

THE FIVE THEOLOGICAL ORATIONS



GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

THE FIVE THEOLOGICAL ORATIONS

Translated from the Greek by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow
From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. 7, edited by Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D.

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duction. The footnote apparatus is retained where it serves the text; we have set aside those notes that pertain only to the nineteenth-century volume context, and any commentary at variance with the Orthodox confession of the Fathers themselves. We add a scripture index for the text in hand.

The texts are typeset in IM Fell English, a face cut by John Fell in seventeenth-century Oxford and freely available again through the work of Igino Marini. The Greek, where there is any, is set in Philokalia, designed for the Athonite tradition.

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THE FIVE
THEOLOGICAL ORATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO THE "THEOLOGICAL" ORATIONS

By Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow, Translators

"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.'"[1] They were preached in the Church called Anastasia, 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.

[1] 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'Athanase; un courant d'éloquence tempérée qui ne se ralentit, ni ne s'égare en aucun moment; une argumentation nerveuse sans sècheresse, 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."

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 Tri-unity of God; that is, the Doctrine that while there is but One Substance or Essence[2]

[2] "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 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

in the Godhead, and by 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

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

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*

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.)

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 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.[3]

As they viewed the Holy Ghost as sharing the Divine Nature in an even remoter degree, as being only

[3] 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.