

S:1.

The eighth book very notably overthrows the blasphemy of the heretics who say that the Only-begotten came from nothing, and that there was a time when He was not, and shows the Son to be no new being, but from everlasting, from His having said to Moses, "I am He that is," and to Manoah, "Why askest thou My name? It also is wonderful";-- moreover David also says to God, "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail;" and furthermore Isaiah says, "I am God, the first, and hereafter am I:" and the Evangelist, "He was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God:"--and that He has neither beginning nor end: --and he proves that those who say that He is new and comes from nothing are idolaters. And herein he very finely interprets "the brightness of the glory, and the express image of the Person."

These, then, are the strong points of Eunomius' case; and I think that when those which promised to be powerful are proved by argument to be so rotten and unsubstantial, I may well keep silence concerning the rest, since the others are practically refuted, concurrently with the refutation of the stronger ones; just as it happens in warlike operations that when a force more powerful than the rest has been beaten, the remainder of the army are no longer of any account in the eyes of those by whom the strong portion of it has been overcome. But the fact that the chief part of his blasphemy lies in the later part of his discourse forbids me to be silent. For the transition of the Only-begotten from nothing into being, that horrid and godless doctrine of Eunomius, which is more to be shunned than all impiety, is next maintained in the order of his argument. And since every one who has been bewitched by this deceit has the phrase, "If He was, He has not been begotten, and if He has been begotten, He was not," ready upon his tongue for the maintenance of the doctrine that He Who made of nothing us and all the creation is Himself from nothing, and since the deceit obtains much support thereby, as men of feeble mind are pressed by this superficial bit of plausibility, and led to acquiesce in the blasphemy, we must needs not pass by this doctrinal "root of bitterness," lest, as the Apostle says, it "spring up and trouble us [850]." Now I say that we must first of all consider the actual argument itself, apart from our contest with our opponents, and thus afterwards proceed to the examination and refutation of what they have set forth.

One mark of the true Godhead is indicated by the words of Holy Scripture, which Moses learnt by the voice from heaven, when He heard Him Who said, "I am He that is [851]." We think it right, then, to believe that to be alone truly Divine which is represented as eternal and infinite in respect of being; and all that is contemplated therein is always the same, neither growing nor being consumed; so that if one should say of God, that formerly He was, but now is not, or that He now is, but formerly was not, we should consider each of the sayings alike to be godless: for by both alike the idea of eternity is mutilated, being cut short on one side or the other by non-existence, whether one contemplates "nothing" as preceding "being [852]," or declares that "being" ends in "nothing"; and the frequent repetition of "first of all" or "last of all" concerning God's non-existence does not make amends for the impious conception touching the Divinity.

For this reason we declare the maintenance of their doctrine as to the non-existence at some time of Him Who truly is, to be a denial and rejection of His true Godhead; and this on the ground that, on the one hand, He Who showed Himself to Moses by the light speaks of Himself as being, when He says, "I am He that is [853] ," while on the other, Isaiah (being made, so to say, the instrument of Him Who spoke in him) says in the person of Him that is, "I am the first, and hereafter am I [854] ," so that hereby, whichever way we consider it, we conceive eternity in God. And so, too, the word that was spoken to Manoah shows the fact that the Divinity is not comprehensible by the significance of His name, because, when Manoah asks to know His name, that, when the promise has come actually to pass, he may by name glorify his benefactor, He says to him, "Why askest thou this? It also is wonderful [855] "; so that by this we learn that there is one name significant of the Divine Nature--the wonder, namely, that arises unspeakably in our hearts concerning It. So, too, great David, in his discourses with himself, proclaims the same truth, in the sense that all the creation was brought into being by God, while He alone exists always in the same manner, and abides for ever, where he says, "But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail [856] ." When we hear these sayings, and others like them, from men inspired by God, let us leave all that is not from eternity to the worship of idolaters, as a new thing alien from the true Godhead. For that which now is, and formerly was not, is clearly new and not eternal, and to have regard to any new object of worship is called by Moses the service of demons, when he says, "They sacrificed to devils and not to God, to gods whom their fathers knew not; new gods were they that came newly up [857] ." If then everything that is new in worship is a service of demons, and is alien from the true Godhead, and if what is now, but was not always, is new and not eternal, we who have regard to that which is, necessarily reckon those who contemplate non-existence as attaching to Him Who is, and who say that "He once was not," among the worshippers of idols. For we may also see that the great John, when declaring in his own preaching the Only-begotten God, guards his own statement in every way, so that the conception of non-existence shall find no access to Him Who is. For he says [858] that He "was in the beginning," and "was with God," and "was God," and was light, and life, and truth, and all good things at all times, and never at any time failed to be anything that is excellent, Who is the fulness of all good, and is in the bosom of the Father. If then Moses lays down as a law for us some such mark of true Godhead as this, that we know nothing else of God but this one thing, that He is (for to this point the words, "I am He that is [859] "); while Isaiah in his preaching declares aloud the absolute infinity of Him Who is, defining the existence of God as having no regard to beginning or to end (for He Who says "I am the first, and hereafter am I," places no limit to His eternity in either direction, so that neither, if we look to the beginning, do we find any point marked since which He is, and beyond which He was not, nor, if we turn our thought to the future, can we cut short by any boundary the eternal progress of Him Who is),--and if the prophet David forbids us to worship any new and strange God [860] (both of which are involved in the heretical doctrine; "newness" is clearly indicated in that which is not eternal, and "strangeness" is alienation from the Nature of the very God),--if, I say, these things are so, we declare all the sophistical fabrication about the non-existence at some time of Him Who truly is, to be nothing else than a departure from

Christianity, and a turning to idolatry. For when the Evangelist, in his discourse concerning the Nature of God, separates at all points non-existence from Him Who is, and, by his constant repetition of the word "was," carefully destroys the suspicion of non-existence, and calls Him the Only-begotten God, the Word of God, the Son of God, equal with God, and all such names, we have this judgment fixed and settled in us, that if the Only-begotten Son is God, we must believe that He Who is believed to be God is eternal. And indeed He is verily God, and assuredly is eternal, and is never at any time found to be non-existent. For God, as we have often said, if He now is, also assuredly always was, and if He once was not, neither does He now exist at all. But since even the enemies of the truth confess that the Son is and continually abides the Only-begotten God, we say this, that, being in the Father, He is not in Him in one respect only, but He is in Him altogether, in respect of all that the Father is conceived to be. As, then, being in the incorruptibility of the Father, He is incorruptible, good in His goodness, powerful in His might, and, as being in each of these attributes of special excellence which are conceived of the Father, He is that particular thing, so, also, being in His eternity, He is assuredly eternal. Now the eternity of the Father is marked by His never having taken His being from nonexistence, and never terminating His being in non-existence. He, therefore, Who hath all things that are the Father's [861], and is contemplated in all the glory of the Father, even as, being in the endlessness of the Father, He has no end, so, being in the unoriginateness of the Father, has, as the Apostle says, "no beginning of days [862]," but at once is "of the Father," and is regarded in the eternity of the Father: and in this respect, more especially, is seen the complete absence of divergence in the Likeness, as compared with Him Whose Likeness He is. And herein is His saying found true which tells us, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father [863]." Moreover, it is in this way that those words of the Apostle, that the Son is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person [864]," are best understood to have an excellent and close application. For the Apostle conveys to those hearers who are unable, by the contemplation of purely intellectual objects, to elevate their thought to the height of the knowledge of God, a sort of notion of the truth, by means of things apparent to sense. For as the body of the sun is expressly imaged by the whole disc that surrounds it, and he who looks on the sun argues, by means of what he sees, the existence of the whole solid substratum, so, he says, the majesty of the Father is expressly imaged in the greatness of the power of the Son, that the one may be believed to be as great as the other is known to be: and again, as the radiance of light sheds its brilliancy from the whole of the sun's disc (for in the disc one part is not radiant, and the rest dim), so all that glory which the Father is, sheds its brilliancy from its whole extent by means of the brightness that comes from it, that is, by the true Light; and as the ray is of the sun (for there would be no ray if the sun were not), yet the sun is never conceived as existing by itself without the ray of brightness that is shed from it, so the Apostle delivering to us the continuity and eternity of that existence which the Only-begotten has of the Father, calls the Son "the brightness of His glory."

[850] Cf. Heb. xii. 15

[851] Exod. iii. 4.

[852] Reading protheoroie for prostheoroie

[853] Exod. iii. 4.

[854] See note 4 on Book V. S:1, where these words are also treated of.

[855] Cf. Judges xiii. 18 (LXX.).

[856] Ps. cii. 27.

[857] Cf. Deut. xxxii. 17 (LXX.). The quotation is not exact.

[858] Cf. S. John i

[859] Exod. iii. 4.

[860] Cf. Ps. lxxxi. 10.

[861] S. John xvi. 15

[862] Heb. vii. 3.

[863] S. John xiv. 8

[864] Heb. i. 3.

S:2.

He then discusses the "willing" of the Father concerning the generation of the Son, and shows that the object of that good will is from eternity, which is the Son, existing in the Father, and being closely related to the process of willing, as the ray to the flame, or the act of seeing to the eye.

After these distinctions on our part no one can well be longer in doubt how the Only-begotten at once is believed to be "of the Father," and is eternally, even if the one phrase does not at first sight seem to agree with the other,—that which declares Him to be "of the Father" with that which asserts His eternity. But if we are to confirm our statement by further arguments, it may be possible to apprehend the doctrine on this point by the aid of things cognizable by our senses. And let no one deride our statement, if it cannot find among existing things a likeness of the object of our enquiry such as may be in all

respects sufficient for the presentation of the matter in hand by way of analogy and resemblance. For we should like to persuade those who say that the Father first willed and so proceeded to become a Father, and on this ground assert posteriority in existence as regards the Word, by whatever illustrations may make it possible, to turn to the orthodox view. Neither does this immediate conjunction exclude the "willing" of the Father, in the sense that He had a Son without choice, by some necessity of His Nature, nor does the "willing" separate the Son from the Father, coming in between them as a kind of interval: so that we neither reject from our doctrine the "willing" of the Begetter directed to the Son, as being, so to say, forced out by the conjunction of the Son's oneness with the Father, nor do we by any means break that inseparable connection, when "willing" is regarded as involved in the generation. For to our heavy and inert nature it properly belongs that the wish and the possession of a thing are not often present with us at the same moment; but now we wish for something we have not, and at another time we obtain what we do not wish to obtain. But, in the case of the simple and all-powerful Nature, all things are conceived together and at once, the willing of good as well as the possession of what He wills. For the good and the eternal will is contemplated as operating, indwelling, and co-existing in the eternal Nature, not arising in it from any separate principle, nor capable of being conceived apart from the object of will: for it is not possible that with God either the good will should not be, or the object of will should not accompany the act of will, since no cause can either bring it about that that which befits the Father should not always be, or be any hindrance to the possession of the object of will. Since, then, the Only-begotten God is by nature the good (or rather beyond all good), and since the good does not fail to be the object of the Father's will, it is hereby clearly shown, both that the conjunction of the Son with the Father is without any intermediary, and also that the will, which is always present in the good Nature, is not forced out nor excluded by reason of this inseparable conjunction. And if any one is listening to my argument in no scoffing spirit, I should like to add to what I have already said something of the following kind.

Just as, if one were to grant (I speak, of course, hypothetically) the power of deliberate choice to belong to flame, it would be clear that the flame will at once upon its existence will that its radiance should shine forth from itself, and when it wills it will not be impotent (since, on the appearance of the flame, its natural power at once fulfils its will in the matter of the radiance), so that undoubtedly, if it be granted that the flame is moved by deliberate choice, we conceive the concurrence of all these things simultaneously--of the kindling of the fire, of its act of will concerning the radiance, and of the radiance itself; so that the movement by way of choice is no hindrance to the dignity of the existence of the radiance,--even so, according to the illustration we have spoken of, you will not, by confessing the good act of will as existing in the Father, separate by that act of will the Son from the Father. For it is not reasonable to suppose that the act of willing that He should be, could be a hindrance to His immediately coming into being; but just as, in the eye, seeing and the will to see are, one an operation of nature, the other an impulse of choice, yet no delay is caused to the act of sight by the movement of choice in that particular direction [865],--(for each of these is regarded separately and by itself,

not as being at all a hindrance to the existence of the other, but as both being somehow interexistent, the natural operation concurring with the choice, and the choice in turn not failing to be accompanied by the natural motion)--as, I say, perception naturally belongs to the eye, and the willing to see produces no delay in respect to actual sight, but one wills that it should have vision, and immediately what he wills is, so also in the case of that Nature which is unspeakable and above all thought, our apprehension of all comes together simultaneously--of the eternal existence of the Father, and of an act of will concerning the Son, and of the Son Himself, Who is, as John says, "in the beginning," and is not conceived as coming after the beginning. Now the beginning of all is the Father; but in this beginning the Son also is declared to be, being in His Nature that very thing which the Beginning is. For the Beginning is God, and the Word Who "was in the Beginning" is God. As then the phrase "the beginning" points to eternity, John well conjoins "the Word in the Beginning," saying that the Word was in It; asserting, I suppose, this fact to the end that the first idea present to the mind of his hearer may not be "the Beginning" alone by itself, but that, before this has been impressed upon him, there should also be presented to his mind, together with the Beginning the Word Who was in It, entering with It into the hearer's understanding, and being present to his hearing at the same time with the Beginning.

[865] Oehler's punctuation here seems faulty.

S:3.

Then, thus passing over what relates to the essence of the Son as having been already discussed, he treats of the sense involved in "generation," saying that there are diverse generations, those effected by matter and art, and of buildings,--and that by succession of animals,--and those by efflux, as by the sun and its beam. The lamp and its radiance, scents and ointments and the quality diffused by them,--and the word produced by the mind; and cleverly discusses generation [866] from rotten wood; and from the condensation of fire, and countless other causes.

Now that we have thus thoroughly scrutinized our doctrine, it may perhaps be time to set forth and to consider the opposing statement, examining it side by side in comparison with our own opinion. He states it thus:--"For while there are," he says, "two statements which we have made, the one, that the essence of the Only-begotten was not before its own generation, the other that, being generated, it was before all things, he [867] does not prove either of these statements to be untrue; for he did not venture to say that He was before that supreme [868] generation and formation, seeing that he is opposed at once by the Nature of the Father, and the judgment of sober-minded men. For what sober man could admit the Son to be and to be begotten before that supreme generation? and

He Who is without generation needs not generation in order to His being what He is." Well, whether he speaks truly, when he says that our master [869] opposed his antitheses to no purpose, all may surely be aware who have been conversant with that writer's works. But for my own part (for I think that the refutation of his calumny on this matter is a small step towards the exposure of his malice), I will leave the task of showing that this point was not passed over by our master without discussion, and turn my argument to the discussion, as far as in me lies, of the points now advanced. He says that he has in his own discourse spoken of two matters,--one, that the essence of the Only-begotten was not before Its own generation, the other, that, being generated, It was before all things. Now I think that by what we have already said, the fact has been sufficiently shown that no new essence was begotten by the Father besides that which is contemplated in the Father Himself, and that there is no need for us to be entangled in a contest with blasphemy of this kind, as if the argument were now propounded to us for the first time; and further, that the real force of our argument must be directed to one point, I mean to his horrible and blasphemous utterance, which clearly states concerning God the Word that "He was not." Moreover, as our argument in the foregoing discourse has already to some extent dealt with the question of his blasphemy, it would perhaps be superfluous again to establish by like considerations what we have proved already. For it was to this end that we made those former statements, that by the earlier impression upon our hearers of an orthodox mode of thought, the blasphemy of our adversaries, who assert that non-existence preceded existence in the case of the Only-begotten God, might be more manifest.

It seems at this point well to investigate in our argument, by a more careful examination, the actual significance of "generation." That this name presents to us the fact of being as the result of some cause is clear to every one, and about this point there is, I suppose, no need to dispute. But since the account to be given of things which exist as the result of cause is various, I think it proper that this matter should be cleared up in our discourse by some sort of scientific division. Of things, then, which are the result of something, we understand the varieties to be as follows. Some are the result of matter and art, as the structure of buildings and of other works, coming into being by means of their respective matter, and these are directed by some art that accomplishes the thing proposed, with a view to the proper aim of the results produced. Others are the results of matter and nature; for the generations of animals are the building [870] of nature, who carries on her own operation by means of their material bodily subsistence. Others are the result of material efflux, in which cases the antecedent remains in its natural condition, while that which flows from it is conceived separately, as in the case of the sun and its beam, or the lamp and its brightness, or of scents and ointments and the quality they emit; for these, while they remain in themselves without diminution, have at the same time, each concurrently with itself, that natural property which they emit: as the sun its beam, the lamp its brightness, the scents the perfume produced by them in the air. There is also another species of "generation" besides these, in which the cause is immaterial and incorporeal, but the generation is an object of sense and takes place by corporeal means;--I speak of the word which is begotten by the mind: for the mind, being itself incorporeal,

brings forth the word by means of the organs of sense. All these varieties of generation we mentally include, as it were, in one general view. For all the wonders that are wrought by nature, which changes the bodies of some animals to something of a different kind, or produces some animals from a change in liquids, or a corruption of seed, or the rotting of wood, or out of the condensed mass of fire transforms the cold vapour that issues from the firebrands, shut off in the heart of the fire, to produce an animal which they call the salamander,--these, even if they seem to be outside the limits we have laid down, are none the less included among the cases we have mentioned. For it is by means of bodies that nature fashions these varied forms of animals; for it is such and such a change of body, disposed by nature in this or that particular way, which produces this or that particular animal; and this is not a distinct species of generation besides that which is accomplished as the result of nature and matter.

[866] To make the grammar of the sentence exact ten should here be substituted for ton, the object of the verb being apparently gennesin not logon. The whole section of the analysis is rather confused, and does not clearly reproduce S. Gregory's division of the subject. A large part of this section, and of that which follows it, is repeated with very slight alteration from Bk. II. S:9 (see pp. 113-115 above). The resemblances are much closer in the Greek text than they appear in the present translation, in which different hands have been at work in the two books.

[867] i.e.S. Basil.

[868] anotato may be "supreme," in the sense of "ultimate" or "most remote," or in the more ordinary sense of "most exalted."

[869] i.e.S. Basil.

[870] Or (reading as proposed above, p. 114, oikonomei for oikodomei), "the ordering of nature."

S:4.

He further shows the operations of God to be expressed by human illustrations; for what hands and feet and the other parts of the body with which men work are, that, in the case of God, the will alone is, in place of these. And so also arises the divergence of generation; wherefore He is called Only-begotten, because He has no community with other generation such as is observed in creation [871], but in that He is called the "brightness of glory," and the "savour of ointment," He shows the close conjunction and co-eternity of His Nature with the Father [872]

Now these modes of generation being well known to men, the loving dispensation of the Holy Spirit, in delivering to us the Divine mysteries, conveys its instruction on those matters which transcend language by means of what is within our capacity, as it does also constantly elsewhere, when it portrays the Divinity in bodily terms, making mention, in speaking concerning God, of His eye, His eyelids, His ear, His fingers, His hand, His right hand, His arm, His feet, His shoes [873] , and the like,--none of which things is apprehended to belong in its primary sense to the Divine Nature,--but turning its teaching to what we can easily perceive, it describes by terms well worn in human use, facts that are beyond every name, while by each of the terms employed concerning God we are led analogically to some more exalted conception. In this way, then, it employs the numerous forms of generation to present to us, from the inspired teaching, the unspeakable existence of the Only-begotten, taking just so much from each as may be reverently admitted into our conceptions concerning God. For as its mention of "fingers," "hand," and "arm," in speaking of God, does not by the phrase portray the structure of the limb out of bones and sinews and flesh and ligaments, but signifies by such an expression His effective and operative power, and as it indicates by each of the other words of this kind those conceptions concerning God which correspond to them, not admitting the corporeal senses of the words, so also it speaks indeed of the forms of these modes of coming into being as applied to the Divine Nature, yet does not speak in that sense which our customary knowledge enables us to understand. For when it speaks of the formative power, it calls that particular energy by the name of "generation," because the word expressive of Divine power must needs descend to our lowliness, yet it does not indicate all that is associated with formative generation among ourselves,--neither place nor time nor preparation of material, nor the co-operation of instruments, nor the purpose in the things produced, but it leaves these out of sight, and greatly and loftily claims for God the generation of the things that are, where it says, "He spake and they were begotten, He commanded and they were created [874] ." Again, when it expounds that unspeakable and transcendent existence which the Only-begotten has from the Father, because human poverty is incapable of the truths that are too high for speech or thought, it uses our language here also, and calls Him by the name of "Son,"--a name which our ordinary use applies to those who are produced by matter and nature. But just as the word, which tells us in reference to God of the "generation" of the creation, did not add the statement that it was generated by the aid of any material, declaring that its material substance, its place, its time, and all the like, had their existence in the power of His will, so here too, in speaking of the "Son," it leaves out of sight both all other things which human nature sees in earthly generation (passions, I mean, and dispositions, and the co-operation of time and the need of place, and especially matter), without all which earthly generation as a result of nature does not occur. Now every such conception of matter and interval being excluded from the sense of the word "Son," nature alone remains, and hereby in the word "Son" is declared concerning the Only-begotten the close and true character of His manifestation from the Father. And since this particular species of generation did not suffice to produce in us an adequate idea of the unspeakable existence of the Only-begotten, it employs also another species of generation, that which is the result of efflux, to express the Divine Nature of the Son, and calls Him "the brightness of glory [875] ,"

the "savour of ointment [876] ," the "breath of God [877] ," which our accustomed use, in the scientific discussion we have already made, calls material efflux. But just as in the previous cases neither the making of creation nor the significance of the word "Son" admitted time, or matter, or place, or passion, so here also the phrase, purifying the sense of "brightness" and the other terms from every material conception, and employing only that element in this particular species of generation which is suitable to the Divinity, points by the force of this mode of expression to the truth that He is conceived as being both from Him and with Him. For neither does the word "breath" present to us dispersion into the air from the underlying matter, nor "savour" the transference that takes place from the quality of the ointment to the air, nor "brightness" the efflux by means of rays from the body of the sun; but this only, as we have said, is manifested by this particular mode of generation, that He is conceived to be of Him and also with Him, no intermediate interval existing between the Father and that Son Who is of Him. And since, in its abundant loving-kindness, the grace of the Holy Spirit has ordered that our conceptions concerning the Only-begotten Son should arise in us from many sources, it has added also the remaining species of things contemplated in generation,--that, I mean, which is the result of mind and word. But the lofty John uses especial foresight that the hearer may not by any means by inattention or feebleness of thought fall into the common understanding of "Word," so that the Son should be supposed to be the voice of the Father. For this reason he prepares us at his first proclamation to regard the Word as in essence, and not in any essence foreign to or dis severed from that essence whence It has Its being, but in that first and blessed Nature. For this is what he teaches us when he says the Word "was in the beginning [878] ," and "was with God [879] ," being Himself also both God and all else that the "Beginning" is. For thus it is that he makes his discourse on the Godhead, touching the eternity of the Only-begotten. Seeing then that these modes of generation (those, I mean, which are the result of cause) are ordinarily known among us, and are employed by Holy Scripture for our instruction on the subjects before us, in such a way as it might be expected that each of them would be applied to the presentation of Divine conceptions, let the reader of our argument "judge righteous judgement [880] ," whether any of the assertions that heresy makes have any force against the truth.

[871] This passage is clearly corrupt: the general sense as probably intended is given here.

[872] See note 7 in the last section.

[873] The reference is probably to Ps. lx. 8, and Ps. cviii. 9.

[874] Ps. cxlviii. 5 (LXX.).

[875] Heb. i. 3.

[876] Perhaps Cant. i. 3.

[877] Wisd. vii. 25.

[878] Cf. S. John i. 1

[879] Cf. S. John i. 1

[880] S. John vii. 24

S:5.

Then, after showing that the Person of the Only-begotten and Maker of things has no beginning, as have the things that were made by Him, as Eunomius says, but that the Only-begotten is without beginning and eternal, and has no community, either of essence or of names, with the creation, but is co-existent with the Father from everlasting, being, as the all-excellent Wisdom says, "the beginning and end and midst of the times," and after making many observations on the Godhead and eternity of the Only-begotten, and also concerning souls and angels, and life and death, he concludes the book.

I will now once more subjoin the actual language of my opponent, word for word. It runs thus:--"While there are," he says, "two statements which we have made, the one, that the essence of the Only-begotten was not before its own generation, the other, that, being generated, it was before all things--"What kind of generation does our dogmatist propose to us? Is it one of which we may fittingly think and speak in regard to God? And who is so godless as to pre-suppose non-existence in God? But it is clear that he has in view this material generation of ours, and is making the lower nature the teacher of his conceptions concerning the Only-begotten God, and since an ox or an ass or a camel is not before its own generation, he thinks it proper to say even of the Only-begotten God that which the course of the lower nature presents to our view in the case of the animals, without thinking, corporeal theologian that he is, of this fact, that the predicate "Only-begotten", applied to God, signifies by the very word itself that which is not in common with all begetting, and is peculiar to Him. How could the term "Only-begotten" be used of this "generation," if it had community and identity of meaning with other generation? That there is something unique and exceptional to be understood in His case, which is not to be remarked in other generation, is distinctly and suitably expressed by the appellation of "Only-begotten"; as, were any element of the lower generation conceived in it, He Who in respect of any of the attributes of His generation was placed on a level with other things that are begotten would no longer be "Only-begotten." For if the same things are to be said of Him which are said of the other things that come into being by generation, the definition will transform the sense of "Only-begotten" to signify a kind of

relationship involving brotherhood. If then the sense of "Only-begotten" points to absence of mixture and community with the rest of generated things, we shall not admit that anything which we behold in the lower generation is also to be conceived in the case of that existence which the Son has from the Father. But non-existence before generation is proper to all things that exist by generation: therefore this is foreign to the special character of the Only-begotten, to which the name "Only-begotten" bears witness that there attaches nothing belonging to the mode of that form of common generation which Eunomius misapprehends. Let this materialist and friend of the senses be persuaded therefore to correct the error of his conception by the other forms of generation. What will you say when you hear of the "brightness of glory" or of the "savour of ointment [881]?" That the "brightness" was not before its own generation? But if you answer thus, you will surely admit that neither did the "glory" exist, nor the "ointment": for it is not possible that the "glory" should be conceived as having existed by itself, dark and lustreless, or the "ointment" without producing its sweet breath: so that if the "brightness" "was not," the "glory" also surely "was not," and the "savour" being non-existent, there is also proved the non-existence of the "ointment." But if these examples taken from Scripture excite any man's fear, on the ground that they do not accurately present to us the majesty of the Only-begotten, because neither is essentially the same with its substratum--neither the exhalation with the ointment, nor the beam with the sun--let the true Word correct his fear, Who was in the Beginning and is all that the Beginning is, and existent before all; since John so declares in his preaching, "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God [882]." If then the Father is God and the Son is God, what doubt still remains with regard to the perfect Divinity of the Only-begotten, when by the sense of the word "Son" is acknowledged the close relationship of Nature, by "brightness" the conjunction and inseparability, and by the appellation of "God," applied alike to the Father and the Son, their absolute equality, while the "express image," contemplated in reference to the whole Person [883] of the Father, marks the absence of any defect in the Son's proper greatness, and the "form of God" indicates His complete identity by showing in itself all those marks by which the Godhead is betokened.

Let us now set forth Eunomius' statement once more. "He was not," he says, "before His own generation." Who is it of Whom he says "He was not"? Let him declare the Divine names by which He Who, according to Eunomius, "once was not," is called. He will say, I suppose, "light," and "blessedness," "life" and "incorruptibility," and "righteousness" and "sanctification," and "power," and "truth," and the like. He who says, then, that "He was not before His generation," absolutely proclaims this,--that when He "was not" there was no truth, no life, no light, no power, no incorruptibility, no other of those pre-eminent qualities which are conceived of Him: and, what is still more marvellous and still more difficult for impiety to face, there was no "brightness," no "express image." For in saying that there was no brightness, there is surely maintained also the non-existence of the radiating power, as one may see in the illustration afforded by the lamp. For he who speaks of the ray of the lamp indicates also that the lamp shines, and he who says that the ray "is not," signifies also the extinction of that which gives light: so that when the Son is said not to be, thereby is also maintained as a necessary consequence the non-existence

of the Father. For if the one is related to the other by way of conjunction, according to the Apostolic testimony--the "brightness" to the "glory," the "express image" to the "Person," the "Wisdom" to God--he who says that one of the things so conjoined "is not," surely by his abolition of the one abolishes also that which remains; so that if the "brightness" "was not," it is acknowledged that neither did the illuminating nature exist, and if the "express image" had no existence, neither did the Person imaged exist, and if the wisdom and power of God "was not," it is surely acknowledged that He also was not, Who is not conceived by Himself without wisdom and power. If, then, the Only-begotten God, as Eunomius says, "was not before His generation," and Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God [884] ," and the "express image" [885] and the "brightness [886] ," neither surely did the Father exist, Whose power and wisdom and express image and brightness the Son is: for it is not possible to conceive by reason either a Person without express image, or glory without radiance, or God without wisdom, or a Maker without hands, or a Beginning without the Word [887] , or a Father without a Son; but all such things, alike by those who confess and by those who deny, are manifestly declared to be in mutual union, and by the abolition of one the other also disappears with it. Since then they maintain that the Son (that is, the "brightness of the glory,") "was not" before He was begotten, and since logical consequence involves also, together with the non-existence of the brightness, the abolition of the glory, and the Father is the glory whence came the brightness of the Only-begotten Light, let these men who are wise over-much consider that they are manifestly supporters of the Epicurean doctrines, preaching atheism under the guise of Christianity. Now since the logical consequence is shown to be one of two absurdities, either that we should say that God does not exist at all, or that we should say that His being was not unoriginate, let them choose which they like of the two courses before them,--either to be called atheist, or to cease saying that the essence of the Father is un-originate. They would avoid, I suppose, being reckoned atheists. It remains, therefore, that they maintain that God is not eternal. And if the course of what has been proved forces them to this, what becomes of their varied and irreversible conversions of names? What becomes of that invincible compulsion of their syllogisms, which sounded so fine to the ears of old women, with its opposition of "Generated" and "Ungenerate"?

Enough, however, of these matters. But it might be well not to leave his next point unanswered; yet let us pass over in silence the comic interlude, where our clever orator shows his youthful conceit, whether in jest or in earnest, under the impression that he will thereby have an advantage in his argument. For certainly no one will force us to join either with those whose eyes are set askance in distorting our sight, or with those who are stricken with strange disease in being contorted, or in their bodily leaps and plunges. We shall pity them, but we shall not depart from our settled state of mind. He says, then, turning his discourse upon the subject to our master, as if he were really engaging him face to face, "Thou shalt be taken in thine own snare." For as Basil had said [888] that what is good is always present with God Who is over all, and that it is good to be the Father of such a Son,--that so what is good was never absent from Him, nor was it the Father's will to be without the Son, and when He willed He did not lack the power, but having the power and the will to be in the mode in which it seemed good to Him, He also

always possessed the Son by reason of His always willing that which is good (for this is the direction in which the intention of our father's remarks tends), Eunomius pulls this in pieces beforehand, and puts forward to overthrow what has been said some such argument as this, introduced from his extraneous philosophy:--"What will become of you," he says, "if one of those who have had experience of such arguments should say, If to create is good and agreeable to the Nature of God, how is it that what is good and agreeable to His Nature was not present with Him unoriginately, seeing that God is unoriginate? and that when there was no hindrance of ignorance or impediment of weakness or of age in the matter of creation,"--and all the rest that he collects together and pours out upon himself,--for I may not say, upon God. Well, if it were possible for our master to answer the question in person, he would have shown Eunomius what would have become of him, as he asked, by setting forth the Divine mystery with that tongue that was taught of God, and by scourging the champion of deceit with his refutations, so that it would have been made clear to all men what a difference there is between a minister of the mysteries of Christ and a ridiculous buffoon or a setter-forth of new and absurd doctrines. But since he, as the Apostle says, "being dead, speaketh [889]" to God, while the other puts forth such a challenge as though there were no one to answer him, even though an answer from us may not have equal force when compared with the words of the great Basil, we shall yet boldly say this in answer to the questioner:--Your own argument, put forth to overthrow our statement, is a testimony that in the charges we make against your impious doctrine we speak truly. For there is no other point we blame so much as this, that you [890] think there is no difference between the Lord of creation and the general body of creation, and what you now allege is a maintaining of the very things which we find fault with. For if you are bound to attach exactly what you see in creation also to the Only-begotten God, our contention has gained its end: your own statements proclaim the absurdity of the doctrine, and it is manifest to all, both that we keep our argument in the straight way of truth, and that your conception of the Only-begotten God is such as you have of the rest of the creation.

Concerning whom was the controversy? Was it not concerning the Only-begotten God, the Maker of all the creation, whether He always was, or whether He came into being afterwards as an addition to His Father? What then do our master's words say on this matter? That it is irreverent to believe that what is naturally good was not in God: for that he saw no cause by which it was probable that the good was not always present with Him Who is good, either for lack of power or for weakness of will. What does he who contends against these statements say? "If you allow that God the Word is to be believed eternal, you must allow the same of the things that have been created"--(How well he knows how to distinguish in his argument the nature of the creatures and the majesty of God! How well he knows about each, what befits it, what he may piously think concerning God, what concerning the creation!)--"if the Maker," he says, "begins from the time of His making: for there is nothing else by which we can mark the beginning of things that have been made, if time does not define by its own interval the beginnings and the endings of the things that come into being."

On this ground he says that the Maker of time must commence His existence from a like beginning. Well, the creation has the ages for its beginning, but what beginning can you conceive of the Maker of the ages? If any one should say, "The beginning' which is mentioned in the Gospel"--it is the Father Who is there signified, and the confession of the Son together with Him is there pointed to, nor can it be that He Who is in the Father [891] , as the Lord says, can begin His being in Him from any particular point. And if any one speaks of another beginning besides this, let him tell us the name by which he marks this beginning, as none can be apprehended before the establishment of the ages. Such a statement, therefore, will not move us a whit from the orthodox conception concerning the Only-begotten, even if old women do applaud the proposition as a sound one. For we abide by what has been determined from the beginning, having our doctrine firmly based on truth, to wit, that all things which the orthodox doctrine assumes that we assert concerning the Only-begotten God have no kindred with the creation, but the marks which distinguish the Maker of all and His works are separated by a wide interval. If indeed the Son had in any other respect communion with the creation, we surely ought to say that He did not diverge from it even in the manner of His existence. But if the creation has no share in such things as are all those which we learn concerning the Son, we must surely of necessity say that in this matter also He has no communion with it. For the creation was not in the beginning, and was not with God, and was not, God, nor life, nor light, nor resurrection, nor the rest of the Divine names, as truth, righteousness, sanctification, Judge, just, Maker of all things, existing before the ages, for ever and ever; the creation is not the brightness of the glory, nor the express image of the Person, nor the likeness of goodness, nor grace, nor power, nor truth, nor salvation, nor redemption; nor do we find any one at all of those names which are employed by Scripture for the glory of the Only-begotten, either belonging to the creation or employed concerning it,-- not to speak of those more exalted words, "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me [892] ," and, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father [893] ," and, "None hath seen the Son, save the Father [894] ." If indeed our doctrine allowed us to claim for the creation things so many and so great as these, he might have been right in thinking that we ought to attach what we observe in it to our conceptions of the Only-begotten also, since the transfer would be from kindred subjects to one nearly allied. But if all these concepts and names involve communion with the Father, while they transcend our notions of the creation, does not our clever and sharp-witted friend slink away in shame at discussing the nature of the Lord of the Creation by the aid of what he observes in creation, without being aware that the marks which distinguish the creation are of a different sort? The ultimate division of all that exists is made by the line between "created" and "uncreated," the one being regarded as a cause of what has come into being, the other as coming into being thereby. Now the created nature and the Divine essence being thus divided, and admitting no intermixture in respect of their distinguishing properties, we must by no means conceive both by means of similar terms, nor seek in the idea of their nature for the same distinguishing marks in things that are thus separated. Accordingly, as the nature that is in the creation, as the phrase of the most excellent Wisdom somewhere tells us, exhibits "the beginning, ending, and midst of the times [895] " in itself, and extends concurrently with all temporal intervals, we take as a sort of characteristic of the subject

this property, that in it we see some beginning of its formation, look on its midst, and extend our expectations to its end. For we have learnt that the heaven and the earth were not from eternity, and will not last to eternity, and thus it is hence clear that those things are both started from some beginning, and will surely cease at some end. But the Divine Nature, being limited in no respect, but passing all limitations on every side in its infinity, is far removed from those marks which we find in creation. For that power which is without interval, without quantity, without circumscription, having in itself all the ages and all the creation that has taken place in them, and over-passing at all points, by virtue of the infinity of its own nature, the unmeasured extent of the ages, either has no mark which indicates its nature, or has one of an entirely different sort, and not that which the creation has. Since, then, it belongs to the creation to have a beginning, that will be alien from the uncreated nature which belongs to the creation. For if any one should venture to suppose the existence of the Only-begotten Son to be, like the creation, from any beginning comprehensible by us, he must certainly append to his statement concerning the Son the rest also of the sequence [896] ; for it is not possible to avoid acknowledging, together with the beginning, that also which follows from it. For just as if one were to admit some person to be a man in all [897] the properties of his nature, he would observe that in this confession he declared him to be an animal and rational, and whatever else is conceived of man, so by the same reasoning, if we should understand any of the properties of creation to be present in the Divine essence, it will no longer be open to us to refrain from attaching to that pure Nature the rest of the list of the attributes contemplated therein. For the "beginning" will demand by force and compulsion that which follows it; for the "beginning," thus conceived, is a beginning of what comes after it, in such a sense, that if they are, it is, and if the things connected with it are removed, the antecedent also would not remain [898] . Now as the book of Wisdom speaks of "midst" and "end" as well as of "beginning," if we assume in the Nature of the Only-begotten, according to the heretical dogma, some beginning of existence defined by a certain mark of time, the book of Wisdom will by no means allow us to refrain from subjoining to the "beginning" a "midst" and an "end" also. If this should be done we shall find, as the result of our arguments, that the Divine word shows us that the Deity is mortal. For if, according to the book of Wisdom, the "end" is a necessary consequence of the "beginning," and the idea of "midst" is involved in that of extremes, he who allows one of these also potentially maintains the others, and lays down bounds of measure and limitation for the infinite Nature. And if this is impious and absurd, the giving a beginning to that argument which ends in impiety deserves equal, or even greater censure; and the beginning of this absurd doctrine was seen to be the supposition that the life of the Son was circumscribed by some beginning. Thus one of two courses is before them: either they must revert to sound doctrine under the compulsion of the foregoing arguments, and contemplate Him Who is of the Father in union with the Father's eternity, or if they do not like this, they must limit the eternity of the Son in both ways, and reduce the limitless character of His life to non-existence by a beginning and an end. And, granted that the nature both of souls and of the angels has no end, and is no way hindered from going on to eternity, by the fact of its being created, and having the beginning of its existence from some point of time, so that our adversaries can use this

fact to assert a parallel in the case of Christ, in the sense that He is not from eternity, and yet endures everlastingly,--let any one who advances this argument also consider the following point, how widely the Godhead differs from the creation in its special attributes. For to the Godhead it properly belongs to lack no conceivable thing which is regarded as good, while the creation attains excellence by partaking in something better than itself; and further, not only had a beginning of its being, but also is found to be constantly in a state of beginning to be in excellence, by its continual advance in improvement, since it never halts at what it has reached, but all that it has acquired [899] becomes by participation a beginning of its ascent to something still greater, and it never ceases, in Paul's phrase, "reaching forth to the things that are before," and "forgetting the things that are behind [900] ." Since, then, the Godhead is very life, and the Only-begotten God is God, and life, and truth, and every conceivable thing that is lofty and Divine, while the creation draws from Him its supply of good, it may hence be evident that if it is in life by partaking of life, it will surely, if it ceases from this participation, cease from life also. If they dare, then, to say also of the Only-begotten God those things which it is true to say of the creation, let them say this too, along with the rest, that He has a beginning of His being like the creation, and abides in life after the likeness of souls. But if He is the very life, and needs not to have life in Himself ab extra, while all other things are not life, but are merely participants in life, what constrains us to cancel, by reason of what we see in creation, the eternity of the Son? For that which is always unchanged as regards its nature, admits of no contrary, and is incapable of change to any other condition: while things whose nature is on the boundary line have a tendency that shifts either way, inclining at will to what they find attractive [901] . If, then, that which is truly life is contemplated in the Divine and transcendent nature, the decadence thereof will surely, as it seems, end in the opposite state [902] .

Now the meaning of "life" and "death" is manifold, and not always understood in the same way. For as regards the flesh, the energy and motion of the bodily senses is called "life," and their extinction and dissolution is named "death." But in the case of the intellectual nature, approximation to the Divine is the true life, and decadence therefrom is named "death": for which reason the original evil, the devil, is called both "death," and the inventor of death: and he is also said by the Apostle to have the power of death [903] . As, then, we obtain, as has been said, from the Scriptures, a twofold conception of death, He Who is truly unchangeable and immutable "alone hath immortality," and dwells in light that cannot be attained or approached by the darkness of wickedness [904] : but all things that participate in death, being far removed from immortality by their contrary tendency, if they fall away from that which is good, would, by the mutability of their nature, admit community with the worse condition, which is nothing else than death, having a certain correspondence with the death of the body. For as in that case the extinction of the activities of nature is called death, so also, in the case of the intellectual being, the absence of motion towards the good is death and departure from life; so that what we perceive in the bodiless creation [905] does not clash with our argument, which refutes the doctrine of heresy. For that form of death which corresponds to the intellectual nature (that is, separation from God, Whom we call Life) is, potentially, not

separated even from their nature; for their emergence from non-existence shows mutability of nature; and that to which change is in affinity is hindered from participation in the contrary state by the grace of Him Who strengthens it: it does not abide in the good by its own nature: and such a thing is not eternal. If, then, one really speaks truth in saying that we ought not to estimate the Divine essence and the created nature in the same way, nor to circumscribe the being of the Son of God by any beginning, lest, if this be granted, the other attributes of creation should enter in together with our acknowledgment of this one, the absurd character of the teaching of that man, who employs the attributes of creation to separate the Only-begotten God from the eternity of the Father, is clearly shown. For as none other of the marks which characterize the creation appears in the Maker of the creation, so neither is the fact that the creation has its existence from some beginning a proof that the Son was not always in the Father,-- that Son, Who is Wisdom, and Power, and Light, and Life, and all that is conceived of in the bosom of the Father.

[881] Heb. i. 3, and Cant. i. 3, referred to above.

[882] S. John i. 1

[883] hupostasei

[884] 1 Cor. i. 24.

[885] Heb. i. 3.

[886] Heb. i. 3. [

887] Or perhaps "or an irrational first cause," (alogon archen.)

[888] The reference is to S. Basil adv. Eunomium II. 12 (p. 247 in Ben. ed.)

[889] Cf. Heb. xi. 4

[890] Reading humas for hemas. If the reading hemas, which Oehler follows, is retained, the force would seem to be "that you think we ought not to make any difference," but the construction of the sentence in this case is cumbrous.

[891] S. John xiv. 10

[892] S. John xiv. 10

[893] S. John xiv. 9

[894] Apparently an inexact quotation of S. Matt. xi. 27.

[895] Wisd. vii. 18.

[896] That is, he must also acknowledge a "middle" and an "end" of the existence which has a "beginning."

[897] Oehler's emendation, for which he gives weighty ms. authority, is certainly an improvement on the earlier text, but in sense it is a little unsatisfactory. The argument seems to require the hypothesis not of some one acknowledging a person to be a man in all, but in some attributes. The defect, however, may possibly be in S. Gregory's argument, not in the text.

[898] i.e. "if the middle' and end' are not admitted, at the beginning,' which is the beginning' of a sequence, is thereby implicitly denied." Oehler's punctuation has been somewhat altered here, and at several points in the remainder of the book, where it appears to require emendation.

[899] Reading ktethen, with the Paris ed. of 1638. Oehler's reading ktisthen hardly seems to give so good a sense, and he does not give his authority for it.

[900] Phil. iii. 13.

[901] Reading with Oehler, tois kata gnomen prosklinomene. The reading proskinoumenois, found in the earlier editions, gives a tolerable sense, but appears to have no ms. authority.

[902] Or (if pantos be constructed with antikeimenon), "will end, as it seems, in that state which is absolutely opposed to life." [903] Cf. Heb. ii. 14 [904] Cf. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

[905] i.e. the order of spiritual beings, including angels and human souls. Of these S. Gregory argues that they are capable of an akinesia pros to agathon which is death in them, as the absence of motion and sense is bodily death: and that they may therefore be said to have an end, as they had a beginning: so far as they are eternal it is not by their own power, but by their mutable nature being upheld by grace from this state of akinesia pros to agathon. On both these grounds therefore--that they have an end, and that such eternity as they possess is not inherent, but given ab extra, and contingent--he says they are not properly eternal, and he therefore rejects the proposed parallel.