

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

OUR HOLY FATHER METROPOLITAN GREGORY OF THESSALONIKA¹

Our Father among the saints Gregory of Thessalonika lived under the reign of Andronikos II Paleologos, around the year of grace 1340. Leaving the world behind and all that belongs to the world, he left his country, Constantinople, to go to Mount Athos and lead the monastic life. Giving himself to the most strict asceticism, attaching himself to God alone, in an extreme life of stillness, he was, in the image and resemblance of God, the mirror of the Holy Spirit. More than any other he came to the summit of action and contemplation. His intellect illuminated by the splendours of the vision of God, he left to the Church, like a pillar of Orthodoxy, writings overflowing with wisdom and theology. Extracts from his writings are included in the present book. They inform readers about the treasures of true divine spiritual knowledge, of spiritual wisdom and of perfection. For not only did this celestial intellect do what the ancient saints have advised, but, proposing what he knew supernaturally himself through long familiarity and his happy direct experience, with these writings he produced the very fruit of the beauty of the life of silence, so well that nobody could believe that these were the works of a human intellect. A great deal is needed. In truth, the intellect of Christ and the voice of God exceed all understanding and all thought. With these writings, he courageously fights for the hesychastic saints and for those who devote themselves to sobriety, watchfulness, to the prayer of the intellect. And by their demonstrations, he responds with great knowledge to the empty and contrary words of his adversaries, insofar as they destroy the truth.

¹ St Gregory Palamas.