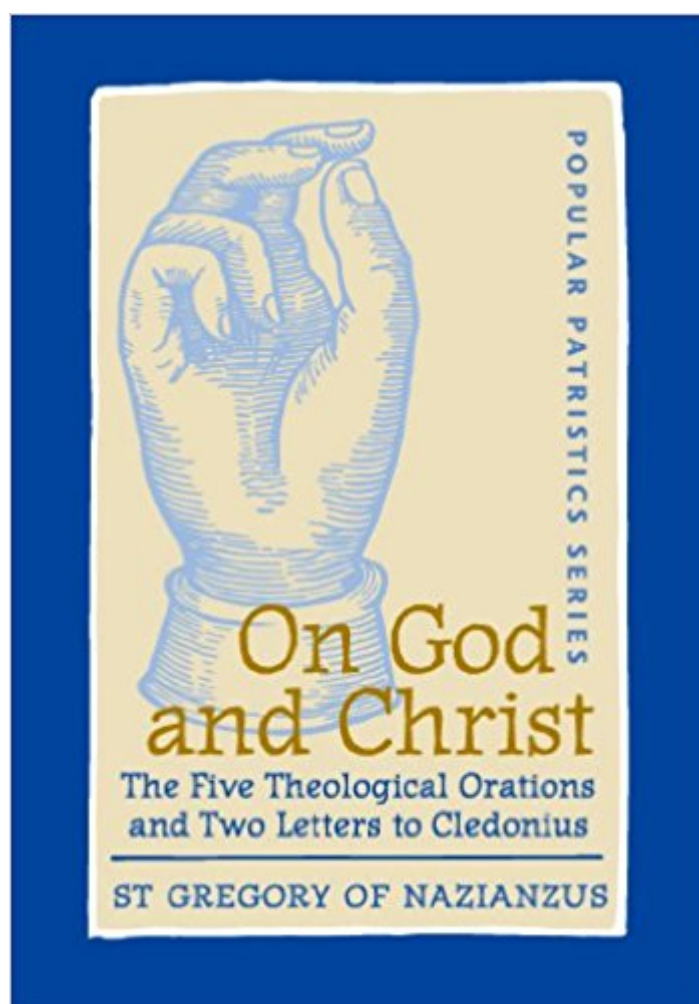


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On God And Christ: The Five Theological Orations And Two Letters To Cleodnius (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press) (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press: Popular Patristics)





Synopsis

Gregory of Nazianzus, "The Theologian," was recognized among the Cappadocian Fathers as a peculiarly vivid and quotable exponent of the doctrine of God in Trinity. A brilliant orator and accomplished poet, he placed before the Church his interpretation of the sublime mystery of the God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These five sermons, probably delivered as a series at the small chapel of the Resurrection in Constantinople, where Gregory was the bishop in charge of loyal "Nicenes," contain Gregory's penetrating teaching. The English translation aims to capture for the present-day reader something of the atmosphere of intellectual excitement and spiritual exhilaration experienced by his first listeners. In addition, this work contains a new translation of Gregory's letters to Cledonius, which contain more focused reflections on the person of Jesus Christ, laying the groundwork for later Christology. Frederick Williams, professor of Greek at the Queen's University in Belfast, translated the first oration. Lionel Wickham, formerly Lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity at Cambridge, translated the other four orations and the two letters to Cledonius.

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Customer Reviews

This was my first venture of reading the church fathers. This book was a great choice. Theologically deep, philosophically relevant for today, and I like the fact they didn't pull any punches when it came to being 'politically correct'--I laughed out loud a few times. The poetry in the first oration is very nice.

The Claims of Knowledge St Gregory's opponents, the Eunomians, reduced God to a set of deductive proofs. Unlike the earlier Gnostics and Arians, their problem was not that God was unknowable, but that he can easily be reduced to what the mind can affirm or negate. On the Son Gregory defines monotheism as "single rule produced by equality of nature, harmony of will, identity of action, and the convergence towards their source of what springs from unity--none of which is possible in the case of created nature" (29:2). This allows "numerical distinction without division in substance. In this way a One eternally changes to a Two and stops at a Three." St Gregory makes an important point in saying that the Son and Holy Spirit are from God but not after him. They have a cause, and thus are not unoriginate, but it is not a temporal cause. He is very quick to affirm the co-eternality of the Son and Holy Spirit with the Father. Gregory's Vocabulary Like St Athanasius, St Gregory operates around a series of terms, which determine the debate. They are "Ingenerate, The Begotten, and `what proceeds from the Father'" (28:2). Gregory is careful to affirm that Ingeneracy is not God's substance (29:12). This is a necessary point because the Son is not ingenerate (since he is begotten), but the Son is of the same substance as the Father. The term "Father" designates neither the activity nor the substance, but the relationship which holds good between the Father and the Son (29:16). This rebuts the dilemma posed: if we say that Father designates the "substance," then we admit the Son is of a different substance than the Father. If we say "activity," then we admit the Son is a creation of the Father. If we say "relationship," however, we can affirm Trinitarianism. Gregory concludes by saying that "each member of the Trinity is in entire unity as much with himself as with the entire partnership, by identity with being and power (31:16). One criticism/observation: Earlier editions translate the passage in the 3rd Theological Oration as "But *monarchy* (monarchia) is what we hold in honor." Here it is translated as "But monotheism is what we hold in honor." I have my suspicions on why this is the case, but it really doesn't detract from the overall point.

good book

This book is a great translation of St. Gregory with very little editorial notes to get in the way. A very pure rendering.

There are some real gems in here! Clear explanations, too, of some very complex ideas and inspires worship. Would recommend!

textbook material

Very hard read for me but useful all the same

Unless you are a theologian, there's really no reason to read this book. It is extremely dense with theological statements and logical arguments. It was not written in English, but the translator did a good job piecing together what the author meant to say. It's not a bad book, but I wouldn't put it on my top million books to read before you die.

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