



Gregory of Nyssa

Collected Works

DELPHI  CLASSICS

Ancient Classics Series

The Collected Works of
GREGORY OF NYSSA

(c. 335-c. 394)



Contents

The Translations

Brief Introduction: St Gregory of Nyssa (1911)

Against Eunomius

Answer to Eunomius' Second Book

On the Holy Spirit

On the Holy Trinity, and of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit

On 'Not Three Gods'

On the Faith

On Virginity

On Infants' Early Deaths

On Pilgrimages

The Making of Man

On the Soul

The Great Catechism

Funeral Oration on Meletius

On the Baptism of Christ

Letters

Life of Saint Macrina

The Greek Texts

List of Greek Texts

The Dual Texts

Dual Greek and English Texts

The Biographies

The Life and Writings of Gregory of Nyssa (1885) by William Moore

Saint Gregory of Nyssa (1913) by Henri Leclercq

The Delphi Classics Catalogue



© *Delphi Classics* 2025
Version 1

The Collected Works of
GREGORY OF NYSSA



By Delphi Classics, 2025

COPYRIGHT

Collected Works of Gregory of Nyssa



First published in the United Kingdom in 2025 by Delphi Classics.

© Delphi Classics, 2025.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form other than that in which it is published.

ISBN: 978 1 80170 242 3

Delphi Classics

is an imprint of

Delphi Publishing Ltd

Hastings, East Sussex

United Kingdom

Contact: sales@delphiclassics.com



www.delphiclassics.com

The Translations



Niksar, historically known as Neocaesarea, a city in Tokat Province, Turkey — believed to be Gregory's birthplace. He was a Cappadocian Greek, born in c. 335.

Brief Introduction: St Gregory of Nyssa (1911)



From '1911 Encyclopædia Britannica', Volume 12

SAINT GREGORY OF NYSSA (c. 331-c. 396), one of the four great fathers of the Eastern Church, designated by one of the later ecumenical councils as “a father of fathers,” was a younger brother of Basil (the Great), bishop of Caesarea, and was born (probably) at Neocaesarea about A.D. 331. For his education he was chiefly indebted to his elder brother. At a comparatively early age he entered the church, and held for some time the office of anagnost or reader; subsequently he manifested a desire to devote himself to the secular life as a rhetorician, an impulse which was checked by the earnest remonstrances of Gregory of Nazianzus. Finally, in 371 or 372 he was ordained by his brother Basil to the bishopric of Nyssa, a small town in Cappadocia. Here he is usually said (but on inadequate data) to have adopted the opinion then gaining ground in favour of the celibacy of the clergy, and to have separated from his wife Theosebia, who became a deaconess in the church. His strict orthodoxy on the subject of the Trinity and the Incarnation, together with his vigorous eloquence, combined to make him peculiarly obnoxious to the Arian faction, which was at that time in the ascendant through the protection of the emperor Valens; and in 375, the synod of Ancyra, convened by Demetrius the Arian governor of Pontus, condemned him for alleged irregularities in his election and in the administration of the finances of his diocese. In 376 he was deprived of his see, and Valens sent him into exile, whence he did not return till the publication of the edict of Gratian in 378. Shortly afterwards he took part in the proceedings of the synod which met at Antioch in Caria, principally in connexion with the Meletian schism. At the great ecumenical council held at Constantinople in 381, he was a conspicuous champion of the orthodox faith; according to Nicephorus, indeed, the additions made to the Nicene creed were entirely due to his suggestion, but this statement is of doubtful authority. That his eloquence was highly appreciated is shown by the facts that he pronounced the discourse at the consecration of Gregory of Nazianzus, and that he was chosen to deliver the funeral oration on the death of Meletius the first president of the council. In the following year, moreover (382), he was commissioned by the council to inspect and set in order the churches of Arabia, in connexion with which mission he also visited Jerusalem. The impressions he gathered from this journey may, in part at least, be gathered from his famous letter *De euntibus Hierosolyma*, in which an opinion strongly unfavourable to pilgrimages is expressed. In 383 he was probably again in Constantinople; where in 385 he pronounced the funeral orations of the princess Pulcheria and afterwards of the empress Placilla. Once more we read of him in 394 as having been present in that metropolis at the synod held under the presidency of Nectarius to settle a controversy which had arisen among the bishops of Arabia; in the same year he assisted at the consecration of the new church of the apostles at Chalcedon, on which occasion there is reason to believe that his discourse commonly but wrongly known as that Εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ χειροτονίαν was delivered. The exact date of his death is unknown; some authorities refer it to 396, others to 400. His festival is observed by the Greek Church on the 10th of January; in the Western martyrologies he is commemorated on the 9th of March.

Gregory of Nyssa was not so firm and able an administrator as his brother Basil, nor so magnificent an orator as Gregory of Nazianzus, but he excelled them both, alike as a speculative and constructive theologian, and in the wide extent of his acquirements. His teaching, though strictly trinitarian, shows considerable freedom and originality of thought; in many points his mental and spiritual affinities with Origen show themselves with advantage, as in his doctrine of ἀποκατάστασις or final restoration. There are marked pantheistic tendencies, *e.g.* the inclusion of sin as a necessary part of the cosmical process, which make him akin to the pantheistic monophysites and to some modern thinkers.

His style has been frequently praised by competent authorities for sweetness, richness and elegance. His numerous works may be classified under five heads: (1) Treatises in doctrinal and polemical theology. Of these the most important is that *Against Eunomius* in twelve books. Its doctrinal thesis (which is supported with great philosophic acumen and rhetorical power) is the divinity and consubstantiality of the Word; incidentally the character of Basil, which Eunomius had aspersed, is vindicated, and the heretic himself is held up to scorn and contempt. This is the work which, most probably in a shorter draft, was read by its author when at Constantinople before Gregory Nazianzen and Jerome in 381 (Jerome, *De vir. ill.* 128). To the same class belong the treatise *To Ablavius*, against the tritheists; *On Faith*, against the Arians; *On Common Notions*, in explanation of the terms in current employment with regard to the Trinity; *Ten Syllogisms*, against the Manichaeans; *To Theophilus*, against the Apollinarians; an *Antirrhetic* against the same; *Against Fate*, a disputation with a heathen philosopher; *De anima et resurrectione*, a dialogue with his dying sister Macrina; and the *Oratio catechetica magna*, an argument for the incarnation as the best possible form of redemption, intended to convince educated pagans and Jews. (2) Practical treatises. To this category belong the tracts *On Virginity* and *On Pilgrimages*; as also the *Canonical Epistle* upon the rules of penance. (3) Expository and homiletical works, including the *Hexaëmeron*, and several series of discourses *On the Workmanship of Man*, *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms*, *On the Sixth Psalm*, *On the first three Chapters of Ecclesiastes*, *On Canticles*, *On the Lord's Prayer* and *On the Eight Beatitudes*. (4) Biographical, consisting chiefly of funeral orations. (5) Letters.

The only complete editions of the whole works are those by Fronton le Duc (Fronto Ducäus, Paris, 1615; with additions, 1618 and 1638) and by Migne. G. H. Forbes began an excellent critical edition, but only two parts of the first volume appeared (Burntisland, 1855 and 1861) containing the *Explicatio apologetica in hexaëmeron* and the *De opificio hominis*. Of the new edition projected by F. Oehler only the first volume, containing the *Opera dogmatica*, has appeared (1865). There have been numerous editions of several single treatises, as for example of the *Oratio catechetica* (J. G. Krabinger, Munich, 1838; J. H. Crawley, Cambridge, 1903), *De precatone* and *De anima et resurrectione*.

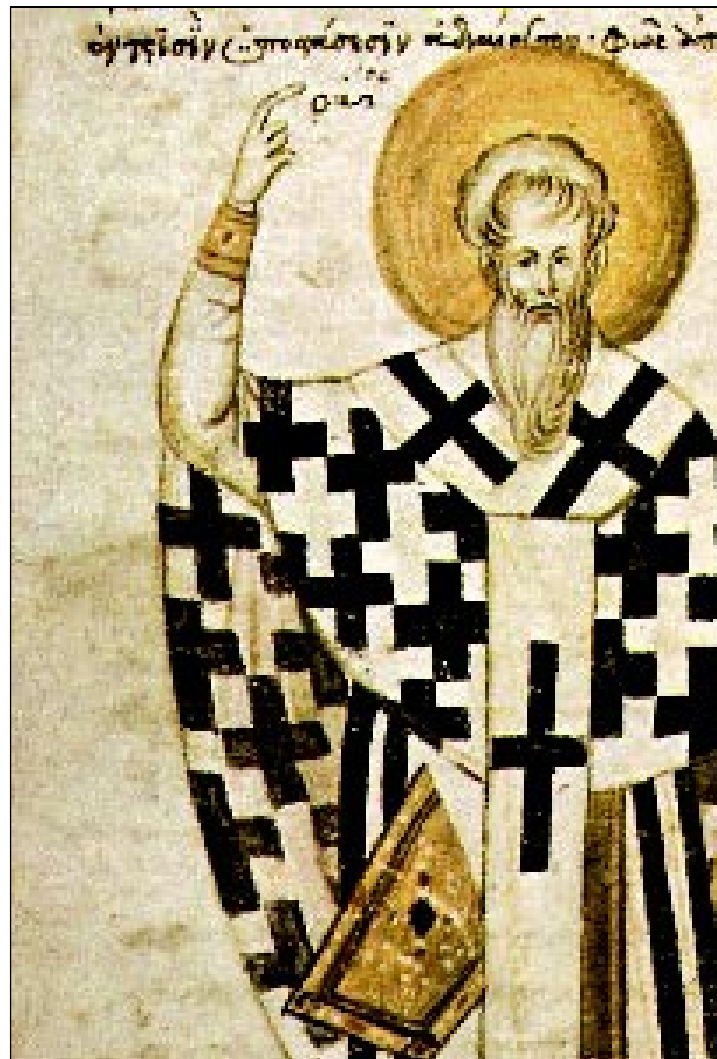
See F. W. Farrar, *Lives of the Fathers*, ii. 56-83, the monograph by J. Rupp (*Gregors, des Bischofs von Nyssa, Leben und Meinungen*, Leipzig, 1834), and compare P. Heyns (*Disputatio historico-theologica de Greg. Nyss.*, 1835), C. W. Möller (*Gregorii Nyss. doctrinam de hominis natura et illustravit et cum Origeniana comparavit*, 1854) and J. N. Stigler, *Die Psychologie des h. Gregors von Nyssa* (Regensburg, 1857), and many smaller monographs cited in Hauck-Herzog's *Realencyk. für prot. Theol.* vii. 149.



An eleventh century mosaic of Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Sophia Cathedral, Kyiv, Ukraine



Solidus depicting Valens (328-378), who was Roman Emperor from 364 to 378. Following a largely unremarkable military career, he was named co-emperor by his elder brother Valentinian I, who gave him the eastern half of the Roman Empire to rule. In 371 Valens split Cappadocia into two new provinces, Cappadocia Prima and Cappadocia Secunda. Gregory was elected bishop of the new see of Nyssa in 372, presumably with the support of his brother Basil, who was metropolitan of Caesarea.



Gregory's brother, Saint Basil of Caesarea, as depicted in a fifteenth century micrograph from Mount Athos



A ninth century Byzantine manuscript illumination of the First Council of Constantinople, Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, 879-883

Against Eunomius



*Translated by William Moore, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Series II, Volume V,
1885*

CONTENTS

Letter I. GREGORY to his brother Peter, Bishop of Sebasteia.

Letter II. To his most pious brother Gregory. Peter greeting in the Lord.

*BOOK I.*¹

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5.
- §6.
- §7.
- §8.
- §9.
- §10.
- §11.
- §12.
- §13.
- §14.
- §15.
- §16.
- §17.
- §18.
- §19.
- §20.
- §21.
- §22.
- §23.
- §24.
- §25.
- §26.
- §27.
- §28.
- §29.
- §30.
- §31.
- §32.
- §33.
- §34.
- §35.
- §36.

- §37.
- §38.
- §39.
- §40.
- §41.
- §42.

BOOK II.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5.
- §6.
- §7.
- §8.
- §9.
- §10.
- §11.
- §12.
- §13.
- §14.
- §15.

BOOK III.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5.
- §6.
- §7.

BOOK IV.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5.
- §6.
- §7.
- §8.
- §9.

BOOK V.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5.

BOOK VI.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.

BOOK VII.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5.

BOOK VIII.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5.

BOOK IX.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.

BOOK X.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.

BOOK XI.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5. ¹

BOOK XII.

- §1.
- §2.
- §3.
- §4.
- §5.



A depiction from the 'Nuremberg Chronicle' of Eunomius (died c. 393 AD), one of the leaders of the extreme or "anomoean" Arians, who are sometimes accordingly called Eunomians.

Letter I. GREGORY to his brother Peter, Bishop of Sebasteia.



HAVING WITH DIFFICULTY obtained a little leisure, I have been able to recover from bodily fatigue on my return from Armenia, and to collect the sheets of my reply to Eunomius which was suggested by your wise advice; so that my work is now arranged in a complete treatise, which can be read between covers. However, I have not written against both his pamphlets¹; even the leisure for that was not granted; for the person who lent me the heretical volume most uncourteously sent for it again, and allowed me no time either to write it out or to study it. In the short space of seventeen days it was impossible to be prepared to answer both his attacks.

Owing to its somehow having become notorious that we had laboured to answer this blasphemous manifesto, many persons possessing some zeal for the Truth have importuned me about it: but I have thought it right to prefer you in your wisdom before them all, to advise me whether to consign this work to the public, or to take some other course. The reason why I hesitate is this. When our saintly Basil fell asleep, and I received the legacy of Eunomius' controversy, when my heart was hot within me with bereavement, and, besides this deep sorrow for the common loss of the church, Eunomius had not confined himself to the various topics which might pass as a defence of his views, but had spent the chief part of his energy in laboriously-written abuse of our father in God. I was exasperated with this, and there were passages where the flame of my heart-felt indignation burst out against this writer. The public have pardoned us for much else, because we have been apt in showing patience in meeting lawless attacks, and as far as possible have practised that restraint in feeling which the saint has taught us; but I had fears lest from what we have now written against this opponent the reader should get the idea that we were very raw controversialists, who lost our temper directly at insolent abuse. Perhaps, however, this suspicion about us will be disarmed by remembering that this display of anger is not on our own behalf, but because of insults levelled against our father in God; and that it is a case in which mildness would be more unpardonable than anger.

If, then, the first part of my treatise should seem somewhat outside the controversy, the following explanation of it will, I think, be accepted by a reader who can judge fairly. It was not right to leave undefended the reputation of our noble saint, mangled as it was by the opponent's blasphemies, any more than it was convenient to let this battle in his behalf be spread diffusely along the whole thread of the discussion; besides, if any one reflects, these pages do really form part of the controversy. Our adversary's treatise has two separate arms, viz. to abuse us and to controvert sound doctrine; and therefore ours too must show a double front. But for the sake of clearness, and in order that the thread of the discussion upon matters of the Faith should not be cut by parentheses, consisting of answers to their personal abuse, we have separated our work into two parts, and devoted ourselves in the first to refute these charges: and then we have grappled as best we might with that which they have advanced against the Faith. Our treatise also contains, in addition to a refutation of their heretical views, a dogmatic exposition of our own teaching; for it would be a

most shameful want of spirit, when our foes make no concealment of their blasphemy, not to be bold in our statement of the Truth.

ENDNOTES.

¹ *both his pamphlets.* The ‘sheets’ which Gregory says that he has collected are the 12 Books that follow. They are written in reply to Eunomius’ pamphlet, ‘*Apologia Apologiæ*,’ itself a reply to Basil’s Refutation. The other pamphlet of Eunomius seems to have come out during the composition of Gregory’s 12 Books: and was afterwards answered by the latter in a second 12th Book, but not now, because of the shortness of the time in which he had a copy of the ‘heretical volume’ in his hands. The two last books of the five which go under the title of Basil’s Refutation are considered on good grounds to have been Gregory’s, and to have formed that short reply to Eunomius which he read, at the Council of Constantinople, to Gregory of Nazianzen and Jerome (*d. vir. illust.* c. 128). Then he worked upon this longer reply. Thus there were in all three works of Gregory corresponding to the three attacks of Eunomius upon the Trinity.



End of Sample