

A READING FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE 4TH CENTURY MYSTIC GREGORY OF NYSSA

God has Logos: else He would be without reason. And this Logos cannot be merely an attribute of God. We are led to a more exalted conception of the Logos by the consideration that in the measure in which God is greater than we, all His predicates must also be higher than those that belong to us.

Our Logos is limited and transient; but the subsistence of the Divine Logos must be indestructible and the same time living, since the rational cannot be lifeless... It follows that, together with the Word, He Who speaks it, which is the Father of the Word, must be recognized as existing... We affirm that we find in the Logos, whose existence is derived from the Father, all the attributes of the Father's nature.

God created by His reason and wisdom, for He cannot have proceeded irrationally in that work, but His reason and wisdom are not to be conceived of as a spoken word, or as the mere possession of knowledge, but as a personal and self-willed potency.

If the entire cosmos was created by this second Divine personage, then certainly was humanity also thus created. Yet not because of any necessity, but from *superabounding* love, that there might exist a being who could participate in the Divine perfections.

If humans are to be receptive to these perfections, it is necessary that human nature should contain an element akin to God; and, in particular, that they should be immortal. Thus, then, was humanity created in the image of God. They could not therefore be without gifts of freedom, independence, and self-determination; and humanity's participation in the Divine gifts was consequently made dependent on virtue. Owing to this freedom they could decide in favor of evil, which cannot have its origins in the Divine will, but only in our inner selves.