

## Empirical Dogmatics Volume 1

“Fr. John grew up and studied in America and knew both forms of Western theology, scholastic and moralistic. He chose The Ancestral Sin as the subject of his thesis, and in it he expounded the Orthodox teaching of the early centuries of the Church on sin, death and salvation. He began preparing this subject while still in America.

When he came to Greece, and particularly when he submitted his doctoral thesis to the Theological School in Athens, he encountered reactions to his Orthodox views. This raised serious questions for him. He had not expected to encounter elements of the scholastic theology of Thomas Aquinas in Greece among Orthodox theologians. It troubled him greatly.”

*Biographical and Autobiographical Information on Fr. John Romanides*

\* \* \*

“Anyone reading the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils realises that the terminology is determined, and sometimes changes, according to the polemics of the heretics, in order to deal with the heresies. This is not a matter of development in the understanding of dogma, but of development in the way it is formulated.

‘There is no development in the understanding of dogma. No development in the understanding of dogma is possible. Dogma can never be understood, because dogma is not subject to man’s reason, but is lived by the experience of glorification. Then dogma is changed into experience. It becomes experience, it becomes divine vision. Dogma is what can be put into words.’ [Fr. John Romanides]”

*The Development of Dogmas*

\* \* \*

“God reveals Himself to the glorified and the glorified use their reason to translate the revelation into their language.

‘If God spoke with human language, then on the day of Pentecost each one would not have heard in his own dialect. These are the mysteries of God at Pentecost, this is the experience of glorification. In the experience of glorification, the manifestation of God, man’s reason is inspired and translates the experience into his language. This divine inspiration inspires each one with his own concepts.’ [Fr. John Romanides]”

*Conveying Experience*

\* \* \*

At the stages of purification and illumination, the words and concepts of Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church are necessary. They are, however, superseded in glorification.

‘Created words are used in the first stages of perfection, but they are not absolute, in the sense that created words are used so that someone can be cured by means of these created words, under the guidance of a spiritual father, by Holy Scripture, by the writings of the Fathers of the Church and by the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. Once he reaches the stage of glorification, however, this experience of glorification goes beyond words and concepts, because he arrives at ineffable words...’ [Fr. John Romanides]

Because the dogmas act as medicines, when man is cured, when he arrives at glorification, they are unnecessary, as then man sees God, and definitions about God are not needed.

‘We have Christ in front of us. Are we going to put words and concepts in between us? These will cease to exist in the experience of glorification. Even noetic prayer is unnecessary, as we have God Himself before us.’ [Fr. John Romanides]”

*From Created Words to Ineffable Words*