

## Introduction to the “Theological” Orations.

“It has been said with truth,” says the writer of the Article on Gregory of Nazianzus in the Dictionary of Christian Biography, “that these discourses would lose their chief charm in a translation....Critics have rivalled each other in the praises they have heaped upon them, but no praise is so high as that of the many Theologians who have found in them their own best thoughts. A Critic who cannot be accused of partiality towards Gregory has given in a few words perhaps the truest estimate of them: ‘A solidity of thought, the concentration of all that is spread through the writings of Hilary, Basil, and Athanasius, a flow of softened eloquence which does not halt or lose itself for a moment, an argument nervous without dryness on the one hand, and without useless ornament on the other, give these five Discourses a place to themselves among the monuments of this fine Genius, who was not always in the same degree free from grandiloquence and affectation. In a few pages, and in a few hours, Gregory has summed up and closed the controversy of a whole Century.’”<sup>3377</sup> They were preached in the Church called Anastasia,<sup>3378</sup> at Constantinople, between 379 and 381, and have gained for their author the title of The Theologian, which he shares with S. John the Evangelist alone. It should perhaps, however, be noted that the word is not here used in the wide and general sense in which we employ it, but in a narrower and more specific way, denoting emphatically the Defender of the Deity of the Logos. His principal opponents were the followers of Eunomius and Macedonius, and it is almost entirely against them that these Orations on Theology, or the Godhead of the Word and the Holy Ghost, are directed. The chief object of the Preacher in these and most other of his public utterances, is to maintain the Nicene Faith of the Trinity or Trinity of God; that is, the Doctrine that while there is but One Substance or Essence<sup>3379</sup> in the Godhead, and by

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3377 De Broglie, “L’Eglise et l’Empire,” v. 385.—“Ce sont autant de modèles dans l’art délicat d’imprimer la forme oratoire aux développements philosophiques. Une pensée substantielle, formée de tous les sucs répandus dans les écrits d’Hilaire, de Basile et d’Athanasie; un courant d’éloquence tempérée qui ne se ralentit, ni ne s’égare en aucun moment; une argumentation nerveuse sans sécheresse, mais sans vaine parure d’ornements, font à ces cinq discours une place à part parmi les monuments de ce beau génie, auquel l’emphase et l’affectation ne furent pas toujours aussi étrangers. En quelques pages, et en quelques heures, Grégoire avait résumé et clos la controverse de tout un siècle.”

3378 See Prolegomena p. 171.

3379 “There is but one divine Essence or Substance; Father, Son, and Spirit, are one in essence, or consubstantial. They are in one another, inseparable, and cannot be conceived without each other. In this point the Nicene doctrine is thoroughly monotheistic, or monarchian, in distinction from tritheism, which is but a new form of the polytheism of the pagans. “The terms Essence (οὐσία) and Nature (φύσις), in the philosophical sense, denote not an individual, a personality, but the Genus or Species; not Unum in Numero, but Ens Unum in Multis. All men are of the same substance, partake of the same human nature; though as persons and individuals they are

consequence God is in the most absolute sense One, yet God is not Unipersonal, but within this Undivided Unity there are three Self-determining Subjects or Persons, distinguished from one another by special characteristics (ἰδιότητες) or personal properties—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. With this object he entered into conflict with the heretics named above, who denied either the Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, or the perfect Godhead and Personality of the Holy Ghost.

Eunomius, whom Ullmann calls one of the most interesting heretics of the Fourth Century, was by birth a Cappadocian, and slightly older than Gregory. As a young man he was a pupil and amanuensis of Aëtius, by whom the Arian heresy was developed to its extreme results. The disciple never shrank from drawing the furthest logical conclusions from his master's premises, or from stating them with a frankness, which to those who regarded the premises themselves from which he reasoned as horrible blasphemies, seemed nothing less than diabolical in its impiety. So precisely did he complete and formulate his teacher's heretical tenets, that the Anomœan Arians were ever afterwards called Eunomians, rather than Aëtians. They asserted the absolute *Unlikeness* of the Being of the Father and of the Son. Starting with the conception of God as Absolute Being, of Whom no Generation can be predicated, Unbegotten and incapable of Begetting, they went on to say that an Eternal Generation is inconceivable, and that the Generation of the Son of God must have had a beginning. Of course, therefore, the Arian conclusion followed, namely, that there was a time when the Son did not exist (ἦν ποτὲ ὅτε οὐκ ἦν), and His Essence is altogether unlike

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very different. The term Homo-ousion, in its strict grammatical sense, differs from Mono-ousion or Touto-ousion, as well as from Hetero-ousion, and signifies not numerical identity, but equality of essence or community of nature among several beings. It is clearly thus used in the Chalcedonian Symbol, where it is said that Christ is 'consubstantial (Homo-ousios) with the Father as touching the Godhead, and consubstantial with us (and yet individually distinct from us) as touching the Manhood.' But in the Divine Trinity consubstantiality denotes not only sameness of kind, but at the same time Numerical unity; not merely the Unum in Specie, but also the Unum in Numero. The three Persons are related to the Divine Substance not as three individuals to their species, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or Peter, John, and Paul, to human nature; they are only one God. The divine Substance is absolutely indivisible by reason of its simplicity, and absolutely inextensible and untransferable by reason of its infinity; whereas a corporeal substance can be divided, and the human nature can be multiplied by generation. Three Divine substances would limit and exclude each other, and therefore could not be infinite or absolute. The whole fulness of the one undivided Essence of God, with all its attributes, is in all the Persons of the Trinity, though in each in His own way; in the Father as Original Principle, in the Son by eternal Generation, in the Spirit by eternal Procession. The Church teaches not One Divine Essence *and* Three Persons, but One Essence *In* Three Persons. Father, Son, and Spirit cannot be conceived as Three separate individuals, but are in one another, and form a solidaric Unity." (Schaff, History of the Church, Nic. & Post-Nic. Period, Div. ii. p. 672.)

that of the Unbegotten Father. Equality of essence and Similarity of essence, are alike untenable, from the mere fact that the one Essence is Unbegotten, and the other is Begotten. The Son, they said, is the First Creation of the Divine Energy, and is the Instrument by whom God created the world, and in this sense, as the Organ of creative power, may be said to be the Express Image and Likeness of the Energy of the Father.<sup>3380</sup>

As they viewed the Holy Ghost as sharing the Divine Nature in an even remoter degree, as being only the noblest production of the Only-begotten Son, Eunomius was the first person heretically to discontinue the practice of threefold immersion in Holy Baptism. He also corrupted the Form of that Sacrament, by setting aside the use of the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and baptizing people “in the name of the Creator, and into the death of Christ.” Therefore the Council of Constantinople ordered that converts from Eunomianism should be *baptized*, although those from other forms of Arianism were admitted into the Catholic Church by simple imposition of hands. Through the influence of the followers of Aëtius, Eunomius became, in 360, Bishop of Cyzicus in Mysia, but he does not appear to have occupied the See very long. At any rate when Gregory came, in 379, to Constantinople, he was living in retirement near Chalcedon. All parties concur in representing him as a consummate Dialectician, but the Orthodox declared that he had turned Theology into a mere Technology. Readiness of Dialectic was the great characteristic of his Sect, and it was they who introduced into the Capital that bad spirit of theological disputatiousness which Gregory deplors in the first of these famous Orations. He also differed entirely from Gregory, not merely in the conclusions at which he arrived, but in the method by which he reached them; following the system of Aristotle, rather than of Plato, and using an exclusively intellectual method, while Gregory treated Religion as belonging to the entire man. The point at issue between them, besides this of the Interior relations of the Three Blessed Persons within the Godhead, was mainly the question as to the complete comprehensibility of the Divine Nature, which the Eunomians maintained, and Gregory denied. The latter argued that, while we have a sure conviction that God is, we have not a full understanding of What He is. He would not, however, exclude us from *all* knowledge of God’s Nature, only he limits our capacity to so much as God has been pleased to reveal to us of Himself. “In my opinion,” he says (Or. xxiv. 4), “it is impossible to express God, and yet more impossible to conceive Him—seeing that the thick covering of the flesh is an obstacle to the understanding of the truth.” Similarly in the Fourth of these Orations (Or. xxx. 17) he says, “The Deity cannot be expressed in words. And this is proved to us, not only by arguments, but by the wisest and most ancient of the Hebrews, so far as they have given us

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3380 Two terms borrowed from Holy Scripture ([Heb. i. 3](#)). But observe, borrowed with a difference—not “the Image of His Substance,” which they would not admit, but of His “Energy,” which is a very different conception.

reason for conjecture. For they appropriated certain characters to the honour of the Deity, and would not even allow the name of anything inferior to God to be written with the same letters as that of God, because to their mind it was improper that the Deity should even to that extent admit any of His creatures to a share with Himself. How then could they have admitted that the indivisible and separate Nature can be explained by divisible words?”

In the mind of Gregory, the Orthodox doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is the fundamental dogma of Christianity, in contrast with all other religions, and with all heretical systems. “Remember your confession,” he says to his hearers in an Oration against the Arians; “Into what were you baptized? The Father? Good, but still Jewish. The Son? Good; no longer Jewish, but not yet perfect. The Holy Ghost? Very good; this is perfect. Was it then simply into these, or was there some one common Name of these? Yes, there was, and it is God.” And in the same oration he calls Arianism a new Judaism, because it ascribes full Deity only to the Father; and he speaks of One Nature in Three Individualities, intelligent, perfect, self-existent, distinct numerically, but one in Godhead. “In created things,” says Ullmann, “the several individuals are embraced in a common conception, though in themselves only connected together in thought, while in fact they are not one. Manhood is only an intellectual conception; in fact there exist only Men. But in the Godhead the Three Persons are not only in conception, but in fact, One; and this Unity is not only a relative but an absolute Unity, because the Divine Being is perfect in all Three Persons, and in all in a perfect equality. In this sense therefore Gregory and all orthodox Trinitarians maintain the Unity of God. But within this Unity there is a true Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a Trinity of Persons in a Unity of Nature.” We worship, he says (Or. xxxiii. 16), the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One Nature in Three Individualities. So that, as he says elsewhere (Or. in laud. Athanasii, xxi. 10), the Trinity is a true Trinity; not a numbering of unlike things, but a binding together of equals. Each of the Persons is God in the fullest sense. The Son and the Holy Ghost have their Source of Being in the Father, but in such sense that They are fully consubstantial with Him, and that neither of Them differs from Him in any particular of Essence. The points of difference lie in the Personal Attributes; the Father Unoriginate, and Source of Deity; the Son deriving His Being eternally from the Father, and Himself the Source of all created existence; the Holy Ghost proceeding eternally from God, and sent into the world.

In the first of these five discourses the Preacher sets himself to clear the ground for the fitting presentation of his great theme. He endeavours to lay down the principles on which Theologians should proceed in such discussions, and very earnestly deprecates the habit of promiscuous argument in all sorts of places, upon all sorts of occasions, and before all sorts of hearers, of the deepest and most sacred truths and mysteries of the Faith. They only should be allowed to engage in such conversation who are fitted for it by the practice of

Christian virtue. For others there are many other subjects upon which they can exercise their dialectical attainments, without doing or incurring any injury.

In the second oration Gregory lays down the position referred to above, that it is impossible for even the most exalted human reason fully to grasp the Nature of God, though His Existence is patent to all. We can only, he says, predicate negatives concerning Him. He gives three reasons for this incapacity. First to enhance our estimation of this knowledge, when attained hereafter; secondly to save us from the danger of falling through pride, like Lucifer, if we attained it prematurely; and thirdly, to support and sustain us in the trials and conflicts of this life, by the certainty that its attainment hereafter will be the reward of faithful service in them. The cause of our present inability is the body with which our soul is united, the grossness of whose present condition hinders us from rising to the complete apprehension of the invisible and immaterial. God, out of compassion for our weakness, has been pleased to designate Himself in Holy Scripture by various names taken from material objects, or from moral virtues; but these are only stepping-stones to the truth, and have indeed been sometimes perverted, and made a basis for polytheism. It is, however, only natural that the Divine Essence should be shrouded in Mystery, for the same is the case with the created essences also.

In the Third and Fourth he deals with the question of the Son. His position may be summed up as follows: The Son is absolutely of One Substance with the Father, and shares with Him all the Attributes of Godhead. Yet He is a distinct Person, marked off by the fact that He is begotten of the Father. But we must be careful not to allow this term “Begotten” to suggest to us any analogy with created things. It is wholly independent of time and space and sense.

This position he had to defend against many assailants, and especially against the Eunomians. These heretics maintained that the use of this term necessarily implied a beginning of the Essence of the Son, and they asked the orthodox to tell them when that beginning took place. Gregory replies that the Generation of God the Son is beyond all time; pointing out that Paternity is an Essential attribute of God the Father, and therefore is as eternal as His Essence, so that there never was a time when He was not the Father, and consequently never a time when the Generation of the Son began. He admits that there is a sense in which it is possible to say that the Son and the Spirit are not unoriginate, but then you must be careful not to use the word Origin in the sense of Beginning, but in that of Cause. They derive Their Being eternally from the Father, and all Three Persons are coeternal together. In respect of cause They are not unoriginate, but the cause is not necessarily prior in time to its effect, just as the Sun is not prior to its own light. In respect of *time*, then, They may be said to be unoriginate, for the Sources of time cannot be subject to time. “If the Father has not ceased to beget, His Generation is an imperfect one; and if He has ceased, He must have begun, for an end implies a beginning.” “Not so,” says Gregory, “unless you are prepared



to admit that what has no end has necessarily no beginning; and in that case what will you say about the Angels, or the human soul? These will have no end; had either of them therefore no beginning?" By a similar process of *Reductio ad absurdum* he dissipates all the quibbles of Eunomian sophistry, and lays down the orthodox Faith of the Church. Then in the remainder of the Third and Fourth Orations he goes on to examine the Scriptural testimony adduced by his opponents, and to shew by a similar catena on the other side that the overwhelming preponderance of the authority of the Bible is clearly against them. In connection with this point he lays down the canon that in the interpretation of Scripture in regard to our Lord, all expressions savouring of humility or weakness are to be referred to that pure Humanity which He assumed for our sake; while all that speaks of Majesty and Power belongs to His Godhead.

In the Fifth he deals with the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. The heresy of Arius was at first directly concerned only with the Person of our Lord, though not without a side-glance at that also of the Holy Ghost. The Council of Nicæa had confined itself to the first question, and its Creed ended with, "We believe in the Holy Ghost." This, it was afterwards argued, was enough to proclaim His Divinity, and so Gregory argues in this Oration, "If He be only a creature, how do we believe on Him, how are we made perfect in Him, for the first of these belongs to Deity, the second may be said of anything" (c. vi.). The reason, however, that the Great Synod made no express definition on the point seems to have been that the controversy had not yet been carried so far in direct terms (cf. S. Basil, Epp. lxxviii. ccclxxxvii.). But fifty years later the growth of the heresy rendered a definition of the Church's faith on this point needful; and in 363, on his return from his fourth period of exile, S. Athanasius held a provincial Synod at Alexandria, in whose Synodical Letter to the Emperor Jovian the Godhead of the Holy Ghost is maintained in terms which, as Canon Bright says, partly anticipate the language of the Creed of Constantinople (Dict. Biog. Art. Athanasius). The new development of the heresy had begun to appear at Constantinople as well as in Thrace and Asia Minor. Macedonius, a Semi-Arian, had been elected Bishop of Constantinople in 341, and in spite of violent opposition, which he met by still more violent measures, had maintained his position till 360, when he was deposed and driven out by the Anomœan Arians. He then in his retirement became the leader of the Semi-Arian party. Accepting the statement that the Son was Like in Essence to the Father, he would not concede even this to the Holy Ghost, but declared Him to be a mere creature (Thdt. Hist. [Eccl. ii. 6](#)), and the servant or minister of the Son; applying to Him terms which without error could only be used of the Angels (Sozomen. H. E. iv. 27). His followers were known as Macedonians, or sometimes Marathonians, from a certain Marathonius, formerly a Paymaster of the Prætorian Guards, who had become a Deacon of Constantinople, and, having done much in the way of founding and maintaining Monastic Houses and Houses of Charity in the City, was consecrated by Macedonius as Bishop of Nicomedia. They were also known as Pneumatomachi,

from the nature of their Heresy. A controversy had now begun to arise as to the precise position which the true faith was to assign to the Holy Spirit. There were those who left it doubtful whether He had indeed a separate Personality, or whether He were not rather a mere Influence or Activity of the Father and the Son. Gregory tells us how, when he came to the Metropolis, he found the wildest confusion prevalent. Some, he says, conceived of the Holy Ghost as a mere Energy of God, others thought Him a Creature, others believed Him to be God; while many out of an alleged reverence for Holy Scripture, hesitated to give Him the Name of God. To this last class belonged, according to Socrates (H. E. ii. 45), Eustathius, who had been ejected from the Bishopric of Sebasteia in Pontus. He refused to admit that the Holy Spirit is God, while yet He did not dare to affirm that He is a mere creature. When Gregory proceeded to preach the Deity of the Spirit, he was accused of introducing a strange and unscriptural god, because, as he acknowledges, the letter of the Bible is not so clear on the doctrine of the Spirit as it is on that of the Son. But he points out that it is possible to be superstitious in one's reverence for the letter of the Bible, and that such superstition leads directly to heresy. He explains the reticence of the New Testament on this point by shewing (in this Oration, cc. 26, 27) how God's Self-Revelation to man has always been a gradual one; how the Old Testament revealed the Father clearly, with obscure hints about the Son; and the New Testament manifested the Son, but only hinted at the Godhead of the Spirit; but now, he says, the Spirit dwells among us, and allows us to recognize Him more clearly. For it would not have been advisable, as long as the Godhead of the Father was not acknowledged, to proclaim that of the Son; and while the Deity of the Son was not yet accepted, to add another burden in that of the Holy Spirit. Recognizing thus a Divine economy in the Self-Revelations of God, he was not averse to using a similar caution in his own dealings with weak or ill-instructed minds.<sup>3381</sup> But yet when real necessity arose, he could speak out with perfect plainness on this subject; and he even incurred danger to life and limb from the violence of the opposing party. He met their opposition by the clearest statements of the Catholic Dogma. "Is the Spirit God?" he asks. "Yes." "But is He consubstantial?" "Yes, if He is God." (Orat. xxxi. 10.) He appeals both to the Bible, and to the experience of the Christian life. If the Spirit is not to be adored, how can He deify me in Baptism? From the Spirit comes our new Birth; from the new Birth our new Life; and from the new Life our knowledge of the Dignity of Him from Whom it is derived (Ibid. C. 29). He is, however, milder in his treatment of these heretics than of the strict Arians, both, as he says, because they approached more nearly to the Orthodox belief on the subject of the Son, and because their conspicuous piety of life shewed that their error was not altogether wilful. In this Oration he shows that though the Name of God may not actually be given in

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3381 In his Fifty-third Epistle, addressed to S. Basil, there is an amusing instance of his defence of this tolerant disposition, which S. Basil also displayed in dealing with minds of this class.

the New Testament to the Holy Ghost, yet all the attributes of God are ascribed to Him, and that therefore the use of the Name is a matter of legitimate inference. He carries on the argument in the Oration on Pentecost (No. XLI. See the Introduction to that Oration in the present Volume).

With regard to the doctrine of the Procession, Gregory gives us no clear information. He is silent as to the Procession from the Son. It is enough for him that the Spirit is not Begotten but Proceeding (in SS. Lumina, c. 12), and that Procession is His distinctive Property, which involves at once His Personality and His Essential Deity.

At length in 381 the work of local Synods and episcopal conferences was completed and clinched by the Ruling of a Second Ecumenical Council. It is true that the Council which Theodosius summoned to meet at Constantinople could scarcely have regarded itself as possessing Ecumenical authority; whilst in the West it certainly was not regarded in this light before the Sixth Century. Nevertheless the honours of Ecumenicity were ultimately awarded to it by the whole Church, because it completes the series of Great Councils by which the Doctrine of the Deity of the Holy Spirit was affirmed; and in fact it expressed the final judgment of the Catholic Church upon the Macedonian controversy. Its first Canon anathematises the Semiarians or Pneumatomachi by name as well as the Eunomians or Anomœan Arians (cf. Dict. Biog. Art. Gregory of Nazianzus, by Dr. H. B. Swete).



## Oration XXVII.

### The First Theological Oration.

#### A Preliminary Discourse Against the Eunomians.

I. I am to speak against persons who pride themselves on their eloquence; so, to begin with a text of Scripture, “Behold, I am against thee, O thou proud one,”<sup>3382</sup> not only in thy system of teaching, but also in thy hearing, and in thy tone of mind. For there are certain persons who have not only their ears<sup>3383</sup> and their tongues, but even, as I now perceive, their hands too, itching for our words; who delight in profane babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called,<sup>3384</sup> and strifes about words, which tend to no profit; for so Paul, the Preacher and Establisher of the “Word cut short,”<sup>3385</sup> the disciple and teacher of the Fishermen,<sup>3386</sup> calls all that is excessive or superfluous in discourse. But as to those to whom we refer, would that they, whose tongue is so voluble and clever in applying itself to noble and approved language, would likewise pay some attention to actions. For then perhaps in a little while they would become less sophistical, and less absurd and strange acrobats of words, if I may use a ridiculous expression about a ridiculous subject.

II. But since they neglect every path of righteousness, and look only to this one point, namely, which of the propositions submitted to them they shall bind or loose, (like those persons who in the theatres perform wrestling matches in public, but not that kind of wrestling in which the victory is won according to the rules of the sport, but a kind to deceive the eyes of those who are ignorant in such matters, and to catch applause), and every marketplace must buzz with their talking; and every dinner party be worried to death with silly talk and boredom; and every festival be made unfestive and full of dejection, and every occasion of mourning be consoled by a greater calamity<sup>3387</sup>—their questions—and all the women’s apartments accustomed to simplicity be thrown into confusion and be robbed of its flower of modesty by the torrent of their words...since, I say this is so, the evil is intolerable and not to be borne, and our Great Mystery is in danger of being made a thing of little mo-

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3382 [Jer. i. 31.](#)

3383 [2 Tim. iv. 3.](#)

3384 [Ib. ii. 16.](#)

3385 [Rom. ix. 28.](#)

3386 S. Paul is called a *disciple of the fishermen*, as having been in some sense their follower (though in fact he was never a literal disciple of any of them); and their *teacher* as having taught such Successors of the Apostles as SS. Timothy and Titus.

3387 i.e. be thrown into the shade by something more serious which caused them by comparison to be scarcely felt any longer.

ment. Well then, let these spies<sup>3388</sup> bear with us, moved as we are with fatherly compassion, and as holy Jeremiah says, torn in our hearts;<sup>3389</sup> let them bear with us so far as not to give a savage reception to our discourse upon this subject; and let them, if indeed they can, restrain their tongues for a short while and lend us their ears. However that may be, you shall at any rate suffer no loss. For either we shall have spoken in the ears of them that will hear,<sup>3390</sup> and our words will bear some fruit, namely an advantage to you (since the Sower soweth the Word<sup>3391</sup> upon every kind of mind; and the good and fertile bears fruit), or else you will depart despising this discourse of ours as you have despised others, and having drawn from it further material for gainsaying and railing at us, upon which to feast yourselves yet more.

And you must not be astonished if I speak a language which is strange to you and contrary to your custom, who profess to know everything and to teach everything in a too impetuous and generous manner...not to pain you by saying ignorant and rash.

III. Not to every one, my friends, does it belong to philosophize about God; not to every one; the Subject is not so cheap and low; and I will add, not before every audience, nor at all times, nor on all points; but on certain occasions, and before certain persons, and within certain limits.

Not to all men, because it is permitted only to those who have been examined, and are passed masters in meditation, and who have been previously purified in soul and body, or at the very least are being purified. For the impure to touch the pure is, we may safely say, not safe, just as it is unsafe to fix weak eyes upon the sun's rays. And what is the permitted occasion? It is when we are free from all external defilement or disturbance, and when that which rules within us is not confused with vexatious or erring images; like persons mixing up good writing with bad, or filth with the sweet odours of unguents. For it is necessary to be truly at leisure to know God; and when we can get a convenient season, to discern the straight road of the things divine. And who are the permitted persons? They to whom the subject is of real concern, and not they who make it a matter of pleasant gossip, like any other thing, after the races, or the theatre, or a concert, or a dinner, or still lower employments. To such men as these, idle jests and pretty contradictions about these subjects are a part of their amusement.

IV. Next, on what subjects and to what extent may we philosophize? On matters within our reach, and to such an extent as the mental power and grasp of our audience may

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3388 κατάσκοποι quasi ψευδεπίσκοποι.

3389 [Jer. iv. 19.](#)

3390 [Ecclus. xxv. 9.](#)

3391 [S. Mark iv. 3 and 14.](#) "He that soweth the Word soweth upon," etc. So Billius and the Benedictines, but the rendering in the text seems preferable.

extend. No further, lest, as excessively loud sounds injure the hearing, or excess of food the body, or, if you will, as excessive burdens beyond the strength injure those who bear them, or excessive rains the earth; so these too, being pressed down and overweighted by the stiffness, if I may use the expression, of the arguments should suffer loss even in respect of the strength they originally possessed.<sup>3392</sup>

V. Now, I am not saying that it is not needful to remember God at all times;...I must not be misunderstood, or I shall be having these nimble and quick people down upon me again. For we ought to think of God even more often than we draw our breath; and if the expression is permissible, we ought to do nothing else. Yea, I am one of those who entirely approve that Word which bids us meditate day and night,<sup>3393</sup> and tell at eventide and morning and noon day,<sup>3394</sup> and praise the Lord at every time;<sup>3395</sup> or, to use Moses' words, whether a man lie down, or rise up, or walk by the way, or whatever else he be doing<sup>3396</sup>—and by this recollection we are to be moulded to purity. So that it is not the continual remembrance of God that I would hinder, but only the talking about God; nor even that as in itself wrong, but only when unseasonable; nor all teaching, but only want of moderation. As of even honey repletion and satiety, though it be of honey, produce vomiting;<sup>3397</sup> and, as Solomon says and I think, there is a time for every thing,<sup>3398</sup> and that which is good ceases to be good if it be not done in a good way; just as a flower is quite out of season in winter, and just as a man's dress does not become a woman, nor a woman's a man; and as geometry is out of place in mourning, or tears at a carousal; shall we in this instance alone disregard the proper time, in a matter in which most of all due season should be respected? Surely not, my friends and brethren (for I will still call you Brethren, though you do not behave like brothers). Let us not think so nor yet, like hot tempered and hard mouthed horses, throwing off our rider Reason, and casting away Reverence, that keeps us within due limits, run far away from the turning point,<sup>3399</sup> but let us philosophize within our proper bounds, and not

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3392 i.e. Should not only fail to be strengthened thereby, but be actually weakened, through their inability to understand the argument. A bad defence weakens a good cause.

3393 [Ps. i. 2.](#)

3394 [Ps. lv. 17.](#)

3395 [Ps. xxxiv. 1.](#)

3396 [Deut. vi. 7.](#)

3397 [Prov. xxv. 16.](#)

3398 [Eccles. iii. 1.](#)

3399 The course of the chariot races in the Greek Games was round the Hippodrome a certain number of times. To facilitate this arrangement, a party wall was built down the middle, and at either end of it certain posts were set up called *ύόσσαι*, or in Latin *Metæ*, round which the cars were to turn. The object of the charioteers was to turn round these as close as possible, to save distance; and to do this well it was necessary to have the horses under perfect control, as well as perfectly trained, to make the semicircle at full gallop almost on the axis

be carried away into Egypt, nor be swept down into Assyria<sup>3400</sup>, nor sing the Lord's song in a strange land, by which I mean before any kind of audience, strangers or kindred, hostile or friendly, kindly or the reverse, who watch what we do with over great care, and would like the spark of what is wrong in us to become a flame, and secretly kindle and fan it and raise it to heaven with their breath and make it higher than the Babylonian flame which burnt up every thing around it. For since their strength lies not in their own dogmas, they hunt for it in our weak points. And therefore they apply themselves to our—shall I say “misfortunes” or “failings”?—like flies to wounds. But let us at least be no longer ignorant of ourselves, or pay too little attention to the due order in these matters. And if it be impossible to put an end to the existing hostility, let us at least agree upon this, that we will utter Mysteries under our breath, and holy things in a holy manner, and we will not cast to ears profane that which may not be uttered, nor give evidence that we possess less gravity than those who worship demons, and serve shameful fables and deeds; for they would sooner give their blood to the uninitiated than certain words. But let us recognize that as in dress and diet and laughter and demeanour there is a certain decorum, so there is also in speech and silence; since among so many titles and powers of God, we pay the highest honour to The Word. Let even our disputings then be kept within bounds.

VI. Why should a man who is a hostile listener to such words be allowed to hear about the Generation of God, or his creation, or how God was made out of things which had no existence, or of section and analysis and division?<sup>3401</sup> Why do we make our accusers judges? Why do we put swords into the hands of our enemies? How, thinkest thou, or with what temper, will the arguments about such subjects be received by one who approves of adulteries, and corruption of children, and who worships the passions and cannot conceive of aught higher than the body...who till very lately set up gods for himself, and gods too who were noted for the vilest deeds? Will it not first be from a material standpoint, shamefully and ignorantly, and in the sense to which he has been accustomed? Will he not make thy Theology a defence for his own gods and passions? For if we ourselves wantonly misuse these words,<sup>3402</sup> it will be a long time before we shall persuade them to accept our philosophy. And if they are in their own persons inventors of evil things, how should they refrain from grasping at such things when offered to them? Such results come to us from mutual



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of the car. The horses that got out of hand and galloped wildly round a large circle would almost certainly lose distance enough to lose the race, while the driver would be laughed at for his unskilfulness.

3400 [Dan. iii. 12.](#)

3401 The allusion is to the Arian and Eunomian habit of gossiping about the most sacred subjects in every sort of place or company or time, in order to promote their heresy.

3402 Such expressions as Generation and the like would certainly be understood in a material sense by the heathen; and so would place an unnecessary stumbling-block in the way of their conversion.

contest. Such results follow to those who fight for the Word beyond what the Word approves; they are behaving like mad people, who set their own house on fire, or tear their own children, or disavow their own parents, taking them for strangers.

VII. But when we have put away from the conversation those who are strangers to it, and sent the great legion<sup>3403</sup> on its way to the abyss into the herd of swine, the next thing is to look to ourselves, and polish our theological self to beauty like a statue. The first point to be considered is—What is this great rivalry of speech and endless talking? What is this new disease of insatiability? Why have we tied our hands and armed our tongues? We do not praise either hospitality, or brotherly love, or conjugal affection, or virginity; nor do we admire liberality to the poor, or the chanting of Psalms, or nightlong vigils,<sup>3404</sup> or tears. We do not keep under the body by fasting, or go forth to God by prayer; nor do we subject the worse to the better—I mean the dust to the spirit—as they would do who form a just judgment of our composite nature; we do not make our life a preparation for death; nor do we make ourselves masters of our passions, mindful of our heavenly nobility; nor tame our anger when it swells and rages, nor our pride that bringeth to a fall, nor unreasonable grief, nor unchastened pleasure, nor meretricious laughter, nor undisciplined eyes, nor insatiable ears, nor excessive talk, nor absurd thoughts, nor aught of the occasions which the Evil One gets against us from sources within ourselves; bringing upon us the death that comes through the windows,<sup>3405</sup> as Holy Scripture saith; that is, through the senses. Nay we do the very opposite, and have given liberty to the passions of others, as kings give releases from service in honour of a victory, only on condition that they incline to our side, and make their assault upon God more boldly, or more impiously. And we give them an evil reward for a thing which is not good, license of tongue for their impiety.

VIII. And yet, O talkative Dialectician, I will ask thee one small question,<sup>3406</sup> and answer thou me, as He saith to Job, Who through whirlwind and cloud giveth Divine admonitions.<sup>3407</sup> Are there many mansions in God's House, as thou hast heard, or only one? Of course you will admit that there are many, and not only one. Now, are they all to be filled, or only some, and others not; so that some will be left empty, and will have been prepared to no purpose? Of course all will be filled, for nothing can be in vain which has been done by God. And can you tell me what you will consider this Mansion to be? Is it the rest and glory which is in store There for the Blessed, or something else?—No, not anything else.

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3403 [Luke viii. 31.](#)

3404 S. John Chrysostom, consecrated Archbishop of Constantinople in 397, incurred much unpopularity among his clergy by insisting on the revival of the Night Hours of prayer.

3405 [Jer. ix. 21.](#)

3406 [Job xxxviii. 3.](#)

3407 [Job xxxviii. 1.](#)

Since then we are agreed upon this point, let us further examine another also. Is there any thing that procures these Mansions, as I think there is; or is there nothing?—Certainly there is—What is it? Is it not that there are various modes of conduct, and various purposes, one leading one way, another another way, according to the proportion of faith, and these we call Ways? Must we, then, travel all, or some of these Ways...the same individual along them all, if that be possible; or, if not, along as many as may be; or else along some of them? And even if this may not be, it would still be a great thing, at least as it appears to me, to travel excellently along even one.—“You are right in your conception.”—What then when you hear there is but One way, and that a narrow one,<sup>3408</sup> does the word seem to you to shew? That there is but one on account of its excellence. For it is but one, even though it be split into many parts. And narrow because of its difficulties, and because it is trodden by few in comparison with the multitude of the adversaries, and of those who travel along the road of wickedness. “So I think too.” Well, then, my good friend, since this is so, why do you, as though condemning our doctrine for a certain poverty, rush headlong down that one which leads through what you call arguments and speculations, but I frivolities and quackeries? Let Paul reprove you with those bitter reproaches, in which, after his list of the Gifts of Grace, he says, Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? etc.<sup>3409</sup>

IX. But, be it so. Lofty thou art, even beyond the lofty, even above the clouds, if thou wilt, a spectator of things invisible, a hearer of things unspeakable; one who hast ascended after Elias, and who after Moses hast been deemed worthy of the Vision of God, and after Paul hast been taken up into heaven; why dost thou mould the rest of thy fellows in one day into Saints, and ordain them Theologians, and as it were breathe into them instruction, and make them many councils of ignorant oracles? Why dost thou entangle those who are weaker in thy spider’s web, if it were something great and wise? Why dost thou stir up wasps’ nests against the Faith? Why dost thou suddenly spring a flood of dialectics upon us, as the fables of old did the Giants? Why hast thou collected all that is frivolous and unmanly among men, like a rabble, into one torrent, and having made them more effeminate by flattery, fashioned a new workshop, cleverly making a harvest for thyself out of their want of understanding? Dost thou deny that this is so, and are the other matters of no account to thee? Must thy tongue rule at any cost, and canst thou not restrain the birthpang of thy speech? Thou mayest find many other honourable subjects for discussion. To these turn this disease of thine with some advantage. Attack the silence of Pythagoras,<sup>3410</sup> and the

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3408 [Matt. vii. 14.](#)

3409 [1 Cor. xii. 29.](#)

3410 The disciples of Pythagoras were made to keep silence absolutely for five years as a qualification for initiation into the mysteries of his order. Further, they were bidden to abstain from eating beans, as these were said to be one receptacle of human souls in the course of their peregrinations; and when asked for proof of their peculiar doctrines, contented themselves with the reply, “αὐτὸς ἔθα” “*the master said so.*”

Orphic beans, and the novel brag about “The Master said.” Attack the ideas of Plato,<sup>3411</sup> and the transmigrations and courses of our souls, and the reminiscences, and the unlovely loves of the soul for lovely bodies. Attack the atheism of Epicurus,<sup>3412</sup> and his atoms, and his unphilosophic pleasure; or Aristotle’s petty Providence, and his artificial system, and his discourses about the mortality of the soul, and the humanitarianism of his doctrine. Attack the superciliousness of the Stoa,<sup>3413</sup> or the greed and vulgarity of the Cynic.<sup>3414</sup> Attack the “Void and Full” (what nonsense), and all the details about the gods and the sacrifices and the idols and demons, whether beneficent or malignant, and all the tricks that people play with divination, evoking of gods, or of souls, and the power of the stars. And if these things seem to thee unworthy of discussion as petty and already often confuted, and thou wilt keep to thy line, and seek the satisfaction of thy ambition in it; then here too I will provide thee with broad paths. Philosophize about the world or worlds; about matter; about soul; about natures endowed with reason, good or bad; about resurrection, about judgment, about reward, or the Sufferings of Christ. For in these subjects to hit the mark is not useless, and to miss it is not dangerous. But with God we shall have converse, in this life only in a small degree; but a little later, it may be, more perfectly, in the Same, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory for ever. Amen.

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3411 Plato taught that all things that exist are copies of certain objective archetypal Forms, emanations from the Mind of God, which God copied in creation. He also taught a doctrine of transmigration of souls.

3412 Epicurus, an Athenian philosopher, of a materialistic type, taught that God had no existence, and that the world was made by a fortuitous concourse of innumerable atoms of matter, which are self-existent; and he placed the highest good in pleasure, which he defined as the absence of pain.

3413 The Stoa, a school of philosophers opposed to the Epicureans, took their name from a certain Colonnade at Athens, in which Zeno, their founder, used to teach. Their highest good consisted in the complete subdual of all feeling; and so they were not unnaturally characterized by a haughty affectation of indifference.

3414 The Cynics, so called from their snarling way, were a school founded by Antisthenes. They professed to despise everything human.

## Oration XXVIII.

### The Second Theological Oration.

I. In the former Discourse we laid down clearly with respect to the Theologian, both what sort of character he ought to bear, and on what kind of subject he may philosophize, and when, and to what extent. We saw that he ought to be, as far as may be, pure, in order that light may be apprehended by light; and that he ought to consort with serious men, in order that his word be not fruitless through falling on an unfruitful soil; and that the suitable season is when we have a calm within from the whirl of outward things; so as not like madmen<sup>3415</sup> to lose our breath; and that the extent to which we may go is that to which we have ourselves advanced, or to which we are advancing. Since then these things are so, and we have broken up for ourselves the fallows of Divinity<sup>3416</sup>, so as not to sow upon thorns,<sup>3417</sup> and have made plain the face of the ground,<sup>3418</sup> being moulded and moulding others by Holy Scripture...let us now enter upon Theological questions, setting at the head thereof the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, of Whom we are to treat; that the Father may be well pleased, and the Son may help us, and the Holy Ghost may inspire us; or rather that one illumination may come upon us from the One God, One in diversity, diverse in Unity, wherein is a marvel.

II. Now when I go up eagerly into the Mount<sup>3419</sup>—or, to use a truer expression, when I both eagerly long, and at the same time am afraid (the one through my hope and the other through my weakness) to enter within the Cloud, and hold converse with God, for so God commands; if any be an Aaron, let him go up with me, and let him stand near, being ready, if it must be so, to remain outside the Cloud. But if any be a Nadab or an Abihu, or of the Order of the Elders, let him go up indeed, but let him stand afar off, according to the value of his purification. But if any be of the multitude, who are unworthy of this height of contemplation, if he be altogether impure let him not approach at all,<sup>3420</sup> for it would be dangerous to him; but if he be at least temporarily purified, let him remain below and listen to the Voice alone, and the trumpet,<sup>3421</sup> the bare words of piety, and let him see the Mountain smoking and lightening, a terror at once and a marvel to those who cannot get up. But if any is an evil and savage beast, and altogether incapable of taking in the subject matter of



3415 A marginal reading noted by the Benedictines gives “sobbing” or “panting,” which is a better sense.

3416 [Jerem. iv. 3.](#)

3417 [Matt. xiii. 7.](#)

3418 [Isa. xxviii. 25.](#)

3419 [Exod. xxiv. 1.](#)

3420 [Ib. xix. 14.](#)

3421 [Ib. xix. 16–18.](#)



Contemplation and Theology, let him not hurtfully and malignantly lurk in his den among the woods, to catch hold of some dogma or saying by a sudden spring, and to tear sound doctrine to pieces by his misrepresentations, but let him stand yet afar off and withdraw from the Mount, or he shall be stoned and crushed, and shall perish miserably in his wickedness. For to those who are like wild beasts true and sound discourses are stones. If he be a leopard let him die with his spots.<sup>3422</sup> If a ravening and roaring lion, seeking what he may devour<sup>3423</sup> of our souls or of our words; or a wild boar, trampling under foot the precious and translucent pearls of the Truth;<sup>3424</sup> or an Arabian<sup>3425</sup> and alien wolf, or one keener even than these in tricks of argument; or a fox, that is a treacherous and faithless soul, changing its shape according to circumstances or necessities, feeding on dead or putrid bodies, or on little vineyards<sup>3426</sup> when the large ones have escaped them; or any other carnivorous beast, rejected by the Law as unclean for food or enjoyment; our discourse must withdraw from such and be engraved on solid tables of stone, and that on both sides because the Law is partly visible, and partly hidden; the one part belonging to the mass who remain below, the other to the few who press upward into the Mount.

III. What is this that has happened to me, O friends, and initiates, and fellow-lovers of the truth? I was running to lay hold on God, and thus I went up into the Mount, and drew aside the curtain of the Cloud, and entered away from matter and material things, and as far as I could I withdrew within myself. And then when I looked up, I scarce saw the back parts of God;<sup>3427</sup> although I was sheltered by the Rock, the Word that was made flesh for us. And when I looked a little closer, I saw, not the First and unmingled Nature, known to Itself—to the Trinity, I mean; not That which abideth within the first<sup>3428</sup> veil, and is hidden by the Cherubim; but only that Nature, which at last even reaches to us. And that is, as far as I can learn, the Majesty, or as holy David calls it, the Glory<sup>3429</sup> which is manifested among the creatures, which It has produced and governs. For these are the Back Parts of God, which He leaves behind Him, as tokens of Himself<sup>3430</sup> like the shadows and reflection of

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3422 [Jer. xiii. 23.](#)

3423 [1 Pet. v. 8.](#)

3424 [Matt. vii. 6.](#)

3425 *Arabian:* So the LXX. renders the word which in A.V. [Jer. v. 6.](#) is translated “*of the evening,*” and in the Vulg. “*at evening.*” R.V. gives as an alternative, “*of the deserts.*”

3426 The LXX. in [Cant. xi. 15.](#) admits of this translation as well as of that followed by A.V.

3427 [Exod. xxxiii. 23.](#)

3428 This veil of the Mercy Seat, spoken of in [Exod. xxvi. 31.](#) signifies in Gregory’s sense the denial of contemplation of that Highest Nature.

3429 [Ps. viii. 1.](#)

3430 The Face of God signifies His Essence and Deity, which were before all worlds: His back parts are Creation and Providence, by which He reveals Himself.

the sun in the water, which shew the sun to our weak eyes, because we cannot look at the sun himself, for by his unmixed light he is too strong for our power of perception. In this way then shalt thou discourse of God; even wert thou a Moses and a god to Pharaoh;<sup>3431</sup> even wert thou caught up like Paul to the Third Heaven,<sup>3432</sup> and hadst heard unspeakable words; even wert thou raised above them both, and exalted to Angelic or Archangelic place and dignity. For though a thing be all heavenly, or above heaven, and far higher in nature and nearer to God than we, yet it is farther distant from God, and from the complete comprehension of His Nature, than it is lifted above our complex and lowly and earthward sinking composition.

IV. Therefore we must begin again thus. It is difficult to conceive God but to define Him in words is an impossibility, as one of the Greek teachers of Divinity<sup>3433</sup> taught, not unskilfully, as it appears to me; with the intention that he might be thought to have apprehended Him; in that he says it is a hard thing to do; and yet may escape being convicted of ignorance because of the impossibility of giving expression to the apprehension. But in my opinion it is impossible to express Him, and yet more impossible to conceive Him. For that which may be conceived may perhaps be made clear by language, if not fairly well, at any rate imperfectly, to any one who is not quite deprived of his hearing, or slothful of understanding. But to comprehend the whole of so great a Subject as this is quite impossible and impracticable, not merely to the utterly careless and ignorant, but even to those who are highly exalted, and who love God, and in like manner to every created nature; seeing that the darkness of this world and the thick covering of the flesh is an obstacle to the full understanding of the truth. I do not know whether it is the same with the higher natures and purer Intelligences<sup>3434</sup> which because of their nearness to God, and because they are illumined with all His Light, may possibly see, if not the whole, at any rate more perfectly and distinctly than we do; some perhaps more, some less than others, in proportion to their rank.

V. But enough has been said on this point. As to what concerns us, it is not only the Peace of God<sup>3435</sup> which passeth all understanding and knowledge, nor only the things which

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3431 [Exod. iv. 2.](#)

3432 [2 Cor. xii. 2.](#)

3433 Plato, *Tim.*, 28 E.

3434 No one doubts, say the Benedictine Editors, that the Angels do see God, and that men, too, will see Him, when they attain to Eternal Bliss. S. Thomas (*Summa I. qu. xii. 4*) argues that the Angels have cognition of God's Essence not by nature but by grace: but yet (*Ib. qu. lvi. 3*) that they have by nature a certain cognition of Him, as represented and as it were mirrored in their own essence; though not the actual vision of His Essence. The Angel, he says again (*Ib. qu. lxiv. 1*) has a higher cognition of God than man has, on account of the perfection of his intellect; and this cognition remains even in the fallen Angels.

3435 [Phil. iv. 7.](#)

God hath stored up in promise for the righteous, which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor mind conceived”<sup>3436</sup> except in a very small degree, nor the accurate knowledge of the Creation. For even of this I would have you know that you have only a shadow when you hear the words, “I will consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars,”<sup>3437</sup> and the settled order therein; not as if he were considering them now, but as destined to do so hereafter. But far before them is That nature Which is above them, and out of which they spring, the Incomprehensible and Illimitable—not, I mean, as to the fact of His being, but as to Its nature. For our preaching is not empty, nor our Faith vain,<sup>3438</sup> nor is this the doctrine we proclaim; for we would not have you take our candid statement as a starting point for a quibbling denial of God, or of arrogance on account of our confession of ignorance. For it is one thing to be persuaded of the existence of a thing, and quite another to know what it is.

VI. Now our very eyes and the Law of Nature teach us that God exists and that He is the Efficient and Maintaining Cause of all things: our eyes, because they fall on visible objects, and see them in beautiful stability and progress, immovably moving and revolving if I may so say; natural Law, because through these visible things and their order, it reasons back to their Author. For how could this Universe have come into being or been put together, unless God had called it into existence, and held it together? For every one who sees a beautifully made lute, and considers the skill with which it has been fitted together and arranged, or who hears its melody, would think of none but the lutemaker, or the luteplayer, and would recur to him in mind, though he might not know him by sight. And thus to us also is manifested That which made and moves and preserves all created things, even though He be not comprehended by the mind. And very wanting in sense is he who will not willingly go thus far in following natural proofs; but not even this which we have fancied or formed, or which reason has sketched for us, proves the existence of a God. But if any one has got even to some extent a comprehension of this, how is God’s Being to be demonstrated? Who ever reached this extremity of wisdom? Who was ever deemed worthy of so great a gift? Who has opened the mouth of his mind and drawn in the Spirit,<sup>3439</sup> so as by Him that searcheth all things, yea the deep thing of God,<sup>3440</sup> to take in God, and no longer to need progress, since he already possesses the Extreme Object of desire, and That to which all the social life and all the intelligence of the best men press forward?

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3436 [Isa. lxiv. 4](#); [1 Cor. ii. 9](#).

3437 [Ps. viii. 3](#).

3438 [1 Cor. xv. 19](#).

3439 [Ps. cxix. 21](#).

3440 [1 Cor. ii. 10](#).

VII. For what will you conceive the Deity to be, if you rely upon all the approximations of reason? Or to what will reason carry you, O most philosophic of men and best of Theologians, who boast of your familiarity with the Unlimited? Is He a body? How then is He the Infinite and Limitless, and formless, and intangible, and invisible? or are these attributes of a body? What arrogance for such is not the nature of a body! Or will you say that He has a body, but not these attributes? O stupidity, that a Deity should possess nothing more than we do. For how is He an object of worship if He be circumscribed? Or how shall He escape being made of elements, and therefore subject to be resolved into them again, or even altogether dissolved? For every compound is a starting point of strife, and strife of separation, and separation of dissolution. But dissolution is altogether foreign to God and to the First Nature. Therefore there can be no separation, that there may be no dissolution, and no strife that there may be no separation, and no composition that there may be no strife. Thus also there must be no body, that there may be no composition, and so the argument is established by going back from last to first.

VIII. And how shall we preserve the truth that God pervades all things and fills all, as it is written “Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord,”<sup>3441</sup> and “The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world,”<sup>3442</sup> if God partly contains and partly is contained? For either He will occupy an empty Universe, and so all things will have vanished for us, with this result, that we shall have insulted God by making Him a body, and by robbing Him of all things which He has made; or else He will be a body contained in other bodies, which is impossible; or He will be enfolded in them, or contrasted with them, as liquids are mixed, and one divides and is divided by another;—a view which is more absurd and anile than even the atoms of Epicurus<sup>3443</sup> and so this argument concerning the body will fall through, and have no body and no solid basis at all. But if we are to assert that He is immaterial (as for example that Fifth Element which some<sup>3444</sup> have imagined), and that He is carried round in the circular movement...let us assume that He is immaterial, and that He is the Fifth Element; and, if they please, let Him be also bodiless in accordance with the independent drift and arrangement of their argument; for I will not at present differ with them on this point; in what respect then will He be one of those things which are in movement and agitation, to say nothing of the insult involved in making the Creator subject to the same movement as the creatures, and Him That carries all (if they will allow even this) one with those whom He carries.

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3441 [Jer. xxiii. 24.](#)

3442 [Wisd. i. 7.](#)

3443 Epicurus taught that Matter is eternal, and consists of an indefinite number of Atoms or indivisible units, floating about in space, and mutually attracting and repelling each other; and that all that exists is due to some chance meeting and coalition of these atoms.

3444 This is a speculation of Aristotle, who imagined a Fifth Element, consisting of formless matter.

Again, what is the force that moves your Fifth Element, and what is it that moves all things, and what moves that, and what is the force that moves that? And so on *ad infinitum*. And how can He help being altogether contained in space if He be subject to motion? But if they assert that He is something other than this Fifth Element; suppose it is an angelic nature that they attribute to Him, how will they shew that Angels are corporeal, or what sort of bodies they have? And how far in that case could God, to Whom the Angels minister, be superior to the Angels? And if He is above them, there is again brought in an irrational swarm of bodies, and a depth of nonsense, that has no possible basis to stand upon.

IX. And thus we see that God is not a body. For no inspired teacher has yet asserted or admitted such a notion, nor has the sentence of our own Court allowed it. Nothing then remains but to conceive of Him as incorporeal. But this term Incorporeal, though granted, does not yet set before us—or contain within itself His Essence, any more than Unbegotten, or Unoriginate, or Unchanging, or Incorruptible, or any other predicate which is used concerning God or in reference to Him. For what effect is produced upon His Being or Substance<sup>3445</sup> by His having no beginning, and being incapable of change or limitation? Nay, the whole question of His Being is still left for the further consideration and exposition of him who truly has the mind of God and is advanced in contemplation. For just as to say “It is a body,” or “It was begotten,” is not sufficient to present clearly to the mind the various objects of which these predicates are used, but you must also express the subject of which you use them, if you would present the object of your thought clearly and adequately (for every one of these predicates, corporeal, begotten, mortal, may be used of a man, or a cow, or a horse). Just so he who is eagerly pursuing the nature of the Self-existent will not stop at saying what He is *not*, but must go on beyond what He is not, and say what He *is*; inasmuch as it is easier to take in some single point than to go on disowning point after point in endless detail, in order, both by the elimination of negatives and the assertion of positives to arrive at a comprehension of this subject.

But a man who states what God is not without going on to say what He is, acts much in the same way as one would who when asked how many twice five make, should answer, “Not two, nor three, nor four, nor five, nor twenty, nor thirty, nor in short any number below ten, nor any multiple of ten;” but would not answer “ten,” nor settle the mind of his questioner upon the firm ground of the answer. For it is much easier, and more concise to shew what a thing is not from what it is, than to demonstrate what it is by stripping it of what it is not. And this surely is evident to every one.



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3445 Petavius (De Trin. IV. ii. 7) notes that ὑπόστασις seems used here of the Essence and Nature common to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

X. Now since we have ascertained that God is incorporeal, let us proceed a little further with our examination. Is He Nowhere or Somewhere. For if He is Nowhere,<sup>3446</sup> then some person of a very inquiring turn of mind might ask, How is it then that He can even exist? For if the non-existent is nowhere, then that which is nowhere is also perhaps non-existent. But if He is Somewhere, He must be either in the Universe, or above the Universe. And if He is *in* the Universe, then He must be either in some part or in the whole. If in some part, then He will be circumscribed by that part which is less than Himself; but if everywhere, then by one which is further and greater—I mean the Universal, which contains the Particular; if the Universe is to be contained by the Universe, and no place is to be free from circumscription. This follows if He is contained in the Universe. And besides, where was He before the Universe was created, for this is a point of no little difficulty. But if He is *above* the Universe, is there nothing to distinguish this from the Universe, and where is this *above* situated? And how could this Transcendence and that which is transcended be distinguished in thought, if there is not a limit to divide and define them? Is it not necessary that there shall be some mean to mark off the Universe from that which is above the Universe? And what could this be but Place, which we have already rejected? For I have not yet brought forward the point that God would be altogether circumscribed, if He were even comprehensible in thought: for comprehension is one form of circumscription.

XI. Now, why have I gone into all this, perhaps too minutely for most people to listen to, and in accordance with the present manner of discourse, which despises noble simplicity, and has introduced a crooked and intricate<sup>3447</sup> style? That the tree may be known by its fruits;<sup>3448</sup> I mean, that the darkness which is at work in such teaching may be known by the obscurity of the arguments. For my purpose in doing so was, not to get credit for myself for astonishing utterances, or excessive wisdom, through tying knots and solving difficulties (this was the great miraculous gift of Daniel),<sup>3449</sup> but to make clear the point at which my argument has aimed from the first. And what was this? That the Divine Nature cannot be apprehended by human reason, and that we cannot even represent to ourselves all its greatness. And this not out of envy, for envy is far from the Divine Nature, which is passionless, and only good and Lord of all;<sup>3450</sup> especially envy of that which is the most honour-

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3446 Nowhere is in this passage used in an ambiguous sense. As asserted of God, it means that His being is in no way limited by place: not that He has no existence in place, for He is everywhere, and He transcends all place. Before the creation of the Universe He existed, and He created Place, which therefore cannot be the seat of His Being.

3447 v. 1. *Affected*. The allusion is especially to the ostentatious dialectics and tedious arguments of Aëtius and his followers, Eunomius and others.

3448 [Luke vi. 44.](#)

3449 cf. [Dan. v. 12.](#)

3450 Plato, *Tim.*, 10.

able<sup>3451</sup> of all His creatures. For what does the Word prefer to the rational and speaking creatures? Why, even their very existence is a proof of His supreme goodness. Nor yet is this incomprehensibility for the sake of His own glory and honour, Who is full,<sup>3452</sup> as if His possession of His glory and majesty depended upon the impossibility of approaching Him. For it is utterly sophistical and foreign to the character, I will not say of God, but of any moderately good man, who has any right ideas about himself, to seek his own supremacy by throwing a hindrance in the way of another.

XII. But whether there be other causes for it also, let them see who are nearer God, and are eye witnesses and spectators of His unsearchable judgments;<sup>3453</sup> if there are any who are so eminent in virtue, and who walk in the paths of the Infinite, as the saying is. As far, however, as we have attained, who measure with our little measure things hard to be understood, perhaps one reason is to prevent us from too readily throwing away the possession because it was so easily come by. For people cling tightly to that which they acquire with labour; but that which they acquire easily they quickly throw away, because it can be easily recovered. And so it is turned into a blessing, at least to all men who are sensible, that this blessing is not too easy. Or perhaps it is in order that we may not share the fate of Lucifer, who fell, and in consequence of receiving the full light make our necks stiff against the Lord Almighty, and suffer a fall, of all things most pitiable, from the height we had attained. Or perhaps it may be to give a greater reward hereafter for their labour and glorious life to those who have here been purified, and have exercised long patience in respect of that which they desired.

Therefore this darkness of the body has been placed between us and God, like the cloud of old between the Egyptians and the Hebrews;<sup>3454</sup> and this is perhaps what is meant by “He made darkness His secret place,”<sup>3455</sup> namely our dulness, through which few can see even a little. But as to this point, let those discuss it whose business it is; and let them ascend as far as possible in the examination. To us who are (as Jeremiah saith), “prisoners of the earth,”<sup>3456</sup> and covered with the denseness of carnal nature, this at all events is known, that as it is impossible for a man to step over his own shadow, however fast he may move (for the shadow will always move on as fast as it is being overtaken) or, as it is impossible for the eye to draw near to visible objects apart from the intervening air and light, or for a fish to glide about outside of the waters; so it is quite impracticable for those who are in the body

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3451 v. 1. Most Akin to Himself. Combefis.

3452 [Isa. i. 11.](#)

3453 [Rom. xi. 33.](#)

3454 [Exod. xiv. 20.](#)

3455 [Ps. xviii. 11.](#)

3456 [Lam. iii. 34.](#)

to be conversant with objects of pure thought apart altogether from bodily objects. For something in our own environment is ever creeping in, even when the mind has most fully detached itself from the visible, and collected itself, and is attempting to apply itself to those invisible things which are akin to itself.

XIII. This will be made clear to you as follows:—Are not Spirit, and Fire, and Light, Love, and Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Mind and Reason, and the like, the names of the First Nature? What then? Can you conceive of Spirit apart from motion and diffusion; or of Fire without its fuel and its upward motion, and its proper colour and form? Or of Light unmingled with air, and loosed from that which is as it were its father and source? And how do you conceive of a mind? Is it not that which is inherent in some person not itself, and are not its movements thoughts, silent or uttered? And Reason...what else can you think it than that which is either silent within ourselves, or else outpoured (for I shrink from saying loosed)? And if you conceive of Wisdom, what is it but the habit of mind which you know as such, and which is concerned with contemplations either divine or human? And Justice and Love, are they not praiseworthy dispositions, the one opposed to injustice, the other to hate, and at one time intensifying themselves, at another relaxed, now taking possession of us, now leaving us alone, and in a word, making us what we are, and changing us as colours do bodies? Or are we rather to leave all these things, and to look at the Deity absolutely, as best we can, collecting a fragmentary perception of It from Its images? What then is this subtle thing, which is of these, and yet is not these, or how can that Unity which is in its Nature uncomposite and incomparable, still be all of these, and each one of them perfectly? Thus our mind faints to transcend corporeal things, and to consort with the Incorporeal, stripped of all clothing of corporeal ideas, as long as it has to look with its inherent weakness at things above its strength. For every rational nature longs for God and for the First Cause, but is unable to grasp Him, for the reasons I have mentioned. Faint therefore with the desire, and as it were restive and impatient of the disability, it tries a second course, either to look at visible things, and out of some of them to make a god... (a poor contrivance, for in what respect and to what extent can that which is seen be higher and more godlike than that which sees, that this should worship that?) or else through the beauty and order of visible things to attain to that which is above sight; but not to suffer the loss of God through the magnificence of visible things.

XIV. From this cause some have made a god of the Sun, others of the Moon, others of the host of Stars, others of heaven itself with all its hosts, to which they have attributed the guiding of the Universe, according to the quality or quantity of their movement. Others again of the Elements, earth, air, water, fire, because of their useful nature, since without them human life cannot possibly exist. Others again have worshipped any chance visible objects, setting up the most beautiful of what they saw as their gods. And there are those who worship pictures and images, at first indeed of their own ancestors—at least, this is the



case with the more affectionate and sensual—and honour the departed with memorials; and afterwards even those of strangers are worshipped by men of a later generation separated from them by a long interval; through ignorance of the First Nature, and following the traditional honour as lawful and necessary; for usage when confirmed by time was held to be Law. And I think that some who were courtiers of arbitrary power and extolled bodily strength and admired beauty, made a god in time out of him whom they honoured, perhaps getting hold of some fable to help on their imposture.

XV. And those of them who were most subject to passion deified their passions, or honoured them among their gods; Anger and Blood-thirstiness, Lust and Drunkenness, and every similar wickedness; and made out of this an ignoble and unjust excuse for their own sins. And some they left on earth, and some they hid beneath the earth (this being the only sign of wisdom about them), and some they raised to heaven.<sup>3457</sup> O ridiculous distribution of inheritance! Then they gave to each of these concepts the name of some god or demon, by the authority and private judgment of their error, and set up statues whose costliness is a snare, and thought to honour them with blood and the steam of sacrifices, and sometimes even by most shameful actions, frenzies and manslaughter. For such honours were the fitting due of such gods. And before now men have insulted themselves by worshipping monsters, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things,<sup>3458</sup> and of the very vilest and most absurd, and have made an offering to them of the glory of God; so that it is not easy to decide whether we ought most to despise the worshippers or the objects of their worship. Probably the worshippers are far the most contemptible, for though they are of a rational nature, and have received grace from God, they have set up the worse as the better. And this was the trick of the Evil One, who abused good to an evil purpose, as in most of his evil deeds. For he laid hold of their desire in its wandering in search of God, in order to distort to himself<sup>3459</sup> the power, and steal the desire, leading it by the hand, like a blind man asking a road; and he hurled down and scattered some in one direction and some in another, into one pit of death and destruction.

XVI. This was their course. But reason receiving us in our desire for God, and in our sense of the impossibility of being without a leader and guide, and then making us apply ourselves to things visible and meeting with the things which have been since the beginning, doth not stay its course even here. For it was not the part of Wisdom to grant the sovereignty

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3457 Referring to the mythical partition of the Universe, which gave heaven to Zeus, the sea to Poseidon, and the infernal regions to Aidoneus.

3458 [Rom. i. 23.](#)

3459 It was a very general belief in the early Church that the gods whom the heathen worshipped were in reality actual evil spirits; and this belief is certainly supported by S. Paul's argument about εἰδωλόθυτον in [1 Cor. x. 19–21.](#)

to things which are, as observation tells us, of equal rank. By these then it leads to that which is above these, and by which being is given to these. For what is it which ordered things in heaven and things in earth, and those which pass through air, and those which live in water; or rather the things which were before these, heaven and earth, air and water? Who mingled these, and who distributed them? What is it that each has in common with the other, and their mutual dependence and agreement? For I commend the man, though he was a heathen, who said, What gave movement to these, and drives their ceaseless and unhindered motion? Is it not the Artificer of them Who implanted reason in them all, in accordance with which the Universe is moved and controlled? Is it not He who made them and brought them into being? For we cannot attribute such a power to the Accidental. For, suppose that its existence is accidental, to what will you let us ascribe its order? And if you like we will grant you this: to what then will you ascribe its preservation and protection in accordance with the terms of its first creation. Do these belong to the Accidental, or to something else? Surely not to the Accidental. And what can this Something Else be but God? Thus reason that proceeds from God, that is implanted in all from the beginning and is the first law in us, and is bound up in all, leads us up to God through visible things. Let us begin again, and reason this out.

XVII. What God is in nature and essence, no man ever yet has discovered or can discover. Whether it will ever be discovered is a question which he who will may examine and decide. In my opinion it will be discovered when that within us which is godlike and divine, I mean our mind and reason, shall have mingled with its Like, and the image shall have ascended to the Archetype, of which it has now the desire. And this I think is the solution of that vexed problem as to “We shall know even as we are known.”<sup>3460</sup> But in our present life all that comes to us is but a little effluence, and as it were a small effulgence from a great Light. So that if anyone has known God, or has had the testimony of Scripture to his knowledge of God, we are to understand such an one to have possessed a degree of knowledge which gave him the appearance of being more fully enlightened than another who did not enjoy the same degree of illumination; and this relative superiority is spoken of as if it were absolute knowledge, not because it is really such, but by comparison with the power of that other.

XVIII. Thus Enos “hoped to call upon the Name of the Lord.”<sup>3461</sup> Hope was that for which he is commended; and that, not that he should *know* God, but that he should call *upon* him. And Enoch was translated,<sup>3462</sup> but it is not yet clear whether it was because he

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3460 1 Cor. xiii. 12, but with a reading ἐπιγνώσεσθε, which is not in the New Testament.

3461 Gen. iv. 26. The verb has by some been taken as passive, and not middle, “hoped that the Name of the Lord would be called upon.”

3462 Ib. v. 24, Ecclus. xlix. 14.

already comprehended the Divine Nature, or in order that he might comprehend it. And Noah's<sup>3463</sup> glory was that he was pleasing to God; he who was entrusted with the saving of the whole world from the waters, or rather of the Seeds of the world, escaped the Deluge in a small Ark. And Abraham, great Patriarch though he was, was justified by faith,<sup>3464</sup> and offered a strange victim,<sup>3465</sup> the type of the Great Sacrifice. Yet he saw not God as God, but gave Him food as a man.<sup>3466</sup> He was approved because he worshipped as far as he comprehended.<sup>3467</sup> And Jacob dreamed of a lofty ladder and stair of Angels, and in a mystery anointed a pillar<sup>3468</sup>—perhaps to signify the Rock that was anointed for our sake—and gave to a place the name of The House of God<sup>3469</sup> in honour of Him whom he saw; and wrestled with God in human form; whatever this wrestling of God with man may mean...possibly it refers to the comparison of man's virtue with God's; and he bore on his body the marks of the wrestling, setting forth the defeat of the created nature; and for a reward of his reverence he received a change of his name; being named, instead of Jacob, Israel—that great and honourable name. Yet neither he nor any one on his behalf, unto this day, of all the Twelve Tribes who were his children, could boast that he comprehended the whole nature or the pure sight of God.

XIX. To Elias neither the strong wind, nor the fire, nor the earthquake, as you learn from the story,<sup>3470</sup> but a light breeze adumbrated the Presence of God, and not even this His Nature. And who was this Elias? The man whom a chariot of fire took up to heaven, signifying the superhuman excellency of the righteous man. And are you not amazed at Manoah the Judge of yore, and at Peter the disciple in later days; the one being unable to endure the sight even of one in whom was a representation of God; and saying, "We are undone, O wife, we have seen God;"<sup>3471</sup> speaking as though even a vision of God could not

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3463 [Gen. vi. 8.](#)

3464 [Ib. xviii. 18.](#)

3465 [Ib. xxviii. 2.](#)

3466 [Gen. xviii. 2.](#) Elias Cretensis sees in this occurrence a foreshadowing of the Incarnation; and also with many others, a revelation of the Trinity, in that Abraham saw Three and conversed with One.

3467 [Gen. xxxii. 28.](#)

3468 [Ib. ver. 28.](#)

3469 v. l. *The Form of God*, which would refer to the occasion cited below. The reading is grammatically easier, as an accusative is required; but in that case we might have expected the wrestling with the Angel to have been mentioned first, as the name Penuel was given by Jacob on the day following the night in which he wrestled, and received his own change of name. The Benedictines, while retaining *House* in text and version, express a preference for *Form*, because the subject of the argument is the Vision of God.

3470 [1 Kings xix. 11, 12.](#) LXX. has a Sound of a Light breeze.

3471 [Judg. xiii. 22.](#)

be grasped by human beings, let alone the Nature of God; and the other unable to endure the Presence of Christ in his boat and therefore bidding Him depart;<sup>3472</sup> and this though Peter was more zealous than the others for the knowledge of Christ, and received a blessing for this,<sup>3473</sup> and was entrusted with the greatest gifts. What would you say of Isaiah or Ezekiel, who was an eyewitness of very great mysteries, and of the other Prophets; for one of these saw the Lord of Sabaoth sitting on the Throne of glory,<sup>3474</sup> and encircled and praised and hidden by the sixwinged Seraphim, and was himself purged by the live coal, and equipped for his prophetic office. And the other describes the Cherubic Chariot<sup>3475</sup> of God, and the Throne upon them, and the Firmament over it, and Him that shewed Himself in the Firmament, and Voices, and Forces, and Deeds.<sup>3476</sup> And whether this was an appearance by day, only visible to Saints, or an unerring vision of the night, or an impression on the mind holding converse with the future as if it were the present; or some other ineffable form of prophecy, I cannot say; the God of the Prophets knoweth, and they know who are thus inspired. But neither these of whom I am speaking, nor any of their fellows ever stood before the Council<sup>3477</sup> and Essence of God, as it is written, or saw, or proclaimed the Nature of God.

XX. If it had been permitted to Paul to utter what the Third Heaven<sup>3478</sup> contained, and his own advance, or ascension, or assumption thither, perhaps we should know something more about God's Nature, if this was the mystery of the rapture. But since it was ineffable, we too will honour it by silence. Thus much we will hear Paul say about it, that we know in part and we prophesy in part.<sup>3479</sup> This and the like to this are the confessions of one who is not rude in knowledge,<sup>3480</sup> who threatens to give proof of Christ speaking in him, the

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3472 [Luke v. 8.](#)

3473 [Matt. xvi. 16, 17.](#)

3474 [Isa. vi. 1 sqq.](#)

3475 [Ezek. i. 4–28.](#)

3476 v. l. Orders, i.e. of angels.

3477 This is a quotation from the LXX. of [Jer. xxiii. 18](#), where for ὑποστήματι Aquila has ἀπορρήτω, and Symmachus ὁμιλίᾳ, (according to Trommius). ὑπόστημα properly means a Station of troops, and such is the meaning in the other two places where the word occurs in the LXX., viz.:—[2 Sam. xxiii. 14](#), and [1 Chron. xi. 16](#). The Hebrew word which it represents in this passage is one of frequent use, and means “a Council,” or, in a sense derived from this, Familiar Intercourse. In [Job xv. 8](#) it is rendered in A.V. The Secret of God, where the LXX. has σύνταγμα. The Vulgate in both cases has Concilium Dei; the Benedictines however render it Substance. A.V. has Counsel, and in marg. Secret; while R.V. reads Council, with no marginal alternative.

3478 [2 Cor. xii. 2.](#)

3479 [1 Cor. xiii. 9.](#)

3480 [2 Cor. xi. 6.](#)

great doctor and champion of the truth. Wherefore he estimates all knowledge on earth only as through a glass darkly,<sup>3481</sup> as taking its stand upon little images of the truth. Now, unless I appear to anyone too careful, and over anxious about the examination of this matter, perhaps it was of this and nothing else that the Word Himself intimated that there were things which could not now be borne, but which should be borne and cleared up hereafter,<sup>3482</sup> and which John the Forerunner of the Word and great Voice of the Truth declared even the whole world could not contain.<sup>3483</sup>

XXI. The truth then, and the whole Word is full of difficulty and obscurity; and as it were with a small instrument we are undertaking a great work, when with merely human wisdom we pursue the knowledge of the Self-existent, and in company with, or not apart from, the senses, by which we are borne hither and thither, and led into error, we apply ourselves to the search after things which are only to be grasped by the mind, and we are unable by meeting bare realities with bare intellect to approximate somewhat more closely to the truth, and to mould the mind by its concepts.

Now the subject of God is more hard to come at,<sup>3484</sup> in proportion as it is more perfect than any other, and is open to more objections, and the solutions of them are more laborious. For every objection, however small, stops and hinders the course of our argument, and cuts off its further advance, just like men who suddenly check with the rein the horses in full career, and turn them right round by the unexpected shock. Thus Solomon, who was the wisest of all men,<sup>3485</sup> whether before him or in his own time, to whom God gave breadth of heart, and a flood of contemplation, more abundant than the sand, even he, the more he entered into the depth, the more dizzy he became, and declared the furthest point of wisdom to be the discovery of how very far off she was from him.<sup>3486</sup> Paul also tries to arrive at, I will not say the nature of God, for this he knew was utterly impossible, but only the judgments of God; and since he finds no way out, and no halting place in the ascent, and moreover, since the earnest searching of his mind after knowledge does not end in any definite conclusion, because some fresh unattained point is being continually disclosed to him (O marvel, that I have a like experience), he closes his discourse with astonishment, and calls this the riches of God,<sup>3487</sup> and the depth, and confesses the unsearchableness of the judgments of

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3481 [1 Cor. xiii. 12.](#)

3482 [John xvi. 12.](#)

3483 S. [John xxi. 25.](#) By a curious slip of the tongue S. Gregory here attributes to the Baptist words of the Evangelist.

3484 cf. Petav. de Deo, iii., c. 7.

3485 [1 Kings iii. 12.](#)

3486 [Ecc. vii. 23.](#)

3487 [Rom. xi. 23.](#)

God, in almost the very words of David, who at one time calls God's judgments the great deep whose foundations cannot be reached by measure or sense;<sup>3488</sup> and at another says that His knowledge of him and of his own constitution was marvellous,<sup>3489</sup> and had attained greater strength than was in his own power or grasp.

XXII. For if, he says, I leave everything else alone, and consider myself and the whole nature and constitution of man, and how we are mingled, and what is our movement, and how the mortal was compounded with the immortal, and how it is that I flow downwards, and yet am borne upwards, and how the soul is circumscribed;<sup>3490</sup> and how it gives life and shares in feelings; and how the mind is at once circumscribed and unlimited,<sup>3491</sup> abiding in us and yet travelling over the Universe in swift motion and flow; how it is both received and imparted by word, and passes through air, and enters with all things; how it shares in sense, and enshrouds itself away from sense. And even before these questions—what was our first moulding and composition in the workshop of nature, and what is our last formation and completion? What is the desire for and imparting of nourishment, and who brought us spontaneously to those first springs and sources of life? How is the body nourished by food, and the soul by reason? What is the drawing of nature, and the mutual relation between parents and children, that it should be held together by a spell of love? How is it that species are permanent, and are different in their characteristics, although there are so many that their individual marks cannot be described? How is it that the same animal is both mortal and immortal<sup>3492</sup>, the one by decease, the other by coming into being? For one departs, and another takes its place, just like the flow of a river, which is never still, yet ever constant. And you might discuss many more points concerning men's members and parts, and their mutual adaptation both for use and beauty, and how some are connected and others disjoined, some are more excellent and others less comely, some are united and others divided, some contain and others are contained, according to the law and reason of Nature. Much too might be said about voices and ears. How is it that the voice is carried by the vocal organs, and received by the ears, and both are joined by the smiting and resounding of the medium of the air? Much too of the eyes, which have an indescribable communion with visible objects, and which are moved by the will alone, and that together, and are affected exactly as is the

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3488 [Ps. xxxvi. 7.](#)

3489 [Ib. cxxxix. 6.](#)

3490 v. l. And how the soul is carried round.

3491 v. l. Invisible.

3492 Gregory is not here speaking of the immortality of the individual soul, but of that of the Race, which it shares with other animals, and which is effected by continual succession.

mind. For with equal speed the mind is joined to the objects of thought, the eye to those of sight. Much too concerning the other senses, not objects of the research of reason. And much concerning our rest in sleep, and the figments of dreams, and of memory and remembrance; of calculation, and anger, and desire; and in a word, all by which this little world called Man is swayed.

XXIII. Shall I reckon up for you the differences of the other animals, both from us and from each other,—differences of nature, and of production, and of nourishment, and of region, and of temper, and as it were of social life? How is it that some are gregarious and others solitary, some herbivorous and others carnivorous, some fierce and others tame, some fond of man and domesticated, others untamable and free? And some we might call bordering on reason and power of learning, while others are altogether destitute of reason, and incapable of being taught. Some with fuller senses, others with less; some immovable, and some with the power of walking, and some very swift, and some very slow; some surpassing in size or beauty, or in one or other of these respects; others very small or very ugly, or both; some strong, others weak, some apt at self-defence, others timid and crafty<sup>3493</sup> and others again are unguarded. Some are laborious and thrifty, others altogether idle and improvident. And before we come to such points as these, how is it that some are crawling things, and others upright; some attached to one spot, some amphibious; some delight in beauty and others are unadorned; some are married and some single; some temperate and others intemperate; some have numerous offspring and others not; some are long-lived and others have but short lives? It would be a weary discourse to go through all the details.

XXIV. Look also at the fishy tribe gliding through the waters, and as it were flying through the liquid element, and breathing its own air, but in danger when in contact with ours, as we are in the waters; and mark their habits and dispositions, their intercourse and their births, their size and their beauty, and their affection for places, and their wanderings, and their assemblings and departings, and their properties which so nearly resemble those of the animals that dwell on land; in some cases community, in others contrast of properties, both in name and shape. And consider the tribes of birds, and their varieties of form and colour, both of those which are voiceless and of songbirds. What is the reason of their melody, and from whom came it? Who gave to the grasshopper the lute in his breast, and the songs and chirruping on the branches, when they are moved by the sun to make their midday music, and sing among the groves, and escort the wayfarer with their voices? Who wove the song for the swan when he spreads his wings to the breezes, and makes melody of their rustling? For I will not speak of the forced voices, and all the rest that art contrives against the truth. Whence does the peacock, that boastful bird of Media, get his love of

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3493 The Benedictines here insert *Some well protected*; but it is their own conjecture, and is not found in the Manuscripts.

beauty and of praise (for he is fully conscious of his own beauty), so that when he sees any one approaching, or when, as they say, he would make a show before his hens, raising his neck and spreading his tail in circle around him, glittering like gold and studded with stars, he makes a spectacle of his beauty to his lovers with pompous strides? Now Holy Scripture admires the cleverness in weaving even of women, saying, Who gave to woman skill in weaving and cleverness in the art of embroidery?<sup>3494</sup> This belongeth to a living creature that hath reason, and exceedeth in wisdom and maketh way even as far as the things of heaven.

XXV. But I would have you marvel at the natural knowledge even of irrational creatures, and if you can, explain its cause. How is it that birds have for nests rocks and trees and roofs, and adapt them both for safety and beauty, and suitably for the comfort of their nurslings? Whence do bees and spiders get their love of work and art, by which the former plan their honeycombs, and join them together by hexagonal and co-ordinate tubes, and construct the foundation by means of a partition and an alternation of the angles with straight lines; and this, as is the case, in such dusky hives and dark combs; and the latter weave their intricate webs by such light and almost airy threads stretched in divers ways, and this from almost invisible beginnings, to be at once a precious dwelling, and a trap for weaker creatures with a view to enjoyment of food? What Euclid ever imitated these, while pursuing philosophical enquiries with lines that have no real existence, and wearying himself with demonstrations? From what Palamedes came the tactics, and, as the saying is, the movements and configurations of cranes, and the systems of their movement in ranks and their complicated flight? Who were their Phidiæ and Zeuxides, and who were the Parrhasii and Aglaophons who knew how to draw and mould excessively beautiful things? What harmonious Gnossian chorus of Dædalus, wrought for a girl<sup>3495</sup> to the highest pitch of beauty? What Cretan Labyrinth, hard to get through, hard to unravel, as the poets say, and continually crossing itself through the tricks of its construction? I will not speak of the ants' storehouses and storekeepers, and of their treasurings of wood in quantities corresponding to the time for which it is wanted, and all the other details which we know are told of their marches and leaders and their good order in their works.

XXVI. If this knowledge has come within your reach and you are familiar with these branches of science, look at the differences of plants also, up to the artistic fashion of the leaves, which is adapted both to give the utmost pleasure to the eye, and to be of the greatest advantage to the fruit. Look too at the variety and lavish abundance of fruits, and most of all at the wondrous beauty of such as are most necessary. And consider the power of roots,

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3494 [Job xxxviii. 36.](#) LXX.

3495 The allusion is to a group made by Dædalus for Ariadne, representing a chorus of youths and maidens, which seemed to be moving in musical rhythm. It is described by Homer (Il., xviii., 592 sqq.).



and juices, and flowers, and odours, not only so very sweet, but also serviceable as medicines; and the graces and qualities of colours; and again the costly value, and the brilliant transparency of precious stones. Since nature has set before you all things as in an abundant banquet free to all, both the necessaries and the luxuries of life, in order that, if nothing else, you may at any rate know God by His benefits, and by your own sense of want be made wiser than you were. Next, I pray you, traverse the length and breadth of earth, the common mother of all, and the gulfs of the sea bound together with one another and with the land, and the beautiful forests, and the rivers and springs abundant and perennial, not only of waters cold and fit for drinking, and on the surface of the earth; but also such as running beneath the earth, and flowing under caverns, are then forced out by a violent blast, and repelled, and then filled with heat by this violence of strife and repulsion, burst out by little and little wherever they get a chance, and hence supply our need of hot baths in many parts of the earth, and in conjunction with the cold give us a healing which is without cost and spontaneous. Tell me how and whence are these things? What is this great web unwrought by art? These things are no less worthy of admiration, in respect of their mutual relations than when considered separately.

How is it that the earth stands solid and unswerving? On what is it supported? What is it that props it up, and on what does that rest? For indeed even reason has nothing to lean upon, but only the Will of God. And how is it that part of it is drawn up into mountain summits, and part laid down in plains, and this in various and differing ways? And because the variations are individually small, it both supplies our needs more liberally, and is more beautiful by its variety; part being distributed into habitations, and part left uninhabited, namely all the great height of Mountains, and the various clefts of its coast line cut off from it. Is not this the clearest proof of the majestic working of God?

XXVII. And with respect to the Sea even if I did not marvel at its greatness, yet I should have marvelled at its gentleness, in that although loose it stands within its boundaries; and if not at its gentleness, yet surely at its greatness; but since I marvel at both, I will praise the Power that is in both. What collected it? What bounded it? How is it raised and lulled to rest, as though respecting its neighbour earth? How, moreover, does it receive all the rivers, and yet remain the same, through the very superabundance of its immensity, if that term be permissible? How is the boundary of it, though it be an element of such magnitude, only sand? Have your natural philosophers with their knowledge of useless details anything to tell us, those men I mean who are really endeavouring to measure the sea with a wineglass, and such mighty works by their own conceptions? Or shall I give the really scientific explanation of it from Scripture concisely, and yet more satisfactorily and truly than by the longest arguments? "He hath fenced the face of the water with His command."<sup>3496</sup> This is the chain

of fluid nature. And how doth He bring upon it the Nautilus that inhabits the dry land (i.e., man) in a little vessel, and with a little breeze (dost thou not marvel at the sight of this,—is not thy mind astonished?), that earth and sea may be bound together by needs and commerce, and that things so widely separated by nature should be thus brought together into one for man? What are the first fountains of springs? Seek, O man, if you can trace out or find any of these things. And who was it who cleft the plains and the mountains for the rivers, and gave them an unhindered course? And how comes the marvel on the other side, that the Sea never overflows, nor the Rivers cease to flow? And what is the nourishing power of water, and what the difference therein; for some things are irrigated from above, and others drink from their roots, if I may luxuriate a little in my language when speaking of the luxuriant gifts of God.

XXVIII. And now, leaving the earth and the things of earth, soar into the air on the wings of thought, that our argument may advance in due path; and thence I will take you up to heavenly things, and to heaven itself, and things which are above heaven; for to that which is beyond my discourse hesitates to ascend, but still it shall ascend as far as may be. Who poured forth the air, that great and abundant wealth, not measured to men by their rank or fortunes; not restrained by boundaries; not divided out according to people's ages; but like the distribution of the Manna,<sup>3497</sup> received in sufficiency, and valued for its equality of distribution; the chariot of the winged creation; the seat of the winds; the moderator of the seasons; the quickener of living things, or rather the preserver of natural life in the body; in which bodies have their being, and by which we speak; in which is the light and all that it shines upon, and the sight which flows through it? And mark, if you please, what follows. I cannot give to the air the whole empire of all that is thought to belong to the air. What are the storehouses of the winds?<sup>3498</sup> What are the treasures of the snow? Who, as Scripture hath said, hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of Whose womb came the ice? and Who bindeth the waters in the clouds, and, fixing part in the clouds (O marvel!) held by His Word though its nature is to flow, poureth out the rest upon the face of the whole earth, and scattereth it abroad in due season, and in just proportions, and neither suffereth the whole substance of moisture to go out free and uncontrolled (for sufficient was the cleansing in the days of Noah; and He who cannot lie is not forgetful of His own covenant);...nor yet restraineth it entirely that we should not again stand in need of an Elias<sup>3499</sup> to bring the drought to an end. If He shall shut up heaven, it saith, who shall open it? If He open the floodgates, who shall shut them up?<sup>3500</sup> Who can bring an excess or withhold a sufficiency

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3497 [Exod. xvi. 18.](#)

3498 [Job xxxvii. 9, 10.](#)

3499 [1 Kings xviii. 44.](#)

3500 [Job xii. 14.](#)

of rain, unless he govern the Universe by his own measures and balances? What scientific laws, pray, can you lay down concerning thunder and lightning, O you who thunder from the earth, and cannot shine with even little sparks of truth? To what vapours from earth will you attribute the creation of cloud, or is it due to some thickening of the air, or pressure or crash of clouds of excessive rarity, so as to make you think the pressure the cause of the lightning, and the crash that which makes the thunder? Or what compression of wind having no outlet will account to you for the lightning by its compression, and for the thunder by its bursting out?

Now if you have in your thought passed through the air and all the things of air, reach with me to heaven and the things of heaven. And let faith lead us rather than reason, if at least you have learnt the feebleness of the latter in matters nearer to you, and have known reason by knowing the things that are beyond reason, so as not to be altogether on the earth or of the earth, because you are ignorant even of your ignorance.

XXIX. Who spread the sky around us, and set the stars in order? Or rather, first, can you tell me, of your own knowledge of the things in heaven, what *are* the sky and the stars; you who know not what lies at your very feet, and cannot even take the measure of yourself, and yet must busy yourself about what is above your nature, and gape at the illimitable? For, granted that you understand orbits and periods, and waxings and wanings, and settings and risings, and some degrees and minutes, and all the other things which make you so proud of your wonderful knowledge; you have not arrived at comprehension of the realities themselves, but only at an observation of some movement, which, when confirmed by longer practice, and drawing the observations of many individuals into one generalization, and thence deducing a law, has acquired the name of Science (just as the lunar phenomena have become generally known to our sight), being the basis of this knowledge. But if you are very scientific on this subject, and have a just claim to admiration, tell me what is the cause of this order and this movement. How came the sun to be a beacon-fire to the whole world, and to all eyes like the leader of some chorus, concealing all the rest of the stars by his brightness, more completely than some of them conceal others. The proof of this is that they shine against him, but he outshines them and does not even allow it to be perceived that they rose simultaneously with him, fair as a bridegroom, swift and great as a giant<sup>3501</sup> for I will not let his praises be sung from any other source than my own Scriptures—so mighty in strength that from one end to the other of the world he embraces all things in his heat, and there is nothing hid from the feeling thereof, but it fills both every eye with light, and every embodied creature with heat; warming, yet not burning, by the gentleness of its temper, and the order of its movement, present to all, and equally embracing all.

XXX. Have you considered the importance of the fact that a heathen writer<sup>3502</sup> speaks of the sun as holding the same position among material objects as God does among objects of thought? For the one gives light to the eyes, as the Other does to the mind; and is the most beautiful of the objects of sight, as God is of those of thought. But who gave him motion at first? And what is it which ever moves him in his circuit, though in his nature stable and immovable, truly unwearied, and the giver and sustainer of life, and all the rest of the titles which the poets justly sing of him, and never resting in his course or his benefits? How comes he to be the creator of day when above the earth, and of night when below it? or whatever may be the right expression when one contemplates the sun? What are the mutual aggressions and concessions of day and night, and their regular irregularities—to use a somewhat strange expression? How comes he to be the maker and divider of the seasons, that come and depart in regular order, and as in a dance interweave with each other, or stand apart by a law of love on the one hand, and of order on the other, and mingle little by little, and steal on their neighbour, just as nights and days do, so as not to give us pain by their suddenness. This will be enough about the sun.

Do you know the nature and phenomena of the Moon, and the measures and courses of light, and how it is that the sun bears rule over the day, and the moon presides over the night; and while She gives confidence to wild beasts, He stirs Man up to work, raising or lowering himself as may be most serviceable? Know you the bond of Pleiades, or the fence of Orion<sup>3503</sup> as He who counteth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names?<sup>3504</sup> Know you the differences of the glory<sup>3505</sup> of each, and the order of their movement, that I should trust you, when by them you weave the web of human concerns, and arm the creature against the Creator?

XXXI. What say you? Shall we pause here, after discussing nothing further than matter and visible things, or, since the Word knows the Tabernacle of Moses to be a figure of the whole creation—I mean the entire system of things visible and invisible—shall we pass the first veil, and stepping beyond the realm of sense, shall we look into the Holy Place, the Intellectual and Celestial creation? But not even this can we see in an incorporeal way, though it is incorporeal, since it is called—or is—Fire and Spirit. For He is said to make His Angels spirits, and His Ministers a flame of fire<sup>3506</sup> . . . though perhaps this “making” means preserving by that Word by which they came into existence. The Angel then is called spirit and fire; Spirit, as being a creature of the intellectual sphere; Fire, as being of a purifying nature; for

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3502 Plato.

3503 [Job xxxviii. 31.](#)

3504 [Ps. cxlvii. 4.](#)

3505 [1 Cor. xv. 41.](#)

3506 [Ps. civ. 4.](#)

I know that the same names belong to the First Nature. But, relatively to us at least, we must reckon the Angelic Nature incorporeal, or at any rate as nearly so as possible. Do you see how we get dizzy over this subject, and cannot advance to any point, unless it be as far as this, that we know there are Angels and Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Powers, Splendours, Ascents, Intelligent Powers or Intelligencies, pure natures and unalloyed, immovable to evil, or scarcely movable; ever circling in chorus round the First Cause (or how should we sing their praises?) illuminated thence with the purest Illumination, or one in one degree and one in another, proportionally to their nature and rank...so conformed to beauty and moulded that they become secondary Lights, and can enlighten others by the overflowings and largesses of the First Light? Ministrants of God's Will, strong with both inborn and imparted strength, traversing all space, readily present to all at any place through their zeal for ministry and the agility of their nature...different individuals of them embracing different parts of the world, or appointed over different districts of the Universe, as He knoweth who ordered and distributed it all. Combining all things in one, solely with a view to the consent of the Creator of all things; Hymners of the Majesty of the Godhead, eternally contemplating the Eternal Glory, not that God may thereby gain an increase of glory, for nothing can be added to that which is full—to Him, who supplies good to all outside Himself but that there may never be a cessation of blessings to these first natures after God. If we have told these things as they deserve, it is by the grace of the Trinity, and of the one Godhead in Three Persons; but if less perfectly than we have desired, yet even so our discourse has gained its purpose. For this is what we were labouring to shew, that even the secondary natures surpass the power of our intellect; much more then the First and (for I fear to say merely That which is above all), the only Nature.

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## Oration XXIX.

### The Third Theological Oration.

#### On the Son.

I. This then is what might be said to cut short our opponents' readiness to argue and their hastiness with its consequent insecurity in all matters, but above all in those discussions which relate to God. But since to rebuke others is a matter of no difficulty whatever, but a very easy thing, which any one who likes can do; whereas to substitute one's own belief for theirs is the part of a pious and intelligent man; let us, relying on the Holy Ghost, Who among them is dishonoured, but among us is adored, bring forth to the light our own conceptions about the Godhead, whatever these may be, like some noble and timely birth. Not that I have at other times been silent; for on this subject alone I am full of youthful strength and daring; but the fact is that under present circumstances I am even more bold to declare the truth, that I may not (to use the words of Scripture) by drawing back fall into the condemnation of being displeasing to God.<sup>3507</sup> And since every discourse is of a twofold nature, the one part establishing one's own, and the other overthrowing one's opponents' position; let us first of all state our own position, and then try to controvert that of our opponents;—and both as briefly as possible, so that our arguments may be taken in at a glance (like those of the elementary treatises which they have devised to deceive simple or foolish persons), and that our thoughts may not be scattered by reason of the length of the discourse, like water which is not contained in a channel, but flows to waste over the open land.

II. The three most ancient opinions concerning God are Anarchia, Polyarchia, and Monarchia. The first two are the sport of the children of Hellas, and may they continue to be so. For Anarchy is a thing without order; and the Rule of Many is factious, and thus anarchical, and thus disorderly. For both these tend to the same thing, namely disorder; and this to dissolution, for disorder is the first step to dissolution.

But Monarchy is that which we hold in honour. It is, however, a Monarchy that is not limited to one Person, for it is possible for Unity if at variance with itself to come into a condition of plurality;<sup>3508</sup> but one which is made of an equality of Nature and a Union of mind, and an identity of motion, and a convergence of its elements to unity—a thing which is impossible to the created nature—so that though numerically distinct there is no severance of Essence. Therefore Unity<sup>3509</sup> having from all eternity arrived by motion at Duality, found

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3507 [Heb. ii. 4; x. 38.](#)

3508 Billius and others here read Authority, which is not supported by the best mss., or by the context.

3509 Elias explains this to mean that of old men knew only One Person in the Godhead: and until the Incarnation this knowledge was sufficient; but from that time forward they acknowledged a Second Person, and through Him a Third also, the Holy Ghost. But this explanation falls far short of Gregory's meaning, which certainly is

its rest in Trinity. This is what we mean by Father and Son and Holy Ghost. The Father is the Begetter and the Emitter;<sup>3510</sup> without passion of course, and without reference to time, and not in a corporeal manner. The Son is the Begotten, and the Holy Ghost the Emission; for I know not how this could be expressed in terms altogether excluding visible things. For we shall not venture to speak of “an overflow of goodness,” as one of the Greek Philosophers dared to say, as if it were a bowl overflowing, and this in plain words in his Discourse on the First and Second Causes.<sup>3511</sup> Let us not ever look on this Generation as involuntary, like some natural overflow, hard to be retained, and by no means befitting our conception of Deity. Therefore let us confine ourselves within our limits, and speak of the Unbegotten and the Begotten and That which proceeds from the Father, as somewhere God the Word Himself saith.

III. When did these come into being? They are above all “When.” But, if I am to speak with something more of boldness,—when the Father did. And when did the Father come into being. There never was a time when He was not. And the same thing is true of the Son and the Holy Ghost. Ask me again, and again I will answer you, When was the Son begotten? When the Father was not begotten. And when did the Holy Ghost proceed? When the Son was, not proceeding but, begotten—beyond the sphere of time, and above the grasp of reason; although we cannot set forth that which is above time, if we avoid as we desire any expression which conveys the idea of time. For such expressions as “when” and “before” and “after” and “from the beginning” are not timeless, however much we may force them; unless indeed we were to take the *Æon*, that interval which is coextensive with the eternal things, and is not divided or measured by any motion, or by the revolution of the sun, as time is measured.

How then are They not alike unoriginate, if They are coeternal? Because They are from Him, though not after Him. For that which is unoriginate is eternal, but that which is

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that the movement of self-consciousness in God from all Eternity made the Generation of the Son, and the Procession of the Holy Ghost, a necessity. All is objective in God. cf. Petav. de Deo, II., viii., 16; also, Greg. Naz., Or. xxiii. 5.

3510 *προβολὺς-προβολή* was a term used by the Gnostics to describe the Emanations by which the distance between the Finite and the Infinite was according to them bridged over; and on this account it fell under suspicion, and was rejected by both Arius and Athanasius. Tertullian used it with an explanation which is satisfactory as regards the *προβολή* of the Son; but when he comes to apply it to the Procession of the Holy Ghost he uses an illustration which is in almost the very words rejected by Gregory (c. Prax., 7, 8. See Swete, p. 56). Origen did not admit it. Later when this danger was past, the word came into use again as the equivalent of *ἐκπόρευσις*, at first with reserve and explanations in the text, but later on as an accepted term. See Swete, “On The Doctrine Of The Holy Spirit,” p. 36.

3511 The expression is from Plato.

eternal is not necessarily unoriginate, so long as it may be referred to the Father as its origin. Therefore in respect of Cause They are not unoriginate; but it is evident that the Cause is not necessarily prior to its effects, for the sun is not prior to its light. And yet They are in some sense unoriginate, in respect of time, even though you would scare simple minds with your quibbles, for the Sources of Time are not subject to time.

IV. But how can this generation be passionless? In that it is incorporeal. For if corporeal generation involves passion, incorporeal generation excludes it. And I will ask of you in turn, How is He God if He is created? For that which is created is not God. I refrain from reminding you that here too is passion if we take the creation in a bodily sense, as time, desire, imagination, thought, hope, pain, risk, failure, success, all of which and more than all find a place in the creature, as is evident to every one. Nay, I marvel that you do not venture so far as to conceive of marriages and times of pregnancy, and dangers of miscarriage, as if the Father could not have begotten at all if He had not begotten thus; or again, that you did not count up the modes of generation of birds and beasts and fishes, and bring under some one of them the Divine and Ineffable Generation, or even eliminate the Son out of your new hypothesis. And you cannot even see this, that as His Generation according to the flesh differs from all others (for where among men do you know of a Virgin Mother?), so does He differ also in His spiritual Generation; or rather He, Whose Existence is not the same as ours, differs from us also in His Generation.

V. Who then is that Father Who had no beginning? One Whose very Existence had no beginning; for one whose existence had a beginning must also have begun to be a Father. He did not then become a Father after He began to be, for His being had no beginning. And He is Father in the absolute sense, for He is not also Son; just as the Son is Son in the absolute sense, because He is not also Father. These names do not belong to us in the absolute sense, because we are both, and not one more than the other; and we are of both, and not of one only; and so we are divided, and by degrees become men, and perhaps not even men, and such as we did not desire, leaving and being left, so that only the relations remain, without the underlying facts.<sup>3512</sup>

But, the objector says, the very form of the expression “He begat” and “He was begotten,” brings in the idea of a beginning of generation. But what if you do not use this expression, but say, “He had been begotten from the beginning” so as readily to evade your far-fetched and time-loving objections? Will you bring Scripture against us, as if we were forging something contrary to Scripture and to the truth? Why, every one knows that in practice we very often find tenses interchanged when time is spoken of; and especially is this the custom of Holy Scripture, not only in respect of the past tense, and of the present; but even

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3512 Elias explains this to refer to the fact that children leave and are left by parents; or else to the death of either one or the other.



of the future, as for instance “Why did the heathen rage?”<sup>3513</sup> when they had not yet raged and “they shall cross over the river on foot,”<sup>3514</sup> where the meaning is they did cross over. It would be a long task to reckon up all the expressions of this kind which students have noticed.

VI. So much for this point. What is their next objection, how full of contentiousness and impudence? He, they say, either voluntarily begat the Son, or else involuntarily. Next, as they think, they bind us on both sides with cords; these however are not strong, but very weak. For, they say, if it was involuntarily He was under the sway of some one, and who exercised this sway? And how is He, over whom it is exercised, God? But if voluntarily, the Son is a Son of Will; how then is He of the Father?—and they thus invent a new sort of Mother for him,—the Will,—in place of the Father. There is one good point which they may allege about this argument of theirs; namely, that they desert Passion, and take refuge in Will. For Will is not Passion.

Secondly, let us look at the strength of their argument. And it were best to wrestle with them at first at close quarters. You yourself, who so recklessly assert whatever takes your fancy; were you begotten voluntarily or involuntarily by your father? If involuntarily, then he was under some tyrant’s sway (O terrible violence!) and who was the tyrant? You will hardly say it was nature,—for nature is tolerant of chastity. If it was voluntarily, then by a few syllables your father is done away with, for you are shewn to be the son of Will, and not of your father. But I pass to the relation between God and the creature, and I put your own question to your own wisdom. Did God *create* all things voluntarily or under compulsion? If under compulsion, here also is the tyranny, and one who played the tyrant; if voluntarily, the creatures also are deprived of their God, and you before the rest, who invent such arguments and tricks of logic. For a partition is set up between the Creator and the creatures in the shape of Will. And yet I think that the Person who wills is distinct from the Act of willing; He who begets from the Act of begetting; the Speaker from the speech, or else we are all very stupid. On the one side we have the mover, and on the other that which is, so to speak, the motion. Thus the thing willed is not the child of will, for it does not always result therefrom; nor is that which is begotten the child of generation, nor that which is heard the child of speech, but of the Person who willed, or begat, or spoke. But the things of God are beyond all this, for with Him perhaps the Will to beget is generation, and there is no intermediate action (if we may accept this altogether, and not rather consider generation superior to will).

VII. Will you then let me play a little upon this word Father, for your example encourages me to be so bold? The Father is God either willingly or unwillingly; and how will you

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3513 Ps. ii. 1.

3514 Ps. lxvi. 6.

escape from your own excessive acuteness? If willingly, when did He begin to will? It could not have been before He began to be, for there was nothing prior to Him. Or is one part of Him Will and another the object of Will? If so, He is divisible. So the question arises, as the result of your argument, whether He Himself is not the Child of Will. And if unwillingly, what compelled Him to exist, and how is He God if He was compelled—and that to nothing less than to be God? How then was He begotten, says my opponent. How was He created, if as you say, He was created? For this is a part of the same difficulty. Perhaps you would say, By Will and Word. You have not yet solved the whole difficulty; for it yet remains for you to shew how Will and Word gained the power of action. For man was not created in this way.

VIII. How then was He begotten? This Generation would have been no great thing, if you could have comprehended it who have no real knowledge even of your own generation, or at least who comprehend very little of it, and of that little you are ashamed to speak; and then do you think you know the whole? You will have to undergo much labour before you discover the laws of composition, formation, manifestation, and the bond whereby soul is united to body,—mind to soul, and reason to mind; and movement, increase, assimilation of food, sense, memory, recollection, and all the rest of the parts of which you are compounded; and which of them belongs to the soul and body together, and which to each independently of the other, and which is received from each other. For those parts whose maturity comes later, yet received their laws at the time of conception. Tell me what these laws are? And do not even then venture to speculate on the Generation of God; for that would be unsafe. For even if you knew all about your own, yet you do not by any means know about God's. And if you do not understand your own, how can you know about God's? For in proportion as God is harder to trace out than man, so is the heavenly Generation harder to comprehend than your own. But if you assert that because you cannot comprehend it, therefore He cannot have been begotten, it will be time for you to strike out many existing things which you cannot comprehend; and first of all God Himself. For you cannot say what He is, even if you are very reckless, and excessively proud of your intelligence. First, cast away your notions of flow and divisions and sections, and your conceptions of immaterial as if it were material birth, and then you may perhaps worthily conceive of the Divine Generation. How was He begotten?—I repeat the question in indignation. The Begetting of God must be honoured by silence. It is a great thing for you to learn that He was begotten. But the manner of His generation we will not admit that even Angels can conceive, much less you. Shall I tell you how it was? It was in a manner known to the Father Who begat, and to the Son Who was begotten. Anything more than this is hidden by a cloud, and escapes your dim sight.

IX. Well, but the Father begat a Son who either was or was not in existence.<sup>3515</sup> What utter nonsense! This is a question which applies to you or me, who on the one hand were in existence, as for instance Levi in the loins of Abraham;<sup>3516</sup> and on the other hand came into existence; and so in some sense we are partly of what existed, and partly of what was nonexistent; whereas the contrary is the case with the original matter, which was certainly created out of what was non-existent, notwithstanding that some pretend that it is unbegotten. But in this case “to be begotten,” even from the beginning, is concurrent with “to be.” On what then will you base this captious question? For what is older than that which is from the beginning, if we may place there the previous existence or non-existence of the Son? In either case we destroy its claim to be the Beginning. Or perhaps you will say, if we were to ask you whether the Father was of existent or non-existent substance, that he is twofold, partly pre-existing, partly existing; or that His case is the same with that of the Son; that is, that He was created out of non-existing matter, because of your ridiculous questions and your houses of sand, which cannot stand against the merest ripple.

I do not admit either solution, and I declare that your question contains an absurdity, and not a difficulty to answer. If however you think, in accordance with your dialectic assumptions, that one or other of these alternatives must necessarily be true in every case, let me ask you one little question: Is time in time, or is it not in time? If it is contained in time, then in what time, and what is it but that time, and how does it contain it? But if it is not contained in time, what is that surpassing wisdom which can conceive of a time which is timeless? Now, in regard to this expression, “I am now telling a lie,” admit one of these alternatives, either that it is true, or that it is a falsehood, without qualification (for we cannot admit that it is both). But this cannot be. For necessarily he either is lying, and so is telling the truth, or else he is telling the truth, and so is lying. What wonder is it then that, as in this case contraries are true, so in that case they should both be untrue, and so your clever puzzle prove mere foolishness? Solve me one more riddle. Were you present at your own generation, and are you now present to yourself, or is neither the case? If you were and are present, who were you, and with whom are you present? And how did your single self become thus both subject and object? But if neither of the above is the case, how did you get separated from yourself, and what is the cause of this disjoining? But, you will say, it is stupid to make a fuss about the question whether or no a single individual is present to himself; for the expression is not used of oneself but of others. Well, you may be certain that it is even more stupid to discuss the question whether That which was begotten from the beginning existed before its generation or not. For such a question arises only as to matter divisible by time.

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3515 This is the Arian dilemma, “Did the Son exist before he was begotten?”

3516 [Heb. vii. 10.](#)

X. But they say, The Unbegotten and the Begotten are not the same; and if this is so, neither is the Son the same as the Father. It is clear, without saying so, that this line of argument manifestly excludes either the Son or the Father from the Godhead. For if to be Unbegotten is the Essence of God, to be begotten is not that Essence; if the opposite is the case, the Unbegotten is excluded. What argument can contradict this? Choose then whichever blasphemy you prefer, my good inventor of a new theology, if indeed you are anxious at all costs to embrace a blasphemy. In the next place, in what sense do you assert that the Unbegotten and the Begotten are not the same? If you mean that the Uncreated and the created are not the same, I agree with you; for certainly the Unoriginate and the created are not of the same nature. But if you say that He That begat and That which is begotten are not the same, the statement is inaccurate. For it is in fact a necessary truth that they are the same. For the nature of the relation of Father to Child is this, that the offspring is of the same nature with the parent. Or we may argue thus again. What do you mean by Unbegotten and Begotten, for if you mean the simple fact of being unbegotten or begotten, these are not the same; but if you mean Those to Whom these terms apply, how are They not the same? For example, Wisdom and Unwisdom are not the same in themselves, but yet both are attributes of man, who is the same; and they mark not a difference of essence, but one external to the essence.<sup>3517</sup> Are immortality and innocence and immutability also the essence of God? If so God has many essences and not one; or Deity is a compound of these. For He cannot be all these without composition, if they be essences.

XI. They do not however assert this, for these qualities are common also to other beings. But God's Essence is that which belongs to God alone, and is proper to Him. But they, who consider matter and form to be unbegotten, would not allow that to be unbegotten is the property of God alone (for we must cast away even further the darkness of the Manichæans).<sup>3518</sup> But suppose that it is the property of God alone. What of Adam? Was he not alone the direct creature of God? Yes, you will say. Was he then the only human being? By no means. And why, but because humanity does not consist in direct creation? For that which is begotten is also human. Just so neither is He Who is Unbegotten alone God, though He alone is Father. But grant that He Who is Begotten is God; for He is of God, as you must allow, even though you cling to your Unbegotten. Then how do you describe the Essence of God? Not by declaring what it is, but by rejecting what it is not. For your word signifies that He is not begotten; it does not present to you what is the real nature or condition of that which has no generation. What then *is* the Essence of God? It is for your infatuation to define this, since you are so anxious about His Generation too; but to

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3517 cf. Petavius De Trin., V. ii., 2.

3518 The Manichæans, who believed in two eternal principles of good and evil, light and darkness, held that darkness too was unbegotten (Elias).

us it will be a very great thing, if ever, even in the future, we learn this, when this darkness and dulness is done away for us, as He has promised Who cannot lie. This then may be the thought and hope of those who are purifying themselves with a view to this. Thus much we for our part will be bold to say, that if it is a great thing for the Father to be Unoriginate, it is no less a thing for the Son to have been Begotten of such a Father. For not only would He share the glory of the Unoriginate, since he is of the Unoriginate, but he has the added glory of His Generation, a thing so great and august in the eyes of all those who are not altogether grovelling and material in mind.

XII. But, they say, if the Son is the Same as the Father in respect of Essence, then if the Father is unbegotten, the Son must be so likewise. Quite so—if the Essence of God consists in being unbegotten; and so He would be a strange mixture, begottenly unbegotten. If, however, the difference is outside the Essence, how can you be so certain in speaking of this? Are you also your father's father, so as in no respect to fall short of your father, since you are the same with him in essence? Is it not evident that our enquiry into the Nature of the Essence of God, if we make it, will leave Personality absolutely unaffected? But that Unbegotten is not a synonym of God is proved thus. If it were so, it would be necessary that since God is a relative term, Unbegotten should be so likewise; or that since Unbegotten is an absolute term, so must God be...God of no one. For words which are absolutely identical are similarly applied. But the word Unbegotten is not used relatively. For to what is it relative? And of what things is God the God? Why, of all things. How then can God and Unbegotten be identical terms? And again, since Begotten and Unbegotten are contradictories, like possession and deprivation, it would follow that contradictory essences would co-exist, which is impossible.<sup>3519</sup> Or again, since possessions are prior to deprivations, and the latter are destructive of the former, not only must the Essence of the Son be prior to that of the Father, but it must be destroyed by the Father, on your hypothesis.

XIII. What now remains of their invincible arguments? Perhaps the last they will take refuge in is this. If God has never ceased to beget, the Generation is imperfect; and when will He cease? But if He has ceased, then He must have begun. Thus again these carnal minds bring forward carnal arguments. Whether He is eternally begotten or not, I do not yet say, until I have looked into the statement, "Before all the hills He begetteth Me,"<sup>3520</sup> more accurately. But I cannot see the necessity of their conclusion. For if, as they say, everything that is to come to an end had also a beginning, then surely that which has no end had no beginning. What then will they decide concerning the soul, or the Angelic nature? If it had a beginning, it will also have an end; and if it has no end, it is evident that according to them it had no beginning. But the truth is that it had a beginning, and will

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3519 Because "Son" implies "begotten." But (ex hyp.) "Unbegotten" is synonymous with "God."

3520 [Prov. viii. 25.](#)

never have an end. Their assertion, then, that which will have an end had also a beginning, is untrue. Our position, however, is, that as in the case of a horse, or an ox, or a man, the same definition applies to all the individuals of the same species, and whatever shares the definition has also a right to the Name; so in the very same way there is One Essence of God, and One Nature, and One Name; although in accordance with a distinction in our thoughts we use distinct Names and that whatever is properly called by this Name really is God; and what He is in Nature, That He is truly called—if at least we are to hold that Truth is a matter not of names but of realities. But our opponents, as if they were afraid of leaving any stone unturned to subvert the Truth, acknowledge indeed that the Son is God when they are compelled to do so by arguments<sup>3521</sup> and evidences; but they only mean that He is God in an ambiguous sense, and that He only shares the Name.

XIV. And when we advance this objection against them, “What do you mean to say then? That the Son is not properly God, just as a picture of an animal is not properly an animal? And if not properly God, in what sense is He God at all?” They reply, Why should not these terms be ambiguous, and in both cases be used in a proper sense? And they will give us such instances as the land-dog and the dogfish; where the word Dog is ambiguous, and yet in both cases is properly used, for there is such a species among the ambiguously named, or any other case in which the same appellative is used for two things of different nature. But, my good friend, in this case, when you include two natures under the same name, you do not assert that either is better than the other, or that the one is prior and the other posterior, or that one is in a greater degree and the other in a lesser that which is predicated of them both, for there is no connecting link which forces this necessity upon them. One is not a dog more than the other, and one less so; either the dogfish more than the land-dog, or the land-dog than the dogfish. Why should they be, or on what principle? But the community of name is here between things of equal value, though of different nature. But in the case of which we are speaking, you couple the Name of God with adorable Majesty, and make It surpass every essence and nature (an attribute of God alone), and then you ascribe this Name to the Father, while you deprive the Son of it, and make Him subject to the Father, and give Him only a secondary honour and worship; and even if in words you bestow on Him one which is Equal, yet in practice you cut off His Deity, and pass malignantly from a use of the same Name implying an exact equality, to one which connects things which are not equal. And so the pictured and the living man are in your mouth an apter illustration of the relations of Deity than the dogs which I instanced. Or else you must concede to both an equal dignity of nature as well as a common name—even though you introduced these natures into your argument as different; and thus you destroy the analogy

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3521 The Benedictines here translate λόγῳ by “Scripture,” on the ground that Reason is not competent to assert the Divinity of the Word.

of your dogs, which you invented as an instance of inequality. For what is the force of your instance of ambiguity, if those whom you distinguish are not equal in honour? For it was not to prove an equality but an inequality that you took refuge in your dogs. How could anybody be more clearly convicted of fighting both against his own arguments, and against the Deity?

XV. And if, when we admit that in respect of being the Cause the Father is greater than the Son, they should assume the premiss that He is the Cause by Nature, and then deduce the conclusion that He is greater by Nature also, it is difficult to say whether they mislead most themselves or those with whom they are arguing. For it does not absolutely follow that all that is predicated of a class can also be predicated of all the individuals composing it; for the different particulars may belong to different individuals. For what hinders me, if I assume the same premiss, namely, that the Father is greater by Nature, and then add this other, Yet not by nature in every respect greater nor yet Father—from concluding, Therefore the Greater is not in every respect greater, nor the Father in every respect Father? Or, if you prefer it, let us put it in this way: God is an Essence: But an Essence is not in every case God; and draw the conclusion for yourself—Therefore God is not in every case God. I think the fallacy here is the arguing from a conditioned to an unconditioned use of a term,<sup>3522</sup> to use the technical expression of the logicians. For while we assign this word Greater to His Nature viewed as a Cause, they infer it of His Nature viewed in itself. It is just as if when we said that such a one was a dead man they were to infer simply that he was a Man.

XVI. How shall we pass over the following point, which is no less amazing than the rest? Father, they say, is a name either of an essence or of an Action, thinking to bind us down on both sides. If we say that it is a name of an essence, they will say that we agree with them that the Son is of another Essence, since there is but one Essence of God, and this, according to them, is preoccupied by the Father. On the other hand, if we say that it is the name of an Action, we shall be supposed to acknowledge plainly that the Son is created and not begotten. For where there is an Agent there must also be an Effect. And they will say they wonder how that which is made can be identical with That which made it. I should myself have been frightened with your distinction, if it had been necessary to accept one or other of the alternatives, and not rather put both aside, and state a third and truer one, namely, that Father is not a name either of an essence or of an action, most clever sirs. But it is the name of the Relation in which the Father stands to the Son, and the Son to the Father. For as with us these names make known a genuine and intimate relation, so, in the case before us too, they denote an identity of nature between Him That is begotten and Him

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3522 Or as the schoolmen say the fallacy is, *A dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, one of the many forms of Undistributed Middle Term. Petavius, however (*De Trin.*, II., v., 12), pronounces the argument of this section unsatisfactory.

That begets. But let us concede to you that Father is a name of essence, it will still bring in the idea of Son, and will not make it of a different nature, according to common ideas and the force of these names. Let it be, if it so please you, the name of an action; you will not defeat us in this way either. The Homousion would be indeed the result of this action, or otherwise the conception of an action in this matter would be absurd. You see then how, even though you try to fight unfairly, we avoid your sophistries. But now, since we have ascertained how invincible you are in your arguments and sophistries, let us look at your strength in the Oracles of God, if perchance you may choose to persuade us out of them.

XVII. For we have learnt to believe in and to teach the Deity of the Son from their great and lofty utterances. And what utterances are these? These: God—The Word—He That Was In The Beginning and With The Beginning, and The Beginning. “In the Beginning was The Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,”<sup>3523</sup> and “With Thee is the Beginning,”<sup>3524</sup> and “He who calleth her The Beginning from generations.”<sup>3525</sup> Then the Son is Only-begotten: The only “begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, it says, He hath declared Him.”<sup>3526</sup> The Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;” and “I am the Light of the World.”<sup>3527</sup> Wisdom and Power, “Christ, the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God.”<sup>3528</sup> The Effulgence, the Impress, the Image, the Seal; “Who being the Effulgence of His glory and the Impress of His Essence,”<sup>3529</sup> and “the Image of His Goodness,”<sup>3530</sup> and “Him hath God the Father sealed.”<sup>3531</sup> Lord, King, He That Is, The Almighty. “The Lord rained down fire from the Lord;”<sup>3532</sup> and “A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom;”<sup>3533</sup> and “Which is and was and is to come, the Almighty”<sup>3534</sup>—all which are clearly spoken of the Son, with all the other passages of the same force, none of which is an afterthought, or added later to the Son or the Spirit, any more than to the Father Himself. For Their Perfection is not affected by additions. There never was a time when He was without the Word, or when He was not the Father, or when

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3523 [John i. 1.](#)

3524 [Ps. cx. 3.](#)

3525 [Isa. xli. 4.](#)

3526 [John i. 18.](#)

3527 [John vii. 12; ix. 5; xiv. 6.](#)

3528 [1 Cor. i. 24.](#)

3529 [Heb. i. 3 R.V.](#)

3530 [Wisd. vii. 26.](#)

3531 [John vi. 27.](#)

3532 [Gen. xix. 24.](#)

3533 [Ps. xlv. 6.](#)

3534 [Rev. i. 8.](#)



He was not true, or not wise, or not powerful, or devoid of life, or of splendour, or of goodness.

But in opposition to all these, do you reckon up for me the expressions which make for your ignorant arrogance, such as “My God and your God,”<sup>3535</sup> or greater, or created, or made, or sanctified;<sup>3536</sup> Add, if you like, Servant<sup>3537</sup> and Obedient<sup>3538</sup> and Gave<sup>3539</sup> and Learnt,<sup>3540</sup> and was commanded,<sup>3541</sup> was sent,<sup>3542</sup> can do nothing of Himself, either say, or judge, or give, or will.<sup>3543</sup> And further these,—His ignorance,<sup>3544</sup> subjection,<sup>3545</sup> prayer,<sup>3546</sup> asking,<sup>3547</sup> increase,<sup>3548</sup> being made perfect.<sup>3549</sup> And if you like even more humble than these; such as speak of His sleeping,<sup>3550</sup> hungering,<sup>3551</sup> being in an agony,<sup>3552</sup> and fearing,<sup>3553</sup> or perhaps you would make even His Cross and Death a matter of reproach to Him. His Resurrection and Ascension I fancy you will leave to me, for in these is found something to support *our* position. A good many other things too you might pick up, if you desire to put together that equivocal and intruded god of yours, Who to us is True God, and equal to the Father. For every one of these points, taken separately, may very easily, if we go through them one by one, be explained to you in the most reverent sense, and the stumbling-block of the letter be cleaned away—that is, if your stumbling at it be honest, and not wilfully malicious. To give you the explanation in one sentence. What is lofty you are to apply to the Godhead, and to that Nature in Him which is superior to sufferings and in-

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3535 [John xx. 17, 28.](#)

3536 [Prov. viii. 22; John x. 36; Acts ii. 36.](#)

3537 [Phil. ii. 7.](#)

3538 [Phil. ii. 8.](#)

3539 [John i. 12.](#)

3540 [Heb. v. 8.](#)

3541 [John x. 18; xiv. 31.](#)

3542 [Ib. iv. 34; v. 23, sq.](#)

3543 [Ib. v. 19, 30.](#)

3544 [Mark xiii. 32.](#)

3545 [1 Cor. xv. 28.](#)

3546 [Luke vi. 12.](#)

3547 [John xiv. 16.](#)

3548 [Luke ii. 52.](#)

3549 [Heb. v. 9, etc.](#)

3550 [Matt. viii. 24; Mark iv. 38.](#)

3551 [Matt. iv. 2; Luke iv. 2.](#)

3552 [Luke xxii. 44.](#)

3553 [Heb. v. 7.](#)

corporeal; but all that is lowly to the composite condition<sup>3554</sup> of Him who for your sakes made Himself of no reputation and was Incarnate—yes, for it is no worse thing to say, was made Man, and afterwards was also exalted. The result will be that you will abandon these carnal and grovelling doctrines, and learn to be more sublime, and to ascend with His Godhead, and you will not remain permanently among the things of sight, but will rise up with Him into the world of thought, and come to know which passages refer to His Nature, and which to His assumption of Human Nature.<sup>3555</sup>

XIX. For He Whom you now treat with contempt was once above you. He Who is now Man was once the Uncompounded. What He was He continued to be; what He was not He took to Himself.<sup>3556</sup> In the beginning He was, uncaused; for what is the Cause of God? But afterwards for a cause He was born. And that cause was that you might be saved, who insult Him and despise His Godhead, because of this, that He took upon Him your denser nature, having converse with Flesh by means of Mind.<sup>3557</sup> While His inferior Nature, the Humanity, became God, because it was united to God, and became One Person<sup>3558</sup> because the Higher Nature prevailed in order that I too might be made God so far as He is made Man.<sup>3559</sup> He was born—but He had been begotten: He was born of a woman—but she was

3554 S. Gregory often speaks of Human Nature as *our composite being*; and here he means the Sacred Humanity exclusively; there is no shadow of suspicion of Nestorianism or Eutychianism attaching to his name.

3555 The word *οικονομία* is used in four principal senses: (a) The ministry of the Gospel, cf. [Ephes. iii. 2](#); [Col. i. 25](#); etc., and S. Cyril Hieros., has the expression “Economy of the Mystery” (Cat. xxv.). It is also used absolutely by S. Chrysostom and others. (b) The Providence of God, as by Epiphanius, Greg. Nyss., and others. (c) The Incarnation, as in the text, without any epithet—in which use it is opposed to *ἡ θεότης*. Sometimes however epithets are added. (d) The whole Mystery of Redemption, including the Passion.

3556 cf. S. Leo, Serm. xxi., De Nativ. Dei, c. ii. “Remaining what He was, and putting on what He was not, He united the true form of a servant to that form in which He was equal to God the Father, and combined both natures in a union so close that the lower was not consumed by receiving glory, nor the higher lessened by assuming lowliness.

3557 “Mediante anima,” cf. Orat. xxxviii., 13. S. T. Aq., Summa, III., vi. Jungmann, de Verbo Incarn., c. 68. Forbes, On Nicene Creed, p. 188. Petav. de Incarn, IV., xiii., 2.

3558 *γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος ὁ κάτω θεός*. The passage is one of great difficulty. Elias Cretensis renders the words as follows:—“Becoming Man, the inferior God, because humanity was” etc.; but his rendering is rejected as impossible by Petavius (de Incarn., IV., ix., 2, 3). (i.) It is grammatically possible (Madvig, Gk. Syntax, 9 a. rem. 3) for *ὁ κάτω*, standing as it does, to qualify *ἄνθρωπος*. (ii.) But the *καὶ γενόμενος ...θεός* may be taken as a nom. absolute, which would have been expressed by a gen. if *ἄνθρωπος* had not been the same Person as *ὀμιλήσας*.

3559 As by the Incarnation He who was God was made perfect Man, so Man was made perfect God, and each nature retained its own qualities. Or it may mean that God Incarnate was made Man in respect of body, soul, and mind; that is, in all points: and the Humanity which He assumed was in all these points Deified; and

a Virgin. The first is human, the second Divine. In His Human nature He had no Father, but also in His Divine Nature no Mother.<sup>3560</sup> Both these<sup>3561</sup> belong to Godhead. He dwelt in the womb—but He was recognized by the Prophet,<sup>3562</sup> himself still in the womb, leaping before the Word, for Whose sake He came into being. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes<sup>3563</sup>—but He took off the swathing bands of the grave by His rising again. He was laid in a manger—but He was glorified by Angels, and proclaimed by a star, and worshipped by the Magi. Why are you offended by that which is presented to your sight, because you will not look at that which is presented to your mind? He was driven into exile into Egypt—but He drove away the Egyptian idols.<sup>3564</sup> He had no form nor comeliness in the

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therefore they who are His kindred and imitators share to that extent the Deification (Elias). In the First Epistle to Cledonius (v. infra) the Priest, against Apollinarius, which is sometimes reckoned as the 51st Oration, S. Gregory says, “The Godhead and the Manhood are two natures, just as soul and body are. But there are not two Sons or two Gods; although Paul did thus entangle the outward man and the inward. And, to speak succinctly, the Natures which make our Saviour are distinct, for the Invisible is not the same as the visible, nor the Timeless as that which is subject to time; but He is not two Persons, God forbid, for both these are one in the union, God being made Man, and Man being made God, or however else you may express it.” And upon this S. Thomas Aquinas remarks that it is true, if by Man you understand simply Human Nature, and not a Human Person; in this sense it was brought to pass that Man was God; or in other words Human Nature was made that of the Son of God. (Summa, III., xvi., 7.)

3560 “If any does not admit Mary to be the Mother of God (θεοτόκον), he is separated from God. If any say that He passed through the Virgin as through a conduit, and that He was not formed in her both divinely and humanly (divinely, because without a human father; humanly, because in accordance with the laws of gestation), he is in like manner atheistic. If any assert that the Humanity was thus formed, and the Deity subsequently added, he is condemned; for this is not a generation of God, but an evasion of generation” (S. G. N. ad Cled., Ep. i.) S. Thomas Aquinas explains the fitness of the title thus: The Blessed Virgin could be denied to be the Mother of God only if either His Humanity had been conceived and born before That Man was the Son of God:—which was the position taken up by Photinus; or else if the Humanity had not been assumed into the unity of the Person (or Hypostasis) of the Son of God;—which was the position of Nestorius. Both these positions are erroneous. Therefore to deny that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God is heretical (Summa, III., xxxv. 4). In the text S. Gregory merely means that the Godhead of our Lord was not derived from His Blessed Mother, just as his Manhood was not derived from any man; but, as the extract at the beginning of this Note shews, he would be the last to take up the Nestorian notion, which was afterwards condemned at the Council of Ephesus.

3561 Both These, i.e., the being without Father, and without Mother is a condition which belongs only to the Godhead.

3562 S. John the Baptist (S. [Luke i.](#)).

3563 [Luke ii. 41.](#)

3564 Referring, perhaps, to the tradition that at the coming of Christ into Egypt all the Idols in the land fell down and were broken.

eyes of the Jews<sup>3565</sup>—but to David He is fairer than the children of men.<sup>3566</sup> And on the Mountain He was bright as the lightning, and became more luminous than the sun,<sup>3567</sup> initiating us into the mystery of the future.

XX. He was baptized as Man—but He remitted sins as God<sup>3568</sup>—not because He needed purificatory rites Himself, but that He might sanctify the element of water. He was tempted as Man, but He conquered as God; yea, He bids us be of good cheer, for He has overcome the world.<sup>3569</sup> He hungered—but He fed thousands;<sup>3570</sup> yea, He is the Bread that giveth life, and That is of heaven. He thirsted—but He cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.<sup>3571</sup> Yea, He promised that fountains should flow from them that believe. He was wearied, but He is the Rest of them that are weary and heavy laden.<sup>3572</sup> He was heavy with sleep, but He walked lightly over the sea.<sup>3573</sup> He rebuked the winds, He made Peter light as he began to sink.<sup>3574</sup> He pays tribute, but it is out of a fish;<sup>3575</sup> yea, He is the King of those who demanded it.<sup>3576</sup> He is called a Samaritan and a demoniac,<sup>3577</sup>—but He saves him that came down from Jerusalem and fell among thieves;<sup>3578</sup> the demons acknowledge Him, and He drives out demons and sinks in the sea legions of foul spirits,<sup>3579</sup> and sees the Prince of the demons falling like lightning.<sup>3580</sup> He is stoned, but is not taken. He prays, but He hears prayer. He weeps, but He causes tears to cease. He asks where Lazarus was laid, for He was Man; but He raises Lazarus, for He was God.<sup>3581</sup> He is sold, and very cheap, for it is only for thirty pieces of silver;<sup>3582</sup> but He redeems the world, and that at a



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- 3565 [Isa. liii. 2.](#)  
3566 [Ps. xlv. 2.](#)  
3567 [Matt. xvii. 2.](#)  
3568 [Matt. iii. 13; ix. 6.](#)  
3569 [John xvi. 33.](#)  
3570 [Ib. vi. 10.](#)  
3571 [Ib. vii. 37.](#)  
3572 [Matt. xi. 28.](#)  
3573 [Ib. viii. 24.](#)  
3574 [Ib. xiv. 25, 30.](#)  
3575 [Ib. xvii. 24.](#)  
3576 [John xix. 19.](#)  
3577 [Ib. viii. 48.](#)  
3578 [Luke x. 30, etc.](#)  
3579 [Luke viii. 28–33.](#)  
3580 [Ib. x. 18.](#)  
3581 [John xi. 43.](#)  
3582 [Matt. xxvi. 15.](#)

great price, for the Price was His own blood.<sup>3583</sup> As a sheep He is led to the slaughter,<sup>3584</sup> but He is the Shepherd of Israel, and now of the whole world also. As a Lamb He is silent, yet He is the Word, and is proclaimed by the Voice of one crying in the wilderness.<sup>3585</sup> He is bruised and wounded, but He healeth every disease and every infirmity.<sup>3586</sup> He is lifted up and nailed to the Tree, but by the Tree of Life He restoreth us; yea, He saveth even the Robber crucified with Him;<sup>3587</sup> yea, He wrapped the visible world in darkness. He is given vinegar to drink mingled with gall. Who? He who turned the water into wine<sup>3588</sup>, who is the destroyer of the bitter taste, who is Sweetness and altogether desire.<sup>3589</sup> He lays down His life, but He has power to take it again;<sup>3590</sup> and the veil is rent, for the mysterious doors of Heaven are opened; the rocks are cleft, the dead arise.<sup>3591</sup> He dies, but He gives life, and by His death destroys death. He is buried, but He rises again; He goes down into Hell, but He brings up the souls; He ascends to Heaven, and shall come again to judge the quick and the dead, and to put to the test such words as yours. If the one give you a starting point for your error, let the others put an end to it.

XXI. This, then, is our reply to those who would puzzle us; not given willingly indeed (for light talk and contradictions of words are not agreeable to the faithful, and one Adversary is enough for us), but of necessity, for the sake of our assailants (for medicines exist because of diseases), that they may be led to see that they are not all-wise nor invincible in those superfluous arguments which make void the Gospel. For when we leave off believing, and protect ourselves by mere strength of argument, and destroy the claim which the Spirit has upon our faith by questionings, and then our argument is not strong enough for the importance of the subject (and this must necessarily be the case, since it is put in motion by an organ of so little power as is our mind), what is the result? The weakness of the argument appears to belong to the mystery, and thus elegance of language makes void the Cross, as Paul also thought.<sup>3592</sup> For faith is that which completes our argument. But may He who proclaimeth unions and looseth those that are bound, and who putteth into our minds to solve the knots of their unnatural dogmas, if it may be, change these men and make them

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3583 [1 Pet. i. 19.](#)

3584 [Isa. liii. 7.](#)

3585 [John i. 23.](#)

3586 [Isa. liii. 23.](#)

3587 [Luke xxiii. 43.](#)

3588 [John ii. 1-11.](#)

3589 [Cant. v. 16.](#)

3590 [John x. 18.](#)

3591 [Matt. xxvii. 51.](#)

3592 [1 Cor. i. 17.](#)

faithful instead of rhetoricians, Christians instead of that which they now are called. This indeed we entreat and beg for Christ's sake. Be ye reconciled to God,<sup>3593</sup> and quench not the Spirit;<sup>3594</sup> or rather, may Christ be reconciled to you, and may the Spirit enlighten you, though so late. But if you are too fond of your quarrel, we at any rate will hold fast to the Trinity, and by the Trinity may we be saved, remaining pure and without offence, until the more perfect shewing forth of that which we desire, in Him, Christ our Lord, to Whom be the glory for ever. Amen.

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3593 [2 Cor. v. 20.](#)

3594 [1 Thess. v. 19.](#)

## Oration XXX.

### The Fourth Theological Oration, Which is the Second Concerning the Son.

I. Since I have by the power of the Spirit sufficiently overthrown the subtleties and intricacies of the arguments, and already solved in the mass the objections and oppositions drawn from Holy Scripture, with which these sacrilegious robbers of the Bible and thieves of the sense of its contents draw over the multitude to their side, and confuse the way of truth; and that not without clearness, as I believe all candid persons will say; attributing to the Deity the higher and diviner expressions, and the lower and more human to Him Who for us men was the Second Adam, and was God made capable of suffering to strive against sin; yet we have not yet gone through the passages in detail, because of the haste of our argument. But since you demand of us a brief explanation of each of them, that you may not be carried away by the plausibilities of their arguments, we will therefore state the explanations summarily, dividing them into numbers for the sake of carrying them more easily in mind.

II. In their eyes the following is only too ready to hand “The Lord created me at the beginning of His ways with a view to His works.”<sup>3595</sup> How shall we meet this? Shall we bring an accusation against Solomon, or reject his former words because of his fall in after-life? Shall we say that the words are those of Wisdom herself, as it were of Knowledge and the Creator-word, in accordance with which all things were made? For Scripture often personifies many even lifeless objects; as for instance, “The Sea said”<sup>3596</sup> so and so; and, “The Depth saith, It is not in me;”<sup>3597</sup> and “The Heavens declare the glory of God;”<sup>3598</sup> and

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3595 [Prov. viii. 22.](#) The A.V. has in the place Possessed, and this has very high authority: but the Hebrew word in almost every case signifies to Acquire. It is used, says Bp. Wordsworth (ad h. l.), about eighty times in the O.T., and in only five places is it rendered in our Translation by Possess;—in two of which ([Gen. xiv. 10, 22,](#) and [Ps. cxxxix. 13](#)) it might well have the sense of Creating, and in two ([Jer. xxxii. 15,](#) and [Zech. xi. 5](#)) of Getting. In some ancient Versions (LXX. and Syr.) it is rendered by Create. S. Jerome in his Ep. ad Cypr. (ii. 697) says that the word may here be understood of possession, but in his Comm. on [Ephes. ii.](#) (p. 342) he adopts the rendering Create, which he applies to the Incarnation, as in several places does S. Athanasius. But Wordsworth thinks it better to apply the words to the Eternal Generation, as S. Hilary expounds it (c. Arianos, who argued from it that Christ was a creature); “quia Filius Dei non corporalis parturitionis est genitus exemplo, sed ex perfecto Deo perfectus Deus natus; et ideo ait creatam se esse Sapientia; omnem in generatione sua notionem passionis corporalis excludens.”

3596 [Is. xxiii. 4.](#)

3597 [Job xxviii. 14.](#)

3598 [Ps. xix. 1.](#)

again a command is given to the Sword;<sup>3599</sup> and the Mountains and Hills are asked the reason of their skipping.<sup>3600</sup> We do not allege any of these, though some of our predecessors used them as powerful arguments. But let us grant that the expression is used of our Saviour Himself, the true Wisdom. Let us consider one small point together. What among all things that exist is unoriginate? The Godhead. For no one can tell the origin of God, that otherwise would be older than God. But what is the cause of the Manhood, which for our sake God assumed? It was surely our Salvation. What else could it be? Since then we find here clearly both the Created and the Begetteth Me, the argument is simple. Whatever we find joined with a cause we are to refer to the Manhood, but all that is absolute and unoriginate we are to reckon to the account of His Godhead. Well, then, is not this “Created” said in connection with a cause? He created Me, it so says, as the beginning of His ways, with a view to his works. Now, the Works of His Hands are verity and judgment;<sup>3601</sup> for whose sake He was anointed with Godhead;<sup>3602</sup> for this anointing is of the Manhood; but the “He begetteth Me” is not connected with a cause; or it is for you to shew the adjunct. What argument then will disprove that Wisdom is called a creature, in connection with the lower generation, but Begotten in respect of the first and more incomprehensible?

III. Next is the fact of His being called Servant<sup>3603</sup> and serving many well, and that it is a great thing for Him to be called the Child of God. For in truth He was in servitude to flesh and to birth and to the conditions of our life with a view to our liberation, and to that of all those whom He has saved, who were in bondage under sin. What greater destiny can befall man’s humility than that he should be intermingled with God, and by this intermingling should be deified,<sup>3604</sup> and that we should be so visited by the Dayspring from on high,<sup>3605</sup> that even that Holy Thing that should be born should be called the Son of the Highest,<sup>3606</sup> and that there should be bestowed upon Him a Name which is above every name? And what else can this be than God?—and that every knee should bow to Him That was made of no reputation for us, and That mingled the Form of God with the form of a servant, and that all the House of Israel should know that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ?<sup>3607</sup>

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3599 [Zech. xiii. 7.](#)

3600 [Ps. cxiv. 6.](#)

3601 [Ps. cxi. 7.](#)

3602 [Ps. xiv. 7.](#)

3603 [Isa. xlix. 6; liii. 11.](#) The LXX. here mistranslates; the Hebrew and the Latin have the same word in all the passages quoted below, while the LXX. varies, as follows: [Isa. xlii. 1.](#) παῖς. [19.](#) παῖδες, δούλοι. [xliv. 2.](#) παῖς. [21.](#) παῖς. [xlviii. 29.](#) δοῦλον. [xlix. 3.](#) δοῦλος. [5.](#) δοῦλον. [6.](#) παῖδα. [7.](#) δοῦλον. [lii. 13.](#) παῖς. [liii. 11.](#) δοῦλεύοντα.

3604 See Prolegomena, sec. ii. and [2 Pet. i. 4.](#)

3605 [Luke i. 78.](#)

3606 [Phil. ii. 9.](#)

3607 [Acts ii. 36.](#)



For all this was done by the action of the Begotten, and by the good pleasure of Him That begat Him.

IV. Well, what is the second of their great irresistible passages? “He must reign,”<sup>3608</sup> till such and such a time...and “be received by heaven until the time of restitution,”<sup>3609</sup> and “have the seat at the Right Hand until the overthrow of His enemies.”<sup>3610</sup> But after this? Must He cease to be King, or be removed from Heaven? Why, who shall make Him cease, or for what cause? What a bold and very anarchical interpreter you are; and yet you have heard that Of His Kingdom *there shall be no end.*<sup>3611</sup> Your mistake arises from not understanding that Until is not always exclusive of that which comes after, but asserts *up to* that time, without denying what comes *after* it. To take a single instance—how else would you understand, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?”<sup>3612</sup> Does it mean that He will no longer be so afterwards. And for what reason? But this is not the only cause of your error; you also fail to distinguish between the things that are signified. He is said to reign in one sense as the Almighty King, both of the willing and the unwilling; but in another as producing in us submission, and placing us under His Kingship as willingly acknowledging His Sovereignty. Of His Kingdom, considered in the former sense, there shall be no end. But in the second sense, what end will there be? His taking us as His servants, on our entrance into a state of salvation. For what need is there to Work Submission in us when we have already submitted? After which He arises to judge the earth, and to separate the saved from the lost. After that He is to stand as God in the midst of gods,<sup>3613</sup> that is, of the saved, distinguishing and deciding of what honour and of what mansion each is worthy.

V. Take, in the next place, the subjection by which you subject the Son to the Father. What, you say, is He not now subject, or must He, if He is God, be subject to God?<sup>3614</sup> You are fashioning your argument as if it concerned some robber, or some hostile deity. But look at it in this manner: that as for my sake He was called a curse,<sup>3615</sup> Who destroyed my curse; and sin,<sup>3616</sup> who taketh away the sin of the world; and became a new Adam<sup>3617</sup> to

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3608 [1 Cor. xv. 35.](#)

3609 [Acts iii. 21.](#)

3610 [Ps. cx. 1.](#)

3611 [Luke i. 33.](#) Cf. Nic. Creed.

3612 [Matt. xxviii. 20.](#)

3613 [Ps. lxxxii. 1.](#)

3614 S. Gregory would here shew that the subjection of Christ of which S. Paul speaks in the passage quoted, is that of the Head of the Church, representing the members of His body. Cf. S. Ambrose, de Fide V. vi., quoted by Petavius, de Trin. III. v. 2.

3615 [Gal. iii. 13.](#)

3616 [2 Cor. v. 21.](#)

3617 [1 Cor. xv. 45.](#)

take the place of the old, just so He makes my disobedience His own as Head of the whole body. As long then as I am disobedient and rebellious, both by denial of God and by my passions, so long Christ also is called disobedient on my account. But when all things shall be subdued unto Him on the one hand by acknowledgment of Him, and on the other by a reformation, then He Himself also will have fulfilled His submission, bringing me whom He has saved to God. For this, according to my view, is the subjection of Christ; namely, the fulfilling of the Father's Will. But as the Son subjects all to the Father, so does the Father to the Son; the One by His Work, the Other by His good pleasure, as we have already said. And thus He Who subjects presents to God that which he has subjected, making our condition His own. Of the same kind, it appears to me, is the expression, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"<sup>3618</sup> It was not He who was forsaken either by the Father, or by His own Godhead, as some have thought, as if It were afraid of the Passion, and therefore withdrew Itself from Him in His Sufferings (for who compelled Him either to be born on earth at all, or to be lifted up on the Cross?) But as I said, He was in His own Person representing us. For we were the forsaken and despised before, but now by the Sufferings of Him Who could not suffer, we were taken up and saved. Similarly, He makes His own our folly and our transgressions; and says what follows in the Psalm, for it is very evident that the Twenty-first<sup>3619</sup> Psalm refers to Christ.

VI. The same consideration applies to another passage, "He learnt obedience by the things which He suffered,"<sup>3620</sup> and to His "strong crying and tears," and His "Entreaties," and His "being heard," and His "Reverence," all of which He wonderfully wrought out, like a drama whose plot was devised on our behalf. For in His character of the Word He was neither obedient nor disobedient. For such expressions belong to servants, and inferiors, and the one applies to the better sort of them, while the other belongs to those who deserve punishment. But, in the character of the Form of a Servant, He condescends to His fellow servants, nay, to His servants, and takes upon Him a strange form, bearing all me and mine in Himself, that in Himself He may exhaust the bad, as fire does wax, or as the sun does the mists of earth; and that I may partake of His nature by the blending. Thus He honours obedience by His action, and proves it experimentally by His Passion. For to possess the disposition is not enough, just as it would not be enough for us, unless we also proved it by our acts; for action is the proof of disposition.

And perhaps it would not be wrong to assume this also, that by the art<sup>3621</sup> of His love for man He gauges our obedience, and measures all by comparison with His own Sufferings,

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3618 [Ps. xxii. 1.](#)

3619 [I.e. Ps. xxii. A.V.](#)

3620 [Heb. v. 8,](#) etc.

3621 [Leuvenclavius](#) translates "The art of this lovingkindness gauges," etc.

so that He may know our condition by His own, and how much is demanded of us, and how much we yield, taking into the account, along with our environment, our weakness also. For if the Light shining through the veil<sup>3622</sup> upon the darkness, that is upon this life, was persecuted by the other darkness (I mean, the Evil One and the Tempter), how much more will the darkness be persecuted, as being weaker than it? And what marvel is it, that though He entirely escaped, we have been, at any rate in part, overtaken? For it is a more wonderful thing that He should have been chased than that we should have been captured;—at least to the minds of all who reason aright on the subject. I will add yet another passage to those I have mentioned, because I think that it clearly tends to the same sense. I mean “In that He hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.”<sup>3623</sup> But God will be all in all in the time of restitution; not in the sense that the Father alone will Be; and the Son be wholly resolved into Him, like a torch into a great pyre, from which it was reft away for a little space, and then put back (for I would not have even the Sabellians injured<sup>3624</sup> by such an expression); but the entire Godhead...when we shall be no longer divided (as we now are by movements and passions), and containing nothing at all of God, or very little, but shall be entirely like.

VII. As your third point you count the Word Greater;<sup>3625</sup> and as your fourth, To My God and your God.<sup>3626</sup> And indeed, if He had been called greater, and the word equal had not occurred, this might perhaps have been a point in their favour. But if we find both words clearly used what will these gentlemen have to say? How will it strengthen their argument? How will they reconcile the irreconcilable? For that the same thing should be at once greater than and equal to the same thing is an impossibility; and the evident solution is that the Greater refers to origination, while the Equal belongs to the Nature; and this we acknowledge with much good will. But perhaps some one else will back up our attack on your argument, and assert, that That which is from such a Cause is not inferior to that which has no Cause; for it would share the glory of the Unoriginate, because it is from the Unoriginate. And there is, besides, the Generation, which is to all men a matter so marvellous and of such Majesty. For to say that he is greater than the Son considered as man, is true indeed, but is no great thing. For what marvel is it if God is greater than man? Surely that is enough to say in answer to their talk about Greater.

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3622 The Benedictines render, “In darkness, that is, in this life, because of the veil of the body.”

3623 [Heb. ii. 18.](#)

3624 The Benedictines take *παρὰ φθειρέσθωσαν* in an active sense: “I would not let even the Sabellians wrest such an expression.”

3625 [John xiv. 28.](#)

3626 [Ib. xx. 17.](#)

VIII. As to the other passages, My God would be used in respect, not of the Word, but of the Visible Word. For how could there be a God of Him Who is properly God? In the same way He is Father, not of the Visible, but of the Word; for our Lord was of two Natures; so that one expression is used properly, the other improperly in each of the two cases; but exactly the opposite way to their use in respect of us. For with respect to us God is properly our God, but not properly our Father. And this is the cause of the error of the Heretics, namely the joining of these two Names, which are interchanged because of the Union of the Natures. And an indication of this is found in the fact that wherever the Natures are distinguished in our thoughts from one another, the Names are also distinguished; as you hear in Paul's words, "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory."<sup>3627</sup> The God of Christ, but the Father of glory. For although these two terms express but one Person, yet this is not by a Unity of Nature, but by a Union of the two. What could be clearer?

IX. Fifthly, let it be alleged that it is said of Him that He receives life,<sup>3628</sup> judgment,<sup>3629</sup> inheritance of the Gentiles,<sup>3630</sup> or power over all flesh,<sup>3631</sup> or glory,<sup>3632</sup> or disciples, or whatever else is mentioned. This also belongs to the Manhood; and yet if you were to ascribe it to the Godhead, it would be no absurdity. For you would not so ascribe it as if it were newly acquired, but as belonging to Him from the beginning by reason of nature, and not as an act of favour.

X. Sixthly, let it be asserted that it is written, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.<sup>3633</sup> The solution of this is as follows:—Can and Cannot are not words with only one meaning, but have many meanings. On the one hand they are used sometimes in respect of deficiency of strength, sometimes in respect of time, and sometimes relatively to a certain object; as for instance, A Child cannot be an Athlete, or, A Puppy cannot see, or fight with so and so. Perhaps some day the child will be an athlete, the puppy will see, will fight with that other, though it may still be unable to fight with Any other. Or again, they may be used of that which is Generally true. For instance,—A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid;<sup>3634</sup> while yet it might possibly be hidden by another higher hill being in a line with it. Or in another sense they are used of a thing which is not

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3627 [Ephes. i. 17.](#)

3628 [John viii. 54.](#)

3629 [John v. 22.](#)

3630 [Ps. ii. 8.](#)

3631 [John xvii. 2.](#)

3632 [2 Pet. i. 17,](#) etc.

3633 [John v. 19.](#)

3634 [Matt. v. 14.](#)

reasonable; as, Can the Children of the Bridechamber fast while the Bridegroom is with them;<sup>3635</sup> whether He be considered as visible in bodily form (for the time of His sojourning among us was not one of mourning, but of gladness), or, as the Word. For why should they keep a bodily fast who are cleansed by the Word?<sup>3636</sup> Or, again, they are used of that which is contrary to the will; as in, He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief,<sup>3637</sup>—i.e. of those who should receive them. For since in order to healing there is need of both faith in the patient and power in the Healer,<sup>3638</sup> when one of the two failed the other was impossible. But probably this sense also is to be referred to the head of the unreasonable. For healing is not reasonable in the case of those who would afterwards be injured by unbelief. The sentence The world cannot hate you,<sup>3639</sup> comes under the same head, as does also How can ye, being evil, speak good things?<sup>3640</sup> For in what sense is either impossible, except that it is contrary to the will? There is a somewhat similar meaning in the expressions which imply that a thing impossible by nature is possible to God if He so wills;<sup>3641</sup> as that a man cannot be born a second time,<sup>3642</sup> or that a needle will not let a camel through it.<sup>3643</sup> For what could prevent either of these things happening, if God so willed?

XI. And besides all this, there is the absolutely impossible and inadmissible, as that which we are now examining. For as we assert that it is impossible for God to be evil, or not to exist—for this would be indicative of weakness in God rather than of strength—or for the non-existent to exist, or for two and two to make both four and ten,<sup>3644</sup> so it is impossible and inconceivable that the Son should do anything that the Father doeth not.<sup>3645</sup> For all things that the Father hath are the Son's;<sup>3646</sup> and on the other hand, all that belongs to the Son is the Father's. Nothing then is peculiar, because all things are in common. For Their Being itself is common and equal, even though the Son receive it from the Father. It is in respect of this that it is said I live by the Father;<sup>3647</sup> not as though His Life and Being

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3635 [Mark ii. 19.](#)

3636 [John xv. 3.](#)

3637 [Mark vi. 5.](#)

3638 Note with the Benedictines that S. Gregory is here speaking of our Lord alone, not of ordinary Physicians; hence he uses the singular.

3639 [John vii. 7.](#)

3640 [Matt. xii. 34.](#)

3641 [Matt. xix. 26.](#)

3642 [John iii. 4.](#)

3643 [Matt. xix. 24.](#)

3644 One ms. reads “to be fourteen.”

3645 [John v. 19.](#)

3646 [Ib. xvi. 15.](#)

3647 [Ib. vi. 57.](#)

were kept together by the Father, but because He has His Being from Him beyond all time, and beyond all cause. But how does He see the Father doing, and do likewise? Is it like those who copy pictures and letters, because they cannot attain the truth unless by looking at the original, and being led by the hand by it? But how shall Wisdom stand in need of a teacher, or be incapable of acting unless taught? And in what sense does the Father “Do” in the present or in the past? Did He make another world before this one, or is He going to make a world to come? And did the Son look at that and make this? Or will He look at the other, and make one like it? According to this argument there must be Four worlds, two made by the Father, and two by the Son. What an absurdity! He cleanses lepers, and delivers men from evil spirits, and diseases, and quickens the dead, and walks upon the sea, and does all His other works; but in what case, or when did the Father do these acts before Him? Is it not clear that the Father impressed the ideas of these same actions, and the Word brings them to pass, yet not in slavish or unskilful fashion, but with full knowledge and in a masterly way, or, to speak more properly, like the Father? For in this sense I understand the words that whatsoever is done by the Father, these things doeth the Son likewise; not, that is, because of the likeness of the things done, but in respect of the Authority. This might well also be the meaning of the passage which says that the Father worketh hitherto and the Son also,<sup>3648</sup> and not only so but it refers also to the government and preservation of the things which He has made; as is shewn by the passage which says that He maketh His Angels Spirits,<sup>3649</sup> and that the earth is founded upon its steadfastness (though once for all these things were fixed and made) and that the thunder is made firm and the wind created.<sup>3650</sup> Of all these things the Word was given once, but the Action is continuous even now.

XII. Let them quote in the seventh place that The Son came down from Heaven, not to do His own Will, but the Will of Him That sent Him.<sup>3651</sup> Well, if this had not been said by Himself Who came down, we should say that the phrase was modelled as issuing from the Human Nature, not from Him who is conceived of in His character as the Saviour, for His Human Will cannot be opposed to God, seeing it is altogether taken into God; but conceived of simply as in our nature, inasmuch as the human will does not completely follow the Divine, but for the most part struggles against and resists it. For we understand in the same way the words, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; Nevertheless let not what I will but Thy Will prevail.<sup>3652</sup> For it is not likely that He did not know whether it was possible or not, or that He would oppose will to will. But since, as this is the language of

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3648 [John v. 17.](#)

3649 [Ps. civ. 4, 5, LXX.](#)

3650 cf. [Amos iv. 13](#), where A.V. reads, He That formed the mountains and created the wind.

3651 [John vi. 38.](#)

3652 [Matt. xxvi. 39.](#)

Him Who assumed our Nature (for He it was Who came down), and not of the Nature which He assumed, we must meet the objection in this way, that the passage does not mean that the Son has a special will of His own, besides that of the Father, but that He has not; so that the meaning would be, “not to do Mine own Will, for there is none of Mine apart from, but that which is common to, Me and Thee; for as We have one Godhead, so We have one Will.”<sup>3653</sup> For many such expressions are used in relation to this Community, and are expressed not positively but negatively; as, e.g., God giveth not the Spirit by measure,<sup>3654</sup> for as a matter of fact He does not give the Spirit to the Son, nor does He *measure* It, for God is not measured by God; or again, Not my transgression nor my sin.<sup>3655</sup> The words are not used because He has these things, but because He has them not. And again, Not for our righteousness which we have done,<sup>3656</sup> for we have not done any. And this meaning is evident also in the clauses which follow. For what, says He, is the Will of My Father? That everyone that believeth on the Son should be saved,<sup>3657</sup> and obtain the final Resurrection.<sup>3658</sup> Now is this the Will of the Father, but not of the Son? Or does He preach the Gospel, and receive men’s faith against His will? Who could believe that? Moreover, that passage, too, which says that the Word which is heard is not the Son’s<sup>3659</sup> but the Father’s has the same force. For I cannot see how that which is common to two can be said to belong to one alone, however much I consider it, and I do not think any one else can. If then you hold this opinion concerning the Will, you will be right and reverent in your opinion, as I think, and as every right-minded person thinks.

XIII. The eighth passage is, That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent;<sup>3660</sup> and There is none good save one, that is, God.<sup>3661</sup> The solution of this appears to me very easy. For if you attribute this only to the Father, where will you place the Very Truth? For if you conceive in this manner of the meaning of To the only wise God,<sup>3662</sup> or Who only hath Immortality, Dwelling in the light which no man can

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3653 Observe that S. Gregory expressly limits this paraphrase to the Divine Nature of our Lord, and is not in any way denying to Him a Human Will also;—indeed in the preceding sentence he distinctly asserts it. The whole passage makes very strongly against the heresy of Apollinarius, which adopted the Arian tenet that in our Lord the Divine Logos supplied the place of the human soul.

3654 [John iii. 34.](#)

3655 [Ps. lix. 3.](#)

3656 [Dan. ix. 18.](#)

3657 [John vi. 40.](#)

3658 V. l. Restoration.

3659 [John xiv. 24.](#)

3660 [Ib. xvii. 3.](#)

3661 [Luke xviii. 19.](#)

3662 [1 Tim. i. 17.](#)

approach unto,<sup>3663</sup> or of to the king of the Ages, immortal, invisible, and only wise God,<sup>3664</sup> then the Son has vanished under sentence of death, or of darkness, or at any rate condemned to be neither wise nor king, nor invisible, nor God at all, which sums up all these points. And how will you prevent His Goodness, which especially belongs to God alone, from perishing with the rest? I, however, think that the passage That they may know Thee the only true God, was said to overthrow those gods which are falsely so called, for He would not have added and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent, if The Only True God were contrasted with Him, and the sentence did not proceed upon the basis of a common Godhead. The “None is Good” meets the tempting Lawyer, who was testifying to His Goodness viewed as Man. For perfect goodness, He says, is God’s alone, even if a man is called perfectly good. As for instance, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things.<sup>3665</sup> And, I will give the kingdom to one who is good above Thee.<sup>3666</sup> ... Words of God, speaking to Saul about David. Or again, Do good, O Lord, unto the good<sup>3667</sup> ... and all other like expressions concerning those of us who are praised, upon whom it is a kind of effluence from the Supreme Good, and has come to them in a secondary degree. It will be best of all if we can persuade you of this. But if not, what will you say to the suggestion on the other side, that on your hypothesis the Son has been called the only God. In what passage? Why, in this:—This is your God; no other shall be accounted of in comparison with Him, and a little further on, after this did He shew Himself upon earth, and conversed with men.<sup>3668</sup> This addition proves clearly that the words are not used of the Father, but of the Son; for it was He Who in bodily form companied with us, and was in this lower world. Now, if we should determine to take these words as said in contrast with the Father, and not with the imaginary gods, we lose the Father by the very terms which we were pressing against the Son. And what could be more disastrous than such a victory?

XIV. Ninthly, they allege, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us.<sup>3669</sup> O, how beautiful and mystical and kind. For to intercede does not imply to seek for vengeance, as is most men’s way (for in that there would be something of humiliation), but it is to plead for us by reason of His Mediatorship, just as the Spirit also is said to make intercession for us.<sup>3670</sup> For there is One God, and One Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ

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3663 [Ib. vi. 16.](#)

3664 [Ib. i. 17.](#)

3665 [Mat. xii. 35.](#)

3666 [1 Sam. xv. 28.](#)

3667 [Ps. cxxv. 4.](#)

3668 [Baruch iii. 35, 37.](#)

3669 [Heb. vii. 25.](#)

3670 [Rom. viii. 26.](#)



Jesus.<sup>3671</sup> For He still pleads even now as Man for my salvation; for He continues to wear the Body which He assumed, until He make me God by the power of His Incarnation; although He is no longer known after the flesh<sup>3672</sup>—I mean, the passions of the flesh, the same, except sin, as ours. Thus too, we have an Advocate,<sup>3673</sup> Jesus Christ, not indeed prostrating Himself for us before the Father, and falling down before Him in slavish fashion... Away with a suspicion so truly slavish and unworthy of the Spirit! For neither is it seemly for the Father to require this, nor for the Son to submit to it; nor is it just to think it of God. But by what He suffered as Man, He as the Word and the Counsellor persuades Him to be patient. I think this is the meaning of His Advocacy.

XV. Their tenth objection is the ignorance, and the statement that Of the last day and hour knoweth no man, not even the Son Himself, but the Father.<sup>3674</sup> And yet how can Wisdom be ignorant of anything—that is, Wisdom Who made the worlds, Who perfects them, Who remodels them, Who is the Limit of all things that were made, Who knoweth the things of God as the spirit of a man knows the things that are in him?<sup>3675</sup> For what can be more perfect than this knowledge? How then can you say that all things before that hour He knows accurately, and all things that are to happen about the time of the end, but of the hour itself He is ignorant? For such a thing would be like a riddle; as if one were to say that he knew accurately all that was in front of the wall, but did not know the wall itself; or that, knowing the end of the day, he did not know the beginning of the night—where knowledge of the one necessarily brings in the other. Thus everyone must see that He knows as God, and knows not as Man;—if one may separate the visible from that which is discerned by thought alone. For the absolute and unconditioned use of the Name “The Son” in this passage, without the addition of whose Son, gives us this thought, that we are to understand the ignorance in the most reverent sense, by attributing it to the Manhood, and not to the Godhead.

XVI. If then this argument is sufficient, let us stop here, and not enquire further. But if not, our second argument is as follows:—Just as we do in all other instances, so let us refer His knowledge of the greatest events, in honour of the Father, to The Cause. And I think that anyone, even if he did not read it in the way that one of our own Students<sup>3676</sup> did, would soon perceive that not even the Son knows the day or hour otherwise than as the

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3671 [1 Tim. ii. 5.](#)

3672 [2 Cor. v. 16.](#)

3673 [1 John ii. 1.](#)

3674 [Mark xiii. 32.](#)

3675 [1 Cor. ii. 11.](#)

3676 Elias thinks that the great S. Basil is here referred to. Petavius thinks the first argument of c. xvi. forced and unsatisfactory.

Father does. For what do we conclude from this? That since the Father knows, therefore also does the Son, as it is evident that this cannot be known or comprehended by any but the First Nature. There remains for us to interpret the passage about His receiving commandment,<sup>3677</sup> and having kept His Commandments, and done always those things that please Him; and further concerning His being made perfect,<sup>3678</sup> and His exaltation,<sup>3679</sup> and His learning obedience by the things which He suffered; and also His High Priesthood, and His Oblation, and His Betrayal, and His prayer to Him That was able to save Him from death, and His Agony and Bloody Sweat and Prayer,<sup>3680</sup> and such like things; if it were not evident to every one that such words are concerned, not with That Nature Which is unchangeable and above all capacity of suffering, but with the passible Humanity. This, then, is the argument concerning these objections, so far as to be a sort of foundation and memorandum for the use of those who are better able to conduct the enquiry to a more complete working out. It may, however, be worth while, and will be consistent with what has been already said, instead of passing over without remark the actual Titles of the Son (there are many of them, and they are concerned with many of His Attributes), to set before you the meaning of each of them, and to point out the mystical meaning of the names.

XVII. We will begin thus. The Deity cannot be expressed in words. And this is proved to us, not only by argument, but by the wisest and most ancient of the Hebrews, so far as they have given us reason for conjecture. For they appropriated certain characters to the honour of the Deity, and would not even allow the name of anything inferior to God to be written with the same letters as that of God, because to their minds it was improper that the Deity should even to that extent admit any of His creatures to a share with Himself. How then could they have admitted that the invisible and separate Nature can be explained by divisible words? For neither has any one yet breathed the whole air, nor has any mind entirely comprehended, or speech exhaustively contained the Being of God. But we sketch Him by His Attributes, and so obtain a certain faint and feeble and partial idea concerning Him, and our best Theologian is he who has, not indeed discovered the whole, for our present chain does not allow of our seeing the whole, but conceived of Him to a greater extent than another, and gathered in himself more of the Likeness or adumbration of the Truth, or whatever we may call it.

XVIII. As far then as we can reach, He Who Is, and God, are the special names of His Essence; and of these especially He Who Is, not only because when He spake to Moses in the mount, and Moses asked what His Name was, this was what He called Himself, bidding

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3677 [John xii. 49.](#)

3678 [Heb. v. 7., etc.](#)

3679 [Phil. ii. 9.](#)

3680 [Luke xii. 44.](#)

him say to the people “I Am hath sent me,”<sup>3681</sup> but also because we find that this Name is the more strictly appropriate. For the Name Θεός (God), even if, as those who are skilful in these matters say, it were derived from θέειν<sup>3682</sup> (to run) or from Αἶθειν (to blaze), from continual motion, and because He consumes evil conditions of things (from which fact He is also called A Consuming Fire),<sup>3683</sup> would still be one of the Relative Names, and not an Absolute one; as again is the case with Lord,<sup>3684</sup> which also is called a name of God. I am the Lord Thy God, He says, that is My name;<sup>3685</sup> and, The Lord is His name.<sup>3686</sup> But we are enquiring into a Nature Whose Being is absolute and not into Being bound up with something else. But Being is in its proper sense peculiar to God, and belongs to Him entirely, and is not limited or cut short by any Before or After, for indeed in him there is no past or future.

XIX. Of the other titles, some are evidently names of His Authority, others of His Government of the world, and of this viewed under a twofold aspect, the one before the other in the Incarnation. For instance the Almighty, the King of Glory, or of The Ages, or of The Powers, or of The Beloved, or of Kings. Or again the Lord of Sabaoth, that is of Hosts, or of Powers, or of Lords; these are clearly titles belonging to His Authority. But the God either of Salvation or of Vengeance, or of Peace, or of Righteousness; or of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of all the spiritual Israel that seeth God,—these belong to His Government. For since we are governed by these three things, the fear of punishment, the hope of salvation and of glory besides, and the practice of the virtues by which these are attained, the Name of the God of Vengeance governs fear, and that of the God of Salvation our hope, and that of the God of Virtues our practice; that whoever attains to any of these may, as carrying God in himself, press on yet more unto perfection, and to that affinity which arises out of virtues. Now these are Names common to the Godhead, but the Proper Name of the

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3681 [Exod. iii. 14.](#)

3682 The derivation of Θεός from θέειν (to run) is given by Plato (Crat., 397c). That from Αἶθειν (to blaze) is found also in S. John Damascene (De Fide Orth., I, 12), who however may have borrowed it from S. Gregory, or from the source whence the latter took it. S. Athanasius also admits it (De Defin., 11). Other definitions are, according to Suicer, (1) θεᾶσθαι (to see), e.g. Greg. Nyss. in Cant. Hom., V. (2) θεωρεῖν (to contemplate), Athan. Quæst Misc., Qu. XI. θεός λέγεται ἀπὸ τὸ θεωρεῖν τὰ πάντα, οἰονεὶ θεωρὸς καὶ θεός, ἡγουν θεάτης πάντων. (3) τιθέναι (to place), Clem., Al. Strom., l. s. fin., θεός παρὰ τὴν θέσιν εἴρηται.

3683 [Deut. iv. 24.](#)

3684 Lord (Κύριος) is simply the LXX. rendering of the word which in reading Hebrew is substituted for the Ineffable Name. Thus in the passages quoted, had the original language been used, the Four-Lettered Name would have appeared.

3685 [Isa. xlii. 8.](#)

3686 [Amos ix. 6.](#)

Unoriginate is Father, and that of the unoriginately Begotten is Son, and that of the unbegottenly Proceeding or going forth is The Holy Ghost. Let us proceed then to the Names of the Son, which were our starting point in this part of our argument.

XX. In my opinion He is called Son because He is identical with the Father in Essence; and not only for this reason, but also because He is Of Him. And He is called Only-Begotten, not because He is the only Son and of the Father alone, and only a Son; but also because the manner of His Sonship is peculiar to Himself and not shared by bodies. And He is called the Word, because He is related to the Father as Word to Mind; not only on account of His passionless Generation, but also because of the Union, and of His declaratory function. Perhaps too this relation might be compared to that between the Definition and the Thing defined<sup>3687</sup> since this also is called Λόγος.<sup>3688</sup> For, it says, he that hath mental perception of the Son (for this is the meaning of Hath Seen) hath also perceived the Father;<sup>3689</sup> and the Son is a concise demonstration and easy setting forth of the Father's Nature. For every thing that is begotten is a silent word of him that begat it. And if any one should say that this Name was given Him because He exists in all things that are, he would not be wrong. For what is there that consists but by the word? He is also called Wisdom, as the Knowledge of things divine and human. For how is it possible that He Who made all things should be ignorant of the reasons of what He has made? And Power, as the Sustainer of all created things, and the Furnisher to them of power to keep themselves together. And Truth, as being in nature One and not many (for truth is one and falsehood is manifold), and as the pure Seal of the Father and His most unerring Impress. And the Image as of one substance with Him, and because He is of the Father, and not the Father of Him. For this is of the Nature of an Image, to be the reproduction of its Archetype, and of that whose name it bears; only that there is more here. For in ordinary language an image is a motionless representation of that which has motion; but in this case it is the living reproduction of the Living One, and is more exactly like than was Seth to Adam,<sup>3690</sup> or any son to his father. For such is the nature of simple Existences, that it is not correct to say of them that they are Like in one particular and Unlike in another; but they are a complete resemblance, and should rather be called Identical than Like. Moreover he is called Light as being the Brightness of souls cleansed by word and life. For if ignorance and sin be darkness, knowledge and a godly life will be Light.... And He is called Life, because He is Light, and is the constituting and creating Power of every reasonable soul. For in Him we live and move and have our being,<sup>3691</sup> according to the double power of that Breathing into us; for we were

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3687 Of the oration on Christmas Day, where He is called ὁ τοῦ Πατρὸς ὄρος καὶ λόγος, and see Note there.

3688 Ratio (relation; sometimes reason) Sermo (discourse) and Verbum (Word) are all renderings of Λόγος.

3689 [John xiv. 9.](#)

3690 [Gen. v. 3.](#)

3691 [Acts xvii. 28.](#)

all inspired by Him with breath,<sup>3692</sup> and as many of us as were capable of it, and in so far as we open the mouth of our mind, with God the Holy Ghost. He is Righteousness, because He distributes according to that which we deserve, and is a righteous Arbiter both for those who are under the Law and for those who are under Grace, for soul and body, so that the former should rule, and the latter obey, and the higher have supremacy over the lower; that the worse may not rise in rebellion against the better. He is Sanctification, as being Purity, that the Pure may be contained by Purity. And Redemption, because He sets us free, who were held captive under sin, giving Himself a Ransom for us, the Sacrifice to make expiation for the world. And Resurrection, because He raises up from hence, and brings to life again us, who were slain by sin.

XXI. These names however are still common to Him Who is above us, and to Him Who came for our sake. But others are peculiarly our own, and belong to that nature which He assumed. So He is called Man, not only that through His Body He may be apprehended by embodied creatures, whereas otherwise this would be impossible because of His incomprehensible nature; but also that by Himself He may sanctify humanity, and be as it were a leaven to the whole lump; and by uniting to Himself that which was condemned may release it from all condemnation, becoming for all men all things that we are, except sin;—body, soul, mind and all through which death reaches—and thus He became Man, who is the combination of all these; God in visible form, because He retained that which is perceived by mind alone. He is Son of Man, both on account of Adam, and of the Virgin from Whom He came; from the one as a forefather, from the other as His Mother, both in accordance with the law of generation, and apart from it. He is Christ, because of His Godhead. For this is the Anointing of His Manhood, and does not, as is the case with all other Anointed Ones, sanctify by its action, but by the Presence in His Fulness of the Anointing One; the effect of which is that That which anoints is called Man, and makes that which is anointed God. He is The Way, because He leads us through Himself; The Door, as letting us in; the Shepherd, as making us dwell in a place of green pastures,<sup>3693</sup> and bringing us up by waters of rest, and leading us there, and protecting us from wild beasts, converting the erring, bringing back that which was lost, binding up that which was broken, guarding the strong, and bringing them together in the Fold beyond, with words of pastoral knowledge. The Sheep, as the Victim: The Lamb, as being perfect: the Highpriest, as the Offerer; Melchisedec, as without Mother in that Nature which is above us, and without Father in ours; and without genealogy above (for who, it says, shall declare His generation?) and moreover, as King of Salem, which means Peace, and King of Righteousness, and as receiving tithes from Patriarchs, when they prevail over powers of evil. They are the titles of the Son.

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3692 [Gen. ii. 7.](#)

3693 [Ps. xxiii. 2.](#)

Walk through them, those that are lofty in a godlike manner; those that belong to the body in a manner suitable to them; or rather, altogether in a godlike manner, that thou mayest become a god, ascending from below, for His sake Who came down from on high for ours. In all and above all keep to this, and thou shalt never err, either in the loftier or the lowlier names; Jesus Christ is the Same yesterday and to-day in the Incarnation, and in the Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

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The Fifth Theological Oration.

On the Holy Spirit.

I. Such then is the account of the Son, and in this manner He has escaped those who would stone Him, passing through the midst of them.<sup>3694</sup> For the Word is not stoned, but casts stones when He pleases; and uses a sling against wild beasts—that is, words—approaching the Mount<sup>3695</sup> in an unholy way. But, they go on, what have you to say about the Holy Ghost? From whence are you bringing in upon us this strange God, of Whom Scripture is silent? And even they who keep within bounds as to the Son speak thus. And just as we find in the case of roads and rivers, that they split off from one another and join again, so it happens also in this case, through the superabundance of impiety, that people who differ in all other respects have here some points of agreement, so that you never can tell for certain either where they are of one mind, or where they are in conflict.

II. Now the subject of the Holy Spirit presents a special difficulty, not only because when these men have become weary in their disputations concerning the Son, they struggle with greater heat against the Spirit (for it seems to be absolutely necessary for them to have some object on which to give expression to their impiety, or life would appear to them no longer worth living), but further because we ourselves also, being worn out by the multitude of their questions, are in something of the same condition with men who have lost their appetite; who having taken a dislike to some particular kind of food, shrink from all food; so we in like manner have an aversion from all discussions. Yet may the Spirit grant it to us, and then the discourse will proceed, and God will be glorified. Well then, we will leave to others<sup>3696</sup> who have worked upon this subject for us as well as for themselves, as we have worked upon it for them, the task of examining carefully and distinguishing in how many senses the word Spirit or the word Holy is used and understood in Holy Scripture, with the evidence suitable to such an enquiry; and of shewing how besides these the combination of the two words—I mean, Holy Spirit—is used in a peculiar sense; but we will apply ourselves to the remainder of the subject.

III. They then who are angry with us on the ground that we are bringing in a strange or interpolated God, viz.:—the Holy Ghost, and who fight so very hard for the letter, should know that they are afraid where no fear is;<sup>3697</sup> and I would have them clearly understand that their love for the letter is but a cloak for their impiety, as shall be shewn later on, when we refute their objections to the utmost of our power. But we have so much confidence in

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3694 [Luke iv. 29, 30.](#)

3695 [Exod. xix. 13.](#)

3696 E.g. S. Basil and S. Gregory of Nyssa.

3697 [Ps. liii. 5.](#)

the Deity of the Spirit Whom we adore,<sup>3698</sup> that we will begin our teaching concerning His Godhead by fitting to Him the Names which belong to the Trinity, even though some persons may think us too bold. The Father was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. The Son was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. The Other Comforter was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world.<sup>3699</sup> Was and Was and Was, but Was One Thing. Light thrice repeated; but One Light and One God. This was what David represented to himself long before when he said, In Thy Light shall we see Light.<sup>3700</sup> And now we have both seen and proclaim concisely and simply the doctrine<sup>3701</sup> of God the Trinity, comprehending out of Light (the Father), Light (the Son), in Light (the Holy Ghost). He that rejects it, let him reject it,<sup>3702</sup> and he that doeth iniquity, let him do iniquity; we proclaim that which we have understood. We will get us up into a high mountain,<sup>3703</sup> and will shout, if we be not heard, below; we will exalt the Spirit; we will not be afraid; or if we are afraid, it shall be of keeping silence, not of proclaiming.

IV. If ever there was a time when the Father was not, then there was a time when the Son was not. If ever there was a time when the Son was not, then there was a time when the Spirit was not. If the One was from the beginning, then the Three were so too. If you throw down the One, I am bold to assert that you do not set up the other Two. For what profit is there in an imperfect Godhead? Or rather, what Godhead can there be if It is not perfect? And how can that be perfect which lacks something of perfection? And surely there is something lacking if it hath not the Holy, and how would it have this if it were without the Spirit? For either holiness is something different from Him, and if so let some one tell me what it is conceived to be; or if it is the same, how is it not from the beginning, as if it were better for God to be at one time imperfect and apart from the Spirit? If He is not from the beginning, He is in the same rank with myself, even though a little before me; for we are both parted from Godhead by time. If He is in the same rank with myself, how can He make me God, or join me with Godhead?



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3698 *πρεσβεύειν* is not commonly used in this sense, but there are classical instances of it (e.g. *Æsch. Choeph.*, 488; *Soph., Trach.*, 1065, and it occurs also in Plato), and this is the sense in which it is here rendered by Billius; but a V. L. of some mss. gives the meaning, whose cause we are pleading, which is more frequent use of the word.

3699 [John i. 9.](#)

3700 [Ps. xxxvi. 9.](#)

3701 Al. The Confession.

3702 [Isa. xxi. 2.](#)

3703 [Ib. xl. 9.](#)



V. Or rather, let me reason with you about Him from a somewhat earlier point, for we have already discussed the Trinity. The Sadducees altogether denied the existence of the Holy Spirit, just as they did that of Angels and the Resurrection; rejecting, I know not upon what ground, the important testimonies concerning Him in the Old Testament. And of the Greeks those who are more inclined to speak of God, and who approach nearest to us, have formed some conception of Him, as it seems to me, though they have differed as to His Name, and have addressed Him as the Mind of the World, or the External Mind, and the like. But of the wise men amongst ourselves, some have conceived of him as an Activity, some as a Creature, some as God; and some have been uncertain which to call Him, out of reverence for Scripture, they say, as though it did not make the matter clear either way. And therefore they neither worship Him nor treat Him with dishonour, but take up a neutral position, or rather a very miserable one, with respect to Him. And of those who consider Him to be God, some are orthodox in mind only, while others venture to be so with the lips also. And I have heard of some who are even more clever, and measure Deity; and these agree with us that there are Three Conceptions; but they have separated these from one another so completely as to make one of them infinite both in essence and power, and the second in power but not in essence, and the third circumscribed in both; thus imitating in another way those who call them the Creator, the Co-operator, and the Minister, and consider that the same order and dignity which belongs to these names is also a sequence in the facts.

VI. But we cannot enter into any discussion with those who do not even believe in His existence, nor with the Greek babblers (for we would not be enriched in our argument with the oil of sinners).<sup>3704</sup> With the others, however, we will argue thus. The Holy Ghost must certainly be conceived of either as in the category of the Self-existent, or as in that of the things which are contemplated in another; of which classes those who are skilled in such matters call the one Substance and the other Accident. Now if He were an Accident, He would be an Activity of God, for what else, or of whom else, could He be, for surely this is what most avoids composition? And if He is an Activity, He will be effected, but will not effect and will cease to exist as soon as He has been effected, for this is the nature of an Activity. How is it then that He acts and says such and such things, and defines, and is grieved, and is angered, and has all the qualities which belong clearly to one that moves, and not to movement? But if He is a Substance and not an attribute of Substance, He will be conceived of either as a Creature of God, or as God. For anything between these two, whether having nothing in common with either, or a compound of both, not even they who invented the goat-stag could imagine. Now, if He is a creature, how do we believe in Him, how are we made perfect in Him? For it is not the same thing to believe IN a thing and to

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3704 [Ps. cxli. 5.](#)

believe About it. The one belongs to Deity, the other to—any thing. But if He is God, then He is neither a creature, nor a thing made, nor a fellow servant, nor any of these lowly appellations.

VII. There—the word is with you. Let the slings be let go; let the syllogism be woven. Either He is altogether Unbegotten, or else He is Begotten. If He is Unbegotten, there are two Unoriginates. If he is Begotten, you must make a further subdivision. He is so either by the Father or by the Son. And if by the Father, there are two Sons, and they are Brothers. And you may make them twins if you like, or the one older and the other younger, since you are so very fond of the bodily conceptions. But if by the Son, then such a one will say, we get a glimpse of a Grandson God, than which nothing could be more absurd. For my part however, if I saw the necessity of the distinction, I should have acknowledged the facts without fear of the names. For it does not follow that because the Son is the Son in some higher relation (inasmuch as we could not in any other way than this point out that He is of God and Consubstantial), it would also be necessary to think that all the names of this lower world and of our kindred should be transferred to the Godhead. Or may be you would consider our God to be a male, according to the same arguments, because he is called God and Father, and that Deity is feminine, from the gender of the word, and Spirit neuter, because It has nothing to do with generation; But if you would be silly enough to say, with the old myths and fables, that God begat the Son by a marriage with His own Will, we should be introduced<sup>3705</sup> to the Hermaphrodite god of Marcion and Valentinus<sup>3706</sup> who imagined these newfangled Æons.

VIII. But since we do not admit your first division, which declares that there is no mean between Begotten and Unbegotten, at once, along with your magnificent division, away go your Brothers and your Grandsons, as when the first link of an intricate chain is broken they are broken with it, and disappear from your system of divinity. For, tell me, what position will you assign to that which Proceeds, which has started up between the two terms of your division, and is introduced by a better Theologian than you, our Saviour Himself? Or perhaps you have taken that word out of your Gospels for the sake of your Third Testament, The Holy Ghost, which proceedeth from the Father;<sup>3707</sup> Who, inasmuch as He proceedeth

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3705 Irenæus. I., 6.

3706 It would seem that S. Gregory commonly confused Marcion with Marcus, one of the leaders of the Gnostic School of Valentinus. In another place he speaks of the Æons of Marcion and Valentinus, evidently meaning Marcus; for the system of Marcion is characterized by an entire absence of any theory of Emanations (Æons). Similarly there is no trace in Marcion of this notion of a hermaphrodite Deity, but there is something very like it in the account of Marcus given by S. Irenæus.

3707 [John xv. 26](#). “It did not fall within this Father’s (Greg. Naz.) province to develop the doctrine of the Procession. He is content to shew that the Spirit was not Generated, seeing that according to Christ’s own teaching He Proceeds from the Father. The question of His relation to the Son is alien to S. Gregory Nazianzen’s

from That Source, is no Creature; and inasmuch as He is not Begotten is no Son; and inasmuch as He is between the Unbegotten and the Begotten is God. And thus escaping the toils of your syllogisms, He has manifested himself as God, stronger than your divisions. What then is Procession? Do you tell me what is the Unbegottenness of the Father, and I will explain to you the physiology of the Generation of the Son and the Procession of the Spirit, and we shall both of us be frenzy-stricken for prying into the mystery of God.<sup>3708</sup> And who are we to do these things, we who cannot even see what lies at our feet, or number the sand of the sea, or the drops of rain, or the days of Eternity, much less enter into the Depths of God, and supply an account of that Nature which is so unspeakable and transcending all words?

IX. What then, say they, is there lacking to the Spirit which prevents His being a Son, for if there were not something lacking He would be a Son? We assert that there is nothing lacking—for God has no deficiency. But the difference of manifestation, if I may so express myself, or rather of their mutual relations one to another, has caused the difference of their Names. For indeed it is not some deficiency in the Son which prevents His being Father (for Sonship is not a deficiency), and yet He is not Father. According to this line of argument there must be some deficiency in the Father, in respect of His not being Son. For the Father is not Son, and yet this is not due to either deficiency or subjection of Essence; but the very fact of being Unbegotten or Begotten, or Proceeding has given the name of Father to the First, of the Son to the Second, and of the Third, Him of Whom we are speaking, of the Holy Ghost that the distinction of the Three Persons may be preserved in the one nature and dignity of the Godhead. For neither is the Son Father, for the Father is One, but He is what the Father is; nor is the Spirit Son because He is of God, for the Only-begotten is One, but He is what the Son is. The Three are One in Godhead, and the One Three in properties; so that neither is the Unity a Sabellian one,<sup>3709</sup> nor does the Trinity countenance the present evil distinction.



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purpose; nor does it seem to have once been raised in the great battle between Arianism and Catholicity which was fought out at Constantinople during Gregory's Episcopate" (Swete on the Procession, p. 107).

3708 [Ecclus. i. 2.](#)

3709 Sabellius, who taught at Rome during the Pontificate of Callistus, was by far the most important heresiarch of his period, and his opinions by far the most dangerous. While strongly emphasizing the fundamental doctrine of the Divine Unity, he also admitted in terms a Trinity, but his Trinity was not that of the Catholic dogma, for he represented it as only a threefold manifestation of the one Divine Essence. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are in his view only temporary phænomena, which fulfil their mission, and then return into the abstract Monad. Dr. Schaff (Hist. of the Church, Ante-Nicene Period, p. 582) gives the following concise account of his teaching: "The unity of God, without distinction in itself, unfolds or extends itself in the course of the word's development

X. What then? Is the Spirit God? Most certainly. Well then, is He Consubstantial? Yes, if He is God. Grant me, says my opponent, that there spring from the same Source One who is a Son, and One who is not a Son, and these of One Substance with the Source, and I admit a God and a God. Nay, if you will grant me that there is another God and another nature of God I will give you the same Trinity with the same name and facts. But since God is One and the Supreme Nature is One, how can I present to you the Likeness? Or will you seek it again in lower regions and in your own surroundings? It is very shameful, and not only shameful, but very foolish, to take from things below a guess at things above, and from a fluctuating nature at the things that are unchanging, and as Isaiah says, to seek the Living among the dead.<sup>3710</sup> But yet I will try, for your sake, to give you some assistance for your argument, even from that source. I think I will pass over other points, though I might bring forward many from animal history, some generally known, others only known to a few, of what nature has contrived with wonderful art in connection with the generation of animals. For not only are likes said to beget likes, and things diverse to beget things diverse, but also likes to be begotten by things diverse, and things diverse by likes. And if we may believe the story, there is yet another mode of generation, when an animal is self-consumed and self-begotten.<sup>3711</sup> There are also creatures which depart in some sort from their true natures, and undergo change and transformation from one creature into another, by a magnificence of nature. And indeed sometimes in the same species part may be generated and part not; and yet all of one substance; which is more like our present subject. I will just mention one fact of our own nature which every one knows, and then I will pass on to another part of the subject.

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in three different forms and periods of revelation, and after the completion of redemption returns into Unity. The Father reveals Himself in the giving of the Law or the Old Testament Economy (not in the creation also, which in his view precedes the Trinitarian revelation); the Son in the Incarnation; the Holy Ghost in inspiration; the revelation of the Son ends with the Ascension; that of the Spirit goes on in generation and sanctification. He illustrates the Trinitarian revelation by comparing the Father to the disc of the sun, the Son to its enlightening power, the Spirit to its warming influence. He is also said to have likened the Father to the body, the Son to the soul, the Holy Ghost to the spirit of man: but this is unworthy of his evident speculative discrimination. His view of the Logos too is peculiar. The Logos is not identical with the Son, but is the Monad itself in its transition to Triad; that is, God conceived as vital motion and creating principle; the Speaking God, as distinguished from the Silent God. Each Person (or Aspect—the word is ambiguous) is another Uttering; and the Three Persons together are only successive evolutions of the Logos, or world-ward aspect of the Divine Nature. As the Logos proceeded from God, so He at last returns into Him, and the process of Trinitarian development closes.”

3710 [Isa. viii. 19.](#)

3711 i.e. the Phœnix. Hdt., ii. 37.

XI. What was Adam? A creature of God. What then was Eve? A fragment of the creature. And what was Seth? The begotten of both. Does it then seem to you that Creature and Fragment and Begotten are the same thing? Of course it does not. But were not these persons consubstantial? Of course they were. Well then, here it is an acknowledged fact that different persons may have the same substance. I say this, not that I would attribute creation or fraction or any property of body to the Godhead (let none of your contenders for a word be down upon me again), but that I may contemplate in these, as on a stage, things which are objects of thought alone. For it is not possible to trace out any image exactly to the whole extent of the truth. But, they say, what is the meaning of all this? For is not the one an offspring, and the other a something else of the One? Did not both Eve and Seth come from the one Adam? And were they both begotten by him? No; but the one was a fragment of him, and the other was begotten by him. And yet the two were one and the same thing; both were human beings; no one will deny that. Will you then give up your contention against the Spirit, that He must be either altogether begotten, or else cannot be consubstantial, or be God; and admit from human examples the possibility of our position? I think it will be well for you, unless you are determined to be very quarrelsome, and to fight against what is proved to demonstration.

XII. But, he says, who in ancient or modern times ever worshipped the Spirit? Who ever prayed to Him? Where is it written that we ought to worship Him, or to pray to Him, and whence have you derived this tenet of yours? We will give the more perfect reason hereafter, when we discuss the question of the unwritten; for the present it will suffice to say that it is the Spirit in Whom we worship, and in Whom we pray. For Scripture says, God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.<sup>3712</sup> And again,—We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;<sup>3713</sup> and I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the understanding also;<sup>3714</sup>—that is, in the mind and in the Spirit. Therefore to adore or to pray to the Spirit seems to me to be simply Himself offering prayer or adoration to Himself. And what godly or learned man would disapprove of this, because in fact the adoration of One is the adoration of the Three, because of the equality of honour and Deity between the Three? So I will not be frightened by the argument that all things are said to have been made by the Son;<sup>3715</sup> as if the Holy Spirit also were one of

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3712 [John iv. 24.](#)

3713 [Rom. viii. 26.](#)

3714 [1 Cor. xiv. 15.](#)

3715 [John i. 2.](#)

these things. For it says all things that were made, and not simply all things. For the Father was not, nor were any of the things that were not made. Prove that He was made, and then give Him to the Son, and number Him among the creatures; but until you can prove this you will gain nothing for your impiety from this comprehensive phrase. For if He was made, it was certainly through Christ; I myself would not deny that. But if He was not made, how can He be either one of the All, or through Christ? Cease then to dishonour the Father in your opposition to the Only-begotten (for it is no real honour, by presenting to Him a creature to rob Him of what is more valuable, a Son), and to dishonour the Son in your opposition to the Spirit. For He is not the Maker of a Fellow servant, but He is glorified with One of co-equal honour. Rank no part of the Trinity with thyself, lest thou fall away from the Trinity; cut not off from Either the One and equally august Nature; because if thou overthrow any of the Three thou wilt have overthrown the whole. Better to take a meagre view of the Unity than to venture on a complete impiety.

XIII. Our argument has now come to its principal point; and I am grieved that a problem that was long dead, and that had given way to faith, is now stirred up afresh; yet it is necessary to stand against these praters, and not to let judgment go by default, when we have the Word on our side, and are pleading the cause of the Spirit. If, say they, there is God and God and God, how is it that there are not Three Gods, or how is it that what is glorified is not a plurality of Principles? Who is it who say this? Those who have reached a more complete ungodliness, or even those who have taken the secondary part; I mean who are moderate in a sense in respect of the Son. For my argument is partly against both in common, partly against these latter in particular. What I have to say in answer to these is as follows:—What right have you who worship the Son, even though you have revolted from the Spirit, to call us Tritheists? Are not you Ditheists? For if you deny also the worship of the Only Begotten, you have clearly ranged yourself among our adversaries. And why should we deal kindly with you as not *quite* dead? But if you do worship Him, and are so far in the way of salvation, we will ask you what reasons you have to give for your ditheism, if you are charged with it? If there is in you a word of wisdom answer, and open to us also a way to an answer. For the very same reason with which you will repel a charge of Ditheism will prove sufficient for us against one of Tritheism. And thus we shall win the day by making use of you our accusers as our Advocates, than which nothing can be more generous.

XIV. What is our quarrel and dispute with both? To us there is One God, for the Godhead is One, and all that proceedeth from Him is referred to One, though we believe in Three Persons. For one is not more and another less God; nor is One before and another after; nor are They divided in will or parted in power; nor can you find here any of the qualities of divisible things; but the Godhead is, to speak concisely, undivided in separate Persons; and there is one mingling of Light, as it were of three suns joined to each other. When then we look at the Godhead, or the First Cause, or the Monarchia, that which we

conceive is One; but when we look at the Persons in Whom the Godhead dwells, and at Those Who timelessly and with equal glory have their Being from the First Cause—there are Three Whom we worship.

XV. What of that, they will say perhaps; do not the Greeks also believe in one Godhead, as their more advanced philosophers declare? And with us Humanity is one, namely the entire race; but yet they have many gods, not One, just as there are many men. But in this case the common nature has a unity which is only conceivable in thought; and the individuals are parted from one another very far indeed, both by time and by dispositions and by power. For we are not only compound beings, but also contrasted beings, both with one another and with ourselves; nor do we remain entirely the same for a single day, to say nothing of a whole lifetime, but both in body and in soul are in a perpetual state of flow and change. And perhaps the same may be said of the Angels<sup>3716</sup> and the whole of that superior nature which is second to the Trinity alone; although they are simple in some measure and more fixed in good, owing to their nearness to the highest Good.

XVI. Nor do those whom the Greeks worship as gods, and (to use their own expression) *dæmons*, need us in any respect for their accusers, but are convicted upon the testimony of their own theologians, some as subject to passion, some as given to faction, and full of innumerable evils and changes, and in a state of opposition, not only to one another, but even to their first causes, whom they call *Oceani* and *Tethyes* and *Phanetes*, and by several other names; and last of all a certain god who hated his children through his lust of rule, and swallowed up all the rest through his greediness that he might become the father of all men and gods whom he miserably devoured, and then vomited forth again. And if these are but myths and fables, as they say in order to escape the shamefulness of the story, what will they say in reference to the dictum that all things are divided into three parts,<sup>3717</sup> and that each god presides over a different part of the Universe, having a distinct province as well as a distinct rank? But our faith is not like this, nor is this the portion of Jacob, says my Theologian.<sup>3718</sup> But each of these Persons possesses Unity, not less with that which is United to it than with itself, by reason of the identity of Essence and Power.<sup>3719</sup> And this is the account of the Unity, so far as we have apprehended it. If then this account is the true one, let us thank God for the glimpse He has granted us; if it is not let us seek for a better.

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3716 “Similarly it is clear concerning the Angels, that they have a being incapable of change, so far as pertains to their nature, with a capacity of change as to choice, and of intelligence and affections and places, in their own manner” (S. Thomas Aq., *Summa*, I., x., 5).

3717 Homer, *Il.*, xiv., 189.

3718 [Jer. x. 16.](#)

3719 Petavius praises this dictum, *De Trin.*, IV., xiii., 9.

XVII. As for the arguments with which you would overthrow the Union which we support, I know not whether we should say you are jesting or in earnest. For what is this argument? “Things of one essence, you say, are counted together,” and by this “counted together,” you mean that they are collected into one number.<sup>3720</sup> But things which are not of one essence are not thus counted...so that you cannot avoid speaking of three gods, according to this account, while we do not run any risk at all of it, inasmuch as we assert that they are not consubstantial. And so by a single word you have freed yourselves from trouble, and have gained a pernicious victory, for in fact you have done something like what men do when they hang themselves for fear of death. For to save yourselves trouble in your championship of the Monarchia you have denied the Godhead, and abandoned the question to your opponents. But for my part, even if labor should be necessary, I will not abandon the Object of my adoration. And yet on this point I cannot see where the difficulty is.

XVIII. You say, Things of one essence are counted together, but those which are not consubstantial are reckoned one by one. Where did you get this from? From what teachers of dogma or mythology? Do you not know that every number expresses the quantity of what is included under it, and not the nature of the things? But I am so old fashioned, or perhaps I should say so unlearned, as to use the word Three of that number of things, even if they are of a different nature, and to use One and One and One in a different way of so many units, even if they are united in essence, looking not so much at the things themselves as at the quantity of the things in respect of which the enumeration is made. But since you hold so very close to the letter (although you are contending against the letter), pray take your demonstrations from this source. There are in the Book of Proverbs three things which go well, a lion, a goat, and a cock; and to these is added a fourth;—a King making a speech before the people,<sup>3721</sup> to pass over the other sets of four which are there counted up, although things of various natures. And I find in Moses two Cherubim<sup>3722</sup> counted singly. But now, in your technology, could either the former things be called three, when they differ so greatly in their nature, or the latter be treated as units when they are so closely connected and of one nature? For if I were to speak of God and Mammon, as two masters, reckoned under one head, when they are so very different from each other, I should probably be still more laughed at for such a connumeration.

XIX. But to my mind, he says, those things are said to be connumerated and of the same essence of which the names also correspond, as Three Men, or Three gods, but not

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3720 συναριθμῆται, as when you say Three Gods, or Three Men, and the like, as you do when you reckon up things of the same sort. On the other hand, you must use the plural number in reckoning up things which differ in kind.

3721 [Prov. xxx. 29, 30. 31.](#)

3722 [Exod. xxxvii. 7.](#)



Three this and that. What does this concession amount to? It is suitable to one laying down the law as to names, not to one who is asserting the truth. For I also will assert that Peter and James and John are not three or consubstantial, so long as I cannot say Three Peters, or Three Jameses, or Three Johns; for what you have reserved for common names we demand also for proper names, in accordance with your arrangement; or else you will be unfair in not conceding to others what you assume for yourself. What about John then, when in his Catholic Epistle he says that there are Three that bear witness,<sup>3723</sup> the Spirit and the Water and the Blood? Do you think he is talking nonsense? First, because he has ventured to reckon under one numeral things which are not consubstantial, though you say this ought to be done only in the case of things which are consubstantial. For who would assert that these are consubstantial? Secondly, because he has not been consistent in the way he has happened upon his terms; for after using Three in the masculine gender he adds three words which are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws which you and your grammarians have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine Three first, and then adding One and One and One in the neuter, or after a masculine One and One and One to use the Three not in the masculine but in the neuter, which you yourself disclaim in the case of Deity? What have you to say about the Crab, which may mean either an animal, or an instrument, or a constellation? And what about the Dog, now terrestrial, now aquatic, now celestial? Do you not see that three crabs or dogs are spoken of? Why of course it is so. Well then, are they therefore of one substance? None but a fool would say that. So you see how completely your argument from connumeration has broken down, and is refuted by all these instances. For if things that are of one substance are not always counted under one numeral, and things not of one substance are thus counted, and the pronunciation of the name<sup>3724</sup> once for all is used in both cases, what advantage do you gain towards your doctrine?

XX. I will look also at this further point, which is not without its bearing on the subject. One and One added together make Two; and Two resolved again becomes One and One, as is perfectly evident. If, however, elements which are added together must, as your theory

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3723 This is the famous passage of the Witnesses in [1 John v. 8](#). In some few later codices of the Vulgate are found the words which form [verse 7](#) of our A.V. But neither [verse 7](#) nor these words are to be found in any Greek ms. earlier than the Fifteenth Century; nor are they quoted by any Greek Father, and by very few and late Latin ones. They have been thought to be cited by S. Cyprian in his work on the Unity of the Church; and this citation, if a fact, would be a most important one, as it would throw back their reception to an early date. But Tischendorf (Gk. Test., Ed. viii., ad. loc.) gives reasons for believing that the quotation is only apparent, and is really of the last clause of [verse 8](#).

3724 i.e. Though the things referred to many differ essentially, yet if the name by which they are known is the same, one utterance of it with one numeral is enough to express a collection of them all.

requires, be consubstantial, and those which are separate be heterogeneous, then it will follow that the same things must be both consubstantial and heterogeneous. No: I laugh at your Counting Before and your Counting After, of which you are so proud, as if the facts themselves depended upon the order of their names. If this were so, according to the same law, since the same things are in consequence of the equality of their nature counted in Holy Scripture, sometimes in an earlier, sometimes in a later place, what prevents them from being at once more honourable and less honourable than themselves? I say the same of the names God and Lord, and of the prepositions Of Whom, and By Whom, and In Whom, by which you describe the Deity according to the rules of art for us, attributing the first to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Ghost. For what would you have done, if each of these expressions were constantly allotted to Each Person, when, the fact being that they are used of all the Persons, as is evident to those who have studied the question, you even so make them the ground of such inequality both of nature and dignity. This is sufficient for all who are not altogether wanting in sense. But since it is a matter of difficulty for you after you have once made an assault upon the Spirit, to check your rush, and not rather like a furious boar to push your quarrel to the bitter end, and to thrust yourself upon the knife until you have received the whole wound in your own breast; let us go on to see what further argument remains to you.

XXI. Over and over again you turn upon us the silence of Scripture. But that it is not a strange doctrine, nor an afterthought, but acknowledged and plainly set forth both by the ancients and many of our own day, is already demonstrated by many persons who have treated of this subject, and who have handled the Holy Scriptures, not with indifference or as a mere pastime, but have gone beneath the letter and looked into the inner meaning, and have been deemed worthy to see the hidden beauty, and have been irradiated by the light of knowledge. We, however in our turn will briefly prove it as far as may be, in order not to seem to be over-curious or improperly ambitious, building on another's foundation. But since the fact, that Scripture does not very clearly or very often write Him God in express words (as it does first the Father and afterwards the Son), becomes to you an occasion of blasphemy and of this excessive wordiness and impiety, we will release you from this inconvenience by a short discussion of things and names, and especially of their use in Holy Scripture.

XXII. Some things have no existence, but are spoken of; others which do exist are not spoken of; some neither exist nor are spoken of, and some both exist and are spoken of. Do you ask me for proof of this? I am ready to give it. According to Scripture God sleeps and is awake, is angry, walks, has the Cherubim for His Throne. And yet when did He become

liable to passion, and have you ever heard that God has a body? This then is, though not really fact, a figure of speech. For we have given names according to our own comprehension from our own attributes to those of God. His remaining silent apart from us, and as it were not caring for us, for reasons known to Himself, is what we call His sleeping; for our own sleep is such a state of inactivity. And again, His sudden turning to do us good is the waking up; for waking is the dissolution of sleep, as visitation is of turning away. And when He punishes, we say He is angry; for so it is with us, punishment is the result of anger. And His working, now here now there, we call walking; for walking is change from one place to another. His resting among the Holy Hosts, and as it were loving to dwell among them, is His sitting and being enthroned; this, too, from ourselves, for God resteth nowhere as He doth upon the Saints. His swiftness of moving is called flying, and His watchful care is called His Face, and his giving and bestowing<sup>3725</sup> is His hand; and, in a word, every other of the powers or activities of God has depicted for us some other corporeal one.

XXIII. Again, where do you get your Unbegotten and Unoriginate, those two citadels of your position, or we our Immortal? Show me these in so many words, or we shall either set them aside, or erase them as not contained in Scripture; and you are slain by your own principle, the names you rely on being overthrown, and therewith the wall of refuge in which you trusted. Is it not evident that they are due to passages which imply them, though the words do not actually occur? What are these passages?—I am the first, and I am the last,<sup>3726</sup> and before Me there was no God, neither shall there be after Me.<sup>3727</sup> For all that depends on that Am makes for my side, for it has neither beginning nor ending. When you accept this, that nothing is before Him, and that He has not an older Cause, you have implicitly given Him the titles Unbegotten and Unoriginate. And to say that He has no end of Being is to call Him Immortal and Indestructible. The first pairs, then, that I referred to are accounted for thus. But what are the things which neither exist in fact nor are said? That God is evil; that a sphere is square; that the past is present; that man is not a compound being. Have you ever known a man of such stupidity as to venture either to think or to assert any such thing? It remains to shew what are the things which exist, both in fact and in language. God, Man, Angel, Judgment, Vanity (viz., such arguments as yours), and the subversion of faith and emptying of the mystery.

XXIV. Since, then, there is so much difference in terms and things, why are you such a slave to the letter, and a partisan of the Jewish wisdom, and a follower of syllables at the expense of facts? But if, when you said twice five or twice seven, I concluded from your words that you meant Ten or Fourteen; or if, when you spoke of a rational and mortal an-

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3725 var. lect., receiving.

3726 [Isa. xli. 4.](#)

3727 [Ib. xliii. 10.](#)

imal, that you meant Man, should you think me to be talking nonsense? Surely not, because I should be merely repeating your own meaning; for words do not belong more to the speaker of them than to him who called them forth. As, then, in this case, I should have been looking, not so much at the terms used, as at the thoughts they were meant to convey; so neither, if I found something else either not at all or not clearly expressed in the Words of Scripture to be included in the meaning, should I avoid giving it utterance, out of fear of your sophistical trick about terms. In this way, then, we shall hold our own against the semi-orthodox—among whom I may not count you. For since you deny the Titles of the Son, which are so many and so clear, it is quite evident that even if you learnt a great many more and clearer ones you would not be moved to reverence. But now I will take up the argument again a little way further back, and shew you, though you are so clever, the reason for this entire system of secresy.

XXV. There have been in the whole period of the duration of the world two conspicuous changes of men's lives, which are also called two Testaments,<sup>3728</sup> or, on account of the wide fame of the matter, two Earthquakes; the one from idols to the Law, the other from the Law to the Gospel. And we are taught in the Gospel of a third earthquake, namely, from this Earth to that which cannot be shaken or moved.<sup>3729</sup> Now the two Testaments are alike in this respect, that the change was not made on a sudden, nor at the first movement of the endeavour. Why not (for this is a point on which we must have information)? That no violence might be done to us, but that we might be moved by persuasion. For nothing that is involuntary is durable; like streams or trees which are kept back by force. But that which is voluntary is more durable and safe. The former is due to one who uses force, the latter is ours; the one is due to the gentleness of God, the other to a tyrannical authority. Wherefore God did not think it behoved Him to benefit the unwilling, but to do good to the willing. And therefore like a Tutor or Physician He partly removes and partly condones ancestral habits, conceding some little of what tended to pleasure, just as medical men do with their patients, that their medicine may be taken, being artfully blended with what is nice. For it is no very easy matter to change from those habits which custom and use have made honourable. For instance, the first cut off the idol, but left the sacrifices; the second, while it destroyed the sacrifices did not forbid circumcision.<sup>3730</sup> Then, when once men had submitted to the curtailment, they also yielded that which had been conceded to them;<sup>3731</sup> in the first



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3728 [Heb. xii. 26.](#)

3729 Referring to the earthquake at the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai ([Heb. xiii.](#)), and to the prophesy of Haggai ([ii. 6](#)), with reference to the Incarnation. The third great earthquake is that of the end of the world ([Heb. xii. 26](#)).

3730 [Acts xvi. 3.](#)

3731 [Ib. xxi. 26.](#)

instance the sacrifices, in the second circumcision; and became instead of Gentiles, Jews, and instead of Jews, Christians, being beguiled into the Gospel by gradual changes. Paul is a proof of this; for having at one time administered circumcision, and submitted to legal purification, he advanced till he could say, and I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?<sup>3732</sup> His former conduct belonged to the temporary dispensation, his latter to maturity.

XXVI. To this I may compare the case of Theology<sup>3733</sup> except that it proceeds the reverse way. For in the case by which I have illustrated it the change is made by successive subtractions; whereas here perfection is reached by additions. For the matter stands thus. The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us, and supplies us with a clearer demonstration of Himself. For it was not safe, when the Godhead of the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son; nor when that of the Son was not yet received to burden us further (if I may use so bold an expression) with the Holy Ghost; lest perhaps people might, like men loaded with food beyond their strength, and presenting eyes as yet too weak to bear it to the sun's light, risk the loss even of that which was within the reach of their powers; but that by gradual additions, and, as David says, Goings up, and advances and progress from glory to glory,<sup>3734</sup> the Light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated. For this reason it was, I think, that He *gradually* came to dwell in the Disciples, measuring Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him, at the beginning of the Gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues. And indeed it is by little and little that He is declared by Jesus, as you will learn for yourself if you will read more carefully. I will ask the Father, He says, and He will send you another Comforter, even the spirit of Truth.<sup>3735</sup> This He said that He might not seem to be a rival God, or to make His discourses to them by another authority. Again, He shall send Him, but it is in My Name. He leaves out the I will ask, but He keeps the Shall send,<sup>3736</sup> then again, I will send,—His own dignity. Then shall come,<sup>3737</sup> the authority of the Spirit.

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3732 [Galat. vii. 7–17.](#)

3733 Theology is here used in a restricted sense, as denoting simply the doctrine of the Deity of the Son or Logos. It is very frequently used in this limited sense; examples of which may readily be found in Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, Chrysostom, and others. A similar use occurs in Orat. XXXVIII., c. 8, in which passage θεολογία is contrasted with οἰκονομία, the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity with that of the Incarnation.

3734 [Ps. lxxxiv. 7, and 2 Cor. iii. 18.](#)

3735 [John xiv. 16, 17.](#)

3736 [John xvi. 7.](#)

3737 [Ib. xvi. 8.](#)

XXVII. You see lights breaking upon us, gradually; and the order of Theology, which it is better for us to keep, neither proclaiming things too suddenly, nor yet keeping them hidden to the end. For the former course would be unscientific, the latter atheistical; and the former would be calculated to startle outsiders, the latter to alienate our own people. I will add another point to what I have said; one which may readily have come into the mind of some others, but which I think a fruit of my own thought. Our Saviour had some things which, He said, could not be borne at that time by His disciples<sup>3738</sup> (though they were filled with many teachings), perhaps for the reasons I have mentioned; and therefore they were hidden. And again He said that all things should be taught us by the Spirit when He should come to dwell amongst us.<sup>3739</sup> Of these things one, I take it, was the Deity of the Spirit Himself, made clear later on when such knowledge should be seasonable and capable of being received after our Saviour's restoration, when it would no longer be received with incredulity because of its marvellous character. For what greater thing than this did either He promise, or the Spirit teach. If indeed anything is to be considered great and worthy of the Majesty of God, which was either promised or taught.

XXVIII. This, then, is my position with regard to these things, and I hope it may be always my position, and that of whosoever is dear to me; to worship God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, One Godhead, undivided in honour and glory and substance and kingdom, as one of our own inspired philosophers<sup>3740</sup> not long departed shewed. Let him not see the rising of the Morning Star, as Scripture saith,<sup>3741</sup> nor the glory of its brightness, who is otherwise minded, or who follows the temper of the times, at one time being of one mind and of another at another time, and thinking unsoundly in the highest matters. For if He is not to be worshipped, how can He deify me by Baptism? but if He is to be worshipped, surely He is an Object of adoration, and if an Object of adoration He must be God; the one is linked to the other, a truly golden and saving chain. And indeed from the Spirit comes our New Birth, and from the New Birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of Him from Whom it is derived.

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3738 [Ib. xvi. 12.](#)

3739 [Ib. xiv. 26.](#)

3740 Perhaps S. Gregory Thaumaturgus is meant. He was born about a.d. 210. The date of his death is uncertain, but was probably not before 270. He was Bishop of Neocæsarea in Pontus. Amongst his works was an Exposition of the Faith, which he is said to have received by direct revelation, and in it the words in the text were contained. S. Gregory in another Oration refers to the closing sentences as the substance of the Formula itself: "There is nothing created or servile in the Trinity, nor anything superinduced, as though previously non-existing and introduced afterwards. Never therefore, was the Son wanting to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son; but there is ever the same Trinity, unchangeable and unalterable"(Reynolds, in Dict. Biog.).

3741 [Job iii. 9.](#)

XXIX. This, then, is what may be said by one who admits the silence of Scripture. But now the swarm of testimonies shall burst upon you from which the Deity of the Holy Ghost<sup>3742</sup> shall be shewn to all who are not excessively stupid, or else altogether enemies to the Spirit, to be most clearly recognized in Scripture. Look at these facts:—Christ is born; the Spirit is His Forerunner. He is baptized; the Spirit bears witness. He is tempted; the Spirit leads Him up.<sup>3743</sup> He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes His place. What great things are there in the idea of God which are not in His power?<sup>3744</sup> What titles which belong to God are not applied to Him, except only Unbegotten and Begotten? For it was needful that the distinctive properties of the Father and the Son should remain peculiar to Them, lest there should be confusion in the Godhead Which brings all things, even disorder<sup>3745</sup> itself, into due arrangement and good order. Indeed I tremble when I think of the abundance of the titles, and how many Names they outrage who fall foul of the Spirit. He is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Mind of Christ, the Spirit of The Lord, and Himself The Lord, the Spirit of Adoption, of Truth, of Liberty; the Spirit of Wisdom, of Understanding, of Counsel, of Might, of Knowledge, of Godliness, of the Fear of God. For He is the Maker of all these, filling all with His Essence, containing all things, filling the world in His Essence, yet incapable of being comprehended in His power by the world; good, upright, princely, by nature not by adoption; sanctifying, not sanctified; measuring, not measured; shared, not sharing; filling, not filled; containing, not contained; inherited, glorified, reckoned with the Father and the Son; held out as a threat;<sup>3746</sup> the Finger of God; fire like God; to manifest, as I take it, His consubstantiality); the Creator-Spirit, Who by Baptism and by Resurrection creates anew; the Spirit That knoweth all things, That teacheth, That bloweth where and to what extent He listeth; That guideth, talketh, sendeth forth, separateth, is angry or tempted; That revealeth, illumineth, quickeneth, or rather is the very Light and Life; That maketh Temples; That deifieth; That perfecteth so as even to anticipate Baptism,<sup>3747</sup> yet after Baptism to be sought as a separate gift;<sup>3748</sup> That doeth all things that God doeth; divided into fiery tongues; dividing gifts; making Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers; understanding manifold, clear, piercing, undefiled, unhindered, which is the same thing as Most wise and varied in His actions; and making all things clear and plain; and of independent power, unchangeable,

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3742 [Luke i. 35; iii. 22; iv. 1.](#)

3743 [Luke iv. 1, 18.](#)

3744 [Acts ii. 4.](#)

3745 v. l. Yea, even disorder.

3746 Viz.:—where we are told that Blasphemy against Him hath never forgiveness.

3747 As in the case of the Centurion Cornelius, [Acts x. 9.](#)

3748 i.e. in Confirmation.

Almighty, all-seeing, penetrating all spirits that are intelligent, pure, most subtle (the Angel Hosts I think); and also all prophetic spirits and apostolic in the same manner and not in the same places; for they lived in different places; thus showing that He is uncircumscribed.

XXX. They who say and teach these things, and moreover call Him another Paraclete in the sense of another God, who know that blasphemy against Him alone cannot be forgiven,<sup>3749</sup> and who branded with such fearful infamy Ananias and Sapphira for having lied to the Holy Ghost, what do you think of these men?<sup>3750</sup> Do they proclaim the Spirit God, or something else? Now really, you must be extraordinarily dull and far from the Spirit if you have any doubt about this and need some one to teach you. So important then, and so vivid are His Names. Why is it necessary to lay before you the testimony contained in the very words? And whatever in this case also<sup>3751</sup> is said in more lowly fashion, as that He is Given, Sent, Divided; that He is the Gift, the Bounty, the Inspiration, the Promise, the Intercession for us, and, not to go into any further detail, any other expressions of the sort, is to be referred to the First Cause, that it may be shewn from Whom He is, and that men may not in heathen fashion admit Three Principles. For it is equally impious to confuse the Persons with the Sabellians, or to divide the Natures with the Arians.

XXXI. I have very carefully considered this matter in my own mind, and have looked at it in every point of view, in order to find some illustration of this most important subject, but I have been unable to discover any thing on earth with which to compare the nature of the Godhead. For even if I did happen upon some tiny likeness it escaped me for the most part, and left me down below with my example. I picture to myself an eye,<sup>3752</sup> a fountain, a river, as others have done before, to see if the first might be analogous to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Ghost. For in these there is no distinction in time, nor are they torn away from their connexion with each other, though they seem to be parted by three personalities. But I was afraid in the first place that I should present a flow in the Godhead, incapable of standing still; and secondly that by this figure a numerical unity would be introduced. For the eye and the spring and the river are numerically one, though in different forms.

XXXII. Again I thought of the sun and a ray and light. But here again there was a fear lest people should get an idea of composition in the Uncompounded Nature, such as there is in the Sun and the things that are in the Sun. And in the second place lest we should give Essence to the Father but deny Personality to the Others, and make Them only Powers of

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3749 [Matt. xii. 31.](#)

3750 [Acts v. 3,](#) etc.

3751 As before in the case of the Son. See above, Theol., iii. 18.

3752 Elias Cretensis says that the Eye in this passage is not to be understood of the member of the body so called, but as the Eye or the centre of a spring, the point from which the water flows.



God, existing in Him and not Personal. For neither the ray nor the light is another sun, but they are only effulgences from the Sun, and qualities of His essence. And lest we should thus, as far as the illustration goes, attribute both Being and Not-being to God, which is even more monstrous. I have also heard that some one has suggested an illustration of the following kind. A ray of the Sun flashing upon a wall and trembling with the movement of the moisture which the beam has taken up in mid air, and then, being checked by the hard body, has set up a strange quivering. For it quivers with many rapid movements, and is not one rather than it is many, nor yet many rather than one; because by the swiftness of its union and separating it escapes before the eye can see it.

XXXIII. But it is not possible for *me* to make use of even this; because it is very evident what gives the ray its motion; but there is nothing prior to God which could set Him in motion; for He is Himself the Cause of all things, and He has no prior Cause. And secondly because in this case also there is a suggestion of such things as composition, diffusion, and an unsettled and unstable nature...none of which we can suppose in the Godhead. In a word, there is nothing which presents a standing point to my mind in these illustrations from which to consider the Object which I am trying to represent to myself, unless one may indulgently accept one point of the image while rejecting the rest. Finally, then, it seems best to me to let the images and the shadows go, as being deceitful and very far short of the truth; and clinging myself to the more reverent conception, and resting upon few words, using the guidance of the Holy Ghost, keeping to the end as my genuine comrade and companion the enlightenment which I have received from Him, and passing through this world to persuade all others also to the best of my power to worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the One Godhead and Power. To Him belongs all glory and honour and might for ever and ever. Amen.

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