

**Athanasius of Alexandria (295-373), *Three Orations against the Arians***

*Extracts from the Thalia of Arius. Arius maintains that God became a Father, and the Son was not always; the Son out of nothing; once He was not; He was not before his generation; He was created; named Wisdom and Word after God's attributes; made that He might make us; one out of many powers of God; alterable; exalted on God's foreknowledge of what He was to be; not very God; but called so as others by participation; foreign in essence from the Father.*

For, behold, we take divine Scripture, and thence discourse with freedom of the religious Faith, and set it up as a light upon its candlestick, saying:—Very Son of the Father, natural and genuine, proper to His essence, Wisdom Only-begotten, and Very and Only Word of God is He; not a creature or work, but an offspring proper to the Father's essence. Wherefore He is very God, existing one in essence with the very Father; while other beings, to whom He said, 'I said ye are Gods,' had this grace from the Father, only by participation<sup>47</sup> of the Word, through the Spirit. For He is the expression of the Father's Person, and Light from Light, and Power, and very Image of the Father's essence. For this too the Lord has said, 'He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father<sup>48</sup>.' And He ever was and is and never was not. For the Father being everlasting, His Word and His Wisdom must be everlasting.

If then, as we have stated and are shewing, that the Offspring of the Father's essence is the Son, we cannot hesitate, rather we must be certain, that the same is the Wisdom and Word of the Father, in and through whom He creates and makes all things; and His Brightness too, in whom He enlightens all things, and is revealed to whom He will; and His Expression and Image also, in whom He is contemplated and known, wherefore 'He and His Father are one,' and whoever looks on Him looks on the Father; and the Christ, in whom all things are redeemed, and the new creation wrought afresh.

Therefore, if, even before the world was made, the Son had that glory, and was Lord of glory and the Highest, and descended from heaven, and is ever to be worshipped, it follows that He had not promotion from His descent, but rather Himself promoted the things which needed promotion; and if He descended to effect their promotion, therefore He did not receive in reward the name of the Son and God, but rather He Himself has made us sons of the Father, and deified men by becoming Himself man.

[Phil. 2:6-11] Therefore He was not man, and then became God, but He was God, and then became man, and that to deify us. . . . For of this was man's nature in want, because of the humble estate of the flesh and of death. Since then the Word, being the Image of the Father and immortal, took the form of the servant, and as man underwent

for us death in His flesh, that thereby He might offer Himself for us through death to the Father; therefore also, as man, He is said because of us and for us to be highly exalted, that as by His death we all died in Christ, so again in the Christ Himself we might be highly exalted, being raised from the dead, and ascending into heaven, whither the forerunner Jesus is for us entered, not into the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

[Ps. 45:7-8] And therefore He is here ‘anointed,’ not that He may become God, for He was so even before; nor that He may become King, for He had the Kingdom eternally, existing as God’s Image, as the sacred Oracle shews; but in our behalf is this written, as before. For the Israelitish kings, upon their being anointed, then became kings, not being so before; but the Saviour on the contrary, being God, and being Himself He that supplies the Holy Ghost, nevertheless is here said to be anointed, that, as before, being said as man to be anointed with the Spirit, He might provide for us men, not only exaltation and resurrection, but the indwelling and intimacy of the Spirit.

[Arius: “The Son who is tempted, suffers and dies, however exalted he may be, is not equal to the immutable Father beyond pain and death; if he is other than the Father, he is inferior to him.”]

Wherefore of necessity when He was in a body suffering, and weeping, and toiling, these things which are proper to the flesh, are ascribed to Him together with the body. If then He wept and was troubled, it was not the Word, considered as the Word, who wept and was troubled, but it was proper to the flesh; and if too He besought that the cup might pass away, it was not the Godhead that was in terror, but this affection too was proper to the manhood. And that the words ‘Why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ are His, according to the foregoing explanations (though He suffered nothing, for the Word was impassible), is notwithstanding declared by the Evangelists; since the Lord became man, and these things are done and said as from a man, that He might Himself lighten these very sufferings of the flesh, and free it from them.

But from that most enduring purpose and courage of the Holy Martyrs is shewn, that the Godhead was not in terror, but the Saviour took away our terror. For as He abolished death by death, and by human means all human evils, so by this so-called terror did He remove our terror, and brought about that never more should men fear death.

And He let His own body suffer, for therefore did He come, as I said before, that in the flesh He might suffer, and thenceforth the flesh might be made impassible and immortal, and that henceforth men might forever abide incorruptible, as a temple of the Word.