



Holy Martyr Callistratus
27 September/10 October, 2012

We, the hierarchs of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America, provide this resume of the patristic teachings concerning the Name of God, and do hereby declare that these traditional teachings on this subject are held by us unconditionally and without reservation.

All should understand that, by these pronouncements, we hierarchs are not Name-worshippers as defined in this statement, and that we believe, confess and espouse the Orthodox Christian belief, also defined in this statement.

Concerning the Constantinopolitan patriarchs' resolutions of 1912 and 1913, and also, the decision of the so-called Russian synod of 1913, these pronouncements against the Name-worshippers are not reasoned theologically according to the traditional teachings of the Orthodox Church. Their basic reasoning rejects the patristic teaching that the Name of God is Holy by nature; further they teach that It is not an energy or operation, nor the grace of God. Those who believe this fall under their own condemnation because, like the Name-worshippers they condemn, they believe that God's revealed Name is separate from Him. Further, they perpetually speak of God's eternal Name as if it were some created object, not revealed from on high, as our Fathers teach.

It is for this reason that we hierarchs of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America are not Name-worshippers. The reasons for the hierarchs' refusal to accept the various resolutions and decisions concerning Name-worshippers should also be clear.

Our position is blatantly Orthodox, consistent with the traditional teachings of the Holy Fathers of our Church; this we believe, this we proclaim, this we confess and this we teach.

“We follow in the footsteps of the Holy Fathers.”

(Fourth Ecumenical Council)

DIVERGENT TEACHINGS

I. Name-worshippers believe:

- 1) That God's Name is his Essence.
- 2) That God's Name is separate from Him.
- 3) That God's Name is another deity.
- 4) That created letters, sounds and random or accidental thoughts about God may be deified, or be used for occult or magical purposes.

II. Orthodox Christians believe:

- 1) That God's Name is *not* His Essence, but rather is the revealed truth about Himself, that is, His Uncreated Energy, His Uncreated Grace, His Providence, His Glory. In fact, His Essence is unknowable and has no name.
- 2) That God's Name is *not* separate from Him.
- 3) That God's Name is *not* another deity.
- 4) That created letters, sounds and random or accidental thoughts about God must *not* be deified. Further, they believe that these letters or sounds must *not* be used for occult or magical purposes.

St. Basil of Ancyra (+363) said to the pagan proconsul, "My chief name is 'Christian,' derived from 'Christ,' the Name that is eternal and beyond human understanding." These words are the straightforward and singular confession of every believing Orthodox Christian today also. Furthermore, as St. Cyril of Jerusalem (+386) says, "The Name of God is *in its nature* holy, whether we say so or not." St. John Chrysostom (+407) also tells us, "The Name of God is worthy of praise by *its very nature*;" and St. Macarius of Corinth (+1805) affirms, "The Name of God is *by nature* holy and supremely-holy, and the source of sanctification." This makes matters perfectly clear, because, as Orthodox Christians, we know and believe that the *only* Entity that is eternal, holy, supremely-holy, and the source of sanctification *by nature* is God Himself! This can only mean that His Name is indeed God Himself — again, not in His Essence, but in His Grace.

Together with St. Clement of Rome (+100), Orthodox Christians believe that, "The Name of God gave existence to all creation."¹ For St. Clement and the Church Fathers, this is exactly the same as saying "the Grace of God gave existence to all creation;" which is exactly the same as saying, "God gave existence to all creation." This is why the Orthodox, together with St. Tikhon of Zadonsk and St. John of Kronstadt, can say, "The Name of God is God Himself" because the Name of God *is His Energy and Grace*.

In addition, as St. John of Kronstadt affirms, "when you pronounce to yourself in your heart the Name of God, of the Lord, or that of the most Holy Trinity, or of the Lord of Sabaoth,

¹ Obviously, for St. Clement, the term "Name of God" signifies a power of God that is *eternal* and *uncreated*.

or of the Lord Jesus Christ, *then in that Name you have the Lord's whole being*; in it is His infinite mercy, His boundless wisdom, His inaccessible light, omnipotence, and immutability” — that is to say, you have God's uncreated and divine Grace.

The Hesychastic Councils of the 14th century and the *Synodicon of the Orthodoxy* affirm that *both* the Essence and the Grace of God *are God Himself*, although they are distinct one from the other (see *The True Vine*, #31, p. 12ff.). Therefore, “the Name of God *is* God” indeed, since His Name and His Grace are one and the same.²

III. Name-fighters:

confuse the doctrines described in sections I and II above, and therefore, like the Roman Catholics and Protestants, come to the erroneous conclusion that Orthodox Christians are guilty of pantheism and heresy (see the Resolutions of Patriarch Joachim III of Constantinople in 1912, and the Resolutions of Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople in 1913, and the Russian Synod of 1913.) As a result of their having confused these two divergent teachings, the Constantinopolitan Resolutions of 1912 and 1913 stray from the truth; especially the Russian Synod of 1913 itself comes under the anathemas of the 14th Century Hesychastic Councils and the *Synodicon of Orthodoxy*, because it teaches *falsely* concerning the Grace of God.

Orthodox Christians cannot “unconditionally” accept, endorse and perpetuate these false teachings.

IV. Concerning the “Russian Synod”

Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky wrote, “Our Church [in Russia] is governed by a layman, or, to say it officially, by a collegial institution never seen by the Church of Christ before....The [Russian] Church is deprived of its lawful head and is given over for enslavement to lay officials, which hide behind an assembly of six or seven hierarchs who are changed every half year, and two presbyters. Who is not aware that such an institution is uncanonical? That it was not approved at its very inception by two Patriarchs; and even if it had been approved by all four, this would only show the unlawful deed of the Patriarchs and not the canonicity of [Russian] Synodal rule, because no Patriarch can establish and authorize an institution which is unknown to Holy Orthodoxy and which was invented only to bring weakness and decay....”

(*Voice of the Church*, January 1912)

² It is precisely to this Orthodox teaching concerning the Name of God that the fathers expelled from Holy Mountain in 1913 adhered. They refused to be labeled as *Name-worshippers*, but rather called themselves *Name-glorifiers*.