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**THEOLOGY AND CHURCH IN CONCEPTION OF
PROFESSOR DOCTOR NICOLAE CHIȚESCU**

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THEOLOGY AND CHURCH INTO THE CONCEPTION OF PROFESSOR DR. NICOLAE CHIȚESCU

The Romanian theology of XX century has given the Church representatives, who contributed to the development of the Dogmatic. Among the most venerable theologians, we remember professor of Dogmatic Theology, Nicolae Chițescu. The Works of great teacher include subjects particularly precious and worthy of noted Which have given the Romanian theology one pulse in the process of return from the scholastic method to the spirit of the Holy parents. The textbook about Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology of 1958 was a valuable moment for the Romanian theology in general and for professor Nicolae Chițescu in particular, whereas he is co-author or better said the main author of this work from which they have been inspired generations of students. The symbolic exposure in this manual and in almost all studies of professor Chițescu is concise and worthy of note, the Romanian theologian mentions the advantage that has the Orthodox Church, namely to be kept the entire Revelation as it was sent.

The work constitutes the first doctoral thesis in which it is researched the work and the life of the great teacher of Romanian Dogmatic Theology. The personality of professor N. Chitescu is often honored by the Romanian theologians and the dogmatic themes developed by him were taken, subsequently, by other theologians too. Although it has brought a remarkable contribution in the indigenous theology, however the precious work of the great leader of the Romanian Dogmatic is not enough exploited, the writings and his personality entering, unfortunately, in obscurity. Through this work, we want to bring a minimum contribution in the notice of the work and of the personality of that one who has been professor of Dogmatic Theology at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest, member in the commission "Faith and Constitution of The Ecumenical Council of Churches", but also simply inhabitant of the Orthodox Church.

In this work, structured in four chapters, I tried to emphasize the contribution brought by professor Nicolae Chițescu to renewal of Romanian Theology, particularly regarding the ecclesiology, but also the deification topic.

I. In the first chapter, entitled **"The context wherein professor Nicolae Chițescu develops his dogmatic thinking"**, we presented the circumstances in which the Romanian theologian developed the activity, but also a few ideas about the life of this great teacher, finishing with the guidelines we meet in his work.

The interwar period is characterized by the renunciation of the translations of the Dogmatic textbooks and drawing up their own books, from which we deduce that the renewal process of Romanian Dogmatic Theology begins to assert itself. Over this period, too, new names in Romanian theology appear and, in the year 1936, takes place at Athens the first congress of the Faculties of Theology congress where is decided the return to the way of life and to make theology of Holly parents. Among the inadequacies in this period we remember the fact that it has not reached a uniformity as regards the theological education and in the schools of theology the Holy Scripture was not used not even to the biblical disciplines. Along with these two, of course, and the influence of the scholastics who was holding down the Dogmatic Theology orthodox dogma. The contribution of professor Nicolae Chițescu, during this period, consists in major contributions with respect to the deification and ecclesiology topic.

The Communist period is characterized by major changes in all the plans. As it was expected, in the life of the Church too have occurred changes. Unfortunately, these renewals have not been beneficial to the Church, this being much more damaged, in particular, by the Church law, promulgated in 1948. Instead, this age is not held only by the deficiencies, but also by theological appearances that will enrich the indigenous theology. So, priest Dumitru Stăniloae begins the translation of Philokalia and in 1958 appears the "Textbook of Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology" whose main author is professor Nicolae Chițescu. In 1978 was published the "Dogmatic Theology Orthodox" in three volumes of priest professor Dumitru Stăniloae. Along with these masterpieces of theology we can observe other significant studies, as well as the opening of the Orthodox Church toward ecumenism. The most probably, this is the reason for which the work of professor N. Chițescu has never been so marked in the second part of his life, alongside, of course, the changing of political register. His entire existence can be characterized as a human life in the service of the Church. An apprentice of Metropolitan Ioan Irineu Mihălcescu, professor Nicolae Chițescu was remarked by competency and seriously, through dedication and feeling, being a model for the young generations of theologians.

The Dogmatic thinking of professor Chițescu is directed in several directions. Within the symbolic it is imperative to remember the essential contribution brought to the development of the Textbook of dogmatic theology and symbolic of the year 1958. The introduction of this book is missing as proof of the fact that it is recommended by its content. The symbolic thinking of professor Nicolae Chițescu includes also the theme of Soteriology with the three conditions of the appropriation of salvation: Grace, faith and good deeds. They are exposed both from the point of view of the Orthodox and Roman-Catholic and Protestant. The embodiment and Ransom are regarded both through the eyes of the orthodox theologians and Roman Catholic theologians. The doctrinal core of the three largest Christian confessions is also one of the subjects founded in the work of the Romanian theologian. In addition to those, professor Nicolae Chițescu treats symbolically also the relation between dogma and the Christian life as well as the role of professions of faith in the salvation of the oikonomia. The crowd of issues treated to reveals the great patristic culture, but also the fact that he was connected to the writings of the important authors of the western theology, Roman-Catholic or Protestant. We do not forget that the symbolic ideology of professor Nicolae Chitescu is complete in the textbook of 1958.

Member in the commission "Faith and Constitution" of The Ecumenical Council of Churches, as well as in the commission inter-orthodox dialog box with Old-Eastern Churches and with Anglicans, Professor Nicolae Chitescu held conferences and essays during the ecumenical meetings, pointing a large openness toward this topic, especially in the second half of his life. Militating for that all to come to a knowledge of the truth, Professor Chitescu insists on the dialog between the Orthodox Church and the Old-Eastern churches, considering their monophysitism as one moderate and that what separates these two families from the Churches is insufficient in comparison with what they have in common. In order to show the importance of the dialog with the Old-Eastern churches, professor N. Chitescu emphasizes the fact that for almost a millennium, the Church was not separately, even if there were differences of traditions which have sometimes affected even the dogma of the Holy Trinity. Historical, cultural, organizational elements definitely emphasize the dialog between the two families of

churches. It describes the organization and a short history of the "Ecumenical Movement", considering that the dogmatic, organizational differences, and those of cult, make this action aim very difficult to achieve. However, professor Nicolae Chitescu remains confident in the hope that it will be achieved the word of the Saviour which promised that finally it will be a flock and a shepherd (Matthew, 19,26). Also in this chapter we have debated the confession of faith of the Pope Paul VI and the role of tradition and of the Holy Scripture in the ecumenical dialog. The Orthodox Church has an important purpose in the ecumenical dialog, also recognized by heterodox theologians.

In 1936, at the congress held in Athens it was decided the return to the way to teach theology of all Holy parents. This renewal guidance is assumed also by the professor Nicolae Chițescu which, by his studies, demonstrates that the relation between dogma and the Christian life is described by Roman-Catholicism, but also by the Protestantism. In Roman-Catholic Church, the spirituality treaties preferred are those which combine goodness with the theology, even if throughout the history were many controversies regarding this issue. The goodness and the theology went hand in hand and those who tipped the balance in favour of one of them were wrong. History priorities in a decent way the goodness, but the relation between these two is described by professor Nicolae Chițescu as a process of symbiosis. The acquisition of the Theological values and their valorization in everyday life, really represents the Orthodoxy.

II. In the second Chapter, entitled "**Basic issues raised in dogmatic work of professor Nicolae Chițescu**", we developed the main themes encountered in the work of great teacher of Romanian Theology. The divine revelation is perceived through the eyes of the Holy parents and of the modern theologians, by arguing that the accusations brought to the Orthodox theology through which this one is not able to progress, are not founded. The progress of dogma is seen as a new phrasing of what is already in Revelation. Keeping the Revelation unaltered is due to the fact that, in Orthodoxy, the synodality is the one which reigns. In the absence of ecumenical synods, keeping the true doctrine is made by the consensus of the Church from everywhere. Scripture and tradition are seen by Professor Chițescu in a symbolic way, this one pointing out that Orthodoxically, the Holy Tradition has the role of the giving the key of Holy Scripture and not to bring new knowledge in Revelation. Professor Nicolae Chițescu considers the Scripture and Tradition as the sources of the Revelation, stating in a single place that recently they are perceived as sources of Revelation. It is eulogized the role of the synology in the genuine preservation of the Revelation, and it is specified that this one is a heavenly and a human body of the expression of the infallibility.

The second theme treated, the relation between tradition and dogma, specifies the vision of the theologian N. Chițescu about the purpose of dogma in the Tradition, about the meaning of dogma during the Christian history, as well as the dogma's development. Dogma is historically perceived resulting the rendering of meanings that it has in the world today, namely strict sense(what was stated at ecumenical synods) and in a broad sense(what is received by Churches from everywhere. The concept of dogma represented for professor N. Chițescu a continuous concern, this one writing several studies about this theme. The characteristics of the dogma stated by the Romanian theologian are inspired in particular from the writings of Vincent of Lerins, but also from the writings of Happy Augustine and from Symbolistic of Hristu Andrusos.

In the third subchapter I wrote about Christology. The secret of deification is perceived by professor Chițescu in close relation with the redemption, he was speaking about the redemptive embodiment. Pointing out firstly the reasons for which the Son of God has come in the world, he approaches the patristic sources, as well as the views of Greek, Russian and Bulgarian theologians. Professor Nicolae Chițescu has studied the Christology old Oriental churches too, wishing to have a minimum contribution to the dialog between the two families of the Church in order to prepare the union. The problem of union of these the two types, as well as about the two wills are regarded, in particular, through the eyes of the Holy John of Damasc. Among the representatives of the Church of Egypt is invoked the controversial personality of the Holy Cyril of Alexandria, professor Nicolae Chițescu states that the formula "a single nature of God's logos" regarded throughout its theology is an Orthodox one. It is mentioned in this respect the contribution of Leonce of Bizance in fixing the teaching about the union of the two natures in a single form. In the presentation of the teaching about Christology, professor Chițescu makes use of the patristic works, revealing the relation between embodiment and redemption, as well as the knowledge about the two natures and wills.

The fourth theme treated in this chapter is soteriology where prevail grace and deification. The theologian Nicolae Chițescu regrets the fact that the teaching of the Holy grace is depicted in the Orthodox theology exactly at the Roman Catholic families. The Holy grace is viewed from a historical point of view, indicating the essential contribution of the Holy Gregory Palamas with regard to the constancy of the teaching about the energies uncreated. The approach on this topic is one inter-confessional showing that what is created can not deify and the grace in no case can not be an accident created. In order to clarify the teaching about predestination, professor Chițescu describes the fight of grace and freedom, and mentions that God gives His grace to all of the people, but he does not oblige anybody to save himself. The deification is considered to be the central teaching of Christianity and it is exposed interconfessional. Professor Chițescu develops this topic in many lines of his work. The deification theme is developed within the Holy parents, revealing that some people saw even from Earth the divine gift prepared for the eternity.

In a close relation with the embodiment, the deification topic, as perceived by professor N. Chițescu contributes to the renewal of the view about the theme of deification in Romanian orthodox theology. A special attention is given to Roman-Catholic doctrine with reference to this subject. The theory of Anselm of Canterbury, related to the satisfaction for God is deeply contested and, in the conception of professor Chițescu, it is inspired from social condition of that time. The biggest mistake of Roman-Catholics consists in the abandon of the biblical and patristic interpretation, with reference to this topic.

The last issue analyzed in this chapter is the ecclesiology. Identical to the case of deification, the contribution of professor Chițescu is remarkable as regards the liberation of this teaching from the eastern possession. In a close relation with the deification, the ecclesiology of Romanian theologian is founded on the Saint Scripture and on the Saint parents' work. The Church, regarded as secret Body of Christ, its ecumenical quality, as well as the role of ecclesiology in the ecumenism, as considered by the honored teacher of Romanian Dogmatic Theology, are developed in this subchapter of the thesis. We mention also the influence of great Russian writer and inhabitant, Alexei Homiakov,

particularly on the ecclesiology of professor Nicolae Chițescu, and generally on his work and life.

III. "The Orthodox Ecclesiology in the dogmatic vision of professor Nicolae Chițescu" represents the third chapter of the work. At its beginning we briefly drew the ecclesiology of principal Dogmatic treaties from the beginning of XX century, in order to see the stage of the teaching about Church. Among the theologians who wrote about ecclesiology, we mention: Ștefan Călinescu, Macarie Bulgakov, Ioan Irineu Mihălcescu, Alexiu Comoroșan, Hristu Andrutsoș, Iosif Iuliu Olariu and Silvestru de Canev. The ecclesiology of these theologians was scholastically influenced, even by the Dogmatic of Andrutsoș which was considered the standard of those periods.

Professor Nicolae Chițescu approaches the subject of the relation between church and the Body of Christ. In his presentation, we can easily notice the influence of Homiakov, demonstrating at once that the teaching about the Church, about the secret Body is absent in the eastern theology due to the lack of deification dogma. This teaching is debated by the Romanian theologian by using the Saint Scripture and the patristic works; he demonstrates that the Orthodox Church kept the right ecclesiological teaching, as opposed to Roman-Catholics and Protestants who have fallen to the extreme. It is emphasized the role of collaboration between the limbs of the body of the Church during the process of salvation. The Church is the one because all the limbs constitutes a single living organism and the role of martyrs into the body of the Church is demonstrated by parables.

In a close relation with the Church doctrine, the mystical body of the Christ, is represented also by the deification dogma. Professor Chițescu regrets the crisis situation of the western theology which could not pass over the theory of Anselm about the ransom. The significance of the ontological embodiment of the Christ, is presented by treating inter confessional the relation between embodiment and ransom. He presents the redeemable embodiment and related to the question of whether the embodiment would no longer be held in the case in which Adam would be fallen he does not give a clear answer, considering, however, that in Revelation no evidence is found in this respect. Biblical and patristic visions presented by professor Nicolae Chițescu can not be replaced by interpretations which reproduce social condition no longer present. In the second part of this subchapter we presented the vision of theologian Nicolae Chițescu regarding the indissoluble connection between the deification and the Church, the mystical body of Christ. Throughout the embodiment all the Church staff have the deification possibility, but nowadays this deification of the members of the mysterious body is completed by sharing with the Sacraments. The deification topic is presented by professor Nicolae Chițescu in the light of the Holy Parents, but also from the perspective of Russian and Greeks theologians. In Roman-Catholic theology there is no official teaching with reference to this subject and Protestants are seen as its deadly enemies.

In the opinion of professor Nicolae Chițescu, the ideal model for the ecumenicity of the Church can be found in the God love of Holy Trinity. Considering that the ecumenism has both visible and invisible aspects, it is perceived also as manner to live the truth in the Church. The ideal of ecumenism is the God love of Holy Trinity. Only if we live this spirit of trinity love in the mystical body of the Christ we can keep the faith

union. Professor Nicolae Chițescu emphasizes the man's deification experience in the Church. Both the appearance of the Church, as well as the embodiment of the Word are obscured by the Holy Spirit. The human deification is conditioned by the will and it is realized at the time of sharing with the Holy Eucharist. Inspired by the writings of the Saint parents, professor Chițescu demonstrates that those who share with the Body of Christ become the Christ's body and that the Mystical body is also called house of God, as well as the religious body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

The theology of professor Nicolae Chițescu is always based on the Scripture and on the works of the Saint parents, but also on their way of life. Living as a good Orthodox in his Church, he emphasized in his work the close relation between the dogma and life. The teaching belief, but also the maintenance of the truth it is a duty of all the members of the Church, hierarchy and simple believers. The real feeling of the dogma is at the Holy Parents. Professor Chițescu highlights the Ecclesiology of the Three Hierarchs, which also includes in his opinion anthropology. From the work of the Romanian theologian Nicolae Chițescu can be established its opening toward ecumenism. The feelings of fraternity and the desire to contribute to a future union between the Orthodox Church and the old Oriental Churches can be easily noticed from his writings. The different doctrines of cults and organization are made especially on account of a difficult development due to a troubled history and the political element is considered to be the main guilty of the separation of these Church families from the Orthodox Church. It presents the aspects of the Christology of Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christology of St. John of Damascus and the role they have in the dialog between Orthodoxism and Old Oriental Churches. In the context of the ecumenical dialog and by virtue of the desire for the recovery of the Church, professor Nicolae Chitescu presents also the stage of the Orthodox Anglican Dialog, the relations between the Orthodox Church with old Catholics, with Roman Catholics, but also with the Protestantism. In this subchapter, we have emphasized also the role of the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition in ecumenical dialog and the fact that any discussion carried out within this dialog should be based on the first eight Christian centuries. Otherwise, the dialog is difficult and the target is not simple to reach.

IV. In the last chapter, entitled the „**Relevance of the work of professor Nicolae Chițescu in the current dogmatic conception**”, we demonstrated the relevance of the work of professor Nicolae Chițescu in the current dogmatic conception. The work of the great Romanian theologian has meant much for the Romanian dogmatic theology, they drew attention on the Romanian theologians who have been attracted by them. Father professor Ștefan Sandu invokes the importance of the Textbook of Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology that highlights a new way to dogmatize and to expose the notion of the dogma as it is perceived by professor Nicolae Chițescu in the context of his entire theology, considering that the Greek theology has marked in a great manner the vision of the Romanian theologian about the dogma. Father professor Ioan Tulcan is preoccupied with the aspects of the Orthodox Christology in the work of professor Nicolae Chițescu. Thereby, he identifies in the writings of professor Chițescu the general coordinates of his Christology, namely: the issues of Saint Cyril Christology, the relation between the embodiment and redemption, the teaching of two natures and the two wills. Father

professor Ioan Tulcan appreciates the contribution of professor Nicolae Chițescu to renew the Romanian theology. Father Valer Bel notes the contribution of the Romanian theologian, N. Chițescu with reference to the transmission of the Holy Tradition and its role that in the this interpretation of the Holy Scripture. After he remembers that the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church is one of the "rejuvenating", father Valer Bel draws a few main ideas withdrawn from the work of professor Chițescu with reference to Tradition. Father Cristinel Ioja considers a lot professor Nicolae Chițescu, reaching him among the Romanian dogmatic theologians immediately after father Dumitru Stăniloae. In his work Dogmatic, and Dogmatists, Father Ioja distinguishes the main coordinates of the work of professor Chițescu and emphasizes his contribution with regard to ecclesiology, deification topic, relation dogma-life, uncreated energies, ecumenical dialog. However, not only in this work is recalled the contribution of professor Chițescu, but also in the IInd tome of the Dogmatic history in the Romanian Orthodox Church. The vision of the Romanian theologian Nicolae Chițescu with reference to the Eucharistic terminology and the dispute between the patriarch Dositei and Ioan Cariofil is treated by father Cristinel Ioja in the year dedicated to the Holy Martyrs Brâncoveni whereas at this dispute has participated the reigning Constantin Brâncoveanu along with Antim Ivireanul.

Considering the variety of the themes treated by professor Nicolae Chițescu and the few subsequent approaches, we can appreciate, along with father Ioan Ică sn. that his work has entered in "obscurity". The approaches of Romanian theologians on the issues treated by professor Nicolae Chițescu are made mainly on a single topic of his work, invoking also the personality of the great Romanian theologian. Professor Nicolae Chițescu is a representative of the Dogmatic Theology, what has brought the most significant contribution to the Dogmatic and symbolic Theology Textbook of 1958. By his work, he has achieved to contribute fully to the disposal of the Romanian theology of scholastic and to return to the spirit of Holy parents. His contributions with regard to deification, ecclesiology, dogma, devotion and theology, ecumenism, revelation, grace, but also other important themes for the orthodox theology, succeeded that his work, but also his personality, in occupying an important place in the Romanian theology. Professor Nicolae Chițescu enjoyed the appreciation of those around him during his entire earthly life and after going to the eternal he has remained in the memory of those who met him as a simple man, following the dogma he has preached from his desk but also from the pulpit, even if it has been ordained.

Conclusions on the work of theologian Nicolae Chițescu

1. The theological conception of professor Nicolae Chițescu enters into the considerable effort of the Romanian Orthodox Theology to develop itself under the sign of renewal, rediscovery and updating of patristic tradition of the Church.

2. The work of professor Nicolae Chițescu is extended and with major implications in very many of the Aspects of Orthodox Dogmatic. Among those aspects professor Nicolae Chițescu points, in particular, the issues of Revelation and Dogma in immediate relation with the Christology that he develops in an ontological way and no less with Ecclesiology that he develops in soteriological terms .
3. Among the theological themes that professor Chițescu assumes and develop systematically I reminded the question of deification intrinsically connected with the theology of grace, the question of dogma intrinsically connected with the issue about Church developed in the perspective of the Holy secret body of the Lord.
4. The work of professor Nicolae Chițescu represents the necessary connection between the classical books of Orthodox Dogma in the XIX century and the first half of the XX century and the creative and restorer approach we meet in the thinking and work of the father Dumitru Stăniloae. This is why the dogmatic work of professor Nicolae Chițescu is a source of inspiration also for young dogmatist of today's young dogmatics, and for all those who want to identify the renewal evolution in Dogmatic Orthodox Theology of the twentieth century.
5. As a central point of the theological method specifically to the work of professor Nicolae Chitescu is the relation between the Dogma and Theology, on the one hand, and between the dogma, godliness, experience and Ecclesiology on the other side. This unifying method has not represented what we can see in the work of father Dumitru Stăniloae, but it is a specific contribution of professor Nicolae Chițescu to the development of the Orthodox Dogmatic in Romania.
6. All chapters related to Dogmatic researched by Nicolae Chițescu converge and are summarized and oriented toward the Grand Chapter of Ecclesiology and Soteriology. Even Histological aspects so debated in the manner of preaching of professor Nicolae Chițescu find the coherence by the theme of Deification and by an ontological perspective personally in the mystical ambience of the Church.
7. The Dogmatic approaches of our theologian do not only concern the requirements of the subject that he teaches and the spiritual dimension which was making more and more place in dogma approaches, but it develops also a historical perspective of the Orthodox Dogma. Exposing the influences of the medieval Scholastics in dogmatic terminology and reporting of a few orthodox theologians to three central topics: question of Grace, of deification, and the complex issue of Orthodox Ecclesiology.

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