

SCRIPTURE IN THE WORKS OF ST GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN

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Abstract: St Gregory the Theologian is rightly regarded as an exemplary scripture scholar although he never wrote a systematic biblical commentary. The value of his work lies rather in the breadth with which he applied the fruits of intense hermeneutical study and spiritual reflection. This richness extended also to his literary gifts and skills: his sage advice, limpid argument and lyrical poetry. Equally at home in debating the doctrinal controversies of his age as in responding to the needs of ordinary people, he achieved both with rare pastoral sensitivity and spiritual awareness. An appreciation of the potential of such a contribution for modern society is long overdue.

St Gregory's *Poems* and *Oration*s are full of biblical allusions and applications to ordinary life that are helpful, compassionate and often quite modern. While he never wrote a biblical commentary as such, his exegetical works demonstrate a sound understanding of hermeneutics and especially its foundational role in doctrinal, spiritual and pastoral considerations. For him, there can be no authentic doctrine that is not based on Scripture. Likewise, he constantly draws upon biblical insights for the spiritual life. In particular, Gregory can be credited with one of the earliest extant compilations of the Old and New Testament Canon, uniquely written in poetic form.

It is precisely the depth and variety of his contribution to biblical hermeneutics that make Gregory's contribution so valuable. That his work in this area has largely been neglected perhaps reflects the predilection for systematic 'objective' commentaries especially on the part of modern biblical scholarship.¹ Recent scholarly discussion around the need to balance critical exegetical methods with spiritual and pastoral

applications makes a reconsideration of his work timely. It is the aim of the present paper to contribute to that conversation.

Scripture in Saint Gregory's Poems

Perhaps more than any other of the early church fathers, Gregory recognised the limitations of our attempts to express the divine mysteries in human language. From time immemorial, theologians and mystics have struggled to articulate what is often best grasped not by precise technical terms but in poetry. Like the psalmist before him through to saints such as St John of the Cross centuries later, Gregory found a partial answer in the imagery and rhythmic qualities of the poetic medium.² This has been well said in his regard:

All human language suffers these limitations. Therefore all theologians are basically philologists (Or. 30.16). Indeed the best theologian is a poet, someone who offers better images and provides vivid but fleeting glimpses into the deep mysteries (Or. 30.17).³

Among Gregory's many poems is one he entitled *Prayer before reading Scripture*.⁴ In this, as with his other works, he has a unique gift for expressing doctrine and spirituality in language and images that speak so well to the person of faith.

All-seeing Father of Christ
Hear now our prayers
and grace your minister
with a song of divine sweetness;
for he walks the straight and godly path
and has known the self-originate God
among the living creatures (Hab. 3.2 LXX; Origen De Princ. 1.3)
and the Lord Christ
who heals all ills of mortal man.
It is he who had compassion on the wretched state
of the suffering race of men
and in accordance with the Father's will
he willingly exchanged his form. (Phil. 2.6-11)
The incorruptible God
became mortal
and by his blood unloosed the dreadful chains of hell.

Now draw near
and from this pure and sacred book
and in these God-inspired words
find sustenance for your soul,
for here you shall behold the ministers of truth
proclaim the word of life
in a voice that pierces heaven itself.

In this prayer-poem, Gregory addresses God as ‘Father of Christ’ and asks a blessing on the one who is about to engage in reading Scripture, not for its own sake, nor simply for gaining knowledge, but in order to ‘refresh the soul’. This ancient tradition of *lectio divina*, this ‘godly path’, is first among others of the ways in which Gregory grounds all his learning and spirituality in Scripture. The reader is exhorted to pray for the grace to grow in intimate union with God through contemplating the mysteries contained within ‘this sacred book’.

Gregory identifies Christ in terms of Paul’s image of the κένωσις. In its fullest definition, κένωσις denotes the key incarnational belief that Christ emptied himself of the ‘divine form’ and took on human form, in obedience to God the Father, and in order to bring to humankind God’s gracious gift of setting us free from sin and its existential consequences. Gregory captures this in succinct poetic style, a doctrine that became the basis of his Christology.

This poem is also a good example of the way Gregory regularly alludes to Scripture without actually quoting from it. In his reference to the κένωσις for example, he does not mention Paul’s letter to the Philippians from which the image derives (2:5-11). Rather, as was common in the patristic tradition of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, he has so imbibed the biblical text and its spirit that it is second nature to him, shining through his teachings and writings.

A different type of example is this poem-prayer⁵ in which he asks for Christ’s help in his own spiritual struggles, by invoking the Exodus story. The sustained Old Testament image, so apt in its application, seems

to flow naturally from his pen while adding colour and depth to the prayer.

Christ, light of mortals, pillar of glowing flame
For Gregory's soul, wandering this bitter waste:
Curb Pharaoh, hold his taskmasters in check,
Rescue my feet from Egypt's shifting mud,
Chasten my enemies with unsightly plagues-
Give me a level way! And if my foe
Should close on me in rage, come, split apart
The Red Sea, let me cross it like a road
To destiny and dry land, as you promised.

The Dogmatic Poems

In his thirty-eight Dogmatic Poems,⁶ Gregory takes a more systematic approach. Poems 1-11 follow the order of Origen's *Peri Archon* in treating the central Christian theological beliefs.⁷ He then focuses the next set, Poems 12-28, explicitly upon selected biblical texts.

As a kind of introduction (Poem 12), he provides a complete list of the canon (minus Revelation),⁸ a unique poetic version of the list of the books of the Bible, *Concerning the Genuine Books of Divinely Inspired Scripture* [Περὶ τῶν γνησίων βιβλίων τῆς θεοπνεύστου Γραφῆς].⁹ Gregory can therefore be credited with one of the earliest extant compilations of the Canon. While he asks the reader to accept the authenticity of his list ("Accept, O friend, this, my approved number"), there is more here than a compilation for its own sake. Notice in the opening lines of the exhortation clearly stated reasons for constantly carrying the word of God on one's lips and in one's thoughts.

The divine oracles [θείους ... λογιόισιν] should always on the tongue and in the mind [γλώσση τε νόφ τε] be rehearsed. For God will indeed give a reward for this labour, so that you may obtain light from anything hidden, or, what is far better, that you may be spurred by God to greater purity, and thirdly, be called away from the cares of the world by such study.

What better way to do this than through committing the word of God to prayerful memory with the aid of poetic rhythm. McGuckin makes the

pertinent observation that the range and combination of metres indicate the intended use as an educational tool for memorising the biblical books and learning Greek metrical form.¹⁰ Gregory the theologian is indeed also Gregory the mystic, the pastor and the educator.¹¹

The rest of Poem 12 provides a succinct and memorable listing of the entire biblical corpus, many lines of which include a word or two of background as to source, author and/or unique character. By way of illustration, here are the Gospels.

Now count also those of the new mystery [νέου μυστηρίου]
 Matthew wrote the miracles of Christ for the Hebrews,
 Mark for Italy, Luke for Greece;
 John for all, the great herald, who walked in the heavens.

Having identified the biblical corpus, Gregory goes on to illustrate it with selections from the Old and New Testaments. The first five of these poems are based on key characters and/or incidents from the Old Testament accounts (Poems 13-17) in chronological order. While each is largely a poetic précis of the biblical text, they nevertheless suggest a fascinating selection of what he perceived as significant in the OT tradition. Beginning with the list of Jacob's twelve sons whose names became those of the twelve tribes of Israel, he treats in order the plagues of Egypt, the Decalogue of Moses and the miracles associated with Elijah and Elisha.

The second set (Poems 18-28) consists of eleven poetic paraphrases of stories from the New Testament. The collection, in order, is

18. The genealogy of Christ
19. The Twelve disciples of Christ
20. The Miracles of Christ according to Matthew
21. The Miracles of Christ according to Mark
22. The Miracles of Christ according to Luke
23. The Miracles of Christ according to John
24. Parables and Mysteries of Christ
25. Parables according to Mark

26. Parables according to Luke
27. Parables of the Four Gospels
28. Christ calms the waters

As with the previous examples, Gregory's purpose is to provide an *aide-memoire* for study and prayerful reflection. It is interesting that he largely ignores the popular harmonisations modelled on Tatian's 2nd century *Diatessaron*, thus providing the reader with an appreciation of the distinct traditions of the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. Only in one case where there is little difference in the Synoptic accounts (Mark 4:35-41; Matt 8:23-27; Luke 8:22-25) does he give a précis of the common elements of the story. Perhaps his choice of this passage also reflects his pastoral concern for those struggling with faith or life issues.

Poem 28 – Christ Calms the Waters¹²

On the boat, Christ was sleeping a human sleep
and stirred like crazy was the water by the winds.
Fear grips the sailors and they cast a shout 'Saviour, awake.
Help and let us leave.' The King arose and commanded
the wave and the wind to stand still. So it happened
and with the miracle the sailors marvelled at their God.

A second example, Poem 23, more closely echoes the 'list' of Poem 12; here it is the seven miracles or 'signs' of the Fourth Gospel,¹³ along with the ultimate 'sign' of the resurrection of Christ. Yet, while demonstrating to his listeners the fact that the fourth evangelist provides comparatively few miracles, there are several hints that they come about through the power of Christ's 'word'. The initial 'many words of Christ' apply to this but also to the lengthy and substantial Johannine dialogues and revelatory pronouncements. Even where this is not explicit, the rich brevity of the work leaves open an equally rich interpretation.

Poem 23 – The Miracles of Christ according to John

Few miracles you will find in John's holy book
but many words of Christ the King.
At the wedding they offer the wine that was water.
He speaks, and up jumps the son from his illness.
He speaks, and the one who could not be healed at Siloam picks up his bed.

The miracle of the five loaves. And then walking
 on the tempest of the sea He saves the disciples.
 The one born blind He heals by applying clay.
 Four days in the tomb and, behold, Lazarus is raised.
 For the dead He too was dead, and for the living,
 having risen, Christ the King is with his own.

Scripture as the Basis of Doctrine

Gregory's in-depth knowledge of the Scriptures reflects a lifetime of contemplative prayer and poetic intuition. At the same time, these mystical gifts were matched by finely-tuned exegetical skills developed over years of profound study, enabling him to distil from Scripture the foundations for articulating and defending theological developments of the time. He drew upon all the resources of biblical and rhetorical scholarship available to him, those he developed from dialogue with his contemporaries, as well as those inherited from his predecessors especially Origen of Alexandria (185-254).¹⁴

In Oration 31, Gregory addresses the 'silence of scripture' and related difficulties of interpretation in 'a short discussion of things and names, and especially of their use in Holy Scripture' (Or. 31.21). He then proceeds to outline, and illustrate, four key principles:

Some things have no existence, but are spoken of; others which do exist are not spoken of; some neither exist nor are spoken of, and some both exist and are spoken of. Do you ask me for proof of this? I am ready to give it. According to Scripture God sleeps and is awake, is angry, walks, has the Cherubim for His Throne. And yet when did He become liable to passion, and have you ever heard that God has a body? This then is, though not really fact, a figure of speech (Or. 31.22).

Here, he is clearly building on Origen's *De Principiis* Book 4:

The object... is to show that it was the design of the Holy Spirit, who deigned to bestow upon us the sacred Scriptures, to show that we were not to be edified by the letter alone, or by everything in it – a thing which we see to be frequently impossible and inconsistent; for in that way not only absurdities, but impossibilities, would be the result; but

that we are to understand that certain occurrences were interwoven in this visible history, which, when considered and understood in their inner meaning, give forth a law which is advantageous to men and worthy of God (4.18).¹⁵

What Gregory then does is to integrate these principles into his own work with considerable intellectual and pastoral sensitivity. Context invariably determined his approach. Where serious dogmatic issues were at stake, Gregory was meticulous in applying rules of linguistic interpretation.¹⁶ But how he went about this was tempered by his audience: whether the people for whom he had pastoral responsibility or the leading theologians of his time.¹⁷

It is not by accident that St Anselm's time-honoured definition of theology as 'faith seeking understanding'¹⁸ endures to this day. It captures the fact that development of Christian theology is intimately related to the ongoing liturgical and spiritual life of the Christian community.¹⁹ Creedal formulae and celebration of the sacraments have both informed, and were formed by, the ongoing scholarship of theologians such as Gregory. Through constant study of the Scriptures, they brought fresh insights and ever-clearer articulation of the core teachings of the Christian faith.

Thus did Gregory's writings on the central doctrine of the Trinity arise not only from debates with opponents such as the Arians, but from the everyday situations of those who gathered for worship: their need to understand what they recited in the creeds, but also, and perhaps more immediately, in their celebration of the sacraments. This is most clearly seen in the Trinitarian baptismal formula, based as it is on the final command from the risen Jesus as portrayed in the Gospel according to Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Gregory of course was not the first of the Church fathers to link this text to the baptismal formula,²⁰ but he had a unique approach that brought such textual insights out of the scholarly cupboard and into the domestic and spiritual concerns of ordinary people.²¹

Evidence of this can be found even in the writings of the New Testament itself. A classic example is that of St Paul's teaching on the celebration of the Eucharist. The only major reference to the Eucharist in Paul's letters occurs in the First Epistle to the Corinthians – in the context of having to correct the behaviour of some participants who would arrive early and enjoy a huge repast of eating and drinking before the poor members joined them for the actual Eucharistic celebration (1 Cor 11:17-33). Paul is horrified by this and challenges them that such selfish behaviour, in which the poor are excluded, is not simply selfish but is in fact a mockery of the true meaning of the body of Christ. Yet, if such quarrels and selfishness had not occurred, we may never have had any record of the central place Paul gave to the Eucharist nor of his core teaching of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27).

Just so did Gregory and many scholars who came after Paul. The proportion of space and attention given to particular scriptural texts in his works are not so much the result of systematically working through the Bible. Rather, they reflect the situations in which the Christian churches found themselves at any given time. Thus, we know that Gregory read and drew upon the Septuagint because of his references to texts such as the later Wisdom literature and deuterocanonical books to support his arguments against the Arian heresies. In particular, especially in his *Theological Orations*, he frequently quotes from the Wisdom of Solomon to support his Trinitarian teaching.²²

When engaged in such debates, Gregory was very precise in the methods he used in his interpretation of Scripture. He applied sound linguistic rules to texts that were being misquoted by the Arians to argue against the divinity of Christ. An example of this is his interpretation of John 6:38. "I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the One who sent me". The Eunomians, an extreme Arian sect from about 350 to 380, argued from this biblical text that the Son is inferior to the Father since He has no will of his own but is dependent on the Father's will. Gregory refuted this by showing how the error in his opponents' position was that they interpreted the text negatively when

in fact there was no negative element in it. On the contrary, its meaning is positive: the Son is so intimately connected to the Father that there is only the one will originating with the Father and shared equally between them (Oration 30.12).

One of Gregory's most substantial works on the role of Scripture in the development of doctrine is on the divinity of the Holy Spirit, the subject of Oration 31, known as the *Fifth Theological Oration*.²³ He counters the claim that Scripture does not support the divinity of the Holy Spirit by placing it within the broad biblical basis for the doctrine of the Trinity. With admirable insight and clarity, he moves towards the conclusion that the apparent silence of scripture on the topic is part of God's plan or 'progressive revelation'. Just as the Father is clearly portrayed as God in the Old Testament but the Son only faintly, so does the New Testament portray Jesus Christ as God and man but the Spirit only by hints. It is in the post-Pentecost period, the 'time of the Holy Spirit', that the Spirit itself leads the post-resurrection community to a clear understanding that the Spirit too is God. The description of the Spirit's coming in 'bodily form' at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) identifies 'another Paraclete' (John 14:16), distinct from the Son and leads Gregory's argument naturally into his concluding comments evoking the other Johannine 'Paraclete'/'spirit of truth' passages as well as almost fifty other passages.²⁴

What we have seen here is typical of Gregory's approach to biblical interpretation in which he consistently interprets a biblical passage in context. This means not only the immediate context, but related texts elsewhere in the entire book. The reader is encouraged to consider the given verse alongside others which may help to elucidate it more clearly and accurately. So, in the example just given above with John 6:38, he considers not only the given text, but also others that support and/or complement it. The verse, "the Father and I are one" (John 10:30) makes an explicit statement that settles the argument beyond dispute.

Applying Scripture to Pastoral Concerns: Matthew 19:1-12

It is this broader contextual approach to the biblical text that typifies Gregory in dealing with pastoral situations. While his approach to theology as biblical interpretation was typical of the patristic tradition,²⁵ unlike Origen, St John Chrysostom, St Jerome or St Augustine, he wrote no major biblical commentaries. Yet Jerome refers to him as his own ‘teacher of biblical interpretation’²⁶ and has been said to regard him as “the most insightful commentator of his generation.”²⁷ It is fascinating that Gregory’s only substantial exegetical study, at least among his extant works, is a response to the pastoral difficulties around marriage and divorce.

One of Gregory’s most admirable characteristics is the way in which he complemented his remarkable theological acumen with such sensitivity towards the struggles and concerns of the people with whom he ministered. In the words of one author: “It is typical of Gregory to focus on something close to the personal happiness of people rather than on the grand scale.”²⁸

In Oration 37, he provides a carefully crafted and detailed homily based on an exegesis of the Gospel according to Matthew 19:1-12. The historical context was that, in 380, the emperor Theodosius was seeking to bring Roman civil law into conformity with the Christian Gospel and asked Gregory’s advice.²⁹ While he comments in detail on each verse of this passage, there are two key points which have particular relevance to the people of his time, and remain remarkably so in our own.³⁰

The first is to do with gender inequality in the divorce law of the time. Why, he asks, should the law enable a man to divorce his wife, but not accord her the same right? He dismisses old arguments about Adam being created first by God, and Eve only as his companion. Rather ought we to keep in mind the teaching of Paul about a man reverencing his wife as he would Christ himself. In Gregory’s own words,

This sacrament is great, Paul says. But I speak concerning Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32). It is well for the wife to reverence Christ through her husband: and it is well for the husband not to dishonour the Church through his wife. Let the wife, he says, see that she reverence her husband, for so she does Christ; but also he bids the husband cherish his wife, for so Christ does the Church.³¹

Gregory's second – and more substantial – point has had long-lasting resonance within the Eastern Church. This is the issue of the indissolubility of marriage and whether or not to allow Christians to divorce and remarry. He addresses the saying the evangelist attributes to Jesus himself (Matthew 19:6): “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

At first sight, those who would take the hard line here seem to have an open and shut case. Jesus himself has spoken clearly! But no, says Gregory, all scripture must be taken in its context. Yes, say his opponents, we understand that the historical and literary context have to be considered. But surely there can be no argument against such a directive from the Lord himself that stands for all time and all cultural and religious circumstances.

With refreshing insight and exegetical skill that would be the envy of many modern biblical scholars, Gregory proceeds to situate these verses in the wider context – the whole of the Gospel's portrayal of Jesus. He begins by placing this saying in the context of the ‘law of Christ’, the teachings of Jesus whose entire mission was one of inclusivity, mercy and compassion. While the same Jesus presents a challenge such as this one to his listeners, he is also the first to make allowances for human frailty. This, says Gregory, must be the broader context against which to interpret and apply the Gospel saying on divorce.

So he is able to set the standard without contradiction of the ‘law of Christ’ that Christian marriages are for life. But, if on account of human weakness, the marriage relationship breaks down, then divorce and a second marriage, while not strictly according to Christ's teaching,

are permitted on the grounds of compassion and so that the persons concerned may continue in the grace of Christ. But there is no place for a third marriage, much less a fourth. Having worked through his argument, Gregory arrives at the conclusion in succinct fashion:

The first is law, the second is indulgence, the third is transgression, and anything beyond this is swinish [ὁ δὲ ὑπὲρ τοῦτο χοιρώδης].³²

That Gregory's interpretation became, and remains the *judicatum* for the Eastern Orthodox churches is testimony to his wisdom and exegetical skill.³³ McGuckin summarises this well:

It is interesting to see Gregory's psychological character as a passionate and carefully observant man (celibate ascetic though he was) so abundantly evidenced in that one area of society where so much joy and yet so much misery is evidenced in human affairs: intimate domestic relations. His concern is dominated by two equally marked principles: a remedy for an unjust and unequal treatment of women under the law, and a desire to inform Church law with compassionate realism, and take the stated laws of Christ beyond their fundamentalist significance to their ultimate goal, the mercifully economic salvation of men and women who are 'swimming in a turbulent sea of grief'.³⁴

It is not possible here to do more than give a taste of Gregory's wisdom, knowledge and skill in interpreting and applying Scripture to the dogmatic and pastoral concerns of his time. Given that he lived and wrote in the fourth century, it is remarkable how much of his works of, and advice about, scriptural interpretation have a modern resonance, both in terms of methodology and the pastoral concerns so dear to his heart. In the words of one scholar:

Although deeply rooted in his fourth-century context, Gregory offered much advice about scriptural interpretation that appears to be modern and to fit our contemporary perspectives... It is regrettable his contribution to biblical hermeneutics has not been more widely acclaimed.³⁵

It is hoped that this modest contribution may go some way towards redressing this gap and bringing Gregory's time-honoured works into dialogue with modern scholars who are equally concerned with balancing sound exegetical skills with the best spiritual and pastoral wisdom.



NOTES:

- ¹ Several exceptions in contemporary English-speaking scholarship are identified in works quoted below.
- ² For an overview of Gregory's own list of motives for adopting the poetic medium, see J.A. McGuckin, 'Gregory: the Rhetorician as Poet', in J. Bortnes & T. Hagg (eds.), *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006, 193-212), 209-212.
- ³ F. Norris, 'Gregory Nazianzen: Constructing and Constructed by Scripture', in P.M. Blowers (ed.), *The Bible in Greek Christian Antiquity* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame, 1997, 149-162), 154.
- ⁴ Carmina I,1,35 (PG 37.517-518), translated into English for the first time by J.A. McGuckin and published in his work, *St Gregory of Nazianzen: Selected Poems* (Oxford: SLG Press, 2006), 13. With thanks to Professor McGuckin for alerting me to this translation and providing his own copy.
- ⁵ Carmina II,1, *Poemata de seipso* 22 (PG 37,1281-1282), translated and published in Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 171.
- ⁶ PG 37, 397-471. For an English translation of *Poems* 1-11, see Gilbert, *On God and Man*, 37-84.
- ⁷ See C. Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2006, 748-752), 749-750.
- ⁸ While the book of Revelation was included in the 27 books of the New Testament canon at the Councils of Hippo, 393 and Carthage, 397 and 417, it took a few more centuries to be completely accepted in the Eastern church at least partly because of its championing by the Montanist heretical sects.
- ⁹ PG 37, 471-474 (Carmina Dogmatica, Book I, Section I, Carmen XII.). Interlinear Greek / English version in M.D. Marlowe, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/index.html>. For an alternate translation, see P. Gilbert, *On God and Man: The Theological Poetry of St Gregory of Nazianzus* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 85-86.
- ¹⁰ McGuckin, 'Gregory: the Rhetorician as Poet', 201, n.27.

- ¹¹ On this last point, McGuckin writes: ‘Gregory emerges as a very good teacher indeed, shaping his message to the many different audiences he had, and communicating it with vivid imagery and a great gift for graphically memorable synopsis’. Cf. *St Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir Seminary Press, 2001), 332.
- ¹² For these unpublished translations from the modern Greek version of Poems 23 and 28, I am indebted to my colleague, Dimitri Kepreotes, lecturer in Modern Greek at SAGOTC.
- ¹³ Gregory uses θαύματα not the distinctive Johannine σημεῖα (cf. John 2:11; 4:54; 20:30).
- ¹⁴ F.W. Norris, ‘Gregory of Nazianzus’, in J.H. Hayes (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999) 466. For a brief but solid overview, see C.A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 271-273.
- ¹⁵ Translated from the Latin of Rufinus, in Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4: *Fathers of the Third Century*, 367-8.
- ¹⁶ Gregory was well-grounded in the classical Greek rules of rhetoric and linguistics and their application to hermeneutics. See J.A. McGuckin, ‘Patterns of Biblical Exegesis in the Cappadocian Fathers’, in *Orthodox and Wesleyan Scriptural Understanding and Practice* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2005, 38-54), 41; and Norris, ‘Gregory’, 153-154.
- ¹⁷ So Norris (‘Gregory’, 149) who says of Gregory’s writings, that they ‘always represent the thought of a constructive theologian who teaches and preaches within a context shaped both by polemical adversaries and by confessional friends.’
- ¹⁸ The phrase, *fides quaerens intellectum*, was the original title of Anselm’s *Proslogion*. While it is true that the word ‘theology’ was never used by Anselm (c.1033-1109) and is attributed to Peter Abelard (1079-1142), what Anselm was doing in this work would be broadly recognised as ‘theology’ in the current use of the term. For a discussion on this, but with a different conclusion, see R. Norman: www.dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt_10/norman.htm
- ¹⁹ See Norris, ‘Gregory’, 154, 160.
- ²⁰ Norris provides examples from Justin, Irenaeus, Theodotus and Tertullian (‘Gregory’, 150, n.4).
- ²¹ Oration 31.28-39.

²² Norris, 'Gregory', 152.

²³ For a useful outline of the contents of Oration 31, see Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 168. Beeley then follows with a summary of the section as 'the witness of Scripture and the order of theology' (169-180).

²⁴ For an excellent article expanding these points, see T.A. Noble, 'Gregory Nazianzen's Use of Scripture in Defence of Deity of the Spirit', *Tyndale Bulletin* 39 (1988) 101-123.

²⁵ See J. Behr, *The Formation of Christian Theology*, Vol. I: *The Way to Nicaea* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 169.

²⁶ So McGuckin, 'Patterns of Biblical Exegesis', 40 and 40, n.19.

²⁷ *Loc. cit.*

²⁸ McGuckin, *St Gregory*, p.332.

²⁹ *Loc. cit.*

³⁰ For a fuller analysis, see McGuckin, 'Patterns of Biblical Exegesis in the Cappadocian Fathers', 40-43.

³¹ Oration 37.7. PG 36, 292A.

³² Oration 37.8. PG 36, 292B.

³³ While further concession exists for a third marriage, with penitence, it is still applied with Gregory's wisdom.

³⁴ McGuckin, *St Gregory*, 335.

³⁵ Norris, 'Gregory of Nazianzus', 466.

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