

Gregory of Nyssa

THE LIFE OF MOSES

TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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PREFACE

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trines and to the doctrines of the fathers will find himself between two antagonists.¹⁹ For the foreigner in worship is opposed to the Hebrew teaching, and contentiously strives to appear stronger than the Israelite. And so he seems to be to many of the more superficial who abandon the faith of their fathers and fight on the side of the enemy, becoming transgressors of the fathers' teaching. On the other hand, he who is great and noble in soul like Moses slays with his own hand the one who rises in opposition to true religion.²⁰

14. One may, moreover, find this same conflict in us, for man is set before competitors as the prize of their contest. He makes the one with whom he sides the victor over the other.²¹ The fight of the Egyptian against the Hebrew is like the fight of idolatry against true religion, of licentiousness against self-control, of injustice against righteousness, of arrogance against humility, and of everything against what is perceived by its opposite.²²

15. Moses teaches us by his own example to take our stand with virtue as with a kinsman and to kill virtue's adversary. The victory of true religion is the death and destruction of idolatry. So also injustice is killed by righteousness and arrogance is slain by humility.

16. The dispute of the two Israelites with each other occurs also in us. There would be no occasion for wicked, heretical opinions to arise unless erroneous reasonings withstood the truth. If, therefore, we by ourselves are too weak to give the victory to what is righteous, since the bad is stronger in its attacks and rejects the rule of truth, we must flee as quickly as possible (in accordance with the historical example) from the conflict to the greater and higher teaching of the mysteries.

17. And if we must again live with a foreigner, that is to say, if need requires us to associate with profane wisdom, let us with determination scatter the wicked shepherds from their unjust use of the wells—which means let us reprove the teach-

ers of evil for their wicked use of instruction.

18. In the same way we shall live a solitary life,²³ no longer entangled with adversaries or mediating between them, but we shall live among those of like disposition and mind who are fed by us while all the movements of our soul are shepherded, like sheep,²⁴ by the will of guiding reason.²⁵

The Burning Bush

19. It is upon us who continue in this quiet and peaceful course of life that the truth will shine, illuminating the eyes of our soul with its own rays. This truth, which was then manifested by the ineffable and mysterious illumination which came to Moses, is God.

20. And if the flame by which the soul of the prophet was illuminated was kindled from a thorny bush, even this fact will not be useless for our inquiry.²⁶ For if truth is God and truth is light—the Gospel testifies by these sublime and divine names to the God who made himself visible to us in the flesh²⁷—such guidance of virtue leads us to know that light which has reached down even to human nature. Lest one think that the radiance did not come from a material substance, this light did not shine from some luminary among the stars but came from an earthly bush and surpassed the heavenly luminaries in brilliance.

21. From this we learn also the mystery of the Virgin: The light of divinity which through birth shone from her into human life did not consume the burning bush, even as the flower of her virginity was not withered by giving birth.²⁸

22. That light teaches us what we must do to stand within the rays of the true light: Sandaled feet cannot ascend that height where the light of truth is seen, but the dead and earthly covering of skins, which was placed around our nature at the beginning when we were found naked because of disobedience to the divine will, must be removed from the feet of the soul.²⁹

When we do this, the knowledge of the truth³⁰ will result and manifest itself.³¹ The full knowledge of being comes about by purifying our opinion concerning nonbeing.

23. In my view the definition of truth is this: not to have a mistaken apprehension of Being. Falsehood is a kind of impression which arises in the understanding about nonbeing: as though what does not exist does, in fact, exist. But truth is the sure apprehension of real Being.³² So, whoever applies himself in quietness to higher philosophical matters over a long period of time will barely apprehend what true Being is, that is, what possesses existence in its own nature,³³ and what nonbeing is, that is, what is existence only in appearance, with no self-subsisting nature.³⁴

24. It seems to me that at the time the great Moses was instructed in the theophany he came to know that none of those things which are apprehended by sense perception and contemplated by the understanding really subsists, but that the transcendent essence and cause of the universe, on which everything depends, alone subsists.³⁵

25. For even if the understanding looks upon any other existing things, reason observes in absolutely none of them the self-sufficiency by which they could exist without participating in true Being.³⁶ On the other hand, that which is always the same, neither increasing nor diminishing, immutable to all change whether to better or to worse (for it is far removed from the inferior and it has no superior), standing in need of nothing else, alone desirable, participated in by all but not lessened by their participation—this is truly real Being. And the apprehension of it is the knowledge of truth.³⁷

26. In the same way that Moses on that occasion attained to this knowledge, so now does everyone who, like him, divests himself of the earthly covering and looks to the light shining from the bramble bush,³⁸ that is, to the Radiance which shines upon us through this thorny flesh and which is (as the Gospel says) the true light and the truth itself.³⁹ A person like this

becomes able to help others to salvation, to destroy the tyranny which holds power wickedly, and to deliver to freedom everyone held in evil servitude.⁴⁰

The transformation of the right hand and the rod's changing into a snake became the first of the miracles.

27. These seem to me to signify in a figure the mystery of the Lord's incarnation, a manifestation of deity to men which effects the death of the tyrant and sets free those under his power.⁴¹

28. What leads me to this understanding is the testimony of the Prophets and the Gospel. The Prophet declares: *This is the change of the right hand of the most High*,⁴² indicating that, although the divine nature is contemplated in its immutability, by condescension to the weakness of human nature it was changed to our shape and form.

29. When the hand of the lawgiver was extended from his bosom it was changed to an unnatural complexion, and when placed again in his bosom, it returned to its own natural beauty. Again, *the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father*⁴³ is *he who is the right hand of the most High*.⁴⁴

30. When he was manifested to us from the bosom of the Father, he was changed to be like us. After he wiped away our infirmities, he again returned to his own bosom the hand which had been among us and had received our complexion. (The Father is the bosom of the right hand.) What is impassible by nature did not change into what is passible, but what is mutable and subject to passions was transformed into impassibility through its participation in the immutable.⁴⁵

31. The change from a rod into a snake should not trouble the lovers of Christ—as if we were adapting the doctrine of the incarnation to an unsuitable animal.⁴⁶ For the Truth himself through the voice of the Gospel does not refuse a comparison like this in saying: *And the Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert*.⁴⁷

32. The teaching is clear. For if the father of sin is called a

weak to strike the disobedient ear. Therefore the Jews' deaf ears did not receive the sound of the trumpets. As the trumpets came closer, according to the text, they became louder. The last sounds, which came through the preaching of the Gospels, struck their ears, since the Spirit through his instruments sounds a noise more loudly ringing and makes a sound more vibrant in each succeeding spokesman. The instruments which ring out the Spirit's sound would be the Prophets and Apostles whose *voice*,¹⁸⁶ as the Psalter says, *goes out through all the earth: and their message to the ends of the world.*¹⁸⁷

160. The multitude was not capable of hearing the voice from above but relied on Moses to learn by himself the secrets and to teach the people whatever doctrine he might learn through instruction from above. This is also true of the arrangement in the Church: Not all thrust themselves toward the apprehension of the mysteries, but, choosing from among themselves¹⁸⁸ someone who is able to hear things divine, they give ear gratefully to him, considering trustworthy whatever they might hear from someone initiated into the divine mysteries.

161. It is said, *Not all are apostles, nor all prophets*,¹⁸⁹ but this is not now heeded in many of the churches. For many, still in need of being purified from the way they have lived, unwashed and full of spots in their life's garment and protecting themselves only with their irrational senses, make an assault on the divine mountain. So it happens that they are stoned by their own reasonings, for heretical opinions are in effect stones which crush the inventor of evil doctrines.¹⁹⁰

The Darkness

162. What does it mean that Moses entered the darkness and then saw God in it?¹⁹¹ What is now recounted seems somehow to be contradictory to the first theophany, for then

the Divine was beheld in light but now he is seen in darkness.¹⁹² Let us not think that this is at variance with the sequence of things we have contemplated spiritually. Scripture teaches by this that religious knowledge comes at first to those who receive it as light. Therefore what is perceived to be contrary to religion is darkness, and the escape from darkness comes about when one participates in light. But as the mind progresses and, through an ever greater and more perfect diligence, comes to apprehend reality, as it approaches more nearly to contemplation, it sees more clearly what of the divine nature¹⁹³ is un contemplated.

163. For leaving behind everything that is observed, not only what sense comprehends but also what the intelligence thinks it sees,¹⁹⁴ it keeps on penetrating deeper¹⁹⁵ until by the intelligence's yearning¹⁹⁶ for understanding it gains access to the invisible and the incomprehensible, and there it sees God. This is the true knowledge of what is sought; this is the seeing that consists in not seeing,¹⁹⁷ because that which is sought transcends all knowledge, being separated on all sides by incomprehensibility as by a kind of darkness. Wherefore John the sublime, who penetrated into the luminous darkness,¹⁹⁸ says, *No one has ever seen God*,¹⁹⁹ thus asserting that knowledge of the divine essence is unattainable not only by men but also by every intelligent creature.²⁰⁰

164. When, therefore, Moses grew in knowledge, he declared that he had seen God in the darkness, that is, that he had then come to know that what is divine is beyond all knowledge and comprehension, for the text says, *Moses approached the dark cloud where God was.*²⁰¹ What God? He who *made darkness his biding place*,²⁰² as David says, who also was initiated into the mysteries in the same inner sanctuary.²⁰³

165. When Moses arrived there, he was taught by word what he had formerly learned from darkness, so that, I think, the doctrine on this matter might be made firmer for us for being testified to by the divine voice. The divine word at the

beginning forbids that the Divine be likened to any of the things known by men,²⁰⁴ since every concept which comes from some comprehensible image²⁰⁵ by an approximate understanding and by guessing at the divine nature constitutes an idol of God and does not proclaim God.

166. Religious virtue is divided into two parts, into that which pertains to the Divine and that which pertains to right conduct (for purity of life is a part of religion).²⁰⁶ Moses learns at first the things which must be known about God (namely, that none of those things known by human comprehension is to be ascribed to him). Then he is taught the other side of virtue, learning by what pursuits the virtuous life is perfected.

167. After this he comes to the tabernacle not made with hands. Who will follow someone who makes his way through such places and elevates his mind to such heights, who, as though he were passing from one peak to another, comes ever higher than he was through his ascent to the heights? First, he leaves behind the base of the mountain and is separated from all those too weak for the ascent. Then as he rises higher in his ascent he hears the sounds of the trumpets. Thereupon, he slips into the inner sanctuary of divine knowledge. And he does not remain there, but he passes on to the tabernacle not made with hands.²⁰⁷ For truly this is the limit that someone reaches who is elevated through such ascents.

168. For it seems to me that in another sense the heavenly trumpet becomes a teacher to the one ascending as he makes his way to what is not made with hands. For the wonderful harmony of the heavens proclaims the wisdom which shines forth in the creation and sets forth the great glory of God through the things which are seen, in keeping with the statement, *the heavens declare the glory of God*.²⁰⁸ It becomes the loud sounding trumpet of clear and melodious teaching, as one of the Prophets says, *The heavens trumpeted from above*.²⁰⁹

169. When he who has been purified and is sharp of hearing in his heart hears this sound (I am speaking of the

knowledge of the divine power which comes from the contemplation of reality), he is led by it to the place where his intelligence lets him slip in where God is. This is called *darkness* by the Scripture,²¹⁰ which signifies, as I said, the unknown and unseen. When he arrives there, he sees that tabernacle not made with hands, which he shows to those below by means of a material likeness.²¹¹

The Heavenly Tabernacle

170. What then is that tabernacle not made with hands which was shown to Moses on the mountain and to which he was commanded to look as to an archetype so that he might reproduce in a handmade structure that marvel not made with hands?²¹² God says, *See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain*.²¹³ There were gold pillars supported by silver bases and decorated with similar silver capitals; then, there were other pillars whose capitals and bases were of bronze but whose shafts were of silver. The core of all the pillars was wood that does not rot.²¹⁴ But all around shone the brightness of these precious metals.

171. Likewise, there was an ark made of wood that does not rot, overlaid with gleaming pure gold. In addition, there was a candlestick with a single base, divided at its top into seven branches, each supporting a lamp. The candlestick was made of solid gold and not of wood overlaid with gold. There was, moreover, an altar and the throne of mercy and the so-called cherubim whose wings overshadowed the ark.²¹⁵ All these were gold, not merely presenting a superficial appearance of gold but gold through and through.

172. Furthermore, there were curtains artistically woven of diverse colors; these brilliant colors were woven together to make a beautiful fabric. The curtains divided the tabernacle into two parts: the one visible and accessible to certain of the

priests and the other secret and inaccessible. The name of the front part was the Holy Place and that of the hidden part was the Holy of Holies. In addition, there were lavers and braziers and hangings around the outer court and the curtains of hair and skins dyed red and all the other things he describes in the text. What words could accurately describe it all?

173. Of what things not made with hands are these an imitation? And what benefit does the material imitation of those things Moses saw there convey to those who look at it? It seems good to me to leave the precise meaning of these things to those who have by the Spirit the power to search *the depths of God*,²¹⁶ to someone who may be able, as the Apostle says, *in the Spirit to speak about mysterious things*.²¹⁷ We shall leave what we say conjecturally and by supposition on the thought at hand to the judgment of our readers. Their critical intelligence must decide whether it should be rejected or accepted.

174. Taking a hint from what has been said by Paul, who partially uncovered the mystery of these things, we say that Moses was earlier instructed by a type in the mystery of the tabernacle which encompasses the universe. This tabernacle would be *Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God*,²¹⁸ who in his own nature was not made with hands, yet capable of being made when it became necessary for this tabernacle to be erected among us. Thus, the same tabernacle is in a way both unfashioned and fashioned, uncreated in preexistence but created in having received this material composition.²¹⁹

175. What we say is of course not obscure to those who have accurately received the mystery of our faith. For there is one thing out of all others which both existed before the ages and came into being at the end of the ages.²²⁰ It did not need a temporal beginning (for how could what was before all times and ages be in need of a temporal origin?), but for our sakes, who had lost our existence through our thoughtlessness, it consented to be born like us so that it might bring that which had left reality back again to reality. This one is the Only

Begotten God, who encompasses everything in himself but who also pitched his own tabernacle among us.²²¹

176. But if we name such a God "tabernacle," the person who loves Christ should not be disturbed at all on the grounds that the suggestion involved in the phrase diminishes the magnificence of the nature of God. For neither is any other name worthy of the nature thus signified, but all names have equally fallen short of accurate description, both those recognized as insignificant as well as those by which some great insight is indicated.²²²

177. But just as all the other names, in keeping with what is being specified, are each used piously to express the divine power—as, for example, physician, shepherd, protector, bread, vine, way, door, mansion, water, rock, spring, and whatever other designations are used of him—in the same way he is given the predicate "tabernacle" in accord with a signification fitting to God.²²³ For the power which encompasses the universe, in which *lives the fulness of divinity*,²²⁴ the common protector of all, who encompasses everything within himself, is rightly called "tabernacle."

178. The vision must correspond to the name "tabernacle,"²²⁵ so that each thing seen leads to the contemplation of a concept appropriate to God. Now the great Apostle says that the curtain of the lower tabernacle is the flesh of Christ,²²⁶ I think, because it is composed of various colors, of the four elements.²²⁷ Doubtless he himself had a vision of the tabernacle when he entered the supercelestial sanctuary where the mysteries of Paradise were revealed to him by the Spirit.²²⁸ It would be well then by paying heed to the partial interpretation, to fit the total contemplation of the tabernacle to it.

179. We can gain clarity about the figures pertaining to the tabernacle from the very words of the Apostle. For he says somewhere with reference to the Only Begotten, whom we have perceived in place of the tabernacle, that *in him were created all things, everything visible and everything invisible, Thrones, Dom-*

removed from their ears the earring of the commandment. Therefore, he who kills such brothers and friends and neighbors will hear from the Law that statement which the history says Moses spoke to those who killed them: *Today you have won yourselves investiture as priests of Yahweh at the cost, one of his son, another of his brother; and so he grants you a blessing today.*²⁸³

214. I think it is time to call attention to those who gave themselves over to sin. Thus we may learn how the tables inscribed by God with the divine Law, which fell from Moses' hands to the ground and were broken by the impact, were restored again by Moses. The tables were not wholly the same, only the writing on them was the same. Having made the tables out of earthly matter, Moses submitted them to the power of the One who would engrave his Law upon them. In this way, while he carried the Law in letters of stone, he restored grace inasmuch as God himself had impressed the words on the stone.

215. For perhaps it is possible, as we are led by these events, to come to some perception of the divine concern for us. For if the divine Apostle speaks the truth when he calls the tables "hearts,"²⁸⁴ that is, the foremost part of the soul (and certainly he who *by the Spirit . . . reaches . . . the depths of God*²⁸⁵ does speak the truth), then it is possible to learn from this that human nature at its beginning was unbroken and immortal. Since human nature was fashioned by the divine hands and beautified with the unwritten characters of the Law, the intention of the Law lay in our nature in turning us away from evil and in honoring the divine.²⁸⁶

216. When the sound of sin struck our ears, that sound which the first book of Scripture calls the "voice of the serpent,"²⁸⁷ but the history concerning the tables calls the "voice of drunken singing,"²⁸⁸ the tables fell to the earth and were broken. But again the true Lawgiver, of whom Moses was a type, cut the tables of human nature for himself from our earth. It was not marriage which produced for him his "God-

receiving"²⁸⁹ flesh, but he became the stonecutter of his own flesh, which was carved by the divine finger, for *the Holy Spirit came upon the virgin and the power of the Most High overshadowed her.*²⁹⁰ When this took place, our nature regained its unbroken character, becoming immortal through the letters written by his finger. The Holy Spirit is called "finger" in many places by Scripture.²⁹¹

217. Moses was transformed to such a degree of glory that the mortal eye could not behold him.²⁹² Certainly he who has been instructed in the divine mystery of our faith knows how the contemplation of the spiritual sense agrees with the literal account. For when the restorer of our broken nature (you no doubt perceive in him the one who healed our brokenness) had restored the broken table of our nature to its original beauty—doing this by the finger of God, as I said—the eyes of the unworthy could no longer behold him. In his surpassing glory he becomes inaccessible to these who would look upon him.

218. For in truth, as the Gospel says, *when he shall come in his glory escorted by all the angels,*²⁹³ he is scarcely bearable and visible to the righteous. He who is impious and follows the Judaizing heresy²⁹⁴ remains without a share in that vision, for let the impious be removed, as Isaiah says, and *he shall not see the glory of the Lord.*²⁹⁵

Eternal Progress²⁹⁶

219. While following these things in the sequence of our investigation, we were led to a deeper meaning in contemplating this passage.²⁹⁷ Let us return to the subject. How does someone who Scripture says saw God clearly in such divine appearances—*face to face, as a man speaks with his friend*²⁹⁸—require that God appear to him, as though he who is always visible had not yet been seen, as though Moses had not yet

attained what Scripture testifies he had indeed attained?

220. The heavenly voice now grants the petitioner's request and does not deny this additional grace. Yet again He leads him to despair²⁹⁹ in that He affirms that what the petitioner seeks cannot be contained by human life. Still, God says there is a *place with himself* where there is a *rock with a hole in it*³⁰⁰ into which he commands Moses to enter. Then God placed his hand over the mouth of the hole and called out to Moses as he passed by. When Moses was summoned, he came out of the hole and saw the back of the One who called him.³⁰¹ In this way he thought he saw what he was seeking, and the promise of the divine voice did not prove false.

221. If these things are looked at literally, not only will the understanding of those who seek God be dim, but their concept of him will also be inappropriate.³⁰² Front and back pertain only to those things which are observed to have shape. Every shape provides the limits of a body. So then he who conceives of God in some shape will not realize that he is free of a bodily nature. It is a fact that every body is composite, and that what is composite exists by the joining of its different elements. No one would say that what is composite cannot be decomposed. And what decomposes cannot be incorruptible, for corruption is the decomposition of what is composite.

222. If therefore one should think of the back of God in a literal fashion, he will necessarily be carried to such an absurd conclusion. For front and back pertain to a shape, and shape pertains to a body. A body by its very nature can be decomposed, for everything composite is capable of dissolution. But what is being decomposed cannot be incorruptible; therefore, he who is bound to the letter would consequently conceive the Divine to be corruptible. But in fact God is incorruptible and incorporeal.

223. But what understanding other than the literal interpretation fits what is written? If this part of the written

narrative compels us to seek out another understanding, it is certainly appropriate to understand the whole in the same way. Whatever we perceive in the part, we of necessity take as true for the whole, since every whole is made up of its parts. Wherefore the place with God, the rock at that place, the opening in it called a hole, Moses' entrance into it, the placing of the divine hand over its mouth, the passing by and the calling and after this the vision of the back—all this would more fittingly be contemplated in its spiritual sense.

224. What then is being signified? Bodies, once they have received the initial thrust downward, are driven downward by themselves with greater speed without any additional help as long as the surface on which they move is steadily sloping and no resistance to their downward thrust is encountered.³⁰³ Similarly, the soul moves in the opposite direction. Once it is released from its earthly attachment, it becomes light and swift for its movement upward, soaring from below up to the heights.³⁰⁴

225. If nothing comes from above to hinder its upward thrust (for the nature of the Good attracts to itself those who look to it),³⁰⁵ the soul rises ever higher and will always make its flight yet higher—by its desire of the heavenly things *straining ahead for what is still to come*,³⁰⁶ as the Apostle says.

226. Made to desire and not to abandon the transcendent height by the things already attained, it makes its way upward without ceasing, ever through its prior accomplishments renewing its intensity for the flight.³⁰⁷ Activity directed toward virtue causes its capacity to grow through exertion; this kind of activity alone does not slacken its intensity by the effort, but increases it.³⁰⁸

227. For this reason we also say that the great Moses, as he was becoming ever greater, at no time stopped in his ascent, nor did he set a limit for himself in his upward course. Once having set foot on the ladder which God set up (as Jacob

says),³⁰⁹ he continually climbed to the step above and never ceased to rise higher, because he always found a step higher than the one he had attained.

228. He denied the specious kinship with the Egyptian queen. He avenged the Hebrew. He chose the desert way of life where there was no human being to disturb him. In himself he shepherded a flock of tame animals. He saw the brilliance of the light. Unencumbered, having taken off his sandals, he made his approach to the light. He brought his kinsmen and countrymen out to freedom. He saw the enemy drowning in the sea.

229. He made camps under the cloud. He quenched thirst with the rock. He produced bread from heaven. By stretching out his hands, he overcame the foreigner. He heard the trumpet. He entered the darkness. He slipped into the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle not made with hands. He learned the secrets of the divine priesthood. He destroyed the idol. He supplicated the divine Being. He restored the Law destroyed by the evil of the Jews.

230. He shone with glory. And although lifted up through such lofty experiences, he is still unsatisfied in his desire for more. He still thirsts for that with which he constantly filled himself to capacity, and he asks to attain as if he had never partaken, beseeching God to appear to him, not according to his capacity to partake, but according to God's true being.³¹⁰

231. Such an experience seems to me to belong to the soul which loves what is beautiful.³¹¹ Hope always draws the soul from the beauty which is seen to what is beyond, always kindles the desire for the hidden through what is constantly perceived.³¹² Therefore, the ardent lover of beauty, although receiving what is always visible as an image of what he desires, yet longs to be filled with the very stamp of the archetype.

232. And the bold request which goes up the mountains of desire asks this: to enjoy the Beauty³¹³ not in mirrors and

reflections, but face to face. The divine voice granted what was requested in what was denied, showing in a few words an immeasurable depth of thought. The munificence of God assented to the fulfillment of his desire, but did not promise any cessation or satiety of the desire.³¹⁴

233. He would not have shown himself to his servant if the sight were such as to bring the desire of the beholder to an end, since the true sight of God consists in this, that the one who looks up to God never ceases in that desire. For he says: *You cannot see my face, for man cannot see me and live.*³¹⁵

234. Scripture does not indicate that this causes the death of those who look, for how would the face of life ever be the cause of death to those who approach it? On the contrary, the Divine is by its nature life-giving. Yet the characteristic of the divine nature is to transcend all characteristics.³¹⁶ Therefore, he who thinks God is something to be known does not have life, because he has turned from true Being to what he considers by sense perception to have being.³¹⁷

235. True Being is true life. This Being is inaccessible to knowledge.³¹⁸ If then the life-giving nature transcends knowledge, that which is perceived certainly is not life. It is not in the nature of what is not life to be the cause of life. Thus, what Moses yearned for is satisfied by the very things which leave his desire unsatisfied.

236. He learns from what was said that the Divine is by its very nature infinite, enclosed by no boundary. If the Divine is perceived as though bounded by something, one must by all means consider along with that boundary what is beyond it. For certainly that which is bounded leaves off at some point, as air provides the boundary for all that flies and water for all that live in it. Therefore, fish are surrounded on every side by water, and birds by air. The limits of the boundaries which circumscribe the birds or the fish are obvious: The water is the limit to what swims and the air to what flies. In the same way, God, if he is conceived as bounded, would necessarily be

surrounded by something different in nature. It is only logical that what encompasses is much larger than what is contained.

237. Now it is agreed that the Divine is good in nature.³¹⁹ But what is different in nature from the Good is surely something other than the Good. What is outside the Good is perceived to be evil in nature. But it was shown that what encompasses is much larger than what is encompassed. It most certainly follows, then, that those who think God is bounded conclude that he is enclosed by evil.

238. Since what is encompassed is certainly less than what encompasses, it would follow that the stronger prevails. Therefore, he who encloses the Divine by any boundary makes out that the Good is ruled over by its opposite. But that is out of the question. Therefore, no consideration will be given to anything enclosing infinite nature. It is not in the nature of what is unenclosed to be grasped. But every desire for the Good which is attracted to that ascent constantly expands³²⁰ as one progresses in pressing on to the Good.

239. This truly is the vision of God: never to be satisfied in the desire to see him.³²¹ But one must always, by looking at what he can see, rekindle his desire to see more. Thus, no limit would interrupt growth in the ascent to God, since no limit to the Good can be found nor is the increasing of desire for the Good brought to an end because it is satisfied.³²²

240. But what is that place which is seen next to God? What is the rock? And what again is the hole in the rock? What is the hand of God that covers the mouth of the rock? What is the passing by of God? What is his back which God promised to Moses when he asked to see him face to face?

241. Naturally each of these things must be highly significant and worthy of the munificence of the divine Giver. Thus this promise is believed to be more magnificent and loftier than every theophany which had previously been granted to his great servant. How then would one, from what has been said, understand this height to which Moses desires to attain after

such previous ascents and to which *he who turns everything to their good cooperates with all those who love God*³²³ makes the ascent easy through his leadership? *Here is a place*, he says, *beside me*.³²⁴

242. The thought harmonizes readily with what has been contemplated before. In speaking of "place" he does not limit *the place* indicated by anything quantitative (for to something unquantitative there is no measure). On the contrary, by the use of the analogy of a measurable surface he leads the hearer to the unlimited and infinite. The text seems to signify some such understanding: "Whereas, Moses, your desire for *what is still to come*³²⁵ has expanded and you have not reached satisfaction in your progress and whereas you do not see any limit to the Good, but your yearning always looks for more, the place with me is so great that the one running in it is never able to cease from his progress."³²⁶

243. In another Scriptural passage the progress is a standing still, for it says, *You must stand on the rock*.³²⁷ This is the most marvelous thing of all: how the same thing is both a standing still and a moving.³²⁸ For he who ascends certainly does not stand still, and he who stands still does not move upwards. But here the ascent takes place by means of the standing. I mean by this that the firmer and more immovable one remains in the Good, the more he progresses in the course of virtue. The man who in his reasonings is uncertain and liable to slip, since he has no firm grounding in the Good but *is tossed one way and another and carried along*³²⁹ (as the Apostle says) and is doubtful and wavers in his opinions concerning reality, would never attain to the height of virtue.

244. He is like those who toil endlessly as they climb uphill in sand: Even though they take long steps, their footing in the sand always slips downhill,³³⁰ so that, although there is much motion, no progress results from it. But if someone, as the Psalmist says, should pull his feet up from the mud of the pit and plant them upon the rock³³¹ (the rock is Christ³³² who is absolute virtue), then the more *steadfast and unmoveable*³³³ (ac-

9. For the use of *ἀντιτύπα* by the Greek allegorists, see R.M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit*, pp. 120f.
10. Maximus, of Tyre, *Dissert.* 40.5; Marcus Aurelius 5.23; Methodius, *Symp.* 2.
11. Exod. 2.3. This is a Philonic type of exegesis. Elsewhere—*In bapt. Christi* (MG 46.589C-D)—Gregory follows Origen in giving a baptismal interpretation to the passage (*In Ex. hom.* 2.4).
12. Exod. 2.10 mentions only the adoption. The "History," I, 17, has the adoption take place out of the princess's good will; that it was due to her sterility was a part of Jewish tradition—Artapan in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.29; cf. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.4.13. See Bk. I, n. 33 on *ἐξωθεν*. Origen interpreted the daughter of Pharaoh as the church of the Gentiles (*In Ex. hom.* 2.4). Here as often we see Gregory working with a particular kind of exegetical tradition but applying it in his own way.
13. See Plutarch, *Mor.* 479E.
14. For the figure, Philo compares "ignorance and lack of education" to "childlessness and infertility of soul"—*Quaest. Ex.* 2.19. Isa. 26.18 may be the source of the imagery.
15. The same imagery in Philo, *Leg. alleg.* 1.24.75-76. See *In inscrip. Ps.* 2.15, Vol. 5, p. 164, 4ff. (MG 44.596A-B); *Or. in laud. Greg. Thaum.* (MG 46.901A). On *theognosia* see Bk. II, n. 174.
16. Same contrast in Philo, *Leg. alleg.* 3.87.244-45.
17. Exod. 2.7-9.
18. Gregory develops this symbolism in *In laud. frat. Bas.* (MG 46.809A). On the Church as mother see Joseph C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia* (Washington, 1943). On milk as the Church's teaching, see Clement Alexandria, *Paed.* 1.6.42, where Clement says that the Church as Virgin Mother has no milk of her own so she must offer only the Word as spiritual milk.
19. Note the idea of "fathers" of the Church versus those on the "outside" (profane). See Bk. I, n. 5.
20. Philo, *Leg. alleg.* 3.12.37-38; *Fug.* 26.148. Gregory uses *ἐνσρέβεια*, on which cf. n. 62.
21. "He who is found to be in the midst of two lives acts as a mediator between them, in order to give the victory to the purer one by destroying the inferior one"—*In Cant.* 12, Vol. 6, p. 351, 6 (MG 44.1021D), with which cf. p. 344, 15ff. (MG 44.1017B). See also *De perf.*, Vol. 8, 1, p. 180, 9-22 (MG 46.257C-D) for a close parallel to this paragraph. *In laud. frat. Bas.* (MG 46.809A-B) interprets the killing of the Egyptian by Moses as the victory of the spirit over the flesh.
22. See I, 5. Cf. Philo, *Quaest. Ex.* 2.17.
23. Basil applies the Midian episode to his withdrawal after his

- student days at Athens—*Comm. in Isa.*, Proem. (MG 30.129A), an event to which Gregory also refers—*In laud. frat. Bas.* (MG 46.809B-C); cf. *In inscrip. Ps.* 1.7, Vol. 5, pp. 43, 26—44, 3 (MG 44.456C).
24. The image of the mind as shepherd of sheep is in Philo, *Sacr.* 10.45 (his *Vit. Mos.* 1.11.60 treats Moses' experience as a shepherd as a training ground for kingship—followed by Clement Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.23) and in Origen, *Hom. Jer.* 5.6, where the irrational movements of the soul are sheep and Christ is the good shepherd. The shepherds of Bethlehem suggest the same imagery in *In diem nat. Christi* (MG 46.1137B). The motif of living at peace with even wild animals is prominent in Christian monasticism; the theme is placed in full perspective by George Williams, *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought* (New York, 1962).
25. The domination of the *nous* is Platonic, but modified here by the Stoic idea of "leading."
26. The Hebrew word in Exod. 3.2, 3 refers to a thorny bush; cf. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.12.65; Clement Alexandria, *Paed.* 2.8.75. In Judaism the burning bush was a symbol of Israel and the thorns represent the sufferings of Israel—R. Bloch, *Mosë*, p. 103 (cf. *Midrash Rabbah, Exodus* 2:5 and Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.12.67). (For thorns as a symbol of sin see Bk. II, n. 118.) For Hippolytus, *Ben. Mos.* (PO 27, pp. 172f.), God "speaks with the saints in a church as in a bush"; for Hilary too (*Tract. Mys.* 1.30) the bush is the Church persecuted, but not destroyed. The burning bush was an epiphany of an angel, not God Himself, in the Septuagint and Hellenistic Jewish interpretation of the "angel of the Lord" of the Hebrew text (Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.12.66; Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.29). This stress on an angel distinct from the person of God is also found in Justin, *Dial.* 59.2 (cf. 127.4); Clement Alexandria, *Prot.* 1.8.3 and *Paed.* 2.8.75; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.20.1 (Harvey, 2, p. 173). This prepares for Gregory's incarnation interpretation—see next note.
27. John 8.12 and 14.6. The importance of the incarnation for Gregory should be noted. The thorny bush is given an incarnation interpretation also in *De perf.* Vol. 8, 1, p. 206, 18f. (MG 46.280B-C). Many of the same types of the incarnation and virgin birth as Gregory employs in this treatise are present in the Byzantine rite—Jean Blanc, "La fete de Moïse dans le rite byzantin," *Mosë*, pp. 345-353. The *Adv. Apoll. ad Theoph.* (MG 45.1273B-C) seems to say that if everyone were a great contemplative like Moses there would be no need for the incarnation, but there is a more positive assessment of the incarnation as showing the manifold divine wisdom in *In Cant.* 8, Vol. 6, pp. 255f. (MG 44.948D-949A)—cf. A.H. Armstrong, "Platonic Elements in St. Gregory of Nyssa's Doctrine of Man," *Dominican Studies* 1 (April 1948): 119ff.
28. Gregory appears to be the first to make the bush a figure of

Mary's virginity unaffected by the birth of Jesus. See also *In diem nat. Christi* (MG 46.1136B-C) for the burning bush as "the mystery of the virgin" and Cyril of Alexandria, *Adv. anthropom.* 26 (MG 76.1129A).

29. Gregory alludes to the "garments of skin" of Gen. 3.21, which hold an important place in his teaching. Cf. "Circumcision means the casting off of the dead skins which we put on when we had been stripped of the supernatural life after the transgression," *De beat.* 8 (MG 44.1292B; trans. from ACW 18: 166, and see *ibid.*, p. 184, n. 43 to *De or. dom.* 2). Gregory refers to the "garments of skins" in *In Inscip. Ps.* 1.7, Vol. 5, p. 44, 3-5 (MG 44.456C); *Or. cat.* 8 (MG 45.33C-D); *De virg.* 12 and 13, Vol. 8, 1, pp. 302, 9f. and 303, 15 (MG 46.373D and 376B); *De an. et res.* (MG 46.148C-149A); *De mort.* (MG 46.524D); *De Mel. epis.* (MG 46.861B); *In Cant.* 11, Vol. 6, pp. 327, 14f. and 329, 17f. (MG 44.1004D and 1005C). Shortly after the last passage Gregory gives a baptismal interpretation to the removing of the sandals (p. 331, 4; MG 1008A); cf. Daniélou, *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 27-31. See further n. 260. The phrase "placed around our nature" is significant for Gregory's anthropology—the real self is something other than the fleshly existence. Human nature is made up of a series of layers which must be removed, and this removal is a continuous process according to *In Cant.* 12, Vol. 6, p. 360, 5-14 (MG 44.1029B-C). From these passages it is clear that the "garments of skin" are not bodily existence *per se*, for man had a body in Paradise, but animality or biological existence. The garments include the passions, sexuality, and especially mortality, which are added to the human nature made in the image of God. The importance of Gen. 3.21 for Gregory may in part be due to the fact that *χρῶν* was used for the body by Neoplatonists. Cf. Proclus, *Elements of Theology* 209; Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.6.7. See E.R. Dodds, *Proclus: The Elements of Theology* (Oxford, 1962), p. 307, for the Orphic-Pythagorean origin of the term and its use by the Valentinian Gnostics. J. Quasten, "A Pythagorean Idea in Jerome," *Am. J. of Philol.* 63 (1942): 207-215 shows that animal skins were a sign of death. See also A.H. Armstrong, "Platonic Elements in St. Gregory of Nyssa's Doctrine of Man," *Dominican Studies* 1 (April 1948): 123-125. For Gregory's doctrine of man, especially with reference to the tunics of skin, see further Ladner, "The Philosophical Anthropology of Saint Gregory of Nyssa," *DOP* 12 (1958): 88ff.; Daniélou, *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 56-60; *idem*, "La colombe et la ténèbre dans la mystique byzantine ancienne," *Eranos Jahrbuch* 23 (1954): 390ff.; *idem*, *Glory to Glory*, pp. 11-14; J.T. Muckle, "The Doctrine of St. Gregory of Nyssa on Man as the Image of God," *Mediaeval Studies* 7 (1945): 55-84; R. Leys, *L'image de Dieu chez Saint Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris, 1951); F. Hilt, *Des bl. Gregors von Nyssa Lebre vom Menschen systematisch dargestellt* (Köln, 1890); W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker*, pp. 57-74;

R. Gillet, "L'homme divinisateur cosmique dans la pensée de saint Grégoire de Nysse," *Studia Patristica* 6 (1962): 62-83.

Genesis 3.21 had received various interpretations. Origen in *Sel. in Gen.* 42 (MG 12.101A-B; Lommatsch 8, p. 58) refers to three interpretations, to each of which he finds an objection: (1) the literal interpretation is unworthy of God; (2) to say the garments are bodies is not safe and true in view of Gen. 2.23; (3) if the tunics are death, how does God and not sin make the covering and would not this interpretation demand that before sin entered the world flesh and blood were not corruptible? The rabbis understood the verse literally. Philo (*Quaest. Gen.* 1.53) and the Gnostics (Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.1.10—Harvey, 1, pp. 49-50; Clement Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.14.95; *Exc. ex Theod.* 55.1; Tert. *De res. mort.* 7) take the verse as referring to the clothing of man with the present human body. This interpretation is charged to Origen by Methodius (*De res.* 1.4.2; 1,23.3), Epiphanius (Jerome, *Ep.* 51.4,5), and Theodoret (*Quaest. in Gen.* 39). But in some passages Origen takes the coats as symbols of mortality—*C. Cels.* 4.40; *Comm. Jno.* 6.42; *In Lev. bom.* 6, with which cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 246b-c. See LeMoine G. Lewis, *The Commentary: Jewish and Pagan Background of Origen's Commentaries with Emphasis on the Commentary on Genesis* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1958), pp. 161ff. Methodius too says they are mortality from the irrational nature (*De res.* 1.39); cf. Gregory Nazianzus, *Or.* 38.12, and Asterius, *Hom. XXII In Ps. XI, Hom. III* (Richard, p. 173).

30. The "knowledge of the truth" is the way of salvation in *De inst. christ.* Vol. 8, 1, p. 41, 3.

31. From this sentence through section 25 is commented on by Balás, pp. 100-120. The whole passage is loaded with crucial terms for Gregory.

32. Neoplatonic usage (Plotinus, *Enn.* 3.6.6) and the context of an incarnation interpretation of the burning bush suggest that by "real Being" Gregory refers to the second hypostasis of the Godhead. This and succeeding statements are strong affirmations of the full deity of Jesus Christ for which Gregory had argued so strenuously in the *Contra Eunomium*.

33. The formulation τὸ ὄν, δὲ τῆ αὐτοῦ φύσει τὸ εἶναι ἔχει appears to be inspired by Aristotle, *Metaph.* XII (Λ), 6; 1071b, 19-20. Cf. J. Gross, *La divinisation du chrétien d'après les pères grecs* (Paris, 1938), p. 220, n. 1; Endre von Ivánka, "Vom Platonismus zur Theorie der Mystik," *Scholastik* 11 (1936): 163-195.

34. There are several examples in the treatise of these definitions, *borismoï* (e.g. II, 281, 306), a "Platonic" feature (*Sophist* 260c). On Gregory's epistemology see Weiswurm, *Nature of Human Knowledge*, especially pp. 77ff. on truth and certitude. Cf. also Cherniss, *op. cit.*, p. 50 and his references to Plato for this discussion of falsehood and truth.

35. Exod. 3.14 in the LXX provided the ontological base for Gregory's thought. The definition of God as ὁ ὄντως ὢν is rather frequent in Gregory—see references in Balás, p. 108. In Plato, *Tim.* 38c; *Phaed.* 247d; *Soph.* 260c. Exod. 3.14 was a basic text in the development of Christian philosophy—Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* (London, 1936), chapter 3. We find it used in Justin, *Apol.* 1.63; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 4.6; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.6.2; Clement Alexandria, *Prot.* 6.69; *Paed.* 1.8.71; Origen, *De princ.* 1.3.6. Note Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.14.75: "First tell them that I am He who is, that they may learn the difference between what is and what is not, and also the further lesson that no name at all can properly be used of Me, to Whom alone existence belongs."

36. This is a thoroughly Platonic statement; see Balás, p. 108.

37. These are Platonic expressions (e.g., *Symp.* 211ab; *Repub.* 380d). For the thought cf. *De an. et res.* (MG 46.93C-97A).

38. Cf. *In bapt. Christi* (MG 46.584B); *Ep.* 3, Vol. 8, 2, p. 23, 25ff. (MG 46.1020C); and n. 118.

39. John 1.9 and 14.6.

40. The tyranny of the passions is Platonic (*Repub.* 577d). For Gregory true freedom is ἀπάθεια. See Daniélou, *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 71-83, 92-103.

41. Here are two more figures of the incarnation—the rod and the arm, cf. Ambrose, *De off.* 3.15.94-95 and Cyril Jer., *cat. Lect.* 12.28. Tertullian sees in the transformation of the hand a figure of the resurrection (*De res. mort.* 28), and Hilary sees in it an illustration of the two senses of Scripture (*Tract. Myst.* 16, a work which finds types of Christianity in the patriarchs). Cyril of Alexandria follows Gregory—*Glaph. in Ex.* 2.300 (MG 69, 2.474D). For the rod see n. 46.

42. Ps. 76.11 LXX. Cf. *C. Eun.* 3.4.24, Vol. 2, p. 143, 5ff. (MG 45.720C-D). For the next sentence cf. *Ref. conf. Eun.* 181, Vol. 2, pp. 388, 24—389, 4 (MG 45.549A).

43. John 1.18 in mss. of the Alexandrian text.

44. Ps. 76.11. Irenaeus spoke of the "two hands of God"—*Adv. haer.* 4.34.1 (Harvey, 2, p. 213)—see John Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of St. Irenaeus* (London, 1948), chapter 10.

45. Cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 5.pref. (Harvey, 2, p. 314) and Athanasius, *De incarn. Verbi* 54.

46. The change of the rod into a snake as a figure of the incarnation appears in Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.28 (Harvey, 2, p. 118), and is used later by Cyril Alexandria, *Glaph. in Ex.* 2.299 (MG 69, 2.469D-472C). The rod is the Virgin in Irenaeus, *Proof* 59 (ACW 16: 87). Justin, *Dial.* 86 (cf. 100.4 and 126.1), identifies the rod with Christ as well as with the cross. Hilary, *Tract.*

Mys. 1.31, applies the rod to Christ considered by the Jews as Beelzebub but manifested for what he is by the resurrection. (Note that what an Eastern theologian sees as the incarnation a Western sees as the resurrection.)

47. John 3.14. The episode referred to is discussed in II, 269ff.

48. John 8.44; Apoc. 20.2; Gen. 3.1.

49. 2 Cor. 5.21.

50. Heb. 11.1.

51. Gregory here used the word *περίνοια*, which is important for him. It describes a knowledge that is superior to that derived from observation of material things. Yet it is not quite the same as the knowledge that comes from contemplation of God, for it is still dependent on human intelligence (cf. II, 162 and notes 193f.) and conjecture (cf. II, 165). Athenagoras uses the word in the same way: The masses who cannot contemplate the truth because they are enmeshed in material things do not even have an approximate knowledge (*ἀπερινώητος*) of the Creator (*Embassy* 27:2). The philosophers and the poets who do distinguish between what is sensible and intelligible, but who conjecture on their own initiative, are able to attain to an approximate knowledge (*περινωήσαι*) but not to find true reality (*Embassy* 7:2). Even Plato had only an approximate knowledge of God (*περινωήσας θεόν*, *Embassy* 23:7), apparently because he had not received his knowledge by inspiration, as the Prophets had. See A. Puech, *Les apologistes grecs du IIIe Siècle de notre ère* (Paris, 1912), p. 180, n. 1, for the suggestion that *περινωήσαι* indicates a lack of certainty in one's knowledge of God. See note 193 and II, 165.

52. Exod. 7.1.

53. Cf. *C. Eun.* 3.8, Vol. 2, p. 261, 28f. (MG 45.852C).

54. Exod. 5.2. Pharaoh is "atheistic and pleasure-loving disposition" according to Philo, *Leg. alleg.* 3.212. Gregory, for whom the contest with Pharaoh is between good and evil, will continue Philo's line of thought. For the rabbis the issue was idolatry—*Midrash Rabbah, Exodus* 8.2. Methodius says, "Pharaoh was the symbol of the Devil"—*Sym.* 4.2.

55. The imagery of the athlete is frequently applied to the ascetic in Christian literature. See the *ἀγών* words in PGL. Cf. II, 44. See V.C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif* (*Novum Testamentum Supplement* 14, 1967). In Gregory cf. *In Eccl.* 1, Vol. 5, p. 278, 7ff. (MG 44.617C); *In S. Steph.* (MG 46.704A-C). For the motif in a martyr context, see references n. 337.

56. In Philo the marriages of the patriarchs are allegorized in the same way; thus Agar, the concubine of Abraham, symbolizes pagan education (*Congr.* 14.71), as Sephora does here. Origen similarly sees in the marriages with foreigners and concubines the symbol of the use of pagan

Christian appropriation of these Platonic categories, see Abraham J. Malherbe, "The Structure of Athenagoras, *Supplicatio pro Christianis*," *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969): esp. 7ff.

180. 1 Cor. 2.9; Isa. 64.4. *De beat.* 2 gives the same sense as the text (MG 44.1209D). The passage is referred to God's gifts reserved for man in *De prof. Christ.*, Vol. 8, 1, p. 142, 1f. (MG 46.249C).

181. Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.6.4.

182. *θεολογία* here describes the contemplation of things divine. The term would be reserved, in the terminology of the Greek mystics, for the highest degree of the contemplative ascent. Cf. J. Marechal, *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques* II (Paris, 1937), p. 104, n. 1. For the earlier use of word see P. Natorp. "Thema und Disposition der aristotelischen Metaphysik I," *Philosophische Monatshefte* 14 (1887/88): 58ff.; A.J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste. II. Le Dieu cosmique* (Paris, 1949), pp. 598-605. For early Christian use see F. Kattenbusch, "Die Entstehung einer christlicher Theologie. Zur Geschichte der Ausdruck *θεολογία, θεολογεῖν, θεολόγος*," *Zeitsch. f. Theol. u. Kirche* 2 (1930): 161-205.

183. Cf. Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works*, p. 78, for the frequency in Gregory of the idea that the approach to God is a toilsome ascent. Cf. Gregory Nazianzus, *Or.* 28.2 (MG 36.28B-D) for going up the mountain as Moses did for contemplation.

184. Exod. 19.19. In this passage the *logos* is the *historia*.

185. *Οικονομία* is a regular word of the incarnation, see PGL s.v. J. Reumann, *The Use of Οικονομία and Related Terms in Greek Sources to about A.D. 100, as a Background for Patristic Applications* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1957). In Gregory cf. *Ep.* 3, Vol. 8, 2, p. 25, 23 (MG 46.1021C) and frequently in the *Or. cat.*

186. The description of inspired men as musical instruments already occurs earlier. Cf. Plutarch, *De def. or.* 436F; Philo, *De spec. leg.* 1.9.65; Athenagoras, *Embassy* 9:1.

187. Ps. 18.5.

188. The evidence for congregational election of bishops in the 4th century is assembled in Everett Ferguson, *Ordination in the Ancient Church* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1959), pp. 236-342. A particularly vivid account, with all the atmosphere of a modern political campaign, is found in the *Vit. Greg. Thaum.* (MG 46.933ff.), the pertinent passages of which are translated in the dissertation, pp. 229-32.

189. 1 Cor. 12.29.

190. See *In Cant.* 1, Vol. 6, p. 26, 4-6 (MG 44.773B). Gregory also criticizes the ambitions of ecclesiastics in II, 279.

191. Exod. 20.21. For the divine transcendence, cf. *In Eccl.* 7, Vol. 5,

p. 415, 1ff. (MG 44.732B). The darkness into which Moses entered represented the ultimate inaccessibility of God already in Clement Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.2.6 and 5.12.78. The Cappadacians followed Clement instead of Origen on this point—Brooks Otis, "Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System," *DOP* 12 (1958): 108. For the theme of darkness in Gregory's spirituality see Daniélou, *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 190-199; *Glory to Glory*, pp. 26ff.; and "Mystique de la ténèbre chez Grégoire de Nysse," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 2; 1872ff.; G. Horn, "Le 'Miroir,' la 'Nuée': Deux manières de voir dieu d'après S. Grégoire de Nysse," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 8 (1927): 113-131. See n. 200.

192. Gregory is inspired here by Philo, *De post. Cain.* 4.12-5.16, a passage which also has the quest of God; cf. *Vit. Mos.* 1.28.158 and *De mut.* 2, 7. The same teaching is in *In Cant.* 11, Vol. 6, p. 322, 9 (MG 44.1000D).

193. Gregory seems to be saying that the more philosophical one becomes the nearer he approaches to *theoria*. At this point one is still *περιωία* (see note 51 and II, 165), not *ἐν θεωεία*. The whole passage reflects the theme of progress.

194. One must leave behind not only sensation but also the ordinary intelligence—see *In Cant.* 6, Vol. 6, p. 183, 2-3 (MG 44.893B) and *C. Eun.* 2, Vol. 1, p. 252, 16ff. (MG 45.940C-D), a passage which also stresses the continual progress. Cf. the descriptions "going beyond oneself"—*De virg.* 10, Vol. 8, 1, p. 290, 4 (MG 46.361B); going "out of human nature"—*Vita Macr.*, Vol. 8, 1, p. 390, 7 (MG 46.977B); "to abandon the senses," or "to abandon human nature"—*In Cant.* 6, Vol. 6, p. 181, 13 (MG 44.892D) and 11, Vol. 6, p. 323, 3 (MG 44.1000D); "giddy from the heights"—*De beat.* 6 (MG 44.1264B-C); and the reference to Paul in the "third heaven"—*C. Eun.* 3.1.16, Vol. 2, p. 9, 12ff. Cf. n. 198. See Daniélou, *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 261-273; Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa*, pp. 203ff.

195. The "going out of oneself" is at the same time an interiorization—*In Cant.* 12, Vol. 6, p. 366, 14ff. (MG 44.1036A).

196. See note 122. Here he's positive and elsewhere negative on *polypragmosune*. *C. Eun.* 2.92, Vol. 1, p. 253, 28f. (MG 45.941B), states that it was after Abraham abandoned the "curiosity of knowledge (*gnosis*)" that he believed on God and was justified.

197. This is a fundamental text which closely approximates Philo, *De post. Cain.* 5.15. The theme of the true sight of God will appear again in II, 234f. and 253f. See also *In Eccl.* 7, Vol. 5, p. 411, 13 (MG 44.729A) for the Divine to be above knowledge. See Weiswurm, *op. cit.*, p. 216 for a note on this passage.

198. On the use of this oxymoron, see Hans Lewy, *Sobria Ebrietas. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der antiken Mystik* (Giessen, 1929), pp. 31 n. 1 and 41 n. 3; H. Koch, "Das mystische Schauen bei Gregor von Nyssa,"

Theol. Quartalschrift 80 (1898): 405f., 415f. *In Cant.* 11, Vol. 6, p. 324, 10f. (MG 44.1001B) speaks of a "certain sense of his presence" given in the darkness. Gregory delights in these paradoxes: "sober inebriation"—*In Cant.* 10, Vol. 6, p. 308, 5ff. (MG 44.989B-C), cf. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.34.187; "watchful sleep"—*In Cant.* 10, Vol. 6, pp. 311-314 (MG 44.992C-993D) (studied by R. Joly, "Sur deux thèmes mystiques de Grégoire de Nysse," *Byzantion* 36 [1966]: 137-143); "passionless love"—*In Cant.* 1, Vol. 6, pp. 23, 9f. and 27, 5ff. (MG 44.772A and 773C-D); "wise folly"—*In Cant.* 10, Vol. 6, p. 309, 11-14 (MG 44.989D); "stationary movement"—II, 243; and "living death"—II, 314. See Daniélou in *Dict. Spirit.* 2: 1872-1885, in *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 274ff., and in *Glory to Glory*, pp. 34-46; and Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers* (New York, 1960), p. 362. H. Langerbeck, "Zur Interpretation Gregors von Nyssa," *Theol. Literaturzeitung* 82 (1957): 83, objects against the view that such formulations are merely rhetorical and represent a stylistic taste for antithetic formulas. He fears that such an understanding will reduce the *theologia negativa* to a stylistic play.

199. John 1.18.

200. His argument is based on the literal meaning of John 1.18, "no one," not "no man." God is invisible to the angels themselves, according to John Chrysostom, *Hom. de incompr. Dei natura* 6 (MG 48.725A). The incomprehensibility of God often recurs—*De perf.*, Vol. 8, 1, p. 188 (MG 46.264D-265A). This is based on the infinity of the divine nature—Weiswurm, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-59. Cf. Basil *Ep.* 234 (MG 32.868C-872A) and Bk. I, n. 84.

201. Exod. 20.21.

202. Ps. 17.12. Cf. on this section *In Cant.* 6, Vol. 6, pp. 176-183 (MG 44.888C-893C) and with the same citation of Ps. 17.12, set in the middle of a key passage.

203. On *ἀδυτον* see Plotinus, *Enn.* 6.9.11, 25. Cf. *De beat.* 7 (MG 44.1277B); *De or. dom.* 3 (MG 44.1149C-1152A) where the *adyton* is the "hidden storeroom of the heart"; I, 46 and Bk. I, n. 74. The word is discussed by Daniélou, *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 182-189.

204. Exod. 20.2.

205. See note 51. "When St. Gregory uses the word *φαντασία*, he does not, in most cases, employ it to signify the faculty of imagination, but the image which the senses cause in the rational principle"—Weiswurm, *op. cit.*, pp. 107f. For examples of this philosophical usage, cf. B. D. Jackson, *loc. cit.* This statement taken with II, 163 shows that Gregory interprets the first commandment as prohibiting even an intellectual representation of God, as coming ultimately from sense experience. On Gregory's understanding of knowledge, see H. v. Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée*, pp. 60-67.

206. This fact was not commonly recognized by the Greeks of the pre-Christian centuries. See A. D. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford, 1933), pp. 215ff.

207. Heb. 9.11.

208. Ps. 19.1. If the essence of God is inaccessible, his existence is manifested by his action in the world—*In Cant.* 1, Vol. 6, p. 36, 12ff. (MG 44.781D) and 11, Vol. 6, p. 334, 15ff. (MG 44.1009D); *De beat.* 6 (MG 44.1268C-1269A); *C. Eun.* 2, Vol. 1, pp. 256-57 (MG 45.944D-945C); *De inf. qui praem. abr.* (MG 46.181A-C). See Bk. I, n. 84. This was a first step of the ascent to God, accessible to the pagan wise men—*De beat.* 6 (MG 44.1269D); it was taken by Abraham when he was still in Chaldaea—*C. Eun.* 2, Vol. 1, p. 252, 24ff. (MG 45.940D). Cf. Philo, *Quaest. Ex.* 2.67, "The most lucid and most prophetic mind receives the knowledge and science of the Existent One not from the Existent One Himself, for it will not contain His greatness, but from His chief and ministering powers." See Cherniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-49, for knowledge of the material world as a first stage which must finally be abandoned for reflection on the real world. See Aubineau, SC 119: 185, and Endre von Ivánka, "Von Platonismus zur Theorie der Mystik," *Scholastik* 11 (1936): 178-185.

209. *Ecclus.* 46.17, but not according to the LXX; cf. Homer, *Il.* 21, 388.

210. Exod. 20.21. In 24.15, 18 Moses enters the "cloud."

211. Exod. 25-27. Philo, *Quaest. Ex.* 2.52 and 82.

212. The symbolism of the tabernacle occupies a considerable place in Philo, who interprets it mainly in terms of natural science but with some philosophy and psychology—*Vit. Mos.* 2.15.71-27.140 and *Quaest. Ex.* 2.51-106. See also Clement Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.6.32-40; Origen, *In Ex. bom.* 9; Ps. Justin, *Cob. ad Graecos* (MG 6.296B-C); Gregory Nazianzus, *Or.* 28.31 (MG 36.72A). The Epistle of Barnabas 16 recognizes only a spiritual tabernacle. *Midrash Rabbah Exodus* 50.5 interprets the tabernacle of the Messianic Age.

213. Exod. 25.40.

214. Is. 40.20 for the wood that will not rot.

215. Heb. 9.5.

216. 1 Cor. 2.10.

217. 1 Cor. 14.2. Gregory declares that the *theoria* of the secrets of Scripture belongs only to "those who fathom its depths by the Holy Spirit and who know how to speak in the spirit of the divine mysteries"—*C. Eun.* 3.1.42, Vol. 2, p. 18, 11ff. (MG 45.580B). Cf. Origen, *In Ex. bom.* 4.5.

218. 1 Cor. 1.24.

219. For Philo the celestial tabernacle is the intelligible world of archetypal ideas (*Quaest. Ex.* 2.52, 59, 83) and the earthly tabernacle is the

universe (*Spec. leg.* 1.12.66; *Quaest. Ex.* 2.83). It is rather typical of Gregory, but yet peculiar to him, that he takes the two tabernacles of the two natures in Christ, a subject beginning to exercise the attention of the Church at the end of the 4th century. Methodius, *Sym.* 5.7, compares the tabernacle to the Church; *De res.* 1.14 to the resurrection body.

220. Col. 1.17.

221. John 1.14. The incarnation is compared to a building in *C. Eun.* 3.1, Vol. 2, p. 19, 6-12 (MG 45.580D) and to the construction of the true tabernacle in *In Cant.* 13, Vol. 6, p. 381, 1ff. (MG 44.1045D) and in *Ep.* 3, Vol. 8, 2, p. 25, 8ff. (MG 46.1021C). In *Nativitatem* (MG 46.1128-29) shows the steps of the progressive manifestation of the tabernacle: the tabernacle of the Jews, the incarnation, baptism, and the resurrection of the body. See Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*, pp. 333-347.

222. Literally, "by which some great concept originating in sense impression." On the thought cf. *De beat.* 2 (MG 44.1209B) and see Weiswurm, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

223. The names of Christ is a catechetical theme—see Justin, *Dial.* 4; 34; 126; Melito, *Peri Pascha*, pp. 103-105; Origen, *Comm. Job.* 1.9.52; Cyril, *Cat. Lect.* 10 (MG 33.660-90); Gregory Nazianzus, *Or.* 1.6-7 (MG 35.400B-C). Gregory has devoted the treatise *On Perfection* to the names of Christ. For similar listings see *In Eccl.* 2, Vol. 5, pp. 298, 10ff. (MG 44.636B); *De prof. Chris.*, Vol. 8, 1, pp. 134-35 (MG 46.241C-244B); *Adv. Maced.* 5, Vol. 3, 1, p. 92, 23-24 (MG 45.1305D); *Ref. conf. Eun.* 124, Vol. 2, p. 365, 14ff. (MG 45.524B); *C. Eun.* 3, 1, 127, Vol. 2, p. 46, 21ff. (MG 45.609C-D); 3, 8, 9-10, Vol. 2, pp. 241, 21-242, 8 (MG 45. 829D).

224. Col. 2.9. For the theme of God's penetrating and containing the universe, see Balás, pp. 116f.

225. The Stoic notion of the *logos* as the principle of unity in the universe is found in Philo (*Plant.* 2.8-10; *De sacr.* 18.66-67) in conjunction with the Platonic notion of the *logos* as an archetype.

226. Heb. 10.20.

227. This cosmological interpretation comes from Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.18.88; *Quaest. Ex.* 2.85. See also Josephus, *Ant.* 3.7.183, and Origen, *In Ex. bom.* 13.3 and the references in n. 212.

228. 2 Cor. 12.4.

229. Col. 1.16. For the different classes of angels in Gregory, see the references in Balás, *op. cit.*, p. 133. Also, Daniélou, *The Angels and their Mission*, pp. 83-94, on angels and the spiritual life.

230. Cf. note 71. The heavenly tabernacle is not only the divine nature of Christ but also the celestial world. But for Gregory this celestial world is not the world of impersonal ideas but of personal angels. Philo (*Quaest. Ex.* 2.62) had identified the cherubim of the tabernacle with the divine powers.

For this transformation of Platonism, see Balthasar, *op. cit.*, pp. xvii-xix.

231. Heb. 1.14.

232. Isa. 6.2; Ezek. 5.4; 10.1f.

233. The Jews used "Face" as a designation of God.

234. Philo, *Quaest. Ex.* 2.65.

235. Apoc. 4.5 and Zech. 4.2 are the source. Gregory refers to Isa. 11.1f. which had great influence on the ancient Church's thought about the Spirit. For the usage here, cf. Clement Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.6.35 and *Paed.* 3.2.87.

236. Rom. 3.25. For the sake of consistency this rendering departs from that of the Jerusalem Bible.

237. Phil. 2.10.

238. Heb. 13.15; Apoc. 5.8.

239. Exod. 25.4,5. The following interpretation picks up the thought of II, 22 that the skins of animals symbolize death.

240. 1 Cor. 12.12; Eph. 1.23. The tabernacle as a figure of the Church appears in Origen, *In Ex. bom.* 9.3-4; Hilary, *In Ps.* 131.16; and Ambrose, *Ep.* 4. On the following sections see more briefly *In Cant.* 2, Vol. 6, p. 44, 16ff. (MG 44.788D). Gregory anticipates the two hierarchies of the Pseudo Dionysius.

241. 1 Cor. 12.28f.; Gal. 2.9, but in the following sentence Gregory changes the order of the names. See Origen, *In Ex. bom.* 9.3, and Gregory, *In Cant.* 14, Vol. 6, p. 416, 11ff. (MG 44.1077A) for this use of Gal. 2.9, and cf. "pillars of faith" in *De beat.* 6 (MG 44.1264D).

242. John 5.35.

243. Phil. 2.15.

244. Matt. 5.14.

245. 1 Cor. 15.58 (the Douay translation).

246. 1 Tim. 3.15 (the Douay translation).

247. Ps. 141.2 (departing from the Jerusalem Bible) gives its wording to the whole statement, but see also Eph. 5.2; Phil. 4.18; Exod. 29.18; Ezek. 20.41; 1 Tim. 2.8 on the "holy hands."

248. Cf. Cyril, *Cat. Lect.* 3.2 (MG 33.428B); the following chapters refer also to the baptizing activity of Jesus, Peter, and John. Elsewhere Gregory uses the members of a body to express the various ranks in the church—*In Cant.* 7, Vol. 6, pp. 216-224 (MG 44.917B-924D).

249. Mark 1.4,5.

250. Acts 2.41.

251. Acts 8.27ff. We follow Musurillo's emendation in our translation. All the manuscripts read "laver of Candace" as if that were the name of the Ethiopian treasurer. Candace was the title of the Ethiopian queen, but was taken by Gregory (as normally) as a personal name.

287. Gen. 3.4.
 288. Exod. 32.18f., LXX.
 289. On θεοδόχος see *Or. cat.* 37 (MG 45.97B) and PGL *s.v.*
 290. Luke 1.35 modified. Here is another figure of the incarnation, for which cf. Irenaeus, *Proof* 26 (ACW 16: 64). The Exodus account of the tables of stone is sufficient to suggest the idea, but is there also an allusion to Daniel 2.34, 45, which is used by Gregory—*In bapt. Christi* (MG 46.589A-B)—in reference to the virgin birth?
 291. Luke 11.20 and Matt. 12.28 (cf. Exod. 8.19 and Deut. 9.10).
 292. Exod. 34.29ff.
 293. Matt. 25.31.
 294. Arianism was regarded as a Judaizing heresy—*De fide* (MG 45.137A); *C. Eun.* 3, 7, Vol. 2, p. 217, 26 (MG 45.804C).
 295. Isa. 26.10 (the Douay translation). The parallel of the glory of the visage of Moses with that of Christ is in 2 Cor. 3.7-4.6, itself an application of Exod. 34.
 296. See Introduction and bibliography in note 60.
 297. Daniélou, "Akolouthia," pp. 236ff.
 298. Exod. 33.11. Cf. *In Cant.* 12, Vol. 6, p. 356, 1-16 (MG 44.1025D) for the same context commented on in a similar way to what follows.
 299. Ἀπελπισμός. Gregory uses ἀγελπιστία in *In Cant.* 13, Vol. 6, p. 369, 15ff. (MG 44.1037B-C) to express the state of the soul in never attaining to God. Cf. Philo, *De post. Cain.* 4.12-5.16.
 300. Exod. 33.21-23 (the Douay translation).
 301. On the whole pericope, cf. Philo, *De spec. leg.* 1.41-50 and *De post. Cain.* 48.168-169: God remains invisible, but His ὀπίσθια are his traces in the world, which are his powers. Gregory Nazianzus, *Or.* 2.3 (MG 36.29B), refers to this Exodus passage in developing the impossibility of man's comprehending God in his essence, but he too takes the back of God as referring to the traces of his activity which God leaves in the world. See n. 208.
 302. One of the principles of the Alexandrian exegesis was that a statement unworthy of God points to an allegorical meaning. See Introduction.
 303. The same figure appears in *De beat.* 2 (MG 44.1213B-C), cf. 6 (MG 44.1272D-1273A), and *Or. cat.* 6 (MG 45.29A). There are two parts of our nature: "The intellectual part would naturally move upward and the material part downward"—*In Cant.* 12, Vol. 6, p. 345, 11-19 (MG 44.1017C). For man as μεθόειος, the meeting place of the earthly and heavenly, see Ladner, *DOP* XII (1958): 71; Weiswurm, *op. cit.*, pp. 48ff.; J. Daniélou, *L'être et le temps chez Gregoire de Nysse* (Leiden, 1970), pp. 116-132.
 304. The theme of the flight of the soul, associated with wings, comes

from Plato, *Phaedrus* 246b, 249a, 255c, and *Theaetetus* 176a. Gregory utilizes it often—II, 244; *In Cant.* 15, Vol. 6, p. 449, 12ff. (MG 44.1101B-C); *De or. dom.* (MG 44.1145A-B); *De virg.* 11, Vol. 8, 1, p. 294, 7ff. (MG 46.365C-D)—but for him the wings are those of the dove, the Holy Spirit—*ibid.* The theme is used by Justin, *Dial.* 2.6; Clement Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.14.94, and Origen, *De princ.* 3.6.1; cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.2; 1.2.3ff. See P. Courcelle, "Tradition néo-platonicienne et tradition chrétienne du vol de l'âme," *Annuaire du Collège de France* 63 (1963): 376-388 and 64 (1964): 392-404; Daniélou, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 23 (1954): 396-400; Cherniss, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-49; Ladner, *DOP* 12 (1958): 65.

305. The theme of the attraction by the Good comes from Hellenistic philosophy, influenced by Plato and Stoicism (*Herm.* 10.6; 16.5), but it is also biblical (John 6.44; 13.22). The basis for the flight of the soul is the attraction of like for like—Cherniss, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 48f. Gregory in *De an. et res.* (MG 46.97A-B) has the attraction of the soul by God's love if it is not held down by material things (cf. 44.876B).

306. Phil. 3.13. We arrive at the essential passage which is the text for the book.

307. The ever-increasing participation in the Good is always the point of departure for new progress. The creature "never halts at what it has reached, but all that it has acquired becomes by participation a beginning of its ascent to something still greater"—*C. Eun.* 3.6.74, Vol. 2, p. 212, 10-12 (MG 45.797A). "The boundary of what has been attained becomes the beginning for the discovery of higher goods"—*In Cant.* 8, Vol. 6, p. 247, 11f. (MG 44.941C). This is possible because the soul has been created as a receptacle with an ever-increasing capacity to receive what is poured into it—*De an. et res.* (MG 46.105A-C). See Daniélou, *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 291-307.

308. Plotinus, *Enn.* 5.8.4, 26.

309. Gen. 28.12. The theme of the ladder is in Plato, *Symp.* 211c, and Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.6.1, 20. Gregory more often employs the figure of step or stages (βαθμοί)—*De virg.* 11, Vol. 8, 1, p. 292, 10ff. (MG 46.364B-C); *In Cant.* 5, Vol. 6, p. 158, 19ff. (MG 44.876B). See Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works*, p. 79.

310. For the constant increase in the desire for God, cf. *In Cant.* 12, Vol. 6, p. 366, 11ff. (MG 44.1033D-1036A). Although one fills himself to capacity, because of the infinite nature of God he is able to grow greater in proportion to his growth in grace—*In Cant.* 8, Vol. 6, p. 245, 19—246, 15 (MG 44.940D-941B). Thus the spirit, unlike flesh (n. 83) never knows satiety—*In Cant.* 14, Vol. 6, p. 425, 14ff. (MG 44.1084C-D); only love for the Beautiful knows no limit—*De an. et res.* (MG 46.96A and 97A). See II, 232, 235, 239.

311. The use of *ἔεως* is a reference to Plato, *Symp.* 201d. Gregory explains that by *ἔεως* he means an intense form of *ἀγάπη*—*In Cant.* 13, Vol. 6, p. 383, 9 (MG 44.1048C). See G. Horn, "L'Amour Divin: Note sur le mot 'Eros' dans S. Grégoire de Nysse," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 6 (1925): 378-389; Daniélou, *Platonisme . . .*, pp. 199-208; Aubineau, SC 119: 177, 195; Weiswurm, *op. cit.*, pp. 196ff.; Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works*, p. 76; Leys, *op. cit.*, 53-55. For a view of *ἔεως* opposed to that of Daniélou, *op. cit.*, and H. v. Balthasar, *Der versiegelte Quell* (Einsiedeln, 1954²), p. 11, see Mühlberg, *op. cit.*, p. 183, n. 3.

312. Cf. n. 208.

313. God is the Good and the Beauty—Aubineau, SC 119: 150.

314. Cf. Origen, *De princ.* 2.9.1-3. See reference on satiety in n. 310. Ivánka, *Hellenistisches und christliches im frühbyzantinischen Geistesleben* (Vienna, 1948), pp. 48ff.; Daniélou, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 23 (1954): 400-407, 417. For the contrast with Origen's spirituality, Otis, DOP 12 (1958): 108f.

315. Exod. 33.20.

316. Basil, *Ep.* 234.2 (MG 32.869C); Gregory Naz., *Or.* 45.3 (MG 36.628A). Cf. Völker, p. 41.

317. A Platonic polemic against Stoicism's *καταληπτική φαντασία*—the phrase is also in *In Cant.* 12, Vol. 6, p. 357, 6 (MG 44.1028A). For the refinement of Gregory's opposition to Stoicism in this respect, see v. Balthasar, *Présence et Pensée*, pp. 60-67.

318. N. 191.

319. See I, 7 and note 14.

320. Same root (*συνεπεκτείνω*) as in Phil. 3.13 (cf. II, 225). See *In Cant.* 1, Vol. 6, p. 31, 6ff. (MG 44.777B).

321. Comparable formulations in *In Cant.* 12, Vol. 6, pp. 369, 24-370, 3 (MG 44.1037B) and *In Eccl.* 7, Vol. 5, pp. 400, 21-401, 2 (MG 44.720C). One notes the progress of this formula over that which defines the earlier vision at Sinai, "the seeing that consists in not seeing," II, 163. Gregory does not deny a real vision of God, but he asserts the deficiency of any possible vision of God in relation to what he is. Philo, *Quaest. Ex.* 2.51, "For the beginning and end of happiness is to be able to see God. But this cannot happen to him who has not made his soul . . . a sanctuary and altogether a shrine of God." On the theme, see K.E. Kirk, *The Vision of God* (London, 1932).

322. Thus is achieved the demonstration of the thesis posed in the Introduction that perfection is in progress (I, 10). Cf. Balás, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

323. Rom. 8.28, reading the text of the Alexandrian family.

324. Exod. 33.21.

325. Phil. 3.13.

326. Almost an exact parallel in *In Cant.* 5, Vol. 6, p. 159, 12ff. (MG

44.876C). Cf. Joseph Maréchal, *Études sur la psychologie des Mystiques* II (Paris, 1937), pp. 107f., who develops the idea that Christ is the rock and the place.

327. Exod. 33.21. There is a very similar discussion of "rock," commenting on Cant. 2.14, in a context of knowing God but without reference to Moses in *In Cant.* 5, Vol. 6, pp. 160, 10—163, 10 (MG 44.876D-877D). Irenaeus in commenting on the Exodus passage says it teaches two things: that it is impossible for man to see God, and that man shall see Him in the last times in a rock, namely in His coming as a man—*Adv. haer.* 4.34.9 (Harvey, II, 220).

328. By this paradox Gregory opposes physical movement which is cyclical and stationary to spiritual movement which is progressive and stable. Daniélou, in *Eranos Jahrbuch* 23 (1954): 400-408 and *Platonisme . . .*, p. 282.

329. Eph. 4.14.

330. Epicurus, *Fragment* 470 (Usener). The sand image appears in *In Eccl.* 1, Vol. 5, p. 290, 1ff. (MG 44.628C-D); *De mort.* (MG 46.500D-501D).

331. Ps. 39.3, but Gregory changes the verse so that it is man doing it instead of having it done to him. The verse is correctly cited in a similar context in *In Cant.* 11, Vol. 6, p. 331, 15 (MG 44.1008B).

332. 1 Cor. 10.4. Cf. *In Cant.* 11, Vol. 6, p. 331, 16 (MG 44.1008B). *In Cant.* 5, Vol. 6, p. 161, 15-18 (MG 44.877B) has the Gospel as the rock. Christ as the "rock" is treated in *De perf.*, Vol. 8, 1, p. 192, 20ff. (MG 46.269A). *De beat.* 6 (MG 44.1264C) has "steep and sheer rock" in connection with the inaccessible knowledge of God; cf. *In Eccl.* 7, Vol. 5, p. 413, 4ff. (MG 44.729D) for the lack of sure footing in the spiritual quest.

333. 1 Cor. 15.58.

334. See n. 304.

335. 2 Cor. 5.1.

336. 2 Tim. 4.7.

337. Christ as the *ἀγωνοθέτης* appears many times in Gregory—*De beat.* 8 (MG 44.1296C and 1301A); *C. Eun.* 3.1, Vol. 2, p. 3, 14 (MG 45.573A); *De S. Theod. Mart.* (MG 46.737D-740A). For other references see PGL, s.v.

338. In the *De perfectione* for the first time in the history of theology a theology of the divine names is unfolded (cf. Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works*, p. 30). Although the names of Christ here seldom stand unconnected, Gregory does not seem to have yet understood the names of Christ as steps on an endless ladder to virtue. This understanding is at the basis of his presentation of the names here. They are steps which lead to the desired object, sparks which illuminate a little of its essence (for a discussion and