
The Trinity

The incomprehensibility of God

The more I wanted to write, and forced myself to understand the divine nature of the Word, the further the knowledge drew away from me; and the more I thought I understood it, the more I knew I failed to do so. Furthermore, I could not express in writing what I seemed to understand; what I wrote was unequal to the foreshadowing of the truth that existed in my mind ... But lest I should cause you pain, or by my silence lead into godlessness the argumentative people who have consulted you, I forced myself to write the few things that I have now sent ... For although a perfect understanding of the truth is at present far away from us because of the infirmity of the flesh, yet it is possible, as the Preacher himself has said, to know the madness of the godless and, having found it, to say that it is more bitter than death (Eccles. 7:26) ... For though it is impossible to comprehend what God is, yet it is possible to say what he is not.¹

The Holy Spirit must be God as he deifies by participation

Moreover, all things are said to be participants of God through the Spirit. For it says, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy that one. For the temple of God, which you are, is holy” (1 Cor 3:16,17). But if the Holy Spirit were a creature, there would not be for us any participation of God in the Spirit. Indeed, if we were merely united to a creature, we would still be foreigners to the divine nature, having no participation in it... But if we become sharers in the divine nature through participation in the Spirit, one would have to be crazy to say that the Spirit is of a created nature and not of the nature of God, for that is how those in whom the Spirit is become divinized. But if the Spirit divinizes, it is not to be doubted that it is of the nature of God himself.²

The unity of action of the three persons indicates their shared nature

[Let us] consider the tradition and teaching and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, that which the Lord has given, the apostles preached, and the fathers guarded ... The Trinity is holy and perfect, confessed as God in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, having nothing foreign or extrinsic mingled with it, nor compounded of creator and created, but is wholly Creator and Maker. It is identical with itself and indivisible in nature, and its activity is one. For the Father does all things through the Word and in the Holy Spirit. Thus the oneness of the Holy Trinity is preserved and thus is the one God “who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:6) preached in the Church – “over all,” as Father, who is beginning and fountain; “through all,” through the Son; and “in all” in the Holy Spirit.³

¹ *First Letter to the Monks* (Barnard, pp.10-11)

² *ad Serap.* 1.24 (Anatolios, p.223)

³ *ad Serap.* 1.28 (Anatolios, p.227)