

CHAPTER SIX.

The Doctrine of the Triune God

The Christian Doctrine that God is One is a common doctrine and applies to the Jewish and Islamic faiths as well. This Truth is not denied even by rationalists and philosophers. The specific and unique characteristic of the Christian Doctrine is that *God is One in Trinity and Trinity in One.*¹ God is One according to His unique and undivided Essence. God is also Trinity according to His Hypostases which differ from one another, being co-eternal Persons Who have no beginning and are of the same Essence and Energy.²

The Truth concerning the Triune God was revealed mainly in the New Testament. The same True God was revealed in the Old Testament but strictly Monotheistically with only a few indications concerning the Trinity. The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of the Word were made known to the Prophets and the Apostles through the Revelation of the natural Glory and Divinity of Christ in the Old and New Testament.³ These indications were not clear and they would have remained obscure if the Light of Divine Revelation did not shine in the New Testament through

¹ Bryennios, *Paralipomena*, ch. XVI, v. III, p. 84.

² Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, pp. 96-98. Kefalas, *Catechesis*, p. 85. Damalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 10-11. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 61-64. Labadarios, *Sermons*, pp. 19-21. Ware, *Way*, pp. 33-39. Lossky, *Theology*, pp.36-39

³ Romanides, *Dogmatique*, v. 1, p. 194.

the Incarnation of the Word of God in the Person of the God-Man, the Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament one finds God speaking in the plural form⁴ instead of the singular form. This use of the plural form “*let Us*” indicates that God is referring to Others Who are equal in Authority to Him. God is not referring to Angels because they do not create and He is not obliged to give an account of His Actions to His own Creation.⁵ However, the most solid Teachings of the Holy Trinity are manifested by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and by His Holy Apostles.⁶

The Orthodox Church proclaimed this Truth to the world from the beginning and used it as an essential part of its worship. As time passed the Orthodox Church clarified this Doctrine through the Decrees of the Holy Ecumenical Councils. These Holy Councils were convened in order to defend the True Orthodox Faith against the false teachings of heretics that were expressed at different times. As a result, the Orthodox Church renounced the false teachings of Arius and Macedonius who proclaimed that the Son and the Holy Spirit were created by the Father; the teachings of Sabellius and Monarchianism who renounced the belief that God is One in Deity but Three Persons in Hypostasis.⁷ Consequently, in the struggle against these heresies in the West, the Orthodox Church used the terms “*Natura,*” “*Substantia*”

⁴ Gen. 1:26; 2:18; 3:23; 11:7.

⁵ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 127-128.

⁶ Ibid, p. 129.

⁷ Bryennios, *Paralipomena*, Homily XVI, v. I, p. 259.

and “*Essentia*” whereas in the East, to express the same terms, they used the terms “*Nature*” and “*Essence*” as well as “*Hypostasy*” and “*Person*” in order to express the unity of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. In addition, the term “*of the same Essence*” (“*Homoousios*” “*ομοούσιος*”) prevailed over the term used by Arius “*something like*” (“*homoiousios*” “*ομοιούσιος*”). The terms “*not born*” (*αγέννητος*) and “*not made*” (*αγένητος*), as well as the terms “*born*” (*γεννητός*) and “*made*” (*γενητός*) were also clarified.

The Three Persons or Hypostases were distinguished from one another as co-existing before time and without beginning but at the same time They were declared to be inseparable and undivided. It was also declared that beside the hypostatic attributes of each Person of the Trinity, They have One and the same Energy and all the Divine Attributes of the One and same Divine Essence. Thus, the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit creates everything. In this way the Unity of the Holy Trinity is preserved and One God is proclaimed within the Orthodox Church “*Who is above all, and through all, and in all.*”⁸ “*Above all*” refers to the Father Who is the Beginning and the Source of all. “*Through all*” refers to the Son Who is the Word of God the Father. “*In all*” refers to the Holy Spirit Who perfects and sanctifies all that the Father and Son do.

God is Trinity not only in words but in Existence. As the Father is God the BEING, likewise the Son is God the BEING. The Holy Spirit is also God the BEING, Who with the Father and the Son are inseparable and consist of

⁸ Ephes. 4:6.

the One Deity, the Holy Trinity. Although Three in Persons, we proclaim that God is ONE in Essence and undivided.

The above Doctrine is the entire basis and foundation of the Orthodox Christian Faith concerning Creation, Salvation of mankind and all the other Doctrines of the Orthodox Church.

1. Monotheism in the Old Testament and the Indications Concerning the Holy Trinity

The great Truth concerning the Holy Trinity as the One God was especially revealed in the New Testament. Undoubtedly in the Old Testament the True God revealed Himself and through Moses strict Monotheism was preached as the first article of Divine Revelation. *“I Am the Lord your God ... You shall have no other gods beside Me.”*⁹ *“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”*¹⁰ The Jews, however, proved to be disobedient to the Will of God and worshipped false gods and idols on numerous occasions.¹¹ Because their wickedness and immaturity prevented the elected people of God from accepting the revelation of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, it naturally remained a vague reality until Divine Providence prepared the way for man to receive the fullness of the Divine Revelation.

⁹ Ex. 20:2-5.

¹⁰ Deut. 6:4-5.

¹¹ Judges 2:16-19.

In the Old Testament we have the period of preparation, according to which the Work of Divine Providence guided the events for the establishment of the Mystery of the Divine Revelation. These events were ambiguous and incomprehensible not only to the people but even to the Holy Prophets themselves and had they not been clarified by the New Testament, they would have remained obscure.

In the older Books of the Old Testament the term “*Angel of God*” is used meaning One Who speaks not only on behalf of God but as God Himself. Thus, Philo saw Him as the Word of God. Many ecclesiastic scholars, especially Theodoretus of Cyrus, understood that the term “*Angel of God*” referred to the second Person of the Holy Trinity.¹² Contemporary theologians accepted the theory that the use of the term “*Angel of God*” was to replace the Name of Jehovah in a respectful way, having appeared directly to the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) and to Moses. This theory was revised and these Appearances were referred to as the “*Angel of God*” without losing validity concerning the way that this “*Angel of God*” speaks with the Authority of God.¹³

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¹² Trempeles, *Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 229.

¹³ Lagrange, “L’ ange”, pp. 221-222.

¹⁴ Gen. 1:26; 2:18; 3:23; 11:7.

Others Who are equal in Authority to Him.¹⁵ God is not speaking to Himself as one Person because this would be considered madness. Neither is He speaking to Angels because Angels cannot create and God is not obliged to give an account of His Actions to His own Creation. The Angels are certainly not equal to God but stand in awe before Him, glorifying Him ceaselessly for all the wonders He has performed.

The use of the word “*Holy*” three times in Isaiah¹⁶ and the appearance of the three Angels at Mamre¹⁷ Who were addressed as one Person, were considered to be indications of three Hypostases of the Deity. Furthermore, in Proverbs the Wisdom appears to have Its own personality with self-conscience, activity, existing from the beginning with God, reflecting the Light of God’s Knowledge and participating in the Work of Creation. All these were considered as references to the second Person of the Holy Trinity. The author of the Book of Proverbs is a very strict Monotheist who does not tolerate or accept

¹⁵ St. Basil the Great, *To Exahemerus*, ch. VIII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 205. *Barnabas*, V, 5, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 167. Theophylactos of Bulgaria, in *B*, v. 2, p. 230, 232 and v. 5, p. 34. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, X, § 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 668. St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Greeks*, § 44, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 93. St. Gregory os Nyssa, *To Genesis 1:26*, Homily 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 44, 260. St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, IV, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 1032. St. Cyril of Alexandria, *About the Holy Trinity*, Homily 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 75, 25. St. John Chrysostom, *To Genesis*, Homily 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 53, 71.

¹⁶ Is. 6:3. St. Athanasius the Great, *About the Incarnation*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 1000. *Ibid*, *To “all has been given to Me...”*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 220. *Ibid*, *Against Arians*, Homily II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 312. St. Ambrosius, *De fide*, in Makarios, *Enchiridion*, v. I, p. 211, note 2.

¹⁷ Gen. 18:1-4.

the co-existence of a second Person in the Deity. According to him there is only one God.

Generally speaking, the meaning of the above verses that give indications of the three Persons of God is alien not only to the Israelites who lived before Christ but even to the authors of the Sacred Books. This however does not contradict St. Augustine's statement that the Old Testament is interpreted and clarified by the New Testament.¹⁸ This is understandable when we remember that the Jews, influenced by neighbouring nations, were always ready to turn to idol worship and paganism. So, in order to protect them from such a fall, God ensured that the Mystery of the Holy Trinity was hidden from them, thereby preventing the introduction of differences in the Nature of the Hypostases resulting in idolatry. Furthermore, it was to teach them right from the beginning about the Monarchy of the Deity and slowly to progress to the Doctrine of the three Hypostases.¹⁹

For this reason the Prophecies concerning the Messiah, such as "*Emmanuel*" Who shall be born of "*a Virgin*,"²⁰ the "*Anointed*" of God,²¹ upon Whom the Holy Spirit will rest, Whose Name shall be "*called the Messenger of Great Counsel*," "*Prince of Peace*,"²² "*the Lord God*,"²³ "*the Son of Man, the One coming with the*

¹⁸ St. Augustine, "*Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet*".

¹⁹ St. Isidorus of Pelusion, *Book II, epistle 143*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 78, 589.

²⁰ Is. 7:14.

²¹ Psalm 2:2.

²² Is. 9:6.

²³ Psalm 110:3.

clouds,”²⁴ and so many other prophecies, are still not understood by contemporary Jews who, unfortunately, have not accepted the Coming of the True Messiah, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of King David, according to the flesh, Whom they had crucified.

Generally speaking, the terms “*Wisdom,*” “*Word,*” “*Spirit,*” “*Son of God*” and “*Anointed of the Lord,*” are not considered as having the same meaning in the Old Testament as in the New Testament, but each term is examined separately from the others. All we can say with regard to the Teachings of the Old Testament, is that during the times of the ancient authors, the world was prepared for faith in the Holy Trinity but it was not revealed to the Israelites, who knew and were taught Monotheism as a way of worship of the One True and Personal God.

2. The Teaching of the New Testament Concerning the Holy Trinity being the One God

The solid foundations concerning the Teaching of the Holy Trinity are founded in the New Testament, whereas, at the same time the oneness of the Deity and its unity is proclaimed. The Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, was informed by the Archangel Gabriel that “*the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the Power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that the Holy One Who is to be born will be called*

²⁴ Dan. 7:13.

the Son of God."²⁵ When Christ was Baptized, the Holy Trinity was clearly manifested: the Holy Spirit descended "like a dove" and the Father witnessing from above that He Who is Baptized is His "beloved Son" in Whom He is "well pleased."²⁶ Furthermore, when Christ took His three Disciples, Peter, James and John with Him and went up Mount Tabor, He was Transfigured before them. Simultaneously the Holy Spirit "overshadowed them" in the form of "a bright cloud" and the Father assured them that "this is My beloved Son, in Whom I Am well pleased. Hear Him."²⁷

In His last prayer before His deliverance to the Jews, Christ differentiated Himself from the Holy Spirit Whom He referred to as "another Helper"²⁸ and Whom He "will send from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who proceeds from the Father."²⁹ This Holy Spirit Who proceeds only from the Father, will testify concerning the Son, will remind them of everything and will guide them into all the Truth.³⁰ When Christ called the Holy Spirit "another Helper," He indicated by use of the word "another" the difference of the Hypostasis of the third Person from the other two Persons of the Holy Trinity, whereas, by using the word "Helper," He indicated the relationship to the

²⁵ Luk. 1:35.

²⁶ Matth. 3:16-17. Mark 1:9-11. Luk. 3:22. Psalm 2:7. Is. 42:1. 2 Peter 1:17. John 1:33.

²⁷ Matth. 17:1-8. Mark 9:2-8. Luk. 9:28-36.

²⁸ John 14:16-17.

²⁹ John 15:26; 16:26.

³⁰ John 14:26; 15:26.

Divine Essence according to which the Holy Spirit performs whatever the Son does.³¹

The last Commandment that Christ gave to His Holy Apostles before He ascended into Heaven, “*go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo I Am with you always, even to the end of ages,*”³² proclaimed not only the Trinity of God’s Hypostases but the oneness and undivided nature of the Holy Trinity. By commanding them to baptize the people NOT “*in the names*”, but “*in the Name*” He indicated the one Nature of the Holy Trinity.³³

St. Paul the Apostle of the Nations, closing his second epistle to the Corinthians prays that “*the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with all*”³⁴ thus proclaiming clearly the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. St. Paul places the Names of the Holy Trinity in a different order and not according to that which Christ used according to St. Matthew 28:19-20, indicating that the order of the Names does not signify difference in the Nature or Power or Office of the Persons of the Holy Trinity but it proclaims the equality of the Hypostases or

³¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To John*, book IX, Homily 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 74, 257. St. John Chrysostom, *To John*, Homily 75, § 1, in Montfaucon, v. 8, p. 502.

³² Matth. 28:19-20.

³³ St. Ambrosius, *De Spiritus Sanctus*, I, ch. 3, § 40, in migne, *P.L.*, 16, 742. St. Augustine, in migne, *P.L.*, 35, 1429.

³⁴ 2 Corinth. 13:14. Phil. 2:1.

Persons of the Deity.³⁵ And again, in other cases he refers to the Grace coming from the Lord, or the Holy Spirit, or God the Father, thus proving that he does not place it according to rank because the Nature and Essence of the Holy Trinity is common for all three Persons.

3. The Teaching of the Orthodox Church Concerning the Holy Trinity

The Truth of the Divine Revelation concerning the Holy Trinity was proclaimed by the Orthodox Church from the beginning³⁶ since anyone becoming a member of the Orthodox Church has to be baptized in the Name of the three Persons: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Orthodox Church incorporated the use of the Names of the three Persons of God within its worship and made it an essential part of the Confession of Faith, which opposed any false doctrines and heresies.

The Didache mentions that a person should be baptized “*in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” in running water.³⁷

St. Justin the Philosopher and Martyr mentions this type of Baptism with an additional Baptismal Creed proclaiming faith in the Holy Trinity. In addition, he informs us that during the Eucharist the Priest “*gives glory*

³⁵ Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Josuah, Introduction*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 82, 457.

³⁶ Romanides, *Dogmatique*, v. 1, pp. 173-175.

³⁷ *Didache*, 7, 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 153.

to the Father of all through the Name of the Son and the Holy Spirit.”³⁸

These Trinitarian Doxologies became more frequent in the life of the Orthodox Church as they are incorporated in the *Egyptian Order*, which is identical to the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus. It determined that with each blessing we should say: “*Glory be to Thee, Father and Son with the Holy Spirit in the Holy Church, now and for ever and to the ages of ages.*”³⁹

During the Baptismal Service the person who was to be baptized was asked by the Presbyter: “*Do you believe in God the Father Almighty?*” and by answering that he believed, the first immersion into the Sanctified water immediately took place. Then another question was asked: “*Do you believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God ...?*” and by answering that he believed, the second immersion followed. A third question was put to the Catechumen by the Presbyter: “*Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and in the Holy Church and in the resurrection of the flesh?*” and in response to the answer in the affirmative, the third immersion took place.⁴⁰

Parallel to the worship, the faith in the Holy Trinity was common among all Apostolic Fathers and ancient ecclesiastical scholars although certain issues concerning

³⁸ Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *I Apology*, § 6, § 13, § 61, § 65, in *B*, v. 3, pp. 164, 167, 194 and 197.

³⁹ Connolly, “On the text”, v. XXV, pp. 176-177.

⁴⁰ Ibid, “On the text”, v. XXV, p.102.

the equality of the three Persons and their relationship to one another were not yet clarified.

St. Clement of Rome, in his letter addressed to the Church in Corinth, refers to the Father as “*the Creator,*” the Son as “*the Saviour*” while the Holy Spirit Who inspired the Holy Apostles, “*Sanctifies the souls and guides the Church.*”⁴¹

St. Ignatius the Theophorus of Antioch uses the Trinitarian type and calls the Christians “*the stones of a temple, prepared beforehand for the building of God the Father, hoisted up to the heights by the crane of Jesus Christ, which is the Cross, using as a rope the Holy Spirit, your faith is what lifts you up, and love is the way that leads up to God.*”⁴²

In the *Epistle of Barnabas* it is mentioned that God the Father said “*at the foundation of the world*” to the Son: “*Let Us make man according to Our image and likeness.*”⁴³

Athenagoras, refuting the false accusations of atheism against the Christians, expressed his astonishment by asking how those who believe in “*God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit showing the unity of*

⁴¹ St. Clement of Rome, *1st Corinthians*, 58 § 2, 42 § 3, 46 § 6, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 61, 51, 54.

⁴² St. Ignatius, *To Ephesians*, 9; *To Magnesians*, 13; in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 89, 96.

⁴³ *Barnabas*, 5 § 5, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 167. Cf. Gen. 1:26.

*Power [unity of Essence] and the ordered division [differentiation of hypostases]*⁴⁴ can be accused of atheism.

Tertullian was the first in the West who used successfully the term: “*Three Persons, one Essence*” (*tres Personae una Substantia*) and who referred to the Trinity of the One Deity (*Trinitas unius divinitatis Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus*).⁴⁵

The 1st Ecumenical Synod, which took place in Nicaea (325 A.D.), proclaimed that the Son is “*Begotten of the Father before all worlds,*” He is “*Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not made, of one Essence with the Father by Whom all things were made.*”

The 2nd Ecumenical Synod, which took place in Constantinople in 381 A.D. (today Istanbul, Turkey), proclaimed that the Holy Spirit is “*the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets.*”

4. Clarification and Finalization of the Trinitarian Terminology

The Fathers of the Orthodox Church clarified the terms concerning the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In the

⁴⁴ Athenagoras, in *B*, v. 4, p. 288.

⁴⁵ Tertullian, *Adversus Praxeam*, II; *De Judic.* 21, in migne, *P.L.*, 2, 180 and 1080.

West Tertullian introduced the terms “*Natura*” (“*Nature*”), “*Substantia*” (“*Substance*”) and later the term “*Essentia*” (“*Essence*), which refer to the common Divine Essence of the Holy Trinity. These terms represented the terms used in the East: “*Nature*” and “*Essence*.”

St. Ambrosius does not divide Christ when he distinguishes the Essence of the Flesh from that of the Deity but he proclaims one Christ Who is with the Father and the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶

Very few scholars used the terms “*Natura*” and “*Substantia*” to define the Divine Persons for which later on the term “*Hypostasis*” was used. Furthermore, other Fathers used the terms “*Substantia*” and “*Hypostasis*” as synonymous.

St. Athanasius the Great of Alexandria, writing to the Bishops of Africa stated that: “*The Hypostasis is the Essence and nothing else but rather than the Being Itself ... Because the Hypostasis and the Essence are the Existence.*”⁴⁷

When the term “*Hypostasis*” was used to express the term “*Person*,” the Fathers of the West hesitated to accept it because, according to them, this term having the equivalent term “*Substantia*” expressed the same meaning as the term “*Essence*.” To clarify this difference, a Synod

⁴⁶ Ibid, *De in carnatione*, c. VII § 77, in Migne, *P.L.*, 16, 873.

⁴⁷ St. Athanasius the Great, *Epistle to the bishops of Egypte*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 1036.

was held in the Great City of Alexandria (Egypt) and the decisions were sent to Antioch.⁴⁸ Finally, the term “*Hypostasis*” (“*Substantia*”) was distinguished from the terms “*Nature*” (“*Natura*”) and “*Essence*” (“*Essentia*”). The Nature and Deity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one but at the same time the Identity of the one Nature is distinguished into the three perfect “*Hypostases*” and thus is the One God known.⁴⁹

Because the term “Person” was used by Sabellius to express the ways of God’s manifestations, many Fathers had their doubts. Although St. Gregory of Nazianzus prefers the term “*Hypostasis*,” he does not reject the term “*Person*” since the three “*Hypostases*” do not introduce three “*Essences*.” Even those who speak of three Persons acknowledge that the division does not refer to the Nature of God but to His *Hypostatic Attributes*.⁵⁰

St. Basil the Great believed that it is not enough to count the different Persons but to confess each Person as a real Hypostasis.⁵¹

The term “*of the same Essence*” (μοούσιος)⁵² was accepted after many discussions. St. Athanasius urged those who accepted the Nicene decrees yet doubted the

⁴⁸ Ibid, *Tomos to the Antiochians*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 801.

⁴⁹ St. Basil the Great, *Epistle 2*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 773 and 776. Isidorus of Pelusion, *Book III, epist. 112*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 78, 817.

⁵⁰ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 42*, ch. 16, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 477.

⁵¹ St. Basil the Great, *Epistle 210*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 776.

⁵² Lossky, *Theology*, p. 40.

term “*of the same Essence*” (Ὁμοούσιος), not to act with animosity against those had accepted it, “*for they are of the same mind and their hesitation is only concerning the Name*” because they confess that “*the Hypostasis of the Son is from the same Essence of that of the Father and that He is not created but Begotten purely from the Father’s Nature, existing before all time with the Father.*”⁵³

The 1st Ecumenical Synod (325 AD) condemned the term “*something like the Essence*” (ὁμοιοῦσιος) which was used by the heretic Arius who proclaimed that “*there was a time that the Son had not existed*” and that the Son is neither equal to the Father nor a perfect God but He was made and is “*something like*” God. The Holy Synod, adopting the term “*of the same Essence*” (Ὁμοούσιος), proclaimed that the Son is of the same Essence as the Father and not made. The Word of God is the Image of God the Father, the same and identical in all things with Him, unchangeable and undivided, existing before all time with Him “*being the brightness of His Glory and the express Image of His Person.*”⁵⁴

The Holy Synod also proclaimed that the Word is different from all other Creation, not only because He is of the same Essence as the Father but because He remains undivided from the Essence of the Father in such a way that He is one with the Father.⁵⁵ The Son is the Image of

⁵³ St. Athanasius the Great, *Synods*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 765.

⁵⁴ Heb. 1:3. St. Athanasius the Great, *About Dionysius bishop of Alexandria*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 505.

⁵⁵ John 17:11.

the Father⁵⁶ and always existed in the Father and the Father in the Son,⁵⁷ as in the relation of brightness to the light.⁵⁸

St. Basil the Great teaches us that the term “*of one Essence*” indicates the term “*Identical.*”⁵⁹

Finally, the terms “*not made*” (αγένητος) and “*not born*” (αγέννητος) were clarified. Arianism, confusing the meaning of “*not made*” (αγένητος), only referred it to the Father in order to prove that He is the only One Who is “*not made*” (αγένητος), whereas, concerning the Son, they proclaimed that because He was “*born*” (γεννητός), He should be ascribed as being “*made*” (γενητός).

St. Athanasius the Great of Alexandria, stated that “*if that which is not created but exists always is called “not made” (αγένητος), then the Son should be called “not made” (αγένητος). But, if through the term “not made” (αγένητος) they wish to express “that which exists” (το υπάρχον) but which is not born from someone, neither has a father, then they should know that there is only one and only, the Father. But because the Father is “not made” (αγένητος), this does not prove that the Son is “made” (γενητός) because the Word is the same with the Father. So, if God is “not made” (αγένητος), then neither is His Image. And as the Father is Eternal, Everlasting, Almighty, Light, King, Pantocrator, God, Lord and*

⁵⁶ 2 Corinth. 4:4. Col. 1:15.

⁵⁷ John 14:10; 17:21.

⁵⁸ St. Athanasius the Great, *Synods*, in Migne, P.G., 25, 425.

⁵⁹ St. Basil the Great, *Epistle* 9, in Migne, P.G., 32, 272.

*Creator, then identical to these must be His Image, in order that truly he who sees the Son has seen the Father.*⁶⁰ *Otherwise, if as the Arians proclaim that He is “made” (γενητός), then the Son is not from Everlasting, then He is not truly the Image of the Father and it would be impossible for the Creator of all to see Himself in a created being. “For whatever is the Father, His Image should be.”*⁶¹ Thus the Son is “Begotten” of the Father before all time but He is “not made” (αγένητος) because He was not created.

5. Trinity in One and One in Trinity

According to the above, one and undivided is the Essence or Nature of the Deity and one Deity is in the Trinity. It is considered blasphemy to divide the Deity into many natures. In the one Deity there are three Hypostases or Persons but they are One and the three Persons have the same Nature and Identity. Each Person is the fullness of the Deity of the Father and the Son is True God, as is the Holy Spirit. Whatever refers to the Deity of the Father refers to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, without them being called “*Father*.”⁶² And according to the attributes of infinity, unsearchability and uncreativity they are the same because in the Divine Nature there is no difference between the Father and the

⁶⁰ John 14:9.

⁶¹ St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, I, §§ 20-21 and 31, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 53 and 76.

⁶² St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, III § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 328 and 332.

Son and the Holy Spirit. They are one and undivided Communion.

Under no circumstances can there be any kind of split or division within the Divine Essence. Neither can we imagine that the Son could exist without the Father nor can the Holy Spirit be separated from the Son. Within the three Persons there is an incomprehensible Communion in which the differentiation of the Hypostases neither divides the unity of the Nature nor confuses their personal Characteristics and Hypostatic Attributes.⁶³ There is one Deity because one is the Essence of the three Persons.

In the Holy Trinity there is no minor God, nor did one Person exist before the Other. The Persons are not divided by will or by force. In the three Hypostases the Will, Power and Energy is one. The Father does nothing on His own and neither does the Son do anything without the Holy Spirit. All the Divine Energy that guides Creation comes from the Father, is realized through the Son and is perfected by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁴

The Father has perfected His Existence and has no need of anything. He is the Cause and Source of the Deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, as being the unique Source of the One Godhead. The Son is also perfect God being

⁶³ St. Basil the Great, *Epistle* 38, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 332. St. Symeon, *Euriskomena*, Homily LXII, pp. 323-326.

⁶⁴ St. Gregory of Nyssa, *That there are not three gods*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 125. St. John of Damascus, *About the two wills in Christ*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 95, 136. *Ibid*, *Exposition. About the Holy Trinity*, VIII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 825.

the Word of God and Begotten of the Father before all ages. The Holy Spirit is perfect God as well, being neither part of the Father nor of the Son. The Son is united with the Father and the Holy Spirit inseparably, as the Holy Spirit is united inseparably with the Son and the Father.

The three Hypostases or Persons do not divide the one Divine Essence of God, so therefore God is One and not three Gods. We believe that from the Nature of God the Father rises the Son and the Holy Spirit, as from the fire comes the light and the warmth. As the fire always radiates light and heat, likewise, before the Creation of all things, the Word of God and His Spirit existed with God the Father before all time. Thus, One is God Who is glorified in Trinity and His Deity is the Source and Root of the Deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is One in Nature and Essence but three in Hypostases: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and whatever is the Father in Nature likewise is the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ God is One in Trinity, Trinity in One and One and simultaneously Trinity.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. I, p. 365. Ibid, *The dogmatics*, v. II pp. 500, 595-596.

⁶⁶ Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 58-60.