

## **PART TWO**

### **THE CREATION**

## CHAPTER ONE

### PART TWO

#### THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

God created the visible and invisible world from nothingness. Being the Absolute, Infinite and Almighty Lord, He did not adapt or change pre-existing matter, but brought it from non-existence into existence through His Almighty Will. God created the limited world in time, always the same without it ceasing to be unalterable.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Orthodox Christian Doctrine the only Co-operator with God the Father in the creation of the world was His Only-begotten Son and Word, “*through Whom all things were made,*”<sup>2</sup> and the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies all creation. This Teaching of the Orthodox Church is based on clear and solid Teachings of Holy Scriptures and Sacred Apostolic Tradition, which was taught by the Apostolic Fathers and their successors, the ecclesiastic authors and ecumenical teachers, especially by St. Athanasius the Great of Alexandria.

The fact that the three Persons of the Holy Trinity co-operated in the creation of the world from nothingness, especially the Son, is stressed throughout the Holy

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, pp. 41-43. Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, pp. 115-117. Kefalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 49-50. Damalas, *Catechesis*, p. 14. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 65-66. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup> John 1:3.

Scriptures. The world was created in time and could not have existed on its own as an individual reality. It appeared simultaneously with the first manifestations of creation. This Teaching was adopted by the holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church and completely excludes the error that the creation is eternal or that it co-existed with God. Even the Angels did not co-exist nor are they co-eternal with God. They were formed before the creation of the visible world. The creation of the creative beings surpasses natural knowledge. Only God can reveal why and how He created the Cosmos.<sup>3</sup>

Although the creative action of God concerning the visible world took place in time, the plan and the exact time of the realization of the creation existed eternally in the Mind of God. If God had Willed it, then a change would have taken place within the unchangeable God. Nevertheless, when God created the world, He created it by His Free Will<sup>4</sup> and not by any external cause or force. God's freedom of action with the creation of the world is witnessed throughout the Holy Scriptures and was proclaimed by all the holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church. Also the creative action of God bears the Seal of His Goodness, Almightyness and All-wisdom that eternally planned creation realized in time and which was "very good."<sup>5</sup> The fact that God made the creation because of His infinite Goodness does not exclude its purpose of being glorified in His Works, His infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness, and generally speaking, in

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<sup>3</sup> Evdokimov, *Orthodoxia*, p. 115

<sup>4</sup> Lossky, *Theology*, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. 1:31. Cf. Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, ch. 4, p. 30.

all His Perfection, as understood by intellectual beings. For through this knowledge of the only True God, intellectual beings find their Blessedness and Eternal Life, which are realized through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God in the heavenly Kingdom of God.

## I. GOD THE CREATOR OF ALL.

### 1. The Teachings of Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition.

The creation of heaven and earth as the Work of God is manifested in Holy Scripture. In the first verses of the first Book of the Old Testament it is written: “*In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth.*”<sup>6</sup> King David states in the book of Psalms: “*He spoke, and it was done; He Commanded, and it stood fast.*”<sup>7</sup> He is the One Who “*made the earth by His Strength, Who set up the world by His Wisdom, and by His Understanding stretched out the sky, and set abundance of waters in the sky, and brought up clouds from the ends of the earth; He made lightnings for the rain, and brought forth light out of His Treasures.*”<sup>8</sup> God has no need of any assistance from anyone or anything else, but “*stretches out the heavens like a curtain.*”<sup>9</sup> “*Who makes Pleias, and Hesperus, and Arcturus, and the chambers of the South. Who does great*

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<sup>6</sup> Gen 1:1.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 33(34):9.

<sup>8</sup> Jer. 10:12-16.

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 104(105):2. Is. 44:24. Job 9:8.

*and unsearchable things; glorious also and excellent things, innumerable.*<sup>10</sup>

Being eternal He created the ends of the earth “*by the Power of His Might.*”<sup>11</sup> It was not difficult for God to create the universe but simply “*by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His Mouth.*”<sup>12</sup> To Him as the Lord, the children of Israel raised their voices seeking His invincible Protection; and to Him the holy Apostles urged everyone to turn, away from “*the useless*” idol worship “*to the Living God, Who made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.*”<sup>13</sup> “*For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.*”<sup>14</sup>

The Apostolic Fathers and the holy Fathers confess in their writings: “*God is one, Who created all things and set them in order, and made out of what did not exist everything that is, and Who contains all things but is Himself alone Uncontained.*”<sup>15</sup> He is the “*Almighty Master*” Who “*created all things for His Name’s sake,*”<sup>16</sup> and “*knowing that nothing transpires apart from God.*”<sup>17</sup> “*For the Creator and Master of the universe Himself*

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<sup>10</sup> Job 9:9-10.

<sup>11</sup> Is. 40:26.

<sup>12</sup> Psalm 33(34):6.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 14:15.

<sup>14</sup> Rom. 12:36.

<sup>15</sup> *Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate 1, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 214. Cf. St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 1032.

<sup>16</sup> *Didache*, 10, 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 155.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 3, 10, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 151.

rejoices in His Works.”<sup>18</sup> “The Omnipotent Creator of all, the invisible God Himself, established among men the Truth and the Holy, Incomprehensible Word from heaven and fixed it firmly in their hearts, not, as one might imagine, by sending to men some subordinate, or Angel or ruler or one of those who manage earthly matters, or one of those entrusted with the administration of Things in heaven, but the Designer and Creator of the universe Himself, by Whom He created the heavens, by Whom He enclosed the sea within its proper bounds, Whose Mysteries all the elements faithfully observe, from Whom the sun has received the measure of the daily course to keep, Whom the moon obeys as He Commands it to shine by night, Whom the stars obey as they follow the course of the moon, by Whom all things have been ordered and determined and placed in subjection, including the heavens and the things in the heavens, the earth and the things in the earth, the sea and the things in the sea, fire, air, abyss, the things in the heights, the things in the depths, the things in between – this one He sent to them”<sup>19</sup>! “For God, the Master and Creator of the universe, Who made all things and arranged them in order, was not only tender-hearted but also very patient.”<sup>20</sup> “For He Who made the heaven and the earth and all that is in them, and provides us all with what we need, cannot Himself need any of the things that He

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<sup>18</sup> St. Clement of Rome, *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians*, 33, 2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. (?).

<sup>19</sup> *Epistle to Diognetus*, 7, 2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 300.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 8, 7, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 301.

*Himself provides to those who imagine that they are giving to Him.*"<sup>21</sup>

In the early testimonies is the faith that God, Father Almighty, is the One Who created heaven and earth, the seas and all that is therein.<sup>22</sup> This testimony was incorporated later in the Nicene Creed. It was projected as the Canon of Faith that there is only one God and none other beside Him, Who is the Creator of the world and Who brought the universe out of nothingness through His Word.<sup>23</sup> The Alexandrians proclaimed God as the "*Ruler and Maker of all and the Creator of all principles.*"<sup>24</sup> For the BEING is one God and His Essence is one. St. Hippolytus noted that God being alone, wanted to create the world; and He created the world without any assistance. For this reason it is our duty to bless the Creator, Who is without beginning and Who gave the beginning to everything<sup>25</sup>.

## **2. Erroneous Theories that were condemned.**

a) The Orthodox Doctrine concerning the creation of the world contradicts the theory of *materialism*, which renounces any other existence except matter. This theory

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 3, 4, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 298.

<sup>22</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book I, ch. 10, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 550. Cf. Ibid, in Hadjephraimides, p. 64.

<sup>23</sup> Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, ch. XIII, in migne, *P.L.*, 2, 26.

<sup>24</sup> Clement the Alexandrian, *Protrepticus*, V, 65; *Stromata*, IV, 26, in *B*, v. 7, pp. 51 and v. 8, p. 106.

<sup>25</sup> St. Hippolytus, *About the heresy of Noetus*, 10, in *B*, v. 6, p. 16.

believes that the cosmos is the result of casual events and changes of and within the matter. According to this theory, matter and its atoms are eternal.<sup>26</sup>

b) The Christian Doctrine strongly contradicts the myths concerning ‘*theogony*’ (= the birth of the gods) and ‘*cosmogony*’ (= the creation of the cosmos).

c) The Christian Doctrine contradicts the teachings of Manichaeism, according to which God, when creating the world, needed assistance from the Angels. St. John of Damascus strongly opposes this blasphemy, stating that “*all those who say that the Angels are creators, are the mouth of Satan; for the creatures cannot be creators.*”<sup>27</sup>

### 3. The Son of God in the Work of Creation.

It is a clear and reliable Teaching of Holy Scripture and the holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church that God created the world through His Son and Word. The fourth Gospel proclaims: “*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*”<sup>28</sup> St. Paul assures us that “*for us there is one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord*

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About Diabolus and Demons*, book II, ch. 18, § 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 873. Cf.: St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book II, ch. II, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 713. St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 190, 201 and 204. St. Augustine, in Migne, *P.L.*, 34, 403; 41, 373-374. Bartmann, *Theologie Dogmatique*, v. I, p. 272

<sup>28</sup> John 1:3.

*Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things, and through Whom we live.*”<sup>29</sup> Elsewhere he testifies: God “*by His Son ... through Whom also He made the worlds.*”<sup>30</sup> In the book of Psalms we read: “*O my God, ... Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.*”<sup>31</sup> “*For every house is built by someone, but He Who built all things is God.*”<sup>32</sup> The use of the term “*through Whom*” does not make the Son inferior to the Father as taught by the Arians.<sup>33</sup> Thus in the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul stated: “*For Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory forever. Amen.*”<sup>34</sup>

This New Testament Teaching was incorporated into the Teachings of the Orthodox Church right from the period of the Apostolic Fathers.

Thus, St. Ignatius the Theophorus of Antioch, referring to the Lord wrote: “*It is better to be silent and be real, than to talk and not be real. It is good to teach, if*

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<sup>29</sup> 1 Corinth. 8:6.

<sup>30</sup> Heb. 1:2.

<sup>31</sup> Psalm 102(103):25-27. Heb. 1:10-12.

<sup>32</sup> Heb. 3:4.

<sup>33</sup> St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, ch. II and V, in Migne, P.G., 32, 73 and 77. St. Cyril of Alexandria, in Migne, P.G., 73, 85. St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, II, §§ 21, 24, 26, in Migne, P.G., 26, 190, 197, 201.

<sup>34</sup> Rom. 11:36. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Genesis*, question 74, in Migne, P.G., 82, 184.

*one does what one says. Now there is one such Teacher, Who 'spoke and it happened'; indeed, even the things which He has done in silence are worthy of the Father*"<sup>35</sup>.

In the *Shepherd of Hermas* it is proclaimed that "The Name of the Son of God is great and incomprehensible, and sustains the whole world."<sup>36</sup>

*The Epistle to Diognetus* states: "The Omnipotent Creator of all, the invisible God Himself, established among men the Truth and the Holy, Incomprehensible Word from heaven and fixed it firmly in their hearts, not, as one might imagine, by sending to men some subordinate, or Angel or ruler or one of those who manage earthly matters, or one of those entrusted with the administration of Things in heaven, but the Designer and Creator of the universe Himself, by Whom He created the heavens, by Whom He enclosed the sea within its proper bounds, Whose Mysteries all the elements faithfully observe, from Whom the sun has received the measure of the daily course to keep, Whom the moon obeys as He Commands it to shine by night, Whom the stars obey as they follow the course of the moon, by Whom all things have been ordered and determined and placed in subjection, including the heavens and the things in the heavens, the earth and the things in the earth, the sea and the things in the sea, fire, air, abyss, the things in the

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<sup>35</sup> St. Ignatius, *To Ephesians*, 15, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 91.

<sup>36</sup> *Shepherd of Hermas*, Parable 9, 14, 5, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 274.

*heights, the things in the depths, the things in between – this one He sent to them.*”<sup>37</sup>

The *Epistle of Barnabas* states that the use of the plural form “*Let Us make man according to Our image and likeness*”<sup>38</sup> was said to the Lord Who “*submitted to suffer for our souls.*”<sup>39</sup>

St. Justin the Philosopher and Martyr, writing about the Son of God, characterizes Him as being “*the only and mainly Son, the Word Who existed and was Begotten before all creatures, when at the beginning through Him everything was made and adorned.*”<sup>40</sup> Also the Dialogue with Trypho adopts the use of the plural form “*Let Us make man according to Our image and likeness*”<sup>41</sup> as mentioned in the *Epistle of Barnabas*.<sup>42</sup>

Athenagoras notes that “*everything was made, adorned and sustained by God through His Word.*”<sup>43</sup> Justin’s disciple Tatianus adds: “*we know that the Word is the beginning of the world.*”<sup>44</sup> St. Irenaeus, Tertullian and St. Hippolytus repeat the same teachings that “*everything*

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<sup>37</sup> *Epistle to Diognetus*, ch. 7, 2, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 300.

<sup>38</sup> Gen 1:26.

<sup>39</sup> *Barnabas*, 5, 5, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 167.

<sup>40</sup> St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *2 Apology*, ch. 20, 6, 3., in **B**, v. 3, p. 203.

<sup>41</sup> Gen 1:26.

<sup>42</sup> St. Justin, the philosopher and martyr, *Dialogue*, 62, in **B**, v. 3, p. 203.

<sup>43</sup> Athenagoras, *Legation*, ch. 10, in **B**, v. 4, p. 288.

<sup>44</sup> Tatianus, *To the Greeks*, ch. 5 and 7, in **B**, v. 4, pp. 245 and 246.

*was made through the Word,” and “only He alone through and from the Father.”*<sup>45</sup>

When we say that the world was made through the Son, we must never forget that the Father does nothing without the Son. Neither does the Son do anything without the Holy Spirit. All divine action concerning the world derives from the Father through the Son and is perfected by the Holy Spirit.<sup>46</sup> Divine Action can neither be divided nor described separately to each of the Divine Persons. Whatever is done by God is done by the three Persons together, in unison, and not by three separate actions. Therefore, Holy Scripture sometimes refers to the creation as being of the Father while in other cases they refer to it as being of the Son.<sup>47</sup> In relation to the Holy Spirit, St. Basil the Great noted that the Holy Spirit is also the Creator, as He is not simply a word in God nor a spirit of air that diffuses or scatters. He is alive and existing and active. He is Power of Sanctification, Substantial, Self-existing and Hypostasis.<sup>48</sup>

The creation has always been considered the Work of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Aristides the Apologist proclaimed that everything was made through

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<sup>45</sup> St. Hippolytus, *To the heresy of Noetus*, ch. XI, 2, 6, 17. St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, I, ch. 22, 1, in Migne, *P.L.*, 7, 669. Cf. *Ibid.*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 89. Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, ch. 13, in Migne, *P.L.*, 2, 31.

<sup>46</sup> St. Gregory of Nyssa, *That there are not three gods*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 125.

<sup>47</sup> Luke 10:21. Acts 4:24. 1 Corinth. 8:6. Psalm 102(103):26.

<sup>48</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Against Eunomius*, book V, ch. 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 30,

God the Creator in the Only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit;<sup>49</sup> whereas St. Irenaeus repeatedly affirmed that the Word and the Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, were always with God, through Whom He created everything by His free Will. Therefore God needs no one else as He creates everything through the Word and the Holy Spirit. He noted that mortal man is made in the “*image and likeness*” of God Who is not born, and that while God the Father was Consenting and Commanding, the Son was Acting and Creating and the Holy Spirit was Nourishing and Increasing.<sup>50</sup>

St. John of Damascus refers to the whole Creation as an Action of the Holy Trinity.<sup>51</sup>

St. Epiphanius states that “*from the Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit everything was made which did not exist, but, yet they came into existence from the Father and from the Son and from the Holy Spirit.*”

St. Basil the Great deals with this subject in more detail and notes that in relation to the creation of the Angels “*the Father is the preliminary cause, the Son the creative cause and the Holy Spirit the prefecture cause; so by the Will of the Father the Liturgical Angels exist;*

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<sup>49</sup> Aristides, *Apology*, XV, 3, in *B*, v. 3, p. 148.

<sup>50</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book I, ch. 22, § 1; book IV, ch. 20 and ch. 38, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 669, 1032 and 1108. Cf. *Ibid.*, in Hadjephraimides, pp. 89, 302-309 and 351-353.

<sup>51</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About heaven*, XX; *About angels*, XVII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 880 and 865.

*through the Act of the Son they came into existence and in the Presence of the Spirit they are perfected.” He also emphasizes that one might be misled when using human analogies in relation to the unique Action of the Divinity, dividing it between three Persons and giving to each one a part. For this reason he adds: “The beginning of the beings is One, Which creates through the Son and is perfected in the Holy Spirit; and neither the Father, ‘Who works all in all,’<sup>52</sup> has the incomplete Energy, nor does the Son have the incomplete Creation nor does it remain incomplete in the Holy Spirit. The Father Wills the creation through the Son and the Son Creates, Acting as the Father, but the Son Wills through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>53</sup>*

Any additional attempts to clarify the Mystery of the Son’s relation in the Work of Creation surpasses all limited human intelligence. We stand before a great Mystery and only through true faith can we accept and bow before the Divine Revelation.

## **II. THE CREATION FROM NOTHINGNESS.**

### **1. The Teachings of Holy Scripture.**

A fundamental Teaching of the Orthodox Doctrine concerning the creation of the world is that: a) everything was created from nothingness; b) is limited and c) is distinguished from the infinite Essence of God. In other

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<sup>52</sup> 1 Corinth. 12:6.

<sup>53</sup> St. Basil the Great, *About the Holy Spirit*, ch. XVI, § 38, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 136.

words God the Creator neither made the cosmos from a pre-existing matter nor did it proceed from His Essence, but He Created everything from nothingness.<sup>54</sup>

This Teaching is based on the first verse of the Book of Genesis: “*In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth.*”<sup>55</sup> According to St. John Chrysostom the abovementioned verse is enough to convince those who oppose the true Teachings and who proclaim that matter is eternal. For the expression “*in the beginning*” is equivalent to the expression “*when nothing existed.*”<sup>56</sup> And as St. Augustine adds, the term “*in the beginning*” was used to make it clear that nothing was made before, otherwise it would have been mentioned in Scripture.<sup>57</sup> The use of the verb “*made*” in relation to “*in the beginning*” ascertains that the creation of the universe was from nothingness. The second verse: “*the earth was unsightly and unfurnished, and darkness was over the deep*”<sup>58</sup> illustrates that the matter created from nothingness was unformed. God did not create only a part of the earth and heaven, but the entire substance of the matter of which the universe is composed. “*For God is not the Founder of shapes, but the Creator of the nature of the beings.*”<sup>59</sup>

St. John of Damascus says, “*God Who is in Trinity and one in glory, made from nothingness and from non-*

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<sup>54</sup> Lossky, *Theology*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>55</sup> Gen. 1:1.

<sup>56</sup> St. John, Chrysostom, *Homily II*, in Montfaucon, 4, 16.

<sup>57</sup> St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XI, VI, in migne, P.L., 41, 321.

<sup>58</sup> Gen. 1:2.

<sup>59</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Hexaemerus*, Homily II, § 3, in Migne, P.G., 29, 33.

*pre-existing matter the heavens, the earth, the air, the fire, the water,*” “*the animals, the plants, the seeds*” and everything else which was made by Him. He formed and shaped them from the matter that He had already created.<sup>60</sup>

In the New Testament the words used in the fourth Gospel: “*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made,*”<sup>61</sup> prove that the Word of God made everything from nothingness. St. Paul proclaims God, “*Who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did,*”<sup>62</sup> to have created everything only by His Word and Commandment. He called the non-existing and they came into being; and as He called them, they were produced. As easy as it is for us to name the different beings, it is even easier for God to create them from nothingness. Finally, in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is written: “*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*”<sup>63</sup> It is certain that the matter from which the world was made was not visible, for the heavens and earth and all the matter from which the beings are made, came into existence out of nothingness by the Word of God. It is through faith that we are able to understand these things, not only because we cannot see the Creator creating, but only through faith have we learnt of these matters. We

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<sup>60</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About the visible creation*, book II, ch. 19 and 20, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 880.

<sup>61</sup> John 1:3.

<sup>62</sup> Rom. 4:17.

<sup>63</sup> Heb. 11:3.

have no evidence of man creating things from nothingness as he can only make things from existing matter.<sup>64</sup>

## 2. The Teachings of the Holy Fathers.

The Teaching concerning the creation from nothingness is found in the Apostolic Fathers. The Shepherd of Hermas proclaims: “*God is one, Who created all things and set them in order, and made out of what did not exist everything.*”<sup>65</sup>

St. Clement of Rome in his 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Corinthians wrote: “*the Creator and Master of the universe ... the living creatures which walk upon it He called into existence by His Decree.*”<sup>66</sup>

St. Polycarp of Smyrna, before facing Martyrdom, referred to God in his prayer as “*the God of Angels and Powers and of all Creation.*”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> St. Ecumenius, *To Romans*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 118, 404. Theophylactus of Bulgaria, *To Romans*, ch. IV, in Migne, *P.G.*, 124, 397. Kalogerou, II, *Maria*, p. 427. St. John, Chrysostom, *Homily 20*, § 1, in Montfaucon, 12, 289. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Hebrews*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 82, 757. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 66-67. Mitsopoulos, *Themata*, p. 62.

<sup>65</sup> *Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate I, 26, 1, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 214.

<sup>66</sup> St. Clement of Rome, *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians*, 33, 3, in Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 46.

<sup>67</sup> *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 14, 1, n Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 141.

Aristides states that “*the elements were made from nothingness by God.*”<sup>68</sup>

Athenagoras says that he cannot find a reason to accept that matter can be older than God, because the creative cause must exist before those that were made.<sup>69</sup>

St. Justin the Philosopher and Martyr characterizes the cosmos as being creative and opposes those who say that it is not created.

Theophilus of Antioch says that God created all things from nothingness and in this is manifested God’s Power, in that He created from nothingness the creatures as He Willed. If God is not made and the matter is not made, then God is not the Creator of all things; neither is it considered to be a great thing to make the cosmos from existing matter, because any technician who takes existing matter, is able to make anything that he wills.<sup>70</sup>

Tatianus states that “*the matter is not infinite as God*” but “*is creative and made by the Creator.*”<sup>71</sup>

The theory that matter co-existed and is co-eternal with God is characterized by St. Athanasius of Alexandria

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<sup>68</sup> Aristides, *Apology*, IV, § 1, in **B**, v. 3, p. 136.

<sup>69</sup> Athenagoras, in **B**, v. 4, pp. 291 and 294.

<sup>70</sup> Theophilus of Antioch, *Autolytus*, II, 10, 13 and 4, in **B**, v. 4, pp. 30, 22.

<sup>71</sup> Tatianus, *to Greeks*, in **B**, v. 4, p. 245. St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 690.

as “paganistic.”<sup>72</sup> According to Theophilus of Antioch if “God was made from matter,” then “He should be called technician and not Creator.”<sup>73</sup>

St. Irenaeus wrote: “God being Mighty and Rich in everything created and also matter.”<sup>74</sup> Men are unable to bring something out of nothingness and whatever they do, they do it with pre-existing matter. But God, Who is greater than man, created matter from nothingness and proved His Greatness and Majesty in comparison to men.<sup>75</sup>

Obviously one who believes that matter pre-existed as co-eternal with God, submits Him to matter and exalts the position of matter as being above God, since it pre-describes the boundaries in which God’s creativity must act.<sup>76</sup>

St. Cyril of Alexandria notes that God “creates as He knows and as He wants.”<sup>77</sup>

St. Basil the Great says: “What can be more disrespectful, without character, unknowing, extreme, formless, indescribable disgrace” rather to demand to

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<sup>72</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, II, § 22, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 192.

<sup>73</sup> Theophilus of Antioch, *2 Autolycus*, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 5, 22.

<sup>74</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book II, ch. 10, § 3, in in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 736. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 125.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, *Heresies*, II, X, 4, in in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 736. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 126.

<sup>76</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenem*, in migne, *P.L.*, 2, 228.

<sup>77</sup> St. Cyril of Alexandria, in Migne, *P.G.*, 69, 17.

offer matter the same honour that is described “*to the Wise and Mighty and All Beautiful Creator of all?*”<sup>78</sup>

St. John Chrysostom states that “*it is the extreme expression of madness to say that creatures were made from existing matter and not to confess that God created them from nothingness.*”<sup>79</sup> For either we renounce the existence of God, or we accept God the Creator, Who made all things from nothingness, and that there was no matter before but that God created it. For God exists as the Lord of all forever and brings what He Wills out of nothingness into being “*according to His Will and Commandment.*”<sup>80</sup>

### III. THE CREATION IN RELATION TO TIME.

#### 1. The beginning of time.

The terms “*time*” and “*cosmos*” are relative and undivided. Time begins with the Cosmos, but the Cosmos does not begin *in* time but *with* time. For time cannot pre-exist before the Cosmos.<sup>81</sup> Eternity and time differentiate in that time does not exist and no change takes place within Eternity. Since there were no creatures, which through their movements could bring change and different

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<sup>78</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Hexaemerus*, Homily 2, § 2, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 32.

<sup>79</sup> St. John, Chrysostom, *Homily II*, § 2, in Montfaucon, 4, 13.

<sup>80</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Dialogue against Manichaenians*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1524. St. Ambrosius, in Migne, *P.L.*, 14, 124, 126, 129.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Damalas, *Catechesis*, pp. 21-22. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 68-69. Lossky, *Theology*, pp. 58-63.

conditions, time was impossible to begin. Therefore, it is illogical to say that God created time after a period of time. Time before the creation does not exist, but only God existed. As the creation took place, so did time. Time is relative to the Cosmos, to the living creatures and to the plants. And as those that were created with time pass away, so does time pass without ceasing. The present becomes past and exists no more. The future is not present and the present, before it is known, passes by and becomes the past.<sup>82</sup> Time began at the moment when God gave the first creative Commandment, when His creative Will was expressed at the beginning of Creation. Thus time was created by God, Who created all things and even the order of the centuries was made by God, Who is the Maker and Founder of the worlds.<sup>83</sup>

Time does not exist as an independent reality since it appeared at the first manifestation of Creation. Thus God is also the Creator of time.

## **2. Concerning the Beginning of Time and the In Time Creation Teachings of Holy Scripture and Ecclesiastic Authors.**

When Holy Scripture proclaims: “*In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth,*”<sup>84</sup> this suggests that the Cosmos was created in time and the things in creation

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<sup>82</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Hexaemerus*, Homily 1, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 13.

<sup>83</sup> St. Augustine, *Confessio*, XI, 13, in migne, *P.L.*, 32, 815.

<sup>84</sup> Gen. 1:1.

at a certain period of time. St. Ambrosius notes that God made the heavens and earth at the beginning of time, which did not exist before the Cosmos.<sup>85</sup> Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in His prayer addressed to His Father before His Passion and Suffering on the Cross, asked: *“That they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”*<sup>86</sup> Here our Lord differentiates His eternal relationship to His Father to that which began in time. He makes the same differentiation when speaking about the Love of the Father towards Himself.<sup>87</sup> St. Paul in the Epistle to the Colossians concerning the Son states *“He is the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn over all Creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether Thrones or Dominions or Principalities or Powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”*<sup>88</sup> He exists before the creation of the invisible world, which was created before the visible Cosmos, and thus He created the Angels.<sup>89</sup> Christ is the *“Firstborn”* and not the *“first-created,”* Born of the Father and existing before all things.

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<sup>85</sup> St. Ambrosius, *In Hexaemerus*, I. I, c. 6, § 20, in Migne, *P.L.*, 14, 143.

<sup>86</sup> John 17:24.

<sup>87</sup> John 17:5.

<sup>88</sup> Col. 1:15-17.

<sup>89</sup> St. John, Chrysostom, *Homily 1*, § 2, in Montfaucon, v. 11, p. 5. Zigabinos, *To Matthew*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 129, 640. Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Colossians*, VII, in Migne, *P.G.*, 82, 597.

According to the holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church the things and creatures are characterized in that they were non-existent before they were brought into existence. Only the Word of God, contrary to the creatures that began their existence in time, is without beginning and as the Father Who begat Him is Eternal, so is the Son. The creatures cannot be eternal, as they have a beginning and came into being from nothingness. How then can that which did not exist be Co-eternal with God Who always exists? Thus all those who describe Eternity to the Creation are dragged into insanity and madness with those who deny the Eternity of the Lord of Creation, the Word and Son of God.<sup>90</sup>

Many ask the question: “*What did God do before He created the world?*” Can we image God doing nothing? Or it is possible to say that God had nothing before and obtained it afterwards? God is always Pantocrator and there was never a time that He was not what He is, and precisely for this reason, all His Creation must be under His Authority.<sup>91</sup>

St. Athanasius the Great of Alexandria characterizes as “*madness*” the curiosity of those who ask: “*Why God Who could create, does not always create?*” He answers: “*For who has known the Mind of the Lord?*”

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<sup>90</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, I, § 29; II, §§ 1, 22 and 57, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 72, 148, 193 and 269. St. Basil the Great, *Against Eunomius*, II, § 17, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 608. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius*, I, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 364. St. Maximus, *Chapter about love*, IV, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 90, 1048.

<sup>91</sup> Origen, *About Principals*, book I, ch. 2 § 10.

*Or who has become His counsellor”?* Then the question: “*What did God do before He created the world*” does not make sense. “*For God could have sent His Son at the time of Adam or Noah or Moses, and yet He sent Him during these last days, because this is what He considered profitable for all Creation; likewise, concerning the creatures, when He wanted and considered, He created.*”<sup>92</sup>

St. Augustine notes that since heaven and earth did not exist, neither did time. Why then should anyone ask: ‘*What were You doing then, O God?*’ For wherever there is no time, there cannot be ‘*then*’ because “*You do not precede through time all Eternity, O Lord, but You exist through Your supreme Presence eternally.*”<sup>93</sup>

St. Irenaeus gives a clearer answer to this question and notes that before God created Adam and before all Creation, the Word was glorifying His Father, abiding in Him and He was glorified by His Father, as He Himself says: “*O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*”<sup>94</sup>

St. Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus adds that before the world was created, God was “*moving within His own Vision.*”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Against Arians*, I, § 29, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 72. Cf. Rom. 11:34. Is. 40:13. Je. 23:18. Job 36:22-23.

<sup>93</sup> St. Augustine, *Confessio*, I, XI, 13, in Migne, *P.L.*, 32, 815.

<sup>94</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, book IV, ch. 14, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 1010. Cf. *Ibid*, in Hadjephraimides, p. 288. John 17:5.

<sup>95</sup> St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 38, 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 320.

Finally, there is a differentiation between “*beyond time*,” “*Eternity*” and “*eternal condition*,” which are older than the creation of the world and which refer to the Heavenly Hosts.<sup>96</sup> The “*beyond time*” condition is Eternity itself, which cannot be measured by the changes of this world. It began when God created the intellectual beings of heaven, the Angels and all the heavenly places, which surpass our limited understanding and of which even their names are impossible to know. We comprehend that the Angels live in a condition of imperishability and Eternity, a condition that the Righteous will enter after the General Resurrection and Last Judgment, to inherit the Heavenly Kingdom of God<sup>97</sup> where “*time will exist no more*.”<sup>98</sup>

### **3. The Plan of Creation Existed in the Mind of God from all Eternity.**

Although the creative Action of God was expressed in time, the plan of creation existed in the Divine Mind of God before all ages. We must never think that God suddenly decided to create the world and man and then fulfilled the plan that He conceived before time existed. For this presupposes change and alteration in the

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<sup>96</sup> St. Basil the Great, *Hexaemerus*, Homily 1, § 5, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 13.

<sup>97</sup> Matth. 5:10; 19:29; 25:34, 46. Mark 10:30. Luke 18:30. Heb. 1:14.

<sup>98</sup> Rev. 10:6.

unalterable God<sup>99</sup> Who always had the plan of creation in mind and Who always wanted to create the world at a specific time that He Himself had determined before time. “*The Counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.*”<sup>100</sup>

When God created the things of the world, He did not create something that He did not know, but, as He created all things in time, He fulfilled His eternal Will in such a way that neither in His Will nor in His Plan the slightest change occurred.<sup>101</sup> God is not like men who conceive something new in their minds, make decisions and then accomplish it. God has only one eternal Will. Neither does God change from not wanting to wanting, or from ignorance to knowing.

Thus, the Creation is not Co-eternal with God because He was always the Lord. He ruled from the beginning over all and when He wanted to He brought everything from nothingness into being. He has the Power to create through His Word and in the spirit of His Mouth; and being the Eternal Creator, when He wants to He creates through His Consubstantial Word and the Holy Spirit.<sup>102</sup> God is the Creator, because He has within Him

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<sup>99</sup> St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, I. XII, c. 14, in Migne, *P.L.*, 41, 362.

<sup>100</sup> Psalm 33(34):11.

<sup>101</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Dialogue against Manichaeus*, § 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1512; *Catechesis*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 837. St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, IV, 2 and XI, 10, in Migne, *P.L.*, 41, 320 and 327.

<sup>102</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Against Manichaeans*, § 9, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1513. St. Maximus, *Chapter about love*, IV, 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 90, 1048.

whatever is required to be the Creator: the plan of creation and its changeability. The new titles such as Creator, Governor and Master that describe God after the Creation, do not bring any alteration to the Essence of the Deity. Before the Creation God was perfect and after the Creation He did not increase or change. For “*You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.*”<sup>103</sup>

#### IV. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD’S CREATIVE ACTION.

##### 1. God Creates by His Free Will.

The Creative Action of God was a free action. The freedom of God to create was perfect and infinite. God was free to create or not to create. It was up to God’s free Will to create this world or another. And only because of His Goodness and Holiness, He did not create an evil world.<sup>104</sup> For “*He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*”<sup>105</sup> God had no need of anyone or anything in order to create, since nothing existed before the Creation; but, by His own Will, He freely made everything, being the only True God and Lord, the only Creator and Father, Who contains and provides for everything in order for

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<sup>103</sup> Heb. 1:10-12.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, ch. 4, p. 30.

<sup>105</sup> 2 Tim. 2:13.

them to exist.<sup>106</sup> God was not moved by anything that existed outside His Divine Essence, nor by any inner force or procession, as Pantheism claims, but by His own free Will.<sup>107</sup>

The freedom of the Creative Action of God in the work of creation is proclaimed by the Book of Genesis; and by the Commandment: “*Let there be.*”<sup>108</sup> Especially when creating man God says: “*Let Us make man in Our image and in Our likeness.*”<sup>109</sup> God appears to act freely, as the unique Pantocrator and Ruler.

According to the holy Fathers and ecclesiastical scholars, God always acts as He Wills, doing whatever He pleases, as and whenever He pleases; not without His Will, but wanting and knowing that He made everything.<sup>110</sup> God’s Will is the measure of all things and everything is based upon His Will; for His Will is the foundation of the Universe.<sup>111</sup> It is considered a great heresy to say that God was forced to create all that He has made.

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<sup>106</sup> St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 710.

<sup>107</sup> Clement the Alexandrian, *Stromata*, VII, 7, in **B**, v. 8, p. 264. St. Basil the Great, *Hexaemerus*, Homily 1 § 7, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 17.

<sup>108</sup> Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 20, 24.

<sup>109</sup> Gen. 1:26.

<sup>110</sup> Aristides, *Apology*, IV, § 1, in **B**, v. 3, p. 136. St. Hippolytus, *Noetus*, VIII, in **B**, v. 6, p. 16. St. Irenaeus, *Heresies*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 7, 735 and 736. Psalm 135(136):6.

<sup>111</sup> St. Ambrosius, *In Hexaemerus*, lib. I, c. 6, § 22; lib. II, c. 2, § 4, in Migne, *P.L.*, 14, 145 and 158.

## 2. The Creative Action of God is an Action of Love.

The Creative Action of God bears the Seal of His Love. God being the only True Blessed One, not having any need of anything or anyone, but giving to all everything and being by nature Good, He was pleased to create creatures that benefit from His Love and Goodness. Thus He created the Cosmos, the invisible and the visible world. But before God created the Cosmos, He was moved by seeing His own Goodness and Infinite Perfection; and His Life, Glory and Majesty is unspeakable.<sup>112</sup>

Being the Source of Goodness and wanting to share His Goodness with other creatures, God created the world out of nothingness.<sup>113</sup> Holy Scripture seals the various stations of the Creation with the expression “*and God saw that it was good.*”<sup>114</sup> This expression reveals that God did not create for His own benefit, but rather out of Love and Goodness, just because that which was made was good.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> 1 Tim. 6:15. Acts 17:25. 2 Corinth. 8:9. Psalm 16(17):21. St. John of Damascus, *Catechesis*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 864. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily 45 to holy Pascha*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 629. St. Ecumenius, *To 2 Corinthians*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 118, 1012.

<sup>113</sup> St. Athanasius the Great, *Concerning the incarnation of the Logos*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 25, 101. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To holy Pascha*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 629. Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, pp. 513 and 749.

<sup>114</sup> Gen. 1:4, 8, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

<sup>115</sup> St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, I. XI, c. 24, in Migne, *P.L.*, 41, 338. St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechesis*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 45, 21.

### 3. Energy Always Possible.

The Creative Energy of God bears the Seal of His Almightyness. The Psalmist wrote: “*He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast,*”<sup>116</sup> revealing the Divine Almightyness during the Creation. Clement the Alexandrian states that for God it was enough just to want and immediately it was done. God is not under stress nor exhausted or weakened when He creates. He wanted to create the world and it was created. Whatever He wants, it is done. His Will is action and this is called world.<sup>117</sup> God has the Power to create tens of thousands of worlds like the one in which we exist, but He did not wish to do so.<sup>118</sup>

The Commands “*let there be*” and “*bring forth*” through which God speaks and commands, are anthropomorphic expressions that express His Will. The fact that only the Will of God is sufficient in order to create the universe, the visible and invisible world, from nothingness, is incomprehensible to man.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Psalm 33(34):9.

<sup>117</sup> Clement the Alexandrian, *Protrepticus*, IV, 63, in **B**, v.7, p. 49. *Ibid*, *Pedagogus*, in **B**, v. 7, p. 92. St. Athanasius, *Against Arians*, II, § 24, in Migne, *P.G.*, 26, 197. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About providence*, II, 43, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 964.

<sup>118</sup> Mogilas, A’ 14, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, v. II, p. 599.

<sup>119</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About passion and energy*, II, 36, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 841. St. Ambrosius, *In Hexaemerus*, .1. I, c. 9, in migne, *P.L.*, 14, 145.

#### 4. Energy All-wise.

The Creative Energy of God bears the Seal of His All-wisdom. The Commands “*let there be*” and “*bring forth*” in relation to the different stages of Creation and that “*God saw that it was good*” presupposes the capability of the existence of an Absolute, Supreme Mind and thoughts or ideas of the Creator that enable Him to bring forth His plan of Creation. St. Gregory of Nazianzus believes that in order for God to create the Angelical Hosts, which were made before the visible world, firstly He thought timelessly. Afterwards in time, His Thought, which the Word completed and the Holy Spirit perfected, was realized. Secondly, He thought about creating a visible world of matter. Accordingly He created everything visible and invisible. Therefore the eternal pre-existing Knowledge of the Creator gave them essence and brought them into existence.<sup>120</sup>

These thoughts or ideas do not exist outside God. They pre-exist within Him. Theology refers to them as “*Vocations, Divine and Good Wills*”. These ideas are as eternal and timeless as God is. It would be considered blasphemous to say that external ideas entered His Mind, not having pre-existed within Him.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Homily* 38, § 9 and 10, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 320 and 321. St. Maximus, *Chapter about love*, IV § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 90, 1048. Rhosse, *System*, p. 342.

<sup>121</sup> St. Augustine, in migne, *P.L.*, 40, 30.

Eugenius Boulgareos notes that these ideas must be considered in the light of Holy Scripture. For in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is written: “*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*”<sup>122</sup> It is evident that the ideas of God existed within Him.<sup>123</sup> Whatever was made was known to God because He did not receive the knowledge of their existence after they were created. Before the creatures were made, they both existed and did not exist because they existed in the Knowledge of God but they did not exist in their nature.<sup>124</sup> They existed intellectually but not perceptibly until they were realized afterwards through the Creation. For God is simple and within Him are the images and examples of what He will make. In other words they are contained within His Eternal Will.<sup>125</sup>

## **5. Relative is the Perfection of the Cosmos.**

The Creative Energy of God that bears the Seal of God’s Goodness, All-wisdom and the freedom of His Almightyness raises the question: Is this world, which is the result of the Divine Perfection of God, as perfect as He had intended, or does it have imperfections? The answer

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<sup>122</sup> Heb. 11:3.

<sup>123</sup> Boulgareos, *Theologicon*, p. 154.

<sup>124</sup> St. Augustine, lib. V, c. 18, § 36, in Migne, *P.L.*, 34, 334.

<sup>125</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Apologiticus to those those who slander the holy Icons*, Homily 1, § 10, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1240-1241.

is in the Book of Genesis: “*God saw all the things that He made, and, behold, they were very good.*”<sup>126</sup>

By saying that the present world is the most perfect of all: 1) one restricts the freedom of God, 2) God’s Actions are limited to certain boundaries of the creation, 3) one ignores the existence of evil in the world, and finally, 4) one ignores “*His Promise ...[of] new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*”<sup>127</sup>

The present world is “*very good*” but it is not the perfect one since it will pass away. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, assured us by saying: “*Assuredly, I say to you ... Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*”<sup>128</sup>. It is impossible by nature to incorporate the perfections of the infinite into that which passes away. Since this world will pass away, it is obvious that God is able to make other more perfect worlds.

When God created this world, He had in mind the moral evil that would enter through Satan, the fallen angel and inventor of sin. His All-wisdom, Goodness and Justice permitted it so that the moral evil of the world and natural imperfections (natural evil) would be conquered by God’s All-wise Providence. Dositheus states that God, being by nature good, made everything very good for it is impossible for Him to create evil. Evil exists in the world because it is either caused by man or Satan and we know

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<sup>126</sup> Gen 1:31.

<sup>127</sup> 2 Peter 3:13.

<sup>128</sup> Matth. 24:35.

there is no evil in nature as God is not the Creator of wickedness.<sup>129</sup> Therefore after the conquest of moral evil, it is necessary to regenerate the world into a higher existence. As this present life has a worldly nature, so the Life to come must have a similar condition after the end.<sup>130</sup>

Concerning the existence of moral evil we must bear in mind that this does not exist as a live essence with a soul, or as a second principal, existing eternally and opposing good. Moral evil is the disposition within the soul or any intellectual being that opposes virtue and leads the indolent astray. It is the freedom of choice of each individual and intellectual being to remain either good, as God created us from the beginning, or to rebel and stray from the natural condition of goodness by being led into sin. Thus evil becomes reality within intellectual beings when they permit it and thereby misuse their free will, the freedom of choice. This is rebelliousness against God, poverty of soul, lack of goodness, distortion of morality and real enslavement of intellectual beings.<sup>131</sup>

Concerning the question: “*Since God knew before He created the world that the intellectual beings will rebel and invent the evil, why then did He create the world and*

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<sup>129</sup> Dositheus of Jerusalem, in Karmeris, *The dogmatics*, II, p. 749.

<sup>130</sup> St. Basil the Great, *In Hexaemerus*, Homily 1, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 12.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, *In Hexaemerus*, Homily 2, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 37. St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. That God is not the cause of evil*, IV, 22, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1197; *Ibid*, *Against Manichaeus*, §§ 14 and 32, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1517 and 1540. Androutsos, *Dogmatique*, p. 119.

*why did He not prevent them from falling?”* If God did not create the world because of the moral evil that entered therein, then He would have deprived the Creation from the countless numbers of intellectual beings that would have remained in Virtue, His Blessedness and Blessed Life. This would then be considered a defeat of God’s Goodness.

Concerning the fallen angel Satan, God gave him his existence to show that He is not afraid of the rebellion of servants; and above all to teach us that He is Merciful even to those who choose evil. Truly God gave Lucifer his existence and the freedom to choose either to remain in holiness with God or to rebel against Him. And although God has the Power to destroy the devil and all his wicked angels, and even to annihilate them by sending them back to non-existence, He did not do so. Instead God tolerated his stupidity and granted him his existence out of His Love and Goodness.<sup>132</sup> In other words God, in His Divine Goodness, gave existence to Satan and the angels who had followed him, so that they may still participate in His Blessedness. They remain by their own free will in their darkness, which they prefer rather than being cast out into non-existence. God allows Satan to exist in order to prove his evilness to the whole universe. Ultimately Satan will be condemned to Eternal Condemnation in the “*Everlasting Fire prepared for the devil and his angels*”<sup>133</sup> on the Day of the Final Judgment.

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<sup>132</sup> St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. That God is not the cause of evil*, IV, 22, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1197. *Ibid*, *Against Manichaeus*, §§ 14 and 32, in Migne, *P.G.*, 94, 1517 and 1540.

<sup>133</sup> *Matth.* 25:41.

## V. THE PURPOSE OF CREATION.

### 1. Primary and Secondary Purpose.

Since the world is the result of God's free Will and Love, and not that of a blind fate or necessity, it is obvious that it was created to fulfill a certain Purpose. According to Holy Scripture God is the "A(=Alpha) and the  $\Omega$ (=Omega), the beginning and the end"<sup>134</sup> in His Creation. He is not only the cause 'by' Whom all things have their existence, but 'through Him' and 'to Whom' "are all things."<sup>135</sup> "Through Him" is the Distribution and Providence and "to Him" all things aspire. Everything is "through Him" being the only Begotten Son of God and "to Him" everything was created. In this biblical verse, St. Paul presents the beginning of the existence of all things "from Him," and the coherence "through Him" and finally "to Him." Elsewhere it is written: "For it was fitting for Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings."<sup>136</sup> It is proclaimed that everything was made for God, being the final Purpose of all things. "Then comes the end, when He (Jesus Christ) delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power."<sup>137</sup> "When all things are made subject to Him (Jesus Christ), then the Son Himself will also be subject to

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<sup>134</sup> Rev. 1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13.

<sup>135</sup> Rom. 11:36.

<sup>136</sup> Heb. 3:10.

<sup>137</sup> 1 Corinth. 15:24.

*Him (the Father) Who put all things under Him that God may be all in all.*"<sup>138</sup>

God does not only intervene in His Creation, but also in the history of man, with the intention of the glorification of His Name. Thus He "*hardens the heart of Pharaoh*" in order to "*be glorified upon Pharaoh, and on his entire host, and all his chariots and his horses*" and "*all the Egyptians shall know that I AM the Lord.*"<sup>139</sup> God through His intervention saved the Israelites from catastrophe and made known His mighty Power,<sup>140</sup> for He has prepared them for His glory, and He formed and made His people.<sup>141</sup> But He has also chosen His new elect people: all those who accept Him through true and undefiled faith "*to the glory of His Grace.*"<sup>142</sup> Therefore "*the heavens declare the glory of God*"<sup>143</sup> and "*everything that has breath*"<sup>144</sup> is called to "*praise the Lord.*"<sup>145</sup> He reminds His great Works, which He had created, and the people of Israel who witnessed His Majesty and proclaimed Him as the Lord God, that He would not give His glory "*to another.*"<sup>146</sup> Thus the primary and main purpose of God creating the Cosmos is His glory.

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<sup>138</sup> 1 Corinth. 15:28.

<sup>139</sup> Gen. 15:17-18.

<sup>140</sup> Psalm 106(107):8, 10.

<sup>141</sup> Is. 43:7.

<sup>142</sup> Ephes. 1:6.

<sup>143</sup> Psalms 19(20):1; 89(90):5; 104(105):24.

<sup>144</sup> Psalm 150(151):6.

<sup>145</sup> Psalms 135(136):1-3, 19-21; 148(149):1-14; 149(150):1, 3, 6; 150(151):1-6.

<sup>146</sup> Is. 42:5-8.

The second Purpose of Creation is the intellectual man who was made in the “*image and likeness*”<sup>147</sup> of God. To man whom God created from the “*dust of the earth*,”<sup>148</sup> He gave the authority to “*have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the flying creatures of heaven, and over the cattle and all the earth, and over all the reptiles that creep on the earth.*”<sup>149</sup> When God created the first couple, He “*blessed them*” and said to them “*increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over*” all the things upon the earth.<sup>150</sup> And all things God subjected under man’s feet, making him the recognised ruler of the earth and of all Creation, which “*was subjected to futility, not willingly,*”<sup>151</sup> but because of the fall of man.

## **2. The Teachings of the Fathers of the Orthodox Church.**

According to the above Teachings of the Orthodox Church, the Apologists and the holy Fathers proclaimed that the main Purpose of Creation is to make known “*through the works the Majesty and Greatness of God.*”<sup>152</sup> Tertullian adds that “*God produced from nothingness the world in order to decorate His Majesty.*”<sup>153</sup> With particular regard to man’s creation it is proclaimed “*that*

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<sup>147</sup> Gen. 1:26.

<sup>148</sup> Gen. 2:7.

<sup>149</sup> Gen. 1:26, 28.

<sup>150</sup> Gen. 1:28.

<sup>151</sup> Rom. 8:20.

<sup>152</sup> Theophilus of Antioch, *I Autolytus*, § 4, in *B*, v. 5, p. 14.

<sup>153</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, c. 17, in *migne, P.L.*, 1, 432.

*the primary and common cause that God made everything for Himself is reflected in the goodness and wisdom of man's creation.*"<sup>154</sup> Parallel to the primary Purpose is a secondary purpose, which refers to the benefits that man would receive from the Creation. Thus it is proclaimed that the sun, the moon and the stars were created by God "*for signs and for seasons and for days and for years,*"<sup>155</sup> not because He needs these things, but to assist man. This was emphasized to avoid idolatry, since Creation was made for man and it must not be worshipped.<sup>156</sup>

St. John Chrysostom states that God, planning to place man as the king above all Creation, made everything before him, thereby emphasising the value of this Creation.<sup>157</sup> God did not create everything only for our needs but also for our spiritual benefit because, seeing the abundance, beauty and variety of the creatures, we glorify and praise the Power of the Creator Who made everything.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Athenagoras, *About resurrection*, § 12, in **B**, v.4, p. 320.

<sup>155</sup> Gen. 1: 14.

<sup>156</sup> Theophilus of Antioch, *I Autolytus*, § 6, in **B**, v. 5, p. 15. Tatianus, *Homily to the Greeks*, § 4, in **B**, v. 3, p. 244.

<sup>157</sup> St. John, Chrysostom, *To Genesis*, Homily 8, § 2, in Montfaucon, v. 4, p. 72.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, in *Genesis Homily 7*, § 5, in Montfaucon, v. 4, p. 66.

## VI. THE ORDER OF CREATION.

### 1. Indications from Holy Scriptures.

In Genesis, the first Book of the Old Testament, God created the unformed matter from nothingness. From this matter the heavenly bodies of the stars and the earth were made and from this earth life appeared, beginning with the most simple form of life and gradually proceeding, in order, to the most perfect of all creatures.<sup>159</sup>

The biblical references concerning the creation of the world in Genesis 1:1-2:3 belong to the Interpretative field of Theology. It is very important to stress the order in which the Creation took place in this biblical narration.

The author of the book of Genesis presents the beginning of the earth as being in a chaotic condition.<sup>160</sup> The unformed matter was covered by water<sup>161</sup> and in six days the earth took its form with all its fullness as we know it now. The “*six days*”<sup>162</sup> of Creation must be understood as being six long periods of time in which, step by step, according to the laws of nature, everything developed in an orderly way, according to the Will of God. Referring to the “*seventh day*”<sup>163</sup> - Saturday or the Sabbath - the God-inspired author has in mind the division of the year into weeks and one week into seven days.

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<sup>159</sup> Cf. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>160</sup> Gen. 1:1.

<sup>161</sup> Gen. 1:6-8.

<sup>162</sup> Gen. 2:1-2.

<sup>163</sup> Gen. 2:3.

It is also important to notice that the heavenly bodies, the stars, the sun and the moon, which divide the time into periods of day and night, appear only on the fourth day of Creation.<sup>164</sup> Thus the three previous days<sup>165</sup> were not determined according to the movement of the earth around the sun. Nevertheless, the plants that were necessary for preserving animal life, appeared on the fifth day,<sup>166</sup> completely developed and covering the entire surface of the earth.<sup>167</sup>

This orderly progress of Creation, whereby life proceeded from the simple form of plants (“*herb of grass*” and “*fruit-tree*”)<sup>168</sup> to that of life in the seas (“*reptiles*,” “*great whales*” and “*winged creatures*”),<sup>169</sup> and then to the life on dry land (“*the living creatures*,” “*reptiles*” (amongst them the dinosaurs), “*wild beasts*” and “*cattle*”),<sup>170</sup> was necessary because the simplest forms of life provided the means of existence to the more advanced creatures.

God does not just create the laws of nature, He also oversees the work of Creation, intervening during the different stages by His Life-giving Almightyness. Thus, the plant kingdom prepared the way for the appearance of the animal kingdom; and later, but **NOT from it**, man

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<sup>164</sup> Gen. 1:14-19.

<sup>165</sup> Gen. 1:1-13.

<sup>166</sup> Gen. 1:20-25

<sup>167</sup> Gen. 1:11-13.

<sup>168</sup> Gen. 1:11.

<sup>169</sup> Gen. 1:20, 21.

<sup>170</sup> Gen. 1:24.

appeared as the crown of all Creation through the special intervention of God.<sup>171</sup>

## **2. The Theories Concerning Creation.**

The holy Fathers and ecclesiastic Scholars interpreted the above biblical narration according to the grammatical and allegorical method. In our contemporary times, however, we must bear in mind the discoveries of science in the fields of astronomy, archaeology, paleontology and many others in order to supply the correct answers to those who question.

### **1. The Theory of the Flood or Cataclysm.**

According to this theory the rocks and different layers of the earth were caused by the great Flood.<sup>172</sup> The previous forms of animal and plant life were destroyed and the next generation of species appeared.

**2. The Theory of Restoration.** According to this theory the creatures that were created throughout the centuries were destroyed, as proved by their fossilized relics discovered in the different layers of the earth, and in the period of six days, life as it is today, was restored.

**3. The Theory of Periods.** According to this theory the six days in the narration of the Bible are six long

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<sup>171</sup> Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, 21-22.

<sup>172</sup> Gen. 6:1-9:17.

periods of time, since “*a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past.*”<sup>173</sup>

4. **The Ideal Theory.** According to this theory, the narration of the Book of Genesis is a pedagogic poem, which divides Creation into seven days in order to establish analogy and dependence between the Creation of God, the Jewish week and the Sabbath.

5. **The Theory of Vision.** According to this theory, the work of Creation was revealed by God either to Adam or to Moses through seven Divine Visions and thereby each Vision was presented as the work of one day.

6. **The Theory of Myths.** This theory, which is unacceptable, was supported by Gunkel and the followers of the negative criticism. According to this erroneous theory, the biblical narration was derived from ancient oriental myths concerning the Creation of the world.

We must never forget that Holy Scripture is not simply a book of science, archaeology or geology, but the Book in which God’s Divine Revelation is inscribed.

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<sup>173</sup> Psalm 90(91):4.