

## On Boundedness

(two of two)

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### Elegchos in Plato's Works

The Greek noun elegchos may be defined as follows: refutation, argument of disproof, refutation; it derives from the verb elegcho: to refute, cross-examine, question, put to shame.

#### Apology

18.d7: One cannot bring one of them into court or refute him; one must simply fight with shadows, as it were, in making one's defense and cross examine when no one answers.

39.c7: You did this in the belief that you would avoid giving an account of your life, but I maintain that quite the opposite will happen to you. There will be more people to test you, whom I now held back, but you did not notice it.

#### Phaedo

85.c5: Precise knowledge...surely shows a very poor spirit not exhausted by an all-round investigation.

#### Theaetetus

157.e5: You realize, I suppose, that refutation of the theory we have just expounded. For in these conditions, we surely have false perceptions.

161.e7: To examine and try to refute each other's appearances and judgments, when each person's are correct—this is surely an extremely tiresome piece of nonsense.

162.a5: I could not consent to have him refuted through my admissions; and yet I should not be prepared to resist you against my own judgment.

166.b1: When you are examining any doctrine of mine by the method of question and answer, if the person being questioned answers as I myself would answer, and gets caught, then it is I who am refuted.

#### Sophist

230.d1: The people who cleanse the soul likewise think the soul, too, won't get any advantage from any learning that's offered to it until someone shames it by refuting it.

230.d7: For all these reasons, Theaetetus, we have to say that refutation is the principal and most important kind of cleansing.

231.b6: And let's say that within education, according to the way the discussion has turned now, the refutation of the empty belief in one's own wisdom is nothing other than our noble sophistry.

238.d5: Don't you notice on the basis of the things we said that that which is not even confuses the person who's refuting it in just this way, that whenever someone tries to refute it, he's forced to say mutually contrary things about it?

239.b3: Then what would somebody say about me? He'd find that the refutation of that which is not has been defeating me for a long time.

241.e1: We'll never be able to avoid having to make ourselves ridiculous by saying conflicting things whenever we talk about false statements and beliefs, either as copies or likenesses or imitations or appearances, or about whatever sorts of expertise there are concerning those things—unless, that is, we either refute Parmenides' claims or else agree to accept them.

242.a5: When I was talking a minute ago I said that I've always given up whenever I've tried to refute what Parmenides said, just the way I did this time.

242.b1: It's for your sake that we'll be trying to refute what Parmenides said—if we can do it.

256.c2: That, though, we demonstrated earlier, before we came to this point, and we showed that by nature it has to be so.

259.c9: That is, we should leave pointless things like this alone. Instead we should be able to follow what a person says and scrutinize it step by step.

259.d5: Well, if someone enjoys constantly trotting out contraries like that in discussion, that's not true refutation. It's only the obvious new-born brain-child of someone who just came into contact with those which are.

### **Philebus**

14.b3: Well, then, let us not cover up the difference between your good and mine, Protarchus, but put it right in the middle and brave the possibility that, when put to a closer scrutiny, it will come to light whether pleasure should be called the good, or wisdom, or yet a third thing.

14.e2: When someone who first distinguishes a person's limbs and parts asks your agreement that all these parts are identical with that unity, but then exposes you to ridicule because of the monstrosities you have to admit, that the one is many and indefinitely many, and again that the many are only one thing.

15.a5: But when someone tries to posit man as one, or ox as one, or the beautiful as one, and the good as one, zealous concern with divisions of these and the like gives rise to controversy.

23.a7: Had we not better leave her alone now, rather than subject her to the most exacting test and give her pain by such an examination?

52.d10: I want to omit nothing in the investigation of both pleasure and knowledge.

### **Symposium**

217.b3: And, Socrates, if I say anything untrue, I want you to correct me.

220.a6: Still, and most amazingly, no one ever saw him drunk (as we'll straightaway put to the test).

### **Phaedrus**

267.a1: And he also adds Refutation and Supplementary Refutation, to be used both in prosecution and in defense.

273.b8: The coward must say that the spunky man didn't beat him up all by himself, while the latter

must rebut this by saying that only the two of them were there, and fall back on that well-worn plea, “How could a man like me attack a man like him?”

273.c3: The strong man, naturally, will not admit his cowardice, but will try to invent some other lie, and may thus give his opponent the chance to refute him.

278.c5: If anyone of you has composed these things with a knowledge of the truth, if you can defend your writing when you are challenged, and if you can yourself make the argument that your writing is of little worth, then you must be called by a name derived not from these writings but from those things that you are seriously pursuing.

### **Charmides**

166.c5: And I think you are quite consciously doing what you denied doing a moment ago—you are trying to refute me and ignoring the real question at issue.

166.c8: “Oh come,” I said, “how could you possibly think that even if I were to refute everything you say, I would be doing it for any other reasons than the one I would give for a thorough investigation of my own statements—the fear of unconsciously thinking I know something when I do not.

166.e1: Pluck up courage, then, my friend, and answer the question as seems best to you, paying no attention to whether it is Critias or Socrates who is being refuted. Instead, give your attention to the argument itself to see what the result of its refutation will be.

### **Laches**

189.b2: To you then, Socrates, I present myself as someone for you to teach and to refute in whatever manner you please, and, on the other hand, you are welcome to any knowledge I have myself.

### **Lysis**

211.b7: But you’ve got to come to my rescue if he tries to refute me. Or don’t you know what a debater he is?

### **Euthydemus**

272.a8: ...as a result, not a single man can stand up to them, they have become so skilled in fighting in arguments and in refuting whatever may be said, no matter whether it is true or false.

275.e6: ...I may tell you beforehand, Socrates, that whichever way the boy answers he will be refuted.

293.e1: You are refuted out of your own mouth, Socrates, he said.

295.a6: But, said I, there is nothing I would like better than to be refuted on these points. Because if I am unaware of my own wisdom, but you are going to demonstrate that I know everything and know it forever, what greater godsend than this would I be likely to come across my whole life long?

303.d4: ...but that the majority understand them so little that I feel sure they would be more ashamed to refute others with arguments of this sort than to be refuted by them.

304.d1: Instead I am one of those you mentioned who would rather be refuted by arguments of this kind than use them to refute.

### **Protagoras**

331.c6: It's not this "if you want" or "if you agree" business I want to test. It's you and me I want to put on the line, and I think the argument will be tested best if we take the "if" out.

331.e1: And the things we were just talking about as having different powers or functions and not being the same kinds of things—the parts of the face—these resemble each other in a certain way, and they are like each other. So by this method you could prove, if you wanted to, that these things too are all like each other.

344.b4: Let's review instead the overall structure and intention of the ode, which is from the beginning to end a refutation of Pittacus' maxim.

## **Gorgias**

458.a3: And what kind of man am I? One of those who would be pleased to be refuted if I say anything untrue, and who would be pleased to refute anyone who says anything untrue; one who, however, wouldn't be any less pleased to be refuted than to refute. For I count being refuted a greater good, insofar as it is a greater good for oneself to be delivered from the worst thing there is than to deliver someone else from it.

461.a3: ...and so I made that speech in which I said that if you, like me, think that being refuted is a profitable thing, it would be worth while to continue the discussion, but if you don't, to let it drop.

462.a4: Take your turn in asking and being asked questions the way Gorgias and I did, and subject me and yourself to refutation.

467.a9: How then could it be that orators or tyrants have great power in their cities, so long as Socrates is not refuted by Polus to show that they do what they want?

470.c8: In that case, I'll be very grateful to the child, and just as grateful to you if you refute me and ride me of this nonsense. Please don't falter now in doing a friend a good turn. Refute me.

470.d1: Surely, Socrates, we don't need to refer to ancient history to refute you. Why, current events quite suffice to do that, and to prove that many people who behave unjustly are happy.

471.e2: My wonderful man, you're trying to refute me in oratorical style, the way people in law courts do when they think they're refuting some claim.

471.e7: This "refutation" is worthless, as far as truth is concerned, for it might happen sometimes that an individual is brought down by the false testimony of many reputable people.

472.c3: There is, then, this style of refutation, the one you and many others accept. There's also another, one that I accept

473.b11: Not difficult, surely, Polus. It's impossible. What's true is never refuted.

473.e3: What's this, Polus? You're laughing? Is this now some further style of refutation, to laugh when somebody makes a point, instead of refuting him?

474.a3: If you have no better "refutations" than these to offer, do as I suggested just now: let me have my turn, and you try the kind of refutation I think is called for.

474.b2: See if you'll be willing to give me a refutation, then, by answering the questions you're asked.

475.e7: So you see, Polus, that when the one refutation is compared with the other, there is no

resemblance at all.

486.c4: Leave these subtleties to others...and envy not those men who refute such trivia, but those who have life and renown, and many other good things as well.

497.b7: But Socrates is always like this, Gorgias. He keeps questioning people on matters that are trivial, hardly worthwhile, and refutes them!

504.c6: And if you think I'm right, give your assent. If not, refute me and don't give way.

506.a3: I'll go through the discussion, then, and say how I think it is, and if any of you thinks that what I agree to with myself isn't so, you must object and refute me.

506.c1: And if you refute me, I shan't be upset with you as you were with me; instead you'll go on record as my greatest benefactor.

522.d3: Now if someone were to refute me and prove that I am unable to provide this protection for myself or for anyone else, I would feel shame at being refuted, whether this happened in the presence of many or of a few, or just between the two of us.

527.b3: But among so many arguments this one alone survives refutation and remains steady: that doing what's unjust is more to be guarded against than suffering it, and that it's not seeming to be good but being good that a man should take care of more than anything, both in his public and his private life.

### **Meno**

75.d2: ...and if my questioner was one of those clever and disputatious debaters, I would say to him: "I have given my answer; if it is wrong, it is your job to refute it."

### **Greater Hippias**

286.e2: Teach me enough about what the fine is itself...so I won't be a laughingstock again for having been refuted a second time.

287.b3: I could teach you to answer much harder things than that so no human being could refute you.

287.e3: My friend, I understand. I will indeed tell him what the fine is, and never will I be refuted.

288.a2: So you really think, if I gave that answer, I'd be answering what was asked, and correctly, and never will I be refuted?

288.b1: Then do you think that man will still try to refute you—that what you say is not a fine thing—or if he does try, he won't be a laughingstock?

289.e4: If you answer him that this thing he's asking for, the fine, is just gold, he'll be stuck and won't try to refute you.

304.d2: ...I hear every insult from that man (among others around here) who has always been refuting me.

304.d7: ...he asks if I'm not ashamed that I dare discuss fine activities when I've been so plainly refuted about the fine, and it's clear I don't even know at all what that is itself!

## Republic

336.c4: If you truly want to know what justice is, don't just ask questions and then refute the answers simply to satisfy your competitiveness or love of honor.

337.e3: He gives no answer himself, and then, when someone else does give one, he takes up the argument and refutes it.

349.a10: What difference does it make to you, whether I believe it or not? It's my account you're supposed to be refuting.

534.c1: Unless someone can distinguish in an account the form of the good from everything else, can survive all refutation, as if in a battle, striving to judge things not in accordance with opinion but in accordance with being.

538.d8: And when he answers what he has heard from the traditional lawgiver, the argument refutes him, and by refuting him often and in many places shakes him from his convictions, and makes him believe that the fine is no more fine than shameful.

539.b5: They imitate those who've refuted them by refuting others themselves, and, like puppies, they enjoy dragging and tearing those around them with their arguments.

## Critias

107.c7: ...since we have no precise knowledge of such things, we do not examine these paintings too closely or find fault with them, but we are content to accept an art of suggestion and illusion for such things, as vague and deceptive as this art is.

## Laws

648.b8: Your procedure would be to test these people's reactions when they had been put into a state of alarm, and by encouraging, rebuking and rewarding individuals you would compel them to become fearless.

702.b2: I wonder, Clinias and Megillus, if there's some test of this that we could set ourselves?

727.d4: Here again it is necessary to examine the various reasons for honoring it, and see which are genuine and which are false; this is the job of a legislator.

891.a2: So there's no reason for alarm if at first they make difficult listening, because your slow learner will be able to go back again and again and examine them.

893.b5: Now when I'm under interrogation on this sort of topic, and such questions as the following are put to me, the safest replies seem to be these.

917.d2: If a man proves to be beyond persuasion by our present address and sells a faulty article, the passer-by who has the knowledge and ability to expose him should prove his case before the authorities.

946.c7: The Scrutineers are to divide all the officials into twelve groups and look into their conduct by making all such inquiries as are consistent with dignity of a gentleman.

963.b2: Now it is the turn of the statesman's reason to be investigated.

## **Epinomis**

991.c3: In all our discussion we must fit the individual to the species by asking questions and refuting errors. This method is the first and the finest touchstone for humans to use.

## **Letters**

314.d5: You are far superior to them in dialectic, both by natural aptitude and by your method of disputation.

319.d4: And there is more and even clearer evidence that I could submit for examination, if ever there should be a competent inquiry into the matter.

340.b1: When I arrived, I thought my first task was to prove whether Dionysius was really on fire with philosophy, or whether the many reports that came to Athens were without foundation.

343.d2: But when it is “the fifth” about which we are compelled to answer questions or to make explanations, then anyone who wishes to refute has the advantage.

343.d8: Those who are listening sometimes do not realize that it is not the mind of the speaker or writer which is being refuted, but these four instruments mentioned, each of which is by nature defective.

344.b5: Only when all of these things—names, definitions, and visual and other perceptions—have been rubbed against one another and tested, pupil and teacher asking and answering questions in good will and without envy—only then, when reason and knowledge are at the very extremity of human effort, can they illuminate the nature of any object.

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## **On the Concept of Boundedness in Gregory of Nyssa**

### **Introduction**

NOTE: Part of this document is on the Gregory of Nyssa Home Page under the title, “References to Boundedness in Gregory of Nyssa.” That is to say, all references are included along with a simpler Introduction. I decided to include the same document with an expanded set of reflections (and under a different title) because it goes beyond the scope of the Nyssa Page.

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The list of terms presented here is by no means exhaustive or fully representative of Gregory of Nyssa’s view with regards to the notion of boundedness or limitations. I decided to glean through some texts already available on this Gregory of Nyssa Home Page using two representative English words (“bound” and “limit”) in order to see what he was getting at. The Greek texts obviously contain a richer fare; transliterated words are inserted along with explanations when necessary to flesh out the texts. It is not uncommon for Gregory to use insights centered around these two key words when discussing the most fundamental aspect of human experience, the vast yet ultimately circumscribed sphere of knowledge. Once this has been established, Gregory proceeds to discuss both the personhood and divinity of Jesus Christ. Thus his whole theology revolves around these two spheres, a common feature to any good theologian, yet one that requires closer attention.

The reason for choosing this concept is actually quite simple. Boundedness is the rock-bottom

foundation upon which all our other concepts rest and are developed. It tends to be overlooked because it is so fundamental. Unfamiliarity this insight can run the risk of not being properly grounded when it comes to discussions about theology or the spiritual life. When reflecting upon the fact that our experience and knowledge about life (and this includes literally everything) is in the final analysis restricted and is followed by death, we can despair or be cast into despondency which colors our thoughts and behavior.

Gregory lived during the fourth century when Christian theology had achieved a fairly high degree of sophistication within Hellenic culture. For this reason he offers penetrating insights on human boundedness which remain applicable today. At the same time, realization that we are inherently circumscribed can be an opportunity of opening ourselves to the possibility that something may lay outside what we know and experience. At first no evidence is present to support this possibility because unconsciously we use boundedness to discern that which lacks bounds. After all, it's the only world we know. There comes to mind the familiar image of a fish not aware of being in the water; it doesn't come to this realization until it has been on dry land.

Another word we often use to describe awareness of that which exceeds our limited condition is "faith." I prefer to stay away from this term because it has certain connotations ranging all the way from a dogmatic standpoint to an attitude we take when things get desperate. It is therefore loaded and requires careful application because of the overlay of interpretations gathered down the centuries. One example: faith can be a kind of mental gesture reserved for trials and suffering, a grin-and-bear-it approach to life. While this may be true in some circumstances, faith as presented by Gregory of Nyssa is considerably broader and rests in an appreciation that anything we perceive is inherently restricted.

Our bounded nature is the stage for inspiration<sup>1</sup> which steps over this condition and opens up a communication between the two realms. That is to say, inspiration in the literal sense implies a breathing-in from a source other than our limited condition. For this reason I have added at the end of citations from Gregory of Nyssa's works five passages from Plato's Dialogues with which Gregory was acquainted.

The word *theopneustos* is used only once in the New Testament as inspired by God: "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness" [2 Tim 3.16]. Gregory frequently uses *theopneustos* in the same context when he quotes from Scripture to amplify a point he wishes to make.

The concept of time is intimately related to that of boundedness. Gregory of Nyssa uses a special term for this, *diastema*, which may be found in document also posted on this Home Page: "References to Diastima in the Writings of Gregory of Nyssa." More specifically, *diastema* may translate roughly as "interval." Thus we have three sets of references, those pertaining to limit, time and inspiration.

Most excerpts have been taken from the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, volume V. Those texts followed by the letter M refer to the *Patrologia Graecae*. Those texts followed by the letter J refer to Werner Jaeger's series of critical texts.

## Hexaemeron

1. For as all beings are established at once by God's *ineffable power* (*aphrastou dunameos*); "beginning" (*arche*) as used by Moses which is understood as "head" (*kephalaion*) is taken as the existence of all things. With regard to the boundary (*ta akra*) of created beings, silence reveals by extremities (*tois akrois*). I mean this in a human *fashion* (*aisthesin*) because they neither pass under the earth nor ascend into heaven. M.72

Therefore fire has been begotten in the *highest realms* (in tois akrois) of creation and is endowed with a circular *movement* (kukloeide). It is *conveyed* (sunelaunomenon) to everything by the underlying *power* (dunamis) of nature; it does not have a place to which it is immediately conveyed, for all *perceptible* (aisthete) creation is *circumscribed* (periechetai) by its own *limitations* (horos). Having been moved, it advances by *intellectual nature* (tes noetes phuseos), for as we have said earlier, fire does not have the capability to move itself. M.77

The furthest *human senses* (anthropinen aisthesin) can reach are heaven and earth for which reason [David] says that "In his hand are the *bound* (perata) of the earth" [Ps 104.4], and the middle parts are *encompassed* (sumperielaben) by *bounds* (peraton). Thus Moses says that material creation is *circumscribed* (dia ton peraton), a fact with which we concur by the following words, "Earth was not seen and unfurnished." M.77

It thus follows that fire enables us to comprehend the firmament, that is, the *bounds* (peras) of matter; only by its own *bounds* (horo) is the firmament *circumscribed* (perigraphen), even though its material nature is compared to *what lies above* (ton hupokeimenon). Heaven is its name just as the term "light" is called day and darkness is called "night." M.81

Water which is not seen, does not flow and is *not constrained* (ouk horatai) but lies outside (echo) place and every *perceptible* (kat' aisthesin) quality; if the *spirit* (pneuma) of God bears this water aloft to the heavens and *remains outside* (menein exoteron) all things known *by the senses* (di' aistheseos), I would not think to hold anything else except water which shares the properties which are common with *intellectual substance* (ennoein ousian). For we suspect from that everything moved is *circumscribed* (perieirgetai) *within* (entos) by the mind's nature. Nature's *bounds* (horos) consist of *temporal limits* (to peras tes diastematikes) with regard to things that are in motion, whereas the spiritual and adiastatic nature is free from tangible and diastematic properties. The *furthest boundary* (akrotaton peras) of *perceptible* (aisthetes) nature beyond which it cannot reach and what we know by *appearances* (phainomenois) we designate by the name "firmament." M.84

Since the waters are *discerned* (diekrithe) from one another, those seen and those comprehended, and the *boundary* (horos) set between the two is heaven, that which was grasped in the beginning with earth and all thing at the *constitution* (kataskeuen) of the world, we now have the *perfection* (teleiotheis) and naming of the firmament *bounded* (horisthentos) by the circling fire and the second perimeter of light, again overshadowed and illumined the heaven above. Such was the name designated in accordance with the *sequence* (akolouthian) and is the day. M.85

Air maintains its *own bounds* (en tois idois horois), nor does fire diminish; how do these which are consumed differ from water? M.92

Yet we observe the sea spreading out equally in all places and the course of rivers maintaining *their own bounds* (en tois idois metrois); anything moist is witness enough as not to be consumed through such *bounds* (peiras). M.93

In this fashion the world's elements in every place and created thing have the same *measure* (metrou) which at its beginning the Creator's wisdom ordains for the *harmony* (euarmostian) of all. M.96

First we have said that the ocean is one *self-contained entity* (suneches pros heauten) and is divided into a myriad of seas, the totality of which is not dispersed. Should the continuous presence of heat coming from the south enter it, those parts feel a diminution because the flow of water is automatically drawn downward due by a constant ebb and flow. M.100

Clearly this shows that the firmament was not rendered by saying that rain from the waters above

gushed forth; rather, heaven is called the air which *encompasses* (perigeion) the earth, *surrounding* (horizonta) it with vapors and which is the *boundary* (horos) of the more subtle, *transcendent* (huperkeimenou) nature. Nothing heavy has the power to ascend beyond it, neither cloud, wind, vapor, moisture nor any winged creature. M.101

When such water ascends, it becomes vapor in the air; air saturated with moisture becomes dry in the heat above; what is earthly is separated from moisture through fire; the coldness present in the earth through into water, and so it goes unceasingly. There is no impediment nor infringement, but the *boundaries* (metroids) remain *constant* (diamenontos) from the *beginning* (arche). M.113

If anyone asks us about the third heaven of which Moses is silent, Paul beheld it and entered it as an inner sanctuary and heard unutterable things [cf. 2 Cor 12.2-4]; we claim that the third heaven is not outside what we have expounded. It seems to me that the great Apostle who *stretched out* (epekteinon) to what was in front of him had *transcended* (diabas) the *bounds* (horos) of physical sensation and entered *spiritual comprehension* (eis ten noeten katastasin) which no corporeal vision can accurately grasp by thoughts. He says in his own words that “whether I was in the body or outside the body, I did not know. God knows that such a man was snatched up to the third heaven.” I think that the *highest peak* (akrotaton) of the perceptible world is the third heaven which Paul named; by a three-fold division he named everything visible which is in accord with Scripture and designated each of these parts as heaven. Scripture names one heaven, the *bound* (horon) of the denser air where we have the clouds, winds and the realm of high-flying birds; it names the clouds and birds of heaven, not simply heaven but the firmament of heaven. M.121

Since he is familiar from childhood with holy words, by his own written words he designates the third heaven that realm of these three divisions in which the world is located. Paul left the air, *passed through* (paredrame) the midst of the *circling* (kuklophorian) stars, *transcended* (eperase) the limit (akran) of ether’s *bounds* (horon) and having come to firm and *intelligible nature* (noete phusei), knows the beauties of paradise and has heard what human nature cannot utter. M.121

### Song of Songs

Let no one be *bound up* (dundethe) in his own thoughts or drag the pure words of the bridegroom and the bride down into earthly, irrational passions. J.15

These concepts testify that Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the *boundaries* (horos) of human wisdom. What could be more paradoxical than to make nature purify itself of its own passions and teach *detachment* (apatheia) in words normally suggesting passion (pathos)? J.29

To me something like the following is signified through this verse: the *unlimited* (aoriston) [divine] nature cannot be accurately *contained* (perilephthenai) by a name; rather, every capacity seem to contain something great and befitting God’s glory, are unable to grasp his reality. But starting from certain traces and sparks, as it were, our words *aim* (katastochazetai) at the *unknown* (adelou), and from what we can grasp we make conjectures by a kind of analogy about the *ungraspable* (to akatalepton). Whatever name we may adopt to signify the perfume of divinity, it is not the perfume itself which we signify by our expressions; rather, we reveal just the slightest trace of the divine odor by means of our theological terms. J.37

The blessed, eternal nature *surpassing* (huperechousa) all understanding contains all things in itself and is *limited* (periechetai horou) by nothing. For no name or concept can impose *limits* (perieirgousa) to it: not time, place, color, form, image, bulk, quantity, dimension or anything else. Every good conceived as belonging to God’s nature is present in *infinite* (apeiron) and *unbounded* (aoriston) measure. For evil has no place and the good is *boundless* (peras). J.157

What the Song says is this: The blessed, eternal nature *surpassing* (huperechousa) all *understanding* (noun) contains all things in itself and is *limited* (periechetai horou) by nothing. For no name or concept can impose *limits* (perigraptikon) to it: not time, place, color, form, image, bulk, quantity, dimension or anything else. Every good conceived as belonging to God's nature is present in *infinite* (apeiron) and *unbounded* (aoriston) measure. For evil has no place and the good is *boundless* (peras). J.157

In *changeable* (treptes) human nature, good and evil exist by turns because we have the capacity to choose either one of two contraries. As a result, the good in us alternates with the evil, and the evil becomes a *limit* (horos) on the good. All the activities of our souls, insofar as they are opposed, *define* (legei) and *limit* (horizetai) one another. On the other hand, the divine nature is simple, pure, of one kind, unmoved, unchangeable, always the same and always self-contained. J.158

Because it is incapable of fellowship with evil, it remains *unlimited* (aoristos) in the good. It recognizes no *limits* (peras) because it contains no opposites in itself. So, then, when God draws a human soul to participate in himself, he always remains in equal measure superior to the participating soul because of his superabundant goodness. On the one hand, the soul continually grows through *participation* (metousia) in what is beyond it and never stops growing so that the more the soul participates in it, the more she recognizes that it *transcends* (huperanesteken) her as much as before. J.158

He exhorts her to draw near to the light and to become beautiful by being *transformed* (morphotheisan) into a dove's image in the light. The bride at this point *partakes* (metaschousan) in the good as much as she can. Then he starts again to draw her to participate in a higher beauty as if she had never tasted it. As she progresses, her desire grows with each step; because there is always an *unlimited* (huperkeimenon) good beyond what the bride has attained, she always seems to be just *beginning* (aptesthai) her ascent. J.159

If I may put it in a few words, the teaching presented to us says that creation is divided into two distinct classes, one *sensible and material* (aistheton kai hulodes), the other being *intelligible and spiritual* (noeton kai aulon). The sensible is grasped by sense, while the intelligible *transcends* (hyperpipton) *sensible comprehension* (aisthetiken katanoesin). The intelligible is infinite and *unbounded* (apeiron kai aoriston), while the material is limited, for everything material is determined by quantity and quality. Anything with mass, form, appearance and shape *limits* (peras) our understanding so that the person who examines material creation can perceive nothing beyond these *bounds* (peras) through his *imagination* (phantasia). J.173

The intelligible and spiritual is free from *constraint* (perioches); it escapes *limitation* (horon) and is *circumscribed* (peratoumenon) by nothing. Furthermore, a *spiritual* (noetes) nature has two aspects. First, the uncreated or Creator of beings always remains what it is, and always being itself, it does not admit an *increase or diminution* (prosthekes kai elattoseos) with respect to the good. The second aspect comes into existence through creation and always looks back to its first cause. By *participation* (metousia) in the *transcendent* (huperechontos), it continually remains stable in the good; in a certain sense, it is always being created while ever changing for the better in its growth in perfection. Neither is it *limited* (peras), nor can it be *circumscribed* (perigraphesthai) in its growth towards the good; however, its present state of goodness, even if especially great and perfect, is only the *beginning* (archen) of a more *transcendent* (huperkeimenou), better stage. The Apostle's words are thus verified: *stretching out* (epektaseos) to what lies before is related to *forgetfulness* (en lethe) of earlier accomplishments [Phil 3.13]. The good which is superior to the one already attained holds the attention of those participating in it while not allowing them to look at the past; by enjoying what is more worthy, their memory of inferior things is *blotted out* (parakrouomenon). J.174

Then, as if the bride has already attained *perfection* (to teleion), she tells the other companions of her ardent desire and excites their love by an oath. Who would not say that the soul exalted to such a height has reached the *limit* (en to akrotato) of perfection? But the *end* (peras) of the bride's advancements becomes a *beginning* (arche) for further *advancement* (ta huperkeimena). All these examples are like voices summoning the soul to contemplate the [heavenly] mysteries. J.177

It is right for the soul to be glad since she has *reached* (ephikomenen) in her lofty ascent the *summit* (tes hupseloes) of her desires. For what greater happiness can be conceived of than to see God? But this *limit* (peras) of her attainment is the *beginning* (arche) of her hope for what lies beyond. J.178

By a contemplation of the words before us, we are clearly taught not to *limit* (tini perati) the greatness of God's nature. Neither can any measure of knowledge *limit* (horon) the comprehension of our objective and prevent us from moving further on. But the mind running on high through its understanding of *transcendent* (huperkeimenon) reality should realize that all perfection of knowledge *attainable* (ephikten) by human nature is only the *beginning* (archen) of a *desire* (epithumias) for more lofty things. J.180

If I may put it in a few words, the teaching presented to us says that creation is divided into two distinct classes, one *sensible and material* (aistheton kai hulodes), the other being *intelligible and spiritual* (noeton kai aulon). The sensible is grasped by sense, while the intelligible *transcends* (huperpipton) sensible comprehension. The intelligible is *infinite* (apeiron) and *unbounded* (aoriston), while the material is limited, for everything material is determined by quantity and quality. Anything with mass, form, appearance and shape *limits* (peras) our understanding so that the person who examines material creation can perceive nothing beyond these *bounds* (peras, implied by touton) through his *imagination* (phantasia). J.173

Because Solomon in his wisdom signifies true wisdom, no one may contradict this fact while considering history and the truth. History testifies that Solomon *transcended* (parelthe) the *bounds* (horous) of human wisdom, having held the knowledge of all things in the *breadth* (platei) of his heart; he surpassed those before him and was unable to be matched by those after him. J.202

After hearing the unutterable mysteries of paradise, Paul still continued to move higher and did not cease to *ascend* (anabaseos). He never allowed the good already attained to *limit* (horon) his *desire* (epithumias). Paul teaches us here, I believe, that the blessed nature of the good is eternally much better than what we have received while what *lies beyond* (to huperkeimenon) our comprehension is always *boundless* (apeiroplosion). Something similar will occur to those who partake of the good; they will always have a greater *participation* (metechousi) in God throughout eternity. According to the true words of the Lord [Mt 5.8], the pure in heart will see God. They will receive as much as their minds can comprehend. However, the *unbounded* (aoriston) *incomprehensible* (aperilepton) divinity *remains beyond* (epekena) all understanding. J.245

Paul teaches us here, I believe, that the blessed nature of the good is eternally much better than what we have received while what *lies beyond* (to huperkeimenon) our *comprehension* (katalambanomenou) is always *boundless* (apeiroplosion). Something similar will occur to those who partake of the good; they will always have a greater participation in God throughout eternity. According to the true words of the Lord [Mt 5.8], the pure in heart will see God. They will receive as much as their minds can comprehend. However, the *unbounded* (aoriston), *incomprehensible* (aperilepton) divinity *remains beyond* (epekeina) all understanding. God's exceedingly great glory is *endless* (ouk peras) as the prophet testifies [Ps 144.5]. God always remains the same as we contemplate Him in his loftiness. J.246

We learn about the ineffable nature of the good from the Apostle. He says that the eye has not seen

that good even though it sees it (for the eye does not completely see the good as it is but only as it receives the good). The ear as well does not completely hear the Word but according to its manifestation even though the ear always listens to it. Also, the Word does not enter the heart of man even if the pure in heart always see it. Although the stage attained is indeed greater than what a person had earlier, this stage does not *limit* (horizei) his good; rather, the *limit* (peras) of his achievement becomes a beginning for the discovery of higher blessings. The person rising never stands still. He moves from one *beginning* (arche) to another, for the beginning of even greater blessings is never *limited* (teleitai). The *desire* (epithumia) of a soul thus rising never remains in its knowledge, but by an ever greater desire, it moves onwards. The soul thus progresses through higher realms towards the *unbounded* (to aoriston). J.247

Also, the Word does not enter the heart of man even if the pure in heart always see it. Although the stage *attained* (katalambanomenon) is indeed greater than what a person had earlier, this stage does not *limit* (horizei) his good; rather, the *limit* (peras) of his achievement becomes a *beginning* (arche) for the discovery of higher blessings. The person rising never stands still. He moves from one beginning to another, for the beginning of even greater blessings is never *limited* (teleitai). The desire of a soul thus rising never remains in its knowledge, but by an ever greater *desire* (epithumia), it moves onwards. The soul thus progresses through higher realms towards the *unbounded* (to aoriston). J.247

As the Fountain himself says in the Gospel, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and let him drink" [Jn 7.37]. By these words [Christ] set no *limit* (horon) on our thirst, nor on our movement towards him nor on the satisfaction of our drinking, but by extending his command indefinitely in time, he exhorts us to thirst, drink and to move towards him. J.248

You see how *boundless* (aoristos) is the path for those rising up to God, yet how is it that what the soul has always comprehended is the beginning (arche) of something *beyond* (huperkeimenon) her? We expected that the bride would come to a *stop* (stasin) on her way on high because of the words addressed to her. (For what more could she seek after so great a testimony to her perfection?) We then see her inside, not outside her house. She has not yet delighted at the appearance of her groom's face but is still led by hearing to participate in the good. We learn that for those who are always advancing to what is greater the Apostle's words hold true: "If anyone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know as he should" [1Cor 8.2]. Hitherto the soul understands only what she has understood, but what she still does not know is *infinitely* (apeiroplosion) greater than what she has already *comprehended* (katalephthentos). Because of this, the bridegroom often appears to the soul; although not present to her sight, he promises the bride by his voice that he will appear. J.320-1

Wisdom *limits* (horon) our *comprehension* (katalepseos) of God and is the sole divine operation which descends to our mortal existence for the purpose of giving us life. Similarly, water moved by wind does not remain at the edge of the lake but becomes a spring gushing forth which rushes on high to its connatural state. J.334

When the soul beholds these wonders, it considers him who is recognized in his works. Similarly, in the age to come all *limitations* (to horomenon) will yield to that life which is beyond anything seen, heard or understood. J.335

Meanwhile our soul's *limit* (horos) of ineffable knowledge consists in appearances whose operation in creation we symbolically understand as the bridegroom's hands. By them the purified soul no longer sets foot upon material existence so that it may not defile its footsteps by being frustrated in expectation for the bridegroom to enter its house. J.336

For the time being the bride has enjoyed contemplating only her spouse's hand which signifies his capacity for action: "My beloved has put his hand through the hole of the door." Human nature is not able to *contain* (chorei) the *infinite* (aoriston), *unbounded* (aperilepton) divine nature. "My belly was moved for him," the bride says. The term "wonder" signifies amazement and astonishment at the sight of this miracle. Every soul endowed with the faculty of reason is struck by the wonderful deeds of the divine hand which *transcends* (huperkeimene) our human capacity, for the divine nature effecting such wonders can neither be *grasped* (akatalepton) nor *contained* (achoretou). Every created being is the work of that hand which appeared through the aperture. J.336-7

These two trees could not occupy the same place at the center of paradise: if we allow one to be at the center, the other must be excluded. The dead center of a completely *bounded* (to periechon) object is determined by its equidistance from the circumference. Since a circle has only one center, it can never have two centers occupying the same location. If the center of the other circle takes the place of the one already there, it is necessary to substitute another circle; thus the first center is excluded from being its center, while a new circle is described about the second center. J.349

### Against Eunomius

For no one can say that he has strayed from ignorance into some silly fancy of separating, locally, the supreme from that which is below, and assigning to the Father as it were the peak of some hill, while he seats the Son lower down in the hollows. No one is so childish as to conceive of *differences* (diaphoran) in space, when the intellectual and spiritual is under discussion. *Local position* (thesis epi topou) is a property of the material: but the intellectual and immaterial is confessedly removed from the idea of locality. 1.14

Good, as long as it is incapable of its opposite, has no *bounds* (horon) to its goodness: its opposite alone can *circumscribe* (perigraphesthai) it...Life is *limited* (periorizetai) by death alone; darkness is the ending of light: in a word, every good is checked by its opposite, and by that alone. 1.15

But if the Divine and unalterable nature is incapable of degeneracy, as even our foes allow, we must regard it as absolutely *unlimited* (aoristos) in its goodness: and the *unlimited* (aoriston) is the same as the *infinite* (apeiro). But to suppose excess and defect in the *infinite* (apeirou) and *unlimited* (aoristou) is to the last degree unreasonable: for how can the idea of infinitude remain, if we posited increase and loss in it? We get the idea of excess only by a comparison of *limits* (peraton): where there is no *limit* (peras), we cannot think of any excess. 1.15

For it is not in the power of time to define for each one the *measures* (metra) of nature, but nature abides self-contained, preserving herself through succeeding generations: and time has a course of its own, whether surrounding, or flowing by, this nature, which remains firm and motionless within her own *limits* (horos). 1.15

Strength is stopped only when weakness seizes it; life is *limited* (periorizetai) by death alone; darkness is the *ending* (peras) of light: in a word, every good is checked by its *opposite* (enantiois), and by that alone. If then he supposes that the nature of the Only-begotten and of the Spirit can change for the worse, then he plainly diminishes the conception of their goodness, making them capable of being associated with their opposites. 1.15

It was said, moreover, above that good can be diminished by the presence of evil alone, and that where the nature is incapable of deteriorating, there is no *limit* (horos)

conceived of to the goodness: the *unlimited* (aoriston), in fact, is not such owing to any relation whatever, but, considered in itself, escapes *limitation* (horon). It is, indeed,

difficult to see how a reflecting mind can conceive one infinite to be greater or less than another infinite. 1.19

Now the ultimate division (diairesis) of all being is into the *Intelligible and the Sensible* (to noeton kai to aistheton). The Sensible world is called by the Apostle broadly "that which is seen." For as all body has color, and the sight apprehends this, he calls this world by the rough and ready name of "that which is seen," leaving out all the other qualities, which are essentially inherent in its framework. The common term, again, for all the intellectual world, is with the Apostle "that which is not seen:" by withdrawing all idea of comprehension by the senses he leads the mind on to the *immaterial and intellectual* (to asomaton kai noeton). Reason again divides this "which is not seen" into the uncreate and the created, inferentially comprehending it: the uncreate being that which effects the Creation, the created that which owes its origin and its force to the uncreate. In the Sensible world, then, is found everything that we comprehend by our organs of bodily sense, and in which the differences of qualities involve the idea of more and less, such differences consisting in quantity, quality, and the other properties. 1.22

The fountain, the origin, the supply of every good is regarded as being in the world that is uncreate, and the whole creation inclines to that, and touches and shares the Highest Existence only by virtue of its *part* (koinonia) in the First Good: therefore it follows from this *participation* (metousia) in the highest blessings varying in degree according to the amount of freedom in the will that each possesses, that the greater and less in this creation is disclosed according to the proportion of this *tendency* (hormes) in each. 1.22

Whereas uncreate intelligible nature is far removed from such *distinctions* (diaphoras): it does not possess the good by acquisition, or participate only in the goodness of some good which lies above it: in its own essence it is good, and is conceived as such: it is a *source* (pege) of good, it is simple, uniform, incomposite, even by the confession of our adversaries. 1.22

The First Good is in its nature *infinite* (apeiron), and so it follows of necessity that the *participation* (metousia) in the enjoyment of it will be infinite also, for more will be always being grasped, and yet something beyond that which has been *grasped* (katalambanousa) will always be discovered, and this search will never overtake its Object, because its fund is as inexhaustible as the growth of that which *participates* (metousia) in it is ceaseless. 1.22

When he pronounces that the life of the Father is prior to that of the Son, he places a certain interval between the two; now, he must mean, either that this *interval* (diastemati) is infinite, or that it is *included* (horizomenon) within fixed *limits* (perasi). But the principle of an *intervening mean* (diastema) will not allow him to call it infinite; he would annul thereby the very conception of Father and Son and the thought of anything connecting them, as long as this infinite were *limited* (horizomenon) on neither side, with no idea of a Father cutting it short above, nor that of a Son checking it below. The very nature of the infinite is, to be extended in either direction, and to *have* (perilambanesthai) no *bounds* (perati) of any kind. 1.25

Therefore if the conception of Father and Son is to remain firm and immoveable, he will find no ground for thinking this *interval* (diastema) is *infinite* (apeiron): his school must place a definite interval of *time* (diastesousi) between the Only-begotten and the Father. What I say, then, is this: that this view of theirs will bring us to the conclusion that the Father is not from everlasting, but from a *definite point* (apo tinos horismenou) in time. I will convey my meaning by familiar illustrations; the known shall make the unknown clear. 1.25

The creation, as we have said, comes into existence according to a *sequence of order* (kata tina taxeos

akolouthian), and is *commensurate* (parametreitai) with the *duration* (diastemati) of the ages, so that if one ascends along the line of things created to their beginning, one will bound the search with the foundation of those ages. But the world above creation, being removed from all *conception of distance* (diastematikou noematos), eludes all *sequence* (akolouthian) of time: it has no commencement of that sort: it has no end in which to cease its advance, according to any discoverable method of *order* (taxin). Having traversed the ages and all that has been produced therein, our thought catches a glimpse of the divine nature, as of some immense ocean, but when the imagination stretches onward to grasp it, it gives no sign in its own case of any beginning; so that one who after inquiring with curiosity into the 'priority' of the ages tries to mount to the source of all things will never be able to make a single calculation on which he may stand; that which he seeks will always be moving on before, and no basis will be offered him for the *curiosity* (polupragmosune) of thought. 1.26

It is clear, even with a moderate insight into the nature of things, that there is nothing by which we can *measure* (parametroumenon) the divine and blessed Life. It is not in time, but time flows from it; whereas the creation, starting from a manifest *beginning* (arches), journeys onward to its proper *end* (skopon) through *spaces of time* (dia ton chronikon diasematon); so that it is possible, as Solomon somewhere says, to detect in it a beginning, an end, and a middle; and mark the *sequence* (akolouthian) of its history by divisions of time. But the supreme and blessed life has no *time-extension* (diastematos) *accompanying its course* (sumparodeuontos), and therefore no *span* (diametroun) nor *measure* (dialambanon). Created things are confined within the fitting *measures* (horo), as within a *boundary* (metro), with due regard to the good adjustment of the whole by the pleasure of a wise Creator; and so, though human reason in its weakness cannot reach the whole way to the contents of creation, yet still we do not doubt that the creative power has assigned to all of them their *limits* (horon) and that they do not stretch beyond creation. But this creative power itself, while *circumscribing* (sumperigraphousa) by itself the growth of things, has itself no *circumscribing bounds* (periechon); it buries in itself every effort of thought to mount up to the source of God's life, and it eludes the busy and ambitious strivings to get to the *end of the Infinite* (pros to peras tou aoristou). Every discursive effort of thought to go back beyond the ages will ascend only so far as to see that that which it seeks can never be passed through: time and its contents seem the *measure* (metron) and the *limit* (horos) of the movement and the working of human thought, but that which lies beyond remains outside its reach; it is a world where it may not tread, unsullied by any object that can be *comprehended* (katalepsin) by man. No form, no place, no size, no reckoning of time, or anything else knowable, is there: and so it is inevitable that our *apprehensive* (kataleptike) faculty, seeking as it does always some object to grasp, must fall back from any side of this incomprehensible existence, and seek in the ages and in the creation which they hold its kindred and congenial sphere. 1.26

But within that transcendent and blessed Power all things are equally present as in an instant: past and future are within its *all-encircling grasp* (periektikes) and its comprehensive view. 1.26

The Divine nature is a stranger to these *special marks* (idiazontos) in the creation: It leaves beneath itself the *sections* (tmemata) of time, the 'before' and the 'after,' and the ideas of space: in fact 'higher' cannot properly be said of it at all. Every *conception* (to nooumenon) about that uncreate Power is a sublime principle, and involves the idea of what is proper in the highest degree. We have shown, then, by what we have said that the Only-begotten and the Holy Spirit are not to be looked for in the creation but are to be believed above it; and that while the creation may perhaps by the persevering efforts of ambitious seekers be seized in its own *beginning* (arche), whatever that may be, the supernatural will not the more for that come within the realm of knowledge, for no mark before the ages indicative of its nature can be found. 1.26

There are no *intervals* (diastema) in that *pre-temporal* (proaioniou) world: and difference on the score

of being there is none. 1.26

Thus the *limit* (metron) of the energy is to be found in the work which it produces. But the question now is not about the amount of the energy, but about the being of that which has put forth the energy. 1.28

How will he get an idea of a thing which is visible from the Invisible, of the perishable from the imperishable, of that which has a date for its existence from that which never had any generation, of that which has duration but for a time from the everlasting; in fact, of the object of his search from everything which is the very opposite to it. Let this man who has accurately probed the secret of things tell us how it is possible that two *unlike things* (ta anomiois) should be known from each other. 1.30

Whichever way we look, He is equally existing there for ever; He transcends the *limit* (peras) of any end, the idea of any beginning, by the infinitude of His life; whatever be His title, eternity must be implied with it. 1.38

Man is born in a stated time; and a particular place must be the receptacle of his life; without it it is not in nature that he should have any concrete substance: whence also it is inevitable that *sections of time* (chronika tmemata) are found enveloping his life; there is a Before, and With, and After him. It is true to say of any one whatever of those born into this world that there was a time when he was not, that he is now, and again there will be time when he will cease to exist; but into the Eternal world these *ideas of time* (ta chronika noemata) do not enter; to a sober thinker they have nothing akin to that world. He who considers what the divine life really is will *get beyond* (diabas) the 'sometime,' the 'before,' and the 'after,' and every mark whatever of this *extension in time* (ten chroniken paratastin); he will have lofty views upon a subject so lofty; nor will he deem that the Absolute is bound by those laws which he observes to be in force in human generation. 1.39

2. And by this deliverance the Word seems to me to lay down for us this law, that we are to be persuaded that the Divine Essence is *ineffable and incomprehensible* (arreton kai akatalepton): for it is plain that the title of Father does not present to us the Essence, but only indicates the relation to the Son. 2.3

NO GREEK INSERTS: Others are the result of material and nature; for nature orders the generation of animals one from another, effecting her own work by means of the material subsistence in the bodies of the parents; others again are by material efflux. In these the original remains as it was before, and that which flows from it is contemplated by itself, as in the case of the sun and its beam, or the lamp and its radiance, or of scents and ointments, and the quality given off from them. For these, while remaining undiminished in themselves, have each accompanying them the special and peculiar effect which they naturally produce, as the sun his ray, the lamp its brightness, and perfumes the fragrance which they engender in the air. There is also another kind of generation besides these, where the cause is immaterial and incorporeal, but the generation is sensible and takes place through the instrumentality of the body; I mean the generation of the word by the mind. For the mind being in itself incorporeal begets the word by means of sensible instruments. So many are the differences of the term generation, which we discover in a philosophic view of them, that is itself, so to speak, the result of generation. 2.9

Since, then, these kinds of generation, those, I mean, which arise as the result of some cause, and are recognized in our every-day experience, are also employed by Holy Scripture to convey its teaching concerning transcendent mysteries in such wise as each of them may reasonably be *transferred* (metalephthenai) to the expression of divine conceptions. 2.9

It behooves a man to lay aside all material conceptions which enter in by association with the carnal significance of the word "father," and to form in the case of the God and Father a conception befitting the Divine nature, expressive only of the reality of the relationship. Since, therefore, in the notion of a human father there is included not only all that the flesh suggests to our thoughts, but a certain *notion of interval* (diastematike ennoia) is also undoubtedly conceived with the idea of human fatherhood, it would be well, in the case of the Divine generation, to reject, together with bodily pollution, the *notion of interval* (diastematikou noematos) also, that so what properly belongs to matter may be completely purged away, and the transcendent generation may be clear, not only from the idea of passion, but from that of interval. Now he who says that God is a Father will unite with the thought that God is, the further thought that He is something: for that which has its being from some *beginning* (arches), certainly also derives from something the beginning of its being, whatever it is: but He in Whose case being had no beginning, has not His beginning from anything, even although we contemplate in Him some other attribute than simple existence. Well, God is a Father. It follows that He is what He is from eternity: for He did not become, but is a Father: for in God that which was, both is and will be. On the other hand, if He once was not anything, then He neither is nor will be that thing: for He is not believed to be the Father of a Being such that it may be piously asserted that God once existed by Himself without that Being. 3.3

Learning this, therefore, from Paul, we boldly declare that, not only are the judgments of God too high for those who try to search them out, but that the ways also that lead to the knowledge of Him are even until now *untrodden and impassable* (atribeis kai anepibatoi). For this is what we understand that the Apostle wishes to signify, when he calls the ways that lead to the incomprehensible "past finding out," showing by the phrase that that knowledge is *unattainable* (anepibatos) by human *calculations* (logismois), and that no one ever yet set his understanding on such a path of reasoning, or showed any trace or sign of an approach, by way of perception, to the things incomprehensible. 3.5

If His judgments cannot be searched out, and His ways are not traced, and the promise of His good things *transcends* (huperkeitai) every representation that our conjectures can frame, by how much more is His actual Godhead higher and loftier, in respect of being unspeakable and unapproachable, than those attributes which are conceived as accompanying it, whereof the divinely instructed Paul declares that there is no knowledge: and by this means we confirm in ourselves the doctrine they deride, confessing ourselves inferior to them in the knowledge of those things which are beyond the range of knowledge, and declare that we really worship what we know. Now we know the loftiness of the glory of Him Whom we worship, by the very fact that we are not able by *reasoning* (analogizomenoi) to *comprehend* (katalabein) in our thoughts the incomparable character of His greatness. 3.5

Now if any one should ask for some interpretation, and description, and explanation of the Divine essence, we are not going to deny that this kind of wisdom we are unlearned, acknowledging only so much as this, that it is not possible that which is by nature *infinite* (aoriston) should be comprehended in any conception expressed by words. The fact that the Divine greatness has no *limit* (horon) is proclaimed by prophecy, which declares expressly that of His splendour, His glory, His holiness, "there is no end:" and if His surroundings have no *limit* (peras), much more is He Himself in His essence, whatever it may be, comprehended by no *limitation* (horo) in any way. If then interpretation by way of words and names implies by its meaning some sort of comprehension of the subject, and if, on the other hand, that which is *unlimited* (aoriston) cannot be *comprehended* (perilephthenai), no one could reasonably blame us for ignorance, if we are not bold in respect of what none should venture upon. For by what name can I describe the incomprehensible? By what speech can I declare the unspeakable? 3.5

For nothing is Divine that is conceived as being *circumscribed* (pergraphe) but it belongs to the Godhead to be in all places, and to pervade all things, and not to be *limited* (perieigresthai) by anything: so that those who fight against Christ find the phrase they adduce against us turned into an accusation of themselves. For, as the Samaritans, supposing the Deity to be compassed round by some *circumscription* (perigraphe) of place, were rebuked by the words they heard, "'Ye worship ye know not what,' and your service is profitless to you, for a God that is deemed to be settled in any place is no God,"-so one might well say to the new Samaritans, "In supposing the Deity to be *limited* (perieilephthai) by the absence of generation, as it were by some local *limit* (topo), 'ye worship ye know not what,' doing service to Him indeed as God, but not knowing that the infinity of God exceeds all the significance and *comprehension* (perilepseos) that names can furnish." 3.5

Therefore, as great as God is, so great, clearly, is the Word also that is with Him; so that if God is *limited* (perioristai), then will the Word also, surely, be subject to *limitation* (horo). But if the *infinity* (apeiria) of God exceeds *limit* (horo), neither is the Word that is contemplated with Him comprehended by *limits* (horos) and *measures* (metrois). For no one would deny that the Word is contemplated together with the entire Godhead of the Father, so that he should make one part of the Godhead appear to be in the Word, and another destitute of the Word. 4.1

If then Moses lays down as a law for us some such *mark* (charaktema) 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"); 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* (archen), do we find any *point* (semeion) 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* (horo) the eternal *progress* (proodon) of Him Who is),-and if the prophet David forbids us to worship any new and strange God (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). 8.1

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"); 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) 8.1

The ultimate *division* (dairesis) 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* (gnoristikas idiotetas), 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 in itself, and *extends concurrently* (sumparateinomenes) with all *temporal intervals* (chronikois diastemasi), we take as a sort of characteristic of the subject this property, that in it we see some *beginning* (archen) of its formation, look on its midst, and *extend* (sumparateinesthai) our expectations to its *end* (peras). 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* (peras) on every side in its *infinity* (en to aoristo), is

far removed from those marks which we find in creation. For that power which is *without interval* (adiastatos), 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. 8.5

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* (horizomenen) 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* (metra kai peras horizon) for the infinite (aoristo) 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* (perigegrammenen) by some beginning. 8.5

That the Divine generation, therefore, may be clear of every idea connected with passion, we shall avoid conceiving with regard to it even that extension which is *measured by intervals* (diastematiken parataasin). Now that which begins and ends is surely regarded as being in a kind of *extension* (en parateasei), and all extension is measured by time, and as time (by which we mark both the end of birth and its beginning) is excluded, it would be vain, in the case of the uninterrupted generation, to entertain the idea of end or beginning, since no idea can be formed to mark either the point at which such generation begins or that at which it ceases. If on the other hand it is the inanimate creation to which he is looking, even in this case, in like manner, place, and time, and matter, and preparation, and power of the artificer, and many like things, concur to bring the product to perfection. And since time assuredly is *concurrent* (sumparateinetai) with all things that are produced, and since with everything that is created, be it animate or inanimate, there are conceived also bases of construction relative to the product, we can find in these cases evident beginnings and endings of the process of formation. For even the procuring of material is actually the beginning of the fabric, and is a sign of place, and is logically connected with time. 9.3

What *measure* (metron) can he find for that which has no quantity, or what *interval* (diastema) for that which has no extension? or how can any one define the *infinite* (to aoriston) by "end" and "beginning?" for "beginning" and "end" are names of *limits of extension* (ton diastematikon peraton), and, where there is no *extension* (diastaseos), neither is there any *limit* (peras). Now the Divine Nature is *without extension* (adiastatos), and, being without *extension* (adiastatos), it has no *limit* (peras); and that which is limitless is infinite, and is spoken of accordingly. Thus it is idle to try to *circumscribe* (perigraphein) the *infinite* (apeiron) by "beginning" and "ending"-for what is *circumscribed* (perigegrammenon) cannot be *infinite* (apeiron). 9.3

But how can any one measure or treat as extended that which is without quantity and without extension? What measure can he find for that which has no quantity, or what interval for that which has no extension? or how can any one define the infinite by "end" and "beginning?" for "beginning" and "end" are names of *limits of extension* (diastematikon peraton), and, where there is no extension (diastaseos), neither is there any *limit* (peras). Now the Divine Nature is *without extension*

(adiastatos), and, being without extension, it has no limit; and that which is *limitless* (aperatoton) is *infinite* (apeiron), and is spoken of accordingly. 9.3

But that which is not eternal is of course *limited* (proskairon) in duration. And such a kind of life is common to the irrational animals as well as to men. 10.2

### On the Making of Man

I admit it to be true that the *intellectual part* (dianoetikon) of the soul is often disturbed by prevalence of passions; and that the reason is blunted by some bodily accident so as to hinder its natural operation; and that the heart is a sort of source of the fiery element in the body, and is moved in correspondence with the impulses of passion; and moreover, in addition to this, I do not reject (as I hear very much the same account from those who spend their time on anatomical researches) the statement that the cerebral membrane (according to the theory of those who take such a physiological view), enfolding in itself the brain, and steeped in the vapours that issue from it, forms a foundation for the senses; yet I do not hold this for a proof that the incorporeal nature is *bounded* (emperieilephthai) by any *limits* (perigraphais) of place. 10.3

Now just as any particular man is *limited* (perieirgetai) by his bodily dimensions, and the peculiar size which is conjoined with the superficies of his body is the *measure* (metron) of his separate existence, so I think that the entire plenitude of humanity was included by the God of all, by His power of foreknowledge, as it were in one body, and that this is what the text teaches us which says, "God created man, in the image of God created He him." For the image is not in part of our nature, nor is the grace in any one of the things found in that nature, but this power extends equally to all the race: and a sign of this is that mind is implanted alike in all: for all have the power of understanding and deliberating, and of all else whereby the Divine nature finds its image in that which was made according to it: the man that was manifested at the first creation of the world, and he that shall be after the consummation of all, are alike: they equally bear in themselves the Divine image. 16.17

Now that which is always in motion, if its *progress* (proodon) be to good, will never cease moving onwards to what lies before it, by reason of the *infinity* (aoriston) of the course to be traversed: for it will not find any *limit* (peras) of its object such that when it has apprehended it, it will at last cease its motion: but if its bias be in the opposite direction, when it has finished the course of wickedness and reached the extreme *limit* (akrotaton) of evil, then that which is ever moving, finding no halting point for its impulse natural to itself when it has run through the lengths that can be run in wickedness, of necessity turns its motion towards good: for as evil does not extend to *infinity* (aoriston), but is comprehended by necessary *limits* (perasi), it would appear that good once more follows in succession upon the *limit* (peras) of evil; and thus, as we have said, the ever-moving character of our nature comes to run its course at the last once more back towards good, being taught the lesson of prudence by the memory of its former misfortunes, to the end that it may never again be in like case. 21.2

And this it seems to me the Divine apostle considered when he declared in his

epistle to the Corinthians the sudden stoppage of time, and the change of the

things that are now moving on back to the opposite end where he says, "Behold, I

show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a

moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet." For when, as I suppose, the full complement of human nature has reached the *limit* (metron) of the pre-determined *measure* (peras), because there is no longer anything to be made up in the way of increase to the number of souls, he teaches us that

the change in existing things will take place in an *instant* (akarei) of time, giving to that limit of time which has no parts or *extension* (adiastaton peras) the names of "a moment," and "the twinkling of an eye"; so that it will no more be possible for one who reaches the verge of time-which is the last and extreme *point* (akrotaton tes akmes), from the fact that nothing is lacking to the attainment of its *extremity* (akroteti)-to obtain by death this change which takes place at a fixed period, but only when the trumpet of the resurrection sounds, which awakens the dead, and transforms those who are left in life, after the likeness of those who have undergone the resurrection change, at once to incorruptibility. 22.6

For as the body *proceeds* (proeisin) from a very small original to the *perfect state* (teleion), so also the operation of the soul, growing in correspondence with the subject, gains and increases with it. For at its first formation there comes first of all its power of growth and nutriment alone, as though it were some root buried in the ground; for the limited nature of the recipient does not admit of more; then, as the plant comes forth to the light and shows its shoot to the sun, the gift of sensibility blossoms in addition, but when at last it is ripened and has grown up to its proper height, the power of reason begins to shine forth like a fruit, not appearing in its whole vigour all at once, but by care increasing with the perfection of the instrument, bearing always as much fruit as the powers of the subject allow. 29.8

### **Ecclesiastes**

If the sun's course consists in this, it too has no *limit* (horon); neither is there any *succession* (diadoche) between day and night, and the earth is condemned to remain ever unmoved. The rivers also labor in vain, for they are consumed by the insatiable sea which receives this constant inflow to no avail. If this is true, what about man who is subject to such elements? Why are we astonished at the rise and fall of a generation which follows a natural course because a generation of men always succeeds the one before it and so forth? J.286

In similar fashion pleasures arising from human nature with its present *limit* (metrois) cannot expand its gluttonous appetite to keep pace with their great number; rather, the influx [of pleasures] does not cease even though our capacity for enjoyment is *limited* (horo). If enjoyment cannot exceed the *limit* (metron) of nature, why are we pressed by an onrush of harmful forces which are never beneficial since they have surpassed what had been added earlier? J.289

"I have looked," Ecclesiastes says, "on all my works which my hands have made and on my labor which I have labored to perform, and behold, all was vanity and waywardness of spirit, and there is no advantage under the sun" [2.11]. Each sense perception has its *limits* (horon) and operation under the sun, but further on he says that the senses cannot comprehend *transcendent reality* (huperkeimenon agathon). Ecclesiastes teaches us that we should not admire wealth, honor, authority, banquets, parties and so forth. Instead, he sees that their one end is vanity whose abundance is unlimited. J.352

### **On the Inscriptions of the Psalms**

Thus the blending into a whole from various, separate elements in the universe through an ordered, constant rhythm results. It harmonizes all the parts and sings in all of them this supremely consonant melody. The mind becomes a hearer though in no way is it *limited* (sugchromenos) to this voice; rather, by *surpassing* (huperkupton) corporeal senses and becoming heavenly, it perceives the celestial hymns. It seems to me that the great David perceived these things when he beheld the graceful, subtle of heavenly bodies and exclaimed that they proclaim the glory of God (cf. Ps 18.2). J.31

The psalms' sublime teaching points out to us a way to blessedness which constantly leads persons *progressing* (odegoumenous) in the exalted life of virtue until they *attain that measure* (phthase to

metron) of blessedness where the mind subjects transcendental reality neither to circumstantial evidence nor to opinions; neither can reason discover anything further about this reality. But the *movement of desire* (kinesis tes epithumias) based upon hope always outstrips us...Beyond this lies a better hope to which the psalm testifies by a careful order of words. J.67

### On Perfection

While seeking the reason for material existence they do not show curiosity when asking "How does matter come from what is immaterial?" And, "How does quality come from what lacks quality, form from formlessness, color from what is invisible and the *limited* from the unbounded? If no quality pertains to what is simple and uncompounded, why is matter subject to *measurement* (emperatoumenon)?" The person asking these questions finds a solution because the Word bears everything by his word of power from non-existence into existence. Everything with a material or immaterial nature has one cause, the Word of inexpressible power. This teaches us to look to him, the source of created beings. If we have come into existence and are established in him, we must believe that nothing lies outside his knowledge in whom we are, from whom we have come into existence and to whom we return. J.189

The following supplement contain some references on *inspiration* from **Plato: Complete Works**:

Almost all the bystanders might have explained the poems better than their authors could. I soon realized that poets do not compose their poems with knowledge, but by some inborn talent and by inspiration, like seers and prophets who also say many fine things without any understanding of what they say. Apology 22c.

For a poet is an airy thing, winged and holy, and he is not able to make poetry until he becomes inspired and goes out of his mind and his intellect is no longer in him. As long as a human being has his intellect in his possession he will always lack the power to make poetry or sing prophecy. Therefore because it's not by mastery that they make poems or say many lovely things about their subjects—but because it's by a divine gift—each poet is able to compose beautifully only that for which the Muse has aroused him...You see, it's not mastery that enables them to speak those verses, but a divine power, since if they knew how to speak beautifully on one type of poetry by mastering the subject, they could do so for all the others also. That's why the god takes their intellect away from them when he uses them as his servants, as he does prophets and godly diviners, so that we who hear should know that they are not the ones who speak those verses that are of such high value, for their intellect is not in them: the god himself is the one who speaks, and he gives voice through them to us. Ion 534cd

There is an old proverb, legislator, which we poets never tire of telling and which all laymen confirm, to the effect that when a poet takes his seat on the tripod of the Muse, he cannot control his thoughts. He's like a fountain where the water is allowed to gush forth unchecked. His art is the art of representation, and when he represents men with contrasting characters he is often obliged to contradict himself, and he doesn't know which of the opposing speeches contains the truth. Laws IV 719c

Socrates: Therefore, if it is not through knowledge, the only alternative is that it is through right opinion that statesmen follow the right course for their cities. As regards knowledge, they are no different from soothsayers and prophets. They too say many things when inspired, but they have no knowledge of what they are saying.—That is probably so.

Socrates: And so, Meno, is it right to call divine also those soothsayers and prophets whom we just mentioned, and all the poets, and we should call no less divine and inspired those public men who are

no less under the gods' influence and possession, as their speeches lead to success in many important matters, though they have no knowledge of what they are saying.—Quite so. Meno 99cd

for just this reason it is fair that only a philosopher's mind grows wings, since its memory always keeps it as close as possible to those realities by being close to which the gods are divine. A man who uses reminders of these things correctly is always at the highest, most perfect level of initiation, and he is the only one who is perfect as perfect can be. He stands outside human concerns and draws close to the divine; ordinary people think he is disturbed and rebuke him for this, unaware that he is possessed by god...Only a few remain whose memory is good enough; and they are beside themselves, and their experience is beyond their comprehension because they cannot fully grasp what it is that they are seeing. Phaedrus 249d & 250a

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### References to Diastema in the Writings of Gregory of Nyssa

This list of the word diastema, by no means complete, is intended to give the reader an idea of how Gregory of Nyssa used its fundamental meaning of "interval (of time)" when applied to our everyday world of common experience. Gregory contrasts this diastematic existence with the adiastratic existence of God who transcends space and time.

A note with regard to the excerpts: except where noted, most references come from the series of critical texts begun under the leadership of Werner Jaeger and which continued after his death. Those numbers in parentheses refer to the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series, volume five (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972 reprint).

#### **Against Eunomius, I**

Then he must tell us on what grounds he has measured out more length of life to the Father, while no distinctions of time whatever have been previously conceived of in the personality of the Son. 78.2 (52)

Every measure of distance that we could discover is beneath the divine nature: so no ground is left for those who attempt to divide this pre-temporal and incomprehensible being by distinctions of superior & inferior. 79.5 (52)

Again; only in the case of the creation is it true to speak of "priority." The sequence of works was there displayed in the order of the days; and the heavens may be said to have preceded by so much the making of man, and that interval may be measured by the interval of days. But in the divine nature, which transcends all idea of time and surpasses all reach of thought, to talk of a "prior" and a "latter" in the honors of time is a privilege only of this new-fangled philosophy. 128.13 (67)

What exposes still further the untenableness of this view is, that, besides positing a beginning in time of the Son's existence, it does not, when followed out, spare the Father even, but proves that he also had his beginning in time. 129.2 (67)

When he pronounces that the life of the Father is prior to that of the Son, he places a certain interval between the two; now, he must mean, either that this interval is infinite, or that it is included within fixed limits. 129.15 (67)

When we say that man was made the fifth day after the heavens, we tacitly imply that before those same days the heavens did not exist either; a subsequent event goes to define, by means of the interval which precedes it, the occurrence also of a previous event. 129.27 (67)

Our adversaries conceive of the existences of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as involving elder and younger, respectively. Well then, if at the bidding of this heresy, we journey up beyond the generation of the Son, and approach that intervening duration which the mere fancy of these dogmatists supposes between the Father and the Son, and then reach that other and supreme point of time by which they close that duration, then we find the life of the Father fixed as it were upon an apex; and thence we must necessarily conclude that before it the Father is not to be believed to have existed always. 130.17 & 30 (68)

So, if there is, as our adversaries say, an excess of some kind in the Father's life as compared with the Son's, it must needs consist in some definite interval of duration: and they will allow that this interval of excess cannot be in the future, for that Both are imperishable, even the foes of the truth will grant. No; they conceive of third difference as in the past, and instead of equalizing the life of the Father and the Son there, they extend the conception of the Father by an interval of living. But every interval must be founded by two ends: and so for this interval which they have devised we must grasp the two points by which the ends are denoted. The one portion takes its beginning, in their view, from the Son's generation; and the other portion must end in some other point, from which the interval starts, and by which it limits itself...It admits not of a doubt, then, that they will not be able to find at all the other portion, corresponding to the first portion of their fancied interval, except they were to suppose some beginning of their Ungenerate, whence the middle, that connects with the generation of the Son, may be conceived of as starting...Let it suffice on the ground of causation only to conceive of the Father as before the Son; and let not the Father's life be thought of as a separate and peculiar one before the generation of the Son, lest we should have to admit the idea inevitably associated with this of an interval before the appearance of the Son which measure the life of him who begot him, and then the necessary consequence of this, that a beginning of the Father's life also must be supposed by virtue of which their fancied interval may be stayed in its upward advance so as to set a limit and a beginning to this previous life of the Fr as well: let it suffice for us when we confess the "coming from him," to admit also, bold as it may seem, the "living along with him;" for we are led by the written oracles to such a belief. 131.8, 13, 14, 20, 25; 132 3, 5, 20, 23 (68)

One therefore of two things must follow. Either the Creation is everlasting; or, it must be boldly admitted, the Son is later in time (than the Father). The conception of an interval in time will lead to monstrous conclusions, even when measured from the Creation up to the Creator. 133.15 (68)

If he could point to anything above Creation which as its origin marked by any interval of time, and it were acknowledged possible by all to think of any time-interval as existing before Creation, he might have occasion for endeavoring to destroy by such attracts that everlastingness of the Son which we have proved above. 133.21, 23 (69)

But seeing that by all the suffrages of the faithful it is agreed that, of all things that are, and that the divine nature is to be believed uncreated (although within it, as our faith teaches, there is a cause, and there is a subsistence produced, but without separation, from the cause), while the creation is to be viewed in an extension of distances,--all order and sequence of time in events can be perceived only in the ages (of this creation)...But the world above creation, being removed from all conception of distance, eludes all sequence of time: it has no commencement of that sort: it has no end in which to cease its advance, according to any discoverable method of order. 134.3, 10, 14 (69)

It is clear, even with a moderate insight into the nature of things, that there is nothing by which we can measure the divine and blessed Life. It is not in time, but time flows from it; whereas the creation, starting from a manifest beginning, journeys onward to its proper end through spaces of time...But the supreme and blessed life has no time-extension accompanying its course, and therefore no span nor measure. 135.4, 9 (69)

Well, then, if in this uncreate existence those wondrous realities, with their wondrous names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are to be in our thoughts, how can we imagine, of that pretemporal world, that which our busy, restless minds perceive in things here below by comparing one of them with another and giving it precedence by an interval of time? 138.3 (79)

...as the Only-begotten Light, and having shone forth in that very Light, being divisible neither by duration nor by an alien nature from the Father or from the Only-begotten. 138.14 (70)

There are no intervals in that pre-temporal world; and difference on the score of being there is none. 138.16 (70)

The generation of the Son does not fall within time, any more than the creation was before time: so that it can in no kind of way be right to partition the indivisible, and to insert, by declaring that there was a time when the Author of all existence was not. 138.29 (70)

...and that, if any interval were to be imagined dividing the two [Son's birth and Father's ungeneracy], that same interval would fix a beginning for the life of the Almighty. 139.4 (70)

Then again, we see yet another such Light after the same fashion, sundered by no interval of time from that offspring Light, and while shining forth by means of It yet tracing the source of its being to the Primal Light. 180.28 (85)

You cannot take one of these [Fatherhood and Ungeneracy plus other divine attributes] and separate it in thought from the rest by any interval of time, as if it preceded or followed something else; no sublime or adorable attribute in Him can be discovered, which is not simultaneously expressed in His everlastingness. 196.12 (90)

I for my part cannot see what there is to think of in connection with the Father, by himself, that is parted by any interval so as to precede our apprehension of the Son. 197.21 (90)

When there is no intermediate matter, or idea, or interval of time, to separate the being of the Son from the Father, no symbol can be thought of, either, by which the Only-begotten can be unlinked from the Father's life and shown to proceed from some special source of his own. 210.7 (94)

Those who draw a circular figure in plane geometry from a center to the distance of the line of circumference tell us there is no definite beginning to their figure; and that the line is interrupted by no ascertained end any more than by any visible commencement. 218.1, 4 (97)

On the other hand, because the existence of the Son is not marked by any intervals of time, and the infinitude of his life flows back before the ages and onward beyond them in an all-pervading tide, he is properly addressed with the title of Eternal. 224.13 (100)

### **Against Eunomius, II**

3. But when all such material, temporal and local existence is excluded from the sense of the term "Son," community of nature alone is left, and for this reason by the title "Son" is declared, concerning the Only-begotten, the close affinity and genuineness of relationship which mark his manifestation from the Father. 37 (114)

The latter is confined within its own boundaries according to the pleasure of its Maker. The former is bounded only by infinity. The latter stretches itself out within certain degrees of extension, limited by time and space; the former transcends all notion of degree, baffling curiosity from every point of view. In this life we can apprehend the beginning and the end of all things that exist, but the beatitude that

is above the creature admits neither end nor beginning, but is above all that is connoted by either, being ever the same, self-dependent, not travelling on by degrees from one point to another in its life. 246.19, 21, 27 (257)

For you cannot apply the same definition to "light" and "day", but light is what we understand by the opposite of darkness, and day is the extent of the measure of the interval of light. 309.7 (279)

What is this vain flourish of baseless expressions, seeing that our Master simply says that whatever in the Divine essence transcends the measurable distances of the ages in either direction is called by certain distinctive names. 359.24 (296)

For seeing that human life, moving from stage to stage, advances in its progress from a beginning to an end, and our life here is divided between that which is past and that which is expected, so that the one is the subject of hope, the other of memory; on this account, as, in relation to ourselves, we apprehend a past and a future in this measurable extent, so also we apply the thought, though incorrectly, to the transcendent nature of God; not of course that God in his own existence leaves any interval behind, or passes on afresh to something that lies before, but because our intellect can only conceive things according to our nature, and measures the eternal by a past and a future, where neither the past precludes the march of thought to the illimitable and infinite, nor the future tells us of any pause or limit of his endless life. 360.16 (296)

...and Moses, speaking of the kingdom of God as "extending beyond all ages," so that we are taught by both [reference to David] that every duration conceivable is environed by the Divine nature, bounded on all sides by the infinity of him who holds the universe in his embrace. 361.10 (296)

"His transcending," he continues, "every limit of the ages, and every distance in temporal extension, whether we consider the previous or the subsequent, this absence of limit or circumscription on either hand in the Eternal Life we mark in the one case with the name of imperishability, and in the other case with the name of ungeneracy." 380.19

For, as beginning means one thing, and end means another, by virtue of an intervening extension, if anyone allow the privation of the first of these to be essence, he must suppose his life to be only half subsisting in this being without beginning, and not to extend further, by virtue of his nature, to the being without end, if ungeneracy be regarded as itself his nature. 381.13 (303)

All that actually comes within our comprehension is such that it must be of one of these four kinds: either contemplated as existing in an extension of distance... 395.5 (308)

### **Against Eunomius, III**

...in the notion of a human father there is included not only all that the flesh suggests to our thoughts, but a certain notion of interval is also undoubtedly conceived with the idea of human fatherhood, it we would be well, in the case of the divine generation, to reject, together with bodily pollution, the notion of interval also, that so what properly belongs to matter may be completely purged away. 31.15 (144)

...since we too confess the close connection and relation of the Son with the Father, so that there is nothing inserted between them which is found to intervene in the connection of the Son with the Father, no conception of interval, not even that minute and indivisible one, which, when time is divided into past, present and future, is conceived indivisibly by itself as the present... 91.14 (166)

Neither does this immediate conjunction exclude the "willing" of the Father, in the sense that he has 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. 191.19 (202)

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. 199.4 (205)

...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 that Son who is of him. 200.2 (205)

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. 207.24 (208)

For if the interval of the ages has preceded existing things, it is proper to employ the temporal adverb, and to say "He then willed" and "He then made": but since the age was not, since no conception of interval is present to our minds in regard to that divine nature which is not measured by quantity or by interval, the force of temporal expressions must surely be void...but to regard the divine nature itself as being in a kind of extension measured by intervals, belongs only to those who have been trained in the new wisdom. 217.3 (211)

And what is this that is inserted as intervening between the life of the Father and that of the Son, that is not time nor space, nor any idea of extension, nor any like thing? 219.22 (212)

That the divine generation, therefore, may be clear of every idea connected with passion, we shall avoid conceiving with regard to it even that extension which is measured by intervals. Now that which begins and ends is surely regarded as being in a kind of extension, & all extension is measured by time, and as time (by which we mark both the end of birth and its beginning) is excluded, it would be vain, in the case of the uninterrupted generation, to entertain the idea of end or beginning, since no idea can be formed to mark either the point at which such generation begins or that at which it ceases. 225.13 (215)

For it is only as being circumscribed in some quantitative way that things can be said either to begin or to cease on arriving at a limit, and the measure expressed by time (having its extension concomitant with the quantity of that which is produced) differentiates the beginning from the end by the interval between them. But how can any one measure or treat as extended that which is without quantity and without extension?...Now the divine nature is without extension, and, being without extension, it has no limit; and that which is limitless is infinite, and is spoken of accordingly. 226.22 (215)

For any of the things that do not exist is no more in a state of "not being" now than if it were non-existent before, but the idea of "not being" is one applied to that which "is not" at any distance of time. 232.11 (217)

### **Refutation to the Confession of Eunomius**

Now every such conception of matter 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. 350.23 (205)

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. 351.24 (205)

For who believes in the Father according to the Lord's precept likewise hears the Father and does not conceive the Son by any intervening interval, immediately passing from the Son to the Father. PG#45, 512a; 353.25

There was before their generation an interval of time. *ibid*, 513a; 355.16

Against the Macedonians: Concerning the Holy Spirit

The mysterious meaning of the anointing is that no distance exists between the Son and the Holy Spirit. (*ibid*, 1521a; 102.32)

### **Commentary on the Inscriptions of the Psalms**

The first words of Psalm Eighty-nine read, "Lord, you have been a refuge for us from one generation to the next." What does this mean? That you [God], the origin and end of time, exist before creation and embrace every period of time, for infinity is an end without bounds. "Before the mountains were born and the earth formed, and even from age to age, you are." Because human nature is mutable, it was pulled down from the heavenly good and cast into the error of sin. Therefore, God, extend your unfailing hands to our fallen human nature. What you are by nature you have imparted to us. Do not let [human nature] return from its loftiness in your presence to the humility of sin. 46.7

If anyone regards the period of time in which David lived and the sequence of his deeds. 115.12

That people is all humanity which joined themselves to God and which was separated from the holy commands by a great and infinite interval. 145.25

The marks of divine beauty [on Moses' face] did not fade away, but he preserved the unchangeable beauty in his mutable nature. This is the man who guides us in the fourth ascent and who elevates himself above the people by the three preceding ascents. For the person who has attained this lofty height now stands midway between the mutable and immutable natures and intercedes for both extremes. 45.6 (NB: This excerpt shows interpreter as *methorios* or one in between as in between boundaries or a person somewhere in between teacher and pupil).

### **Concerning the Sixth Psalm**

When we measure time with days, beginning from the first and closing with the seventh again, we return to the first day. We always measure the totality of time through the circle of seven days until things endowed with motion pass away and the flux of the world's movement ceases. 189.4

### **Commentary on Ecclesiastes**

If this is true, what about man who is subject to such elements? Why are we astonished at the rise and fall of a generation which follows a natural course? A generation of men always succeeds the one before it and so forth. 286.7

We are never satiated; rather, appetite is common to us all while passion flowers with enjoyment, and is not circumscribed by the attainment of its desire." But inasmuch as we perceive the good in pleasure, any delight sets desire aflame, for pleasure is united to desire and is always attractive to each stage of our growth. 313.16

Because men earnestly strive after corporeal pleasure which is a pursuit and distraction of the soul from things above to what is below, they squander the time allotted to them in this life by gathering material possessions. Thus whoever judges this good to be from God knows how to define it as vanity. 372.6

Indeed, whatever belongs to time, extension, or interval is determined by smallness and greatness. Time is the measure of conception, the growth of corn, fruit, the measure of sailing, walking, the periods of life which are infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, early manhood, the prime of life, middle age, fullness of maturity, past one's prime, old age and senility. Time is not restricted by one measure (for each stage of growth is not the same because persons differ from one another), while everything subject to measure has the same, all-encompassing time. For this reason Ecclesiastes does not say that measure belongs to all things because there is equality in great and small with regard to measure. However, time is a general measure and standard. 377.3

Who does not know that each action is judged according to its own merits, whether evil or not? The time of the action is considered apart from the nature of the person who committed the deed. What shares a common interval of time with an action we freely committed? If asked of what the day consists, our response is that the sun above the earth measures morning and evening. Our answer not only pertains to the circuit of the seventh day, but to the first and second day right up to the seventh, and that the Sabbath day does not differ from the others according to our notion of a day. 392.14

All our notions are bound by time; they attempt to transcend their proper limits but cannot. Intervals of time constitute all our thoughts as well as the substance of a person who gives rise to such thoughts. Such intervals are created. The good we teach, however, must be pursued and guarded. We also advise that a person unite himself to this reality which transcends creation and thought. Our mind functions by using intervals within time, so how can it grasp [God's] nature which not subject to temporal extension? Through the medium of time, the inquisitive [mind] always leaves behind any thought older than what it just discovered. The mind also busily searches through all kinds of knowledge yet never discovers the means to grasp eternity in order to transcend both itself and what we earlier considered, namely, the eternal existence of beings. This effort resembles a person standing on a precipice (A smooth, precipitous rock which abruptly falls down into a boundless distance suggests this transcendence. Its prominence reaches on high while also falling to the gaping deep below). A person's foot can therefore touch that ridge falling off to the depths below and find neither step nor support for his hand. This example may pertain to the soul's passage through intervals of time in its search for [God's] nature which exists before eternity and is not subject to time. His nature cannot be grasped, for it lacks space, time, measure and anything else we can apprehend; instead, our mind is overcome with dizziness and stumbles all over the place because it cannot lay hold of transcendent reality. Being powerless, it returns to its connatural state. Our mind loves to know only about God's transcendence of which it is persuaded because his nature differs from anything we know. 412.10, 14, 414.1

Our conception of eternity, limited as it is by our thoughts, signifies all creation which [God] contains. Therefore, the text points out all created beings embraced by God. For our benefit God put into our hearts everything [that is, with diastema] he made in eternity that we might contemplate their Creator by reason of their greatness and beauty. However, persons who benefited from them do not necessarily suffer affliction if they use them profitably. Because of this Ecclesiastes says, "Man cannot find out what God had done" (3.11). Here he implies the treachery lying within the human soul. It becomes stronger and results in ignorance of the good which God performs for our usefulness in all the things he made from the beginning of creation until their fulfillment when evil shall be no more. Neither does evil naturally arise from the good. If the Creator and Author of the universe is good, then

all things are substantially good. 440.3

### **De Tribui inter Mortum et Resurrectionem...Spatio**

It suffices to say that in a little temporal interval suffices the all-powerful wisdom in the heart of the earth to mock that great mind. 280.16

Do not marvel if in a chronological interval the creation of the good is divided. For in the first creation of the world the divine power does not exhaust to perfect all beings at once but distributes by their fabrication chronological distensions. 286.1 & 5

Since the mystic and unutterable reason seeks a number, not the accustomed interval of days and nights hinders to the action of the divine power of operation. 290.13

So shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth for an interval of three days. 291.2

Therefore when in this occasion the moon by its form since it completes according to its own course by an interval of night, comes the rest to the circle so that light might fulfill with the rays of day. 297.13

### **Apologia in Hexaemeron** (Migne references)

Thus being able, by which matter contains all things by wisdom and by power of will establishes regarding completion, gravity, density, lightness, heaviness, pressed together, rarity, softness, hardness, humidity, dryness, coldness, warmth, color, form, circumscription, interval: all are such notions and mere considerations. 69.42

The meaning of each is clear: "in the head" is the gathering of everything. Through "the beginning" clearly is what is a moment and without interval. The beginning is quite different from a sense which lacks interval. As a point is the beginning of a line and has an indivisible bulk, thus what is a moment of interval. 72.12

In like manner according to temporal interval is a succession regarding space, I mean light and darkness. (reference to Moses) 77.17

Because the firmament is called heaven, the measure of perceptible creation from which a certain perceptible creation is comprehended in which is no form, greatness, setting in place, measure of interval, color, figure, quantity, nor anything which is seen under heaven. 81.46

Nature is the bound with regard to the terminus of diastematic bounds, constituting spacial and diastematic properties which the perceptible and undiastematic nature finds. 84.43

...the diastema of three days suffices. 116.16

Therefore the sun's light shines upon us in order that we are not obscured by a long interval. 117.24

If all things are established beforehand at once by the Creator's power with regard to their constitution, the distinct manifestation of visible things in the world are perfected by a certain natural order and sequence by a distinct intervals. 120.16

### **On the Making of Man** (Migne references)

If anyone now sees in the world's movement a certain order by which we observe a temporal interval, no one can say that stability receives. 209.22

If God who is simple by nature, immaterial, without quality, magnitude, composed of nothing, circumscribed by no form, contains all material in temporal extension...209.50

### **On the Soul and the Resurrection** (Migne references)

But the corporeal, is naturally composed by temporal intervals while the intellectual and transcendent nature does not admit passions from the former (diastematic) realm. 48.26

Since the punishment of death is for transgressors of the law and death follows by necessity, human life is two-fold, one corporeal and another outside the body which is not bound by temporal intervals but is circumscribed by a very small temporal boundary. 81.37

### **Commentary on the Song of Songs**

This field, even if it is called a valley in comparison to the life of heaven, is in no way less a field, and the soul that is well tended in it is not prevented from being a flower. From this hollow valley the shoot rises up to the heights just as in the case of a lily. Quite often a lily's green shoot runs up to the heights from its roots like a reed; then the flower spreads out on the top. There is also quite a distance between the flower and the ground. 114.7

For who does not know that at the beginning the assembly from among the nations was dark from idolatry before it became the Church? It lived far from knowledge of the true God and was separated by a great gulf of ignorance. 205.8

The dead center of a completely bounded object is determined by its equidistance from the circumference. Because a circle has one center, it can never have two centers occupying the same location. 349.6

But in the second restoration, an interval of time necessarily accompanies those pursuing the first good. Because our minds incline towards evil, our association with evil is removed like bark which is gradually scraped off by a more becoming life. 458.20

### **Against Fate**

As a result, they firmly believe that the stars' light advances and recedes according to their respective orbits, and that the superior light succeeds and hides the inferior light from view. Once the inferior becomes obscured, the following is supposed to happen: a different form appears when the star's revolution encompasses the one lying behind it so that the greater either immediately overshadows it or makes this star turn aside. The orbit occurs in either a brief or longer temporal interval according to the revolution's size which bears a necessary correlation to the speed or slowness of each circuit. 36.10

In like manner, a person who diligently applies himself to the stars above and considers each one knows their strength by the way in which they are combined. Their influence is not identical with respect to a brief period of time; instead, their movement never remains the same with respect to other stars, and varying degrees of movement from these stars continuously affects their particular motion. In a short period of time each star's property influences life by foretelling and influencing [the fate of] every person. Just as a seal impresses its form upon wax, so a person whose life is influenced by the stars' movement conforms to their properties and retains their influence right from the beginning. Having been sealed in such a manner, this influence expands to one's activities because the stars have determined his beginning and continue to motivate him. 39.1

All types of movement have one measure of time whether or not it is from one place to another. If

fate does not cause temporal interruptions with regard to the flow of rivers, motion of ships or our wander-ings, how can the stars' movement be responsible for them? How can you claim that observation of the stars enables us to per-ceive the influence of fate upon an hour or frac-tion of an hour? 45.21

### **Concerning Infants Who Have Died Prematurely**

It is agreed that the universe has one cause and is not responsible for bringing itself into existence. But the universe as a whole is always uncreated, eternal, self-contained, transcends every concept of measurement, remains constant, is infinite and transcends all bounds. Its nature, time, space and everything in it lies beyond our grasp even if we could grasp anything which existed before it. Divinely inspired teaching also includes human nature. God brings everything into existence; man's created nature is composed of various elements; it is also carefully composed from what is both divine and intelligible. 77.8

### **Diastasis**

#### **Against Eunomius, I**

Every discursive effort of thought to go back beyond the ages will ascend only so far as to see that that which it seeks can never be passed through: time and its contents seem the measure and the limit of the movement and the working of human thought, but that which lies beyond remains outside its reach. 135.24 (69)

So that there is no gulf whatever between the being of the Son and the being of the Spirit is shown by the identity of the power which gives them their subsistence. 142.26 (72)

### **Concerning Those Who Have Died**

After a day's journey, Moses was illumined by rays of light, that Once the soul is no longer identified with appearances after exiting the body, it is united to that good which is in accord with its nature. No more does the sight of beautiful colors entice the eye, nor do we choose anything else which delights the senses; every bodily perception has now been shaken off. There only remains immaterial thought which comprehends its own good because it freely perceives spiritual beauty which lacks color, form, interval and quantity while at the same time it transcends anything we may conjecture. 48.23