

Hyeromonk Calinic (Berger), Theognosia – the dogmatic and spiritual synthesis of the Father Dumitru Stăniloae (*Teognosia - sinteza dogmatică și duhovnicească a părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*), Deisis Publishing House, 2014, p. 462

The book of Father Calinic (Berger), published in 2014, at Deisis Publishing House, is the one that gave the author the academical title of PhD. in theology. This work was presented in America, in 2003, under the title: *Towards a Theological Gnoseology: The Synthesis of Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae*. The project of translation of the book in our country was initiated by the Deacon Ioan I. Ică jr., and the translation is by Monk Nectarios Daraban.

Father hyeromonk Calinic (Berger) is now parish at the Romanian Orthodox Church of Hermitage Pennsylvania, and he finished the studies at the Santa Clara University (1988), The Saint Cross Greek Theological School (1994), and the PhD at Washington, with the remembered work. The work that made him known in the Romanian Orthodox Theology, is another exceptional work: *Provocări ale gândirii și vieții ortodoxe astăzi. Reflecții despre temeiurile credinței creștine*, appeared in 2012, this book reunited the theological reflections of the author – grounded on the Holy Bible, with the spiritual Tradition of the Holy Fathers, regarding some of the reference themes of Christianity.

Through the book that follows to be presented, the author wants to realize a full synthesis regarding thegnoseology of the Father Dumitru Stăniloae. To realize this study, he structures the work in two big sections: the first section will be about the „Dogmatic fundamentals”, which will be at the base of thegnoseology, and the second will present directly the problem of knowing or „Theognosia”. The waiting of the author of the end of this study targets the synthetically exposure at the way Father Stăniloae managed an integral view to the spirituality and knowing, even as nature (divine and human), and by person (divine and human).

In the first part of the study (pp. 35-209), the author analyses deeply what means for Father Stăniloae the fundamental of hisgnoseology. In

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this part, the Christological and Trinitarian theology of the Father, has an important place. Here, what's different at Father Staniloae from others big theologians of the XX century (Lossky, Zizioulas, Yannaras), is the relation which doesn't oppose dialectically of what means "person", and what means "nature". From the point of view of the author of this study, the relation person-nature has important implications in gnoseology, because "doesn't exist any dualism between person and nature, body and soul, material and spiritual" (p. 15). Other characteristic of the gnoseology of Father Staniloae, identified by Hyeromonk Calinic, is the permanent parallel which realize even terminologically and doctrinarian between the notion of "person" and "nature", even at human level, and even divine (p. 123)

In the problem of gnoseology, the author presents the major implications of the theology of Saint Maxim the Confessor in the view of Father Staniloae over the world. Massively influenced of his theology, Father Staniloae considers as important in the contemplation of God, the study of contemplating nature. Here the author will have a special chapter dedicated to those "logos, logoi or symbols" (pp. 163-197), which corresponds to the divine work through God permanently "creates, sustains and diriges all the things to Himself". At the end of elaboration of the first parts, the author of the book considers that the problem of knowing in the theology of Father Staniloae, has new and actuals terms. The big theological synthesis which the author tries to catch, is on the melting and mixing of several factors, specially: "the Christological doctrine and Trinitarian, the teaching of Saint Maxim of logoi, the Dionysian concept of symbol/logos and participation, the palamite teaching about the unmade energies and the insistences of Father Staniloae on the personal character of God." (p. 16)

If in the first part of the work, the author insisted on the principals and the fundamentals about Father Staniloae orients in the problem of knowing, in the second part, is treating about the knowing of God or "theognosia" directly. Thus, into the chapters of this parts will be a generally presentation of the gnoseology of Father Staniloae, starting with the fundamentation of this knowing in the divine Revelation (p. 212). After augmented the knowing to the prism of the Revelation, Hyeromonk Calinic distinguishes in the theology of Father Staniloae, three forms of knowing: cataphatically, apophatically and existential (pp. 219-257), which treats them in parts, seeing the synthesis and the tie which exists between them (p. 230). The fallen state of the men has direct implications on the gnoseology, because this reduces the perspective on the world and man at a dimension utilitarian, fragmentary, which implicates the human nature at a true knowing

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and a communication with God. Thus, in the vision of Father Staniloae, to receive the true knowing, takes from the man a big ascetical effort, This theme, the author dedicates a chapter “The steps of the gnoseological ascending”(pp. 257-277), where he presents the meaning of this ascending, the motivation he should have in every move and the relations which exists between those three steps.

Before going to the presentation of those three steps of the mystical ascending: the purification, illumination and deification, the author will debate largely regarding the human qualities which will became a table of knowing: the mind, ration and will (pp. 277-305). After, at the chapter “The sins as the base of ignorance” (p. 305) is elucidate the fundamental characteristics of the sins, the causes and their effect on the human structure (pp. 309-325). After demonstrating the above mentioned, will effectively pass at the presentation of the gnoseological ascending realized through the purification, illumination and union or deification as what it is in the treaty of mystique of Father Staniloae “The orthodox spirituality, chapter 3”.

At the chapter “Purification” (pp. 325-355), is discovered the process through the reorientation of the human faculties (the ration, sense and will) from the sinner to virtues. In this way is hierarchizes the fallen human nature, the way being having the body of soul, and the restoration of the relation between human and world, as the relations between people. In Father Staniloae, this step has major gnoseological implications, because every step of purification passed an obstacle before the way of seeing God and the interpersonal communion with Him. In his vision, “this process is necessary to all Christians, even if some progress farther then others”. (p. 353).

Hyeromonk Calinic synthetize the theme of illumination from the Ascetic and Mystic of Father Dumitru Staniloae, using this three parts that the Romanian theologian made: a) illumination in the sense of knowing God mediated through world and Holy Bible; b) an meeting about the apophatic knowing and negative theology; c) the illumination as receiving God with clear soul. The theme of illumination presents after another splitting: the knowing of God mediated by the things and the events or the rations of the world and the knowing mediated by the even human mind.

Thus, after the process of purification and reorientation of the man, it is the illumination which begins from the contemplation of the nature and culminate to the “clean prayer”, where the mind stands in silence in front of the infinity of God. Even the contemplation of the nature and the sincere prayer are steps that come one after another, and the mind follows to the

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higher steps of the divine abyss, doesn't mean that the union is done. This step is described largely in the chapter Deification.

At the chapter "Deification", the book of the hyeromonk Calinic presents the teaching about deification, following closely the synthetisations made by Father Staniloae (pp. 327-429). Thus, the deification is understood in two ways: largely, having all the Christians which received the Holy Mystery of the Baptism, and strictly, reserved to some chosen people, which will eat in short times the goodies reserved to the next century. The deification is presented as the seeing of the unmade world, especially having the base the love. Because of the relationship of love between man and God, the deification isn't seen as a cancellation and amalgamation of the persons, but the keeping of the characteristics, after the structure of the Trinity.

The work presented above – after the confessions of the author was begun "under the sign of the intimidations", emphasize the genius and the knowing of the Romanian theologian, who rediscovered and updated the patristic thinking "without stopping the subtle and complex diversity". One of the wishes of Father Dumitru Staniloae was the knowing of his theology abroad. But a deeply wish was the continuation and development of those. Through the contributions had in the writing of this work, Hyeromonk Calinic, not only made known the theology of father in other countries, but continues it.

The book of Fathe Calinic (Berger) inscribes into the category of the reference studies regarding the theology of father Dumitru Staniloae. This book represents first of all an homage to the Romanian theologian, and second, realizes a synthesis of the mystical theology of Father Staniloae. Through this work, the Romanian theology becomes richer, giving to the researchers in the domain an exceptional methodical study regarding the work of Father Staniloae, an evaluation and an update of his theology, and a discovering of the theology of Father Staniloae, knowing better enough, evaluated and fully explicated. Nevertheless, the presented synthesis in this book can be a real winning to the Christians laics wisher to a spiritual deep life, but to the other laics, whom presents the supreme way at which it was called the man and nature and the transfiguration and deification.

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