a more up-to-date treatment of Orthodoxy will replace his now classical introduction.

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