

# **Divine Light in Church History**

Final essay, by Neil Kazen, towards  
“History of Eastern Churches 1204 to 21st C.,  
including east-west relations and ecumenism.”

Course # TRH2414H”  
April 18, 2019

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## **Introduction:**

### **Why choosing the topic of Light?**

The reason for choosing the topic of the Light is that it will have a central position in my planned synthesis between Theology and Physics. It is related to the plausibility, of the existence of another world to replace what our ancestors used to think of as a world above the clouds, with winged angels flying up to and around Heaven. That vision has been lost with the advent of air travel where any one can fly above the clouds only to find no one there. The new reality dealt a heavy blow to the faith of many, including myself in my early years. How can we believe in Heaven if it is not even plausible?

Luckily, there is the plausibility of another world that can be predicted by an extrapolation of some laws of Physics. Over a century ago, Albert Einstein mentioned, in passing, that it is plausible that there is a world beyond the speed of light, using extrapolation of the Special Theory of Relativity. However, that world is off limits to us due to the light speed barrier. Recent research on the link between light and DNA suggests a plausibility of connection with that world via living matter.

That world not another universe but another plane of reality. My preliminary assessment of the main features of it seem to resemble what was our understanding of Heaven: A world beyond our daily reach; totally different from our world, yet it gave birth to our world through the Big Bang; its connection with our world is light; its light is different from the light of this world, yet the two lights form the boundaries of both worlds; that world is not granulated like ours, but continuous and smooth; it has perfect inner connectivity, everything is connected with everything else; movement there lasts forever, never stagnating, never ending; all movement is towards an entity that is impossible to reach; that entity is possibly what created all; that world seems to have direct connection through its light with the living matter in our world (a surprising connection between that light and DNA spirals). That is the outline of my planned work on the Physics side of Quantum Theology, and is summarized in the last section of this essay.

### **Light in Theology:**

Light occupies a central roll in most religions and philosophies with religious spirit. It is associated with the knowledge of God, a message from God, or the opening of the gates of Heaven.

However, what is meant by “light” varies from metaphorical “enlightenment” or in a real sense as an indication of religious experience. The later is considered by some as physical, created light seen by the created eyes, while by others, as the supernatural Uncreated Light seen by those who are judged by God to be worthy to receive the Wisdom of the Spirit (as we will see in the writings of St. Gregory Palamas). (1, p. 31, 3, p.103)

While the Orthodox *Hesychast Light* experience is the main focus of this essay, some attention is given to Light according to Frederick Denison Maurice, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Anglican theologian who was called “Witness to the Light” for associating it with connectivity, inclusion, union, and harmony that are themes in his Christian Socialism.

In Christianity, while Light is associated with the knowledge of God, the essence of God is totally beyond knowledge, thus in “Darkness”. When Moses went up Mount Sinai, he is said to enter into the ‘thick darkness’ where God was (Exod. 20:21). That is God *dwells in darkness*, not that he *is* darkness. The Darkness represents the inability of the human mind to comprehend God’s essence. (9, p. 169)

Light and Darkness are human terms that do not apply to God. For to God *‘the darkness and the light are both alike’* (Ps. 139:12). *‘The darkness is not the absence of light, but the terror that comes from the blinding light.’* (9, p. 172)

According to their preference for the one ‘sign’ or the other, mystical writers may be characterized as either ‘nocturnal’ or ‘solar’. St Clement of Alexandria (drawing on the Jewish author Philo), St Gregory of Nyssa and St Dionysius the Areopagite give preference to the ‘sign’ of darkness; Origen, St Gregory the Theologian, Evagrius, *The Homilies of St Macarius*, St Symeon the New Theologian and St Gregory Palamas use chiefly the ‘sign’ of light. (9, pp.169,170). The latter two will be discussed in some detail later in this essay.

St John said, *‘God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all’* (1 John 1 :5). God is revealed as light above all at the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor, when *‘his face shone as the sun, and his cloths became dazzling white’* (Matt. 17:2). The divine light, seen by the three disciples on mount Tabor is the uncreated energies of God. This light is neither a physical and created light, nor yet a purely metaphorical ‘light of the intellect’. It is an objectively existent reality in spite of being nonmaterial; that is because the fullness of reality includes the uncreated light that is nonmaterial by our standards. (9, p. 170)

A man can see the nonphysical divine light by his physical eyes if and only if his senses have been transformed by the grace of God. His eyes do not see the light by the natural powers of perception, but through the power of the Holy Spirit acting within him. (9, p. 171)

In the words of St. Maximus the Confessor: *‘The body is deified at the same time as the soul’*. He who beholds the divine light is permeated by it through and through, so that his body shines with the glory that he contemplates. He himself becomes light. (9, p.171)

According to *‘The Homilies of St Macarius: ‘Just as the Lord’s body was glorified, when he went up the mountain and was transfigured into the glory of God and into infinite light, so the saints’ bodies also are glorified and shine as lightning...’*. *‘The glory which thou hast given to me I have given to them’ (John 17:22): just as many lamps are lit from one flame, so the bodies of the saints, being members of Christ, must needs be what Christ is, and nothing else... Our human nature is transformed into the power of God, and it is kindled into fire and light.’* (9, p.171)

When Moses came down from the darkness of Sinai, his face shone with such brilliance that no one could gaze upon it, and he had to place a veil over it when talking with others (Exod. 34:29-35). There are numerous examples of such bodily glorification in the lives of the saints, Western as well as Eastern, (9, p171) Witnessing the Divine Light in the Orthodox Church is closely related to the Hesychast movement, which in its turn was the subject of stormy controversy with the West. While in the West, "Witness to the Light" was used to describe Fredric Denison Maurice (1805-1872), an Anglican theologian, a "Social Christian". Like Palamas, he did claim witnessing the Divine Light himself, but he referred to experience of those who witnessed it. We will come to Maurice later, but first, the history what is associated with the Light experience the most, in the East: Hesychasm.

## **The History of Hesychasm in the East** (2, p.71-75):

The name hesychast is derived from the Greek word *hesychia*, meaning 'quiet'. A hesychast is one who in silence devotes himself to inner recollection and private prayer. (2, p. 73) A *Hesychast Controversy* that rocked the Byzantine Church in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, resulted in theology of the Divine, Uncreated Light which became a defining factor of Orthodoxy. That brought violent attacks by the West. The outcome ultimately determined the history of Orthodoxy ever since. (1, p.45)

The schism between East and West was the continuous process as they grew apart in theology and in way of life. Each evolved in ways that the other was not part of and could not understand.

- Byzantium adhered to the ideas and language of the Greek Fathers of the fourth century, while evolving further into Hesychasm.
- Western Europe replaced the tradition of the Fathers by Scholasticism, a synthesis of philosophy and theology that was developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Both used new terminology which the other did not understand; the two sides were losing a common 'universe of discourse'. (2, p. 171)

In the middle of the fourteenth century, the *Hesychast Controversy* in Byzantium resulted in theological developments which involved the doctrine of God's nature and the methods of prayer used in the Orthodox Church.

The roots of the Hesychasm go back to the earlier history of eastern mystical theology:

- In the third century, the main features of mystical theology were worked out by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150- 215) and by Origen of Alexandria (c. 184-253)
- In the fourth century, it was developed further both by the Cappadocian Fathers, particularly Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-395), and by certain ascetics of Egypt, above all Evagrius of Pontus (c. 345- 399).

There were two trends, in mystical theology that complement each other, even though at first sight look inconsistent: The 'way of negation' and the 'way of union'. The apparent inconsistency between them, was at the root of the Hesychast Controversy, and by extension, deepening the divide with the West.

### **The 'way of negation':**

'*Apophatic theology*', as it is often called speaks of God in negative terms. God cannot be properly apprehended by man's mind; human language, when applied to Him, is always inexact. It is therefore less misleading to use negative language about God rather than positive - to refuse to say what God is, and to state simply what He is not. As Gregory of Nyssa put it: '*The true knowledge and vision of God consist in this - in seeing that He is invisible, because what we seek lies beyond all knowledge, being wholly separated by the darkness of incomprehensibility.*' (2, p. 172)

The writings of Pseudo- Dionysius the Areopagite were a classic expression of negative theology. The actual author is unknown; probably lived in the fifth or sixth century, and with Monophysite inclination. For many centuries it was thought that they were written by St. Dionysius the Areopagite, Paul's convert at Athens (Acts 17:34). Those writings, that the real St. Dionysius has nothing to do with, were later used in the *Hesychast Controversy*. Their place in Orthodox theology was secured when St. Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662) composed commentaries on the Dionysian writings.

St. John of Damascus (c. 676-749) repeated the apophatic language of Pseudo – Dionysius: '*God is infinite and incomprehensible*', '*and all that is comprehensible about Him is His infinity and incomprehensibility .... God does not belong to the class of existing things: not that He has no existence, but that He is above all existing things, nay even above existence itself.*'

Pseudo- Dionysius had a great influence on the west as well.

He was quoted 1,760 times by Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) in the *Summa*.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the *Mystical Theology* of Pseudo - Dionysius 'ran through England like the wild deer'. (2, p. 72-73)

### **The 'way of union'**

It would seem, at first sight, that apophatic theology with its emphasis on God's transcendence to exclude any direct experience of God. But in fact many apophatic theologians, such as Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Maximus, also believed in the possibility of a true mystical union with God.

They combined the 'way of negation' with the 'way of union', with the tradition of the mystics or *hesychasts*. While using the apophatic language of negative theology, these writers claimed an immediate experience of the unknowable God, a personal union with Him who is unapproachable. (2, p. 73)

The question of how to reconcile the two 'ways'; how can God be both knowable and unknowable at once, was one of two acute questions presented in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The other question was about the psycho-physical method of prayer.

The psycho-physical method of prayer was totally alien to the likes of Evagrius and Origen who borrowed too heavily from Platonism. Evagrius wrote of prayer in intellectual terms, as an activity of the mind rather than of the whole man; there was no positive role to man's body in the process of redemption and deification.

The balance between mind and body was redressed in the Pseudo-Macarian Homilies that are

the work of an unknown writer, dating from the first half of the fifth century (They were originally attributed to St. Macarius of Egypt (c. ?300-390)). These Homilies revert to a holistic concept of man - not a soul imprisoned in a body (as in Greek thought), but a single and united whole, soul and body together that is more in the spirit of the Bible where the Incarnate God sanctified the human body. Where Evagrius speaks of the *mind*, Pseudo-Macarius uses the Hebraic idea of the *heart*. That is a very significant difference because the “heart” includes the *whole* man - not only intellect, but will, emotions, and, even body. In the '*Prayer of the Heart*', the man starts by praying with the lips while focusing on the meaning of what he is saying. As he perseveres, praying continually with recollection, his intellect and his heart become united: he 'finds the place of the heart', his spirit acquires the power of 'dwelling in the heart', and so his prayer becomes 'prayer of the heart'. It becomes something not merely said by the lips, not merely thought by the intellect, but offered spontaneously by the whole being of man - lips, intellect, emotions, will, and body. The prayer fills the entire consciousness, and no longer has to be forced out, but says itself. This Prayer of the Heart cannot be attained simply through our own efforts, but is a gift conferred by the grace of God. Usually, the words of 'Prayer of the Heart', is the Jesus Prayer

*'Lord Jesus Christ. Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner'.* (2, p. 74)

In the early era of Islam, there was spiritual osmosis in popular monasticism between the two religions, that included the psycho-physical method of prayer. (3, p.79) As '*Sufism*' immersed in Islam, it was labeled by conservative Moslems, as a heresy (“buda’ ” in Arabic = “innovation” in a bad way) “imitating Christians”. Ultimately, Sufism survived and even maintained a highly respectable place in most of the Islamic world, other than Arabia. Arabia which has no place for Sufism, is the source of Salafism (meaning: the “ancestral” that is “the original”) today. While living in a city of long Sufi Islam history, I knew of a group of mystics who practiced a psycho-physical way of prayer called “*Halakat al thukr*” (Arabic for “circles of mentioning” i.e. mentioning God’s name). They move around in a circle while repeating the word “*Hai*” (Arabic for “Live” that is God who is live for ever). They move rhythmically while say that name of God rhythmically too. They keep going on and on until they go into a trance. They report that they attained the ultimate spiritual experience that brought them as close as possible to God. That has some similarity to the Hesychasts’ way of prayer, but the point shouldn’t be pushed too much.

By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the recitation of the Jesus Prayer had become linked to certain physical exercises, designed to assist concentration. Breathing was carefully regulated in time with the prayer, and a particular bodily posture was recommended: head bowed, chin resting on the chest, eyes fixed on the place of the heart. These exercises were regarded as an optional help to concentration; not the essence of prayer. The Hesychasts knew that there can be no mechanical means of acquiring God's grace, and no techniques leading automatically to the mystical state. (2, p.75)

### **Hesychast and the Divine Light experience** (2, pp. 75-76):

Experiencing vision of Divine and Uncreated Light was the ultimate goal that the Hesychasts of Byzantium would hope for.

An extreme case of 'Light mysticism' was what St. Symeon the New Theologian (c. 975?-1035?) witnessed and reported. It would seem that his whole life revolves around it. His passionate writings and prayers on the Uncreated Light became an inspiration to Byzantine mystics: '*fire truly divine,*' he calls it. '*fire uncreated and invisible, without beginning and immaterial*'

Hesychasts who experienced it, believed that it was identical with the Uncreated Light which the three disciples saw surrounding Jesus at His Transfiguration on Mount Thabor.

But how would the apophatic doctrine of God the transcendent and unapproachable allow such claims? That, together with the role of the body in prayer, came to question in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when the Hesychasts were violently attacked by a learned Greek from Italy, Barlaam the Calabrian, who stated the doctrine of God's '*otherness*' and unknowability in an extreme form. More to that later.

## The Experience of Light of St. Symeon the New Theologian

SAINT SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN  
(975? - 1035? AD) (10, p.168):

*He is the par excellence mystical theologian of the Church.*

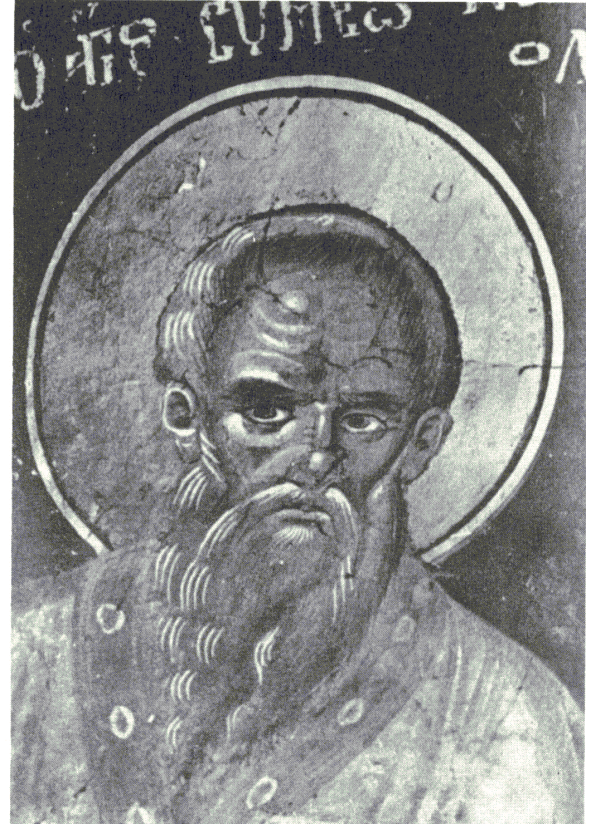
*Born in Palestine, Saint Symeon went to Constantinople to study politics, but from the very first days of his life there he met a holy monk, Saint Symeon the Pious, who inspired in him the mystical love for Christ.*

*Living first the life of obedience, commandments and praxis, he spoke vividly on the need for love, light and immediate experience of God.*

*Among his numerous disciples, the most renowned is Niketas Stethatos who made Saint Symeon's works known. The most important of these are his "Discourses," his "Hymns," the "Practical and Theological Chapters" and many prayers.*

*Although he is considered to be a controversial personality because of the way he expressed himself, many think of him as the Father of Orthodox mysticism and the guiding spirit of Eastern Hesychasm.*

*He is commemorated by the Church on March the 12th (or October the 12th).*



Here is St Symeon the New Theologian describing how Christ revealed himself in a vision of light (9, p.21):

*'You shone upon me with brilliant radiance and, so it seemed, you appeared to me in your wholeness as with my whole self I gazed openly upon you. And when I said, 'Master, who are you?' then you were pleased to speak for the first time with me the prodigal. With what gentleness did you talk to me, as I stood astonished and trembling, as I reflected a little within myself and said: 'What does this glory and this dazzling brightness mean? How is it that I am chosen to receive such great blessings?' 'I am God', you replied, 'who became man for your sake; and because you have sought me with your whole heart, see from this time onwards you shall be my brother, my fellow-heir, and my friend.'*

In this vision, he speaks to God and God speaks to him. How could he see the unseeable? He saw a blinding light. In one stroke, God has both revealed Himself, yet remained unapproachable. The paradox is resolved in one vision. Co-existence of opposites (very seeable yet unseeable, since it is blinding) without contradiction.

The following are excerpts from his beautiful *'Mystical Prayer to the Holy Spirit'*. (For the full prayer, please see Appendix I). In it, he elaborated joyfully on his experience, starting his encounter with the 'true light'. Both apophatic and positive, with numerous references to the scripture (10, pp.173-176):

*'Come, O true light! ..... Jn 1:9*

*Come, O eternal life! ..... 1 Jn 5:20*  
*Come, O hidden mystery! ..... Eph 3:9*  
 ...  
*Come, O unsetting light!*  
 ...  
*Come, O resurrection of the dead! ..... Jn 11:25*  
 ...  
*Come, O you who always remain immobile*  
*and at each moment move all,*  
*and come to us, who lie in hades,*  
*you who are above all heavens. .... Eph 4:10*  
 ...  
*Come, O eternal joy!*  
*Come, O unwithering wreath! ..... 1 Pet 5:4*  
 ...  
*Come, O my breath and life! ..... Acts 17:25*  
 ...  
*and that you have become everything for me, ..... 1 Cor 15:28*  
 ...  
*I give you thanks that for me*  
*you have become unsetting light*  
*and non-declining sun;*  
 ...  
*you who nowhere find the place of your repose? .....Is 66:1*  
 ...  
*Today, then, O Master,*  
*come pitch your tent with me; ..... Jn 1:14*  
 ...  
*and after my departure may I reign with you, ..... 2 Tim 2:12*  
*O God who are above everything. .... Rom 9:5*  
*O Master, stay and do not leave me alone,*  
*so that my enemies,*  
*arriving unexpectedly,*  
*they who are always seeking to devour my soul, ..... 1 Pet 5:8*  
 ...  
*and set me before your glorious face, ..... Jude 24*  
 ...  
*I, the beggar, may always be rich,*  
*richer than kings;*  
*that by eating you and by drinking you, ..... In 6:54*  
*by putting you on at each moment,*  
*I go from delight to delight*  
*in inexpressible blessings;*  
*for it is you, who are all good and*  
*all glory and all delight*  
*and it is to you,*  
*holy, consubstantial, and life-creating Trinity*  
*that the glory belongs,*  
*you whom all faithful venerate, confess, adore, and serve*



*in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen. '*

He summed up his experience with the Divine Light as:

*'Think of a man standing at night inside his house, with all the doors closed; and then suppose that he opens a window just at the moment when there is a sudden flash of lightning. Unable to bear its bright-ness, at once he protects himself by closing his eyes and drawing back from the window. So it is with the soul that is enclosed in the realm of the senses: if ever she peeps out through the window of the intellect, she is overwhelmed by the brightness, like lightning, of the pledge of the Holy Spirit that is within her. Unable to bear the splendour of unveiled light, at once she is bewildered in her intellect and she draws back entirely upon herself, taking refuge, as in a house, among sensory and human things. '* (9, p.30)

St. Symeon the New Theologian, held the extreme view that he refuses the name of Christian to those who have not had in this life the experience of the divine Light. (1, pp.68-69)

No wonder, his "Dismissal Hymn" reflects the Divine Light:

*'Having received in your soul the divine illumination, O father Symeon, you appeared to be like a brilliant star in the world, scattering away its darkness and convincing all to seek after the grace of the Spirit which they have lost. To him pray fervently that he may grant to us great mercy'.* (10, p.167)

# The Theology of Light In the Thought of St. Gregory Palamas

**SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS (1296 - 1359 AD )**  
(10, p183)

*He is the greatest Post-Byzantine theological figure and the founder of Hesychasm. He enjoyed an excellent education in his youth because of his father who held the position of counselor to the Byzantine emperor. However, being inspired by the monastic life, he went to the Holy Mountain ( Mt. Athos), where he practiced strict askesis, exercise, silence and holy "hesychia" (stillness).*

*The false teachings of Barlaam, Akindynos and Nicephoros Gregoras forced him to elaborate and articulate the Orthodox teaching on the procession of the Holy Spirit and to prove the foundation of the hesychastic life in the tradition of the Church. His most famous works are the "Triads" ("On the Defense of the Hesychasts"), his sermons, his 150 theological chapters and his letters.*

*During the last years of his life, he was elected Archbishop of Thessaloniki where he distinguished himself as a loving and caring pastor.*

*His memory is celebrated on the Second Sunday of the Great Lent and on November the 15th.*



The mystical theology of St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, evoked stormy polemics in the West, which have not ceased after six centuries.(1, p.45)

*'In mystical contemplation a man sees neither with the intellect nor with the body, but with the Spirit; and with full certainty he knows that he beholds supernaturally a light which surpasses all other light. But he does not know through what organ he beholds this light, nor can he analyze the nature of the organ, for the ways of the Spirit, through which he sees, are unsearchable. And this is what St Paul affirmed, when he heard things which it is not lawful for man to utter and saw things which none can behold: ... whether in the body or whether out of the body, I cannot tell' (2 Cor. 12:3)-that is, he did not know whether it was his intellect or his body which saw them. For he did not perceive these things by sensation, yet his vision was as clear as that where-by we see the objects of sense perception, and even clearer still. He saw himself carried out of himself through the mysterious sweetness of his vision; he was transported not only outside every object and thought but even outside himself.*

*This happy and joyful experience which seized upon Paul and caused his intellect to pass beyond all things in ecstasy, which made him turn entirely in upon himself, this experience took the form of light - a light of revelation, but such as did not reveal to him the objects of sense perception. It was a light without bounds or termination below or above or to the sides; he saw no limit whatever to the light which appeared to him and shone around him, but it was like a sun infinitely brighter and larger than the universe: and in the midst of this light he himself stood, having become nothing but eye. Such, more or less, was his vision. ' (9, pp. 176-177)*

His position within the Orthodox Church is summed up nicely in his *“Dismissal Hymn”*: *‘Star of Orthodoxy, support and teacher of the Church, beauty of monastics and undefeatable defender of theologians, o wonderworking Gregory, pride of Thessaloniki and preacher of grace, pray for ever that our souls may be saved.’* (10, p.181)

## **St. Gregory Palamas Defense of the Hesychasts**

### **Introduction:**

Gregory Palamas, in his defense of the Hesychasts against bitter attacks by Barlaam, a learned Greek from Italy, led him to articulate mystical theology. His theology on the Divine, Uncreated Light became a defining factor of Orthodoxy. That brought violent attacks by the West. The outcome ultimately determined the history of Orthodoxy ever since. (1, p.45 & 2, pp. 75-76)

As we will see, Barlaam, made sincere attempts to understand Hesychasts, but his background dictated his circle of vision. That ended up, unwittingly, into a controversy that led Palamas and the Orthodox Church at large, into deeper focus on what is consistent with its own spiritual way. That focus was not just about what differentiate the Orthodox Church from the Latin Church, but from the Protestant Reformation as well, i.e. the West as a whole. For that reason, we need to look more closely into the dynamics of Barlaam’s thought.

### **Barlaam** (3, pp.81-105)

Barlaam, a Calabrian Greek, grew up in Italy where he moved in humanistic circles that were trying to break free from the rigidity of the Middle Ages thought, dominated by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD) school of theology. Thomistic Natural Theology is about what can be known about God by reason, that is, apart from revelation; reason can demonstrate basic truths such as that there is God, only one God and that he is a good God. This is contained in Scripture, but human reasoning without revelation could have discovered it. (4, p.1). Humanists, in trying to break from the intellectual rigidity of the Middle Ages, that were symbolized by Thomist thought, were ushering the Renaissance spirit. Barlaam, earliest theological writings seem to be along the lines of the nominalist philosophy of William of Ockham (c. 1287-1347); even though there is no record of any direct contact between the two.

Ockham nominalism was metaphysical following “Ockham Razor” methodological principle. (5, p.1), aiming at liberating human thought from medieval authorities and ultimately leading to the Protestant Reformation.

Barlaam’s earliest theological writings were an attack on Latin theology, which he identified with Thomistic Natural Theology. He rejected their assertion that they “know” God and their “proof” of the double procession of the Holy Spirit (the Filioque). In his nominalistic agnosticism, he describing them as “demonical”:

*‘Thomas and everyone who reasons as he does thinks that there is nothing inaccessible to the human mind; that we believe that this opinion comes from a soul of demonical and evil pride; for most divine things transcend human knowledge.’* (Text in *Paris Gr. Manuscript 1278*, fol. 137) (3, p. 84)

The above implies that *human 'knowledge' is limited to "Reason"*. That would be at the root of his controversy with Palamas.

His “apophaticism”, the assertion of the unknowability of God, attracted him to Eastern theology; devoting himself to the study of St. Dionysius the Areopagite the “Eastern doctor of apophatic theology” (3, p.84) who was converted by St. Paul in Athens (Acts 17:34), and who is venerated in both the Eastern and Western Churches. Dionysius thought gave Barlaam a metaphysical reason to unite the churches, glossing over the Filioque controversy; why quarrel over the procession of the Holy Spirit when God is unknowable? However, what was thought of as Dionysius the Areopagite writings were most likely those of “Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite”, a Christian Neoplatonist who wrote in the late fifth or early sixth century CE and who transposed in a thoroughly original way the whole of Pagan Neoplatonism, into a distinctively new Christian context. (6, p.1) However, the extent of conflict between Neoplatonism and the Eastern Church was not clear yet; not until his conflict with the Eastern monks. So, when he went to Constantinople in 1338, he was welcomed as a scholar and philosopher. His work on astronomy and logic earned him fame, which led to his appointment as chair at the imperial university. There, he called the attention of his students to the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius which were widely in circulation in the East and West; with its Neoplatonism escaping scrutiny. What helped him win the trust of the Byzantine government, in spite of him being a foreigner, was his “love of true piety”; his fidelity to Orthodoxy and the interests of the Empire, and his longing to return to the faith of his fathers. (3, p.82) However, the controversy he was involved in later, showed that his Italian upbringing had greater influence on him than what he thought.

The Calabrian philosopher, based his position on two postulates derived from ancient philosophy:

1. Aristotelian postulate: all knowledge is derived from perception of sense “experience”.
2. Neoplatonic postulate: embedded in some Christian writings such as that of Pseudo-Dionysius, is the understanding that God is beyond sense experience therefore, based on postulate 1, is unknowable. Only an indirect knowledge of God is possible; as it passes “through beings” that are observable. Therefore, mystical knowledge can only be a “symbolic reality”. (3, p. 102)

That Neoplatonist component, with its pagan roots, ended up at the core of the controversy; blocking his flight from the intellectual realism of Latin Thomistic scholasticism towards the mystical realism of Eastern monks. However, his good intentions and curiosity, led him to seek first hand knowledge about his new adversaries. So, he lived for a while in hesychast hermitages at Thessalonica and Constantinople. There, the psycho-physical way of prayer was widely used and was credited for the experience of Light. It shocked his humanistic mentality by its focus on the individual, and shocked his Platonic spirituality by its focus on the body. He was compelled to write this scathing report:

*‘I have been initiated by them in monstrosities and in absurd doctrines that a man with any intelligence or even a little sense, cannot lower himself to describe, products of erroneous belief and rash imagination. They taught me almost marvelous separations and reunions of mind and soul, the relations of the demon with the latter, the differences between red and white lights, the intelligible entrances and exits produced by the nostrils while breathing, the shields around the navel and finally, the vision of Our Lord with the soul that is produced within the navel in perceptible manner with full certitude of heart...’* (Letter V to Ignatius, ed. G. Schiro, in *Barlaam Calabro*, Epistole Greche, Palermo, 1954, pp. 323-324) (3, p.85)

It is not clear whether Barlaam was referring to an actual observation, or to the treatise of

Nicephorus, the Hesychast of Mount Athos, *On Guarding the Heart* (to be discussed later), or Pseudo-Symeon *Method*, or just a satirical exaggeration. However, what really created the controversy was his series of polemical treatises identifying the hesychast monks with the Messalian or “Bogomil” heretics. (3, p.85) Messalianism was a heresy that started in Mesopotamia, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and spread to Syria and Asia Minor. Messalians were lay ascetics who denied the sacraments but practiced extreme ascetic life with constant prayer, which gave them their name (Messalin means “those who pray” in Syrian language; in today’s Arabic it would be Mussalin). They believed that their vigorous prayers led them to possession by the Holy Spirit; leading them to see God with their physical eyes. They were anathematized by the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431. (7) On the other hand, Bogomilism heresy emerged in Bulgaria in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and spread into Byzantium, Serbia, Bosnia, Italy and France. It was a Gnostic dualistic heresy that insisted that Christ had only the “appearance” of flesh since “true flesh” would hinder Him in his work of Salvation rather than help it. (8) There were many Bogomil heretics, in the Balkans, contemporaries to Barlaam. (3, p. 85). So, aside from his early attack on hesychast monks’ practices, he focused his attack on their claim of seeing the Light with their bodily eyes. He interpreted it that they are Messalians claiming to see the essence of God. He built his case by exhibiting his knowledge with all Eastern thought; choosing what corroborated with his intellectualism and nominalism; the apophatic theology of Pseudo-Dionysius and the spiritualist mysticism of Evagrius (c. 346-399) with Neoplatonic bent. In the following passage he tries to establish his spiritual credentials, writing it in the style of Evagrius:

*‘He who applies himself to prayer must quite the senses and entirely put to death the passionate part of the soul so that none of his powers may act; so too with all activity common to soul and body; for each of these activities is an obstacle to prayer, especially in the measure in which it involves some physical effort, gives pleasure or pain, particularly in regard to the grossest and most irrational sense, that of touch’* (Quoted by Palamas in his *Triads* II, ii, 4, ed. Meyendorff in *Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense*, 1959, p.324) (3, p.86)

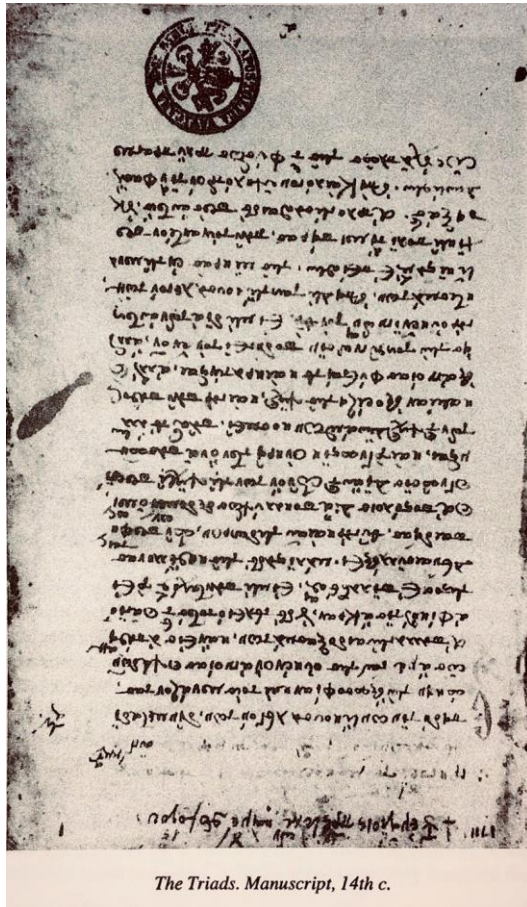
Having established his “spiritual credentials” he feels vindicated to talk as a philosopher with crunching logic:

*‘If they agree to say that the intelligible and immaterial light of which they speak is the superessential God himself and if they continue at the same time to acknowledge that he is absolutely invisible and inaccessible to the senses, they must face a choice: if they claim to see this light, they must consider it to be either an angel or the essence of the mind itself, when purified of passions and of ignorance, the spirit sees itself and in itself sees God in his own image. If the light of which they speak is identified with one of these two realities, then their thought must be held to be perfectly correct and conformed to Christian tradition. But if they say that this light is neither the superessential essence, nor an angelic essence, nor the mind itself, but that the mind contemplates it as another hypostasis, for my part, I do not know what that light is, but I do know that it does not exist’* (Quoted *ibid.* II, iii, 7, pp.400-402) (3, p.86)

It was against such polemics that St. Gregory Palamas wrote his famous *Triads for the Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*.

First, in response to Barlaam’s postulates, Palamas acknowledged the value of ancient philosophy, but only to put it in the perspective of a bigger picture where the Wisdom of the Spirit is supreme:





(3, p. 87)

*'Certain men speak contemptuously of the end proposed to Christians under the pretext that it be too lowly; those unutterably good things that are promised to us in the world to come! They accept nothing but knowledge of "experience", and would bring it into the church that lives by Christ's own wisdom. Those who possess no scientific knowledge, they assert, are ignorant and imperfect; all must devote themselves wholly to Hellenic study, forsaking the teachings of the Gospel (for those teachings are of no use in dispelling ignorance of science), and mockingly abandon him who says "Become perfect" (1 Cor 14:20; cf. Matt 5:48), "if a man is in Christ, he is a perfect man" (Phil 3:14-15; Col 1:28) and "We preach to the perfect" (1 Cor 2:6)... It is not by dispelling that kind of ignorance but by dispelling your ignorance of God and divine doctrine, ignorance which our theologians condemn, by making your whole life better in conformity to the rules laid down by these theologians, that you will be filled with the wisdom of God and will become in reality the image and likeness of God' (Triads I, i-4, p. 15) (3, p. 105)*

Palamas thought about the supremacy of Wisdom of the Spirit over Hellenic philosophy, is similar to that St. Augustine's, but what distinguishes Palamas thought is his defense of the psycho-physical method of prayer taught by Nicephorus the Hesychast. That defense focused of refuting Barlaam's identification of the supernatural with the immaterial. To Barlaam, it is unthinkable that human body can be a receptacle for grace. But for Palamas, monastic tradition is based on the writings of Pseudo-Macarius which asserts that the very incarnation of the Son of God in the flesh establishes that the sacramental grace of the Church can and must sanctify the whole man.

*'I hold that among God's gifts some are natural; they are granted indiscriminately to all, before the law, under the law, and after the law. Others are supernatural and full of mystery. These later gifts I hold to be higher than the former, as those who have been judged worthy to receive the Wisdom of the Spirit are superior to the whole tribe of Hellenists. I hold also that philosophy is one of the natural gifts of God, as are also the discoveries of human reason, the sciences... I give each the honor in merits...' (Triads II, i-25, pp.275-277) (3, p. 103)*

According to Palamas, ancient philosophy has nothing to do with the knowledge of God. The supernatural knowledge is only granted in Jesus Christ to man as a whole, body and soul, not by sense experience but by the grace of God. Here he criticize the Hellenic philosophy in general:

*'In his incomparable love for men, the Son of God did not merely unite his divine Hypostasis to our nature, clothing himself with a living body and an intelligent soul, "to appear on earth and live with men" (Barush 3:38), but O incomparable and magnificent miracle! He unites himself also to human hypostases, joining himself to each of the faithful by communion in his holy Body. For he becomes one body with us (Eph 3:6) making us a temple of the whole Godhead- for in the very Body of Christ "the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells corporeally" (Col 3:9). How then would he not illuminate those who share worthily in the divine radiance of his Body within us, shining upon their soul as he once shone on the bodies of the apostles on Tabor? For as this Body, the source of the light of grace, was at that time not yet united to our body, it shone exteriorly on those who came near it worthily, transmitting light to the soul through the eyes of the sense. But today, since it is united to us and dwells within us, it illuminates the soul interiorly' (Triads, I, i-38, p. 193) (3, p. 107)*

With the sanctification of the whole man, comes the ability of seeing the Uncreated Light by those who came close to it worthily. That would sum most of Palamas *Triads*.

More on the Uncreated Light in his *Homily 34*, on the Transfiguration, he goes on with full attack on those who are limited to "the wisdom of the world" setting them inferior to "spiritual men":

*'12. There are people in our times, who boast of pagan Greek learning and the wisdom of this world, and who completely disobey spiritual men in matters of the Spirit, and choose to oppose them. When they hear that the light of the Lord's transfiguration on the mountain was seen by the eyes of the apostles, they immediately reduce it to visible, created light. They drag down that immaterial, never-setting, pre-eternal light, which surpasses not only our senses but also our minds, because they themselves are at a low level, and are incapable of conceiving of anything higher than earthly things. Nevertheless, He who shone with this light proved in advance that it was uncreated by referring to it as the kingdom of God. God's kingdom is not subservient or created, but uniquely unsubduable and invincible. It is beyond the bounds of both time and aeon, and cannot be said to have had a beginning or to have been overtaken by time or age. We believe this kingdom to be the inheritance of those who are being saved'*

In *Homily 35* he goes on to demonstrate that although the Divine Light of the transfiguration is uncreated, it is not God's essence.

In summary, Palamas' writings established the dignity of matter, which was denied by Hellenistic spiritualism. He does not oppose spirit to matter but the supernatural to the created world. Both human spirit and body are different from God. God grants his saving grace to the whole man, soul and body. It is the authority of the Scripture over the nihilistic mysticism of Hellenistic philosophy. (3, p.108)

Barlaam attacks on hesychast monks, led the Orthodox Church, through Palamas, to recognize explicitly the place of hesychasm in its central dogmas. Further, it led to scrutinizing earlier traditions to cleanse them from elements that are heterogeneous to Orthodoxy's own spiritual way, especially Neoplatonic spirituality. The Palamite distinction between the divine essence and energies was adapted by the Byzantine councils of the 14<sup>th</sup> c. After some delays due to interior political struggle within the empire, the *Hagiorite Tome*, of Palamas was signed in 1340-1341 by the abbots and monks of the Holy Mountain (*hagion ores*) of Athos. Athonite monasticism acknowledged Palamas as its spokesman in their stand against the nominalistic humanism of Barlaam. (3, p. 88) Two councils in June and August, 1341, in Constantinople, condemned Barlaam. The East was not the home of the ancient Hellenism anymore as he hoped. He returned to Italy where his views had wider audience since the Renaissance spirit was in the air. (3, p. 90)



However, Palamas victory was not sealed yet. There were Byzantine humanists who were not happy with the rigid Byzantine way of life; only exhibiting exterior fidelity to the dogmas of the seven Ecumenical Councils. It was because of them that the Calabrian philosopher had his brief career in Byzantium. The Church has been adapting a rigid framework since its victory in 843 over iconoclasm. The dogmas of the seven Ecumenical Councils were all what was needed for doctrinal security. (3, p.92) Tradition was as rigidly fixed as the figures of the Fathers in this Church Mosaic (3, P. 93)



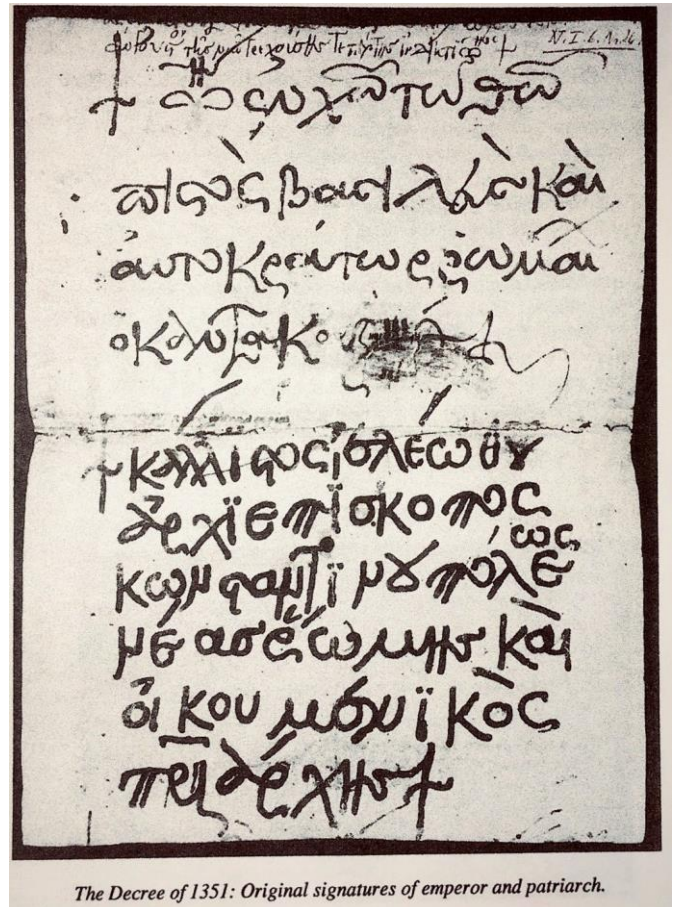
After the Calabrian Philosopher left, Palamas was attacked by both the humanists as well as the defenders of “theology of repetition”. That would have cut short if it wasn’t for political instability that followed the death of Emperor Andronicus III Paleologus in June 1341 before he could sign the decree.

A Bulgarian monk, Akindynus, was a disciple of Palamas who later became a disciple of Barlaam. He tried to use that in appointing himself an arbitrator between the two adversaries creating ambiguous conditions. In reality, he belonged to “formal conservative” who believed that simple repetition of rigid frameworks has all the answers. They opposed the theology of “the energies” formulated by monks. Akindynus was condemned by the August 1341 council, but was not officially named as he agreed to sign a vague formula for repentance. However, as the decree of August 1341 was not signed due to the Emperor’s death, Akindynus had the opportunity to attack Palamas, exploiting the political chaos that followed; at some point having Palamas arrested and his work refuted (3, pp. 94-97) Finally,



as the political arena stabilized, series of councils favorable to Palamas took place and in May 1347, he was consecrated archbishop of Thessalonica. In July 1351, a most important council met and condemned the philosopher Nicephorus Gregoras, Palamas last adversary. The *Synodal Tome* published by this council was the official manifesto in which the Orthodox Church adapted the doctrine of Palamas. During the remainder of that century, it was incorporated in other local councils. They were reproduced in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy* and included in liturgical books ever since. (3, pp. 97-99)

The historical impact of that controversy is that it brought to the open latent crisis; an ongoing conflict between humanism and “theology of repetition”. Humanism and Platonism used to be tolerated up to a degree; as long as they are limited to intellectual exercises. If the Eastern Church remained passive in the face of nominalism advance, the turbulent wind of modern ideas would have broken down its rigid and brittle medieval framework. That would have led to a crisis like that in the West; leading to Renaissance, Neopaganism and “Church Reformation” in the name of new nominalism. (3, pp.93,94) And, in my opinion, an easy prey to atheism. Palamas defense of the hesychasts softened its conservatism, while keeping nominalistic humanism at bay; adding a third dimension higher than both, thus making it the great survivor of modern times.



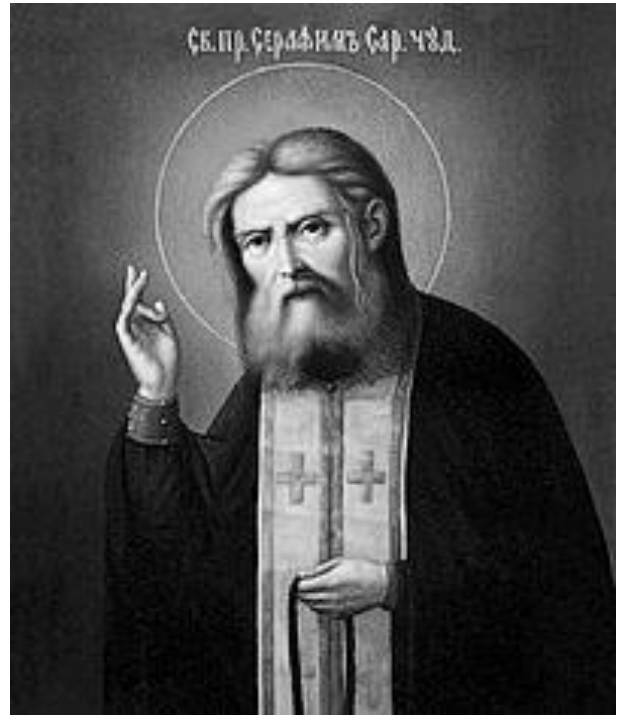
The Decree of 1351: Original signatures of emperor and patriarch.

(3, p.98)

## St. Seraphim of Sarov: A Wonderful Revelation (of Light) to the World

### St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759- 1833 AD)

*Saint Seraphim of Sarov was born in city of Kursk. His parents were pious Orthodox Christians, examples of true spirituality. At the age of ten, Seraphim was miraculously healed from a serious illness by means of the Kursk icon of the Theotokos. As a boy, he immersed himself in church services and church literature. At age 19, he began monastic life; at 27 was tonsured as a monk, soon after was ordained a deacon. The intensity and purity of Seraphim's participation in the Divine services are evident as he was allowed to see angels, and during the liturgy on Holy Thursday, he saw the Lord Himself. At thirty-four, Seraphim was ordained as a priest, and was assigned as the spiritual guide of the Diveyevo convent and also received a blessing to begin life as a hermit in the forest surrounding Sarov. He would go to the monastery on Sundays to receive Holy Communion. In 1804, Seraphim was attacked by robbers and almost beaten to death. Permanent injuries sustained from this attack caused him to always be bent over and the need of a staff to walk.*



[https://orthodoxwiki.org/Seraphim\\_of\\_Sarov](https://orthodoxwiki.org/Seraphim_of_Sarov)

*After this event, the Saint began more fervent prayer, kneeling on a stone near his cell crying out, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." Then he then spent three years in absolute silent seclusion; returning back to the monastery in 1810. In obedience to a heavenly vision, of the Theotokos, Seraphim ended his silence and began to speak for the benefit of others. The Saint greeted all who came to him with a prostration, a kiss, and the words of the Pascha greeting: "Christ is Risen!" He called everyone, "my joy." In 1825, he returned to his forest cell, where he received thousands of pilgrims from across Russia. Granted the gift of clairvoyance, the wonder-working Saint Seraphim of Sarov gave consolation and guidance to all. Saint Seraphim died on January 2, 1833, while kneeling before an icon of the Theotokos.(14 & 15)*

Nearly five centuries after St. Gregory Palamas' victorious *Defense of the Holy Hesychasts*. St. Seraphim of Sarov showed the world that the Light experience is still alive and well. An example of the grace of the Holy Spirit at work within the life and words of Saint Seraphim has been preserved for us. In November of 1831, a pious Orthodox Christian named Nicholas Motovilov met with Saint Seraphim, and recorded his conversation. The notes by Motovilov were transcribed and published by Sergius Nilus, who wrote the following introduction:



Cover of Motovilov's book  
Serafim's Discourse On the  
Purpose of the Christian Life  
shows how the event is usually  
depicted in the modern icon  
tradition

*'This revelation is undoubtedly of worldwide significance. True, there is nothing essentially new in it, for the full revelation was given to the Apostles from the very day of Pentecost. But now that people have forgotten the fundamental truths of Christian life and are immersed in the darkness of materialism or the exterior and routine performance of "ascetic labors," St. Seraphim's revelation is truly extraordinary, as indeed he himself regarded it. "It is not given to you alone to understand this," said St. Seraphim towards the end of the revelation, "but through you it is for the whole world!" Like a flash of lightning this wonderful conversation illumined the whole world which was*

*already immersed in spiritual lethargy and death less than a century before the struggle against Christianity in Russia and at a time when Christian faith was at a low ebb in the West. Here God's Saint appears before us in no way inferior to the prophets through whom the Holy Spirit Himself spoke.'* (14)

The miraculous transfiguration of the starets' face was described by this close admirer and follower of St. Seraphim: Motovilov. This happened during the winter, on a cloudy day. Motovilov was sitting on a stump in the woods; St. Seraphim was squatting across from him and telling his pupil the meaning of a Christian life, explaining for what we Christians live on earth. "It is necessary that the Holy Spirit enter our heart. Everything good that we do, that we do for Christ, is given to us by the Holy Spirit, but prayer most of all, which is always available to us," he said. "Father," answered Motovilov, "how can I see the grace of the Holy Spirit? How can I know if He is with me or not?" (15)

The following is an excerpt of a Motovilov's description of the conversation and Light experience that they had together. (12 & 13, pp.227-229). (For the full report, please see Appendix II)

*'...Then Father Seraphim took me very firmly by the shoulders and said: "We are both in the Spirit of God now, my son. Why don't you look at me?"*

*I replied: "I cannot look, Father, because your eyes are flashing like lightning. Your face has become brighter than the sun, and my eyes ache with pain."*

*Father Seraphim said: "Don't be alarmed, your Godliness! Now you yourself have become as bright as I am. You are now in the fullness of the Spirit of God yourself; otherwise you would not be able to see me as I am."... You saw that I did not even cross myself; and only in my heart I prayed mentally to the Lord God and said within myself: 'Lord, grant him to see clearly with his bodily eyes that descent of Thy Spirit which Thou grantest to Thy servants when Thou art pleased to appear in the light of Thy magnificent glory.'... How then shall we not thank Him for this unspeakable gift to us both?... But why, my son, do you not look me in the eyes? Just look, and don't be afraid! The Lord is with us!"*

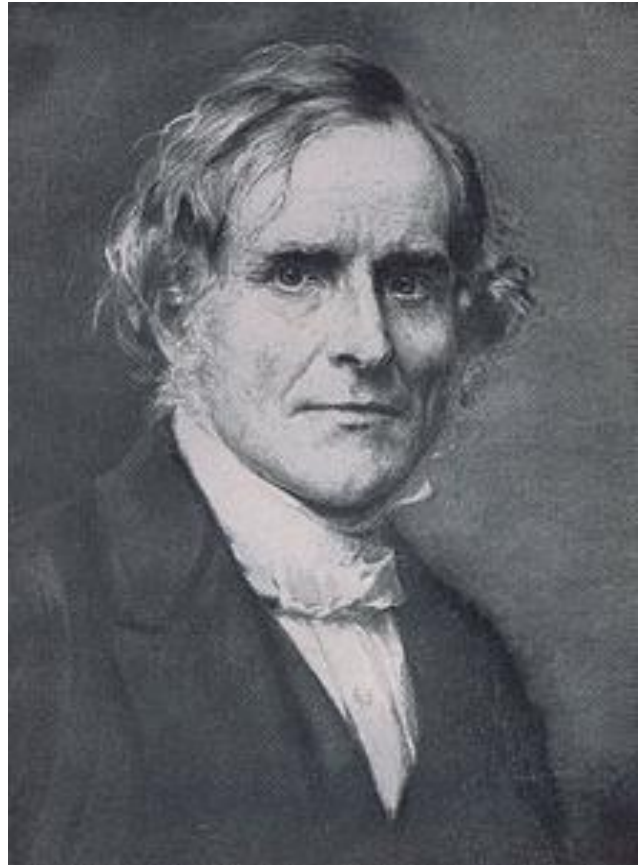
*After these words I glanced at his face and there came over me an even greater reverent awe. Imagine in the center of the sun, in the dazzling light of its midday rays, the face of a man talking to you. You see the movement of his lips and the changing expression of his eyes, you hear his voice, you feel someone holding your shoulders; yet you do not see his hands, you do not even see yourself or his figure, but only a blinding light spreading far around for several yards and illumining with its glaring sheen both the snow-blanket which covered the forest glade and the snow-flakes which besprinkled me and the great Elder. ...*

*I answered: "I feel such calmness and peace in my soul that no words can express it."*

*"This, your Godliness," said Father Seraphim, "is that peace of which the Lord said to His disciples: My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you (Jn. 14:21). If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (Jn. 15:19). But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (Jn. 16:33)....*

## Frederick Denison Maurice, “Witness to the Light”

**John Frederick Denison Maurice (29 August 1805 – 1 April 1872)**, the son of an evening preacher in a Unitarian chapel, was an English Anglican theologian, a prolific author, and one of the founders of Christian socialism. Since World War II, interest in Maurice has expanded. He earned his first-class degree in civil law from Trinity College, Cambridge (1823-1827). Maurice engaged in two lasting educational initiatives: founding Queen's College, London in 1848 and the Working Men's College in 1854. Unfortunately, his leadership in the Christian Socialist Movement, and because of the supposed unorthodoxy of his *Theological Essays* (1853) he was dismissed from King's College. However, he enjoyed public support and his friends "looked up to him with the reverence due to a great spiritual teacher." Maurice continued to work for the education of workers. In February 1854, and he developed plans for a Working Men's College. In 1866 he was elected to the Knightbridge professorship of casuistry, moral theology, and moral philosophy at [the University of] Cambridge. In spite of terminal illness, in his final years, he continued working on *Metaphysical and Moral Philosophy to the very end*. On Easter Monday, 1 April 1872, after receiving Holy Communion, with great effort he pronounced the blessing, became unconscious and died. (17).



### Christian socialism:

Maurice was affected by the "revolutionary movements of 1848". He believed that "Christianity rather than secularist doctrines was the only sound foundation for social reconstruction. He disliked competition as fundamentally unchristian, and wished to see it, at the social level, replaced by co-operation, as expressive of Christian brotherhood. In 1849, Maurice joined other Christian socialist in an attempt to mitigate competition by the creation of co-operative societies. He viewed co-operative societies as 'a modern application of primitive Christian communism.'

Maurice's perception of a need for a moral and social regeneration of society led him into Christian socialism. He insisted that "Christianity is the only foundation of Socialism, and that a true Socialism is the necessary result of a sound Christianity. He has been characterized as "the spiritual leader" of the Christian socialists.

*'Let people call me merely a philosopher, or merely anything else'. He said. '.... My business, because I am a theologian, and have no vocation except for theology, is not to build, but to dig, to show that economics and politics ... must have a ground beneath themselves, and that society was not to be made by any arrangements of ours, but is to be regenerated by finding the law and ground of its order and harmony, the only secret of its existence, in God' (17)*

And it was through his Christian Socialism, that he discovered the “Higher Light”



Even though, like St. Gregory Palamas, he did not assert having a personal experience with the Light (even though he might had), he put it at the center of a whole social theology that impacts all aspects of society, politics and life. Like Palamas, he mentioned the Higher Light (as we will see in his sermon on Light and Darkness ..., below). It is not clear whether he was influenced by Palamas or not, but one thing is clear: he started where Palamas ended and built on it his vision of The Kingdom of Christ (on earth).

F. D. Maurice witnessed it; he trusted in it and called us to trust it too. "I go to the Bible- I would bid you go to it- because I feel how much darkness surrounds you and me; because I believe that He, in whom all light dwells, is ready to meet us there; to reveal Himself to us; to guide us onward to the perfect day." (13, p.150)

Maurice is generally identified as a "Christian Socialist", but that is only a feature of a deeper sense of connectivity related to his witnessing the Light. It is not surprising that someone like him who focuses on the center of unity, will abhor the sins of false pride and greed associated with the fragmentation in the world that he saw around him. From that vantage point, and due to lack of record to the contrary, Christian Socialism would look like a utopia. However, it is my belief, that if was to witness our time, he would have seen that unchecked socialism results in the sins of envy and sloth. The social utopia would have been compromised, but the Light would stay. So, I would join Alec R. Vidler (13) in identifying him as "Witness to the Light".

His Epistles of St. John are clear example of the intensity of his focus on the Light.

### **The Coming and Rejection of the Light, F. D. Maurice, M. A. (18)**

*'He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. ... '* (John 1:10-11)

*'The light came into men's hearts as into its proper native dwelling-place. The Word from whom that light issued asserted His right over all the feelings, instincts, impulses, and determinations of these hearts, as over His own rightful domestics and subjects. But the light was repelled; the rightful Ruler was treated as an intruder by these domestics and subjects. There was anarchy and rebellion where there should have been subordination and harmony. A usurper had reduced those into slavery who would not have the service which is freedom.'* (18)

This is an example of how Maurice connects "light" with God the rightful ruler, with harmony and freedom; hallmarks of Heaven that he hopes to see on earth.

### **Light and Darkness: Sin and Purification, F. D. Maurice, M. A. (16)**

"This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all...." (1 John 1:5-10)

The following are selected excerpts of it; for full text, see Appendix III

*' "Light" and "Darkness" are very living expressions. They belong to the life of us all. ... They (the pre-Christian Ephesians) felt that a higher light than the light which the eyes could see must proceed from him (Artemis or Diana). So these old Greeks thought. They were continually exalting the lower light above the higher light, and supposing the higher to come from the lower. This was their idolatry. They*

*worshipped the visible things from which they thought that the light proceeded. ... But He did not think that these Ephesians had been wrong because they had dreamt of a God of Light. That was a true dream. Christ had come to fulfill it. The God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, whom Jesus had revealed, was this God of Light. ... “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” ... All those strange intimations which come to me that I am not what I am meant to be, must be flashes of light from the source of light. They are painful flashes. ... “God is light, and in Him is no darkness”; I am intended to walk in this light. This inclination not to be true, not to have fellowship with my fellow men, is an inclination not to walk in this light, not to be in that state in which He has intended men to be. ... God was light, and in Him was no darkness — that He had sent His Son to bring them into His light! ... ’ (16)*

Here, we see reference to “higher light” ... a true dream, even though it was initially wrongly allocated. That dream came true by the coming of Christ. So, Christ is the “higher light” as opposed to the “lower light” of the world. That “source of light” sends Maurice painful “flashes of light”; painful because they tell him the truth about his deviations from what is good for his real being. So, Maurice seems to have personal experience with the Light after all.

# Moving Forward: Modern Defenders of the Faith

## SCIENTISTS FOR CHRIST

Science Symposium  
March 26 –27, 2008



Wheaton College  
*For Christ and His Kingdom*

String Theory  
and the Multiverse:  
Philosophical and Theological  
Implications



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Robert Mann  
"A New Question  
for Science and  
Theology"



**Dr. Robert Mann** is Professor of Physics and Applied Mathematics and the Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Waterloo. He is currently Vice President elect of the Canadian Association of Physics.

Robin Collins  
"The Multiverse, Theism, and Christian Faith"



**Dr. Robin Collins** is a professor of philosophy at Messiah College. He has two years of graduate-level training in theoretical physics and has written over twenty-five articles on topics ranging from philosophical issues in quantum physics to evolution and original sin. He is currently completing a book on the evidence from physics and cosmology for the divine design of the cosmos.

Gerald Cleaver  
"The String Landscape,  
the Multiverse, the  
Anthropic Principle, and  
Anselm's Ontological Argument"



**Dr. Gerald Cleaver** is Associate Professor of Physics at Baylor University and heads the Early Universe Cosmology and String Theory division of Baylor's Astrophysics Center. Gerald earned his Ph.D. at Caltech in 1993, studying under John Schwartz, a founder of string theory. Gerald has written 50+ journal papers and conference proceedings.

Don Page  
"Does God so  
Love the  
Multiverse?"



Monotheistic religions

**Dr. Don Nelson Page** grew up in Alaska and studied at William Jewell College, Caltech and the University of Cambridge (under Stephen Hawking). He taught physics at Penn State University and is now at the University of Alberta. He and his wife Cathy have three biological children and two adopted daughters from Haiti.

Modern science offers to be the new frontier for theology. Quantum Physics opens the doors to Quantum Theology; a new revolution sweeping the world where the very basic understanding of existence is deeply revised; the greatest revolution in 2500 years connecting this world with the other world. Unlike the Thomas Aquinas Natural Theology, Quantum Theology is better connected to wide mysteries of this universe and beyond.

## Some of Their Areas of Interest

### SEMINAR TOPICS

A common theme of this seminar, is that String/ M-Theory, Multiverse hypothesis is compatible with Christian Theology.

God as Multiple Universe Generator.

Deep understanding of existence, with ontological argument.

**Robert Mann**  
"A New Question  
for Science and  
Theology"



The puzzle of existence is perhaps the oldest question addressed by both science and theology — why is there something rather than nothing? In the past few decades scientific research (mainly in cosmology) has generated a new question for each: why is there something rather than everything? This question has emerged because it has become clear that our cosmos is not a typical specimen out of a set of logically possible alternatives. Rather, the conditions for life as we know it are very special, depending sensitively upon the values of a large number of constants of nature whose empirical values superficially appear irrelevant. Is this atypicality indicative of some kind of transcendent super-intelligence, or is it best explained by embedding our cosmos in a much larger structure, in which its special features inevitably occur due to statistical flukes? Or are there alternative modes of explanation that go beyond the scientific approach while paying due diligence to the integrity of the scientific method? This talk shall point out the challenges that the new puzzle of existence poses for both science and theology.

**Robin Collins**  
"The Multiverse, Theism,  
and Christian  
Faith"



This paper will focus on the multiverse hypothesis and the Christian Faith. First, I will argue that what I call the "multiple universe generator" scenario (MUG)—that is, the version in which the multiverse is generated by some physical process—does not substantially undercut the argument for theism from the fine-tuning of the cosmos for life and the beauty and elegance of the laws of nature. I use the inflationary/superstring multiverse hypothesis as my test case. Second, I argue that theists have some reason—e.g., based on God's infinite creativity—to be sympathetic toward MUG. Finally, I will address several theological difficulties that MUG raises for theistic belief and the Christian faith, such as for the doctrine of the Incarnation and Atonement.

**Gerald Cleaver**  
"The String Landscape,  
the Multiverse, the  
Anthropic Principle, and  
Anselm's Ontological Argument"



In the first part of my talk, I will review the 20 year history of modern string/M theory (beginning with the first string revolution of 1984) that has led to the current theorized string landscape and its proposed realization in a multiverse of at least  $10^{500}$  (and perhaps an infinite number of) causally independent universes. The properties of a string/M-theory multiverse will be summarized. The [cyclical] ekpyrotic model will be discussed as an example. Then in part two, I will analyze the string landscape/multiverse picture with regard to the Anthropic Principle and fine tuning. In the final part of my talk, I will discuss how Anselm's Ontological Argument suggests the string landscape/multiverse picture is not just consistent with Christian theology, but that a creation of (at least) the magnitude and vastness implied by the string landscape/multiverse picture is what should, in fact, be expected in Christian theology.

**Don Page**  
"Does God so  
Love the  
Multiverse?"



Monothelistic religions such as Judaism and Christianity affirm that God loves all humans and created them in His image. However, we have learned from Darwin that we were not created separately from other life on earth. Some Christians opposed Darwinian evolution because it undercut certain design arguments for the existence of God. Today there is the growing idea that the fine-tuned constants of physics might be explained by a multiverse with very many different sets of constants of physics. Some Christians oppose the multiverse for similarly undercutting other design arguments for the existence of God. However, undercutting one argument does not disprove its conclusion. Here I argue that multiverse ideas, though not automatically a solution to the problems of physics, deserve serious consideration and are not in conflict with Christian theology as I see it.



**Dr. Robert Mann, Professor of Physics at Waterloo University,  
Former President of both the Canadian Association of Physicists  
And the Canadian Scientific & Christian Affiliation (CSCA)**

Published this paper, on line, in 2012  
to give an idea of what can be accomplished by Physics for Theology

## **Physics at the Theological Frontiers**

**R.B. Mann  
Dept. of Physics & Astronomy  
University of Waterloo  
Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G1 Canada**

### **Editor's Note**

Science is constantly moving. Dr. Robert Mann, professor of physics at the University of Waterloo and former president of both the Canadian Association of Physicists and the Canadian Scientific & Christian Affiliation (CSCA), has written this intriguing description of the latest developments in physics along with insights and challenges that they may raise for Christian faith. Readers are encouraged to take up one of the insights or challenges, or maybe a related one that was not mentioned, and draft an article (typically about 5,000 words) that contributes to the conversation. These can be sent to Dr. Mann at [robertbmann@sympatico.ca](mailto:robertbmann@sympatico.ca). He will send the best essays on to peer review and then we will select from those for publication in a physics theme issue of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*.

Looking forward to hearing your perspectives,

James C. Peterson  
President of CSCA & Editor of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*

*Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*  
draft invitational essay, 25 June 2012

[www.asa3.org](http://www.asa3.org) & [www.csc.ca](http://www.csc.ca)

## Planned Future Work, Related to the Divine Light

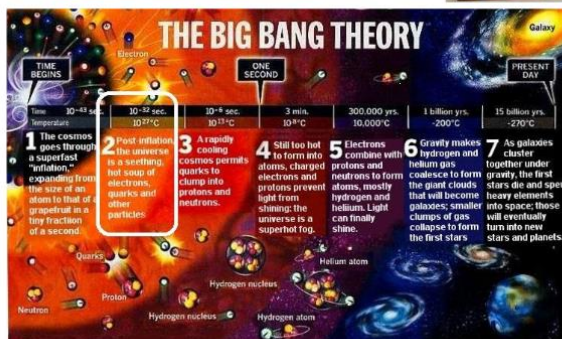
### Research on Pre Big Bang.

Currently, the Big Bang Theory provides theological correlations

### QUANTUM PHYSICS IS THE PANTOCRATOR'S TOUCH



The Pantocrator's  
Divine and earthly  
fingers touching at a  
fine point:



Creating the  
world in  
discrete  
particles.

## THE OTHER WORLD

### The Higher Light

Eschatology is so essential to Christianity, that without a hope in the other world, our faith falls apart. *'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'* (Mt 6:19-21).

It's a pity that, in the face of today's "scientism", some clergy and churches are dropping the reference to "the life in the world to come"; some just preach "heaven within" to avoid embarrassment. But, as we will see, there is an indication that it truly exists as "another world" that we are in communication with.

#### Where is the "Other World"; the "Higher Light"?

That was a burning question for me. For thirty years I wondered if it even exists. It can't be anywhere in this universe, since it will ultimately expand into a freezing death. Could it be located in some other universe that "telegraphs" into ours due to some sort of overlap? But how long will that universe last anyway?

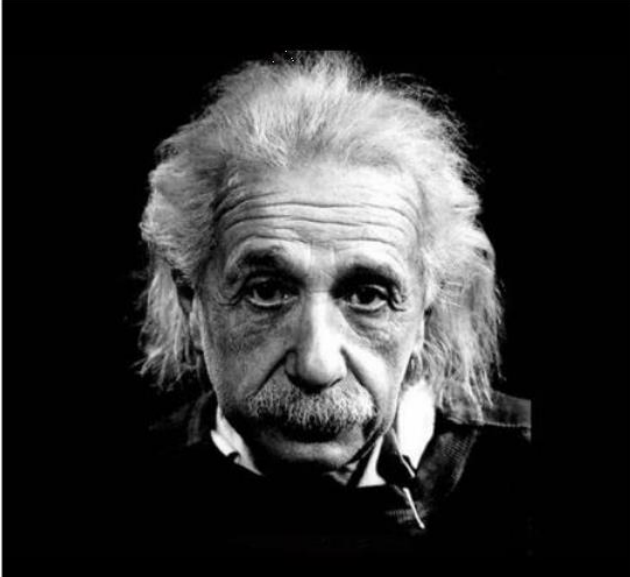
In 2014, I got a break: Someone introduced me to biophotonics research by Fritz-Albert Popp (<http://viewzone.com/dna x.html> 2019-03-20) and others. It was about the interaction light with DNA. It sounded significant that life is intimately connected to light.



And it is significant that light is the boundary with another world. That other world was mentioned casually by Albert Einstein, as a theoretical extrapolation from the equations of the Special Theory of Relativity (STR).

## THE OTHER WORLD

### Extrapolation Beyond Light



Albert Einstein noted that in principle, there can be another world where the speed of light,  $c$ , is the lowest speed, instead of being the highest speed as it is in our world. In that world, it will be as impossible to lower velocity  $v$  down to  $c$ , as it is in our world to increase  $v$  to  $c$ .

The three equations, below, show that in our world, when  $v$  increases, mass  $m$  increases, time  $t$  slows down and length  $l$  shortens.

In the other world, where  $v > c$ , the same happens when  $v$  decreases, even though with some differences; see next page for more information in graph form. However, all three entities will be multiplied by the imaginary number “ $i$ ”, the square root of  $(-1)$ . That means the other world cannot be seen from our world except at its boundary: the light.

$$m = m_0 / \sqrt{1 - v^2 / c^2}$$
$$t = t_0 / \sqrt{1 - v^2 / c^2}$$
$$l = l_0 \times \sqrt{1 - v^2 / c^2}$$

# THE OTHER WORLD

## Extrapolation Beyond Light of mass, length and time

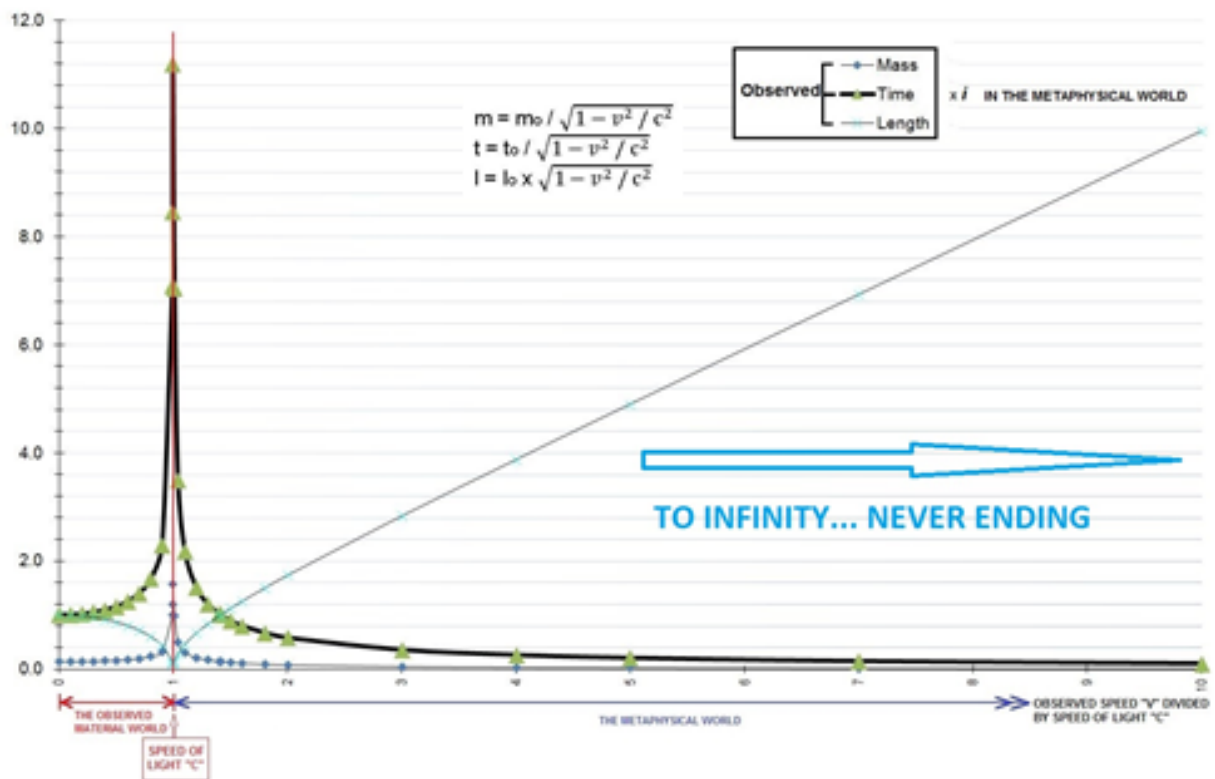
The two worlds of  $v \geq c$  (the other world) and  $v \leq c$  (our world) intersect at light.

At that point, only light exists; any other entity that try reaching it, from either direction, will have its mass tending towards infinity. That point of singularity separates the two worlds. Mass, length and time of the other world are all multiplied by “i”, the square root of (-1); that is the “imaginary number”. So that, nothing from the other world can be seen or detected by our world, even its light cannot be detect by our equipment.

If the other world broke into ours by deceleration, breaking through the light barrier (by some miracle), then it will burst into ours as a big bang of light. It will be the Light that created our world.

Other than a big bang, that mysterious connection between DNA and light, might be the only connection with it. In that case, those who have their connection with inner life intact, are the most likely to see the other light.

In both cases, the other world will be seen from ours as light. Everything in it is beyond light; it is neither darkness as we understand it: it is simply beyond any of possible comprehension based on our world.



## THE OTHER WORLD

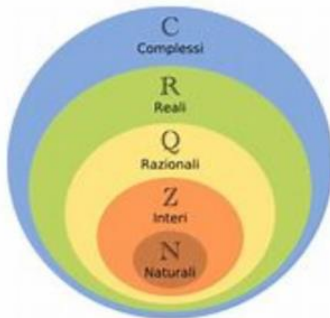
1 ← THE OTHER WORLD IS PERPENDICULAR TO OUR WORLD →  
 THAT MEANS NOTHING IN IT CAN BE SEEN FROM OUR WORLD  
 EXCEPT ITS BOUNDARY WITH OUR WORLD: LIGHT;  
 HOWEVER, IT IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF LIGHT (x i). ONLY LIFE CAN SEE IT.



## THE OTHER WORLD and our world make a duo

The  $v \geq c$  world being multiplied by “i” is perpendicular to our  $v \leq c$  world, because multiplication by “i” represents rotation by 90 degrees. Both worlds represent a “Complex World” as in Complex Numbers and complex equations of electro-magnetic waves. The bottle neck in this argument is in further research on the relationship between DNA and light.

The two worlds together, make a Complex World, as in Complex Numbers and Complex Equations.



### Main types [\[ edit \]](#)

**Natural numbers** ( $\mathbb{N}$ ): The counting numbers  $\{1, 2, 3, \dots\}$  are commonly called natural numbers; however, [other definitions](#) include 0, so that the non-negative integers  $\{0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$  are also called natural numbers.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

**Integers** ( $\mathbb{Z}$ ): Positive and [negative](#) counting numbers, as well as zero:  $\{\dots, -3, -2, -1, 0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$ .

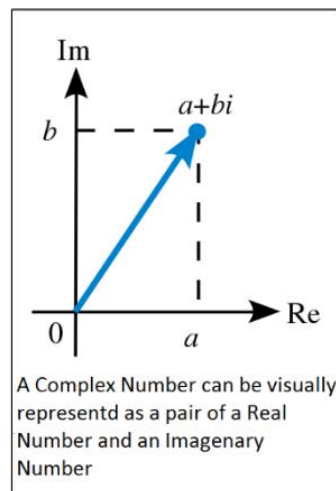
**Rational numbers** ( $\mathbb{Q}$ ): Numbers that can be expressed as a ratio of an integer to a non-zero integer.<sup>[3]</sup> All integers are rational, but the converse is not true.

**Real numbers** ( $\mathbb{R}$ ): Numbers that can represent a distance along a line. They can be positive, negative, or zero. All rational numbers are real, but the converse is not true.

**Irrational numbers** ( $\mathbb{I}$ ): Real numbers that are not rational.

**Imaginary numbers**: Numbers that equal the product of a real number and the square root of  $-1$ . The number 0 is both real and imaginary.

**Complex numbers** ( $\mathbb{C}$ ): Includes real numbers, imaginary numbers, and sums and differences of real and imaginary numbers.

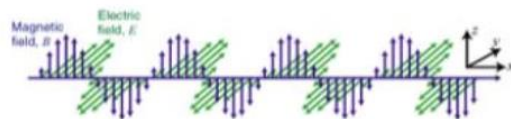


### Vector fields

However, light is a 3D vector field.

A 3D vector field assigns a 3D vector (i.e., an arrow having both direction and length) to each point in 3D space.

A light wave has both electric and magnetic 3D vector fields:



And it can propagate in any direction, and point in any direction in space.

## **THE OTHER WORLD**

### **Mysterious Features**

In the  $\mathcal{V} \geq \mathcal{C}$  world:

- Movement never ends; mass transforms to energy spontaneously; getting closer and closer to zero without ever reaching it; accelerating continuously without ever reaching infinity. Eternal transformation and movement as if gravitated towards an entity that is unreachable.
- It connects with our world only by light. However, that light's mass is multiplied by "i" which renders it none detectable by our world, except (hopefully) by life (DNA) that is intimately connected to light.
- That is compatible with Mystical Theology that God is shown only by His energy (Light) and only to those who are most connected to the HS, the giver of life.
- It's fitting that light is the simplest particle of all; as God is in His mystery, is of utmost simplicity that is beyond comprehension.

**Hopefully, that would be the future Theology of Light;  
vindicating the History of the Divine Light.  
Please pray for its success!**

## Appendix I

**‘Mystical Prayer to the Holy Spirit’, by St. Symeon the New Theologian** (10, pp. 173-175)

*Come, O true light! ..... Jn 1:9*  
*Come, O eternal life! ..... 1 Jn 5:20*  
*Come, O hidden mystery! ..... Eph 3:9*  
*Come, O indescribable treasure!*  
*Come, O ineffable thing!*  
*Come, O inconceivable person!*  
*Come, O endless delight!*  
*Come, O unsetting light!*  
*Come, O true and fervent expectation of all those who will be saved!*  
*Come, O rising of those who lie down!*  
*Come, O resurrection of the dead! ..... Jn 11:25*  
*Come, O powerful one,*  
*who always creates and re-creates and transforms*  
*by your will alone!*  
*Come, O invisible and totally intangible and untouchable!*  
*Come, O you who always remain immobile*  
*and at each moment move all,*  
*and come to us, who lie in hades,*  
*you who are above all heavens. .... Eph 4:10*  
*Come, O desirable and legendary name,*  
*which is completely impossible for us*  
*to express what you are or to know your nature.*  
*Come, O eternal joy!*  
*Come, O unwithering wreath! ..... 1 Pet 5:4*  
*Come, O purple of the great king our God!*  
*Come, O crystalline cincture,*  
*studded with precious stones!*  
*Come, O inaccessible sandal!*  
*Come, O royal robe*  
*and truly imperial right hand!*  
*Come, you whom my wretched soul*  
*has desired and does desire!*  
*Come, you who alone go to the lonely*  
*for as you see I am lonely!*  
*Come, you who have separated me from everything*  
*and made me solitary in this world!*  
*Come, you who have become yourself desire in me,*  
*who have made me desire you,*  
*the absolutely inaccessible one!*  
*Come, O my breath and life! ..... Acts 17:25*  
*Come, O consolation of my humble soul!*  
*Come, O my joy, my glory, and my endless delight!*  
*I thank you that you have become one spirit with me,*



without confusion, without mutation,  
 without transformation, you the God of all;  
 and that you have become everything for me, ..... 1 Cor 15:28  
 inexpressible and perfectly gratuitous nourishment,  
 which ever flows to the lips of my soul  
 and gushes out into the fountain of my heart,  
 dazzling garment which burns the demons,  
 purification which bathes me  
 with these imperishable and holy tears,  
 that your presence brings to those whom you visit.  
 I give you thanks that for me  
 you have become unsetting light  
 and non-declining sun;  
 for you who fill the universe with your glory  
 have nowhere to hide yourself.  
 No, you have never hidden yourself from anyone  
 but we are the ones who always hide from you,  
 by refusing to go to you;  
 but then, where would you hide,  
 you who nowhere find the place of your repose? .....Is 66:1  
 Why would you hide,  
 you who do not turn away from a single creature,  
 who do not reject a single one?  
 Today, then, O Master,  
 come pitch your tent with me; ..... Jn 1:14  
 until the end, make your home  
 and live continually, inseparably within me,  
 your slave, O most-kind one,  
 that I also may find myself again in you,  
 at my departure from this world  
 and after my departure may I reign with you, ..... 2 Tim 2:12  
 O God who are above everything. .... Rom 9:5  
 O Master, stay and do not leave me alone,  
 so that my enemies,  
 arriving unexpectedly,  
 they who are always seeking to devour my soul, ..... 1 Pet 5:8  
 may find you living within me  
 and that they may take flight,  
 in defeat, powerless against me,  
 seeing you, O more powerful than everything,  
 installed interiorly in the home of my poor soul.  
 Yea, O Master, just as you remembered me,  
 when I was in the world  
 and, in the midst of my ignorance,  
 you chose me and separated me from this world  
 and set me before your glorious face, ..... Jude 24  
 SO now keep me interiorly,  
 by your dwelling within me,

*forever upright, resolute;  
that by perpetually seeing you, I, the corpse, may live;  
that by possessing you,  
I, the beggar, may always be rich,  
richer than kings;  
that by eating you and by drinking you, ..... In 6:54  
by putting you on at each moment,  
I go from delight to delight  
in inexpressible blessings;  
for it is you, who are all good and  
all glory and all delight  
and it is to you,  
holy, consubstantial, and life-creating Trinity  
that the glory belongs,  
you whom all faithful venerate, confess, adore, and serve  
in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.*

## Appendix II

### A Wonderful Revelation (of Light) to the World,

by Nicholas Motovilov, of his experience with St. Seraphim of Sarov (12 & 13, pp.227-229)

*'... Then Father Seraphim took me very firmly by the shoulders and said: "We are both in the Spirit of God now, my son. Why don't you look at me?"*

*I replied: "I cannot look, Father, because your eyes are flashing like lightning. Your face has become brighter than the sun, and my eyes ache with pain."*

*Father Seraphim said: "Don't be alarmed, your Godliness! Now you yourself have become as bright as I am. You are now in the fullness of the Spirit of God yourself; otherwise you would not be able to see me as I am."*

*Then, bending his head towards me, he whispered softly in my ear: "Thank the Lord God for His unutterable mercy to us! You saw that I did not even cross myself; and only in my heart I prayed mentally to the Lord God and said within myself: 'Lord, grant him to see clearly with his bodily eyes that descent of Thy Spirit which Thou grantest to Thy servants when Thou art pleased to appear in the light of Thy magnificent glory.' And you see, my son, the Lord instantly fulfilled the humble prayer of poor Seraphim. How then shall we not thank Him for this unspeakable gift to us both?"*

*Even to the greatest hermits, my son, the Lord God does not always show His mercy in this way. This grace of God, like a loving mother, has been pleased to comfort your contrite heart at the intercession of the Mother of God herself. But why, my son, do you not look me in the eyes? Just look, and don't be afraid! The Lord is with us!"*

*After these words I glanced at his face and there came over me an even greater reverent awe. Imagine in the center of the sun, in the dazzling light of its midday rays, the face of a man talking to you. You see the movement of his lips and the changing expression of his eyes, you hear his voice, you feel someone holding your shoulders; yet you do not see his hands, you do not even see yourself or his figure, but only a blinding light spreading far around for several yards and illumining with its glaring sheen both the snow-blanket which covered the forest glade and the snow-flakes which besprinkled me and the great Elder. You can imagine the state I was in!*

*"How do you feel now?" Father Seraphim asked me.*

*"Extraordinarily well," I said.*

*"But in what way? How exactly do you feel well?"*

*I answered: "I feel such calmness and peace in my soul that no words can express it."*

*"This, your Godliness," said Father Seraphim, "is that peace of which the Lord said to His disciples: My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives, give I unto you (Jn. 14:21). If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you (Jn. 15:19). But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (Jn. 16:33). And to those people whom this world hates but who are chosen by the Lord, the Lord gives that peace which you now feel within you, the peace which, in the words of the Apostle, passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7). The Apostle describes it in this way, because it is impossible to express in words the spiritual well-being which it produces in those into whose hearts the Lord God has infused it. Christ the Saviour calls it a peace which comes from His own generosity and is not of this world, for no temporary earthly prosperity can give it to the human heart; it is granted from on high by the Lord God Himself, and that is why it is called the peace of God. What else do you feel?" Father Seraphim asked me.*

*"An extraordinary sweetness," I replied.*

*And he continued: "This is that sweetness of which it is said in Holy Scripture: They will be inebriated with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy delight (Ps. 35:8).*

*And now this sweetness is flooding our hearts and coursing through our veins with unutterable delight. From this sweetness our hearts melt as it were, and both of us are filled with such happiness as tongue cannot tell. What else do you feel?"*

*"An extraordinary joy in all my heart."*

*And Father Seraphim continued: "When the Spirit of God comes down to man and overshadows him with the fullness of His inspiration, then the human soul overflows with unspeakable joy, for the Spirit of God fills with joy whatever He touches. This is that joy of which the Lord speaks in His Gospel: A woman when she is in travail has sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she is delivered of the child, she remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. In the world you will be sorrowful [18]; but when I see you again, your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you (Jn. 16:21-22). Yet however comforting may be this joy which you now feel in your heart, it is nothing in comparison with that of which the Lord Himself by the mouth of His Apostle said that that joy eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for them that love Him (I Cor. 2:9). Foretastes of that joy are given to us now, and if they fill our souls with such sweetness, well-being and happiness, what shall we say of that joy which has been prepared in heaven for those who weep here on earth? And you, my son, have wept enough in your life on earth; yet see with what joy the Lord consoles you even in this life! Now it is up to us, my son, to add labours to labours in order to go from strength to strength (Ps. 83:7), and to come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13), so that the words of the Lord may be fulfilled in us: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall grow wings like eagles; and they shall run and not be weary (Is. 40:31); they will go from strength to strength, and the God of gods will appear to them in the Sion (Ps. 83:8) of realization and heavenly visions. Only then will our present joy (which now visits us little and briefly) appear in all its fullness, and no one will take it from us, for we shall be filled to overflowing with inexplicable heavenly delights. What else do you feel, your Godliness?"*

*I answered: "An extraordinary warmth."*

*"How can you feel warmth, my son? Look, we are sitting in the forest. It is winter out-of-doors, and snow is underfoot. There is more than an inch of snow on us, and the snowflakes are still falling. What warmth can there be?"*

*I answered: "Such as there is in a bath-house when the water is poured on the stone and the steam rises in clouds." '*

## Appendix III

### Full text of

### Light and Darkness: Sin and Purification,

F. D. Maurice, M. A. (16)

*'This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ...'* (1 John 1:5-10)

The Epistles of St. John: a series of lectures on Christian Ethics (1881). [Epistles of St. John.]

*' "Light" and "Darkness" are very living expressions. They belong to the life of us all. Moreover, these expressions were wonderfully suitable for those to whom St. John wrote. The Ephesians had paid an especial worship to Artemis or Diana. They connected her with the moon, the night ruler. They had paid a worship, in common with the other Greeks, to Apollo; him they connected with the sun, that rules the day. They connected them, I say, with these beautiful objects; but they were never satisfied with doing so. The god of light was the god whom they went to consult how they should manage states, conduct wars, make peace. They felt that a higher light than the light which the eyes could see must proceed from him. So these old Greeks thought. They were continually exalting the lower light above the higher light, and supposing the higher to come from the lower. This was their idolatry. They worshipped the visible things from which they thought that the light proceeded. St. John had been taught almost from his birth that he was not to worship things in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth, or the works of his own hands. He had been taught that the Lord his God was one Lord, that He was the Unseen Deliverer, Guide, Teacher, King of Israel. He had clung to this teaching. Now he had believed that this God had revealed Himself to them, not in the sun or in the moon, but in a humble and crucified Man. With this conviction becoming every hour deeper and deeper in his mind, he had settled in the city where Apollo and Diana were worshipped. He saw the mischiefs and dangers of that worship more clearly and fully than he did when people told him about it on the Lake of Galilee. But he did not think that these Ephesians had been wrong because they had dreamt of a God of Light. That was a true dream. Christ had come to fulfill it. The God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, whom Jesus had revealed, was this God of Light. But there is another reason closely connected with this, why St. John could not abandon the word "light" for any that was more formal and less living. A man may easily fancy that goodness, wisdom, truth, are possessions of his own. Whether he thinks he has got them for himself, or that some god has given them to him, he may still believe that he holds them just as he holds a freehold house or a purse of money. But you can never suppose that you hold light in this way. That I can never boast that I possess, Now the message which St. John brought to the Ephesians was not concerning a blessing of the first kind, but of this last kind. He did not tell them that God had given them certain possessions here, or had promised them certain possessions hereafter, which they could call theirs. That is the subject of the next verse — "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." Walking in darkness is, alas! the phrase about which we have the least need of an interpreter. Everyone interprets it himself. It is possible for a man to be in this dark selfish state, and yet to say that he has fellowship with God. He may repeat prayers, he may offer sacrifices, he may pass for a religious man. But his life, the apostle says, is a lie. It is not only that he speaks a lie; he acts a lie. He does not the truth. This, indeed, he would have us to understand is falsehood — the very root of falsehood. "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light,*

*we have fellowship one with another.” The darkness of which St. John speaks is an utterly unsocial condition. A man thinks about himself, dwells in himself; the rest of the universe lies in shadow. What, then, is the opposite state to this? “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” The light is all around us, while we are most dark. I cannot extinguish the creation because I do not think about it or care about it. But this recollection is not enough to bring me out of my dark pit. My selfishness is too strong for all, however bright, in earth, and sea, and air to overcome. It is not too strong for God to overcome. All those strange intimations which come to me that I am not what I am meant to be, must be flashes of light from the source of light. They are painful flashes. They are just what men have tried by their false religions — by their insincere professions of fellowship with God — to drive away. But if, instead of doing that, we will hail them, if we will receive them as His messengers, we may enter into His true order. The proper social life is restored to us, even if we are far away from our brethren. “And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” St. John appeals to our experience. You desire to be true yourself; you desire to have fellowship with other men. The moment that first desire is awakened in me, then arises along with it a sense of falsehood: “I have done false acts. I have been false. I have an inclination to do false acts and to be false now. I have something in me which violently resists my craving to be true.” And about the seriousness, the terribleness of this fact there is no doubt. It must be at the bottom of the insincerity, discord, and hatred of the world. But how shall I describe this fact? I am at a loss; I cannot find a name. But I discover something more about the strange fact. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness”; I am intended to walk in this light. This inclination not to be true, not to have fellowship with my fellow men, is an inclination not to walk in this light, not to be in that state in which He has intended men to be. Now I am, perhaps, better able to express this inclination of mine, and what has been the fruit of it. One name, however, does not satisfy me. I try several. I call it transgression; that is, the passing over a boundary which was marked out for me. I call it iniquity; that is, an uneven, zigzag course, a departure from the straight, even course. I call it sin; that is, the missing of an aim; the going aside from the goal which I was intended to reach. All these words imply that there is One who has marked the boundary for me, who has drawn the line for me, who has fixed the goal or aim for me. All imply a disobedience to a Will which I am meant to obey. Now, the message which St. John brought to the Ephesians was, “God has revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ as the perfect Truth. God has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ as the God who has created men to be one. Therefore it is a revelation to us of our sin; for it shows us how we have fought and do fight against this mind and purpose of God; how, in doing so, we fight against our own proper state, our own proper blessedness.” I do not mean that this sense of sin did not exist before that full revelation of God in Christ. But how much deeper did it become in those who learnt that God was light, and in Him was no darkness — that He had sent His Son to bring them into His light! What a sense of sin must have been in them! How they must have felt, “It is our own fault, our own choice, that we have been walking in darkness. We have been striving against a God who has been at every moment plotting for our good!” If, then, the men in the times of old cried out for a purification, those who heard this revelation must have felt the need of it immeasurably more. But what kind of purification could they have? “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

*There is a new lifeblood put into this nature of ours. God Himself has infused it. The Son of God has taken our flesh and blood. He is the Head of our race. When we seek to rise out of ourselves — to be delivered from our falsehood — to have fellowship with God, and fellowship with our brother, then His blood is an assurance that we have that fellowship. It removes the sense of sin against God which is in us; it removes the sense of sin against men. It gives that atonement and that purification which nothing else in earth and heaven can give. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Instead of this fancy that you are without sin being a proof how clearly the light is shining into you, it is a proof that you are shutting out the light, for that would reveal to you your own*

*inclination to fly from it and to choose the darkness. The truth makes us aware of our falsehoods. Is that hard doctrine? No; for "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." His faithfulness and justice are the enemies of our sins; therefore to them we may turn from our sins. They are the refuges from the darkness that is in us. A faithful and righteous Being is "therefore a forgiving Being. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us." If we will not confess the evil in us, we impute that evil to Him. We thrust away that Word which is shedding abroad His light in us; we bury ourselves in our own darkness. This is the effect of trying to make out a good case for ourselves, when it is our interest, our privilege, our blessedness, to justify God and to condemn ourselves; to say, "Thou hast been true, and we have been liars. Deliver us from our lies! Help us to walk in Thy truth!"*

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