

0329-0390 – Gregorius Nazianzenus – De spiritu sancto

On the Holy Spirit

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without Father in ours; and without genealogy above (for who, it says, shall declare His generation?) and moreover, as King of Salem, which means Peace, and King of Righteousness, and as receiving tithes from Patriarchs, when they prevail over powers of evil. They are the titles of the Son. Walk through them, those that are lofty in a godlike manner; those that belong to the body in a manner suitable to them; or rather, altogether in a godlike manner, that thou mayest become a god, ascending from below, for His sake Who came down from on high for ours. In all and above all keep to this, and thou shalt never err, either in the loftier or the lowlier names; Jesus Christ is the Same yesterday and to-day in the Incarnation, and in the Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.



The Fifth Theological Oration.

On the Holy Spirit.

I. SUCH then is the account of the Son, and in this manner He has escaped those who would stone Him, passing through the midst of them.³⁶⁹⁴ For the Word is not stoned, but casts stones when He pleases; and uses a sling against wild beasts—that is, words—approaching the Mount³⁶⁹⁵ in an unholy way. But, they go on, what have you to say about the Holy Ghost? From whence are you bringing in upon us this strange God, of Whom Scripture is silent? And even they who keep within bounds as to the Son speak thus. And just as we find in the case of roads and rivers, that they split off from one another and join again, so it happens also in this case, through the superabundance of impiety, that people who differ in all other respects have here some points of agreement, so that you never can tell for certain either where they are of one mind, or where they are in conflict.

II. Now the subject of the Holy Spirit presents a special difficulty, not only because when these men have become weary in their disputations concerning the Son, they struggle with greater heat against the Spirit (for it seems to be absolutely necessary for them to have some object on which to give expression to their impiety, or life would appear to them no longer worth living), but further because we ourselves also, being worn out by the multitude of their questions, are in something of the same condition with men who have lost their appetite; who having taken a dislike to some particular kind of food, shrink from all food; so we in like manner have an aversion from all discussions. Yet may the Spirit grant it to us, and then the discourse will proceed, and God will be glorified. Well then, we will leave to others³⁶⁹⁶ who have worked upon this subject for us as well as for themselves, as we have worked upon it for them, the task of examining carefully and distinguishing in how many senses the word Spirit or the word Holy is used and understood in Holy Scripture, with the evidence suitable to such an enquiry; and of shewing how besides these the

³⁶⁹⁴ Luke iv. 29, 30.

³⁶⁹⁵ Exod. xix. 13.

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

combination of the two words—I mean, Holy Spirit—is used in a peculiar sense; but we will apply ourselves to the remainder of the subject.

III. They then who are angry with us on the ground that we are bringing in a strange or interpolated God, viz.:—the Holy Ghost, and who fight so very hard for the letter, should know that they are afraid where no fear is;³⁶⁹⁷ and I would have them clearly understand that their love for the letter is but a cloak for their impiety, as shall be shewn later on, when we refute their objections to the utmost of our power. But we have so much confidence in the Deity of the Spirit Whom we adore,³⁶⁹⁸ that we will begin our teaching concerning His Godhead by fitting to Him the Names which belong to the Trinity, even though some persons may think us too bold. The Father was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. The Son was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. The Other Comforter was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world.³⁶⁹⁹ Was and Was and Was, but Was One Thing. Light thrice repeated; but One Light and One God. This was what David represented to himself long before when he said, In Thy Light shall we see Light.³⁷⁰⁰ And now we have both seen and proclaim concisely and simply the doctrine³⁷⁰¹ of God the Trinity, comprehending out of Light (the Father), Light (the Son), in Light (the Holy Ghost). He that rejects it, let him reject it;³⁷⁰² and he that doeth iniquity, let him do iniquity; we proclaim that which we have understood. We will get us up into a high mountain,³⁷⁰³ and will shout, if we be not heard, below; we will exalt the Spirit; we will not be afraid; or if we are afraid, it shall be of keeping silence, not of proclaiming.

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

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³⁶⁹⁷ Ps. liii. 5.

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

³⁶⁹⁹ John i. 9.

³⁷⁰⁰ Ps. xxxvi. 9.

³⁷⁰¹ Al. The Confession.

³⁷⁰² Isa. xxi. 2.

³⁷⁰³ Ib. xl. 9.

He is not from the beginning, He is in the same rank with myself, even though a little before me; for we are both parted from Godhead by time. If He is in the same rank with myself, how can He make me God, or join me with Godhead?

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

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

³⁷⁰⁴ Ps. cxli. 5.

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

VII. There—the word is with you. Let the slings be let go; let the syllogism be woven. Either He is altogether Unbegotten, or else He is Begotten. If He is Unbegotten, there are two Unoriginates. If he is Begotten, you must make a further subdivision. He is so either by the Father or by the Son. And if by the Father, there are two Sons, and they are Brothers. And you may make them twins if you like, or the one older and the other younger, since you are so very fond of the bodily conceptions. But if by the Son, then such a one will say, we get a glimpse of a Grandson God, than which nothing could be more absurd. For my part however, if I saw the necessity of the distinction, I should have acknowledged the facts without fear of the names. For it does not follow that because the Son is the Son in some higher relation (inasmuch as we could not in any other way than this point out that He is of God and Consubstantial), it would also be necessary to think that all the names of this lower world and of our kindred should be transferred to the Godhead. Or may be you would consider our God to be a male, according to the same arguments, because he is called God and Father, and that Deity is feminine, from the gender of the word, and Spirit neuter, because It has nothing to do with generation; But if you would be silly enough to say, with the old myths and fables, that God begat the Son by a marriage with His own Will, we should be introduced³⁷⁰⁵ to the Hermaphrodite god of Marcion and Valentinus³⁷⁰⁶ who imagined these newfangled Æons.

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

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³⁷⁰⁵ Irenæus. I., 6.

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

³⁷⁰⁷ John xv. 26. "It did not fall within this Father's (Greg. Naz.) province to develop the doctrine of the Procession. He is content to shew that the Spirit was not Generated, seeing that according to Christ's own teaching He Proceeds from the Father. The question of His relation to the Son is alien to S. Gregory Nazianzen's purpose; nor does it seem to have once been raised in the great battle between Arianism and Catholicity which was fought out at Constantinople during Gregory's Episcopate" (Swete on the Procession, p. 107).

your divisions. What then is Procession? Do you tell me what is the Unbegottenness of the Father, and I will explain to you the physiology of the Generation of the Son and the Procession of the Spirit, and we shall both of us be frenzy-stricken for prying into the mystery of God.³⁷⁰⁸ And who are we to do these things, we who cannot even see what lies at our feet, or number the sand of the sea, or the drops of rain, or the days of Eternity, much less enter into the Depths of God, and supply an account of that Nature which is so unspeakable and transcending all words?

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

X. What then? Is the Spirit God? Most certainly. Well then, is He Consubstantial? Yes, if He is God. Grant me, says my opponent, that there spring from the same Source One who is a Son,

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³⁷⁰⁸ Ecclus. i. 2.

³⁷⁰⁹ Sabellius, who taught at Rome during the Pontificate of Callistus, was by far the most important heresiarch of his period, and his opinions by far the most dangerous. While strongly emphasizing the fundamental doctrine of the Divine Unity, he also admitted in terms a Trinity, but his Trinity was not that of the Catholic dogma, for he represented it as only a threefold manifestation of the one Divine Essence. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are in his view only temporary phænomena, which fulfil their mission, and then return into the abstract Monad. Dr. Schaff (*Hist. of the Church, Ante-Nicene Period*, p. 582) gives the following concise account of his teaching:

“The unity of God, without distinction in itself, unfolds or extends itself in the course of the word’s development in three different forms and periods of revelation, and after the completion of redemption returns into Unity. The Father reveals Himself in the giving of the Law or the Old Testament Economy (not in the creation also, which in his view precedes the Trinitarian revelation); the Son in the Incarnation; the Holy Ghost in inspiration; the revelation of the Son ends with the Ascension; that of the Spirit goes on in generation and sanctification. He illustrates the Trinitarian revelation by comparing the Father to the disc of the sun, the Son to its enlightening power, the Spirit to its warming influence. He is also said to have likened the Father to the body, the Son to the soul, the Holy Ghost to the spirit of man: but this is unworthy of his evident speculative discrimination. His view of the Logos too is peculiar. The Logos is not identical with the Son, but is the Monad itself in its transition to Triad; that is, God conceived as vital motion and creating principle; the Speaking God, as distinguished from the Silent God. Each

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

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

Person (or Aspect—the word is ambiguous) is another Uttering; and the Three Persons together are only successive evolutions of the Logos, or world-ward aspect of the Divine Nature. As the Logos proceeded from God, so He at last returns into Him, and the process of Trinitarian development closes.”

³⁷¹⁰ Isa. viii. 19.

³⁷¹¹ i.e. the Phoenix. Hdt., ii. 37.

it will be well for you, unless you are determined to be very quarrelsome, and to fight against what is proved to demonstration.

XII. But, he says, who in ancient or modern times ever worshipped the Spirit? Who ever prayed to Him? Where is it written that we ought to worship Him, or to pray to Him, and whence have you derived this tenet of yours? We will give the more perfect reason hereafter, when we discuss the question of the unwritten; for the present it will suffice to say that it is the Spirit in Whom we worship, and in Whom we pray. For Scripture says, God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.³⁷¹² And again,—We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered;³⁷¹³ and I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the understanding also;³⁷¹⁴—that is, in the mind and in the Spirit. Therefore to adore or to pray to the Spirit seems to me to be simply Himself offering prayer or adoration to Himself. And what godly or learned man would disapprove of this, because in fact the adoration of One is the adoration of the Three, because of the equality of honour and Deity between the Three? So I will not be frightened by the argument that all things are said to have been made by the Son;³⁷¹⁵ as if the Holy Spirit also were one of these things. For it says all things that were made, and not simply all things. For the Father was not, nor were any of the things that were not made. Prove that He was made, and then give Him to the Son, and number Him among the creatures; but until you can prove this you will gain nothing for your impiety from this comprehensive phrase. For if He was made, it was certainly through Christ; I myself would not deny that. But if He was not made, how can He be either one of the All, or through Christ? Cease then to dishonour the Father in your opposition to the Only-begotten (for it is no real honour, by presenting to Him a creature to rob Him of what is more valuable, a Son), and to dishonour the Son in your opposition to the Spirit. For He is not the Maker of a Fellow servant, but He is glorified with One of co-equal honour. Rank no part of the Trinity with thyself, lest thou fall away from the Trinity; cut not off from Either the One and equally august Nature; because if thou overthrow any of the Three thou wilt have overthrown the whole. Better to take a meagre view of the Unity than to venture on a complete impiety.

XIII. Our argument has now come to its principal point; and I am grieved that a problem that was long dead, and that had given way to faith, is now stirred up afresh; yet it is necessary to stand against these praters, and not to let judgment go by default, when we have the Word on our side, and are pleading the cause of the Spirit. If, say they, there is God and God and God, how is it that there are not Three Gods, or how is it that what is glorified is not a plurality of Principles? Who is it who say this? Those who have reached a more complete ungodliness, or even those who have taken the secondary part; I mean who are moderate in a sense in respect of the Son. For my argument

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³⁷¹² John iv. 24.

³⁷¹³ Rom. viii. 26.

³⁷¹⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

³⁷¹⁵ John i. 2.

is partly against both in common, partly against these latter in particular. What I have to say in answer to these is as follows:—What right have you who worship the Son, even though you have revolted from the Spirit, to call us Tritheists? Are not you Ditheists? For if you deny also the worship of the Only Begotten, you have clearly ranged yourself among our adversaries. And why should we deal kindly with you as not *quite* dead? But if you do worship Him, and are so far in the way of salvation, we will ask you what reasons you have to give for your ditheism, if you are charged with it? If there is in you a word of wisdom answer, and open to us also a way to an answer. For the very same reason with which you will repel a charge of Ditheism will prove sufficient for us against one of Tritheism. And thus we shall win the day by making use of you our accusers as our Advocates, than which nothing can be more generous.

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

XV. What of that, they will say perhaps; do not the Greeks also believe in one Godhead, as their more advanced philosophers declare? And with us Humanity is one, namely the entire race; but yet they have many gods, not One, just as there are many men. But in this case the common nature has a unity which is only conceivable in thought; and the individuals are parted from one another very far indeed, both by time and by dispositions and by power. For we are not only compound beings, but also contrasted beings, both with one another and with ourselves; nor do we remain entirely the same for a single day, to say nothing of a whole lifetime, but both in body and in soul are in a perpetual state of flow and change. And perhaps the same may be said of the Angels³⁷¹⁶ and the whole of that superior nature which is second to the Trinity alone; although they are simple in some measure and more fixed in good, owing to their nearness to the highest Good.

XVI. Nor do those whom the Greeks worship as gods, and (to use their own expression) *dæmons*, need us in any respect for their accusers, but are convicted upon the testimony of their own theologians, some as subject to passion, some as given to faction, and full of innumerable evils and changes, and in a state of opposition, not only to one another, but even to their first causes,

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



whom they call Oceani and Tethyes and Phanetes, and by several other names; and last of all a certain god who hated his children through his lust of rule, and swallowed up all the rest through his greediness that he might become the father of all men and gods whom he miserably devoured, and then vomited forth again. And if these are but myths and fables, as they say in order to escape the shamefulfulness of the story, what will they say in reference to the dictum that all things are divided into three parts,³⁷¹⁷ and that each god presides over a different part of the Universe, having a distinct province as well as a distinct rank? But our faith is not like this, nor is this the portion of Jacob, says my Theologian.³⁷¹⁸ But each of these Persons possesses Unity, not less with that which is United to it than with itself, by reason of the identity of Essence and Power.³⁷¹⁹ And this is the account of the Unity, so far as we have apprehended it. If then this account is the true one, let us thank God for the glimpse He has granted us; if it is not let us seek for a better.

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

XVIII. You say, Things of one essence are counted together, but those which are not consubstantial are reckoned one by one. Where did you get this from? From what teachers of dogma or mythology? Do you not know that every number expresses the quantity of what is included under it, and not the nature of the things? But I am so old fashioned, or perhaps I should say so unlearned, as to use the word Three of that number of things, even if they are of a different nature, and to use One and One and One in a different way of so many units, even if they are united in essence, looking not so much at the things themselves as at the quantity of the things in respect of which the enumeration is made. But since you hold so very close to the letter (although you are contending against the letter), pray take your demonstrations from this source. There are in the Book of Proverbs three things which go well, a lion, a goat, and a cock; and to these is added a

³⁷¹⁷ Homer, II., xiv., 189.

³⁷¹⁸ Jer. x. 16.

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

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

fourth; — a King making a speech before the people,³⁷²¹ to pass over the other sets of four which are there counted up, although things of various natures. And I find in Moses two Cherubim³⁷²² counted singly. But now, in your technology, could either the former things be called three, when they differ so greatly in their nature, or the latter be treated as units when they are so closely connected and of one nature? For if I were to speak of God and Mammon, as two masters, reckoned under one head, when they are so very different from each other, I should probably be still more laughed at for such a connumeration.

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



³⁷²¹ Prov. xxx. 29, 30. 31.

³⁷²² Exod. xxxvii. 7.

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

one numeral, and things not of one substance are thus counted, and the pronunciation of the name³⁷²⁴ once for all is used in both cases, what advantage do you gain towards your doctrine?

XX. I will look also at this further point, which is not without its bearing on the subject. One and One added together make Two; and Two resolved again becomes One and One, as is perfectly evident. If, however, elements which are added together must, as your theory requires, be consubstantial, and those which are separate be heterogeneous, then it will follow that the same things must be both consubstantial and heterogeneous. No: I laugh at your Counting Before and your Counting After, of which you are so proud, as if the facts themselves depended upon the order of their names. If this were so, according to the same law, since the same things are in consequence of the equality of their nature counted in Holy Scripture, sometimes in an earlier, sometimes in a later place, what prevents them from being at once more honourable and less honourable than themselves? I say the same of the names God and Lord, and of the prepositions Of Whom, and By Whom, and In Whom, by which you describe the Deity according to the rules of art for us, attributing the first to the Father, the second to the Son, and the third to the Holy Ghost. For what would you have done, if each of these expressions were constantly allotted to Each Person, when, the fact being that they are used of all the Persons, as is evident to those who have studied the question, you even so make them the ground of such inequality both of nature and dignity. This is sufficient for all who are not altogether wanting in sense. But since it is a matter of difficulty for you after you have once made an assault upon the Spirit, to check your rush, and not rather like a furious boar to push your quarrel to the bitter end, and to thrust yourself upon the knife until you have received the whole wound in your own breast; let us go on to see what further argument remains to you.

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

XXII. Some things have no existence, but are spoken of; others which do exist are not spoken of; some neither exist nor are spoken of, and some both exist and are spoken of. Do you ask me

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

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for proof of this? I am ready to give it. According to Scripture God sleeps and is awake, is angry, walks, has the Cherubim for His Throne. And yet when did He become liable to passion, and have you ever heard that God has a body? This then is, though not really fact, a figure of speech. For we have given names according to our own comprehension from our own attributes to those of God. His remaining silent apart from us, and as it were not caring for us, for reasons known to Himself, is what we call His sleeping; for our own sleep is such a state of inactivity. And again, His sudden turning to do us good is the waking up; for waking is the dissolution of sleep, as visitation is of turning away. And when He punishes, we say He is angry; for so it is with us, punishment is the result of anger. And His working, now here now there, we call walking; for walking is change from one place to another. His resting among the Holy Hosts, and as it were loving to dwell among them, is His sitting and being enthroned; this, too, from ourselves, for God resteth nowhere as He doth upon the Saints. His swiftness of moving is called flying, and His watchful care is called His Face, and his giving and bestowing³⁷²⁵ is His hand; and, in a word, every other of the powers or activities of God has depicted for us some other corporeal one.

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

XXIV. Since, then, there is so much difference in terms and things, why are you such a slave to the letter, and a partisan of the Jewish wisdom, and a follower of syllables at the expense of facts? But if, when you said twice five or twice seven, I concluded from your words that you meant Ten or Fourteen; or if, when you spoke of a rational and mortal animal, that you meant Man, should you think me to be talking nonsense? Surely not, because I should be merely repeating your own

³⁷²⁵ var. lect., receiving.

³⁷²⁶ Isa. xli. 4.

³⁷²⁷ Ib. xliii. 10.

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

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

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³⁷²⁸ Heb. xii. 26.

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

³⁷³⁰ Acts xvi. 3.

³⁷³¹ Ib. xxi. 26.

I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?³⁷³² His former conduct belonged to the temporary dispensation, his latter to maturity.

XXVI. To this I may compare the case of Theology³⁷³³ except that it proceeds the reverse way. For in the case by which I have illustrated it the change is made by successive subtractions; whereas here perfection is reached by additions. For the matter stands thus. The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us, and supplies us with a clearer demonstration of Himself. For it was not safe, when the Godhead of the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son; nor when that of the Son was not yet received to burden us further (if I may use so bold an expression) with the Holy Ghost; lest perhaps people might, like men loaded with food beyond their strength, and presenting eyes as yet too weak to bear it to the sun's light, risk the loss even of that which was within the reach of their powers; but that by gradual additions, and, as David says, Goings up, and advances and progress from glory to glory,³⁷³⁴ the Light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated. For this reason it was, I think, that He *gradually* came to dwell in the Disciples, measuring Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him, at the beginning of the Gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues. And indeed it is by little and little that He is declared by Jesus, as you will learn for yourself if you will read more carefully. I will ask the Father, He says, and He will send you another Comforter, even the spirit of Truth.³⁷³⁵ This He said that He might not seem to be a rival God, or to make His discourses to them by another authority. Again, He shall send Him, but it is in My Name. He leaves out the I will ask, but He keeps the Shall send,³⁷³⁶ then again, I will send,—His own dignity. Then shall come,³⁷³⁷ the authority of the Spirit.

XXVII. You see lights breaking upon us, gradually; and the order of Theology, which it is better for us to keep, neither proclaiming things too suddenly, nor yet keeping them hidden to the end. For the former course would be unscientific, the latter atheistical; and the former would be calculated to startle outsiders, the latter to alienate our own people. I will add another point to what I have said; one which may readily have come into the mind of some others, but which I think a fruit of my own thought. Our Saviour had some things which, He said, could not be borne at that

³⁷³² Galat. vii. 7–17.

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

³⁷³⁴ Ps. lxxxiv. 7, and 2 Cor. iii. 18.

³⁷³⁵ John xiv. 16, 17.

³⁷³⁶ John xvi. 7.

³⁷³⁷ Ib. xvi. 8.

time by His disciples³⁷³⁸ (though they were filled with many teachings), perhaps for the reasons I have mentioned; and therefore they were hidden. And again He said that all things should be taught us by the Spirit when He should come to dwell amongst us.³⁷³⁹ Of these things one, I take it, was the Deity of the Spirit Himself, made clear later on when such knowledge should be seasonable and capable of being received after our Saviour's restoration, when it would no longer be received with incredulity because of its marvellous character. For what greater thing than this did either He promise, or the Spirit teach. If indeed anything is to be considered great and worthy of the Majesty of God, which was either promised or taught.

XXVIII. This, then, is my position with regard to these things, and I hope it may be always my position, and that of whosoever is dear to me; to worship God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, One Godhead, undivided in honour and glory and substance and kingdom, as one of our own inspired philosophers³⁷⁴⁰ not long departed shewed. Let him not see the rising of the Morning Star, as Scripture saith,³⁷⁴¹ nor the glory of its brightness, who is otherwise minded, or who follows the temper of the times, at one time being of one mind and of another at another time, and thinking unsoundly in the highest matters. For if He is not to be worshipped, how can He deify me by Baptism? but if He is to be worshipped, surely He is an Object of adoration, and if an Object of adoration He must be God; the one is linked to the other, a truly golden and saving chain. And indeed from the Spirit comes our New Birth, and from the New Birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of Him from Whom it is derived.

XXIX. This, then, is what may be said by one who admits the silence of Scripture. But now the swarm of testimonies shall burst upon you from which the Deity of the Holy Ghost³⁷⁴² shall be shewn to all who are not excessively stupid, or else altogether enemies to the Spirit, to be most clearly recognized in Scripture. Look at these facts:—Christ is born; the Spirit is His Forerunner. He is baptized; the Spirit bears witness. He is tempted; the Spirit leads Him up.³⁷⁴³ He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes His place. What great things

³⁷³⁸ Ib. xvi. 12.

³⁷³⁹ Ib. xiv. 26.

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

³⁷⁴¹ Job iii. 9.

³⁷⁴² Luke i. 35; iii. 22; iv. 1.

³⁷⁴³ Luke iv. 1, 18.

are there in the idea of God which are not in His power?³⁷⁴⁴ What titles which belong to God are not applied to Him, except only Unbegotten and Begotten? For it was needful that the distinctive properties of the Father and the Son should remain peculiar to Them, lest there should be confusion in the Godhead Which brings all things, even disorder³⁷⁴⁵ itself, into due arrangement and good order. Indeed I tremble when I think of the abundance of the titles, and how many Names they outrage who fall foul of the Spirit. He is called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Mind of Christ, the Spirit of The Lord, and Himself The Lord, the Spirit of Adoption, of Truth, of Liberty; the Spirit of Wisdom, of Understanding, of Counsel, of Might, of Knowledge, of Godliness, of the Fear of God. For He is the Maker of all these, filling all with His Essence, containing all things, filling the world in His Essence, yet incapable of being comprehended in His power by the world; good, upright, princely, by nature not by adoption; sanctifying, not sanctified; measuring, not measured; shared, not sharing; filling, not filled; containing, not contained; inherited, glorified, reckoned with the Father and the Son; held out as a threat;³⁷⁴⁶ the Finger of God; fire like God; to manifest, as I take it, His consubstantiality); the Creator-Spirit, Who by Baptism and by Resurrection creates anew; the Spirit That knoweth all things, That teacheth, That bloweth where and to what extent He listeth; That guideth, talketh, sendeth forth, separateth, is angry or tempted; That revealeth, illumineth, quickeneth, or rather is the very Light and Life; That maketh Temples; That deifieth; That perfecteth so as even to anticipate Baptism,³⁷⁴⁷ yet after Baptism to be sought as a separate gift;³⁷⁴⁸ That doeth all things that God doeth; divided into fiery tongues; dividing gifts; making Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers; understanding manifold, clear, piercing, undefiled, unhindered, which is the same thing as Most wise and varied in His actions; and making all things clear and plain; and of independent power, unchangeable, Almighty, all-seeing, penetrating all spirits that are intelligent, pure, most subtle (the Angel Hosts I think); and also all prophetic spirits and apostolic in the same manner and not in the same places; for they lived in different places; thus showing that He is uncircumscribed.

XXX. They who say and teach these things, and moreover call Him another Paraclete in the sense of another God, who know that blasphemy against Him alone cannot be forgiven,³⁷⁴⁹ and who branded with such fearful infamy Ananias and Sapphira for having lied to the Holy Ghost, what do you think of these men?³⁷⁵⁰ Do they proclaim the Spirit God, or something else? Now really, you must be extraordinarily dull and far from the Spirit if you have any doubt about this and need

³⁷⁴⁴ Acts ii. 4.

³⁷⁴⁵ v. 1. Yea, even disorder.

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

³⁷⁴⁷ As in the case of the Centurion Cornelius, Acts x. 9.

³⁷⁴⁸ i.e. in Confirmation.

³⁷⁴⁹ Matt. xii. 31.

³⁷⁵⁰ Acts v. 3, etc.



some one to teach you. So important then, and so vivid are His Names. Why is it necessary to lay before you the testimony contained in the very words? And whatever in this case also³⁷⁵¹ is said in more lowly fashion, as that He is Given, Sent, Divided; that He is the Gift, the Bounty, the Inspiration, the Promise, the Intercession for us, and, not to go into any further detail, any other expressions of the sort, is to be referred to the First Cause, that it may be shewn from Whom He is, and that men may not in heathen fashion admit Three Principles. For it is equally impious to confuse the Persons with the Sabellians, or to divide the Natures with the Arians.

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

XXXII. Again I thought of the sun and a ray and light. But here again there was a fear lest people should get an idea of composition in the Uncompounded Nature, such as there is in the Sun and the things that are in the Sun. And in the second place lest we should give Essence to the Father but deny Personality to the Others, and make Them only Powers of God, existing in Him and not Personal. For neither the ray nor the light is another sun, but they are only effulgences from the Sun, and qualities of His essence. And lest we should thus, as far as the illustration goes, attribute both Being and Not-being to God, which is even more monstrous. I have also heard that some one has suggested an illustration of the following kind. A ray of the Sun flashing upon a wall and trembling with the movement of the moisture which the beam has taken up in mid air, and then, being checked by the hard body, has set up a strange quivering. For it quivers with many rapid movements, and is not one rather than it is many, nor yet many rather than one; because by the swiftness of its union and separating it escapes before the eye can see it.

XXXIII. But it is not possible for *me* to make use of even this; because it is very evident what gives the ray its motion; but there is nothing prior to God which could set Him in motion; for He is Himself the Cause of all things, and He has no prior Cause. And secondly because in this case also there is a suggestion of such things as composition, diffusion, and an unsettled and unstable nature...none of which we can suppose in the Godhead. In a word, there is nothing which presents

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

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

a standing point to my mind in these illustrations from which to consider the Object which I am trying to represent to myself, unless one may indulgently accept one point of the image while rejecting the rest. Finally, then, it seems best to me to let the images and the shadows go, as being deceitful and very far short of the truth; and clinging myself to the more reverent conception, and resting upon few words, using the guidance of the Holy Ghost, keeping to the end as my genuine comrade and companion the enlightenment which I have received from Him, and passing through this world to persuade all others also to the best of my power to worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the One Godhead and Power. To Him belongs all glory and honour and might for ever and ever. Amen.

Oration XXXIII.

Against The Arians, and Concerning Himself.

Delivered at Constantinople about the middle of the year 380.

I. WHERE are they who reproach us with our poverty, and boast themselves of their own riches; who define the Church by numbers,³⁷⁵³ and scorn the little flock; and who measure Godhead,³⁷⁵⁴ and weigh the people in the balance, who honour the sand, and despise the luminaries of heaven; who treasure pebbles and overlook pearls; for they know not that sand is not in a greater degree more abundant than stars, and pebbles than lustrous stones—that the former are purer and more precious than the latter? Are you again indignant? Do you again arm yourselves? Do you again insult us?³⁷⁵⁵ Is this a new faith? Restrain your threats a little while that I may speak. We will not insult you, but we will convict you; we will not threaten, but we will reproach you; we will not strike, but we will heal. This too appears an insult! What pride! Do you here also regard your equal as your slave? If not, permit me to speak openly; for even a brother chides his brother if he has been defrauded by him.

II. Would you like me to utter to you the words of God to Israel, stiff-necked and hardened? “O my people what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I injured thee, or wherein have I wearied thee?”³⁷⁵⁶ This language indeed is fitter from me to you who insult me. It is a sad thing that we

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³⁷⁵³ Shewing the absurdity of defining the Church by counting heads.

³⁷⁵⁴ This refers to the distinction drawn by the Arians in degree as to the Godhead, asserting the Spirit to be great, the Son greater, and the Father greatest (cf. Or. xlii., 16).

³⁷⁵⁵ The beginning of the Oration was apparently disturbed by hostile demonstrations on the part of Arian hearers.

³⁷⁵⁶ Mic. vi. 3.