

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### **The Divine Attributes in Relation to the Way of the Divine Existence.**

The Attributes of God that are related to the Divine Existence are those that refer to the Divine Nature itself without any relation to the Creation. Their basis is that God is the “*Absolute Being*,” the “*Self-existing*,” the “*Perfect*,” the “*existing beyond any boundaries of space or time*,” the “*Needless*” and the “*Blessed*,” the “*Invisible*” and “*Incomprehensible*” to any intellectual mind. In other words, God being Perfect is “*beyond any limitation*” and “*want*,” having absolutely “*all perfection*.” He is “*Self-existing*” not only because “*He is that He is*,” but because He does not receive His existence from anyone else. He is the One Who gave the existence to everything that exists outside Himself, which He created from nothingness and brought into being. Being beyond time, He is “*without beginning*” and “*without end*,” “*Eternal*,” not distinguishing within Himself past, present or future, but always present. Thus God is unalterable and unchangeable because any alteration is the result of a change of events, which creates time. Being beyond space, He cannot be contained by any creation and yet He is All-present without being confused with the Creation. Being the Absolute and Perfect Spirit, God is invisible and incomprehensible even by the Angels. Finally, God being the Perfect Being is the Absolute Blessed One.

## 1. The Unlimited and Infinity of God.

God is unlimited as He cannot be restricted by any boundaries. He is free from all limitations and want, and having Absolute Perfection His Essence is infinite and unlimited.<sup>1</sup> God's Essence is understood as being unlimited, but not unspecified. God is for Himself unlimited and the Absolute Being Who distinguishes Himself from Himself through His natural, logical and moral Eternal Energies.<sup>2</sup>

Holy Scripture states that "*great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.*"<sup>3</sup> "*Great is our Lord, and mighty in Power; His understanding is infinite.*"<sup>4</sup> "*Behold, the Mighty One is great, and we shall not know Him: the number of His years is infinite.*"<sup>5</sup> "*He Who is the Blessed and only Potentate.*"<sup>6</sup>

The holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church characterize God as being the Absolute Infinite Being Who is impossible to be seen or comprehended. The only perception of Him is His infinity and incomprehensibility because as God is unlimited by Nature, He cannot be limited nor restricted by any boundaries. He is without form, unlimited and immense beyond any intellectual

---

<sup>1</sup> Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>2</sup> Rhosse, *System*, pp. 305-306. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 145(146):3.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 147(148):5.

<sup>5</sup> Job 36:26.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinth. 6:15.

concept or knowledge. Because God is infinite, He cannot be named. He is the Absolute Good. He is the fullness of all good things and being Perfect, He is above all perfection.<sup>7</sup>

The infinite Attributes of God reveal His unlimited Perfection. God is infinitely Perfect in all things and is the Source of all Virtues. He is Perfect in seeing, Perfect in creating, Perfect in majesty, Perfect in foreknowledge, Perfect in goodness, Perfect in justice, Perfect in philanthropy. God is Perfect in all His Attributes and there is no part of His Divine Essence where one Attribute is lesser than another, but all are equal and absolutely Perfect. He is neither greater in Philanthropy and smaller in Wisdom, nor greater in Foreknowledge and smaller in Justice, but all His Attributes are equal.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. The Self-existence of God.

Self-existence is an Attribute that is related to the infinity of God and cannot be ascribed to anyone else but only to the infinite and self-existing God Who is the only Source of Life, Who “*has life in Himself*”<sup>9</sup> and does not

---

<sup>7</sup> St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 38*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 317. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *That there are not three gods*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 129. *Ibid*, *Against Eunomius*, Homily III, ch. 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 601. *Ibid*, *Against Eunomius*, Homily IX, ch. 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 808. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the Word and Son of God*, book I, ch. VI, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 801.

<sup>8</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, VI, 8, 5, 10, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 552, 542, 553.

<sup>9</sup> John 5:26.

receive it from some other source, but rather “*gives to all life.*”<sup>10</sup>

Clement the Alexandrian speaks of God as being the only One Who was, is and shall always be.<sup>11</sup>

St. Dionysius observes that God being the absolute Being is the Giver of Life to all beings, having within Himself the Absolute Existence.<sup>12</sup>

St. Athanasius the Great of Alexandria ascribes to God the titles: “*self-wisdom, self-truth, self-light, self-virtue, self-power, self-justice;*”<sup>13</sup> whereas St. Dionysius adds the following: “*self-life, self-goodness, and self-wisdom.*”<sup>14</sup>

St. John of Damascus beside the above titles ascribes to God the term “*self-essence.*”<sup>15</sup>

### 3. The Self-sufficiency of God.

Inseparable from the above Divine Attributes is the self-sufficiency of God. According to Holy Scripture the

---

<sup>10</sup> Acts 17:25.

<sup>11</sup> Clement the Alexandrian, in **B**, v. 7, p. 117.

<sup>12</sup> St. Dionysios, *About Divine Names*, ch. V, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 818.

<sup>13</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Greeks*, 46-47, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 93.

<sup>14</sup> St. Dionysios, *About Divine Names*, ch. II and V, in Migne, *P.G.*, 3, 636, 645 and 820.

<sup>15</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the Holy Trinity*, book I, ch. VIII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 808.

Lord is self-sufficient and has no need of anyone. *“Nor is He worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath and all things.”*<sup>16</sup> *“For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?”*<sup>17</sup> God has no need of any worship and glory that we offer Him. We offer these because we need to do so. Through this means of communication we participate in His Divine Grace and Gifts.<sup>18</sup>

The self-sufficiency of God is an endless Fountain of Life that flows with love to all, requiring no replenishment or renewal whatsoever. God has no need of anyone or of anything. He is self-sufficient, giving to all everything necessary, being the Creator of all,<sup>19</sup> *“for in Him we live and move and have our being.”*<sup>20</sup> And although God dwells in the Heavens He *“humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the Heavens and in the earth. He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap”*<sup>21</sup> and gives *“patience to the faint-hearted”* and *“Life to the broken-hearted.”*<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Acts 17:25.

<sup>17</sup> Psalm 50(51):12-13.

<sup>18</sup> II Maccabees 14:35.

<sup>19</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Against Greeks*, in Minge, P.G., 25, 56.

<sup>20</sup> Acts 17:28.

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 113(114):6-7.

<sup>22</sup> Is. 57:15.

#### 4. The Without Beginning and Eternal Attributes of God.

The absolutely self-existent and self-sufficient Being cannot be fully understood except that He is beyond any time and space in which all creatures exist. God is *without beginning* and *without end*, not created by another being, nor having begun life in a certain period of time. He does not come to an end or have a successor.<sup>23</sup> “*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*”<sup>24</sup> The Lord “*shall endure forever*” and His Name shall be remembered by “*all generations,*” for “*they will perish, but He will endure*” and His “*years will have no end*”<sup>25</sup> for He “*alone has immortality, dwelling in Unapproachable Light.*”<sup>26</sup> The time of this world is like split-seconds to God when compared to Eternity. “*With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*”<sup>27</sup>

Because we are limited beings moving in time, we cannot have a perfect concept of Eternity. God as the Absolute Being is neither bound within nor part of time.

---

<sup>23</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, IV, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 457. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 49-50. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>24</sup> Psalm 90(91):2.

<sup>25</sup> Psalm 102(103):12, 26, 27.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Tim. 6:16.

<sup>27</sup> 2 Peter 3:8. Psalm 90(91):4.

Therefore we should not say that God “*was always and is and shall be,*” but rather that He “*is always.*”<sup>28</sup>

The terms “*century,*” “*Eternity,*” “*without being*” and “*immortality*” expressing long periods were formed by our perception of time. Consequently they cannot express the essential meaning of “*Everlasting,*” “*without beginning*” and “*without ending*” ascribed to God. He is the “*Eternal King*”<sup>29</sup> and remains absolutely independent of time because He “*lives forever and ever,*”<sup>30</sup> as will those who inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. They too will live with any restrictions of time.

Although God is beyond time and change of circumstances, He should not be understood as being inactive while He rests overseeing His Creation.<sup>31</sup> Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, assures us that the Father “*has been working until now, and I have been working.*”<sup>32</sup>

Time only began when God created the visible world.<sup>33</sup> It did not exist before the Creation and is the result of the movement of matter and the constantly changing events within Creation. Therefore God Who looks down upon His Creation with love and compassion

---

<sup>28</sup> St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 38, ch. 7 and 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 317, 320.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Tim. 1:17

<sup>30</sup> Rev. 10:6.

<sup>31</sup> Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, II, 6, in *B*, v. 7, p. 309.

<sup>32</sup> John 5:17.

<sup>33</sup> Gen. 1:1.

is the Cause of all time, directing all events to the final destination of man's Salvation in Jesus Christ.

## 5. The Unchangeable Attribute of God.

Inseparable from the Eternal Attribute of God is the Unchangeable Attribute,<sup>34</sup> which excludes any change or alteration or “*variation or shadow of turning*”<sup>35</sup> of His Existence. God is unchangeable and unalterable, neither being decreased nor increased but remaining always what He is,<sup>36</sup> as He says through the Prophet Malachi, “*for I Am the Lord your God, and I Am not changed.*”<sup>37</sup>

The Unchangeable Attribute is related inseparably to the Eternity of God, because any change or succession of events would suggest the existence of time within His Existence. Since we accept God as Eternal, accordingly we must accept Him as Unchangeable.

The Divine Being is completely devoid of any change because that would indicate a variation of condition either to a greater or lesser degree<sup>38</sup> and there can be no increase or decrease because God needs nothing

---

<sup>34</sup> Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 50-52. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 114-115. Bryennios, *Paralipomena*, ch. XVIII, v. III, p. 86.

<sup>35</sup> James 1:17.

<sup>36</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, IV, §§ 4, 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 457, 460. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, I, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 435.

<sup>37</sup> Mal. 3:6.

<sup>38</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeam*, XXVII, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 214.

to be added to or subtracted from His Divine Existence, otherwise He would not be Infinite.<sup>39</sup>

The Divine Energies of God, and especially the Divine *Economy* (the Incarnation of the Word and Son of God), are related to the world because they take place in time within Creation whereas God Himself remains Unchangeable.<sup>40</sup>

Assuredly, the Unchangeable Attribute of God in relation to His Divine Energies manifested in time remain an inscrutable Mystery. It is impossible to comprehend how God's Divine Energies act in time and simultaneously remain united to, undivided and inseparable from His Essence. Using the sun as an example, its radiance and light shines over the world but everything according to its own ability and condition, either benefits or suffers from the effects of the same light - some receive life and grow while others may be damaged and die. For example sunlight shining on candle-wax causes its destruction because it will melt, whereas the effect of the same sunlight on healthy eyes brings the joy of being able to see the beauty of Creation. However light can also cause pain to eyes that are diseased or damaged.<sup>41</sup>

The Divine *Economia* (the Incarnation of the Word and Son of God), existed in the Eternal Plan of God before

---

<sup>39</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, XII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 933.

<sup>40</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, IV, 14, in *B*, v. 9, p. 242. Cf.: Owen, *Theology*, p. 85.

<sup>41</sup> St. Augustine, in Migne, *P.L.*, 36, 918.

all time. At the Incarnation no alteration occurred in the Word as He took on human nature and became perfect Man. Changes only transpired in the human nature and Body of Christ as He grew from an infant to a child to a youth to an adult. *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.”*<sup>42</sup>

The Love of God towards man remains unchangeable, because the Salvation offered on the Cross by the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, existed in the Will of God before all ages and was not a result of any additional action by God. God did not begin to love us after Christ’s Crucifixion because He always loved us, even before the creation of the Cosmos. This is the reason why St. Paul proclaims that *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*<sup>43</sup>

When we read in Holy Scripture that God appears to be angry<sup>44</sup> or repents,<sup>45</sup> these are not changeable conditions that refer to His Divine Existence but rather to our relationship with God. God’s Divine Energies offer Life to man as long as he accepts them with piety and fear of God while the same Divine Energies appear to punish

---

<sup>42</sup> Luke 2:52.

<sup>43</sup> Rom. 5:8.

<sup>44</sup> **Ex.** 4:14. **Nu.** 11:10; 22:22. **De.** 6:15; 29:23. **Jos.** 7:1. **Judges** 2:20; 10:7. **1 Kings (3 Kings)** 15:30. **1 Ch.** 13:10. **2 Ch.** 25:15. **Job** 9:13; 21:17. **Psalms** 6:1; 7:6. **Is.** 1:4; 5:25. **Jer.** 4:26; 23:20. **La.** 2:22; 4:16. **Na.** 1:3. **Zep.** 2:2-3.

<sup>45</sup> **Psalms** 110(111):4. **Jonah** 3:9-10. **1 Samuel (1 Kings)** 15:35. **Jer.** 26:19. **Amos** 7:3, 6. **Zec.** 8:14.

man when he remains sinful.<sup>46</sup> For example, God's relationship differs with that of a virtuous man, that of a sinner and that of a repentant.<sup>47</sup> Therefore these changes take place within man and not within God, because God always remains Unchangeable.<sup>48</sup>

## 6. The All-presence of God.

God is beyond any constraints of time or space. He is not only without beginning, Eternal and Unchangeable but being the Absolute Infinite and Unlimited Spirit, He is All-present. This Divine Attribute is classified with those attributes that are related to God's Way of Existence. Infinity and Unlimited are the Absolute Attributes of God. The All-presence is a relative attribute and one can refer to it mainly ever since Creation occurred. It is related to the Unlimited Attribute of God and we can say that the All-presence is the qualification of the Unlimited Attribute of the Divine Essence in relation to the limited world.

God, Who is Infinite and Unlimited, must be understood as the Son in the Father and the Holy Spirit, and as the Father and the Holy Spirit in the Son, and as the Holy Spirit in the Son and the Father. We must not perceive the Persons of the Holy Trinity as though they complete one another, as though the Son fulfills the

---

<sup>46</sup> Is. 1:16-20.

<sup>47</sup> Rhosse, *System*, p. 315.

<sup>48</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Against Manicheans*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1580.

emptiness of the Father, the Father fulfills the emptiness of the Son and so on, because this concept can only be applied to Creation because “*the Father is perfect and the fullness of the Deity is the Son, as well as the Holy Spirit.*”<sup>49</sup>

In relation to Creation God is Uncontainable. He is not restricted or limited to physical places, neither is He contained by anyone because He is beyond and above all space.<sup>50</sup>

Holy Scripture speaks of God’s All-presence in the Book of Isaiah, saying: “*Thus said the Lord, ‘Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool: what kind of a house will ye build Me? And of what kind is to be the place of My rest? For all these things are Mine.’*”<sup>51</sup> Also in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah it is written: “*I Am a God nigh at hand, said the Lord, and not a God afar off. Shall any one hide himself in secret places, and I not see him? Do I not fill Heaven and earth?*”<sup>52</sup> In Psalm 119 it is written: “*The knowledge of Thee is too wonderful for me; it is very difficult, I cannot attain to it. Where shall I go from Thy Spirit? And where shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I should go up to Heaven, Thou art there: if I should go down to hell, Thou art present. If I should spread my wings to fly straight forward, and sojourn at*

---

<sup>49</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Homily 3*, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 324.

<sup>50</sup> Clement the Alexandrian, in *B*, v 8, p. 261. St. Athanasius the Great, *Epistle about the Nicene Council*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 433. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the place of God and that only the divine is indescribleable*, book I, ch. XIII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 852.

<sup>51</sup> Is. 66:1-2.

<sup>52</sup> Jer. 23:23-24.

*the extremity of the sea, it would be in vain, for even there Thy hand would guide me, and Thy right hand would hold me.*"<sup>53</sup> Christ Himself reassured the Samaritan woman, that "*the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father ... But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth ... God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"<sup>54</sup>

The All-presence of God should not be understood as though the Divine Existence is confused or mixed with the Cosmos. God is present everywhere and undivided. It is not as though one part of Him will be here and another part elsewhere. God acts everywhere simultaneously through His One simple Energy but in different ways because He is All-present.<sup>55</sup> God is All-present throughout the universe but He is above and beyond it and cannot be contained by it. He is fully present throughout the entire Cosmos but cannot be restricted by any space. God "*according to His Essence is the fullness of all the Cosmos, but according to His Power He cannot be contained by the Cosmos*".<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Psalm 139(140):6-10.

<sup>54</sup> John 4:21, 23, 24.

<sup>55</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the place of God and that only the divine is indescribable*, book I, ch. XIII, in Migne, P.G., 94, 852. St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, III, § 22, in Migne, P.G., 26, 369.

<sup>56</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the place of God and that only the divine is indescribable*, book I, ch. XIII., in Migne, P.G., 94, 856.

God should not be discerned as being the Soul of the Cosmos like the soul in man's body. God is Spirit Who penetrates through all things and contains all things but cannot be contained or restricted by anything. God does not expand throughout the universe because this would imply that God is matter. In fact, He is above and beyond the visible and invisible world.<sup>57</sup>

Although God is All-present by His Existence, by His Nature He remains pure and unmixed with the things of the world<sup>58</sup> and while He is not far away from anyone, everything by nature is far from Him.<sup>59</sup> So we are unable to ascribe any type of dimension to God because that would restrict Him to space. Instead we proclaim the greatness and majesty of His Nature that is beyond and above all.

According to Eugenius Boulgareos<sup>60</sup> God is All-present according to:

1. His *All-knowing*, because nothing can be hidden from Him.

2. His *Almightiness*, because in Him we live and move and exist.

---

<sup>57</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, VI, 71, in **B**, v. 10, p. 114. St. Augustine, *Epist.* 187, c. IV, § 11, in Migne, *P.L.*, 33, 836.

<sup>58</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *About the Holy Trinity*, Homily 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 75, 73.

<sup>59</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, III, § 22, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 369.

<sup>60</sup> Boulgareos, *Theologicon*, p. 103.

3. His *Essence*, because He cannot be described or limited.

God is All-present because His Essence is Absolute Simple, which means that He is neither synthetic nor made of His Divine Attributes. So we say that wherever His Almightyness is, there His Essence necessarily should be. But again if we say that God is All-present within His Essence, we face the danger of falling into Pantheism as well as misleading ourselves into believing that the All-presence of God is accomplished by expanding the Divine Essence.<sup>61</sup> Thus we face the danger of ascribing the meaning of quantity to God. St. Cyril of Alexandria states: “*the Divine is not in a place, neither in quantity, nor has a body.*”<sup>62</sup>

It is because of our limited minds that are unable to understand God’s All-presence, that we say He “*dwells*” in Heaven and has His Throne there. Obviously, God cannot be contained in Heaven, otherwise we would portray Him as being lesser in comparison to the Heavens. He is certainly beyond the Heavens and the earth and all that is contained therein. So, when Holy Scripture states that God “*dwells*” in Heaven, it indicates the close relationship between God and the world wherein He Acts, reassuring everyone and everything everywhere of His All-presence and Almightyness. Subsequently, by saying God’s “*place*,” we mean the condition of Grace that the faithful and virtuous dwell in while enjoying God’s Promises

---

<sup>61</sup> Owen, *Theology*, p. 90.

<sup>62</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Habbakuk*, ch. III, in Migne, *P.G.*, 71, 897.

together with the Holy Angels and Saints, glorifying Him for ever and ever.<sup>63</sup>

## 7. The Invisibility and Unintelligibility of God.

God being the Absolute Spiritual Being is Invisible and Unintelligible. God's invisibility is the natural result of the spirituality of the Divine. God is bodiless, invisible and untouchable by Nature. St. Athanasius the Great of Alexandria teaches us that because God "*has no body, which can be touched and as the Absolute Spirit, He is infinite and indefinite and unformed and unsearchable and untouchable and invisible.*"<sup>64</sup> The Divine Nature is not "*like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.*"<sup>65</sup> In the Old Testament God forbade the Israelites from making any idols to be worshipped.<sup>66</sup>

Christ Himself assured us that "*no one has seen God at any time.*"<sup>67</sup> Anyone who should say that God has a Body<sup>68</sup> has been misled by their own imagination. Therefore St. John Chrysostom states that "*if anyone says*

---

<sup>63</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the place of God and that only the divine is indescribleable*, book I, ch. XIII., in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 852. St. Athanasius the Great, *Against the Greeks*, § 42, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 84. Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 600.

<sup>64</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Against the Greeks*, § 26, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 56. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 28, § 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 33.

<sup>65</sup> Acts. 17:29.

<sup>66</sup> Ex. 20:3-5.

<sup>67</sup> John 1:18.

<sup>68</sup> Tertullian, in migne, *P.L.*, 2, 289.

that 'I have seen God', he is the one who especially has not known Him, since he proclaims the invisible God to be visible."<sup>69</sup> Whenever it is mentioned in Holy Scripture that holy men had seen God or He had appeared to them, we must understand that they did not see God as He is by Nature but only a part of His Glory, which was revealed to them according to their ability of receiving it.<sup>70</sup> Therefore the use of the terms "as" or "like"<sup>71</sup> are very common.

Accordingly, Abraham did not see God as He is but as "three men"<sup>72</sup> whereas Jacob saw God standing at the top of the ladder in the form of a man, in his dream.<sup>73</sup> Elsewhere it is recorded that he wrestled with Him till the morning.<sup>74</sup> To the Prophet Elijah God revealed Himself not by His Nature but as "a gentle breeze"<sup>75</sup> and he saw God "as the likeness of a man above."<sup>76</sup> None of the Prophets had ever seen the true Nature of God, nor did they speak of it because it is impossible to see Him Who is Absolutely Bodiless. Therefore the Prophets had not seen

---

<sup>69</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *To Psalm 143(144)*, § 2, in Montfaucon, v. 5, p. 555.

<sup>70</sup> Zigabinos, *To John*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 129, 1128. Theophylactus of Bulgaria, *To John 1:18*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 123, 1164D-1165A.

<sup>71</sup> **Ex.** 24:17. **1 Samuel (1 Kings)** 2:2. **Psalm** 36(37):6. **Ez.** 1:13, 24. **Daniel** 7:9-10. **Matth.** 3:16. **Mark** 1:10. **Luke** 3:22. **John** 1:32. **Rev.** 1:13-16; 2:18; 4:3; 14:14.

<sup>72</sup> Gen. 18:1-2.

<sup>73</sup> Gen. 28:11-15

<sup>74</sup> Gen. 32:24-31.

<sup>75</sup> 2 Kings (4 Kings)19:12.

<sup>76</sup> Ez. 1:26.

the Lord Himself except what God had revealed to them, which was a small radiance of His Divine Glory.<sup>77</sup>

Man is unable to see the fullness of God's Glory just like he is unable to look directly at the brightness of the sun. Furthermore God said "*no man shall see My Face, and live.*"<sup>78</sup> Even the spiritual Bodies of Heaven - Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Principalities, Authorities, Cherubim and Seraphim - cannot see God as He is but only as He manifests Himself to them. This is why in the Vision of the Prophet Isaiah the Seraphim covered their faces and feet,<sup>79</sup> because they were unable to look at the fullness of the Divine Light.

God does not appear as He is but as He Wills. We must never forget that God said: "*No man shall see My Face and live.*"<sup>80</sup> God makes Himself known to whomever He wills.<sup>81</sup> He appears as a flaming Fire out of the bush,<sup>82</sup> as a Pillar of fire or cloud,<sup>83</sup> or as a gentle Breeze.<sup>84</sup> Only the Son of God with the Holy Spirit can see and know the fullness of God the Father.<sup>85</sup> He who knows the Son knows the Father because he who has seen the Son has seen the Father, for the Son is in the Father and the Father

---

<sup>77</sup> **Is.** 6:1-3. **Ez.** 1:4-28; 2:10; 44:1-3. **Dan.** 7:9-10. **Amos** 9:1. **Zach.** 3:1; 4:1-3.

<sup>78</sup> Ex. 33:20.

<sup>79</sup> Is. 6:2.

<sup>80</sup> Ex. 33:20.

<sup>81</sup> Ex. 25:22.

<sup>82</sup> Ex. 3:2.

<sup>83</sup> Ex. 14:19; 24.

<sup>84</sup> 2 Kings (4 Kings) 19:12.

<sup>85</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, VI, § 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 545.

in the Son <sup>86</sup> and “*no one comes to the Father except through*”<sup>87</sup> Jesus Christ, the Son of God, “*and the one to whom the Son Wills to reveal Him.*”<sup>88</sup>

## **8. The Blessedness of God.**

Finally, as much as we have tried to explain the Divine Attributes according to our limited intellectual capabilities, it remains impossible to fully comprehend and describe the Indescribable. The Absolute Being, in Whom is all Perfection, “*is the Blessed.*”<sup>89</sup> The Lord our God Who is needless and self-sufficient, unalterable and unchangeable, is “*the fullness of joy*”<sup>90</sup> and His Peace “*surpasses all understanding.*”<sup>91</sup> He is the Absolute Blessed One and thus the Self-Blessed.

---

<sup>86</sup> John 14:7, 9-11.

<sup>87</sup> John 14:6.

<sup>88</sup> Matth. 11:27.

<sup>89</sup> 1 Tim. 6:15.

<sup>90</sup> Psalm 16(17):11.

<sup>91</sup> Phil. 4:7.