

The Experience of the Prayer of the Heart

A Condition of Contemplating the Light of God.

Missionary Considerations

Gheorghe ISTODOR^{*}

Abstract: Prayer is our dialogue with God implying a collaboration of man's mind with his „heart”, defined as „the centre of spiritual life”. When it becomes contemplative, prayer prepares the way to seeing the light, characterized by the making of deeds altogether with the incessant repentance. The prayer of Jesus makes possible the descent of the mind into the heart and completes the communion with Christ the Savior, as the Lord and God of man. The sight or glory of God represents the purpose of man's entire soteriological effort and represents a real communion with the Son of God, not embodied in the Old Testament, and more often, with the Logos incarnate after the „fullness of time” (Ephesians IV,4). We are therefore talking about a Christocentric character of deification, where prayer has its fundamental role

Keywords: God, Christ, the prayer of Jesus, the glory of God, contemplation, seeing the Light, deification, soteriology, mind, heart

Introduction

In a more and more secularized world, more desacralized and, unfortunately, more de-Christianized, a beam of God's Providence – an expression of God's love and mercy allows us to make theological assumptions, and some of us may even grow to experimenting the prayer in its most profound and authentic state, as an indispensable condition of receiving the charisma of contemplating the Light of God. When we bring about prayer in its most profound and authentic state, we refer undoubtedly to what is called in theology “the prayer of the heart” or the prayer of Jesus, not avoiding to mention that we are talking about the prayer of the mind descended into heart.

^{*} Gheorghe Istodor, PhD, Professor at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, „Ovidius” University – Constanța

When the Church Fathers speak about mind darkness, they do not refer to a darkness of reason., they would make a distinction between mind (nous) and reason (logiky); therefore, through Adam's fall, it was not reason that was affected but the mind. We need here to clarify that through mind, one would understand the state of seeing God, a state that was darkened by sin. The Church Fathers did not find any hints referring to the fact that man's reason grew to darkness, modern science shows us that nowadays in man reason in the brain is strong. Therefore, when the Fathers say that the minds of the first created grew to darkness, they did not have the reason in mind but another energy of the soul, whose centre is the heart. Next to mind thickness, the original sin means mixing the mind with the reason, with passions and with the environment. The mind before the fall would move toward God impetuously, free of the energy of reason, of passions and the environment; nevertheless, when the mind remained "still" (non-working), it confounded itself with reason, with passions and with the environment, this thing is defined as "fall", which means from a patristic point of view identifying the energies of the mind with the energies of reason. In conclusion, the original sin is mind stillness, mind thickness and its identification with the reason, with passions and with the environment, the consequences of this fact being awful¹.

In the Fathers' theological speaking the heart is seen as the centre of spiritual life of man. Thus, Saint Apostle Paul speaks about the mysterious man of the heart (I Peter III,4), the heart being the essence of a person, in which the mystery of human freedom manifests itself. The Saviour also says that from the heart flow bad thoughts, killings, adultery and dissipation, and Saint Macarius speaks about the fact that the heart is the motor of the entire body. Also, Saint Theophanes the Recluse states that the heart is the spring of human activity, and Saint Nicodemus the Agios speaks about a double potential of the heart: 1) a heart as "deepness of passion; 2) a heart as "the home of God".

1. Jesus' Prayer or the Prayer of the Heart. Fundamental Reference Points.

Jesus' prayer or the prayer of the heart is the following "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner". Initially, it was uttered without the word "a sinner" which was added to the prayer later on. This used to be a prayer in use with the Byzantine and Slavic Christians. It literally meant "mental practice", a thing which may seem confusing as it makes a too tight connection with the environment of rational thinking, more especially when we speak about praying, proper words for Jesus' prayer would be the adjectives "interior" and "sacred". The Church theological speaking makes reference to stages in Jesus'

¹ Ierotheos Vlahos. *Dogmatica empirică după învățăturile prin viu grai ale Părintelui Ioannis Romanidis*. Iași: Editura Doxologia, 2017.

prayer, equivalent to multiplying the spiritual steps of the believer. One may speak, therefore of certain stages, the first belongs to the practical or working aspect of Jesus' prayer, this stage being accessible to everyone. The second stage makes that Jesus' prayer be adorned with the adjectives "spiritual", "seeing" or "of the heart" and it represents a progress as compared to the first stage, this second stage being described as a journey to the centre of the heart, where the prayer spreading into its depth and the depth stages are conditioned by man. The last stage makes that Jesus' prayer become in a first step noetic, namely, it is active only in mind or spirit, and then it should descend into the heart, namely, it should be filled with that energy from the centre of the spirit or of the heart, making the whole human being of man be grasped into praying².

According to some Holy Fathers there are eight stages of the prayer of the heart and according to others there are three or five:

1) the prayer of the mind as the first stage of uttering the words "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me, a sinner", in which the entire attention is focused on this assertion³;

2) the mind praying in the heart makes that the mind, praying, gets deeper and deeper into the heart⁴;

3) the continuous prayer or otherwise said, the one moving from itself, where the heart with each of its heartbeats repeats alone the words of prayer⁵;

4) pure prayer, in which contemplation makes extasy possible, which determines the mind to become steady⁶;

5) the prayer as spiritual seeing or praying without prayer; this happens when the mind passed beyond pure prayer and there is no sensuality, control, freedom, tears or meekness⁷;

Jesus' prayer is a characteristic of Orthodox monasticism, and according to our tradition the origins of this prayer reach our Saviour. Also, under the same

² Christopher David; Leonard Johnson. *Authority and Tradition in Contemporary Understandings of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer*. Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh, 2009, p. 28.

³ Archbishop Paul of Finland. *The Faith We Hold*. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980, p. 84.

⁴ *Pelerinul rus*. București: Editura Sophia, 2009, p. 89.

⁵ Radu Ciobanu. *Mic dicționar de cultură religioasă*. Timișoara: Editura Helicon, 1994, p. 214.

⁶ Sfântul Issac Sirul. *Cuvântul XXXII: Despre rugăciunea curată*, in "Filocalia sau culegere din scrierile sfinților părinți care arată cum se poate omul curați, lumina și desăvârși", Vol X, București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al BOR, 1981, p. 180.

⁷ Sfântul Issac Sirul. *Epistola III*, in "Filocalia sau culegere din scrierile sfinților părinți care arată cum se poate omul curați, lumina și desăvârși", Vol X, București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al BOR, 1981, p. 498.

form, without words, other Fathers find it practised by Moses according to the Lord's advice, for He stops Moses to pray aloud assuring him that He hears the voice of his praying. Not in the least, this form of praying that leads to hesychasm we find in Theotokos Miriam, when she prayed in the Holy of Holies, as Saint Gregory of Palama describes in his homily on the Entrance into the Temple of the Theotokos⁸.

Patriarchs Calyst and Ignatius say that the founder of this prayer is Jesus Himself. "While studying the works of Clement of Alexandria we see the relation between the ideal of perfection of the Christian gnostic and those practising hesychasm. Unfolding and generalizing this prayer must be put in connection with the emergence of monasticism as the first monks would practise on short prayers named by Blessed Augustin *orationes joculatas*"⁹.

The prayer of the heart is heard of in the entire Christian East, both at desert monks and at the ones in monasteries, starting with the first centuries. We meet this prayer in the Cappadocian Saints – Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, in Saint John Chrysostomus or Saint Savva – the founder of the Great Monastery in Mar Saba in the fifth century AD. We also find it in Saint Maximus the Confessor, the deep thinking of the Confessor on praying being a must to be mentioned.

Saint Gregory of Sinai speaks about the beginning of praying with the mind, as being the purifying work of the Holy Spirit. Saint Gregory of Palama says about Jesus' prayer that it leads to unity in mind. With the Saints Gregory of Sinai and Gregory of Palama a very important moment of monasticism comes to a close, namely hesychasm¹⁰.

Saint Maximus the Confessor, in "Replies to Tallassee", third volume of Philocaly, says that "the prayer of the one with theological habits needs to be mysterious hesychasm, during which the mind becomes, by denying things (in the sense of overcoming them), worthy of harmonizing itself beyond understanding and knowledge. Thus, the prayer as mysterious hesychasm is the pure prayer"¹¹.

2. Vision or God's Glory – the Purpose of the Entire Soteriological Effort of Man

⁸ Protosinghel Ghedeon Huțanașu. *Sfântul Cuvios Onufrie de la Sihăstria Voronei*, in „Gazeta Greștină”, nr. 263, 2008.

⁹ Corneliu Zăvoianu. *Rugăcinea lui Iisus in Imperiul bizantin. Răspândirea ei in Peninsula balcanică și in Țările române*, in „Glasul Bisericii”, Nr. 11-12, 1981, p. 1100.

¹⁰ Thomas Keating. *The Foundations for Centering Prayer and the Christian Contemplative Life*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2006.

¹¹ Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul. *Răspunsuri către Talasie*, in Filocalia vol III, București; Editura Harisma, 1994, p. 116.

The teaching on vision from God through contemplation is central within the mystical theology of the Eastern Church. The Church Fathers have developed this fundamental teaching, nevertheless, the most relevant in this sense continues to remain Saint Symeon the New Theologian, whose contemplative theology is totally founded on divine Revelation¹². The Revelation of the Scriptures comprises two series of texts about seeing God, which seem to be contradictory and look like they would exclude one another; therefore, we find texts comprising a formal negation of any vision of God, Who is invisible, unknown and inaccessible to created beings, still, there are other texts which encourage us to search on God's "face"¹³ and promise to us that we may see God the way He is. In the first category we find the texts from the Exodus 33,23; 1 Timothy 6,16; John 1,18; and in the second group we find the texts from Genesis 32, 24-30; Exodus 33,11; Deuteronomy 34,10; The Book of Job 19, 25-27; 1 John 3,2; and 1 Corinthians 13,12¹⁴. Thus, God is, as a result, both Invisible and Visible, according to the Biblical Revelation. This ambivalence and seemingly contradiction between God as Invisible or Visible is approached by the patristic literature in several ways: 1) this problematic is placed within the context of the notion of God's essence and energies; 2) approaching the Visible- Invisible theme includes the Christological dimension and 3) approaching the theme mentioned before presents the eschatological perspective. With regard to the first option, the Fathers have shown that God is invisible by His nature, but that He may be seen in His energies, glory, kindness and revelations etc. this teaching was developed by Saint Gregory of Nyssa and Saint John Chrysostomus. With regard to the second option, it is stated by the Fathers that God is Invisible in His essence, but He reveals Himself through His incarnated Son. These aspects are theologically valued by Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Saint Irenaeus, Saint Athanasius the Great¹⁵, Saint John Chrysostomus or Saint Theodore the Studite. As for the third way of approach highlight is casted on the fact that God is invisible in the present life but will be seen by the righteous in the future Kingdom of Heaven. This aspect is dealt with in the Book of Job 19,25-27; 1 John 3,2; 1 Corinthians 13,12; but we will also find this in Saint Isaac the Syrian; Saint Symeon the New Theologian or Saint Theodore

¹² See Cristian Petcu, „The ascetic dimensions of the prayer within the theology of Saint Simeon the New Theologian”, in *De la lumina rugăciunii la teologia luminii. aspecte ale cercetării doctorale actuale*, Coordonator: Pr. Prof. Dr. Viorel SAVA, Iași: Editura Doxologia, 2022, pp. 423-438.

¹³ Origen. Peri Arhon (Despre principii) in PSB vol 8, București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al BOR, 1982, p.131.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Sfântul Atanasie cel Mare. Trei cuvinte împotriva arienilor, in PSB vol. 15, București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al BOR, 1987, p. 258.

the Studite¹⁶. There is a fourth manner of explaining the contradiction Visible-Invisible when referring to God, by placing this within the context of the idea of soul purification, which leads to deification. This notion appears at Teophilus of Antioch or Saint Gregory of Nyssa¹⁷.

There is a unity of thought in the Fathers on this problematic, and thus, Saint Symeon tried to found his teaching on seeing God in the patristic tradition by stating that all Holy Fathers living ahead shared the same teaching on seeing the Holy Trinity as Light. Saint Symeon does not ignore the passages which deny the possibility of seeing God and states that the notion of God's invisibility is one of the important components of his holy father's teaching on seeing God, teaching about the fact that one may see with the intellect what is invisible. Altogether he states that God is invisible for those who have their "spiritual eyes closed" and are not reborn yet; he refers to an appeal to a traditional mode of solving the problem of God's Invisibility, that of seeing God only with the "new eyes" of the human being, who is reborn and transfigured. In conclusion, he states in apophatic terms that people see in an invisible manner the ineffable beauty of God Himself.

At the same time, Saint Symeon understands the vision of God as a consequence of man's deification through Christ, the Christological dimension from the theme of God's vision, this being similarly important to Saint Symeon as to many of his predecessors. As a result, seeing God is often described by Saint Symeon as seeing Christ, seeing Christ is not marked by solipsism, but Christ reveals Himself together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

There is yet an obvious difference between Saint Symeon and Saint Gregory of Nazianzus in the problematic of seeing the Holy Trinity, the first stating that this vision should take place in this present life, and for the second Father, this vision is placed in an eschatological perspective. Nevertheless, we mention that the eschatological dimension of seeing God is always present in Saint Symeon but is never limited only to the future life. This aspect represents one of the elements for which Saint Symeon was perceived by his contemporaries as spreading misleading teachings.

When talking about contemplating God's glory, one must have in mind, firstly, the etymological dimension: the term in Hebrew "Kabod Yahweh", where "Kabod" is a term used both in the current lay Hebrew language, but also in the Holy Scripture and it means, on one hand "to be heavy", to "weigh heavily", on the other hand it would sent to "honesty" or "honour" as a result of a state of "value (being heavy)" to which man attributed importance¹⁸. These meanings were

¹⁶ See Cristian Petcu, *art.cit.*, pp. 430- 431.

¹⁷ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria. *Dicționar de Teologie Ortodoxă*. București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al BOR, 1994, p. 318.

¹⁸ *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite*. Volumul VI, Paris: Beauchesne, 1965, col. 422.

strictly related to the human person in his communion with his fellow creatures, only this happened when one had Yahweh in mind, or, better said His condescending attraction of man, the term has in view what makes it impressive to man, sending to His force or valuable manifestation. Through “Kabod Yahweh” man perceives that presence of God as transcendent and invisible moving towards the created things, not only in order to produce “fear” and “respect”, not only for showing Himself important to man and in order to be praised and honoured by the latter, but most especially in order to bring man to pertain to a new mode of life, the divine life.

We must have in mind as well the importance of the semantic shifting of “Kabod”, which places the exterior manifestation (requested to be honoured) in strong connection with the interior of the subject as the subsistent spring of the “ad extra” manifestation; the Glory (Kabod) is not a reality exterior to God (Yahweh), or a created product, but is the love springing from the uncreated abyss of His Essence and exceeds the created limits of time and space, so that man can reach communion with His Glory. In other words, God’s Glory or His manifestation towards creation has a single purpose, men’s holy communion with His Glory, so that they share in His Glory¹⁹.

Speaking about the different meanings of “Kabod Yahweh” in the Old Covenant, we mention:

1) the connection between God’s Glory and the so-called meteorological phenomena (clouds, storm, lightnings, hills melting like wax according to Exodus 24,15; Ezekiel 1,1; Judges 5,4; Psalm 29 etc)²⁰. When speaking about this, we must state that the described phenomena are only symbols of God’s presence within the entire period of the exodus and only the subsequent priestly tradition developed later on gave the name of “Kabod Yahweh” to a lighting manifestation associated with the cloud. Thus, on one hand Yahweh’s Glory is a mode of the divine presence distinct from the cloud of fire (mentioned in Numbers 9,15; 35,34), cloud that guided the people in the desert; on the other hand, the manifestation of Glory is, on the contrary, the symbol of the temporary meeting between God and His people through Moses (according to Exodus 33,7; the place of meeting being the Tabernacle (according to Exodus 29, 42-43). At the same time, we must remember the Western vision on these phenomena, which go along with the divine intercession and express the irresistible power of God on the one hand and the ontological frailty of the entire creation in front of Him and, consequently, the inconsistency of the earthly powers which would try to stand against the sav-

¹⁹ John S. Romanidis, in „The sickness of religion and its cure” as well as in „Yahweh of glory according to 1-st, 2nd and 9-th ecumenical councils are rejected unknowingly by Augustin and his Vatican and Protestant followers”, taken from the site www.romanity.org. accessed in 22.09.2022.

²⁰ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. vol. II, Ger. Kittel (ed.), Grand Rapids: Ed. Michigan, 1993, p. 239.

ing plan, on the other hand. This vision in which the creation stands against the Creator so that it would miss salvation is, at least strange to the spirit of the Holy Scripture, if we are to refer ourselves to Psalm 103 or the Epistle to the Romans of Saint Apostle Paul – chapter 8, verses 19-22. This ambivalence sends clearly to Palama's distinction asserted later on between a being and its works, the nature of biblical theophanies does not identify itself with the uncreated nature of God, nor does it confound itself with the created matter which became a symbol, but they pertain to the work of the will of God's Essence, more precisely – as Saint Diadoch of Photicea says – it pertains to the work of His Will". The ontological abyss between the created and the uncreated places ourselves in the absolute impossibility to perceive God in any certain way; thus, only God's descending to us, His will to discover Himself through His works, places us in front of an experience which culminates with the communion between man and His Glory, it culminates with the deification of created reasoning hypostases. Thus, in order to see God, one must be oneself God: "In your Light we shall see light" (Psalm 35,9), only this way one may understand why those of the divine visions or of the Glory of God were only the patriarchs and the prophets being raised to contemplating the divine works, due to the purity of their hearts and, at the same time, we understand why God urges, through Moses, the people to cleansing, before God showing Himself on the mount Sinai.

2) the choice of "Kabod Yahweh" as transcendent and immanent at the same time, or as reality which is placed and is active between the transcendent and the immanent. In this sense we may state that "Kabod" has nothing to do with the natural phenomena, the cloud present, described at the sanctification of the Temple of Solomon, being more of a protective nature than a part of "Kabod", this symbolizing, at the same time, the presence and the created immanent as well, and God's transcendence, too. Therefore, God's Glory - „Kabod Yahweh", cannot be placed only in the transcendent or only in the immanent, as if they were a reality separated from God's Essence, and it is Yahweh the transcendent Himself, Who, through "Kabod", makes Himself present in the immanent, and in this, His Essence should not confound itself with the created plan.

3) *Kabod's* presentation as being the metonymic of Yahweh²¹. Here we refer to a hypothesis speaking about "Kabod" as not being a manifestation distinct from God's Essence, "Kabod" or "the Glory" being just another name for Yahweh, namely His metonymic. Therefore, texts like the one in Psalm 62,3: "In a desolate, impassable and waterless land/ So in the holy place I appear before You, / To see Your power and Your Glory" would highlight this metonymic character of the word "Kabod" and would emphasize a greater approach to the concept of "honour", this speaking about honour which should be dedicated to Yahweh

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 242.

as exterior recognition, which is either refused, either offered to Him²². Surely, we do not speak here about honour as similar to that in the plan of interhuman relationships, or of respect imposed by certain exterior conditions, but we speak of a real faith testimonia, through man's giving glory that he owes to God or the giving Glory to God as placing our existential centre not in the present world but in everyone's Creator and Proniator. We speak, therefore, of an ontological focusing of man in the Holy Trinity, which is not the result of honour dedicated to the Creator, but, more especially, giving testimony as such, or adulation brought to Him, as a result of the style of life in the interior of "Kabod Yahweh". Even if we accept the sense of "honour", *Kabod's* symbolism as an intrinsic manifestation of God's personal Essence does not disappear, moreover, it is profoundly implied.

4) the "Kabod Yahweh" problematization as a hypostatic or anhypostatic reality. This problematization starts from the hypothesis according to which "Kabod" is not an impersonal manifestation of Yahweh, nor a wilful kenosis of His, or a metonymy, but is rather a reality subsistent in itself, unfolding its work within the space of the created, communicating and fulfilling Yahweh's will and, at the same time, conservating His transcendence; "Kabod" would be thus a hypostatic reality different from Yahweh's hypostasis²³.

Old Covenant anthropomorphic apparitions were not simple angelic-epiphanyes, but they had as subject the Son of God before the Incarnation, Who, in order to accomplish the Father's economy, visibly manifested Himself under a "human" shape, *morph* or *image*, being come across, and through which the patriarchs and the prophets were praised. That is why there is a need to establish relations between the elements specific to divine manifestations in the immanent plan and the uncreated divine hypostases, relations that will definitively be clarified, once with the palamite dispute on the theme of uncreated Light and man's participation to it. Concerning the God's *image* or *morph* (*tnmut-temunab*) one must state that this is about a morph through which the One manifested Himself visibly to patriarchs and prophets, in order for His Essence' invisibility not to be altered. This term would have been removed once with the translation of the Jewish text translation, due to the danger it represented for the Jewish teaching on God's absolute Invincibility. Translations on "temunab", have all a pure dogmatic reason, through which it is intended not to suggest a possible substantial presence of Yahweh in the created plan. Most often, the word is used in the expressions referring to the Jewish people's interdiction to prostrate to idols, the way we find from the second commandment of the Decalogue, from the book of Exodus or

²² *Ibidem*, p. 241.

²³ John T. Strong, „God's Kabôd: The Presence of Yahweh in the Book of Ezekiel”, in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000, p. 9

from the books of the Pentateuch. God's "Glory" which Moses had seen on the Mount of Sinai, "the image" he contemplated and Whose "Glory" spread on his face is a hypostatic reality, distinct from Yahweh and which most Holy Fathers consider to be the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, the One Who is "the image" of the Father's (hypostatic) Essence and Who proniates all with the word of His power (Hebrews 1,3). This profoundly biblical, and patristic perspective as well about the Second Person in the Holy Trinity understood as "image" of the Father, as the hypostatic "Glory"/ "Light" which discovers the Father's Invisibility, seems to have been the background of the anthropomorphist controversy which troubled the Egyptian monastic environments – and not only – at the end of Century IV and the beginning of the next one. Some Fathers considered that these heretics, when literally speaking about God's *image* or *morph*, in fact were speaking about either the hypostasis of the Father, or about the Divine Essence, a thing denied by other writings of some supposed anthropomorphist monks or by theologians as George Florovski²⁴, who suggested – in good faith – that the subject of the anthropomorphic disputes on God's *image* or *morph* would be, in fact, the Second Person in the Holy Trinity.

Other theologians, like Alexander Golitzin²⁵, state that the Christ, the monks accused of anthropomorphism spoke about, is not the Second - Incarnated - Person of the Holy Trinity, but rather the Logos before Incarnation which patriarchs and prophets spoke with and in Whose "Glory" they found themselves in communion with. Thus, we would deal not with a materialization of the divine Substance, or with introducing *the morph* within God's uncreated and all-simplified Essence, but we would have to deal with a Christology of a very old origin, according to which *the morph*, *the image* or *the glory* would directly refer to the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, the conclusion of the reminded theologian being that anthropomorphism, far from being a naïve conception only met in the Egyptian monastic environment, crystalizes in itself an archaic Christology with Jewish echoes, focusing itself on the reliance of seeing God in this life, on the participation to His light, to His glory.

Therefore, the dogmatic statements of the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea were the ones that not only highlighted this conception latently existing most especially in the ascetic environments, but they contributed – being corroborated with Evagrius' principles of intellectualist mysticism – to the emergence of an inner mysticism in which the accent is not laid on what sensitive eyes see but on what the mind enlightened with the Holy Spirit perceives.

²⁴ G. Florovsky. *Antropomorphites in the Egyptian Desert in Collected Works*. vol. VI, Belmont: Norland, 1975, p. 91.

²⁵ Ieromonah Alexander Golitzin. *Mistagogia - experiența lui Dumnezeu in ortodoxie*. Sibiu: Editura Deisis, 1998, pp. 184-267.

Therefore, we may understand the importance given by the relationship between „Kabod Yahweh” and the Second Person of the Holy Trinity – the divine Logos. Even if the Son sometimes receives (either in the Holy Scriptures, or in the patristic literature) the name “Glory”, this does not exclude the initial sense of the Hebrew term of Yahweh’s “ad extra” manifestation, it does not exclude of His real presence in the created plan through the “Glory”. If for the Jewish theology “Kabod” could represent, at a certain moment, Yahweh’s extrinsic reality, with the role of preserving the transcendence of the Divine or even a hypostatic presence, other than Yahweh’s, with the same role for the Christian theology, the way we find it exposed in the New Testament or with the Holy Fathers, “the Glory” is at the same time a name for the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, but also for the hypostatic manifestation of the Trinitarian God, whom the created rational hypostases may find themselves in communion with. Within this relationship, between Christ and “Glory” there is to discover the real sense of the divine works which, do not represent an impersonal reality disrupted from the divine Substance, but they have the role of making felt, divinely, to the believer, the divine hypostases. Therefore, “the Glory” is an hypostasiated ²⁶, it is present in the Logos’ hypostasis: “the Glory” is Christ, not because we have to deal with a single hypostatic reality, but because it is Christ’s, the way it is of the other Trinitarian Persons; “the Glory” is Christ’s, because through “Glory” we are full with Christ and it is Christ’s because it is not identified with His hypostasis, at the same time not being separated from Him, because it springs from the Trinitarian Substance, three times hypostatic of God. We are full with Christ in a real way, of His “Glory”, the grace being none other than Christ -the Glory through which This One makes himself present within ourselves in a pure, unmixed way, unchanged, undivided and unseparated.

This Christocentric character of divinity does not lead to a marginalization of a Christian’s relationship with the other two of God’s Hypostases, the way Saint Athanasius, Saint Basil and the other Fathers have shown in the fourth century, but through this it is emphasized both the importance of the Incarnation of the Son of God – as Principle of our deification and the perichoretic character of the divine Hypostases, no only found within the plan of theological living, but also found at Their economic work. Thus, even if the “Spirit” is “the Seal” or “the ointment” with the divine glory, The One that anoints us and seals us is the Son; only this way may we understand the real meaning of the moment of Transfiguration on the Mount Taborus, become the real support and the theological argument for Palama’s teaching propagated later on and we understand why Christians felt this strong connection up to identifying Christ with “the Glory”

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 222.

ever-since the beginning-, even if the terminological statement of this relation emerged later on.

We must state the fact that this dimension of a relationship with God, having in view the vision and living in God's glory *hic et nunc* and not only in the eschatological plan will be underlined in Paul's Epistles, but also in the other apostolic Epistles. For Saint Apostle Paul, "the Glory" is not only, surely, only a status reserved to the eschaton, man being created to live in this glory of God in order to become a partaker to "the richness of His Glory (according to Romans 9,23), nevertheless, the sin prevented man to partake to this primordial glory. God's Glory is, in fact, "the place" of the kingdom of Heaven, and the prevention or distancing from this "Glory" represents the very "eternal condemnation and eternal departure from the Lord's Face" (according to Thessalonians 1,9). Not in the least, this "Glory" is eternal (according to II Corinthians 4,7; II Timothy 2,10; I Peter 5,10) and even to see with our own eyes (according to II Peter 1,16). Keeping in mind all that is testified, we may say that God's "Glory" is and represents a deifying photographic epiphany, speaking about an identity between the light of Divine "Glory" and the works of the Three-Hypostatic Essence.

Instead of Conclusions. Missionary Considerations

The experience of the prayer of the heart, as a premise of contemplating God's glory is quantified and valued in missionary dimension, this sending to a real triad of Orthodox life and theological speaking, formed of knowledge, living and testimony. When we speak about knowledge, we must state that we do not send, in the least, to the intellectualist knowledge, about which either Varlam speechified (held forth) – Saint Gregory of Palama's opponent, be there taken into discussion the older or newer gnostic systems. Missiology, like the entire Orthodox theology vehemently rejects to consider Salvation as being equivalent to the strictly philosophical knowledge, as Varlaam of Calabria used to propagate and it also strongly rejects the gnostic type of knowledge – either we speak of Gnosticism in centuries II-III AD or we refer to the modern gnostic systems, showing that knowledge is more important than Salvation. The knowledge in our discussion is derived from man's real communion with the Holy Trinity, knowledge that has a pure soteriological character, according to the Saviour's word in the hierarchic prayer: "for this is eternal life, that man knows Thee, the One and Truthful God and Jesus Christ You sent to the world" (John 17,3). Then to this type of knowledge we may add living, specifying that the authentic living depends on the authentic and Orthodox knowledge. In other words we may strongly state that there cannot be a superficial living man of this experience or be ignorant in those that belong to the mystery of God, which is at the same time the mystery of our salvation. From knowledge and living one may further on derive testimony, which

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is fundamental and indispensable in our effort for salvation. Therefore, bringing the study to a conclusion, we speak from a missionary point of view of this Interdependence between knowledge, living and testimony, which bring man to a state in which the experience of Jesus' prayer is considered a value, praying which is a premise of contemplating and seeing God.