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The Cappadocian achievement

So far in this study something has been said about the lives and achievements of the three Cappadocian Fathers, and of their treatment of their cultural and theological heritage. Above all, attention has been concentrated upon their reworking of the legacy of Origen and their reaction to the challenge of Eunomius. But apart from this last point little has been said about the specific contribution made by each separately and all together to the doctrine of the Trinity and to Christology. In both these areas, but especially the first, they had a lasting effect on the face of Eastern theology. So, John Meyendorff's account of the Triune God in his *Byzantine Theology* begins with a quotation from Gregory of Nazianzus: 'When I say God, I mean Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'[1] The essentially Trinitarian character of Eastern theism owes much to the work of all three Cappadocians, and to an account of this theology I now turn.

6.1 THE CAPPADOCIANS AND THE TRINITY

On 19 June 325, in the presence of the Emperor Constantine, the '318' fathers of Nicaea produced the Nicene Creed, which affirmed in quite unequivocal language the full deity of the Son. In order to reinforce and expand its point the council introduced a word into the creed, the meaning of which was then unclear and caused subsequent generations much trouble. It said that the Son was *homoousios*, or consubstantial, with the Father. But despite the

apparent authority of the creed we hear no more about it until its reaffirmation at the Western Council of Serdica in 342/343, seventeen years later. In the intervening period the strongest supporters of the creed had found themselves expelled from their sees and exiled to foreign parts, while the supporters of Arius flourished. Above all, Eusebius of Nicomedia became a favoured counsellor of the Emperor, whom he baptized on his deathbed in 337. Far from Nicaea being regarded as authoritative and as having said the last word, synod after synod produced creed after creed in order to secure some measure of unity in the Church. An impression of the doctrinal industry and disunity that mark the period between 325 and 381, the date of the second ecumenical council, held at Constantinople, is afforded by the simple fact that it saw the production of at least twelve different and sometimes contradictory creeds.

On the whole it can be said that the central aim of all parties was to steer some sort of middle course between the position of Arius on the one hand and that of Marcellus of Ancyra on the other. This means that though all agreed that Arius had been wrong, if he meant that the Son was not co-eternal with the Father, Marcellus was no less wrong in denying any real and eternal distinction between the Father and the Son. Cappadocian theology is an attempt to interpret the central term *homoousios* in such a way as to insist on the full deity of the Son and of his eternal distinction from the Father.

Basil's own rise to theological consciousness can be dated with some accuracy to a council held at Constantinople in 360, when we find him associated with the party of his friend Eustathius of Sebaste, the so-called Homoiousians. The party had arisen in the middle of the previous decade and tried to form a common front against Aetius and Eunomius, whose insistence on the unlikeness of Son to Father and proposed definition of the divine nature as the Unbegotten or Ingenerate or Primal One has already been mentioned. At a synod held in Ancyra in Galatia in 358 Eustathius of Sebaste, George of Laodicea and Basil of Ancyra had endeavoured to rebut the views of Eunomius, by insisting that the Son was 'like in substance' to the Father. Such a view of the matter may have satisfied Basil for a short while, but not in the long term. We never find him employing the expression 'like in substance' or *homoiousios* with which to define the position of the Son in relation to the Father. On the other hand we do find him adopting a more pluralist position regarding the nature of God and of the relations within the deity between the three persons. Indeed, much of Basil's theological

enterprise was to reconcile to the Nicene Creed those whose fears had been roused by the interpretation put upon it by Marcellus.

For what did *homoousios* mean? To the Fathers of Nicaea it had been a convenient tool for disposing of Arius, who would never have dreamed of so defining the relation of Son to Father. It very clearly meant that whatever was affirmed about the Father must also be affirmed about the Son, Fatherhood alone excepted. But apart from this affirmation of equality of nature it is hard to say what more was being stated. Marcellus of Ancyra, as we have seen, thought that the creed asserted identity of nature *and* of person. In other words there was for him only one *nature* (*ousia*) in the deity, but also only one *person* (*hypostasis*) there. In other words the interpretation of Nicaea turned on what precise relation was assumed between the two terms *ousia* and *hypostasis*.

In 362 the Emperor Julian, in an attempt to disturb the peace of the Church, recalled from exile those bishops, among them Athanasius, who had been sent away from their dioceses by Julian's predecessor Constantius. Athanasius seized the opportunity thus offered him by summoning a synod at Alexandria in 362. The upshot of this was the *Tomus ad Antiochenos* (*Letter to the Antiochenes*). It was a clever document, irenic in tone and intention, endeavouring to rally all to the creed of Nicaea, but permitting a certain diversity of interpretation in its meaning. It states: 'We require nothing beyond the faith of Nicaea.' As long as that is asserted, together with the condemnation of Arius, it appears to be a matter of theological niceness whether it be affirmed that in the deity there are one *ousia* and one *hypostasis* or one *ousia* and three *hypostaseis*. This highly ecumenical document was designed to reconcile the opposing factions in the Church of Antioch.

Basil of Caesarea's central contribution to the theological debate was to clarify or to attempt to clarify the relation between these two terms. In his earlier work, the *Against Eunomius* of about 364, Basil is shy of the word *homoousios*, using it on only one occasion (1.20), in connection with Hebrews 1:3. After his consecration as bishop in 370, however, he appears as a stalwart supporter both of Nicaea itself and of his own interpretation of the *homoousios*. In a letter (210) written in 375 he puts forward his own position as an attempt to find a middle path between polytheism and Judaism, Arius and Sabellius. We must confess both community of essence (*ousia*) and distinction of person (*hypostasis*), he writes. It is only in *Letter* 236, of the same year, that he explains more precisely what this distinction entails. Using a distinction which goes back to

Aristotle,[2] the relation between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is likened to that between general and particular, *koinon* and *idion*.

> The distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* is the same as that between the general and particular; as, for example, between the animal and the particular man. Wherefore in the case of the Godhead we confess one essence (or substance), so as not to give a variant definition of existence, but we confess a particular *hypostasis* in order that our conception of Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be without confusion and clear. If we have no distinct perception of the separate characteristics of fatherhood, sonship and sanctification, but form one conception from the general idea of existence, we cannot possibly have a sound account of our faith.

Here and elsewhere[3] Basil offers us a model drawn from logic, with slightly materialistic overtones,[4] in order to shed light upon the mystery of the immaterial Trinity. The three persons of the Trinity all belong to the same general category of Godhead; all are therefore equally spiritual and uncreated, because all share in the same nature. Yet this nature does not have an independent reality apart from the three persons. We are not to think of God as somehow distinct from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To believe in God is to believe in the Trinity. In the Basilian scheme each person of the Trinity can be thought of as a union of the general divine nature and an individual characteristic, sometimes referred to as a *tropos hyparxeōs* or way of existing. So the Father is as it were a compound of divinity + Fatherhood, and so on for the Son and Spirit.

Basil's treatment of the Spirit calls for special comment, as we have noted above in Chapter 3. For him, what makes the Spirit distinct from Father and Son is his holiness or sanctifying power. This is a constant feature of Basil's pneumatology.[5] However, it fails to show how within such a scheme the role of the Spirit *within* the eternal divine life is adequately defined. For while Fatherhood and Sonship clearly relate to the immanent nature of God it is hard to see how Sanctification can perform this role. Sanctification defines the role of the Spirit in his economic dealings with us. He cannot be thought of as making the Father and Son holy.

A final mark of Basil's Trinitarian theology goes back to the early days of his controversy with Eunomius. He admits in Book 3 of *Against Eunomius* that there *is* an order within the deity, with the

Father as the source of being, the Son and Spirit as deriving their existence from the Father. But though admitting the place of *taxis* or order within the Trinity, Basil refuses to follow Eunomius in inferring from this order a lessening of essential being and Godhead. Though the Son comes from the Father he is not therefore any less than the Father. In holding this Basil set himself against what can be called a tenet of Platonism, namely that the cause is superior to the effect.[6] The pattern of descent from the Father as source persists throughout the rest of Basil's life, and flowers in his book *On the Holy Spirit*, where the Father is the first cause of everything, the Son the creator, and the Spirit, the perfecter.[7]

Gregory of Nazianzus delivered his five *Theological Orations* in the summer or autumn of 380 in the church of the Resurrection in Constantinople. Although the audience to whom they were addressed was composed of adherents of the Nicene Creed, the wider audience Gregory clearly has in mind are the Eunomians, with whom he spars in the first and second orations, and the Macedonians or Spirit-fighters in the fifth. Apart from a more pronounced insistence on the deity of the Holy Spirit than we find in Basil, he owes much to and shares much with him. He inherits from Basil the two models of sharing a common nature and descent from a single source. With the help of the former he argues for and illustrates the co-equal deity of the three members of the Trinity; by means of the latter he hopes to show how all three are nevertheless only one God. In the fifth *Theological Oration* (section 10) he admits that all three are consubstantial, yet not three gods, because all come from the same source, that is, the Father. This insistence of Gregory that the source of the divine unity is the *monarchy* of the Father is often repeated. In the third oration, for example, he writes 'In a serene, non-temporal, incorporeal way the Father is the parent of the offspring and the originator of the emanation'. Slightly later in the same speech he states 'So because they [the Son and the Holy Spirit] have a cause [the Father] they are not unoriginate'.[8] Even more clearly we find him writing in *Oration* 42.15 'The three have one nature . . . the Godhead. The principle of unity is the Father, from whom the other two are brought forward and to whom they are brought back, not so as to coalesce, but so as to cleave together.'

Although most of Gregory's analogies support the general model of a unity in trinity achieved by means of a hierarchical descent from the Father, there is at least one passage which seems to derive

the unity from a slightly different picture. In section 14 of the fifth *Theological Oration* he writes:

> We have one God because there is a single Godhead. Though there are three objects of belief, they derive from the single whole and have reference to it . . . In a nutshell, the Godhead exists undivided in separate beings . . . It is as though there were a single intermingling of light, which exists in three mutually connected suns. When we look at the Godhead, the primal cause and the sole sovereignty, we have a mental picture of a single whole, certainly.

In this passage the unity of the Godhead seems to derive less from the Father than from common sharing in the divine nature. Part of the trouble arises because of Gregory's flexible use of the key term *monarchia*, which in the passage just cited refers to membership of the same class; but which in the passage from the third oration referred to just previously clearly means derivation from the Father.

On balance, however, despite the odd passage from the fifth *Theological Oration*, Gregory prefers the idea of a monarchy where the Father is the source of order and being. He advances two further analogies in the same oration, one derived from rivers and the other from sunlight. Both are models of derivation, and so satisfy him on one level, but both connote flux, bodiliness and change and time, and therefore he finally rejects them. A final model is that drawn from mental processes, and that also makes use of a descending model. In this model Father, Son and Holy Spirit are self-related even as mind, word and breath.[9] Such an analogy had appealed to a variety of Fathers from Tertullian to Gregory of Nyssa, and slightly later to Augustine.[10] It had the great advantage over the stream and sun models of not depending for its effectiveness upon spatial imagery.

To Gregory of Nazianzus we owe one particular idea that seems to be quite new. In his endeavour to evade the Arian charge that the ideas of Fatherhood must be descriptions either of the divine essence – which would exclude the Son – or of the divine attributes – which would import accidents into the simple essence of the Deity – Gregory produces in his third *Theological Oration* (section 16) the idea of relationship (*schesis*). 'I should have been frightened by your distinction, if it had been necessary to accept one or other of the alternatives, and not rather put both aside, and state a third and

truer one, namely that "the Father" is not the name either of an essence or of an action, but is the name of the relation, in which the Father stands to the Son and the Son to the Father.' A relation is neither an action nor a nature nor an attribute. It is, even so, real. It makes the important point that the nature of the Trinity is not simply constituted by the age-old characteristics of deity, like omnipotence, goodness and eternity, but also and perhaps more importantly by the *relationship* of the three members of the Trinity both to each other (immanent Trinity) and to the world (economic Trinity). This idea has been explored by John Zizioulas in *Being as Communion*,[11] in which he seems to see the nature of the deity as constituted by their mutual interrelationships. So helpful and so powerful was this solution to the problem of the Trinity that it is possible that the celebrated analogies of Augustine in his *On the Trinity* owe something to it.[12]

Gregory of Nyssa's discussion of the Trinity occurs in several contexts. Much of his time was spent, as we have seen, in defending the truth of the co-equality of all three persons against the graded Trinity of Eunomius. In doing this he used language which was susceptible of a tritheist interpretation. So, for example, in his first book *Against Eunomius* (section 227), he had argued that the three persons of the Trinity share the same divine nature, even as Peter, James and John share in the same human nature. They are the same as each other in point of nature, different in their individuality. His apparent tritheism is even more marked in a letter ascribed to Basil, but now assigned to Gregory, *Letter* 38. The letter begins by insisting on a real distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. After explaining the meaning of the two terms in the human sphere, it continues: 'Apply this to the doctrine of God and you will not go far wrong . . . The notion of uncreatedness and incomprehensibility apply in the same way exactly to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit . . . The difference of the *hypostases* does not disintegrate the community of the *ousia*, nor does the community of the *ousia* confuse the particularity of the individual characteristics.' Together they form a 'united separation and a separated union'. Another of Gregory's colourful images follows, that of the rainbow. As the rainbow unites continuity of light and difference of colour, so too the Trinity unites community of nature and distinction of person.

It is hardly surprising that Gregory, with the best intentions in the world, by using language and images of this kind was exposed to the accusation of tritheism. His dense argument in *To Ablabius: On*

Not Three Gods is of uncertain date, but may come from the period after the Eunomian crisis. It was in that period that he had argued that the unity of the divine nature was parallel to the unity of human nature; Father and Son and Spirit were like Peter, James and John. The treatise begins with the account of some unknown critic arguing that such an analogy implied tritheism. It is Gregory's intention to prove that it does not. His first argument is to suggest that the word 'God' should not be used in the plural. For him 'God' is strictly not a class word at all. The same for Gregory is true of the word 'man'. He wishes to make the interesting and difficult observation that 'God' is neither a common noun nor a particular one but transcends both. It is, he insists, above *physis* and therefore not open to the charge of being used in the plural. The *aim* of the argument is clear, for if accepted it absolves Gregory from the charge of possible tritheism. The difficulty in fully understanding him arises from the fact that the distinction between the terms *physis* and *ousia* is both novel and unclear.

The second argument in the treatise proceeds on the assumption that we can infer unity of source from unity of action. By this is meant the idea that if it can be shown that one action proceeds from the three members of the Trinity, then the Trinity is the single source of that action. 'When we inquire whence this good gift came to us, we find, through the guidance of the Scriptures, that it was through the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Trinity brings to effect every operation in a similar way.' In other words, where there is only one action, there is only one agent.

A third attempt to counter the charge of tritheism takes the form of an attempt to relate the three members of the Trinity together by means of internal relationships. It is not unlike a form of the argument already to be found in Gregory of Nazianzus and may owe something to him.

> Although we acknowledge the nature as undifferentiated, we do not deny a distinction with respect to causality. That is the only way we distinguish one person from another, by believing, that is, that one is the cause and the other depends on the cause. Again, we recognize another distinction, with regard to that which depends on the cause. There is that [sc. the Son] which depends on the first cause [sc. the Father], and there is that [sc. the Holy Spirit] which derives from the first cause through the second.

Slightly later on this dependence is defined in terms of relationship.

There is much here to remind the reader of Augustine's analogies for the Trinity. Gregory and he are both dealing with the immanent Trinity. Gregory and he both use the notion of relation. Gregory and he both see the Spirit as coming in some way from both the Father and the Son. Where they differ is that Gregory lacks a *symmetrical* understanding of the way this procession takes place. So Augustine can write in *On the Trinity* XV.xiii.29 what Gregory never did nor could write: the Spirit proceeds *principaliter* from the Father, but also from the Son. Behind Augustine's formulation lies his conviction of the equality of the Son with the Father in all except one feature, his Fatherhood. Apart from that they share all attributes equally, *including* that of being the source of the Spirit. In *On the Trinity* XV.xxvi.47 Augustine writes that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *principaliter et communiter de utroque*. The Western form of the Nicene Creed, 'the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son', is the direct child of Augustinian theology. Even so, despite the evident difference in emphasis, the two versions are much closer than is sometimes made out. For in Gregory of Nyssa the Spirit does in a sense come from the Son, at least coming through him; and in the Augustinian version the Spirit does come from the Son, but principally from the Father. Attempts have been made to erect wonderfully different ecclesiologies on the base of this slender difference; it may be doubted with what justification or success.

6.2 THE CAPPADOCIANS AND THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Attempts to understand and explore the mystery of Christ's person had, up to the Council of Nicaea, largely concentrated on asserting what was meant by calling Jesus God. Little serious attempt had been made to examine what it meant to call him man, or how the two assertions about Christ, that he was divine and that he was human, could both be made without breaking him in half and being unable to put the pieces together. Solutions to the problem of the unity of Christ tended in two opposite directions. On one side there were those who treated the deity as primary and reduced the human elements to a very secondary place. Members of this 'school' are often termed *logos–sarx* theologians. The expression derives from the prologue of the fourth gospel: 'and the Word became flesh.' The tendency of this school is either to deny that

Christ possessed a human soul, or to admit that he had one, but to deny to it any independent power of action. By and large theologians who came from Alexandria held such opinions, among them Athanasius. On the other side there were members of the *logos–anthrōpos* school, who came largely from Antioch and insisted that Christ was fully human and had become united with the Word at his baptism or resurrection or birth as a result of his virtue and obedience, either actual or foreseen. For the members of the former school the virtue of Christ's life and work derived from his divine nature, for members of the latter the power of Christ resided more in his obedience and example.

In 361 a certain Apollinarius became Bishop of Laodicea in Syria. He and his father had done much to create a Christian culture in the East in response to the attempt made by the Emperor Julian in 362 to drive the Christians back into a cultureless ghetto. The two, father and son, had produced classical versions of the books of the Bible. Plato formed the model for the gospels; Homer for the books of Kings and so on. In addition to these fairly harmless activities Apollinarius the younger produced a version of Christology which challenged the rest of the Church, and above all the Cappadocian Fathers, to define their own positions.

Basil's own relationship with Apollinarius has been the subject of some debate.[13] A correspondence between the two has been preserved (*Letters* 361–364) which, if genuine, suggests that Apollinarius had a strong influence on Basil's Trinitarian beliefs. Later, however, in 375, in a letter to Eustathius of Sebaste (= *Letter* 223), Basil denies having had anything to do with Apollinarius. By 375 Apollinarian views on the nature of the person of Christ had become widespread and were coming to be regarded as dangerous. What then were they?

Posterity has not been kind to Apollinarius and we are forced to reconstruct his views largely from the writings of his critics.[14] The central thrust of his position was to insist on the unity of Christ. But if Christ were truly one, he could have only one leading principle, or *hēgemonikon*. This leading principle Apollinarius asserted to be the divine nature of the Word. But, if that were so, what place could be found for the humanity of Christ, above all for his rational soul? The answer given was startling in its simplicity: there was none. None was needed, none was possible, none was there. For to assert the existence of a human soul in Christ meant the denial of any true unity in Christ. Again, if Christ was sinless, and he was, and had to be so if he were to save us, then he could not have a

fragile human soul, which everyone knew from experience as liable to sin. The sinlessness of Christ derived from his being a vehicle of the divine nature, which *could not* sin. Unity and sinlessness were the main props upon which the Apollinarian picture of Christ rested. 'If God had been conjoined with man, i.e. perfect God with perfect man, there would be two, one Son of God by nature, the other by adoption.' Finally, ancient biology insisted that in conception the soul came from the father, the body from the mother. But if Christ had no earthly father – and being virginally conceived he had none – then he had no human soul. The arguments of Apollinarius were very clever; he had a case which needed answering.

His old friend Basil has little to offer on the debate. In his *Letter* 261, written in 377 to the people of Sozopolis, he does indeed discuss the person of Christ, though without mentioning Apollinarius by name. There he insists that Christ possessed a human soul 'using a body' which was capable of hope and fear and of growth in virtue. To say otherwise would mean that one would have to predicate the sufferings of Christ, both physical and mental, of the divine nature – a move which would make God less than perfect. It appears from this argument of Basil that his principal objection to the Apollinarian doctrine is theological rather than anthropological. It ought to be rejected less because it tends to the denial of Christ's full humanity than because it implies his imperfect divinity. The full humanity of Christ therefore appears as a device to protect his deity. A like argument occurs in the second letter of Nestorius to Cyril, in which he writes with clarity that the division of the natures was necessary in order to protect the divine impassibility.[15]

Gregory of Nazianzus produced a full and elegant reply to Apollinarius in his *Letters to Cledonius*. Here Gregory's understanding of the meaning of redemption, rather than the need to protect a particular idea of the divinity of the Word incarnate, led him to coin a phrase which sums up his (and the Church's) unhappiness with Apollinarius, and his own positive reply. 'What has not been assumed has not been healed' (*to aproslēpton, atherapeuton*). The Word heals our human nature in Christ simply in virtue of touching it. The implications of this elegant formula are far reaching. To begin with there is some sort of identity assumed between Christ's humanity and ours. Secondly salvation is assimilated to healing, an idea which, for all its attractiveness to the Greek mind,[16] is not frequent in the Bible. Finally, the place of healing is assumed to be primarily the created spirit or mind. The mind is the place at which the union between the body of Christ and

the deity occurs. 'Mind is mingled with mind as nearer and more closely related, and through it with flesh, being a mediator between God and carnality.' Here we are close to Origen's belief that the human mind of Christ is the point of juncture between God and the body.[17] In several respects, therefore, Gregory of Nazianzus is more Greek than is Apollinarius in his conception of the Incarnation, above all in his insistence on healing as the heart of divine salvation and on the need for the divine in Christ to be related to the bodily by means of something more spiritual.

Gregory of Nyssa produced two writings explicitly directed against Apollinarius and his followers. This is in addition to his treatment of the Incarnation in the *Catechetical Oration*. He wishes to insist, against the criticism of Apollinarius, that, although Christ possessed a complete human nature, he was still one person. Opinions about the nature of his solution have differed.[18] Some have seen in him a proto-Nestorian, others a crypto-Monophysite. Others again find his theology 'crude' and with little power of synthetic thought. With such a variety of interpretations and judgements it is not easy to form a conclusion that does justice to all the evidence. It seems best to treat him as holding a two-stage Christology, relating to both before and after the resurrection – an element in his teaching, as the *Catechetical Oration* makes clear, of crucial importance. This will mean that for Gregory Christ during his earthly life was made of two distinct elements, a full divinity and humanity held together in a loose unity, after a Nestorian model. Gradually, however, the shadows in and of the cave of our humanity are dispelled by the presence within it of the divine Word, until the work is completed on the cross. Thereafter, with the resurrection of Christ, the two elements are so firmly joined together that the divinity of Christ swallows up the humanity and transforms it into itself. Gregory uses another of his striking images with which to illustrate this second stage. Our humanity is like a 'drop of vinegar mixed with the endless ocean'.[19] Thereafter it no longer remains in or with its own properties, but takes upon itself the features of the Godhead. No separate, independent nature of the humanity of Christ remains after the transformation. If Gregory began his reply to Apollinarius as a Nestorian, he ends it as a pronounced Monophysite. And what is true for Christ is also true for the whole of humanity. We are made for transformation and it is achieved partly in and partly by us in virtue of our being somehow one with Christ and of our taking seriously the life of the Spirit. For

by our serious co-operation in the life of virtue we realize in ourselves what Christ has begun.

The most important contribution made by the Cappadocians to the Christological debate comes undoubtedly from Gregory of Nazianzus. He asserts the basic principle that if we are truly to be saved we need to be saved at our point of greatest need. And that is the human soul. He offers no account of precisely how our humanity relates to Christ, and therefore of how the saving and healing work is to be transmitted. But he does assert the great truth that Christ our saviour must be fully one of us, and therefore must possess a fully human nature.

6.3 THE CAPPADOCIANS AND HELLENISM

In origin Christianity was a Hebraic faith, which before very long found itself obliged to express its beliefs in Greek. If the primary motive for this shift had been missionary, it soon became necessary for the Church to defend its particular mission and to expand and explore it in an alien culture. The vast majority of the leading bishops and thinkers of the Church came from Greek-speaking areas of the empire, and the most celebrated writers, especially those who came from Antioch and Alexandria, gave to the primitive Gospel a new complexion, if not a new substance. Whether this development amounted to a change or a continuity has been much disputed. The fact remains that by the fourth century the Church had at least two centuries of Hellenization behind it, and although, towards the beginning of this period, Tertullian in the West had protested against this alien wisdom, the majority of cultivated Christians took it for granted that the marriage between the Gospel and the Greeks was advantageous to the Church. It provided forms with which to express convictions. If the intention of the Lord was a worldwide mission (cf. Matt 28:19), then it is hardly surprising that the forms of the converted world entered into the life of the conqueror. When Rome conquered Greece, it soon found itself using the forms of the vanquished. The same was true with the Gospel.

The three Cappadocians grew up in a world where it was assumed that such a marriage of Hellenism and the Gospel was both a fact and a necessary and desirable fact. Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus received a university education at Athens between 351 and 356, and although Gregory of Nyssa received his learning from

his brother Basil, his style and knowledge of philosophy were in no way inferior to his brother's.

Even so, the complacency with which they had all three regarded the alliance between Christianity and classical culture was rudely shaken by the School Law of 362, in which the Emperor Julian forbade Christians to instruct in schools. The marriage which had existed since the days of Justin and Clement of Alexandria was suddenly threatened with divorce. All three Cappadocians reacted, with varying degrees of speed and vigour, to the challenge. Possibly the most outspoken, because the most threatened, of the three was Gregory of Nazianzus, whose brother Caesarius probably belonged to the entourage of the emperor. His funeral oration on his brother reflects a certain ill-founded anxiety about the effects on his brother of this connection;[20] but Caesarius remained a Christian despite the anti-Christian fanaticism of Julian – a reminder, perhaps, that Julian's hostility may not have been quite so intemperate as is often suggested. But, whatever the *actual* intentions and methods of the emperor, they elicited, after his death in Persia in the spring of 363, two violent harangues from Gregory, *Orations* 4 and 5, probably delivered at the end of 363 or the beginning of the following year. The former is very long and occupies 130 columns in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*. This must imply that the speech was meant as a pamphlet to be read rather than as a speech to be delivered. The bitterness of the invective reveals the important fact that Gregory regarded Julian's law and actions as an attack not only upon the Christian community, but also upon all that he, Gregory, held dear – above all the marriage between Hellenism and Christianity, which had informed his own life.

Julian's legislation has been described as an early attempt to create a form of sectarian education, with the Greek poets acting as a sort of sacred text. He chose to regard the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Plato and Euripides, as supreme works of literature, but also as productions of a view of the world in which the good Christian could not possibly share. Julian is in this sense a pioneer in his refusal to treat these masterpieces of the past as simply literature. The spirit that inspired them and the form they assumed could not be separated. Culture and religion formed an organic whole. Celsus, two centuries earlier, had made a similar reply to Christians who had tried to marry pagan philosophy and Christianity. Julian in 362 tried to effect a divorce between the Gospel and culture. It is therefore not hard to understand why it was that Gregory of Nazianzus, most of all the Cappadocians, felt his whole position

threatened by the School Law. Had he been assured of support from his fellow Christians in the encounter with Julian he might have felt more secure, but the Christian tradition *vis-à-vis* culture had never been monolithic. There had been many who had doubted the wisdom and the desirability of using the wisdom and culture of the Greeks. Tertullian in the second century, and Jerome in the fourth, had taken a very hostile stand on the subject.[21]

Gregory, therefore, was defending himself against a twofold attack, from Julian and from the enemies of culture within the Church. His main strategy is to challenge the central contention on which Julian's position rests. The Greeks, he says,[22] had tried to establish a link between *to hellenizein*, that is, speaking Greek, and worshipping the gods, and saw Christianity as characterized essentially by boorishness and exaggerated respect for authority. To this twofold accusation Gregory replies that appeals to authority are by no means restricted to Christians, and cites a well-known Greek expression, *autos epha*, 'He said so', much in use among the followers of Pythagoras. On the main issue, however, he merely asks how Julian knows that the Greek language is a monopoly of the pagans. Of course he admits that if *hellenizein* included in its meaning the idea of worshipping the gods, over and above that of speaking Greek, then, in that case, Julian may be correct. But that is precisely what needs proving. But if the word simply means speaking the Greek language then it is quite beyond the competence of the pagans to make such unilateral claims about it.

Basil's attitude to culture can best be gauged from his little work *To Young Men on the Value of Greek Literature*.[23] It is impossible to be certain about the addressees or the date. A recent editor suggests that the addressees were probably Basil's nephews (and nieces) and that the work dates from the last years of Basil's life, about 376 or 377. It lacks the bitterness of Gregory, and is very sententious. His treatment of Greek poetry, above all Homer, is highly moral. Homer is to be read only in so far as he is useful, and by 'useful' Basil means 'profitable for the moral life'. Much of what Basil says owes a good deal to Plato's treatment of the gods and of the poets in the *Republic*. He may also have known Plutarch's *On Reading the Poets*. Basil's attitude to Greek poetry is rather narrow and disappointing. The Christian, he thinks, must use only those parts of Homer which have a moral value, and leave the rest on one side. He must be like a bee in his selectiveness, flitting from one flower to another. There is no suggestion here that there is any value in such poetry apart from the moral. Aesthetic considerations

or the theory of 'art for art's sake' seem to have no place in Basil's attitude.

Basil's cautious approach to classical *culture* is reflected in Gregory of Nyssa's attitude to classical *philosophy*. On two occasions in his *Life of Moses* he addresses the problem of the attitude a Christian should adopt towards the treasures of Greece. On the first occasion (section II.37) he writes of the foreign wife of Moses that 'she will follow him, for there are certain things derived from pagan education, which should not be rejected when we propose to give birth to virtue. Indeed moral and natural philosophy may become at certain times a comrade, friend and companion of life to the higher way, provided that the offspring of this union produce nothing of a foreign defilement.' Shortly afterwards Gregory shows what he means by 'foreign defilement'. 'Pagan philosophy says the soul is immortal. This is a pious offspring. But it also says that souls pass from bodies to bodies and are changed from a rational to an irrational nature. This is a fleshly and alien foreskin.' Further examples of discrimination follow, which evaluate the contribution of pagan philosophy, choosing some elements, not others. What Basil proposed as a way forward for the Christian when faced with Homer, Gregory does for Plato. The second example derives from the spiritual exegesis of the spoils of the Egyptians (cf. Exod 12:35). The demand to rob the Egyptians of their valuable possessions

> invites those participating through virtue in the free life to equip themselves with the wealth of pagan learning, by which foreigners to the faith beautify themselves . . . We are to receive such things as moral and natural philosophy, geometry, astronomy, dialectic and whatever else is sought by those outside the Church, since these things will be useful [the same word is used by Gregory as by Basil, meaning 'profitable for the moral life'] when in time the divine sanctuary of mystery must be beautified by the riches of reason . . . For many bring the Church of God their profane learning as a kind of gift. Such a man was the great Basil, who acquired the Egyptian wealth in every respect during his youth and dedicated this wealth to God for the adornment of the Church, the true tabernacle.[24]

The moderate, somewhat guarded attitude displayed by the three Cappadocians to the Hellenic tradition manifests itself in several ways, which for the sake of clarity I shall divide into form and content. All three of them used forms that they inherited from

their education. Gregory of Nyssa used Plato's dialogues the *Symposium* and *Phaedo* as literary models for his treatises *On Virginity* and *On the Soul and Resurrection*. His account of the creation of man in *On the Making of Man* owes a good deal both to the *Symposium* and to *Protagoras*. Gregory of Nazianzus owes a considerable debt in his poetry to the didactic poems of Hesiod and Aratus, and in his style to the speeches of Himerius and, before him, to Polemo. Basil is less obviously dependent on any one author, though he may have kept up a correspondence with Libanius, under whom he studied before his departure for Athens.[25] The styles of all three fit well into what we know of the general non-Christian literature of the period.

But though there are many formal elements which link them with the contemporary world, it is their use of the world vision of the ancient world that is more complex and more intriguing. All three moved in a 'platonic universe'.[26] The 'Plato' whom they knew taught them that there existed an intellectual world of supreme beauty and goodness, apprehensible by the mind, from which and for which the human spirit came and existed. The human spirit or soul was imprisoned in the body, into which it had fallen because of some 'sin' committed in a previous existence, and the purpose of life was emancipation from the constriction of the body by a process of purification both moral and mental. To the realm of spirit belonged the world of Forms or Ideas, at the summit of which was to be found the supreme Form, the Idea of the Good, and beneath it the lesser Forms, all conceived as static modes of reality.

Much of this general pattern had been already taken over by Origen, and from him the Cappadocians inherited a good deal. But although there is much continuity in their general approach, their innovations within it are perhaps even more striking. The extent of the revision can be seen by looking at four main areas: (a) God, (b) the spiritual world, (c) anthropology and (d) evil.

(a) *God*. For Plato and Plotinus the supreme principle is rarely termed God. The Idea of the Good or of Beauty or Absolute Being is regularly 'defined' by Plato as neuter, while in *Timaeus* the personal god looks at the impersonal Form as something superior to himself. For Plato, value was superior to being, and immobility to motion. Plato would probably have considered a personal absolute as a contradiction in terms. Plotinus, likewise, rarely applies the term 'god' to the One;[27] to make the One personal would have meant a difficulty in applying any idea of absorption in it as the goal of the ascent of the finite spirit. For the Cappadocians, however,

the idea of God is regularly personal, even though the terms of Plato are still applied to God. This fusion of personal and Platonic occurs especially in the more ascetic writings. In the first of his *Longer Rules*, for example, Basil writes that the supreme beauty is the good: 'the good is God. All desire the good [a possible reference to the opening sentence of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*], therefore all desire God.' Gregory of Nyssa, likewise, in his treatise *On Virginity*, identifies the abstract object of Plato's quest in the *Symposium* with the God whose vision is promised to the pure of heart at Matthew 5:8. Gregory distinguishes himself from Basil by his greater reluctance to abandon the more impersonal language of the Greeks. This feature of his writing is well illustrated by his frequent use of the neuter *to theion*, when referring to the deity.[28]

A further respect in which, while retaining a belief in the absolute nature of God, the Cappadocians substantially modified it, was in their Trinitarian doctrine. They all believed that in some sense the one God was not so simple as to exclude that one God being three persons. In other words absolute unity and simplicity were in their view compatible with threeness. Contrast this with the simplicity of Plato's first principle, always the same without increase or diminution, or with the One of Plotinus, whose absolute simplicity exceeds our experience of unity. Something has already been said about the embarrassment felt by Gregory of Nyssa in the face of the apparent tritheism of his belief in *To Ablabius*.

Plotinus did indeed believe in the existence of three ultimate principles – a sort of Neoplatonic trinity of One, Mind and Soul. This again might provide a model for a Christian Trinity, until it is remembered that the Plotinian trinity is organized on a descending scale, such that the higher is always superior to what follows. As we have seen, built into Neoplatonism is the principle of the superiority of the cause to the effect. But this principle is consistently rejected by all three Cappadocians.[29] For both Gregorys the three persons of the Christian Trinity share equally in eternity and infinity and in being the source of being to all else. The fact that the Son is derived from the Father, and the Spirit from the Father through the Son, makes no difference to the character of their deity. Here again, therefore, we are face to face with a strange phenomenon. Both sides to the debate are at one in admitting that in the divine world there exist three divine hypostases. Both sides admit that it is possible to order these three in point of cause and effect. But, while Plotinus clearly supposes that the One is not only

the uncaused cause of all but also superior to all, the Cappadocians were at one in rejecting any subordinationism of this kind.

(b) *The spiritual world*. For Plato the Idea of the Good was approached by means of a subordinate world of Forms, called *mathematica*. In other dialogues Plato assumes the existence of a *kosmos noētos* or intelligible world, which contained the ideal patterns of this world, in accordance with which in *Timaeus* God had fashioned the temporal order. These forms were thought of as static, perfect and changeless. In comparison with this picture of the upper world, though not with that of Plotinus,[30] the transformation wrought by the Cappadocians is remarkable. The divine world of Forms is replaced by the divine world of angels. The Forms in some ill-defined sense owe their existence to the Idea of the Good; the angels are most definitely creatures of God and, more importantly, they are full of life. This transformation is too consistent to be either freakish or accidental, and may go back to Origen, who identifies the 'waters above the firmament' with the angelic creation.

For Basil, indeed, a regular distinction is made between the angels and the Holy Spirit, who is the source of their perfection. 'Holiness is not part of the essence of the angels; it is accomplished in them through the communion of the Spirit.'[31] Gregory of Nazianzus is a little uncertain about the perfection of the angels, whom he describes in the second *Theological Oration* as 'pure natures, unalloyed, immovable to evil, or scarcely movable'.[32] The reiterated affirmation of the mutable angelic nature makes Gregory's difference from Plato clear enough. The angels know the divine splendour, but are still with difficulty capable of deserting it in favour of something inferior. Although he does not make use in so many words of Origen's doctrine of *koros* or of boredom in the presence of a finite God, he shares with him the conviction that to remain with God is at best precarious. Gregory of Nyssa also believes in the essential mutability of the angels, but for him there is only one sort of movement now, that is movement upwards towards God and nearer to him.[33] Freedom from sin, and even absence of a body, never lead to the face-to-face vision of God, whether for human beings or for disembodied spirits. The whole subject of the divine vision has been explored thoroughly by Gregory himself in the sixth *Homily on the Beatitudes*. Though less optimistic than the other two Cappadocians, he is at one with them in admitting the possibility or even the necessity of change in the world of the angels. This by itself does distinguish all three from the Platonic

conception of a spiritual world of changeless Forms. For *them* as distinct from Plato the Forms have become living beings rather than static patterns of changeless perfection.

(c) *Anthropology*. Plato's conception of the human being is hard to define. He is popularly regarded as the archetypal dualist as a result of dialogues like *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* in both of which the soul is regarded as having fallen from a state (and place) of contemplation of the Ideas, without a body, into a state of loss of contemplation, with a body. In other words popular Platonism believes in both a radical distinction of soul and body *and* the pre-existence of the soul. This fragile union of soul and body, though characteristic of much of Plato, is not the whole picture. In *Timaeus*, above all, a much closer union is postulated between body and soul; there is no doctrine of pre-existence, and human nature is treated as a sort of microcosm of the whole.[34] This latter view is much more characteristic of the Cappadocians than is the more strictly dualist position. Even Gregory of Nyssa, who devotes the first part of *On the Soul and Resurrection* to a highly Platonic analysis of the human soul, deals in the second part with the very un-Platonic doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Further, as we have seen, his account of the creation of man in his *Catechetical Oration* insists on the necessity of a body for human nature, and later on his doctrine of resurrection is closely linked to the idea that body and soul will eternally belong together. Gregory of Nazianzus, likewise, in his second *Theological Oration*, also speaks of man as a microcosm. There he speaks of the mingling of the mortal with the immortal, of the necessary connection of intellect, the divine part, and of sense.[35] Finally, Basil, at least in his treatment of what constitutes the image of God in human nature, does not seem to follow his master, Origen.[36] He locates the image of God in man rather in the power to control than in any particularly intellectual faculty. Doubtless the more populist version of Plato remains as an undercurrent throughout the writings of all three Cappadocians; but the very fact that alongside that stress we also find a rather different picture, hard to reconcile with the more common version, even for a philosopher of the calibre of Plotinus,[37] indicates a dissatisfaction with 'school Platonism'. This greater sympathy for the body may have come about through reading the *Enneads* of Plotinus, with whom the Cappadocians had some slight acquaintance,[38] but it is more probable that this revolution took place under the influence of a deeper perception of the meaning for human life

of the doctrines of creation, Incarnation and resurrection of the body.

(d) *Evil*. For Plato there was no Form of evil. It had no eternal significance. He identified being with goodness and non-being with evil. It became an axiom, therefore, for Platonists that evil did not really exist and had therefore no place in the real or spiritual world. Plotinus, too, in his treatise *On the Nature and Origin of Evils* (= *Ennead* I.8), argues that, though evil has some sort of existence, it does not exist in the upper world of his three hypostases and is both connected with turning away from the One and somehow connected to matter. It is not absolutely unreal but only relatively so. Much of this reduction of evil to unreality had found a ready home among Christian writers, above all Origen. Basil, also, in his sermon *That God Is Not the Author of Evils*,[39] in his effort to remove the responsibility for the existence of evil from God, adopted a markedly Platonic stance. God is not the author of evil, because evil does not exist. What appears to us to be evil is simply appearance. It results from no action of God, but from our perverted wills, that turn away from God, through lack of interest in him. The word Basil uses to describe this mental condition is *koros*, boredom or satiety. It had been used by Origen[40] also to explain the sombre phenomenon of the fall of the soul from its state of primitive blessedness. In Origen's case this sense of boredom had arisen, so he argued, from the inability of God to satisfy completely the finite spirit. And this 'inability' on God's part was a direct consequence of the finite nature of God himself. It is instructive to see Basil, who in common with Gregory of Nyssa had almost certainly rejected the notion of the divine finitude and replaced it with that of the divine infinity, continuing to use a solution of Origen in order to account for evil in the heavenly places.[41] Although neither of the two Gregorys uses this device as a way of accounting for evil's origin, Basil's continuing use of Origenistic theodicy is an indication of both the strength of Origen's system even when severed from its roots and the difficulty of accounting for the rise of evil. Gregory of Nyssa, indeed, rejects the Origenistic doctrine of *koros*,[42] but retains the general Greek idea that sin arises from ignorance.

A further 'inconvenience' of the conception of evil as non-being, with which all three Cappadocians worked, was: What were they to make of the doctrine of eternal punishment, once it had been agreed that the triumph of God in Christ meant the death of hell and all evil? As we have seen, this conviction of the ultimate

triumph of good led Gregory of Nyssa to a doctrine of universal salvation. For him the Greek teaching of the unreality of evil resolves itself into a doctrine of the non-eternity of hell and of the ultimate salvation of all, even the devil. For Gregory, therefore, basing himself on 1 Corinthians 15:24–28, the only form of punishment is therapeutic. It is surprising that such teaching was not condemned, though attempts were later made to erase it from his writings. The doctrine of universalism was indeed condemned at a much later date by the Synod of Constantinople of 543;[43] and the slight suspicion that surrounded the name and works of Gregory of Nyssa doubtless reflects the unease felt at his unashamed maintenance of this doctrine.

Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus were less wholehearted in their universalism.[44] Basil, particularly, interprets the strictness of God's demands and judgements so as, in the last analysis, to rule out the possibility of ultimate forgiveness. Both in the *Moralia* and in the *Shorter Rules* the sin of disobedience is punished with unending penalties. Eternal punishment can no more come to an end than can eternal life. Compared with the austerities of Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus looks very mild indeed. In his discussion of 1 Corinthians 15:28, which had been used by Gregory of Nyssa to argue to universalism, Gregory of Nazianzus suggests the same conclusion, though neither so clearly, nor so philosophically. In his fourth *Theological Oration* (section 6) he writes 'But God will be all in all in the time of restitution; not in the sense that the Father alone will be, and the Son resolved into him . . . but the whole Godhead, when we shall no longer be divided . . . and shall be entirely like God, ready to receive the whole God and him alone. This is the perfection to which we press on.' His language is nothing like so clear as that of his namesake. He does not say outright that *all* will be saved; that is only an inference we might draw from his language, simply because the subject of the sentence 'we' is unclear in its precise meaning. Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, though following the general Platonic picture of evil as somehow unreal, are sufficiently loyal to the majority view of the Church as to insist on or not to deny the eternity of evil and therefore of punishment.

The four topics chosen enable us to see at a glance what position the Cappadocians took towards their Hellenic heritage. With Plato they shared the view that there exists a spiritual world, beyond the reach of the senses, into which all are invited once the victory over evil has been accomplished. If calling them Platonists is to say that they shared this view, then most certainly that is what they were.

But within this scheme they introduced (though neither uniformly nor universally) certain highly significant modifications. They modified the simplicity of the Absolute by their doctrine of a consubstantial Trinity. They modified its impersonal character by making it profoundly personal. The world of impersonal Forms was replaced by a world of personal and changeable angels. The imprisonment of the soul in the body had by and large been replaced by a more unified version, in which the body was there from the outset and would be there at the end. The major area of disagreement among them is to be found in their treatment of the end of man and the fate of the devil and of other evildoers. Origen (and Plato) held to the view that punishment was essentially therapeutic and would not last for ever. Gregory of Nyssa shared this opinion, and his avowed universalism may explain his absence from among the four great doctors of the Greek Church. Basil, however, almost always holds the sterner view, believing in everlasting punishment. Gregory of Nazianzus is an uncertain candle set between the two brothers.

EPILOGUE

The Cappadocians lived through a period during which the shape and attitudes of the Church were being forged, less in the crucible of persecution, though they had to endure a little of that, than beneath the smiles of imperial favour. By the time they were born the council and creed of Nicaea were already past events. Yet neither the meaning nor the authority of the creed was assured. By the year 381 not only had the creed become acceptable and accepted to the majority of Christians; its meaning had also been clarified, by the distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. Further, the deity of the Holy Spirit had also been affirmed. For all these achievements the Cappadocians were largely responsible.

The 'domestication' of the Church under Constantine and its consequent transformation into a department of state had also raised problems for the Cappadocians, especially when they saw quite clearly that, for some not totally obvious reason, the Arians had the ear of the Emperor. But, except in some of the letters of Basil, the problem of Church–state relationships seems not to have been a cause of great concern to any of the three. It was only in the face of an anti-Christian Emperor, Julian, that the difficulty became acute, above all with his attempt to reclaim classical culture

for paganism. The year 362, therefore, proved vital for them, as it forced them to work out a coherent Christian response to the Julianic challenge. Their reply became in its own way classical, and contrasts suggestively with the total divorce proposed by Julian and endorsed by St John Chrysostom on the one hand, and the exuberant and uncritical enthusiasm for Hellenism displayed by Synesius of Cyrene, the 'Platonist in a mitre', on the other.

Much of this book has been devoted to an exploration of the spirituality of the Cappadocians, especially its modification of the heritage of Origen. How far Gregory of Nyssa, above all, modified his inheritance has been fruitfully explored by Jean Daniélou and Henri Crouzel, who differ in their assessment of the revolutionary character of Gregory's own contribution. One thing is certain. Gregory's defence of Nicene orthodoxy made him stress the otherness of God in a more marked fashion than we find in Origen. In this newly discovered 'orthodoxy', 'faith' plays a significantly larger role than it does in Origen. Gregory's insistence on the divine mystery made him less confident in the power of the human mind adequately to explore the nature of God. Finally, for Gregory, the life of moral perfection is never totally superseded. The demand to fashion our lives on the pattern of knowledge achieved and on that of God himself means that contemplation never replaces virtue but always accompanies it in the endless striving to remodel our own finite existences on the pattern of his infinite goodness.

Notes

1 John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (New York, 1974).

2 Aristotle, *Categories* 2B.

3 Basil, *Letters* 52, 125 and 214.

4 The Greek word used by Basil is *to hypokeimenon*, 'that which lies underneath'.

5 For examples of the Spirit as pre-eminently sanctifier (*hagiazon*) see *Against Eunomius* III.2; *Letter* 214.4.

6 For the general axiom in Neoplatonism of the superiority of the cause to the effect cf. Plotinus, *Ennead* V.5.13.35; and for a discussion of the principle cf. Proclus, *Elements of Theology* (Oxford, 1933), p. 193 and E. R. Dodds *ad loc.*

7 Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 16.38.

8 Gregory of Nazianzus, third *Theological Oration* 2, 3.

9 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 12.1.

10 The 'mental' analogy occurs in Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 7; Athanasius, *Against the Arians* 2.2; Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration* 2; Augustine, *On the Trinity* IX and X.

11 John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London, 1985).

12 For Augustine's possible dependence on Gregory of Nazianzus see *On the Trinity* 15.20.38 and the note there in the Bibliothèque Augustinienne edition, p. 528.

13 G. L. Prestige, *St Basil the Great and Apollinaris of Laodicea*, ed. H. Chadwick (London, 1956).

14 See *Creeds, Councils and Controversies*, ed. J. Stevenson, rev. W. H. C. Frend (London, 1989), no. 70.

15 Ibid., no. 220.

16 The idea that punishment is essentially and solely therapeutic probably begins with Plato, *Gorgias* 477A and 480C; and is taken over by Origen, *On Jeremiah* 1.16; *Against Celsus* 4.72; *On First Principles* 2.10.4–6; it is Gregory of Nyssa's persistent view in *Catechetical Oration* 8 and 26.

17 Origen, *On First Principles* 2.6.3.

18 J. F. Bethune Baker, *Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine* (London, 1903), p. 251, regards Gregory as basically Nestorian in tendency, while J. R. Srawley thinks Gregory's theology 'crude and tentative' and of a 'monophysite type': 'St Gregory of Nyssa on the sinlessness of Christ', *Journal of Theological Studies* (1905/06).

19 For humanity as a drop of vinegar in water, cf. *Against Apollinarius*: GNO III.1.126.

20 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 7.13.

21 Tertullian, *Apologeticus* 46; Jerome, *Letter* 22.

22 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 4.102.

23 *St Basil on Greek Literature*, ed. N. G. Wilson (London, 1975).

24 *On the Life of Moses* II.115, 116; and on his brother Basil in GNO X.1.126.10.

25 Gregory of Nyssa, *Letter* 13.4; Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* IV.26.

26 Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* (London, 1989), p. 300.

27 Plotinus applies the word *theos* to the Absolute One at *Ennead* VI.8.21.9; VI.9.9.16.

28 *to theion* as a designation for God is very frequent in Gregory: cf. *On the Making of Man* 5, 6; and the examples cited in the index to Srawley's edition of the *Catechetical Oration*.

29 Cf. note 6 above; and Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* I.270.

30 For Plotinus the upper world of Spirit, *nous*, is full of life and movement as at *Ennead* V.4.2.43.

31 Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 16.38; *On the Hexameron* 2.5.

32 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Theological Oration* 2.31 and Mason's reference.

33 Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses* II.163.

34 Compare Plato, *Phaedo* 80, 81 with *Phaedrus* 245ff. and *Timaeus* 81A, 88D.

35 Gregory of Nazianzus, second *Theological Oration* 22.

36 Compare Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides* 12 and 16 and Basil, *Homilies on the Hexameron* 8.6 and 9.5.

37 Plotinus, *Ennead* IV.8.1, IV.8.8.

38 For Gregory and the Cappadocian knowledge of Plotinus cf. J. Rist in P. J. Fedwick (ed.), *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic* (Toronto, 1981), ch. 5.

39 PG 31, 329.

40 Origen, *On First Principles* 2.8.3.

41 Brooks Otis, 'Cappadocian thought as a coherent system', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958).

42 Gregory rejects the Origenistic idea of *koros* in *Life of Moses* II.232.

43 For the canons of the Synod of 543, cf. H. Denzinger, rev. A. Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (34th edn; Freiburg: Herder, 1967), nos 403–411.

44 For a very useful conspectus of early Church teaching upon eschatology, cf. Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church* (Cambridge, 1991).