

Letter VIII.¹⁷⁷⁹

To the Cæsareans. A defence of his withdrawal, and concerning the faith.

1. I have often been astonished at your feeling towards me as you do, and how it comes about that an individual so small and insignificant, and having, may be, very little that is lovable about him, should have so won your allegiance. You remind me of the claims of friendship and of fatherland,¹⁷⁸⁰ and press me urgently in your attempt to make me come back to you, as though I were a runaway from a father's heart and home. That I am a runaway I confess. I should be sorry to deny it; since you are already regretting me, you shall be told the cause. I was astounded like a man stunned by some sudden noise. I did not crush my thoughts, but dwelt upon them as I fled, and now I have been absent from you a considerable time. Then I began to yearn for the divine doctrines, and the philosophy that is concerned with them. How, said I, could I overcome the mischief dwelling with us? Who is to be my Laban, setting me free from Esau, and leading me to the supreme philosophy? By God's help, I have, so far as in me lies, attained my object; I have found a chosen vessel, a deep well; I mean Gregory, Christ's mouth. Give me, therefore, I beg you, a little time. I am not embracing a city life.¹⁷⁸¹ I am quite well aware how the evil one by such means devises deceit for mankind, but I do hold the society of the saints most useful. For in the more constant change of ideas about the divine dogmas I am acquiring a lasting habit of contemplation. Such is my present situation.

2. Friends godly and well beloved, do, I implore you, beware of the shepherds of the Philistines; let them not choke your wills unawares; let them not befoul the purity of your knowledge of the faith. This is ever their object, not to teach simple souls lessons drawn from Holy Scripture, but to mar the harmony of the truth by heathen philosophy. Is not he an open Philistine who is introducing the terms "*unbegotten*" and "*begotten*" into our faith, and asserts that there was once a time when the Everlasting was not;¹⁷⁸² that He who is by nature and eternally a Father became a Father; that the Holy Ghost is not eternal? He

1779 This important letter was written a.d. 360, when Basil, shocked at the discovery that Dianius, the bishop who had baptized him, had subscribed the Arian creed of Ariminum, as revised at Nike (Theod., *Hist. Ecc.* II. xvi.), left Cæsarea, and withdrew to his friend Gregory at Nazianzus. The Benedictine note considers the traditional title an error, and concludes the letter to have been really addressed to the monks of the Cœnobium over which Basil had presided. But it may have been written to monks in or near Cæsarea, so that title and sense will agree.

1780 πατρις seems to be used of the city or neighbourhood of Cæsarea, and so far to be in favour of Basil's birth there.

1781 *i.e.* the life of the city, presumably Nazianzus, from which he is writing.

1782 *cf.* the Arian formula ἦν ποτὲ ὅτε οὐκ ἦν.

bewitches our Patriarch's sheep that they may not drink "of the well of water springing up into everlasting life,"¹⁷⁸³ but may rather bring upon themselves the words of the prophet, "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water;"¹⁷⁸⁴ when all the while they ought to confess that the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God,¹⁷⁸⁵ as they have been taught by the divine words, and by those who have understood them in their highest sense. Against those who cast it in our teeth that we are Tritheists, let it be answered that we confess one God not in number but in nature. For everything which is called one in number is not one absolutely, nor yet simple in nature; but God is universally confessed to be simple and not composite. God therefore is not one in number. What I mean is this. We say that the world is one in number, but not one by nature nor yet simple; for we divide it into its constituent elements, fire, water, air, and earth.¹⁷⁸⁶ Again, man is called one in number. We frequently speak of one man, but man who is composed of body and soul is not simple. Similarly we say one angel in number, but not one by nature nor yet simple, for we conceive of the hypostasis of the angel as essence with sanctification. If therefore everything which is one in number is not one in nature, and that which is one and simple in nature is not one in number; and if we call God one in nature how can number be charged against us, when we utterly exclude it from that blessed and spiritual nature? Number relates to quantity; and quantity is conjoined with bodily nature, for number is of bodily nature. We believe our Lord to be Creator of bodies. Wherefore every number indicates those things which have received a material and circumscribed nature. Monad and Unity on the other hand signify the nature which is simple and incomprehensible. Whoever therefore confesses either the Son of God or the Holy Ghost to be number or creature introduces unawares a material and circumscribed nature. And by circumscribed I mean not only locally limited, but a nature which is comprehended in foreknowledge by Him who is about to educe it from the non-existent into the existent and which can be comprehended by science. Every holy thing then of which the nature is circumscribed and of which the holiness is acquired is not insus-

1783 [John iv. 14.](#)

1784 [Jer. ii. 13.](#)

1785 *cf.* p. 16, note. This is one of the few instances of St. Basil's use of the word *θεός* of the Holy Ghost.

1786 For the four elements of ancient philosophy modern chemistry now catalogues at least sixty-seven. Of these, earth generally contains eight; air is a mixture of two; water is a compound of two; and fire is the visible evidence of a combination between elements which produces light and heat. On the "elements" of the Greek philosophers *vide* Arist., *Met.* i. 3. Thales (†c. 550 b.c.) said *water*; Anaximenes (†c. b.c. 480) *air*; and Heraclitus (†c. b.c. 500) *fire*. To these Empedocles (who "*ardentem frigidus Ætnam insiluit*", c. b.c. 440) added a fourth, *earth*.

ceptible of evil. But the Son and the Holy Ghost are the source of sanctification by which every reasonable creature is hallowed in proportion to its virtue.

3. We in accordance with the true doctrine speak of the Son as neither like,¹⁷⁸⁷ nor unlike¹⁷⁸⁸ the Father. Each of these terms is equally impossible, for like and unlike are predicated in relation to quality, and the divine is free from quality. We, on the contrary, confess identity of nature and accepting the consubstantiality, and rejecting the composition of the Father, God in substance, Who begat the Son, God in substance. From this the consubstantiality¹⁷⁸⁹ is proved. For God in essence or substance is co-essential or con-substantial with God in essence or substance. But when even man is called "god" as in the words, "I have said ye are gods,"¹⁷⁹⁰ and "dæmon" as in the words, "The gods of the nations are dæmons,"¹⁷⁹¹ in the former case the name is given by favour, in the latter untruly. God alone is substantially and essentially God. When I say "alone" I set forth the holy and uncreated essence and substance of God. For the word "alone" is used in the case of any individual and generally of human nature. In the case of an individual, as for instance of Paul, that he alone was caught into the third heaven and "heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter,"¹⁷⁹² and of human nature, as when David says, "as for man his days are as grass,"¹⁷⁹³ not meaning any particular man, but human nature generally; for every man is short-lived and mortal. So we understand these words to be said of the nature, "who alone hath immortality"¹⁷⁹⁴ and "to God only wise,"¹⁷⁹⁵ and "none is good save one, that is God,"¹⁷⁹⁶ for here "one" means the same as alone. So also, "which alone spreadest out the heavens,"¹⁷⁹⁷ and again "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."¹⁷⁹⁸ "There is no God beside me."¹⁷⁹⁹ In Scripture "one" and "only" are not predicated of God to mark distinction from the Son and the Holy Ghost, but to except the unreal

1787 Asserted at Seleucia and Ariminum.

1788 cf. *D. Sp. S. § 4* on Aetius' responsibility for the Anomœan formula.

1789 τὸ ὁμοούσιον.

1790 *Ps. lxxxii. 6.*

1791 *Ps. xcvi. 5, LXX.*

1792 *2 Cor. xii. 4.*

1793 *Ps. cii. 15.*

1794 *1 Tim. vi. 16.*

1795 *Rom. xvi. 27.*

1796 *Luke xviii. 19.*

1797 *Job ix. 8.*

1798 *Deut. vi. 13, LXX.*, where the text runs κύριον τὸν θεόν σου φοβηθήσῃ. St. Basil may quote the version in *Matt. iv. 10* and *Luke iv. 8*, προσκυνήσεις. The Hebrew="fear".

1799 *Deut. xxxii. 39, LXX.*

gods falsely so called. As for instance, “The Lord alone did lead them and there was no strange god with them,”¹⁸⁰⁰ and “then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and did serve the Lord only.”¹⁸⁰¹ And so St. Paul, “For as there be gods many and lords many, but to us there is but one god, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jesus Christ by Whom are all things.”¹⁸⁰² Here we enquire why when he had said “one God” he was not content, for we have said that “one” and “only” when applied to God, indicate nature. Why did he add the word Father and make mention of Christ? Paul, a chosen vessel, did not, I imagine, think it sufficient only to preach that the Son is God and the Holy Ghost God, which he had expressed by the phrase “one God,” without, by the further addition of “the Father,” expressing Him of Whom are all things; and, by mentioning the Lord, signifying the Word by Whom are all things; and yet further, by adding the words Jesus Christ, announcing the incarnation, setting forth the passion and publishing the resurrection. For the word Jesus Christ suggests all these ideas to us. For this reason too before His passion our Lord deprecates the designation of “Jesus Christ,” and charges His disciples to “tell no man that He was Jesus, the Christ.”¹⁸⁰³ For His purpose was, after the completion of the œconomy,¹⁸⁰⁴ after His resurrection from the dead, and His assumption into heaven, to commit to them the preaching of Him as Jesus, the Christ. Such is the force of the words “That they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,”¹⁸⁰⁵ and again “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.”¹⁸⁰⁶ Everywhere the Holy Ghost secures our conception of Him to save us from falling in one direction while we advance in the other, heeding the theology but neglecting the œconomy,¹⁸⁰⁷ and so by omission falling into impiety.

4. Now let us examine, and to the best of our ability explain, the meaning of the words of Holy Scripture, which our opponents seize and wrest to their own sense, and urge against us for the destruction of the glory of the Only-begotten. First of all take the words “I live because of the Father,”¹⁸⁰⁸ for this is one of the shafts hurled heavenward by those who

1800 [Deut. xxxii. 12](#), LXX.

1801 [1 Sam. vii. 4](#).

1802 [1 Cor. viii. 5, 6](#).

1803 [Matt. xvi. 19](#).

1804 *i.e.* of His work on earth as God manifest in the flesh. *Vide* note, p. 7.

1805 [John xvii. 3](#).

1806 [John xiv. 1](#).

1807 *cf.* note, p. 7.

1808 [John vi. 57](#), R.V. The Greek is ἐγὼ ζῶ διὰ τὸν πατέρα, *i.e.* not through or by the Father, but “because of” or “on account of” the Father. “The preposition (Vulg. *propter Patrem*) describes the ground or object, not the instrument or agent (by, through διὰ τοῦ π.). Complete devotion to the Father is the essence of the life of the Son; and so complete devotion to the Son is the life of the believer. It seems better to give this full sense to

impiously use it. These words I do not understand to refer to the eternal life; for whatever lives because of something else cannot be self-existent, just as that which is warmed by another cannot be warmth itself; but He Who is our Christ and God says, "I am the life."¹⁸⁰⁹ I understand the life lived because of the Father to be this life in the flesh, and in this time. Of His own will He came to live the life of men. He did not say "I have lived because of the Father," but "I live because of the Father," clearly indicating the present time, and the Christ, having the word of God in Himself, is able to call the life which He leads, life, and that this is His meaning we shall learn from what follows. "He that eateth me," He says, "he also shall live because of me;"¹⁸¹⁰ for we eat His flesh, and drink His blood, being made through His incarnation and His visible life partakers of His Word and of His Wisdom. For all His mystic sojourn among us He called flesh and blood, and set forth the teaching consisting of practical science, of physics, and of theology, whereby our soul is nourished and is meanwhile trained for the contemplation of actual realities. This is perhaps the intended meaning of what He says.¹⁸¹¹

5. And again, "My Father is greater than I."¹⁸¹² This passage is also employed by the ungrateful creatures, the brood of the evil one. I believe that even from this passage the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father is set forth. For I know that comparisons may properly be made between things which are of the same nature. We speak of angel as greater than angel, of man as juster than man, of bird as fleeter than bird. If then comparisons are made between things of the same species, and the Father by comparison is said to be greater than the Son, then the Son is of the same substance as the Father. But there is another sense underlying the expression. In what is it extraordinary that He who "is the Word and was made flesh"¹⁸¹³ confesses His Father to be greater than Himself, when He was seen in glory inferior to the angels, and in form to men? For "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,"¹⁸¹⁴ and again "Who was made a little lower than the angels,"¹⁸¹⁵ and "we

the word than to take it as equivalent to 'by reason of'; that is, 'I live because the Father lives.'" Westcott, *St. John* ad loc.

1809 [John xi. 25.](#)

1810 [John vi. 57,](#) R.V.

1811 With this striking exposition of Basil's view of the spiritual meaning of eating the flesh and drinking the blood, cf. the passage from Athanasius quoted by Bp. Harold Browne in his *Exposition of the XXXIX. Articles*, p. 693. It is not easy for Roman commentators to cite passages even apparently in support of the less spiritual view of the manducation, e.g. Fessler, *Inst. Pat.* i. 530, and the quotations under the word "*Eucharistia*," in the *Index* of Basil ed Migne. Contrast Gregory of Nyssa, in chap. xxxvii. of the *Greater Catechism*.

1812 [John xiv. 28.](#)

1813 [John i. 14.](#)

1814 [Ps. viii. 5.](#)

1815 [Heb. ii. 9.](#)

saw Him and He had neither form nor comeliness, his form was deficient beyond all men.”¹⁸¹⁶ All this He endured on account of His abundant loving kindness towards His work, that He might save the lost sheep and bring it home when He had saved it, and bring back safe and sound to his own land the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and so fell among thieves.¹⁸¹⁷ Will the heretic cast in His teeth the manger out of which he in his unreasonableness was fed by the Word of reason? Will he, because the carpenter’s son had no bed to lie on, complain of His being poor? This is why the Son is less than the Father; for your sakes He was made dead to free you from death and make you sharer in heavenly life. It is just as though any one were to find fault with the physician for stooping to sickness, and breathing its foul breath, that he may heal the sick.

6. It is on thy account that He knows not the hour and the day of judgment. Yet nothing is beyond the ken of the real Wisdom, for “all things were made by Him;”¹⁸¹⁸ and even among men no one is ignorant of what he has made. But this is His dispensation¹⁸¹⁹ because of thine own infirmity, that sinners be not plunged into despair by the narrow limits of the appointed period,¹⁸²⁰ no opportunity for repentance being left them; and that, on the other hand, those who are waging a long war with the forces of the enemy may not desert their post on account of the protracted time. For both of these classes He arranges¹⁸²¹ by means of His assumed ignorance; for the former cutting the time short for their glorious struggle’s sake; for the latter providing an opportunity for repentance because of their sins. In the gospels He numbered Himself among the ignorant, on account, as I have said, of the infirmity of the greater part of mankind. In the Acts of the Apostles, speaking, as it were, to the perfect apart, He says, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.”¹⁸²² Here He implicitly excepts Himself. So much for a rough statement by way of preliminary attack. Now let us enquire into the meaning of the text from a higher point of view. Let me knock at the door of knowledge, if haply I may wake the Master of the house, Who gives the spiritual bread to them who ask Him, since they whom we are eager to entertain are friends and brothers.

1816 [Isa. liii. 2, 3](#), LXX.

1817 *cf.* [Luke x. 30](#).

1818 [John i. 3](#).

1819 τοῦτο οἰκονομεῖ.

1820 τῷ στενῷ τῆς προθεσμίας. ἡ προθεσμία *sc.* ἡμέρα was in Attic Law a day fixed beforehand before which money must be paid, actions brought, etc. *cf.* Plat. *Legg.* 954, D. It is the “time appointed” of the Father in [Gal. iv. 2](#).

1821 οἰκονομεῖ.

1822 [Acts i. 7](#).

7. Our Saviour's holy disciples, after getting beyond the limits of human thought, and then being purified by the word,¹⁸²³ are enquiring about the end, and longing to know the ultimate blessedness which our Lord declared to be unknown to His angels and to Himself. He calls all the exact comprehension of the purposes of God, a day; and the contemplation of the One-ness and Unity, knowledge of which He attributes to the Father alone, an hour. I apprehend, therefore, that God is said to know of Himself what is; and not to know what is not; God, Who is, of His own nature, very righteousness and wisdom, is said to know righteousness and wisdom; but to be ignorant of unrighteousness and wickedness; for God who created us is not unrighteousness and wickedness. If, then, God is said to know about Himself that which is, and not to know that which is not; and if our Lord, according to the purpose of the Incarnation and the denser doctrine, is not the ultimate object of desire; then our Saviour does not know the end and the ultimate blessedness. But He says the angels do not know;¹⁸²⁴ that is to say, not even the contemplation which is in them, nor the methods of their ministries are the ultimate object of desire. For even their knowledge, when compared with the knowledge which is face to face, is dense.¹⁸²⁵ Only the Father, He says, knows, since He is Himself the end and the ultimate blessedness, for when we no longer know God in mirrors and not immediately,¹⁸²⁶ but approach Him as one and alone, then we shall know even the ultimate end. For all material knowledge is said to be the kingdom of Christ; while immaterial knowledge, and so to say the knowledge of actual Godhead, is that of God the Father. But our Lord is also Himself the end and the ultimate blessedness according to the purpose of the Word; for what does He say in the Gospel? "I will raise him up at the last day."¹⁸²⁷ He calls the transition from material knowledge to immaterial contemplation a resurrection, speaking of that knowledge after which there is no other, as the last day: for our intelligence is raised up and roused to a height of blessedness at the time when it con-

1823 cf. [John xv. 3](#), "Now ye are clean through the word."

1824 [Mark xiii. 32](#).

1825 The Ben. note is *Tota hæc explicandi ratio non sua sponte deducta, sed vi pertracta multis videbitur. Sed illud ad excusandum difficilius, quod ait Basilius angelorum scientiam crassam esse, si comparetur cum ea quæ est facie ad faciem. Videtur subtilis explicatio, quam hic sequitur, necessitatem ei imposuisse ita de angelis sentiendi. Nam cum diem et horam idem esse statueret, ac extremam beatitudinem; illud Scriptura, sed neque angeli sciunt, cogebat illis visionem illam, quæ fit facie ad faciem, denegare; quia idem de illis non poterat dici ac de Filio, eos de se ipsis scire id quod sunt, nescire quod non sunt. Quod si hanc hausit opinionem ex origenis fontibus, qui pluribus locis eam insinuat, certe cito deposuit. Ait enim tom II. p. 320. Ἀγγέλους ἢ δύνῃσι φαχίῃ χοντινεντερ ἰντεντος οχυλος ηαβερε. Ἰδεμ δοχετ ἰν Χομ. Is. p. 515, n. 185, et De Sp. S. cap. XVI.*

1826 διὰ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων. cf. [1 Cor. xiii. 12](#), where St. Paul's word is ἔσοπτρον. St. Basil's κάτοπτρον may rather be suggested by [2 Cor. iii. 18](#), where the original is κατοπτριζόμενοι.

1827 [John vi. 40](#).

templates the One-ness and Unity of the Word. But since our intelligence is made dense and bound to earth, it is both commingled with clay and incapable of gazing intently in pure contemplation, being led through adornments¹⁸²⁸ cognate to its own body. It considers the operations of the Creator, and judges of them meanwhile by their effects, to the end that growing little by little it may one day wax strong enough to approach even the actual unveiled Godhead. This is the meaning, I think, of the words “my Father is greater than I,”¹⁸²⁹ and also of the statement, “It is not mine to give save to those for whom it is prepared by my Father.”¹⁸³⁰ This too is what is meant by Christ’s “delivering up the kingdom to God even the Father;”¹⁸³¹ inasmuch as according to the denser doctrine which, as I said, is regarded relatively to us and not to the Son Himself, He is not the end but the first fruits. It is in accordance with this view that when His disciples asked Him again in the Acts of the Apostles, “When wilt thou restore the kingdom of Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.”¹⁸³² That is to say, the knowledge of such a kingdom is not for them that are bound in flesh and blood. This contemplation the Father hath put away in His own power, meaning by “power” those that are empowered, and by “His own” those who are not held down by the ignorance of things below. Do not, I beg you, have in mind times and seasons of sense but certain distinctions of knowledge made by the sun apprehended by mental perception. For our Lord’s prayer must be carried out. It is Jesus Who prayed “Grant that they may be one in us as I and Thou are one, Father.”¹⁸³³ For when God, Who is one, is in each, He makes all out; and number is lost in the in-dwelling of Unity.

This is my second attempt to attack the text. If any one has a better interpretation to give, and can consistently with true religion amend what I say, let him speak and let him amend, and the Lord will reward him for me. There is no jealousy in my heart. I have not approached this investigation of these passages for strife and vain glory. I have done so to help my brothers, lest the earthen vessels which hold the treasure of God should seem to be

1828 κόσμων. The Ben. note quotes Combefis as saying, “*Dura mihi hic vox: sit pro στοιχείων, per cognata corpori elementa,*” and then goes on, *sed hac in re minus vidit vir eruditus; non enim idem sonat illa vox ac mundi, quasi plures ejusmodi mundos admittat Basilius; sed idem ac ornatus, sive ut ait Basilius in Epist. vi. τὰ περὶ γῆν κάλλη, pulchritudines quæ sunt circa terram. In Com. in Is. n. 58, p. 422. Ecclesia dicitur πρέπουσιν ἑαυτῇ κοσμίαις κεκοσμημένη, convenientibus sibi ornamentis instructa eadem voce utitur Gregorius Nazianz. Ep. cvii.*

1829 [John xiv. 28.](#)

1830 [Matt. xx. 23.](#) *cf. n. Theodoret, p. 28.*

1831 [1 Cor. xv. 24.](#)

1832 [Acts i. 6, 7.](#)

1833 [John xvii. 21 and 22,](#) slightly varied.

deceived by stony-hearted and uncircumcised men, whose weapons are the wisdom of folly.¹⁸³⁴

8. Again, as is said through Solomon the Wise in the Proverbs, “He was created;” and He is named “Beginning of ways”¹⁸³⁵ of good news, which lead us to the kingdom of heaven. He is not in essence and substance a creature, but is made a “way” according to the œconomy. Being made and being created signify the same thing. As He was made a way, so was He made a door, a shepherd, an angel, a sheep, and again a High Priest and an Apostle,¹⁸³⁶ the names being used in other senses. What again would the heretics say about God unsubjected, and about His being made sin for us?¹⁸³⁷ For it is written “But when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things



1834 Basil also refers to this passage in the treatise, *C. Eunomium* i. 20: “Since the Son’s origin (ἀρχή) is from (ἀπό) the Father, in this respect the Father is greater, as cause and origin (ὡς αἷτιος καὶ ἀρχή). Whence also the Lord said thus *my Father is greater than I*, clearly inasmuch as He is Father (καθὸ πατήρ). Yea; what else does the word Father signify unless the being cause and origin of that which is begotten by Him?” And in iii. 1: “The Son is second in order (τάξει) to the Father, because He is from Him (ἀπό) and in dignity (ἀξιώματι) because the Father is the origin and cause of His being.” Quoted by Bp. Westcott in his *St. John* in the additional notes on xiv. 16, 28, pp. 211 *seqq.*, where also will be found quotations from other Fathers on this passage.

1835 The text of [Prov. viii. 22](#) in the LXX. is κύριος ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ. The rendering of A.V. is “possessed,” with “formed” in the margin. The Hebrew verb occurs some eighty times in the Old Testament, and in only four other passages is translated by possess, viz., [Gen. xiv. 19, 22](#), [Ps. cxxxix. 13](#), [Jer. xxxii. 15](#), and [Zec. xi. 5](#). In the two former, though the LXX. renders the word in the Psalms ἐκτίσω, it would have borne the sense of “create.” In the passage under discussion the Syriac agrees with the LXX., and among critics adopting the same view Bishop Wordsworth cites Ewald, Hitzig, and Genesius. The ordinary meaning of the Hebrew is “get” or “acquire,” and hence it is easy to see how the idea of getting or possessing passed in relation to the Creator into that of creation. The Greek translators were not unanimous and Aquila wrote ἐκτίσατο. The passage inevitably became the Jezreel or Low Countries of the Arian war, and many a battle was fought on it. The depreciators of the Son found in it Scriptural authority for calling Him κτίσμα, e.g. Arius in the *Thalia*, is quoted by Athanasius in *Or. c. Ar. I. iii. § 9*, and such writings of his followers as the Letter of Eusebius of Nicomedia to Paulinus of Tyre cited in Theod., *Ecc. Hist. I. v.*, and Eunomius as quoted by Greg. Nyss., *c. Eunom. II. 10*; but as Dr. Liddon observes in his *Bampton Lect.* (p. 60, ed. 1868), “They did not doubt that this created Wisdom was a real being or person.” ἔκτισε was accepted by the Catholic writers, but explained to refer to the manhood only, cf. Eustathius of Antioch, quoted in Theod., *Dial. I.* The view of Athanasius will be found in his dissertation on the subject in the *Second Discourse against the Arians*, pp. 357–385 of Schaff & Wace’s edition. cf. Bull, *Def. Fid. Nic. II. vi. 8*.

1836 [Heb. iii. 1](#).

1837 cf. [2 Cor. v. 21](#).

under Him.”¹⁸³⁸ Are you not afraid, sir, of God called unsubjected? For He makes thy subjection His own; and because of thy struggling against goodness He calls himself unsubjected. In this sense too He once spoke of Himself as persecuted—“Saul, Saul,” He says, “why persecutest thou me?”¹⁸³⁹ on the occasion when Saul was hurrying to Damascus with a desire to imprison the disciples. Again He calls Himself naked, when any one of his brethren is naked. “I was naked,” He says, “and ye clothed me;”¹⁸⁴⁰ and so when another is in prison He speaks of Himself as imprisoned, for He Himself took away our sins and bare our sicknesses.¹⁸⁴¹ Now one of our infirmities is not being subject, and He bare this. So all the things which happen to us to our hurt He makes His own, taking upon Him our sufferings in His fellowship with us.

9. But another passage is also seized by those who are fighting against God to the perversion of their hearers: I mean the words “The Son can do nothing of Himself.”¹⁸⁴² To me this saying too seems distinctly declaratory of the Son’s being of the same nature as the Father. For if every rational creature is able to do anything of himself, and the inclination which each has to the worse and to the better is in his own power, but the Son can do nothing of Himself, then the Son is not a creature. And if He is not a creature, then He is of one essence and substance with the Father. Again; no creature can do what he likes. But the Son does what He wills in heaven and in earth. Therefore the Son is not a creature. Again; all creatures are either constituted of contraries or receptive of contraries. But the Son is very righteousness, and immaterial. Therefore the Son is not a creature, and if He is not a creature, He is of one essence and substance with the Father.

10. This examination of the passages before us is, so far as my ability goes, sufficient. Now let us turn the discussion on those who attack the Holy Spirit, and cast down every high thing of their intellect that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.¹⁸⁴³ You say that the Holy Ghost is a creature. And every creature is a servant of the Creator, for “all are thy servants.”¹⁸⁴⁴ If then He is a servant, His holiness is acquired; and everything of which the holiness is acquired is receptive of evil; but the Holy Ghost being holy in essence is called “fount of holiness.”¹⁸⁴⁵ Therefore the Holy Ghost is not a creature. If He is not a creature,

1838 1 Cor. xv. 28. *i.e.* Because the Son *then* shall be subjected, He is previously ἀνυπότακτος, not as being “disobedient” (1 Tim. i. 9), or “unruly” (Tit. i. 6, 10), but as being made man, and humanity, though subject unto Him, is not yet seen to be “put under Him” (Heb. ii. 8).

1839 Acts ix. 4.

1840 Matt. xxv. 36.

1841 *cf.* Isa. liii. 4 and Matt. viii. 17.

1842 John v. 19.

1843 2 Cor. xi. 5.

1844 Ps. xix. 91.

1845 Rom. i. 4.

He is of one essence and substance with the Father. How, tell me, can you give the name of servant to Him Who through your baptism frees you from your servitude? "The law," it is said, "of the Spirit of life hath made me free from the law of sin."¹⁸⁴⁶ But you will never venture to call His nature even variable, so long as you have regard to the nature of the opposing power of the enemy, which, like lightning, is fallen from heaven and fell out of the true life because its holiness was acquired, and its evil counsels were followed by its change. So when it had fallen away from the Unity and had cast from it its angelic dignity, it was named after its character "Devil,"¹⁸⁴⁷ its former and blessed condition being extinct and this hostile power being kindled.

Furthermore if he calls the Holy Ghost a creature he describes His nature as limited. How then can the two following passages stand? "The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world;"¹⁸⁴⁸ and "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?"¹⁸⁴⁹ But he does not, it would seem, confess Him to be simple in nature; for he describes Him as one in number. And, as I have already said, everything that is one in number is not simple. And if the Holy Spirit is not simple, He consists of essence and sanctification, and is therefore composite. But who is mad enough to describe the Holy Spirit as composite, and not simple, and consubstantial with the Father and the Son?

11. If we ought to advance our argument yet further, and turn our inspection to higher themes, let us contemplate the divine nature of the Holy Spirit specially from the following point of view. In Scripture we find mention of three creations. The first is the evolution from non-being into being.¹⁸⁵⁰ The second is change from the worse to the better. The third is the resurrection of the dead. In these you will find the Holy Ghost cooperating with the Father and the Son. There is a bringing into existence of the heavens; and what says David? "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."¹⁸⁵¹ Again, man is created through baptism, for "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature."¹⁸⁵² And why does the Saviour say to the disciples, "Go ye

1846 [Rom. viii. 2.](#)

1847 In *Letter cciv.* The name of Διάβολος is more immediately connected with Διαβάλλειν, to calumniate. It is curious that the occasional spelling (e.g. in Burton) Divell, which is nearer to the original, and keeps up the association with Diable, Diavolo, etc., should have given place to the less correct and misleading "Devil."

1848 [Wisdom i. 7.](#)

1849 [Ps. cxxxix. 7.](#)

1850 παραγωγή ἀπὸ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι. For παραγωγή it is not easy to give an equivalent; it is leading or bringing with a notion of change, sometimes a change into error, as when it means a quibble. It is not quite the Ben. Latin "*productio*." It is not used intransitively; if there is a παραγωγή, there must be ὁ παράγων, and similarly if there is evolution or development, there must be an evolver or developer.

1851 [Ps. xxxiii. 6.](#) τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, LXX.

1852 [2 Cor. v. 17.](#)

therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost”? Here too you see the Holy Ghost present with the Father and the Son. And what would you say also as to the resurrection of the dead when we shall have failed and returned to our dust? Dust we are and unto dust we shall return.¹⁸⁵³ And He will send the Holy Ghost and create us and renew the face of the earth.¹⁸⁵⁴ For what the holy Paul calls resurrection David describes as renewal. Let us hear, once more, him who was caught into the third heaven. What does he say? “You are the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you.”¹⁸⁵⁵ Now every temple¹⁸⁵⁶ is a temple of God, and if we are a temple of the Holy Ghost, then the Holy Ghost is God. It is also called Solomon’s temple, but this is in the sense of his being its builder. And if we are a temple of the Holy Ghost in this sense, then the Holy Ghost is God, for “He that built all things is God.”¹⁸⁵⁷ If we are a temple of one who is worshipped, and who dwells in us, let us confess Him to be God, for thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.¹⁸⁵⁸ Supposing them to object to the word “God,” let them learn what this word means. God is called Θεός either because He placed (τεθεικέναι) all things or because He beholds (θεᾷσθαι) all things. If He is called Θεός because He “placed” or “beholds” all things, and the Spirit knoweth all the things of God, as the Spirit in us knoweth our things, then the Holy Ghost is God.¹⁸⁵⁹ Again, if the sword of the spirit is the word of God,¹⁸⁶⁰ then the Holy Ghost is God, inasmuch as the sword belongs to Him of whom it is also called the word. Is He named the right hand of the Father? For “the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass,”¹⁸⁶¹ and “thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.”¹⁸⁶² But the Holy Ghost is the finger of God, as it is said “if I by the finger of God cast out devils,”¹⁸⁶³ of which the version in another Gospel is “if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils.”¹⁸⁶⁴ So the Holy Ghost is of the same nature as the Father and the Son.

1853 cf. [Gen. iii. 19.](#)

1854 cf. [Ps. ciii. 30.](#)

1855 [1 Cor. vi. 19.](#)

1856 The Greek word ναός (ναίω)=dwelling-place. The Hebrew probably indicates capacity. Our “temple,” from the latin *Templum* (τέμενος—VTAM) is derivatively a *place cut off*.

1857 [Heb. iii. 4.](#)

1858 [Matt. iv. 10.](#) cf. note on p. .

1859 [1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.](#) On the derivation of Θεός from θέω (τίθημι) or θεάομαι, cf. Greg. Naz. Skeat rejects the theory of connexion with the Latin *Deus*, and thinks that the root of τίθημι may be the origin.

1860 [Eph. vi. 17.](#)

1861 [Ps. cxviii. 16.](#) P.B. “doeth valiantly,” A.V. ἐποίησε δύνα μιν, LXX.

1862 [Ex. xv. 6.](#)

1863 [Luke xi. 20.](#)

1864 [Matt. xii. 28.](#)

12. So much must suffice for the present on the subject of the adorable and holy Trinity. It is not now possible to extend the enquiry about it further. Do ye take seeds from a humble person like me, and cultivate the ripe ear for yourselves, for, as you know, in such cases we look for interest. But I trust in God that you, because of your pure lives, will bring forth fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold. For, it is said, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.¹⁸⁶⁵ And, my brethren, entertain no other conception of the kingdom of the heavens than that it is the very contemplation of realities. This the divine Scriptures call blessedness. For “the kingdom of heaven is within you.”¹⁸⁶⁶

The inner man consists of nothing but contemplation. The kingdom of the heavens, then, must be contemplation. Now we behold their shadows as in a glass; hereafter, set free from this earthly body, clad in the incorruptible and the immortal, we shall behold their archetypes, we shall see them, that is, if we have steered our own life’s course aright, and if we have heeded the right faith, for otherwise none shall see the Lord. For, it is said, into a malicious soul Wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin.¹⁸⁶⁷ And let no one urge in objection that, while I am ignoring what is before our eyes, I am philosophizing to them about bodiless and immaterial being. It seems to me perfectly absurd, while the senses are allowed free action in relation to their proper matter, to exclude mind alone from its peculiar operation. Precisely in the same manner in which sense touches sensible objects, so mind apprehends the objects of mental perception. This too must be said that God our Creator has not included natural faculties among things which can be taught. No one teaches sight to apprehend colour or form, nor hearing to apprehend sound and speech, nor smell, pleasant and unpleasant scents, nor taste, flavours and savours, nor touch, soft and hard, hot and cold. Nor would any one teach the mind to reach objects of mental perception; and just as the senses in the case of their being in any way diseased, or injured, require only proper treatment and then readily fulfil their own functions; just so the mind, imprisoned in flesh, and full of the thoughts that arise thence, requires faith and right conversation which make “its feet like hinds’ feet, and set it on its high places.”¹⁸⁶⁸ The same advice is given us by Solomon the wise, who in one passage offers us the example

1865 [Matt. v. 8.](#)

1866 [Luke xvii. 21](#), ἐν τῷ ὑμῶν. Many modern commentators interpret “in your midst,” “among you.” So Alford, who quotes Xen., *Anab.* I. x. 3 for the Greek, Bp. Walsham How, Bornemann, Meyer. The older view coincided with that of Basil; so Theophylact, Chrysostom, and with them Olshausen and Godet. To the objection that the words were said to the *Pharisees*, and that the kingdom was not in their hearts, it may be answered that our Lord might use “you” of humanity, even when addressing Pharisees. He never, like a merely human preacher, says “we.”

1867 [Wisdom i. 4.](#)

1868 [Ps. xviii. 33.](#)

of the diligent worker the ant,¹⁸⁶⁹ and recommends her active life; and in another the work of the wise bee in forming its cells,¹⁸⁷⁰ and thereby suggests a natural contemplation wherein also the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is contained, if at least the Creator is considered in proportion to the beauty of the things created.

But with thanks to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost let me make an end to my letter, for, as the proverb has it, πάν μέτρον ἄριστον.¹⁸⁷¹

1869 cf. [Prov. vi. 6.](#)

1870 [Ecclus. xi. 3.](#) The ascription of this book to Solomon is said by Rufinus to be confined to the Latin church, while the Greeks know it as the Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach (vers. Orig., *Hom. in Num.* xvii.).

1871 Attributed to Cleobulus of Lindos. Thales is credited with the injunction μέτρον χρῶ. cf. my note on Theodoret, *Ep. cli.* p. 329.