

0213-0270 – Gregorius Thaumaturgus – A Declaration of Faith

A Declaration of Faith

this file has been downloaded from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf06.html>

believed to have been gifted with a power of working miracles, which he was constantly exercising. But into these it is profitless to enter. When all the marvellous is dissociated from the historical in the records of this bishop's career, we have still the figure of a great, good, and gifted man, deeply versed in the heathen lore and science of his time, yet more deeply imbued with the genuine spirit of another wisdom, which, under God, he learned from the illustrious thinker of Alexandria, honouring with all love, gratitude, and veneration that teacher to whom he was indebted for his knowledge of the Gospel, and exercising an earnest, enlightened, and faithful ministry of many years in an office which he had not sought, but for which he had been sought. Such is, in brief, the picture that rises up before us from a perusal of his own writings, as well as from the comparison of ancient accounts of the man and his vocation. Of his well-accredited works we have the following: *A Declaration of Faith*, being a creed on the doctrine of the Trinity; a *Metaphrase of the Book of Ecclesiastes*, a *Panegyric to Origen*, being an oration delivered on leaving the school of Origen, expressing eloquently, and with great tenderness of feeling, as well as polish of style, the sense of his obligations to that master; and a *Canonical Epistle*, in which he gives a variety of directions with respect to the penances and discipline to be exacted by the Church from Christians who had fallen back into heathenism in times of suffering, and wished to be restored. Other works have been attributed to him, which are doubtful or spurious. His writings have been often edited,—by Gerard Voss in 1604, by the Paris editors in 1662, by Gallandi in 1788, and others, who need not be enumerated here.



Part I.—Acknowledged Writings.

A Declaration of Faith.¹⁸

their shrine. One strange story told of him by Gregory of Nyssa is to the effect that, as Gregory was meditating on the great matter of the right way to worship the true God, suddenly two glorious personages made themselves manifest in his room, in the one of whom he recognised the Apostle John, in the other the Virgin. They had come, as the story goes, to solve the difficulties which were making him hesitate in accepting the bishopric. At Mary's request, the evangelist gave him then all the instruction in doctrine which he was seeking for; and the sum of these supernatural communications being written down by him after the vision vanished, formed the creed which is still preserved among his writings. Such were the wonders believed to signalize the life of Gregory.

¹⁸ The title as it stands has this addition: "which he had by revelation from the blessed John the evangelist, by the mediation of the Virgin Mary, Parent of God." Gallandi, *Veterum Patrum Biblioth.*, Venice, 1766, p. 385. [Elucidation, p. 8, *infra*.]

THERE is one God, the Father of the living Word, *who is His* subsistent Wisdom and Power and Eternal Image:¹⁹ perfect Begetter of the perfect *Begotten*, Father of the only-begotten Son. There is one Lord, Only of the Only,²⁰ God of God, Image and Likeness of Deity, Efficient Word,²¹ Wisdom comprehensive²² of the constitution of all things, and Power formative²³ of the whole creation, true Son of true Father, Invisible of Invisible, and Incorruptible of Incorruptible, and Immortal of Immortal and Eternal of Eternal.²⁴ And there is One Holy Spirit, having His subsistence²⁵ from God, and being made manifest²⁶ by the Son, to wit to men:²⁷ Image²⁸ of the Son, Perfect *Image* of the Perfect;²⁹ Life, the Cause of the living; Holy Fount; Sanctity, the Supplier, *or Leader*,³⁰ of Sanctification; in whom is manifested God the Father, who is above all and in all, and God the Son, who is through all. There is a perfect Trinity, in glory and eternity and sovereignty, neither divided nor estranged.³¹ Wherefore there is nothing either created or in servitude³² in the Trinity;³³ nor anything superinduced,³⁴ as if at some former period it was non-existent, and at some later period

19 χαρακτήρος αΐδίου.

20 μόνος ἐκ μόνου .

21 λόγος ἐνεργός.

22 περιεκτική.

23 ποιητική.

24 αΐδιος αΐδίου.

25 ὕπαρξιν.

26 πεφηνός.

27 The words δηλαδή τοῖς ἀνθρώποις are suspected by some to be a gloss that has found its way into the text.

28 εἰκόν.

29 So John of Damascus uses the phrase, εἰκὼν τοῦ Πατρὸς ὁ Υἱὸς, καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ, τὸ Πνεῦμα, the Son is the Image of the Father, and the Spirit is that of the Son, lib. 1, *De fide orthod.*, ch. 13, vol. i. p. 151. See also Athanasius, *Epist. 1 ad Serap.*; Basil, lib. v. *contra Eunom.*; Cyril, *Dial.*, 7, etc.

30 χορηγός.

31 ἀπαλλοτριουμένη. See also Gregory Nazianz., *Orat.*, 37, p. 609.

32 δοῦλον.

33 Gregory Nazianz., *Orat.*, 40, p. 668, with reference apparently to our author, says: Οὐδὲν τῆς Τριάδος δοῦλον, οὐδὲ κτιστον, οὐδὲ ἐπέισακτον, ἤκουσα τῶν σοφῶν τινος λέγοντος— *In the Trinity there is nothing either in servitude or created, or superinduced, as I heard one of the learned say.*

34 ἐπέισακτον.

it was introduced. And thus neither was the Son ever wanting to the Father, nor the Spirit to the Son;³⁵ but without variation and without change, the same Trinity *abideth* ever.³⁶



Elucidation.

THE story of the “Revelation” is of little consequence, though, if this were Gregory’s genuine work, it would be easy to account for it as originating in a beautiful dream. But it is very doubtful whether it be a genuine work; and, to my mind, it is most fairly treated by Lardner, to whose elaborate chapter concerning Gregory every scholar must refer.³⁷ Dr. Burton, in his edition of Bishop Bull’s works,³⁸ almost overrules that learned prelate’s inclination to think it genuine, in the following words: “Hanc formulam minime esse Gregorii authenticam...multis *haud spernendis argumentis demonstrat* Lardner.” Lardner thinks it a fabrication of the fourth century.

Cave’s learned judgment is more favourable; and he gives the text³⁹ from Gregory of Nyssa, which he translates as follows: “There is one God, the Father of the living Word and of the subsisting Wisdom and Power, and of Him who is His Eternal Image, the perfect begetter of Him that is perfect, the Father of the only-begotten Son. There is one Lord, the only *Son* of the only *Father*, God of God, the character and image of the Godhead, the powerful Word, the comprehensive Wisdom, by which all things were made, and the Power that gave being to the whole creation, the true Son of the true Father, the Invisible of the Invisible, the Incorruptible of the Incorruptible, the Immortal of the Immortal, and the Eternal of Him that is Eternal. There is one Holy Ghost, having its subsistence of God, which appeared through the Son to mankind, the perfect Image of the perfect Son, the Life-giving Life, the holy Fountain, the Sanctity, and the Author of sanctification, by whom God the Father is made manifest, who is over all, and in all; and God the Son, who is through all. A perfect Trinity, which neither in glory, eternity, or dominion is divided, or departed from itself.”

³⁵ In one codex we find the following addition here: οὔτε αὐξεται μονὰς εἰς δυάδα, οὐδὲ δυὰς εἰς τριάδα—*Neither again does the unity grow into duality, nor the duality into trinity*; or = *Neither does the condition of the one grow into the condition of the two, nor that of the two into the condition of the three.*

³⁶ [See valuable note and Greek text in Dr. Schaff’s *History*, vol. ii. p. 799.]

³⁷ *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 635.

³⁸ Vol. v. p. 423.

³⁹ Cave, *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. i. p. 402, ed. Oxford, 1840.