Christian character to their hunger and thirst after justice, after personal dignity, racial self-respect and civil liberty. It will be dangerous work, for the Church's educational effort must impinge on the raw and passionate stuff of racial, political and economic exasperation.

All the while the dominant force in South Africa will most probably remain totally impervious to Catholic influence; its eyes fixed on the target of national survival; its religious, political, cultural and economic powers concentrated on what it imagines to be the God-given mission of the Afrikaner nation. So the day comes on apace when White supremacy and Black nationalism will meet in head-on collision, and trial by ordeal of the Church's social mission seems destined to accompany the pangs of its birth and the first uncertain steps of its infancy.

THE GREEKS IN THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE[1]

JOSEPH GILL, S.J.

THE history of the ecclesiastical breach between East and West, and of the attempt to heal it, is very long and obscure. There was the Photian schism of the middle of the ninth century, but that was over within a few years. Two centuries later the Patriarch Cerularius was excommunicated by an over-zealous papal legate and retaliated in kind; but that quarrel was not final. The Fourth Crusade captured Christian Constantinople and never went any further, but set up a Latin kingdom there which lasted less than sixty years and did as much to antagonize the Greeks as anything else. Yet, a little more than ten years after he regained his throne, the restored Greek Emperor—but not the Greek Church—had accepted the Latin faith and union in the Second Council of Lyons (1274). His purpose, however, was political, to win the Pope's help to prevent any attempt to re-establish the Latin kingdom of Constantinople.

From then on over the next century, whenever Constantinople was more in danger than usual by reason of the rapid advance of the Turks, the Byzantine emperors approached the pope of the time, as head of western Christendom. They asked for military aid, and they

1 This article by the author of *The Council of Florence*, which the Cambridge University Press published last year, appeared first, in Italian, in *La Civiltá Cattolica*.

offered the possibility of union of the Churches through the medium of a general council. The offer was, of course, a sort of bribe, but not entirely so. Both East and West sincerely deplored the schism that divided them and would have wholeheartedly welcomed a genuine union. The threat from the Turks increased towards the end of the fourteenth century and at the same time the Latin Church, because of its own schism, became more conciliar-minded. Contacts, therefore, between East and West multiplied.

The negotiations that ended with the arrival of the Greeks in Italy in March 1438 began at least at the Council of Constance (1414-18). Constance had given unity to the Latin Church with the election of Martin V as Pope and thereby had put an end to the Great Schism of the West, during which there had been for some forty years two or even three rival 'popes'. There were Greek delegates at Constance, whose overtures for union of the Churches Martin received enthusiastically. He was so persuaded of the readiness of the Orientals for union—and that by submission to the Latin faith and discipline—that he twice appointed an Apostolic Legate to go with a small suite of theologians to Constantinople to effect it. Death in the one case and a Turkish siege of Constantinople in the other prevented his legates from fulfilling their office. But so anxious was he to bring the good work to a conclusion that, while the siege was still in progress, he sent a Nuncio, Antonio de Massa, O.F.M., to make the first preparations.

Antonio was commissioned to request answers to certain specific demands. One of these was, whether the co-Emperors and the Patriarch were ready to abide by the declaration made in their names by their ambassadors, that they and the Greek Church were willing to unite 'under that faith which the holy Roman Church holds and under obedience to the same Roman Church'. The answer returned by the Emperor John VIII (November 1422) was a sad disappointment to the Pope. He entirely rejected the optimism of his ambassadors and demanded that union should be treated of in a General Council when, after free and complete discussion of all the differences that divided the Churches, both sides would loyally accept whatever the Holy Spirit should inspire the council to decide.

The prospect of a council of many Greeks and few Latins, and in Constantinople, frightened the Pope. His efforts for union slackened. But his enthusiasm still burned bright and he still used what opportunities came his way to persuade the Greeks to take part in a council, but now a council to be held in Italy. In the end he succeeded. In 1430 Greek ambassadors carried back to Constantinople the draft of an agreement that in some city of the eastern

Italian littoral there should be a synod 'peaceful, apostolic, canonical, without violence or strife, free', in which the Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople with the other three patriarchs of the East and a body of higher clergy would take part with the Latins. The agreement was accepted by the Emperor and the Greek Church. Messengers were on their way to Rome carrying the document signed and sealed, when at Gallipoli they learnt that Martin was dead (20 February 1431).

Martin's successor, Eugenius IV, was also very desirous of uniting the Churches of East and West. His predecessor had summoned a general council of the Latin Church to meet in Basel in 1431, but had died before the council opened. Eugenius, partly because he thought that the council would not succeed in Basel, partly also because he wanted to make it attractive to the Greeks by locating it in Italy, decided to prorogue the Council of Basel to meet in Bologna a year and a half later. But the Fathers of Basel refused to disperse and they received strong support for their obstinacy both from the Church and from the civil powers. Eugenius had to withdraw his dissolution (December 1433) and the council continued.

Meantime, however, both council and Pope separately had been treating with Constantinople. Three Greek ambassadors arrived in July 1434 at Basel, bringing with them the agreement negotiated with Martin V. There were discussions in which its provisions were defined in greater detail and the agreement thus clarified was embodied in the decree *Sicut pia mater* formally passed by the council on 7 September 1434 and accepted by the Greeks in the name of their principals. Besides containing a multitude of details about money and the defence of Constantinople in the Emperor's absence, it pledged the Greeks to come to a town in Italy at the expense of the council, there to treat of union. It was to be a council where 'each should freely declare his judgment without hindrance or violence from anyone', and where 'the Emperor of the Greeks and their Church should have its honours, that is, those that it had at the time when the present schism arose, provided always that the rights, privileges and honour of the Supreme Pontiff and the Roman Church and of the Roman Emperor be respected, and, if any doubt should arise, that it be submitted to the decision of the aforesaid general council'. Basel, it seems, for the sake of union, was prepared to ignore the schism between the two Churches and to treat with the Greeks as in the old days of concord

While the Fathers of the council had been engaged with the Greek envoys in Basel, Pope Eugenius, unaware of their activities, had sent Cristoforo Garatoni as envoy to Constantinople to treat

of the same subject. Garatoni was empowered to arrange a council in Constantinople itself. That was a proposal most agreeable to the Greeks. Garatoni returned in January 1435 with two Greek envoys authorized to conclude an agreement with the Pope. The terms of that agreement disclose Eugenius' mind on the whole subject of relations with the Greeks. It laid down that a papal legate with a sufficient suite of theologians should meet the Greek Emperor, Patriarch, prelates and notables in Constantinople, that the Latins should have complete freedom to propose, argue and prove their views, and that the Greeks should have a similar freedom: 'Also that the prelates and others who had come together from both sides should use the method of disputation, proposing and replying as above, and, as is the custom of those disputing, supporting their arguments with texts from the Gospels and the other sacred writings and also from the holy Fathers and Doctors. Also that whatever shall be concluded by common agreement of both of the two sides about the differences that exist between the two Churches should be inviolably observed and preserved intact under the necessary penalties and censures by all the subjects of the two Churches, both Western and Eastern.'

No sooner, of course, had this agreement between Rome and Constantinople been made than news of it reached Basel. The Fathers were aggrieved at the Pope's 'interference' and let him know of their wrath. Eugenius at that time was trying hard to preserve amicable relations with the council, and so he sent Garatoni and the two Greeks to Basel to report. With them he sent a draft of the agreement and letters. He told the council that, if it insisted on its own method, he would yield and accept it, but that his method was the better, and he strongly advised them to adopt it, viz. 'that a legate of the Apostolic See with prelates and other of our most learned men be sent to the city of Constantinople, where the prelates and other notables of the Greeks with the Emperor and the Patriarch should meet in a similar way, and there by the method of disputation, just as at an earlier time was done in the sixth council, with the truth made plain, each of the two Churches should reach the desired result of union and peace.'

The sixth council, to which Eugenius likened his projected council in Constantinople, was, of course, an ecumenical council, the third of Constantinople, of the year 680. But as events turned out, he was not destined to have his council in Constantinople. Instead, when the Fathers of Basel defaulted on the agreement *Sicut pia mater* that they had made with the Greeks, he undertook to fulfil its conditions. The result was the Council in Ferrara-Florence, which was regarded

by its participants as an ecumenical council. That from its very inception it was, in fact, an ecumenical council of the Latin Church, there is no doubt. It was convoked as such and as the continuation of the general council of Basel. The Greeks obviously also regarded it as ecumenical from the start. They had always demanded a general council as a condition and means of union. They would not have undertaken the long journey from Constantinople in winter for anything less. They asserted their belief that it was a general council time and again—the Emperor, the Patriarch, Mark Eugenicus who opposed union consistently, Scholarius and others all said the same. It can certainly be doubted whether it was in fact a general council for the Greeks from the start, but it can hardly be doubted that Pope Eugenius thought that it was a general council from the very start also for the Greeks. That is the obvious conclusion to be drawn from his comparing his projected meeting in Constantinople with the sixth general council. It explains his readiness to welcome free discussion of all doctrinal differences and his acceptance beforehand of the council's eventual decision. It underlay his words in the Bull *Doctoris gentium* (18 September 1437), by which he first announced the transfer of the Council of Basel to 'the city of Ferrara, which we from now on appoint for the future ecumenical council', as being convenient for the Greeks and in conformity with the pact *Sicut pia mater* made with them. It is manifest in the way he links the assent of the Greeks with his declaration of ecumenicity publicly read in the solemn inaugural session on 9 April 1438[2] and the similar announcement of the transfer of the council to Florence on 10 January 1439.[3]

Part of the explanation of Eugenius' attitude—which was shared also by the Fathers of Basel and the Latins in general—was doubtless his firm conviction of the impregnability and superiority of the Latin Church. Free discussion could, therefore, only result in the Greeks admitting their errors and adopting the Latin faith. Union would inevitably be on the basis of Latin dogma. The Latins thought and spoke of union as the *reductio*, the 'bringing back', of

2 'We decree and declare, with the assent of the said Emperor and Patriarch and of all those here in the present synod, that it is a holy, universal, that is ecumenical, synod in this city of Ferrara. . . . Given in Ferrara in a general synodal session celebrated in the cathedral church of Ferrara. . . .'

3 'We should have preferred indeed that this universal Council, which we initiated in this city, should have continued in the same. . . . But with the approval of our most dear son, John Palaeologus, Emperor of the Greeks, and of our venerable brother Joseph, Patriarch of Constantinople, and with the approbation of the sacred Council, as from now we transfer and declared transferred this ecumenical, that is universal, synod from this city of Ferrara to the city of Florence . . . with those securities and safe-conducts which we extended to all in the beginning of the sacred Council. . . .'

the Greeks. For their part the Greeks held similar views as regards the Latins. In their eyes, the Western Church had caused the schism when, without awaiting the decision of a general council, without even consulting the other patriarchates, it had acted as if it were the whole Church by arbitrarily introducing the *Filioque* into the common Creed, and, to make things worse, the *Filioque* that was doctrinally wrong. The Greeks, therefore, came to Ferrara convinced that they would easily show the Latins the error of their ways, that then the *Filioque* would be removed from the Creed and union be established on the basis of the first seven councils. It is not surprising that, when two such parties met, there should have been a little friction.

There was, however, surprisingly little. Some of the Latins who were sent to welcome the Greeks on their arrival at Venice in February 1438 were indignant because neither Emperor nor Patriarch rose to meet the Cardinal papal Legate when he entered. Eugenius expected the Patriarch to follow the Latin custom of salutation by kissing the papal foot: Joseph II refused in spite of pressure, and the Pope gave way, but in consequence he received the Patriarch and his clerics not publicly, but privately. There was some altercation about the position of the thrones for the sessions. Eugenius wished to be centrally placed between the two Churches, which would then have been arrayed on his left and right. The Greeks would not consent. In the end the papal throne was slightly in advance of the rest and apart on one side, with the Greek Emperor's throne exactly opposite and equal to that of the Holy Roman Emperor, and then came the thrones of the Patriarch and the other oriental prelates. In the first doctrinal sessions there was disagreement on the method to be pursued. The Pope, to the annoyance of some of his subjects, allowed the Greeks to follow their own way.

These small dissensions were motivated on each side by a principle. The Latins thought that theirs was the 'mother' Church receiving back the erring 'daughter' Church, and so they tried to assert from the start their superiority as a Church. The Greeks, for their part, were conscious of no sense of inferiority; if anything, they felt that they had come to judge the soundness of Latin beliefs and to receive the Latins into union according as their faith was, or could be reduced to, orthodoxy. They would therefore brook nothing that set them below the Latins, but demanded at least equality. They were outnumbered numerically, so that if questions in the Council were to be decided by a count of heads, the Latins must have prevailed every time that there was disagreement between the Churches. A deputation, therefore, of Greeks, before ever the dogmatic discussions

began, visited the Pope to propose that the approval required for any conciliar decision should be determined not by the overwhelming vote of a majority, but by concord between the two Churches which should be regarded, as it were, as units and as of equal standing. It is not known what answer Eugenius gave, but as things turned out the union between the two Churches proclaimed in Florence was in fact reached in pretty much that way.

The road that led to that union was, however, long, and caused many miseries to the Greeks before they reached its end. But those were miseries arising from circumstances; they were not difficulties of principle. In the general arrangements of the council the Greeks were treated as equals. In certain respects they behaved as principals because, if they refused to discuss, the council came to a temporary standstill; and several times they did, in fact, refuse to discuss. The Emperor made it a condition of the solemn inauguration of the combined council on 9 April 1438 that there should be an interval of four months before the dogmatic discussions began so that the representatives of the western princes, whom he wished to meet, might have time to arrive. To fill in that period usefully the Latins persuaded the Greeks to discuss something at least in committee; the *Filioque* and the Eucharist were barred by the Emperor as being dogmas, so that the Latin choice fell on Purgatory. The public sessions where dogma was at last debated began only on 8 October. Each Church appointed six orators to present its views. Each had three notaries to record the speeches. The Greeks furnished the admirable interpreter, Sagundino. Any document quoted had to be produced. The Churches spoke in turn, first the Greeks who also had chosen the exact subject to be discussed—the addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed—then the Latins. The speaker did not always finish his discourse in a single session, though the sessions lasted for at least three hours; in practice he often had to finish in a second. Such were the discussions in Ferrara, which in fact ended in stalemate.

In Florence, in the hope of speeding things up, the method of 'question and answer' was adopted, i.e. of short speeches with an immediate reply and not infrequently interruptions. There were only two who spoke, John of Montenero, O.P., for the Latins and Mark Eugenicus for the Greeks. The basis of argument was Scripture, the Fathers, the first seven councils. No one, not even a Latin, made any appeal to the second Council of Lyons which had already defined the doctrine of the *Filioque*.

The procedure followed both in Ferrara and Florence in the discussions was what Eugenius had proposed in 1434—that both

sides used 'the method of disputation . . . supporting their arguments with texts from the Gospels and the other sacred writings and also from the holy Fathers and Doctors', i.e. free and equal debate; and it led nowhere. The fourteen sessions in Ferrara had not convinced most of the Greeks of the legitimacy of the Latin addition to the Creed; the eight sessions in Florence left most of them still with the belief that the *Filioque* was unsound as doctrine. In the atmosphere of disappointment and almost despair, the Greeks refused to attend any more discussions in public sessions. They twice sent an ultimatum to the Pope that they would have no more disputations, that they were content with their traditional faith, that the Latins should find some other way leading to union or else they would go home to Constantinople. For two months the council laboured in that atmosphere of depression and frustration. Various expedients were tried to find a solution of the chief difference that divided the Churches, the doctrine of the *Filioque*, but without result. Finally the force of the patristic argument was brought home to the Greeks and, weary of their long separation from family ties and homeland, they were glad to acknowledge the orthodoxy of the Latin belief. That is to say, they recognized that the Latin doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Spirit also from the Son was harmonious with the traditional belief of their Church, even though differently expressed, and so was orthodox and no bar to union. Neither Church was wrong; both Churches were equally right. The Patriarch Joseph II in a formal statement that he made in the Greek synod a week before his death (he died on 10 June 1439, two days after Greeks and Latins had reached complete agreement on the Holy Spirit) prefaced the announcement of his readiness to unite with the Latins by the assertion, which he thought completely compatible with union: 'Never will I change or vary the doctrine handed down from our fathers, but will abide in it till my last breath'.

It might be said that on both sides there was a certain lack of logic, a certain discrepancy between theory and practice. But so deep were the common roots, so closely bound together the traditions of the two Churches, traditions founded on the councils that they both acknowledged and on the Greek Fathers and the Latin Fathers that they both venerated as saints and doctors, so great was the agreement in faith and sacraments, that neither Church could easily dismiss the other as outside the fold. To the Latins, the Greeks were 'somewhat heretical' (to use the words of John Gerson), but not heretical like the Wyclifites, for example, or the Hussites. The Council of Basel hastened with apologies to change the phrase

in its decree *Sicut pia mater* that seemed to liken the Greeks to the Hussites, when the Greeks strongly objected to it. John Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris, saw nothing to disapprove of in the Greek appeal to a general council, for the Latins then were doing just that to solve their own problem of schism. He noted too that 'we Latins owe much' to them, the Greeks. The schism had somehow robbed the Church of an element that it wanted for its completeness.

If that sentiment was to be found in the Western Church, much more so was it felt and voiced in the Eastern. A favourite simile of the Greeks was that the schism had rent the seamless robe of Christ. Union would repair the rent, but, till there was union, the robe remained spoilt and the Church, which should be one, was split, maimed, diminished, incomplete. For the Greeks, then as now, a general council meant the meeting of both Churches. Neither Church apart could celebrate an ecumenical council by itself: it would be a contradiction in terms. So for them Florence was the first ecumenical council after the second Council of Nicaea (787).

The Latin attitude to the Greeks in Florence was the fruit also of another influence. In 1370 Pope Urban V refused to accede to a Greek suggestion for a general council, on the grounds that doctrines already settled in the Latin Church might be called in question. In 1430, as we have seen, Martin V, and in 1434 Eugenius IV and the Council of Basel, had no hesitation in agreeing to open and free discussion of all theological differences between East and West in a common council. What was responsible for this great change of outlook was the schism in the Latin Church from 1378-1417?

In the first place it made the Latins, now that they had experienced the sad fruits of schism from near at hand, abominate it as the worst of all evils and desire to end it at all costs. But more than that, it had infused a spirit of conciliation. Pope and antipope, with their rival curias and colleges of cardinals, had hurled excommunications at each other and at all aiders and abettors, and each ignored the other's fulminations. The 'popes' did little to end the schism. It was, in the event, cardinals, theologians, princes, who, in spite of the mutual excommunications, acted by bringing together the supporters of the rivals and by persuading the 'popes' to abdicate or by deposing them, and finally in the Council of Constance convened by King Sigismund they restored peace by the election of Martin V. That process was possible because it was not felt that the schism had put any of the innocent adherents of the rivals out of the Church, and this in turn made a spirit of concession possible, of not insisting on the absolute letter of the law. It was carried out in councils—

Pisa (1409) and Constance (1414)—convened primarily to end the schism, where the 'schismatical' parties met to act in common accord to a common end, the general good of the Church. That method was effective in the Latin Church. It seemed, therefore, to be the right way to reach peace with the Greek Church. Gerson, writing after the Council of Pisa which he mistakenly thought had already solved the Latin schism, addressed these words to the King of France: 'Men of good will ought to work valiantly that the council which has been decreed should be held within the three years. And since the Greeks can and wish to join in, there is (so it would appear) no more apt arrangement for the peace of which we speak than the said council should be, nor could this business be accomplished in any better way, just as the last council was necessary for the peace of the Latins.' The Council of Florence was the fulfilment of Gerson's hope. Though some of Gerson's views were more radical than those of several of his contemporaries, he was not an isolated thinker. The history of the time had imposed a reassessment of values and every one came under its influence to some degree. The Council of Basel exaggerated the new ideas to the limit. The Council of Florence reduced them to a juster proportion, subordinating them to the established principles of a sound theology.

Note: In next month's issue of BLACKFRIARS an article will appear on 'The Background of the Council of Trent', by H. O. Evennett, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and in the following month Edmund Hill, O.P., will contribute an article on 'The Vatican Decree'.

MORALS AND POLITICS

LORD PAKENHAM

THERE is generally understood to be some special link between morals and the career of the politician. Every professional man, the business executive, the professor, the actor, the doctor and the barrister (to confine ourselves to laymen) encounters plenty of moral problems in the course of his career and in the case of the last two categories—lawyers and doctors—a number of well-known issues are recognized under the headings of forensic and medical ethics. But there is generally thought to be more to it than this in the case of politicians. They not only encounter personal