

**Fourth Century Christian Education: An Analysis of Basil's *Ad
Adolescentes***

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Abstract

This thesis explores Basil's *Ad Adolescentes* as the composition of a highly educated bishop who was well grounded in classical *paideia*, but also deeply influenced by the thoughts and writings of his Christian predecessors. Despite the long-running debate about the appropriateness of a classical education for a Christian, the reality of the Fourth Century meant that officials and clerics alike had been trained by means of traditional literature. In a world where Christianity was no bar to public office, the common educational experience became important since a mutual appreciation of *paideia* enabled magistrates, bishops and orators to relate to one another regardless of their religious convictions. Consequently, the sons of Christians attended school fully aware of potential career opportunities in the secular sphere, since faith and office appeared no longer at odds. It was in this climate that Basil composed *Ad Adolescentes*, addressing himself to Christian youths embarking on higher education with a range of possibilities before them.

In this thesis Basil's text is analysed and discussed by a combination of thematic introduction and commentary: the thematic chapters consider the subject, purposes and specific and broader contexts of the *Ad Adolescentes* and the previous scholarship on the work in this regard; the commentary explicates relevant details in the text and offers close analysis which supports interpretations offered in the introduction. Chapters 1 and 2 consider the views of previous scholars on the text and the educational context relevant to Basil's audience. The subsequent two chapters address the question of literary influence and the traditional methods employed in the interpretation of classical texts by both Christian and pagan educationalists. The final introductory chapter explores the propaedeutic nature of the text and identifies the manner in which Basil sought to synthesise lessons from traditional literature with homiletic themes, in anticipation of the secular and Christian responsibilities available to his audience.

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List of Abbreviations

<i>Adolescens</i>	<i>Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat</i>
<i>Adv. Eos</i>	<i>Homilia adversus eos qui irascuntur</i>
<i>Adv. Opp.</i>	<i>Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae</i>
<i>Attende tibi</i>	<i>Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi</i>
<i>De Cohib.</i>	<i>De cohibenda ira</i>
<i>De Idol.</i>	<i>De Idolatria</i>
<i>De Inani</i>	<i>De inani gloria et de educandis liberis</i>
<i>De Lib.</i>	<i>De liberis educandis</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
GNaz	Gregory Nazianzus
GNys	Gregory of Nyssa
HE	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
Hex.	<i>Homiliae in hexaemeron</i>
JChrys	John Chrysostom
Lampe	Lampe, A <i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> (Oxford, 1961)
LSJ	Liddell, Scott & Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Oxford, 1940)
OCD	Hornblower & Spawforth, <i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , 3 rd edition (Oxford, 1996)
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orationes</i>
<i>Paed.</i>	<i>Paedagogus</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , ed. J.P.Migne
<i>Quis Suos</i>	<i>Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus</i>
<i>Reg. Fus.</i>	<i>Asceticon magnum sive Quaestiones (regulae fusius tractatae)</i> PG 31.1052-1305
<i>Rep</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Somnium</i>	<i>Somnium sive vita Luciani</i>
<i>Str.</i>	<i>Stromata</i>
<i>VMac.</i>	<i>Vita Macrinae</i>
<i>WD</i>	<i>Works and Days</i>

Chapter 1. Basil's biography and education in the fourth century

Basil's biography

Basil of Caesarea appears to have presented something of an enigma to historical scholars. He was a prolific letter-writer and preacher of many homilies, as well as the subject of two panegyrics by his friend and his brother,¹ and is mentioned, along with Gregory Nazianzen in Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*.² Meredith maintains that as a consequence of the literary evidence by or concerning Basil more is probably known about him than any other ancient writer, except for Cicero and St Augustine,³ but at the same time, Rousseau concludes that he was 'probably rather odd',⁴ and suggests that 'he never gave the impression of having found a settled point of view'.⁵ However, despite Rousseau's assessment, Basil had a 'far-ranging legacy'⁶ and it is a testament to the man's ascetic and philanthropic lifestyle, plus his efforts on behalf of orthodoxy within the church, that only 70 years after his death, the Council of Churches at Chalcedon declared him to have been 'the greatest of the fathers.'⁷

Basil was born in AD 330 in Caesarea as the eldest son to Basil and Emmelia. They would go on to have eight more children, of whom three became bishops and five were eventually canonised.⁸ Basil the Elder was a 'sophist rhetorician' of some standing in Caesarea,⁹ and both he and his wife were the children and grandchildren of Christians and celebrated the fact that their family had been persecuted in the days before Constantine's conversion to Christianity.¹⁰ Basil's maternal grandmother, the elder Macrina had been connected with Gregory Thaumaturgus, and in *Ep.* 204 and 223 he details his upbringing and Christian education in her capable hands.¹¹

¹ GNaz, *Or.* 43 (PG 36.493-605) and GNys, *In laudem fratris Basilii* (PG 46.788-817).

² Socrates, *HE* 4.26.

³ Anthony Meredith, *The Cappadocians* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995) 20.

⁴ Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) xiii.

⁵ *Ibid.* 1.

⁶ Stephen M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: a synthesis of Greek thought and biblical truth* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007) preface.

⁷ Richard Travers Smith, *St Basil the Great* (London: SPCK, 1879) 46.

⁸ In addition to Basil, GNys and Peter of Sebaste had careers in the church. These three all became saints, as well as their brother Naucratus who lived a life of ascetic seclusion and their sister Macrina.

⁹ P. J. Fedwick, "Basil of Caesarea on education," in *Atti del Congresso internazionale su Basilio di Cesarea, la sua età e il Basiliansimo in Sicilia* (Università degli studi di Messina, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, 3-6 dicembre 1979), I (Centro di Studi umanistici, 1983) 582, and Rousseau, *Basil* 5.

¹⁰ See Rousseau, *Basil* 3-5 for the regard in which Basil and his family held their distinguished Christian ancestors. GNaz, *Or.* 43.5-8.

¹¹ *Ep.* 204.6 and 223.3.

Although he was a Christian, Basil was educated in the manner typical of a wealthy young man of the time, probably by his father in Caesarea,¹² then by Libanius in Constantinople¹³ and finally by the eminent Prohaeresius and Himerius in the centre of learning and philosophy itself, Athens.¹⁴ He spent five years on the final stages of his education,¹⁵ before returning to Caesarea with the intention to become a teacher of rhetoric himself.¹⁶

The education of the fourth century

Basil's educational career, which spanned so many years, was typical of the time in its methods, but the extent of Basil's experience was not common to the majority of schoolboys, whether pagan or Christian.¹⁷ As a member of the wealthy elite, Basil and his peers had the privilege of an extensive education and access to the best teachers at all stages of the school curriculum, and this section will detail the practices involved in the education of young nobles to prepare them for their place within the wider world.¹⁸

¹² GNaz, *Or.* 43.12.

¹³ GNaz, *Or.* 43.14 on Basil's going to Byzantium. See Raffaella Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 100-104 for a discussion about Basil's relationship with Libanius and their subsequent correspondence. Also Rousseau, *Basil* 57-60.

¹⁴ Rousseau, *Basil* 31. Assessments of the cultural and educational standing of the city in the fourth century vary. Raffaella Cribiore, "The Value of a Good Education: Libanius and Public Authority," in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau (2009) 235 suggests that Athens was a desired school destination because of its former reputation rather than as a result of any superlative teachers and intellectual thought at the time, while Nigel Guy Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*, [Duckworth classical, medieval, and renaissance editions] (London: Duckworth, 1983) 36 maintains that the city was 'probably at its peak in the fourth century' with large numbers of teachers who attracted students from all over the empire.

¹⁵ 349-355.

¹⁶ GNys, *VMac.* 966c.

¹⁷ For the vast majority of males in antiquity Basil's experience of schooling would have been totally alien, since most could only afford the most basic level of learning. Literacy was considered to be the most effective means for the lower classes in society to achieve some degree of wealth and power (Libanius, *Or.* 42.23-25; JChrys, *Adv. Opp.* 3.5), and for this reason parents strove to send their children to school. However, while William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) 289 suggests that there were some 'elementary schools accessible to fairly poor people', he also maintains that 'it should not ... be thought that the system sent large numbers of the sons of the poor to school.'

¹⁸ The standard work on ancient education has long been Henri Irene Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1948), but for more recent publications which include detail about fourth century AD see Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: the grammarian and society in Late Antiquity*, *The Transformation of the Classical Heritage*; 11 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) and Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the mind: Greek education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also Ronald F. Hock, "Homer in Greco-Roman Education," in *Mimesis and intertextuality in antiquity and Christianity*, ed. Dennis Ronald MacDonald (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001) 69 for the aim of education.

There were broadly three stages in the Roman education system, closely modelled on those established in Classical Greece.¹⁹ Schooling began for boys²⁰ around the age of 7, when they started to attend classes with the primary teacher, the *grammatistes*. The aim of this first level of education was for the child to acquire a knowledge of basic literacy and numeracy,²¹ and boys practised their letters by copying the names of gods and heroes from classical literature.²² Jerome recommends that a ‘set of letters made of boxwood or ivory’ should be bought for the young girl Paula so that she could become familiar with the sounds and shapes through her play.²³ However, his suggestion that the training given to Paula should be enjoyable seems a marked contrast to Augustine’s recollections of his schooldays, about which he says: ‘I was put to school to get learning, of which I (worthless as I was) knew not what use there was; and yet, if slow to learn, I was flogged!’²⁴ Given that corporal punishment appears to have been a certain feature in ancient schools, Augustine’s experience was perhaps more common than that imagined by Jerome.²⁵ At this basic level students became familiar with Homer, in part because of his use for copying exercises, but they also read a smattering of Euripides and learned quotations from Isocrates.²⁶

For the second stage of education a pupil went to the grammarian where he practised ‘reading aloud’,²⁷ and began his real foray into literature. At this level he read and memorised a considerable amount of Homer,²⁸ as well as becoming particularly familiar with Hesiod,²⁹ Euripides³⁰ and Menander,³¹ in addition to encountering other poets.

¹⁹ Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* 265. Criore, *Gymnastics* 2 points out that although the literary sources show ‘three well-defined stages of schooling supervised by different teachers,’ in reality the system was ‘more fluid’ than has been maintained. However, despite her assertion that ‘organisation, structure, teachers’ functions, and even contents of the curriculum ... depended on situational circumstances’ she continues to refer to the usual division of classes as being ‘broadly realistic’. The point to remember is that there were few hard and fast rules about the ages of children in the different stages of education.

²⁰ There is evidence to suggest that girls could also attend primary schools (Martial, *Epigrammata* IX.68.2), but the number of female pupils was probably very small, and most did not continue to the later stages. Wealthy girls would have had tutors to teach them basic reading and writing. See Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4 on the education of Paula and GNys, *VMac.* 962d-964a on his mother’s emphasis on biblical studies as the most appropriate education for Christian women.

²¹ Criore, *Gymnastics* 50.

²² Henri Ir Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York,: Sheed and Ward, 1956) 162; Hock, "Homer in Greco-Roman Education," 62.

²³ *Ep.* 107.4

²⁴ *Confessions* 9.14.

²⁵ Marrou, *History of Education* 272.

²⁶ Criore, *Gymnastics* 179.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 190.

²⁸ See *ibid.* 194 and Xenophon, *Symposium* 3.5 for the high regard in which Homer was held in antiquity.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 197.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 198.

Laistner and Marrou suggest that during their time with the grammarian students would have ‘become ... acquainted with prose literature’,³² but Cribiore maintains that although ‘a good knowledge of prose writers was part of the cultural baggage of a grammarian his students actually approached literature almost exclusively though poetic works. Education had always been strictly connected to criticism and interpretation of the poets.’³³ To supplement their literary studies, students would also learn about grammar and the intricate workings of language and style.³⁴

For many students, contact with the grammarian marked the culmination of their education, but this was not necessarily seen as a disadvantage. The school system had no method of formal examination, and rather than trying to ensure that all pupils reached the same standard, ‘teachers aimed at leading each student up to the level of literacy demanded by that pupil’s place in the social and economic pyramid’.³⁵ Few of those who learned from the grammarian continued to the classes of the rhetor, and it did not matter greatly. The experience of the second level of education was a common one to members of the upper class in society and marked an individual out as a man of taste and culture.³⁶ It set him on the road to his future career,³⁷ and ‘provided entry into the network of personal relationships and patronage that could lead to wealth, offices and good marriages.’³⁸

The third level of education, the study of rhetoric, was accessible to only the very few, elite, wealthy students,³⁹ and began when a boy reached around 14 or 15 years old. Although the fundamental shaping of a student’s mind was carried out by the grammarian, ‘a rhetorical education provided an entrée to positions of power,’⁴⁰ and

³¹ For the ‘four pillars’ of classical education see M. L. W. Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture in the Later Roman Empire* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1951; repr., 1967; 1978) 11 and Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* 19.

³² Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture* 11; Marrou, *History of Education* 278.

³³ Cribiore, *Gymnastics* 192.

³⁴ For Basil and most others in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire, the language appears to have been exclusively Greek, but in the West the focus would have been on both languages together (Marrou (1956) p274-9). Robert Browning, *The Emperor Julian* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975) 34 asserts that Julian was well versed in both languages, but Ammianus Marcellinus suggests that his Latin was adequate for conversation (16.5.7).

³⁵ Cribiore, *Gymnastics* 44.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 3; 53.

³⁷ Kaster, *Guardians of Language* 26; Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture* 17.

³⁸ Kaster, *Guardians of Language* 28.

³⁹ Cribiore, *Gymnastics* 3: ‘class and status – and, to a much lesser extent, merit – determined who continued’ in education.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 56; Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*, The Curti lectures; 1988 (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992) 38.

those who sought careers in the law or the high echelons of Imperial administration would certainly have continued to higher education.⁴¹ During this stage a student would continue to read poetry, but would also discover the prose authors, in particular Demosthenes and other orators, as well as the historians.⁴² The purpose of reading such works was less for literary criticism, as would have been practised with the grammarian, but more to study methods of oratory and discover ways to apply rhetorical technique.⁴³ The ability to express oneself eloquently and persuasively was an essential skill for those entering public life in any capacity.⁴⁴

The moral education

Education opened up a whole range of possibilities to the young man who had been taught by the grammarian and rhetor, but in reality to be educated meant much more than simply knowing facts and being familiar with a range of poets. Success in education was characterised by hard work (πόνος),⁴⁵ and the discipline of the ‘gymnastics of the mind’⁴⁶ could also be translated to the effort required to overcome bad habits of a moral kind. Education was the ‘gymnastic of the soul’:⁴⁷ the means by which a young man trained himself towards philosophy and moral virtue.⁴⁸ Hence for the ancients, an educated man was a moral man.⁴⁹

Education and moral virtue were linked because of the concept of *paideia*. The word ‘which originally meant ‘child rearing’, was conceived as a slow vegetable growth that affected people through the course of their lives and embraced more than the purely

⁴¹ Cribiore, *Gymnastics* 3.

⁴² A. F. Norman, "The Library of Libanius," *Rheinisches Museum* 107(1964) 159 details the reading suggested for pupils by Libanius, following the advice of Dio Chrysostom.

⁴³ Marrou, *History of Education* 200. Also see Hock, "Homer in Greco-Roman Education," 69-76 for a summary of the activities undertaken as part of the rhetorical training.

⁴⁴ Cribiore, "Good Education," 238-241 on the advancement of those who had been given the advantages of a rhetorical education. Eloquence did not only have to be displayed in public speech, but also in appeals to those in power by means of letters. Brown, *Power and Persuasion* 46 discusses the way that the language of epistles pointed to a common educational experience which the writer and recipient shared and therefore made the requests contained in letters more about equals granting each other favours rather than being the appeal ‘of a suppliant to a superior.’

⁴⁵ Cribiore, *Gymnastics* 222; 281.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 128-9.

⁴⁷ Kaster, *Guardians of Language* 15.

⁴⁸ Cribiore, *Gymnastics* 220 for education’s appropriation of Hesiod’s image of the philosopher climbing the steep hill towards virtue.

⁴⁹ Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture* 15-16, quoting Julian, *Ep.* 36: ‘We believe that a true education results, not in carefully acquired symmetry of phrases and language, but in a healthy state of mind, which has understanding and true opinions about things good and evil, honourable and base.’

intellectual.⁵⁰ It was used to define culture as well as literary and other knowledge, and the concept encapsulated the unwritten rules which governed how men of the upper classes related to one another.⁵¹ It was the value placed on the concept of *paideia* which enabled Christians, in the East particularly, to view classical literature in a reasonably positive light, despite strong religious objections to the content of many works.

Paideia

From the earliest days of the church, Christians had questioned the value of the ‘wisdom of the pagans’. Following Paul’s declaration that God had put to shame the wisdom of the wise, instead choosing to reveal his mysteries to the foolish and childlike of the world,⁵² the apologists had sought either to reject outright the words of the philosophers and poets of old, or to reconcile Christian morality and pagan virtue. In the West in particular⁵³ it became a commonplace to rage against an education system which depended on religious festivals to define the school year and used the stories of false gods as the basis of its curriculum.⁵⁴

However, there was something ironic in the fact that the very people who denounced classical literature so vociferously had received the benefit of an extensive education based on the classics, often before their conversion to Christianity.⁵⁵ They objected to children being exposed to pagan gods yet made no attempt to develop a system which could deliver all the same skills and benefits without the religious dangers, and indeed even if an attempt had been made it is doubtful that it would have had very much appeal, even to the most faithful Christian parent.⁵⁶ As Cameron points out: ‘traditional grammatical and rhetorical education was felt to fill the secular needs of society...changing the educational system would have meant changing the definition of culture, in effect the definition of the elite. The traditional system had the irreplaceable practical advantage of having standards that were accepted in every corner of the

⁵⁰ Cribiore, *Gymnastics* 243.

⁵¹ Ibid. 281; Brown, *Power and Persuasion* 122.

⁵² 1 Corinthians 1.19; see Matthew 11.25 for a similar sentiment from the lips of Jesus.

⁵³ Kaster, *Guardians of Language* 72.

⁵⁴ Most famously, Tertullian objected to Christians working as teachers: *De Idol.* 10 and asked ‘What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?’ (*De praescriptione haereticorum* 7.9).

⁵⁵ Augustine, *Confessions* 13 describes how he delighted in Latin literature and wept over the fate of Dido as a boy, but expresses regret that he had no concern for his own immortal soul at that time in his life.

⁵⁶ Indeed, the Apollinarii did set about trying to create Biblically based versions of epic and tragic poetry following Julian’s *Rescript on Christian Teachers* in 362, but after the death of Julian their works disappeared, suggesting the traditional texts continued to be favoured by Christians. (Socrates, *HE* 3.16; Sozomen, *HE* 5.18).

Roman world.⁵⁷ Classical literature was the means by which young nobles were prepared for their place in the world, whether they were pagan or Christian, and it did not matter how many Tertullians declaimed against it, parents would continue to send their sons to the grammarian.⁵⁸

Another reason for the absence of a school system based on Christian texts may be that by Late Antiquity it was only in the West that education was regarded as representative of the Christian-pagan divide.⁵⁹ For Eastern Christians the culture and literature of the Greeks were always viewed as a part of their own culture,⁶⁰ and they did not seek to reject the ‘outside wisdom’ in favour of received Christian revelation. In contrast to Tertullian, Origen suggested that ‘the educated Christian ... occupied the enviable position of the connoisseur’.⁶¹ He could survey the whole range of classical literature and take from it the truth, while rejecting the false.⁶² Eastern Christians operated within a world where a common emphasis on *paideia* meant that bishops and Christians working in official positions could interact with pagans in the same positions as equals.⁶³ Christian children continued to be educated in the same way as their pagan predecessors had for hundreds of years, because ‘at a purely practical level there was simply no alternative preparation for public life.’⁶⁴

Basil's higher education and subsequent career

Gregory Nazianzen maintains that Basil was a brilliant scholar in Athens, although his Christian commitment was equal to his devotion to his studies.⁶⁵ After he left Greece, Basil appears to have travelled in the East, but then in 355 returned to his native Caesarea in order to begin a career as a rhetorician like his father, who had died previously.⁶⁶ Presumably he would have been a very successful and skilled rhetorical

⁵⁷ Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) 357.

⁵⁸ The only evidence we have for a real ‘alternative’ education for the male offspring of a good family is the education given to Basil’s youngest brother Peter by his mother and sister, as described in GNys, *VMac.* 972b-d. However, Neil McLynn, “The Manna from Uncle: Basil of Caesarea’s *Address to Young Men*,” *Unclassical Traditions* (2010) 114 asserts that this entirely Christian ‘freakish’ upbringing would never have been adopted by a self-respecting father.

⁵⁹ Kaster, *Guardians of Language* 74.

⁶⁰ Cameron, *Last Pagans* 7.

⁶¹ Kaster, *Guardians of Language* 74.

⁶² Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Oratio Panegyrica* 14 details Origen’s technique of presenting the truthful elements of different philosophies to his pupils.

⁶³ Brown, *Power and Persuasion* 39; 122.

⁶⁴ Cameron, *Last Pagans* 357.

⁶⁵ GNaz, *Or.* 43.21.

⁶⁶ Probably in 346 according to Fedwick, “Basil of Caesarea on education,” 585.

teacher, since Gregory of Nyssa states that he returned home full of importance because of his great skill.⁶⁷ As a consequence of the influence of his sister, Macrina, Basil was persuaded to adopt the ascetic lifestyle and he moved to a retreat in Pontus, rejecting his secular career. He spent several years at the retreat with some involvement in church affairs, during which time he was ordained.⁶⁸ He became bishop of Caesarea in 370 and died on 1st January, 379.⁶⁹

Despite the many years that he spent in education, Basil makes very little reference to his schooling and in comparison with his friend and his brother alludes to a relatively small amount of classical literature in his writings.⁷⁰ That he was comfortable with using classical language and literature cannot be doubted: his epistles contain allusions suitable to his audience when the occasion calls for it,⁷¹ but he is reticent about showing his knowledge in other contexts.

Basil recalls his studies in *Ep.* 223, written to Eustathius of Sebaste in order to assert his orthodox opinions, and he refers to the many years that he spent on ‘vanity’ in the schools. He writes that he ‘consumed almost all [his] youth in the futility ... with the acquirement of the precepts of that wisdom made foolish by God,’ before he ‘looked out on the marvellous light of the truth of the gospel.’⁷² This letter has been viewed as Basil’s total rejection of classical learning and certainly he appears to have regarded literature as fairly unimportant in his exposition of sermons and in his letters, but that does not mean that he did not see the value in an education based on the traditional texts of the school curriculum. After all, while he may have chosen not to display his own wide knowledge, he nonetheless owned a debt to the grammarians and rhetors who had trained him in the *paideia* that enabled him to communicate so effectively with both pagans and Christians in a variety of contexts.

⁶⁷ GNys, *VMac* 966c: although Basil is criticised for being ‘puffed up’ with himself, there is no suggestion that his estimation of his abilities was wrong.

⁶⁸ Rousseau, *Basil* 1-2.

⁶⁹ Although see *ibid.* Appendix 3 for dispute about the date of his death.

⁷⁰ Raymond Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow: Roman rule and Greek culture in Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) 180: Basil ‘seems to have removed classical culture from his everyday life.’

⁷¹ E.g. *Ep.* 74; 186; 334; 339; 348.

⁷² *Ep.* 223.

Basil's writings

As has been mentioned, Basil was a prolific letter-writer and the collection of his correspondence numbers 368 epistles, most sent by him.⁷³ He also preached a large number of sermons in the course of his career, and published works relating to the ascetic life and regulations governing the conduct of those living in Christian communities.⁷⁴

This thesis is concerned primarily with his work *Ad Adolescentes*, but also refers to other writings by Basil.

Thesis outline

This thesis analyses the literature which influenced Basil's composition of his address and how he explores his sermon themes in a way which shows he is addressing the young rather than an adult Christian audience by means of thematic chapters. These introductory discussions consider current modern scholarship in connection with the *Ad Adolescentes* and questions of classical education, the interpretation of texts and homiletic literature. The thesis provides the author's translation of the work alongside the Greek text from the Loeb edition. The following commentary highlights Basil's use of previous texts, his incorporation of pagan and Christian literature into his work and offers analysis which supports interpretations suggested in the thematic introduction. It considers the development of Basil's argument from the starting point grounded in the idea of the classical education system to an introduction and exhortation to the Christian life and Basil's conviction that his young audience can be encouraged to develop themselves into responsible members of the church and society, being aware of their thoughts and actions and being prepared to make a full commitment to their faith.

Chapter 1: Basil's biography and education in the fourth century.

Chapter 2: Scholarship and setting of *Ad Adolescentes*.

Chapter 3: Pagan and Christian influences.

Chapter 4: The intellectual context of Basil's time and his use of allegory.

⁷³ Included in the collection are a number of letters sent to Basil by various correspondents, including his friend GNaz, the rhetor Libanius and the Emperor Julian.

⁷⁴ Paul Jonathan Fedwick, "A Chronology of the Life and Works of Basil of Caesarea," in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian Humanist, Ascetic: A Sixteen-Hundred Anniversary Symposium*, ed. Paul Jonathan Fedwick (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1981) sets out the probably dates of publication of Basil's different works.

Chapter 5: Basil's homilies and their relation to *Ad Adolescentes*.

Chapter 6: Text and translation of *Ad Adolescentes*.

Chapter 7: Commentary.

The base text used is the Loeb text published in Deferrari, R. J. and McGuire, M. R. P. (1924) *Saint Basil, the Letters*. London, New York,; W. Heinemann; G. P. Putnam's sons, available for scholarship through the Perseus website at:

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:2008.01.0638>.

Padelford's 1902 translation is available online at

http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/fathers/basil_litterature01.html, but the translation used in the thesis is the author's.

Where relevant, matters of textual reading are discussed in the commentary.

Other works used in the thesis

The Long Rules (Regulae Fusius Tractatae, PG 31. 1052-1305): These questions and answers about the conduct and daily life of monks in Basil's communities were probably first published in short form in around 366, but appear to have been added to and revised throughout much of Basil's life.⁷⁵ The rules are useful for this thesis because of the recommendations they make about the treatment and education of children who were brought up in the monastery, since Basil appears to consider that the education of such children should be different in several respects to the traditional education system of his day.

Homilies: These were composed and delivered during the period of Basil's 'ecclesiastical ministry' between 363-370.⁷⁶ This thesis looks in particular at the sermons *On the Words 'Give Heed to Thyself'* (*Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi* PG 31.197-217) and *Against those who are Prone to Anger* (*Homilia adversos eos qui irascuntur*, PG 31.353-372).

Translations of the homilies and *Long Roles* are taken from Wagner, Monica M. *Ascetical Works of Saint Basil*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1950.

⁷⁵ Anna Silvas, *The Asketikon of St Basil the Great*, Oxford early Christian studies (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 2.

⁷⁶ Fedwick, "Chronology " 9.

Epistles: Basil's letters are referred to throughout the thesis where appropriate. The numbering system and translation used is that in in Deferrari, R. J. and McGuire, M. R. P. (1924) *Saint Basil, the Letters*. London, New York,: W. Heinemann; G. P. Putnam's sons.

Chapter 2. Scholarship and setting of *Ad Adolescentes*

Ad Adolescentes

Of all Basil's writings, *Ad Adolescentes* or the *Address to the Young Men on How They Might Profit from Pagan Literature*, as the full English title goes, is the 'best known and most widely disseminated of Basil's works'.¹ It appears not to have been particularly valued during late antiquity, but was given a new lease of life in the Latin translation by Bruni published early in the 15th century, and afterwards was viewed as an important document used to justify and advocate the study of the Classics by Renaissance thinkers throughout Europe.² Coming as it does from a Christian who appears to reject classical learning elsewhere in his writings, this could be viewed as a strange piece, but Basil's reference to his own secular education and acquisition of worldly knowledge as ματαιότης³ does not indicate that he regarded traditional education as something to be shunned. Rather, as an educated bishop he was more aware than most of the benefits conferred by education, and determined to pass those benefits onto another generation of Christians: whether future church leaders or secular officials.

Ad Adolescentes in modern scholarship

Perhaps as a consequence of this work being largely ignored in antiquity there is little external evidence to enable scholars to attach a firm date of composition to the piece, and the various dates proposed range over the last 24 years of Basil's life. The view that the piece was written during Basil's episcopate, sometime in the 370s, is maintained by most early scholars, and based on the fact that Basil writes about himself as: 'being of a certain age', and experienced in the ways of the world through the many situations he has encountered.⁴ Indeed Wilson argues that the words would appear 'intolerably sententious'⁵ coming from the mouth of a man younger than his mid-forties. However,

¹ Roy Joseph Deferrari and Martin Rawson Patrick McGuire, *Saint Basil, the Letters*, 4 vols. (London, New York: W. Heinemann; G. P. Putnam's sons, 1924) Vol. 4, 371.

² Schucan (1973), summarised in e.g. McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 107; Wendy E. Helleman, "Basil's *Ad Adolescentes*: Guidelines for Reading the Classics," in *Christianity and the Classics: The Acceptance of a Heritage*, ed. Wendy E. Helleman (1990) 31.

³ *Vanity* (*Ep.* 223).

⁴ *Ad Adol.* 1.1.

⁵ Nigel Guy Wilson, *Saint Basil on the Value of Greek Literature* (London: Duckworth, 1975) 9.

the notion that this is a work composed by an ageing bishop nearing the ‘end of a life of wide experience’⁶ has been challenged for a variety of reasons.

In her article of 1972, Ann Moffatt argued that the work could have been composed as early as 355, which would coincide with Basil leaving Athens and returning home to Caesarea to take up a position as a teacher of rhetoric.⁷ There are problems with this view however, since it relies on the statement that ‘Basil’s sisters were up to ten years older than him’, and therefore could potentially have had teenage children to be the addressees of the work by the mid-350s.⁸ The original premise is awry, since Rousseau⁹ states that Macrina, Basil’s oldest sister, was born in 327, only three years before Basil himself and she did not marry.¹⁰ Although arguing the possibility of the very early date, Moffatt follows Bardy, and settles on the idea that Basil was composing his work as an immediate reaction to Julian’s school law of 362 which was issued at the same time as the emperor wrote to Atarbius on the subject.¹¹ The two statements together made it clear that Julian’s intentions were to force Christians out of the teaching profession, prompting a backlash from educated believers, and therefore Moffatt places the delivery of the address somewhere in 362-3.¹² The notion that Basil had the Rescript in mind as he wrote this piece is an appealing one, despite the fact that Van Dam maintains that Julian ‘seems not to have registered in his historical awareness’¹³ and states that Basil did not seek to engage in public arguments about the role of classical education in the lives of Christians. Certainly there are signs that Basil is thinking of the dangers that pagan teachers might pose to Christian students in the address, since he explicitly states that they need extra advice from him, even though they ‘go to school every day at the

⁶ Emmanuel Amand De Mendieta, "The Official Attitude of Basil of Caesarea as a Christian Bishop towards Greek Philosophy and Science," in *The 14th Summer Meeting and the 15th Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History* (Basil Blackwell, 1976) 25.

⁷ Ann Moffatt, "The Occasion of St Basil's *Address to Young Men*," *Antichthon* 6(1972) 76.

⁸ *Ibid.* 76.

⁹ Rousseau, *Basil* 4.

¹⁰ GNys, *VMac.* 964d: She was engaged to an excellent young man, but when he died ‘she would say that it was absurd and unlawful not to be faithful to the marriage that had been arranged for her by her father’, and refused another suitor.

¹¹ Julian, *Ep.* 36.

¹² Moffatt, "Occasion," 74: Bardy (1935) maintains Address was one of ‘four great Christian replies to the issues raised in Emperor Julian’s Rescript on Christian teachers’; 83. It is unlikely, however, that the facts would have circulated as quickly as Moffatt anticipates, and even if it were the reason for the address it would not necessarily be useful in identifying the date of composition. After all, GNaz’s *Invectives Against Julian* were only written after the emperor’s death.

¹³ Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow* 184.

house of the teacher',¹⁴ and he warns them not to accept everything they are given, because sweet honey could disguise deadly poison.¹⁵

Other scholars who give support to the thesis of an earlier date include Rist, Van Dam and McLynn. They view the purpose of the work differently (see below), but generally place it somewhere in the mid-360s; with Rist and McLynn connecting it to Basil's activity within the spheres of education.¹⁶

It appears unlikely that Basil composed this work very late in his life, since his comment towards the end of the address that 'I will counsel you about [important things] through the whole of your life'¹⁷ does seem to envisage some considerable time in contact with these young men in the future. On the other hand, the notion that the work might have had its genesis in the early 360s as Moffatt suggests also appears difficult. The exact ages of Basil's sisters are not known. The only one we can date with confidence is the eldest, Macrina, in 327, and as mentioned above she did not marry or have children. However, it is possible to gain more clues about the potential dates for the weddings of the younger sisters from Gregory of Nyssa's account of Macrina's life. Gregory writes that Macrina's father arranged her marriage when she came of age, but unfortunately her fiancé died before the nuptials could be celebrated.¹⁸ Therefore Macrina would have been married before her father died in 346. Gregory also states that Basil returned from studying in Athens in 355, after his 'mother had arranged marriages for her daughters'.¹⁹ Since it is the mother who arranged the weddings of Macrina's sisters rather than the father, this would imply that Basil's sisters were all married

¹⁴ *Ad Adol.* 1.4.

¹⁵ *Ad Adol.* 4.3. For an analysis of Basil's use of honey and bee imagery in this work, and the suggestion that it is closely related to Julian's Rescript of Christian teachers, see Jennifer Helen Gane, "'How Doth the Little Busy Bee...': The Use of Apian Imagery in Basil's 'On the Value of Pagan Literature'", *The School of Historical Studies Postgraduate Forum E-Journal* 5(2006).

¹⁶ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 112: In 365 Basil was 'much engaged with the world of professional paideia. Before he became established as a leader of the local church, he was actively soliciting contacts with Libanius in Antioch and sending students in his direction'; J.M. Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism': Its Background and Nature," in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian Humanist, Ascetic: A Sixteen-Hundred Anniversary Symposium: Part One*, ed. Paul Jonathan Fedwick (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1982) 219, n.340; Fedwick, "Chronology" 18-19 and Rousseau, *Basil* 49-50 consider the various dates proposed, but none come to a satisfactory conclusion.

¹⁷ *Ad Adol.* 10.7: Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἅ κράτιστα εἶναι κρίνω, τὰ μὲν νῦν εἰρηκα, τὰ δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν βίον ὑμῶν συμβουλευέσω. See LSJ for use of πᾶς with an article and noun to mean 'all of/ the whole of'.

¹⁸ *GNys, VMac.* 964c. The young man in question was an ideal Christian male, and Gregory says that he brought to 'his future father-in-law his fame in public speaking', but, being consistent with the Christian faith, the talent was used 'on behalf of the wronged.'

¹⁹ *GNys, VMac.* 966c.

sometime between 347 and 355. Therefore it is most likely that, if the work was intended for Basil's teenage nephews (see below), then it should probably be dated between 365-369; a time before Basil became embroiled in his bishop's activities, but was performing the role of parish priest, preaching sermons and regularly encountering his local congregation.²⁰

The audience

Just as in the problem of trying to identify the date of this work, there is no external evidence which can be used to determine the audience to whom Basil addresses himself. The first part of the text shows Basil's connection with the members of his audience, who he states are related to him 'by nature' and that he stands 'immediately after [their] parents' both in relationship and kindly feeling towards them.²¹ He implies that the friendly feeling is mutual, since they do not miss their fathers when they are with Basil instead.²² With some exceptions,²³ scholars tend to accept that the 'young men' addressed by Basil are the children of his younger sisters and therefore his nephews (or in some cases his nieces).²⁴ Accepting that these children are part of Basil's family also makes sense of the comment towards the end of the work where he states that he will continue to give advice to them throughout their lives,²⁵ since he can envisage no reason why they would not encounter each other at least at some stages in the future.

The assumption that Basil is addressing a group in his capacity as a priest could also be supported by the comment that he will continue to give them advice throughout their lives, since his pastoral oversight will carry on even as they leave his care (if they are

²⁰ See Fedwick, "Chronology" 17 on the fact that Basil's homilies were likely to have been composed during the period 363-370 'within the period of Basil's ecclesiastical ministry, as a presbyter and as a bishop in the diocese of Pontus.'

²¹ *Ad Adol.* 1.2.

²² McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 111 has an interesting view on this point. He argues that the youths are literally missing their fathers since they have come to study at Caesarea, possibly under the instruction of their other uncle, Gregory.

²³ Deferrari and McGuire, *Saint Basil, the Letters* 4, 365: a group of seminary students; Moffatt, "Occasion," 81: 'a group of teenage students'. She takes the close relationship to be that of a priest to his congregation rather than a physical familial bond.

²⁴ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 111: the connection between Basil and the youths must be 'literal blood relationship'; Sherman Garnett, "The Christian Young and the Secular World: St Basil's Letter on Pagan Literature," *Greek Theological Review* 26, no. 3 (1981) 212 does not identify an addressee, but suggests that Basil's claim of relationship is inserted as a way of presenting his pure motives, to avoid him being regarded as a sophist who claimed to impart wisdom in return for money. Wilson, *St Basil* 7 suggests that the work is addressed to Basil's 'nephews (and perhaps nieces)'. There is evidence for the education of girls in schools (see above, ch1, 3n.20) but they would have been unlikely to benefit from rhetorical schooling as the boys would have done.

²⁵ *Ad Adol.* 10.7.

presumed to be children raised in his monastery) or when they leave school.²⁶ However, the only other extant text where Basil purports to address young people is *Ep.* 43 which is to a single young ascetic, and appears to be more a homily than a letter.²⁷ The absence of other works addressed to groups of young people, despite the fact that Basil certainly had contact with the children raised in his monastery and did write to third parties about the methods which should be employed in the education of those children,²⁸ would seem to suggest that he was not in the habit of regularly addressing groups of children in his priestly capacity. Therefore it would make more sense to accept that this work was composed for a particular occasion when Basil wished to impart something important to a group of his relations, who were perhaps approaching a particular milestone or educational stage in their life.²⁹

If it is accepted that Basil is addressing his blood relations, the sons of his sisters, the next question is whether it can be determined what age the boys are likely to be. Scholars generally suggest that the youths are in the second stage of classical education, and that the teacher to whom Basil refers would have been the grammarian, and the boys probably 12-15 years old.³⁰ Moffatt states that the addressees of the work are ‘children at the beginning of their teens’.³¹ In gauging the ages of the youths scholars tend to look at the texts which Basil makes use of in the work and assess whether the boys would be familiar enough with all those quoted or alluded to so as to be able to follow the argument that Basil makes with the material he uses.³² As Kaster has pointed out³³ the educational curriculum was not uniform across the Empire, and the decisions about which texts should be encountered by school-boys was as much due to the availability of books as it was intellectual consideration. However, the youths would

²⁶ Moffatt, "Occasion," 75.

²⁷ Deferrari and McGuire, *Saint Basil, the Letters* 4, 240-1; 264-5 for the question of the authenticity of the letter.

²⁸ *Reg. Fus.* 15, in Monica M. Wagner, *Ascetical Works of Saint Basil* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1950) 264-268.

²⁹ Another reason why this work is more likely to be addressed to young men of Basil's family rather than the wards of the monks is the fact that it takes as its starting point the staple literary texts of a private education, rather than the ‘maxims from Proverbs’ and Bible stories that Basil advocates for those educated by the clergy (ibid. 266).

³⁰ See ch1, 3-5 above for a summary of the various stages of classical education.

³¹ Moffatt, "Occasion," 75.

³² This approach is mostly successful, but McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 111 states that Basil ‘spends much of his time talking [over the youths] heads’ and suggests that the references to Plutarch, *Quis Suos* would have been too sophisticated for teenage students. Wilson, *St Basil* 8 states that Hesiod was read at a ‘relatively early stage’ of schooling, but asserts that some references would have required ‘a considerable degree of knowledge, if not downright precocity.’

³³ Robert A. Kaster, "Notes on "Primary" and "Secondary" Schools in Late Antiquity," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 113(1983) 342; 346.

certainly have some familiarity with Homer, Hesiod and other poets, even if they had read little in the way of prose authors.³⁴

Another approach is to consider Basil's assessment of his audience's understanding of faith, virtue and literature and how it compares with the early church's views of children's abilities and levels of comprehension. It is not so much the specific texts that Basil uses which may be important, but rather how he expects his nephews to understand and make use of the examples which he provides them with that will show the stage of life these young men are at.

The internal evidence in the work is scant about both the specific identity and age of the youths. Basil states that they attend school each day and read classical literature³⁵ which would seem to put them in the 12-15 age range. However, while he argues that classical literature, despite its pagan origins, can be useful in providing lessons which will be beneficial for the cultivation of a virtuous Christian life, he does also state that Christian writings will be more helpful and appropriate for the task.³⁶ The problem he identifies with this is that he says the youths are not old enough to fully understand the mysteries contained within the Scriptures.³⁷ This is not to suggest that the Bible was considered too complicated for the young to read, but rather that the full extent of Christian revelation needed more maturity and greater familiarity with Biblical writings than the youths have at present. It is therefore most suitable for them to use their secular studies as a 'training ground' in readiness for their earnest Biblical study at a later date. Basil does not expect his nephews to have engaged in the study of Scripture at this point in their lives, however, that is not necessarily helpful in determining their ages unless it can be ascertained at what age children were generally considered capable of Biblical understanding and Christian commitment in the ancient world.

In his book *Adults & Children in the Roman Empire*, Thomas Wiedemann highlights the fundamental difference between adults and children as being one of reason. Children are, by definition, 'non-speakers' (*infantes*) because they lack the reason which enables

³⁴ Although he is a special case, Julian states that his tutor Mardonius taught him about Socrates through the works of Plato, as well as encouraging him to read Aristotle and Theophrastus when he was in Nicomedia (*Misopogon* 353c).

³⁵ *Ad Adol.* 1.4.

³⁶ *Ad Adol.* 10.1.

³⁷ *Ad Adol.* 2.5-6.

them to think through and therefore rationalise their actions.³⁸ It is for this reason that Seneca states that children cannot be taught philosophy in its proper sense, but instead may only be encouraged to learn philosophical maxims in the hope that they might gain understanding as they get older.³⁹ Likewise, in his discussion of the methods which ought to be used in the education of children, Plato reminds his audience that children find it hard to be serious and so need to be taught in a way that is playful rather than arduous.⁴⁰ In addition he cautions that the young are incapable of understanding allegorical stories, so advises that they should only be presented with characters and situations which will show ostensibly moral and praiseworthy qualities.⁴¹

It appears that Basil agrees with this notion that children are incapable of reason until a certain age, and the idea may be in part behind his thinking in this work. In the *Long Rules* he advises that, although children can be accepted into the monastery for education at any age, a child may not make a decision to commit himself to a life of virginity until that time of life ‘when reason enters’,⁴² after which time the decision can be ‘relied upon’ because the child has the mental capabilities to fully understand what is being undertaken.⁴³ Canon 18 of the Church canons quotes Basil as asserting that the age for a girl to be ‘mistress of her thoughts’ was 17 years old and therefore this was the age at which females could first be accepted into the life of virginity.⁴⁴ Unfortunately there is no equivalent canon regarding the age for boys to be admitted to the monastery, but it was generally presumed that the age of reason for them was at a slightly younger age, such as 15 or 16.⁴⁵

It is clear that Basil does consider that his nephews are approaching the age when their reason ‘matures’ because of the fact that he encourages them to develop the ability to allow reason to govern their actions, rather than being persuaded by everything that they

³⁸ Wiedemann, T. (1989) *Adults and children in the Roman Empire*. London: Routledge, 21.

³⁹ Seneca, *Ep.* 33.7.

⁴⁰ Plato, *Laws* 659e- 660a.

⁴¹ Plato, *Rep.* 378d.

⁴² *Reg. Fus.* 15 in Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 264.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 267.

⁴⁴ Günter Prinzing, "Observations on the legal status of children and the stages of childhood in Byzantium," in *Becoming Byzantine : children and childhood in Byzantium*, ed. Alice-Mary Maffry Talbot and Arietta Papaconstantinou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2009)33. Also found in Basil, *Ep.* 199.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 16; Cornelia B. Horn and John W. Martens, "*Let the little children come to me*": *childhood and children in early Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009) 6-7 for a discussion of Philo and Hippocrates' views on the development of children.

encounter in their school books,⁴⁶ and part of the development of his argument makes use of the notion that the youths are coming to a point in life where they will have to take more responsibility for their actions and decisions. In Section 1 Basil envisages them attending school and hanging on every word uttered by their teachers, while at the same time he states that they are just starting out in life.⁴⁷ However, as he goes through his work he introduces the notion that the nephews will listen to his advice and begin to act on it,⁴⁸ culminating in them reaching the position where they can start to discern the right course of action for themselves, or at least take themselves to a wiser guide if they are unsure.⁴⁹ He certainly appears to address his nephews as though they are reaching an age when they can start to consider how they should think and behave, and there is no indication that he does not regard them to be incapable of understanding or acting on the advice that he offers them.

The episode at 5.12-14 of the address also supports the idea that the youths are coming to a time in their lives when they will have to start making choices and utilise their growing rational abilities. Basil recounts the story of Herakles at the crossroads where he encounters the figures of Virtue and Vice. The women who represent these two characteristics offer hardship or luxury respectively to Herakles, and endeavour to entice the young man to follow their path of life. The incident encapsulates many of the ideas explored in this work, but most importantly presents a parallel for Basil's nephews, who stand at a point in their own crossroads and will soon be called upon to make decisions about the course that their lives will take. Basil does not state the age that Herakles was at the time of his fabled choice between Virtue and Vice, but does link the episode closely to the youths by stating that he was 'passing near that time of life, which you also are now'.⁵⁰

In terms of the Bible knowledge Basil expects his nephews to have, although he argues that a developed understanding of the Christian mysteries is probably beyond their intellectual abilities, he does assume that they are aware of certain staple Old Testament characters and stories. At 3.3-4 Basil draws on the examples of Moses and Daniel,

⁴⁶ *Ad Adol.* 8.3.

⁴⁷ *Ad Adol.* 1.1: '[having] the power as it were to show by example the safest road to those lately establishing themselves in life.'; ὥστε τοῖς ἄρτι καθισταμένοις τὸν βίον ἔχειν ὡσπερ ὁδοῦ τὴν ἀσφαλεστάτην ὑποδεικνύναι.

⁴⁸ E.g. *Ad Adol.* 4.1: 'both love and imitate' ... 'the deeds and words of good men.'; 7.1; 7.7.

⁴⁹ *Ad Adol.* 10.8.

⁵⁰ *Ad Adol.* 5.12.

citing them as examples of those who studied ‘outside’ philosophy before they became versed in knowledge and understanding of the truth. Similarly, he uses David in his capacity as the singer of the Psalms to illustrate the healing properties of wholesome music at 9.8. However, the knowledge of particular Old Testament episodes does not necessarily assist in identifying the age of the youths, since the Jewish Scriptures appear to have been the writing used to provide children with an initial awareness of Biblical teachings.

There is no evidence of Basil’s own ideas about the scriptural education for young children,⁵¹ but his near contemporary John Chrysostom offers a helpful insight into the methods which might have been employed in training the very young in their Bible knowledge. In probably the most useful ancient text about the education of children within a specifically Christian context, *Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up their Children*,⁵² Chrysostom offers advice to parents in his congregation on the best way for them to manage their offspring so as to ‘raise up an athlete for Christ!’.⁵³

He states that parents ought to introduce their sons to a story from the Old Testament: suggesting Cain and Abel first.⁵⁴ He writes that the story should be told without the names of the protagonists, but they ought to be presented as two brothers only. The story should be repeated and once it becomes familiar the child should be asked to recall the tale for his parents.⁵⁵ When that episode is firmly sealed in the child’s mind, another story can be introduced, again from the Old Testament, and the cycle will begin again.⁵⁶ After the child is as familiar with the second story as the first, then the parent should ask him to recall ‘the story of those two brothers’.⁵⁷ When the child begins to recount one story about brothers, the parent should stop him and ask instead for ‘the one of the other

⁵¹ *Reg. Fus.* simply suggest that children in the monasteries should memorise ‘maxims from Proverbs’ (Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 266). GNys describes the education his eldest sister Macrina was given by her mother in Biblical texts, but is also not very helpful in this regard, stating that: ‘such parts of inspired Scripture as you would think were incomprehensible to young children were the subject of the girl’s studies; in particular the Wisdom of Solomon, and those parts of it especially which have an ethical bearing’ (963). He adds that Macrina was also fully conversant with Psalms since she applied herself to them continually.

⁵² *Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up their Children*, (*De Inani*) translated as an appendix in Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture* .

⁵³ *De Inani* 19.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 39.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 40.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 43.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 45.

brothers' and give hints about the content of the story. After this more detail can be added about the sequel to the stories.

Such is the method that Chrysostom advocates for young children. He emphasises the fact that children should only be told stories that are suitable for their age, which cause them pleasure and will therefore be more easily remembered.⁵⁸ He also advises that children must not be given more than they can comprehend, stating: 'thou shouldst not impose so great a burden on his understanding while he is still tender, lest thou dismay him'.⁵⁹ However, he does also lay down the ages at which he considers children to be ready to hear certain tales and doctrines. Between around eight and ten years old a boy may learn the stories of God's judgement, and when he is 15 he should begin to hear about Hell. It is also around this age, if not a little earlier, that he must start to be told the 'deeds of the New Testament – deeds of grace and deeds of hell'.⁶⁰

If Basil's nephews had been brought up in a similar manner to that espoused by Chrysostom it would seem likely that they would be familiar with a variety of Old Testament episodes and characters, but would not have heard very much of the New Testament. This would fit with Basil's use of the Bible in this work, since he makes reference to the Old Testament specifically, but his allusions to New Testament precepts are more obscure.⁶¹ In addition, John Chrysostom's advice about children's exposure to the doctrines of judgement and punishment at around the age of 15 years old would support the notion that Basil's nephews are close approaching this age themselves. In 2.1-3 of the address he introduces the concept of the afterlife to the youths, and the fact that everything achieved on earth would need to be assessed in the light of eternity. In the second half of the work he also considers the idea that there are places of punishment for those who do not make virtue their goal in life, and makes a distinction between those who sin involuntarily and those who do so by deliberate design.⁶² This reference to the potential consequences for those who do not pay heed to advice such as Basil's would imply, not only that Basil is serious in sending his message to his nephews, but also that he expects them to be capable of understanding and acting on his words.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 39.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 52.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 52.

⁶¹ E.g. *Ad Adol.* 7:7.

⁶² *Ad Adol.* 8.14.

The motivation

The interpretations of the rationale behind this address of Basil's have been very mixed throughout the centuries. Some scholars view it as a definite 'pro-Classics manifesto' which Basil wrote in order to defend and justify the study of pagan literature for Christians.⁶³ Other writers have been less sure or complimentary about Basil's creation, seeing it as a 'very slight effort'⁶⁴ or a token gesture which was simply an attempt at 'maintaining the status quo' of the education system in the fourth century.⁶⁵ Certainly it is interesting that several scholars have a fairly low opinion of this work, particularly if they see it as an attempt to make a Christian education system out of the existing classical curriculum. Rousseau states that the work is really a failure on Basil's part, since he does not make a convincing argument about the methods and means by which a Christian should be educated using classical writings.⁶⁶

More recently there have been moves to look beyond the initial impressions of the work and seek a more deeply thought motivation behind Basil's words. Moffatt and Helleman both consider that part of the aim of the work is to try and reassure Christian parents and students who may have been hesitant about attendance at school because of the pagan elements in the literature which would be studied.⁶⁷ Fortin takes a different view and argues that, far from wanting to incline students towards pagan literature, Basil actually seeks to provide them with a Christian-tinted lens through which to view all their school books. He states that by telling his nephews their texts are full of virtuous examples Basil is ensuring that the youths will read pagan literature and be blind to the less

⁶³ Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, *Christianity and classical culture: the metamorphosis of natural theology in the Christian encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 11 is one such, and as mentioned above, this work was raised as a banner in the Renaissance as the major voice in defence of the Classics. Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1971) 332.

⁶⁴ Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture* 52.

⁶⁵ Alan Cameron, "The End of the Ancient Universities," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 10, no. 4 (1967) 672.

⁶⁶ Rousseau, *Basil* 56.

⁶⁷ Moffatt, "Occasion," 83 suggests that the work was written as a response to Julian's Rescript on Christian teachers in 362, and takes the view that the emperor's actions may have caused Christian parents to wonder about the appropriateness of pagan literature in the task of educating their children. Helleman, "Basil's *Ad Adolescentes*," 36 considers that the centuries-old debate about Christianity and pagan literature would still have been a stumbling block for parents in the fourth century, who would have been tempted to keep their children away from school and an education simply because of their faith. While that may have been true for a small minority, it seems unlikely that most parents of a certain status would have chosen to deny their sons the opportunities which came from a good education, even if it contained elements which conflicted with their faith. Tertullian, speaking 150 years earlier, despite his public and vociferous attacks on the literature of the pagans conceded that boys still needed to attend to school and learn their lessons, even if they had to be like those who 'knowingly accept poison, but do not drink it' (*De Idol.* 10).

virtuous episodes.⁶⁸ However, the problems with Fortin's suggestions lead him to maintain that Basil is writing for two different audiences simultaneously, and making an attempt to convey conflicting messages to each.⁶⁹ The second audience is imagined to be alert to Basil's real, but hidden, message that there is no virtue in classical writing and the texts should only be read to provide ammunition against the pagans.⁷⁰

Two scholars who approach the work entirely differently are Van Dam and McLynn. Van Dam suggests that the work, while it is an attempt to explain the relationship between classical culture and Christianity,⁷¹ is less intended as useful advice for Basil's nephews but more a means by which Basil could make sense of the two halves of his own career: his time as a secular scholar versus his ascetic life as a minister of the church.⁷² He states that Basil views pagan writing as a necessary first step in education, after which the youths will move on to 'proper Christian studies' and therefore sees little need to criticise or justify it.⁷³ Because Van Dam makes no serious attempt to place the work in a particular place or time in the light of his assertion that it is primarily Basil's last 'indulgence' in his 'rhetorical prowess' as he considers his dramatic change of career,⁷⁴ McLynn argues that in effect he leaves the work: 'without any obvious purpose' because 'it floats free of any particular context'.⁷⁵ In contrast, he suggests that the work was delivered at a very particular occasion, namely an 'elegant soiree',⁷⁶ and contends that Basil is mainly addressing himself to academic intellectuals, although his nephews are also in attendance at the gathering.⁷⁷ Unlike Moffatt who states that Basil's 'serious' character would make him unlikely to participate in an

⁶⁸ Ernest L. Fortin, "Christianity and Hellenism in Basil the Great's Address Ad Adulescentes," in *Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought, Essays in Honour of A. H. Armstrong* ed. H. J. Blumenthal and R. A. Markus (London: Variorum Publications, 1981) 195: 'the only viable course of action was to pre-empt in the mind of the reader any interpretation of the pagan authors that tended to place them at odds with the Christian faith.'

⁶⁹ Ibid. 196.

⁷⁰ Since elsewhere Basil is happy to point out the perceived inconsistencies and errors in Greek philosophy it seems unlikely that he would go to such lengths to hide them here. (See e.g. *Hexaemeron* 3.8 in Sister Agnes Clare Way, *Saint Basil: Exegetic Homilies*, The Fathers of the Church (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963) 51. Also Amand De Mendieta, "Official Attitude," for Basil's attacks on pagan thinking about the creation of the world.

⁷¹ Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow* 182.

⁷² Ibid. 184-5.

⁷³ Ibid. 182.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 186: 'This treatise marked a final indulging of his rhetorical prowess; it also nicely illustrated the contrast between his past life of classical culture and his current life of Christian asceticism.'

⁷⁵ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 108.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 112.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 111: He maintains that Basil 'relentlessly infantises' his nephews and talks over their heads to the 'grown-ups' who are present. n.29 asserts that Basil's use of the 1st person plurals throughout the work are directed at his peers, not the youths.

exercise solely for the purposes of ‘academic display’,⁷⁸ McLynn envisages a cosy setting, full of professors and Basil’s former academic peers where he produces ‘a parody of the job he had once done, mimicking the solemn voices of the classical past and of its contemporary exponents.’⁷⁹

McLynn’s view is compelling in some ways, and his suggestion that the youths have left their homes in the Pontus to study in Caesarea, therefore explaining Basil’s reference to them not wanting to be with their fathers when they see him,⁸⁰ could be a sensible one. However, there are arguments against this work being the kind of light-hearted piece which McLynn imagines. To begin with, there is little evidence to suggest that Basil regularly indulges in frivolous creativity, although there are some light touches in his letters on occasion.⁸¹ The picture painted of him by his friend, Gregory Nazianzen is that of an earnest, serious young man, who was not interested in trivial matters,⁸² and although he and Basil’s brother Gregory of Nyssa suggest that Basil had great capability in debate and rhetorical prowess,⁸³ they do not recall any occasions such as the one imagined by McLynn.

Another element that seems to make the situation unlikely is the fact that McLynn suggests that Gregory of Nyssa may even be the youths’ teacher, since they would be his nephews too, and he spent some time teaching in Caesarea.⁸⁴ However, if Basil is seeking to place himself between his nephews and their teachers,⁸⁵ and offer the students a ‘more profitable course’ than they would receive in school would he really do so if his brother was the teacher in question? If the idea were to prove to pagan intellectuals that the education of children could really be done differently and better from a Christian perspective, then would the point not be lost if it were known that the youths being used as the educational subjects had a Christian teacher, and that that teacher was a close relation of the critic of the system?

⁷⁸ Moffatt, "Occasion," 80.

⁷⁹ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 114.

⁸⁰ *Ad Adol.* 1.2.

⁸¹ E.g. *Ep.* 186 and 187 between Basil and Antipater concerning the benefits of pickled cabbage.

⁸² GNaz, *Or.* 43.16: ‘On this occasion I not only refused to put to shame my friend the great Basil, out of respect for the gravity of his character, and the ripeness of his reasoning powers, but also persuaded all the rest of the students to treat him likewise, who happened not to know him.’

⁸³ *Ibid.* 17 details some other students trying to get the better of Basil in debate. GNys, *VMac.* 966c states that Basil returned from Athens full of pride because of his great ability in oratory.

⁸⁴ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 113-4.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 113.

However, McLynn's criticism that interpretations of Basil's *Address to the Young Men* have relied heavily on the lens of Renaissance humanism does seem to make sense. This work has been understood and evaluated almost exclusively in the light of its support for and exposition of pagan writing and the methods by which a Christian might read classical literature and keep his faith intact. If it is viewed less as a pamphlet about Classics in schools and more as an address directed at its audience for a particular time in life, then it is possible to glean other insights into the rationale behind the work.

Van Dam hints at the fact that Basil views classical literature as a stepping stone towards later, more serious study of Scripture, and for that reason he does not really feel the need to criticise pagan writings.⁸⁶ He argues that Basil looked back on his life and saw his secular studies as a preparation for his later asceticism, and so his attitude in this work is that: 'discipline of classical rhetoric was a preview of the discipline of an ascetic life.' In a similar vein, Helleman maintains that the aim of Basil's address is to encourage young men to adopt the philosophic or ascetic lifestyle.⁸⁷ Both scholars emphasise the propaedeutic nature of classical literature, and consider that it is viewed by Basil as the first step towards the ascetic life.⁸⁸

The problem with Helleman's idea that this work is a manifesto for a life of monastic austerity lies in Basil's own attitude towards the recruitment of the young to the ascetic life. While happy to admit children into the monastery to be educated and brought up with the monks,⁸⁹ Basil was determined that a decision to live the monastic life should be made freely and only when the candidate was certain of his or her choice.⁹⁰ Christian writers do not generally suggest that children were drawn to the ascetic life of their own accord,⁹¹ and Basil is critical of those parents who presented their children for

⁸⁶ Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow* 185 n.7.

⁸⁷ Helleman, "Basil's *Ad Adolescentes*," 43.

⁸⁸ Fortin, "Christianity and Hellenism," 94-5 also focuses on the preparatory nature of pagan writing, but suggests that Basil himself makes it appropriate as preparation for later Christian study. He argues that classical literature is fundamentally opposed to the 'the gentle but austere morality of the Sermon on the Mount', and cannot be used in its pure form as a preparation for the faith. He maintains that Basil, by altering the stories and suggesting that Christian virtue is present in classical writing predisposes his nephews to look for the Biblical moral, even when it is not present at all.

⁸⁹ *Reg. Fus.* 15 in Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 264.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 268 states that the candidate should be given several days in seclusion before being allowed to make his vow, so that there could be no charge of coercion brought against the monastery. Basil states that the policy ensures that 'we may not appear to be kidnapping him'.

⁹¹ C. B. Horn., "Raising Martyrs and Ascetics: A Diachronic Comparison of Educational Role Models for Early Christian Children," in *Children in Late Ancient Christianity*, ed. C. B. Horn and R.R. Phenix (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 299.

consecration before they were able to make a reasoned decision for themselves.⁹² Given his concern that vows should not be broken once made,⁹³ and his attempts to ensure that candidates for the ascetic life were fully aware of the commitment they were making, it seems somewhat unlikely that he would have composed this work with the main intent of recruiting young monks for his monastery. In particular, his emphasis on the ‘natural relationship’ he has with the youths takes on a more sinister tone if we consider the work in such a light: would Basil wish to capitalise on his position as an uncle to urge unsuitable candidates into the celibate life, knowing that if they broke their vows the blame could be reflected back onto him?⁹⁴

Although the work is not designed primarily as a call to the ascetic lifestyle, it is nonetheless a call to the Christian life, and asceticism may or may not be a part of that life for Basil’s nephews. The most important theme of the address is clearly that of literature, and indeed this work itself, as a propaedeutic. The notion that lessons which are introduced at a young age will be easier to learn and remember, and therefore make right practices more likely to be adopted later in life because they have already been absorbed is one found in much of classical literature, and it can be seen that Basil was influenced by such writing.⁹⁵ Basil’s aim in this work is to use the stories and literature which his nephews will be familiar with because of their attendance at school, and draw value from those texts in order to teach lessons which will stand the youths in good stead later in life. He addresses them as Christians, since they would have been brought up in Christian households, and his creation of a group identity which includes Basil and the youths draws teacher and students together and encourages his nephews to pay heed to his advice. However, these youths are unlikely to have been baptised,⁹⁶ and are on the cusp of adulthood, at a point at which their attendance at church and commitment

⁹² *Ep.* 199: ‘For parents, and brothers, and other relatives bring forward many girls before the proper age, not because these girls have an inner urge toward celibacy, but in order that their relatives may provide some worldly advantage for themselves.’

⁹³ *Reg. Fus.* 15 in Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 264-5; *Reg. Fus.* 14, 263: ‘everyone who has been admitted to the community and then has retracted his promise should be looked upon as a sinner against God.’

⁹⁴ Garnett, “Christian Young,” 112 highlights the potential power that an unscrupulous teacher might have over his students, and considers that Basil’s reference to his familial relationship is designed to mark his motives as pure. If that is true, then an active recruitment drive for young monks would negate it.

⁹⁵ See especially Plato, *Rep.* 337b; 378e on the methods and theories of teaching children.

⁹⁶ Although some babies and young children were brought to the church for baptism, normal practice was for adults to be baptised. Indeed, the trend was for people to delay until near the end of their lives, and many sermons were preached encouraging Christians ‘not to postpone baptism, but to enrol for the immediate season.’ (Everett Ferguson, “Preaching at Epiphany: Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom on Baptism and the Church,” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 66, no. 01 (1997) 2). See also Edward Yarnold, *The awe-inspiring rites of initiation: the origins of the RCIA*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1994) 2-6.

to their local congregation would have started to be their own responsibility, rather than the remit of their parents. Throughout the address, Basil seeks to present the Christian lifestyle to his nephews and encourage them to find their place within the community of believers.⁹⁷

On one hand Basil engages with the school texts that his nephews are studying and encourages them to look for elements of virtue and moral excellence within a Christian framework, but on the other hand he also highlights particular themes and ideas which he explores more deeply in his sermons. This address is often found in the homiletic collections of manuscripts of Basil's work,⁹⁸ and some scholars accept it as such,⁹⁹ but its position in the corpus may suggest that the ancient editors were unsure.¹⁰⁰ More recently scholars have determined that it is not a homily,¹⁰¹ but rather an 'oral address',¹⁰² which may or may not have been intended for publication.¹⁰³ Although probably not a sermon, the fact that in amongst the general virtue which Basil encourages his nephews to look for in pagan texts, there are also to be found various elements which can also be discovered as the subjects of his published sermons suggests that this work might be an address designed not just to introduce the idea of virtue to the youths, but also to acquaint them with means to avoid some of the sins that will beset them in adult life, and which they will hear sermons preached about in the future.¹⁰⁴

During the late 360s Basil would have been preaching regular sermons, and the published versions would have been the products of several explorations of the same theme from his years as a presbyter.¹⁰⁵ It therefore makes sense that he would have been

⁹⁷ That place may well have been within a monastery living the ascetic life, but Basil was well aware of the role that Christians could play within the community at large, as his many letters to Christian officials testify. Basil's nephews came from good families, and so were probably more likely destined for public office than asceticism.

⁹⁸ Stig Y. Rudberg, "Manuscripts and Editions of the Works of Basil of Caesarea," in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic. A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium*, ed. Paul Jonathan Fedwick (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981) 61; Wilson, *St Basil* 8.

⁹⁹ Roy J. Deferrari, "The Classics and the Greek Writers of the Early Church: Saint Basil," *The Classical Journal* 13, no. 8 (1918) 581; Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism'," 219.

¹⁰⁰ Rudberg, "Manuscripts," 61: 'it is worth noticing that in several families of manuscripts the piece does not belong to the proper corpus but to a supplement added at the end.'

¹⁰¹ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 110; Amand De Mendieta, "Official Attitude," 25.

¹⁰² Hildebrand, *Trinitarian Theology* 4; Moffatt, "Occasion," 81; McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 109.

¹⁰³ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 109 suggests that the point of the work has been missed because scholars have assumed that the address was intended as a 'book, a literary package sent out into the world with a significant message for its readers to decode'. Wilson, *St Basil* 8 indicates that Basil probably 'had his eye on eventual publication'.

¹⁰⁴ The work contains the basics of the Christian teaching on envy, anger and wealth, as well as several of the notions explored in Basil's Homily *Attende tibi*.

¹⁰⁵ Fedwick, "Chronology" 9.

able to distil some of his thoughts about different subjects into this work for the young, and also explains why, although it initially purports to be solely about the way that Christians should read pagan literature, it veers more into a consideration of certain Christian virtues and attitudes rather than confining itself exclusively to literary concerns. In some ways this address is a preparation for the youths in the nature of Christian homilies: just as Basil draws lessons from pagan stories and says that familiarity with them will make adoption of Christian virtues easier, so he adds simple Christian lessons, knowing that by introducing them to the youths and making them familiar to them, he will be able more effectively to expound them in greater depth at a later date.

The work is grounded in the system of classical education, not because Basil is necessarily setting out to make a conscious comment on the schooling of his day, but because it is familiar territory both to him, with his background in learning and scholarship, and to his nephews, since they attend school ‘everyday’. It is therefore the perfect starting point for this preacher to use an opportunity to introduce his future congregation to the themes they will hear him expounding when they become fully-fledged members of the church.

The *Address to the Young Men* is a propaedeutics, not necessarily for the ascetic monastic novice, but rather for these youths who will shortly take their places within society and the church as ‘grown-up’ Christians, seeking to work out their faith in the world in which they find themselves. After years of experiences as a Christian and a churchman, Basil is aware of the sins which can beset the average Christian,¹⁰⁶ and in this work he seeks to highlight these and give basic advice as preparation for the time that his audience is in a position to hear such themes explored more fully in an adult setting.

Outline summary of *Ad Adolescentes*

1. Basil begins his address by establishing his credentials for giving advice to his nephews. He introduces his first surprising point: that they should not accept everything they read or hear at school, but rather take only those elements which are useful.

¹⁰⁶ See e.g. *Ep.* 42.4.

2. Part two sets the Christian context in which Basil's advice is given. He emphasises the life after death which is the hope of each Christian, and encourages his nephews to strive to achieve that life rather than the temporary achievements provided by an earthly existence.
3. Pagan and Christian wisdom are considered in relation to each other and secular knowledge is likened to the leaves of a plant which bears the fruit of Christian truth.
4. Basil turns to a discussion of how pagan literature can be read in order to benefit from such education. He introduces the importance of good examples and recommends that virtuous characters should be imitated, which negative ones ought to be shunned. The youths should keep the aim of life in mind and only cherish those elements of literature which will prove useful.
5. Virtue is emphasised as important in the Christian life, and Basil refers to pagan texts which endorse the virtuous lifestyle. He encourages his nephews to take an active role in choosing virtue for themselves, likening their situation to that of Herakles at the crossroads faced with the choice of following Virtue or Vice.
6. Basil suggests that there is a wealth of classical literature which praises virtue and urges his nephews to attend to it and seek to live lives which are consistent with the noble sentiments they read.
7. Basil alters his focus from literary to historical examples, presenting his audience with a range of pagan characters who display behaviour consistent with Christian teachings from the Sermon on the Mount.
8. Basil continues to consider the need for consistency and right aim in life. He argues that the aim of life should inform the actions of each individual so that time is not wasted and energy not expended on the wrong things. He cites the examples of musicians and athletes, and suggests that success in one field will not be achieved if practise is undertaken in the other.
9. Having emphasised the need for the Christian to keep in mind the eternal afterlife, Basil encourages his nephews to take care of their souls rather than feeding the

desires of their bodies, and advocates the study of philosophy as the means of achieving this end. He considers the bodily senses and suggests ways of making physical desires subject to the control of reason.

10. Basil concludes his address by focussing his nephews' attention on the lessons they will learn in the future from Scripture, but also urges them to begin to acquire virtue immediately. He maintains that this address will be followed by other occasions when he will advise them and provide them with further encouragement in their Christian lives.

Chapter 3. Pagan and Christian influences

Introduction

Everyone writes after someone else. All the authors and poets of the ancient world were aware of those who had gone before them and the need to create something new or different out of the material of the past. The Church Fathers were no exception to this. The early Christian thinkers were so well versed in the literature of their culture, both secular and previous Christian works, as well as having a sound knowledge of the Bible that it was almost impossible for them not to be influenced by all they had read, and to avoid incorporating ideas and images into their own works, whether consciously or unconsciously.

In addition to the degree of unconscious influence that the works of the past exercised on later writers, there was the time-honoured practice of deliberate allusion by which an author took episodes or illustrations from a previous work and incorporated it into his own, changing the detail in order to rework the old into something different. This practise became almost second nature to those who had been educated in rhetoric, since the 'immediate point of [rhetorical] exercises was to make something new and fresh out of something well-worn; and the way to excel will have been to engage actively with existing literary and rhetorical versions of the given theme.'¹ The best writers and orators were those who could clearly borrow material from previous works and create something different from it. The fact that the allusion was made obvious was important: 'the openness of the borrowing function[ed] as a guarantee of the author's integrity.'² If the source of the intertext could be identified it displayed the breadth of education given to the writer, and also guarded him against charges of plagiarism.

Basil, like the other Fathers, was educated in a culture which sought to utilise and build on the literature of the past, and this secular practice was adopted by the church in the development of its own literature. Riley maintains that 'the early Christians imitated and copied the fundamental values found in the literature and stories of its wider culture as it formed its self-image and presented itself to the world,'³ and it is in this vein that Basil

¹ Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and intertext : dynamics of appropriation in Roman poetry*, Roman literature and its contexts (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 40.

² Ibid. 22.

³ Gregory J. Riley, "Mimesis of Classical Ideals in the Second Christian Century," in *Mimesis and intertextuality in antiquity and Christianity*, ed. Dennis R. MacDonald (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity, 2001) 91.

composed *Ad Adolescentes*. He suggests that there is much good to be found in classical literature, and he uses a range of texts to illustrate this. However, in addition to the references he makes in order to convey his message to his nephews, he also borrows from previous writers in the material he discusses and the manner of his argument.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider some of those classical and Christian writers who influenced Basil in the composition of *Ad Adolescentes*. Certainly the influences of particular writers can be detected throughout Basil's works, but this chapter will consider where Basil's thoughts may reflect ideas specifically about education and the methods that could be employed in the teaching of the young. The nature of influence is twofold: on one hand there are those passages where Basil appears to express identical ideas and notions to the writers he has knowledge of, suggesting he may be directly imitating those authors, on the other hand, there are instances where it could be argued that Basil is attempting to put into practise the educational methods expressed by earlier writers in the way he develops his argument and seeks to teach certain precepts to his nephews.

The table below shows secure allusions found in the address. Some are direct quotations or paraphrases where Basil has cited the original author, or at least the author he has taken the episode from. Others are sure references to other works, although they are not necessarily quotations and the original author is not always mentioned.

Chapter	Author	Work
1	Hesiod	<i>Works and Days</i> 293-297
4	Homer	<i>Odyssey</i> 12.39
	Doric Proverb	'bringing the stone to the line'
5	Hesiod	<i>Works and Days</i> 286-92
	Homer	<i>Odyssey</i> 6, 8.19-20
	Solon	fr. 15
	Theognis	<i>Elegies</i> 157-8
	Prodicus/ Xenophon	<i>Memorabilia</i> 2.1.21-34
6	Homer	<i>Odyssey</i> 10.495
	Plato	<i>Republic</i> 86d
	Euripides	<i>Hippolytus</i> 612
	Plato	<i>Republic</i> 361a
7	Plutarch	<i>Life of Perikles</i> 5
	Plutarch	<i>De Ira Cohibenda</i> 462c

	Euripides	<i>Rhesus</i> 84
	Plutarch	<i>Life of Alexander</i> 21-22
	Iamblichus	<i>Life of Pythagoras</i> 144
8	Homer	<i>Margites</i>
9	Diogenes Laertius	<i>Lives</i> 6.54
	Plato	<i>Republic</i> 498b, 533d
	Solon	fr. 13.17
	Theognis	<i>Epigrams</i> 1155-6
	Plato	<i>Republic</i> 365c
	Homer	<i>Odyssey</i> 4.385
10	Hesiod	<i>Works and Days</i> 360-1
	Plutarch	<i>Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus</i> 81f-82a

This table does not include all the texts which Basil demonstrates knowledge of in his address, but highlights those which are undeniably from an earlier source. They are also the references which Basil anticipates that his nephews will notice and for the most part be familiar with, although some are texts which they may get to know well in the near future.

Influences on Basil

The two classical writers whose influence is most noticeable in Basil's address are Plato and Plutarch. Plato exercised a considerable influence on many of the Fathers of the early church, not surprisingly since they were generally very well educated, and therefore exposed to his thoughts during their own extensive education.⁴ In a similar manner, the *Moralia* of Plutarch are found incorporated into Basil's address and other Christian writings.

It is not certain whether Basil was familiar with the pagan authors through reading full copies of their works, or whether he had encountered them in handbooks or anthologies.⁵ These popular manuals gathered collections of philosophic and moral sayings or even selections of books and provided students with a good working knowledge of a particular author without having to embark on an in-depth study of the

⁴ For a discussion about the contrast between Church Fathers' familiarity with classical literature and the traditional stereotype of the illiterate ascetic holy man, see Dimiter G Angelov, "Emperors and Patriarchs as ideal children and adolescents: literary conventions and cultural expectations," in *Becoming Byzantine: children and childhood in Byzantium*, ed. Alice-Mary Maffry Talbot and Arietta Papaconstantinou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2009)

⁵ Fedwick, "Basil of Caesarea on education," 587.

literature.⁶ During the course of Basil's educational career he probably read a combination of anthologies and full works, since his knowledge appears to have been deep as well as broad.

Plato

In the *Republic* Plato sets out the organisation of his ideal state. He proposes that the soul of the individual operates in the same way as the ideal city. The soul, he says, is made up of three parts: reason, spirit and desire, and the aim of the good man is to subordinate the elements of spirit and desire within himself in favour of being motivated entirely by reason. Plato suggests that rulers appointed in his republic should be those trained to subordinate their spirits to reason so they can identify the good for themselves and the state. Therefore, for Plato the purpose of education is to train the rulers of his state to attain virtue, since the virtuous man will know how to govern his soul and hence be qualified to govern others.⁷

The idea held by Plato that the chief end of education is to attain virtue is not far removed from the emphasis placed on learning by Basil. Near the beginning of his address, Basil introduces the idea that for Christians the main, and indeed only proper, aim in life should be the acquisition of virtue, leading to a place in heaven after death.⁸ He says that nothing 'which makes its contribution to this life of ours only' has any merit, and that 'everything we do is by way of preparation for the other life'. For this reason his hearers should approach their studies with a view to only taking knowledge and understanding from those subjects which provide goodness for the soul, i.e. those things which assist in the attaining of virtue.

Although Basil's youths are not destined to be the rulers of a state of the kind envisaged by Plato, the notion that education ought to make them able to govern their desires and impulses so that they act for the good of their eternal souls is nonetheless the basis of

⁶ There is evidence that GNaz used them in the composition of his poetry, and since his education was the same as Basil's it is likely that Basil also encountered much literature through them. For a detailed discussion see Henry Chadwick, "Florilegium," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, ed. T. Klauser (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1969) 1131-59.

⁷ Gerasimos Santas, *Understanding Plato's Republic* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2010) 58; 122.

⁸ *Ad Adol. 2.2.*

Basil's advice. His nephews must learn to exercise reason over their natural desires and so cultivate the life of virtue which leads to heavenly reward.⁹

Basil articulates the same opinion about the goal of education as Plato, and throughout his *Address to the Young Men* there can be found allusions to and similarities with sentiments about the theory of teaching as expressed by the pagan philosopher.¹⁰ The purpose of this section is not to enumerate all the places where Basil makes use of Plato in his address, but rather to highlight those parts which bear a striking resemblance to the pagan writings, and which suggest that Basil was using them deliberately, either to inform his own thinking, or else reiterating the older ideas. Where Basil has borrowed words or phrases from Plato in the course of his discussion, but the episodes do not relate to his principles of education or the wider argument, then the instances are identified in the commentary.

Both Plato and Basil consider that training in goodness must begin in childhood so as to lay down a good foundation for future life. In the *Republic*, Plato emphasises the importance of education right from the beginning of life, since 'it is then that it is best moulded and takes the impression that one wishes to stamp upon it',¹¹ he adds in the *Laws* that it is easy to convince children of something, and it is therefore the responsibility of the educator to ensure that the young are told the right things, rather than the wrong.¹² Basil also states that familiarity with virtue is a good thing to encourage in the young, since children's souls are 'tender' and the impressions made on them at this age will remain forever.¹³ As a consequence of the need to start training young, Plato decides that in his ideal state, he will 'persuade mothers and nurses to tell our chosen stories to their children'.¹⁴ Although later education will be the responsibility of the state and certain officials, children will begin their learning about virtue even in infancy.¹⁵

⁹ *Ad Adol.* 8.1-3.

¹⁰ There is an early dissertation: Theodore Leslie Shear, "The Influence of Plato on Saint Basil" (Johns Hopkins University, 1906). which can be accessed online and details the obvious incorporation of Platonic ideas into Basil's various writings. It includes a section on *Ad Adolescentes* but confines itself mainly to discussion of Basil's use of *Rep.* and suggests Basil refers to Plato only to disagree with his views on poetry.

¹¹ 377b.

¹² 663e-664a.

¹³ *Ad Adol.* 5.2.

¹⁴ *Rep.* 377c.

¹⁵ This notion of the responsibility of mothers and nurses in setting good foundations for the education of their children is one which can be seen in the life of Basil himself. He writes in *Ep.* 223 about his

The reason that the beginnings of education are treated as of such importance is because of the sense of indelibility of the first lessons given to children. This is significant, since Plato considers that lessons taught initially should be a suitable preparation for similar, more in-depth lessons later in life, and it is to this end that he states: ‘all the preliminary studies that are indispensable preparation for dialectics must be presented to them while still young’.¹⁶ This idea of study as a preparation for later lessons is the basis of Basil’s discussion in his address. The word προπαιδεύω used by Plato and meaning ‘teach beforehand’ is found at 7.8 in Basil’s work in connection with the examples of classical characters who behaved in a manner consistent with those precepts expounded in Matthew 5.

Basil argues that if children are exposed to examples of people following Jesus’ teachings in their early education it will provide them with a sense that following Christian precepts is a possibility, and that the doctrines of the church present an attainable standard rather than an impossible moral lifestyle inaccessible to all but the very few.

Basil puts this educational principle into practice not simply by presenting pagan characters behaving in a manner consistent with Christian precepts,¹⁷ but also in the fact that he offers his nephews some advice about particular Christian morals, but does not go into great detail about them. For example, he introduces the idea that the Christian should avoid anger and uncontrolled behaviour on account of angry feelings in 7.4, and although he admits that the putting down of anger can be difficult, he leaves the youths with the advice that it is not impossible, and must be striven for if virtue is to be attained. Thus Basil sets down the basic teaching about anger from a Christian perspective, anticipating that his nephews will make use of the pagan examples he has mentioned, and understand and apply his teaching to their lives from this point forward. However, this short treatment is not all that Basil has to say on the subject of anger as can be seen from his sermon: *homilia adversos eos qui irascuntur*.¹⁸ The exact propaedeutic nature of his advice in this address and his development of the discussion

Christian heritage, and the association of his grandmother especially with Gregory Thaumaturgus. He makes much of the fact that he and his siblings were brought up by their parents to know about Christianity, even before he embarked on his distinguished academic career.

¹⁶ *Rep.* 536d.

¹⁷ *Ad Adol.* 7: the examples of Perikles, Socrates, Euclides, Alexander the Great and Cleinias.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the sermon and Basil’s advice about anger in this address, see below Ch5, 101-07.

in his sermon will be found later, but suffice it to say that Basil uses the basic admonitions found in this work as the introductory material to his sermon, using the familiar advice as a hook on which to hang his more complex exhortations. If the youths absorb and apply Basil's advice to them, then they will learn that his words are true: although it is hard they can learn to put down anger, just as others have done before them. With this lesson learnt, they will then be ready to trust later advice and exhortation which encourages them to greater feats of virtue and righteousness.

In the *Laws* Plato determines that the educator of children should be chosen carefully, since his job is the most important in the state.¹⁹ Basil does not explicitly criticise the teachers who his nephews associate with, or suggest the types of men that they ought to be if they are good teachers, but he does appear to have been influenced by Plato in the way that he presents himself to his nephews as a legitimate didactic figure. In his definition of education, Plato states that it is: 'the process of attraction, of leading children to accept right principles as enunciated by the law and endorsed as genuinely correct by men who have high moral standards and are full of years and experience,'²⁰ and Basil implies that he has the same desirable qualities, therefore qualifying him to address and educate his nephews. He states that he has reached an age of wisdom, and the many different experiences he has had have trained him sufficiently for him to give useful advice to the young.²¹

Plato's discussion of music in the *Republic* appears to have influenced Basil in his address.²² Both authors consider the different types of musical modes and the emotions engendered in those who hear them. Plato objects to the fact that different tunes tended to produce immoral behaviour in their hearers, and sets down the notion that only the Dorian and Phrygian modes should be taught to children. His justification of the former is that it encourages bravery, and the latter is suitable to be heard on an every day basis.²³ In a similar way Basil discusses various kinds of music. He urges his listeners to avoid 'licentious songs'²⁴ because they encourage 'passions sprung from lack of breeding and baseness', and instead prompts them to 'cultivate that other kind, which is

¹⁹ *Laws* 765d-e.

²⁰ *Laws* 659d.

²¹ *Ad Adol.* 1.1.

²² Shear, "Influence of Plato." 58.

²³ *Rep.* 399a-c.

²⁴ *Ad Adol.* 9.7-8.

better and leads to better'. He cites as an example the music that David played to King Saul to calm his madness, and also refers to an episode involving Pythagoras. He says that Pythagoras used the Doric mode to shame a group of drunken revellers into going home sobered when they heard the music.²⁵ Like Plato, Basil would suggest that the Doric mode is one suitable for those being trained in virtue, whether pagan or Christian.

As Shear points out, this work provides two of the three occasions in his whole corpus of writings where Basil explicitly quotes Plato.²⁶ The first appears at 6.5 in a consideration of the need for consistency between one's words and actions, and the second comes at 9.12 where he links the words of Plato with sentiments expressed by St Paul. Basil also refers to him by name in his discussion of the supposedly unhealthy location of the Academy.²⁷ The references appear to be positive in tone, and on one hand Basil uses them to demonstrate to his nephews how they can pick out pithy sayings and sentiments from pagan writers which will support Christian precepts, while on the other hand he uses those sayings to convey essential morals to the youths.

However, while the influence of Plato in Basil in this address is unavoidable, there is an element that Basil does not completely endorse Plato's views, despite his explicit use of some of his writings. This idea is hinted at in the way that he justifies his use of his second quotation from Plato at 9.12 on account of its similarity to St Paul's statement. Despite the fact that Basil borrows phrases and imagery from Plato throughout this and other works, there is a sense that his usefulness and worth will only be recognised when his ideas resemble the words of the apostle or other Christian precepts.

While Basil is familiar with and clearly makes use of the *Republic*,²⁸ it is interesting that on the subject of poetry his attitude differs significantly from Plato. The philosopher states that there are two areas in which poets are particularly prone to writing falsehoods. One is the fabrication of stories about the gods and heroes which are either untrue or show the central characters in a bad light,²⁹ and the other is regarding the underworld. As a consequence of the former Plato writes that children ought not to read Homer or Hesiod or other poets who write 'misrepresenting' the gods. He is concerned

²⁵ *Ad Adol.* 9.9.

²⁶ Shear, "Influence of Plato." 60.

²⁷ *Ad Adol.* 9.15.

²⁸ Shear, "Influence of Plato." 51-52 discusses Basil's use of *Rep.* 2 and 3.

²⁹ *Rep.* 377e; 378b-c.

that the gods should be represented accurately in literature, because he argues, children are unable to 'distinguish between what is allegory and what isn't'.³⁰ Therefore it is important that the works read by the young only contain subjects which will encourage a good character. The use of bad characters to try and make an allegorical point is forbidden since children do not have the maturity of mind to understand the message because they have not yet attained the ability to reason.³¹ Regarding false myths about the underworld, Plato has two concerns. One is that people will be afraid of death if they fear what might happen to them should they be killed in battle, and therefore tales of the underworld will produce cowardly citizens,³² and the other concern is that such tales are not conducive to the acquisition of virtue nor do they train the young to reason.

It is on aspects of these points that Basil disagrees with Plato. He does agree that his addressees should ignore the poets when they write about immoral subjects: 'men engaged in amours or drunken' and 'an over-abundant table or dissolute songs'.³³ He expressly states that any writing about the gods ought to be passed over totally, partly because poets 'speak of them as being many' and also because they are presented with human weaknesses and vices.³⁴ However, while Plato criticises Homer for writing lies about the gods, Basil takes a completely opposite stance, stating that 'all Homer's poetry is an encomium of virtue'.³⁵ He refers to several episodes in the *Odyssey* in his address, and uses them to suggest the course of action his readers should take as they go through life seeking virtue.³⁶

Shear sees Basil's attitude towards poetry as a direct challenge of Plato's views,³⁷ and certainly the fact that Basil links his discussion of the good and bad in the works of poets so closely to passages from the *Republic* would seem to bear this argument out. Basil is in no position to prevent his nephews from reading classical literature, and

³⁰ *Rep.* 378d.

³¹ Since a large part education in the fifth century BC involved the memorising of passages of literature and then acting them out in the classroom it is particularly important that Plato's future good citizens do not encounter degenerate characters in their reading. Plato is concerned that a good citizen could have to act out, and therefore pretend to be, a bad character even for the purposes of education. (*Rep.* 395). In a similar way Basil considers the need for consistency in life, arguing that people who seek to become popular will always be inconsistent in their opinions because they will always be swayed by what others think 'instead of making sound reason his guide of life'. (*Ad Adol.* 9.25).

³² *Rep.* 386b.

³³ *Ad Adol.* 4.4.

³⁴ *Ad Adol.* 4.5.

³⁵ *Ad Adol.* 5.6.

³⁶ *Ad Adol.* 4.2.

³⁷ Shear, "Influence of Plato." 54.

indeed, is not composing this address with any intention to try and do so, but he does appear to be using Platonic writings to both support his own theories and to illustrate the technique he wants to encourage his nephews to use when they read literature for themselves. He is influenced by Plato's ideas about the way that children learn and the pliability of their minds, but he is fundamentally opposed to the philosopher's stance on poetry as having no use in the development of a virtuous life.

In addition to making comments which refute the opinions of Plato about poetry, Basil can also be seen to use Platonic images, but he explores them in a different light to that intended by the philosopher. One example is found at 10.1 of the address, where Basil considers the relationship between classical and Christian literature. He states: 'But doubtless we will learn these things [routes to virtue] more completely from our own writings; but for now we will draw for ourselves as far as possible some **sketch of virtue** from outside teachings.'³⁸ The phrase is borrowed from *Republic* 365c: πρόθυρα μὲν καὶ σχῆμα κύκλω περὶ ἑμαυτὸν σκιαγραφίαν ἀρετῆς περιγραπτέον; 'For a front and a show I must draw about myself a shadow-line of virtue'; but the tone in which the words are used is different. For Plato the phrase conveys negative connotations: the idea that an outline is drawn to disguise the reality, along the lines of the notion that imitation of something is bad.³⁹ However, Basil presents the phrase in a positive light: pagan literature provides an ideal basis from which to draw an image of virtue which will be helpful in developing specifically Christian virtue later. This identifies another tension between Basil and Plato's thought. Plato views imitation as dangerous, while Basil sees the idea that something which imitates truth can be useful as a preparation for the truth itself. In a similar way, he suggests that soldiers can be trained in war by means of gymnastics exercises, which then profit them at the time of crisis.⁴⁰

It has already been said that Basil's use of Platonic references serve several purposes in this address, and his direct mention of the philosopher in section 9 sheds light on his attitude towards classical writers. He states that Plato writes about the body in a similar way to St Paul, and although he quotes the pagan writer's use of the word 'philosophy',

³⁸ *Ad Adol.* 10.1: Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν που κὰν τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις τελειότερον μαθησόμεθα· ὅσον δὲ σκιαγραφίαν τινὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς, τό γε νῦν εἶναι, ἐκ τῶν ἕξωθεν παιδευμάτων περιγραψόμεθα.

³⁹ Idea that Homer depicts an imitation of virtue, which is not real virtue, and so is a bad thing.

⁴⁰ *Ad Adol.* 2.6.

it is clear that he identifies the value in Plato's sentiment because it resonates with that of the apostle. It is interesting that Basil suggests Plato is reminiscent of St Paul, rather than the other way around, thereby giving greater weight to the Scriptural exhortation, despite the pagan sentiment having been written chronologically earlier.

This exemplifies the manner in which Basil seeks to make use of classical literature in this work. He states in 3.1 that where there is 'a relationship' between pagan and Christian writing, then a comparison of the two will identify the elements which are morally good and also highlight the things which should be disregarded. Although he is greatly influenced by Platonic thought and literature in his style and the content of his work, Basil does not intend to accept all that has been presented to him by a pagan philosopher, despite the fact that some of it is good, and just as he urges his nephews to be discerning about the literature they read, so Basil discriminates between the profitable and the superfluous in the literature he uses.

Basil utilises those parts of Plato's work which serve his own ends, but as a Christian rather than a Platonist,⁴¹ he is also compelled to be critical in his use, and is happy to counter Platonic assertions and notions in order to advance the Christian perspective on classical literature.

Plutarch

Basil makes use of Plutarch's historical lives and his philosophical works in his *Ad Adolescentes*. The borrowing from the *Lives* will be dealt with in Chapter 7:

Commentary, since the individual episodes are not significant for a consideration of Basil's educational approach and the methods he employs in his use of classical writings. There are three particular philosophical works which merit attention in this chapter: *De liberis educandis* (*Moralia* 1-14), *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* (*Moralia* 14-36) and *Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus* (*Moralia* 75-86). These are by no means the only works which Basil appears to be familiar with in the address, but they are particularly interesting in the context of a discussion of education, poetry and virtue: the basic subjects which Basil considers in his work.

⁴¹ For a discussion of Basil's adherence to, or lack of, Neoplatonic ideas see Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism'".

In his discussion of the authors exercising an influence of Basil, Wilson cites *De liberis educandis* and *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* but suggests that there are not 'enough verbatim similarities to prove ... that Basil was borrowing directly from Plutarch'.⁴² However, he admits that Basil may have reread them not long before composing his address. McLynn identifies Basil's use of *Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus* but cites it in support of his argument that Basil is not really addressing himself to his nephews, since they would have been unlikely to have read such a work.⁴³ *Adolescens* has been linked with Basil's *Address to the Young Men* in an edition by Padelford, in which he provides some historical occasions for the works to have been viewed in parallel.⁴⁴ However, he does not enter into a discussion of the two in comparison with each other.

If Basil is seeking to synthesise pagan and Christian wisdom in order to encourage his nephews to make use of their time at school in the acquisition of Christian virtue, then his use of Plutarch's *Moralia* is significant. While he may not have borrowed verbatim from the pagan's moral work, he certainly makes use of images and episodes in the texts to convey and reinforce his own ideas. This part of the chapter will identify those places in Plutarch's work which may have influenced Basil in his approach towards education and those which he has used in the formation and presentation of his argument. It will also consider how Basil may have altered or added a Christian flavour to the episodes to prepare his nephews for the Christian life.

On the education of children: De liberis educandis

The question of whether Plutarch's ideas about the need for and the methods of educating children may have influenced Basil in the development of his ideas and the strategies he adopts in his address can be answered most obviously by looking at *Moralia* 1-14, entitled *De liberis educandis*. The work is without addressee and sets out to determine the best way for a free-born child to be brought up if he is to develop a good character in adulthood.⁴⁵

⁴² Wilson, *St Basil* 12.

⁴³ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 115

⁴⁴ F. M. Padelford, *Essays on the Study and Use of Poetry by Plutarch and Basil the Great*, vol. 15, Yale Studies in English (New York: Yale University Press, 1902) 8.

⁴⁵ *Moralia* 1a.

Plutarch agrees with Plato that the earliest lessons given to children will have a lasting impression, and so should be good ones. He commends the philosopher for advising that nurses ought to be discriminating in the tales they tell their young charges, because: ‘youth is impressionable and plastic, and while such minds are still tender lessons are infused deeply into them.’⁴⁶ He compares children’s minds with wax, stating that: ‘just as seals leave their impression in soft wax, so are lessons impressed upon the minds of children while they are young.’ Basil expresses the same sentiment, although is more likely to have received it initially from Plato, since he shows equal familiarity with that portion of the *Republic* from where Plutarch would have borrowed his idea.⁴⁷

However, in his emphasis on the importance of providing good training for children, Plutarch expresses two sentiments which Basil appears to adopt, albeit with a more Christian emphasis. The philosopher asks the rhetorical question: ‘is it not absurd for people to accustom children to take their food with their right hand, and, if one puts out his left to rebuke him, and yet to take no forethought that they shall hear words of instruction?’⁴⁸ Plutarch criticises those parents and guardians who care more for the outward actions of their children, but take no pains to ensure that they have good moral teaching to develop understanding into adulthood. Basil takes this idea further, and uses the starting point of food, but places his comment in the context of ethical eternity. He states: ‘it is shameful to refuse the harmful things in foods, but to have no concern for the teaching which nourishes our soul, but just like a torrent sweeping everything in its path to absorb indiscriminately everything we come across.’⁴⁹

Although Basil differs from some Christian thinkers in that he does not condemn the human body as entirely evil, he does consider it of less importance than the soul, since the soul will continue after the death of the body. He therefore advocates that the body should only be cared for as necessity dictates, and should always be considered subservient to the soul.⁵⁰ With this in mind he uses Plutarch’s image about training children in the more superficial social mores and neglecting the essential ones and

⁴⁶ *Moralia* 3e. Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 377a-b.

⁴⁷ *Ad Adol.* 5.2. Cf. the discussion of children’s education in *Reg. Fus.*, in Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 267 stating that: ‘while the mind is still easy to mold and pliable as wax ... it should be exercised from the beginning in every good discipline.’

⁴⁸ *Moralia* 5a.

⁴⁹ *Ad Adol.* 8.1.

⁵⁰ *Ad Adol.* 9.16.

translates it into the context of feeding the superficial and subservient part of the whole man, but neglecting to nourish the essential part.

In 2.2 of the address, Basil seeks to encourage his nephews to adopt the right priorities in their lives, and not value highly those elements of life which the world may revere, but which are transitory and superficial in comparison with the eternity he directs them towards. He states that: ‘no distinction of ancestors, no strength of the body, no beauty, no greatness, no honours from all men, no royalty itself, nor any human thing which someone might suggest, do we judge to be great,’ and instead suggests that only virtue will last into the life to come. He does not explain at this point why such earthly values are only temporary, but his list echoes a similar one by Plutarch, in which he asserts that education should be valued, rather than external goods. He maintains: ‘Good birth is a fine thing, but it is an advantage which must be credited to one’s ancestors. Wealth is held in esteem, but it is a chattel of fortune, since oftentimes she takes it away from those who possess it, and brings and presents it to those who do not expect it ... Repute, moreover is imposing, but unstable. Beauty is highly prized, but short lived. Health is a valued possession but inconstant. Strength is much admired, but it falls an easy prey to disease and old age. And, in general, if anybody prides himself wholly upon the strength of his body, let him know that he is sadly mistaken in judgement.’⁵¹

Plutarch explains that the mind and reason are the only two elements in man which cannot be taken away, and suggests that old age will add wisdom to the mind, rather than having an adverse effect on it, as it does on the body. He states: ‘War, again, like a torrent, sweeps everything away and carries everything along in its current, but learning alone it cannot take away,’⁵² adding that unknown factors can affect those things erroneously prized by men. This passage is echoed by Basil in his discussion about the need to focus on the eternal rather than the temporary, and to be discerning about the teaching that is accepted into the soul, rather than taking on board everything indiscriminately. The similarity of the images used suggest that Basil may have borrowed the idea from Plutarch, even if he did not recall the text verbatim.

Plutarch commends the words of Hesiod about adding small efforts to other small

⁵¹ *Moralia* 5d.

⁵² *Moralia* 5e.

efforts with the result that a great thing will be achieved.⁵³ He is followed by Basil who advocates that the principle should be adopted with regard to virtue as much as to money, as the original author implied.⁵⁴ Basil is probably borrowing directly from Hesiod at this point, but given his familiarity with Plutarch it seems possible that the reinforcement of the quote used in the *Moralia* may have encouraged its use here.

Both Basil and Plutarch recommend that the actions of great men of the past should be used as role models for the young as they become educated.⁵⁵ Plutarch comments on those who are ‘celebrated among all mankind’⁵⁶ and adds that, although the control of passions might be difficult, these examples can be used to spur youth onto feats of effort and virtue.⁵⁷ Basil employs the same approach, conceding that it is not easy to put down anger, and urges his nephews to apply reason and the examples of noble men to spur them on.⁵⁸

How to Study Poetry: Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat

It would seem likely that Basil would have borrowed from *Moralia* 14-37: *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* since the works appear to have the same aim, namely to guide the young towards the right manner in which to read poetry, or in Basil’s case, pagan literature. However, there is a difference in the authors’ attitudes towards their subject matter. Plutarch emphasises the fact that his son and the son of his friend need close guidance in the reading of poetry because such literature is inherently dangerous, and could be as perilous to them as if they were alone in the streets.⁵⁹ Although poetry has some redeeming features, the danger it presents means that youths cannot be allowed to read it entirely unsupervised.⁶⁰ Basil on the other hand, while he admits there are things to avoid and passages to ignore in literature, gives the impression that much good can be found in poetry and other pagan writings. In addition, one of his aims in the *Address to the Young Men* is to provide his nephews with the tools to read classical literature by themselves and develop their ability to exercise reason and discernment

⁵³ *Moralia* 9e, quoting Hesiod, *WD* 361-2.

⁵⁴ *Ad Adol.* 10.2.

⁵⁵ *Ad Adol.* 7.7: *Moralia* 10e.

⁵⁶ *Moralia* 2c.

⁵⁷ *Moralia* 10e.

⁵⁸ *Ad Adol.* 7.4. The exhortation is followed by anecdotes about Perikles, Euclides of Megara, Socrates, Alexander the Great and Cleinias.

⁵⁹ *Moralia* 15a.

⁶⁰ *Moralia* 15c.

about the texts, so he focuses on the good to be found, rather than the danger to be avoided.

Both Plutarch and Basil agree that poetry can be useful as a training ground, the means by which a youth is introduced to the skills and tenets of virtue, or in Plutarch's case, philosophy. Plutarch maintains that poetry ought to be used to encourage the young to 'seek the profitable in what gives pleasure',⁶¹ in preparation for philosophical studies. He puts a great deal of emphasis on the pleasure afforded by poetry, and suggests that it is the enjoyment of the texts which might lead the young who read it astray.⁶² However, he concedes that children should not be forbidden from reading poetic works,⁶³ but rather that the poetry ought to be mixed with the beginning of philosophy in order to make the experience a profitable one.⁶⁴ Basil also does suggest that reading literature is a pleasant experience for the young, but he is more concerned that his nephews gain something profitable from their reading, whether the texts are enjoyable or not.⁶⁵

In the *De Lib.* Plutarch asserts that historical characters can be held up as models of those who have benefitted from education, but in *Adolescens* he clearly makes a distinction between historical characters and those represented by the poets. He states that poets will often write about 'base deeds, or of wicked experiences and characters',⁶⁶ and advises that young people should be 'taught to commend the faculty and art which imitates these things, but to repudiate and condemn the disposition and the actions which it imitates.'⁶⁷ Basil takes a different approach, and advocates both the use of historical characters and the examples given by poets.⁶⁸ He recommends the reading of poetry because he states that poets show all kinds of men in their writings: by implication, he refers to the good and the bad. He, like Plutarch, suggests that the

⁶¹ *Moralia* 16a.

⁶² *Moralia* 15c; 15f.

⁶³ *Moralia* 15d.

⁶⁴ *Moralia* 15f.

⁶⁵ *Ad Adol.* 4.7 on the simile of the bees as the guide for approaching classical literature, where Basil suggests that pagan writings are pleasant, but he does not necessarily imply that the pleasure is a bad thing as Plutarch does. The only occasion where Basil seems to consider that pleasure might disguise something dangerous is 4.3, where he warns his nephews not be like those men who unwittingly 'take in poison along with the honey'.

⁶⁶ *Moralia* 18b.

⁶⁷ *Moralia* 18d.

⁶⁸ Although that is only for his nephews and the young being educated in the traditional systems of the time, who would have no choice but to read poetry. It is worth noting that where Basil is at liberty to set his own agenda and subject matter for education, he advocates the use of noble, historical characters as examples, but forbids myths, which therefore suggests that he objects to the use of mythological characters as role models (*Reg.Fus.* 15, Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 266).

actions of bad man are to be disregarded, and not copied, but he does not suggest that a distinction is to be made between the style of the poet and the content of the poetry. If the poet shows the deeds of bad men, then they are to be passed over and not imitated, but if the deeds and words of good men are represented, then they should be noted by the youths and the behaviour emulated. Basil does not consider the manner in which the characters are portrayed to be important in assessing whether the passages of poetry have value.

It has been mentioned that Plato disapproved of even the poet Homer because of the fact that he portrayed falsehoods about the gods.⁶⁹ Shear suggests that Basil's endorsement of Homer is in marked opposition to Plato's condemnation of him, since Basil states that 'all Homer's poetry is in praise of virtue'.⁷⁰ At 5.6, Basil tells his nephews that he was taught that Homer's poetry was virtuous, by a 'man skilled at understanding the poet's mind'. Speculation about the identity of this man has prompted that suggestion that Basil refers to Libanius, since he probably studied under him in Constantinople, but Basil might be thinking of any of his teachers.⁷¹ However, since Basil is deliberately vague about the genesis of his comment it may be that part of his opinion about Homer's poetry comes from his reading of Plutarch.

Plutarch maintains that poetry is dangerous because the poets present bad actions and characters but their skill is such that they make evil appealing and so can have a corrupting effect of those who read their works. However, he commends Homer because he 'in advance discredits the mean and calls our attention to the good in what is said ... But in discrediting in advance, he all but protests and proclaims that we are not to follow or heed the sentiments expressed, as being unjustifiable and mean.'⁷²

Although Homer depicts negative characters in his works, the fact that he identifies them as unworthy of imitation makes him a poet to be admired. Consequently, Plutarch objects to allegorical interpretations of Homer's poetry, since the poet himself indicates how a story ought to be interpreted.⁷³ Since Basil is determined that Homer's poetry should be interpreted as portraying virtue, despite the fact that he shows both good and bad characters, it may be that he is thinking of the indication that the poet himself gives

⁶⁹ *Rep.* 378d, see 38 above.

⁷⁰ Shear, "Influence of Plato." 54. *Ad Adol.* 5.6.

⁷¹ See Wilson, *St Basil* 52. A similar sentiment about Homer is expressed by Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 53.11.

⁷² *Moralia* 19b.

⁷³ *Moralia* 19f.

to identify when a character is morally good, or when his example should be passed over.

Shear identifies Basil's use of Hesiod *Works and Days* 287-9 as a criticism of Plato's sentiment that the poet encouraged youth towards vice rather than virtue.⁷⁴ This may well be true, but it is interesting that the same passage is mentioned in this work by Plutarch, and discussed in a positive light. He argues that the key to understanding 'difficult' poetic statements lies in the way that youths are encouraged to interpret the meanings of the words that the poets use. He states that, according to the poets, the word virtue can be used to mean 'the best and godliest estate to which we can attain',⁷⁵ but equally can be used 'instead of repute, or influence, or good fortune, or the like',⁷⁶ and he cites *WD* 287ff as an example of the former usage. This defence of Hesiod in a work with which Basil was certainly familiar may have influenced the composition of his address, not just by encouraging him in his criticism of Plato, but also in the knowledge that his positive approach to the verses would be reinforced in his nephews' minds when they came to read Plutarch's work, if they had not already encountered it.

In his consideration of the means by which poetry might be used to train young men, Plutarch discusses a technique endorsed by Basil in 3.1 of his *Address to the Young Men*. Basil states that when Christian and pagan writing have some similarities, if the texts are placed in parallel, the moral lessons in the writing will be apparent, and it will also serve to identify the negative lessons. Plutarch gives more direction about how this technique should be used to teach the young, a result of the fact that he addresses himself to those responsible for the care of youths rather than to the youths themselves as Basil does. He maintains that 'when ... a comparison of passages makes their contradictions evident, we must advocate the better side.'⁷⁷ He also warns that 'comparison and consideration of opposing sentiments will result in one of two ways: it will either guide the youth over toward the better side, or else cause his belief to revolt from the worse,'⁷⁸ and so encourages the teacher to make clear the correct

⁷⁴ Shear, "Influence of Plato." 54-55.

⁷⁵ *Moralia* 24e.

⁷⁶ *Moralia* 24f.

⁷⁷ *Moralia* 20c.

⁷⁸ *Moralia* 21d.

understanding or better moral lesson so that his students will be ‘helped and not harmed by poetry.’⁷⁹

Following his advice that the youths can consider similar passages in parallel and so glean benefit from them through reinforcement or contrast, Basil incorporates several images and episodes in his address which are found in Plutarch’s work on poetry. The passages are not identical, and as Wilson states, there are few verbatim similarities,⁸⁰ but the number of instances suggests that Basil did have Plutarch’s work in his recent memory, and consciously used the images to help reinforce his points. It has been suggested that Basil’s address does not just advocate the technique of propaedeutis in the way that it recommends the reading of classical texts, but rather that it acts as a propaedeutis, demonstrating certain ideas which are then explored further in other texts. Plutarch’s *Moralia* were not necessarily the ‘required reading’ for youths the age of Basil’s nephews, but it is likely that they would have started to encounter his philosophical works as they progressed in their schooling, and by incorporating the images which the nephews will discover in Plutarch, Basil prepares them for the moral lessons he wishes them to draw from the pagan writer.

Particular passages in *Adolescens* which may have been borrowed by Basil in his address include: *Moralia* 15d which references the story of the Sirens from Homer’s *Odyssey*; 27a-b about the meeting of Nausicaa and Odysseus; 28d on the need to resist being blown about by every wind of opinion; 28e which uses the image of a plant and its fruit and foliage representing truth and attractive embellishment; 30d and 32e concerning bees and the way that they approach the gathering of honey from thorny plants and 36e on the need for the mind to be trained in truth before it can truly learn about it, just as the eye needs to be prepared to look at the sun after a long period of darkness. The passages will be discussed at the appropriate places in the commentary below, but here it is enough to state that Basil is clearly making use of this work of Plutarch’s to show useful ideas which can be taken from pagan literature.

⁷⁹ *Moralia* 22d; 20e for the same sentiment.

⁸⁰ Wilson, *St Basil* 12.

Making progress in virtue: Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus

Moralia 75-86: *Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus* is identified by McLynn as a source for Basil's *Address to the Young Men on Pagan Literature*.⁸¹ However, McLynn uses the fact that Basil's nephews were unlikely to have read the work as evidence for his argument that he was not really addressing himself to them, but rather a group of educated professionals in attendance at 'an elegant soiree'.⁸² It is true that the youths would probably not have been familiar with Plutarch's philosophical works, but that does not negate the value that Basil might have sought in using the text as a source for his address, nor does it necessarily suggest that he was not speaking to his nephews.

On the contrary, if Basil's aim in this work is to encourage his nephews to view their pagan studies as a preparation for later Christian study, and not just to exhort them to do this, but also to use this address as a vehicle to demonstrate the method of *propaideusis* that he advocates, then it is more than likely that Basil would use texts that the nephews have not yet encountered, since it enables Basil to present the messages he wants them to notice and learn from when they do read the works.⁸³ It has been mentioned above that Basil takes images from *Adolescens* and uses them in the same manner, but it should be noted that that work, along with *De Lib*, is addressed to an adult individual who has a concern for the training of the young.

Basil's address is directed at his nephews, and throughout the piece he seeks to engage with them and establish a group identity which includes them and himself in the wider community of Christians. This is important for two reasons. The first is that Basil wants his nephews to accept his words as being most useful to them, and by associating himself with them, not just as an older and wiser uncle but also as a Christian who has to beware of the same dangers as them, he puts himself on the same level as them and therefore speaks to them as spiritual equals rather than in a wholly didactic manner. The other reason is that he wants the youths to identify themselves with the Christian community, and therefore encourage them to seek their place within that society. It has been established that these youths are nearing the age when they will be moving away

⁸¹ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 115.

⁸² *Ibid.* 112.

⁸³ Fortin, "Christianity and Hellenism," discusses the notion of Basil's work as a '*preparatio evangelica*' – the means by which Basil trains his nephews to view pagan literature through Christian moral eyes. Fortin, however, maintains that Basil takes this approach because there is really no affinity between pagan and Christian virtue, and by encouraging the youths to look for the virtue in literature, he attempts to cloud their view against the immorality they may otherwise discover.

from their homes to study⁸⁴ and so will be taking responsibility for their own commitment to the community of faith. Basil wants the youths to adopt a Christian way of approaching their school texts and their lives, which will stand them in good stead as they move to take their own place in the wider world.⁸⁵

Plutarch's *Quis Suos* is not addressed to a person responsible for others, but to an individual who seeks to make progress on his own behalf. In this regard the work is similar to Basil's address, since he speaks, not to his nephews' teachers, but to the youths themselves, and encourages them to assess their own progress towards virtue. Since Basil is attempting to encourage the youths to move away from a position of passive acceptance of whatever they are told into a place where they begin to exercise their own reason and take responsibility for their own understanding and moral development, then it is significant that he uses, not just texts designed to educate the young, but also texts which appear to encourage self-application, so that the nephews find the examples he introduces them to in works which they can approach as capable individuals, rather than ones which emphasise their status as children.

Basil achieves several things by borrowing examples and sentiments from a text that the youths may not have encountered yet in their school, but which they are likely to read in the future under the tutelage of their pagan teachers. The first is that he establishes himself as an authority on classical and Christian education, since the youths will recall that Basil introduced them to the stories and images that they subsequently encounter in their textbooks. Second, he relegates the pagan advice by introducing his nephews to it in a Christian context. The aim is not to try and subvert the messages,⁸⁶ but rather to place the literature where it can be held up next to Christian writing and so reinforce the moral message which can be learned from the two works. Third, the address acts a propaedeutis: Basil's nephews absorb his advice and when they encounter Plutarch they will be able to identify those areas where they are already making progress in virtue because Basil has already suggested those things that they should be doing.

Consequently, not only do the youths have confidence in the actions that they read about because they have previously encountered and started practising them, but also

⁸⁴ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 111 suggests that they may have already done so.

⁸⁵ GNaz, *Or.* 43.21 states that when he and Basil were in Athens they travelled to only two places: their school and their church, but even so, Basil writes that he has encountered corrupting temptations (*Ep.* 42.4). He perhaps does not expect that his nephews will be so single-minded in their thirst for virtue that they will seek it out entirely without help.

⁸⁶ As Fortin, "Christianity and Hellenism," 195 maintains.

they will take the useful from Plutarch and apply the principles in a Christian manner because Basil has introduced these things on a Christian backdrop which will persist even when the work is encountered in a pagan context.

Plato and Plutarch are by no means the only writers whose influence can be seen on Basil. But he does demonstrate a clear familiarity with them in his address, whether he encountered them in anthologies or through their own writings. He draws on their works for examples which illustrate the moral virtue which can be found in pagan literature, but he also borrows images and ideas to assist in the formation of his own sentiments.

While it is natural that Basil should draw on pagan examples in his address about classical literature, it would not necessarily be the case that he would incorporate earlier Christian literature in his composition. However, as much as Basil was a product of his classical learning, he was also influenced by the centuries of Christian thinking and doctrine which had come before him. He and Gregory Nazianzen spent time editing a version of Origen's *Philocalia* at the former's retreat at Annesi after they returned from Athens to Cappadocia,⁸⁷ and Basil shows a keen awareness of his own generation's place within the Christian tradition.⁸⁸ It is therefore reasonable to assume that Basil was familiar with the writings of many earlier Christian thinkers, and he incorporated some of their ideas into his address. This next section considers his use of Clement of Alexandria, and in particular his treatise *Paedagogus*.

Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*

When Christian writers in the early centuries considered education, they tended to condemn a system which placed an emphasis on the pagan gods, either as an essential part of the curriculum or even the association between the 'academic calendar' and pagan religious festivals.⁸⁹ As has been mentioned, the church fathers who appeared to object most vociferously against classical schooling were those who had received most benefit from the system before their own conversion to Christianity.⁹⁰ Consequently it is no great surprise that there are not many other works written in the same vein as Basil's,

⁸⁷ Rousseau, *Basil* 66.

⁸⁸ E.g. *Ep.* 223 and *ibid.* 117-8.

⁸⁹ For example, Tertullian *De Idol.* 10 is critical of Christian teachers, in part because of the need for them to deal with idols in their everyday duties, but even more so because they were required to attend religious events in order to receive their pay.

⁹⁰ See Ch1, 6.

namely with the intention of setting out to consider pagan literature positively but in the light of Christian revelation. However, Basil's sentiment that classical writings can be proved to contain much that would be useful to a young Christian, and his principle that a comparison of texts will serve to illuminate the better course of action, is not entirely original.

Two hundred years before Basil, Clement of Alexandria⁹¹ wrote several treatises on the Christian life, including *Protrepticus (Address to the Heathens)*, *Paedagogus (The Instructor)* and *Stromata (Miscellanies)*.⁹² The first work is designed to encourage conversion to Christianity, the second sets out the requirements of the Christian life and suggests that Jesus, as the Instructor, teaches Christians how they should live, while the *Stromata* is a collection of different questions and ideas about Scriptural and other issues. Rankin suggests that while the *Paedagogus* was probably written with new Christians, or catechumens in mind, the *Stromata* was designed for mature Christians written with a view to teaching them how 'to see in pagan learning a possible set of tools for understanding the Gospel'.⁹³

Although the discussions in the *Stromata* are also relevant to the questions raised in Basil's *Ad Adolescentes*, it is the second of these works, *Paedagogus* which will be considered in this chapter. It will be seen that there are several images common to the two writers which suggests that Basil was familiar with Clement's works, and his approach in advising his nephews, not just about their classical studies, but also with regard to cultivating a Christian lifestyle, echoes principles and methods expounded by Clement. The *Paedagogus* would appear to be directed at an audience similar to that of Basil's address, since it seeks to teach new Christians about the requirements of a holy life, rather than addressing mature members of the faith. Although Basil considers questions about classical literature, he also focusses on young Christians, who he states are not very familiar with the Bible and Christian writings.⁹⁴ It is therefore appropriate to compare Basil's work with the *Paedagogus* rather than the *Stromata* in this instance, because of the relative similarities between the potential audiences.⁹⁵

⁹¹ See David Ivan Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2007) 125 for a brief biography.

⁹² Eusebius, *HE* 6.13.1-3 lists ten of his works, but only four are extant.

⁹³ Rankin, *Clement to Origen* 125-6.

⁹⁴ *Ad Adol.* 2.6.

⁹⁵ In addition, *Str.* appears to be directed at an audience with a sound knowledge of pagan learning, and seeks to provide a way towards conversion for those who are not yet convinced of the faith (*Str.* 1.5.28).

There are distinct differences between the two works; Clement's rationale is not the same as Basil's: he writes to Christians to give them an insight into how they ought to live once they have left their pagan lives behind them rather than considering pagan writings. Also Clement includes many references to the Bible and quotes Scripture extensively, which suggests an audience who are expected to be becoming, if they are not already, quite scripturally aware. However, his readers are assumed to be well versed in classical literature, since Clement refers frequently to Plato, tragic and comic playwrights and also Homer. In addition he highlights passages that are later utilised by Basil in his work, which implies Basil's reading of Clement.

Principles of Education

Basil approaches his nephews with the initial intention of considering pagan literature. However, his secondary aim is to focus their attention, through their school texts, towards the ultimate aim of the Christian life and introduce them to the means by which they can achieve the salvation of their souls. One of the major themes of his address then is the need to treasure only those elements of classical literature, and indeed the whole of life, which are useful in the journey towards Christian virtue.⁹⁶ The same sentiment is expounded by Clement as he seeks to explain how newly converted Christians should tailor their lives to the requirements of God. He states that Jesus, as the Instructor of the Christians, wishes to: 'improve the soul ... and to train it up to a virtuous, not to an intellectual life.'⁹⁷

Clement puts the idea of education into a particularly Christian context: he follows prevailing earlier thought about virtue as the chief aim of education,⁹⁸ but goes a step further with an overt rejection of the 'intellectual'. Basil's notion is not so extreme, but he certainly emphasises the need for virtue, and also implicitly encourages the youths he addresses not to value literature and study for their own sake, nor in order to make themselves appear clever.⁹⁹

This would put it at odds with Basil's sentiment, since his nephews, although not mature in their understanding of Christianity, are certainly assumed to be Christians.

⁹⁶ *Ad Adol.* 2.2-3.

⁹⁷ *Paed.* 1.1.

⁹⁸ See e.g. Plato, *Rep.* 376c.

⁹⁹ See Ch7: Commentary for Basil's views on oratory (4.6).

Like Basil, Clement encourages his readers to select those things which will assist them in their Christian life, writing: ‘since we assign no place to pleasure which is linked to no use serviceable to life, come let us distinguish here too, selecting what is useful.’¹⁰⁰ However, it is in this regard that the distinction between Clement’s audience and Basil’s is made, since Clement states that his readers should select ‘the Scriptures which bear on the usefulness of training for life’,¹⁰¹ while Basil’s focus is on the classical literature which his nephews encounter everyday.

Both writers address themselves to those in need of education: Basil’s nephews need instruction in the best way to apply themselves to literature so that they move towards gaining Christian virtue, and Clement’s aim is to encourage his readers to adopt more of a Christian lifestyle as they gradually become able to hear and obey the commands of the Instructor for themselves. Although the contexts may be slightly different, the two Church Fathers adopt the same principles to convey their messages.

Clement states that the Instructor uses several methods in order to draw men towards the right behaviour, and one of those is the system of examples. He explains that when people are shown two contrasting examples, one good and one bad, the intention is that the better course of action becomes apparent: ‘one having for its purpose that we should choose and imitate the good, and the other that we should reject and turn away from the opposite.’¹⁰² Basil echoes this notion in his recommendation about classical and Christian texts being viewed side by side so that, where a difference between the two may be discerned, the wrong sentiment can be disregarded.¹⁰³

The use of examples of good behaviour for imitation is found advocated by Clement, and similarly by Basil. Clement states that ‘didactic discourse’ about the mysteries of the Christian faith is too advanced for his audience, who are still in the first stages of their Christian experience, and he argues instead that it is sufficient for them to love God and by ‘turning away from some examples, and imitating others as much as [they] can, ... perform the works of the Master according to His similitude.’¹⁰⁴ Full understanding of the faith is not required to take steps to live out the Christian life, and

¹⁰⁰ *Paed.* 2.8.

¹⁰¹ *Paed.* 2.1.

¹⁰² *Paed.* 1.1.

¹⁰³ *Ad Adol.* 3.1.

¹⁰⁴ *Paed.* 1.3.

greater revelation will come in the future. Basil follows this principle in his exhortation to his nephews to pay attention to and imitate noble pagan characters whose behaviour parallels that found in the Scriptures.¹⁰⁵ The youths are not fully conversant themselves with the deep mysteries of the faith,¹⁰⁶ but they have an awareness of how they should live and Basil builds on that in his address. Like Clement he encourages them to follow good examples and take their first steps towards the Christian life through the passage of pagan literature.

Propaideusis

Clement maintains that the individual must be trained in the the Christian life in order to prove worthy of salvation, and considers the means by which training occurs. He states that the Instructor initially uses man's fear of death and other difficulties as a way of 'repressing the people, and at the same time turning them to salvation'.¹⁰⁷ He likens this to 'wool that is undergoing the process of dyeing [which] is want to be previously treated with mordants, in order to prepare it for taking on a fast colour.' The souls of men are prepared for conversion and instruction in the same way that wool is prepared for the dyeing process. Interestingly, Basil uses the same image of wool dyers in the context of training the 'eye of the soul', in his case by means of pagan literature.¹⁰⁸ He states that the treating of material before the dyeing takes place ensures that the change of colour will be permanent and will not fade. Therefore the training which takes place in a young individual will not only prepare his soul for the Christian truths which are to follow, but will have the added advantage of being indelible.

The notion that successful training also involves an element of practice is asserted by both writers. Clement suggests that 'if anyone of you shall entirely avoid luxury, he will, by a frugal upbringing, train himself to the endurance of involuntary labours, by employing constantly voluntary afflictions as training exercises for persecutions; so that when he comes to compulsory labours, and fears, and griefs, he will not be unpractised in endurance.'¹⁰⁹ He indicates that the Christian ought to prepare himself for hardships by voluntarily subjecting himself to privations as training for what may come. Basil likewise maintains that searching for virtue in pagan literature and attempting to imitate

¹⁰⁵ *Ad Adol.* 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ad Adol.* 2.6.

¹⁰⁷ *Paed.* 1.9.

¹⁰⁸ *Ad Adol.* 2.8.

¹⁰⁹ *Paed.* 3.8.

morally good actions can act as a training ground for the later seeking out of virtue in the Scriptures and putting into practice the tenets found there. He compares the process to that of soldiers who, ‘gaining experience by means of gymnastics and dancing, enjoy in contests the profit from their training.’¹¹⁰

The use of classical literature

There is no sense that Clement seeks to explore the connections between classical and Christian literature in the *Paedagogus*, but he does make use of pagan writers where their literature can be seen to endorse his message about the Christian life.¹¹¹ He does this to add weight to his declarations, implying that the widespread agreement across pagan and Christian borders about certain tenets would support the truth of the declarations. He makes many of his references to authors by name, with occasional allusions to ‘the comic poet’ or similar, accompanied by a quotation. Throughout the work Clement refers to Homer,¹¹² Pythagoras,¹¹³ Plato,¹¹⁴ Aristotle,¹¹⁵ Menander,¹¹⁶ Aristophanes¹¹⁷ and Heraclitus.¹¹⁸ The wide range of authors on which he draws would suggest that he expects his audience to be as well-read as he is himself, and also that he is not interested in engaging in any debate about classical writing, since he makes no attempt to defend his use of these writers.

There are four areas in which Basil’s address to his nephews appears to echo Clement’s use of pagan literature. The first is the two Christians’ use of Plato. It has already been established that Basil’s address is Platonic in tone, and he makes many allusions, both implicit and explicit, to the philosopher although he does not always endorse the pagan’s opinion.¹¹⁹ Clement quotes Plato frequently, but unlike Basil is positive about his writings, introducing his comments with phrases such as: ‘that truth seeking philosopher’¹²⁰ and ‘for my part, I approve of Plato’.¹²¹ He also, as Basil does later,

¹¹⁰ *Ad Adol.* 2.6.

¹¹¹ He addresses himself to the question of the validity of classical philosophy and literature in the opening books of *Str.* where he declares Greek philosophy to be the ‘handmaiden of truth’ (1.5).

¹¹² *Paed.* 1.6; 2.2.

¹¹³ *Paed.* 1.10; 2.1.

¹¹⁴ *Paed.* 1.8; 1.9; 2.1; 2.3; 2.10; 3.11.

¹¹⁵ *Paed.* 2.1.

¹¹⁶ *Paed.* 3.2.

¹¹⁷ *Paed.* 3.2.

¹¹⁸ *Paed.* 2.10.

¹¹⁹ See above, 38-40..

¹²⁰ *Paed.* 2.1.

¹²¹ *Paed.* 2.3.

connects Plato with St Paul and uses the writings of both to reinforce one message.¹²² However, Clement does emphasise the notion held by early Christian thinkers that Plato travelled extensively in the East before he wrote his philosophy, and consequently was influenced by Jewish religious writings when he set down his own literature.¹²³ In *Paedagogus*, Clement suggests that not only was Plato educated in the writings of Moses,¹²⁴ but he was also familiar with the psalms of David.¹²⁵ Basil does not refer to the question of whether Plato may have been influenced by Jewish literature; the thrust of his argument is that classical writing can contain some useful principles, regardless of where they might have come from originally.

Both Clement and Basil refer to and use Plato's writing in their own works because of their familiarity with him through their own extensive classical education. Although both men address themselves to Christians, they are comfortable with the notion that pagan thought and writing can shed light on those Christian tenets which concern the right way to live, and therefore include references to classical authors to support their ideas. It is a sign of their shared attitude towards Plato that both Clement and Basil present the pagan philosopher's words alongside and as an endorsement of those belonging to the Christian apostle Paul.

The second occasion that Basil echoes Clement is found as the earlier writer continues in the vein of approving classical authors. Clement states: 'I admire the Ceian sophist' and his depiction of Virtue and Vice.¹²⁶ He refers to the fable concerning the choice of Herakles at the crossroads, of which the 'Ceian sophist', Prodicus, was thought to have been the originator. The episode is recalled by Basil at 5.12-14 and he gives a full account of Herakles' choice and actions, relating the story closely to his nephews' situation of beginning to make moral choices about their lives.¹²⁷ Basil's use of the fable will be discussed in more detail below,¹²⁸ but what is worth pointing out here is that both he and Clement introduce the well-known anecdote with a reference to the author, not by name, but rather with an epithet. They call Prodicus the 'Ceian sophist', and of the many writers who relate the story, they seem to be the only ones who use this

¹²² *Paed.* 2.10; cf. *Ad Adol.* 9.12.

¹²³ Arthur J. Droge, *Homer or Moses?: early Christian interpretations of the history of culture* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1989) vii and 60f.

¹²⁴ *Paed.* 1.8; 2.10.

¹²⁵ *Paed.* 2.1.

¹²⁶ *Paed.* 2.11.

¹²⁷ *Ad Adol.* 5.12.

¹²⁸ Ch4, 85-98.

moniker. Xenophon, who is thought to have been the literary source of the story for the ancients, since any written account by Prodicus himself appears to have been lost even in antiquity,¹²⁹ calls him ‘Prodicus the wise’, making use of his name.¹³⁰ As Wilson pointed out, Basil’s nephews would have had to be fairly precocious to have been able to identify Prodicus from his epithet,¹³¹ and it is possible that Basil was influenced in his choice of words by his reading of Clement.¹³²

It has been suggested that Clement does not seek to defend his use of classical writers in the *Paedagogus*, but on one occasion he does try to put his use of pagan illustrations into context in a manner later imitated by Basil. He states: ‘I set these quotations from the comic poets before you, since the word most strenuously wishes to save us. And by and by I will fortify them with the divine scriptures.’¹³³ He does not attempt to justify his inclusion of these texts, but rather affirms the idea that something useful can be gleaned from different sources, and using pagan texts as a starting point he reiterates the message with words from the Bible. This principle is found as the basis for Basil’s address. He maintains that classical literature can be read with an eye to the useful, and those texts will prove the starting point on the path to a life of Christian virtue. However, although he concedes that the scriptures will prove most useful in this regard, nevertheless the benefit to be gained from pagan writings should not be ignored.

Clement’s discussion of the use of examples and similes is the fourth area in which Basil appears to borrow from his Christian predecessor. Clement maintains that the message of classical literature can relate to the life of a Christian and he quotes a text later used by Basil. He states:

‘some men being instructed are saved; and others, self-taught, either aspire after or seek virtue. “He truly is the best of all who himself perceives all things.”

Such is Abraham, who sought God.

“And good, again, is he who obeys him who advises well.”

Such are those disciples who obeyed the Word. Wherefore the former was called “friend,” the latter “apostles;” the one diligently seeking, and the other preaching one and the same God. And both are peoples, and both these have hearers, the one who is profited through seeking, the other who is saved through finding.

“But whoever neither himself perceives, nor, hearing another,

¹²⁹ Wilson, *St Basil* 54.

¹³⁰ Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.21.

¹³¹ Wilson, *St Basil* 54.

¹³² Clement could not have been Basil’s only source of the story, since his reference to the fable is superficial and focuses on the figures of Vice and Virtue, and does not consider Herakles’ role in the proceedings.

¹³³ *Paed.* 3.2.

Lays to heart—he is a worthless man.”

The other people is the Gentile—useless; this is the people that followeth not Christ.’¹³⁴

Clement quotes Hesiod, *Works and Days* 293-297, a pagan text, but provides Christian examples of the types of man that Hesiod describes. The man who identifies the best course for himself is like Abraham, the man who responds to instruction is like the disciples who were taught by Christ, and the useless man, who does not see for himself nor will learn from others, refers to those who do not follow Christ.¹³⁵ Basil uses the same lines of poetry towards the beginning of his address, and encourages his nephews to be like the second type of man, and receive the instruction that Basil offers, rather than the third kind of useless individual.¹³⁶ Hesiod’s sentiment was regularly used by authors, pagan and Christian, to provide a moral message, and Basil was no doubt familiar with the poem itself, but he may have had Clement in mind when he used the text in his address.

Clement’s use of pagan writers can be found echoed in Basil’s address to his nephews. Both Christians make extensive use of Plato in their works, although Clement endorses the philosopher more wholeheartedly than perhaps Basil does. They both refer to Prodicus as ‘the Ceian sophist’, suggesting that Basil may have borrowed from Clement if they did not have a mutual source for the epithet. Clement explains that he uses pagan literature as the first attempts of towards salvation, which will be followed by Biblical exposition, and Basil echoes this sentiment with his notion that the study of literature will be beneficial before an individual embarks on Biblical studies. Finally, both Christians quote Hesiod, *WD* 293-7 in their works, encouraging their audience to take steps to avoid being the third type of man described by the pagan poet.

¹³⁴ *Paed.* 3.8.

¹³⁵ Ὅς δέ κε μήτ’ αὐτὸς νοέη μήτ’ ἄλλου ἀκούων / ἐν θυμῷ βάλληται, ὃ δ’ αὖτ’ ἀχρήσιος ἀνήρ. Λαὸς ἄλλος ἐστίν, ἔθνικὸς ἀχρεῖος οὗτος ὁ λαὸς ὃ μὴ Χριστῷ ἐπόμενος. It seems likely that in his exposition of Hesiod’s text Clement is punning on the Greek words for worthless (ἀχρεῖος) and Christ (Χριστός). There was a tradition of punning on the name Christ from the earliest days of the church, for further discussion see Thomas Scott Caulley, "The Chrestos/Christos Pun (1 Pet 2:3) in P72 and P125," *Novum Testamentum* 53, no. 4 (2011) and John Moles, "Jesus the Healer in the Gospels, the *Acts of the Apostles*, and Early Christianity," *Histos* 5 (2011) 130. Basil does not link his own use of the text specifically to Christians but he may also have had it in mind.

¹³⁶ *Ad Adol.* 1.3.

Common images

Clement and Basil make use of certain images which may suggest a common literary heritage or that Basil is drawing on the earlier writer in his own address. In his discussion of luxury, Clement compares it to a horse which is ‘prone to kick up its heels and toss its mane, and shake off the charioteer, the Instructor; who, pulling back the reins from far, leads and drives to salvation the human horse ... which is wildly bent on pleasures.’¹³⁷ This image is echoed by Basil in the context of controlling the body and its desire for pleasure so that the Christian is not ‘led, just like a charioteer, being swept along by violence, borne by uncontrollable horses.’¹³⁸ The illustration is Platonic in origin¹³⁹ so it is not possible to identify Clement as Basil’s source, but it is interesting to see these two writers using the same image in a similar context.

Clement exhorts his audience to avoid inconsistency in their lives, advising them that they should cultivate Christian virtues, in order ‘to be, not to seem’ virtuous.¹⁴⁰ He criticises those who change their character depending on the kinds of people they spend time with, writing: ‘as they say that polypi, assimilated to the rocks to which they adhere, are in colour such as they; so, laying aside the inspiration of the assembly, after their departure from it, they become like others with whom they associate.’¹⁴¹ Basil, likewise, ends his discussion on the various aspects of the Christian life with an appeal for his nephews not to behave like a flatterer who ‘approves righteousness at one minute to those people who honour it, but at another minute will speak opposite opinions whenever he perceives that unrighteousness is held in esteem’. He likens such behaviour to that of a polypus which ‘changes its skin-colour according to the ground it lies on,’ since such a man ‘changes his mind according to the opinions of those around him.’¹⁴²

The Christian life

Basil has been criticised for his seeming digression into the subject of Christian lifestyle, and how his nephews should live, and if his address is viewed as solely an attempt to consider the question of pagan literature and its place within a Christian

¹³⁷ *Paed.* 3.11.

¹³⁸ *Ad Adol.* 9.14.

¹³⁹ Plato, *Phaedrus* 254.

¹⁴⁰ *Paed.* 3.11; cf. *Ad Adol.* 6.3.

¹⁴¹ *Paed.* 3.11.

¹⁴² *Ad Adol.* 9.27.

education then to a degree that criticism is justified. However, Basil is not simply concerned with his nephews' intellectual activities in the abstract, he wishes to see them become faithful members of the Christian community, and the consideration of classical literature in this work merely provides a starting point for the discussion and the advice he wants to give them. Therefore, since his aim is wider than just a discussion of ancient writings it should come as no surprise that Basil follows the practice of the Church Fathers before him, including Clement, and deals with the various questions of life which his nephews will need to negotiate in the near future.¹⁴³

Clement devotes the second part of the *Paedagogus* to a consideration of the Christian life, introducing the subject: 'Keeping, then, to our aim, and selecting the Scriptures which bear on the usefulness of training for life, we must now compendiously describe what the man who is called a Christian ought to be during the whole of his life.'¹⁴⁴ The subjects which he contemplates in this section are echoed by Basil in the penultimate section of his address.

	Clement	Basil
On Eating	<p>2.1: Some men, in truth, live that they may eat, as the irrational creatures, "whose life is their belly, and nothing else." But the Instructor enjoins us to eat that we may live.</p> <p>We must therefore reject different varieties ... For people dare to call by the name of food their dabbling in luxuries, which glides into mischievous pleasures ... [and] put themselves to a world of trouble to procure dainties from beyond seas.</p>	<p>9.2: providing the stomach with necessary but not the most pleasant foodstuffs, unlike those men who devote their thoughts to slaves who set out tables, and cooks, tracking them down though every land and sea.</p>
On Wealth	<p>2.3: wealth, when not properly governed, is a stronghold of evil, about which many casting their eyes, they will never reach the kingdom of heaven, sick for the things of the world, and living proudly through luxury. But those who are in earnest about salvation must settle this beforehand in their</p>	<p>9.17: For will we still want wealth, having dishonoured the pleasure of the body?</p> <p>9.18: For the greater the need, even if it were for Lydian gold (dust), or even for the work of gold-gathering ants, he will deem</p>

¹⁴³ Even though Basil's focus appears to have moved away from pagan writings in his section on Christian living it should be noted that he continues to refer to classical literature where the texts provide a suitable moral comment on different life choices.

¹⁴⁴ *Paed.* 2.1.

	<p>mind, “that all that we possess is given to us for use, and use for sufficiency, which one may attain to by a few things.”</p> <p>But the best riches is poverty of desires; and the true magnanimity is not to be proud of wealth, but to despise it.</p>	<p>it much more unworthy as the less he requires it. And perhaps he would determine the need by the constraints of nature, rather than by pleasures.</p> <p>9.21: For the words of Socrates are well put: He, when a rich man was thinking much of himself because of his possessions, said that he would not simply admire him before he proved that he understood how to make use of them.</p>
On Music	<p>2.4: For if people occupy their time with pipes, and psalteries, and choirs, and dances, and Egyptian clapping of hands, and such disorderly frivolities, they become quite immodest and intractable, beat on cymbals and drums, and make a noise on instruments of delusion.</p> <p>For the apostle adds again, “Teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to God.” ... This is our thankful revelry. And even if you wish to sing and play to the harp or lyre, there is no blame. Thou shalt imitate the righteous Hebrew king in his thanksgiving to God.</p> <p>But let amatory songs be banished far away, and let our songs be hymns to God.</p>	<p>9.7-8: nor to pour down destructive music into the soul by means of the ears. For passion which is the offspring of illiberality and baseness is produced from this kind of music. But we must follow closely after another kind, which is both better and also conveys to even better which David, the poet of holy songs made use of, as they say, and brought the king back from his madness.</p>
On Perfume	<p>2.8: And as we have abandoned luxury in taste, so certainly do we renounce voluptuousness in sights and odours; lest through the senses, as through unwatched doors, we unconsciously give access into the soul to that excess which we have driven away.</p> <p>There are some who ... appear to me to be rightly so averse to perfumes on account of their rendering manhood</p>	<p>9.11: Indeed in truth, I should be ashamed to forbid the use of all kinds of perfumes mixed up to bring pleasure on the air, or defile the surface of the body with countless things.</p>

	<p>effeminate, as to banish their compounders and vendors from well-regulated states... For it is not right that ensnaring garments and unguents should be admitted into the city of truth; but it is highly requisite for the men who belong to us to give forth the odour not of ointments, but of nobleness and goodness.</p>	
On Clothes	<p>2.11: Neither are we to provide for ourselves costly clothing any more than variety of food.</p>	<p>9.4: For what would be the difference, to a man of sense, to be looked upon wearing a fine robe of state or some cloak of poor material, as long as there is no lack of protection from it both in the winter cold and the heat? And indeed in other matters in the same way one must not be equipped more than is necessary.</p>
On Hairdressing	<p>3.3: To such an extent, then, has luxury advanced, that not only are the female sex deranged about this frivolous pursuit, but men also are infected with the disease. For not being free of the love of finery, they are not in health; but inclining to voluptuousness, they become effeminate, cutting their hair in an ungentlemanlike and meretricious way, clothed in fine and transparent garments, chewing mastich, smelling of perfume. What can one say on seeing them? Like one who judges people by their foreheads, he will divine them to be adulterers and effeminate, addicted to both kinds of venery, haters of hair, destitute of hair, detesting the bloom of manliness, and adorning their locks like women.</p> <p>Diogenes, when he was being sold, chiding like a teacher one of these degenerate creatures, said very manfully, "Come, youngster, buy for yourself a man," chastising his meretriciousness by an ambiguous speech.</p>	<p>9.3: To take more than necessary pains about hair-cutting and clothes is, according to Diogenes, for those who are unlucky or unrighteous. Thus to be a dandy, and to be likewise called one is more shameful than those men who keep company with, or form designs on other men's wives.</p> <p>9.5: For it is no less a reproach to a man who is truly worthy of such a name, like dandy and 'body-lover', than to be in a lowly state because of some other of the passions.</p>

Both writers consider the subjects of food, wealth, music, perfume, clothes and hairstyles in their discussion of how to live the Christian life. Their sentiments are often similar and they demonstrate the same attitudes towards these various things. Can it be determined that Basil has borrowed from Clement in this section of his address? Certainly, there is no firm biblical precedent for considering the minutiae of the Christian lifestyle: the New Testament raises the question of money and luxury and points towards holy living, but does not discuss every issue. Why does Basil select the subjects he does, unless he is borrowing from earlier writings? It cannot be proved that he had Clement in mind, but it is interesting that these subjects which were of concern to the leaders of the church in the second century continued to be bones of contention in the Fourth.¹⁴⁵

As part of his contemplation of Christian living, Clement also focuses on two of Jesus' precepts from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. He states: 'above all, let an oath on account of what is sold be far from you; and let swearing too on account of other things be banished' and also declares: 'it seems right that we turn away from the sight of women. For it is sin not only to touch, but to look'.¹⁴⁶ That a Father of the church should concern himself with these precepts is not a surprise, but it is of note that Basil also makes reference to the same sentiments. In section 7 he explains that noble pagans whose behaviour has been recorded as morally excellent can serve as role models for the youths to imitate as they develop virtuous actions in their lives, and he draws on examples of historical characters who can be seen to have put into practice the virtues expounded in Matthew 5. He does not tie the actions to their Biblical point of origin, but does state that 'these things bring us near to those tenets of ours' and argues that there is benefit to be gained from imitating them.¹⁴⁷ He recalls stories about Alexander the Great and Cleinias which demonstrate the precepts of not looking at women and not swearing an oath. Clearly these declarations of Jesus would have been well known to all Christian writers,¹⁴⁸ but combined with the other instances of similarity between *Ad Adolescentes* and *Paedagogus* it may indicate Basil's familiarity with Clement's work.

¹⁴⁵ Indeed they continued to be controversial questions in the life of the church for many more centuries, and Basil's declarations in *Ad Adol.* were later canonised by the Ecumenical Councils and entered into church law (e.g. Canon 16 from Second Ecumenical Council at Nice in AD 787).

¹⁴⁶ *Paed.* 3.11.

¹⁴⁷ *Ad Adol.* 7.7.

¹⁴⁸ For the argument for the inclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in catechistic teaching see Everett Ferguson, "Love of Enemies and Non-Retaliation in the Second Century," in *The Contentious Triangle: Church, State, and University: a Festschrift in honor of Professor George Huntston Williams*, ed. Rodney L. Petersen and George Huntston Williams (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson Univ. Press, 1999).

John Chrysostom

As a consequence of his extensive secular education and his training in Christian literature Basil was familiar with a wide range of authors and works. Some of his knowledge would have been gleaned from the many anthologies which circulated in the fourth century rather than the original books,¹⁴⁹ but nonetheless his learning was considerable. While certain ideas and images in his address can be traced back to particular earlier authors, many of his notions and illustrations would have come from a common stock of images which were used by a variety of pagan and Christian writers for many centuries. This section will consider the work of John Chrysostom, specifically his *Address on Vainglory and the Right Way to Bring up Children*¹⁵⁰ and *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life*,¹⁵¹ to highlight approaches and attitudes which appear to be common to Christian thinkers of the fourth century. Chrysostom was roughly contemporary with Basil,¹⁵² and lived in the Eastern Empire. It has traditionally been accepted that, like Basil, he knew no Latin,¹⁵³ but he received an excellent rhetorical education at the school of Libanius.¹⁵⁴

To consider John Chrysostom's attitude towards education and children can be helpful in highlighting the ways that Christians viewed certain social practices which Basil only hints at in his address.

Pagan examples

Basil is not alone in his avocation of the use of pagan examples to draw lessons from. On several occasions John Chrysostom suggests that the secular world can be utilised to understand spiritual truths. In *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life* he addresses himself to a pagan father whose son had adopted the monastic lifestyle. He states that he will demonstrate the superiority of this course of action to the worldly situation the father wishes for his offspring by means of only pagan arguments, not Christian. He maintains that this is because the parent will pay no attention to Christian arguments,

¹⁴⁹ See above 33-4.

¹⁵⁰ Translated in Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture* 85-122.

¹⁵¹ Translated in David G. Hunter, *A comparison between a king and a monk; Against the opponents of the monastic life: two treatises by John Chrysostom*, Studies in the Bible and early Christianity (Lewiston, N.Y., USA: E. Mellen Press, 1988) .

¹⁵² J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom: clerics between desert and empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 113-127 has details of his early life and a discussion of the difficulties with the sources.

¹⁵³ Ibid. 126.

¹⁵⁴ Hunter, *Comparison* Chrysostom states that his mother paid for his excellent education (*De Sacerdotio* 1.5).

since he does not share the faith, but by adopting this approach Chrysostom is able to present the Christian ascetic life as a natural consequence of pagan philosophy, not just Christian thought.

In the *Address on Vainglory*, Chrysostom starts his discussion saying: ‘let us begin ... with the pagan world about us.’¹⁵⁵ He considers the futility of gaining popularity and honour by presenting lavish shows and spectacles since not only is the adulation temporary, but also the giver is in danger of ruining himself by spending more and more in order to win the favour of the fickle mob.

When Chrysostom presents the way that he considers Bible stories should be told to children he recalls the fact that some pagan tales can reflect the essence of certain scriptural episodes. He states:

‘If in pagan legend such marvels are told, one says: ‘He made the soul the soul of a hero.’ And the child believes and, while he does not know what a hero is, he knows that it is something greater than a man. And as soon as he hears, he marvels.’¹⁵⁶

Therefore he suggests that the heathen story will plant the seeds of wonder in the child’s mind, even though he does not understand the fact of what he hears. Chrysostom argues that this sense of wonder will be increased when the child hears the Biblical stories of the resurrection of the dead, and so the pagan legend will act as a training ground and preparation for the Christian truth.¹⁵⁷

In the same way that Basil advocates the use of examples of moral pagans from the past who showed behaviour consistent with Christian precepts,¹⁵⁸ so John Chrysostom tells parents that they should: ‘guide the conversation to the kingdom of heaven and to those men of old, pagan or Christian, who were illustrious for their self-restraint.’¹⁵⁹ Despite deeply held objections to pagan religious beliefs it appears that the Church Fathers were quite happy to endorse good behaviour and use it to promote Christian virtue whenever it would be helpful.

¹⁵⁵ *De Inani* 3.

¹⁵⁶ *De Inani* 39.

¹⁵⁷ Elsewhere JChrys suggests that children should not be told fantastical tales about pagan subjects but is he responding to the reality of children’s entertainment rather than the ideal theory for a Christian? In practice the Church Fathers’ more extreme positions with regard to their congregations’ encounter with classical culture was probably not followed to the letter.

¹⁵⁸ *Ad Adol.* 7.7.

¹⁵⁹ *De Inani* 79.

Basil's address is fundamentally different to other works of a similar nature in that he speaks directly to the young men in need of his advice rather than to their guardians or teachers. John Chrysostom follows the traditional approach of writers of educational treatises and addresses parents about the way that they should either seek to bring up their children or how they should not hinder them from the adoption of the monastic life. He is critical of fathers who do not expend effort on the moral education of their sons, but when they are born consider: 'not whereby he may direct the child's life wisely, but whereby he may adorn it and clothe it in fine raiment and golden ornaments.'¹⁶⁰

Basil shares John Chrysostom's sentiment that children need to be instructed in their youth, although for him the practice of this is to address the young rather than direct their fathers to take pains to instil the lessons of virtue. Chrysostom maintains that when negative desires and vices have become instilled in children it is particularly difficult to remove them, stating: 'if good precepts are impressed on the soul while it is yet tender, no man will be able to destroy them when they have set firm, even as does a waxen seal.'¹⁶¹ It is for this reason that he urges fathers to be concerned that their children learn to be good right from the beginning of their lives.

Similarly Basil's encouragement that his nephews reject worldly qualities and advantages which have no eternal value appears to be an attempt to divert their attention away from 'worldly desires' just at a time when they are likely to be considering their future and the wealth and honour that could come to them.¹⁶²

Athlete not ascetic

Although Christian writers aimed to direct the minds of their audiences away from worldly possessions and sinful desires, they did not necessarily intend their hearers to adopt the ascetic lifestyle of the monks. John Chrysostom encourages parents to: 'Raise up an athlete for Christ,'¹⁶³ but he adds: 'I do not mean by this, hold him back from wedlock and send him to desert regions and prepare him to assume the monastic life.'

¹⁶⁰ *De Inani* 16.

¹⁶¹ *De Inani* 20. Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 377a; Plutarch, *Moralia* 3e; Basil, *Reg. Fus.* 15 (Wagner, 267).

¹⁶² See Ch5, 111 for a fuller discussion of Basil's opinion of the 'frivolousness of youth' and how he tries to combat it.

¹⁶³ *De Inani* 19.

He admits that he might have once urged this course, but concedes that not all Christians are gifted for such a lifestyle. Instead he states: ‘teach him though he is living in the world to be reverent from his earliest youth.’

While in some minds the rewards of a life of virtue and ascetic self-denial were akin to the status of martyrdom, the Church Fathers realised that not everyone followed that path. However, while not all could be living saints, it was important that each Christian lived his life according to the precepts of the Bible as far as possible. It has been argued that Basil’s *Address to the Young Men* is a call for youth to adopt an ascetic philosophic lifestyle,¹⁶⁴ but the aim of the work is not so narrow. Certainly given the careers of several members of Basil’s family, it would not be very unlikely if one or more of his nephews had a career in the church, but the address is not designed only for those committed to asceticism. Basil’s desire is to encourage his relations to take responsibility for their Christian faith, and to take the first steps to developing the virtuous character required of all Christians for themselves. The questions which he considers: attitude to wealth; the control of passion; how to treat the body; are as relevant to the Christian living in the world as they are to the one secluded inside a monastery.

Control of passion

Both pagan and Christian thinkers wrestled with questions of passion and self-control, and sought ways to bring the potential violent nature of the soul into a state of subjection to the will. Basil considers the problem of anger in his address, and encourages his nephews to control their angry emotions as much as possible and show calm and forgiveness to those who harm them.¹⁶⁵ In a similar manner John Chrysostom encourages his audience to train their sons in the management of anger, and bases his arguments on a Platonic understanding of the tripartite soul.¹⁶⁶

He suggests that a boy should be provoked and tested by his slaves and peers so that he ‘may learn on every occasion to control his passion.’¹⁶⁷ The role of the father is to judge of the boy’s progress, since Chrysostom maintains that he cannot try and provoke the

¹⁶⁴ Helleman, "Basil's *Ad Adolescentes*," 43.

¹⁶⁵ See Ch5, 102-108 for a fuller discussion of anger and Basil’s thoughts about the use of passion.

¹⁶⁶ Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture* 78.

¹⁶⁷ *De Inani* 68.

child himself, 'for the name of father ... does not permit him to rebel.' He also suggests that one effective method of keeping passion under control is to ensure that the boy does not form too strong an attachment to his possessions, because then if they are damaged his anger is more easily abated. He states: 'children are made fractious by the loss of ... articles [such as pencils or writing tablets] and incline rather to lose their soul than to let the culprit go unpunished,'¹⁶⁸ but maintains that if they are trained to forgive the slave who breaks or loses their belongings they will bear greater losses with equanimity, having been trained in small things.

However, while Chrysostom is firm that anger should be avoided if a boy feels a sense of his own hurt or loss, he does not suggest that a child's spirit should be entirely broken by his education. He writes: 'We must not eliminate [the despotic part of the soul, spirit] utterly from the youth, nor yet allow him to use it all the time. Let us train boys from earliest childhood to be patient when they suffer wrongs themselves, but, if they see another being wronged, to sally forth courageously and aid the sufferer in fitting measure.'¹⁶⁹ He maintains that 'at all times the faculty of spirit is serviceable',¹⁷⁰ if only it is used to ensure justice and not personal gain.

This sentiment is not found in Basil's address, but this is a consequence of the different audience intended for each work. John Chrysostom addresses himself to parents, who understand the nuances of the argument, and are capable of seeing the positive and negative effects of the passions. Basil's nephews are not yet intellectually developed enough to deal with the seemingly conflicting ideas that they should control anger but also allow it to be used for positive purposes, so his brief admonition is sufficient. However, as it will be seen in chapter 5 Basil is aware of the positive uses of anger and he expounds these in the more appropriate context of a homily addressed to the adult members of his church congregation.

The Theatre

John Chrysostom exhorts fathers to keep their sons away from the theatre and other such spectacles so that they will 'not suffer utter corruption through [their] ears and

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. 73.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 66.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 69.

eyes.¹⁷¹ Throughout the centuries the Church Fathers encouraged Christians to avoid the theatre first of all because of its association with pagan gods and rituals and secondly because of its reputation for encouraging immorality as a consequence of its subject matter.¹⁷² However, despite this condemnation, it would appear that shows were still well-patronised in the fourth century, even by Christians.¹⁷³ Indeed, John Chrysostom's treatise includes the advice that: 'if [your son] yearns after the pleasure to be found there, let us point out any of his companions who are holding back from this, so that he may be held fast in the grip of emulation.'¹⁷⁴ The identification of those boys who did not attend the theatre implies that it would be possible to find many who did.

Basil does not comment on whether his nephews should attend the theatre in his address, although he makes very little use of tragedy and does not mention comedy in his discussion of classical literature. He does refer to actors as an illustration of how one should be real rather than pretending to be something different,¹⁷⁵ but the comparison does not show actors in a positive light. Similarly he mentions shameful behaviour that the pagan poets attribute to the gods, and states that 'we shall leave that to the stage-folk.'¹⁷⁶

It is possible that Basil does not focus on the practice of going to the theatre in his address in part because his nephews would not have been at liberty to attend the shows alone, and therefore he relies on the good governance of their parents in prohibiting them from such an activity. In addition, Basil appears to be more concerned with the way that the youths think and develop their internal sense of morality, rather than their physical activities. He directs his attention to their attendance at school, and seeks to encourage them towards the good life by means of positive examples and exhortation, rather than exclusively prohibiting the bad. This approach is central to the entire

¹⁷¹ Ibid. 56.

¹⁷² Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*; Richard C. Beacham, *The Roman theatre and its audience* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1991) 138 suggests that mime in particular tended to satirise Christianity which made it even more unpopular with the church.

¹⁷³ Jaclyn LaRae Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 52.

¹⁷⁴ *De Inani* 77. Cf. The words of Mardonius to Julian: 'never let the crowd of your playmates who flock to the theatres lead you into the mistake of craving such spectacles as these' (*Misopogon* 351c-d). Clearly the theatre held a fascination for the young of the fourth century.

¹⁷⁵ *Ad Adol.* 6.3.

¹⁷⁶ *Ad Adol.* 4.5. Basil's comments appear to refer to mime rather than classical tragedy, in part because of his allusion to the bad behaviour of the gods, but also since Walter Puchner, "Acting in the Byzantine Theatre: Evidence and Problems," in *Greek and Roman actors: aspects of an ancient profession*, ed. P. E. Easterling and Edith Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 307 states that for a Late Antique Christian the term 'theatre' would have conjured images of pantomime rather than high drama.

address: Basil encourages his relations to look for the positive in pagan literature and even suggests that there is pleasure in reading classical texts rather than seeking to suggest that all school-texts are full of dangerous and negative influence and should be avoided.

There are two ways of looking at the fact that Basil does not make much of theatrical texts in his address. One is that he found other writings which supported the points he wished to make, and he considered that his nephews would be more familiar with these. The other is what Webb maintains in her article, that theatrical performance was such a contemporary cultural activity it was too much of a threat to be countenanced as suitable study material for young Christians.¹⁷⁷ Some of her argument is compelling, but it is possible to make a distinction between reading a text and attending the theatre, especially as the performance of tragedy in the fourth century AD was very different to that in the fifth century BC. Puchner argues that the experience of a tragic performance in Late Antiquity bore little resemblance to Classical Athens, and that plays were recited by one performer accompanied by a lyre, rather than a troupe of actors.¹⁷⁸ He also maintains that dramatic texts continued 'as canonical texts for school-teaching' even after widespread performance of them had died out,¹⁷⁹ and this view is supported by the fact that the Apollonarii worked the stories from the Old Testament into tragedy in the style of Euripides.¹⁸⁰ The style of dramatic texts was considered important in the acquisition of learning, regardless of opinions about theatre as a whole.

Attitude to Rhetoric

In the *Address on Vainglory* John Chrysostom does not explicitly refer to the literary education available to Christian children, since he focuses on the responsibilities of parents in ensuring their offspring are made familiar with Biblical stories. He does suggest that fathers should provide a 'good tutor' for their sons,¹⁸¹ but this is more in the context of employing someone who will make their children 'good' rather than meeting the requirements of literacy. However, since he also looks forward to the potential careers of Christian children it seems likely that he assumes they would experience

¹⁷⁷ Ruth Webb, "Basil of Caesarea and Greek Tragedy," in *A Companion to Classical Receptions* ed. Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007).

¹⁷⁸ Puchner, "Acting in the Byzantine Theatre: Evidence and Problems," 307.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 307.

¹⁸⁰ Sozomen, *HE* 5.18.

¹⁸¹ *De Inani* 16.

some form of secular education, even if only the first or second stage of schooling.¹⁸² However in his work *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life* Chrysostom does consider the appropriateness of secular education for boys, and focuses on the dangers such education presents to Christians in addition to emphasising the potential for failure of those who embark on a course of higher learning.¹⁸³

Most fathers, especially wealthy ones, wanted their children to be educated so they could benefit from all the advantages that training in *paideia* brought and the Church Fathers had to consider the questions of classical education in the light of this reality. John Chrysostom's main objection to higher education is the attitude that prompts fathers to encourage their sons towards such learning. He argues that parents say things like: 'A certain man, of low estate, born of lowly parents, after achieving the power that comes from rhetoric, obtained the highest positions, gained great wealth, married a rich woman, built a splendid house, and is feared and respected by all.'¹⁸⁴ In this way they encourage their children into secular education fuelled by a love and desire for wealth and power, things inconsistent with a life of Christian virtue. He explicitly states that he does not advocate that children be uneducated, but rather that the education needs to be handled in such a way as to ensure that it does not encourage children to conform to the attitudes of the world.¹⁸⁵

Despite the appearance of condemning a rhetorical education, John Chrysostom does consider that there could be some merit in engaging boys in higher secular learning, but only if they have some wise Christian guide in their endeavours. He relates the story of a boy whose paedagogus steered him safely through the dangers of his schooling and argues that a situation like this is particularly beneficial to Christians because: 'an even greater booty would be ours, since through their life, their age and their constant company such youth would be able to capture their companions.'¹⁸⁶ A Christian boy, guided carefully around the obstacles in rhetorical education can act as an example to his peers, encouraging them towards their own Christian salvation.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² *De Inani* 89.

¹⁸³ *Adv. Opp.* 11 (Hunter, *Comparison* 149).

¹⁸⁴ *Adv. Opp.* 5 (ibid.135).

¹⁸⁵ *Adv. Opp.* 12 (ibid. 151).

¹⁸⁶ *Adv. Opp.* 12 (ibid.151).

¹⁸⁷ JChrys appears to have considered the examples of peers as very important in encouraging the young towards virtue. Several times in *De Inani* he exhorts parents to hold up a boy's friends as examples when they display behaviour worthy of imitation.

Basil does not condemn pagan learning, but he does suggest that there are dangers inherent in reading classical texts, and for this reason his advice to his nephews is that they should seek the good but shun the bad. John Chrysostom's notion that a wise Christian guide is necessary to help young men negotiate their way through education resonates with Basil's address, although Basil casts himself in the role of trusted advisor, rather than leaving the job to a slave.

If John Chrysostom's works about children and education are compared with Basil's *Ad Adolescentes* it can be seen that there are several common threads and attitudes towards aspects of teaching and fourth century society. The challenge for all Christians, regardless of status, was to make decisions about how they lived their everyday lives and maintained the integrity of their faith amidst the social mores and practices which appeared to conflict with their beliefs. One of Chrysostom's primary aims in his treatises was to encourage Christians to live in a manner consistent with scriptural precepts, with an awareness that the pagan world was watching and judging their every move,¹⁸⁸ while Basil was particularly conscious that his homilies needed to provide help and guidance to people carrying out their everyday lives in a 'compromised community'.¹⁸⁹ Both priests used examples from the world around them to find useful solutions to the problems and decisions their congregations faced daily, and whether young men lived in Antioch or Caesarea they would encounter the same questions about education and to what extent it could challenge their Christian faith.

Conclusion

It cannot be argued that Basil had read the whole range of classical literature, or that he sought to incorporate all that he had read into his address to his nephews, but he was certainly very familiar with a large amount of both pagan and Christian writing and he uses a considerable quantity in his work. Basil's relations are more familiar with pagan than Christian literature at this time in their life, but just as he includes allusions to works they will read in the future and so give them confidence that his message is true, Basil adds Christian sentiments and writings in anticipation of the time when the youths will become aware of those works.

¹⁸⁸ Hunter, *Comparison* 46.

¹⁸⁹ Rousseau, *Basil* 330.

Chapter 4. Modes of Interpretation

Basil as a product of his time

In addition to his knowledge of classical and early Christian texts, Basil was also firmly grounded in the techniques and methods of approaching literature used by the educators of his day. His *Address to the Young Men* has tended to be considered in the light of the texts to which it alludes rather than whether it provides insight into the interpretation of those texts by Basil or his addressees. This chapter considers the technique of allegorical reading of literature by the ancients and the question of whether Basil uses that literary tradition in his presentation of classical writings for his nephews.

Allegory

Modes of understanding and allegorical interpretation of texts by classical thinkers have been much discussed by modern scholars,¹ but they have not generally focussed on Basil's work in this regard. This is partly a consequence of his own objection to allegory and alternative readings of the creation story in Genesis,² but also because he appears to have been less interested in incorporating classical literature into his writings than his peers. However despite his overt theological rejection of allegory in the context of reading Biblical texts,³ it does not mean that his classical education would not have influenced the way that he read, recalled and subsequently reinterpreted various classical stories.

Another reason why Basil's address might have not been considered in the light of a classical allegorical tradition is that there has been a view that such reading of texts was 'never very popular' in mainstream literary thought and only gained ground among certain philosophical schools and thinkers.⁴ However, Struck suggests that in reality positive allegoresis (i.e. allegorical readings which were not primarily designed to defend poets such as Homer from charges of immorality) was a 'continuous strand of

¹ See e.g. Jean Pépin, *Mythe et allégorie: les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*, Nouv. éd. rev. et augm. ed. (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1976) ; Robert Lamberton, *Homer the theologian: Neoplatonist allegorical reading and the growth of the epic tradition*, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) and more recently David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley; Oxford: University of California Press, 1992) and Peter T. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: ancient readers at the limits of their texts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004) .

² *Hex.* 9.1.

³ Hildebrand, *Trinitarian Theology* 113-139 considers the impact of the Christian schools of allegorical interpretation of the Basil's understanding and exposition of Scripture.

⁴ Struck, *Birth* 18.

literary thinking through the classical, Hellenistic, and early-and late-Roman periods'.⁵ He maintains that there was a common notion that texts were multi-layered and contained a variety of meanings,⁶ and advocates the view that Aristotle's idea of the clarity of language and the ease of textual understanding was really 'a radical departure from the intellectual currents of the day'.⁷ If this is true, and allegorical readings were regarded as common, academic exercises in the normal study of literary texts, then Basil would certainly have had his mind exercised in the technique, and been familiar with the range of possible interpretations of different types of literature. If it is taken as true that allegorical reading of texts was a mainstream literary practice and not closely bound to any particular philosophical school then it is possible to view an interpretation of a text as being the consequence of habitual practise, rather than identifying it as showing the influence of certain philosophical ideas. This is important in considering how Basil may have incorporated allegory into his address to his nephews, since his methods of allegory would certainly have been used with a view to directing the youths towards Christian truth rather than any other philosophies.⁸ Although it would be expected that Basil wanted to be clear in his intentions in *Ad Adolescentes*, he nevertheless wishes his nephews to take what he says seriously and also desires to develop their understanding and reasoning powers. McLynn points out that *paideia* was 'intrinsically competitive',⁹ and by using the clever techniques common to literary criticism of his time Basil confirms his credentials. He can give advice to those in contact with secular teachers because he can read literature as well as the educators.

In the *Address to the Young Men* Basil does not mention allegorical reading as a technique which his nephews could adopt in their gleaning benefit from classical literature, but since there is a strong suggestion that finding virtue within pagan writing will require hard work and selective reading, then it is quite possible that the youths will need to seek some truth beneath the surface reading present in their school-texts.¹⁰ However, while this may be the case, Basil does also make it clear that there are areas in literature about which no attempt should be made to understand allegorically, or indeed

⁵ Ibid.18.

⁶ Ibid. 124.

⁷ Ibid. 51.

⁸ Rist, "Basil's 'Neoplatonism'," 219 maintains that Basil displays very limited influence of Neoplatonism in this work.

⁹ McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 115.

¹⁰ For example, 4.8's exhortation to approach literature in the same manner as bees approach flowers suggests that the surface appearance of as bloom might need to be ignored in order to discover the honey-giving pollen beneath. Similarly at 3.2, the truth which is the fruit of the plant envisaged by Basil is hidden beneath a layer of foliage which must be moved if the fruit is to be made accessible.

in any other way, since they contain only falsehood which will not lead towards virtue. For example, in his discussion of the immoral behaviour of the gods, Basil does not seek to suggest that the stories are symbolic of natural forces at work on the earth, but rather advises his nephews that they should ignore the poets when they begin to expound such subjects.¹¹

While it can be asserted that Basil does not adopt a strong allegorical perspective on many elements of classical literature which do not conform to Christian ideals, there are indications in the address that he is comfortable making use of allegorical images, and also appears to adopt interpretations of classical texts which deviate, at least in part, from the original surface meanings. This section will discuss the examples of two characters used by Basil, and consider how he presents the stories in which they feature. It will investigate whether the stories may have been subject to the development of allegorical or other readings which can be identified to suggest that Basil might be applying, not simply a Christian lens to the episodes, but rather a lens formed and shaped by classical understanding of literary interpretation. The characters being considered are the heroes Odysseus and Herakles.

Odysseus

Basil mentions Odysseus on two separate occasions in his address to his nephews, and also creates an implied connection between himself and the ancient hero in the opening section of the work. The first reference is found in section 4, where Basil advises his nephews that they should disdain those passages of poetry where bad men are described and: ‘to flee these things, blocking your ears no less than those men say Odysseus did, fleeing the songs of the Sirens.’¹² The second episode forms part of a discussion of virtue, and Basil uses it to illustrate his declaration that ‘all the poetry of Homer is praise of virtue’.¹³ He recalls the meeting between Odysseus and Nausicaa when the hero arrives naked on the beach in Phaeacia, and suggests that although Odysseus appeared naked, he was in fact ‘arrayed with virtue instead of a cloak.’ Both of these episodes differ from Homer’s originals in the versions Basil presents of them, but it

¹¹ *Ad Adol.* 4.4. Basil obviously objects to descriptions of the many gods on theological grounds, but his rejection of allegorical interpretation of the stories may have been influenced by Plutarch, *Moralia* 19f.

¹² *Ad Adol.* 4.2.

¹³ *Ad Adol.* 5.6.

because he has not ‘read his *Odyssey* as carefully’ as he ought to have done,¹⁴ or rather is he writing as part of a long established tradition of literary interpretation?

The poetry of Homer had long been established as the basis for all classical education, and the works held a unique place in the minds of ancient thinkers. However, despite widespread affection for Homer, philosophers and other intellectuals found difficulties in the manner that the gods and other immortals were presented in the poems, and writers began to criticise the lustful, devious and war-like nature that Homer’s divine beings displayed.¹⁵ Consequently, traditional readings of the poems were adapted to enable Homer still to be read, despite theological or moral objections. These readings were often developed by different ancient schools of thought in order to make the works consistent with their own philosophical or moral ideas. The Stoic Heraclitus wrote the *Homeric Questions* in order to defend the poet from charges of blasphemy, and also to present an allegorical reading of his works, which expressed the gods as forces of nature, and the heroes as synonymous with moral virtues.¹⁶

Of all Homer’s characters it was the figure of Odysseus, and the poem detailing his voyage home from Troy after the war, which was most ripe for adaptation and alternative interpretation. Odysseus’ personality, which was full of conflicting qualities, made him an ideal subject for later writers to laud or vilify.¹⁷ For some writers ‘to praise Homer means to praise Odysseus’,¹⁸ while others could not ignore the negative aspects of his character. As a consequence of his versatility, Odysseus was considered and reconsidered by generations of literary and philosophical thinkers, and ‘every refashioning of him in ancient literature [was] at the same time a moral evaluation’.¹⁹ In her survey of ancient interpretations of Odysseus, Montiglio maintains that in general,

¹⁴ Dennis Ronald MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer: the Odyssey, Plato, and the Acts of Andrew* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 22.

¹⁵ The most notable of these was Plato, *Rep.* 10 stating that poets should be banned from the ideal state since they do not encourage the citizens to be good when they fabricate stories about the degenerate behaviour of some of the gods. Plato was followed by other writers, and later the Christians used the immorality of Homer’s gods as fuel for the arguments against paganism. (E.g. Clement, *Protrepticus* 2.24; 2.31; 4.52-3).

¹⁶ D. A. Russell and David Konstan, *Heraclitus: Homeric problems* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005) .

¹⁷ William Bedell Stanford, *The Ulysses theme: a study in the adaptability of a traditional hero* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1954) 9 considers different writers’ opinions of the character. Cf. Horace, *Satire* 2.5 which focuses on a more negative view of Odysseus’ resourcefulness. See also MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer* 22-23.

¹⁸ Silvia Montiglio, *From villain to hero: Odysseus in ancient thought* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011) 126.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 2.

literary readings were more negative about the hero's qualities than philosophical ones, stating that in tragedy 'Odysseus embodies the morally questionable type of the σοφός'.²⁰

Although philosophers tended towards positive interpretations of Odysseus' character, Plato presents a somewhat mixed opinion of Homer's complicated hero. On one hand he approves of his self-control 'as an illustration for the supremacy of the soul over the body',²¹ but on the other he expresses indignation at his articulation of words which offer high praise to feasting and luxurious living.²² Subsequent to Plato, the Stoic and Cynic schools read Odysseus as an advocate of virtue,²³ and the poem of his travels became a kind of Stoic *Pilgrim's Progress*.²⁴ In contrast, in some Epicurean and comic circles the hero became 'the prototypical parasite because of his alleged love for food and drink.'²⁵ Meanwhile, for the Pythagoreans and Neoplatonists, the *Odyssey* took on a 'metaphysical dimension' as it became an allegory for the soul's passage through earthly hardships to its final spiritual home.²⁶

The Christians followed pagan readers in interpreting the *Odyssey* in alternative ways. This happened partly through necessity, since the works of Homer were the staple reading for schoolboys throughout antiquity, and it was felt that the stories needed some censoring to make them appropriate for Christian children, but it can be argued, also partly because the notion of reading Homer 'straight' would have been as strange to well-educated, philosophically-minded Christians, as it would have been to their pagan counterparts. MacDonald details attempts by the writers of the early church to 'tame' Homer,²⁷ but not all modern scholars agree that the Christians really sought to 'Christianise' the pagan epic poet.²⁸ Certainly the Church Fathers regularly condemned

²⁰ Ibid. 8.

²¹ Ibid. 52, referring to Plato, *Symposium* 220a1.

²² Plato, *Rep.* 390a-b. (It is interesting to note that Basil echoes Plato's sentiments about poets when they praise full tables and banqueting, but elsewhere he appears to have a different opinion of Odysseus himself.)

²³ Stanford, *Ulysses* 6 and Montiglio, *Villain to Hero* 14: 'the Stoics claimed the *Odyssey* advocated virtue'.

²⁴ Stanford, *Ulysses* 121.

²⁵ Montiglio, *Villain to Hero* 96.

²⁶ See Jean Pépin, "The Platonic and Christian Ulysses," in *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, ed. D. J. O'Meara (1982) 4ff. for a fuller discussion. Also MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer* 23.

²⁷ MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer* 20.

²⁸ Robert Browning, "The Byzantines and Homer," in *Homer's ancient readers: the hermeneutics of Greek epics earliest exegetes*, ed. John J. Keaney and Robert Lamberton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) 145 maintains that the 'systematic Christianization of Homer ... never took place'. The same

the immoral representations of the gods, but in this they did not differ from their pagan predecessors, and while Christian allegorical reading of the *Odyssey* did ultimately develop the image of Odysseus lashed to the mast of his ship as a parallel for Christ on the cross,²⁹ there is a sense that such thinking could be seen as equal to the Neoplatonic image of the journey of the soul. It is therefore not necessary to understand Christian reading of Homer's poems solely as an attempt to 'sanitise' the stories from a Christian perspective, but rather to see them as a development in a mainstream allegorical tradition that encouraged readers to look below the surface of texts in order to discover moral and philosophical lessons which could be drawn from them.

Basil's references to Odysseus in his address need to be considered in the light of the ancient scholarly habit of reading literary works in general, and also the tradition of the moral reinterpretation of Odysseus' character by pagans and Christians. From this perspective, his reference to the Sirens in section 4 of the work is less problematic than has been suggested by scholars in the past.

The episode to which Basil refers appears in *Odyssey* 12, after the hero and his companions have returned from their trip to the underworld, via the island belonging to the witch Circe where they had to bury their dead companion Elpenor. It is Circe herself who warns Odysseus of the danger that the Sirens pose to him and his men, and she suggests the means by which they might avoid being lured to their deaths on the rocks.

Circe tells Odysseus that he must stop the ears of his men with wax so they are unable to hear the Sirens' song, but adds that if Odysseus himself wishes to listen to the tune, he should order his men to tie him firmly to the mast of his ship, and ignore anything he might say or signal to them while they are sailing past the Sirens' home.

The fact that in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus does listen to the song of the Sirens causes problems for readers of Basil's work, since his advice to his young audience is that they should 'flee' stories about bad men: 'blocking your ears no less than those poets say Odysseus did, fleeing the songs of the Sirens.'³⁰ Fortin considers it significant that Basil

opinion is held by Fortin, "Christianity and Hellenism," 195: Homer was always regarded as 'a purveyor of false values' not as an 'exemplar of Christian or pre-Christian virtue'.

²⁹ See MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer* 259-261 for a discussion of the image, and the fact that links were made between the picture of a ship's mast and crucifixion by pagans as well as Christians.

³⁰ *Ad Adol.* 4.2.

alters Homer's original story,³¹ and MacDonald accuses him of not reading his poetry carefully enough,³² but neither consider that Basil may be interpreting the episode in a particular way, rather than seeking to represent a strictly accurate version.³³

It is worth looking at the use that Plutarch makes of the story in *Adolescens*, since Basil was familiar with that work, and may have borrowed from it. Plutarch writes: 'Shall we then stop the ears of the young, as those of the Ithacans were stopped, with a hard and unyielding wax, and force them to put to sea in the Epicurean boat, and avoid poetry and steer their course clear of it?'³⁴ He is consistent with the Homer's story in that it is the ears of Odysseus' crew who have their ears blocked, rather than Odysseus himself, but the difference between Basil's image and Plutarch's may be a consequence of the different situations surrounding the composition of their works.

Plutarch writes to his friend, discussing the means by which they can protect their sons from the dangers of poetry, while Basil addresses his nephews, who need help to navigate their own way through the potential perils of pagan literature. In the former case, it is Plutarch who will act as an Odyssean figure, since he has the power to stop the ears of his son, while in the latter, the youths would need to do it themselves. Basil therefore uses the image of Odysseus in a different way to Plutarch. He wishes his nephews to identify themselves with the 'Cephalenian leader', because if they do so they will be more likely to take responsibility for their own learning and understanding, which is part of what Basil wants to achieve in making his address.

This notion that Basil wishes to use the figure of Odysseus as an allegory for those who study literature can be supported by other references, found in this work and elsewhere. Basil begins his address with an explanation of his credentials for advising his nephews. As well as citing family relationships and emotional ties, he states that he has 'been trained already by means of many things', and his participation in both good and evil circumstances have 'made me fully acquainted with the ways of men'.³⁵ These phrases echo the opening lines of the *Odyssey*, where the poet describes Odysseus' experiences:

³¹ See Fortin, "Christianity and Hellenism," 190-1 for a full discussion.

³² MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer* 22.

³³ Harry Vredeveld, "'Deaf as Ulysses to the Siren's Song": The Story of a Forgotten Topos," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (2001) traces the use of the image through antiquity in to the Renaissance period, and suggests that the notion of Odysseus stopping his own ears became proverbial, in part due to Basil's assertion in the address.

³⁴ *Moralia* 15d.

³⁵ *Ad Adol.* 1.1.

‘Many were the men whose cities he saw and whose mind he learned, aye, and many the woes he suffered’.³⁶ Basil seems to identify himself with Odysseus, since both men have experienced difficulties and encountered many types of people.

This representation of himself as an Odysseus figure is found again in *Epistle 1*, written shortly after Basil finished his studies in Athens.³⁷ He writes to Eustathius that after leaving Athens he travelled around, seeking to meet him, but always missed the opportunity. He discusses the ‘many varied experiences’ which obstructed him, and rather than naming all the places he visited Basil refers to them euphemistically, as though wishing to conjure up a fantastic journey rather than just a factual one.³⁸ In the letter he also refers to the Sirens’ episode found in the address, stating that he passed Constantinople quickly, ‘as no Odysseus ever avoided the Siren’s songs.’³⁹ Fresh from his student experience, Basil is happy to imagine himself an Odysseus, even as he seeks an encounter with a Christian ascetic.

Basil sees in the character of Odysseus an allegory of his own experiences. He, like the hero, has travelled, has encountered different people: good and bad, and, in the context of his education, has been offered worldly wisdom in the same way that Odysseus was promised knowledge by the Sirens. In the address Basil presents himself as a role model for his nephews: he is one who has gone through the secular education system, he has studied pagan literature, listened to the Sirens, but has gone on his way unharmed; just like Odysseus, he has kept his soul intact.⁴⁰

But the allegory of Odysseus is not only relevant for Basil here. As mentioned above, he wants his nephews to identify with Odysseus themselves since they are sailing through the potentially dangerous waters of pagan education and need to find a way to prevent themselves from being lured onto the deadly rocks by the attractive songs. Basil is proof that the journey can be undertaken safely, but the youths need to strive to find the best way through their schooling for themselves, as well as using Basil’s advice.

³⁶ *Odyssey* 1.3-4.

³⁷ AD 357.

³⁸ *Ep.* 1: ‘I hastened past the city on the Hellespont ... I marvelled at Asia’s wonders ... hurried on toward the mother city.’

³⁹ *Ep.* 1: παρέδρομον δὲ τὴν ἐφ’ Ἑλλησπόντῳ πόλιν, ὡς οὐδεὶς Ὀδυσσεὺς Σειρήνων μέλη.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of the different characterisations Basil adopts for himself see Jennifer Helen Gane, "O Uncle, Who Art Thou? Basil’s adoption of identities from Homer’s *Odyssey*," *The School of Historical Studies Postgraduate Forum E-Journal* 7(2010).

The youths are further encouraged to follow the model of Odysseus in section 5 of Basil's address, where he discusses the path of virtue and the benefits which come from a virtuous life, and cites the 'general of the Cephallenians' as an example of such things. He refers to the episode from *Odyssey* 6, in which Odysseus arrives on the island of Phaeacia, having left Calypso's island with a raft full of riches. His raft was destroyed in a storm sent by the god Poseidon, and his treasures were lost. However, Odysseus made it to land safely, with some help from the sea-nymph, Leucothoe. Meanwhile, Athene had appeared in a dream to Nausicaa, the daughter of the king of Phaeacia, and sent her to the sea-shore to clean her family's clothes. It was there that Odysseus saw her with her companions and asked for help. Basil argues that Odysseus arrived in Phaeacia accompanied only by virtue, but he was honoured for it nonetheless. The message for his nephews is that if they seek to acquire virtue, it will be the one possession which will never be taken away from them, and will always bring them honour, as it did Odysseus.

Basil's identification of Odysseus as 'the virtuous man' again causes consternation to Fortin, who remembers the negative qualities in Odysseus' character,⁴¹ but Basil is once more following the traditional allegorical method of reinterpreting the hero. However, what is interesting is the fact that it appears that Basil is borrowing from a pagan's reinterpretation of Odysseus as a man of virtue, since his ideas echo those expressed by Libanius in his *Encomium to Odysseus*⁴² found in the *Progymnasmata*.⁴³ Basil recounts the story:

'As I have heard a certain man, skilled to understand a poet's mind, say all the poetry of Homer is praise of virtue, and everything of his he bears to this end, whatever is not incidental. Not least in that which he had made the general of the Cephallenians, having been saved naked from a shipwreck, and although at first he felt shame at having appeared alone to the princess, but far from deserving shame at being looked upon naked, since Homer made him arrayed with virtue instead of a cloak. Then indeed, he was also considered so worthy by the rest of the Phaeacians that letting go of the softness with which they lived, they all looked at and admired him, and none of the Phaeacians at that time prays to be other than he was more than to become Odysseus, and him saved from shipwreck.'⁴⁴

⁴¹ Fortin, "Christianity and Hellenism," 190-4.

⁴² *Encomium* 1.1: 'The poet Homer, in my opinion, shows genuine admiration for all the heroes, not least of all for Odysseus.'

⁴³ Craig A. Gibson, *Libanius' Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008) 209-219.

⁴⁴ *Ad Adol.* 5.6.

Wilson suggests that the ‘certain man’ to whom Basil refers could be Libanius,⁴⁵ although the sentiment is found expressed by other writers. It would seem reasonable that he did have Libanius in mind here though, especially if he has used the rhetorician’s encomium as a model. Libanius’ *Encomium to Odysseus* describes the events of *Odyssey* 6 thus:

‘(21)And it was necessary, as seems reasonable, that he be saved after both the shipwreck and a host of evils that no one could list. Now, when his ship broke apart, the keel carried him; now, when his raft was destroyed, his skill in swimming brought him to the island that the Phaeacians inhabited. Even when he landed there naked, he was immediately admired by the daughter of Alcinoos, and a bit later he proved himself to everyone; for he was invited by the Phaeacians to see some athletic contests, and having amazed them by what he did, he departed, so that they sent him home and made him rich. (22) And all these things happened by the will of Athena, but Athena’s willingness to do them resulted from the fact that Odysseus lived in accordance with virtue. Because of his virtue, the sea divinities cared for him, too, and Leucothea helped him as he swam and provided the means by which he would later escape the waves.’

Libanius states that when Odysseus arrived on the island, he was admired although he was naked, and it was because of his virtue that Athene helped him and caused the Phaeacians to be friendly towards him. The encomium shows how late antique readers were happy to interpret Odysseus as a virtuous character, but a comparison between the works of Libanius and Basil highlights the areas which required a further reinterpretation by a Christian, but cause no difficulty for a pagan.

In Homer’s poem Odysseus’ appearance is altered and he is otherwise assisted by the goddess Athene, and Libanius identifies this fact in his work. He states that Odysseus’ success in his endeavours was a consequence of Athene’s favour of him, and that this ‘resulted from the fact that Odysseus lived in accordance with virtue’.⁴⁶ The pagan writer attributes virtue to Odysseus, but is happy to allow a goddess to be the instrument of his success. In contrast Basil personifies virtue, and gives the personification the role of Athene in the original work. So he interprets the actions of Athene as an allegory for the benefits which a personified virtue brings to the man who acquires it. He maintains that Odysseus was accompanied by virtue wherever he went, even when he experienced a shipwreck. If Athene and virtue are interpreted as being synonymous, then this will explain how Odysseus can be presented as ‘arrayed in virtue’ when he encountered the princess Nausicaa. It was as a consequence of Athene’s direction that Nausicaa was on the beach when Odysseus woke after his shipwreck, and Homer states that it was

⁴⁵ Wilson, *St Basil* 52.

⁴⁶ *Encomium* 1.22.

Athene who ‘put courage into her heart and took the fear from her limbs’ (*Odyssey* 6.140) so Nausicaa stood still and allowed Odysseus to make his appeal to her.

The encomium by Libanius states that ‘because of his virtue, the sea divinities cared for him too’⁴⁷ which refers to Leucothoe’s giving of her veil to Odysseus to keep him safe while he swam towards the shore (*Odyssey* 5.338-350). This connects with Basil’s emphasis on Odysseus’ state of having been shipwrecked, but virtue accompanied him, also keeping him from being dashed to pieces on the rocks as he approached dry land. (An interesting point is that when Leucothoe hands her veil to Odysseus, she tells him he should take off all his other clothes and just keep hold of the veil. The clothes he was wearing were those given to him by Calypso, and she also gave him other goods when he left her island. In the light of the later lines where Basil states that virtue is the only possession which goes through all circumstances and is faithful to its possessor, it is possible that the gifts given by Calypso represent the easily lost goods, while the only thing that Odysseus keeps is his virtue, and that is the thing which ensures his safe conduct.) By focussing on virtue, Basil dispenses with the pagan gods and their role in Homer’s poetry.

The epic hero is used in Basil’s address as a role model for the youths, as they are encouraged towards virtue while they read pagan texts. Basil uses time-honoured, traditional literary readings to overlook any negative aspects of Odysseus’ character, and instead reinterprets the *Odyssey* in a way consistent with his own aim.

Herakles

As well as using a pagan reinterpretation of Odysseus as a basis for the creation of a virtuous role model for his nephews, Basil also uses an allegorical story in order to encourage his nephews towards the acquisition of virtue. He introduces the tale after expressing the sentiment that all writers who have been considered wise will have written to some degree about virtue and its benefits. He cites the author of his example as ‘the Ceian sophist’,⁴⁸ and recounts for his audience the story of ‘The Choice of Herakles at the Crossroads’. This popular allegory, composed by the fifth century

⁴⁷ Ibid. 1.22.

⁴⁸ *Ad Adol.* 5.11: ὁ Κεῖός ... σοφιστής.

sophist, Prodicus and delivered at his public lectures,⁴⁹ was adapted by many ancient writers, both pagan and Christian. The oldest extant source for the story is Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.21-34, since Prodicus' written text was lost even in antiquity.⁵⁰ Therefore it is considered that Xenophon would have provided the basis for most different versions of the episode written by later writers.

Basil's version of the story is found at the end of section 5 of this address, following his discussion of the rewards of virtue, and his consideration of the virtuous character of Odysseus. He states:

'And also the Ceian sophist philosophises somewhere in his writings a sister to these sentiments about virtue and vice. And it is necessary for us to apply our minds to him also, for the man should not be despised. His words went somehow thus, as much as I can remember the mind of the man, since I do not know the words for certain, except that he spoke in one way, without a metre: he said that when Herakles was just a young man, and passing near that time of life, which you also are now, and while he was deliberating which of the roads he should turn himself to, the one leading to virtue by means of hard work, or the easy one, two women approached him, these being Virtue and Vice. Straightaway, although they were silent, they displayed their differences by their bodies. For one had been equipped for beauty by embellishments, and flowed through with softness, and led a whole swarm of pleasures which had been fastened onto her. Therefore, while she showed these things, she also promised still more of them, attempting to draw Herakles towards her. But the other woman was like a skeleton, and squalid, and severe looking, and said things of a different kind. For she promised no dissoluteness, nor anything pleasant, but countless sweat and toils and dangers, through every land and sea, but the prize for these things would be to become a god, as he (the writer) says. Indeed in the end it was this one that Herakles followed.'

It can almost certainly be assumed that Basil took Xenophon as his main source, since the similarities between the two accounts are many and marked.⁵¹ However, it is interesting that the ways in which Basil differs from his source are found, not only in Basil himself, but also in other versions of the allegory, composed by writers after Xenophon, but before Basil. Just as in his dealing with the figure of Odysseus, Basil appears to place himself firmly within a tradition of adapting sources and developing allegorical episodes so as to promote a particular perspective on life or a certain situation.⁵²

⁴⁹ For a discussion about the nature of Prodicus' various public lectures see David Sansone, "Heracles at the Y," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 124(2004).

⁵⁰ Wilson, *St Basil* 54.

⁵¹ E.g. both writers introduce the story with the information that they are quoting from memory.

⁵² It was a common practice to pair Odysseus and Herakles as exempla of virtuous heroes in antiquity (Montiglio, *Villain to Hero* 36-7; 84) so Basil is following classical tradition further by considering the two characters in close context.

This section will consider the story of ‘The Choice of Herakles at the Crossroads’ in the versions offered by Xenophon, Cicero, Justin Martyr, Dio Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, Philostratus and Lucian,⁵³ in comparison with that of Basil, in order to explore his use of the tradition of adapting and utilising classical allegorical stories.

Analysis of the Versions of the Allegory

‘when Herakles was just a young man, and passing near that time of life, which you also are now’:

Xenophon	Was passing from boyhood to youth (when the young, becoming their own masters, show [how they] will approach life)
Cicero	(makes reference to Xenophon) was just coming into youth’s estate (when Nature has appointed for each man to chose the path of life)
Philostratus	Herakles is represented as a youth, who has not yet chosen the life he will lead
Dio Chrysostom	Ambitious youth that [Herakles] was
Lucian	My childhood was over, I had just left school (note: Statuary addresses him as ‘Dear Youth’ φίλε παῖ)

Most versions of the story make some reference to Herakles’ age, and suggest that he was a ‘youth’, approaching the age when he would have needed to take some responsibility for the course of his life. Cicero and Xenophon add that the time of the decision was an appropriate one. This would support the idea in Basil’s treatise that he is not forcing a premature decision about approaching life in a Christian way upon his nephews, but rather they are at the appropriate age to begin to make such decisions. The phrase ‘time of life’ picks up the words in section 1 of the work, where Basil says that he is giving advice to those ‘lately establishing themselves in life’, reminding the youths of Basil’s involvement with them and his close relationship to them.

As he begins his anecdote, Basil encourages his nephews to identify with Herakles, since he states that the hero was at that time of life, ‘which you are now’. In her article on Prodicus’ version of the allegory, Kunst suggests that the figure of Herakles is simply a construct, designed to invite Prodicus’ audience to ‘identify with the mythic

⁵³ The texts are: Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.21-34; Cicero, *De Officiis* 118; Justin Martyr, *Apologia Secunda* 9; Dio Chrysostom, *De Regno* 1.66-84; Clement, *Str.* 5.5 and *Paed.* 2.11; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 6.10 and Lucian, *Somnium* 5-8.

hero'.⁵⁴ If this is true, then Basil takes the encouragement one step further by explicitly linking the ages of Herakles and his nephews.⁵⁵

The use of this story in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* is presented in a different way to that in Basil's work, or in Xenophon's. The story is still being told as a means of encouraging a certain decision, but it is introduced with the words: 'you have seen in picture-books the representations of Heracles by Prodicus'. This is a very interesting reference, since it attests to the popularity of this story which was not expounded solely in by means of words but also in images. However, there is no extant pictorial evidence for Prodicus' fable. Given the absence of enduring representations from the ancient world of this story, it is fascinating to discover that literary references to the episode could have been drawing on the audiences' knowledge of pictorial sources rather than simply spoken or written ones. Since Philostratus uses an image of the story he wishes to discuss, the details of the retelling are necessarily different to other examples, but he still agrees that Herakles was an adolescent when the event took place: 'Herakles is represented as a youth'.

Dio Chrysostom presents Herakles' choice as one about the right way to rule people; he chooses between Royalty and Tyranny, once he has been shown each by the god Hermes. However, Dio is consistent with the other writers about the age of Herakles at the time of his decision, since he states that Herakles went eagerly with Hermes. 'ambitious youth that he was'.

The writer Lucian of Samosata makes use of Prodicus' tale in a very different way. Rather than presenting Herakles making a choice between virtue and vice, Lucian casts himself in the protagonist's role, and describes a dream in which he had to choose between the life of an artisan and that of a wordsmith. The action takes place at the

⁵⁴ Mary Kuntz, "The Prodikeyan "Choice of Herakles" a Reshaping of Myth," *The Classical Journal* 89, no. 2 (1993) She maintains that since there is no tradition of attaching the story to Herakles elsewhere in literature, the central character could be a 'personified Youth' and the 'lesson would lose nothing of its moral force' (168). However, the figure of Herakles is inserted in order to enhance the appeal of the tale to potentially younger listeners. Also Gotthard Karl Galinsky, *The Herakles theme: the adaptations of the hero in literature from Homer to the twentieth century* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1972) 102 on the idea that Prodicus chose Herakles simply because of his status as 'the most popular hero of Greece ... [who] most readily suggested himself as Everyman.'

⁵⁵ Certainly Basil is once more presenting a role model for the youths to imitate, just as he did with the figure of Odysseus. Montiglio, *Villain to Hero* 36-7 discusses the frequent pairing of Odysseus and Herakles as typical virtuous characters, and Basil is no doubt following that tradition by considering them both in the same context in his address.

same time of life for Lucian as for Herakles, but Lucian states ‘I had just left school’. Unlike Cicero, who relates the tale of Herakles’ choice in a way which elevates the subject and indeed suggests that such decisions are the remit of those ‘scion[s] of Jove’ but not really for ordinary people, Lucian grounds the episode in a very practical sense by placing it at a specific time of his life and in a specific context.

Basil follows this idea by suggesting that the decision is one that the youths have to make, since from a Christian perspective, if they do not, the future of their eternal souls will hang in the balance. The claims of the church, that all people can seek to live a life pleasing to God, regardless of gender or status, meant that Cicero’s notion that only demi-gods might fully make a choice about their life would not be accurate. The choice is a real and necessary one for Basil’s nephews, just as it is presented as a real and necessary, albeit humorous, one for Lucian.

‘while deliberating which of the roads he should turn himself to, the one leading to virtue by means of hard work, or the easy one’

Xenophon	He went out into a quiet place, and sat pondering whether to approach life by the path of Virtue or the path of vice
Cicero	He went out into a desert place. And as he saw two paths, the path of Pleasure and the path of Virtue, he sat down and debated long and earnestly which one it were better for him to take
Justin Martyr	coming to a place where three ways met, found Virtue and Vice
Dio Chrysostom	Hermes took Herakles to a place where he is shown the two women
Lucian	The decision was made that he would become a craftsman, he disliked the work, quarrelled with his uncle, and then had his dream

In the context of his *Memorabilia*, Xenophon places this story about Herakles in a discussion of the best way to live, and precedes it with a quote by Hesiod about the different paths leading to virtue and vice. Basil follows Xenophon’s example, and the beginning of section 5 considers the same passage in Hesiod, *Works and Days* 285 about the steep road to virtue.⁵⁶ Both writers therefore pick up the theme of roads in their introduction to Herakles’ choice. Basil creates an image which suggests that Herakles is standing at a place where he has to decide on which road to take, and he emphasises the virtuous path by giving more detail about it as he describes the choice Herakles must make: ‘the path leading to virtue by means of hard work’. In contrast, the

⁵⁶ The difference between the two accounts is that Xenophon’s use of Hesiod comes immediately before the introduction of Prodicus’ anecdote, whereas Basil discusses ideas from *WD* and then digresses into a consideration of virtue, and the relative benefits which come to those who acquire it.

fact that the other road leads to vice is not mentioned, but instead it is simply the 'easy one'. Presumably Basil does not consider that the road towards vice could be a viable proposition for his nephews. Xenophon, on the other hand presents the two possible paths as equal options, and seems to consider them simply as routes which are part of a bigger whole, namely Herakles' life. He writes that Herakles' decision was really about how he should 'approach life', and the paths of virtue or vice were the two which presented themselves.⁵⁷

Unlike Basil, Xenophon states that Herakles went to a specific 'quiet place' in order to contemplate the course of his future, and this idea is imitated by Cicero in his version of the story. He writes that Herakles went to a 'desert place', and it was there that he 'saw two paths' and so decided to consider which one he ought to take. This account creates the sense that Herakles only made the decision between the paths because they appeared in front of him as he was travelling in the desert, not that he deliberately set out to make decisions about his life. In this way Cicero differs from Xenophon and Basil, who both imply that Herakles' decision was a conscious act which occurred at the appropriate time of his life, a conscious act which both writers would like their readers to imitate. However, the almost 'chance' encounter with the paths which Cicero's Herakles has reflects something of the sense which the author continues to convey as he discusses the episode further. He states that most people do not make deliberate decisions about the route their life will take, but instead each one copies 'the model he fancies', and that as a consequence of the fact that 'we are so imbued with the teachings of our parents, that we fall irresistibly into their manners and customs'. In a way Cicero suggests that Herakles made his choice only when the options presented themselves to him, but in fact most people never make the choice at all, but rather will drift into whatever circumstances their upbringing predisposes them to.⁵⁸

There is a sense that the roads in Basil and Xenophon's works are metaphorical, rather than actual, but Cicero, and also Justin Martyr suggest that Herakles really sees the roads he is contemplating. In Justin Martyr's account of the story he describes Herakles

⁵⁷ The inference in the passage in Xenophon is that actually there is a third way to approach life, i.e. the philosophic path, and it is perhaps for this reason that life is emphasised here rather than the paths themselves. See Ernest L. Fortin, "Basil the Great and the Choice of Herakles: A Note on the Christianisation of a Pagan Myth," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 11, no. 2 (1986) 73-4 for a discussion of this question, and the notion that Basil himself was thinking of a third way in his recounting of the story.

⁵⁸ Cicero states that some people 'enter the right path of life, without parental guidance' and regards this as a 'happy fortune'.

‘coming to a place where three ways met’. In his article, Fortin considers the phrase ‘three ways met’ and suggests that Justin is interpreting the story in a way similar to Xenophon, and therefore implying that there is a third path open to Herakles, which is the philosophic, in Justin’s mind, Christian, life.⁵⁹

‘two women approached him, these being Virtue and Vice’

Xenophon	There appeared two women of great stature making towards him (the women are described and then identified)
Cicero	Saw two paths (no women)
Philostratus	Vice and virtue stand each side of him plucking his garments and trying to draw him to themselves
Justin Martyr	Found Virtue and Vice, who appeared to him in the form of women
Clement, <i>Paedagogus</i>	Who delineated like and suitable images of virtue and vice
Dio Chrysostom	Royalty and Tyranny are depicted as women, but sitting, and Herakles went to see them
Lucian	Statuary and Culture shown as women – two women had hold of my hands ... trying ... to draw me each her way

Panofsky identifies a reluctance to personify virtue during the Middle Ages, and traces this idea back to Augustine, *City of God*, 4.20-21. Fortin suggests that there could be other reasons for the absence of instances where virtue is personified, since ancient writers do not have appeared to demonstrate the same reluctance as later ones.⁶⁰ Basil, writing roughly contemporaneously with Augustine, albeit in the Eastern part of the empire, describes Herakles being approached by two women, and identifies them immediately as Virtue and Vice. In this he differs from Xenophon, who writes that ‘two women of great stature’ appeared to Herakles, and continues with a physical description of the ladies, before he identifies who they are.⁶¹

Justin Martyr’s account of the story is interesting, as he deliberately conveys the abstract nature of virtue and vice, rather than suggesting that the women have any real substance. He states that they appeared to Herakles ‘in the form of women’, therefore implying that they have assumed the shape simply for a specific purpose.

⁵⁹ But if the junction is envisioned as a Y (see Sansone, "Heracles "), then there are three roads, but actually only two choices, because one of the roads is the road already travelled, so unless one turns round and goes backwards, the choice is between the two roads in front.

⁶⁰ Fortin, "Choice of Herakles," 66.

⁶¹ See Kuntz, "Prodikeyan "Choice",," 167 for the observation that the height of the women was an indication of their divinity.

As previously mentioned, Philostratus' account of the story is based on a picture, which would account for the fact that he does not state that virtue and vice are women, since that would be apparent to anyone familiar with the images he imagines. However, since a picture cannot speak, Philostratus describes virtue and vice as each plucking at Herakles clothes in an attempt to encourage him in her respective direction. This image is picked up by Lucian in his version of the story. He writes that in his dream each of the women was holding one of his hands, and trying to drag him towards her. However, Statuary and Culture then each address themselves to Lucian in a speech designed to win him over, so there is really no need for tug-of-war they engage in. It may be that Lucian is drawing from pictures as well as literary accounts in re-creating his own 'choice of Herakles', and certainly the image he describes adds comedy to the episode.

'straightaway, although they were silent, they displayed their differences by their bodies'

Basil makes explicit the fact that the two women can be distinguished from one another by their appearances before he proceeds to give a physical description of them. He writes ἀπὸ τοῦ σχήματος⁶² which is also used by Xenophon: τὸ δὲ σχῆμα σωφροσύνη.⁶³

Basil first gives a description of Vice :

'equipped for beauty by embellishments, and flowed through with softness, and led a whole swarm of pleasures which had been fastened onto her.'

Xenophon (2 nd)	was plump and soft with high feeding. Her face was made up to heighten its natural white and pink, her figure to exaggerate her height. Open-eyed was she; and dressed so as to disclose all her charms. Now she eyed herself; anon looked whether any noticed her; and often stole a glance at her own shadow.
Philostratus (1 st)	Vice is adorned with gold and necklaces and with purple raiment, and her cheeks are painted and her hair delicately plaited and her eyes underlined with henna; and she also wears golden slippers, for she is pictured strutting about in these.
Justin Martyr (1 st)	in a luxurious dress, and with a seductive expression rendered blooming by such ornaments, and her eyes of a quickly melting tenderness.
Clement (2 nd) <i>Paedagogus</i>	dressed in superfluous attire, brightened up with colour not her own, and her gait and mien are depicted as studiously framed to give pleasure, forming a sketch of wanton women.

⁶² *Ad Adol.* 5.13.

⁶³ Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.22: 'sober was her figure'.

Fortin comments that Basil describes Vice first of the two women, whereas Xenophon ranks her second in his description. He states that this shows that Basil wishes to emphasise the struggle against evil that he wants his nephews to engage in, rather than implying that the virtuous life has any intrinsic attractiveness of itself.⁶⁴ However, Basil is not alone in placing his description of Vice before that of Virtue. Both Philostratus and Justin Martyr detail the appearance and dress of Vice before they address themselves to Virtue, and in any case, although Xenophon describes Virtue's physical appearance first, he also states that Vice runs ahead of Virtue, so it is she who makes the primary address to Herakles.⁶⁵

When looking at Philostratus, Justin Martyr and Clement's accounts of the story, it is noticeable that the negative aspect of Vice is slightly different in the Christian and pagan versions. Philostratus focuses on the luxury that surrounds Vice: she wears gold, jewellery and elegant clothes, and is richly made up. Justin Martyr and Clement, on the other hand, both emphasise the dangerous sexuality of Vice: Justin Martyr's women wears a 'seductive expression' and 'come-hither' eyes; while Clement's image is the very 'sketch of wanton woman'. This difference may be a consequence of the context in which this story comes in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, since the reference is made to encourage Apollonius to embrace an ascetic philosophy, rather than one which offers ease and luxury.

Basil's description obviously borrows much from Xenophon, since his Vice is full of 'softness' and her natural appearance has been embellished to beautify her. However, his addition that she was followed by a 'whole swarm of pleasures which had been fastened onto her' is an interesting one. The idea that the pleasure and ease which Vice offers verbally is displayed in her person, picks up the notion that this story was a common image which people would have been exposed to regularly, and therefore by adding this description Basil may be visualising a picture as much as recalling a literary account. There is also a sense that there are many pleasures which, although they may not be bad in and of themselves, tend to be attached to Vice, and therefore lead the soul in that direction, rather than leading it to the rewards which virtue provides. In later

⁶⁴ Fortin, "Choice of Herakles," 69.

⁶⁵ See Sansone, "Heracles" 137 n.62 for the 'convention that, in a fictionalized debate, the figure that the author wishes to commend speaks second'.

sections Basil details some actions which he defines as unnecessary since they appear pointless when one is focussing on how to care for the soul, and it may be some of these things which he has in mind.

‘but the other woman was like a skeleton, and squalid, and severe looking, and said things of a different kind’

Xenophon (1 st)	fair to see and of high bearing, and her limbs were adorned with purity, her eyes with modesty; sober was her figure, and her robe was white.
Philostratus (2 nd)	resembles a woman worn out with toil, with a pinched look; and she has chosen for her adornment rough squalor, and she goes without shoes and in the plainest of raiment, and she would have appeared naked if she had not too much regard for her feminine decency.
Justin Martyr (2 nd)	who was of squalid look and dress
Clement	standing simply, white-robed and pure, adorned with modesty alone (for such ought to be the true wife, dowered with modesty).

The writers adopt different ways of depicting Virtue in contrast to the figure of Vice. For Xenophon she is a clean and pleasant woman, showing purity and sobriety in her dress and stance. This view is also followed by Clement who describes her modest and simple, and states that ‘the true wife’ ought to be the same.⁶⁶

In contrast, Basil, Philostratus and Justin Martyr present Virtue from a different perspective. For Philostratus she ‘resembles a woman worn out with toil... she goes without shoes’, and she is dirty and almost naked. Justin Martyr simply states that she is of ‘squalid look and dress’, while virtue in Basil’s mind is skeletal, dirty and ‘severe looking’. These writers appear to have moved away from the classical image of plain but pleasant virtue, into the area of asceticism and also the adoption of Cynic ideals.⁶⁷

The Women’s Speeches

Basil, Xenophon, Justin Martyr and Philostratus all continue their versions of the story by giving details about the speeches made by Vice and Virtue to Herakles. Philostratus’ speeches relate closely to the context in which the tale is being used; a philosopher cites

⁶⁶ Clement may be thinking of the admonition in 1 Peter 3.3-4 which states: ‘Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.’ However, in addition to considering how a physical woman ought to conduct herself, Clement could also have in mind the imagery of the church as ‘the bride of Christ’, since he refers to ‘the true wife’ rather than wives in general.

⁶⁷ Wilson, *St Basil* 55.

the choice as one between Indian philosophy and his own brand of extreme asceticism, and so uses the imagined speech of the two women to present the benefits of each philosophy. The Indian philosophic ideas are those attributed to Vice, since they offer a life of ease and physical luxury, while virtue accompanies hard work and sacrifice. The ultimate reward for choosing virtue in this case is simply to be thought wise, since the philosopher argues that to choose ‘the life of a strolling juggler’, i.e. become an adherent of the Indian philosophers, will have the result that ‘you will flatter men’s eyes and ears, but they will think you no wiser than anybody else’.

As previously mentioned, although Xenophon provides a physical description of Virtue before that of Vice in his account, Vice runs ahead of her rival, and reaching Herakles first, begins her address. In her speech Xenophon recalls his earlier reference to the hard and easy roads to virtue and vice when the woman says: ‘make me your friend ... and I will lead you along the pleasantest and easiest road’. She promises him all good things in life, and vows that he will not suffer hardship. More importantly, she claims ‘you shall have the fruits of others’ toil, and refrain from nothing that can bring you gain’. It is presumably indicative of the type of youth Herakles is that his response to these promises is to ask ‘what is your name?’. Vice’s response to this question gives an indication of the slightly ambiguous nature of this story, as explored by Fortin in his article. Vice says that her friends address her as Happiness, but only her enemies class her as Vice. This ambiguity is missing from the other accounts of the story, but continues the idea that the choice Herakles has to make concerns two equally viable options, rather than one being presented as the morally superior path.

In contrast to Vice, when Virtue gets close enough to address Herakles, she claims ‘I know your parents and I have taken note of your character during the time of your education’. This familiarity, although it does not find expression in Basil’s account of the choice of Herakles, is reflected in the sentiments expressed by him about his nephews at the beginning of the address. He refers to the youths’ parents and in emphasising his relationship with the nephews implies that he has been an observer of their education to the time of his address. In addition, at the end of his work, Basil states that he will continue to give his nephews advice and point them in the correct direction, just as Virtue promises to do for Herakles.

Xenophon's Virtue says that Herakles will have a life of hard work, but will hopefully 'turn out a right good doer of high and noble deeds', despite that fact that he will have to train his body 'with toil and sweat'. She states that the reward for a life of such noble exertion is that when those who live it die 'they lie not forgotten and dishonoured, but live on, sung and remembered for all time'; and she adds to Herakles, 'if thou wilt labour earnestly on this wise, thou mayest have for thine own the most blessed happiness'.⁶⁸ The deeds which Virtue anticipates being performed by Herakles are his exertions on behalf of the Greeks, and she predicts the lasting fame which will be attributed to the hero.

Likewise, Basil's Virtue states that Herakles will endure a life of hardship and toil if he follows her path, but ends on a different note to Xenophon's woman. The latter offers lasting fame, while Basil writes that Herakles' reward for a life of virtue would be to become a god. This statement is potentially problematic, coming as it does in a treatise by a Christian,⁶⁹ and in a treatise which focuses firmly on the fate of the individual's eternal soul after death. Basil justifies his mention of the deification of Herakles with the words 'as the writer says', but if the writer who was his source for the story was Xenophon, then he does not explicitly say that Herakles was to become a god.⁷⁰ It may be that Basil not only had Xenophon in mind when he composed this, but also Justin Martyr's account of the story. He writes that those people who follow the difficult path are considered to 'enter into blessedness', a phrase which bears some similarity with the final words of Xenophon's Virtue. Justin also makes a reference to 'what the poets relate of the so-called gods' in his discussion, which may have prompted Basil's statement about Herakles becoming a god after his virtuous life.

Of course it may be that Basil wants to draw his nephews' attention from the idea of immortality through earthly fame, and so he uses Herakles real achievement of immortality as a foil to this idea, but that raises as many questions as it answers. Certainly, the idea that good reputation was something to be sought has already been refuted by Basil in section 2 of his work, where he detailed all the earthly qualities which were temporary, insubstantial goods.

⁶⁸ Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.33.

⁶⁹ Wilson, *St Basil* 55.

⁷⁰ Basil cites Prodicus as the originator of the story, but it is unlikely since his works did not survive in antiquity, and both Cicero and Justin Martyr quote Xenophon as their source for Prodicus' tale.

In addition to stating that Herakles would become a god as a reward for his life of virtue, Basil writes that the woman Virtue promised him: ‘no dissoluteness, nor anything pleasant, but countless sweat and toils and dangers, through every land and sea.’ In these words Basil weaves in ideas he explores in the address so rather than offering something new to the readers, Virtue demonstrates that she embodies the qualities the nephews have already been encouraged to accept earlier in the work. First she promises, ‘no dissoluteness’ (οὐδὲν ἀνειμένον), and the word used is the same as in section 4 where Basil cited the occasions that poets ought to be ignored, saying ‘We will not praise the poets ... whenever they limit happiness to ... dissolute songs.’ ‘Dissolute songs’ is ῥήδων ἀνειμένων, so the fact that Virtue states that there will be no dissoluteness immediately sets her in harmony with sentiments previously expressed by Basil. She also offers nothing ‘pleasant’ (οὐδὲ ἡδύ) and this contrasts with the ‘swarm of pleasures’ that accompany Vice (πάντα ἔσμὸν ἡδονῆς). The ‘countless sweat and toils’ (ἰδρωτάς μυρίους καὶ πόνους) also offered by Virtue pick up the earlier discussion of the path to virtue found in Hesiod, since Basil writes that the summit of the mountain can only be obtained through much hard work and exertion (καὶ ἰδρωτός συχνοῦ καὶ πόνου πλήρης).

In Xenophon’s story there is no resolution to the debate between Virtue and Vice. Virtue finishes her appeal to Herakles, but the thrust of her argument is more about the benefits of a virtuous life in general, rather than being directed exclusively towards the young man. Fortin and Kuntz discuss this at length: Fortin argues that Xenophon has in mind a third way of life, and therefore shows Herakles adopting neither of the choices on offer, while Kuntz suggests that the story is not so much an episode in the life of Herakles as a story written to advertise the advantages of following virtue, designed for Prodicus’ students, which uses the familiar character of Herakles as a way in, but is not exclusively about him. Basil on the other hand makes clear that squalid, skinny Virtue is the woman that Herakles chose to follow, rather than soft, pleasurable Vice. Fortin considers that Basil may have a third way in mind, similar to that of Xenophon, since the figure of Virtue is surely not one which would appeal to the young men to whom Basil addresses himself. It is true that the figure of Virtue is not visually appealing, but the fact that the life she holds out to Herakles bears such a strong resemblance to the one Basil is urging his nephews to follow serves to make her argument more compelling.

The fact that Basil states at the end of this story that ‘it was this one [Virtue] that Herakles followed’, can be seen as his making sure his nephews get the point of the story; that they are to follow the hard path of virtue rather than the easy path of vice, but there is also another possibility. There is a sense which pervades this work that Basil is consciously presenting models for his nephews to follow; models which will assist the youths in walking the right path through their experience of literature and their later lives. Right at the start, Basil presents himself as one such model, in contrast to the potentially pagan teachers the boys encounter on a daily basis. Later, he refers to the story of Odysseus, and encourages his readers to take him as their model, both in the reading of literature, and in cultivating an acquaintance with virtue. In this story Herakles is the figure whose example the nephews ought to imitate and Basil creates an affinity between the two as he presents the story. He begins by stating that Herakles was at the age ‘which you also are now’, and as well as suggesting that these life decisions are appropriate for the nephews, it also serves to link them to the hero.⁷¹ Having established that here is a chance for the young men to emulate Herakles in their decisions about life, Basil concludes his account with what Herakles subsequently did, rather than leaving the outcome unresolved, as Xenophon does. In this way he uses the common allegorical story to continue the theme of presenting role models to his young relations; models who will lead them in the direction of Christian virtue.

Throughout his address Basil takes well-known stories and adds his own colour and sense to them, in order to make the most use of them from a Christian perspective. In a similar way to those writing before him, he alters and adapts the accepted versions of various tales and allegories so that the hidden truth he wishes to convey will be revealed. Given his familiarity with the educational system and the techniques of school teachers, it should come as no surprise that he follows the long established techniques of earlier writers and reinterprets the figures of Odysseus and Herakles in a moral way, tailoring the episodes he uses to make them suitable for his audience, just as he would have been taught when he was in their place.

⁷¹ In a way Basil does the very opposite to Cicero, who removes the episode from the experience of the ordinary man, referring to Herakles as ‘scion of Jove’, thereby emphasising his semi-divine status.

Chapter 5: *Ad Adolescentes* as a *Propaideusis*

Introduction

As a priest with a pastoral responsibility for his congregation, Basil would have been concerned with the way that his nephews lived their lives as Christians, not just what they read in school. Part of that concern prompts him to encourage the youths to look out for moral messages in the classical literature which they encounter everyday, but his care for them does not limit itself simply to checking up on their school texts. Basil wants to see these young men developing their reason and character so that they become useful members of the Christian community, and are prepared to take their place within society, not only as men who have received the right education and therefore are considered ‘cultured’, but also as those who consistently apply Christian precepts to their behaviour and actions, regardless of the profession in which they find themselves.

Ad Adolescentes therefore, is an interesting work not simply because it contains a synthesis of classical and Christian literature and morals and exemplifies the manner in which an educated Christian approached the literature of his day, but in addition the work provides a vehicle for Basil to explore the classical education available to his nephews and use it as a starting point to introduce Christian principles and themes. The subjects are dealt with at a basic level and the precepts are closely linked to the pagan stories. This chapter concludes the introductory section of this thesis and explores the central theme of Basil’s work, the notion of προπαίδευσις: the preparation of the mind and soul for the lessons to come.

The address acts as a *propaideusis* on two levels. On one hand Basil uses classical literature to point out examples of Christian precepts which the youths need to understand and remember, as well alluding to pagan writing which will become familiar to his nephews in the future, and so preparing them for the moral messages he wants them to discover. On the other hand, he uses the address as a means of introducing certain specific issues and moral principles which he knows will be relevant and important to adult Christians, and he seeks to provide a basis of understanding about those questions, which he will build on as his nephews get older.

Basil clearly anticipates an involvement in his nephews' future; he looks forward to a time when they will become more familiar with scripture, and states that the advice he gives now will serve as a useful preparation in the years to come. In addition, he concludes his address with the declaration that he will continue to give advice and encouragement to his nephews throughout their lives. The work is the first step for Basil as his nephews' guide and voice of wisdom, just as it is directed at youths who are 'establishing themselves in life'.¹

It may be that Basil anticipates the composition of more addresses like this work as he continues to give advice to his relations, but there is not really any strong suggestion that that is the case. As McLynn points out,² the work was probably not intended as a book, and since there is no evidence of any epistolary correspondence between Basil and his nephews it seems unlikely that this was intended as the first instalment of many. If it is not possible to determine the exact nature of Basil's future contact with his nephews, then it is more fruitful to consider the means by which he would as a churchman have communicated regular advice to those in his care: namely, the delivery of his sermons.

This chapter considers some of Basil's homilies and the way that they can be seen to relate to the advice presented in *Ad Adolescentes*. Basil introduces particular topics in his discussion of pagan literature and those topics are elaborated on and further expounded in his sermons. In his suggested dating of Basil's homilies, Fedwick suggests that the published versions are the culmination of many revisions based on similar sermons being delivered on different occasions,³ and therefore give a summary of Basil's thoughts on each subject. One thing is sure, the published sermons demonstrate the way that Basil addressed his adult congregation of committed believers, and it is interesting to compare how this differs from the way that he addresses the young. A comparison highlights what Basil saw as the starting points for discussion of certain Christian concerns, and also the different levels of understanding he expected of different groups of people. It can be seen that his opinion of the thoughts and desires of 'youth' affect the way that he approaches his nephews, and also the way that he

¹ *Ad Adol.* 1.1.

² McLynn, "Manna from Uncle," 109.

³ Fedwick, "Chronology " 9.

expected their reasoning and understanding to develop from the first principles which he highlights *Ad Adolescentes*.⁴

Anger

In section 7 of his address, Basil introduces the method of dealing with anger as part of a wider consideration about pagan characters who exhibited worthy behaviour which resonates with the Christian precepts expounded in Matthew 5. He uses the examples of Perikles and Eucleides of Megara as men who did not rouse themselves to anger despite the greatest provocation on the part of others, and states:

‘How many examples of this kind have come through memory, with men having already restrained their passion? For one must not be persuaded by the tragedian when he says ‘simply, against enemies anger arms the hand.’ But while we should especially leave aside anger absolutely, if this is not easy to do then putting in reason, just like a bit, we must bear it to go no further.’⁵

Basil’s basic message to his nephews is that they should avoid anger and attempt to control their passions. He concedes that it is a difficult thing to do, but insists that it is not impossible, and maintains that the best way to begin training the mind to overcome anger is to consider the examples of those men who have done that very thing, and so draw strength and encouragement from them. The image of others whose actions can be imitated will assist the youths in their endeavours to master their own passions.

The question of how one should control anger was an important one for pagans and Christians alike. Robin Lane Fox suggests that the second century AD could perhaps have been better entitled ‘the age of anger’, rather than ‘anxiety’ on the basis of the many writers seeking ways to address the problem of violent passion.⁶ Plutarch wrote a treatise on the subject,⁷ and 200 years later Libanius considered the case against it in *Invective 7*.⁸ Basil identifies a topic which his nephews would have read about in pagan writers, but which was also a matter of concern for Christians. However, it is not only a topic to be mentioned to the young and then forgotten about: Basil demonstrates the

⁴ Clearly not all adults who heard Basil’s sermons understood and absorbed all his arguments at every level, since chronological age does not guarantee an equal level of intellectual capacity, but it is possible to determine what Basil hoped would be the highest grade of understanding about a particular Christian moral problem.

⁵ *Ad Adol.* 7.3-4.

⁶ Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1986) 65.

⁷ *De Cohib.*; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* books 3 and 7 have discussions, also Plato, *Rep.* 4.

⁸ Gibson, *Libanius* 305-313.

importance of controlling anger in his homily on the subject⁹ which has similarities with his treatment of it in *Ad Adolescentes*.

In his consideration of anger in his address to the young, Basil hangs his advice very firmly from the hook of pagan wisdom, rather than Christian precept, making use of an episode from the writings of Plutarch and also a quotation from Euripides. He states: ‘a certain man, having been provoked by Eucleides of Megara took an oath and threatened to kill him. However, he swore in return that he would truly appease the man and make him stop holding his harshness against him.’¹⁰

The story is found in Plutarch, *De Cohib.* 462c-d as part of a section giving advice on how to deflect the anger of another.¹¹ Although the episode, along with others in the section, is designed to illustrate the words of Jesus from Matthew 5, Basil does not tie the story very closely with the Christian precepts he implies are relevant, but instead uses Eucleides as an example for his nephews to imitate.

Having praised the actions of one pagan, Basil quotes Euripides, stating that ‘one must not be persuaded by the tragedian when he says ‘simply, against enemies anger arms the hand.’¹² In contrast to the previous example, Basil uses the playwright as an ‘anti-exemplum’: his advice should not be remembered and imitated in the way that good actions should.¹³ His message to the youths is that they should seek to ‘put down’ anger, no matter how hard a task that might appear to be.

It is in this section that Basil explicitly mentions the word προπαίδευσις and encourages his nephews to store up good examples and practices which will be useful in cultivating virtuous lives in the future. His advice is that the youths ought to search out actions to imitate in the lives of virtuous pagans, and he gives them suggestions to follow. He has introduced the notion of imitation at 4.1 but here he spells out his

⁹ *Homilia adversos eos qui irascuntur* in Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 447-462.

¹⁰ *Ad Adol.* 7.3.

¹¹ It is also recalled in Plutarch, *De Fraterno Amore* 489d.

¹² Euripides, *Rhesus* 84.

¹³ It is interesting that on the two occasions that Basil quotes from Euripides in this address, he uses his words as examples of those which are not to be heeded. Webb, "Basil of Caesarea and Greek Tragedy," suggests that Basil was hostile to tragedy because of the mimetic character of education and the fact that plays were still performed in Late Antiquity, therefore preventing tragedy from being viewed ‘at a distance’ by Christians as the poetry of Homer and Hesiod was. Although there do seem to be some flaws in her argument it is nonetheless noteworthy that Basil chooses to use tragedy to provide anti-exempla rather than positive models.

approach: if his nephews find models to copy and begin to take pains to incorporate the good behaviour into their lives they will find it easy to adopt the similar Christian precepts when they come across them.¹⁴ The sentiment is expressed in Plutarch, *De Cohib.*, a work which Basil seems to have been familiar with so his thought may owe something to the pagan. Plutarch states:

‘just as those who expect a siege collect and store up all that is useful to them if they despair of relief from without, so it is most important that we should acquire far in advance the reinforcements which philosophy provides against temper and convey them into the soul in the knowledge that, when the occasion for using them comes it and not be possible to introduce them with ease.’¹⁵

Like Plutarch, Basil advocates the practice of good behaviour throughout his address, encouraging his nephews that if they take the first steps towards training their soul while they are young, they will reap the benefit later in life.¹⁶ However, while Basil’s explicit advice is that his nephews should look for literature which can act as a preparation for virtue during their studies his address itself forms a preparation for the time when the youths will be more involved in the life of the church.

Sermon against those who are prone to anger

The message Basil conveys to his nephews is that they are to try and avoid anger and restrain any strong impulses against other people, using their reason to control their passion as a bit controls a horse. In his sermon, *Homilia adversos eos qui irascuntur*,¹⁷ he uses this notion as a starting point, but then introduces more sophisticated notions about anger and how to direct it.

Basil begins his homily by affirming the value that can be gained from following Christian precepts, and argues that the benefits can be seen in the lives of those who obey them. He considers several Bible passages which speak against anger, including Ephesians 4.31: ‘Let all anger and indignation and clamour be put away from you with all malice.’¹⁸ The sentiment is the same as that expressed in *Ad Adolescentes*, and as the sermon goes on Basil uses images which are found in different places in the work.

¹⁴ *Ad Adol.* 7.4.

¹⁵ 454a.

¹⁶ *Ad Adol.* 2.6.

¹⁷ Homily 10 in Wagner, *Ascetical Works* .

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 447. This text is also used in the closing paragraph of the sermon.

He describes what happens when anger takes over a person's mind and states: 'like mountain torrents which converge their streams in the valleys and sweep along with them everything in their path, the violent and uncontrolled onset of an angry man carries all before it.'¹⁹ This compares to *Ad Adolescentes* 8.1 where he likens the mind without reason and discernment to a 'torrent' which absorbs everything in its path. Although the context is different, Basil is not discussing anger at that point in his address, the message in both passages is the need for reason to control the passions or else destruction can follow.

In his address Basil maintains that reason needs to be developed and used to govern anger, and this theme is emphasised and elaborated on in the homily. He states that temper, 'when it has once succeeded in banishing reason, itself usurps the dominion over the soul,' and makes man no better than an animal.²⁰ He also describes the 'shameful paroxysms'²¹ and physical changes which affect those in the grip of rage.²²

The description is no doubt designed to induce a sense of shame in those members of his audience who regularly find themselves in the grip of such a passion, and by linking his advice to symptoms which would be familiar to his hearers, either because they exhibit themselves or see them in others, Basil makes his words relevant to their lives, and encourages them towards a better path. This is a more detailed treatment of the negative effects of anger than he goes into in his nephews' address, but since he may anticipate the youths encountering similar images in their reading of pagan texts it was perhaps not necessary or appropriate to elaborate further in that context.²³

Just as he encourages his nephews to let reason control passion like a bit controls a horse, so in his homily Basil urges his listeners to develop reason and govern their anger. He asks: 'how might we avoid the harm that comes from yielding to anger?' and responds: 'by concentrating our efforts above all upon not allowing [our wrath] to outstrip our reason. We should keep it curbed, as we would a horse, and obedient to our

¹⁹ Ibid. 448.

²⁰ Ibid. 448.

²¹ Ibid. 447

²² Ibid. 450.

²³ Plutarch, *De Cohib.* 455f describes the physical changes the body goes through when someone becomes angry.

reason, which may be compared to a bridle, so that it may never leave its proper place, but allow itself to be led by the reason whithersoever it may divert it.’²⁴

Basil’s starting point in his homily is therefore parallel with his advice to his nephews. The sermon contains more detailed description and instruction, but mentions ideas and concepts which would be easily grasped by the younger, less experienced members of the audience. However, the sermon is not just a more detailed version of the same advice contained in *Ad Adolescentes*. Rather Basil builds on his simple starting point and introduces sophisticated argument and discussion.

In his address Basil makes use of two different words for anger: θυμός and ὀργή.²⁵ He mentions the words, but makes no distinction between the two in his discussion, simply emphasising that his nephews should make every effort to keep anger at a distance. However, in his homily, Basil identifies these two words and explains the differences between them. He states: ‘now as the words for indignation (θυμός) and anger (ὀργή) are different, so also are the significations which they bear very different. Indignation is a kind of flaring and sudden ebullition of passion. Anger on the other hand, nurses a grievance; the soul, itching for vengeance, constantly urges us to repay those who have wronged us.’²⁶ He argues that it is important for his congregation to identify the different ways that anger can infiltrate the soul, but maintains: ‘both of these errors we are obliged to shun.’

In explaining the different types of feeling and activity which come under the heading of ‘anger’, Basil ensures that his audience is aware of the distinctions and will be on their guard, not just against sudden flaring rage, but also the subtle nursing of a grudge which would be longer-lived and more dangerous. This is a development of the discussion in *Ad Adolescentes*, and suggests that greater understanding of the problem of anger is both necessary and possible for a more mature audience.

Basil introduces a complex concept towards the second half of his homily, and deals with the question of whether anger can be turned towards good, rather than always having negative effects. This discussion is no doubt intended for the more spiritually

²⁴ Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 456.

²⁵ *Ad Adol.* 7.3-4.

²⁶ Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 459. The words are expounded in other homilies (See Rousseau, *Basil* 225).

mature and intelligent thinkers in the congregation, since it requires a firm control of reason in order to put it into practice. He suggests: ‘the irascible part of the soul, however, is serviceable to us in many acts of virtue ... Unless your anger has been aroused against the Evil One, it is impossible for you to hate him as fiercely as he deserves. For, our hatred of sin should be as intense, I believe, as our love of virtue; and anger is very useful for bringing this about, if, as a dog the shepherd, it follows closely the guidance of the reason and remains quiet and docile to those who are helping it and readily obedient to the call of reason.’²⁷ Anger roused against those things recognised as bad, such as sin or the devil, can be a positive rather than a negative emotion, according to Basil, but in order for it to be most effective, the man who exercises this kind of anger must be fully in command of his reasoning faculties and also have learned to keep his passions in check.

The man who can successfully negotiate a ‘co-operation between the irascible and the rational part of the soul’ will be ‘most excellent’, and he ‘will never compromise with treachery nor ever ally himself with anything harmful.’²⁸ In the light of this declaration it is easy to see why Basil would not have included this concept in his address to the young. The ability to control anger and use its energy for good would not be possible for someone just starting out on the path to virtue, and indeed it is probably a task beyond all but a few of Basil’s adult listeners.

Basil uses the same technique of encouraging imitation of good deeds in both his address and his sermon, although the objects for imitation are very different. For his nephews Basil provides examples of noble pagan characters, who he says, behaved in a way not inconsistent with Christian precepts,²⁹ and urges the youths to copy their actions. In a similar manner, he encourages his congregation to: ‘repress the violent and frenzied movement of the soul by recalling the example of holy men,’³⁰ but rather than directing his Christian listeners towards the classical literature he guides them towards the figure of Jesus.³¹ classical literature has no place in the words of Basil’s sermon since, the figures of Perikles and Euclides offer provide merely a ‘sketch’ of virtue,³² which pales in comparison with the control and self-negation of Christ. Basil uses the

²⁷ Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 456.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 457.

²⁹ *Ad Adol.* 7.7; 7.9-10.

³⁰ Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 455.

³¹ *Ibid.* 459-60.

³² *Ad Adol.* 10.1.

writings which his nephews encounter on an everyday basis to demonstrate the way that they should start to develop Christian virtue, but his intention is that as they mature they will focus their attentions away from their literary studies and towards the hope of life eternal.

In *Ad Adolescentes* Basil introduces the first principles of ‘anger management’ and hangs them on useful anecdotes from classical literature, while at the same time pointing towards Christian precepts. His discussion is limited to the basic aspects of the problem, while he focusses on directing his nephews in taking their first steps towards a virtuous life by using the literature they would encounter at school. In another context however, it can be seen that Basil engages in a complex and subtle discussion of anger, beginning from the first principles which are deemed suitable for the young, but drawing his more mature audience into a greater understanding and deeper commitment to Christian living.

On the words ‘Give Heed to Thyself’

Rousseau states that ‘the essence of Basil’s philosophy lay in exploring the scope and nature of self-knowledge,³³ and nowhere is the practical application of this better illustrated than in *Homilia in illud: Attende tibi ipsi*.³⁴ The sermon is based on the Biblical precept at Deuteronomy 15.9: ‘Give heed to thyself, lest perhaps a wicked thought steal in upon thee’,³⁵ and Fedwick suggests that ‘the affinity of these words with the Delphic oracle ‘know yourself’ is more than accidental.’³⁶ While the homily, like *Adv. Eos.*, is firmly placed within the framework of a Christian context and Biblical tenets, much of it resonates with the advice contained in Basil’s *Ad Adolescentes* which alludes to the pagan principle in developing a life of virtue.³⁷

However, while the two works contain many similarities, the homily is quite clearly addressed to a group of adults who play various roles in life,³⁸ rather than being aimed at the young as is *Ad Adolescentes*. It seems possible that Basil’s address is intended as a preparatory sermon which introduces the basic ideas contained in a homily like

³³ Rousseau, *Basil* p330.

³⁴ Homily 3 in Wagner, *Ascetical Works* .

³⁵ Ibid. 432.

³⁶ Fedwick, "Basil of Caesarea on education," 596 n.43.

³⁷ 9.6.

³⁸ Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 437.

Attende tibi, but at the same time relies on the knowledge the youths already have in order to connect with the Christian messages. He no doubt envisages these young men absorbing such sermons in later life, when their faith and reason have become more mature, but for the time being his address provides a training ground and the first steps on the journey to virtue.

As mentioned, the exhortation to *Attende tibi* parallels that influential pagan precept ‘know thyself’ as uttered by the Delphic oracle, and the same sentiment is found in Basil’s address, in the context of those people who lavish attention on their appearance and clothes. Basil states that the man who spends too much time worrying about how he looks: ‘does not discern himself, nor does he understand the wise precept, that the real man is not what is seen, but some more superior wisdom is necessary, by means of which each of us, whoever he is, will recognise himself.’³⁹

The section of the address in which this phrase appears is interesting, because Basil seeks to interact more explicitly with pagan philosophical ideas than he does in earlier parts of the work, but at the same time he tries to describe a Christian lifestyle to his nephews. Before his discussion of clothes and the avoidance of unnecessary preoccupation over dress he has already disparaged the desire for luxury food items, fashionable hair styles and excessive care of the body.⁴⁰ He then suggests that external trappings are of less importance than the internal state of the soul, and implies that the gaining of virtue occurs when an individual has self-knowledge and understanding.

This statement shows a development of Basil’s thought and points towards the maturity of understanding which he hopes his nephews are acquiring. Early in the work he maintains that human goods and possessions are temporary, and of little worth in comparison with the eternal goods which are the rewards of a virtuous life. Having focused the youths’ minds on heaven, he proceeds to use their engagement with classical literature to encourage them to seek virtue for themselves. In section 9 he revisits the human goods in more detail, and gives his nephews advice about the attitude they should hold regarding such things. As mentioned above, the passage resembles that of Clement’s ‘Compendious view of the Christian life’ from *Paedagogus*,⁴¹ and

³⁹ *Ad Adol.* 9.6.

⁴⁰ 9.2-3.

⁴¹ Ch3, 61-65.

suggests that Basil's nephews are at the first stage of their faith, just as Clement's audience is. However, the admonition that self-recognition is the real key to understanding how to view earthly goods and luxuries acts as a sign that there is more to achieving virtue than simply following certain rules about how to behave.

In the introduction to the *Long Rules* Basil considers what motivates an individual to obedience, in particular obedience to Christian precepts, and he argues that there are three factors which help to command obedience. The first is obedience motivated by fear of punishment. The individual fulfils the requirements of a godly life but only as a consequence of his dread of being punished, and therefore he shows the 'attitude of a slave'.⁴² The second motivation is the desire for reward. Basil states 'we observe the commandments for our own advantage and in this we are like hirelings.' The benefits which come from obedience are the motivating factor in ensuring that obedience. It is this factor which appears to be at the forefront of much of Basil's advice in his address. He emphasises the pleasant outlook which is seen from the top of the steep hill to virtue,⁴³ and focuses his nephews' minds to the other life which brings so much more profit than the life on earth.⁴⁴

The third reason for obedience to Christian precepts is naturally the best, and Basil states that this is when 'for the sake of the virtuous act itself and out of love for ... a God so good and so glorious ... we are thus in the dispositions of sons.' The revelation of God's love motivates obedience and virtue, not through any fear or self-seeking but rather through delight in the act itself.

In Basil's mind self-recognition is necessary for an individual to move towards virtue, but it is not self-knowledge which comes about through autonomous, internal inspection. He maintains in his address that 'some superior wisdom is necessary',⁴⁵ and this wisdom is the Christian revelation which focuses the whole of life.⁴⁶ Basil wants his nephews to travel on the journey of self-reflection into a place where they can govern

⁴² Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 227.

⁴³ *Ad Adol.* 5.3.

⁴⁴ *Ad Adol.* 2.4.

⁴⁵ *Ad Adol.* 9.6.

⁴⁶ I.P. Sheldon Williams, "The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena," in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 428.

themselves with reason and understanding and so live Christian lives as sons of God rather than slaves or hirelings.

It is just such self-recognition that Basil advocates in his sermon *Attende tibi*. The Biblical admonition occurs in the context of watching the soul so that no ‘wicked thought steal on upon thee’,⁴⁷ and it is this care of the soul that forms the major theme of Basil’s homily. He maintains that ‘God has ordained that purity in the ruling part of our soul be our primary concern’,⁴⁸ and develops the idea set out in *Ad Adolescentes* that the earthly goods of the world should be shunned and reason cultivated so that a Christian can ‘distinguish between the injurious and the salutary’ in life.⁴⁹ However, unlike in the address where the notion that being observant of oneself occurs only after Basil has established some of the requirements of a Christian life, the homily advocates self-reflection and the application of reason right from the start. The aim of the sermon is to suggest that as a consequence of giving heed to himself the individual will identify the best things in life in the same way that animals recognise what is good for them by instinct.

The homily emphasises the transitory nature of human possessions, both riches and bodily attributes, and encourages the audience to have concern for themselves, their souls and intellects, rather than things which do not last.⁵⁰ This notion is explored in Basil’s address, but there is an interesting twist on the way that he considers these qualities in his sermon.

Basil warns his congregation not hope for riches and status in the future, but to ‘be sober, thoughtful, [and] careful to preserve what you have.’⁵¹ He admonishes them against day-dreaming and pretending that they have what they wish for, asking: ‘is not this weakness of imagining that something hoped for is already possessed a natural trait in the young by reason of the frivolity of their minds?’ Clearly Basil’s use of this rhetorical question is designed to encourage his listeners to resolve not to spend time idly thinking about their futures, since such behaviour is the remit of the young rather

⁴⁷ Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 432.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 432.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 434.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 434-5.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 438.

than mature people engaged in useful professions in society.⁵² However, the way that Basil refers to young people sheds light on the some of the advice in his address.

After Basil has set out his credentials for addressing his nephews in *Ad Adolescentes* he quickly lays down the principle that Christians do not consider those things which only pertain to human life to be important, but instead focus on the life to come in heaven.⁵³

To this end he states:

‘Therefore no distinction of ancestors, no strength of the body, no beauty, no greatness, no honours from all men, no royalty itself, nor any human thing which someone might suggest, do we judge to be great, but instead consider them not even worthy of prayer, nor do we look with admiration at those possessing these things, but we go advance to a greater end with our hopes, and we complete all things as a preparation to another life.’

This compares with the list of fantasies that he maintains the young promise themselves in his homily: ‘fame, a brilliant marriage, model offspring, a good old age, universal esteem ... herds of cattle, a countless throng of slaves, civil magistracies, positions of national leadership, military commands, battles, triumphs, royal power itself.’⁵⁴

Since Basil is addressing young men of a certain status in *Ad Adolescentes* who will be entering the ranks of nobles and potentially powerful officials by means of their birth and education, it makes sense that he would emphasise the fact that they should disregard the trappings of their status near the outset of his advice to them. This approach becomes even more understandable when it is apparent that Basil anticipates that worldly possessions will be of a great importance to these youths as they are just ‘establishing themselves in life’,⁵⁵ and moving into higher education. Basil seeks to prevent his nephews spending time in idle dreaming about their future riches by disparaging the things they desire right at the beginning of his discussion.

The value which Basil thinks his young relations may put on earthly goods also explains why he continues to revisit this theme throughout his address. He reminds his nephews that all possessions except virtue can be lost at any time,⁵⁶ and also questions the pleasure which could really come from owning fields and cattle and hidden gold.⁵⁷ He

⁵² Ibid. 437 details the different occupations of members of Basil’s congregation.

⁵³ *Ad Adol.* 2.1-2.

⁵⁴ Wagner, *Ascetical Works* 439.

⁵⁵ *Ad Adol.* 1.1.

⁵⁶ *Ad Adol.* 5.9.

⁵⁷ *Ad Adol.* 9.21.

urges them to keep looking forward in the light of the rewards of a Christian life after death,⁵⁸ directing their focus away from their immediate futures and towards their eternal ones. In such a way he hopes to anticipate their earthly desires, and lay the groundwork in their hearts and minds for a more mature Christian commitment and the practice of a Christian lifestyle.

It is not possible to determine exactly when Basil presented his address to his nephews, and nor can it be shown precisely when each of his sermons was given, so this chapter is not suggesting that the sermons were composed with the address in mind, and nor was the address necessarily written to relate to specific homilies, since these would have been given in various forms at various times. Basil clearly preached regularly and gave far more sermons than those extant versions.⁵⁹ However, it can be suggested that as Basil composed his homilies week after week, the various subjects and illustrations used in those sermons would have been uppermost in his mind when he came to compose his address to the young. Just as Basil draws on the past in his address, so he also looks to the future. He encourages his nephews to seek out moral lessons and useful examples from the pagans of old because those are the examples most readily available to them, but he also puts in their minds the qualities which they should be looking for in their reading as well as the actions which they should be seeking to imitate in their own lives. He argues that the behaviour of the good pagan men of the past will be an encouragement to his relations that high moral standards can be achieved,⁶⁰ and this advice is given again in his sermons, although the examples there are saints rather than heathens. By filling his address with some of the basic precepts which he expounds for mature audiences in his homilies, Basil also uses his address to prepare his nephews for the advice they will receive as adults, in anticipation of the fact that what they accept in their youth will have become ingrained in their hearts and minds so that they have confidence in it when they revisit it in their more mature state.

⁵⁸ *Ad Adol.* 2.1-2; 10.3.

⁵⁹ *Hex.* 7.6 suggests that sermons were preaching in the morning and evening so there would have been repetition and overlap in the homilies presented over one man's ministerial career.

⁶⁰ *Ad Adol.* 7.8.

Chapter 6. Text and Translation of *Ad Adolescentes*

Section 1

Πολλά με τὰ παρακαλοῦντά ἐστι
ξυμβουλευῆσαι ὑμῖν, ὦ παῖδες, ἃ
βέλτιστα εἶναι κρίνω, καὶ ἃ
ξυνοίσειν ὑμῖν ἐλομένοις
πεπίστευκα. τό τε γὰρ ἡλικίας
οὕτως ἔχειν καὶ τὸ διὰ πολλῶν ἤδη
γεγυμνάσθαι πραγμάτων καὶ μὴν
καὶ τὸ τῆς πάντα παιδεύουσης ἐπ'
ἅμφω μεταβολῆς ἱκανῶς
μετασχεῖν, ἔμπειρόν με εἶναι τῶν
ἀνθρωπίνων πεποίηκεν, ὥστε τοῖς
ἄρτι καθισταμένοις τὸν βίον ἔχειν
ὡσπερ ὁδῶν τὴν ἀσφαλεστάτην
ὑποδεικνύναι. [2] τῇ τε παρὰ τῆς
φύσεως οἰκειότητι εὐθύς μετὰ τοὺς
γονέας ὑμῖν τυγχάνω, ὥστε μήτε
αὐτὸς ἔλαττόν τι πατέρων εὐνοίας
νέμειν ὑμῖν: ὑμᾶς δὲ νομίζω, εἰ μὴ τι
ὑμῶν διαμαρτάνω τῆς γνώμης, μὴ
ποθεῖν τοὺς τεκόντας, πρὸς ἐμὲ
βλέποντας. [3] εἰ μὲν οὖν προθύμως
δέχοισθε τὰ λεγόμενα, τῆς δευτέρας
τῶν ἐπαινουμένων ἔσεσθε παρὸ
Ἡσιόδω τάξεως: εἰ δὲ μή, ἐγὼ μὲν
οὐδὲν ἂν εἴποιμι δυσχερές, αὐτοὶ δὲ
μέμνησθε τῶν ἐπῶν δηλονότι, ἐν
οἷς ἐκεῖνός φησιν ἄριστον μὲν εἶναι
τὸν παρὸ ἑαυτοῦ τὰ δέοντα
ξυνορῶντα, ἐσθλὸν δὲ κάκεῖνον τὸν
τοῖς παρὸ ἑτέρων ὑποδειχθεῖσιν
ἐπόμενον, τὸν δὲ πρὸς οὐδέτερον
ἐπιτήδειον, ἀχρεῖον εἶναι πρὸς
ἅπαντα. [4] Μὴ θαυμάζετε δὲ εἰ καὶ
καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν εἰς
διδασκάλους φοιτῶσι, καὶ τοῖς
ἐλλογίμοις τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν, δι'
ῶν καταλελοίπασι λόγων,
συγγινομένοις ὑμῖν αὐτός τι παρὸ
ἑμαυτοῦ λυσιτελέστερον
ἐξευρηκέναι φημί. [5] τοῦτο μὲν οὖν

There are many things urging me to
advise you, O children, things which I
judge to be the best, and things which I
am persuaded will be of use to you,
having chosen them for yourself. For thus
being of a certain age, and having been
trained already by means of many things,
and also having had a sufficient share in
the all-instructing changes of fortune on
every side, have made me fully
acquainted with the ways of men, so as to
have the power as it were to show by
example the safest road to those lately
establishing themselves in life. [2] With
respect to a relationship to you from
nature, I happen to be immediately after
your parents, so that not only do I myself
show no less goodwill towards you than
your fathers; but I consider that you, if I
do not fail in my opinion of you, do not
long for your parents, when looking at
me.

[3] Therefore, if you will freely receive
my words, you will be of the second
group of those men praised in Hesiod; but
if not, while I would say nothing
unpleasant, do remind yourselves clearly
of the verses, in which that man says that
the best man is the one who sees all at
once the necessary things by himself,
good also is that one who follows the
examples shown by others, but the man
who is suitable for neither is useless in
every single thing.

[4] So do not be surprised if to those
going to school each day to teachers, and
associating with the well-regarded of the
ancient men by means of the words they
have left behind, I myself say something
from my store of wisdom that I have
discovered to be quite profitable.

αὐτὸ καὶ ξυμβουλεύσων ἦκω, τὸ μὴ
δεῖν εἰς ἅπαξ τοῖς ἀνδράσι τούτοις,
ὡσπερ πλοίου, τὰ πηδάλια τῆς
διανοίας ὑμῶν παραδόντας, ἤπερ
ἂν ἄγωσι, ταύτη συνέπεσθαι: ἀλλ'
ὅσον ἐστὶ χρήσιμον αὐτῶν
δεχομένους, εἰδέναι τί χρὴ καὶ
παριδεῖν. τίνα οὖν ἐστὶ ταῦτα, καὶ
ὅπως διακρινούμεν, τοῦτο δὴ καὶ
διδάξω ἔνθεν ἐλών.

[5] Therefore I have come advising this
very thing: that it is not necessary, as if
on a boat, to surrender the rudders of
your mind to these men once and for all,
or to follow them closely wherever they
lead, but receiving however much is
useful from them, to know and notice
whatever is of use.
Therefore what these things are and how
we discern them, I will teach this now,
taking it from here.

Section 2

Ἡμεῖς, ὧ παιῖδες, οὐδὲν εἶναι χρῆμα
παντάπασι τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον
τοῦτον ὑπολαμβάνομεν, οὐτ'
ἀγαθόν τι νομίζομεν ὅλως, οὐτ'
ὀνομάζομεν, ὃ τὴν συντέλειαν ἡμῖν
ἄχρι τούτου παρέχεται. [2] οὐκ οὖν
προγόνων περιφάνειαν, οὐκ ἰσχὺν
σώματος, οὐ κάλλος, οὐ μέγεθος, οὐ
τὰς παρὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων τιμάς,
οὐ βασιλείαν αὐτήν, οὐχ ὅτι ἂν
εἴποι τις τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων μέγα,
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ εὐχῆς ἄξιον κρίνομεν, ἢ
τοὺς ἔχοντας ἀποβλέπομεν, ἀλλ' ἐπι
μακρότερον προΐμεν ταῖς ἐλπίσι,
καὶ πρὸς ἑτέρου βίου παρασκευῆν
ἅπαντα πράττομεν. [3] ἂ μὲν οὖν ἂν
συντελῆ πρὸς τοῦτον ἡμῖν, ἀγαπᾶν
τε καὶ διώκειν παντὶ σθένει χρῆναί
φαμεν, τὰ δὲ οὐκ ἐξικνούμενα πρὸς
ἐκεῖνον, ὡς οὐδενὸς ἄξια παρορᾶν.
τίς δὴ οὖν οὗτος ὁ βίος καὶ ὅπη καὶ
ὅπως αὐτὸν βιωσόμεθα,
μακρότερον μὲν ἢ κατὰ τὴν
παροῦσαν ὁρμὴν ἐφικέσθαι,
μειζόνων δὲ ἢ καθ' ὑμᾶς ἀκροατῶν
ἀκοῦσαι.
[4] τοσοῦτόν γε μὴν εἰπὼν ἱκανῶς
ἂν ἴσως ὑμῖν ἐνδειξαίμην, ὅτι
πᾶσαν ὁμοῦ τὴν ἀφ' οὗ γεγόνασιν

We, O children, do not suppose that this
human life is entirely valuable, and we
neither consider nor call anything good,
which provides us help which is limited
to this life.
[2] Therefore no distinction of ancestors,
no strength of the body, no beauty, no
greatness, no honours from all men, no
royalty itself, nor any human thing which
someone might suggest, do we judge to
be great, but instead think them not to be
worthy of prayer, nor do we look with
admiration at those possessing these
things, but we go forward to a greater end
with our hopes, and we complete all
things as a preparation to another life.
[3] Therefore we say that it is necessary
to love and pursue with all our might
those things which would contribute to
this life for us, and to overlook as being
unworthy the things not reaching towards
it. Therefore whatever this life is and by
what way and in what manner we will
live it is a greater matter than can be
attained in relation to the present purpose,
and it would be better for pupils other
than yourselves to hear.
[4] Indeed truly in saying so much, I will
probably sufficiently show to you that

ἄνθρωποι, τῷ λόγῳ τις συλλαβῶν
καὶ εἰς ἓν ἀθροίσας εὐδαιμονίαν,
οὐδὲ πολλοστῷ μέρει τῶν ἀγαθῶν
ἐκείνων εὐρήσει παρισουμένην,
ἀλλὰ πλεῖον τοῦ ἐν ἐκείνοις
ἐλαχίστου τὰ σύμπαντα τῶν τῆδε
καλῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἀφεστηκότα,
ἢ καθ' ὅσον σκιά καὶ ὄναρ τῶν
ἀληθῶν ἀπολείπεται. [5] μᾶλλον δὲ
ἴν' οἰκειοτέρῳ χρήσωμαι
παραδείγματι, ὅσῳ ψυχὴ τοῖς πᾶσι
τιμιωτέρα σώματος, τοσοῦτῳ καὶ
τῶν βίων ἐκατέρων ἐστὶ τὸ
διάφορον. εἰς δὴ τοῦτον ἄγουσι μὲν
ἱεροὶ λόγοι, δι' ἀπορρήτων ἡμᾶς
ἐκπαιδεύοντες. [6] ἕως γε μὴν ὑπὸ
τῆς ἡλικίας ἐπακούειν τοῦ βᾶθους
τῆς διανοίας αὐτῶν οὐχ οἷόν τε, ἐν
ἑτέροις οὐ πάντῃ διεστηκόσιν,
ὥσπερ ἐν σκιάις τισι καὶ
κατόπτροις, τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμματι
τέως προγυμναζόμεθα, τοὺς ἐν τοῖς
τακτικοῖς τὰς μελέτας ποιουμένους
μιμούμενοι, οἳ γε ἐν χειρονομίαις
καὶ ὀρχήσεσι τὴν ἐμπειρίαν
κτησάμενοι, ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγώνων τοῦ ἐκ
τῆς παιδείας ἀπολαύουσι κέρδους.
[7] καὶ ἡμῖν δὴ οὖν ἀγῶνα
προκειῖσθαι πάντων ἀγώνων
μέγιστον νομίζειν χρεῶν, ὑπὲρ οὗ
πάντα ποιητέον ἡμῖν καὶ πονητέον
εἰς δύναμιν ἐπὶ τὴν τούτου
παρασκευὴν, καὶ ποιηταῖς καὶ
λογοποιοῖς καὶ ῥήτορσι καὶ πᾶσιν
ἀνθρώποις ὀμιλητέον, ὅθεν ἂν
μέλλη πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς
ἐπιμέλειαν ὠφέλειά τις ἔσσεσθαι. [8]
ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ δευσοποιοὶ
παρασκευάσαντες πρότερον
θεραπείαις τισὶν ὅ τι ποτ' ἂν ἦ τὸ
δεξόμενον τὴν βαφήν, οὕτω τὸ
ἄνθος ἐπάγουσιν, ἂν τε ἀλουργὸν
ἂν τέ τι ἕτερον ἦ, τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ καὶ
ἡμεῖς τρόπον, εἰ μέλλοι ἀνέκπλυτος

were someone collecting in an account all
the happiness since men have existed,
and gathering it together into one, he will
find it is equal to not even a little share of
these other goods, but if the total of the
goods of this life, being weighed out
against the worth of the smallest goods of
that other life, it would be as full as a
shadow and a dream are of truth.

[5] Or rather, so that I may use a more
suitable example, as much as the soul is
in all respect more valuable than the body,
just as much also is the difference
between each life.

The Holy Scriptures lead us to this,
teaching us by means of mysteries.

[6] But indeed, while it is not possible to
attend to the deep meaning of them while
at your time of life, by means of other
writings which are not totally different,
just as by means of shadows and mirrors,
meanwhile we exercise beforehand the
eye of the soul, imitating those doing
exercises in military tactics. Indeed, those
men, gaining the experience by means of
gymnastics and dancing, enjoy the profit
from the training in the battles. [7] And
now therefore, it is necessary to think that
the greatest contest of all contests lies
before us, for which it is necessary for us
to do all things and to toil with our
strength as a preparation of this, and it is
necessary to become familiar with the
poets and the historians and the orators
and all types of men from whom some
advantage for the care of the soul intends
to be obtained.

[8] Therefore, just as dyers prepare
beforehand with some treatments
whatever will be receiving the dye, and
then bring on the colour, whether it be
dyed with purple or some other colour;
we also must act in the same way, if the
sentiment of the good intends to remain
indelible for us for all time, for, having

ἡμῖν ἅπαντα τὸν χρόνον ἢ τοῦ
καλοῦ παραμένειν δόξα, τοῖς ἔξω
δὴ τούτοις προτελεσθέντες,
τηνικαῦτα τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ
ἀπορρήτων ἐπακουσόμεθα
παιδευμάτων: καὶ οἷον ἐν ὕδατι τὸν
ἥλιον ὄραν ἐθισθέντες, οὕτως αὐτῶ
προσβαλοῦμεν τῷ φωτὶ τὰς ὄψεις.

become initiated by those things from
outside, we will listen to and understand
the holy and mysterious lessons. And just
as having become accustomed to look at
the sun in the water, thus we will attend
our sights towards the light itself.

Section 3

Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τις οἰκειότης πρὸς
ἀλλήλους τοῖς λόγοις, προὔργου ἂν
ἡμῖν αὐτῶν ἢ γνῶσις γένοιτο: εἰ δὲ
μή, ἀλλὰ τό γε παράλληλα θέντας
καταμαθεῖν τὸ διάφορον, οὐ μικρὸν
εἰς βεβαίωσιν τοῦ βελτίονος. [2] τίνι
μέντοι καὶ παρεϊκάσας τῶν
παιδεύσεων ἑκατέραν, τῆς εἰκόνας
ἂν τύχοις; ἤπου καθάπερ φυτοῦ
οἰκεία μὲν ἀρετὴ τῷ καρπῷ βρῦειν
ώραίω, φέρει δὲ τινα κόσμον καὶ
φύλλα τοῖς κλάδοις περισειόμενα,
οὕτω δὴ καὶ ψυχῇ προηγουμένως
μὲν καρπὸς ἢ ἀλήθεια, οὐκ ἄχαρὶ γε
μὴν οὐδὲ τὴν θύραθεν σοφίαν
περιβεβλησθαι, οἷον τινα φύλλα
σκέπην τε τῷ καρπῷ καὶ ὄψιν οὐκ
ἄωρον παρεχόμενα. [3] λέγεται
τοῖνυν καὶ Μωϋσῆς ἐκεῖνος ὁ πάνυ,
οὗ μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἐπὶ σοφία παρὰ
πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὄνομα, τοῖς
Αἰγυπτίων μαθήμασιν
ἐγγυμνασάμενος τὴν διάνοιαν,
οὕτω προσελθεῖν τῇ θεωρίᾳ τοῦ
Ἵουτος. [4] παραπλησίως δὲ τούτω,
κὰν τοῖς κάτω χρόνοις, τὸν σοφὸν
Δαυιὴλ ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνός φασιν τὴν
σοφίαν Χαλδαίων καταμαθόντα,
τότε τῶν θείων ἄψασθαι
παιδευμάτων.

Therefore, if there is some relationship
between one another of the writings, then
the knowledge of them would be useful
to us. But if there is not, then indeed the
act of placing them side by side to
observe the difference would be no small
matter to making sure of the better one.
[2] Indeed with what can each of the
teachings be compared so that you would
hit upon a simile? Surely just as the
proper virtue of a plant is to burst with
fruit in due season, so it also brings forth
some decoration and foliage which are
tossed about on the branches. Thus
although principally the fruit of the soul
is truth, indeed it is not unpleasant for
outside wisdom to have been thrown
around it, as such foliage provides both
protection and a not unseasonable
appearance to the fruit.
[3] Indeed it is said even that great
Moses, whose name is greatest for
wisdom according to the judgement of all
men, having had his mind trained with
the learning of the Egyptians, in the same
way came to the contemplation of the
One who is. [4] Similarly to this, and also
in later times, they say that the wise
Daniel in Babylon, having examined
closely the wisdom of the Chaldeans,
then attached himself to the divine
teachings.

Section 4

Ἄλλ' ὅτι μὲν οὐκ ἄχρηστον ψυχαῖς
μαθήματα τὰ ἔξωθεν δὴ ταῦτα
ἱκανῶς εἴρηται: ὅπως γε μὴν αὐτῶν
μεθεκτέον ὑμῖν ἐξῆς ἂν εἴη λέγειν.
Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τοῖς παρὰ τῶν
ποιητῶν, ἵν' ἐντεῦθεν ἄρξωμαι: ἐπεὶ
παντοδαποί τινές εἰσι κατὰ τοὺς
λόγους, μὴ πᾶσιν ἐφεξῆς προσέχειν
τὸν νοῦν: ἀλλ' ὅταν μὲν τὰς τῶν
ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν πράξεις ἢ λόγους
ὑμῖν διεξιῶσιν, ἀγαπᾶν τε καὶ
ζηλοῦν, καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα πειραῖσθαι
τοιούτους εἶναι: [2] ὅταν δὲ ἐπὶ
μοχθηροῦς ἀνδρας ἔλθωσι, τὴν
μίμησιν ταύτην δεῖ φεύγειν,
ἐπιφρασσομένους τὰ ὦτα, οὐχ
ἦττον ἢ τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα φασὶν ἐκεῖνοι
τὰ τῶν Σειρήνων μέλη. ἢ γὰρ πρὸς
τοὺς φαύλους τῶν λόγων συνήθεια,
ὁδός τις ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα. [3]
διὸ δὴ πάση φυλακῇ τὴν ψυχὴν
τηρητέον, μὴ διὰ τῆς τῶν λόγων
ἡδονῆς παραδεξάμενοί τι λάθωμεν
τῶν χειρόνων, ὥσπερ οἱ τὰ
δηλητήρια μετὰ τοῦ μέλιτος
προσιέμενοι. [4] οὐ τοίνυν <ἐν
πᾶσιν> ἐπαινεσόμεθα τοὺς ποιητὰς
οὐ λοιδορούμενους, οὐ σκώπτοντας,
οὐκ ἐρῶντας ἢ μεθύοντας
μιμουμένους, οὐχ ὅταν τραπέζῃ
πληθούσῃ καὶ ὠδαῖς ἀνειμέναις τὴν
εὐδαιμονίαν ὀρίζονται. πάντων δὲ
ἥκιστα περὶ θεῶν τι διαλεγόμενοι
προσέξομεν, καὶ μάλισθ' ὅταν ὡς
περὶ πολλῶν τε αὐτῶν διεξιῶσι καὶ
τούτων οὐδὲ ὁμοοῦντων. [5]
ἀδελφὸς γὰρ δὴ παρ' ἐκείνοις
διαστασιάζει πρὸς ἀδελφὸν καὶ
γονεὺς πρὸς παῖδας καὶ τούτοις
αὐθις πρὸς τοὺς τεκόντας πόλεμός
ἐστὶν ἀκήρυκτος. μοιχείας δὲ θεῶν
καὶ ἔρωτας καὶ μίξεις ἀναφανδόν,

But it has been sufficiently said that
outside knowledge is not unprofitable for
the soul, then indeed the next thing would
be to say to you by what means you
should have a share in them. First
therefore considering the writings of the
poets, if I may begin there, since there are
all kinds of men found in their words. Do
not turn your mind to all of it without
exception, but whenever they relate to
you the deeds or words of good men,
both love and imitate them, and try
especially to be like them, [2] but
whenever they are concerned with wicked
men it is necessary to flee the imitation of
these things, blocking your ears no less
than those men say Odysseus did, fleeing
the songs of the Sirens. For an
acquaintance with wicked words is the
road to the same deeds.

[3] Therefore one must watch the soul
with all care lest having welcomed
something on account of the sweetness of
the words we do not miss something
worse, just like those men who accept
deadly poisons with honey.

[4] We will not praise the poets in
everything then, not when they are
scoffing, nor when they are jeering, nor
when imitating lechers or drunkards, nor
whenever they limit happiness to a full
table and dissolute songs. Least of all will
we pay attention to them when they are
saying something about gods, and
especially whenever they recount both
that there are many of them, and also that
they are not even of one mind. [5] For
indeed according to them brother quarrels
with his brother, and a father with his
children and likewise these are engaged
in a truceless war with their parents. The
adulteries, lusts and fornications of gods,
carried out in the open, and indeed,

καὶ ταῦτάς γε μάλιστα τοῦ κορυφαίου πάντων καὶ ὑπάτου Διός, ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν, ἃ κὰν περὶ βοσκημάτων τις λέγων ἐρυθρίασειε, τοῖς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς καταλείψομεν.

[6] Ταῦτά δὴ ταῦτα λέγειν καὶ περὶ συγγραφέων ἔχω, καὶ μάλισθ' ὅταν ψυχαγωγίας ἕνεκα τῶν ἀκουόντων λογοποιῶσι. καὶ ῥητόρων δὲ τὴν περὶ τὸ ψεύδεσθαι τέχνην οὐ μιμησόμεθα. οὔτε γὰρ ἐν δικαστηρίοις οὔτ' ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις πράξεσιν ἐπιτήδειον ἡμῖν τὸ ψεῦδος, τοῖς τὴν ὀρθὴν ὁδὸν καὶ ἀληθῆ προελομένοις τοῦ βίου, οἷς τὸ μὴ δικάζεσθαι νόμῳ προστεταγμένον ἐστίν. [7] ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνα αὐτῶν μᾶλλον ἀποδεξόμεθα, ἐν οἷς ἀρετὴν ἐπήνεσαν ἢ πονηρίαν διέβαλον. ὡς γὰρ τῶν ἀνθέων τοῖς μὲν λοιποῖς ἄχρι τῆς εὐωδίας ἢ τῆς χροᾶς ἐστὶν ἢ ἀπόλαυσις, ταῖς μελίτταις δ' ἄρα καὶ μέλι λαμβάνειν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὑπάρχει, οὕτω δὴ κἀνταῦθα τοῖς μὴ τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ ἐπίχαρι μόνον τῶν τοιοῦτων λόγων διώκουσιν, ἔστι τινὰ καὶ ὠφέλειαν ἀπ' αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀποθέσθαι. [8] κατὰ πᾶσαν δὴ οὖν τῶν μελιττῶν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν λόγων ὑμῖν μεθεκτέον. ἐκεῖναί τε γὰρ οὔτε ἅπασι τοῖς ἄνθεσι παραπλησίως ἐπέρχονται, οὔτε μὴν οἷς ἂν ἐπιπτῶσιν, ὅλα φέρειν ἐπιχειροῦσιν, ἀλλ' ὅσον αὐτῶν ἐπιτήδειον πρὸς τὴν ἐργασίαν λαβοῦσαι, τὸ λοιπὸν χαίρειν ἀφήκαν. [9] ἡμεῖς τε, ἣν σωφρονῶμεν, ὅσον οἰκεῖον ἡμῖν καὶ συγγενὲς τῇ ἀληθείᾳ παρ' αὐτῶν κομισάμενοι, ὑπερβησόμεθα τὸ λειπόμενον. καὶ καθάπερ τῆς ῥοδωνιάς τοῦ ἄνθους δρεψάμενοι τὰς ἀκάνθας ἐκκλίνομεν, οὕτω καὶ

especially when these things are committed by the leader and highest of them all, Zeus, as they say, which would make someone speaking about animals apt to blush, we will leave to those on the stage.

[6] I have these things to say also concerning historians, and especially whenever they fabricate stories to persuade their hearers. And we will not imitate the art of the orators when they practise lying. For neither in the lawcourts, nor in any other affairs is lying proper for us, who having chosen the straight and true road of life, it has been commanded not to decide issues by law. [7] But we will rather show those things of theirs, in which they praise virtue, or condemn vice.

For just as the enjoyment of flowers for other people goes as far as the sweet smell and the colour, for bees it is possible to take honey from them also, and thus for those pursuing not only the sweet and pleasing in these words it is possible to put away some profit from there into the soul. [8] Therefore you must participate in literature entirely like the bees. For they do not approach all flowers equally, nor do they attempt to carry away the whole of those to which they fly, but taking whatever is profitable for their work, they go away leaving the rest.

[9] And we too, if we are wise, bearing away from these writings whatever is suitable for us and related to the truth, we will pass by whatever is left. And just as we avoid the thorns while plucking flowers in a rose garden, so also while enjoying whatever is useful in these words we guard ourselves against the harmful/ poisonous.

ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων λόγων ὅσον
χρήσιμον καρπωσάμενοι, τὸ
βλαβερόν φυλαξώμεθα. [10] εὐθύς
οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπισκοπεῖν ἕκαστον
τῶν μαθημάτων καὶ συναρμόζειν
τῷ τέλει προσῆκε, κατὰ τὴν
Δωρικὴν παροιμίαν τὸν λίθον ποτὶ
τὰν σπάρτον ἄγοντας.

[10] Therefore, straight away from the
beginning we must examine each of the
lessons and make them fit together with
the end, according to the Doric proverb,
leading the stone to the rope.

Section 5

Καὶ ἐπειδήπερ δι' ἀρετῆς ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ
τὸν βίον καθεῖναι δεῖ τὸν ἡμέτερον,
εἰς ταύτην δὲ πολλὰ μὲν ποιηταῖς,
πολλὰ δὲ συγγραφεῦσι, πολλῶ δὲ
ἔτι πλείω φιλοσόφοις ἀνδράσιν
ὑμνῆται, τοῖς τοιούτοις τῶν λόγων
μάλιστα προσεκτέον. [2] οὐ μικρὸν
γὰρ τὸ ὄφελος οἰκειότητά τινα καὶ
συνήθειαν ταῖς τῶν νέων ψυχαῖς
τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐγγενέσθαι, ἐπεὶπερ
ἀμετάστατα πέφυκεν εἶναι τὰ τῶν
τοιούτων μαθήματα, δι' ἀπαλότητα
τῶν ψυχῶν εἰς βάθος
ἐνσημαινόμενα. [3] ἢ τί ποτε ἄλλο
διανοηθέντα τὸν Ἡσίοδον
ὑπολάβωμεν ταυτὶ ποιῆσαι τὰ ἔπη
ἃ πάντες ἄδουσιν, ἢ οὐχὶ
προτρέποντα τοὺς νέους ἐπὶ ἀρετῆν;
ὅτι τραχεῖα μὲν πρῶτον καὶ
δύσβατος, καὶ ἰδρώτος συχνοῦ καὶ
πόνου πλήρης ἢ πρὸς ἀρετῆν
φέρουσα καὶ ἀνάντης ὁδός. [4]
διόπερ οὐ παντὸς οὔτε προσβῆναι
αὐτῇ διὰ τὸ ὄρθιον, οὔτε προσβάντι
ῥαδίως ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον ἐλθεῖν. ἄνω δὲ
γενομένῳ ὁρᾶν ὑπάρχει ὡς μὲν
λεία τε καὶ καλή, ὡς δὲ ῥαδία τε καὶ
εὐπορος καὶ τῆς ἐτέρας ἡδίων τῆς
ἐπὶ τὴν κακίαν ἀγούσης, ἣν ἀθρόαν
εἶναι λαβεῖν ἐκ τοῦ σύνεγγυς, ὃ
αὐτὸς οὗτος ποιητῆς ἔφησεν. [5]
ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ δοκεῖ οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ

And since it is necessary for us to enter
into our life by means of virtue, we must
pay especial attention to those sections of
the writings which pertain to this end: the
many things sung by poets, the many
things praised by prose writers, and still
more by philosophic men.

[2] For it would be of no small benefit,
that any relationship and acquaintance
with virtue would be born in the souls of
the young; since the lessons of these
kinds are disposed to be most
unchanging, being imitated most deeply
on account of the tenderness of the souls.
[3] Or what else do we understand that
Hesiod intended in writing these words
which everyone sings, if not to persuade
the young to virtue? That the road
bearing one to virtue is rough at first, and
inaccessible and requiring much sweat
and full of toil and steep.

[4] For this reason not everyone can
approach it on account of the steep path,
and nor can those, having begun to climb
it, easily get to the top. But, having got
up, he begins to see that it is both level
and fine, that it is both easy and passable,
and more pleasant than the other road
leading to vice, which that same poet has
said, is assembled to take from near at
hand. [5] For it seems to me that this is
nothing else than urging us on to virtue,
and calling everyone to be good, and also

προτρέπων ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ ἀρετὴν καὶ προκαλούμενος ἅπαντας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι, ταῦτα διελθεῖν, καὶ ὥστε μὴ καταμαλακισθέντας πρὸς τοὺς πόνους, προαποστῆναι τοῦ τέλους. καὶ μέντοι καὶ εἴ τις ἕτερος εὐοικότα τούτοις τὴν ἀρετὴν ὑμνησεν. ὡς εἰς ταῦτόν ἡμῖν φέροντας τοὺς λόγους ἀποδεχόμεθα. [6] Ὡς δ' ἐγὼ τινος ἤκουσα δεινοῦ καταμαθεῖν ἀνδρὸς ποιητοῦ διάνοιαν, πᾶσα μὲν ἡ ποιήσις τῷ Ὀμήρῳ ἀρετῆς ἐστὶν ἔπαινος, καὶ πάντα αὐτῷ πρὸς τοῦτο φέρει, ὅ τι μὴ πάρεργον, οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ ἐν οἷς τὸν στρατηγὸν τῶν Κεφαλλήνων πεποίηκε γυμνὸν ἐκ τοῦ ναυαγίου περισφθέντα, πρῶτον μὲν αἰδέσθαι τὴν βασιλίδα φανέντα μόνον: τοσοῦτου δεῖν αἰσχύνην ὀφλῆσαι γυμνὸν ὀφθέντα μόνον, ἐπειδήπερ αὐτὸν ἀρετῇ ἀντὶ ἱματίων κεκοσμημένον ἐποίησε: [7] ἔπειτα μέντοι καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς Φαίαξι τοσοῦτου ἄξιον νομισθῆναι, ὥστε ἀφέντας τὴν τρυφὴν ἢ συνέζων, ἐκεῖνον ἀποβλέπειν καὶ ζηλοῦν ἅπαντας καὶ μηδένα Φαιάκων ἐν τῷ τότε εἶναι ἄλλο τι ἂν εὐξασθαι μᾶλλον ἢ Ὀδυσσεῶα γενέσθαι, καὶ ταῦτα ἐκ ναυαγίου περισφθέντα. [8] ἐν τούτοις γὰρ ἔλεγεν ὁ τοῦ ποιητοῦ τῆς διανοίας ἐξηγητῆς μόνον οὐχὶ βοῶντα λέγειν τὸν Ὀμηρον: ὅτι ἀρετῆς ὑμῖν ἐπιμελητέον, ὧ ἄνθρωποι, ἢ καὶ ναυαγήσαντι συνεκνήχεται καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς χέρσου γενόμενον γυμνὸν τιμιώτερον ἀποδείξει τῶν εὐδαιμόνων Φαιάκων. [9] καὶ γὰρ οὕτως ἔχει. τὰ μὲν ἄλλα τῶν κτημάτων, οὐ μᾶλλον τῶν ἐχόντων ἢ καὶ οὐτινοσοῦν τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων ἐστὶν ὥσπερ ἐν παιδιᾷ κύβων τῆδε κἀκέισε μεταβαλλόμενα: μόνη δὲ

to pass through these things so that we do not become soft at the sight of the work, and stop before the end. And indeed, if anyone else praises virtue in terms that resemble these, then let us accept the words as bearing us to the same place.

[6] As I have heard a certain man, skilled to understand a poet's mind, say all the poetry of Homer is praise of virtue, and everything of his bears to this end, whatever is not incidental. Not least in that which he had made the general of the Cephallenians, having been saved naked from a shipwreck, and although at first he felt shame at having appeared alone to the princess, but far from deserving shame at being looked upon naked, since Homer he made him arrayed with virtue instead of a cloak. [7] Then indeed, he was also considered so worthy by the rest of the Phaeacians that letting go of the softness with which they lived, they all looked at and admired him, and none of the Phaeacians at that time prays to be other than he was more than to become Odysseus, and him saved from shipwreck.

[8] For in these words the expounder of the poet's mind says that Homer, practically shouting, says: "Pay attention to Virtue, O men, who swims with a shipwrecked man, and coming to land with him, even naked, will show him to be more honoured than the happy Phaeacians."

[9] For indeed it happens thus. Other possessions are no more the possessions of their owners than of anyone who can reach them, just as in a child's game of dice, they change from that man to this one, so of all possessions virtue alone cannot be taken away, and remains

κτημάτων ἢ ἀρετὴ ἀναφαίρετον καὶ ζῶντι καὶ τελευτήσαντι παραμένουσα. ὅθεν δὴ καὶ Σόλων μοι δοκεῖ πρὸς τοὺς εὐπόρους εἰπεῖν τό: Ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς αὐτοῖς οὐ διαμειψόμεθα τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸν πλοῦτον, ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ, Χρήματα δ' ἀνθρώπων ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει. [10] Παραπλήσια δὲ τούτοις καὶ τὰ Θεόγνιδος, ἐν οἷς φησι τὸν θεόν, ὄντινα δὴ καὶ φησι, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸ τάλαντον ἐπιρρέπειν ἄλλοτε ἄλλως: ἄλλοτε μὲν πλουτεῖν, ἄλλοτε δὲ μηδὲν ἔχειν. [11] Καὶ μὴν καὶ ὁ Κεῖός που σοφιστὴς <Πρόδικος> τῶν ἑαυτοῦ συγγραμμάτων ἀδελφὰ τούτοις εἰς ἀρετὴν καὶ κακίαν ἐφιλοσόφησεν: ᾧ δὴ καὶ αὐτῷ τὴν διάνοιαν προσεκτέον: οὐ γὰρ ἀπόβλητος ὁ ἀνήρ. [12] ἔχει δὲ οὕτω πως ὁ λόγος αὐτῷ, ὅσα ἐγὼ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τῆς διανοίας μέμνημαι, ἐπεὶ τά γε ῥήματα οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι, πλὴν γε δὴ ὅτι ἀπλῶς οὕτως εἶρηκεν ἄνευ μέτρου, ὅτι νέω ὄντι τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ κομιδῇ καὶ σχεδὸν ταύτην ἄγοντι τὴν ἡλικίαν, ἣν καὶ ὑμεῖς νῦν, βουλευομένω ποτέραν τράπηται τῶν ὁδῶν, τὴν διὰ τῶν πόνων ἄγουσαν πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἢ τὴν ῥάστην, προσελθεῖν δύο γυναῖκας, ταύτας δὲ εἶναι Ἀρετὴν καὶ Κακίαν: [13] εὐθύς μὲν οὖν καὶ σιωπῶσας ἐμφαίνειν ἀπὸ τοῦ σχήματος τὸ διάφορον: εἶναι γὰρ τὴν μὲν ὑπὸ κομμωτικῆς διεσκευασμένην εἰς κάλλος, καὶ ὑπὸ τρυφῆς διαρρεῖν, καὶ πάντα ἐσμὸν ἡδονῆς ἐξηρημένην ἄγειν: ταῦτά τε οὖν δεικνύναι, καὶ ἔτι πλείω τούτων ὑπισχνουμένην, ἔλκειν ἐπιχειρεῖν τὸν Ἡρακλέα πρὸς ἑαυτήν: [14] τὴν δ' ἑτέραν κατεσκληκέναι καὶ

faithful to the living and the dead.

Whence it seems to me that Solon was saying this regarding those who are rich: "But for ourselves, we will not exchange virtue for wealth, since that is always sure ground, whereas another man has a man's money at another time."

[10] Similar to this also are the words of Theognis, in which he says that god, whoever he means, inclines the scales for men differently at one time or another, "To be rich at another time, or to have nothing at another."

[11] And also the Ceian sophist has philosophised somewhere in his writings a sister to these sentiments about virtue and vice. And it is necessary for us to apply the mind to him also, for the man should not be despised.

[12] His words went somehow thus, as much as I can remember the mind of the man, since I do not know the words for certain, except that he spoke in one way, without a metre: that when Herakles was just a young man, and passing near that time of life which you also are now, was deliberating which of the roads he should turn himself to, the one leading to virtue by means of hard work, or the easy one; when two women approached him, these being Virtue and Vice. [13] Straightaway, although they were silent, they displayed their differences by their bodies. For one had been equipped for beauty by embellishments, and flowed through with softness, and led a whole swarm of pleasures which had been fastened onto her. Therefore, while she showed these things, she also promised still more of them, attempting to draw Herakles towards her. [14] But the other woman was like a skeleton, and squalid, and severe looking, and said things of a different kind. For she promised no

αὐχμεῖν καὶ σύντονον βλέπειν καὶ λέγειν τοιαῦτα ἕτερα: ὑπισχνεῖσθαι γὰρ οὐδὲν ἀνεμμένον οὐδὲ ἡδύ, ἀλλ' ἰδρωτάς μυρίους καὶ πόνους καὶ κινδύνους διὰ πάσης ἡπείρου τε καὶ θαλάσσης: ἄθλον δὲ τούτων εἶναι θεὸν γενέσθαι, ὡς ὁ ἐκείνου λόγος: ἦπερ δὴ καὶ τελευτῶντα τὸν Ἡρακλέα ξυνέπεσθαι.

dissoluteness, nor anything pleasant/, but countless sweat and toils and dangers, through every land and sea, but the prize for these things would be to become a god, as the writer says. Indeed in the end it was this one that Herakles followed.

Section 6

Καὶ σχεδὸν ἅπαντες, ὧν δὴ καὶ λόγος τίς ἐστὶν ἐπὶ σοφία, ἢ μικρὸν ἢ μείζον εἰς δύναμιν ἕκαστος ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτῶν συγγράμμασιν ἀρετῆς ἔπαινον διεξῆλθον, οἷς πειστέον καὶ πειρατέον ἐπὶ τοῦ βίου δεικνύναι τοὺς λόγους. ὡς ὁ γε τὴν ἄκρι ῥημάτων παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις φιλοσοφίαν ἔργω βεβαιῶν, οἷος πέπνυται, τοὶ δὲ σκιαὶ ἀἴσσοισι. [2] Καὶ μοι δοκεῖ τὸ τοιοῦτον παραπλήσιον εἶναι, ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ ζωγράφου θαυμαστὸν τι οἷον κάλλος ἀνθρώπου μιμησαμένου, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς εἶη τοιοῦτος ἐπὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, οἷον ἐπὶ τῶν πινάκων ἐκεῖνος ἔδειξεν. [3] ἐπεὶ τό γε λαμπρῶς μὲν ἐπαινέσαι τὴν ἀρετὴν εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ μακροὺς ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς ἀποτείνειν λόγους, ἰδίᾳ δὲ τὸ ἡδὺ πρὸ τῆς σωφροσύνης καὶ τὸ πλέον ἔχειν πρὸ τοῦ δικαίου τιμᾶν, εὐοκέναι φαίην ἂν ἔγωγε τοῖς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ὑποκρινομένοις τὰ δράματα, οἱ ὡς βασιλεῖς καὶ δυνάσται πολλάκις εἰσέρχονται, οὔτε βασιλεῖς ὄντες οὔτε δυνάσται, οὐδὲ μὲν οὖν τυχὸν ἐλεύθεροι τὸ παράπαν. [4] εἶτα μουσικὸς μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐκὼν δέξαιτο ἀνάρμοστον αὐτῷ

And almost all those having some reputation for wisdom, each of them according to his ability, to a greater or lesser extent, has passed through the praise of virtue in his writings; and these we must obey and attempt to display their words in our lives. For thus indeed is the man who confirms his philosophy by deed, which others confirm no further than words:

‘He alone is wise; the others dart about like shadows.’

[2] And it seems to me that it closely resembles this, just as when a painter is imitating some wonderful beauty of a man, and he turns out to be just such a kind in truth as the painter shows him on his canvas. [3] For indeed, brilliantly praising virtue in public, and extending lofty words on its behalf, but in private to honour pleasure instead of temperance, and to honour having plenty instead of righteousness, I for my part would say, resembles the plays by actors on the stage. For those men who often appear as kings or lords, are in reality neither kings, nor lords, nor indeed are they even free man at all. [4] Also, a musician would not willingly accept his lyre being out of tune, and the leader of the chorus would not allow the chorus not to be singing in

τὴν λύραν εἶναι, καὶ χοροῦ
κορυφαῖος μὴ ὅτι μάλιστα
συνάδοντα τὸν χορὸν ἔχειν: αὐτὸς
δέ τις ἕκαστος διαστασιάσει πρὸς
ἑαυτὸν, καὶ οὐχὶ τοῖς λόγοις
ὁμολογοῦντα τὸν βίον παρέξεται;
[5] ἀλλ' ἢ γλῶττα μὲν ὁμώμοκεν, ἡ
δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος, κατ' Εὐριπίδην
ἔρει, καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν ἀγαθὸς πρὸ τοῦ
εἶναι διώξεται. ἀλλ' οὐτός ἐστιν ὁ
ἔσχατος τῆς ἀδικίας ὄρος, εἴ τι δεῖ
Πλάτωνι πείθεσθαι, τὸ δοκεῖν
δίκαιον εἶναι μὴ ὄντα.

unison. So why does each man form himself into separate factions, and not make his life agree with his words? [5] But, does he say, according to Euripides: 'Although the tongue swears, the mind does not swear'? And will he pursue the goal of seeming in place of actually being good? But this is the most extreme boundary of injustice, if we can be persuaded by Plato, to seem to be just but not being so.

Section 7

Τοὺς μὲν οὖν τῶν λόγων, οἱ τὰς τῶν
καλῶν ἔχουσιν ὑποθήκας, οὕτως
ἀποδεχόμεθα: ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ
πράξεις σπουδαῖαι τῶν παλαιῶν
ἀνδρῶν ἢ μνήμης ἀκολουθία πρὸς
ἡμᾶς διασώζονται, ἢ ποιητῶν ἢ
συγγραφέων φυλαττόμεναι λόγοις,
μηδὲ τῆς ἐντεῦθεν ὠφελείας
ἀπολειπόμεθα. [2] οἷον, ἐλοιδόρει
τὸν Περικλέα τῶν ἐξ ἀγορᾶς τις
ἀνθρώπων: ὁ δὲ οὐ προσεῖχε: καὶ εἰς
πᾶσαν διήρκεσε τὴν ἡμέραν, ὁ μὲν
ἀφειδῶς πλύνων αὐτὸν τοῖς
ὄνειδεσιν, ὁ δέ, οὐ μέλων αὐτῷ.
εἶτα, ἐσπέρας ἤδη καὶ σκότους
ἀπαλλαττόμενον μόλις ὑπὸ φωτὶ
παρέπεμψε Περικλῆς, ὅπως αὐτῷ
μὴ διαφθαρεῖ τὸ πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν
γυμνάσιον. [3] πάλιν τις Εὐκλείδην
τῷ Μεγαρόθεν παροξυνθεὶς
θάνατον ἠπειλήσεν καὶ ἐπώμοσεν: ὁ
δὲ ἀντώμοσεν ἢ μὴν ἰλεώσασθαι
αὐτόν, καὶ παύσειν χαλεπῶς πρὸς
αὐτὸν ἔχοντα. πόσου ἄξιον τῶν
τοιούτων τι παραδειγμάτων
εἰσελθεῖν τὴν μνήμην ἀνδρὸς ὑπὸ

Therefore if those men have made suggestions of good in their writings, we will accept them thus. Then also the earnest accomplishments of men of old which have been preserved up to our time as examples either by memory, or being kept by the words of the poets or historians, let us not ignore help from there. [2] For example, a certain man from the agora was railing at Perikles, and he did not take any notice of him; and they held out for the whole day, the one unsparingly abusing the other with reproaches, the other ignoring him. Then, when it was already evening and dark, Perikles, scarcely being left alone by the man, escorted him home, so that his training in philosophy would not be utterly destroyed.

[3] Again, a certain man, having been provoked by Eucleides of Megara took an oath and threatened to kill him. However, he (Eucleides) swore in return that he would truly appease the man and make him stop being angry towards him. How valuable it is that examples of this kind should come to the memory of men

ὀργῆς ἤδη κατεχομένου; [4] τῆ
 τραγωδία γὰρ οὐ πιστευτέον ἀπλῶς
 λεγούσῃ, ἐπ' ἐχθροὺς θυμὸς ὀπλίζει
 χεῖρα: ἀλλὰ μάλιστα μὲν μὴδὲ
 διανίστασθαι πρὸς θυμὸν τὸ
 παράπαν: εἰ δὲ μὴ ῥάδιον τοῦτο,
 ἀλλ' ὥσπερ χαλινὸν αὐτῷ τὸν
 λογισμὸν ἐμβάλλοντας, μὴ ἔαν
 ἐκφέρεσθαι περραιτέρω. [5]
 Ἐπαναγάγωμεν δὲ τὸν λόγον αὐθις
 πρὸς τὰ τῶν σπουδαίων πράξεων
 παραδείγματα. ἔτυπτε τις τὸν
 Σωφρονίσκου Σωκράτην εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ
 πρόσωπον ἐμπεσὼν ἀφειδῶς: ὁ δὲ
 οὐκ ἀντήρεν, ἀλλὰ παρείχε τῷ
 παροينوῦντι τῆς ὀργῆς
 ἐμφορεῖσθαι, ὥστε ἐξοιδεῖν ἤδη καὶ
 ὕπουλον αὐτῷ τὸ πρόσωπον ὑπὸ
 τῶν πληγῶν εἶναι. ὡς δ' οὖν
 ἐπαύσατο τύπτων, ἄλλο μὲν οὐδὲν
 ὁ Σωκράτης ποιῆσαι, ἐπιγράψαι δὲ
 τῷ μετώπῳ λέγεται, ὥσπερ
 ἀνδριάντι τὸν δημιουργόν: Ὁ δεῖνα
 ἐποίει: [7] καὶ τοσοῦτον ἀμύνασθαι.
 ταῦτα σχεδὸν εἰς ταῦτόν τοις
 ἡμετέροις φέροντα, πολλοῦ ἄξιον
 εἶναι μιμήσασθαι τοὺς τηλικούτους
 φημί. τουτὶ μὲν γὰρ τὸ τοῦ
 Σωκράτους ἀδελφὸν ἐκείνῳ τῷ
 παραγγέλματι, ὅτι τῷ τύπτοντι
 κατὰ τῆς σιαγόνος, καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν
 παρέχειν προσῆκε: [8] τοσοῦτου
 δεῖν ἀπαμύνασθαι. τὸ δὲ τοῦ
 Περικλέους ἢ τὸ Εὐκλείδου, τῷ τοὺς
 διώκοντας ὑπομένειν καὶ πρῶως
 αὐτῶν τῆς ὀργῆς ἀνέχεσθαι, καὶ τῷ
 τοῖς ἐχθροῖς εὐχεσθαι τὰ ἀγαθὰ,
 ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐπαρᾶσθαι. ὡς ὅ γε ἐν
 τούτοις προπαιδευθεὶς οὐκ ἔτ' ἂν
 ἐκείνοις ὡς ἀδυνάτοις
 διαπιστήσειεν. [9] οὐκ ἂν
 παρέλθοιμι τὸ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου, ὃς
 τὰς θυγατέρας Δαρείου
 αἰχμαλώτους λαβὼν θαυμαστόν τι

restraining their passion? [4] For one
 must not be persuaded by the tragedian
 when he says 'simply, against enemies
 anger arms the hand.' But while we
 should especially leave aside anger
 absolutely, if this is not easy to do then
 putting in reason, just like a bit, we must
 bear it to go no further.

[5] But let us lead our words again to the
 examples of earnest deeds. A certain
 man, having fallen upon Socrates, the son
 of Sophroniscos, was striking him
 unsparingly about the face. He did not
 rise up against him, but suffered the
 drunkard to fulfil his impulse, so that his
 face was swollen and bruised from the
 blows. Therefore when he ceased his
 striking, Socrates did nothing except, as it
 is said, to write on his forehead, just like
 a craftsman on a statue, 'what's-his-
 name' did this; [7] and so he defended
 himself only this much. Since these
 things bring us near to these tenets of
 ours, I say that there is much value in
 those of your age imitating them. For the
 action of Socrates is brother to that other
 precept, that to the man hitting us on the
 cheek we should offer the other one, [8]
 and it is necessary to defend ourselves
 only to this extent. And the examples of
 Perikles or Eucleides are brother to that
 one which says to submit to those
 persecuting you, and to suffer their anger
 gently, and to that one to pray good
 things for those who hate you, but not to
 curse them. Thus indeed, the man who,
 having been taught these things
 beforehand would not find it impossible
 to have confidence in those others.

[9] I will not pass by the example of
 Alexander, who having taken captive the
 daughters of Darius, did not think to look
 at them, who had been reported to have
 such wonderful beauty. For he judged it

οἷον τὸ κάλλος παρέχειν
μαρτυρουμένας, οὐδὲ προσιδεῖν
ἠξίωσεν, αἰσχρὸν εἶναι κρίνων τὸν
ἄνδρα ἐλόντα γυναικῶν
ἠττηθῆναι. τουτὶ γὰρ εἰς ταῦτον
ἐκείνῳ φέρει, ὅτι ὁ ἐμβλέψας πρὸς
ἠδονὴν γυναικὶ κἂν μὴ τῷ ἔργῳ τὴν
μοιχείαν ἐπιτελέσῃ, ἀλλὰ τῷ γε τὴν
ἐπιθυμίαν τῇ ψυχῇ παραδέξασθαι,
οὐκ ἀφίεται τοῦ ἐγκλήματος. [10] τὸ
δὲ τοῦ Κλεινίου, τῶν Πυθαγόρου
γνωρίμων ἐνὸς χαλεπὸν πιστεῦσαι
ἀπὸ ταῦτομάτου συμβῆναι τοῖς
ἡμετέροις, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ μιμησαμένου
σπουδῆ. τί δὲ ἦν ὁ ἐποίησεν ἐκεῖνος;
ἔξὸν δι' ὄρκου τριῶν ταλάντων
ζημίαν ἀποφυγεῖν, ὁ δὲ ἀπέτισε
μᾶλλον ἢ ὤμοσε, καὶ ταῦτα
εὐορκεῖν μέλλων: ἀκούσας, ἐμοὶ
δοκεῖν, τοῦ προστάγματος τὸν
ὄρκον ἡμῖν ἀπαγορεύοντος.

shameful that having captured a man, he
might be defeated by the charms of
women. For this bears to that precept,
that the man who looks at a woman for
pleasure, even though he does not
accomplish adultery in action, indeed
since he has admitted the desire into his
soul, he is not released from the charge.
[10] Again, the example of Cleinias, one
of the disciples of Pythagoras; and it is
difficult to believe that this agrees with
our precepts by chance, and not through
having been imitated by conscious effort.
What was it that this man did? It was
possible for him to avoid a loss of three
talents if he swore an oath, but he would
rather pay than swear, and he would have
been faithful to the oath too, but having
heard, it seems to me, the command
forbidding us to take an oath.

Section 8

Ἀλλ' ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔλεγον, πάλιν
εἰς ταῦτον ἐπανίωμεν. οὐ πάντα
ἔξῃς παραδεκτέον ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ὅσα
χρήσιμα. καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρὸν τῶν μὲν
σιτιῶν τὰ βλαβερὰ διωθεισθαι, τῶν
δὲ μαθημάτων, ἃ τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν
τρέφει, μηδένα λόγον ἔχειν, ἀλλ'
ὥσπερ χειμάρρουν παρασύροντας
ἅπαν τὸ προστυχὸν ἐμβάλλεσθαι.
[2] καίτοι τίνα ἔχει λόγον
κυβερνήτην μὲν οὐκ εἰκῆ τοῖς
πνεύμασιν ἐφίεσθαι, ἀλλὰ πρὸς
ὄρμους εὐθύνειν τὸ σκάφος: καὶ
τοξότην κατὰ σκοποῦ βάλλειν: καὶ
μὲν δὴ καὶ χαλκευτικὸν τίνα ἢ
τεκτονικὸν ὄντα τοῦ κατὰ τὴν
τέχνην ἐφίεσθαι τέλους: ἡμᾶς δὲ
καὶ τῶν τοιούτων δημιουργῶν
ἀπολείπεσθαι, πρὸς γε τὸ συνορᾶν

But let us discuss again the subject which
I was talking about at the beginning; it is
not necessary for us to admit everything
we come to in succession, but as much as
is useful. For it is shameful to reject the
harmful things in foods, but to have no
consideration for the teaching which
nourishes our soul, but just like a torrent
sweeping everything in its path, we
absorb indiscriminately everything we
come across. [2] And indeed isn't there a
reason, when instead of giving way to the
wind a helmsman goes up against it and
steers the ship to a safe harbour, and an
archer aims at the mark, and indeed some
metalworker or carpenter keeps in mind
the end of his craft, but should we leave
behind the methods of these craftsmen in
respect to our ability to be able to see our
own interests?

δύνασθαι τὰ ἡμέτερα; [3] οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῶν μὲν χειρωνακτῶν ἐστὶ τι πέρας τῆς ἐργασίας, τοῦ δὲ ἀνθρωπίνου βίου σκοπὸς οὐκ ἔστι, πρὸς ὃν ἀφορῶντα πάντα ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν χρὴ τὸν γε μὴ τοῖς ἀλόγοις παντάπασι προσεοικέναι μέλλοντα; ἢ οὕτως ἂν εἶημεν ἀτεχνῶς κατὰ τῶν πλοίων τὰ ἀνερμάτιστα, οὐδενὸς ἡμῖν νοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς οἰάκων καθεζομένου, εἰκῆ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἄνω καὶ κάτω περιφερόμενοι. [4] ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς γυμνικοῖς ἀγῶσιν, εἰ δὲ βούλει, τῆς μουσικῆς: ἐκείνων εἰσὶ τῶν ἀγῶνων αἱ μελέται, ὧν περ οἱ στέφανοι πρόκεινται, καὶ οὐδεὶς γε πάλην ἀσκῶν ἢ παγκράτιον, εἴτα κιθαρίζειν ἢ αὐλεῖν μελετᾷ. [5] οὐκ οὐκ οὐ Πολυδάμας γε: ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος πρὸ τοῦ ἀγῶνος τοῦ Ὀλυμπιάσι, τὰ ἄρματα ἴσθη τρέχοντα, καὶ διὰ τούτων τὴν ἰσχὺν ἐκράτυνε. καὶ ὁ γε Μίλων ἀπὸ τῆς ἀθλητικῆς ἀσπίδος οὐκ ἐξωθεῖτο, ἀλλ' ἀντεῖχεν ὠθούμενος, οὐχ ἦττον ἢ οἱ ἀνδριάντες οἱ τῶ μολύβδῳ συνδεδεμένοι. [6] καὶ ἀπαξ ἀπλῶς αἱ μελέται αὐτοῖς παρασκευαί τῶν ἄθλων ἦσαν. εἰ δὲ τὰ Μαρσύου ἢ τὰ Ὀλύμπου τῶν Φρυγῶν περιειργάζοντο κρούματα, καταλιπόντες τὴν κόνιν καὶ τὰ γυμνάσια, ταχύ γ' ἂν στεφάνων ἢ δόξης ἔτυχον ἢ διέφυγον τὸ μὴ καταγέλαστοι εἶναι κατὰ τὸ σῶμα; [7] ἀλλ' οὐ μέντοι οὐδὲ ὁ Τιμόθεος τὴν μελωδίαν ἀφείκει ἐν ταῖς παλαιστραῖς διηγεν: οὐ γὰρ ἂν τοσοῦτον ὑπῆρξεν αὐτῷ διενεγκεῖν ἀπάντων τῆ μουσικῆ: ᾧ γε τοσοῦτον περιῆν τῆς τέχνης, ὥστε καὶ θυμὸν ἐγείρειν διὰ τῆς συντόνου καὶ αὐστηρᾶς ἁρμονίας,

[3] For is it the case that there is an end of the work of the craftsmen, but there is no aim of the life of man, towards which it is necessary for us to look at everything we do and say, if we are not going to be entirely like the brute beasts. Or in this way, would we be simply boats without ballast, if we do not have reason taking up position on the rudders of our souls, being carried without direction up and down through life?

[4] But, just as in gymnastic contests, or if you prefer, musical competitions, there are exercises for those contests which have crowns as prizes, and indeed no one practising wrestling or pankration then takes care of playing the lyre or flute.

[5] Indeed Polydamas did not do this, but instead, before the Olympic Games set up running chariots, and honed his strength in this way. And what about Milo, who could not be forced off a greased shield, but held out against the pushing no less than would statues, bound to their bases with lead. [6] And in general their exercises were a preparation for the contest. If they had taken more pains about the notes of Marsyas or Olympus of Phrygia, having left behind the dust and the gymnasia, would they have quickly attained crowns or glory, or would they have escaped not being ridiculed on account of the state of their bodies?

[7] But to be sure, Timotheos did not, having given up singing spend his time in the palaistras. For it would not have been for possible him to surpass everyone in music, for he was so superior in his skill that he could even rouse anger by means of strained and harsh harmonies, and indeed he could calm and soften it again by relaxing the tune whenever he wished.

[8] With that art it is said that once while

καὶ μέντοι καὶ χαλᾶν καὶ μαλάττειν
 πάλιν διὰ τῆς ἀνειμένης, ὅποτε
 βούλοιο. [8] ταύτη τοι καὶ
 Ἀλεξάνδρω ποτὲ τὸ Φρύγιον
 ἐπαυλήσαντα, ἐξαναστῆσαι αὐτὸν
 ἐπὶ τὰ ὄπλα λέγεται μεταξὺ
 δειπνοῦντα, καὶ ἐπαναγαγεῖν πάλιν
 πρὸς τοὺς συμπότας, τὴν ἀρμονίαν
 χαλάσαντα. τοσαύτην ἰσχὺν ἔν τε
 μουσικῇ καὶ τοῖς γυμνικοῖς ἀγῶσι,
 πρὸς τὴν τοῦ τέλους κτῆσιν ἢ
 μελέτη παρέχεται. [9] Ἐπεὶ δὲ
 στεφάνων καὶ ἀθλητῶν ἐμνήσθην,
 ἐκεῖνοι μυρία παθόντες ἐπὶ μυριοῖς,
 καὶ πολλαχόθεν τὴν ῥώμην ἑαυτοῖς
 συναυξήσαντες, πολλὰ μὲν
 γυμναστικοῖς ἐνιδρώσαντες πόνοις,
 πολλὰς δὲ πληγὰς ἐν παιδοτριβῶν
 λαβόντες, διαίταν δὲ οὐ τὴν
 ἡδίστην, ἀλλὰ τὴν παρὰ τῶν
 γυμναστῶν αἰρούμενοι, καὶ τᾶλλα,
 ἵνα μὴ διατριβῶ λέγων, οὕτω
 διάγοντες, ὡς τὸν πρὸ τῆς ἀγωνίας
 βίον μελέτην εἶναι τῆς ἀγωνίας,
 τῆνικαῦτα ἀποδύονται πρὸς τὸ
 στάδιον, καὶ πάντα πονοῦσι καὶ
 κινδυνεύουσιν, ὥστε κοτίνου λαβεῖν
 στέφανον ἢ σελίνου ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς
 τῶν τοιούτων καὶ νικῶντες
 ἀναρρηθῆναι παρὰ τοῦ κήρυκος.
 [10] ἡμῖν δέ, οἷς ἄθλα τοῦ βίου
 πρόκειται οὕτω θαυμαστὰ πλήθει
 τε καὶ μεγέθει, ὥστε ἀδύνατα εἶναι
 ῥηθῆναι λόγῳ, ἐπὶ ἄμφω
 καθεύδουσι καὶ κατὰ πολλὴν
 διαιωμένους ἄδειαν, τῇ ἐτέρῳ
 λαβεῖν τῶν χειρῶν ὑπάρξει; [11]
 πολλοῦ μὲντ' ἂν ἄξιον ἦν ἢ ῥαθυμία
 τῷ βίῳ, καὶ ὁ γε Σαρδανάπαλος τὰ
 πρῶτα πάντων εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν
 ἐφέρετο, ἢ καὶ ὁ Μαργίτης, εἰ
 βούλει, ὃν οὐτ' ἀροτῆρα οὐτε
 σκαπτῆρα οὐτε ἄλλο τι τῶν κατὰ
 τὸν βίον ἐπιτηδεῖων εἶναι Ὅμηρος

he was playing a Phrygian tune to
 Alexander he made him rise and make for
 his weapons while having dinner, and led
 him back again to his companions,
 having slackened the harmony. As far as
 strength in both music and athletic
 contests goes, it is practice towards the
 possession of the prize which makes it
 perfect.

[9] Since I have been reminded about
 crowns and contests, and that these men
 suffer countless upon countless things,
 and have increased their strength in many
 ways: on one hand sweating in many
 gymnastic efforts, and on the other
 receiving many blows in the training
 school; not the most pleasant way of life,
 but being chosen by the athletic trainers,
 along with other things and, so that I do
 not waste time speaking, making their life
 before the contest a practice for the
 contest itself; and at the time when they
 strip off for the stadium, and perform all
 toils and put themselves in danger, in
 order to take a crown of olive or parsley,
 or some other suchlike material, and for
 the winners to be announced by the
 herald.

[10] But for us, to whom wonderful
 prizes of life are promised in the way,
 both so full and great that it is impossible
 to speak of them in words, will it be
 possible for us sleeping on both our ears
 and leading a life of great indulgence to
 begin to take it with one hand?

[11] If laziness in life was worth very
 much, indeed Sardanapalus would have
 been ranked the first of all in good
 fortune, or even Margites, if you prefer,
 being neither a ploughman, nor a digger,
 nor anything else useful for life as Homer
 has declared him to be, if these words are
 Homer's.

[12] But perhaps indeed the saying of

ἔφησεν, εἰ δὴ Ὀμήρου ταῦτα. [12] ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀληθῆς μάλλον ὁ τοῦ Πιττακοῦ λόγος, ὃς χαλεπὸν ἔφησεν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι; διὰ πολλῶν γὰρ δὴ τῶ ὄντι πόνων διεξελλθοῦσι μόλις ἂν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐκείνων τυχεῖν ἡμῖν περιγένοιτο, ὧν ἐν τοῖς ἄνω λόγοις οὐδὲν εἶναι παράδειγμα τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐλέγομεν. [13] οὐ δὴ οὖν ῥαθυμητέον ἡμῖν, οὐδὲ τῆς ἐν βραχεῖ ῥαστώνης μεγάλας ἐλπίδας ἀνταλλακτέον, εἴπερ μὴ μέλλοιμεν ὀνειδίη τε ἕξειν καὶ τιμωρίας ὑφέξειν, οὐ τι παρὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐνθάδε, καίτοι καὶ τοῦτο οὐ μικρὸν τῶ γε νοῦν ἔχοντι, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς, εἴτε ὑπὸ γῆν, εἴτε καὶ ὅπου δὴ τοῦ παντὸς ὄντα τυγχάνει, [14] δικαιωτηρίοις. ὡς τῶ μὲν ἀκουσίως τοῦ προσήκοντος ἀμαρτόντι κἂν συγγνώμη τις ἴσως παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ γένοιτο: τῶ δὲ ἐξεπίτηδες τὰ χεῖρω προελομένῳ οὐδεμία παραίτησις, τὸ μὴ οὐχὶ πολλαπλασίῳ τὴν κόλασιν ὑποσχεῖν.

Pittacus is true, which he has said, it is difficult to be good?

For indeed, having passed through many toils in reality it would scarcely remain for us to achieve those goods, which we have said in the words above no human goods are an example.

[13] Therefore, we must not be careless, nor must we exchange our great hopes in return for brief laziness, if we would not prefer to gain reproach and hold ourselves under punishment, not anything here in the hands of men, and indeed even this is not held a small thing by someone of sense, but in the houses of correction, whether under the earth or even wherever of all places they happen to be. [14] Since, for the man who goes wrong involuntarily even some degree of pardon may be given by God; but to the one who commits the worst things deliberately there will be not one means of escape so he does not suffer punishment many times over.

Section 9

Τί οὖν ποιῶμεν; φαίη τις ἂν. τί ἄλλο γε ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιμέλειαν ἔχειν, πᾶσαν σχολὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἄγοντας; [2] οὐ δὴ οὖν τῶ σώματι δουλευτέον, ὅτι μὴ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη; ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ τὰ βέλτιστα ποριστέον, ὥσπερ ἐκ δεσμοτηρίου, τῆς πρὸς τὰ τοῦ σώματος πάθη κοινωνίας αὐτὴν διὰ φιλοσοφίας λύοντας, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τὸ σῶμα τῶν παθῶν κρεῖττον ἀπεργαζομένους, γαστρὶ μὲν γε τὰ ἀναγκαῖα ὑπηρετοῦντας, οὐχὶ τὰ ἡδίστα, ὡς οἱ

Therefore, what should we do? Someone might say. What else indeed but to have a care for the soul, keeping all leisure away from other things? [2] Therefore we should not be a slave to the body, unless under absolute compulsion; but must provide the best things for the soul, so that we release it from communion with the passions of the body by means of philosophy, as though from a prison, and at the same time sanctify the body to be stronger than the passions, ministering to the stomach with necessary but not the most pleasant foodstuffs, unlike those

γε τραπεζοποιούς τινας καὶ
 μαγείρους περινοῦντες, καὶ πᾶσαν
 διερευνώμενοι γῆν τε καὶ
 θάλασσαν, οἷόν τινα χαλεπῶ
 δεσπότη φόρους ἀπάγοντες,
 ἔλεεινοὶ τῆς ἀσχολίας, τῶν ἐν ἄδου
 κολαζομένων οὐδὲν πάσχοντες
 ἀνεκτότερον, ἀτεχνῶς εἰς πῦρ
 ξαίνοντες, καὶ κοσκίνῳ φέροντες
 ὕδωρ, καὶ εἰς τετρημένον
 ἀντλοῦντες πίθον, [3] οὐδὲν πέρασ
 τῶν πόνων ἔχοντες. κουράς δὲ καὶ
 ἀμπεχόνας ἔξω τῶν ἀναγκαίων
 περιεργάζεσθαι, ἢ δυστυχοῦντων
 ἐστί, κατὰ τὸν Διογένηος λόγον, ἢ
 ἀδικούντων. ὥστε καλλωπιστὴν
 εἶναι καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι ὁμοίως
 αἰσχροῦν ἢ γειῖσθαι φημι δεῖν τοὺς
 τοιούτους, ὡς τὸ ἔταιρεῖν ἢ
 ἀλλοτρίοις γάμοις ἐπιβουλεύειν. [4]
 τί γὰρ ἂν διαφέρει τῶ γε νοῦν
 ἔχοντι, ξυστίδα ἀναβεβλήσθαι ἢ τι
 τῶν φαύλων ἱμάτιον φέρειν, ἕως ἂν
 μηδὲν ἐνδέη τοῦ πρὸς χειμῶνά τε
 εἶναι καὶ θάλπος ἀλεξητήριον; [5]
 καὶ τᾶλλα δὴ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον μὴ
 περιττότερον τῆς χρείας
 κατεσκευάσθαι, μηδὲ περιέπειν τὸ
 σῶμα πλεον ἢ ὡς ἄμεινον τῆ ψυχῆ.
 οὐχ ἦττον γὰρ ὄνειδος ἀνδρὶ τῶ γε
 ὡς ἀληθῶς τῆς προσηγορίας ταύτης
 ἀξίῳ, καλλωπιστὴν καὶ
 φιλοσώματον εἶναι, ἢ πρὸς ἄλλο τι
 τῶν παθῶν ἀγεννῶς διακεῖσθαι. [6]
 τὸ γὰρ τὴν πᾶσαν σπουδὴν
 εἰσφέρεισθαι, ὅπως ὡς κάλλιστα
 αὐτῶ τὸ σῶμα ἔξοι, οὐ
 διαγινώσκοντός ἐστιν ἑαυτόν, οὐδὲ
 συνιέντος τοῦ σοφοῦ
 παραγγέλματος, ὅτι οὐ τὸ
 ὀρώμενόν ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος: ἀλλὰ
 τινος δεῖται περιττοτέρας σοφίας, δι
 ἧς ἕκαστος ἡμῶν, ὅστις ποτέ ἐστιν,
 ἑαυτὸν ἐπιγνώσεται. τοῦτο δὲ μὴ

men who devote their thoughts to slaves
 who set out tables, and cooks, tracking
 them down though every land and sea,
 just like those bringing home tribute to
 some harsh master, wretched individuals
 because of their labour, suffering nothing
 more bearable than those being punished
 in Hades, such as those unskilfully
 combing wool into fire, and bearing
 water in a sieve, and drawing water in a
 perforated jug, [3] having no end to their
 toils.

To take more than necessary pains about
 hair-cutting and clothes is, according to
 Diogenes, for those who are unlucky or
 unrighteous. Thus to be a dandy, and to
 be likewise called one is, I say, as
 shameful as those men who keep
 company with prostitutes or form designs
 on other men's wives.

[4] For what would be the difference, to a
 man of sense, to be looked upon wearing
 a fine robe of state or some cloak of poor
 material, as long as there is no lack of
 protection from it both in the winter cold
 and the heat? [5] And indeed in other
 matters in the same way one must not be
 equipped more than is necessary, and the
 body should not be treated with great care
 or better than the soul. For it is no less a
 reproach to a man who is truly worthy of
 such a name, like dandy and 'body-
 lover', than to be in a lowly state because
 of some other of the passions.

[6] For the man who brings all effort in
 order to have the most beautiful body
 does not know himself, nor does he
 understand the wise precept, that the real
 man is not what is seen, but some more
 superior wisdom is necessary, by means
 of which each of us, whoever he is, will
 recognise himself. For those who have
 not cleansed their mind, this is more
 difficult than for a bleary-eyed man to
 look towards the sun.

καθηραμένοις τὸν νοῦν
ἀδυνατώτερον ἢ λημῶντι πρὸς τὸν
ἥλιον ἀναβλέψαι. [7] Κάθαρσις δὲ
ψυχῆς, ὡς ἀθρόως τε εἰπεῖν καὶ ὑμῖν
ἱκανῶς, τὰς διὰ τῶν αἰσθήσεων
ἡδονὰς ἀτιμάζειν, μὴ ὀφθαλμοῦς
ἐστιᾶν ταῖς ἀτόποις τῶν
θαυματοποιῶν ἐπιδείξεσιν ἢ
σωμάτων θεαῖς ἡδονῆς κέντρον
ἐναφιέντων, μὴ διὰ τῶν ὠτων
διεφθαρμένην μελωδίαν τῶν ψυχῶν
καταχεῖν. [8] ἀνελευθερίας γὰρ δὴ
καὶ ταπεινότητος ἔκγονα πάθη ἐκ
τοῦ τοιοῦδε τῆς μουσικῆς εἶδους
ἐγγίνεσθαι πέφυκεν. ἀλλὰ τὴν
ἐτέραν μεταδιωκτέον ἡμῖν, τὴν
ἀμείνω τε καὶ εἰς ἄμεινον φέρουσιν
ἢ καὶ Δαβὶδ χρώμενος ὁ ποιητὴς
τῶν ἱερῶν ἁσμάτων, ἐκ τῆς μανίας,
ὡς φασι, τὸν βασιλέα καθίστη. [9]
λέγεται δὲ καὶ Πυθαγόραν
κωμασταῖς περιτυχόντα μεθύουσι
κελεῦσαι τὸν ἀύλητὴν τὸν τοῦ
κώμου κατάρχοντα, μεταβαλόντα
τὴν ἀρμονίαν, ἐπαυλῆσαί σφισι τὸ
Δώριον, τοὺς δὲ οὕτως
ἀναφρονῆσαι ὑπὸ τοῦ μέλους, ὥστε
τοὺς στεφάνους ῥίψαντας,
αἰσχυνομένους ἐπανελθεῖν. [10]
ἔτεροι δὲ πρὸς αὐλὸν κορυβαντιῶσι
καὶ ἐκβακχεύονται: τοσοῦτόν ἐστι
τὸ διάφορον ὑγιῶς ἢ μοχθηρᾶς
μελωδίας ἀναπλησθῆναι. ὥστε, τῆς
νῦν δὴ κρατούσης ταύτης, ἦττον
ὑμῖν μεθεκτέον, ἢ οὔτινοσοῦν τῶν
αἰσχίστων. [11] ἀτμούς γε μὴν
παντοδαπούς ἡδονὴν ὀσφρήσει
φέροντας τῷ ἀέρι καταμιγνύναι, ἢ
μύροις ἑαυτοὺς ἀναχρώννυσθαι,
καὶ ἀπαγορεύειν αἰσχύνομαι. τί δ'
ἂν τις εἴποι περὶ τοῦ μὴ χρῆναι τὰς
ἐν ἀφῆ καὶ γεύσει διώκειν ἡδονὰς, ἢ
ὅτι καταναγκάζουσιν αὐταὶ τοὺς
περὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν θήραν

[7] The purification of the soul, being totally sufficient for you, so to speak, encourages you not to honour pleasures which come by means of the senses; not feasting the eyes on the strange demonstrations of the conjurers, or on sights of bodies which allow in the goad of pleasure, nor to pour down destructive music into the soul by means of the ears. [8] For passion which is the offspring of illiberality and baseness is produced from this kind of music. But we must follow closely after another kind, which is both better and also conveys to even better which David, the poet of holy songs made use of, as they say, and brought the king back from his madness.

[9] And it is said that Pythagoras, coming upon some drunken revellers, commanded the flautist leading the revel to change the harmony and play the Dorian mode to them, and thus they returned to their senses on account of the melody, so that, throwing down their flowery crowns they returned home ashamed of themselves. [10] Others start up and become frenzied at the sound of the flute. This is the difference between being filled with wholesome or knavish music. And as this type is now popular you should have less of a share in it than in anything else which is clearly shameful.

[11] Indeed in truth, I should be ashamed to forbid the use of all kinds of perfumes mixed up to bring pleasure on the air, or defile the surface of the body with countless things. What more needs to be said about there being no need to pursue the pleasures of touch and taste, than that these things force those devoting themselves to the hunting of them to live

ἔσχολακότας, ὥσπερ τὰ θρέμματα, πρὸς τὴν γαστέρα καὶ τὰ ὑπ' αὐτὴν συννενευκότας ζῆν; [12] Ἐνὶ δὲ λόγῳ, παντὸς ὑπεροπτεύον τοῦ σώματος τῷ μῆ, ὡς ἐν βορβόρῳ, ταῖς ἡδοναῖς αὐτοῦ κατορωρύχθαι μέλλοντι, ἢ τοσοῦτον ἀνθεκτέον αὐτοῦ, ὅσον, φησὶ Πλάτων; ὑπηρεσίαν φιλοσοφία κτωμένου, εὐκότα που λέγων τῷ Παύλῳ, ὃς παραινεῖ μηδεμίαν χρῆναι τοῦ σώματος πρόνοιαν ἔχειν εἰς ἐπιθυμιῶν ἀφορμὴν. [13] ἢ τί διαφέρουσιν οἱ τοῦ μὲν σώματος ὡς ἂν κάλλιστα ἔχοι φροντίζουσι, τὴν δὲ χρησομένην αὐτῷ ψυχὴν ὡς οὐδενὸς ἀξίαν περιορῶσι, τῶν περὶ τὰ ὄργανα σπουδαζόντων, τῆς δὲ δι' αὐτῶν ἐνεργούσης τέχνης καταμελούντων; [14] πᾶν μὲν οὖν τοῦναντίον κολάζειν αὐτὸ καὶ κατέχειν ὥσπερ θηρίου τὰς ὀρμὰς προσῆκε, καὶ τοὺς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ θορύβους ἐγγινομένους τῇ ψυχῇ, οἰονεῖ μάστιγι, τῷ λογισμῷ καθικνουμένους κοιμίζειν, ἀλλὰ μὴ πάντα χαλινὸν ἡδονῆς ἀνέντας περιορᾶν τὸν νοῦν, ὥσπερ ἡνίοχον, ὑπὸ δυσσηνίων ἵππων ὕβρει φερομένων παρασυρόμενον ἄγεσθαι: καὶ τοῦ Πυθαγόρου μεμνησθαι, ὃς τῶν συνόντων τινὰ καταμαθὼν γυμνασίοις τε καὶ σιτίοις ἑαυτὸν εὖ μάλα κατασαρκοῦντα, οὕτως ἔφη: Οὐ παύση χαλεπώτερον σεαυτῷ κατασκευάζων τὸ δεσμωτήριον; [15] διὸ δὴ καὶ Πλάτωνά φασι τὴν ἐκ σώματος βλάβην προειδόμενον, τὸ νοσῶδες χωρίον τῆς Ἀττικῆς τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν καταλαβεῖν ἐξεπίτηδες, ἵνα τὴν ἄγαν εὐπάθειαν τοῦ σώματος, οἷον ἀμπέλου τὴν εἰς τὰ περιττὰ φορᾶν, περικόπτοι. ἐγὼ δὲ

just like animals, concentrating on their stomachs and the things below it?

[12] In a word, we must disdain every part of the body, if we wish not to be destined to be buried in its pleasures as though in the mire, and cleave to it only so much, as Plato declares, as can be pressed into service of philosophy, speaking somewhere in a similar way to Paul, who advised that there is no need to have consideration for the body as a starting point for desires.

[13] What is the difference between those men who think of the body so that it would be especially beautiful, but their soul is lacking so that they overlook it as unworthy of anything, and those men who make haste about their instruments, but take no care over the operation of their craft?

[14] Therefore, doing the very opposite we must chastise and keep the body held down, just like the rage of a wild beast, and send away with reason, as with a whip, the innate uproars created in the soul by it, and put it to sleep; not loosening every curb on pleasure and overlook the mind, so that we are led, just like a charioteer being swept along by violence, borne by uncontrollable horses. Also we should remember Pythagoras, who having observed one of his disciples becoming very fleshy by both gymnastics and eating well, said "Pray cease from making your prison more wretched for yourself."

[15] And indeed, for this reason they say that Plato, taking thought for the harm from the body, deliberately chose a diseased spot of Attica for the Academy, so that he could prune excessive comfort from the body, as he would prune excessive crop from the grape vine. And indeed, I have heard from doctors that

καὶ σφαλερὰν εἶναι τὴν ἐπὶ ἄκρον
εὐεξίαν ἰατρῶν ἤκουσα. [16] Ὅτε
τοῖνυν ἢ ἄγαν αὕτη τοῦ σώματος
ἐπιμέλεια, αὐτῷ τε ἀλυσιτελῆς τῷ
σώματι καὶ πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν
ἐμπόδιόν ἐστι, τό γε
ὑποπεπτωκέναι τούτῳ καὶ
θεραπεύειν, μανία σαφής. [17] ἀλλὰ
μὴν εἰ τούτου γε ὑπερορᾶν
μελετήσασιν, σχολῆ γ' ἂν ἄλλο τι
τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θαυμάσασιν. τί
γὰρ ἔτι χρησόμεθα πλούτῳ, τὰς διὰ
τοῦ σώματος ἡδονὰς ἀτιμάζοντες;
ἐγὼ μὲν οὐχ ὀρώ, πλήν εἰ μή, κατὰ
τοὺς ἐν τοῖς μύθοις δράκοντας,
ἡδονὴν τινα φέροι θησαυροῖς
κατορωρυγμένοις ἐπαγρυπνεῖν. [18]
ὅ γε μὴν ἐλευθερίως πρὸς τὰ
τοιαῦτα διακειῖσθαι πεπαιδευμένος,
πολλοῦ ἂν δέοι ταπεινόν τι καὶ
αἰσχροῦ ἔργῳ ἢ λόγῳ ποτὲ
προελέσθαι. τὸ γὰρ τῆς χρείας
περιττότερον, κἂν Λύδιον ἢ ψῆγμα,
κἂν τῶν μυρμηκῶν ἔργον τῶν
χρυσόφορων, τοσοῦτῳ πλεον
ἀτιμάσει, ὅσῳπερ ἂν ἦττον
προσδέηται: αὐτὴν δὲ δῆπου τὴν
χρείαν τοῖς τῆς φύσεως ἀναγκαίοις,
ἀλλ' οὐ ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὀριεῖται. [19] ὡς
οἱ γε τῶν ἀναγκαίων ὄρων ἔξω
γενόμενοι, παραπλησίως τοῖς κατὰ
τοῦ πρᾶνου φερομένοις, πρὸς
οὐδὲν στάσιμον ἔχοντες ἀποβῆναι,
οὐδαμοῦ τῆς εἰς τὸ πρόσω φορᾶς
ἴστανται: ἀλλ' ὅσῳπερ ἂν πλείω
προσπεριβάλλωνται, τοῦ ἴσου
δέονται ἢ καὶ πλείονος πρὸς τὴν τῆς
ἐπιθυμίας ἐκπλήρωσιν, κατὰ τὸν
Ἐξηκεστίδου Σόλωνα, ὃς φησι:
Πλούτου δ' οὐδὲν τέρμα
πεφασμένον ἀνδράσι κεῖται. [20] τῷ
δὲ Θεόγνιδι πρὸς ταῦτα διδασκάλῳ
χρηστέον λέγοντι: Οὐκ ἔραμαι
πλουτεῖν οὐτ' εὐχομαι, ἀλλὰ μοι εἶη

extreme good health is dangerous.

[16] Since therefore, too much care of the
body is both unprofitable for the body
itself and also an obstacle for the soul,
then indeed it is clearly madness to be
subjected to it and defer to it. [17] But if
indeed we take care to overlook the body,
we would hardly marvel at any other
human thing. For will we still want
wealth, having dishonoured the pleasure
of the body? Since I do not see that it
would bring any pleasure except perhaps
to brood over buried treasure like the
dragons in myths.

[18] For truly the man who has been
taught to be thus disposed towards these
things would only choose when
absolutely necessary anything lowly and
shameful in word or deed. For the
greater the need, even if it were for
Lydian gold dust, or even for the work of
gold-gathering ants, he will deem it much
more unworthy as the less he requires it.
And perhaps he would determine the
need by the constraints of nature, rather
than by pleasures.

[19] As for those men going outside the
boundaries of necessity, resembling those
being carried along headlong, having no
firm point to alight on, and can nowhere
stop carrying themselves forwards; but as
much as they would surround themselves
with more, so the same and even more is
necessary for them to fulfil their desires:
according to Solon, the son of Exekestes,
who says:

'No limit of wealth lies shown to men.'

[20] And we should use the teacher
Theognis when he speaks concerning
these things:

'I do not long to be wealthy, nor do I pray
for it, but may it be enough for me to live
with a few things, suffering no evil.'

Ζῆν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀλίγων μηδὲν ἔχοντι
 κακόν. Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ Διογένους
 ἄγαμαι τὴν πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν
 ἀνθρωπίνων ὑπεροψίαν: ὅς γε καὶ
 βασιλέως τοῦ μεγάλου ἑαυτὸν
 ἀπέφηνε πλουσιώτερον, τῷ
 ἔλαττόνων ἢ ἐκεῖνος κατὰ τὸν βίον
 προσδεῖσθαι. [21] ἡμῖν δὲ ἄρα εἰ μὴ
 τὰ Πυθίου τοῦ Μυσοῦ προσεῖη
 τάλαντα, καὶ πλέθρα γῆς τόσα καὶ
 τόσα, καὶ βοσκημάτων ἔσμοι
 πλείους ἢ ἀριθμῆσαι, οὐδὲν
 ἐξαρκέσει. ἀλλ', οἶμαι, προσήκει
 ἀπόντα τε μὴ ποθεῖν τὸν πλουῦτον,
 καὶ παρόντος μὴ τῷ κεκτηθῆσθαι
 μάλλον φρονεῖν, ἢ τῷ εἰδέναι αὐτὸν
 εὖ διατίθεσθαι. τὸ γὰρ τοῦ
 Σωκράτους εὖ ἔχει: ὅς μέγα
 φρονοῦντος πλουσίου ἀνδρὸς ἐπὶ
 τοῖς χρήμασιν οὐ πρότερον αὐτὸν
 θαυμάσειν ἔφη, πρὶν ἂν καὶ ὅτι
 κεχρησθῆσθαι τούτοις ἐπίσταται,
 πειραθῆναι. [23] ἢ Φειδίας μὲν καὶ
 Πολύκλειτος, εἰ τῷ χρυσίῳ μέγα
 ἐφρόνουν καὶ τῷ ἐλέφαντι, ὧν ὁ μὲν
 Ἡλείοις τὸν Δία, ὁ δὲ τὴν Ἥραν
 Ἀργείοις ἐποίησάτην, καταγελάστω
 ἂν ἦσθην ἀλλοτριῷ πλούτῳ
 καλλωπιζόμενοι, ἀφέντες τὴν
 τέχνην, ὑφ' ἧς καὶ ὁ χρυσὸς ἡδίων
 καὶ τιμιώτερος ἀπεδείχθη: ἡμεῖς δὲ
 τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν ἀρετὴν οὐκ
 ἐξαρκεῖν ἑαυτῇ πρὸς κόσμον
 ὑπολαμβάνοντες, ἐλάττονος
 αἰσχύνης ἄξια ποιεῖν οἴομεθα; [24]
 Ἄλλὰ δῆτα πλούτου μὲν
 ὑπεροψόμεθα καὶ τὰς διὰ τῶν
 αἰσθήσεων ἡδονὰς ἀτιμάσομεν,
 κολακειᾶς δὲ καὶ θωπείας
 διωξόμεθα, καὶ τῆς Ἀρχιλόχου
 ἀλώπεκος τὸ κερδαλέον τε καὶ
 ποικίλον ζηλώσομεν; [25] ἀλλ' οὐκ
 ἔστιν ὁ μάλλον φευκτέον τῷ
 σωφρονοῦντι, τοῦ πρὸς δόξαν ζῆν,

And I also admire the contempt of
 Diogenes for all human possessions
 together, who indeed showed himself to
 be wealthier than the great king, needing
 less than him to live on.

[21] But will none of us be content unless
 he has the gold talents of Pythias the
 Mysian, and greater and greater measures
 of land, and more herds of cattle than can
 be counted? But I imagine we should
 both not miss wealth when we don't have
 it, nor should we think about it when it is
 present, having been acquired, than
 knowing that it is disposed of well. For
 the words of Socrates are well put: He,
 when a rich man thought much of himself
 because of his possessions, said that he
 would not simply admire him before he
 proved that he understood how to make
 use of them.

[23] Pheidias and Polycleitus, if they had
 been proud of the gold and ivory with
 which one had made Zeus at Elis and the
 other made Hera at Argos, they would
 have been ridiculous: priding themselves
 in another's wealth, and ignoring their
 own skill, by which the gold was
 displayed as more pleasant and more
 honourable. And we also, supposing that
 human virtue is not enough of an
 ornament for us, do we imagine we can
 make ourselves less worthy of shame?

[24] But of course will we look down on
 wealth, and dishonour sensual pleasures
 but will pursue flattery and adulation for
 ourselves, and emulate the cunning and
 craftiness of the fox of Archilochus?

[25] But there is nothing which a man
 with sound mind must flee more than to

καὶ τὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς δοκοῦντα
περισκοπεῖν, καὶ μὴ τὸν ὀρθὸν
λόγον ἡγεμόνα ποιεῖσθαι τοῦ βίου,
ὥστε, κἂν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις
ἀντιλέγειν, κἂν ἀδοξεῖν καὶ
κινδυνεύειν ὑπὲρ τοῦ καλοῦ δέη,
μηδὲν αἰρεῖσθαι τῶν ὀρθῶς
ἐγνωσμένων παρακινεῖν. [26] ἢ τὸν
μὴ οὕτως ἔχοντα τί τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου
σοφιστοῦ φήσομεν ἀπολείπειν, ὃς
φυτὸν ἐγίγνετο καὶ θηρίον, ὅποτε
βούλοιο, καὶ πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ
πάντα χρήματα, [27] εἴπερ δὴ καὶ
αὐτὸς νῦν μὲν τὸ δίκαιον
ἐπαινέσεται παρὰ τοῖς τοῦτο
τιμῶσι, νῦν δὲ τοὺς ἐναντίους
ἀφήσει λόγους, ὅταν τὴν ἀδικίαν
εὐδοκимоῦσαν αἰσθηται, ὅπερ δίκης
ἐστὶ κολάκων; καὶ ὥσπερ φασὶ τὸν
πολύποδα τὴν χροῶν πρὸς τὴν
ὑποκειμένην γῆν, οὕτως αὐτὸς τὴν
διάνοιαν πρὸς τὰς τῶν συνόντων
γνώμας μεταβαλεῖται.

live for glory, and he must not consider
the opinions of the multitude, but instead
should make reason his guide of life, so
that, even if he must speak against all
men, and has to be held in contempt and
be in danger because of honour, he would
not choose to move aside from what he
has recognised as truth.

[26] Or how will we say he is behind the
Egyptian sophist, who became a plant
and a wild beast, whenever he wished,
and fire and water and all kinds of things?

[27] But if indeed he approves
righteousness at one minute to those
people who honour it, but at another
minute will speak opposite opinions
whenever he perceives that
unrighteousness is held in esteem, then he
is behaving in the same manner as do
flatterers. And just as they say the
polypus changes its skin-colour according
to the ground it lies on, so he changes his
mind according to the opinions of those
around him.

Section 10

Ἄλλα ταῦτα μὲν που κἂν τοῖς
ἡμετέροις λόγοις τελειότερον
μαθησόμεθα: ὅσον δὲ σκιαγραφίαν
τινὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς, τό γε νῦν εἶναι, ἐκ
τῶν ἕξωθεν παιδευμάτων
περιγραψόμεθα. τοῖς γὰρ ἐπιμελῶς
ἐξ ἐκάστου τὴν ὠφέλειαν
ἀθροίζουσιν, ὥσπερ τοῖς μεγάλοις
τῶν ποταμῶν, πολλαὶ γίνεσθαι
πολλαχόθεν αἱ προσθήκαι
πεφήκασιν. [2] τὸ γὰρ καὶ σμικρὸν
ἐπὶ σμικρῷ κατατίθεσθαι, οὐ
μᾶλλον εἰς ἀργυρίου προσθήκην, ἢ
καὶ εἰς ἡντιναοῦν ἐπιστήμην ὀρθῶς
ἡγεῖσθαι ἔχειν τῷ ποιητῇ προσῆκεν.
[3] ὁ μὲν οὖν Βίας τῷ υἱεῖ πρὸς
Αἰγυπτίους ἀπαίροντι καὶ

But doubtless we will learn these things
more completely from our own writings;
but for now we will draw for ourselves as
far as possible some sketch of virtue from
outside teachings. For by drawing
together the profit from each one
carefully, just like great rivers, many
additions are produced from different
places.

[2] For by putting a little on a little, as
great a help with money as it is with any
knowledge, is rightly kept as a guide, as
said by the poet.

[3] Therefore, as Bias said when his son
was leaving to go to Egypt, and asked

πυνθανομένω τί ἂν ποιῶν αὐτῶ
μάλιστα κεχαρισμένα πράττοι:
Ἐφόδιον, ἔφη, πρὸς γῆρας
κτησάμενος, τὴν ἀρετὴν δὴ τὸ
ἐφόδιον λέγων, μικροῖς ὄροις αὐτὴν
περιγράφων, ὅς γε ἀνθρωπίνῳ βίῳ
τὴν ἀπ' [4] αὐτῆς ὠφέλειαν ὠρίζετο.
ἐγὼ δέ, κἂν τὸ Τιθωνοῦ τις γῆρας,
κἂν τὸ Ἀργανθωνίου λέγη, κἂν τὸ
τοῦ μακροβιωτάτου παρ' ἡμῖν
Μαθουσάλα, ὅς χίλια ἔτη,
τριακόνα δεόντων, βιῶναι λέγεται,
κἂν σύμπαντα τὸν ἀφ' οὗ γεγονόσιν
ἄνθρωποι, χρόνον ἀναμετρή, ὡς ἐπὶ
παίδων διανοίας γελάσομαι, εἰς τὸν
μακρὸν ἀποσκοπῶν καὶ ἀγήρω
αἰῶνα, οὗ πέρας οὐδέν ἐστι τῆ
ἐπινοία λαβεῖν, οὐ μᾶλλον γε ἢ
τελευτὴν ὑποθέσθαι τῆς ἀθανάτου
ψυχῆς. [5] πρὸς ὄνπερ κτᾶσθαι
παραινέσαιμ' ἂν τὰ ἐφόδια, πάντα
λίθον κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν
κινουντας, ὅθεν ἂν μέλλῃ τις ὑμῖν
ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὠφέλεια γενήσεσθαι. μηδ'
ὅτι χαλεπὰ ταῦτα καὶ πόνου
δεόμενα, διὰ τοῦτ' ἀποκνήσωμεν:
ἀλλ' ἀναμνησθέντας τοῦ
παραινέσαντος, ὅτι δέοι βίον μὲν
ἄριστον αὐτὸν ἕκαστον
προαιρεῖσθαι, ἡδὺν δὲ προσδοκᾶν
τῆ συνηθείᾳ γενήσεσθαι, ἐγχειρεῖν
τοῖς βελτίστοις. [6] αἰσχροὺν γὰρ τὸν
παρόντα καιρὸν προεμένους,
ὑστερόν ποτ' ἀνακαλεῖσθαι τὸ
παρελθόν, ὅτε οὐδέν ἐσται πλεόν
ἀνιωμένοις. [7] Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἂ
κράτιστα εἶναι κρίνω, τὰ μὲν νῦν
εἴρηκα, τὰ δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν βίον
ὑμῖν ξυμβουλεύσω. ὑμεῖς δέ, τριῶν
ἀρρωστημάτων ὄντων, μὴ τῶ
ἀνιάτῳ προσεοικέναι δόξητε, μηδὲ
τὴν τῆς γνώμης νόσον
παραπλησίαν τῆ τῶν εἰς τὰ σώματα
δυστυχησάντων δείξητε. [8] οἱ μὲν

him what he should do to perform
something especially agreeable to him:
“Gain supplies for old age,” speaking
indeed about supplies of virtue, and
outlining it with small boundaries, since
indeed he limited its profit to human life.
[4]

But if someone should talk about the old
age of Tithonus, or of Arganthonius, or
the old age of the most long lived of all of
us, Methuselah, who is said to have lived
for 970 years, or if he should measure out
together all the time which men have
existed, I will laugh at him as though at
the minds of children, looking instead
towards the great and undecaying age, of
which there is no end that the mind can
grasp, not indeed can the end of the
immortal soul be supposed.

[5] I would advise you to gain provisions
for this old age, according to the saying:
moving every stone, from where some
help might be going to come for you. But
although this task is difficult and does not
lack hard work, we should not hesitate on
account of that; but remembering the
counsels that it is necessary for each man
to choose the best life, and to expect that
it will become pleasant through habit,
turning one's hand to the best things.

[6] For it is shameful, having neglected
the present time, later to appeal for it to
come again.

[7] Therefore, the things which I judge to
be the most important, some I will say
now, and others I will counsel you about
through the whole of life. But you, of the
three kinds of illnesses, do not imagine
resembling the incurable one, and do not
display the sickness of the mind like
those unfortunate in their bodies. [8] For

γὰρ τὰ μικρὰ τῶν παθῶν
κἀμνοντες, αὐτοὶ παρὰ τοὺς
ἰατροὺς ἔρχονται: οἱ δὲ ὑπὸ
μειζόνων καταληφθέντες
ἀρρωστημάτων, ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς
καλοῦσι τοὺς θεραπεύσοντας: οἱ δ'
εἰς ἀνήκεστον παντελῶς
μελαγχολίας παρενεχθέντες, οὐδὲ
προσιόντας προσίενται. ὁ μὴ
πάθητε τῶν νῦν ὑμεῖς, τοὺς ὀρθῶς
ἔχοντας τῶν λογισμῶν
ἀποφεύγοντες.

some men suffering from small passions
take themselves to the doctors; those
being seized by a greater illness summon
those who can treat them; but those
having been brought to a deadly and total
melancholy, do not even admit those
coming to them. Do you now not suffer
this which truly seizes those who run
away from reason.

Chapter 7. Commentary on *Ad Adolescentes*

Section 1

1.1: Πολλά με τὰ παρακαλοῦντά ἐστι: **There are many things urging me:**

The opening of [Demosthenes] 59, *Against Neaera*: πολλά με τὰ παρακαλοῦντα ἦν, ὧ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι: ‘Many indeed are the reasons, men of Athens, which urged me’. Basil begins his address to his nephews with an established format, which he may expect them to notice, but even if they do not, the opening has the effect of elevating the importance of Basil’s message.

ὧ παῖδες: **O children:** The ostensible addressees of this work; the ‘young men’ of the title, are introduced in ‘O children’. (See Ch2, 15-21 for the suggested audience of this address.)

The fact that this work is directed at a specific set of addressees who will benefit from its advice sets it apart from many works dealing with issues of education which tend to be written either for a general, undisclosed audience, or are directed at an adult with care for the education of children. (E.g. Plutarch, *De Lib.* and *Adolescens*. As well as JChrys, *De Inani* and *Ad. Oppug.* (see Ch3) which seek to inform parents and guardians about the best way to bring up their sons. Similarly, Augustine, *De Catechandis Rudibus* and *De Doctrina Christiana* are addressed to those who teach, and Jerome’s thoughts on the training of girls are directed at their parents (e.g. *Ep.* 107 on Paula).

The use of ὧ παῖδες comes as an interesting twist after the legal opening, and the use that Basil makes of the opening line of a known speech would lead an educated reader, recognising the allusion, to expect something other than the word παῖδες.

The word is used in classical Greek to refer to a slave, child or young person of any age up to an adult (Golden 1985, 92-3). Lampe suggests that it often means child or son in the Church Fathers, although Clement, *Paed.* 1.5 explains that while Christians are described as children of God this does not imply that they should be always childish. Basil’s audience are not really children, or else they would be too young to understand his argument or the classical allusions he makes, but since παῖς could refer to anyone

younger than an adult it is not strange for Basil to use it to address his teenage nephews. Given that he is trying to encourage his nephews to develop maturity in their thinking and behaviour his idea may be to start by addressing them at a young level so that he can draw them on to a more adult understanding of classical literature and its use in a Christian world.

ὕμῖν ἐλομένοις: **having chosen it for yourself:** Basil tries to give a certain degree of autonomy to the addressees of his speech. By using the phrase ὕμῖν ἐλομένοις he suggests that his readers are at liberty to accept or reject the advice that he gives as they decide. Obviously he intends that they will accept his words, but the fact that he implies they have to power not to accept enhances the likelihood of them listening to him. This aspect of choice is particularly relevant as it follows on from the surprising ὦ παῖδες of the introductory sentence. The context of [Demosthenes'] speech is that of the law court, concerning the trial of the courtesan Neaera and her lover Stephanus. They were accused of passing Neaera's illegitimate daughter off as a citizen so she could marry the King-Archon, and as a consequence she performed a religious ceremony which she had no right to do. This case was important with regard to issues about citizenship and the behaviour of women in Athens in the fourth century BC, and [Demosthenes] approaches the Athenians asking them to make a reasoned judgement about a matter of extreme concern to their state so the men will have to listen carefully to the evidence and think hard before they come to a decision. By beginning his address to the young in a similar way, Basil approaches his subject with a sense of seriousness and also respect for his audience. Certainly Basil is presenting himself to the youths as an wise mentor, but at the same time he comes to them as an advocate, crediting them with the ability to make decisions about matters which he later states will be of crucial importance to their own futures.

Basil was very aware of the role of individual choice in the adoption of the Christian lifestyle and the need for decisions about commitment to be made in a reasoned and considered way. (See Ch2, 25 for his views on those consecrating their lives to God.) He implies in his address that his nephews have been brought up thus far as Christians, but there is a suggestion that he is approaching them at this point in their lives because it is time for them to make their own decision, and also to begin to approach the world around them with a consciously Christian viewpoint. Therefore he seeks to encourage

them to make decisions about what is presented to them, and his own advice is the first piece they must accept or reject.

τό τε γὰρ ἡλικίας οὕτως ἔχειν καὶ τὸ διὰ πολλῶν ἤδη γεγυμνάσθαι πραγμάτων καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸ τῆς πάντα παιδευούσης ἐπ' ἄμφω μεταβολῆς ἱκανῶς μετασχεῖν: **For thus being of a certain age, and having been trained already by means of many things, and also having had a sufficient share in the all-instructing changes of fortune on every side:** Basil cites his age and experience which qualify him as an advisor to his nephews. He states that the things he has experienced have 'made [him] fully acquainted with the ways of men' (ἐμπειρόν με εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων πεποιήκεν). The phrase recalls the figure of Odysseus, a character Basil appears to identify with elsewhere in his writings (e.g. *Ep.* 1). (See Ch4, 77-85 for further discussion.)

διὰ πολλῶν ... πραγμάτων: **by means of many things:** Unfortunately very vague; Basil does not state what episodes in his life have provided training and experience, or indeed give any suggestion if he is thinking of specific incidents which would be relevant for his nephews.

γεγυμνάσθαι: **to have been trained:** from γυμνάζω. The word has the sense of 'to train as an athlete', as well as being used in the context of training so as to know something well (For examples of philosophers training their minds, see Diogenes Laertius 4.3.18; 7.5.168; 10.1.12). It is used four times in the New Testament, and Lampe states that the Church Fathers use it particularly to refer to exercising in respect to the Christian life and training in the earthly life as preparation for the next. Basil uses it elsewhere to discuss his experience of life and difficult situations, e.g. *Ep.* 131 ('already ... well practised in such matters'), and also in the context of the adoption of the ascetic life (*Ep.* 45). Derivatives of the word are found eight times in this address, and its use here looks forward to the gymnastic images later in Basil's advice, telling the youths that they should practise what he suggests so that they are prepared for the battles ahead of them (e.g. 2.6-7; 8.9).

παιδεύουσης ... μεταβολῆς: **all-instructing changes of fortune**: As mentioned above, Basil does not go into detail about any episodes from his own life, but his career certainly did contain many changes. Like the young men that he addresses, Basil had an extensive classical education which prepared him initially for a career as a rhetor. He chose to abandon the path of a secular career in favour of an ascetic lifestyle, and lived in retreat at Annesi for a while. He then embarked on a career in the church, and experienced turbulent years in which Caesarea suffered famine (386), he found relationships made and broken as the church grappled with questions of doctrine, and he had to endure his brother's clumsy attempts at peacemaking between Basil and his uncle. In 5.9-10 of this address Basil does mention that a person's fortune can change from one day to the next, and for this reasons urges his nephews to cultivate virtue in their lives, since virtue is the only thing which will stay with a man in every situation.

ἄρτι καθισταμένοις τὸν βίον: **lately establishing themselves in life**: The first of few clues as to the ages of Basil's nephews. However, despite the use of the phrase there is no sense that Basil is addressing youths who are at a particular educational milestone. When he discusses the youths' situation as school pupils, he uses φοιτῶσι: **go regularly to school** (3rd sing. present active verb) and also συγγινομένοις: **associating with** (present participle) which imply continuous action: happening at the time of Basil's address and also likely to continue after it. (See Ch1, 2-5 for the practicalities of the school system.)

1.2: τῇ τε παρὰ τῆς φύσεως οἰκειότητι εὐθὺς μετὰ τοὺς γονέας ὑμῖν τυγχάνω: **With respect to a relationship to you from nature, I happen to be immediately after your parents**: This phrase suggests that Basil is the uncle of the young men whom he addresses; he states that he is related to them by nature, and that he comes after their parents in natural closeness, so implying that he is the brother of their parents.

ὥστε μήτε αὐτὸς ἔλαττόν τι πατέρων εὐνοίας νέμειν ὑμῖν: **so that not only do I myself show no less goodwill towards you than your fathers**: Basil has previously cited his 'qualifications' for giving advice to the youths, he now suggests the motivation for his advice, namely his affection and concern for the children. The idea that an educator should care about his charges is found in *Reg. Fus.* 15 where he states that the

monk in charge of disciplining and teaching the community children should treat them ‘like a father’ and have affection for them (Wagner 1950).

ὕμᾱς δὲ νομίζω, εἰ μὴ τι ὕμῶν διαμαρτάνω τῆς γνώμης, μὴ ποθεῖν τοὺς τεκόντας, πρὸς ἐμὲ βλέποντας: **but I consider that you, if I do not fail in my opinion of you, do not long for your parents when looking at me:** In addition to emphasising the mutual emotional relationship between himself and the youths, Basil continues his technique of crediting the nephews with a maturity which will encourage them to listen to his words in a favourable way.

The phrase μὴ ποθεῖν τοὺς τεκόντας: **you do not long for your parents** suggests on one hand that the young men are fond of Basil, so he is a happy substitute for their closer relations, but it could also be a veiled suggestion to the youths that they are mature enough to encounter Basil’s advice without needing their parents to look after them constantly.

τεκόντες: **parents**, is found mostly in the tragedians (e.g. Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 49; Sophocles *Oedipus Tyrannos* 999; Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers* 329: πατέρων τε καὶ τεκόντων ‘for fathers and for parents’) and can describe both men and women, although often refers to women when used in medical and prose writing.

By emphasising his closeness to the youths via their parents Basil suggests that he can be trusted to be alone with and to give advice to the young men. This care to establish the legitimacy of his relationship with the children is significant in the light of comments he makes about the acceptance of children into the monasteries (Wagner 1950, 264-68). In that situation, Basil insists on witnesses to prove that the children are not being forced into something against their will. The situation in this work is different, since there is no firm evidence that Basil is being accompanied by other people while he presents his advice, rather, the fact that he states that the young men ‘do not long for [their] parents when looking at [him]’, implies that he may be alone with them, and they are not missing their parents (Holder 1992, 401n.20). If Basil does not have witnesses it is important that he establishes an appropriate connection with his audience, so he cannot be accused of corrupting or coercing the youths. In establishing his relationship with the parents of the nephews Basil implies that what he says will meet with their

approval, as they trust him to speak to their children. (See Garnett (1981, 212) for other reasons why Basil might have wanted to establish his legitimacy.)

1.3: εἰ μὲν οὖν προθύμως δέχοισθε τὰ λεγόμενα: **Therefore, if you will freely receive my words:**

προθύμως: **freely /willingly:** picks up ὑμῖν ἐλομένοις from above (**having chosen it for yourself**). Basil contrasts his reference to the youths' parents with a reiteration of their own ability to make decisions for themselves. The young men have reached a degree of independence of thought from their parents, and Basil is offering his advice to them to accept or reject as they choose. The use of these phrases recalls traditional Biblical wisdom literature, and the book of Proverbs has many instances of the writer addressing his son and exhorting him to accept the wisdom he is being offered. (E.g. Prov. 2.1; 5: 'My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you ...then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.' Also: 1:8; 3:1-2; 4:1-5; 4:20; 5:1; 6:20 etc.)

τῆς δευτέρας τῶν ἐπαινουμένων ἔσεσθε παρ' Ἡσιόδῳ τάξεως: **you will be of the second group of those men praised by Hesiod:** Basil introduces a reference to Hesiod, *WD* 293-7 in a vague manner and later elaborates to provide a paraphrase of the passage:

οὗτος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτὸς πάντα νοήσῃ
φρασσάμενος, τὰ κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἐς τέλος ἦσιν ἀμείνω:
ἐσθλὸς δ' αὖ κακείνους, ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθηται: (295)
ὃς δέ κε μήτ' αὐτὸς νοήσῃ μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων
ἐν θυμῷ βάλληται, ὃ δ' αὖτ' ἀχρήσιος ἀνήρ.

'That man is altogether best who considers all things himself and marks what will be better afterwards and at the end; and he, again, is good who listens to a good adviser; but whoever neither thinks for himself nor keeps in mind what another tells him, he is an unprofitable man.'

Hesiod was a popular part of the school curriculum (Cribiore (2001, 179), above Ch1, 3; 16n32) and Basil's nephews would no doubt have known his texts. McLynn (2010, 112) sees this section as Basil testing his audience, 'eliciting responses from his nephews' as he encourages them to show their knowledge.

He tells them αὐτοὶ δὲ μέμνησθε τῶν ἐπῶν δηλονότι: **do remind yourself clearly of the verses:** encouraging them to recall the text, and so giving them confidence that they can grasp the information he is about to present to them.

ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδὲν ἄν εἴποιμι δυσχερές: **I would say nothing unpleasant:** Wilson (1975, 39) suggests that Basil may be thinking of Demosthenes 18.3 here: οὐ βούλομαι δυσχερές εἰπεῖν οὐδὲν ἀρχόμενος τοῦ λόγου: ‘but let me say nothing inauspicious at the outset of my speech,’ and advocates that δυσχερές should be taken to mean ‘disagreeable. Certainly Basil does not want to appear as a strict teacher: the nephews must understand that he is motivated by affection for them; he is not presenting himself as an authority figure who must be obeyed, but rather someone whose opinion they should value and respect.

ἐν οἷς ἐκεῖνός φησιν: **in which that man says:** Basil paraphrases the lines from Hesiod, *WD* which allows him not only to ‘remind’ the youths of the text to which he is referring, but also allows him to add a cautionary element by including the example of the third type of man referred to by Hesiod, which he clearly do not want his nephews to be.

ἄριστον μὲν εἶναι τὸν παρὲς ἑαυτοῦ τὰ δέοντα ξυνορῶντα, ἐσθλὸν δὲ κακῆϊνον τὸν τοῖς παρὲς ἐτέρων ὑποδειχθεῖσιν ἐπόμενον, τὸν δὲ πρὸς οὐδέτερον ἐπιτήδειον, ἀχρεῖον εἶναι πρὸς ἅπαντα: **the best man is the one who sees all at once the necessary things by himself, good also is that one who follows the examples shown by others, but the man who is suitable for neither is useless in every single thing:** This work is used later in this address (5.3-5: 1287-292; 10.2: 360-1) and it appears to have been a popular illustrative text for both pagan and Christian writers. (E.g. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b; Clement, *Paed.* 3.8.)

Basil identifies the second type of man mentioned by Hesiod to his nephews, but in his paraphrase he is also able to highlight the existence of the third type of person, who is ‘useless in every single thing’. This character is included as a cautionary example for the youths; Basil warns them what they will be like if they choose to ignore his advice, but it does not imply that he considers they will be like this in reality, as Fortin (1981,

p196) suggests. On the contrary, while Basil does urge them to listen to a good advisor, he also tries to lead them to a position where they can make judgements about what is right for themselves, since he does not give them step-by-step instructions in interpreting every classical text they may read. Basil maintains a fine balance between treating these young men as those who need to be educated, while at the same time encouraging them to think for themselves, hence his efforts to imply that they have natural ability and intelligence in his opening words. The youths have not yet heard Basil's advice, but if they attend carefully they will benefit from listening to a 'good advisor'. However, once they have received Basil's wisdom they will be in a position to apply his words to the situations they find themselves in, both in the school and the wider world.

1.4: καὶ καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν εἰς διδασκάλους φοιτῶσι: **to those going to school each day to teachers**: Wilson (1975, 40) reads εἰς διδασκάλου and compares it to *Protagoras* 326c5: εἰς διδασκάλων τῆς ἡλικίας ἀρξάμενοι φοιτᾶν: 'begin school at the earliest age'. Migne reads εἰς διδασκάλους, which is the reading in Deferrari & McGuire (1924). (Cf. 8.9: ἐν παιδοτριβῶν.)

There is an emphasis on the youths going regularly to school: φοιτῶσι (present participle from φοιτάω) has the sense of continuous, repeated motion: 'going back and forth to school', which combined with ἡμέραν 'every day' highlights the fact that it is how the youths spend a large amount of their time.

Basil's nephews will be seeing their teachers regularly, and so could potentially develop a close relationship with them. Basil emphasises his own closeness to the youths, but he surely does not see them daily, as their teachers do. This would explain why Basil goes to such efforts at the outset of his work to establish links with the boys through natural and emotional ties: if he is to counter the advice given by a favoured teacher at school, Basil needs to firmly but subtly assert his own familial authority.

τοῖς ἐλλογίμοις τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν, δι' ὧν καταλελοίπασι λόγων,
συγγινομένοις: **associating with the well-regarded of ancient men by means of the words they have left behind**: The phrase suggests a positive attitude towards the pagan

classics, even if Basil later encourages his nephews to disregard anything from literature that is not useful for them. ἐλλόγιμος means ‘held in high account, esteemed, eloquent’, and by his use of it Basil implies that the ancient writers are worthy of study. (See 7.1 for other examples of the phrase τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν.)

τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν: **of ancient men:** A common phrase in literature, e.g. Plutarch, *De Herodoti malignitate* 857f and *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 104d: ἑαυτὸν ἐκάστῳ λογίσασθαι ῥάδιον, καὶ ἄλλων ἀκούσαι παλαιῶν καὶ σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν: ‘it is easy for each man to reason out for himself, and to learn them from wise men of old besides.’

Μὴ θαυμάζετε δὲ εἰ ... αὐτός τι παρὲς ἑμαυτοῦ λυσιτελέστερον ἐξευρηκέναι φημί: **So do not be surprised if ...I myself say something from my store of wisdom that I have discovered to be quite profitable:** Having established his credentials Basil hints that there could be a dichotomy between the advice that the youths receive daily at school and that which he is going to give them.

He refers to the fact that they need to be taught, and then outlines the medium by which they are taught most frequently, i.e. at school by the teacher and in their reading of their school-texts. It is likely that if the youths are paying attention to Basil’s words they would have thought immediately of school when he made the Hesiod reference, and quite possibly assume that ‘Uncle Basil’ is going to tell them that they must pay attention to their teachers and work hard at school in order not to be like the third type of man mentioned by Hesiod. However, although Basil does acknowledge that the youths have a whole host of ‘advisors’ available to them, he adds that he is going to give them some extra advice, at which they should not be surprised.

τι παρὲς ἑμαυτοῦ: **from my store of wisdom:** Basil earlier stated his qualifications for giving the youths advice: his experiences of good and bad; now he passes some of that on to his nephews.

1.5: τοῦτο μὲν οὖν αὐτὸ καὶ συμβουλεύσων ἦκω: **Therefore I have come advising this very thing:** Wilson (1975, 40) suggests that ἦκω is not literally **I have**

come since Basil is speaking to relations, but if he is living in a different place to the youths it is surely not impossible. At any rate, whether Basil has travelled a short or long distance to make this address, he could be using ἤκω as a way of making his address emphatic: he has consciously decided to approach the youths and give them his advice, rather than simply saying what he thinks when he just happens to see them. The phrase parallels that found in orations of Libanius (McLynn 2010, 111n.28).

τὸ μὴ δεῖν εἰς ἅπαξ τοῖς ἀνδράσι τούτοις, ὥσπερ πλοίου, τὰ πηδάλια τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν παραδόντας, ἤπερ ἂν ἄγωσι, ταύτη συνέπεσθαι: ἀλλ' ὅσον ἐστὶ χρήσιμον αὐτῶν δεχομένους, εἰδέναι τί χρή καὶ παριδεῖν: **that is it not necessary, as if on a boat, to surrender the rudders of your mind to these men once and for all, or to follow them closely wherever they lead, but receiving however much is useful from them, to know and notice whatever is of use.**

τοῖς ἀνδράσι τούτοις: **to these men**: Basil can be referring to the ancient writers and to the teachers here. Certainly, ἀνδράσι picks up τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν from the description of going to school, but if διδασκάλους is correct, that the youths go **to teachers** then it could be either.

Here is the surprise in Basil's advice. As said above, the youths might well be expecting an earnest appeal to study hard, as often comes from older relatives, but instead Basil emphatically states that his nephews should not follow or accept everything that they hear at school.

School is the location in which the youths read classical literature, and the teachers are the ones who explain and introduce the meaning of that literature. Therefore Basil seems to make two points when he says '[do not] surrender the rudders of your mind'. On one hand, the young men should not read uncritically: they must keep alert to take only the useful from their textbooks. On the other hand, they should not listen uncritically: they do not know where their teachers want to lead them so they must not accept everything that they are told in case they run aground on dangerous ideas.

There is debate about whether this address was prompted by the Emperor Julian's attempt to drive Christian teachers out of the secular classroom (See above Ch1, 18-19), but even if it is not a direct response, the furore which erupted over the rescript may have prompted a reconsideration of ideas about education (GNaz, *Invectives Against Julian*; Markus 1974, 131). It is possible that Basil imagines his nephews consorting with pagan, rather than Christian, teachers on a daily basis, and if he is considering their long-term education then he is fully aware that they will very likely have pagan teachers at some point in their educational career, just as he did. Therefore it is important that the youths learn not to follow the advice of all those in a position of authority over them, but rather consider what they are told and the credentials of the person who tells them before they accept their words.

Section 2

2.1: Ἡμεῖς: **We**: Basil changes the manner in which he addresses his nephews.

Section 1 uses the second person plural pronoun seven times, in addition to four second person plural verb forms. Basil also refers to himself six times, explaining the motives and qualification for the address. This creates a teacher–student relationship between Basil and the youths. However, the tone in section 2 changes as Basil assumes his nephews are Christian and includes them in his consideration of the aim of Christian life. He uses the pronoun ‘we’ seven times and the first person plural verb form 12 times, but only refers to ‘you’ twice.

ὧ παῖδες: **O children**: Cf. the opening at 1.1.

οὐδὲν εἶναι χρῆμα παντάπασι τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον τοῦτον

ὑπολαμβάνομεν: **do not suppose that this human life is entirely valuable**: Basil introduces the Christian perspective which he wants his nephews to adopt as a background to their studies. This truth needs to be accepted and approved so that pagan literature and the youths' later careers will be approached in the correct manner.

ἀνθρώπινον: **human**: belonging to a human, as opposed to divine. The contrast is echoed at the end of the story about Herakles (5.14). Although the Christian life will not

end in real divinity as is suggested about Herakles it is nonetheless an eternal, immortal life which awaits those faithful to Christ, amongst whom Basil hopes his nephews will be numbered.

οὐτ' ἀγαθόν τι νομίζομεν ὅλως, οὐτ' ὀνομάζομεν, ὃ τὴν συντέλειαν ἡμῖν ἄχρη
τούτου παρέχεται: **and we neither consider nor call anything good, which provides us help limited to this life:** Cf. 10.3, where Bias' advice to his son is limited to human life only.

οὕκουν: **Therefore:** Based on the truth of the previous statement, the following is also true.

προγόνων περιφάνειαν, οὐκ ἰσχὺν σώματος, οὐ κάλλος, οὐ μέγεθος, οὐ τὰς
παρὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων τιμάς, οὐ βασιλείαν αὐτήν, οὐχ ὅ τι ἂν εἴποι τις
τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων μέγα ... κρίνομεν: **no distinction of ancestors, no strength of the body, no beauty, no greatness, no honours from all men, no royalty itself, nor any human thing which someone might suggest, do we judge to be great:** Basil lists the qualities which are valued by the world, but which the Christian should eschew. The same things are found considered in *Attende tibi* (Wagner 1950, 435; 440), particularly in the context of those things that the young desire. (See above Ch5, 108-112 for the use of this passage as a preparation for acceptance of sermons).

προγόνων περιφάνειαν: **distinction of ancestors:** Classical eulogy always contained a celebration of an individual's parents and ancestors, as recommended by the rhetorical handbooks (e.g. Menander Rhetor 370; 403; 412), but Christians attempted to follow the apostle Paul in their rejection of family heritage (Philippians 3.5). Caseau (2009, 134) points out that Christian hagiography tried to consciously reject the traditional encomiastic technique, although with varied success. (Cf. GNaz, *Or.* 43.3-10 on Basil's ancestors whose strong faith and nobility are lauded but at the same time of little value when considering the achievements of Basil himself.)

οὐκ ἰσχὺν σώματος, οὐ κάλλος: **no strength of the body, no beauty:** Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 491c. These are qualities regularly found cited as temporary goods which fade with

the years (e.g. Proverbs 31.30; Plutarch, *De Lib.* 5d). Basil considers these again (9.2-6).

μέγεθος: **greatness**: Often used as part of a title, e.g. Basil, *Ep.* 225: τὸ μέγεθος σου. As members of the educated elite, Basil's nephews would have been destined for public office, and likely to have been addressed in a similar manner. By including the word here Basil encourages them to view such titles as having no eternal value.

τὰς παρὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων τιμάς: **honours from all men**: The task of pleasing the fickle mob is endless and difficult. Cf. JChrys, *Difference between a king and a monk* 4.

βασιλείαν αὐτήν: **royalty itself**: Basil's nephews are not royalty, so it is a surprise that he mentions it here. However, could he have in mind the Emperor Julian, whose position of highest office accompanied the loss of his soul?

τις τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων: **any human thing**: Cf. 2.1 that human life is not precious in any way.

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ εὐχῆς ἄξιον κρίνομεν, ἢ τοὺς ἔχοντας ἀποβλέπομεν: **but instead think them not to be worthy of prayer, nor do we look with admiration at those possessing these things**: Cf. *Attende tibi* (Wagner 1950, 438) about daydreaming as a bad way to spend one's time.

εὐχῆς: **prayer**: used in Plato, *Rep.* 499c to refer to empty hopes.

ἢ τοὺς ἔχοντας ἀποβλέπομεν: **nor do we look with admiration at those possessing these things**: The qualities listed are all things gained without work, through accident of birth rather than a result of commendable effort. In his homily *On Envy* Basil makes similar remarks and argues that certain possessions are only a source of blessing when an individual knows how to use them (9.21).

ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μακρότερον προΐμεν ταῖς ἐλπίσι, καὶ πρὸς ἑτέρου βίου παρασκευὴν ἅπαντα πράττομεν: **but we go forward to a greater end with our hopes, and we**

complete all things as a preparation for another life: Cf. 4.10. Basil states that it is necessary to focus on the desired result so that lessons can be made to fit the end right from the start. He follows his own advice, drawing his nephews' attention to the life to come and the need to study their school texts with this end in mind, before considering the literature they read at school.

2.3: ἅ μὲν οὖν ἂν συντελεῖ πρὸς τοῦτον ἡμῖν, ἀγαπᾶν τε καὶ διώκειν παντὶ σθένει χρῆναί φαμεν: **Therefore we say that it is necessary to love and pursue with all our might those things which would contribute to this life for us:** Cf. 4.1: ἀγαπᾶν τε καὶ ζηλοῦν. The same verb is used in Philippians 3.12: διώκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω. (There are several themes in Philippians 3 echoed here: the rejection of worldly benefits; emphasis on the life after death; and inclusive language encouraging a shared opinion of the issues.)

τίς δὴ οὖν οὗτος ὁ βίος καὶ ὅπη καὶ ὅπως αὐτὸν βιωσόμεθα, μακρότερον μὲν ἢ κατὰ τὴν παροῦσαν ὀρμὴν ἐφικέσθαι, μειζόνων δὲ ἢ καθ' ὑμᾶς ἀκροατῶν ἀκοῦσαι: **Therefore whatever this life is and by what way and in what manner we will live it, is a greater matter than can be attained in relation to the present purpose, and it would be better for pupils other than yourselves to hear:** Basil states that time constraints prevent him from giving a full exposition of the life after death to which he has been referring, but he adds that a different audience would be more appropriate. This is seen as evidence that Basil considers his nephews too young to learn about eternal life (Wilson 1975, 41-2), but John Chrysostom suggests that youths aged 15 should hear about hell, and they ought to learn about grace and salvation a little earlier than that (*De Inani* 52). There are two other possibilities, not necessarily mutually exclusive. One is that Basil is trying to provoke greater curiosity about Christianity in his nephews. By encouraging them that their life should aim at another life, the happiness of which is infinitely greater than all the happiness humans could imagine he whets their appetite to discover more.

ἀκροατῶν: **pupils/ hearers:** (Cf. Basil, *Ep.* 188.4) The other thing that Basil may be doing here is signalling that this address is not a catechical sermon, but rather an oration directed at those whose everyday lives are concentrated on attending school and

listening to their teachers. ἀκροατής means **hearer** but was also used to refer to worshippers in church who were new converts (Hippolytus, *Apostolic Traditions* 15.2). Hearers were not necessarily candidates for baptism, although it seems that after the hearing stage came entry into the catechumenate.

The fact that Basil says a discussion of eternal life is more appropriate at another time, and the efforts he makes in his address to encourage his nephews towards greater responsibility and commitment to the community of faith suggests that this comment is not so much about his nephews' age, but rather an attempt to encourage them to seek to find out more, or even take steps to enter the catechumenate. (GNaz, *Or.* 4.97 suggests that Julian became a reader in the church in his youth.)

2.4: τοσοῦτόν γε μὴν εἰπὼν ἱκανῶς ἂν ἴσως ὑμῖν ἐνδειξαίμην, ὅτι πᾶσαν ὁμοῦ τὴν ἀφ' οὗ γεγόνασιν ἄνθρωποι, τῷ λόγῳ τις συλλαβὼν καὶ εἰς ἓν ἀθροίσας εὐδαιμονίαν, οὐδὲ πολλοστῶ μέρει τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐκείνων εὐρήσει παρισουμένην, ἀλλὰ πλεῖον τοῦ ἐν ἐκείνοις ἐλαχίστου τὰ σύμπαντα τῶν τῆδε καλῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἀφεστηκότα, ἢ καθ' ὅσον σκιά καὶ ὄναρ τῶν ἀληθῶν ἀπολείπεται: **Indeed truly in saying so much, I will probably sufficiently show to you that were someone collecting in an account all the happiness since men have existed, and gathering it together into one, he will find it is equal to not even a little share of these other goods, but if the total of the goods of this life, being weighed out against the worth of the smallest goods of that other life, it would be as full as a shadow and a dream are of truth:** A tiny amount of the blessings from the next life would be greater than all the blessings that the human life has to offer.

εὐδαιμονίαν: **happiness:** See 4.4 for an example of a human definition of happiness, and cf. 5.8: the 'happy' Phaeacians in contrast to the virtuous Odysseus.

ἢ καθ' ὅσον σκιά καὶ ὄναρ τῶν ἀληθῶν ἀπολείπεται: **it would be as full as a shadow and a dream are of truth:** Cf. 2.6 and 10.1 for the use of shadows in learning about virtue.

2.5: παραδείγματι, ὅσῳ ψυχῇ τοῖς πᾶσι τιμιωτέρα σώματος, τοσοῦτῳ καὶ

τῶν βίων ἐκατέρων ἐστὶ τὸ διάφορον: **Or rather, so that I may use a more suitable example, as much as the soul is in all respect more valuable than the body, just as much also is the difference between each life:** This is Basil's first reference to the soul, although he returns to the subject of the body's value in comparison with the soul at 9.2-7.

εἰς δὴ τοῦτον ἄγουσι μὲν ἱεροὶ λόγοι, δι' ἀπορρήτων ἡμᾶς ἐκπαιδεύοντες: **Holy Scriptures lead us to this, teaching us by means of mysteries:** The implication is that the truths in the Bible are not straightforward, but need to have some greater revelation in order for them to be understood (cf. 9.6).

2.6: ἕως γε μὴν ὑπὸ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐπακούειν τοῦ βάθους τῆς διανοίας αὐτῶν οὐχ οἷόν τε: **But indeed, while it is not possible to attend to the deep meaning of them while at your time of life:** Basil suggests that his nephews cannot fully grasp the deep mysteries of Christianity at their age, but this does not mean that they are incapable of understanding anything of their faith or the Bible. The link with Herakles and his moral choice (5.11-14) implies that they are able to take responsibility for their actions and decisions, and also make choices about which path they are going to take in life. If it is accepted that Basil is attempting to encourage his nephews to come forward as candidates for the catechumenate then this hints again at the mysteries and secrets they will be able to learn if they take that step of deepening faith.

ἐν ἑτέροις οὐ πάντα διεστηκόσιν, ὥσπερ ἐν σκιαῖς τισι καὶ κατόπτροι: **by means of other writings which are not totally different, just as by means of shadows and mirrors:** Basil maintains that the first steps toward gaining greater spiritual understanding can come from pagan texts which are similar to Christian ones.

σκιαῖς: **shadows:** a positive use of the word, in contrast to 2.4. (Cf. a similar use at 10.1 and Basil, *De Spirito Sancto* 31-33.)

τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμματι τέως προγυμναζόμεθα: **meanwhile we exercise beforehand the eye of the soul:** The notion of 'exercising beforehand' is central to this address. Basil encourages his nephews to read their school texts as preparation for Biblical lessons, but at the same time, he also incorporates Christian precepts and

sentiments into his discussion so that they are familiar to the youths when they meet them in an obviously Christian context. (Cf. John Chrysostom who maintains that children are more attentive when they hear familiar Bible stories expounded in church: *De Inani*, 41).

τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς ὄμματι: **eye of the soul**: From Plato, *Rep.* 339d (Wilson 1975, 42), but cf. use in Basil, *Ep.* 38, where he states that one who views the Son with his ‘soul’s eyes’ will perceive the personality of the Father. (Cf. *Ep.*133; *Hex.* 2.1.)

τοὺς ἐν τοῖς τακτικοῖς τὰς μελέτας ποιουμένους μιμούμενοι: **imitating those doing exercises in military tactics**: A useful image from the secular world which illustrates Basil’s point, and demonstrates the technique he encourages his nephews to adopt in 4.1. He states that by preparing their souls the youths will be **imitating** soldiers.

οἱ γε ἐν χειρονομίαις καὶ ὀρχήσεσι τὴν ἐμπειρίαν κτησάμενοι, ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγώνων τοῦ ἐκ τῆς παιδιᾶς ἀπολαύουσι κέρδους: **Indeed, those men, gaining the experience by means of gymnastics and dancing, enjoy the profit from the training in the battles**: Cf. development of the image of training and gymnastics at 8.4 and 8.9. It supports the notion that Basil sees pleasure in classical literature since he compares it to training by means of dancing and gymnastics.

2.7: καὶ ἡμῖν δὴ οὖν ἀγῶνα προκεῖσθαι πάντων ἀγώνων μέγιστον νομίζειν χρεῶν, ὑπὲρ οὗ πάντα ποιητέον ἡμῖν καὶ πονητέον εἰς δύναμιν ἐπὶ τὴν τούτου παρασκευήν: **And now therefore, it is necessary to think that the greatest contest of all contests lies before us, for which it is necessary for us to do all things and to toil with our strength as a preparation of this**: Basil draws attention back to the aim of Christian life and the battle for the soul. Cf. accounts of martyrdom which often utilised the imagery of athletes and the arena: e.g. *GNaz Or.* 43.5 for the martyrs in Basil’s family, and *Or.*43.66 for a reference to Basil’s encomia of martyrs. (Cf. 8.9 below.)

πονητέον: **it is necessary ... to toil:** Introduces the theme that virtue is something which takes work and effort. Cf. 5.3; 5.5; 5.13-14; 8.9; 8.12; 10.5.

καὶ ποιηταῖς καὶ λογοποιοῖς καὶ ῥήτορσι καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὁμιλητέον, ὅθεν ἂν μέλλη πρὸς τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιμέλειαν ὠφέλειά τις ἔσεσθαι: **and it is necessary to become familiar with the poets and the historians and the orators and all types of men from whom some advantage for the care of the soul intends to be obtained:** Basil maintains that secular literature can provide benefit from the soul, and he suggests the types of writers who might be a source of such benefit. The youths would be most familiar with poetry since they are studying with the grammarian, but Basil also looks forward to the prose writers they will read under their teachers of rhetoric. (See Ch1, 4.)

2.8: ὡσπερ οὖν οἱ δευσοποιοὶ παρασκευάσαντες πρότερον θεραπείαις τισὶν ὅτι ποτ' ἂν ἦ τὸ δεξόμενον τὴν βαφήν, οὕτω τὸ ἄνθος ἐπάγουσιν, ἂν τε ἀλουργὸν ἂν τέ τι ἕτερον ἦ: **Therefore, just as dyers prepare beforehand with some treatments whatever will be receiving the dye, and then bring on the colour, whether it be dyed with purple or some other colour:** Cf. image in Clement, *Paed.* 1.9.

τὸν αὐτὸν δὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς τρόπον, εἰ μέλλοι ἀνέκπλυτος ἡμῖν ἅπαντα τὸν χρόνον ἢ τοῦ καλοῦ παραμένειν δόξα: **We also must act in the same way, if the sentiment of the good intends to remain indelible in us for all time:** Basil is influenced by Plato and Plutarch in his thinking that the things taught in childhood generally prove indelible (see Ch3, 43) but his expression is different in this context. Here he addresses his nephews, exhorting them to desire good to take root in their own souls, rather than speaking to adults with a concern for the education of the young. He therefore makes the experience a shared one which his use of ἡμεῖς.

τοῖς ἔξω δὴ τούτοις προτελεσθέντες, τῆνικαῦτα τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ ἀπορρήτων ἐπακουσόμεθα παιδευμάτων: **for, having become initiated by those things from outside (i.e. pagan writings), we will listen to and understand the holy and mysterious lessons:** LSJ and Lampe both suggest προτελέω can be translated **initiate**,

as well as **instruct beforehand**. Initiate continues the idea that the youths are being encouraged on their first steps towards further Christian initiation, namely baptism, and sets their secular schooling in the context of their Christian life. It becomes a sound preparation for their later Biblical lessons, rather than being a necessary, but unfortunate, hurdle which the youths have to negotiate. However, Basil does convey the idea that the Christian lessons are superior to those ‘outside’ since he emphasises the ‘holy and mysterious’ aspect of Christian initiation.

καὶ οἷον ἐν ὕδατι τὸν ἥλιον ὄραν ἐθισθέντες, οὕτως αὐτῷ προσβαλοῦμεν τῷ φωτὶ τὰς ὄψεις: **And just as having become accustomed to look at the sun in the water, thus we will attend our sights towards the light itself:** Basil uses the image from Plato, *Rep.* 515e-516b and Plutarch, *Adolescens* 36e (Wilson 1975, 44) elsewhere in his works, e.g. *De Spirito Sancto* 33; *Ep.*150. (Cf. image at 9.6)

Section 3

3.1: Εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τις οικειότης πρὸς ἀλλήλους τοῖς λόγοις, προὔργου ἂν ἡμῖν αὐτῶν ἢ γνῶσις γένοιτο σὺς γένοιτο: **Therefore, if there is some relationship between one another of the writings, then the knowledge of them would be useful to us:** Basil suggests that pagan literature can be particularly useful to the Christian where it relates to the Bible or other Christian writing.

οικειότης: **kindred/ relationship:** Cf. Plato, *Rep.*535c which suggests that children should be taught to see connections between the different subjects they study, and so gain the most benefit from their learning. The sentiment echoes that of Clement, *Paed.* 1.1 and Origen’s encouragement of his pupils to study classical philosophy in order to prepare them for Christian scriptures (Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Or. and Panegyric addressed to Origen* 6).

προὔργου ἂν ἡμῖν αὐτῶν ἢ γνῶσις γένοιτο: **then the knowledge of them would be useful to us:** Basil’s implication that pagan learning can be useful if it overlaps with Christian doctrine can be seen as a suggestion that this is the only reason why Christians ought to study literature, but that is not necessarily the case. Rather it points to a

specific Christian benefit which can be gained from a classical education, in addition to the social and cultural benefits available to an educated pagan. (See Kaster (1988, 74) for Origen's attitude.)

προϋργου: **something serviceable/ useful:** Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 498d, looking forward to the afterlife and the profit which can be gained to bear to that end. (Cf. 2.1-2)

Basil's advice to his nephews has been summarised as 'take the useful and leave the harmful' in classical literature, and to a certain extent that is true, however, he also suggests that there is much that is pleasant in the ancient writers, and this can be enjoyed, as long as the empty enjoyment does not trick the readers into accepting the harmful.

ἡ γνῶσις: **knowledge/ result of an investigation:** Suggests thorough awareness of something rather than passing enquiry. Much traditional education involved the memorising of facts and texts, with the intention of displaying knowledge at the appropriate time. It was seen as a mark of learning if a writer or speaker could refer to characters from literature with an obscure epithet to demonstrate erudition. However, Basil offers advice that runs counter to such thinking; his nephews should devote their energy to remembering the useful lessons, not facts intended for empty display.

γνῶσις is used 29 times in New Testament, with the bulk of the references coming from the two letters to the Corinthians. In Paul's writing it often has the sense of 'understanding' (e.g. 1 Cor. 8). It is used regularly by Clement in the context of understanding the Christian life and salvation (111 times in *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus* and *Stromata* together), and Basil may have a similar thought here. It is the useful knowledge which has a bearing on the fate of the youths' eternal souls that they should pay attention to and treasure in their minds.

εἰ δὲ μή, ἀλλὰ τό γε παράλληλα θέντας καταμαθεῖν τὸ διάφορον, οὐ μικρὸν εἰς βεβαίωσιν τοῦ βελτίονος: **But if there is not, then indeed the act of placing them side by side to observe the difference would be no small matter to making sure of the better one:** There are two ways in which the reading of classical literature could benefit Christians. The first is by noticing the good in the older texts which is

similar to the Christian message and morals, and the other is by reading the texts in parallel with Christian precepts. Where the two writings do not resemble each other then the difference will help to highlight the better, i.e. the Christian virtue. For the same idea, cf. Clement, *Paed.* 1.1. A similar notion is found in Plutarch, *Lives* where he considers the exploits of kings and heroes in parallel with each other in order to draw lessons from myth and history (*Life of Theseus* 1.2).

3.2: τίνοι μέντοι καὶ παρεικάσας τῶν παιδεύσεων ἑκατέραν, τῆς εἰκόνοσ ἀν τύχοισι;: **Indeed with what can each of the teachings be compared so that you would hit upon a simile?:** Basil explains his idea by means of an analogy which suggests something about his attitude towards classical literature as a whole.

εἰκόνοσ: **likeness, representation, comparison:** Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 487e.

ἦπου καθάπερ φυτοῦ οἰκεία μὲν ἀρετὴ τῷ καρπῷ βρῦειν ὠραίω, φέρει δὲ τινα κόσμον καὶ φύλλα τοῖσ κλάδοισ περισειόμενα: **Surely just as the proper virtue of a plant is to burst with fruit in due season, so it also brings forth some decoration and foliage which are tossed about on the branches:** Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 41.7 (Wilson 1975, 44) but not likely to be Basil's source since he knew no Latin.

For fruit production as a sign of a plant's health in Christian writing, see e.g. Psalm 1.3; Matt. 3.8, 3.10, 21.19; Mark 11.12-14. Biblical use of the analogy refers to people, but Basil is not introducing the image in the same way here. He is not suggesting that Christians should produce leaves and fruit but rather, if learning is a plant, then in the realm of education there are leaves and fruits available to be enjoyed by the discerning student.

οὕτω δὴ καὶ ψυχῇ προηγουμένωσ μὲν καρπὸσ ἡ ἀλήθεια, οὐκ ἄχαρὶ γε μὴν οὐδὲ τὴν θύραθεν σοφίαν περιβεβλησθαι, οἷόν τινα φύλλα σκέπην τε τῷ καρπῷ καὶ ὄψιν οὐκ ἄωρον παρεχόμενα: **Thus although principally the fruit of the soul is truth, indeed it is not unpleasant for outside wisdom to have been thrown around it, as such foliage provides both protection and a not unseasonable appearance to the fruit:** Basil is positive about the foliage which the plant produces: it improves the appearance of the plant, and also protects the fruit. However, although the

leaves provide pleasure, they are not the important product of the plant. The fruit which the plant produces is the edible part, the part which provides nourishment for those who consume it, and it is designed for this purpose. By using this simile, Basil conveys the message that pagan literature can be admired and looked at, but should not be ‘consumed’ in the same way that Christian writing can be.

ψυχῇ ... καρπὸς ἡ ἀλήθεια: **the fruit of the soul is truth/ truth is fruit for the soul:** Seems to mean that the truth is the fruit which feeds the soul, and while the leaves enhance the enjoyment of the fruit they are not truth, only a suggestion of it, just as pagan learning points at truth but is not itself the aim of life (cf. 10.1). Similar sentiment is found in Clement, *Str.* 1.1: ‘For each soul has its own proper nutriment; some growing by knowledge and science, and others feeding on the Hellenic philosophy, the whole of which, like nuts, is not eatable.’

τὴν θύραθεν σοφίαν: **outside wisdom:** Used by Greek Christian writers to refer to any literature which did not come from their own tradition. According to Cameron (2011, 357) it does not imply a negative attitude towards secular literature. (See Cameron, et al. (1993, 35-6) for the different expressions used.)

τὴν θύραθεν σοφίαν περιβεβλησθαι: **for outside wisdom to have been thrown around it:** It is interesting that Basil tries to suggest the foliage and the fruit of a plant grow simultaneously, rather than considering the fact that the leaves grow first, and the fruit second. He implies that, like leaves being ‘thrown around’ the fruit, pagan ideas surround an already extant Christian philosophy, and simply enhance its appearance rather than existing beforehand. Basil gives no indication that he is entering the debate about the antiquity of Christian ideas, but his use of this analogy suggests that he could be unconsciously adopting the position of the early apologists who maintained that ‘Christianity embodied the most ancient, and hence authoritative, tradition, and that Greek culture was dependent on it’ (Droge 1989, vii).

3.3: λέγεται τοίνυν καὶ Μωϋσῆς ἐκεῖνος ὁ πάνυ, οὗ μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἐπὶ σοφία παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὄνομα, τοῖς Αἰγυπτίων μαθήμασιν ἐγγυμνασάμενος τὴν διάνοιαν, οὕτω προσελθεῖν τῇ θεωρίᾳ τοῦ ὄντος:
Indeed it is said even that great Moses, whose name is greatest for wisdom

according to the judgement of men, having had his mind trained with the learning of the Egyptians, in the same way came to the contemplation of the one who is.:

λέγεται: **it is said:** common method is introducing anecdotes, and regularly seen as an intertext marker (Hinds 1998, 1). According to LSJ it is used most often of any oral communication, which may mean that Basil is considering this story as it could have been encountered by his nephews, as a story they have been told by their parents, or heard about in church. Whether this is the case or not, the fact that he later uses φασί: **they say:** to introduce the story of Daniel suggests that these episodes are very much part of the story tradition of the fourth century. (See above Ch2, 20-21 for Basil's contemporary John Chrysostom on children's earliest Biblical education.)

μέγιστόν ἐστιν ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὄνομα: **whose name is greatest for wisdom in the judgement of all men:** Various Jewish and Christian authors articulate the notion that Moses was regarded as the 'first wise man', and this emphasis on his antiquity gave rise to claims that: 'Moses ... was the author of Greek philosophy, the alphabet, and written laws.' (Droge (1989, 17) cites Eupolemus as the first to claim Moses as 'the first wise man', and 11 highlights the fact that the Jews presented him in the same terms as the Greeks did Homer). He was also considered to be the inspiration for Plato: Clement, *Str.* 1.22: 'what is Plato, but Moses speaking Attic Greek?'

τοῖς Αἰγυπτίων μαθήμασιν ἐγγυμνασάμενος τὴν διάνοιαν: **having had his mind trained with the learning of the Egyptians:** Cf. Acts 7.22: **Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.** The story of Moses is told in the book of Exodus, with the first three chapters giving details of his life and encounter with Jehovah in the form of the burning bush. The ancient writers had some different notions about the role that Moses played in the development of culture, for example Hecataeus of Abdera claimed that all learning came from Egypt, and rather than saying that Moses learned his ideas from someone else, it was instead taken that Moses was the originator of philosophy to Egypt, so therefore the author of all civilised thought, Jewish and Greek (Droge 1989, 16). For the Christians, the authority that Moses had as the lawgiver to the Jews, and therefore as the ultimate originator of Christianity, meant that he was often used as an example of someone trained in 'outside learning' who then

came to a knowledge of God. In his list of Christians who had been extensively educated in heathen learning and used their knowledge in the same way that the Israelites used the treasures they took with them out of Egypt, Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 2.40.61 refers to Moses as Basil does here, stating that ‘of him it is written that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians’.

As well as being important as an independently educated man of God, Moses is also frequently cited in his capacity as the ‘father’ of the Christian religion, in anticipation of Jesus as Messiah. In calling on the great antiquity and authority of the Jewish tradition, the Christian writers were able to counter the charges of the ‘newness’ of their faith and draw on an academic heritage equivalent, or even superior to, the Greek one (Droge 1989, vii). Clement views Moses as an earlier vessel of the tutor in *Paedagogus*, and frequently uses phrases such as: ‘the Instructor...says, through Moses’ to introduce a Old Testament precept consistent with the Christian viewpoint (e.g. 1.2; 1.5; 2.1; 3.12 etc). (Cf. Basil’s use of Moses and his laws as a ‘shadow’ preceding the coming of grace in the New Testament: *De Spiritu Sancto* 31-3.)

οὕτω προσελθεῖν τῇ θεωρίᾳ τοῦ ὄντος: **in the same way came to the contemplation of the One who is:** Exodus 3.14: Moses’ encounter with God in the burning bush. When Moses asked the Lord who he should say had send him to the Israelites, the bush answered: ‘I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ The Septuagint has: εἰμι ὁ ὢν· καὶ εἶπεν Οὕτως ἐρεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ Ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς. Basil uses the same method of using the definite article and the present participle of εἰμί to refer to God as ‘the being’, which Wilson (1975, 44) identifies as Platonic.

3.4: τὸν σοφὸν Δανιήλ ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνός φασι τὴν σοφίαν Χαλδαίων καταμαθόντα, τότε τῶν θείων ἄψασθαι παιδευμάτων: **they say that the wise Daniel in Babylon, having examined closely the wisdom of the Chaldeans, then attached himself to the divine teachings:**

φασι: **they say:** used like λέγεται to introduce a reported episode. Cf. at 4.2; 9.8; 9.15; 9.27. It suggests a common knowledge between Basil and his nephews, and also implies that the story is widely known.

Like Moses, Daniel was a character regularly used by the Church Fathers to illustrate those who had a pagan education. The book of Daniel in the Old Testament details his life. As a youth he was captured during the sack of Jerusalem and taken to Babylon where he was educated and trained so he could enter into the service of the king, Nebuchadnezzar. He is often mentioned in the same context as ‘the three children’: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who were thrown into the fiery furnace but protected by God (Daniel 3).

τὴν σοφίαν Χαλδαίων καταμαθόντα: **having examined closely the wisdom of the Chaldeans**: a reference to the fact that Daniel was educated in the Babylonian court.

Basil’s use of Moses and Daniel raises the question of whether they simply serve as illustrations of those who are educated by ‘outside wisdom’, or if they represent some other idea.

Although Moses was brought up in the Egyptian court of Pharaoh, he was an Israelite by birth. Exodus states that his mother placed him in a basket in the river Nile to avoid the decree issued by Pharaoh that all Hebrew boys should be killed. He was found by Pharaoh’s daughter and brought up in the palace. However, Exodus 2.11-14 suggests that, although Moses was living with the Egyptians, he did have an awareness of his identity as a Jew.

Similarly, when Daniel and the three children were captured in the sack of Jerusalem and immersed in pagan culture and education, they seemed to have been already committed to serving God in accordance with the Jewish tradition (Daniel 1).

Although Moses and Daniel were exposed to pagan education, their learning was laid on top of a strong sense of Jewish identity, rather than an absence of religious sensibility. Basil addresses his nephews as if they are Christians, and indeed, part of his approach in this address is to encourage the youths to view the world and their studies from a Christian perspective. Like the Old Testament characters the nephews study pagan literature with their own religious backdrop firmly in place.

In addition to their confirmed religious adherence, Moses and Daniel can be seen as representing of the potential futures available to Basil's audience. By many of the Church Fathers, Moses is presented as the stereotypical bishop. (e.g. GNaz, *Or.* 43.72 compares Basil to Moses, as does GNys, *In laud. frat.* 1; 20. For discussion of the imagery, see Rapp (2005) p125-6). The role to which God appointed Moses was that of spiritual protector and leader to the Israelites. He opposed Pharaoh and led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and towards the Promised Land. Once they were out of captivity, Moses gave the Jews the laws and decrees of God. Moses, therefore, exemplifies the churchman: the priest who is the 'father' of his congregation, the one who teaches, admonishes and cares for their spiritual wellbeing

Daniel, on the other hand, received his instruction in literature and language so that he was suitably equipped to enter the service of the Great King (Daniel 1.3-5). While his devotion to God took him into the lions' den where he experienced a miraculous deliverance (6.21-22), Daniel's role in life was political. He served pagan rulers with integrity and combined religious adherence with secular duties (6.1-5) .

By using these two Biblical examples Basil sets his advice in the context of his nephews' lives, making it relevant not simply for their school days, but looking forward to a time when they will be making their way in the world.

For young men of a certain status in society at this time there were two options which would have readily presented themselves as career choices after the completion of the standard higher education. One would have been the route into public life and politics, the other, a position in the church. (See Cribiore (2009) for Libanius' assertion that a rhetorical education was instrumental in securing a good job, and Angelov (2009) on the education of future Fathers of the Church). Moses and Daniel exemplify these two choices. Both received standard 'pagan' education and embraced the 'true' religion through their encounters with God. They then fulfilled the roles that God had appointed for them in their different spheres. Whichever path the nephews choose to take in the future, Basil is laying a foundation which will encourage them to behave in accordance with their faith even if they take the route to secular service (Tert. *De Idol.* 15 considers the problems faced by Christians working in public life and discusses Daniel in the same context but by the fourth century public office did not present the same conflicts with Christianity as it did for Tertullian's audience.) .

Section 4

4.1: Ἄλλ' ὅτι μὲν οὐκ ἄχρηστον ψυχαῖς μαθήματα τὰ ἕξωθεν δὴ ταῦτα ἱκανῶς εἴρηται: **But it has been sufficiently said that outside knowledge is not unprofitable for the soul:** Having once explained his qualifications for addressing the youths on the subject of education, and then detailed the relationship between pagan and Christian writings, Basil goes on to suggest the means by which his nephews might study 'outside knowledge'.

The assurance he has that the study of pagan literature will be useful for the soul is found similarly expressed in Clement's *Str.* 1.7 in which he argues that Greek philosophy was the means by which God aimed to enlighten the heathens before the coming of the Word in the form of Christ. He suggests that learning is a practice exercise, preparing the soul for the discipline of faith.

μαθήματα τὰ ἕξωθεν: **outside knowledge:** A common way of describing classical literature for a Greek Christian. (See note at 3.2.)

ὅπως γε μὴν αὐτῶν μεθεκτέον ὑμῖν ἐξῆς ἂν εἴη λέγειν: **Then indeed the next thing would be to say to you by what means you should have a share in them:** The first three sections of the work can be viewed as a preamble to the message that Basil says he wishes to convey, namely how should pagan literature be studied. He intends to identify some of the moral lessons which he wants his nephews to learn, and to lay down principles which they can apply to their reading of school texts as well as other aspects of their life.

Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τοῖς παρὰ τῶν ποιητῶν: **First therefore considering the writings of the poets:** Basil states that he is going to consider pagan literature by type rather than subject or specific writers, and that he will begin with poetry. By doing so he parallels the general introduction that schoolchildren had to classical writing, since the first stories they read were from poetry, usually episodes selected from Homer's *Odyssey*, followed by some of the works of Hesiod (Cribiore 2001, 197).

For many ancients the word ‘poet’ ὁ ποιητής simply conjured references to Homer, as it is used in Plato, *Gorgias* 485d, referring to *Iliad* 9.441, although it could also be used to indicate Hesiod, as in Plato, *Laws* 901a, alluding to *WD* 303. The fact that Basil uses the word in the plural here could suggest that he is considering both these two writers, especially since he makes reference to *Odyssey* 11 in 4.2, and has already referred to Hesiod *WD* at 1.3.

ἵν’ ἐντεῦθεν ἄρξωμαι: **If I may begin there:** The phrase recalls the intended dialogue-type nature of this piece. Basil does not want to deliver a didactic lecture which his nephews will pay little attention to and immediately disregard, but rather wants them to accept and remember his advice and put it into practice in their everyday life. By rhetorically asking permission to start his discussion with the works of the poets Basil focuses on his audience and, by implication, the role that they must play in the application of his words. LSJ mentions that ἄρξωμαι is often used with τοῦ λόγου in order to mean ‘begin a conversation’, which is the sense conveyed here.

ἐπεὶ παντοδαποὶ τινές εἰσι κατὰ τοὺς λόγους: **since there are all kinds of men found in their words:** Basil’s justification for starting in his discussion of how to read literature with poetry, is not his the nephews will have read the poems he considers, but rather that poetry contains examples of the whole range of human characters. The notion that all kinds of men could be found in the works of Homer was an old one, and recalled by writers as both a means of praise and defence of Homer. (E.g. Xenophon, *Symposium*, 4.6 in which the character Niceratus asserts: ‘I will tell you in what respects you shall be better for consorting with myself... you know that Homer, being the wisest of mankind, has touched upon nearly every human topic in his poems.’ In *Homeric Problems*, Heraclitus justifies the fact that Homer presented negative as well as positive characters in his works, saying that he needed to show bad characters in order for the good to be understood as such, as does Ps-Plutarch, *The Life and Poetry of Homer*.)

Basil’s reasons for exploring poetic works suggests that he considers it an advantage for his nephews to read texts which show both good and bad characters. On one hand this could be regarded as an application of his earlier comment about comparing works in parallel in order to identify the positive and the negative (3.1), but the other his

endorsement of poets is counter to the attitude of Plato who condemns poetry precisely because of the wicked characters and actions it portrays (e.g. *Rep.* 378). (For a fuller discussion of Basil's use of Platonic writings, see Ch3, 34-41.)

In *Ad Adol.* 1.1, Basil states that he has been 'trained already by means of many things, and ... [has been] fully acquainted with the ways of men'. It is significant that Basil attributes his position of authority and therefore his qualification for offering advice to his nephews to a large variety of experiences and situations. He does not suggest that he has avoided the negative in order to preserve only the positive influences in his life, but rather, as he suggests is worthwhile in 3.1, he has been through many changes of fortune, and looking at them can see the better experiences in contrast to the worse ones. For this reason, he can see the value in his nephews beholding the good and bad characters in literature, and be more convinced of the better ones by comparison with the worse. (See 3.1 and above, Ch3, 55 for Clement's advocacy of the same principle).

This adds another practical aspect to Basil's advice. He is delivering this address not only considering the literary education of his nephews, but also the fact that they are nearing an age where they will begin to make moral choices about the lives they are going to lead. Basil wants their studies to prepare them for life, and knows that they will encounter bad men as well as good in their future activities. It is therefore important that the youths practise distinguishing good men from degenerate in the safe environment of school in anticipation of the time when they will have to do it in the world.

μη̄ πᾱσιν ἐφεξῆς προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν: **Do not turn your mind to all of it without exception:** Basil reiterates his central point: the nephews have to make choices about what they read, what they accept, and what they do with the information and literature which is presented to them. He recalls his words from 1.5, that the young men are not to 'surrender the rudders of [their] mind ... without exception' to the things that they encounter in pagan literature. This encouragement to pick and choose the beneficial parts of literature is not an innovation of Basil's: Plutarch, *Adolescens* 16a suggests the same, and recommends the study of poetry as an apprenticeship for philosophy.

ἀλλ' ὅταν μὲν τὰς τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν πράξεις ἢ λόγους ὑμῖν διεξίωσιν, ἀγαπᾶν τε καὶ ζηλοῦν, καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα πειροᾶσθαι τοιούτους εἶναι: **but**

whenever they relate to you the deeds or words of good men, both love and imitate them, and try especially to be like them:

ὅταν ... ὑμῖν διεξιῶσιν: **whenever they relate to you...**: Another parallel with the message of 1.3, conveyed particularly by the use of ὑμῖν (to you); the first time the word is used since 2.1. Basil temporarily moves away from the unity which he has created with his audience, in which he describes the Christian point of view as though all parties agree with and adhere to it, and places his nephews once again in their own personal circumstances of ‘going to school each day to the teachers’. This, after all, is one of the aims of the address: Basil wants his nephews to recall his words when they are actually encountering the pagan literature of their school curriculum, not simply to listen and then fail to apply his advice. His use of the pronoun reminds his nephews that they are to do something with these words and the context in which they must act. In addition, the word διέξιμι (lit: to go through) is used frequently in the context of speech-making and discussion (see e.g. Herodotus.1.116; 7.77; Plato, *Protagoras* 361e), and therefore relates to verbal activity rather than reading. It implies that Basil is thinking of the schoolroom when he composes this advice. Although the ‘they’ of Basil’s statement refers on the surface to the poets who he mentioned at the beginning of the passage, the phrase about turning the mind, along with the use of the 2nd person plural pronoun and the use of a word which implies that the youths are hearing information, all combine to recall the ambiguity of the reference to writers and teachers from 1.5. Teachers are not mentioned here, but by creating the image of the schoolroom with similar words and phrases Basil reinforces that element of his advice to his nephews.

τὰς τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν πράξεις ἢ λόγους: **the deeds or words of good men:** Basil suggests that the actions of moral characters are worthy of emulation as well as the virtuous messages they might preach. The two Greek words used here are found in Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454a18: ὁ λόγος ἢ ἡ πράξις, referring to the action and speech of characters in tragedy.

ἀγαπᾶν τε καὶ ζηλοῦν: **you should both love and imitate them:** This phrase recalls 2.3 where Basil encourages his nephews to both ‘love and pursue’ those things which lead towards eternal life.

In saying that the nephews ought to ‘imitate’ the words and deeds of good men, Basil suggests that the characters presented by the poets are to be role models for the youths in their development of virtue. The notion of role models for good behaviour is found in JChrys, *De Inani* 77-78, but he makes it a more contemporary activity: urging parents to surround their children with other virtuous specimens, who he says will have the effect of spurring the children to better behaviour by their example.

The sentiment that the deeds of others, whether contemporary or from a previous time, could be useful in encouraging similar good deeds is a commonplace in pagan moralising, as well as having Biblical support. The apostle Paul urges the Philippian church to consider the good in the world around them and use it to determine their own behaviour. In addition he advises them: ‘Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice’ (Philippians 4.8-9). Likewise Diodorus Siculus states that history provides a multitude of examples and experiences which show men the best way to live and encourage them to imitate the successes of the past (*Historical Library*, preface).

Basil appears to borrow his expression of the sentiment that good men should be loved and imitated from several classical writers. Plutarch, *Perikles* 1.4 maintains that virtuous deeds: ζῆλόν τινα καὶ προθυμίαν ἀγωγὸν εἰς μίμησιν ἐμποιεῖ τοῖς ἱστορήσασιν: ‘implant in those who search them out a great and zealous eagerness which leads to imitation.’ In the same way Plato, *Protagoras* 326a states that at school pupils are introduced to the praiseworthy deeds of good men through eulogies so that: ὁ παῖς ζηλῶν μιμῆται καὶ ὀρέγεται τοιοῦτος γενέσθαι : ‘the boy in envy may imitate them and yearn to become even as they.’ Like his pagan predecessors, Basil uses ζηλοῦν (ζηλέω) to suggest that his nephews should eagerly desire to recreate the virtuous deeds of those they read about.

Basil emphasises the value in imitating the words of good men, but encourages his nephews to flee the imitation of bad characters. While on one hand he provides the youths with a principle to guide their lives, it is likely that he also considers the teaching methods of his day and endeavours to counter any activity in the classroom which could

have a detrimental effect on his relations. One of the key skills an ancient schoolboy had to acquire was the ability to speak in public and learn how to persuade an audience. To this end, the study of classical literature involved the rote learning of large passages of text and then the recitation of that text in a convincing and accurate manner. In this way the boys learnt the rhetorical techniques which they would need in later public life.

The problem with this approach to learning is highlighted in Plato *Rep.* 395. The philosopher identifies the danger of imitations that ‘if continued from youth far into life, settle down into habits and (second) nature’, and considers that if the imitations are of unworthy subjects, then the imitators will have no choice but to become morally degenerate also. For this reason he decreed that the guardians of his city should only be permitted to imitate ‘appropriate’ subjects, such as ‘men...who are brave, sober, pious, free and all things of that kind’, and be forbidden to copy ‘any other shameful thing’ or ‘to play the parts of women’ (*Rep.* 395c-d). It is possible that Basil has that problem in mind here. Certainly Webb (2007, esp. 70) connects the fear of negative mimesis with Basil’s disparaging comments about ‘stage folk’ later in this section, and considers that he is borrowing from Plato in this regard, even if he doesn’t explicitly state the fact.

4.2: ὅταν δὲ ἐπὶ μοχθηροῦς ἀνδρῶν ἔλθῃσι: **but whenever they are concerned with wicked men:** If Basil is thinking about the action of reciting poetry, then this gives weight to the idea that he has merged the role of the poets and the teachers in his mind. The poets write about the different characters, but it will be the nephews’ teachers who allocate them passages for learning and declamation, so they will be the ones who give them bad men to imitate in the classroom. By saying that these subjects should be avoided, Basil prompts his readers to ignore their teachers if to do so will protect their Christian faith.

τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν/ μοχθηροῦς ἀνδρῶν: In referring to the subject of poetry, Basil focuses his initial attention on the activities of human characters in the stories, as shown by his repeated use of ἀνὴρ. Indeed, the majority of his discussion about the works of poets, whether the good or bad elements is concentrated on mortal characteristics, rather than highlighting the dangers of the supernatural aspects of classical poetry.

τὴν μίμησιν ταύτην δεῖ φεύγειν: **It is necessary to flee the imitation of these things:** Basil's advice changes slightly: his nephews are not just to ignore the negative in literature, but rather to actively run away from it. A similar admonition is found in Paul's Letters in the New Testament (1 Cor. 6:18; 10:14; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22) in which he encourages his hearers to avoid sin, and pursue instead the qualities of righteousness.

ἐπιφρασσομένους τὰ ᾧτα, οὐχ ἤττον ἢ τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα φασὶν ἐκεῖνοι τὰ τῶν Σειρήνων μέλη: **blocking your ears no less than those men say Odysseus did, fleeing the songs of the Sirens.:** A problematic sentence in light of the fact that Odysseus did not block his ears, but instead had himself tied to the mast of his ship with the intention of listening to the Sirens' song. (See Fortin (1981, 190) for a consideration and Vredeveld (2001) for other examples of the same image, and above Ch4, 77-85 for the tradition of reading the *Odyssey* and Basil's use of it in this address.)

φασὶν ἐκεῖνοι: **those men say:** Just as he did in his discussion on Moses and Daniel, Basil introduces the episode with a 3rd person plural, 'as they say'. Here he uses it to relate back to the poets who he referred to at the beginning of the passage, but it also conveys the idea that this is a popular story, one which he would expect his nephews to know.

ἢ γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς φαύλους τῶν λόγων συνήθεια, ὁδὸς τίς ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τὰ πρᾶγματα: **for an acquaintance with wicked words is the road to the same deeds:** Once again Basil links words and deeds together, although this time the speech is regarded as the precursor to actions, particularly if the words are bad ones.

This phrase has the feeling on an aphorism about it, and certainly, the imagery of a road is a common topos in much literature. The book of Proverbs abounds with references to the straight path of the righteous and the path of the wicked which leads to destruction. Particularly interesting is Prov. 2:12-15:

'Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways.'

The link between the ‘perverse words’ of the wicked and the fact they are ‘devious in their ways’, resembles Basil’s adage here. (Indeed Basil uses the imagery of the path to virtue regularly in his address. He refers to Hesiod’s description of the road to virtue (5.3-4) and considers the choice of Herakles at the crossroads (5.12). The advice of Bias to his son continues the theme, since the old man tells the young man to ‘gather supplies for old age’ as he goes on his journey (10.3).)

4.3: διὸ δὴ πάση φυλακῇ τὴν ψυχὴν τηρητέον, μὴ διὰ τῆς τῶν λόγων ἡδονῆς παραδεξάμενοί: **Therefore one must watch the soul with all care lest, having welcomed something on account of the sweetness of the words:** The fact that Basil states that the words of pagan poetry are ‘sweet’ suggests that he considers the works to be pleasant and enjoyable to read. This is an important point, because much of the discussion about classical literature by Christian writers concentrates on the appropriateness or usefulness of reading the pagan works, rather than whether the writings have some intrinsic enjoyment in them. This description of the works connects with Basil’s earlier analogy of the leaves of a plant being like the ‘wisdom from outside’, which is found in pagan literature. He states there that the foliage gives the plant a ‘not unseasonable appearance’.

However, while the words of the poets are pleasant to encounter, this is the very thing which makes them dangerous, since the sweet utterances disguise a sinister threat to the reader. Classical texts were experienced not just as words on a page but in a multisensory manner, being read aloud and so heard, rather than read privately. This makes Basil’s reference to ears and the Sirens even more pertinent as his nephews will be hearing the classical poetry declaimed by their teachers. The Sirens promised wonderful rewards to Odysseus in their song, but the consequence of listening to them was death and destruction. Cf. Augustine’s emotional distress at hearing about the fate of Dido, but his carefree disregard for the fate of his immortal soul (*Conf.* 13.21).

τι λάθωμεν τῶν χειρόνων, ὥσπερ οἱ τὰ δηλητήρια μετὰ τοῦ μέλιτος προσιέμενοι: **we do not miss something worse, just like those men who accept deadly poisons with honey:** The use of honey as a means of disguising something unpleasant, such as medicine, is a common topos in ancient literature, which Wilson (1975, 47) identifies as starting with Plato (*Laws* 659c: ‘when people suffer from bodily

ailments and infirmities, those whose office it is try to administer to them nutriment that is wholesome in meats [660a] and drinks that are pleasant, but unwholesome nutriment in the opposite, so that they may form the right habit of approving the one kind and detesting the other'). The sense is similar in this example, but honey is not specifically mentioned by Plato in this context.

It is interesting that bees, which Basil makes use of later in this section, are viewed in literature as almost universally good, moral examples, while honey, the product of the bees commendable toil, is seen in a slightly more sinister light. On one hand, it is frequently used in literature to disguise the bad taste of something beneficial, although it is unable to completely remove the unpleasantness. E.g. Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 4.11-16 states that doctors, 'when they wish to treat children with a nasty dose of wormwood, first smear the rim of the cup with the sweet, yellow syrup of honey. The children ... are lured by the sweetness at their lips into swallowing the bitter draught. So they are tricked but not trapped; for the treatment restores them to health.' The children discover too late that the liquid in their cup is bitter, but the deception is acceptable because it achieves a result which benefits the young drinkers.

However on the other hand, there are many examples in which sweetness of honey is used to deceive in a malevolent way, and it is likely that Basil has some in mind here. Xenophon's *Anabasis* 4.8.19-21 recounts the consequences that his soldiers suffered after they had eaten honey from a certain region of Turkey: they went mad and began to vomit, although they seemed to recover from the effects 24 hours after the honey had been consumed. The Greeks thought that the honey would give them nourishment, but instead it proved debilitating. Possibly even more relevant to Basil's point in his address is the fate of Odysseus' men when they ate honey. In *Odyssey* 10, the witch Circe welcomes Odysseus' crew into her home and offers them 'yellow honey flavoured with Pramian wine'. Homer states that 'into this dish she introduced a noxious drug, to make them lose all memory of their native land' (1.234). Once the men have finished eating, Circe turns them into pigs and locks them in a sty. When Odysseus goes to rescue his comrades he also drinks the potion offered to him by the witch, but he is safe from its power because he has already been warned what could happen to him, and he is protected against the poison by the moly given to him by Hermes. This part of the story comes not much before Odysseus' encounter with the Sirens: it is Circe who warns the Ithacan about the danger the Sirens present to him and his crew, and also suggests how

he might listen to their song without being damaged by it. Because of the close proximity of the two episodes it is quite possible that Basil was thinking about the metamorphosis of Odysseus' men in his composition.

This passage illustrates the manner in which the youths can identify with the character of Odysseus as they seek to find moral value in the stories they read. The young men are going to read pagan literature, but they, unlike Odysseus' crewmen, will not approach what is offered to them by their teachers in ignorance of the danger the works contain, but instead have been primed with the moly of their Uncle Basil, and so can drink deeply of the honey, but not be harmed by it. (See Ch4 for discussion of the image and Basil's representation of himself as Odysseus.)

Another use of honey for deception is found in Julian, (*Ep. ad sacerdotem* 305c) and it demonstrates the common use made of the image in Late Antiquity. He condemns those people who lure children with honey-cakes, leaving a trail of the sweets so that the children follow it, and then they are snatched and put on ships to be sold into slavery.

4.4: οὐ τοίνυν <ἐν πᾶσιν> ἐπαινεσόμεθα τοὺς ποιητὰς: **We will not praise the poets in everything then:** With the use of the 1st person plural verb ἐπαινεσόμεθα, (and the previous verb λάθωμεν) Basil once more identifies himself with his nephews. His use of ὑμεῖς was appropriate when considering activities in the school-room, but now he is thinking more generally it is necessary to place himself once more on the same side as the youths in order to maintain their agreement with his advice. In doing this Basil implies that the recommendations he makes to his nephews are not simply pertinent for them at their particular time of life, but rather they are principles which need to be followed throughout their lives since Basil, at his great age, also needs to beware the dangers of pagan writing.

οὐ λοιδορούμενους, οὐ σκώπτοντας, οὐκ ἐρῶντας ἢ μεθύοντας
μιμουμένους, οὐχ ὅταν τραπέζη πληθούση καὶ ᾠδαῖς ἀνειμέναις τὴν
εὐδαιμονίαν ὀρίζωνται: **not when they are scoffing, nor when they are jeering,
not when imitating lechers or drunkards, nor whenever they limit happiness to a
full table and dissolute songs.:** Basil lists examples of the behaviour and sentiments
that poets are not to be praised for when they display them in their writings. The

original source for this image is Homer, *Odyssey* 9.5-10 but is also found in Plato, *Rep.* 390a-b.

‘For myself I declare that there is no greater fulfillment of delight than when joy possesses a whole people, and banqueters in the halls listen to a minstrel as they sit in order due, and by them tables are laden with bread and meat, and the cup-bearer draws wine from the bowl and bears it round and pours it into the cups. This seems to my mind the fairest thing there is.’

οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ γέ τί φημι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι
ἢ ὅτ’ εὐφροσύνη μὲν ἔχη κάτα δῆμον ἅπαντα,
δαιτυμόνες δ’ ἀνὰ δώματ’ ἀκουάζωνται ἀοιδῶ
ἦμενοι ἔξείης, παρὰ δὲ πλήθωσι τράπεζαι
σίτου καὶ κρειῶν, μέθυ δ’ ἐκ κρητῆρος ἀφύσσων
οἴνοχος φορέησι καὶ ἐγχείη δεπάεσσι:
τοῦτό τί μοι κάλλιστον ἐνὶ φρεσὶν εἶδεται εἶναι.

Basil is probably familiar with both works, although the similarities with Plato suggest that he may be making more use of his work than of Homer. However, the nephews are more likely to know the *Odyssey* so it is probable that they would understand the allusion to the poem rather than the philosophic work.

Rather than a simple list, Basil creates pairs of things which should be avoided, and expresses each pair differently. First he states that he poets should not be praised when they are ‘scoffing or jeering’ (οὐ λοιδορουμένους, οὐ σκώπτοντας). He uses two present participles for actions which are to be condemned when found in poetry. Second, he mentions two character types which, although found in poetry, are not to be imitated: lechers and drunkards (οὐκ ἐρῶντας ἢ μεθύοντας μιμουμένους). This picks up his reference to the ‘all kinds of men’ which are found in poetry, and allows him opportunity to illustrate examples of the ‘wicked’ characters he had referred to earlier in this section (See 7.5 and 7.9 for similar types and their opposites). Finally he states two erroneous notions which are found in the works of poets, namely, that they ‘define happiness as a full table and dissolute songs’ (τραπεζῆ πληθούση καὶ ᾠδαῖς ἀνεμιέναις τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ὀρίζωνται).

The use of εὐδαιμονία (happiness) recalls Basil’s point in 2.4, that all the happiness of the present life would not amount to even the tiniest part of the good of the life to come, and so shows the problem with the poets’ comments.

ἐπαινεσόμεθα from ἐπαινέω: **give approval to, praise, agree with**: later Basil uses προσέξομεν (**pay attention**) when referring to the pagan gods as the subject matter of poems. The words have different nuances: the former suggests that Basil thinks the youths can read these elements of poetry, but will condemn the poets' depiction of bad behaviour, but the latter implies that the youths ought to totally ignore anything about the deities in literature.

But does Basil have anyone other than Homer or Plato in mind in compiling his list? The pairing of words compares to Romans 13:13 (ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ κώμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ: 'Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.') and the subject matter is not entirely different. The sentiment expressed in 'full table' is reminiscent of Isaiah 22.13 ("Let us eat and drink," you say, "for tomorrow we die!") which is quoted in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. 15:32) in which he discusses the resurrection of the dead. ('If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."') It is possible that Basil has chosen this example of wrong thinking not just because of its use in classical literature, but also because its parallel is found in Biblical writing. For St Paul, and also Basil, the happiness of a full table is the exact antithesis of the purpose of a Christian life. (Later at 9.2 he considers the futility of seeking happiness in food).

οὐ ... <ἐν πᾶσιν> ἐπαινεσόμεθα τοὺς ποιητὰς we will not praise the poets **in everything**: There is a degree of repetition in this passage in order to emphasise the message Basil wants to convey. <ἐν πᾶσιν> here picks up the phrase πᾶσιν ἐφεξῆς from 4.1, and also links with πάντων ... ἥκιστα (4.4) later. Also the words προσέχειν τὸν νοῦν (4.1) are recalled by προσέξομεν when Basil begins his discussion about the gods. The idea that the nephews should be discerning when they read their schoolbooks, and can agree with some things but not others, is reinforced as much as possible by the repeated words and phrases.

πάντων δὲ ἥκιστα περὶ θεῶν τι διαλεγόμενοις προσέξομεν, καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν ὡς περὶ πολλῶν τε αὐτῶν διεξίωσι καὶ τούτων οὐδὲ ὁμονοούντων: **Least of all will we pay attention to them when they are saying something about gods, and especially whenever they recount both that there are many of them, and also that they are not even of one mind.**: The question of interaction with the pagan gods was a source of great consternation and difficulty for Christians in the ancient world. The early apologists' discussion ranged from viewing them as malignant demons with the power to disrupt human lives, to simply characters from made-up stories represented by statues of wood or stone. It was the presence of the gods in literature which drove Christians to consider boycotting classical learning in the first place, and prompted Tertullian's famous, oft-quoted phrase: 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?' (*De praescriptione haereticorum* 7. 9). Indeed, in his consideration of education and its appropriateness for Christians, Tertullian decreed, after much thought, that it was possible for young boys to attend school, despite their curriculum being littered with pagan deities, but it was completely wrong for Christians to act as teachers, since they were partaking in idolatry by earning their living expounding pagan subject matter. The issue was further compounded by the fact that teachers were paid on feast-days for the gods, and therefore a teacher was obliged, not just to be aware of the religious festivals as accounting days, but also to attend the ceremonies in order to collect his wages (Tertullian, *De Idol.* 10).

καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν ὡς περὶ πολλῶν τε αὐτῶν διεξίωσι καὶ τούτων οὐδὲ ὁμονοούντων: **and especially when they recount that there are many of them, and also that they are not even of one mind**: The issue of the gods being many was always a fundamental difference between Christians and pagans, as it was between the Jews and pagans before the birth of the church, so in some respects it is not a surprising objection. However, could Basil be subtly introducing a fundamental theological truth to the youths in anticipation of questions about doctrine which may arise in their minds as they mature in their faith? He does not want them to accept the words of poets about the gods since the only authority for the divine should come from the Bible, and he also wishes to avoid them being embroiled in heresy about the persons of the trinity. (See Rousseau (1994, 106-7) for Basil's reliance on Scripture in his objections to Eunomius.)

ὁμονοέω: **be of one mind**: is used by JChrys, *Homily* 82.2 in reference to the agreement of the Son with the Father.

4.5: ἀδελφὸς γὰρ δὴ παρὸ ἐκείνοις διαστασιάζει πρὸς ἀδελφὸν καὶ γονεὺς πρὸς παῖδας καὶ τούτοις αὐθις πρὸς τοὺς τεκόντας πόλεμος ἔστιν

ἀκήρυκτος: **For indeed according to them brother quarrels with his brother, and a father with his children and likewise these are engaged in a truceless war with their parents**: This description of divine behaviour is found similarly in Plato, *Rep.* 378c, but the stories are scattered throughout the works of Homer and Hesiod especially. (E.g. Hesiod, *Theogony*; Homer *Iliad* 1.545ff.) In the passage in Plato, he states that the hostilities between the gods are ‘toward their kith and kin’ (πρὸς συγγενεῖς τε καὶ οἰκείους αὐτῶν), and condemns the poets for depicting such things. However, rather than using general terminology, Basil uses the words: ἀδελφὸς (brother), γονεὺς (father), παῖς (child) and τεκῶν (parent). He therefore emphasises the familiar relationships of the pagan gods, possibly to make the enmities between them appear more shocking, that the family of gods fight, but it also enables him to make links with the Christian community.

ἀδελφὸς (brother) was a word which had important connotations for the members of the church. LSJ defines it as ‘sons of the same mother’, but for Christians it was the word used to identify those who were linked through belief in the Father, God. (See Matthew 12:50 where Jesus rejects blood-familial ties in favour of those formed by shared faith and actions.) It is found 361 times in the New Testament, as well as being used by other religious communities to identify members. (The common use of ‘brethren’ by the earliest Christians, along with their emphasis on loving one another, was what led to the belief that they committed incest as part of their sacred rites: Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 9.1-2; Tertullian, *Apology* 7.1.)

The words γονεὺς (father), παῖς (child) and τεκῶν (parent) are used at 1.2. In that context the words were introduced in order to create a close relationship between Basil and his nephews, and their reinforcement here must serve to highlight the extent that family in-fighting is morally reprehensible behaviour. Whether Basil is responding to

actual or perceived difficulties between his nephews and members of the family, it is impossible to tell, but it is certain that unity within the family and the wider community was something he wished to endorse.

μοιχείας δὲ θεῶν καὶ ἔρωτας καὶ μίξεις ἀναφανδόν, καὶ ταῦτάς γε μάλιστα τοῦ κορυφαίου πάντων καὶ ὑπάτου Διός, ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν, ἃ κἂν περὶ βοσκημάτων τις λέγων ἐρυθριάσειε, τοῖς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς καταλείψομεν: **The adulteries, lusts and fornications of gods, carried out in the open, and indeed, especially when these things are committed by the leader and highest of them all, Zeus, as they say, which would make someone speaking about animals apt to blush, we will leave to those on the stage:**

μοιχείας δὲ θεῶν καὶ ἔρωτας καὶ μίξεις: **The adulteries, lusts and fornications of the gods:** Episodes found in Homer and Hesiod. The reference picks up the earlier discussion of bad human behaviour, since Basil says that the poets should be ignored if they speak about ‘lechers’. The question of the sexual immorality of the pagan deities was condemned by philosophers long before Christianity, and prompted the ancients to create allegorical readings of Homer to try and defend him from charges of impiety (e.g. Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems*; Ps-Plutarch, *Essay on the Life and Works of the Poet Homer*).

ἀναφανδόν: **openly:** *Rep.* 390a discusses the episode from Homer, *Iliad* 14.296 describing Zeus and Hera. Presumably Basil has this in mind, but whether he is referencing Plato or Homer is hard to tell.

ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν: **as they say:** Cf. earlier in this section: φασὶν ἐκεῖνοι, or 3.3-4: λέγεται and φασὶ with reference to Moses and Daniel.

τοῖς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς καταλείψομεν: **we will leave to those on the stage:** Cf. 6.3, where Basil refers to the types of people engaged in acting. The church was generally hostile to the theatre, initially because of the pagan religious rituals associated with it, but also later because mime tended to satirise Christianity. (See above Ch3, 70-72 for Basil and John Chrysostom’s attitudes towards the theatre.)

4.6: Ταῦτὰ δὴ ταῦτα λέγειν καὶ περὶ συγγραφέων ἔχω, καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν ψυχαγωγίας ἕνεκα τῶν ἀκουόντων λογοποιῶσι: **I have these things to say also concerning historians, especially whenever they fabricate stories to persuade their hearers:**

συγγραφέων from συγγραφεύς: ‘a historian, one who collects and writes down historical fact’ (LSJ). However, this word was later used to mean ‘prose writers’ as opposed to poets. (See Plato, *Phaedrus*, 235c: ἢ που Σαπφῶς τῆς καλῆς ἢ Ἀνακρέοντος τοῦ σοφοῦ ἢ καὶ συγγραφέων τινῶν: ‘either from the lovely Sappho or the wise Anacreon, or perhaps from some prose writers.’).

It is probable that Basil is thinking of more general writers of prose than historians here, since he goes on to look specifically at the work of orators and the moral minefield that they represent. This would suggest that under his heading on ‘poets’, Basil does not simply consider the epic writers, Homer and Hesiod, but could also be including the tragedians and possibly comic poets in his advice. It explains why he ends his discussion of poetry with the reference to actors, and the fact that immoral stories about the gods ought to be left to them, since the sudden reference to the theatre strikes the reader as somewhat surprising simply in the context of epic poetry.

ψυχαγωγίας: **a winning of souls, persuading:** Wilson (1975, 48) defines this as the ‘technical term for the persuasive effect of stylistic grace or charm, found e.g. in Plato, *Phaedrus* 261a8.’ (‘Is not rhetoric in its entire nature an art which leads the soul by means of words?’) For a Christian the idea of winning the soul would be especially dangerous, since if a pagan was attempting such a thing it would lead to the eternal damnation of the soul, and is the very outcome that Basil seeks to avoid with this advice.

Λογοποιέω: **to invent stories, to write:**

Does Basil have any particular ‘prose writers’ in mind here, then, if he’s not thinking about historians? Since he goes on to discuss the use of orators as role models it would make sense for the literary types to be related in some way. The concern does appear to

be more about the problems of lies which are used to persuade or attract those listening, rather than an objection to the fabrication of stories for entertainment, because if that were so then he would surely have objected to the poets on those grounds also, and it has already been mentioned that Basil does not condemn references about the pagan gods on the basis that they do not exist.

The idea connects with his use of the analogy of flowers and bees at 4.7 below. The colour and smell of the flowers are appealing and can be enjoyed by those who encounter them, but the real nourishment and benefit only comes to the bees who have the ability to see past the superfluous beauty towards the useful element. Is the fear about rhetoric the fact that the elegant speaking and clever oratorical flourishes can actually become more important to the speaker and listener than they overtake the substance of the argument, i.e. the moral message which will help the soul towards the truth? In a similar manner, the ‘outside learning’ to which Basil refers in 3.2 as giving an attractive appearance to a plant in the form of foliage has no actual productive purpose except to enhance the image of the shrub, since the fruit it produces is the only element of truth and virtue.

καὶ ῥητόρων δὲ τὴν περὶ τὸ ψεύδεσθαι τέχνην οὐ μιμησόμεθα: **And we will not imitate the art of the orators when they practise lying:** Is the ‘art of lying’ the telling of actual untruths or more the blinding of hearers with clever words to as to pull the wool over their eyes, in the manner of the classical sophists? (See e.g. Aeschines, *Against Timarchus* 117 about Demosthenes: ὁ τὰς τῶν λόγων τέχνας κατεπαγγελλόμενος τοὺς νέους διδάσκειν ἀπάτη τινὶ παραλογισάμενος ὑμᾶς: ‘that man who professes to teach the young the tricks of speech may mislead you by some artifice.’)

οὐ μιμησόμεθα: **we will not imitate:** This word continues from 4.1 and 4.2, in the context of imitating the poets when they present morally upright characters, and ‘the words and deeds of good men’. It reminds the reader again that the purpose of the address is to present good examples for the youths to follow, and in this case works on two levels.

All children were taught a degree of rhetorical technique in the classroom. Indeed, children not only had to compose speeches in defence of a particular legal position, but also had to acquire the skills to present those speeches to an audience. (Criore (2001, 190; 221-2); GNys, *Contra Eunomium* 1.5 on the training of school boys to declaim.) Part of the concern behind Plato's prohibition about the guardians' imitation of bad man probably also had connections with the idea of practising oratory. (E.g. *Rep.* 394e 'whether or not our guardians should be good at representation?'; also 395b-d.) In fifth century Athens support was often given to those who could speak convincingly and entertainingly to large crowds, and the ability to sway the audience was sometimes more important than the portrayal of absolute truth. In Plato's mind, if students practised speeches that contained lies and bad sentiment, the danger was that the student himself would develop a bad character, having absorbed negative morals through imitation and acting. (Webb (2007, 70) discusses the dangers of mimesis in the context of Basil's views on Greek tragedy.)

τὴν περὶ τὸ ψεύδεσθαι τέχνην: **concerning the art of lying**: Basil identifies a specific group which he suggests are in the habit of lying, namely orators, and warns his nephews to beware of imitating such people.

As someone who lived with a full awareness of the power of words, both spoken and written, it is interesting that Basil should highlight oratory as a potentially problematic art. But perhaps it is precisely because of this awareness that he takes care to try and make his nephews conscious of the possible negative aspect of that element of their lessons. If the youths are destined for a career in public life or the church the art of oratory would be one they would need to become increasingly familiar with as they continue their education, and it is important for Basil that they select appropriate role models for themselves. (See Criore (2009) for Libanius' views about the need for rhetorical training for future success. Marrou (1956, 194): rhetoric was the 'specific object of Greek education, and the highest Greek culture'; also 196.)

As a bishop, Basil used his oratorical skills on a daily basis: writing appeals to public figures, and in his more personal correspondence, as well as giving frequent sermons. However, while Basil would have said that he did not lie, and used his eloquence solely in the cause of truth, he was only too familiar with the darker side of oratory. Basil's abilities as an orator were praised by his brother, Gregory of Nyssa, and his friend,

Gregory Nazianzus. Discussing Basil's time as a student in Athens, Gregory Nazianzus states: 'what renown he won in a short time from all, both of the common people, and of the leaders of the state; by showing both a culture beyond his years, and a steadfastness of character beyond his culture. An orator among orators, even before the chair of the rhetoricians, a philosopher among philosophers, even before the doctrines of philosophers: highest of all a priest among Christians even before the priesthood. So much deference was paid to him in every respect by all. Eloquence was his by-work' (*Or.* 43.13).

However, Gregory of Nyssa remarks that when Basil came home from Athens, 'he was puffed up beyond measure with the pride of oratory and looked down on the local dignitaries, excelling in his own estimation all the men of leading and position' (*VMac* 966c).

It took the efforts of their sister Macrina to point out to Basil the error of his ways, with the consequence that he rejected his worldly career and adopted an ascetic lifestyle. Basil seeks to warn his nephews about the possible dangers of oratory, not simply the temptation to engage in the art of lying, but also the attraction of fame and admiration it could bring. This thought connects with his admonition at 2.2, that Christians should think nothing of the benefits which derive from the world, and are useful only in the present life, but have no lasting value for the life to come. Basil's 'art of oratory' may have gained him praise, but it would be of no consequence if it did not pertain to the acquisition of virtue which he encourages his nephews to focus on. (Cf. Basil's own reflection of his education in *Ep.* 223.)

It would seem that the pursuit of fame through oratory was one of the major enemies of a life of virtue. Gregory of Nyssa does not present Basil as the only orator who turned his back on human reputation in favour of a life devoted to God. Elsewhere in *VMac* he discusses the shining future of his sister's potential husband and also his brother Naucratus. Macrina's fiancé's oratorical skills are commended, because he 'displayed the power of his eloquence in forensic contests on behalf of the wronged' (946c). Although the young man was famous for his speaking, the fact that he used it to a good end made it an acceptable talent. Naucratus likewise is said to have 'excelled the rest in natural endowments and physical beauty, in strength, speed and ability to turn his hand to anything. When he had reached his twenty-first year, and had given such

demonstration of his studies by speaking in public, that the whole audience in the theatre was thrilled' (968a). However, despite the fame and worldly success that was 'already in his grasp', Naucratus rejected it all and committed himself to a life of asceticism.

Basil's own tumble into the pit of worldly vanity was not the only thing that would have caused him to be suspicious of oratory in his nephews' education. In Basil's dealings with heretical clergymen it can be observed that rhetorical expression is often the substitute for orthodoxy (e.g. GNys, *Contra Eunomium* 3.1).

οὔτε γὰρ ἐν δικαστηρίοις οὔτ' ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις πράξεσιν ἐπιτήδειον ἡμῖν τὸ ψεῦδος, τοῖς τὴν ὀρθὴν ὁδὸν καὶ ἀληθῆ προελομένοις τοῦ βίου, οἷς τὸ μὴ δικάζεσθαι νόμῳ προστεταγμένον ἐστίν: **For neither in the lawcourts, nor in any other affairs is lying proper for us, who having chosen the straight and true road of life, it has been commanded not to decide issues by law:** Not only does Basil announce that Christians should not lie, but he also introduces information about the appropriate involvement in legal activities for his nephews. He states that lying is not right for Christians 'neither in the law courts nor in any other affairs', however, this is followed by an additional comment about the fact that Christians ought not to resort to legal measures in order to resolve disputes. The reference comes from 1 Corinthians 6.1 ('If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?') in which Paul suggests that Christians should settle their disputes with the guidance of the church leaders, rather than having recourse to secular lawsuits.

In this way, Basil suggests that there are two reasons why oratory is a dangerous practice. On one hand, the temptation to lie and use tricks in order to persuade an audience is ever present in the orator's soul, and on the other hand, the very practice of speech-making places a Christian within the world of secular judgement and causes him to focus on the human rather than the divine.

nor in any other affairs is lying proper for us: The problem with lying is the fact that it cause an individual to present as truth something which is not, and this idea of 'double-facedness' is condemned by various philosophers, as well those in the church

(e.g. Seneca, *Epistle* 75.4; Colossians 3.9; 1 John 1.6; Plato, *Rep.* 328b-e; 389b-d: ‘if anyone is caught lying ... he is to be punished.’). The condemnation of those who are inconsistent in their words and actions is considered later by Basil in a discussion of the need for truth in word and action (6.5).

τὴν ὀρθὴν ὁδὸν καὶ ἀληθῆ ... τοῦ βίου: **the straight and true road of life**: Cf. other references to roads in the address: 1.1; 4.2 (and note); 5.3; 5.12; 10.3.

προελομένοις: **having chosen**: Cf. ὑμῖν ἐλομένοις from 1.1. Basil tacitly assumes that the nephews have decided to follow the Christian path, and therefore the prohibition about legal activity will be relevant to them in the future. Although the assumption is made, the use of the word here and at the beginning of the work does suggest that the youths have the freedom to decide for themselves, which of course Basil hopes that they will do.

ὀρθὴν: **straight**: If Basil does have ideas about the use of lies and rhetorical trickery in his mind with reference to certain heretics here, then it is possible that his use of this word about the Christian path of life is deliberately chosen, not simply pointing to Christianity, but specifically the orthodox position of faith.

οἷς τὸ μὴ δικάζεσθαι νόμῳ προστεταγμένον ἐστίν: **it has been commanded not to decide issues by law**: Since the thrust of this address is to prepare Basil’s nephews not just for their immediate educational experience, but also to train them to look for the appropriate Christian path as they progress through their lives, it would appear that Basil is trying to steer the youths away from one possible career choice here, namely that of lawyer. If Christians are commanded not to use lawyers to help them make peace with one another, then it follows that they should not be employed in the capacity either.

4.7: ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνα αὐτῶν μᾶλλον ἀποδεξόμεθα, ἐν οἷς ἀρετὴν ἐπήνεσαν ἢ πονηρίαν διέβαλον: **But rather we will show those things of theirs, in which they praise virtue, or condemn vice**: Essentially the message about orators and prose writers is the same as that about poets: the youths should pay close attention whenever virtue is praised, and if vice is condemned by prose writers, those passages can also be useful. Basil will go on to select passages from pagan writers which illustrate his point.

ὡς γὰρ τῶν ἀνθέων τοῖς μὲν λοιποῖς ἄχρι τῆς εὐωδίας ἢ τῆς χροῶς ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπόλαυσις, ταῖς μελίτταις δ' ἄρα καὶ μέλι λαμβάνειν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὑπάρχει, οὕτω δὲ κἀνταῦθα τοῖς μὴ τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ ἐπίχαρι μόνον τῶν τοιούτων λόγων διώκουσιν, ἔστι τινὰ καὶ ὠφέλειαν ἀπ' αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀποθέσθαι: **For just as the enjoyment of flowers for other people goes as far as the sweet smell and the colour, for bees it is possible to take honey from them also, and thus for those who pursue not only the sweet and pleasing in these words it is possible to put away some profit from there for the soul:** Basil again uses the analogy of plants to represent pagan literature (c.f. 3.2). However, here he focuses on flowers, which represent the books, and the honey they contain, which is symbolic of the virtue and moral lessons which can be found in them. The image supports the idea that Basil enjoys pagan literature, since he reflects on it in positive terms.

ἡ ἀπόλαυσις ... τῆς εὐωδίας ἢ τῆς χροῶς: **the enjoyment ...the sweet smell and the colour:** Flowers are attractive and give pleasure to those who encounter them, even if humans cannot gain the same amount of benefit as the bees do. It echoes the image in 3.2, where the plant's leaves and flowers give it an attractive appearance aside from the fruit that it produces. However, although Basil concedes that pagan literature brings pleasure, there is a definite sense that it is wrong to indulge simply in enjoyment, since that will have no lasting benefit. In 3.3 the purpose of a plant is to produce fruit, and this represents for Basil truth and moral virtue. While the leaves give the plant an attractive appearance, if an individual does not partake of the fruit which the plant produces, he does not gain the benefit of food, but instead will sicken and die if all he does is gaze at the beauty and accept none of the nutrition. Likewise, the smell and appearance of flowers convey no lasting advantage to those who behold them but simply provide a temporary sensual experience with no real benefit.

ταῖς μελίτταις δ' ἄρα καὶ μέλι λαμβάνειν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὑπάρχει: **for bees it is possible to take honey from them also:** Bees alone see beyond the pretty, aromatic flowers to the nutritious honey that they contain, and therefore are able to take something of lasting value from them. The image draws on Basil's earlier warning that

the youths should be on their guard when reading literature so that they ‘do not take poison along with the honey’ (4.3).

οὕτω δὴ κἀνταῦθα τοῖς μὴ τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ ἐπίχαρι μόνον τῶν τοιούτων λόγων διώκουσιν, ἔστι τινὰ καὶ ὠφέλειαν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ἀποθέσθαι: **and thus for those who pursue not only the sweet and pleasing in these words it is possible to put away some profit from there for the soul:** Basil suggests that there are two ways in which someone could read pagan literature: either simply looking at the pleasure within it, or with a view to taking something of moral value which is serviceable for attaining virtue in life.

It seems that this aspect of Basil’s attitude towards the classics has been overlooked somewhat by scholars. The view taken by earlier writers that Basil was wholeheartedly endorsing classical literature and all that it contains has tended to be rejected in favour of the opinion that he has a grudging acceptance of pagan literature, and is trying to make the best of a bad job, by accepting that his nephews have to read classical writings, but he wants to sanitise their experience of it as much as possible. Certainly, Basil wishes to protect his nephews from anything dangerous in the works that they read, but this passage does not imply that he has no affection for pagan literature at all. Rather it suggests that Basil is very aware of the delights of pagan literature, since he likens it to the smell and attractive appearance of flowers.

Part of the question and difficulty for Basil is a matter of priorities. How far should a Christian be involved in the world and culture in which he found himself in the fourth century, and how much should the world’s culture only be embraced if it supported and assisted in the Christian’s race towards the goal of salvation? Basil wants to prevent his nephews from admiring and imitating any degenerate characteristics which might be modelled to them in their reading, and certainly he wants them to consider the issues and morals presented to them by their teachers carefully in case they accept as true something which contradicts the Christian life. But part of his concern is that his nephews might find themselves caught up in an enjoyment and admiration for literature and all that goes with it to such an extent that they are distracted from the real business of life, namely, their care of their immortal souls.

From its earliest days the church propounded the notion that there was another world of greater importance and value than the earthly world of the empire. Consequently the Christians lived lives which put them at odds with the rest of their society. For the first believers, their rejection of the world occurred accompanied by a firm belief that the world that they rejected would not last for long anyway, and that Christ would come again in their lifetime to call his faithful to their heavenly residence. Later, the martyrs embraced death for their cause, holding their earthly lives as of little value in comparison with their eternal one. However, by the fourth century, everything had changed. The acceptance and adoption of Christianity throughout the empire meant that Christians did not have to face death as a result of their beliefs and perceived anti-social behaviour. The threat of apocalypse had receded long before, and the followers of Christ found themselves in all strata of society. So the question which faced Basil and his contemporaries was what did it mean to live as a Christian in a society which still showed the trappings of its pagan past, but at the same time had embraced the truth of the gospel?

Certain activities naturally were at odds with the Christian way of life, either because of an association with other gods or because of a degree of immorality inherent in them. It was in an effort to answer the questions about which activities were appropriate and which were not that Clement wrote *Paedagogus*. He attempts to lay down principles and guidelines which the Christian should adhere to if he is to live in accordance with the faith that he professes. Basil does something similar in this address, but he is not as prescriptive as Clement. He admits that reading classical literature is something that can be done for pleasure and enjoyment, but as a Christian, he is uneasy with the idea that pleasure should be an end in itself. After all, the attitude that proclaims temporary enjoyment is one which has no awareness or apprehension of the true future.

In *Ep.223*, Basil reflects on his education, and despite his great success as a student he announces that he discovered it was all 'vanity'. It would seem that he wishes his nephews to come to a similar realisation at an earlier age than he did. For this reason he condemns those who read simply to get pleasure from literature, but commends the example of the bees to his nephews: bees not only appreciate the beauty of the flower, but also take nourishment for themselves. Likewise, the youths can enjoy the delights of literature, but they must gain some lasting benefit through the experience, or else they will discover that all their effort is simply 'vanity'.

τοῖς ... διώκουσιν: **those who pursue**: Cf. 2.3, where Basil advises his nephews to 'love and pursue' those things which lead to the other (heavenly) life.

ὠφέλειαν: **profit**: Cf. 2.7: τῆς ψυχῆς ... ὠφέλειά: **for the care of the soul**.

4.8: κατὰ πᾶσαν δὴ οὖν τῶν μελιττῶν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν λόγων ὑμῖν

μεθεκτέον: **Therefore you must participate in literature entirely like the bees:**

One question which arises from this image is whether Basil sees more of a danger in the provision of the 'honey' by a third party rather than an encounter with it in its natural state? At 4.3 Basil suggest that the nephews should be on their guard so that they do not accept honey and poison, conjuring memories about Circe from the *Odyssey* and her drugged drink with which she turned Odysseus' men into pigs. If Basil is considering the role of the teacher in his nephews' education, and part of the purpose of this address is to warn the youths to be on their guard against anything which their teachers could say that might be contrary to Christian belief, and therefore prove hazardous to their souls, then it is possible that Basil's use of apian imagery provides his nephews with another means for studying classical poetry. Unlike those who succumb to being poisoned because they rely on someone else to provide them with the honey, bees gather what they require for themselves and so take only goodness from the flowers which they visit. Basil wants his nephews to approach the literature which they study in the same way as the bees. Teachers may try to convert their students by presenting them with anti-Christian messages through their exposition of pagan writings, so the youths are to read the literature for themselves and make their own decisions about it.

Certainly, if the youths are still attending school then they have little choice in which books they read or are exposed to, but part of Basil's aim in this work is to encourage his nephews to take responsibility for what they accept and reject, starting with Basil's own advice, and also applying to the way that they receive their teachers' words. The bees choose which flowers to alight on, and then choose what they will take away, similarly the youths should make their selection according to what they see as being useful for their souls. (On the possibility of pagan teachers converting their pupils, see Julian, *Ep.* 36, but there is little evidence that it happened regularly.)

A similar analogy is found in Plutarch, *Adolescens* (32e-f), stating that even ‘amid the most pungent flowers and roughest thorns’ the bees are able to find honey, and so gain some good from the plant. There is a distinction between the way the Plutarch views literature and how Basil considers it, since Plutarch suggests that literature should only be read as a preparation for philosophical study and therefore the flowers and thorns are an unnecessary distraction from that aim, whereas Basil does see some enjoyment coming from the perusal of various morally good works.

ἐκεῖναί τε γὰρ οὔτε ἅπασι τοῖς ἄνθεσι παραπλησίως ἐπέρχονται, οὔτε μὴν οἷς ἂν ἐπιπτῶσιν, ὅλα φέρειν ἐπιχειροῦσιν, ἀλλ’ ὅσον αὐτῶν ἐπιτήδειον πρὸς τὴν ἐργασίαν λαβοῦσαι, τὸ λοιπὸν χαίρειν ἀφήκαν: **For they do not approach all flowers equally, nor do they attempt to carry away the whole of those to which they fly, but taking whatever is profitable for their work, they go away, leaving the rest.:** The bees are discerning in their choice of which flowers to land on, and they are happy to only take what is necessary, rather than everything that appeals to them.

4.9: ἡμεῖς τε, ἦν σωφρονῶμεν, ὅσον οἰκεῖον ἡμῖν καὶ συγγενὲς τῇ ἀληθείᾳ παρ’ αὐτῶν κομισάμενοι, ὑπερβησόμεθα τὸ λειπόμενον: **We too, if we are wise, bearing away from these writings whatever is suitable for us and related to the truth, we will pass by whatever is left.:**

ἡμεῖς τε, ἦν σωφρονῶμεν: **We too, if we are wise:** Basil’s continues his inclusion of the nephews within the special group of Christians with the use of ἡμεῖς, and recalls the sentiment at 1.3 about the types of man mentioned by Hesiod. The youths, if they want to be considered wise rather than foolish, will heed Basil’s advice and read their schoolbooks with a discerning mind, rather than devouring all that is presented to them. This sense of exclusivity is further conveyed by the phrase at the beginning of this section, that ‘the enjoyment of flowers **for other people** goes as far as the sweet smell and colour’. Basil wants his nephews to be like the bees who collect more profit from the flowers than others, but at the same time he knows that the young men will be surrounded by those who do not read literature for gain, but simply enjoyment. Whether those people are pagans or less discerning Christians, Basil forewarns his audience that

there are those who will not seek profit from their reading, but at the same time the nephews are encouraged to act like wise men rather than fools.

συγγενές τῆ ἀληθεία: **related to the truth**: Contrasts with the earlier sentiments about lying (4.6), and makes clearer why the ‘art of lying’ should not be practised. The aim of the Christian is to adhere to the truth, so only those elements which pertain to the truth in literature should be considered worthy of proper attention. (Cf. 3.2, that the proper fruit of the soul is truth.)

ὑπερβησόμεθα τὸ λειπόμενον: **we will pass by whatever is left**: Refers to the remainder of literature which presents unsuitable or untruthful subject matter. However, the similarity with the previous reference to τοῖς ... λοιποῖς (other people) suggests that Basil may be encouraging his nephews to ignore those who are unable to see the benefit which can be found in classical writings.

καὶ καθάπερ τῆς ῥοδωνιάς τοῦ ἄνθους δρεψάμενοι τὰς ἀκάνθας
ἐκκλίνομεν, οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων λόγων ὅσον χρήσιμον
καρπωσάμενοι, τὸ βλαβερὸν φυλαξώμεθα: **And just as we avoid the thorns while plucking flowers in a rose garden, so also while enjoying whatever is useful in these words we guard ourselves against the harmful**: The image of thorns and roses is a common topos in classical literature (See e.g. Lucian, *How to Write History* 28 (referenced by Wilson (1975, 49) and Petronius, *Poems* 1: ‘every man shall find his own desire; there is no one thing which pleases all: one man gathers roses another thorns’), but it does also appear to have become proverbial by late antiquity, since GNaz, *Ep.* 183: ‘gather a rose out of thorns, as the proverb has it’. However a similar sentiment to Basil’s is expressed by Clement in a discussion about finding the truth within pagan knowledge: *Str.* 2.1: ‘It is a feat fit for the gardener to pluck without injury the rose that is growing among the thorns’, which adds weight to the argument that Basil may have been influenced by Clement in this work. (See Ch 3, 52-65 for more discussion.)

φυλαζόμεθα: **we guard ourselves**: Echoes the earlier advice that the soul should be guarded with all care lest some poison be taken with the honey (4.3). Basil uses the word in the same context of finding honey, and avoiding whatever is harmful.

4.10: εὐθὺς οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπισκοπεῖν ἕκαστον τῶν μαθημάτων καὶ συναρμόζειν τῷ τέλει προσῆκε, κατὰ τὴν Δωρικὴν παροιμίαν τὸν λίθον ποτὶ τὰν σπάρτον ἄγοντας: **Therefore, straightaway from the beginning, we must examine each of the lessons and make them fit together with the end, according to the Doric proverb, leading the stone to the rope**: Basil exhorts his nephews to approach every lesson they learn, every book they read, with a view to the ultimate end, which is the development of Christian virtue. They should not be distracted by the entertaining or attractive in the works they encounter, but rather take away only what contributes to their understanding of the truth.

Section 5

5.1: Καὶ ἐπειδήπερ δι' ἀρετῆς ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὸν βίον καθεῖναι δεῖ τὸν ἡμέτερον: **And since it necessary for us to enter into our life by means of virtue**: Basil changes his focus, and having encouraged his nephews to view their lessons with the ultimate end in mind, starts to consider that end. He returns to the subject of the 'other life' which he maintains is the goal of every Christian (2.2), but adds the means by which this life can be attained, namely via the path of virtue. This is not a departure from his original statement that he would consider how to read pagan literature (4.1), but rather an attempt to show how thinking about the end aim of life ought to affect the youths' reading of their texts.

ἡμᾶς ... τὸν ἡμέτερον: Basil uses the personal pronoun once more to create a sense of exclusivity for himself and his audience.

δι' ἀρετῆς: **by means of virtue**: Virtue has been mentioned as important for the nephews to imitate at 4.7, but Basil then turns his attention to the way that virtue can be seen in pagan writings.

The straightforward manner that Basil uses to introduce this concept of virtue as the key to eternal happiness and the use of the pronouns which encapsulate the Christians as an exclusive group give the impression that the ‘other life’ is obtainable by all who seek the path of virtue, and by inference, is available to all Christians. This simplicity is called into question later in the section, but for the moment Basil suggests that his nephews are fully capable of achieving their future heavenly life.

However, despite his emphasis on the need for virtue, Basil does not exactly define what he means when he uses the word. The fact that in 4.2 he states that good men ought to be imitated in words and actions suggests that that he is urging his nephews to behave in a virtuous manner in order to cultivate a character which performs virtuous deeds regularly. The nephews are not just to read about virtue in books, but the admonition to ‘imitate’ the good suggests that they should act upon what they read. (For the varying nature of virtue in Basil’s mind, see Helleman (1990, 39-41.)

εἰς ταύτην δὲ πολλὰ μὲν ποιηταῖς, πολλὰ δὲ συγγραφεῦσι, πολλῶ δὲ ἔτι πλείω φιλοσόφοις ἀνδρᾶσιν ὕμνηται, τοῖς τοιούτοις τῶν λόγων μάλιστα προσεκτέον: **we must pay especial attention to those sections of the writings which pertain to this end: the many things sung by poets, the many things praised by prose writers and still more by philosophic men:**

πολλὰ μὲν ποιηταῖς, πολλὰ δὲ συγγραφεῦσι: It is not the case that pagan writings need to be gone through with a fine-toothed comb in order to discover examples of virtuous practice or sentiment; Basil states that ‘many things’ are said about virtue in poetry and prose, suggesting that the school literary curriculum can provide many useful examples for the edification of the young Christian.

πολλῶ δὲ ἔτι πλείω φιλοσόφοις ἀνδρᾶσιν: **and still more by philosophic men:** This marks the introduction of a new idea as Basil refers to ‘philosophic men’ in addition to those types of writers he has already considered. He could be looking forward to the nephews’ later studies, but also may mention philosophers in preparation for his use of the philosopher Prodicus at 5.11. (Cf. Plutarch, *Adolescens* 16a for the idea of poetry as a training exercise for philosophy. Also Clement, *Str.*1.6 for the study of secular writings as the best preparation for understanding Christian philosophy).

There was a traditional rivalry between the study of rhetoric and philosophy, and Basil appears to be directing his nephew slightly more in the direction of the philosophical rather than the rhetorical given his comments at 4.6 about the ‘art of lying’. However, while other Christian writers regularly use the term ‘philosophy’ about the Christian life Basil himself generally does not.

τοῖς τοιούτοις τῶν λόγων μάλιστα προσεκτέον: **we must pay especial attention to those sections of the writings which pertain to this end:** The emphasis is on the absorption of the good messages by paying extra attention to them, rather than the rejection of the bad (cf. 4.2). Basil does not explain what ‘especial attention’ he has in mind for the useful passages, but since he has previously discussed the ‘imitation’ of good examples it is likely that he is thinking along those lines here.

5.2: οὐ μικρὸν γὰρ τὸ ὄφελος οἰκειότητά τινα καὶ συνήθειαν ταῖς τῶν νέων ψυχαῖς τῆς ἀρετῆς ἐγγενέσθαι, ἐπεὶπερ ἀμετάστατα πέφυκεν εἶναι τὰ τῶν τοιούτων μαθήματα, δι’ ἀπαλότητα τῶν ψυχῶν εἰς βάθος ἐνσημαινόμενα: **For it would be of no small benefit, that any relationship and acquaintance with virtue would be born in the souls of the young; since the lessons of these kinds are disposed to be the most unchanging, being imitated most deeply on account of the tenderness of their souls.:** This fascinating sentence is the first time that Basil appears not to address his nephews, but rather another adult with a concern for the education of children. Has Basil temporarily forgotten his audience, or is he addressing two groups of people at the same time as McLynn would maintain (2010, 111). The problem with the latter idea is that the interjection could be considered to undermine the efforts the Basil has made previously to imbue his nephews with a sense of their own responsibility for their learning and consideration of the useful in pagan literature. True, he speaks to them as ‘children’ (ὦ παῖδες), but his tone is not condescending or patronising. For him to suddenly speak about the youths in the third person, rather than addressing them in the second, comes as a surprise and would surely have upset the balance of equality which Basil has established in his relationship with the nephews throughout the work so far. The work may have started as an oral address, but it is likely that publication was always intended at some point (Holder 1992, 401n20), and see 5.3 for another example).

ταῖς τῶν νέων ψυχαῖς ... δι' ἀπαλότητα τῶν ψυχῶν: **the souls of the young ... on account of the tenderness of their souls:** For similar sentiments see Plato, *Rep.* 377b; 378e; Plutarch, *De Lib.* 3e-f. Basil makes a similar observation in the *Reg. Fus.* 15, stating: 'while the mind is easy to mold and as pliable as wax, taking the form of what is impressed upon it, it should be exercised from the beginning in every good discipline ... when reason enters and habits of choice develop, they will take their course from the first elements learned at the beginning.'

οἰκειότητά τινα καὶ συνήθειαν: **any relationship and acquaintance:** See 3.1 and 4.2 for other uses of the words. Basil suggests that pagan writings can be the means by which the young become familiar with virtue, rather than necessarily encouraging a familiarity with the writings for their literary merit. (See Kustas (1981, 255-6) and Eden (1997, 46-53) for consideration of Basil's understanding of οἰκονομία in relation to literature.)

ἐνσημαινόμενα: **being imitated:** from ἐνσημαίνομαι. It is used in Plato, *Rep.* 377b meaning **to stamp.**

5.3: ἢ τί ποτε ἄλλο διανοηθέντα τὸν Ἡσίοδον ὑπολάβωμεν ταυτὶ ποιῆσαι τὰ ἔπη ἃ πάντες ἄδουσιν, ἢ οὐχὶ προτρέποντα τοὺς νέους ἐπ' ἀρετήν;: **Or what else do we understand that Hesiod intended in writing these words which everybody sings, if not to persuade the young to virtue?:** Basil still appears to be addressing adults as he uses the words τοὺς νέους which he utilised previously in considering the benefit that acquaintance with virtue will be to 'the young'. He refers to Hesiod, *WD* 286-92, and suggests that the verses were well known: **words which everybody sings.** (Cf. use of the work at 1.3):

σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ ἐσθλὰ νοέων ἐρέω, μέγα νήπιε Πέρση.
τὴν μὲν τοι κακότητα καὶ ἰλαδὸν ἔστιν ἐλέσθαι
ῥηιδίως: λείη μὲν ὁδός, μάλα δ' ἐγγύθι ναίει:
τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάρουθεν ἔθηκον
ἀθάνατοι: μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐς αὐτὴν
καὶ τρηχὺς τὸ πρῶτον: ἐπὴν δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται,
ῥηιδίη δὴ ἔπειτα πέλει, χαλεπή περ ἐοῦσα.

‘To you, foolish Perses, I will speak good sense. Badness can be got easily and in shoals; the road to her is smooth, and she lives very near us. But between us and Goodness the gods have placed the sweat of our brows; long and steep is the path that leads to her, and it is rough at the first; but when a man has reached the top, then is she easy to reach, though before that she was hard.’

The passage is referred to in Plato, *Rep.* 364c-d, which Wilson (1975, 51) suggests is the more likely source for Basil than *WD* itself:

τούτοις δὲ πᾶσιν τοῖς λόγοις μάρτυρας ποιητὰς ἐπάγονται οἱ μὲν κακίας πέρι,
εὐπετείας διδόντες, ὡς “τὴν μὲν κακότητα καὶ ἰλαδὸν ἔστιν ἐλέσθαι”
“ῥηϊδίως: λείη μὲν ὁδός, μάλα δ’ ἐγγύθι ναίει:
τῆς δ’ ἀρετῆς ἰδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροισεν ἔθηκαν”
καὶ τινα ὁδὸν μακρὰν τε καὶ τραχεῖαν καὶ ἀνάντη;

‘And for all these sayings they cite the poets as witnesses, with regard to the ease and plentifulness of vice, quoting: “ Evil-doing in plenty a man shall find for the seeking;” [364d] “Smooth is the way and it lies near at hand and is easy to enter; But on the pathway of virtue the gods put sweat from the first step,” and a certain long and uphill road.’

Προτρέποντα: **encouraging, persuading**: The word is used particularly about the study of philosophy (Wilson 1975, 51), and is used again later at 5.5. It lends weight to the idea that Basil does have philosophical virtue in mind when he advocates the familiarity with it in literature.

However, Basil expresses the idea thus: ὅτι τραχεῖα μὲν πρῶτον καὶ δύσβατος, καὶ ἰδρῶτος συχνοῦ καὶ πόνου πλήρης ἢ πρὸς ἀρετὴν φέρουσα καὶ ἀνάντης ὁδός. [4] διόπερ οὐ παντὸς οὔτε προσβῆναι αὐτῇ διὰ τὸ ὄρθιον, οὔτε προσβάντι ῥαδίως ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον ἐλθεῖν. ἄνω δὲ γενομένῳ ὁρᾶν ὑπάρχει ὡς μὲν λεία τε καὶ καλή, ὡς δὲ ῥαδία τε καὶ εὐπορος καὶ τῆς ἐτέρας ἡδίων τῆς ἐπὶ τὴν κακίαν ἀγούσης, ἣν ἀθρόαν εἶναι λαβεῖν ἐκ τοῦ σύνεγγυς, ὁ αὐτὸς οὗτος ποιητῆς ἔφησεν: **That the road bearing one to virtue is rough at first, and inaccessible and requiring much sweat and full of toil and steep. For this reason not everyone can approach it on account of the steep path, and nor can those, having begun to climb it, easily get to the top. But, having got up, he begins to see that it is both level and fine, that it is both easy and passable, and more pleasant**

than the other road leading to vice, which that same poet has said, is assembled to take from near at hand:

Basil was likely to be familiar with both Hesiod and Plato, but there are significant differences between his image of the steep path and that described by the pagan writers. He introduces the two roads in a different order to the earlier authors: both Hesiod and Plato discuss the fact that vice is easily accessible to all, and there are plenty of examples of wickedness to choose from. Basil in contrast begins his description with the difficult, arduous journey that is entailed when one seeks to follow the path of virtue. He adds that the steep path turns out to be ‘more pleasant’ than the other, once the initial strenuous passage has been completed. Hesiod states something similar, agreeing that once the hill has been climbed, then virtue is easy to reach, but he does not suggest that the path following the steep hill is enjoyable as well as level and passable. Plato suggests nothing about the rewards of virtue at this point in *Rep*, nor does he add the fact that the road is said to level out after a while; he focuses on the difficulty of virtue in comparison with the ease of vice.

5.4: καὶ τῆς ἐτέρας ἡδίων τῆς ἐπὶ τὴν κακίαν ἀγούσης: **and more pleasant than the other road leading to vice:** Basil introduces the concept of the ‘rewards’ of virtue, since he states that although the road to virtue is hard, it holds greater and more benefits than the road towards vice, not just in the future life, but also along the journey. Once the initial steep path has been climbed, he states that the road levels out and does not require so much effort. Once in this situation, the person seeking to cultivate virtue will find the experience more enjoyable than he would a life of vice and ease. Basil encourages his nephews that making the choice to cultivate virtue will reap rewards in the immediate future not just after death. (See Fortin (1986, 69) for the suggestion that Basil’s version of virtue is unappealing to his audience.)

From a Christian perspective the passage recalls Matthew 7.13-14: ‘Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.’ Basil has this in mind in addition to the secular texts, and he incorporates an extra element about the path to virtue which neither pagan writer includes but which can be found in the Scripture. Matthew 7.14b states ‘only a few find

it', and Basil he adds the following between his descriptions of the two different paths of life: διόπερ οὐ παντὸς οὔτε προσβῆναι αὐτῇ διὰ τὸ ὄρθιον, οὔτε προσβάντι ῥαδίως ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον ἐλθεῖν: **For this reason not everyone can approach it on account of the steep path, and nor can those, having begun to climb it, easily get to the top:** This seems to go against the earlier suggestion that the attainment of virtue is simple, if an individual is prepared to make the necessary effort. It transpires that perhaps the life of virtue does not become the goal of all people, or indeed all Christians, but rather those who are prepared to take seriously the call to a life of faith.

The same idea is expressed in GNys, *Life of Moses* 2.158: 'The knowledge of God is a mountain steep indeed and difficult to climb – the majority of people scarcely reach its base.' (According to Jaeger (1954, 78) it is a common image in Gregory's writings). Several Christian authors use the image, and Basil may have been influenced in his fashioning of the traditional topos by Clement. *Str.* 4.2 quotes Hesiod, *WD* 289-92 and following it with Matthew 7.14: identical references to those used by Basil. (See Ch 3, 52-65 for the influence of Clement on Basil's work.)

5.5: ἐμοὶ μὲν γὰρ δοκεῖ οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἢ προτρέπων ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ ἀρετὴν καὶ προκαλούμενος ἅπαντας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι: **For it seems to me that this is nothing else than urging us on to virtue, and calling everyone to be good:**

προτρέποντα τοὺς νέους ἐπὶ ἀρετὴν/ προτρέπων ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ ἀρετὴν: Basil uses almost the same phrases before and after the reference to Hesiod, but the second time he expresses himself in inclusive language which was prevalent earlier in the work. He focuses again on his young audience rather than looking towards the adults he appeared to have been addressing. The repetition of almost the identical phrases supports the argument that this written version of Basil's address is an amalgamation of his oral delivery to an adolescent audience and a written piece intended for wider publication.

καὶ προκαλούμενος ἅπαντας ἀγαθοὺς: **and calling everyone to be good:** This contrasts with the οὐ παντὸς above (5.4) since now Basil argues that Hesiod was encouraging everyone to goodness. Certainly the secular texts do not suggest any sense of exclusivity, or that the beginning of virtue is not possible for all men, and this is the message that Basil wants his nephews to take away from the illustration.

ταῦτα διελθεῖν, καὶ ὥστε μὴ καταμαλακισθέντας πρὸς τοὺς πόνους, προαποστῆναι τοῦ τέλους: **and also to pass through these things so that we do not become soft at the sight of the work, and stop before the end**: Hesiod's passage, according to Basil, encourages people towards goodness while warning them that the route to attaining virtue is difficult, but it also urges them to continue to the finish because the path will level off eventually. Part of the reason that Basil emphasises the fact that the journey is more pleasant once the difficult heights have been scaled is a way of sweetening the pill for his nephews, suggesting that although they will go through hardships it will be worth it in the end. C.f. the promises that Virtue holds out to Herakles at 5.14. She states that he will undergo hardships and toils, and promises 'nothing pleasant' (οὐδὲ ἡδύ), although he will receive a reward at the end.

καταμαλακισθέντα: **becoming soft/ to make effeminate**: from καταμαλακίζω. It is found infrequently with the prefix in classical Greek, but used regularly by the Church Fathers. (e.g. Clement, *Str.* 4.4) (Cf. the use of τὴν τρυφήν at 5.7 concerning softness of the Phaeacians' lives in contrast to Odysseus, who is the embodiment of virtue. Just as the man who climbs the difficult path to virtue is like Odysseus, so the one who 'grows soft' and 'desists before the end' is like the luxurious Phaeacians. See also the description of Vice later in the section: καὶ ὑπὸ τρυφῆς διαρρεῖν: **flowing through with softness.**)

καὶ μέντοι καὶ εἴ τις ἕτερος ἐοικότα τούτοις τὴν ἀρετὴν ὕμνησεν. ὡς εἰς ταῦτόν ἡμῖν φέροντας τοὺς λόγους ἀποδεχώμεθα: **And indeed, if anyone else praises virtue in terms that resemble these, then let us accept the words as bearing us to the same place.:**

εἴ τις ἕτερος: **if anyone else**: i.e. other pagan writers.

ἐοικότα: **resemble, be like, look like**: Basil is happy to accept the pagan versions of virtue which resemble Christian versions, unlike other Christian writers, e.g. Lactantius,

Div. Instit. 6.5 who condemns those things which appear wise and have a semblance of virtue but in fact fall far short of proper Christian virtue and wisdom.

5.6: Ὡς δ' ἐγὼ τινος ἤκουσα δεινοῦ καταμαθεῖν ἀνδρὸς ποιητοῦ διάνοιαν: **As I have heard a certain man, skilled to understand a poet's mind:** Wilson (1975, 52) suggests that the man in question could be Libanius (GNys, *Ep.* 10 maintains that Basil's skills in oratory came from the school-room of the pagan orator, but see Ch1, 2 for a discussion of their relationship).

δεινοῦ καταμαθεῖν ἀνδρὸς ποιητοῦ διάνοιαν: **skilled to understand a poet's mind:** Basil informs his nephews that the judgements he encourages them to make about pagan texts are entirely consistent with his own style of educational experience. If Basil is setting himself up as an authority for how his nephews ought to approach their school books in opposition to a possibly pagan teacher, it is significant if the man he is thinking of here is Libanius. Basil wants the youths to adopt his way of looking at classical texts, and if he cites a pagan teacher's view on a particular author then it would confirm that Basil's erudition cannot be dismissed simply as a Christian reaction to pagan writings. In addition, if he did have Julian's rescript in mind when composing this work, the association with Libanius would be particularly important, given the close nature of the relationship between Julian and the rhetor. (If Basil is making some comment on the pagan scholarship of Libanius and Julian he would not be unique in taking such a position: Hunter (1988, 26) maintains that John Chrysostom's monastic works were written in direct opposition to the paganism of the emperor and the teacher.)

διάνοιαν: **thought, intention, purpose, mind:** The word is found several times in the address, and emphasises the need for Basil's nephews to continually consider the advice they are given by Basil and their teachers and seek to apply the useful to their lives. Cf. 1.5; 2.6; 3.3; 5.6, 5.8, 5.11, 5.12; 9.27; 10.4.

πᾶσα μὲν ἢ ποίησις τῶ Ὀμήρῳ ἀρετῆς ἐστὶν ἔπαινος: **all the poetry of Homer is praise of virtue:** The sentiment is found in Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 53 which states that Homer wrote much about virtue and vice (11). (Libanius *Maxim* 1 argues that Homer is a useful source for all types of information.)

καὶ πάντα αὐτῷ πρὸς τοῦτο φέρει, ὅ τι μὴ πάρεργον: **and everything of his bears to this end, whatever is not incidental**: The implication is that the ‘non-virtuous’ material in Homer’s poems is not essential to the main substance of the storylines.

οὐχ ἦκιστα δὲ ἐν οἷς τὸν στρατηγὸν τῶν Κεφαλλήνων πεποίηκε γυμνὸν ἐκ τοῦ ναυαγίου περισφθέντα, πρῶτον μὲν αἰδέσθαι τὴν βασιλίδα φανέντα μόνον: τοσοῦτου δεῖν αἰσχύνην ὀφλῆσαι γυμνὸν ὀφθέντα μόνον, ἐπειδὴ περ αὐτὸν ἀρετῇ ἀντὶ ἱματίων κεκοσμημένον ἐποίησε: **Not least in that which he had made the general of the Cephallenians, having been saved naked from a shipwreck, and although at first he felt shame at having appeared alone to the princess but far from deserving shame at being looked upon naked, since Homer made him arrayed with virtue instead of a cloak.:**

τὸν στρατηγὸν τῶν Κεφαλλήνων **the general of the Cephallenians**: Odysseus. The episode comes from *Odyssey* 6. (See above Ch4, 83-85 for Basil’s use and adaptation of this story.)

5.7: ἔπειτα μέντοι καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς Φαίαξι τοσοῦτου ἄξιον νομισθῆναι, ὥστε ἀφέντας τὴν τρυφὴν ἢ συνέζων, ἐκεῖνον ἀποβλέπειν καὶ ζηλοῦν ἅπαντας καὶ μηδένα Φαιάκων ἐν τῷ τότε εἶναι ἄλλο τι ἢ εὐξασθαι μᾶλλον ἢ Ὀδυσσεῖα γενέσθαι, καὶ ταῦτα ἐκ ναυαγίου περισφθέντα: **Then indeed he was also considered so worthy by the rest of the Phaeacians that, letting go of the softness with which they lived, they all looked at and admired him, and none of the Phaeacians at that time prays to be other than he was more than to become Odysseus, and him saved from shipwreck.:**

τὴν τρυφὴν: **the softness**: The Phaeacians were known for their good living, and became proverbial examples of delicacy and luxury. In *Odyssey* 8.248-9, King Alcinous says that they are most famous for their feasting, dancing and skill with the lyre (cf. 4.4). In the context the Phaeacians represent the opposite of the virtuous Odysseus, who is presented as a role model for Basil’s nephews. The Phaeacians are synonymous with softness, and Odysseus, who has the opportunity to stay on the island but chooses not

to, is a representation of the man who keeps climbing the steep path despite the difficulties it presents.

ἐκεῖνον ἀποβλέπειν καὶ ζηλοῦν ἅπαντας: **they all looked at and admired him:** Homer depicts Athene actually altering the appearance and stature of Odysseus in order to make him a more impressive figure in front of the Phaeacians (*Odyssey* 8.19-20).

5.8: ἐν τούτοις γὰρ ἔλεγεν ὁ τοῦ ποιητοῦ τῆς διανοίας ἐξηγητῆς μόνον οὐχὶ βοῶντα λέγειν τὸν Ὅμηρον: ὅτι ἀρετῆς ὑμῖν ἐπιμελητέον, ᾧ ἄνθρωποι, ἢ καὶ ναυαγήσαντι συνεκνήχεται καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς χέρσου γενόμενον γυμνὸν τιμιώτερον ἀποδείξει τῶν εὐδαιμόνων Φαιάκων: **For in these words the expounder of the poet's mind says that Homer, practically shouting, says: 'Pay attention to Virtue, O men, which swims with a shipwrecked man, and coming to land with him, even naked, will show him to be more honoured than the happy Phaeacians.'**

ᾧ ἄνθρωποι: **O men:** Basil could be quoting his expounder here, but the words are a contrast with his earlier address to his nephews as ᾧ παῖδες (1.1; 2.1). He seems to imply that during the course of the address his nephews are developing from children into young men, as they accept his advice and become capable of making their own decision to attend to virtue. Certainly it makes an effective introduction to the later story of Herakles as Basil states that the hero had to make his choice between Virtue and Vice at 'that time of life which you also are' (5.12). Just as Herakles had to make his choice, so Basil hopes that his address will assist his nephews in making their own life decisions.

τῶν εὐδαιμόνων Φαιάκων: **the happy Phaeacians:** The happiness of the Phaeacians has already been hinted at as being of an unworthy kind, reliant as it is on 'full tables' and singing. The word εὐδαίμων recalls 2.2 where Basil maintains that the goods of the world are in no way comparable with the heavenly happiness of the life to come. The Phaeacians, although classed as happy, really possess no lasting honour or joy because they are dependant on external pleasures rather than internal virtue.

5.9: καὶ γὰρ οὕτως ἔχει: **And indeed, it happens thus:** Basil endorses the message presented by Homer and his expounder, and then moves on to other writers who express a similar sentiment.

τὰ μὲν ἄλλα τῶν κτημάτων, οὐ μᾶλλον τῶν ἐχόντων ἢ καὶ οὐτινοσοῦν τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων ἐστίν: **Other belongings are no more the possessions of their owners than of anyone who can reach them:** The idea that money and other riches are constantly transferred from one person to another is a widely expressed commonplace, especially in philosophical writing (E.g. Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 555). A similar idea is found in Christian writing, e.g. Matthew 6.19; Luke 12.15-21, but the thrust of thinking in Biblical texts is that money will be lost when death comes, and that could be sooner than anyone thinks. Basil's consideration of wealth at this point in the address is more closely linked to pagan moralising than Christian. (He considers the right use of money at 9.17-21 and maintains that the only benefit which comes from having riches is the 'enjoyment' of guarding it from thieves!)

ὥσπερ ἐν παιδιᾷ κύβων τῆδε κάκεῖσε μεταβαλλόμενα: **just as in a child's game of dice they change from that man to this one:** Wilson (1975, 53) traces this reference back to *Rep.* 604c, but it is interesting that Plato does not suggest the dice is exclusively a child's game. Basil may emphasise the childish nature of games of dice because of Christians' negative feeling about games of chance. Canon 50 of the Council of Trullo forbids laymen from playing dice, while Canon 42 of the Canons of the Holy Apostles recommends that a clergyman should be deposed from his office unless he is prepared to eschew all games of dice and chance. Although these edicts were passed some time after Basil is writing, they reflect sentiment which must have been held throughout Late Antiquity. Indeed, both Basil and John Chrysostom allude to the sinful behaviour which was frequently found when men spent their time playing at dice (Basil, *Hex.* 8.8; JChrys, *Homilies* 15; 47). Earlier writers also condemned the playing of dice by adults (Clement, *Paed.* 3.11; among spurious works ascribed to Cyprian is a homily against games of chance and dice-playing: *Adversus Aleatores*).

However, while the Christians were hostile to grown men wasting their time on dice (JChrys, *Homily on 1 Corinthians* 12.9 suggests that such behaviour identifies the pagans in society, because they do not condemn the practice), the image of children

playing such games is found without a sense of disapproval. On one occasion Jerome compares Origen's youthful writing to a 'boy amusing himself with the dice-box' (*Preface to Translation of Origen on St. Luke*) suggesting that although these writings are somewhat trivial in comparison with his later treatises, there is nothing inherently wrong with them, just as there is nothing censorious in a child playing with dice. Similarly in *The Refutation of All Heresies*, Hippolytus refers to Heraclitus' use of the image of 'a sporting child, playing at his dice' (9.4). Basil may be using the word *παῖς* here to make explicit the message that he is thinking of games of chance in the context of children, rather than adults.

Given that Basil has used *παῖς* with reference to his nephews previously (1.1, 2.1), the use of the word here could also emphasise the idea that his nephews are fast leaving the realms of childhood in order to embark on the life of reason and responsibility, and that is why Basil addresses them about the virtuous life. If the subliminal message contained in the dice simile is that children play at such games but adults do not, and although adults can acquire wealth, the virtuous man understands that riches are transferred from one person to another without qualification, then Basil wishes his nephews to grasp the idea that as they develop a more mature attitude towards life with regard to virtue, so they should also cease to play childish games. Basil links those who want to keep tight hold of worldly possessions with people who play children's games, and by encouraging his audience to reject the unreasoning state of childishness as he works through his address he urges them to become examples of rational, virtuous men. (Cf. Basil's assertion in *Attende tibi* (Wagner 1950, 438) that young minds often imagine acquiring wealth in adulthood, see Ch5, 111 for discussion.)

μόνη δὲ κτημάτων ἢ ἀρετὴ ἀναφαίρετον καὶ ζῶντι καὶ τελευτήσαντι
παραμένουσα: **so of all possessions virtue alone cannot be taken away, and remains faithful to the living and the dead.**: A commonplace in philosophic writings. E.g. Seneca, *On Firmness*: 'the only possession is virtue, and of this [a man] can never be robbed'; Diogenes Laertius 6.1: 'Virtue is a weapon that cannot be taken away'.

ζῶντι καὶ τελευτήσαντι *παραμένουσα*: **remaining faithful to the living and the dead**: This phrase would have special significance for a Christian audience since it

implies, not just that an individual will be remembered as virtuous by posterity, but that virtue will go with his soul to determine what eternal fate will await him after death.

τελευτήσαντι : lit. **one who has finished (life)**. Links with τέλος at 5.5: μή ...

προαποστήναι τοῦ τέλους.

ὄθεν δὴ καὶ Σόλων μοι δοκεῖ πρὸς τοὺς εὐπόρους εἰπεῖν τό: Ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς αὐτοῖς οὐ διαμειψόμεθα / Τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸν πλοῦτον, ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ, / Χρήματα δ' ἀνθρώπων ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει: **Whence it seems to me that Solon was saying this regarding those who are rich: 'But for ourselves, we will not exchange virtue for wealth, since that is always sure ground, whereas another man has a man's money at another time.'**: Basil quotes two other classical authors who 'express similar sentiments' to Christian ideas. The first is fifth century BC Athenian statesman and lawgiver Solon, and Basil may have used Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 3 as the source for this quote (fr. 15):

'For many curs are rich, and men of class are poor,
But we'll not take their riches in exchange
For our nobility, which always stays secure,
While wealth belongs to different men by turns.'

5.10: Παραπλήσια δὲ τούτοις καὶ τὰ Θεόγνιδος, ἐν οἷς φησι τὸν θεόν, ὄντινα δὴ καὶ φησι, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸ τάλαντον ἐπιρρέπειν ἄλλοτε ἄλλως: ἄλλοτε μὲν πλουτεῖν, ἄλλοτε δὲ μηδὲν ἔχειν: **Similar to this also are the words of Theognis, in which he says that god, whoever he means, inclines the scales for men differently at one time or another, 'To be rich at another time, or to have nothing at another'**. The quotation comes from *Elegies* 157-8.

φησι τὸν θεόν ὄντινα δὴ καὶ φησι: **he says that god, whoever he means**: Cf. later 5.14 where Basil states that Herakles' reward for choosing virtue was 'to become a god', as the writer says.' The use of φημί has been used previously to identify stories which Basil has borrowed from others (e.g. 3.3). Here he uses the word to express an opinion which runs counter to his faith.

Whoever he means: Theognis mentions Zeus by name, but Basil paraphrases with a more general expression.

Theognis states that god **inclines the scales for men differently at one time or another** (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸ τάλαντον ἐπιρρέπειν ἄλλοτε ἄλλως). The image comes from *Iliad* 22.209 during the final battle between Achilles and Hektor: ‘the Father lifted on high his golden scales, [210] and set therein two fates of grievous death, one for Achilles, and one for horse-taming Hector; then he grasped the balance by the midst and raised it; and down sank the day of doom of Hector, and departed unto Hades; and Phoebus Apollo left him.’ (It is also found in *Iliad* 8.69 and 19.223.) In the passage there is no suggestion that Zeus deliberately decides which of the two heroes ought to lose the battle, indeed, the use of the scales ensures that he acts as impartial arbiter between the other gods who all support one side or the other.

There are several examples of scales used as an image in the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. E.g. Job 6.2; Proverbs 16.11; Isaiah 40.12; 40.15; Revelation 6.5. Job 31.6 states: ‘let God weigh me in honest scales’, while Daniel 5.27 announces to King Belshazzar: ‘You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting’. In these cases, as in Homer, the scales are a symbol of something which God uses in order to get an accurate picture of a human’s character and merits.

However, the lines of Theognis seem to suggest that ‘god’ has a hand in the changes of man’s fortune, since he ‘inclines the scales differently’, and the divine being is presented as synonymous with Fate.

5.11: Καὶ μὴν καὶ ὁ Κεῖός που σοφιστῆς τῶν ἑαυτοῦ συγγραμμάτων ἀδελφὰ τούτοις εἰς ἀρετὴν καὶ κακίαν ἐφιλοσόφησεν: **And also the Ceian sophist has philosophised somewhere in his writings a sister to these sentiments about virtue and vice:** Wilson (1975, 54) states that some manuscripts gloss the name Prodicus after σοφιστῆς, but considers it an interpolation in the original text. He comments on the precocity of Basil’s nephews that they could identify the philosopher from the epithet. However, although Basil is primarily concerned that the youths read their school-texts with a view to taking the useful rather than the frivolous, he nonetheless wishes to imply that he is enough of an authority on literature so his words will be accepted. Epithets like the one used here displayed a speaker’s erudition and secured his reputation as an educated man.

ἐφιλοσόφησεν: **philosophises**: At 5.1 Basil introduces philosophers as potentially useful authors for his nephews to study, and here he presents an example for them. Prodicus' story of Herakles' choice at the crossroads was used frequently by pagan and Christian writers in antiquity. His own work appears to have been lost early on, and Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.21-34 seems to have been the source for many ancient authors. (See Ch4, 87-98 for a full discussion and analysis of Basil's version of the episode in relation to other renditions.)

5.12: ἔχει δὲ οὕτω πως ὁ λόγος αὐτῷ, ὅσα ἐγὼ τοῦ ἀνδρός τῆς διανοίας μέμνημαι, ἐπεὶ τὰ γε ῥήματα οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι, πλὴν γε δὴ ὅτι ἀπλῶς οὕτως εἶρηκεν ἄνευ μέτρου: **His words went somehow thus, as much as I can remember the mind of the man, since I do not know the words for certain, except that he spoke in one way, without a metre:**

ὅσα ἐγὼ ... μέμνημαι: **as much as I can remember**: Basil maintains that he is speaking from memory, likely following his source Xenophon who states: ὅσα ἐγὼ μέμνημαι.

εἶρηκεν ἄνευ μέτρου: **he spoke ... without a metre**: a prose writer rather than a poet. Basil's nephews would not have encountered prose works with the grammarian (Cribiore 2001, 192), so here he introduces them to a story that they may not be familiar with. However, it resonates with notions Basil has previously expounded reinforcing his message and encouraging the youths to take a further step on the path to virtue.

ὅτι νέω ὄντι τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ κομιδῇ καὶ σχεδὸν ταύτην ἄγοντι τὴν ἡλικίαν, ἣν καὶ ὑμεῖς νῦν: **that when Herakles was just a young man, and passing near that time of life, which you also are now**: Basil makes a connection between Herakles and the youths, and suggests that his advice is coming at an opportune time for them since they are nearing the age at which it is appropriate for them to make decisions about their lives.

βουλευομένῳ ποτέραν τράπηται τῶν ὁδῶν: **was deliberating which of the roads he should turn himself to:** Cf. 1.1 and 5.3-5 for Basil's use of imagery of life as a journey. At 1.1 Basil's statement that he can direct his nephews to 'the safest road' is recalled here.

5.13: εἶναι γὰρ τὴν μὲν ὑπὸ κομμωτικῆς διεσκευασμένην εἰς κάλλος, καὶ ὑπὸ τρυφῆς διαρρεῖν: **For one had been equipped for beauty by embellishments, and flowed through with softness:** Vice is described as surrounded by luxury and pleasure and **flowed through with softness.** The use of τρυφή recalls 5.7 and the softness of the Phaeacians in contrast to the hard virtue of Odysseus.

5.14: ὑπισχνεῖσθαι γὰρ οὐδὲν ἀνεμῆνον οὐδὲ ἡδύ, ἀλλ' ἰδρωῶτας μυρίους καὶ πόνους καὶ κινδύνους διὰ πάσης ἡπείρου τε καὶ θαλάσσης: **For she promised no dissoluteness, nor anything pleasant, but countless sweat and toils and dangers, through every land and sea:** Virtue offers a different life to that promised by Vice, although the rewards are greater in the end.

ἀλλ' ἰδρωῶτας μυρίους καὶ πόνους: **countless sweat and toils:** Cf. 5.3: the effort needed to climb the hill to virtue. Basil reinforces his message by reiterating words he has previously used.

διὰ πάσης ἡπείρου τε καὶ θαλάσσης: **through every land and sea:** Cf. 9.2 where Basil describes those who search throughout the world for temporary luxuries. Although Herakles is promised struggles everywhere he goes his reward is great and eternal, in contrast to the pleasure-seekers who 'have no end to their toil' since they are never satisfied.

ἄθλον δὲ τούτων εἶναι θεὸν γενέσθαι, ὡς ὁ ἐκείνου λόγος: **but the prize for these things would be to become a god, as the writer says:** Neither Xenophon nor others who give accounts of this story state explicitly that Herakles became a god at the end of his life, and it is surprising that Basil seems to do so without precedent. He qualifies it with the comment 'as the writer says', so adopting the same technique he uses at 5.10 about Zeus.

ἤπερ δὴ καὶ τελευτῶντα τὸν Ἡρακλέα ξυνέπεσθαι: **Indeed in the end it was this one that Herakles followed:** Fortin (1986, 70) points out that Xenophon does not resolve the debate between Virtue and Vice, but Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertation* 4 states that Herakles ‘bade farewell to Pleasure, and committed himself to the guidance of Virtue.’

Section 6

6.1: Καὶ σχεδὸν ἅπαντες, ὧν δὴ καὶ λόγος τίς ἐστὶν ἐπὶ σοφία: **And almost all those having some reputation for wisdom:** Wilson (1975, 55) states that λόγος is not used in the sense of ‘reputation’ by Atticists. However, see Plato, *Rep.* 550a ἐν σμικρῷ λόγῳ ὄντας: **being held in slight esteem.**

At 5.1, Basil maintains that many things have been uttered about virtue by different writers, and he elaborates on the idea stating that ‘all those [with] a reputation for wisdom’ have dealt with the subject at some time or another. This reinforces the notion that the consideration of virtue is the aim of everyone who would wish to be known as wise (although Basil goes on to discuss the hypocrisy of trying to get ‘reputation for virtue’ by those who are not prepared to really cultivate the qualities (6.3)).

σοφία: **wisdom:** Used at 3.2-4 where the discussion focuses on the merits of classical learning using the simile of a plant; the leaves of which represent the ‘wisdom from outside’, while the fruit is ‘Christian truth’.

ἢ μικρὸν ἢ μεῖζον εἰς δύναμιν ἕκαστος ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτῶν συγγράμμασιν ἀρετῆς ἔπαινον διεξιῆλθον: **each of them according to his ability, to a greater or lesser extent, has passed through the praise of virtue in his writings:** This serves as a caveat: Basil has maintained that many writers with a good reputation in the pagan world do consider the question of virtue in their works and the natural consequence is that his readers will be on the look out for virtue in all that they read. However, not all discussions of virtue will be in line with Basil’s idea of Christian virtue (see Fortin 1981, 194), nor will all authors write well on the subject. Therefore by commenting that

each writer will write ‘according to his ability’, Basil concedes that the quality of consideration and the appropriateness of adopting ideas to a Christian lifestyle will vary. However, the initial approach must be the same when virtue is sought in pagan writings. (See Kustas (1981, 259-60) for the use of εἰς δύναμιν and other such expressions by Basil.)

οἷς πειστέον καὶ πειρατέον ἐπὶ τοῦ βίου δεικνύναι τοὺς λόγους: **we must obey and attempt to display their words in our lives:** Cf. 4.1; 6: Basil starts his discussion of the types of writers who present valuable moral examples in their works. As at 4.1, the emphasis is on the need not just to hear about virtue but also to apply the knowledge and moral behaviour that accompany it to everyday life. See e.g. James 1.22-4 for a Scriptural admonition consistent with this point of view. (‘Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says’.)

ὡς ὁ γε τὴν ἄκρι ῥημάτων παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις φιλοσοφίαν ἔργῳ βεβαιῶν: **For thus indeed is the man who confirms his philosophy by deed, which others confirm no further than words:** Cf. James 2.14-26 (‘What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? ...In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.’). Basil’s sentiments are identical to those expressed by the apostle, but Basil keeps his focus on the idea of pagan philosophy in anticipation of the examples he will use later (e.g. section 7). He remains consistent with the fact that he does not utilise the Bible in his address to his nephews, despite uttering Christian doctrines and sentiments.

φιλοσοφίαν: **philosophy:** It is interesting that Basil uses the word philosophy here. At 5.1 he points his readers to the words of ‘philosophic men’ as containing useful messages about virtue, and follows the comment with Prodicus’ story about Herakles, as an example of the sort of moral episode which tends towards virtue. However, up to that point Basil did not suggest that he is encouraging his nephews towards a philosophic life, nor has there been any suggestion that he places Christian doctrine and faith on the same level as classical philosophy.

Certain other Christian writers use the term philosophy about the Christian faith with great frequency, and for some, Christianity superseded pagan ideas as the ‘true

philosophy' (Justin Martyr, *Apol. Sec.* 46 argues that Socrates had an intuitive knowledge of Christ, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8 on Christianity as real philosophy). Basil appears to have been less concerned about the idea of Christianity as 'philosophy' than the other two Cappadocians. The word is found 210 times in the works of Gregory Nazianzus, while Gregory of Nyssa uses it 407 times in his writings. In contrast, Basil only refers to philosophy or uses related words 44 times.

Having added philosopher to the list of writers who can be useful to his young Christian relations in 5.1, Basil illustrates what a typical philosophical story might look like, and continues his discussion of acquiring moral virtue, but stays soundly within the area of philosophical ideas. Section 6 explicitly mentions philosophy, and in the discussion of the problem of inconsistency of behaviour and speech, refers to Plato by name. Section 7 provides a list of examples of pagan characters who, motivated by philosophy, behaved in a way which was contrary to their natural inclinations. Although the background to the ideas in section 7 is firmly based in Biblical tenets, just as the notion that words without deeds are useless draws from the scriptural letter of James, nonetheless Basil utilises pagan examples from school-texts to introduce these ideas to his audience.

οἷος πέπνυται, τοὶ δὲ σκιαὶ ἀΐσσοι: **By these he has breath; the others dart about like shadows:** From *Odyssey* 10.495, referring to Tiresias in the Underworld. It is also quoted by Plutarch, *Marcus Cato* 27.4 referring to Scipio, and Plato, *Rep.* 86d has it included in lines which ought to be purged from Homer, since they encourage a fear of death in those that read it.

σκιαὶ: **shadows:** Cf. 2.4, where Basil discusses the good of the earthly life in comparison with the life to come after death, and states that the earthly good is 'as full as a shadow'.

6.2: Καί μοι δοκεῖ τὸ τοιοῦτον παραπλήσιον εἶναι, ὡσπερ ἂν εἰ ζωγράφου θαυμαστόν τι οἷον κάλλος ἀνθρώπου μιμησαμένου, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς εἶη τοιοῦτος ἐπὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, οἷον ἐπὶ τῶν πινάκων ἐκεῖνος ἔδειξεν: **And it seems to me that it closely resembles this, just as when a painter is imitating some wonderful beauty of a man, and he turns out to be just such a kind in truth as the painter**

shows him on his canvas: Wilson (1975, 56) identifies Plato, *Rep.* 472d as reminiscent of this thought, although the discussion is different. Plato suggests that a painter's art is no less regarded if the perfect specimen he presents in his painting is found not to exist, whereas Basil uses the image to suggest that the highest level of consistency is achieved when the perfect portrait is an exact replica of its model.

6.3: ἐπεὶ τό γε λαμπρῶς μὲν ἐπαινέσαι τὴν ἀρετὴν εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ μακροῦς ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς ἀποτείνειν λόγους, ἰδίᾳ δὲ τὸ ἡδὺ πρὸ τῆς σωφροσύνης καὶ τὸ πλεον ἔχειν πρὸ τοῦ δικαίου τιμᾶν, εἰκέναι φαίην ἂν ἔγωγε τοῖς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ὑποκρινομένοις τὰ δράματα: **For indeed, brilliantly praising virtue in public, and extending lofty words on its behalf, but in private to honour pleasure instead of temperance, and to honour having plenty instead of righteousness, I for my part would say, resembles the plays by actors on the stage.**: Criticism of those individuals who do not live morally consistent lives was frequent in classical literature, see e.g. Seneca, *Ep.* 75.4. It is also found in Scripture (e.g. James 2.14-26).

ἐπεὶ τό γε λαμπρῶς μὲν ἐπαινέσαι τὴν ἀρετὴν εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ μακροῦς ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς ἀποτείνειν λόγους: **For indeed, brilliantly praising virtue in public, and extending lofty words on its behalf:** The phraseology is hyperbolic: 'brilliantly praising', 'extend lofty words'. Basil creates an image of a confident orator, extolling virtue to a rapt audience, but his virtue is in word only: he does not practise what he preaches. It recalls 4.6 where Basil states that orators ought not to be imitated 'in their art of lying', and the behaviour he records here would fit into that category. Certainly he speaks in general terms about the fact that one should not present a different character in public from that seen in private, but it seems possible that he has his earlier comments also in mind.

εἰς τὸ μέσον: **in public:** Photius, *Lexicon* states that τὸ Μέσον was the name of one of the law courts in Athens (Also Scholia on Aristophanes, *Wasps* 120 (LSJ A.III.8)). Basil studied in Athens and if the name was still used or if it had passed down in proverb then he could be making a pun here. It would be particularly likely if he is imagining orators speaking in this passage.

μακροὺς ... λόγους: **lofty words**: The phrase is found in Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.1 and Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 14.1091a (καὶ ἔοικεν ἐν αὐτοῖς εἶναι ὁ Σιμωνίδου μακρὸς λόγος: γίγνεται γὰρ ὁ μακρὸς λόγος ὡσπερ ὁ τῶν δούλων ὅταν μηθὲν ὑγιᾶς λέγωσιν: ‘and it seems that in them we have a case of Simonides’ “long story”; for men have recourse to the “long story,” such as slaves tell, when they have nothing satisfactory to say.’). Basil’s sense parallels Aristotle’s use of the phrase, since in both cases the words are uttered with little substance to back them up.

ἰδίᾳ δὲ τὸ ἡδὺ πρὸ τῆς σωφροσύνης καὶ τὸ πλεόν ἔχειν πρὸ τοῦ δικαίου τιμᾶν: **but in private to honour pleasure instead of temperance, and to honour having plenty instead of righteousness**:

ἰδίᾳ: **in private**: Contrasts with τὸ μέσον: **in public**.

τὸ ἡδὺ: **pleasure**: The promise of pleasure held out by Vice is contrasted with the hard work and ‘nothing pleasant’ offered by Virtue (5.13-14).

τῆς σωφροσύνης: **temperance**: A philosophical term, translated variously as prudence, moderation, sobriety and self-control. It is found in Scripture: Acts 26.25; 1 Timothy 2.9; 15. It is used 14 times by Plato in *Laws*, and 25 times in *Rep.* often in conjunction with words for wisdom, courage and justice. (See e.g. *Laws* 964b; *Rep.* 487a; 504a). Lampe cites its similar use in the Church Fathers, as well as the fact it is linked with the virtues: δικαιοσύνη, ἀνδρεία, εὐσέβεια and φρόνησις. (See e.g. Clement, *Paed.* 2.13: ‘And the excellence of man is righteousness, and temperance, and manliness, and godliness.’)

τὸ πλεόν ἔχειν: **having plenty**: The desire for wealth is mentioned by Basil at 9.17, where he compares those who acquire much money for its own sake to dragons who sleep on their gold.

πρὸ τοῦ δικαίου: **instead of righteousness**: LSJ states that the word used in Homer means ‘observant of custom’ and can also denote a ‘good citizen’, also in later authors.

It carries connotations of being ‘observant of duty’, both to the gods and men, hence the translation as ‘righteousness’ (E.g. *Odyssey* 13.209). However, it comes to mean ‘just’ in the sense of legal correctness. Lampe states that in Christian writers the word generally means ‘just’ when concerning God, and ‘righteous’ when concerning man.

ἐουκέναι φαίην ἄν ἔγωγε τοῖς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς ὑποκρινομένοις τὰ δράματα: **I for my part would say, resembles the plays by actors on the stage:** The second reference Basil makes to theatre (see 4.5). The issue here is not about the types of scenes performed by the actors, but rather the fact that they pretended to be something that they were not. (See Puchner (2002, 307) for the church’s objection to the theatre on theological grounds).

τοῖς ... ὑποκρινομένοις: **the actors:** The original word meant **answer**, but it came to have the sense of ‘hypocrite’ in modern English which reflects the attitudes of the early church towards the theatre and those who performed on the stage (Puchner 2002, 307).

John Chrysostom goes a step further than Basil and paints all pagan philosophers as actors, stating that they dress as philosophers, but that is as far as their philosophy takes them. He contrasts them with the Christians who he says, are imbued with their philosophical doctrines, and also act on what they believe (*Homilies of the Statues* 19.3).

οἱ ὡς βασιλεῖς καὶ δυνάσται πολλάκις εἰσέρχονται, οὔτε βασιλεῖς ὄντες οὔτε δυνάσται, οὐδὲ μὲν οὖν τυχὸν ἐλεύθεροι τὸ παράπαν: **For those men who often appear as kings or lords, are in reality neither kings, nor lords, nor indeed are they even free men at all:** This idea was a commonplace (Wilson 1975, 56), but plays themselves sometimes suggested that the performers were not free men, and when threats of corporal punishment were made if the play was not performed well it tended to imply slave status (e.g. Plautus, *Asinaria* 2-3, as discussed, with others, by Brown (2002, 234-36). (See Ch3, 70-72 for a fuller consideration of how the Church Fathers regarded the theatre.)

6.4: εἶτα μουσικὸς μὲν οὐκ ἂν ἐκὼν δέξαιτο ἀνάρμοστον αὐτῷ τὴν λύραν εἶναι, καὶ χοροῦ κορυφαῖος μὴ ὅτι μάλιστα συνάδοντα τὸν χορὸν ἔχειν: **Also, a musician would not willingly accept his lyre being out of tune, and the leader of the chorus would not allow the chorus not to be singing in unison:** The image of a musician would have been a familiar one to Basil's audience: tragedy was no longer performed by troupes of actors, but the works were made popular by the *tragodios*, a single singer who wore a mask, and often carried a lyre.

αὐτὸς δέ τις ἕκαστος διαστασιάσει πρὸς ἑαυτόν, καὶ οὐχὶ τοῖς λόγοις ὁμολογοῦντα τὸν βίον παρέξεται: **So why does each man form himself into separate factions, and not make his life agree with his words?:** A similar sentiment is found in Seneca, *Ep.* 75.4.

The concept of internal conflict is familiar one to Christian writers, and found in Paul's letters (e.g. Romans 7.23; Galatians 5.17; also 1 Peter 2.11). However, although the Biblical texts declare the existence of an internal war which must be waged between the various aspects of the human character, Basil's discussion approaches it from a different perspective. The impression given by Paul is that the virtuous and sinful sides of his personality strive to gain supremacy within him, so that he sometimes does the good things that he wishes to do, but also sometimes commits negative acts which he does not wish to do. Basil does not so much imply an internal battle as the idea that the two sides co-exist alongside each other, and the virtuous is displayed when it is right to do so, but the bad is equally treasured, and is the part that is most indulged when away from a critical audience. (C.f. JChrys, *Homily on St. Matthew* 6.16 in which he criticises those who put on displays of virtue entirely for the sake of observers, but have no desire to be virtuous for its own sake.)

In a similar way, the Emperor Julian's *Rescript on Teachers* (*Ep.* 36) bases the argument that Christians should not be teachers on the concept that 'when a man thinks one thing and teaches his pupils another... he fails to be an honest man'. Julian claimed that school-teachers professed to teach morals as much as literacy and therefore those who educate the young, 'ought to be men of upright character, and ought not to harbour in their souls opinions irreconcilable with what they publicly profess'. Since Christians taught the works of Homer but did not believe in what he wrote about the gods, Julian

maintained that they were not honest and therefore should be prohibited from the classroom.

διαστασιάσει from διαστασιάζω: **to set at variance, form into factions**: Most frequently used of civil unrest and political dissention. (However, Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* 3.8.5 (361): ἢ τί τὰ φίλτατα διαστασιάζομεν, σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν;: ‘why do we set our soul and body, which are such dear companions, at such variance?’: the only example in LSJ of this usage. Lampe cites only Synesius of Cyrene, *Letter* 95.)

6.5: ἀλλ’ ἡ γλῶττα μὲν ὁμώμοκεν, ἡ δὲ φρῆν ἀνώμοτος, κατ’ Εὐριπίδην ἐρεῖ: **But, does he say, according to Euripides: ‘Although the tongue swears, the mind does not swear?’**: Euripides, *Hippolytus* 612. Theatrical texts were read in school in the fourth century, even after the dramatic art in its original form had died out, so it is no surprise that Basil should be familiar with Euripides. He quotes from comedy and tragedy in his letters, although there are perhaps fewer references to plays in this work than might be expected (See Webb 2007 for suggestions).

The line is quoted by two Church Fathers: Origen (*Contra Celsum* 8.44) and Justin Martyr (*First Apology* 39), which may suggest that the phrase had entered into popular proverb, and Basil is thinking of that, rather than the play itself.

καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν ἀγαθὸς πρὸ τοῦ εἶναι διώξεται: **And will he pursue the goal of seeming to be, in place of actually being good?:**

διώξεται: future of διώκω: Recalls Basil’s use of it at 2.3. He advises his nephews that they should ‘love and pursue’ those things which lead to virtue. The same word here emphasises the fact that the man who ‘pursues’ the appearance of virtue but not the virtue itself is directing his efforts towards entirely the wrong thing.

ἀλλ’ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἔσχατος τῆς ἀδικίας ὄρος, εἴ τι δεῖ Πλάτωνι πείθεσθαι, τὸ δοκεῖν δίκαιον εἶναι μὴ ὄντα: **But this is the most extreme boundary of unrighteousness, if we can be persuaded by Plato, to seem to be righteous but not being so.:** *Rep.* 361a: ἐσχάτη γὰρ ἀδικία δοκεῖν δίκαιον εἶναι μὴ ὄντα: ‘For the

height of injustice is to seem just without being so'. (See also Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.13; GNaz, *Or.* 43.60: 'For his aim was ever to be, not to seem, most excellent.')

Section 7

7.1: Τοὺς μὲν οὖν τῶν λόγων, οἱ τὰς τῶν καλῶν ἔχουσιν ὑποθήκας, οὕτως ἀποδεχόμεθα: **Therefore, if these men have made suggestions of good in their writings, we will accept them thus:** Cf. 5.1: Basil says that special attention must be paid to virtue when it is present in pagan writings.

τὰς τῶν καλῶν ... ὑποθήκας: **suggestions of good (things):** As Basil encourages his nephews to take hold of the 'good' things found in literature he prepares them for a closer look at examples from pagan texts which could be useful. The first sections of the address have established the Christian 'backdrop', that must be ever present when the youths interact with classical literature, but Basil begins to engage with pagan examples. However, having introduced the word 'philosophy' at 6.1, and referred to Prodicus by means of an epithet rather than in a straightforward manner, Basil has demonstrated that he is knowledgeable about the literature he expounds for the youths, and can discuss it as a cultured man, fully conversant with classical writings, rather than as a unlettered Christian voice.

ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ πράξεις σπουδαῖαι τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν ἢ μνήμης ἀκολουθία πρὸς ἡμᾶς διασώζονται, ἢ ποιητῶν ἢ συγγραφέων φυλαττόμεναι λόγοις, μηδὲ τῆς ἐντεῦθεν ὠφελείας ἀπολειπόμεθα: **Then also the excellent accomplishments of men of old which have been preserved up to our time as an examples, either by memory, or being kept by the words of the poets or historians, let us not ignore help from there:**

πράξεις σπουδαῖαι: **excellent/ earnest accomplishments:** Cf. 4.1 'the deeds or words of good men' which ought to be imitated when poets describe them in their writings.

σπουδαῖα: **excellent/ earnest**: It is found in the New Testament with the general meaning of ‘diligent/ earnest’, while in Attic writers can simply mean ‘good/ excellent/ worthy of attention’. Lampe has no citation of it used as an adjective, although states it found in compounds meaning ‘serious’. Eusebius and Athenagoras mention the verb σπουδάζω in the passive, with reference to literary works as ‘be studied, be composed’.

τῶν παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν: **of men of old**: Cf. 1.4: ‘you who associate with the well-regarded of the ancient men by means of the words they have left behind’. In the first section Basil refers to the writers whose works are expounded to the nephews by their school teachers. In this context he refers to the men who are the subjects of those writings. The phrase is common in pagan and Christian writers, particularly when suggesting that ancient characters can provide role models. See e.g. Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 104d; *De Herodoti malignitate* 857f; GNaz, *Carmina Moralia* 25.33; JChrys, *De Inani* 79. Plato, *Protagoras* 326a: ἐν οἷς πολλὰ μὲν νοουθετήσεις ἔνεισιν πολλὰ δὲ διέξοδοι καὶ ἔπαινοι καὶ ἐγκώμια παλαιῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν, ἵνα ὁ παῖς ζηλῶν μιμῆται καὶ ὀρέγεται τοιοῦτος γενέσθαι: ‘[at school] they meet with many admonitions, many descriptions and praises and eulogies of good men in times past, that the boy in envy may imitate them and yearn to become even as they.’

ἢ μνήμης ... διασώζονται: **which have been preserved ... either by memory**: Possibly referring to events which are in the more recent past than things written by classical writers. Although Basil is writing primarily about pagan examples, it is very likely that he would also have had Christian examples in mind, in a similar way to John Chrysostom.

Basil himself was very aware of the importance of the handing down of doctrine and good example through tradition and memory. He and his peers celebrated the example of local martyrs at the annual services commemorating their deaths (Leemans, et al. 2003, 15; 56) and he emphasised his acceptance of right doctrine and faith from his grandmother, Macrina, who had received it from Gregory Thaumaturgus (*Ep.* 223).

In addition to the role of memory in Basil's own life, there is also the emphasis placed on the 'tradition' of the church: the handing down of rituals and doctrine from the apostles themselves to the church in Late Antiquity. The idea that the doctrines which had been preserved in memory came from the earliest Christians was important since one of the common charges levelled against the heretics was that they were introducing novel theological ideas which were therefore unorthodox.

μνήμης: Can mean 'memory', but can also refer to something written, although in the sense of 'official' record, rather than literature.

ἢ ποιητῶν ἢ συγγραφέων φυλαττόμεναι λόγοις: **or being kept by the words of the poets or historians:** Cf. 2.7 and 5.1 where Basil lists those types of writers who have produced work which will be useful in the cultivation of virtue.

7.2: οἶον, ἐλοιδῶρει τὸν Περικλέα τῶν ἐξ ἀγορᾶς τις ἀνθρώπων: ὁ δὲ οὐ προσεῖχε: καὶ εἰς πᾶσαν διήρκεσε τὴν ἡμέραν, ὁ μὲν ἀφειδῶς πλύνων αὐτὸν τοῖς ὀνειδέσιν, ὁ δέ, οὐ μέλων αὐτῷ. εἶτα, ἐσπέρας ἤδη καὶ σκοτούς ἀπαλλαττόμενον μόλις ὑπὸ φωτὶ παρέπεμψε Περικλῆς, ὅπως αὐτῷ μὴ διαφθαρεῖν τὸ πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν γυμνάσιον: **For example, a certain man from the agora was railing at Perikles, and he did not take any notice of him; they held out for the whole day, the one unsparingly abusing the other with reproaches, the other ignoring him. Then, when it was already evening and dark, Perikles, scarcely being left alone by the man, escorted him home, so that his training in philosophy would not be utterly destroyed.**

The episode is found in Plutarch, *Life of Perikles* 5, although in that version, Perikles instructed his servant to take the man home rather than accompanying him himself. However, the tone of Plutarch's story fits with the message that Basil wants his nephews to take from the episode: he (Plutarch) is clear that Perikles was genuinely motivated by philosophy, and allowed it to regularly govern his actions. (e.g. 5.4: 'Zeno, when men called the austerity of Perikles a mere thirst for reputation ... urged them to have some such thirst for reputation themselves, with the idea that then very assumption of nobility might in time produce, all unconsciously, something like an eager and habitual practice of it'.)

ὅπως αὐτῷ μὴ διαφθαρεῖ τὸ πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν γυμνάσιον: **so that his training in philosophy would not be utterly destroyed**: The purpose of Perikles' actions was not altruistic, but self-beneficial; to make into deeds the words that he read, and so ensure a consistency of character within himself. This is a perfect example of the type of behaviour Basil encouraged his readers towards in section 6.

This is the first time that Basil has suggested that philosophy could have some personal, earthly benefit, rather than just being the means to salvation (although cf. the pleasant outlook from the path to virtue after the hard steep part is over). It appears that he is seeking ways to present virtue as the preferable option, rather than just the morally right one, and the Perikles story serves this purpose. Perikles does not suffer the man's abuse in silence or provide assistance to his enemy just because it is the morally correct course of action, or because it will help in the cultivation of virtue for its own sake. Rather he does the right thing because it will serve him and the development of his character, and mean that he is not torn inside by a conflict between knowing what he should do and not doing it (cf. James 4.17). He will be cultivating virtue, but the benefit will be the absence of pain and confusion rather than just the knowledge that he has acted virtuously.

Basil's encouragement towards virtue rests on two arguments, the first is that it will be rewarded with the goods of the world to come; the second is the immediate rewards which make a virtuous life more pleasant than the other less-virtuous option. (Cf. the endless toils of those seeking after luxury and exotic foods, 9.2-3).

7.3: πάλιν τις Εὐκλείδη τῷ Μεγαρόθεν παροξυνθεὶς θάνατον ἠπειλήσεν καὶ ἐπώμοσεν: ὁ δὲ ἀντώμοσεν ἧ μὴν ἰλέωσασθαι αὐτόν, καὶ παύσειν χαλεπῶς πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔχοντα: **Again, a certain man, having been provoked by Eucleides of Megara took an oath and threatened to kill him. However, he (Eucleides) swore in return that he would truly appease the man and make him stop being angry towards him.**

The episode is found in Plutarch, *De Cohib.* 462c and *De Fraternali Amore* 489d. For a discussion of this passage and others as preparation for the youths' later life

experiences, see Ch5, 102-3. Euclides was a great admirer of Socrates, and often the subject of improving anecdotes, see e.g Diogenes Laertius 2.5.30; 2.10.106-8.

πόσου ἄξιον τῶν τοιούτων τι παραδειγμάτων εἰσελθεῖν τὴν μνήμην ἀνδρὸς ὑπὸ ὀργῆς ἤδη κατεχομένου: **How valuable is it that examples of this kind should come to the memory of men restraining their passion?**: Basil suggests that the examples of good behaviour can be recalled by people when they are experiencing similar situations and are on the threshold of succumbing to instinct and passion.

ὀργῆς: **passion**: It is used 89 times in the New Testament, usually translated as ‘anger’ in the context of human characteristic (e.g. Ephesians 4.31) and ‘wrath’ when referring to God (see e.g. John 3.36; Romans 1.18; 1 Thessalonians 5.9; Revelation 14.10; 16.19; 19.15). It is frequently found in conjunction with θυμός in lists of negative behaviour (e.g. Ephesians 4.31; Colossians 3.8). Basil considers the distinction between the two words in the context of human emotion in *Adv. Eos* (See Rousseau (1994, 225) and above, Ch5, 106.)

7.4: τῆ τραγωδία γὰρ οὐ πιστευτέον ἀπλῶς λεγούσῃ, ἐπ’ ἐχθροὺς θυμὸς ὀπλίζει χεῖρα: **For one must not be persuaded by the tragedian when he says, ‘simply, against enemies anger arms the hand’:**

[The Migne edition puts ἀπλῶς as part of Basil’s text, but Wilson (1975, 27) keeps it in quotation marks, presumably because the original line reads: ἀπλοῦς ἐπ’ ἐχθροῖς μῦθος ὀπλίζειν χεῖρα (Euripides, *Rhesus* 84).]

This is the second time that Basil quotes Euripides as an anti-exemplum: identifying something that a pagan writer states which Basil does not want his nephews to attend to (see 6.5 for the first occasion). By using literature in this way, Basil demonstrates to the youths that not everything in classical literature is virtuous, and they should be on their guard against it, seeking to identify the bad as well as the good. (Cf. 4.2, and Fortin (1981, 195-6) for the opposite opinion.)

In discussing the use of comparison, Basil states: ‘if there is some relationship between [pagan and Christian] writings, then the knowledge of them would be useful to us. But

if there is not, then indeed the act of placing them side by side to observe the difference would be no small matter to making sure of the better one' (3.1). However, the majority of Basil's examples and references up to this point have been positive ones, showing the youths where pagan virtue recalls Christian virtue, and therefore providing examples which can be copied in order to acquire the right behaviour and qualities. With his use of quotation from tragedy Basil goes on to illustrate the practice of the second part of his statement.

Garnett (1981, 212) has pointed out that the problem with Basil's advice lies in the fact that the youths would need knowledge of Christian virtue in order to make the judgement as to whether a sentiment in pagan literature was useful or not, but Basil suggests how they might approach this angle. Section 7 is the first time Basil makes close links between virtue as present in pagan texts and Christian morality. The examples of pagan worthies he uses exhibit behaviour consistent with the commands contained in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, found most fully in Matthew 5.

It is significant that at the point where Basil might be seen to put himself at odds with the pagan teachers who the youths learn their literature from, he supports his arguments and perspective with specifically Christian adages, rather than taking a general moral line. At 4.4 where he rejects the things that the poets might say about the multiplicity of gods, he simply states that such things should be ignored since they are clearly inconsistent with Christian belief. However, this sentiment, particularly the comment about the bad behaviour of the gods, would not necessarily place the young men in opposition to their tutors, since the immorality of the divinities was a problem for pagan thinkers as much as Christians. A greater problem arises when Basil suggests ideas which conflict more obviously with pagan philosophy.

Basil quotes Euripides and maintains that the sentiment found in his play is a wrong one, which ought to be ignored. The practice he uses is the one he advocates at 3.1; alongside the positive examples from pagan history which prove to be useful in understanding Christian tenets, is an example which highlights the differences between heathen and Christian sentiment.

θυμὸς: **anger**: rather than ὀργή as used previously. However, the two words are often found together in passages of Scripture (7.3).

Wilson (1975, 58) points out that Basil's quotation is in reality inaccurate, since he should be using μῦθος rather than θυμὸς. The words are similar, although have different meanings. It is possible that Basil has misremembered, or confused the sounds of the letters in order to quote the wrong word. Basil goes on to repeat θυμὸς in the following line, keeping the word, rather than reverting to the original ὀργῆς .

ἀλλὰ μάλιστα μὲν μηδὲ διανίστασθαι πρὸς θυμὸν τὸ παράπαν: εἰ δὲ μὴ ῥάδιον τοῦτο, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ χαλινὸν αὐτῷ τὸν λογισμὸν ἐμβάλλοντας, μὴ ἔαν ἐκφέρεσθαι περαιτέρω: **But while we should especially leave aside anger absolutely, if this is not easy to do then putting in reason, just like a bit, we must bear it to go no further:** Several Bible verses recommend that Christians should avoid becoming angry (e.g. Proverbs 29.8; Ephesians 4.26; 4.31; Colossians 3.8; James 1.19-20).

εἰ δὲ μὴ ῥάδιον τοῦτο: **if this is not easy to do:** Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.9: 'it is a hard task to be good' suggests that anger is easily provoked, but the hardest task is learning to become angry only at the 'right' person rather than everyone (Cf. 8.12). A similar sentiment is found in Plutarch, *De Lib.* 10d-e citing the examples of Plato and Archytus.

ἀλλ' ὥσπερ χαλινὸν αὐτῷ τὸν λογισμὸν ἐμβάλλοντας, μὴ ἔαν ἐκφέρεσθαι περαιτέρω: **then putting in reason, just like a bit, we must bear it to go no further:** Cf. James 3.3 on the power of the tongue ('When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal').

Wilson (1975, 58) states that the image of the bit is a common one in classical writing and cites Plato, *Phaedrus* 254. Plutarch, *On Moral Virtue* 6 and *Adolescens* 33f. Cf. Clement, *Paed.* 3.12: 'A horse is guided by a bit, and a bull is guided by a yoke, and a wild beast is caught in a noose. But man is transformed by the Word.'

7.5: Ἐπαναγάγωμεν δὲ τὸν λόγον αὖθις πρὸς τὰ τῶν σπουδαίων πράξεων παραδείγματα: **But let us lead our words again to the examples of**

earnest deeds: Basil focuses again on positive examples from history. The use of τῶν σπουδαίων πράξεων repeats the words at the beginning of the section, emphasising Basil's return to his topic.

Παραδείγματα: **examples (of behaviour):** Cf. Plutarch, *Adolescens* 34c on the benefit of studying many useful examples.

ἔτυπτε τις τὸν Σωφρονίσκου Σωκράτην εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ πρόσωπον ἐμπεσῶν ἀφειδῶς: ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀντήρεν, ἀλλὰ παρεῖχε τῷ παροينوῦντι τῆς ὀργῆς ἐμφορεῖσθαι, ὥστε ἐξοιδεῖν ἤδη καὶ ὕπουλον αὐτῷ τὸ πρόσωπον ὑπὸ τῶν πληγῶν εἶναι: **A certain man, having fallen upon Socrates, the son of Sophroniscos, was striking him unsparingly about the face. He did not rise up against him, but suffered the drunkard to fulfil his impulse, so that his face was swollen and bruised from the blows:** The story is found, with altered details in Diogenes Laertius 6.33 and 6.89 about different people (Diogenes and Crates respectively), and Gregory Nazianzus also relates it in *Or.* 4.72 concerning Antisthenes. Plutarch, *De Lib.* 10c has a story about Socrates being kicked by a 'bold and impudent youth' against whom he took no personal revenge, since he likened the boy to a donkey, saying that he would not kick an animal back if it harmed him. The similarity between the Socrates' episode in Plutarch and the stories told by Diogenes and Gregory suggest that the details may have merged in Basil's mind, causing him to make Socrates the subject of the anecdote.

ἀλλὰ παρεῖχε τῷ παροينوῦντι τῆς ὀργῆς ἐμφορεῖσθαι: **but suffered the drunkard to fulfil his impulse:** It is interesting that Basil takes up various details from the different accounts of his story. Diogenes is said to have been 'roughly handled' by 'revellers' (εἰσελθῶν ποτε ... εἰς νέων συμπόσιον ... πληγὰς ἔλαβε), which implies that high spirits, accompanied by some alcohol, were to blame for his blows. However, Basil describes his perpetrator as 'a drunkard' (παροينوῦντι), and suggests that the man had no good, or even accidental, reason for man-handling Socrates, but was simply out of control on account of his wine consumption.

τῆς ὀργῆς ἐμφορεῖσθαι: **to fulfil his impulse:** ὀργῆς is used once more, linking this episode with the previous examples.

Certainly, the examples of men the youths are to imitate are the characters of Perikles, Eucleides and Socrates, but Basil acknowledges that the behaviour displayed by these ‘heroes of virtue’ is not easy to achieve. He concedes that to put aside anger is a difficult task, but justifies the knowledge of these tales by saying that remembrance of them will help someone who is in the grip of an angry impulse by demonstrating the right behaviour, and so assist him in ceasing from his immoral action.

The fact that the man who beats Socrates is said to be in the grip of ὀργῆς provides Basil with another ‘anti-exemplum’, albeit in an understated manner. He does not explicitly hold up the drunkard as the antithesis of Socrates’ virtuous approach, but there is the unspoken idea that if only the man had known about and recalled those examples previously mentioned to help to suppress passion, he would have stopped himself from harming the philosopher.

In this way Basil is able to demonstrate a cautionary tale to his nephews. He urges them to become like Socrates and Perikles, but if they do not take his advice and learn to restrain their natural impulses they are in danger of becoming the opposite type of man; the type presented as the villains of these particular stories (Cf. 1.3: the three types of man from *WD* 293-7, and Basil’s encouragement for his nephews not to be like the third kind of individual). He uses a similar technique in *Adv. Eos*, describing the physical effects which anger has on a person, and exhorting his hearers to avoid appearing in the same way. (See Ch5, 104-5.)

ὡς δ’ οὖν ἐπαύσατο τύπτων, ἄλλο μὲν οὐδὲν ὁ Σωκράτης ποιῆσαι, ἐπιγράψαι δὲ τῷ μετώπῳ λέγεται, ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντι τὸν δημιουργόν: Ὁ δεῖνα ἐποίει: [7] καὶ τοσοῦτον ἀμύνασθαι: **Therefore, when he ceased his striking, Socrates did nothing except, as it is said, write on his forehead, just like a craftsman on a statue, ‘what’s-his-name’ did this; and so he defended himself only this much:** Gregory Nazianzus gives the same outcome to the story; the wounded party ‘wrote upon his forehead’ the name of his attacker. Neither writer suggests the method of writing employed and it is in Diogenes’ accounts that the idea makes more sense, since the names are written on a sign hung round Diogenes’ neck (6.33) or on a label which was then stuck to Crates’ forehead (6.89).

Basil also differs from Gregory in that he suggests Socrates took a small revenge on the man hitting him, since he ‘defended himself only this much’, by writing his name on his head. However, Gregory interprets the same action differently, writing that Antisthenes wrote the name of the man ‘perhaps in order to accuse him more forcibly’.

7.7: ταῦτα σχεδὸν εἰς ταὐτὸν τοῖς ἡμετέροις φέροντα, πολλοῦ ἄξιον εἶναι μιμήσασθαι τοὺς τηλικούτους φημί: **Since these things bring us near to these tenets of ours, I say that there is much value in those of your age imitating them:**

Cf. 3.1: ‘if there is some relationship between one another of the writings, then the knowledge of them would be useful to us’ and 5.5: ‘if anyone else praises virtue in terms that resemble these, then let us accept the words as bearing us to the same place.’ The previous statements carried the degree of uncertainty: ‘if there is some affinity’ etc, but here Basil unequivocally states that the examples he cites relate directly to Christian philosophy.

μιμήσασθαι: **imitating**: Used before at 4.2, 4.4 and 4.6. Basil reiterates the idea that the ‘actions of good men’ are worthy of imitation, but the difference here is that the examples he holds up are of true characters, rather than fictional individuals constructed by poets.

τοὺς τηλικούτους: **those of your age/ of a certain age**: The word can be used as an indication of youth, but can also imply great age (LSJ). So the tone here is not necessarily suggesting that the youths are very young and so should hear the stories, but possibly rather than they are ‘such an age’, i.e. have come to the right age to be thinking about how to live and behave, and which role models would be useful in guiding them towards the right path of life. The term echoes that used 5.11, referring to Herakles at the crossroads, when he was ‘passing near that time of life, which you also are now’.

φημί: **I say**: Basil uses the voice of authority, used previously at 1.4, where he established his credentials for addressing the young men.

Throughout the address Scriptural foundations lie beneath Basil’s argument, even if they are not explicitly expressed. This seems to be because, as stated in 1 and 2, that the youths are not old enough to have a thorough knowledge of the Bible, and have not

been exposed to the Scriptures in such a way as to make them familiar with the Christian mysteries (2.5-6). However, since Basil has established that there are likenesses between pagan and Christian literature, he illustrates just how scripture and classical writings overlap, and draws on any Biblical knowledge that his nephews might have.

The examples Basil uses in this section all relate to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, found in its fullest form in Matthew 5. He does not state which Biblical precepts he has in mind when he claims the affinity between classical and Christian culture, but the examples are surely deliberately chosen and picked because they highlight precepts which the nephews would have been familiar with. (Ferguson (1999, 82) suggests that the material contained in the Sermon on the Mount was particularly used in the training of new converts and those approaching the catechumenate and for this reason the influence of these precepts on the church was significant. Basil's use of them in his address identifies teaching which his nephews would have received or be about to encounter, especially if they are being encouraged to become catechumens.)

The fact that Basil does not make the links between the pagan stories and the tenets expressed in the Sermon on the Mount explicit when he recalls the anecdotes is possibly because he wants to see whether the youths can draw their own conclusions. In a similar manner to the way that he introduces his first reference to Hesiod, *WD* at 1.3, Basil waits a little before he fills in the blanks. McLynn (2010, 112) suggests that Basil is deliberately testing his nephews, trying to elicit certain responses from them to see how much pagan literature they know. It is interesting that he also does not inform his nephews where these tenets appear in the Bible either. He makes reference to the words of Jesus, but without putting them into a Scriptural context. Is this because the nephews are only just starting to be familiar with the Bible? Or are they still at the stage where their Bible knowledge comes from oral instruction rather than reading it for themselves?

τουτι μὲν γὰρ τὸ τοῦ Σωκράτους ἀδελφὸν ἐκείνω τῷ παραγγέλματι, ὅτι τῷ τύπτοντι κατὰ τῆς σιαγόνος, καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν παρέχειν προσῆκε: [8] τοσοῦτου δεῖν ἀπαμύνασθαι: **For the action of Socrates is brother to that other precept, that to the man hitting us on the cheek we should offer the other one, and it is**

necessary to defend ourselves only to this extent: The tenet to which Basil refers is Matthew 5.39 (also found in Luke 6.29).

ἀδελφὸν: **brother:** LSJ defines the word as ‘son of the same mother’; is Basil trying to convey a particular idea, i.e. not just that pagan and Christian ideas are similar, but they have some shared heritage? (C.f. Clement, *Str.* 1.7 and idea that philosophy was given to the Greeks because they did not have the Jewish revelation and it was to prepare them for the truth that Jesus brought.)

7.8: τὸ δὲ τοῦ Περικλέους ἢ τὸ Εὐκλείδου, τῷ τοὺς διώκοντας ὑπομένειν καὶ πράως αὐτῶν τῆς ὀργῆς ἀνέχεσθαι, καὶ τῷ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς εὐχεσθαι τὰ ἀγαθὰ, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐπαρᾶσθαι: **And the examples of Perikles and Euclides are brother to that one which says to submit to those persecuting you, and to suffer their anger gently, and to that one to pray good things for those who hate you, but not to curse them:** Matthew 5.11 and 5. In addition, the same sentiments are found in Romans 12.14 and 12.17-21.

ὡς ὁ γε ἐν τούτοις προπαιδευθεὶς οὐκ ἔτ' ἂν ἐκείνοις ὡς ἀδυνάτοις διαπιστήσειεν: **Thus indeed, the man who, having been taught these things beforehand would not find it impossible to have confidence in those others:** The idea that the things learned through pagan education will then become realities in the Christian life and experience is an important one (See Wilson 1975, 58). The sentiment is similar to that expressed by Basil and others about the need to teach children important principles while they are young, so that the lessons they learn become deeply engrained in their psyche and are hard to reject when they grow older. (Plato, *Rep.* 377b; Plutarch, *De Lib.* 3e; Basil, *Reg. Fus.* 15.)

Does Basil mention these examples because he expects his nephews to already know them, in which case he is connecting something familiar to Christian tenets? Or is he introducing the pagans as new characters and hanging their actions on already heard Christian principles? The implication appears to be that if these models are known already, then hearing the words of Matthew 5 will not seem so difficult because the reality has previously been illustrated real characters. Is the encouragement for the young men even greater given the fact that the examples Basil uses are pagans, who

behave in this manner even without the benefit of Christian revelation? (C.f. JChrys, *De Inani* 79 states that both pagans and Christians should be held up as role models.)

προπαιδευθεῖς from προπαιδεύω: **to teach beforehand**: LSJ cites only Plato, *Rep.* 536d and Aristotle, *Poetics* 1337a as evidence of this word. However, it was used by the Church Fathers with the sense of ‘preliminary instruction’. E.g. Clement, *Str.* 1.5: ‘Before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness. And now it becomes conducive to piety; being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration.’; 2.8: ‘God deemed it advantageous, that from the law and the prophets, men should receive a preparatory discipline by the Lord.’; 2.20: ‘The divine law, then, while keeping in mind all virtue, trains man especially to self-restraint, ... and disciplines us beforehand to the attainment of self-restraint.’; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.58: ‘But if you will show me teachers who train young men for philosophy, and who exercise them in it, I will not from such turn away young men, but will try to raise them, as those who have been previously exercised in the whole circle of learning and in philosophical subjects...’ and *Clementine Homilies* 5.25: ‘it behoves parents providing for the chastity of their children to anticipate the desire, by imbuing them with instruction by means of chaste books’.

7.9: οὐκ ἂν παρέλθοιμι τὸ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου, ὃς τὰς θυγατέρας Δαρείου αἰχμαλώτους λαβὼν θαυμαστόν τι οἶον τὸ κάλλος παρέχειν μαρτυρουμένας, οὐδὲ προσιδεῖν ἤξιωσεν, αἰσχρὸν εἶναι κρίνων τὸν ἄνδρα ἐλόντα γυναικῶν ἡττηθῆναι: **I will not pass by the example of Alexander, who having taken captive the daughters of Darius, did not think to look at them, who had been reported to have such wonderful beauty. For he judged it shameful that having captured a man, he might be defeated by the charms of women**: Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 21-22 gives details of Alexander’s dealings with Darius’ widow and daughters, although it is the widow who the conqueror refuses to see. Similar sentiments to Basil’s are found in Plutarch, *Moralia* 338e and 343b, and also *De Curiositate* 13: ‘So too Alexander would not go to see Darius’s wife who was said to be very beautiful, but although he visited her mother, an elderly woman, he could not bring himself to see the young and beautiful daughter.’

Basil recalls this episode in a Christian light, rather than suggesting that Alexander was behaving chivalrously as Plutarch does. However, Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 7.8 cites the works of Apion as a source for the story, and quotes him, saying: ‘He forbade the wife of his vanquished foe, a woman of surpassing loveliness, to be brought into his presence, in order that he might not touch her even with his eyes.’ If Basil knew Apion, that version of the story might readily have suggested itself for use in the context with the gospel precept. (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum* 24.4.27 portrays the emperor Julian behaving like Alexander when he refused to look at Persian dancers who were brought to him after the capture of Maiozamalcha. Similarly to Basil, Ammianus Marcellinus suggests the action was motivated by asceticism and desire for chastity rather than chivalry (Smith 2011, 69n82).)

τουτι γὰρ εἰς ταῦτόν ἐκείνω φέρει, ὅτι ὁ ἐμβλέψας πρὸς ἡδονὴν γυναικὶ κἄν μὴ τῷ ἔργῳ τὴν μοιχείαν ἐπιτελέσῃ, ἀλλὰ τῷ γε τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τῇ ψυχῇ παραδέξασθαι, οὐκ ἀφίεται τοῦ ἐγκλήματος: **For this bears to that precept, that the man who looks at a woman for pleasure, even though he does not accomplish adultery in action, indeed since he has admitted the desire into his soul, he is not released from the charge:** Basil refers to Matthew 5.27-28 (‘You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.’).

πρὸς ἡδονὴν γυναικὶ: **to a woman with regard to pleasure:** Cf. 5.13 and the description of Vice as a woman leading a swarm of pleasures behind her.

7.10: τὸ δὲ τοῦ Κλεινίου, τῶν Πυθαγόρου γνωρίμων ἐνὸς χαλεπὸν πιστεῦσαι ἀπὸ ταῦτομάτου συμβῆναι τοῖς ἡμετέροις, ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ μιμησαμένου σπουδῆ. τί δὲ ἦν ὁ ἐποίησεν ἐκεῖνος; ἐξὸν δι’ ὄρκου τριῶν ταλάντων ζημίαν ἀποφυγεῖν, ὁ δὲ ἀπέτισε μᾶλλον ἢ ὤμοσε, καὶ ταῦτα εὐορκεῖν μέλλον: **Again, the example of Cleinias, one of the disciples of Pythagoras; and it is difficult to believe that this agrees with our precepts by chance, and not through imitation by conscious effort. What was it he did? It was possible for him to avoid a loss of three talents if he swore an oath, but he would rather pay than swear, and he**

would have been faithful to the oath too, but having heard, it seems to me, the command forbidding us to take an oath.: The episode is found in Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras* 144, although Cleinias is not mentioned by name. (See Rist (1981, 214) on whether this can be taken as evidence for Basil's familiarity with Iamblichus.)

οὐχὶ μιμησαμένου σπουδῆ: **not through imitation by conscious effort:** Basil attributes the same practices to pagans as he endorses for Christians. It makes sense to him that if he and others encourage Christians to find good in pagan writings and imitate the positive virtue they find there, then it is likely that pagans will do the same with Christian literature. The tenet to which Basil refers is Matthew 5. 33-37. Similar ideas are found in Deuteronomy 10.20; Leviticus 19.12; Numbers 30.2; Deuteronomy 23.21.

Section 8

8.1: Ἄλλ' ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔλεγον, πάλιν εἰς ταὐτὸν ἐπανίωμεν: **But let us discuss again the subject which I was talking about at the beginning:** In the previous two sections Basil has demonstrated the manner in which his nephews ought to interpret pagan examples of virtue, but he returns to the idea introduced in 4.2 that not all literature contains a virtuous message.

ἀρχῆς: **beginning:** This was the subject of section 4, not the beginning of the work itself, although Basil may be referring to the beginning of his more detailed discussion about pagan writings.

οὐ πάντα ἐξῆς παραδεκτέον ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ὅσα χρήσιμα: **it is not necessary for us to admit everything we come to in succession, but as much as is useful:** Cf. similar phrase at 4.1: 'do not turn your mind to all of it without exception'. There Basil advocates the imitation of the words and deeds of good men, but the rejection of morally bad examples. He also introduces the notion of approaching literature as bees approach a field full of flowers, taking only what is useful and leaving behind anything that is not.

χρήσιμα: **useful, serviceable, good for use**: used elsewhere: 1.5; 4.9.

καὶ γὰρ αἰσχροὺς τῶν μὲν σιτίων τὰ βλαβερὰ διωθειῖσθαι, τῶν δὲ μαθημάτων, ἃ τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν τρέφει, μηδένα λόγον ἔχειν: **For it is shameful to reject harmful things in foods, but to have no concern for the teaching which nourishes our soul**: Cf. the discussion about consistency of behaviour at 6 and again at 9.17. Here Basil makes a distinction between the soul and body, and suggests that although people spend time considering safe, good foods for their bodily nourishment, they do not consider the health of their souls sufficiently.

For a similar notion see Plutarch, *De Lib.* 5a where the author rebukes those parents who chastise their children for bad table-manners but ignore the substance of their education, and Basil, *Attende tibi* considering animals' intuitive ability to avoid harmful foods. Basil adds that God lays down precepts which allow men to acquire by reason the advantage which animals have through nature. (Wagner 1950, 433): 'Moreover, in obeying this precept, we become vigilant custodians of the resources God has bestowed on us, avoiding sin as the **beasts shun noxious foods**'; καὶ φύλακες ὄμεν ἀκριβεῖς τῶν παρὰ θεοῦ δεδομένων ἡμῖν ἀφορμῶν, φεύγοντες μὲν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ὥσπερ τὰ ἄλογα φεύγει τῶν βρωμάτων τὰ δηλητήρια.) (See also *Ep.* 236.4 and Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection of the Dead* 6).

ἀλλ' ὥσπερ χειμάρρουν παρασύροντας ἅπαν τὸ προστυχὸν ἐμβάλλεσθαι: **but just like a torrent sweeping everything in its path, we absorb indiscriminately everything we come across**: The image of a river flood is a common one in classical literature, e.g. Homer, *Iliad* 5.88 and 11.492. (The simile is used by GNaz, *Ep.* 48.9 to Basil, explaining his unhappiness about Basil's decision to consecrate Gregory to the newly created bishopric of Sasima. He challenges Basil: 'Do you then play the man and be strong and draw all parties to your own conclusion, as the rivers do the winter torrents': μὲν ἀνδρίζου καὶ κραταιοῦ καὶ πάντα ἔλκε πρὸς τὴν σεαυτοῦ δόξαν, ὥσπερ οἱ ποταμοὶ τοὺς χειμάρρους.) Cf. use in Basil's homily *Adv. Eos* (Wagner 1950, 448).

The idea of a river being out of control in a flood contrasts with the examples of those pagans who lived according to reason and consistency. The characters in section 7 who are not to be imitated: the man railing at Perikles and the drunkard who beat Socrates, are those whose lives resemble the water torrent; they are directed by uncontrollable passion and lack of virtue. In contrast, Basil's nephews are not to let themselves be borne along by the prevailing strong current, but instead adopt reason which will help them to be discerning about the ideas that they adopt and the literature they read.

8.2: καίτοι τίνα ἔχει λόγον κυβερνήτην μὲν οὐκ εἰκῆ τοῖς πνεύμασιν ἐφίεναι, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ὄρμους εὐθύνειν τὸ σκάφος: καὶ τοξότην κατὰ σκοποῦ βάλλειν: καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ χαλκευτικὸν τίνα ἢ τεκτονικὸν ὄντα τοῦ κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἐφίεσθαι τέλους: **And indeed isn't there a reason, when instead of giving way to the wind a helmsman goes up against it and steers the ship to a safe harbour and an archer aims at the mark and indeed some metalworker or carpenter keeps in mind the end of his craft:** The three citations of artisans whose examples can be followed are, as Wilson (1975, 60) states Platonic in origin, but he does not give examples which could have been Basil's influences. The image of the pilot is found in *Laws* 961e, and the notion of aiming at a mark in any activity is considered in 963b. The archer aiming at a mark is explored in 705e, but there does not appear to be a passage which can be identified as Basil's source in Plato, using all three examples. Plato, *Gorgias* 503d-e discusses the fact that it is important to keep the purpose of an activity in mind, since without that view the task will be unsuccessful: 'The good man, who is intent on the best when he speaks, will surely not speak at random in whatever he says, but with a view to some object? He is just like any other craftsman, who having his own particular work in view selects the things he applies to that work of his, not at random, but with the purpose of giving a certain form to whatever he is working upon. You have only to look, for example, at the painters, the builders, the shipwrights, or any of the other craftsmen, whichever you like, to see how each of them arranges everything according to a certain order, and forces one part to suit and fit with another'.

κατὰ σκοποῦ: **at the mark:** Cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 507d: 'This, in my opinion, is the mark on which a man should fix his eyes throughout life'; also Philippians 3.14: 'I press on

toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.’

τοῦ κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἐφίεσθαι τέλους: **keeps in mind the end of his craft**: Cf. 4.10: ‘we must examine each of the lessons and make them fit together with the end’. This continues the theme which Basil introduced in section 4, that the end of every lesson ought to be kept in mind to ensure the right path is taken through life. The nephews are to approach their reading of classical literature bearing in mind the eternal life they wish to acquire through the cultivation of virtuous deeds (cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 503e).

ἡμᾶς δὲ καὶ τῶν τοιούτων δημιουργῶν ἀπολείπεσθαι, πρὸς γε τὸ συνορᾶν δύνασθαι τὰ ἡμέτερα: **but should we leave behind the methods of these craftsmen in respect to our ability to be able to see our own interests?:**

ἡμᾶς: the use of the pronoun, along with τὰ ἡμέτερα emphasises again the group identity of Basil and his nephews as Christians, and establishes typical Christian behaviour.

τὸ συνορᾶν: **to discern/ see**: Cf. Plato, *Laws* 965b: ‘Did we not say that he who is a first-class craftsman or warden, in any department, must not only be able to pay regard to the many, but must be able also to press towards the One so as to discern it and, on discerning it, to survey and organize all the rest with a single eye to it?’

οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῶν μὲν χειρωνακτῶν ἐστὶ τι πέρας τῆς ἐργασίας, τοῦ δὲ ἀνθρωπίνου βίου σκοπὸς οὐκ ἔστι, πρὸς ὃν ἀφορῶντα πάντα ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν χρὴ τὸν γε μὴ τοῖς ἀλόγοις παντάπασι προσεοικέναι μέλλοντα: **For is it the case that there is an end of the work of the craftsmen, but there is no aim of the life of man, towards which it is necessary for us to look at everything we do and say, if we are not going to be entirely like brute beasts?:**

σκοπὸς: Cf. 8.2: **the aim of life**: Used elsewhere in the work as a compound: 4.10; 9.25; 10.4.

πάντα ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν: **everything we do and say**: Cf. the exhortation 6.1-4 about the need to make speech and action conform in order to make progress in the virtuous life.

τοῖς ἀλόγοις: **to brute beasts**: Wilson (1975, 60) cites Plato, *Protagoras* 321c for usage. It contrasts with the previous discussion of the craftsman and the ‘reason’ (λόγος) which governs their respective behaviours. The word literally means ‘without speech’, or ‘without reason’, and is used to identify animals because they do not have the capacity to talk or behave in a rational manner. Since Basil goes on to emphasise the need for reason to be used in deciding the course and aim of life, the use of ἄλογος here is surely deliberate.

The notion that animals are morally and rationally inferior to humans is suggested by Basil at 4.5 where he condemns the bad behaviour of the gods. The sexual liaisons of the pagan deities are, Basil states, so morally degenerate that even animals which have no moral code or reason would be ashamed of them. Similarly here, he considers that animals have no aim towards which the action of their life strives except what is immediate and necessary. Such behaviour is clearly a long way from the focus on eternal life which the Christian should hold, and if a man does not consider his life’s aim he is no better off than the irrational beasts.

ἢ οὕτως ἂν εἴημεν ἀτεχνῶς κατὰ τῶν πλοίων τὰ ἀνερμάτιστα, οὐδενὸς ἡμῖν νοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς οἰάκων καθεζομένου, εἰκῆ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἄνω καὶ κάτω περιφερόμενοι: **Or in this way we would be simply boats without ballast, if we do not have reason taking up position on the rudders of our souls, being carried without direction up and down through life.:**

κατὰ τῶν πλοίων τὰ ἀνερμάτιστα: Plutarch, *Animine an corporis affectiones sint peiores* 501e has a similar idea, stating that those suffering from the sickness of the soul are unable to perceive it with reason, and therefore will not listen to doctors in order to find a cure.

νοῦ: **reason**: as opposed to λόγος. Used on five other occasions in this work: 4.1; 8.13; 9.4; 9.6; 9.14.

LSJ defines it as ‘mind’, in the sense of ‘employed in perceiving and thinking’. New Testament writings have it mostly as ‘mind’: e.g. 1 Corinthians 2.16: ‘we have the mind of Christ’; although also ‘understanding’: 1 Corinthians 14.14-19.

Plutarch, *Adolescens* uses it 28 times, and *De Lib.* 15 times. Significantly, 4f, criticising a father who was ‘devoid of both mind and sense’ (νοῦ καὶ φρενῶν κενόν); also 5e, discussing the permanence of learning, and the supremacy of two elements of human nature: ‘mind and reason’ (νοῦς καὶ λόγος).

τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς οἰάκων: **on the helms of our souls**: Cf. 1.5: ‘do not hand over the rudders of your minds’ to pagan writers and teachers.

οἶαξ: **handle of rudder, tiller** also **helm**. (See e.g. Plato, *Statesman* 272e: ‘the helmsman ... dropped the tiller of the rudder’: ὁ μὲν κυβερνήτης, οἷον πηδαλίων οἶακος ἀφέμενος.)

If οἶαξ is understood as ‘helm’, then the image of reason sitting on the soul, guiding it as a steersman would a ship creates a link between the idea expressed here and that introduced at 1.5, regarding the ‘rudders of the mind’. At the beginning of the address Basil tells his nephews that they should not follow their teachers and the ancient writers blindly, but rather listen to his advice and guidance. However, the introduction of the image of reason as the helmsman of the soul develops this idea and suggests that the nephews can start to exercise their own reason based on the principles which Basil has taught them as a foundation.

τῆς ψυχῆς: **of the soul**: Reason is needed not just to control what an individual thinks, but more because what is thought has a bearing of the state of the soul, and therefore the soul’s eternal fortune. Although he expresses himself in terms consistent with classical understanding, Basil is always conscious that his primary concern is for the Christian salvation of his audience.

εἰκὴ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἄνω καὶ κάτω περιφερόμενοι: **being carried without direction up and down through life:**

εἰκὴ: ‘**without direction, without purpose**’. It can also mean ‘in vain’, and appears to be used in this way in the New Testament frequently, e.g. Ephesians 4.13-14 and James 1.6.

The image is found in other Church Fathers, e.g. GNys, *Against Eumonius* 9.1: καλῶς ὁ γεννάδας καθάπερ τι πλοῖον ἀνερμάτιστον αὐτομάτως ὑπὸ τῶν τῆς ἀπάτης κυμάτων τῷ λιμένι τῆς ἀληθείας ἐγκαθορμίζει τὸν λόγον: ‘Nobly does the gallant man bring his discourse like some ship without ballast, driven unguided by the waves of deceit, into the harbour of truth.’

8.4: ἀλλ’ ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς γυμνικοῖς ἀγῶσιν, εἰ δὲ βούλει, τῆς μουσικῆς: ἐκείνων εἰσὶ τῶν ἀγώνων αἱ μελέται, ὧνπερ οἱ στέφανοι <πρόκεινται,> καὶ οὐδεὶς γε πάλην ἀσκῶν ἢ παγκράτιον, εἶτα κιθαρίζειν ἢ αὐλεῖν μελετᾷ: **But just as in gymnastic contests, or if you prefer, musical competitions, there are exercises for those contests which have crowns as prizes, and indeed no one practising wrestling or pankration then takes care of playing the lyre or flute.:**

ἐν τοῖς γυμνικοῖς ἀγῶσιν: **in gymnastic contests:** Cf.2.6: the use of gymnastic exercises as a practice for fighting in battle.

ἀγῶσιν: used frequently in New Testament writing. E.g. Hebrews 12.1b; 1 Timothy 6.12; 2 Timothy 4.7.

εἰ δὲ βούλει, τῆς μουσικῆς: **or if you prefer, musical competitions:** Basil’s use of the second person refocuses attention on his audience, and raises the possibility that one or other of his examples will be better related to by his nephews. The two examples relate to each other, but Basil selects illustrations that would be most appealing to boys: sport and music.

[Both of these pastimes were fundamental elements of classical education in earlier centuries, although even before Basil’s time their importance had been reduced in

favour of concentrating on literary studies. Consequently both physical activity and music had become the remit of the wealthy or professional individuals (Marrou 1956, 130-32; 138-41).]

ἐκείνων εἰσὶ τῶν ἀγώνων αἱ μελέται, ὧνπερ οἱ στέφανοι: **there are exercises for those contests which have crowns (as prizes):** On the idea that activities undertaken in order to gain some reward require practice and effort cf. Cyprian, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, Preface. 2: ‘For he cannot be a soldier fitted for the war who has not first been exercised in the field; nor will he who seeks to gain the crown of contest be rewarded on the racecourse, unless he first considers the use and skilfulness of his powers.’

καὶ οὐδεὶς γε πάλην ἀσκῶν ἢ παγκράτιον, εἶτα κιθαρίζειν ἢ αὐλεῖν μελετᾷ: **and indeed no one practising wrestling or pankration then takes care of playing the lyre or flute:** The pankration was a form of upright wrestling, and was the most violent of the games at the Greek athletics. There were very few rules, only eye-gouging and biting appear to have been illegal actions. Presumably Basil selected wrestling and pankration from all the different games in order to make use of the named examples Polydamas and Milo in the following lines. However, the image of fighting an adversary is a pertinent image to Christian readers, not just because of the parallels with St. Paul’s references to fighting, but also to elements of Christian martyr stories (cf. 2.7).

The image of wrestling is found in many Church Fathers to describe those who contended for the faith, whether or not a martyr’s death awaited them. Basil’s use of the illustration here works on two levels, the surface image of famous ancient sportsmen, but also conjures ideas of Christian heroes who suffered for their beliefs. The idea is recalled later in this section, when Basil considers the hardships endured by athletes and the prizes awarded to them.

κιθαρίζειν ἢ αὐλεῖν: **the lyre or flute:** The two instruments most commonly used to accompany dramatic performances. Clement, *Paed.* 2.4 discusses the appropriateness of musical instrument playing for Christians, and considers the Biblical exhortations to praise God on different instruments.

The activities which Basil considers in this section, success in musical and gymnastic contests are very much individual activities: signifying personal success rather than indicating corporate involvement in the church. The emphasis on individual achievement is found in 1 Corinthians 9.24 ('Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize?'), although it is partly used as a contrast between the games and the Christian life. The analogy used by Basil highlights the two elements of Christianity: the fact that God can be approached by the individual who bends his efforts towards the end of virtue, but also the role of the church in training and guiding individuals toward that desired end. In addition, the identity of an individual Christian within the religious group is important in encouraging each member of the group to continue his efforts towards virtue. Hence the emphasis Basil places on the use of first person plural pronouns, and the inclusive way he addresses his nephews.

8.5: οὐκ οὖν ὁ Πολυδάμας γε: ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος πρὸ τοῦ ἀγῶνος τοῦ Ὀλυμπιάσι, τὰ ἄρματα ἴστη τρέχοντα, καὶ διὰ τούτων τὴν ἰσχὺν ἐκράτυνε: **Indeed**

Polydamas did not do this, but instead before the Olympic Games, set up running chariots, and honed his strength in this way: Basil mentions the pankratis Polydamas, along with the wrestler Milo, in *Ep.*339 to Libanius. Evidence for Polydamas, who won the Olympic Games in 408BC, is found in Pausanias 6.5 and Diodorus Siculus 9.14.2. Pausanias cites him stopping the chariots as a particular feat of strength rather than a common practice technique as Basil suggests, although he may recall the story because it easily identifies Polydamas. Also, Polydamas' great efforts in practising for his contest parallel the message that the path towards virtue is full of difficulty: even practising is hard.

τοῦ ἀγῶνος τοῦ Ὀλυμπιάσι: **the Olympic Games:** On the basis of inscriptions found at Olympia the games appear to have still been taking place late into the fourth century (SEG XLV 412 refers to a bronze plaque listing winners of events up to AD 385), although the Emperor Theodosius abolished them in 393 because of their pagan religious connections (OCD, 1066).

The Church Fathers regularly mention the Olympic Games, but their opinion of them is sometimes difficult to judge. Certainly, they make much of the parallel between running

the race of the Christian life and the efforts exerted by the Greek athletes. In addition the crowns offered to the victors at the games find a similar analogy in the crown with which Christ will reward his faithful. However, despite their readiness to commandeer the popularity of the games to present illustrations to help understand the nature of Christianity, the Fathers generally do not appear to have endorsed the games as a whole. See e.g JChrys, *Homily XXII on Romans* 14.20-21 announcing that the Olympic Games were undertaken in honour of the devil himself. Also the fourth century *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* 8.4.32, state that competitors in Olympic Games, along with flute and lyre players at the games, prostitutes and theatricals, must abandon their profession if they are to be baptised.

καὶ ὁ γε Μίλων ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληλειμμένης ἀσπίδος οὐκ ἐξωθεῖτο, ἀλλ' ἀντεῖχεν ὠθούμενος, οὐχ ἦττον ἢ οἱ ἀνδριάντες οἱ τῷ μολύβδῳ συνδεδεμένοι: **And what about Milo, who could not be forced off a greased shield, but held out against the pushing no less than would statues bound to their bases with lead.:** Milo of Croton won at the Olympic Games six times between 540-516BC. The fact of him standing on a greased shield is found in Pausanias 6.14.5-7, but he is not the source for the simile. In the Church Fathers the image of a fixed statue is found in JChrys, *Homily 13 on First Corinthians* 4.16: 'Contemplate then a statue of gold or rather of something more costly than gold, and such as might stand in heaven; not fixed with lead nor placed in one spot.'

8.6: καὶ ἀπαξαπλῶς αἱ μελέται αὐτοῖς παρασκευαὶ τῶν ἄθλων ἦσαν: **And in general their exercises were a preparation for the contest:** Cf. 2.6 about utilising in battle the skills which were acquired in sport.

εἰ δὲ τὰ Μαρσίου ἢ τὰ Ὀλύμπου τῶν Φρυγῶν περιειργάζοντο κρούματα, καταλιπόντες τὴν κόνιν καὶ τὰ γυμνάσια, ταχύ γ' ἂν στεφάνων ἢ δόξης ἔτυχον διέφυγον τὸ μὴ καταγέλαστοι εἶναι κατὰ τὸ σῶμα: **If they had taken more pains about the notes of Marsyas or Olympus of Phrygia, having left behind the dust and the gymnasia, would they have quickly attained crowns or glory, or would they have escaped not being ridiculed on account of the state of their bodies?:**

Marsyas: A satyr who was credited with being the first to play the *aulos* (double flute). Apollodorus, *Library* 1.4 and Herodotus, *Histories* 7.26 have accounts of the story.

Olympus of Phrygia: Two musicians by this name from Phrygia. The elder was a mythological figure connected to Marsyas as a pupil (Plato, *Symposium* 215c), and these two are cited in Plato, *Laws* 677d as the inventors of musical arts. The later Olympus from the seventh century BC was credited with being a master-flautist.

Basil has the two mythological characters in mind, since they are so closely connected with one another, but it is interesting that he contrasts two real Olympic athletes with two legendary musicians. Some Church Fathers regarded music as a negative pastime, not least because of the potential immorality connected with certain songs (9.7-10; Clement, *Paed.* 2.4). Does Basil have such an opinion, which might explain why he uses a mythical creature as his example of a musician? If so, then it could be suggested that Basil holds the attitude that music is a negative pursuit, while athletics is a good one. However, that does not appear to be true. The problem Basil highlights is not that abandoning athletics for music would be to exchange one noble exercise for an ignoble one, but rather that the practitioner of one must not forget his aims in that pursuit, and be tempted towards a different pastime. Success in athletics contests will not be achieved if the athlete plays music instead.

στεφάνων ἢ δόξης: **crowns and glory:** Crowns mentioned above (8.4). Later Basil refers to the temporary nature of prizes in the Olympic, and other, Games. Here however, the paring of the words ‘crown’ and ‘glory’ is significant; looking forward to the specifically Christian understanding of contending in arenas for certain rewards. The words are closely connected in much early Christian writing, not least because of the use of the phrase ‘crown of glory’ to be awarded to those Christians who achieved heavenly prizes. (E.g. 1 Peter 5.4; also Cyprian, *Ep.* 8, encouraging the martyrs; GNaz, *Ep.* 44.) On athletes’ motivation, see Clement, *Str.* 7.11; *Paed.* 3.8.

ἢ διέφυγον τὸ μὴ καταγέλαστοι εἶναι κατὰ τὸ σῶμα: **or would they have escaped ridicule on account of the state of their bodies?:** If they had failed to train the athletes would have immediately shown themselves up by having bodies unsuitable for competition. The build-up of muscles was the most important thing for those

engaged in fighting. In contrast the Christian should train his soul, and have less regard for his body (cf. 9.2; 9.6).

8.7: ἀλλ' οὐ μέντοι οὐδὲ ὁ Τιμόθεος τὴν μελωδίαν ἀφείς ἐν ταῖς παλαίστραις διῆγεν: **But to be sure, Timotheus did not, having given up singing spend his time at the palastras:** This example confirms that Basil does not entirely disapprove of music as the use of myth above may have implied, but rather he cites music in direct contrast to the activities the athletes ought to be practising. Here he looks at the situation from the other perspective.

οὐ γὰρ ἂν τοσοῦτον ὑπῆρξεν αὐτῷ διενεγκεῖν ἀπάντων τῆ μουσικῆ: ᾧ γε τοσοῦτον περιῆν τῆς τέχνης, ὥστε καὶ θυμὸν ἐγείρειν διὰ τῆς συντόνου καὶ αὐστηρᾶς ἁρμονίας, καὶ μέντοι καὶ χαλᾶν καὶ μαλάττειν πάλιν διὰ τῆς ἀνειμένης, ὅποτε βούλοιτο: **For it would not have been possible for him to surpass everyone in music, for he was so superior in his skill that he could even rouse anger by means of strained and harsh harmonies, and indeed he could calm and soften it again by relaxing the tune whenever he wished:**

There were two musicians named Timotheus, the earlier, more famous one lived in Miletus (446-360BC) and was a lyre player. He is said to have added strings to the lyre and played under Archelaus I of Macedonia (OCD, 1529 (1)). The other Timotheus played the *aulos* (double-flute) for Alexander the Great (350s-320s BC) and he is the character referred to by Basil (Wilson 1975, 61). However, there does appear to be confusion among the ancients, and therefore subsequent writers, about which Timotheus was which.

τὴν μελωδίαν: LSJ defines the word as ‘singing, chanting’, and cites Plato, *Laws* 935e: ‘chant, choral song’. Philodemus, *On Music* p.12 uses it to mean ‘music’ in general. Since the word has links with singing, that may be one of the reasons for the confusion over which Timotheus is being referred to here.

In addition, τῆς ἀνειμένης can be used specifically about stringed instruments, meaning ‘by slackening the strings’, in addition to its meaning of ‘letting go’ (LSJ

A.II.7). It may be that Basil is confused about what instrument Timotheus was playing, and has muddled the two performers up by his use of vocabulary. (Certainly he could have been in part the cause of the confusion of later writers, given his popularity in post-classical literature. See e.g. Dryden, *Alexander's Feast*, 158-9 where Timotheus appears to play both lyre and flute.)

8.8: ταύτη τοι καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ποτὲ τὸ Φρύγιον ἐπαυλήσαντα,
ἐξαναστῆσαι αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ὄπλα λέγεται μεταξὺ δειπνοῦντα, καὶ
ἐπαναγαγεῖν πάλιν πρὸς τοὺς συμπότας, τὴν ἀρμονίαν χαλάσαντα: **With that art it is said that once while he was playing a Phrygian tune to Alexander, he made him rise and make for his weapons while having dinner, then led him back again to his companions, having slackened the harmony.**: The episode is recounted by Dio Chrysostom, *On Kingship* 1.1, and Plutarch, *On the Fortune of Alexander* 335a, although there the musician is Antigenides. Both authors agree that the instrument which so enraged Alexander was the flute.

τοσαύτην ἰσχὺν ἔν τε μουσικῇ καὶ τοῖς γυμνικοῖς ἀγῶσι, πρὸς τὴν τοῦ τέλους κτῆσιν ἢ μελέτη παρέχεται: **As far as strength in both music and athletic contests goes, it is practise towards the possession of the prize which makes it perfect:** Cf. 4.10: keeping the end in mind and bending the lessons so they achieve the desired aim. Both practise and aim need to be in line with each other if the outcome is to be successful. For Basil's nephews this means that they must stay aware of the future life which they wish to attain, and also must exert the necessary energy on their study of virtue in order to achieve it. (Cf. the effort needed at 5.3-4.)

8.9: Ἐπεὶ δὲ στεφάνων καὶ ἀθλητῶν ἐμνήσθην, ἐκεῖνοι μυρία παθόντες ἐπὶ μυρίοις, καὶ πολλαχόθεν τὴν ῥώμην ἑαυτοῖς συναυξήσαντες: **Since I have been reminded about crowns and contests, and that these men suffer countless upon countless things, and have increased their strength in many ways:**

στεφάνων καὶ ἀθλητῶν: **crowns and contests:** Basil returns to his athletics analogy, but at the same time recalls the activities and rewards of Christian martyrs. Cf. *Ep.* 101: 'Just as athletes win crowns by their struggles in the arena, so are Christians brought to

perfection by the trial of their temptations’, highlights the fact that Basil chooses the images in this section as a parallel to the circumstances his nephews will find themselves in as they go through their Christian lives. See *Ep.* 164.2 for a similar description: ‘You tell me of struggles of athletes, bodies lacerated for the truth’s sake, savage fury despised by men of fearless heart, various tortures of persecutors, and constancy of the wrestlers through them all, the block and the water whereby the martyrs died.’ For the context of martyrs and crowns, see e.g. *Ep.* 139: ‘Brothers, martyrs’ crowns await you ... Blessed is he who is deemed worthy to suffer for Christ; more blessed is he whose sufferings are greater ... I should have liked nothing better than to meet you, that I might see and embrace Christ’s athletes.’; Dionysius, *Ep.* 1: ‘But it would be a superfluous task for me to mention by name our (martyr) friends, who are numerous ... of whom some have suffered by stripes and fire, and some by the sword, and have won the victory and received their crowns.’

μυρία ... ἐπὶ μυρίοις: **countless upon countless things**: an infinite number. Cf. Plato, *Laws* 638e. Although Basil may wish to emphasise the difficulties faced by athletes in their training, the phrase appears somewhat excessive if only applied to sportsmen. The myriad hardships can be equally, if not better, applied to the different sufferings of Christian martyrs. (See e.g. Dionysius, *Ep.* 3 for a list of various sufferings and persecutions of a group of Christians; JChrys, *Homily 2 on 2 Corinthians* ver 5: ‘though we suffer countless horrors, though from every quarter we be shot at and in peril, it is enough for our comfort, yea rather not only for comfort, but even for our crowning, that our conscience is pure and testifieth unto us that for no evil-doing, but for that which is well-pleasing to God, we thus suffer; for virtue’s sake, for heavenly wisdom’s, for the salvation of the many.’)

πολλὰ μὲν γυμναστικοῖς ἐνιδρώσαντες πόνοις, πολλὰς δὲ πληγὰς ἐν παιδοτρίβου λαβόντες, διαίταν δὲ οὐ τὴν ἡδίστην, ἀλλὰ τὴν παρὰ τῶν γυμναστῶν αἰρούμενοι, καὶ τᾶλλα: **on one hand, sweating in many gymnastic efforts, and on the other receiving many blows in the training school; not the most pleasant way of life, but being chosen by the athletic trainers, along with other things**: For the idea of the trainers dictating the food and exercise suitable for athletes see Aristotle, *Nicomachian Ethics* 2.6.7.

ἐνιδρώσαντες: **sweating**: Wilson (1975, 62) cites LSJ for Xenophon, *Symposium* 2.18 as the only occurrence of this word in classical literature. However, it is used by later writers, e.g. GNaz, *Or.* 43.66.4; *Carmina de se ipso* 4; Basil, *Homilies on the Psalms* 444.1.

γυμναστικοῖς ... πόνοις: **gymnastic efforts**: πόνος is found earlier in the address in the context of hard work, so its use here points back to the hard work needed to climb the steep path to virtue (5.3). (Cf. Libanius' use of it to describe rhetorical training (Cribiore 2001, 222).)

δίαιταν δὲ οὐ τὴν ἡδίστην: **not a pleasant way of life**: Cf. 5.14: Virtue 'promised no dissoluteness, nor anything pleasant' to Herakles 'but countless sweat and toils and dangers'.

ἀλλὰ τὴν παρὰ τῶν γυμναστῶν αἰρούμενοι: **but being chosen by the athletic trainers**: The athletes place themselves under the authority and care of their trainers, following their advice in all regards despite the fact that the life they have to lead is not an enjoyable one. The athletes want to win and trust the trainers to provide them with the advice they need in order to achieve their desire.

Although not paralleled explicitly with Christianity, the reference Basil makes to trainers must surely be viewed as a comment on how the youths, as Christian athletes, ought to be prepared to take the advice of wise trainers in the church to help them in their own contest of life. He presents himself in a similar fashion when he establishes his credentials for offering advice to the nephews at 1.1, and later at 10.7 he states that he will continue to provide good counsel to the youths throughout their lives. With his use of the figure of a sporting trainer Basil is able to mention that sometimes those being trained have to accept unpleasant advice or guidance, but the role of the athlete is to obey these things because they all contribute to the desired end. He therefore suggests to his nephews that if they wish to attain virtue they will have to live a life which is not always the most pleasant, but will reap the greatest rewards. (For the importance Basil placed on the figure of trainers for Christians, see *Ep.* 23 concerning a novice monk: 'He is wishful to receive here the crown of God's loves, but I have put him off, because I wish, in conjunction with your reverence, to anoint him for such struggles, and to

appoint over him one of your number whom he may select to be his trainer, training him nobly, and making him by his constant and blessed care a tried wrestler, wounding and overthrowing the prince of the darkness of this world.’; for the value of a trainer for helping an individual withstand persecution, *Ep.* 164.1: ‘however when I saw the athlete, I blessed his trainer’.)

For the use of the image by other Church Fathers see e.g. GNaz, *Or.* 43.5 about Basil’s ancestors who were persecuted by Maximinus but remained ‘trainers in virtue’; JChrys, *On the Priesthood* 4.2: ‘If they who are ambitious of reaching an athletic condition of body need the help of physicians and trainers, and exact diet ...how shall they to whose lot falls the care of the body which has its conflict ... against powers unseen, be able to keep it sound and healthy, unless he surpass ordinary human virtue?’; Clement, *Str.* 7.3 on the success of those who pay heed to their trainer’s instructions: ‘The spectators are summoned to the contest, and the athletes contend in the stadium; the one, who has obeyed the directions of the trainer, wins the day.’; *Quis dives salvetur?* 3 on the way that the wealthy can serve God: ‘So also let not the man that has been invested with worldly wealth proclaim himself excluded at the outset from the Saviour’s lists, provided he is a believer and one who contemplates the greatness of God’s philanthropy; nor let him, on the other hand, expect to grasp the crowns of immortality without struggle and effort, continuing untrained, and without contest. But let him go and put himself under the Word as his trainer, and Christ the President of the contest; and for his prescribed food and drink let him have the New Testament of the Lord; and for exercises, the commandments.’

οὕτω διάγοντες, ὡς τὸν πρὸ τῆς ἀγωνίας βίον μελέτην εἶναι τῆς ἀγωνίας:
making their life before the contest a practice for the contest itself: The contest is the whole aim of life for the athletes Basil mentions in a similar way to that described at 2.6, but here the practice appears to be considered more serious than in section 2, since the athletes ‘receive blows’ and their practice is not described as pleasant activity.

The notion of continual practice before an event is found in Plato, *Laws* 830a: ‘Suppose we had been rearing boxers or pancratiasts or competitors in any similar branch of athletics, should we have gone straight into the contest without previously engaging in daily combat with someone? If we were boxers, for a great many days before the contest we should have been learning how to fight, and working hard, practicing in mimicry all

those methods we meant to employ on the day we should be fighting for victory, and imitating the real thing as nearly as possible’; also Aristotle, *Nichomachian Ethics* 3.5.11 ‘This is shown by the way in which men train themselves for some contest or pursuit: they practice continually’.

τηνικαῦτα ἀποδύονται πρὸς τὸ στάδιον, καὶ πάντα πονοῦσι καὶ κινδυνεύουσιν: **and at the time when they strip off for the stadium, and perform all toils and put themselves in danger**: Cf. the ‘countless ... toils and dangers’ that Virtue offers Herakles (5.14). The description applies equally to athletes as to Christians, and especially martyrs.

ὥστε κοτίνου λαβεῖν στέφανον ἢ σελίνου ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς τῶν τοιούτων: **in order to take a crown of olive or parsley, or some other suchlike material**: Cf. Clement, *Str.* 6.15: ‘though the wild olive be wild, it crowns the Olympic victors’. See Wilson (1975, 62) for comment and reference to 1 Corinthians 9.25 (‘Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.’) The distinction between the temporary crown of the Greek athletes and the eternal reward for the Christian is found in JChrys, *Homily 9 on 2 Timothy* 4.7: ‘it is fought in the cause of Christ, and great crowns are won in it. “The good fight”! There is no worthier than this contest. This crown is without end. This is not of olive leaves.’

καὶ νικῶντες ἀναρρηθῆναι παρὰ τοῦ κήρυκος: **and for the winners to be announced by the herald**: The names of the winners were announced when they received their wreaths, and Basil mentions it here to represent the fame which accompanied victory. It creates a contrast with his comments at 2.2, where he states that Christians should reject the trappings of worldly success. This whole passage bears a resemblance to Seneca’s comments on athletes and the virtuous life in *Ep.* 78.16, but the Latin is unlikely to be Basil’s source. The similarity to ideas explored by the Church Fathers suggests that the resemblance may have come through a stock of common images.

8.10: ἡμῖν δέ, οἷς ἄθλα τοῦ βίου πρόκειται οὕτω θαυμαστὰ πλήθει τε καὶ μεγέθει, ὥστε ἀδύνατα εἶναι ῥηθῆναι λόγῳ, ἐπὶ ἄμφω καθεύδουσι καὶ κατὰ

πολλὴν διαιτωμένοις ἄδειαν, τῇ ἑτέρῳ λαβεῖν τῶν χειρῶν ὑπάρξει: **But for us, to whom wonderful prizes of life are promised, both so full and great that it is impossible to speak of them in words, will it be possible for us, sleeping on both ears and leading a life of great indulgence, to begin to take it with one hand?:** Cf. discussion at 2.4 about the goods of the human life in comparison with the goods of the heavenly life to come.

ἡμῖν δέ: **But for us:** Marks a contrast between the athletes who have been the subject of the description and Basil's Christian nephews.

ἐπ' ἄμφω καθεύδουσι: **sleeping on both ears:** Wilson (1975, 62) identifies this as a common proverb. Three examples of use are: Themistius, *To Theodosius* 193a; Libanius, *Ep.* 1252 and Theodoret, *Erastines* 129.8.

καὶ κατὰ πολλὴν διαιτωμένοις ἄδειαν: **leading a life of great indulgence:** Basil identifies the habits which are opposed to the life he advocates for his nephews.

τῇ ἑτέρῳ λαβεῖν τῶν χειρῶν ὑπάρξει: **will it be possible for us to begin to take it with one hand?:** i.e. easily.

8.11: πολλοῦ μέντ' ἂν ἄξιον ἦν ἡ ῥαθυμία τῷ βίῳ, καὶ ὁ γε Σαρδανάπαλος τὰ πρῶτα πάντων εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν ἐφέρετο: **If laziness in life was worth very much, indeed Sardanapalus would have been ranked first in of all in good fortune:** King of Assyria in the seventh century BC, and a proverbial figure of dissolute living. Augustine describes him: 'the ancient king who was so abandoned to pleasures, that he caused it to be inscribed on his tomb' (*City of God* 2.20). See e.g. Justin Martyr, *Apol. Sec.* 7 for a similar sentiment to Basil's and Clement, *Str.* 2.20; *Paed.* 3.11 for reference to his dissoluteness.

ἢ καὶ ὁ Μαργίτης, εἰ βούλει, ὄν οὔτ' ἀροτῆρα οὔτε σκαπτῆρα οὔτε ἄλλο τι τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον ἐπιτηδείων εἶναι Ὅμηρος ἔφησεν, εἰ δὲ Ὅμηρου ταῦτα: **or even Margites, if you prefer, being neither a ploughman, or a digger, nor anything else useful for life as Homer has declared him to be, if these words are Homer's:**

Among classical authors, Margites was used as the proverbial foolish man (e.g. Polybius, *Histories* 12.25). Aristotle, *Poetics* 1448b attributes the work to Homer, and later authors tend to follow his lead (*Eustratius on Aristotle* in J. M. Edmonds, *Elegy and Iambus*, vol. 2), but only fragments are extant.

The only Christian author who appears to refer to Margites before Basil is Clement, *Str.* 1.4. Wilson (1975, 63) identifies this as the possible source for Basil, on the basis of the phrase: εἰ δὴ Ὅμηρου ταῦτα: **if these words are Homer's**. This would appear likely, particularly since he appears to have influenced Basil elsewhere. (See Ch3, 52-65 for discussion.)

8.12: ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀληθῆς μᾶλλον ὁ τοῦ Πιττακοῦ λόγος, ὃς χαλεπὸν ἔφησεν ἔσθλὸν ἔμμεναι: **But perhaps indeed the saying of Pittacus is true, which he has said, it is difficult to be good?:** One of the Seven Sages, from Mytilene (640-586 BC). Wilson (1975, 63) cites Plato, *Protagoras* 340c as Basil's source, but he is mentioned in Diogenes Laertius 1.4 which quotes the maxim, and states that it is cited by Simonides along with Plato. He is also referenced in Plato, *Protagoras* 343b.

διὰ πολλῶν γὰρ δὴ τῶ ὄντι πόνων διεξεληθοῦσι μόλις ἂν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐκείνων τυχεῖν ἡμῖν περιγένοιτο, ὧν ἐν τοῖς ἄνω λόγοις οὐδὲν εἶναι παράδειγμα τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ἐλέγομεν: **For indeed, having passed through many toils in reality it would scarcely remain for us to achieve those goods, which we have said in the words above, no human goods are an example:** Cf. 2.4 where Basil states that the human goods are no comparison for those in the afterlife, and cannot even be used as a proper guide to the nature of those heavenly goods.

διὰ πολλῶν ... πόνων: **through many toils:** Cf. 5, and 8.9.

Παράδειγμα: **example:** used previously in 7.3 regarding useful examples which can be recalled to memory.

8.13: οὐ δὴ οὖν ῥαθυμητέον ἡμῖν, οὐδὲ τῆς ἐν βραχεῖ ῥαστώνης μεγάλας ἐλπίδας ἀνταλλακτέον: **Therefore, we must not be careless, nor must we**

exchange our great hopes in return for brief laziness: Basil repeats ἡμῖν, emphasising that he is speaking not only to the young nephews, but also to himself, or else he is in danger of the same fate which could await his audience.

μεγάλας ἐλπίδας: **great hopes:** For the similar idea that hope is the motivator for great striving on the part of Christians, see e.g. 2 Corinthians 3.11-12: ‘And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.’; 1 Colossians 1.5: ‘the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel’; also 1 Thessalonians 1.3; 1 Timothy 4.10.

Section 9

9.1: Τί οὖν ποιῶμεν; φάιη τις ἄν: **Therefore what should we do? Someone might say:** Basil imagines a response to his revelation that punishment awaits those who do not seek virtue.

He imagines an interlocutor, using the word τις, rather than putting the question he proceeds to answer into the mouths of his nephews. This may be a sign that Basil envisages a wider audience for the work, but it may also be part of the technique for encouraging his nephews. Basil does not put this question into the mouths of the youths because he wishes to imply that they already know enough not to have to ask the question. It has been established that Basil makes an effort to address these young men, not simply as children, but as youths about to embark on adult life, and he encourages them to engage with his words and adopt his advice willingly because they have made a rational decision, rather than because he has told them to. His creation of a shared Christian identity with the youths has the effect of making them responsible and also implying they have the same perspective as Basil so will readily accept his advice. The implication is that the youths are in a more secure position than the imaginary questioner, since they can begin to apply reason to answer the question for themselves. However, his nephews have not gained total understanding and knowledge yet, and Basil proceeds to explain how to avoid punishment and get virtue, but, his creation of a third listener means he imparts his wisdom to the nephews without explicitly suggesting that they need it.

From here on Basil begins to make more use of personal pronouns as he did at the beginning of the address. As he nears the end of his discussion he reinforces his connection with his nephews and their shared Christian worldview which needs to influence the decisions and actions of the youths after they have listened to Basil's advice.

τί ἄλλο γε ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιμέλειαν ἔχειν, πᾶσαν σχολὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἄγοντας: **What else indeed but to have a care for the soul, keeping all leisure away from other things?:** Basil stresses the importance of looking after the soul throughout life. Cf. 8.1 and 8.3, and introduces the theme of this section, that the soul is of greater importance than the body.

9.2: οὐ δὴ οὖν τῷ σώματι δουλευτέον, ὅτι μὴ πᾶσα ἀνάγκη: ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ τὰ βέλτιστα ποριστέον: **Therefore we should not be a slave to the body, unless under absolute compulsion; but must provide the best things for the soul:** Wilson (1975, 64) cites Plato, *Phaedo* 67a as the source for Basil's phrase 'under compulsion' in this context.

In this section Basil endeavours to deal with the body and the way it should be treated from a Christian perspective, but at the same time reconcile those ideas with opposing notions expressed by pagan writers concerning the evil of the flesh, as his nephews will be encountering those classical ideas in their school texts . Sheldon Williams (1967, 425-27) discusses the relationship between the Neoplatonic and Christian thought, and the idea that Christian philosophy, or Christianity is a distinct brand of thought which takes basic ideas from Plato, but understands them in the light of the Christian divine revelation. That process can be seen working here is Basil's advice. The notion that the soul needs to be released from the bodily passions is a Platonic idea, along with the concept that the body is a prison which keeps the soul bound away from god. However, Basil argues that in addition to training the soul so that it rises above the constraints of the body, the body also needs to be trained and taught, with the result that the body itself can overcome the passions which rage within it, and have the self-control not to give in to its desires.

The tension between classical and Christian concepts about the body can be found explored by several writers, e.g. JChrys, *Homily 1 on Titus*, 1.4: ‘But if [the bishop] takes care of his body that he may minister to thee, if he attends to his health that he may be useful, ought he for this to be accused? Knowest thou not that bodily infirmity no less than infirmity of soul injures both us and the Church? ... For if we could practice virtue with the soul alone, we need not take care of the body.’

ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ τὰ βέλτιστα ποριστέον: **but must provide the best things for the soul:** Even though the body cannot be entirely neglected, the soul is always to be the priority. βέλτιστα: LSJ defines the superlative of ἀγαθός as ‘highest good’ in philosophical texts, e.g. Plato, *Phaedo* 99a.

ὥσπερ ἐκ δεσμωτηρίου, τῆς πρὸς τὰ τοῦ σώματος πάθη κοινωνίας αὐτὴν διὰ φιλοσοφίας λύοντας, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τὸ σῶμα τῶν παθῶν κρεῖττον ἀπεργαζομένους: **So that we release it from communion with the passions of the body by means of philosophy, as though from a prison, and at the same time sanctify the body to be stronger than the passions:**

ἐκ δεσμωτηρίου: **from a prison:** Wilson (1975, 64) cites Plato, *Phaedo*, and the analogy is used later in the section in an anecdote about Pythagoras. It is also found in Plato, *Cratylus* 400c.

κοινωνίας: **communion:** LSJ has ‘communion, association, partnership’. Common in New Testament writings (e.g. 2 Corinthians 13.14), later the word came to be used to refer to the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 10.16). Found in Plato in the context of union between body and soul; see e.g. *Laws* 828d; *Rep.* 462c and *Phaedo* 65a.

διὰ φιλοσοφίας: **by means of philosophy:** As considered above, Basil does not frequently use the word philosophy, particularly when compared to the other Cappadocian fathers. However, in this section, and at 6.1 where he used the word before, he consciously puts himself on a level with classical thinkers, and expressing himself in terms consistent with them. In this section he is clearly, and explicitly, borrowing from Plato, so making use of the term philosophy to engage in his argument.

γαστρὶ μὲν γε τὰ ἀναγκαῖα ὑπηρετοῦντας, οὐχὶ τὰ ἡδίστα: **ministering to the stomach with necessary but not the most pleasant foodstuffs:** Both Christian and pagan thinkers define two kinds of people: those who are enslaved to their bodies and those who, with the benefit of philosophy, are not.

ὑπηρετοῦντας: LSJ gives a meaning of ‘serve as a rower on board ship’, but also ‘be subservient to’, ‘minister to’ etc. Basil highlights the paradox which lies at the centre of discussion about how one should treat the body in a way consistent with the cultivation of the virtuous life. The body must be served because it has certain physical needs which, if neglected, will cause the body to become useless and hinder rather than help the efforts to become virtuous. However, the individual must not become subservient to his body; he provides for its needs, but must behave as a benefactor rather than a servant, or else the comforts that he give the body cease to be necessities and instead become indulgences.

γαστρὶ: **stomach:** Cf. Philippians 3.19: ‘Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.’ See JChrys, *Homilies on the Statues* 9.3 for a discussion on the right way to eat: ‘But he who has eaten will rival him who fasts, as far as regards sobriety of soul; for he eats and drinks, not so as to distend the stomach, or to darken the reason, but in such a way as to recruit the strength of the body when it has become weakened.’

οὐχὶ τὰ ἡδίστα: **not the most pleasant foodstuffs:** Cf. 8.9: the life chosen by athletes and their trainers: δίαιταν δὲ οὐ τὴν ἡδίστην.

ὡς οἱ γε τραπεζοποιούς τινας καὶ μαγείρους περινοοῦντες, καὶ πᾶσαν διερευνώμενοι γῆν τε καὶ θάλασσαν: **Unlike those men who devote their thoughts to slaves who set out tables and cooks, tracking them down through every land and sea:** This image of scouring the world for luxuries was a commonplace for moralists (See Wilson (1975, 64) for examples). Basil uses a typical image which represents unnecessary excess, but he expresses it in terms of the slaves who create and set out the tables for the luxurious food rather than the foods themselves.

τραπεζοποιούς: Lampe cites JChrys, *Homily 28.3 on 2 Corinthians*.

παῖσαν ... γῆν τε καὶ θάλασσαν: **through every land and sea**: Cf. 5.14 contrasting the worldwide struggles of those suffering for virtue and those who travel the world seeking unnecessary delicacies. See Clement, *Paed.* 2.1 on eating, where he berates those who ‘put themselves to a world of trouble to procure dainties from beyond seas’.

οἷόν τινα χαλεπῶ δεσπότη φόρους ἀπάγοντες: **just like those bringing home tribute to some harsh master**: For φόρους ἀπάγοντες meaning ‘tribute’ see Herodotus, *Histories* 1.6.

ἐλεεινοὶ τῆς ἀσχολίας: **wretched individuals because of their labour**: It is not the difficulty of the task which makes these people wretched, since that would negate Basil’s message about the hardships involved in becoming virtuous, but rather the fruitlessness of the activity, since it does not last, and needs to be undertaken again and again for no good purpose. The sentiment echoes that in 8.5-8 that hard work must be undertaken must be for the correct ends or else the labour is in vain.

τῶν ἐν ᾄδου κολαζομένων οὐδὲν πάσχοντες ἀνεκτότερον, ἀτεχνῶς εἰς πῦρ ξαίνοντες, καὶ κοσκίνῳ φέροντες ὕδωρ, καὶ εἰς τετροημένον ἀντλοῦντες πίθον: **suffering nothing more bearable than those being punished in Hades, such as those combing wool unskillfully into the fire, and bearing water in a sieve and drawing water in a perforated jug**:

τῶν ἐν ᾄδου κολαζομένων: **being punished in Hades**: The phrase refers back 8.14 about punishments in the houses of correction, but there Basil did not explicitly refer to human prisons or punishments in the afterlife. Here he writes specifically about the pagan underworld, and refers to chastisements endured by the wicked in Hades. Wilson (1975, 64) comments on these illustrations as ‘proverbial’, and certainly they do not mainly appear to be attached to specific mythological characters

ἐν ᾧδου: **in Hades**: It seems surprising that a Christian writer should refer to the mythological place of torment in his writing, but the word is used nine times in the New Testament, and is commonly used to refer to death or the grave in the Church Fathers.

ἀτεχνῶς εἰς πῦρ ξαίνοντες: **such as those unskillfully combing wool into the fire**: Plato, *Laws* 780c cites this as the proverbial illustration of a fruitless task. Cf. JChrys, *Homily 76 on Matthew 24.16-18* ver. 5 using two of the images introduced by Basil: ‘Why dost thou draw water into a broken cistern? For it is this to labor for the present life. Why dost thou comb wool into the fire?’ Also *Homily 34 on John 6.28-9* ver. 3: ‘And repentance is the not doing the same again; for he that again puts his hand to the same, is like the dog that returneth to his own vomit, and like him in the proverb who cards wool into the fire, and draws water into a cask full of holes.’

καὶ κοσκίνῳ φέροντες ὕδωρ, καὶ εἰς τετροημένον ἀντλοῦντες πίθον: **and bearing water in a sieve, and drawing water in a perforated jug**: The punishment given to the 50 daughters of Danaus who murdered their husbands on their wedding night at the behest of their father. They had to fill a barrel which had a broken bottom with water, and used a sieve to carry the water to the barrel. Aristotle, *Economics* 1344b refers to the two elements of the punishment: ‘otherwise there is no more benefit in acquiring than in baling with a colander, or in the proverbial wine-jar with a hole in the bottom.’ See Plato, *Rep.* 363d for the image of transporting water in a sieve, and *Gorgias* 439b for a discussion of the punishment as an allegory for those who are not initiated into the philosophic life. (See also JChrys, *Instructions to Catechumens* 1.5).

The images Basil uses here do appear to be proverbial rather than attached to specific mythological characters or sins. The punishment given to the daughters of Danaus is found expressed in both pagan and Christian writings with little reference to the women or their crime, suggesting that it had been assimilated into ideas about suffering in Hades without necessarily being connected to a particular myth. The expression ‘carding wool into the fire’ is used to describe a fruitless task, but does not appear to be connected with the punishments endured by those in the underworld, which suggests that Basil may be making use of a proverbial saying in a new context. In this way he can increase the seriousness of the pointless tasks he refers to, since the reality of trying to achieve something impossible and relentless is not just that there will be no end to the

activity, but that also it makes the life of the individual involved more like an existence in hell than a pleasurable life.

Basil wants to drive home the message that not only does the pursuit of luxury make human life miserable, but actually it distracts from the proper business of Christian life, namely to live a life of virtue, and the serious consequence of such living would be punishment, not in a place of mythological gods and monsters, but in the place ordained by God himself.

9.3: οὐδὲν πέρας τῶν πόνων ἔχοντες: **having no end to their toils**: The use of πόνος recalls 5.3-4 and 8.12. The virtuous will live lives full of toils, but they know that there will be an end to their difficulties, and the crown which is the reward for a holy life awaits them when they die. Conversely, these wretched individuals will endure endless toil for luxuries while on the earth, and toil will continue as they are punished after their deaths.

κουρὰς δὲ καὶ ἀμπεχόνας ἔξω τῶν ἀναγκαίων περιεργάζεσθαι, ἢ δυστυχούντων ἐστὶ, κατὰ τὸν Διογένηος λόγον, ἢ ἀδικούντων: **To take more than necessary pains about hair-cutting and clothes is, according to Diogenes, for those who are unlucky or unrighteous:**

τῶν ἀναγκαίων: from ἀνάγκη: **necessity, constraint**. It is the third time the word has been used in this section, and reinforces the notion that that physical requirements ought to be met only as far as it is essential for life, rather than for physical indulgence. Although the context here is how to treat the body in the light of the soul, Basil's admonitions link to those statements earlier about classical literature, and how his nephews should accept only the parts of pagan writing which are necessary and useful. It is a theme running throughout the address that literature should not be pursued and studied for only for pleasure, and in the same way, Basil suggests that care of the body should not be undertaken simply for the enjoyment of the body.

κουρὰς δὲ καὶ ἀμπεχόνας: **hair-cutting and clothes**: The issues that Basil deals with in this section are all connected to the five senses, and is similar to the structure in JChrys, *De Inani* 27. He considers taste in the discussion of the stomach, and concern

for specific foodstuffs, and moves on to touch in the context of fine clothes and hairdressing, cf. Clement, *Paed.* 3.3 (See Ch3, 61-65 for the ways that Basil and Clement deal with these topics.)

ἡ δυστυχοῦντων ἐστί, κατὰ τὸν Διογένους λόγον, ἡ ἀδικούντων: **according to Diogenes, for those who are unlucky or unrighteous:** Wilson (1975, 64) states that the aphorism is found in Diogenes Laertius 6.54: ‘Seeing a youth dressing with elaborate care, he said, "If it's for men, you're a fool; if for women, a knave."’ However, Clement also refers to Diogenes in his discussion of clothing (*Paed.* 3.3: ‘Diogenes, when he was being sold, chiding like a teacher one of these degenerate creatures, said very manfully, “Come, youngster, buy for yourself a man,” chastising his meretriciousness by an ambiguous speech.’) which confirms the idea that the cynic philosopher was seen as a pagan with a suitably Christian moral message. For a discussion of certain fourth century Fathers’ attitudes towards Diogenes and his use as an exemplum see Krueger (1993, 29-49, esp. 29, 35-6 for Basil's use).

ὥστε καλλωπιστὴν εἶναι καὶ ὀνομάζεσθαι ὁμοίως αἰσχρὸν ἡγεῖσθαι φημι δεῖν τοὺς τοιούτους, ὡς τὸ ἐταιρεῖν ἢ ἀλλοτρίοις γάμοις ἐπιβουλεύειν: **Thus to be a dandy and to be likewise called one, I say, is as shameful as those men who keep company with prostitutes or form designs on other men’s wives:** (the Seventh Ecumenical Council quotes Basil’s words here in its edict on the dress for clergy.) Clement also suggest that men who dress in a certain way are taken for ‘adulterers’ (*Paed.* 3.3).

9.4: τί γὰρ ἂν διαφέροι τῷ γε νοῦν ἔχοντι, ξυστίδα ἀναβεβλησθαι ἢ τι τῶν φαύλων ἱμάτιον φέρειν, ἕως ἂν μηδὲν ἐνδέη τοῦ πρὸς χειμῶνά τε εἶναι καὶ θάλπος ἀλεξητήριον: **For what would be the difference, to a man of sense, to be looked upon wearing a fine robe of state or some cloak of poor material, as long as there is no lack of protection from it both in the winter cold and heat?:**

τῷ γε νοῦν ἔχοντι: **to a man of sense:** picks up the use of νόος from 8.3. Here, as in other places, Basil dismisses the value of a course of action or opinion by appealing to the way he hopes that his nephews will want to consider themselves. Having listened to

their Uncle's advice, and made their decision to live Christian lives, Basil's nephews will want to be regarded as sensible individuals, who have acquired the ability to reason, and therefore he anticipates that they will accept the opinion of a 'man of sense', and eschew the need for fine clothes. Cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.6 in reference to Socrates having only one cloak for all seasons and Clement, *Paed.* 2.11 for a consideration of necessary clothes.

9.5: καὶ τὰλλα δὴ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον μὴ περιττότερον τῆς χρείας κατεσκευάσθαι: **and indeed in other matters in the same way one must not be equipped more than is necessary:** Another admonition that only the bare minimum is required to meet physical needs.

μηδὲ περιέπειν τὸ σῶμα πλέον ἢ ὡς ἄμεινον τῆ ψυχῆ: **and the body should not be treated with great care or better than the soul:** The body should be given what it needs, but must not be placed higher in value than the soul, which is the most important. In contrast, some of the earliest Christian writing places a higher degree of value on the body e.g. Ephesians 5.28-29: 'In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church.' Here the apostle suggests that the care given to the physical body is an analogy for the care that Christ gives to the church, implying that care of the body is a good thing, if it is used as a standard for care of others.

οὐχ ἦττον γὰρ ὄνειδος ἀνδρὶ τῷ γε ὡς ἀληθῶς τῆς προσηγορίας ταύτης ἀξίῳ, καλλωπιστὴν καὶ φιλοσώματον εἶναι, ἢ πρὸς ἄλλο τι τῶν παθῶν ἀγεννῶς διακεῖσθαι: **For it is no less a reproach to a man who is truly worthy of such a name, like dandy and 'body-lover', than to be in a lowly state because of some other of the passions:**

φιλοσώματον: **body-lover:** Cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 68c: οὐκ ἄρ' ἦν φιλόσοφος ἀλλὰ τις φιλοσώματος: "Then is it not," said Socrates, "a sufficient indication, when you see a man troubled because he is going to die, that he was not a lover of wisdom but a lover of the body?"

9.6: τὸ γὰρ τὴν πᾶσαν σπουδὴν εἰσφέρεισθαι, ὅπως ὡς κάλλιστα αὐτῷ τὸ σῶμα ἔξοι, οὐ διαγινώσκοντός ἐστιν ἑαυτόν, οὐδὲ συνιέντος τοῦ σοφοῦ παραγγέλματος, ὅτι οὐ τὸ ὁρώμενόν ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος: ἀλλὰ τινος δεῖται περιττοτέρας σοφίας, δι' ἧς ἕκαστος ἡμῶν, ὅστις ποτέ ἐστιν, ἑαυτὸν ἐπιγνώσεται: **For the man who brings all effort in order to have the most beautiful body does not know himself, nor does he understand the wise precept, that the real man is not what is seen, but some superior wisdom is necessary by means of which each of us, whoever he is, will recognise himself.:**

τὴν πᾶσαν σπουδὴν: **all effort:** Cf. 7.1 and the 'earnest accomplishments' of the men of the past, both pagan and Christian, who followed virtue.

οὐ διαγινώσκοντός ... ἑαυτόν/ ἑαυτὸν ἐπιγνώσεται: **does not know himself/ recognise himself:** Wilson (1975, 65) indentifies the similarities between this and the admonition at the temple of Apollo at Delphi. The maxim was one endorsed by Socrates (see e.g. Plato, *Phaedrus* 229e), and is also found in Plutarch (e.g. *Adolescens* 36a and *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* 49b). However, Basil may be equally thinking of his own interpretation of the phrase rather than just the classical references, as found in his *Attende tibi*..

ὅτι οὐ τὸ ὁρώμενόν ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος: **the real man is not what is seen:** Cf. 1 Samuel 16.7b: 'People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'

ἀλλὰ τινος δεῖται περιττοτέρας σοφίας: **some superior wisdom is necessary:** The idea that divine revelation is required to help one understand themselves, and that the ascent to God cannot be achieved by human effort alone.

This is the first time in this work that Basil has suggested that the acquisition of virtue might require more than simply hard work and human toil, but involve a spiritual understanding of the world. As Basil takes his nephews through the realms of classical philosophy and thinking, he is faced with the need to convey more specifically Christian ideas to his audience, even as he discourses in pagan terminology. It has been

mentioned that he uses the word ‘philosophy’ in these later sections, and through his consideration of the way that the body should be treated he interacts directly with philosophical ideas. However, as that interaction takes place, it is no longer possible to speak in broad terms about moral virtue as he has before, because of the fundamentally different views about the body and the fate of the soul which were held by pagan and Christian thinkers. Therefore Basil needs to expound more specific details about the Christian view in order for his nephews to spot the differences between that and the pagan ideas in their schoolbooks.

The ‘superior wisdom’ to which Basil refers is a divine revelation, some spiritual or Scriptural understanding which guides the Christian through life, but at the same time it could appear to convey the idea that a wiser individual might be a help in enabling someone to ‘recognise himself’, and in this context for the youths, that person could be Basil.

τοῦτο δὲ μὴ καθηραμένοις τὸν νοῦν ἀδυνατώτερον ἢ λημῶντι πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον ἀναβλέψαι: **For those who have not cleansed their mind, this is more difficult than for a bleary-eyed man to look towards the sun:** Cf. 2.8 on the idea of training the eye to look at the sun in a pail of water before trying to see it in the sky.

τοῦτο δὲ μὴ καθηραμένοις τὸν νοῦν: **For those who have not cleansed their mind:** repetition of νόος used above (9.4). The idea of ‘cleansing the mind’ was important in the earliest Christian thinking; e.g. Romans 12.2: ‘Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.’, and also the admonitions of Jesus, which suggested that sins which take place only in the mind are still sin, and should be fought against. (e.g. Matthew 5.28 about the adultery of the heart, and discussion of it above (7.9).)

The purging of an individual’s mind was the first step on the road to virtue, and the notion is found in the Church Fathers, e.g. Methodius, *Symposium* 9.2: ‘This signifies the exercise of divine discipline, by which the mind that subdues the passions is cleansed and adorned by the sweeping out and ejection from it of sins ... For the mind being cleansed by laborious exercises from the distracting thoughts which darken it, quickly perceives the truth;’; Cyprian, *Treatise* 8.2: ‘but that he who shall have cleansed

what is within has cleansed also that which is without; and that if the mind is cleansed, a man has begun to be clean also in skin and body,'; GNaz, *Or.* 38.6: 'We will begin from this point; and let me ask of you who delight in such matters to cleanse your mind and your ears and your thoughts, since our discourse is to be of God and Divine,'; JChrys, *Homily 12 on 1 Timothy 4.1-3* ver. 10: 'Cleansed thy mind, and rectify thy judgment, and then thou wilt be good. Learn what are really goods. What are they? Virtue and benevolence,' and *Homily 54 on John 8.31-32* [4]: 'Wherefore, I exhort you, use every means that our life may be righteous, that our minds may be cleansed'.

ἢ λημῶντι πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον ἀναβλέψαι: **than for a bleary-eyed man to look towards the sun**: For Basil's use of the same image see *Ep.* 150.1: 'Then, further, I conclude that it is of no small importance, nor of benefit only for a little while, that the soul's eye should be so purged that, after being freed from all the darkness of ignorance, as though from some blinding humour, one can gaze intently on the beauty of the glory of God.'

9.7: Κάθαρσις δὲ ψυχῆς, ὡς ἀθρόως τε εἰπεῖν καὶ ὑμῖν ἰκανῶς, τὰς διὰ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἡδονὰς ἀτιμάζειν: **The purification of the soul, being both totally sufficient for you, so to speak, encourages you not to honour pleasures which come by means of the senses**: The argument continues: if one is concerned for the soul and the acquisition of virtue, then other more trivial things are of no consequence.

Κάθαρσις: **cleansing/ purification**: Cf. Plato, *Sophist* 227c on the difference between the purification of the soul and that of the body. Basil focuses on the soul here, and agrees with Plato that this type is most important.

τὰς διὰ τῶν αἰσθήσεων ἡδονὰς: **pleasures which come by means of the senses**: Basil has already begun to consider the senses and the pleasures which accompany them in his discussion of taste and clothing. Since the senses only affect and give pleasure to the body, they are to be ignored when dealing with the enhancement of the soul. In the same vein, Basil considers the sense of sight, and various images which are of no psychic benefit.

μη ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐστιᾶν ταῖς ἀτόποις τῶν θαυματοποιῶν ἐπιδείξεσιν: **not feasting the eyes on the strange demonstrations of conjurors:**

ἐστιᾶν: LSJ define as **to receive in one's home**: It has a stronger sense than simply to look at, but conveys the idea of indulging, and treating well, since can also mean **entertain or feast** (e.g. Plato, *Rep.* 458a; *Symposium* 175b). The language creates a similar notion to that used to describe the feeding of the stomach: the idea that delightful things are presented to the stomach or eyes as if the body's desires are important guests or the masters of the body's actions. However, Basil wishes to suggest the exact opposite: the bodily desires and needs are to be the slaves of the soul, not the other way around.

The same image is used by GNaz in the context of avoiding certain sensory pleasures in *Or.* 38.5: 'Let us not adorn our porches, nor arrange dances, nor decorate the streets; let us not feast the eye, nor enchant the ear with music, nor enervate the nostrils with perfume, nor prostitute the taste, nor indulge the touch, those roads that are so prone to evil and entrances for sin.' The speech was delivered in AD 380 or 381, after the death of Basil so it is possible that Gregory was imitating his friend here, although the topos is used by several Church Fathers. (Cf. JChrys, *De Inani* 27.)

τῶν θαυματοποιῶν: **of conjurors**: LSJ cites Plato, *Sophist* 235b: τὸ μὴ οὐ τοῦ γένους εἶναι τοῦ τῶν θαυματοποιῶν τις εἶς; 'The conclusion that he belongs to the class of **conjurors**'. The word is not common in classical authors, but appears to be used more by later writers; e.g. Lucian, *Death of Peregrinus* 17.9; GNys, *Canonical Epistle* 3. GNys, *Ep.* 6 describes: 'conjurors in theatres [who] contrive some such marvel', while Basil himself uses the same image in *Hex.* 4.1: 'There are towns where the inhabitants, from dawn to eve, feast their eyes on the tricks of innumerable conjurors.' Since he continues his criticism of theatrical spectacles in that homily with a consideration of 'dissolute songs' and immoral music it seems likely that this is a theme he introduces because he knows it will become familiar to the youths in the future (cf. discussion in Ch5)).

μη διὰ τῶν ὠτῶν διεφθορμένην μελωδίαν τῶν ψυχῶν καταχεῖν: **nor to pour down destructive music into the soul by means of the ears**: Cf. Basil, *Hex.* 4.1: 'They

are never tired of hearing dissolute songs which cause much impurity to spring up in their souls ... They do not know ... that these melodious and meretricious songs insinuate themselves into men's souls.'

9.8: ἀνελευθερίας γὰρ δὴ καὶ ταπεινότητος ἕκγονα πάθη ἐκ τοῦ τοιοῦδε τῆς μουσικῆς εἴδους ἐγγίνεσθαι πέφυκεν: **For passion which is the offspring of illiberality and baseness is produced from this kind of music:** See 8.8 for a musician affecting behaviour through his choice of rhythm and melody. Here Basil engages with the ancient view that certain types of music had particular moral qualities, and could therefore educate or corrupt those listening to it. West (1992, 158) states that: 'Aesthetic and moral qualities were attributed to various rhythms, partly on the basis of their actual associations with dances or songs of a particular character, partly subjectively, and partly from theoretical considerations.' The musician Damon was the first to argue for state regulation of musical modes (West, p246), and Plato adopted his ideas in his discussion of music's role in educating the young in the *Republic* and *Laws*. No doubt Basil is drawing on the Platonic debate here, but he must also have had firsthand experience of the different ways that members of his congregation behaved when in certain situations, hearing different types of music.

The fact that he mentions 'dissolute songs' (4.4), and advises his nephews that 'since this kind [of singing] is particularly in vogue at the moment, you should have as little to do with it as with anything more obviously sinful', Basil shows that he is aware of the contemporary influences on the youths, and addresses them in the same manner that he would an adult congregation (*Hex.* 4.1). (See Maxwell (2006, 42) on Christian congregations learning song lyrics from the theatre.)

πάθη: **passion:** used several times in this section. LSJ A.II.2 defines it as 'influence of passion or feeling, to be in a certain state of mind'. It does not necessarily have connotations of extremes of feeling, but certainly suggests an opposition to reason.

ἀλλὰ τὴν ἑτέραν μεταδιωκτέον ἡμῖν, τὴν ἀμείνω τε καὶ εἰς ἄμεινον φέρουσαν ἣ καὶ Δαβὶδ χρώμενος ὁ ποιητὴς τῶν ἱερῶν ἁσμάτων, ἐκ τῆς μανίας, ὡς φασὶ, τὸν βασιλέα καθίστη: **But we must follow closely after another**

kind, which is both better and conveys to even better, which David the poet of holy songs made use of, as they say, and brought the king back from his madness:

τὴν ἀμείνω τε καὶ εἰς ἄμεινον φέρουσιν: **both better and conveys to even better:** The music Basil advocates as suitable for the youths has two benefits: it is morally good in itself, so does not have a negative influence on them, but it also encourages the listener towards an even better moral state because of its good nature.

ἧ καὶ Δαβὶδ χρώμενος ὁ ποιητὴς τῶν ἱερῶν ἁσμάτων, ἐκ τῆς μανίας, ὡς φασι, τὸν βασιλέα καθίστη: **which David, the poet of holy songs made use of, as they say, and brought the king back from his madness:** The episode is found in 1 Samuel 16.14-23, and there the notion is that David's skill as a musician, along with the fact that he is favoured by God, are the reasons that he was able to soothe King Saul. (e.g. 16.18 states that David was a 'skilled player'.) However, Basil implies that it was the tunes which David played that were the means by which Saul was able to recover his sanity. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew 2* (preserved in the *Philocalia*) refers to David and the 'music of God' which calmed the spirit tormenting Saul.

ὁ ποιητὴς τῶν ἱερῶν ἁσμάτων: **the poet of holy songs:** The phrase is not found elsewhere, although Augustine refers to the writer of the Psalms: *City of God* 17.14: 'Now David was a man skilled in songs' and *Ep.* 101: 'that holy man loved sacred music'. Basil may be using the phrase ὁ ποιητὴς here as a contrast to his earlier use of it about Homer (5.6) since he is introducing Biblical and Christian examples into his discussion, even as he engages with pagan philosophy.

9.9: λέγεται δὲ καὶ Πυθαγόραν κωμασταῖς περιτυχόντα μεθύουσι κελεῦσαι τὸν ἀλύτην τὸν τοῦ κώμου κατάρχοντα, μεταβαλόντα τὴν ἁρμονίαν, ἐπαυλῆσαί σφισι τὸ Δώριον, τοὺς δὲ οὕτως ἀναφρονῆσαι ὑπὸ τοῦ μέλους, ὥστε τοὺς στεφάνους ῥίψαντας, αἰσχυνομένους ἐπανελθεῖν: **And it is said that Pythagoras, coming upon some drunken revellers, commanded the flautist leading the revel to change the harmony and play the Dorian mode to them, and thus they returned to their senses on account of the melody, so that, throwing down their flowery crowns they returned home ashamed of themselves:**

λέγεται (with ὡς φασι 9.8): **it is said (as they say)**: Cf. 3.3-4 recalling the stories of Moses and Daniel from the Old Testament. Basil does not appear to use these words when discussing literary characters or events, but rather refers to reported episodes in order to introduce real figures who exemplify the qualities he wishes to advertise. Wilson (1975, 66) expresses surprise that Basil should mention David alongside Pythagoras, but it is perhaps less surprising if it is considered that from Basil's perspective these were equally real individuals from a past era who displayed characteristics consistent with Basil's moral message. After all, Basil wishes to convey the message that pagan literature is not inconsistent and useless as a tool for growing in Christian virtue, and by identifying Pythagoras with a Jewish king who was a 'man after God's heart' he gives weight to his argument in a practical way.

Πυθαγόραν: **Pythagoras**: The episode is found in Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 1.11.32, although since Basil did not know Latin this is unlikely to be his source. Wilson (1975, 66) cites Galen, but notes that Damon is the central figure rather than Pythagoras.

τὸ Δώριον: **the Dorian mode**: One of the two modes approved of by Plato (West, 1992 p249). See e.g. *Rep.* 398e on the fact that Lydian and Ionian modes are not suitable; 399a that the Dorian mode is ideal for 'warfare or business'; *Laches* 188d. Plutarch also recommends the mode in *Quis Suos* 84a: 'we, after the manner of musicians, incline to the severity of the Dorian key rather than to the softness of the Lydian'.

Basil not only asserts the moral superiority of the Dorian mode, but suggests that it has the ability to change the group's mood and behaviour, even though the members are drunk as well as under the influence of an immoral tune. Cf 8.8.

τοὺς στεφάνους ῥίψαντας: **throwing down their flowery crowns**: Greek revellers wore wreaths around their heads, but the use of the word στεφάνος here is reminiscent of Basil's use of it earlier at 8.9 in the context of athletics. There he contrasts the temporary nature of the 'parsley' crowns achieved by the athletes with the eternal crown available for the Christian. Here the image of partygoers rejecting and throwing down the crowns associated with debauched behaviour suggests likewise that the things of the

world are as nothing in comparison with the true eternal crown that can be won if virtue is sought and adhered to.

9.10: ἕτεροι δὲ πρὸς αὐλὸν κορυβαντιῶσι καὶ ἐκβακχεύονται: **Others start up and become frenzied at the sound of the flute:** Cf. episode in Iamblichus, *VP* 112. The flute was particularly associated with drunken parties and the worship of Dionysus.

τοσοῦτόν ἐστι τὸ διάφορον ὑγιῶς ἢ μοχθηρᾶς μελωδίας ἀναπλησθῆναι:

This is the difference between being filled with wholesome or knavish music:

Somewhat vague advice. The only ‘wholesome’ music which Basil has referred to is that played by David, and his implicit suggestion that the Psalms would be good moral songs for the youths to listen to.

ὥστε, τῆς νῦν δὴ κρατούσης ταύτης, ἦττον ὑμῖν μεθεκτέον, ἢ οὐτινοσοῦν

τῶν αἰσχίστων: **And as this type is now popular you should have less of a share in it than in anything else which is clearly shameful:** Basil shows that he is aware of the culture in which his nephews are growing up, and comments on the influences around them.

κρατούσης: **is powerful, rules over:** LSJ cites Herodotus, *Histories* 9.42 for the definition ‘prevail in opinion, be popular’.

ἦττον ὑμῖν μεθεκτέον: **you should have less of a share in it:** Cf. 4.1: μεθεκτέον ὑμῖν: how the youths ought to have a share in the wisdom found in pagan literature.

9.11: ἀτμούς γε μὴν παντοδαπούς ἡδονὴν ὀσφρήσει φέροντας τῷ ἀέρι

καταμιγνύναι, ἢ μύροις ἑαυτοὺς ἀναχρώννυσθαι, καὶ ἀπαγορεύειν

αἰσχύνομαι: **Indeed in truth, I should be ashamed to forbid the use of all kinds of perfumes, mixed up to bring pleasure on the air, or defile the surface of the body**

with countless things: Basil continues his look at the senses with a consideration of the sense of smell. Cf. Clement, *Paed.* 2.8 and 3.3.

τί δ' ἄν τις εἴποι περὶ τοῦ μὴ χρῆναι τὰς ἐν ἀφῆ καὶ γεύσει διώκειν ἡδονάς, ἢ ὅτι καταναγκάζουσιν αὐταὶ τοὺς περὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν θήραν ἐσχολακότας, ὡσπερ τὰ θρέμματα, πρὸς τὴν γαστέρα καὶ τὰ ὑπὲρ αὐτὴν συννενευκότας
ζῆν: **What more needs to be said about there being no need to pursue the pleasures of touch and taste, than that these things force those devoting themselves to the hunting of them to live just like animals, concentrating on their stomachs and the things below it:**

διώκειν: **hunting/ pursuing:** Cf. use in 2.3; 6.5; 9.24.

ἡδονάς: **pleasures:** throughout the work Basil returns to the theme that pleasure should not be valued or pursued. Cf. 5.13, and the pleasures which Vice is presented as promising to Herakles; pleasures which he rejects in favour of following Virtue.

ἐν ἀφῆ καὶ γεύσει: **of touch and taste:** Cf. GNys, *On Virginit*y 21: 'we want to apply to our own lives that rule of all temperance, never to let the mind dwell on anything wherein pleasure's bait is hid; but above all to be specially watchful against the pleasure of taste. For that seems in a way the most deeply rooted, and to be the mother as it were of all forbidden enjoyment. The pleasures of eating and drinking, leading to boundless excess, inflict upon the body the doom of the most dreadful sufferings for over-indulgence is the parent of most of the painful diseases.' Also, Clement, *Paed.* 2.1.

ὡσπερ τὰ θρέμματα: **just like beasts:** Cf. comment at 8.3 that if a man has no aim in life then he is just 'like brute beasts'. Here Basil extends the idea: if the aim is the wrong one then it is as bad as having no aim at all. The notion expressed here is Biblical: Philippians 3.19-20: 'Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven.' Basil does not mention the opposite, Christian perspective which is found in Paul's epistle, but the inference is there.

9.12: Ἐνὶ δὲ λόγῳ, παντὸς ὑπεροπτεύον τοῦ σώματος τῷ μὴ, ὡς ἐν βορβόρῳ, ταῖς ἡδοναῖς αὐτοῦ κατορωρύχθαι μέλλοντι: **In a word, we must distain every part of the body, if we wish not to be destined to be buried in its pleasures as though in the mire:** A cautionary sentiment is found in Clement, *Str.* 2.20: 'But

[immoral people], abandoning themselves to pleasure like goats, as if insulting the body, lead a life of self-indulgence; not knowing that the body is wasted, being by nature subject to dissolution; while their soul is buried in the mire of vice; following as they do the teaching of pleasure itself, not of the apostolic man.’ Having gone through the list of the five senses, Basil focuses again on the whole body, and the need to distain all parts of it which pertain to the senses or else the soul will drown in a sea of unbridled pleasures.

ἢ τοσοῦτον ἀνθεκτέον αὐτοῦ, ὅσον, φησὶ Πλάτων; ὑπηρεσίαν φιλοσοφία κτωμένου: **and cleave to it only so much, as Plato says, as can be pressed into service of philosophy:** Basil makes explicit the influence of Plato on his thought, referencing *Rep.* 498b and 533d (Wilson 1975, 66). Note the use of the word ‘philosophy’ which Basil includes here because of his borrowing from Plato.

εὐκότα που λέγων τῷ Παύλῳ, ὃς παραινεῖ μηδεμίαν χρῆναι τοῦ σώματος πρόνοιαν ἔχειν εἰς ἐπιθυμιῶν ἀφορμῆν: **speaking somewhere in a similar way to Paul, who advised that there is no need to have consideration for the body as a starting point for the desires:** Basil attempts to convey the greater authority of Paul by saying that Plato was reminiscent of the apostle, rather than the other way around. A similar idea is found in Clement, *Str.* 1.22 arguing that the Greeks plagiarised their wisdom from Moses and the Jewish writings.

Cf. 7.2-8 for examples of pagan individuals which are then linked to Jesus’ teachings, although Basil does not refer to the tenets as Christ’s words, simply Christian precepts. At 7.10 he attributes knowledge of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount to Cleinias who lived centuries before. His reference to Paul is a contrast to his discussion of David earlier, since he does not add any identifying markers to the apostle, but simply refers to him as ‘Paul’. There is no elaboration about the character, which implies that he expects his nephews to be familiar with Paul and his letters, or at least the figure of Paul as significant in the early church, perhaps from Acts.

9.13: ἢ τί διαφέρουσιν οἱ τοῦ μὲν σώματος ὡς ἂν κάλλιστα ἔχοι φροντίζουσι, τὴν δὲ χρησομένην αὐτῷ ψυχὴν ὡς οὐδενὸς ἀξίαν περιορῶσι, τῶν περὶ τὰ ὄργανα σπουδαζόντων, τῆς δὲ δι’ αὐτῶν ἐνεργούσης τέχνης

καταμελούντων: **What is the difference between those men who think of the body so that it would be especially beautiful, but their soul is lacking so that they overlook it as unworthy of anything, and those men who make haste about their instruments but take no care over the operation of their craft?:** Basil uses the image of craftsmen for a second time, but here the body is the tool which is needed through life, and the manufacture of virtue within the soul is the craft that the tools are used for. He argues that one could spend all his time caring for his tools, but if he does not practise his craft then the shiny tools are redundant. Cf. the argument in 8.6: athletes need to work at developing the right body and skills for competition; effort expended in any other pursuit is wasted. See Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1241b for the relationship between the craftsman and his tools.

9.14: πᾶν μὲν οὖν τούναντίον κολάζειν αὐτὸ καὶ κατέχειν: **Therefore, doing the very opposite we must chastise and keep the body held down:**

ὥσπερ θηρίου τὰς ὀρμάς: **just like the rage of a wild beast:** Cf. e.g. Plato, *Phaedrus* 250e and Plutarch, *De Cohib.* 462e: τὸν θυμὸν ὥσπερ θηρίον ἐφίεμεν: ‘we ... let loose our wrath, like some wild beast’.

προσῆκε, καὶ τοὺς ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ θορύβους ἐγγινομένους τῇ ψυχῇ, οἷονεὶ μάστιγι, τῷ λογισμῷ καθικνουμένους κοιμίζειν: **and send away with reason, as with a whip, the innate uproars created in the soul by it, and put it to sleep:**

οἷονεὶ μάστιγι: **as with a whip:** continues the metaphor of the body as an animal since it must be curbed with a whip. Cf. anger in 7.4 and the need for reason to control it, just like a bit would control a horse.

τῷ λογισμῷ: **with reason:** λογισμός used here rather than νόος as earlier. For similar usage see e.g. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.3.11: ‘Think again of ... how the gods have endowed man with senses ... and ... how they have implanted in us the faculty of reasoning, whereby we are able to reason about the objects of our perceptions and to commit them to memory, and so come to know what advantage every kind can yield, and devise many means of enjoying the good and driving away the bad.’

ἀλλὰ μὴ πάντα χαλινὸν ἡδονῆς ἀνέντας περιορᾶν τὸν νοῦν, ὥσπερ
ἡνίοχον, ὑπὸ δυσηνίων ἵππων ὕβρει φερομένων παρασυρόμενον ἄγεσθαι:
**not loosening every curb on pleasure and overlook the mind, so that we are led,
just like a charioteer being swept along by violence, borne along by uncontrollable
horses:**

χαλινὸν: **curb/ bit**: Cf. 7.4: stories about people controlling their anger can act as a bit to help an individual to resist passion when in a similar situation.

The image is Platonic (Wilson 1975, 66: *Phaedrus* 254 for the notion of the soul as a charioteer), but is found used by several Church Fathers. See e.g. Athanasius, *Against the Heathen* 1.5.2; Clement, *Paed.* 3.11: ‘But irrational impulses must be curbed, lest, carrying us away through excessive relaxation, they impel us to voluptuousness. For luxury, that has dashed on to surfeit, is prone to kick up its heels and toss its mane, and shake off the charioteer, the Instructor; who, pulling back the reins from far, leads and drives to salvation the human horse—that is, the irrational part of the soul—which is wildly bent on pleasures, and vicious appetites, and precious stones, and gold, and variety of dress, and other luxuries.’; JChrys, *Homily 14 on Ephesians*: ‘When then we shall have disciplined these two faculties of the soul, anger and desire, and have put them like well-broken horses under the yoke of reason, then let us set over them the mind as charioteer, that we may “gain the prize of our high calling”’; and *Homily 1 on the Statutes* 10: ‘Timothy then, being aware of all these things, fortified himself on every side; for he knew that youth is an age of difficulty; that it is unstable; easily deceived; very apt to slip; and requires an exceedingly strong bridle. It is indeed a sort of combustible pile easily catching anything from without, and quickly kindled; and for that reason he took care to smother it on all sides; and strove to abate the flame in every way. The steed that was unmanageable and restive he curbed with much vehemence, until he had tamed him of his wanton tricks; until he had made him docile; and delivered him under entire control, into the hands of that reason which is the charioteer.’

καὶ τοῦ Πυθαγόρου μεμνησθαι, ὃς τῶν συνόντων τινὰ καταμαθῶν
γυμνασίοις τε καὶ σιτίοις ἑαυτὸν εὖ μάλα κατασαρκοῦντα, οὕτως ἔφη: Οὐ
παύση χαλεπώτερον σεαυτῷ κατασκευάζων τὸ δεσμωτήριον: **Also we should
remember Pythagoras, who having observed one of his disciples becoming very**

fleshy by both gymnastics and eating well, said “Pray cease from making your prison more wretched for yourself.”:

μεμνη̄σθα: **remember**: Cf. 7.1 and 7.3, recalling good examples in order to influence behaviour.

Basil takes the view that the more care given to the body the more it requires, therefore making man a slave to its wants and needs This is different from the thinking of Pythagoras who, along with the Orphics and others, viewed the body as literally a prison for the soul, and considered that the aim of the soul was to seek freedom from the body as far as possible.

9.15: διὸ δὴ καὶ Πλάτωνά φασι τὴν ἐκ σώματος βλάβην προειδόμενον, τὸ νοσῶδες χωρίον τῆς Ἀττικῆς τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν καταλαβεῖν ἐξεπίτηδες, ἵνα τὴν ἄγαν εὐπάθειαν τοῦ σώματος, οἷον ἀμπέλου τὴν εἰς τὰ περιττὰ φορᾶν, περικόπτοι: **And indeed for this reason they say that Plato, taking thought for the harm of the body, deliberately chose a diseased spot of Attica for the Academy, so that he could prune excessive comfort from the body, as he would prune excessive crop from the grape vine:** The second mention of Plato in this section, although anecdotal rather than a quotation. [Note φασι introducing the anecdote: used 9.8 about David.]

The same idea about the Academy is found in Jerome, *Against Jovinian* 2.9: ‘Plato, moreover ... chose a house called Academia at some distance from the city, in a spot not only lonely but unhealthy, so that he might have leisure for philosophy. His object was that by constant anxiety about sickness the assaults of lust might be defeated, and that his disciples might experience no pleasure but that afforded by the things they learned. We have read of some who took out their own eyes lest through sight they might lose the contemplation of philosophy.’ Wilson (1975, 67) cites Aelian, *Varia Historia* 9.10: ‘Plato, when it was told him that the Academy was an unhealthful place, and the Physicians advised him to remove to the Lyceum, refused, saying, "I would not, to prolong my life, go live on the top of Athos."’, but other writers make no mention of this deliberate decision of Plato’s. Plutarch does suggest that the area around the Academy was a ‘waterless arid spot’ (*Cimon* 13.8), but Diogenes Laertius does not

comment in his description of the place (3.7-8): ‘Plato ... Having returned to Athens, ... lived in the Academy, which is a gymnasium outside the walls, in a grove named after a certain hero, Hecademus, as is stated by Eupolis in his play entitled *Shirkers*: “In the shady walks of the divine Hecademus.” Moreover, there are verses of Timon which refer to Plato: “Amongst all of them Plato was the leader, a big fish, but a sweet-voiced speaker, musical in prose as the cicada who, perched on the trees of Hecademus, pours forth a strain as delicate as a lily.” Thus the original name of the place was Hecademy, spelt with e.’

ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ σφαλερὰν εἶναι τὴν ἐπ’ ἄκρον εὐεξίαν ἰατρῶν ἤκουσα: **And indeed, I have heard that extreme good health is dangerous:** Wilson (1975, 67) cites Hippocrates, *Aphorisms* 1.3, but cf. JChrys, *Homilies on the Statutes* 18.5: ‘Others again suppose, that to enjoy good health is the source of pleasure. But it is not so. For many of those who enjoy good health have a thousand times wished themselves dead, not being able to bear the insults inflicted on them.’ Although the sentiment here is that good health is no guard against other difficulties, rather than that good health is in itself problematic.

9.16: Ὅτε τοίνυν ἡ ἄγαν αὐτῆ τοῦ σώματος ἐπιμέλεια, αὐτῷ τε ἀλυσιτελῆς τῷ σώματι καὶ πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν ἐμπόδιόν ἐστι, τό γε ὑποπεπτωκέναι τούτῳ καὶ θεραπεύειν, μανία σαφής: **Since therefore, too much care of the body is both unprofitable for the body itself and also an obstacle for the soul, then indeed it is clearly madness to be subjected to it and defer to it:**

θεραπεύειν: **serve, defer to:** LSJ A.4 states: ‘to take care of one’s person’. Cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 513d: ‘Remember, however, that we said there were two treatments that might be used in the tendance of any particular thing, whether body or soul: one, making pleasure the aim in our dealings with it; the other, working for what is best, not indulging it but striving with it as hard as we can.’

Basil confirms the thesis expounded in this section, namely that one should not look after the body too much because such behaviour is detrimental to the body itself and also the soul. Having established the truth of this notion, he uses it to support his subsequent other admonitions:

9.17: ἀλλὰ μὴν εἰ τούτου γε ὑπερορᾶν μελετήσαιμεν, σχολῆ γ' ἂν ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θαυμάσαιμεν: **But if we take care to overlook the body, we would hardly marvel at any other human thing:** The logical progression of Basil's argument: that if the body is not a concern, then how much are other human things unnecessary and possible to ignore.

σχολῆ: **have leisure, spare time:** but LSJ B.2 defines as 'hardly, not at all'. See Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.14.3 for the phrase: σχολῆ γ' ἂν. It is often used in the context of drawing a logical conclusion: 'if this, then that'. (E.g. Plato, *Phaedo* 65b, Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 999a10).

ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων: **any human thing:** Cf. 2.4-5 for the idea that even the best human things do not provide even a faint shadow of the heavenly goods; 8.12 for the fact that the things of men are not a good example of the heavenly benefits available for Christians.

τί γὰρ ἔτι χρησόμεθα πλούτῳ, τὰς διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἡδονὰς ἀτιμάζοντες: **For will we still want wealth, having dishonoured the pleasure of the body?:**

χρησόμεθα: continues the sentiment about the use and benefit of certain goods and writings. Here the idea is that if the body has been shunned, then why would an individual feel the need for or gain benefit from other external things? Could be translated **have a need of** here (LSJ C.2 = **to be in want of, lack**).

ἐγὼ μὲν οὐχ ὀρῶ, πλὴν εἰ μή, κατὰ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς μύθοις δράκοντας, ἡδονὴν τινα φέροι θησαυροῖς κατορωρυγμένοις ἐπαγρυπνεῖν: **Since I do not see that it would bring any pleasure except perhaps to brood over buried treasure like the dragon in myths:** Basil suggests that the only way of gaining pleasure from money would be to know that one has it, and to guard and hoard it. It is interesting that he uses a mythical creature to explore this idea, rather than alluding to a Christian precept. The words of Jesus about the inability to serve both God and money (Matthew 6.24) spring to mind, along with the warning that treasures on earth are susceptible to destruction

and decay (Matthew 6.13). Given that Basil has already used examples from the Sermon on the Mount it could have expected that he might continue that practice here.

κατὰ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς μύθοις δράκοντας: **like the dragons in myths**: the image of a dragon guarding something precious is a common one in classical literature, e.g. the Python at Delphi; the dragon set to guard the golden fleece (Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.156). Wilson (1975, 67) cites Phaedrus, *Fables* 4.20, which is a Latin text containing the same image: ‘He burrow’d deep into the ground,/A Dragon in his den he found, /A- watching hidden treasure there’. The notion was clearly familiar to Christians; see e.g. Clement, *Paed.* 2.13; Jerome, *Ep.* 125.3: ‘There are also mountains of gold which however men cannot approach by reason of the griffins, dragons, and huge monsters which haunt them; for such are the guardians which avarice needs for its treasures.’

9.18: ὁ γε μὴν ἐλευθερίως πρὸς τὰ τοιαῦτα διακεῖσθαι πεπαιδευμένος, πολλοῦ ἂν δέοι ταπεινόν τι καὶ αἰσχρὸν ἔργῳ ἢ λόγῳ ποτὲ προελέσθαι: **For truly the man who has been taught to be thus disposed towards these things would only choose when absolutely necessary anything lowly and shameful in word or deed:**

αἰσχρὸν ἔργῳ ἢ λόγῳ: **shameful in word or deed**: both actions and speech is important in the cultivation of virtue. Cf. 4.1 for the advice to imitate the ‘deeds and words’ of good men.

πεπαιδευμένος: **having been taught**: Cf. 7.8: προπαιδευθεῖς: if certain principles have been taught and are adhered to, then their influence will affect the way that an individual speaks and behaves.

ἂν δέοι: **when ... necessary**: Cf. 7.4 about anger. Basil advises his nephews that they should avoid anger as much as possible, but concedes that it is difficult never to become angry. In such a context he states that when anger is unavoidable certain procedures ought to be adopted to try and minimise the deep feeling, namely the recollection of moral men who suppressed their emotions. Here the sentiment is similar; some situations will provoke the youths to ‘shameful’ or sinful actions, but if they received

and adopt the lessons which Basil presents to them here, they will only commit such actions ‘where absolutely necessary’ rather than sinning without extreme provocation.

τὸ γὰρ τῆς χρείας περιττότερον, κὰν Λύδιον ἦ ψῆγμα, κὰν τῶν μυρμηκῶν ἔργον τῶν χρυσοφόρων, τοσούτω πλέον ἀτιμάσει, ὅσῳπερ ἂν ἦττον προσδέηται: **For the greater the need, even if it were for Lydian gold dust, or even for the work of the gold-gathering ants, he will deem it much more unworthy as the less he requires it:**

Λύδιον ἦ ψῆγμα: **Lydian gold dust:** From the river Pactolus (Strabo, *Geography* 13.4.5: ‘The Pactolus River flows from Mt. Tmolus; in early times a large quantity of gold-dust was brought down in it, whence, it is said, arose the fame of the riches of Croesus and his descendants.’) Wilson (1975, 67) cites Clement, *Paed.* 2.11: ‘But to confess one’s self less ornamental than the Lydian ore, how monstrous!’

τῶν μυρμηκῶν ἔργον τῶν χρυσοφόρων: **the work of the gold-gathering ants:** Wilson identifies this reference as from Herodotus, *Histories* 3.102, and it can also be found in Strabo, *Geography* 2.1.9: ‘They renewed Homer’s fable concerning the battles of the Cranes and Pygmies, and asserted the latter to be three spans high. They told of ants digging for gold, of Pans with wedge-shaped heads, of serpents swallowing down’; Clement, *Paed.* 2.13: ‘Wherefore ants dig, and griffins guard gold, and the sea hides the pearl-stone.’

αὐτὴν δὲ δήπου τὴν χρεῖαν τοῖς τῆς φύσεως ἀναγκαίοις, ἀλλ’ οὐ ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὀριεῖται: **And perhaps he would determine the need by the constraints of nature, rather than by pleasures:**

τῆς φύσεως: from : LSJ A.II.1 = **nature, regular order of nature**; A.IV = philosophical use: **nature**. Cf. 1.2 for previous use of the word: Basil connects himself to his audience stating that they are joined by ‘the bonds of nature’, i.e. familial relationship.

9.19: ὡς οἱ γε τῶν ἀναγκαίων ὄρων ἔξω γενόμενοι, παραπλησίως τοῖς κατὰ τοῦ πρᾶνουῤ φερομένοις, πρὸς οὐδὲν στάσιμον ἔχοντες ἀποβῆναι, οὐδαμοῦ τῆς εἰς τὸ πρόσω φορᾶς ἴστανται: **As for those men going outside the**

boundaries of necessity, resembling those being carried along headlong, having no firm point to alight on, and can nowhere stop carrying themselves forward but as much as they would surround themselves with more, so the same and even more is necessary for them to fulfil their desires: The image here is one of being out of control, cf. simile of the torrent at 8.1 and the notion about a lack of aim; just as having no aim leads to the acquisition of all types of knowledge indiscriminately, so the wrong aim which is not checked by the knowledge of what is needed will lead to the acquisition of more and more of one unnecessary thing because there are no boundaries to stop the effort.

πρανοῦς: **falling forwards, headlong:** The word is found in the New Testament describing Judas after his betrayal of Jesus in Acts 1.18: *πρηνῆς γενόμενος*: ‘Now this man obtained a field with the reward for his wickedness, and falling headlong, his body burst open, and all his intestines gushed out.’ It is used by the Church Fathers, especially GNys, who also uses it with *στάσιμον* as Basil does here, *Against Eunomius* 12.4: *ἀπολειφθῆναι ἢ στάσιμον ἐπὶ πρανοῦς μείναι τὸ ὕδωρ*; ‘nor can water remain stationary upon an incline, inasmuch as the slope spontaneously draws its motion onwards’.

Στάσιμον: **firm point:** C.f. Plato, *Rep.* 539d: *τὸ τὰς φύσεις κοσμίους εἶναι καὶ στασίμους οἷς τις μεταδώσει τῶν λόγων*; ‘that those permitted to take part in such discussions must have orderly and stable natures’.

ἀλλ’ ὅσῳ περ ἂν πλείω προσπεριβάλλωνται, τοῦ ἴσου δέονται ἢ καὶ πλείονος πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἐκπλήρωσιν: **but as much as they would surround themselves with more, so the same and even more is necessary for them to fulfil their desires:** The desire for unfulfilling, unnecessary things simply breeds a hunger for more. Cf. Colossians 3.5: ‘Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: ... evil desires.’ (*ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν*).

κατὰ τὸν Ἐξηκεστίδου Σόλωνα, ὅς φησι: Πλούτου δ’ οὐδὲν τέρμα πεφασμένον ἀνδράσι κεῖται: **according to Solon, the son of Exekestes, who says: ‘No limit of wealth lies shown to men.’**: Cf 5.9-10 where Basil quotes Solon and

Theognis side by side, although there he does not use the patronymic for Solon. His subject for both references is money; in section 5 he considers the transient nature of wealth and the permanence of virtue, while here he warns that greed is uncontrollable and the desire for wealth, once begun, will never be satisfied. The reference is found in Solon 13.17, (also Theognis 227). The same quote is used by Plutarch, *De cupiditate divitiarum* 524e and Aristotle, *Politics* 1256b: ὥσπερ Σόλων φησὶ ποιήσας “πλούτου δ’ οὐθὲν τέρμα πεφασμένον ἀνδράσι κεῖται.”; ‘as Solon says that it is in the verse “ But of riches no bound has been fixed or revealed to men’.

9.20: τῷ δὲ Θεόγνιδι πρὸς ταῦτα διδασκάλῳ χρηστέον λέγοντι: Οὐκ ἔραμαι πλουτεῖν οὔτ’ εὐχομαι, ἀλλὰ μοι εἴη Ζῆν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀλίγων μηδὲν ἔχοντι κακόν: **And we should use the teacher Theognis speaking concerning these things: ‘I do not long to be wealthy nor do I pray for it, but may it be for enough for me to live with a few things, suffering no evil.’:**

Χρηστέον: **we should use:** a perfect example of technique that Basil advocates for his nephews: they must attend to the message of pagan writers and when they come across something worthy make effective use of it.

τῷ δὲ Θεόγνιδι ... διδασκάλῳ: **the teacher Theognis:** Cf. 1.4 where the youths are described as going to teachers and learning from them along with the ancient writers whose works they study. GNys and Clement both make reference to Theognis in their writing, but only Proclus, *Commentary on Plato’s Republic* 1.187.2 and Libanius, *Or.* 52.28.5 refer to him as ‘teacher’ in the way Basil does here.

οὔτ’ εὐχομαι: **nor do I pray for it:** Theognis, *Epigrams* 1155-6. Cf. 2.2 where Basil rejects worldly goods and admirable qualities, stating that these things are not even ‘worth praying for’. John Chrysostom, *Ad Eudoxiam* (*Ep.* 1-7) has the phrase: μόνῳ Χριστῷ ζῆν εὐχομαι καὶ πλουτεῖν.

Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ Διογένους ἄγαμαι τὴν πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων ὑπεροψίαν: ὅς γε καὶ βασιλέως τοῦ μεγάλου ἑαυτὸν ἀπέφηνε πλουσιώτερον, τῷ ἐλαττόνων ἢ ἐκεῖνος κατὰ τὸν βίον προσδεῖσθαι: **I also**

admire the contempt of Diogenes for all human possessions together, who indeed showed himself to be wealthier than the great king, needing less than him to live on: Wilson (1975, 68) cites Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom for versions of the story.

πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων: **for all human possessions:** This section, which Wilson (1975, 67) states is a ‘sermon on wealth’, is more than simply about money, but Basil’s attempt to focus his nephews’ attention on higher subjects than the things valued by human consideration. The way that he uses words and phrases which look back at his discussion in section 2 about the need for Christians to bend their efforts towards ‘the goods of the other life’ and reject as unworthy those things which only pertain to human existence suggest that the various riches he mentions are not necessarily bad per se, but rather do not contribute to virtue and the attainment of heaven, and so should not be allowed to distract from the correct aim of a Christian life.

βασιλέως τοῦ μεγάλου: **the great king:** The great Persian king, Darius, was contemporary with Diogenes.

9.21: ἡμῖν δὲ ἄρα εἰ μὴ τὰ Πυθίου τοῦ Μυσοῦ προσεῖη τάλαντα, καὶ πλέθρα γῆς τόσα καὶ τόσα, καὶ βοσκημάτων ἔσμοι πλείους ἢ ἀριθμῆσαι, οὐδὲν ἔξαρκέσει: **But will none of us be content unless he has the gold talents of Pythius the Mysian, and greater and greater measures of land and more herds of cattle than can be counted?:** For Pythias see Herodotus, *Histories* 7.27.8 and Pliny, *Natural History* 33.47. (Cf. the desires of the young in *Attende tibi* (Wagner 1950, 439).)

ἀλλ’ οἶμαι, προσήκει ἀπόντα τε μὴ ποθεῖν τὸν πλοῦτον, καὶ παρόντος μὴ τῷ κεκτηῖσθαι μᾶλλον φρονεῖν, ἢ τῷ εἰδέναι αὐτὸν εὖ διατίθεσθαι: **But I imagine we should both not miss wealth when we do not have it, nor should we think about it when it is present, once it has been acquired, than knowing that it is disposed of well:** This section encourages Basil’s audience, coming from a wealthy background, to consider wealth, not necessarily from an ascetic position (although the idea that they might embrace a holy life is not ruled out), but from the perspective of someone who has money and needs to learn how to spend it virtuously.

The discussion shows quite clearly the idea that the address is designed as a propaedeutic for the youths, preparing them to hear sermons about these subjects, and laying groundwork which Basil's regular sermons in church will build on (see Ch5 above). The issue of the right way to spend money is explored in Basil's homily *On Envy*. There he elaborates on the notion that the main benefit of riches is that the wealthy have the ability to assist the less fortunate, and should do so, not with a view to gaining human recognition for themselves by the act, but rather because they know that to do so increases their virtue before God. Since the main focus of that homily is envy, Basil argues that the rich man should not be envied on account of his riches, because they give him the capability to do good, just as a Bible teacher should not be envied because people can learn from his gift. However Basil adds that a rich man who only uses his wealth for his own comfort also ought not to be the subject of envy, because his lack of altruism means that he lives an unhappy life and prevents him from becoming virtuous. (Cf. the use of wealth to gain unnecessary luxuries at 9.2-3.) Basil lays down the principles of not valuing money and the desire to see it used most beneficially in his nephews, along with the knowledge that human recognition and fame are not to be sought by an individual. Having learned those lessons the youths are ready to benefit from the message that the money they will find themselves in control of in later life should be classed as a gift which must be treated as the means to assist others in return for divine recognition instead of earthly fame.

τὸ γὰρ τοῦ Σωκράτους εὖ ἔχει: ὃς μέγα φρονουῦντος πλουσίου ἀνδρὸς ἐπὶ τοῖς χρήμασιν οὐ πρότερον αὐτὸν θαυμάσειν ἔφη, πρὶν ἂν καὶ ὅτι κεχρησθῆναι τούτοις ἐπίσταται, πειραθῆναι: **For the words of Socrates are well put: he, when a rich man thought much of himself because of his possessions, said that he would not simply admire him before he proved that he understood how to make use of them:** Xenophon, *Economics* 2.11: 'Then don't you remember saying just now in our conversation, when you wouldn't give me leave to utter a syllable, that if a man doesn't know how to manage horses, his horses are not wealth to him, nor his land, sheep, money or anything else, if he doesn't know how to manage them?' Wilson (1975, 68) cites Dio Chrysostom, *De Regno* 3.1: 'When Socrates, who, as you also know by tradition, lived many years ago, was passing his old age in poverty at Athens, he was asked by someone whether he considered the Persian king a happy man, and replied, "Perhaps so"; but he added that he did not really know, since he had never met him and

had no knowledge of his character, implying, no doubt, that a man's happiness is not determined by any external possessions, such as gold plate, cities or lands, for example, or other human beings, but in each case by his own self and his own character.'

The situations of the stories are slightly different, and it is interesting to note that in Dio Chrysostom's version, Socrates is asked about the happiness which would appear to accompany riches, while Basil focuses on the idea of money providing worth to an individual, an idea which he rejects, suggesting that the money itself is of no consequence if the person in question cannot use it correctly.

9.23: ἡ Φειδίας μὲν καὶ Πολύκλειτος, εἰ τῷ χρυσίῳ μέγα ἐφρόνουν καὶ τῷ ἐλέφαντι, ὧν ὁ μὲν Ἥλείοις τὸν Δία, ὁ δὲ τὴν Ἥραν Ἀργείοις ἐποίησάτην, καταγελάστω ἂν ἦσθην ἀλλοτρίῳ πλούτῳ καλλωπιζόμενοι, ἀφέντες τὴν τέχνην, ὑφ' ἧς καὶ ὁ χρυσοῦς ἡδίων καὶ τιμιώτερος ἀπεδείχθη: **Pheidias and Polycleitus, if they had been proud of the gold and ivory with which one had made Zeus at Elis and the other made Hera at Argos, they would have been ridiculous; priding themselves in another's wealth and ignoring their own skill by which the gold was displayed as more pleasant and more honourable:** Pheidias (480-430BC) was a sculptor, most famous for his chryselephantine statue of Zeus in the temple at Olympia which was one of the wonders of the Ancient World. Polycleitus on the other hand was better known as a bronze worker, lauded for his statue of the spear bearer, however, his statue of Hera at Argos was often compared to Pheidias' Zeus. The two craftsmen are frequently cited in the same context, e.g. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.7 names 'Pheidias as a sculptor and to Polycleitus as a statuary'; Lucian, *Somnium* 8: 'Let not a slovenly person or dirty clothes repel you; such were the conditions of that Phidias who produced the Zeus, of Polyclitus who created the Hera.'

The attitude displayed towards Pheidias and Polycleitus in literature is ambivalent: they were lauded as masters of their craft (Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 6.7) but at the same time they are used by writers to demonstrate that notion that craftsmen do not merit the highest praise because they do not encourage men towards great acts of moral virtue. In *Somnium*, Statuary asks Lucian not to look down on her dusty clothes because they are a sign on the conditions in which beauty was produced, but in contrast, Culture convinces Lucian that her way is better because: 'You may turn out a Phidias or a

Polyclitus, to be sure, and create a number of wonderful works; but even so, though your art will be generally commended, no sensible observer will be found to wish himself like you; whatever your real qualities, you will always rank as a common craftsman who makes his living with his hands' (9). Although art is to be admired, it does not display the philosophic and moral qualities of the craftsman. Similarly, Plutarch, *Perikles 2* states: 'Labour with one's own hands on lowly tasks gives witness, in the toil thus expended on useless things, to one's own indifference to higher things. No generous youth, from seeing the Zeus at Pisa or the Hera at Argos, longs to be Pheidias or Polycleitus.' However, it continues: 'But virtuous action straightway so disposes a man that he no sooner admires the works of virtue than he strives to emulate those who wrought them.' The acts of the sculptor are viewed and commended, but the acts of the virtuous man have wider reaching implications since they inspire others to imitate them. Such is the rationale behind much of Basil's address; viewing the deeds of good men will enable the youths to recreate their own noble acts.

However, Basil uses Polycleitus and Pheidias in a different way to Plutarch in this work. Rather than making the distinction between the creating of a thing and the creation of virtue, he chooses to identify the skill in making against the materials used to create. He argues that the sculptors rightly valued their abilities over the raw gold and ivory they used to make their beautiful statues.

καταγελάστω: **they would have been ridiculous**: Cf. 8.5 about Milo and Polydamas who would not 'have escaped ridicule (καταγέλαστοι) on account of the state of their bodies' if they had not trained themselves properly.

ἀφέντες τὴν τέχνην: **ignoring their own skill**: Similar to the discussion at 9.13 about looking after the body and those craftsmen who look after their tools but ignore the practice of their craft.

ὅφ' ἧς καὶ ὁ χρυσοῦς ἡδέϊων καὶ τιμιώτερος ἀπεδείχθη: **by which the gold was displayed as more pleasant and more honourable**: The fact that Basil focuses on the skill of the sculptors rather than the statues they made means that he does not need to embark on a discussion about idolatry and pagan religion. He exemplifies his own advice: he takes the lessons about practising a skill from the pagans, but passes over the

images of the gods which are created by the skill practised. Cf. the sentiment expressed by Arnobius, *Against the Heathen* 6.13: ‘That well-known and most distinguished statuary, Phidias, when he had raised the form of Olympian Jupiter with immense labour and exertion, inscribed on the finger of the god PANTARCES *is* BEAUTIFUL,—*this*, moreover, was the name of a boy loved by him, and that with lewd desire,—and was not moved by any fear or religious dread to call the god by the name of a prostitute; nay, rather, to consecrate the divinity and image of Jupiter to a debauchee. To such an extent is there wantonness and childish feeling in forming those little images, adoring them as gods, heaping upon them the divine virtues, when we see that the artists themselves find amusement in fashioning them, and set them up as monuments of their own lusts! For what *reason* is there, if you should inquire, why Phidias should hesitate to amuse himself, and be wanton when he knew that, but a little before, the very Jupiter which he had made was gold, stones, and ivory, formless, separated, confused, and that it was he himself who brought all these together and bound them fast, that their appearance had been given to them by himself in the imitation of limbs *which he had* carved; and, which is more than all, that it was his own free gift, that *Jupiter* had been produced and was adored among men?’

ἡμεῖς δὲ τὴν ἀνθρωπεῖαν ἀρετὴν οὐκ ἐξαρκεῖν ἑαυτῇ πρὸς κόσμον
 ὑπολαμβάνοντες, ἐλάττονος αἰσχύνης ἄξια ποιεῖν οἴομεθα: **And we also,
 supposing that human virtue is not enough of an ornament for us, do we imagine
 that we can make ourselves less worthy of shame?:**

κόσμον **ornament**: previously used at 3.2 about the correct fruit of the soul which is truth.

τὴν ἀνθρωπεῖαν ἀρετὴν: **human virtue**: Contrasts with human possessions which have been discussed previously. Cf. the consideration of virtue at 5.6 in conjunction with the character of Odysseus. Basil states that Odysseus felt no shame at appearing before Nausiccaa because he was ‘clothed in virtue’ despite his nakedness.

9.24: Ἀλλὰ δῆτα πλούτου μὲν ὑπεροψόμεθα καὶ τὰς διὰ τῶν αἰσθήσεων
 ἡδονὰς ἀτιμάσομεν, κολακειᾶς δὲ καὶ θωπειᾶς διωξόμεθα: **But of course we
 will look down on wealth and dishonour sensual pleasures but pursue flattery and**

adulation for ourselves: Basil uses irony to continue his argument, highlighting the inconsistency which will be present in life if the youths disdain certain human valuables but chase after others. It is important that his nephews take on board the message that they should not seek esteem in the eyes of men at this point in their lives, because part of their role in life as wealthy adults will be to use their money in a way which benefits the poor, and they must do this for God's sake, rather than in order to win adulation from others for their good deeds.

Διωξόμεθα: **we will pursue for ourselves:** Cf. use at 2.3; 4.7; 6.5.

καὶ τῆς Ἀρχιλόχου ἀλώπεκος τὸ κερδαλέον τε καὶ ποικίλον ζηλώσομεν: **and emulate the cunning and craftiness of the fox of Archilochus?:** Wilson (1975, 68) cites Plato, *Rep.* 365c (and highlights Basil's use of σκιαγραφίαν ἀρετῆς in section 10): πρόθυρα μὲν καὶ σχῆμα κύκλω περὶ ἑμαυτὸν σκιαγραφίαν ἀρετῆς περιγραπτέον, τὴν δὲ τοῦ σοφωτάτου Ἀρχιλόχου ἀλώπεκα ἐλκτέον ἐξόπισθεν κερδαλέαν καὶ ποικίλην.: 'For a front and a show I must draw about myself a shadow-line of virtue, but trail behind me the fox of most sage Archilochus, shifty and bent on gain.' A reference is also found in Dio Chrysostom, *On Homer and Socrates* 55.10.

9.25: ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὃ μᾶλλον φευκτέον τῷ σωφρονοῦντι, τοῦ πρὸς δόξαν ζῆν, καὶ τὰ τοῖς πολλοῖς δοκοῦντα περισκοπεῖν, καὶ μὴ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον ἡγεμόνα ποιεῖσθαι τοῦ βίου, ὥστε, κὰν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἀντιλέγειν, κὰν ἀδοξεῖν καὶ κινδυνεύειν ὑπὲρ τοῦ καλοῦ δέη, μηδὲν αἰρεῖσθαι τῶν ὀρθῶς ἐγνωσμένων παρακινεῖν: **But there is nothing which a man with sound mind must flee more than to live for glory, and he must not consider the opinions of the multitude, but instead should make reason his guide of life, so that, even if he must speak against all men, and has to be held in contempt and be in danger because of honour, he will not choose to move aside from what he has recognised as truth:** Basil sums up the essence of the Christian life: to discover the truth and hold fast to it, regardless of the obstacles and oppositions.

τῷ σωφρονοῦντι: **man with sound mind**: a commonly used word in philosophic writings; used at 4.9: ‘And we too, if we are wise, bearing away from these writings whatever is suitable for us and related to the truth’.

καὶ μὴ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον ἡγεμόνα ποιῆσθαι τοῦ βίου: **but instead should make reason his guide of life**: λόγος as **reason** used above, but the word had very specific connotations for Christians in the context of Jesus as the ‘Word of God’ (e.g. John 1.1-14: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... (14) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.’). If Basil is considering the two meanings it creates another link with the work of Clement. The Paedagogus (Instructor) he describes is Jesus, the λόγος or ‘reason’ which should guide the Christian.

κινδυνεύειν: **be in danger**: Cf. 8.9: the description of athletes enduring dangers for the sake of paltry prizes. Historically, the dangers for a Christian were potentially great: martyrdom being the fate of many followers of the Way, but by fourth century the situation was palpably different. However, Basil does not suggest that Christian life is easy, even if the threat of martyrdom had receded.

παρακινεῖν: **to move aside**: Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 540c: καὶ ἔτι καὶ ἐν τούτοις βασανιστέοι εἰ ἐμμενοῦσιν ἐλκόμενοι πανταχόσε ἢ τι καὶ παρακινήσουσι.; ‘And in these offices, too, they are to be tested to see whether they will remain steadfast under diverse solicitations or whether they will flinch and swerve.’

9.26: ἢ τὸν μὴ οὕτως ἔχοντα τί τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου σοφιστοῦ φήσομεν ἀπολείπειν, ὃς φυτὸν ἐγίγνετο καὶ θηρίον, ὅποτε βούλοιο, καὶ πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ πάντα χρήματα: **Or how will we say he is behind the Egyptian sophist, who became a plant and a wild beast, whenever he wishes, and fire and water and all kinds of things?:**

τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου σοφιστοῦ: **the Egyptian sophist**: Proteus, for whom see Homer, *Odyssey* 4.385ff. Wilson (1975, 68) cites Plato, *Euthydemus* 288b: ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐθέλετον ἡμῖν ἐπιδείξασθαι σπουδάζοντε, ἀλλὰ τὸν Πρωτέα μιμῆσθον τὸν

Αἰγύπτιον σοφιστὴν γοητεύοντε ἡμᾶς; ‘Only they are unwilling to give us a display of it in real earnest, but treat us to jugglers' tricks in the style of Proteus the Egyptian adept.’ A reference is also made to him by Clement, *Paed.* 3.1: ‘And appetite, which is the third department, is many-shaped above Proteus, the varying sea-god, who changed himself now into one shape, now into another; and it allures to adulteries, to licentiousness, to seductions.’

9.27: περὶ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς νῦν μὲν τὸ δίκαιον ἐπαινέσεται παρὰ τοῖς τοῦτο τιμῶσι, νῦν δὲ τοὺς ἐναντίους ἀφήσει λόγους, ὅταν τὴν ἀδικίαν εὐδοκίμοῦσαν αἰσθηται, ὅπερ δίκης ἐστὶ κολάκων: **But if indeed he approves righteousness at one minute those people who honour it, but at another minute will speak opposite opinions when he perceives that unrighteousness is held in esteem, then he is behaving in the same manner as do the flatterers.:** Cf. 6.3 about the inconsistency of praising righteousness in public but shunning it in private. There is a slightly different nuance here, because Basil is dealing with the idea of conscious self-representation which changes according to the prevailing popular view. The man he describes here is a world away from the ‘man of sense’ who is considered at 9.4.

κολάκων: **flatterers:** Elaborates on the consideration of flattery above. There Basil states that the youths should not seek flattery for themselves because they ought not to be concerned about human fame and recognition. Here however, he implies that flattery is not desirable because it is not sincere praise, since those who flatter do so according to what is popular at the time rather than out of any genuine sense of admiration or regard. On the other hand, Basil encourages his nephews not to be flatterers themselves, since such behaviour is the height of inconsistency, and they must endeavour to be consistent in all situations (6.5).

καὶ ὥσπερ φασὶ τὸν πολύποδα τὴν χροῖαν πρὸς τὴν ὑποκειμένην γῆν, οὕτως αὐτὸς τὴν διάνοιαν πρὸς τὰς τῶν συνόντων γνώμας μεταβαλεῖται: **And just as they say the polypus changes its skin colour according to the ground it lies on, so he changes his mind according to the opinions of those around him.:** The image of the polypus was a commonplace among ancient moralists. Wilson (1975, 69) cites Theognis, who is quoted by Plutarch, *De amicorum multitudine* 96f: ‘Now is there any person living of that industrious, pliant, and universal humor, who can take the pains

exactly to imitate all shapes, and will not rather deride the advice of Theognis as absurd and impossible, namely, to learn the craft of the polypus, which puts on the hue of every stone it sticks to? However, the changes of this fish are only superficial, and the colors are produced in the skin, which by its closeness or its laxity receives various impressions from neighboring objects.’ He uses the same example in *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* 52f-53a: ‘But he who will take the pains to act the dissembler himself, by interchangeably decrying and extolling the same things, discourses, and ways of living, will easily perceive that the opinions of a flatterer are as mutable and inconstant as the colors of a polypus, that he is never consonant to himself nor properly his own man.’

The Church Fathers also used the image. See e.g. Clement, *Paed.* 3.11: ‘Such ought those who are consecrated to Christ appear, and frame themselves in their whole life, as they fashion themselves in the church for the sake of gravity; and to be, not to seem such—so meek, so pious, so loving. But now I know not how people change their fashions and manners with the place. As they say that polypi, assimilated to the rocks to which they adhere, are in colour such as they; so, laying aside the inspiration of the assembly, after their departure from it, they become like others with whom they associate.’ Basil himself utilises the behaviour of the polypus in *Hex.* 7.3 as an example of human behaviour: ‘I will not pass in silence the cunning and trickery of the squid, which takes the colour of the rock to which it attaches itself. Most fish swim idly up to the squid as they might to a rock, and become themselves the prey of the crafty creature. Such are men who court ruling powers, bending themselves to all circumstances and not remaining for a moment in the same purpose; who praise self-restraint in the company of the self-restrained, and license in that of the licentious, accommodating their feelings to the pleasure of each. It is difficult to escape them and to put ourselves on guard against their mischief; because it is under the mask of friendship that they hide their clever wickedness.’

αὐτὸς τὴν διάνοιαν: **his mind**: Cf. 1.5: τὰ πηδάλια τῆς διανοίας ὑμῶν: **the rudders of your minds**. If the youths follow Basil’s advice their minds will be guarded, so that they will not be in danger of imitating the men he describes here, but will rather turn the rudders of their understanding towards the cultivation of virtue and the imitation of the opposite type of character.

Section 10

10.1: Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν πού καν τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις τελειότερον μαθησόμεθα: **But doubtless we will learn these things more completely from our own writings:** Basil appears at first glance to be undermining the advice he has previously offered about the fact that good lessons can be drawn from pagan literature. However, he reiterates the same message from 2.5, that his nephews will learn more about virtue from the ‘Holy Scriptures’ than classical writings, but for now they can make a good start with what they have.

τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις: **from our own writings:** The use of the possessive adjective combines with the 1st person plural of the verb to reinforce the Christian identity of Basil and his nephews. This is important as Basil nears the end of his address, since he wants the youths to go away with a strong desire to apply his words to their own lives. It is significant that Basil makes the most use of personal pronouns and 1st person plural verbs both near the beginning and the end of his work, although they do feature in the body of the address. He takes pains to establish a link between himself and the youths at the beginning of the speech, and their shared Christian identity, enabling him to set himself up almost in opposition against the pagan teachers who might give his nephews the wrong lessons about literature. Now at the end of the speech Basil reinforces those familial and religious connections: the religious ones are strengthened as he reminds the youths that they have a whole gamut of Christian literature which will guide them towards virtue; a canon of Scripture which the pagans lack.

ὅσον δὲ σκιαγραφίαν τινὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς, τό γε νῦν εἶναι, ἐκ τῶν ἔξωθεν παιδευμάτων περιγραφώμεθα: **but for now we will draw for ourselves as far as possible some sketch of virtue from outside teachings:**

τό γε νῦν εἶναι: **but for now:** Wilson (1975, 69) takes this as a reference to the young age of Basil’s audience, and indeed the link with section two in the previous sentence does recall his comment that they are not yet studying the Bible, but there is also a sense that since pagan literature is the medium which the youths are encountering at present, then for now those writings will suffice to make a start on the path to virtue.

περιγραψώμεθα: **draw in outline**, from περιγράφω: LSJ A.II has this definition found in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1098a: περιγεγράφθω μὲν οὖν τὰγαθὸν ταύτη: δεῖ γὰρ ἴσως ὑποτυπῶσαι πρῶτον, εἶθ' ὕστερον ἀναγράψαι. δόξειε δ' ἄν παντὸς εἶναι προαγαγεῖν καὶ διαρθρῶσαι τὰ καλῶς ἔχοντα τῇ περιγραφῇ; 'Let this account then serve to describe the Good in outline—for no doubt the proper procedure is to begin by making a rough sketch, and to fill it in afterwards. If a work has been well laid down in outline, to carry it on and complete it in detail may be supposed to be within the capacity of anybody; and in this working out of details'.

The middle voice has the sense of 'for oneself', and this is the way it is used here. Basil conveys the notion that the pagan teachers will not necessarily point their charges towards virtue, and if they do try, then the morals they instil will not be Christian ones. Therefore it is the responsibility of each of the youths to learn and understand the need to seek virtue and 'draw for himself' a convincing sketch of virtue so that he avoids potential corruption.

ὅσον δὲ σκιαγραφίαν τινὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς: **as far as possible some sketch of virtue:**

The phrase is borrowed from Plato, *Rep.* 365c: πρόθυρα μὲν καὶ σχῆμα κύκλω περὶ ἑμαυτὸν σκιαγραφίαν ἀρετῆς περιγραπτέον; 'For a front and a show I must draw about myself a shadow-line of virtue,' (Wilson 1975, 68); however, the sense is different and Basil uses the words in a positive, rather than negative manner. He uses the same image in *De Spirit Sancto* 31, and it is found in Plato, *Phaedo* 69b, Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* 69.7, Methodius, *Symposium* 6.2 and GNaz, *Or.* 43.12.4. Like Basil, Gregory uses the image in a positive manner, describing Basil's youthful behaviour as a foreshadowing of his mature, adult virtue.

ἐκ τῶν ἔξωθεν παιδευμάτων: **from outside teaching:** Cf. 3.2 where Basil compares outside virtue to the leaves, which serve to protect the fruit and give the plant itself a more attractive appearance.

τοῖς γὰρ ἐπιμελῶς ἐξ ἑκάστου τὴν ὠφέλειαν ἀθροίζουσιν, ὥσπερ τοῖς μεγάλοις τῶν ποταμῶν, πολλαὶ γίνεσθαι πολλαχόθεν αἱ προσθῆκαι

πεφήκασι: **For by drawing together the profit from each one carefully, just like great rivers, many additions are produced from different places:**

τὴν ὠφέλειαν: **profit:** the word is used similarly at 2.7 and 4.7, and again at 10.4 and 10.5. The idea that different places can be the source of various benefits is found in Clement, *Str.* 1.2 exploring the notion that the Greeks had a form of truth which they wrote down before Jesus came as a revelation to the Gentiles. Some Greek knowledge, according to Clement, comes from the Jews, so is right, and as regards the other elements, God in his divine mercy allowed the heathens to perceive ‘in part’ in preparation for his complete revelation. Basil takes this idea a step further, suggesting that the part-truth can be a useful source of knowledge and understanding, which can then be added to a fuller understanding of Christian virtue when coupled with a study of the Scriptures.

ὥσπερ τοῖς μεγάλοις τῶν ποταμῶν: **just like great rivers:** Cf. the simile at 8.1: there the image is negative; the swollen torrent is out of control and continues to consume everything in its path. Here however, the river takes water from tributaries into itself, and so grows into a greater river, having been fed by the correct methods. The difference between the two rivers is that the growth of the first comes from unseasonable and excessive rain, whereas the other takes only liquid from the streams and smaller rivers whose function is to feed the larger one. The former is governed by nothing in its consumption of all in its path, while the latter takes only what is good for it. The difference between the two images compliment the idea that Basil wants his nephews to learn, namely that they should accept the good, little by little, according to reason, and see an increase in virtue in themselves, rather than accepting everything they come across without discernment or aim.

Πολλαχόθεν: **from many places:** i.e. from pagan and Christian literature.

10.2: τὸ γὰρ καὶ σμικρὸν ἐπὶ σμικρῷ κατατίθεσθαι, οὐ μᾶλλον εἰς ἀργυρίου προσθήκην, ἢ καὶ εἰς ἡντιναοῦν ἐπιστήμην ὀρθῶς ἡγεῖσθαι ἔχειν τῷ ποιητῇ προσῆκεν: **For by putting a little on a little, as great a help with money as it is with any knowledge, is rightly kept as a guide, as is said by the poet:** The reference is to Hesiod, *WD* 360-1: ὅς δ' ἐπ' ἐόντι φέρει, ὃ δ' ἀλέξεται αἴθοπα λιμόν:/εἰ

γάρ κεν καὶ σμικρὸν ἐπὶ σμικρῷ καταθειῖο/καὶ θαμὰ τοῦτ' ἔρδοις, τάχα κεν μέγα καὶ τὸ γένοιτο. 'He who adds to what he has, will keep off bright-eyed hunger; for if you add only a little to a little and do this often, soon that little will become great.' Basil changes the context in which he gives the advice, focusing on knowledge rather than discussing money as Hesiod does.

ἡγεῖσθαι: **as a guide**: Cf. 9.25 for the notion that reason should be the 'guide for life' (τὸν ... λόγον ἡγεμόνα ... βίου).

Basil's quotation of Hesiod here links this section to the opening section, where he made use of *WD* 293-7.

10.3: ὁ μὲν οὖν Βίας τῷ υἱεὶ πρὸς Αἰγυπτίους ἀπαίροντι καὶ πυνθανομένῳ τί ἂν ποιῶν αὐτῷ μάλιστα κεχαρισμένα πράττοι: Ἐφόδιον, ἔφη, πρὸς γῆρας κτησάμενος: **Therefore, as Bias said when his son was leaving to go to Egypt, and asked his father what he should do to perform something especially agreeable to him: "Gain supplies for old age."**: Wilson (1975, 69) identifies the advice from Diogenes Laertius 1.88, but the situation of the anecdote is not given: ἐφόδιον ἀπὸ νεότητος εἰς γῆρας ἀναλαμβάνανε σοφίαν: βεβαιότερον γὰρ τοῦτο τῶν ἄλλων κτημάτων.; 'Make wisdom your provision for the journey from youth to old age; for it is a more certain support than all other possessions.'

τὴν ἀρετὴν δὴ τὸ ἐφόδιον λέγων, μικροῖς ὅροις αὐτὴν περιγράφων, ὅς γε ἀνθρωπίνῳ βίῳ τὴν ἀπ' [4] αὐτῆς ὠφέλειαν ὠρίζετο: **speaking indeed about supplies of virtue, and outlining it with small boundaries, since indeed he limited its profit to human life**: Diogenes Laertius has wisdom (σοφίαν) rather than virtue, but it may be that Basil has a different source, since Diogenes does not include the anecdote about Bias' son. On the other hand, Basil may be seeking to adorn the pagan idea in his own Christian colours, reminding his nephews that they ought to be seeking virtue as they go through life.

μικροῖς ὄροις: **with small boundaries**: picks up the reference to ‘putting little on little’ above. Thus Basil conveys two ideas about pagan virtue. On one hand he suggests that Bias’ words are an example of the ‘little’ which can be built up to make a great amount of understanding, since his advice to his son is a small idea. On the other hand, Basil also reinforces the notion that pagan literature does not go far enough in its understanding of the world, since it limits its concern to human life only.

περιγράφων: **outlining**: Cf. the use of the word 10.1. Both pagans and Christians, Basil suggests, draw sketches of truth, but the sketch is all the pagans have to go on, while the Christians’ image can be filled in with the divine revelation.

ὅς γε ἀνθρωπίνῳ βίῳ τὴν ἀπ’ [4] αὐτῆς ὠφέλειαν ὠρίζετο: **since indeed he limited its profit to human life**:

ἀνθρωπίνῳ βίῳ: **to human life**: For Basil the problem with classical wisdom: it is concerned only with the present age and has no consideration of the life to come. Cf. 2.1-2 and 8.12, where he discusses the ‘goods of the human life’ and the fact that they are not even a pale imitation of heavenly pleasures.

10.4: καὶν τὸ Τιθωνοῦ τις γῆρας, ... λέγει: **But if someone should talk about the old age of Tithonus**: Tithonus was the human lover of the goddess Dawn, who, when she asked Zeus to make the man immortal forgot to add that he should be forever young, so although Tithonus was granted immortality, his body and mind grew older with each year that he lived. Consequently he became more infirm and incapable as time passed. The story is found in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 218-238: (233) ‘when loathsome old age pressed full upon him, and he could not move nor lift his limbs, this seemed to [Dawn] in her heart the best counsel: she laid him in a room and put to the shining doors. There he babbles endlessly, and no more has strength at all, such as once he had in his supple limbs.’

καὶν τὸ Ἀργανθωνίου: **or of Arganthonius**: King of Tartessus in Spain who, according to Herodotus (1.163) was 120 years old when he died. Strabo, *Geography* 3.2 and Pliny, *Natural History* 7.49 have that he was 150.

κἄν τὸ τοῦ μακροβιωτάτου παρὸ ἡμῖν Μαθουσάλα, ὃς χίλια ἔτη, τριάκοντα δεόντων, βιῶναι λέγεται: **or the old age of the most long lived of all of us, Methuselah, who is said to have lived for 970 years:** Despite his use of pagan mythological examples for old age, it is telling that Basil ends his list with someone from the Christian tradition, found in Genesis 5.21-27. Methuselah was the son of Enoch and grandfather of Noah.

ὃς χίλια ἔτη, τριάκοντα δεόντων, βιῶναι λέγεται: **who is said to have lived for 970 years:** literally ‘1000 years lacking 30’.

τοῦ μακροβιωτάτου παρὸ ἡμῖν: **of the most long lived of us:** Methuselah is the man who is the oldest of all men, setting up the next example.

κἄν σύμπαντα τὸν ἀφ’ οὗ γεγόνασιν ἄνθρωποι, χρόνον ἀναμετροῆ: **or if he should measure out together all the time which men have existed:** Once again the emphasis is on human experience and life, with the sense that Basil constantly wishes to challenge the notion that there is more to the human experience than what will be known before death.

ἐγὼ δέ, ... ὡς ἐπὶ παίδων διανοίας γελάσομαι: **I will laugh at him, as though at the minds of children:** Cf. the use of τις from 9.1 (‘someone might ask’) as the reinforcement of the idea that Basil wants his nephews to view themselves on a similar level to those who have knowledge and understanding. Although they do not have complete intelligence about all things pertaining to the Christian life, and therefore are still in need of Basil’s guidance as he suggests later; they have, through their careful attention to their uncle’s words, begun to grasp the essential truths inherent in Christianity, and therefore will not display the foolish notions of those without any training at all.

παίδων διανοίας: **the minds of children:** At the beginning of the address Basil addressed his nephews as ὦ παῖδες, but throughout his teaching has displayed the implicit assumption that their new knowledge and acceptance of his advice will move them from a childish state of ignorance to a mature position of wisdom (Cf. 1

Corinthians 13.11). The use of this phrase contrasts the situation of the youths at the beginning of the work, when they are viewed as children who, because their immaturity, are in danger of handing their minds over to others to fill with whatever they see fit, with the position they are now in, where they are beginning to develop reason as the master of their minds and have the understanding so as to be able to make their own choices about life, albeit with some guidance from the wiser Uncle Basil.

εἰς τὸν μακρὸν ἀποσκοπῶν καὶ ἀγήρω αἰῶνα, οὐ πέρας οὐδέν ἐστι τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ λαβεῖν, οὐ μᾶλλον γε ἢ τελευτῆν ὑποθέσθαι τῆς ἀθανάτου ψυχῆς:

looking instead towards the great and undecaying age, of which there is no end that the mind can grasp, nor indeed can the end of the immortal soul be supposed.:

ἀποσκοπῶν: Cf. use of σκοπὸς at 8.3: the aim of the life of man. Here Basil identifies the aim, and the direction in which the Christian should be looking.

10.5: πρὸς ὄνπερ κτᾶσθαι παραινέσαμι ἂν τὰ ἐφόδια: **I would advise you to gain provisions for this old age:** Basil encourages his nephews to look beyond the old age considered by Bias, and instead make provision for the place of their souls in eternity.

The use of the 1st person singular recalls the beginning of the address. As he reaches the conclusion of his advice, Basil expresses his own exhortation, putting himself in the place of Bias the father providing guidance for his son, rather than identifying with the youths as he has during the body of the speech.

πάντα λίθον κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν κινουῦντας: **according to the saying: moving every stone:** A proverb in the ancient world which has continued into modern form, ‘leaving no stone unturned’. Common in antique writers, it is often found qualified by ‘according to the saying’ or similar. (See e.g. Socrates, *HE* 2.8; 5.15; 6.6; 6.7; GNaz, *Or.* 29.13; Theodoret, *HE* 1.4; 4.19. Theodoret, *Eranistes* 151.12.)

ὅθεν ἂν μέλλη τις ὑμῖν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ὠφέλεια γενήσεσθαι: **from where some help might be going to come to you:** Basil advises his nephews to rule out nothing which could be source of assistance for them in their quest for virtue.

μηδ' ὅτι χαλεπὰ ταῦτα καὶ πόνου δεόμενα, διὰ τοῦτ' ἀποκνήσωμεν: **But although this task is difficult and does not lack hard work, we should not hesitate on account of that:** Cf. 5.3-4: Basil describes the steep path towards virtue which Hesiod details, but he encourages his readers not to allow the daunting prospect to put them off attempting the task. Here he summaries his general argument in the work. The cultivation of a virtuous life will be hard work, and the youths should not aim at it with the expectation of a pleasurable experience, but the lack of obvious pleasure should not be a reason to prevent effort to be made towards that end.

ἀλλ' ἀναμνησθέντας τοῦ παραινέσαντος, ὅτι δέοι βίον μὲν ἄριστον αὐτὸν ἕκαστον προαιρεῖσθαι: **but remembering the counsels that it is necessary for each man to choose the best life:** Basil again makes use of a Pythagorean precept, found e.g. Plutarch, *Moralia* 602c.

ἀναμνησθέντας: **remembering:** The principle which has been encouraged from 7.3: that the youths should store things in their memories which can be brought out to assist in acting in the right way in a trying situation.

παραινέσαντος: **counsels:** Not a Christian precept, but Pythagorean. A similar use of pagan literature as discussed at 9.20 about Theognis.

ἡδὺν δὲ προσδοκᾶν τῇ συνηθείᾳ γενήσεσθαι, ἐγχειρεῖν τοῖς βελτίστοις: **and to expect that it will become pleasant through habit, turning one's hand to the best things:** A similar notion is found in Plutarch, *Perikles* 5.4 concerning the statesman's practice of philosophy, so that it might become an 'eager and habitual' exercise (see note at 7.2 for text).

ἡδὺν: **pleasant:** There is a tension throughout Basil's discussion of virtue, and indeed his consideration of all behaviour and literature, between the idea that virtue will not promise a pleasant life, but at the same time there is pleasure to be found in the living of a virtuous life, a pleasure which comes as a consequence of the exertion which needs to be made. (Cf. the pleasant view from the top of the steep hill at 5.4, and the freedom from the unrelenting toil that comes with desire for luxury at 9.2-3.)

10.6: αἰσχρὸν γὰρ τὸν παρόντα καιρὸν προεμένους, ὕστερόν ποτ' ἀνακαλεῖσθαι τὸ παρελθόν, ὅτε οὐδὲν ἔσται πλέον ἀνιωμένοις: **For it is shameful, having neglected the present time, later to appeal for it to come again:** The idea that one must not waste time and later regret the lost opportunity.

10.7: Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἅ κράτιστα εἶναι κρίνω, τὰ μὲν νῦν εἴρηκα, τὰ δὲ παρὰ πάντα τὸν βίον ὑμῖν συμβουλεύσω: **Therefore the things which I judge to be the most important, some I will say now, and others I will counsel you about through the whole of life:** Basil concludes by stating that he will continue to offer guidance and advice to the youths long after the time of this address has passed. This is significant, not just in terms of establishing a familial link between Basil and his audience, but also from the perspective of Basil in his role as preacher and teacher of a congregation made up of all types of people. Clearly the youths to whom Basil addresses himself are nearing the age of educational maturity. They are developing reason, and will be encountering more and more philosophical texts which Basil wants them to approach with a Christian eye, rather than in a manner consistent with that of their pagan predecessors. However, just as their educational horizons are broadening, so their role and involvement in the church will be developing. As the youths have a greater participation in the life of the church so they will have the benefit of Basil's experience and wisdom imparted to them as he delivers his sermons to them each week.

Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἅ κράτιστα εἶναι κρίνω: **the things which I judge to be the most important:** Cf. opening lines of section 1.1: ἅ βέλτιστα εἶναι κρίνω: **the things which I judge to be best.** Basil finishes his address in the same tone that he began. The ideas which he has presented to his nephews are the ones which he considers to be fundamental in living the best life, and ones which we are to presume that Basil exercises most in his own life.

ὑμῖν συμβουλεύσω: **I will counsel you:** Cf. section 1: Πολλά με τὰ παρακαλοῦντά ἐστι συμβουλεῦσαι ὑμῖν: **there are many things urging me to counsel you.**

ὕμεῖς δέ, τριῶν ἀρρωστημάτων ὄντων, μὴ τῷ ἀνιάτῳ προσεοικένοι δόξητε,
μηδὲ τὴν τῆς γνώμης νόσον παραπλησίαν τῇ τῶν εἰς τὰ σώματα

δυστυχησάντων δείξητε: **But you, of the three kinds of illnesses, do not imagine resembling the incurable one, and do not display the sickness of mind like those**

unfortunate in their bodies: Basil uses the second person plural pronoun as he emphasises the youths need to take responsibility for their actions. This is the point at which their part in developing their own virtuous life really begins. Basil has implied and used notions about shared attitudes and actions during his speech, and there is the hope that the youths will have embraced their part in the collective Christian identity which they have been joined to by Basil. However, now the listening ceases and the youths must act. Basil hopes they will take the ideas they have heard and put them into practice as they attend school and make choices about the world around them. The use of the pronoun reminds the listeners that they must be aware of themselves and their own responsibility as they train themselves towards virtue.

10.8: οἱ μὲν γὰρ τὰ μικρὰ τῶν παθῶν κάμνοντες, αὐτοὶ παρὰ τοὺς ἰατροὺς ἔρχονται: οἱ δὲ ὑπὸ μειζόνων καταληφθέντες ἀρρωστημάτων, ἐφ' ἑαυτοὺς καλοῦσι τοὺς θεραπεύσοντας: οἱ δ' εἰς ἀνήκεστον παντελῶς μελαγχολίας παρενεχθέντες, οὐδὲ προσιόντας προσίενται: **For some men suffering from small passions take themselves to the doctors; those seized by a greater illness summon those who can treat them; but those having been brought to a deadly and total melancholy, do not even admit those coming to them.:** This image is borrowed from Plutarch, *Quis Suos* 81f-82a: 'Of persons needing the services of a physician those who have a painful tooth or finger go straightway to those who treat such ills; those who have fever summon the physicians to their houses, and implore their assistance; but those who have reached a state of melancholia or frenzy or delirium sometimes cannot endure even the physicians' visits, but either drive them away or run away from them, not realizing even that they are ill, because of the violence of their illness.'

This image parallels that taken from Hesiod at 1.3, where Basil cites three types of men, but encourages his nephews to imitate the second character who has the intelligence to follow advice when it is given. Basil's admonition here shows the development that he considers the youths to have made as a consequence of absorbing his teaching.

In 1.3, Basil advocates that his nephews should be like the second type of men mentioned by Hesiod, the one who seeks and follows advice that is given. The implication is that they are not old or wise enough to be like the first kind of man, who knows himself what is necessary and can motivate himself to do it, and Basil suggests that they should avoid being like the third kind of man who cannot take advice and is useless in everything. At the end of their lessons, the youths are encouraged to avoid being like those suffering from the incurable illness, that is, they should not shun those who can help them, but the examples of both the better types of person are available to them. If they were still at the same stage as they are presented at the beginning of the work, then the youths would simply allow themselves to be treated by physician Basil when he attends them for their disease. However, while there may be situations where Basil's counsel will take that form, there is also the suggestion that the youths have been given help to develop their reasoning capabilities and understanding so that they will identify when they begin to suffer from minor passions and the beginnings of unvirtuous behaviour. This means that they are capable of seeking out the help of the doctor of their own accord, and although they are not necessarily able to cure themselves of their illness, they can at least diagnose it and take action to prevent them from straying from the right path.

ὁ μὴ πάθητε τῶν νῦν ὑμεῖς, τοὺς ὀρθῶς ἔχοντας τῶν λογισμῶν

ἀποφεύγοντες: **Do you now not suffer this which truly seizes those who run away from reason.:** The youths need to apply the reason they are developing to all situations, and not avoid the hard work that it may require, or else they will, despite Basil's advice, become like those who cannot face the doctors who will act only in their best interests. Basil's aim is to encourage his audience, but just as elsewhere (e.g. 8.13-14) he does also present them with a warning about what could happen if they eschew his advice. The youths have progressed in their ability to emulate the examples presented from Hesiod and Plutarch, but despite that progress, they must always be aware that the third type of character exists and they could become like him if they do not determine to imitate the better examples.

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