

THE MIRROR OF THE INFINITE: GREGORY OF NYSSA ON THE *VESTIGIA TRINITATIS*

DAVID BENTLEY HART

I

The notion that, from the patristic period to the present, the Trinitarian theologies of the Eastern and Western catholic traditions have obeyed contrary logics and have in consequence arrived at conclusions inimical each to the other—a particularly tedious, persistent, and pernicious falsehood—will no doubt one day fade away from want of documentary evidence. At present, however, it serves too many interests for theological scholarship to dispense with it too casually: Eastern theologians find in it a weapon to wield against the West, which they believe has traditionally—so alleges, for instance, John Zizioulas—forgotten the biblical truth that the unity of the Trinity flows from the paternal *arche*, which is entirely “personal”, and come to believe instead “that that which constitutes the unity of God is the one divine substance, the one divinity”;¹ Western theologians of varying hues—quasi-Hegelian dialectical Trinitarians, social Trinitarians, “personalist” theologians—take it as a license for their differing critiques of the “Platonism” or “Hellenism” of classical Trinitarian metaphysics; and all of us who, in our weaker moments, prefer synopsis to precision find in it a convenient implement for arranging our accounts of doctrinal history into simple taxonomies, under tidily discrete divisions. It was, learned opinion generally concurs, Théodore de Régnon who probably first “discovered” the distinction between Western and Eastern styles of Trinitarian theology: the tendency, that is, of Latin thought to proceed from general nature to concrete Person (the latter as a mode of the former), so according priority to divine unity, and of Greek thought to proceed from Person to nature (the latter as the content

David Bentley Hart
Department of Theology, Loyola College, 4501 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21210, USA

of the former), so placing the emphasis first on the plurality of divine Persons.² Régnon's own aims, as it happens, were quite modest and eirenic, and he certainly understood that, in whatever degree his analysis was correct, neither East nor West enjoyed a manifestly better claim to dogmatic purity; but his distinction has served little purpose in recent years but to feed Eastern polemic and Western insecurity, and to distort the tradition that both share. Now we find ourselves in an age in which many of us have come to believe that we must choose between "Greek" personalism and "Latin" essentialism, or at least remain poised between them; and as a result we have become insensible to the subtlety and richness of the sources that have thus been subjected to these fairly arid categories.

The moment in ecclesial history at which the divergence between East and West on these matters supposedly became acute, at least according to the prevailing prejudices, was some time in the late fourth century and early fifth. This is supposedly especially obvious when one compares the Trinitarian theology of the Cappadocian fathers (particularly Gregory of Nyssa) to that of Augustine. Indeed, if one confines one's investigations to a few select texts, one can make something of a case here: did not Augustine, after all, refuse to draw an analogy of the Trinity from the relationship of husband, wife, and child,³ favouring instead more elliptical analogies drawn from the mind's inner complexity; and did not Gregory, by contrast, go so far at one point as to defend Trinitarianism against the accusation of tritheism by arguing not only that it is incorrect to speak of three gods, but that it is only catachrestically that we speak even of three men, insofar as human nature is one?⁴ But the contrast is no sooner drawn than it begins to melt away: Augustine, certainly, evinces no less keen a sense of the distinct integrity of the divine Persons as Persons than does Gregory,⁵ nor does Gregory actually argue that the unity of the Trinity is reducible to a common nature wherein the divine Persons severally subsist (anyway—*vide infra*—Gregory's understanding of human "nature" is so splendidly peculiar as to make it impossible to draw any facile "social" conclusions from his argument); more to the point, in neither instance is either theologian actually attempting to provide a conceptual definition of the Trinity. We should perhaps do well to remember that it is one thing to move about in the realm of analogy, within which one merely seeks out locutions and similitudes by which creaturely language and thought can pass, however imperfectly, from created towards divine being; but it is another thing altogether to move in the far more mysterious realm of the *imago Dei*, where one must seek first not what we may say of God, but what God says of himself in fashioning us as the creatures we are, called from nothingness to participate in the being that flows from him, and to manifest his beauty in the depths of our nature. It is wise to keep this distinction constantly in view: for while Augustine and Gregory alike are quite willing to consider the many ways in which we may shape models of the Trinitarian relations in our words and reflections, both

become rather more circumspect when attempting to identify precisely how the image of the triune God resides in us. It is precisely here, though—in contemplating where the image of God is impressed upon his creatures, and how—that Trinitarian reflection can achieve its fullest and supplest expression.

One should also note, at the outset, that for Gregory, no less than for Augustine, the divine image is first and foremost the possession of each individual soul, in the mystery of her simultaneous unity of essence and diversity of acts. For instance, Gregory, in *On the Making of Humanity*, explicitly rejects the suggestion that that most basic “form” of human sociality—the distinction between the sexes—is in any sense a feature of God’s image in us: “for in Jesus Christ, according to the apostle, there is neither male nor female”.⁶ Rather, the image is more properly to be sought on the one hand in a variety of spiritual attributes inhering in the soul—reason, love, freedom—and on the other in the soul’s simultaneous complexity and simplicity. Gregory is even willing to argue to the indivisibility of the Trinity from the indivisibility of the soul that is created in its image,⁷ and then to argue back again, in the opposite direction, from the revealed nature of the Trinity to what constitutes God’s image in us: God, scripture tells us, is Mind and Word, and so we possess word and understanding in imitation of the true Word and Mind; God is love, God beholds and hearkens to and searches out all things, and hence we love, and hence we see and hear and seek understanding.⁸ Even the mind’s transcendence of itself—our inability to grasp how, again, an intelligible and simple unity can subsist in a dynamic and versatile plurality of movements and capacities—is an aspect of the divine image in us, reflecting God’s own incomprehensibility and hiddenness.⁹ Nor should one assume that the soul’s singularity of personal identity is, for Gregory, simply and solely a defect in its likeness to the triune God, or any more of a limitation upon that likeness than is the social constitution of creaturely personality; certainly Gregory, insofar as he ventures any portrayal of the interior life of God, does not elevate divine triplicity over divine unity, any more than the reverse:

... the divine nature exceeds each [finite] good, and the good is wholly beloved by the good, and thus it follows that when it looks upon itself it desires what it possesses and possesses what it desires (ὁ ἔχει, θέλει, καὶ ὁ θέλει, ἔχει), and receives nothing from outside itself. ... the life of that transcendent nature is love, in that the beautiful is entirely lovable to those who know it (and God does know it), and so this knowledge becomes love (ἡ δὲ γνώσις ἀγάπη γίνεται), because the object of his recognition is in its nature beautiful.¹⁰

It is all but impossible to read such a passage without discerning in it an essentially Trinitarian grammar. Surely this progression—from the divine nature’s infinite source, through God’s *gnosis* of himself, to the “conversion” of that recognition into delighted love, into *agape*—is a description of how

the one God, even in his infinite simplicity, eternally conceives his equally infinite image, knowing himself perfectly in his Logos, and so eternally “wills” himself with an equally infinite love, so completing his Trinitarian life in the movement of the Spirit. This is, after all, entirely in keeping with the venerable Cappadocian insight that in God—*ad extra* and so, necessarily, *ad intra*¹¹—all is inaugurated in the Father, effected in the Son, and perfected in the Spirit.

Morphologically, at least, this account of the simplicity of God’s nature as also an infinitely accomplished act of knowledge and love—or as the perfect coincidence of desire and possession—entirely follows the logic of Gregory’s (and Basil’s)¹² belief that the generation of the Son is directly from the Father, while the procession of the Spirit is from the Father only *per Filium* (*sed*, to borrow a phrase, *de Patre principaliter*). Admittedly, Gregory does not, in the passage just quoted, make an explicit connection between God’s infinite immanent act of knowing and loving his own essence and the *taxis* of the Trinity; but Augustine does:

... the Son is from the Father, so as both to be and to be coeternal with the Father. For if the image perfectly fills the measure of him whose image it is, then it is coequal to its source ... He has, in regard to this image, employed the name “form” on account, I believe, of its beauty, wherein there is at once such harmony, and prime equality, and prime similitude, in no way discordant, in no measure unequal, and in no part dissimilar, but wholly answering to the identity of the one whose image it is ... Wherefore that ineffable conjunction of the Father and his image is never without fruition, without love, without rejoicing. Hence that love, delight, felicity, or beatitude, if any human voice can worthily say it, is called by him, in brief, use, and is in the Trinity the Holy Spirit, not begotten, but of the begetter and begotten alike the very sweetness, filling all creatures, according to their capacities, with his bountiful superabundance and excessiveness ... In that Trinity is the highest origin of all things, and the most perfect beauty, and the most blessed delight. Therefore those three are seen to be mutually determined, and are in themselves infinite.¹³

Clearly, at any rate, for both theologians the simplicity of God’s essence and the distinctness of his internal relations are to be held together, however imponderable the ultimate convertibility of these things must remain for the finite mind. This oscillation between the poles of the one and the three is constantly present in the thought of both. One sees it, to take an example almost at random, in Gregory’s remark that “if the Father wills something, the Son, being in the Father, knows the Father’s will—or, rather, the Son himself is the Father’s will”;¹⁴ or in his statement that “just as a man’s spirit within him and the man himself are one man, even so God’s Spirit within him and God himself should truly be called the one, first, and sole God”.¹⁵

And both Gregory and Augustine resolve the aporia that theology must thus inevitably confront not by depicting the Trinity as a social “event” accomplished by three independent subjectivities, but in terms of the order of relations that distinguish the Persons from one another “causally” within the absolute simplicity of the divine nature. Both even distinguish generation and procession within the Trinity in terms primarily of the order of cause—as one perhaps must, unless one wishes to compromise the simplicity of the Father’s essence by positing within God two acts that are separate and *essentially* different, rather than distinguished from one another relationally. As Gregory writes (in a passage that would fit very well in, say, Book V of Augustine’s *De Trinitate*),

... while confessing the immutability of the [divine] nature, we do not deny difference in regard to cause and that which is caused, by which alone we discern the difference of each Person from the other, in that we believe one to be the cause and another to be from the cause; and again we conceive of another difference within that which is from the cause: between the one who, on the one hand, comes directly from the principle and the one who, on the other, comes from the principle through the one who arises directly; thus it unquestionably remains peculiar to the Son to be the Only Begotten, while at the same time it is not to be doubted that the Spirit is of the Father, by virtue of the mediation of the Son that safeguards the Son’s character as Only Begotten, and thus the Spirit is not excluded from his natural relation to the Father.¹⁶

None of which is to say that for Gregory there is no relationship between the image of God in us and our nature as creatures necessarily in communion with one another (in a very striking way, as will be seen, some such relationship lies at the heart of his understanding of creation and redemption); nor is it to say, in the narrow terms to which modern theology occasionally succumbs, that Gregory’s Trinitarian theology is “psychologistic” rather than “social”, or that he accords the unity of the divine essence priority over the distinction of the divine Persons. Such oppositions are simply inapposite to classical Trinitarian theology, and are conceptually crude in any event. Surely, to indulge in something of an excursus, we must be acutely conscious of the analogical interval within those words—such as “person”—that we apply to both God and creatures, and always recall that the moral and ontological categories in which human personality are properly described are appropriate only to the finite and composite. The relationality of human persons, however essential it may be, remains a multiple reality, which must be described now in social terms, now in psychological, now in metaphysical; it is infinitely remote from that perfect indwelling, reciprocal “containment”, transparency, recurrence, and absolute “giving way” that is the meaning of the word περιχώρησις or *circumincessio* (adopted by Trinitarian theology long after Gregory or Augustine, and yet so perfectly suited to the theology

of both). For if we forget this interval, we not only risk lapsing into either a collectivistic or solipsistic reduction of human relationality—exclusively outward or inward—but we are likely to adopt either a tritheistic or a unitarian idiom when speaking of God. Our being is synthetic and bounded; just as (again to borrow a later theological vocabulary) the dynamic inseparability but incommensurability in us of essence and existence is an ineffably distant analogy of the dynamic identity of essence and existence in God, the constant pendulation between inner and outer that constitutes our identities is an ineffably distant analogy of that boundless bright diaphaneity of coinherence, in which the exteriority of relations and interiority of identity in God are one, each Person wholly reflecting and containing and indwelling each of the others. Because for us personality is synthetic, composite, successive, and finite, we are related always in some sense “over against”, in a fragmentary way, and to be with others always involves for us a kind of death, the limit of our being. In God, though, given the simplicity of his essence, there is an absolute coincidence of relation and unity. For God, the “inwardness” of the other is each Person’s own inwardness, the “outwardness” of the other is each Person’s outwardness and manifestation.

It is precisely here that the artificial distinction between “Greek” and “Latin” theology has worked the most injurious mischief, by prompting many to rush to one end or the other of a scale that must be kept in balance. We must say, at once, that the divine simplicity is the “result” of the self-giving transparency and openness of infinite Persons, but also that the distinction of the Persons within the one God is the “result” of the infinite simplicity of the divine essence.¹⁷ Otherwise, we will find ourselves trading in mythology: speaking of God as an infinite psychological subjectivity possessed of plural affects, or as a confederacy of three individual centres of consciousness; in either case reducing God, the transcendent source of all being, to a composite being, an ontic God, in whose “subjectivity” there would remain, even within the immanent divine life, some sort of unexpressed interiority (or interiorities), some surfeit of the indeterminate over the determinate, some reserve of self in which identity is constituted as the withheld. God is one because each divine Person, in the circle of God’s knowledge and love of his own goodness (which is both wisdom and charity), is a “face”, a “capture”, of the divine essence that is—as must be, given the infinite simplicity of God—always wholly God, in the full depth of his “personality”. For any “mode of subsistence” of the infinite being of God must be an infinite mode, a way whereby God is entirely, “personally” God. God is never less than wholly God. Just as the Father is the plenitude of divine goodness, in whom inhere both his Word (manifestation, form) and Gift (the life in which the Word goes forth, light in which he is seen, joy in which he is known, generosity wherewith he is bestowed), so in the Son whom the Father generates the depth of the paternal *arche* and the boundless spiritual light and delight of wisdom also inhere, and in the Spirit whom the Father breathes forth the

plenitude of paternal being and filial form inhere in the "mode" of accomplished love. Each Person is fully gathered and reflected in the mode of the other: as other, as community and unity at once. Here, in the mystery of divine infinity, one finds, necessarily, a perfect agreement with one another of the languages of "subsistent relations" and of "divine Persons", and a warrant for seeing Trinitarian *vestigia* both in the multiplicit singularity of the soul, which comprises memory, understanding, and will, and so forth, and in the communal implications of each of us in one another, in the threefold structure of love, within which circle we together, as the event of shared love, constitute (however poorly or sinfully) the human "essence". We waver between these two analogical orders at an infinite distance from their supereminent truth; and obviously the orders are not separate: knowledge and love of neighbour fulfill the soul's velleity towards the world, and so grant each of us that internally constituted "self" that exists only through an engagement with a world of others; but that engagement is possible only in that the structure of interiority is already "othered" and "othering", in distinct moments of consciousness' inherence in itself. In the interdependence of these two ways of analogy, enriching and chastening one another, it becomes possible to speak, with immeasurable inadequacy, of the Trinitarian God who is love.

Here, however, we have moved again from the question of the divine image in the soul, through the more ambiguous question of the Trinitarian *vestigia*, back to the question of analogy; but, again, analogical language about God is the effect of a prior divine language, an act of self-disclosure, in which the triune God declares himself "outside" the eternal utterance of himself in his immanent life, in a created likeness. Where I wish, therefore, to direct my gaze in what follows is towards Gregory's understanding of the relationship between the Trinitarian *taxis* and God's image in us, the better to show how, for Gregory, God's own internal life of perfect wisdom, charity, and bliss is (to use the most precise term) *reflected* in the human soul. I hope thus to demonstrate how God's life of light and joy is understood by Gregory as one of radiant "mirroring", to which the being of creation is joined by what might be called, for want of a better term, a "specular economy".

II

Certainly if one were to attempt to isolate the one motif that pervades Gregory's thought most thoroughly, and that might best capture in a single figure the rationality that unifies it throughout, it would be that of the mirror: the surface in which light is gathered, creating depths where none previously existed, and by which it is reflected back to the source of its radiance. One might say, to begin with, that for Gregory all knowledge consists in *theoria* of the reflected, and this is in some sense so even within the life of God: the Son is the eternal image in which the Father contemplates and loves

his essence, and thus the Father can never be conceived of without his Son, for were he alone he would have no light, truth, wisdom, life, holiness, or power;¹⁸ "if ever the brightness of the Father's glory did not shine forth, that glory would be dark and blind."¹⁹ This "mirroring" is that one original act of knowledge in which each of the Persons shares; the Only Begotten, says Gregory, who dwells in the Father, sees the Father in himself, while the Spirit searches out the deeps of God.²⁰ God himself is, one is tempted to say, an eternal play of the invisible and the visible, the hidden Father made luminously manifest in the infinite icon of his beauty, God "speculating" upon himself by way of his absolute self-giving in the other. And it is from this original "circle of glory"²¹ that the "logic" of created being unfolds: a specular ontology, according to which creation is constituted as simply another inflection of an infinite light, receiving God's effulgence as that primordial gift that completes itself in summoning its own return into existence. Creation is only as the answer of light to light, a created participation in the self-donating movement of the Trinity, existing solely as the manifestation—the reflection—of the splendour of a God whose own being is manifestation: recognition and delight.

Even "material" nature, for Gregory, is entirely subsumed in this economy of reflectivity: the physical world, he says, in its interminable dialectic of constancy and change, stands on the one hand in absolute contrast to divine reality,²² but, on the other hand, it mirrors within its extraordinary intricacy, magnitude, and inscrutability the incomprehensibility and majesty of God.²³ And the beauty that perdures in the midst of the world's ceaseless becoming excites in the soul a longing for the infinite beauty that it reflects.²⁴ Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that, for Gregory, apart from that reflex of light that lies at creation's heart, there is no world to speak of at all; Gregory, like Basil before him,²⁵ in various places denies that the world possesses any material substrate apart from the intelligible acts that constitute its perceptible qualities: the world of bodies is a confluence of "thoughts", "bare concepts", "words", noetic "potentialities",²⁶ proceeding from the divine nature; its *esse*, one might almost say, is *percipi*. The phenomenal realm is not, says Gregory, formed from any underlying matter at all, for "the divine will is the matter and substance of created things (ὄλη καὶ οὐσία τῶν δημιουργημάτων)",²⁷ the "matter, form (κατασκευή), and power (δύναμις) of the world".²⁸ The here below, it seems, is like a mirror without tain, a depth that is pure surface, and a surface composed entirely of the light that it reflects. Otherwise said, the physical world is a "primordial, archetypal, and true music", a purely rhythmic and harmonious complication of movements—in which, adds Gregory, human nature can discover an image of itself.²⁹

The intelligible creation, however, is an even more thoroughly specular reality. For one thing, all talk of human "nature" most properly refers, in Gregory's thought, not merely to some abstract set of properties instantiated in any given individual, but to the *pleroma* of all persons who come into

existence throughout time, who together constitute, as in a single body, the one humanity that God first willed in fashioning a creature in his image,³⁰ the ideal *anthropos* who dwells eternally in the wisdom and foresight of God, comprehended "altogether in its own plenitude".³¹ This alone is truly that "God-like thing (τὸ θεοεικελον χρῆμα)"³² in whom God has condescended to impress his likeness. When, eschatologically, its temporal unfolding is complete and it is united to the Logos as his pure and glorious body, subjected to the Father, the form of Christ will be proclaimed,³³ made visible in a body stamped with his shape, in whose every part the divine image will shine with equal brightness.³⁴ Humanity, then, is nothing, either ideally or collectively, apart from its power to display in itself the "form and fashion" of its creator; and this final beauty—this unveiling of the divine likeness—can be glimpsed even now in the church, which Gregory describes as the mirror in which the face of the sun of righteousness, Christ, has become visible within creation, to the wonder and enlightenment even of the heavenly powers.³⁵ Nowhere, though, does the beauty of the divine image shine forth with a more pristine radiance than in the individual soul purged of sin; for while indeed there will come about, in the eschatological submission of all things to Christ, a coincidence of the beauty of the eternal Logos (who reflects in his depths the full splendor of the unseen Father, in the Spirit's light) and the form of his redeemed creation, still only God can possess that beauty as identical with his essence. Created nature, which is in its inmost essence nothing but change,³⁶ can manifest God's loveliness only insofar as it continues forever to "capture" it, and continues to preserve within its mutability a dynamism entirely oriented towards God, by which it can grow into an ever greater embrace of divine glory;³⁷ and this can occur only within the individual will. Rational creation will indeed ultimately come to mirror the splendor of the Logos "in the convergence upon the One Good of all united one to another",³⁸ and divine beauty will spread throughout all the members of the body, and the grace of the Lord will radiate through all, making everyone of one mind, alike in loveliness, everyone rejoicing in the beauty that appears in one's neighbour;³⁹ but all of this will come to pass only insofar as each "facet" of that perfect creation will have been purified and made bright within itself with the beauty of holiness.

Hence it is here that the enchantment of the mirror, and its sway over Gregory's theology, reaches its profoundest and most paradoxical intensity: such is the soul's "glassy essence" that it cannot help but assume the aspect of that towards which it is turned, and thus its intrinsic mutability and plasticity make of it also a "stable" surface in which anything—however noble or debased—can be made manifest. Human nature, says Gregory, is a mirror that takes on any appearance, bears the impression of any form, and is moulded solely by the determinations of free will.⁴⁰ In its most proper nature, the human mind is in fact that uniquely privileged surface in which the beauty of the divine archetype is reflected and thereby mediated to the

entirety of material creation, which is "a mirror of the mirror". Indeed, the lower creation, able to reflect only what humanity reflects, was subjected to the deformity that human nature conceived in itself when it turned towards sin⁴¹ and forsook those endowments—impassibility, beatitude, incorruption—by which the divine image was originally impressed upon it.⁴² And we, when humanity languished in the chill of idolatry, assumed in our nature the lifeless coldness of what we worshiped; but, when the sun of righteousness arose, our nature grew warm and lustrous again in his radiance.⁴³ Now, when our nature draws near to Christ, it becomes beautiful with the reflection of his beauty.⁴⁴ Gregory calls the soul a "free and living mirror" that, in gazing upon the face of its lover the Word, is adorned with his comeliness;⁴⁵ by looking at him, says Gregory, one becomes what he is.⁴⁶ The Word is the bridegroom who tells his bride, the soul, that she has become beautiful by approaching his light and communing with his eternal beauty;⁴⁷ and he is also the blinding sun that cannot be looked at directly, but can be glimpsed only in its image: the soul that mirrors his beauty in her own purity.⁴⁸ So entirely is the soul's relation to God a matter of this play of light within light, of radiance and reflex, that Gregory can even reverse (or, at any rate, complicate) his specular imagery: just as the bodily eyes cannot see themselves, or perceive their own act of perception, but must find their image outside themselves, in a likeness reflected elsewhere, so the soul that mirrors her divine archetype and his beauty knows herself only in contemplating this reflection, finding in the figure of her archetype the mirror of her own nature.⁴⁹

Obviously, though, in the case of God and the soul, what is reflected immeasurably exceeds the surface in which it appears: the infinite cannot dwell in the finite as a fixed and secure possession (the finite, being nothing but change, cannot even contain itself); God's nature, like a flowing fountain, is inexhaustible and ever new in our sight;⁵⁰ but so long as the soul continues to follow after the shining form of the Word, "stretching out" into his infinity, being transformed throughout eternity into an ever more incandescent—ever more divine—vessel of divine glory,⁵¹ she can preserve within her very changeableness a changeless beauty,⁵² and display it with an ever fuller splendor. In a sense, the infinity of God's glory is reflected in the insatiable eros it awakens: as the soul always bears the impress of what she mirrors, one glimpse of the divine loveliness leaves an ecstasy ever unexpressed in the depths of the mind, like a longing for the ocean deeps or for the sun, inspired by the lingering taste—mere drops and glimmers—of their beauty.⁵³ And, no matter how far the soul ventures into the infinity of God, she will continue always to yearn for more of God's beauty, to hunger for his sweetness, nor will she ever find any end to the reality in which she moves⁵⁴—and herein lies the ultimate truth of the soul's similitude to God. Gregory does not distinguish, as other of the fathers do, between God's image and God's likeness in us (between our created "similarity" to the divine and our ultimate assimilation to God in Christ), for such a distinction could have little meaning

in his theology. Granted, he often speaks of those proper possessions of rational nature that constitute our aboriginal conformity to the divine, but all of them—including even freedom—exist in us only as reflections of the one good,⁵⁵ and only to the degree that we are turned towards it; and this likeness to God is destined to increase in purity, intensity, and resplendency through all eternity. Thus the soul, which is finite but infinitely motile, both is and yet is still called to become the moving mirror of the infinite, in which the glory of God that nothing can comprise and no one see expresses and manifests itself as beauty within change, eternity within movement; and this Gregory calls the *θεωρία τῶν ἀθεωρήτων*: the contemplation of the inconceivable, the vision of the invisible.⁵⁶

Here, however, we seem not to have advanced beyond paradox, which (despite its often mysterious and even thrilling allure) is, in itself, invariably fruitless and, if left to itself, not a little banal. One could nevertheless bring one's reading of Gregory here to a very plausible close, and be content to see in the "dialectic" between God's infinity and created finitude (between hiddenness and revelation, the invisible and the visible, divine darkness and created light) the entire mystery of the divine image in us; but in doing so one would fail to take account of the deeper truth that allows such a relation—such a proportion between incommensurables—to be a real event both of divine self-disclosure and of creaturely participation in God's goodness. After all, were the relation between God and humanity simply that between the infinitely hidden and the finitely manifest, it would be no relation at all, but only an impossible interval, posed between the ontological and the ontic, the actual and the possible, the absolute and the contingent; its only true proportion would be an infinite otherness, and its only true expression the creature's eternal frustration. There must then already be in God, for Gregory's "dynamist" theology of the image to be meaningful, the ground of possibility that would allow the hiddenness of God at once to remain inviolable and yet to unveil itself in a created icon; there must be a Trinitarian "economy" (to use an entirely inappropriate word, given the infinite self-donation of the Father in the Son and Spirit) of invisibility and disclosure, and the created image of God must participate at once in this invisibility and in this disclosure: it must acquire its brightness "within" the Trinitarian order of relations, according to an economy (the word being here appropriately employed) that, in keeping with Gregory's language, might best be called the economy of glory. And, for Gregory, glory means more than an "attribute" of God: it is his light, his splendour, and—most importantly—his Son and Spirit.

III

There are two distinct, though consequent, senses in which it is correct to speak of the invisibility of God: there is, on the one hand, the sheer infinity

of the divine nature, which—flowing from the Father—is the common *proprium* of the divine Persons, who as one forever exceed and excite our souls' most extravagant ecstasies; and there is, on the other hand, that invisibility of the Father within the Trinitarian *taxis* that is altogether convertible with (or, rather, "converted in") the "visibility" or manifestation of the Logos to the Father and the "visibility" or illumination of the Spirit for the Father.⁵⁷ The infinity, and so inaccessibility, of God is known to us in both aspects, and it is only because the former invisibility (divine transcendence) proceeds from the latter (the plenitude of the paternal *arche* within the Trinitarian structure of manifestation, of self-outpouring love and self-knowing wisdom) that the restless mutability of our nature can become, by grace, a way of mediation between the infinite and the finite. We can mirror the infinite because the infinite, within itself, is entirely mirroring of itself, the Father's incomprehensible majesty being eternally united to the co-equal "splendour of his glory", his "form" and "impress", in seeing whom one has seen the Father.⁵⁸ We can become images of God that shine with his beauty because the Father always has his image in his Son, bright with the light of his Spirit, and so is never without form and loveliness.⁵⁹ And (most importantly) the motion of our soul can reflect the eternal peace of God because it can be assimilated to, and made to share in, that one eternal act whereby God is God, by the advent of that act in us under the form of sanctification. Thus, in the surface of the soul, the nature of the Trinitarian life, while always eluding our understanding, somehow appears to us; in his light we see light.

Or, to phrase it differently, God's light is always Trinitarian; his glory is inseparable from his triune being. Moreover, glory, the one indivisible splendor of the Trinity, often figures in Gregory's vocabulary as a special name for the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that divine glory is not a possession of the Father for Gregory, or that Gregory does not, following scripture, call the Son glory, or the splendor of glory, or the seal of glory, who is as inseparable from the Father as is radiance from light.⁶⁰ There is, though, a very particular sense in which the light of the Spirit, for Gregory, is that "perfecting" radiance, that fullness of glory, that "completes" the unity of the godhead:⁶¹ when Christ prays, in John 17, according to Gregory, that his followers might be one even as he and his Father are one and indwell one another, and says that the glory that the Father has given him he has given them, he is speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit; indeed, that glory *is* the Spirit, the glory that the Son had with the Father before the world was made,⁶² the "bond of peace" or "bond of unity" (so like the Augustinian *vinculum caritatis*) by which Father and Son dwell in one another, and by which we dwell in God when the Son breathes the Spirit forth upon us.⁶³ The Spirit, who forever searches the depths of God, and who forever receives from and is sent by the Son, has also always himself possessed his glory, and so has the power to glorify, from everlasting and in infinite superabundance—and "how can any grant the grace of light unless he be himself light?"⁶⁴

Thus the Spirit glorifies the Father and the Son. Nor does he speak falsely who says, "I glorify them that glorify me." "I have glorified you", the Lord says to his Father. And again: "Glorify me with that glory I had with you before the world existed." The divine voice answers: "I have glorified and will glorify." Do you see the revolving circle of glory, from like to like (ἐγκύκλιον τῆς δόξης διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων περιφορᾶν)? The Son is glorified by the Spirit. The Father is glorified by the Son. Again, the Son has his glory from the Father, and so the Only Begotten becomes the glory of the Spirit. For by what will the Father be glorified if not by the true glory of his Only Begotten? And, again, in what will the Son be glorified if not in the majesty of the Spirit? So, again, our confession and praise, circling back again (ἀνακυκλούμενος ὁ λόγος), glorifies the Son through the Spirit, and through the Son the Father.⁶⁵

This last sentence is of the essence, for it shows that it is this very circle of glory into which the Spirit draws us,⁶⁶ and that it is by being refashioned after and in the Trinitarian ordering of self-outpouring light that we are made like God. Thus the "course" of glory in the Godhead—the *taxis* of the divine being—impresses its own reflex in our specular natures, almost under the form of an inversion of the light (as is proper for a mirror), so that God's own loving "return" to himself is our integration into him. Everything—being, power, creation,⁶⁷ holiness, love, truth, faith⁶⁸—flows from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit, and is restored by the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father; and this order of relations, and its doxological dynamism, is the very order of the economy of salvation, which is therefore nothing less than the Trinitarian life gathering us into itself.

In the Song of Songs, says Gregory, when the bride (the soul) cries out that she has been wounded with love, we should see the Father as the archer, sending forth the arrow of his Son, whose "three-pointed arrowhead" has been "dipped in the Spirit of life"; the arrowhead is faith, by which the bolt is fixed deep in the bride's heart; and then (as Gregory astutely observes) the imagery of archery is replaced by that of nuptial delight.⁶⁹ That is: as the light of the Spirit appears in the mirror of the soul, the Trinitarian mystery of love becomes manifest; "in this light [human nature] assumes the beautiful form of the dove: that is, the dove that symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit."⁷⁰ The eyes of the bride are lovely because the dove is reflected in them, and hence they receive the impression of the spiritual life within themselves, so that—thus purified—they are now able to contemplate the beauty of the bridegroom.⁷¹ It is impossible to say Jesus is Lord, or mount in thought to the Son or, through him, to the Father, except in the Holy Spirit.⁷²

... there is no means whereby to look upon the Father's *hypostasis* save by gazing at it through its stamp (χαρακτήρ), and the stamp of the Father's *hypostasis* is the Only Begotten, to whom, again, none can approach whose mind has not been illuminated by the Holy Spirit ...⁷³

The light of the Father, proceeding in the Holy Spirit, makes the Father's Only Begotten light visible, and so the Spirit's glory makes Father and Son perceptible to our intelligence. Thus, though in one sense it is true that "none has ever seen God", still the grace of the Spirit elevates human nature to the contemplation of God, for "where the Spirit is, there the Son is seen and the Father's glory is grasped".⁷⁴ Here, then, in the fused light of holiness—of the Spirit's radiance purifying the soul of every stain and filling her with every splendour—the Trinitarian relations "declare" or "express" themselves, as at once the threefold "community" of glory and also the perfect unity of divine being's structure of infinite self-manifestation: the absolute inseparability of the paternal "depth" from its "image" and "glory".

Moreover, as one considers the sequence of the soul's movements, as the Spirit works upon her, it becomes even clearer that the Trinitarian image appears in us at once as "nature" and as "grace", and appears in each soul as both the ground of "interior" identity and the effect of a transforming act of relation; for the mystery of God's life is reflected not only in the purity of the soul's surface, nor only in the limpid display of the economy of divine revelation there, but also in the "inward" structure of the soul's assimilation to the triune God. Where the light of the Spirit touches the mirror of the soul, one might say, it achieves a chiasmic shape; a mirror, after all, not only inverts the light that strikes it, returning it to its source, but also reproduces in itself, under the form of that inversion, the figure of what it faces, thus gathering into itself what it is gathered into. The mirror of the soul is that ideal surface where two depths are reconciled, or where one depth creates another: the infinite light of God, flowing from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit, and the "spectacle" of its created likeness, rising up from the more "exterior" to the more "interior" aspects of the soul, repeating in the realm of created finitude the infinite's play of hiddenness and manifestation. The three marks of the Christian life, says Gregory, appear in practice, word (*λόγος*), and thought (*ἐνθύμιον*); the principle (*ἀρχικώτερον*) of all three is thought, for mind (*διάνοια*) is that original source (*ἀρχή*) that then manifests itself in speech, while practice comes third and puts mind and word into action. It is within this threefold constitution of our essential act of being and manifesting ourselves that we either conceive the image of sin or of Christ, and so we must strive within the circumvolving mutability of our souls to fashion ourselves after the latter; and, when our life is shaped by a mind whose movements are in conformity to Christ, "there is a harmony of the hidden man with the manifest (*συμφωνίαν εἶναι τοῦ κρυπτοῦ ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν φαινόμενον*)".⁷⁵ It is not fanciful, obviously, given the classically "linear" nature of Cappadocian Trinitarianism, to discern a Trinitarian shape in this account of the human soul (of, that is, mind and body); nor is it excessive to speak of a kind of Pneumatological chiasm brought about by the purifying work of sanctification in the soul: inasmuch as the soul's principle, the mind, expresses itself in word and act, moving from full hiddenness to open

disclosure, just so the Spirit, meeting us in our fleshly acts and words, conducts the Trinitarian glory “upward” into our thought, refashioning us so that our “depths” are ever more conformed to the brightening “surface” of our natures, making our “return” to ourselves at once a reflex of God’s return to himself within his circle of glory and also our ascent out of ourselves—out of our creaturely insubstantiality—into his infinity.

This becomes especially clear in a passage from the *Adversus Macedonianos*: the Spirit, Gregory notes, comes to us first in the life-giving power of baptism, in our flesh, as the power of sanctification; but this requires also a prior act of faith in Christ; but, again, this grace proceeds through the Son from the ungenerate source, the Father, and so faith in the Father somehow comes first. Thus divine life and grace stream down to us from the Father, through the Son, in the perfecting action of the Spirit, and either our praise or our blasphemies return again to the beneficent wellspring of deity, in the Spirit and through the Son; and thus

... the pious worshipper of the Spirit sees in him the glory of the Only Begotten and in the Son beholds the image of the infinite [invisible] one,⁷⁶ and by this image stamps the archetype upon the mind ... but such is this power that whosoever exalts the Spirit in speech (τῷ λόγῳ) exalts him prior to speech in thought: for speech is not able to ascend alongside thought. When one will have attained to the uttermost extent of human power, to the most exalted thoughts within reach of the human mind, one must still think it inferior to his grandeur ...⁷⁷

Doxology becomes *theoria*, as the words that respond to the Spirit’s act within our acts ascends to thought, and thought transcends itself towards God; and, again, the *taxis* of the Trinity shapes the “*taxis*” of the soul, as the ascent of glory from the Spirit and Son back to its paternal source is mirrored in the soul as an ascent from expression to mind. In this way, says Gregory, all duality is overcome, even that between body and soul, so that “the manifest exterior is found in the hidden interior, and the hidden interior in the manifest exterior”.⁷⁸

One should note here, however, that this is not simply some barely baptized form of Neoplatonism, according to which the absolute principle emanates itself in diminishing degrees of divinity—from the One, through Nous, to Psyche—and returns to itself in the finite soul’s ascent to its own inward and noetic simplicity. Gregory’s is not a metaphysics of identity, that would dissolve the divine and human into a bare unity of essence, but a metaphysics of “analogy”: of, that is, divine self-sufficiency and its entirely gratuitous reflection in a created likeness. Between God and soul the proportion of the analogy remains infinite. The Father is not a sublime abyss of undifferentiated light; nor is the Son the prism or cymophane in which that light acquires color through its refraction, fragmentation, or distortion; nor

is the Spirit that light's delicate and diffuse opalescence here below, waiting to be gathered up again in the soul's contemplative intellect. Gregory's thought is, in a way more radical than any identist idealism could ever be, utterly "speculative". The disproportion between word and thought in us does not reflect any inequality within the simplicity of the divine nature; there is no subordination within God's circle of glory. Moreover, we are drawn into God not by a *nisus* of the alone to the alone—the reduction of the soul's motion to the austere featureless light of some "substantial" identity—but by way of ecstasy, of the dynamism of change within a soul that is itself pure change, with no "principle" or "past" to return to or remember. The soul is an absolute futurity,⁷ rising up from nothingness into the infinite, forever. We are music moved to music, light born within light, but God dwells in the fullness of his own glory and fellowship, while we reflect that plenitude and love across the infinite distance of imparted glory, in the ever more luminous surface of our mutable nature, both like and unlike the beauty that gives us being and shape, revealing that beauty both in what we are becoming and in the infinity with which it always exceeds the changing mirrors of our souls. Yet, even so, it is here, to this miraculous incommensurability within union between the infinite and the finite, in the dual action (which is really one and the same act) of creation and redemption, that we must look for our images, however insufficient, of God's triune nature.

IV

To return, then, to this essay's beginning: if it is so that this is how the divine image is constituted in us—as the play of God's glory gathering in the mirror of our nature—and that it is a Trinitarian image, then, in considering how God reveals himself in the economy of creation and salvation, we must ultimately find ourselves far beyond all simple oppositions between "social" and "psychological" Trinitarianism, or between "personalism" and "essentialism", or—most certainly—between Greeks and Latins. Just as we must resist every temptation towards those twin reductions of the human essence to either simply society or simply ego (which are vapid as abstractions and vicious as ideologies), we must surely avoid reducing our understanding of God to rudimentary images of either confederacy or subjectivity. In our own souls, in their absolute implication within one another of the exterior and the interior, we discover—without grasping—an icon of that infinite transparency of the divine Persons within and to one another that is also the infinite depth of each divine Person's distinctness. On the one hand, it seems we must understand this infinite coincidence in God of relation and identity by reflecting upon the unity of the soul's motion outward towards expression and inward towards thought (however we may wish to employ "social" models, in themselves they can offer only pictures of extrinsic accommodations

between monads, or perhaps of the “transparency” of collective identity, but in neither case can such models account for the mysterious complexity and amphibology of personality, or for the reality of the soul’s unity within difference); but, on the other hand, for Gregory no less than for Augustine, the turn inward proves to be, in a still more radical sense, a turn outward: I am an openness whose depth does not belong to me, but to the boundless light that creates me, and whose identity is then given me as other. And as the otherness of God is the soul’s true depth, she can possess no identity apart from the otherness of the neighbour; and both the soul’s otherness from God and the otherness of each soul from every other reflect the mystery of God’s act of “othering” himself within his infinite unity.

It is thus not strange that we find, at the end of Gregory’s commentary on the Song, that the bride—who is the figure of the soul joined to Christ the bridegroom—represents also the unity of all souls united to one another in the dove: in the Spirit of glory.⁸⁰ The Trinitarian image appears in each soul as she is purified by grace, and then integrally in the body of the Logos, which consists in all of humanity bound with the bond of peace, the very Spirit who is the bond of God’s unity. This is an “analogical ontology” in the truest sense: our participation in the being that flows from God is an imparted splendour, always seizing us from nothingness, drawing us into the infinite depth of God’s essential simplicity and Trinitarian diversity, into his knowledge and love of his own beauty, but always only insofar as we comprise within our “essence” an interval of incommensurability that is the created likeness of the infinite ontological interval between God and us. That is to say, perhaps still more obscurely, that our likeness to God, posed between the pure ontic ecstasy of our being *ex nihilo* and the infinite ontological plenitude of his being *in se* (between, one might say, our intrinsic nothingness and his supereminent “no-thing-ness”), cannot simply take the form of a homonymy of “attributes” applied to two discrete substances, but must consist, radically, in the rhythm of our difference from him, our likeness to his unlikeness, under the form of a dynamic synthesis of distinct moments of being that, in God, coincide in simple and infinite identity. The distance within us between what we are and that we are, as between our movements *intus* and *foro*, is the necessary expression within the ontic of the distance between God and contingent reality, which distance has as its ontological possibility and *actus* the “distance” that is opened by the eternal act of the hypostatic distinctions within God’s unity. I am slipping rather too easily into scholastic terminology. In something more like Gregory’s own terms, I should say this: that we are in every way mirrors set among mirrors, within the infinite movement of a light that is always already its own reflection; and in all the complexity of our existence—in moments of interior *theoria* and of exterior communion—we can come to shine with his loveliness, both in the fullness of our nature and in each soul’s glorious and ardent thirst for the whole of God’s beauty, because in God difference is identity and distinction is unity. Somehow, in

this mystery of the moving and finite image of the eternal and infinite God, we are vouchsafed a glimpse of how God knows and loves himself, and is entire in every moment of that act, and receives his glory completely in utterly pouring it forth in another.

Which yields, finally, only this reflection: that a simple, and almost entirely misguided, critical distinction between differing styles of Trinitarianism should have become, over the last century, not only a petrified and petrifying formula in theological scholarship, and not only a justification for pursuing any number of narrower and narrower dogmatic projects, but yet another weapon (and another myth) in the interminable war of recrimination between East and West is an almost excruciating irony. That the language of God's Trinity—of God's perfect unity within the "diversifying" act of his knowing love—should become the grammar of a dispute that seems always to harbour yet greater dimensions of suspicion and misunderstanding is an offense not only against reason, but against love. It may well be that the truest Trinitarian theology of which the Eastern and Western catholic traditions are now capable would consist in the resolution to turn in charity each to the other, in the hope of each finding mirrored in the other those hidden depths that neither is competent to recognize in itself; for the glory of the Spirit is never visible to us apart from our willingness to receive its light from without. Such observations quickly become either saccharine or sanctimonious; so suffice it to remark that no theologian has ever been more adamant than Gregory in insisting that all we are and should be lies outside our grasp, ahead of us, and that we who insist on clinging to our own particular "substances", rather than seeking our proper being in our ecstatic openness to the light that is beyond us, in fact cling to nothing, embrace phantoms, chase shadows and *ignes fatui*, and subjugate ourselves to the transient and empty; and so long as either East or West refuses the glory that appears in the other, it refuses the Holy Spirit—the bond of peace, of unity, and of love—and all our worlds grow dark.

NOTES

- 1 John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), p. 40. It has become so lamentably common among my fellow Orthodox to treat the claim of Vladimir Lossky and others that Western theology in general posits some "impersonal" divine ground behind the Trinitarian hypostases, and so fails to see the Father as the "fountainhead of divinity", as a simple fact of theological history (and the secret logic of Latin "filioquism") that it seems almost churlish to note that it is quite demonstrably untrue, from the patristic through the mediaeval periods, with a few insignificant exceptions; honesty, however, not to mention a modicum of shame, moves me to make the observation anyway. It would be comforting to think that only very incautious "scholars"—like the indefatigable polemicist, *provocateur*, and caricaturist John Romanides—fall prey to this error, but one can number even Orthodox theologians of genuine stature and brilliance, like Dumitru Staniloae, among its victims.
- 2 Théodore de Régnon, *Études de Théologie Positive sur la Sainte Trinité*, 2 vols (Paris 1892), vol. I, 433.

- 3 Augustine, *De Trinitate* XII.5.5–7.12.
- 4 Gregory, *Ad Ablabium: Quod non sint tres Dei*, GNO III, I: 40–42.
- 5 See *De Trinitate* XV.5.7–8. I can do no better than recommend, on this matter, Rowan Williams' quite splendid essay "Sapientia and the Trinity: Reflections on the *De Trinitate*" in (eds) B. Bruning, M. Lamberigts, and J. van Houlm, *Collectanea Augustiniana: Mélanges T. J. van Bavel* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), pp. 317–332.
- 6 *De Hominis Opificio* XVI, PG 44: 181.
- 7 *Ibid.*, V, PG 44: 137.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*, XI, PG 44: 153–156.
- 10 *De Anima et Resurrectione*, PG 46: 93–96.
- 11 Since the time of Vladimir Lossky, various modern Orthodox theologians have, in their assault on "filioquism", adopted an exaggerated "Photianism", and argued that between God's acts in the economy of salvation and God's eternal life of generation and procession there is not an exact correspondence of order. See especially Lossky, "The Procession of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Trinitarian Doctrine", in *idem.*, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 71–96. This, however, is a theologically disastrous course to tread, and one that leads away from the genuine Orthodox tradition altogether. One might note, to begin with, that were this claim sound, the arguments by which the Cappadocians defended full Trinitarian theology against Arian and Eunomian theology—in works like Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto* and Gregory's *Adversus Macedonianos*—would entirely fall apart; more terribly, however, behind such a severance of the *ordines* of the economic and immanent Trinities from one another lies the quite unexcusable spectre of nominalism, the reduction of God to some finite being among beings, whose acts could be distinguishable from his nature, whose freedom would be mere arbitrary choice, who would preserve in his being some quantity of unrealized voluntative potential, and whose relation to the being of creation would be one not of self-disclosing revelation, but of mere power—all of which is quite repugnant to patristic tradition. All truth and goodness in creation is a participation in the eternal truth and goodness of God's Trinitarian act of knowledge and love of his own essence, and were any aspect of created reality—especially the economy of salvation—anything but a disclosure of this order of divine reality, it would be neither true nor good (nor, for that matter, real). Surely, if one is seeking a theological argument against the *filioque* clause (as opposed to the perfectly sufficient doctrinal argument that the creed should not have been altered without conciliar warrant), it would be better to point out that it fails adequately to account for other aspects of what is revealed in the economy of salvation: that the Son is begotten in and by the agency of the Spirit as much as the Spirit proceeds through the Son, inasmuch as the incarnation, unction, and even mission (Mark 1:12) of the Son are works of the Spirit, which must enter into our understanding of the Trinitarian *taxis*.
- 12 Concerning the latter, see Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, XLV–VII; concerning the former, *vide infra*.
- 13 Augustine, *De Trinitate* VI.x.11–12.
- 14 Gregory, *Ad Ablabium*, 288.
- 15 *Refutatio Confessionis Eunomii*, GNO II: 403.
- 16 *Ad Ablabium*, 55–56.
- 17 As Zizioulas cogently argues: *op.cit.*, 89.
- 18 Gregory, *Contra Eunomium* III.i, GNO II: 32.
- 19 *Refutatio*, 355.
- 20 *Contra Eunomium* II, GNO I: 340.
- 21 See *Adversus Macedonianos: De Spiritu Sancto*, GNO III.I: 109; *Contra Eunomium* I, GNO I: 217–218.
- 22 *De Hominis Opificio* I, 128–132.
- 23 *Contra Eunomium* II: 245–254; 260–262.
- 24 *De Beatitudinibus* IV, GNO VII, II: 121; *De Hominis Opificio* XII, 161–164.
- 25 Basil, *In Hexaemeron* I.viii, PG 29: 21.
- 26 See Gregory, *In Hexaemeron*, PG 44: 68–72; *De Anima et Resurrectione*, 124; *De Hominis Opificio* XXIV, 212–213. There are other places, one should note, where Gregory seems to speak of matter more "concretely"—in, for instance, *In Hexaemeron*, 77–80.
- 27 *In illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius*, GNO II, II: 11.

- 28 *De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi*, GNO X, I: 24.
 29 *In Inscriptiones Psalmodum* Liii, GNO V: 30–33.
 30 *De Hominis Opificio* XVI, 185.
 31 *Ibid.*, XVII, 189.
 32 *Ibid.*, XXII, 204.
 33 *Tunc et Ipse Filius*, 20.
 34 *De Mortuis oratio*, GNO IX: 63.
 35 *In Canticum Canticorum* VIII, GNO VI: 255–257.
 36 See *De Anima et Resurrectione*, 141; *In Canticum Canticorum* XII, 351.
 37 The idea that the union of the soul—and so of all lower creation—to God consists in a perpetual progress, an *epektasis*, into God’s infinity is so utterly characteristic of Gregory’s thought that there is little purpose in citing particular passages from his work; I will note, however, that it is the governing theme of the greatest of his spiritual treatises: *In Canticum Canticorum*, *De Vita Moysis* (GNO VII, I), and *De Perfectione* (GNO VIII, I).
 38 *In Canticum Canticorum* XV, 466.
 39 *De Mortuis*, 66. Cf. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XXII, 29–30.
 40 *In Canticum Canticorum* IV, 104.
 41 *De Hominis Opificio* XII, 161–164.
 42 *De Mortuis*, 53.
 43 *In Canticum Canticorum* V, 147.
 44 *Ibid.*, 150.
 45 *Ibid.*, XV, 440.
 46 *Ibid.*, II, 68.
 47 *Ibid.*, IV, 104.
 48 *Ibid.*, III, 90–91; *De Virginitate* XI, GNO VIII, I: 294–297; *De Beatitudinibus* VI, 148.
 49 *De Mortuis*, 41; see *In Ecclesiasten* VII, GNO: 411.
 50 *In Canticum Canticorum* XI, 321.
 51 *Ibid.*, VI, 173–179; VIII, 246, 253; *De Virginitate*, 280–281; *De Perfectione*, 212–214; *Contra Eunomium* I, 112, 285–287; *De Mortuis*, 34–39; *In Inscriptiones Psalmodum* I.v, 39–40; *De Vita Moysis* II, 41–42, 114–118; *et multa cetera*.
 52 *De Vita Moysis* I, 32–33.
 53 *De Virginitate* X, 289.
 54 *De Vita Moysis* I, 4–5; II, 114–118; *De Anima et Resurrectione*, 105.
 55 *Oratio Catechetica*, GNO III, IV: 15–20.
 56 *In Canticum Canticorum* XI, 326. See *ibid.*, X, 307–311.
 57 See *De Perfectione*, 188–189.
 58 *Ibid.*, 189.
 59 *Ibid.*
 60 *Ad Simplicium: De Fide*, GNO III, I: 63–64.
 61 See *Adversus Macedonianos*, 109.
 62 *Tunc et Ipse Filius*, 21–22; *In Canticum Canticorum* XV, 466–468.
 63 *Tunc et Ipse Filius*, 22; *In Canticum Canticorum* XV, 466–467.
 64 *Adversus Macedonianos*, 108.
 65 *Ibid.*, 109.
 66 See *Contra Eunomium* I, 216–218.
 67 *Adversus Macedonianos* 99–100.
 68 *Epistula* XXIV, GNO VIII, II: 77.
 69 *In Canticum Canticorum* IV, 127–128.
 70 *Ibid.*, V, 150–151.
 71 *Ibid.*, IV, 105–106.
 72 *Ibid.*, 106; *Adversus Macedonianos* 98–99.
 73 *Ad Eustathium: De Sancta Trinitate*, GNO III, I: 13.
 74 *In Sanctum Stephanum* I, GNO X, I: 90–91.
 75 *De Perfectione*, 210–212.
 76 The word Gregory uses here is ἀόριστος (“τοῦ ἀορίστου”); as infinity is something Gregory ascribes to all three Persons of the Trinity, as the “measure” of their coequality, it seems somewhat odd to see the Father described as “the infinite”; but Gregory may mean simply that the infinity of the divine essence, flowing from the paternal source, is paradoxically

seen in the Father's coequal image; or it could be that ἁόριστος here carries the force (or may even be a faulty transcription) of ἁόρατος.

77 *Adversus Macedonianos*, 105–107.

78 *De Beatitudinibus* VII, 160–161.

79 *Contra Eunomium* I, 136; *De Anima et Resurrectione*, 93; *In Canticum Canticorum* XII, 366.

80 *In Canticum Canticorum* XV, 466–469.