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"La relation du Fils au Père dans les conceptions théologiques des origines au Concile de Nicée", Joseph Grzywaczewski, Paris 2010 : [recenzja]

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Joseph Grzywaczewski
*La relation du Fils au Père dans les conceptions théologiques
des origines au Concile de Nicée*

Paris 2010, ss. VII, 471

The book is written by Fr Joseph Grzywaczewski, a Polish priest and Rector of the Polish Seminary in Paris, France. Fr Grzywaczewski has lectured at the Catholic Institute in Paris for some years and presented his dissertation for the degree of habilitation at the University of Card, St Wyszynski in Warsaw on May 19, 2011.

Debate about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son has existed since the birth of Christianity. The relationship of the Holy Spirit was first questioned in the 4th Century. So the Book reminds us of the treasures of Scripture and the texts of the early Fathers of the Church. It is written in accordance with the methodology of the French Theological School. The main text draws on original quotations from *Sources Chrétiennes*. The author studied many ancient works including 70 Christian sources and 20 Non-Christian texts. Comprising 4 chapters, the book includes 35 supplementary pages of French, English, German and Polish theological works.

Chapter 1 presents St Peter's Ascent Vision of Christ through Our Lord's Manhood, Divinity, Passion, Death and Resurrection. Faith is linked with the Old Testament tradition, whereas St Paul's Descent Vision arises from never having met Jesus Christ in person. He considers Jesus Christ as the glorified Son of God. Fr Grzywaczewski in comparing these differing views demonstrates that it is not difference in Faith that arises between the two points of view but rather two distinct ways of seeing Christ. So it is that later in history, two traditions were developed.

The first maintained that Christ was a man who played a pivotal role in God's Plan, becoming Divine. This is described as the Adoptionism Tendency, while the latter tradition maintains that Jesus Christ was an Angel sent by God, hence the establishment of the Docetic or Modalistic Tendency.

The proclamation of Christ as God caused one of the most difficult questions of Christianity: if Christ is God, does it mean that there are two Gods? This was raised by Justin in his work *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho* and is the central issue of Fr Grzywaczewski's thesis. This assertion was unacceptable to the Jews, whose religion was monotheistic. The proclamation of Christ as the Son of Mary and also the Son of God was difficult too for pagan society to accept. Greeks and Romans were reluctant to reject their own cults and could not understand how Christ could be held as superior to their own heroes.

Chapter 2 is consecrated to Jesus Christ true God and true Man. Adherents of other tendencies, heresies and views would not accept the existence of

another God beside God the Creator, so they attempted to explain Jesus Christ in their own ways. Their heresies, like Patripassianism, were condemned by the Church. The True Faith was defended by the teaching of Hipolit, Tertullian and St Basil. Fr Grzywaczewski says that real theological reflection begins with the idea of Logos, a concept with biblical origins (see p 182-188). The idea of God the Son has been described already by Philon (p 189-197).

The author says that the idea of Logos was the principle of dialogue with Judaism. He concludes that the relationship of Christ to God the Father was established in the Old Testament and not in Greek philosophy.

Chapter 3 points out the complicated problem of Subordinationism as presented by Tertullian, Novatian and especially Origen, whose views were later condemned. However, thanks to French theologians such as H. U. von Balthasar, Origen was later understood by the method known as Dogmatic Anachronism (p334).

Chapter 4 summarizes the whole work. It deals with Arius and the Council of Nicaea. Arius is described as the man who continues the teaching of modalists, not Origen. The Council accepted the controversial theory of homoousios (p398), as in a proper sense it meant *identical* and was likened to the modalistic vision of Christ.

The Council analysed the theological reflection of three centuries and rejected the Descent Vision of Subordinationism and proclaimed the equality of God the Father and God the Son together with the ontological identity of God the Son through God the Father.

The theme of the book is quite a difficult one to address. One of the book's reviewers, Fr Andrew Nowicki, has written that in his opinion the work is of great merit. Firstly, it has been published diligently in French making it immediately accessible to a large audience in the Roman Church. The author has drawn on a large body of references including Polish publications thereby building a bridge on the subject between Eastern and Western thought.

Although the period of debates was brought to a close by the Council of Nicaea and the theme of homoousios, questions still continue to present themselves.

The book would be useful for those studying Theology and for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. The analysis of Logos and references to *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho* are helping with an understanding of Judaism. The concept of Logos is shared by Christians and Jews alike.

The book describes well the relationship between God the Father and God the Son and helps us to know the Christ who became man and his Father to whom the Son is leading us thanks to the activity of the Church.

Ks. Grzegorz Jaśkiewicz