

Texts Concerning the Feast of the Assumption (15 August)

The three readings for today's Mass are as follows: Revelation 11.9, 12.16; Psalm 45 (responsory verses), 1 Corinthians 15.20-7 and Luke 1.39-56. The notes pertaining to the first two scriptural passages were excerpted from documents already existing on the Lectio Divina Home Page. The document pertaining to the second is from the Gregory of Nyssa Home Page since it deals with the theme of "subjection" and may shed light on this excerpt. Biblical references throughout are taken from the **Revised Standard Edition**.

First Reading

Revelation, Chapter Eleven

Vs. 19: Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightening, loud noises, peals of thunder, and earthquake and heavy hail.

An apt conclusion for Chapter Eleven which has the heavenly *temple* (naos) opened in heaven, implying that the one in Jerusalem has been closed or destroyed. The same applies to the *ark* (kibotos). Kibotos also applies to Noah: "until the day when Noah entered the *ark*" [Mt 24.38]. Consider this verse in light of Lk 23.45: "and the curtain of the *temple* was torn in two." The verse at hand does not specify who or what opens the temple; it is as though a self-actuated motion effects this. The same applies to the ark which remains closed and its contents unseen. King Solomon was the one who brought the ark into the temple which replaced the tent: "Then the priests brought the *ark of the covenant* of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary, underneath the wings of the cherubim" [1 Kg 8.6].

The ark contained "nothing except the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb (cf. Dt 10.2), where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt" [1 Kg 8.9]. The use of *nothing* ('eyn) is interesting as if to negate human curiosity. It also serves to focus attention upon the stone tables given at Horeb, also known as Sinai. God descended upon this mountain God, and the opening of the temple to make the ark visible in vs. 19 may be seen as fulfilling this manifestation. "On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightening and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled" [Ex 19.16]. The dramatic elements belonging to

the heavenly and earthly manifestations of God may be perceived as a barrier: "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for you yourself did charge us saying, 'Set bounds about the mountains and consecrate it'" [Ex 19.23]. Such boundary making hearkens back to John at the beginning of Chapter Eleven: "Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff and I was told, 'Rise and measure the altar and those who worship there.'"

Chapter Twelve

Vs. 1: And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

Woman or *gune* appears in Revelation a total of nineteen times, this being the first occasion. She seems symbolic of God's people and/or Israel; Catholic tradition often identifies her with the Virgin Mary. Here *gune* is a *portent* or *semeion*. In light of Jn 4.48, this word can refer to supernatural events: "Jesus therefore said to him, 'Unless you see *signs* and wonders you will not believe.'" In the verse at hand, *semeion* has a specific location, heaven. Several times earlier it was noted that events unfold in a passive way, this being yet another example: *appeared* or *orao* in the sense of having been seen.

Semeion-as-gune may be outlined with three additional features, all of which connote a certain luminosity attributable to the woman:

- 1) sun with which she is *clothed* (*periballo*, cf. 7.9) or fully enveloped. "In them he has set a tent for the *sun*" [Ps 19.4].
- 2) *moon* (*selene*): "Behold...the *moon* and eleven stars were bowing down to me (Joseph, Gen 37.9)." In the verse at hand, the sun is the dominant image; the moon and crown are subordinate.
- 3) *crown* (*stephanos*): compare with 4.4: 'twenty-four elders clad in white garments with golden *crowns* upon their heads.'" Note use of *periballo* regarding the woman so clothed with the sun. The "twelve stars" may represent the twelve tribes of Israel and twelve disciples; for the latter, cf. Acts 1.14: "All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, with his brothers." Here Mary is seated with the disciples just before the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Vs. 2: She was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery.

Keeping in mind the reference to the Virgin Mary and Pentecost in the last verse, the mother of Jesus may be seen in light of being in “pangs of birth” with respect to the Holy Spirit’s descent. The verse at hand reads “with child” as “having something in (her) *stomach*” (gaster).

“Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now you shall go forth from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon” [Mic 4.10]. Here Revelation’s woman clearly parallels Zion about to leave Israel for Babylon, traditional place of exile. This verse is similar to the woman’s *crying out* (krazo) and *anguish* (odino). For the former: “And Jesus *cried* again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit” [Mt 27.50]. For the latter: “My little children, with whom I am again in *travail* until Christ be formed in you” [Gal 4.19]! Such *forming* or morphoo is Paul’s wish for the morphe of Christ be present in his listeners. “Though he was in the *form* of God” [Phil 2.6].

Vs. 3: And another portent appeared in heaven; behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems upon his heads.

Another use of orao (*appeared*): note the similar location (heaven, which here as in vs. 2 can be taken as the sky above) of the “great red dragon” identified in vs. 9 as Satan. Drakon (*dragon*) is derived from the verb derkomai, *to see clearly*, most likely having in mind the way a reptile stares without blinking as is the case with mammals. This Greek word translates the Hebrew tannin as found in Ex 7.10: “Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a *serpent*.” This dragon could also have a connection with the serpent of Gen 3.1: “Now the *serpent* was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made.” With this verse in mind, we have a clue regarding the dragon’s character, *subtle* or haram; the verbal root connotes nakedness or an uncovering, most likely to reveal malevolence. “They lay *crafty plans* against your people” [Ps 83.3]. Note that therion is the LXX translation for *wild creature* as found in 11.7: “the *beast* that ascends from the bottomless pit.”

Four characteristics of this dragon:

1) *red* or purros in the sense of being fiery in color. Cf. 6.4: “And out came another horse, *bright red*.” Also cf. Sg 5.10 where this word is used in the LXX: “My beloved is all radiant and *ruddy*.” The Hebrew adjective is ‘adom, closely related to ‘adam or *man* and referring to the earth’s color from which he had been formed.

2) “seven *heads*” or kephale. Frequent reference had been made in these **Notes** with

regard to the sacred number seven, mostly in connection with the seven churches and as well as with regard to Jericho. Kephale can represent the source of authority, and here is the exact opposite of Jesus Christ's authority over his church (of which seven were noted in Revelation): "He is the *head* of the body, the church" [Col 1.18].

3) "ten *horns*" or *keras*. "A fourth beast, terrible and dreadful and exceedingly strong...different from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten *horns*" [Dan 7.7]. The Chaldean word *qarnayn* closely resembles the Hebrew *qeren* which connotes strength and power. Horns were also used as part of the altar of sacrifice: "And you shall make *horns* for it on its four corners" [Ex 27.2].

4) "seven *diadems*" or *diadema*. Another "anti-seven" number to the seven churches of Revelation. Compare with *stephanos* (*crown*) in 3.11: "so that no one may seize your *crown*." *Diadema* differs from *stephanos* in the sense that it represents royal authority; the latter can apply to derived authority. In the verse at hand, *diadema* may signify that the beast shared his authority in imitation (in the sense of mockery) of the seven churches. That is, this authority is essentially fractured into "seven heads" with one body of a dragon.

Vs. 4: His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth.

This verse reveals the enormous size of the dragon who apparently is positioned on earth by reason of his proximity to the woman. *Oura* or *tail* is the source of its power. "And the prophet who teaches lies is the *tail*" [Is 9.15], that is, once the Lord has severed head and tail from Israel (cf. vs. 14).

The dragon brings down one third of the stars to earth; *suro* is the verb used here which implies a dragging. "Saul...dragged off men and women and committed them to prison" [Acts 8.3]. A result of such dragging is a casting of the stars (literally) "*into* (*eis*) earth," that is, making them fall and impact the earth similar to meteorites. For a comparable reference: The little horn "cast down to the ground some of the host of the *stars* and trampled upon them" [Dan 8.10].

Since the dragon had destroyed part of the firmament, we may assume that this occurred at night. Perhaps this is why he was able to be present when the woman was about to give birth; it was easy for him to sneak up on her. As the verbal root for dragon (*derkomai*) suggests, this beast...with all seven heads...is *staring* at the woman in anticipation of her son's birth. "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before pain came

upon her she was delivered of a son" [Is 66.7]. Contrast the dragon and these stars with the Magi and the singular star at Jesus' birth: "For we have seen his *star* in the east and have come to worship him" [Mt 2.2].

Katesthio or *to devour*: the opposite to the Magi's act of worship. "Who *devour* widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation" [Mk 12.40]. King Herod, who inquired about the birth of Jesus Christ from the Magi, is a type of dragon ready to devour him.

Vs. 5: She brought forth a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne.

Compare this verse to Christ's birth: "And she gave birth to her *first-born* son" [Lk 2.7]. This verse calls Jesus prototokos as in Col 1.15: "He is the image of the invisible God, the *first-born* of all creation." Prototokos is closely related to Christ as eikon (*image*) of God who remains invisible. Such an image mirrors the activity of the invisible God which in the context of vs. 5 is to *rule* or poimaino; this verb fundamentally means to shepherd (cf. Lk 17.7). This sense is lacking in the context of vs. 5 which is partly lifted from Ps 2.9: "You shall break them with a *rod* of iron." Here the LXX uses poimaino for *to break* which in Hebrew is rahah. In light of this, consider Ps 23.4: "Your *rod* and your *staff*, they comfort me." Here *rod* or shevet can mean *tribe*; *staff* or mishhan implies a support of any kind.

In the verse at hand, rabdos (*rod*) signifies rule as found in the LXX of Ps 45.6: "Your *royal* scepter is a *scepter* of equity." Its composition of iron shows that such rule is harsh with respect to the *nations* (ethnos or goym), traditional foes of Israel.

The verb arpazo (*to snatch*) is in the aorist passive, another instance where action is taken with respect to the person or object at hand (here, the male child) to indicate divine intervention. Note the two-fold direction of this snatching: "*to* (pros) God" and "*to* (pros) the throne;" compare with the ascent of Elijah (2 Kg 2.11) and Enoch (Gen 5.24) as well as Christ's ascension (Acts 1.9).

Thronos (*throne*) is the place from which this child will wield his "rod of iron." Cf. Rev 3.21: "He who conquers I will grant him to sit with me on my *throne* as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his *throne*."

Vs. 6: and the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God

in which to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The woman's flight happens after her son was born, the immediacy of this flight signified by "and" which connects this verse with the previous one. Compare her escape with the Holy Family's descent into Egypt: "And he (Joseph) rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod" [Mt 2.14]. As noted with regard to vs. 4, the action took place at night; the same may apply to the woman which parallels that of the Holy Family.

Eremos or *wilderness* in the sense of an uninhabited region. "I am the voice of one crying in the *wilderness*" [Jn 1.23], that is, I, John the Baptist am a voice in an uninhabited region. Eremos is comparable to the Hebrew midbar: "that they may serve me in the *wilderness*" [Ex 7.16]. In the verse at hand, eremos is a special *place* (topos) "*prepared* (etoimazo) by God" or as this word connotes, a place which stands ready waiting to receive the woman. In conjunction with eremos and John the Baptist, cf. Mt 3.3: "*Prepare* the way of the Lord."

This prepared place is also one of *nourishing* (trepho), a verb commonly associated with infants. "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly father *feeds* them" [Mt 6.26]. Perhaps the woman, like John the Baptist, was nourished in the midbar..by the voice which was crying in that spot. Such nourishing has a temporal duration, 1260 days, the same amount of time (in the sense of kairos, a special event or occasion) as the two witnesses who prophesied, 11.3. Thus the woman shares in this capacity of prophesying, again hearkening back to John the Baptist.

Psalm 45 (responsory), vss. 10-12, 16

Vs. 10: Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house. Four commands to the daughter or possibly the queen of Ophir:

1) *hear* (shamah) or pay attention. "*Hear*, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" [Dt 6.4].

2) *consider* (ra'ah, *to see*), that is, the king's splendor. "But I (queen of Sheba) did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had *seen* it" [1 Kg 10.7].

3) "*incline* your ear" (natah) in the sense of extending the just mentioned hearing in a specific direction; also implies a turning away. "*Incline* your ear to me, rescue me speedily" [Ps 31.2]!

4) *forget* (shakach) which has two objects related to the daughter's origin: her *people* and *father's house*. "God from your country and your kindred and your *father's house* to the land that I will show you" [Gen 12.1].

Vs. 11: And the king will desire your beauty. Since he his your lord, bow to him. The first sentence culminates from the fourfold commands of the previous verse. The queen's *beauty* or *yephy*, whose root as noted elsewhere in these **Notes** means *to shine, be bright*. Such is the object of the king's *desire*, 'awah: "You have given him his heart's *desire*" [Ps 21.2].

The second sentence depicts the queen's submission, *bow* or *shachah* which can apply to divine worship. "I (Abraham) and the lad will go yonder and *worship*" [Gen 22.5].

Vs. 12: The people of Tyre will sue your favor with gifts, the richest of the people with all kinds of wealth. The Hebrew reads "*daughter* of Tyre," a city on the seacoast and whose king was Hiram who furnished King David with supplies for building the Jerusalem temple. "And Hiram king of *Tyre* had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress timber and gold, as much as he desired" [1 Kg 9.11]. Such are the *gifts* given to David.

The second part of vs. 12 continues into vs. 13; "richest of the people" can refer to Tyre as well as other lands acknowledging the construction of the Jerusalem temple. The Hebrew has *face* (panym) for "favor," this word signifying the fuller sense of the king's presence.

Vs. 16: Instead of your fathers shall be your sons; you will make them princes in all the earth. Mention of *fathers* implies that the princess has relinquished her inheritance in favor of the king, her husband, a fact emphasized by the possessive pronoun *your*. Apparently the princess has the capacity to appoint rulers worldwide, "in all the earth." While not kings, such sons are *princes*, sar (singular), which can also apply to a military leader. For this term as evocative of the spiritual realm, cf. Dan 8.25: "Without warning he shall even rise up against the *Prince* of *princes*; but by no human hand he shall be broken."

Second Reading

When (The Father) Will Subject All Things To (The Son), Then (The Son) Himself Will Be Subjected To Him (The Father) Who Subjects All Things To Him (The Son):

A Treatise On First Corinthians 15.28 by Gregory of Nyssa

Introduction

(NB: This text was published in the *Greek Orthodox Review*, Brookline, Massachusetts, USA, 1988)

"And when all things have been subjected to him (the Son), then shall the Son

also himself be subjected to him (the Father) who subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all." Such are the words from Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (15.28) which Saint Gregory of Nyssa comments upon in a treatise¹ especially devoted to this verse. This relatively short treatise, bearing more or less the same heading as the above quoted verse from First Corinthians, may be grouped together with Gregory's other works which basically center around the consecration of mankind in Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection--the Commentary on the Song of Songs, On Perfection, On Ecclesiastes and the Great Catechesis. We might say that these works stand apart from those writings of Gregory dealing with trinitarian and Christological topics. Although Gregory of Nyssa's treatise on the Son's subjection is brief, it demands attention because of the rather thorny problem Saint Paul's above quoted verse to the Corinthians has caused ever since its composition. We might observe that the Christian life, conceived and developed in Gregory's treatise On Virginity and the Life of Moses, is a practical application of the reality contained in Christ's mystical body, the Church. The Commentary on the Song of Songs² centers around the development of the body of Christ in individual souls as opposed to Origen's vision of the Church as the bride of Christ; Gregory does not neglect this, but he relegates it to a place of less importance.

When we hear the word "subjection" (hupotage) in the early development of the Church's dogma, the Arian heresy usually comes to our minds. Arius (256-336) and his

¹The text may be found in Migne, PG44.1304-26. J.K. Downing has a critical text, **The Treatise of Gregory of Nyssa. In Illud: Tunc et Ipse Filius. A Critical Text with Prolegomena** (Cambridge, Ma., 1947). Part of Migne's text (1313-24) may be found in the German translation by Reinhard M. Hübner, **Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa** (Leiden, 1974) pp. 35-40. Hübner gives a highly detailed study of Gregory's text in his first chapter, "Die Einheit und Gemeinschaft des Leibes Christi Innerhalb der Theologie Gregors," pp. 27-66. To the best of my knowledge, Gregory's treatise on the Son's subjection is not fully translated into a modern language.

²The **Commentary on the Song of Songs** consists of fifteen homilies on Song 1.1-6.8. have recently translated this text [PG 44.756-1120 and the critical edition, **Gregorii Nysseni in Canticum Canticorum**, edited by H. Langerbeck under the direction of Werner Jaeger (Leiden, 1960)] with an introduction. My interest in these homilies, with their influence by Origen, has lead me to consider Gregory's treatment on the Son's subjection which more or less takes up the same theme begun in the fifteenth (and last) homily and stresses Gregory's eschatological reflections. Any quotes from the **Song Commentary** are from my own translation.

later followers held a kind of theological rationalism where the Godhead is not only uncreated, but unbegotten (agennetos). A logical sequence of such a doctrine is that the Son of God, the Logos, cannot truly be God. He is the first of all creatures and like them, was brought out of nothing, not from the divine substance. Hence He is essentially different from the Father. He is the Son of God not metaphysically, but in the moral sense of the word. The Logos, whose sonship is by adoption, lacks real participation in the divinity and has a kind of middle position between God and the world. Such a superficial rationalism was appealing since it gave a simple answer to the difficult question of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Arios' theory was not new, but the theory of subordinationism³ had been fashionable before his time; Arios simply took up the theme and added his own notions.

The treatise on the Son's subjection by Gregory of Nyssa has some noticeable polemical overtones, and Gregory indeed intended to defend the catholic tradition from such "evil frauds" in the trinitarian controversies of the day⁴. Nevertheless, when reading the treatise, one might get the impression that Gregory is talking about something more profound, namely his teaching on the Church as deeply embedded in eschatology. Due to the fact that the Son's subjection arises from trinitarian controversies, Hübner maintains that Gregory's treatise rests both upon the teachings of

³This doctrine attributed to a God who was less than God, and thus really unable to effect man's salvation. Such a difference is perhaps understandable, for it rested on an attempt among both Church Fathers and heretics alike to build a theology on the literal texts of Scripture, 1Cor. 15.28 being a prime example. In fact, Scripture attempts to convey a highly complex question regarding the relationship between Father and Son. Prestige remarks on this point. "So long as the ultimate deity was regarded as a unitary being, this deficiency led to no serious consequences, because every object to which an origin could be ascribed was also a creature. It was only when the deity came to be regarded as a triad, and a second and third person came to be distinguished within the divine being itself, that any problem of derivation, as distinct from creation, could possibly arise. This problem, therefore, is specifically a problem of Christian theology." G.L. Prestige, **God in Patristic Thought** (London, 1964) p. 135.

⁴Cf. col. 1304, "Evil frauds...lay hands on the divine silver to make it base by mixing them with heretical and adulterated conceptions which obscure the Word's brightness.... Such persons say that the glory of the Only-Begotten (Son) of God must be degraded." And col. 1325, "The Apostle's purpose was not so much to expose heretical teachings which is what you would gather from the text (1Cor. 15.28) being treated."

Marcellus of Ankyra⁵ and Saint Athanasios. Gregory's contact with Marcellus' followers arose out of concern for his brother, Basil (the Great), who was engaged in a dispute over the lawful bishop of Antioch⁶. Gregory attended the Synod of Antioch in 379 which in turn sent him to the diocese of Pontos as a visitor. It was in the town of Sebaste that Gregory defended himself (380) against charges of Arianism or, more specifically, charges of the Son's inferior position which somewhat resembled Marcellus of Ankyra's point of view. This compelled Gregory to compose a statement on the topic, and he thereby corrected Marcellus' excesses.

After giving an explanation of the term "subjection" (hupotage) (1305-08) with regard to examples from the animal and human spheres, Gregory goes on to say that subjection properly understood is worthy of God himself (1309) and is present in both the "Son who is subjected and in the Father who receives the Son's subjection." Nevertheless, such a good is presently lacking; as Paul says, "The Son's subjection lies in the future." Here is where we find room for heretical doctrines pertaining to such a teaching--they attempt to reconcile the unchangeable nature of God with the present state of human existence which Christ assumed in his Incarnation. As Gregory asks

⁵Marcellus of Ankyra, was at the beginning of the fourth century, a staunch upholder of Nikaia. He wrote **De Subjectione Domini**, a rejection of strict subordinationism. The Arians accused him of leaning towards Sabellian modalism and adoptionism. Marcellus held that the Logos was God from all eternity, but not Son from all eternity; the *Logos* became Son only at the Incarnation. Marcellus was deposed by the Arian Council of Constantinople (336) and was defended by Pope Julius 1 to whom he gave an orthodox profession of faith. Saint Athanasios stood by him until Marcellus was discredited by the errors of his disciple Photinos. Marcellus published a work against Asterios the Sophist (c. 330) in which he attacked Eusebios of Nikomedia and Eusebios of Caesarea, laying himself open to the accusation of Sabellianism, thus becoming a target of the anti-Nikaian party. Marcellus' tract against Asterios is no longer extant, but numerous citations in Eusebios prove his doctrine unorthodox and related to Monarchism. At the consummation of the world, Son and Spirit will reenter the Godhead and will become an absolute monad again.

⁶In Basil's concern for church unity in the Arian controversy, he enlisted Athanasios' help in his attempt to establish better relations between Rome and the East. One such obstacle in the path to such church unity was the trouble over Paulinos and Melitos. Basil's appeal to Athanasios and to Rome for the healing of this schism was rejected, mainly because Rome was opposed to Melitos whom Basil favored.

rhetorically in 1309, "How does this (subjection of the Son to the Father at the fulfillment of time) relate to what is unchangeable?" He answers with "That which will exist afterwards but not now refers to our mutable human nature." The thought of linking human nature with subjection naturally leads Gregory to consider the central fact of the Resurrection, "The goal for which all men hope (pros to peras ton elpizomenon) and for which they direct their prayers" (1312). With the important term peras (goal) Gregory describes the consummation of salvation history, namely apokatastasis, which is "the object of our treatise" (1313). It is in the section from 1313 to 1316 that Gregory presents his readers with his own interpretation of Paul's text (1Cor 15.28).

It is especially in his eschatological views that Gregory proves himself a disciple of Origen. He does not share Origen's ideas regarding the preexistence of souls, and he especially is at pains to reject the doctrine that they have "fallen" into material bodies as a punishment for sins committed in a preceding world⁷. However, Gregory agrees with Origen in holding that the pains of hell are not eternal but temporary due to their medicinal nature. Detachment or apatheia in this life represents a foretaste of the blessed life to come. This is practically carried out by despoiling our "garments of skin" (cf. Gen 3.21) which compose our animal life or psuche. Gregory equates the "man" first created by God in Gen 1.27 not with an historical figure, but with that of Christ to come--"There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3.28). Gregory's conception of askesis which helps restore our eikon, or the original man spoken of above, is commanded by apatheia freedom from passion. Thus apatheia is a habitual state of grace.

The use of Gregory's Pauline exegesis is a vision of the Church as Christ's body. Creation's goal is none other than the return of all things to fellowship (koinonia) in the good subjection (1308) which they had at the beginning. Hence, it is easy to see how this doctrine ties in with the above-mentioned doctrine of man created in the image of God. "Nothing made by God is excluded from his kingdom.... Such things had their origin in God; what was made in the beginning (arche) did not receive evil" (1313). We find

⁷A basic theme of **Peri Psuches kai Anastaseos ho Logos ho Legomenos ta Makrineia**, PG 46.113. Origen held that spirits, once having fallen into material bodies, must despoil themselves of such bodies in order to return to God. Gregory develops the relationship of soul to body in **On the Creation of Man**, **On the Holy Pascha**, and **Dialogue on the Soul and the Resurrection**.

evidence of the essential goodness of all things in Gregory's other writings⁸; evil comes in through man's misuse of his freedom--"Decrease of the good always results by straying from its principle, while the good is found closer to us insofar as it has in each one's dignity and power" (1313). Because man is God's image, he is naturally good by nature⁹. This point cannot be stressed enough for a proper appreciation of Gregory's entire anthropology and theology.

Gregory's parable of the lost sheep, which is based upon Mt 18.12-14, pertains to the original unity of all things. We find it expounded in his second and twelfth homilies on the Song of Songs. Such a doctrine in turn rests upon Irenaios¹⁰. Man participates in the angelic nature (*eis phuseos ton aggelon*). Gregory's treatise *On the Making of Man* (PG 44.188), in line with his treatise on the Son's subjection, says that the grace of the Resurrection is none other than the restoration of fallen nature in its original unity. In light of this we must view his *Okonomielehre*¹¹ or the grand mystery of Christ's incarnation-death-resurrection-ascension. As Daniélou points out¹², all souls are restored to the unity of the *kosmos noetos* in which the angels dwell. However, this unity is not a mere return to the primitive state of paradise, since the human drama has caused the appearance of a new reality, that of the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

⁸**Peri Psuches kai Anastaseos**, PG 46.81; **Commentary on the Song of Songs**, Twelfth Homily.

⁹"Because the nature of creation subsists from its very beginning by the divine power, the end of each created being is simultaneously linked with its beginning--each thing as created from nothing passes into existence with its perfection following as simultaneous with its beginning. Human nature is also created but does not, like other created beings, advance towards its perfection; right from the very beginning it is created in perfection. 'Let us make man according to our image and likeness' (Gen 1.26). Here is shown the very summit and perfection of goodness.... Thus in the first creation of man its end is simultaneous with its beginning, and human nature originated in perfection," Gregory of Nyssa, **Commentary on the Song of Songs**, Fifteenth Homily.

¹⁰In opposition to gnostic dualism, Irenaios teaches that there is only one God, creator of the world and Father of Jesus Christ. He develops the Pauline doctrine of *anakephalaiosis*, or recapitulation of all things in Christ--Christ as the new Adam renews all creation and leads it back to its author through the incarnation and redemption.

¹¹Reinhard Hübner, **Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa** (Leiden, 1974) p.44, n. 51.

¹²Jean Daniélou, **Platonisme et Théologie Mystique** (Paris, 1944) p. 181.

The immediate goal of Christ's Incarnation is the destruction of evil--"When we are removed from evil in imitation of the first fruits (aparche), our entire nature is mixed with this self-same fruits. One body has been formed with the good as predominant; our body's entire nature is united to the divine, pure nature. This is what we mean by the Son's subjection, when in his body Christ rightly has the subjection brought to him and effects in us the grace of subjection" (1316). In this way Gregory interprets the subjection of the Son to his Father as the removal of evil.

The individual members of Christ's body are "physically" joined to his human nature. Thus, the body--the Church--grows as a whole unity. "Unity then means to be one body with him...for all who are joined to the one body of Christ by participation are one body with him. When the good pervades everything, then the entirety of Christ's body will be subjected to God's vivifying power. Thus the subjection of this body will be said to be the subjection of the Son himself as united to his own body, the Church" (1317). Also, the rest of creation is meant to participate in this unity found in subjection as 1320 states. It is based upon Paul's statement in Phil 2.10, "When everything in heaven, on earth, and under the earth bends the knee to him.... Then when every creature has become one body and is joined in Christ through obedience to one another, he will bring into subjection his own body to the Father."

The phrase in 1317, "proper measure" (idion metron)¹³, calls for some comment; for it brings to mind the body of Christ as a collective unity in the process of growth through the earlier concept of "first fruits." This phrase, it should be remembered, refers to the material side of human nature. Christ as this first fruits is present in mankind as a whole, a fact Gregory stresses as opposed to Christ's presence in individual members. The "proper measure" then implies that full realization of each person who has attained "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," a quote from Eph 2.13 which Gregory uses in 1317. In order to understand this better, refer to his treatise *On the Making of Man*, chapter sixteen, a key doctrine of the "double creation" of man¹⁴. "All of

¹³*Metron*--we may take it as identical to *pleroma*, meaning the sum of all humankind.

¹⁴"In saying that 'God created man,' the text indicates, by the indefinite character of the term, all mankind; for was not Adam here named together with the creation, as the history tells us in what follows? Yet the name given to the man created is not the

nature, beginning from the first to the last man, is, so to speak, one image of him who is" (PG 44.185). This ought not to be identified with the apokatastasis as such which is purely spiritual, but this is mankind taken as an entire race.

Compare this statement from *On the Making of Man* with the treatise on subjection (1320): "Christ's body consists of human nature in its entirety to which he has been united." The apokatastasis of mankind which partakes of the angelic realm as stated above refers, however, to the Church as the body of Christ through the Incarnation. Thus apokatastasis refers to the restoration of mankind through the Incarnation. It is of this original unity of mankind in its entirety that chapter sixteen of *On the Making of Man* speaks. It should be noted that in this chapter Gregory does not mention the term apokatastasis or restoration of man's image; one should read it before his treatise on the Son's subjection to appreciate it better. There is no ontological relationship of mankind with regard to God in the reality of apokatastasis--mankind is an "image of him who is." Gregory's mysticism in its entirety as developed in the *Life of Moses* and the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* centers around the transcendence of God's being (ousia). Due to this inaccessible ousia, individual souls will be eternally increasing in the depths of God's inscrutable darkness. The darkness Gregory presents to us is absolute. No amount of human effort can comprehend God¹⁵.

We find two conceptions of the subjection of Christ's body in the treatise which should be noted: "The subjection of this body (that is, those joined together in Christ) will be said to be the subjection of the Son himself as united to his own body, that is, the Church" (1317). And "subjection to God is complete alienation from evil" (1316). The first model depends upon Marcellus of Ankyra, as Hübner has shown (p. 53), which Gregory obtained from *Peri tes Ensarkou Epiphaneias tou Theou Logou kata Hareianon* attributed to Saint Athanasios. Marcellus of Ankyra takes 1Cor 15.28 as the subjection of Christ's manhood¹⁶. Compare this now with Gregory's subjection of the body of Christ,

particular, but the general name. Thus, we are led by the employment of the general name of our nature to some such view as this - that in the divine foreknowledge and power all humanity is included in the first creation." PG 44.185.

¹⁵"God's manifestation to the great Moses began with light; afterwards God spoke to him through a cloud. Then having risen higher and having become more perfection, Moses saw God in darkness," **Commentary on the Song of Songs**, Eleventh Homily.

¹⁶**Peri tes Anthropotetos Autou, Esti Pasa he Ekklesia**, PG 26.1021.

the Church, in 1320: "Christ's body consists of human nature in its entirety to which He has been united" (katamichte).

The second model comes from Origen's understanding of Christ's subjection to his Father as that of every rational creature. Compare both the use of Ps 61.2 in Gregory and Origen, "Shall not my soul be subjected to God?" For Gregory this verse (1305) develops the psalm quote by saying, "The mark of submission to God is salvation as we have learned" (1305), and later in 1308, "With regard to salvation's goal it is said that the Only-Begotten [Son] of God is subjected to the Father in the same way salvation from God is procured for mankind." The phrase "we have learned" most likely rests upon the great Alexandrian's comments in *De Principiis*, vi. 1:

What then is the "subjection" by which "all things must be made subject" to Christ? In my opinion it is the same subjection by which we too desire to be subjected to him, and by which the apostles and all the saints who have followed Christ were subject to him. For the word subjection, when used for our subjection to Christ, implies the salvation proceeding from Christ of those who are subjected.

Here salvation equals subjection, a theme we see in Gregory's treatise; both authors see it as a lordship of the good. Gregory fills out Origen by saying, "Our subjection, however, consists of a kingdom, incorruptibility, and blessedness living in us; this is Paul's meaning of being subjected to God" (1325).

Christ's body for both Gregory and Origen encompasses not only all mankind, but every rational creature with free will. Parallel 1320, which uses Phil 2.10, with Origen's *De Principiis*, i.6, 2:

Subjection to God is our chief good when all creation resounds as one voice; when everything in heaven, on earth, and under the earth bends the knee to him, and when every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Then when every creature has become one body and is joined in Christ through obedience to one another, he will bring into subjection his own body to the Father.

And Origen:

For the end is always like the beginning; as therefore there is one end of all things, so we must understand that there is one beginning of all things, and as there is one end of many things, so from one beginning arise many differences and varieties, which in their turn are restored through God's goodness, through their subjection to Christ and their unity with the Holy Spirit, to one end, which is like the beginning. I refer to all those who, by 'bending the knee in the name of Jesus,' have through this very fact displayed the sign of their subjection. These are they who dwell 'in heaven and on earth and under the earth,' the three terms indicating the entire universe, that is, all those beings who started from one beginning but were drawn in various directions.

In order to show the concrete materiality of human nature, Gregory employs the term "first fruits of the common dough" (*oion aparche tis tou koinou phuramatos*) into which the divine Logos was incarnated. Origen says in a similar vein, "So every soul in God's hands is one nature and all rational beings come, if I may say so, from one lump" (*De Principiis*, iii.1, 22). We gather from this that the principle of unity of the spiritual body of Christ is not mankind, but the Godhead of the Logos; and Gregory simply took this concept over. Originally all creatures were subjected to God in one nature, and the end equals the beginning with no distinctions (cf. *De Principiis*, i.6, 2 above).

Although Gregory, like Origen, sees 1 Corinthians 15.28 as a statement for evil's destruction and return of all spiritual natures to God's lordship, Gregory, as Hübner points out (p. 60), brings in Marcellus of Ankyra's model or equation of mankind and Christ's body: "Christ's body...consists of human nature in its entirety to which he has been united" (1320). Marcellus' goal is to see *apokatastasis* as the upbuilding of Christ's body of the Incarnation ("Christ assumed from death both the beginning of evil's destruction and the dissolution of death; then...a certain order was consequently added"-1313). In this reference no hint of the body's preexistence is present, a reason why Athanasios stood by Marcellus--he did not advocate the Origenistic concept of the preexistence of spiritual bodies. It is in line with Gregory's anthropology and soteriology which lacks Origen's concept of the body. Gregory thus has a wholly positive sense of Christ's Incarnation.

For Gregory of Nyssa the goal of the Christian life is similarity to God as the Ninth Homily on the Song says: "The end of a virtuous life is likeness to God and purity of soul." The principle of such a likeness or unity with God lies in his goodness. Compare 1317 of the subjection treatise with the Fifteenth Homily: "When the good pervades everything then the entirety of Christ's body will be subjected to God's vivifying power." And "the disciples...should all be one and grow together into one good through the unity of the Holy Spirit"¹⁷. Unity of likeness is a sum, not an organism as in the Pauline concept of Christ's body--an organic community and solidarity of Christ's body is here without significance for salvation. Christ's Incarnation as "first fruits of the common dough" has rather the view of final penetration of the divine goodness, i.e., salvation safeguards the body's composition of its free members; for the principle of apokatastasis is God's goodness, not mankind's unity.

The contents of Christ's body as based upon the tradition of Irenaios, Athanasios, Marcellus of Ankyra and Origen, are based upon the Stoic arche-akolouthia-peras (beginning-consequence-goal). It gives to the grand view of Christ's body, the Church, a certain wholeness and consistency. With Gregory, the importance of akolouthia designates not only the necessary body between two propositions, but the consequence by which a proposition is connected to its first principles (archai). It is only when this sequence is established and lacks no connection that one possesses certitude. This use of the term akolouthia can be seen in the Fifteenth Homily of the Song:

We hold that the bride's praises are as teachings which philosophize about more refined matters. These teachings say that beings are created and renewed not in accord with the same order or system (akolouthia). Because the nature of creation subsists from its very beginning by the

¹⁷Hübner sums up this unity of Christ's body by saying: "Die Tragweite der Leib-Christi- Theologie Gregors hängt ab von der Tragweite der Theologie der Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen, denn der Leib Christi der Endzeit ist die Vollzahl der in ihrer ursprünglichen Gottähnlichkeit Widerhergestellten, das Endstadium der Rückführung aller aus der Entfremdung in ihre natürliche erkenntnismäßige und willentliche Verhaftung im allein Seienden und Guten, das ihr Seinsgrund ist, die Zentrierung des Blickes aller auf das eine Ziel," **Die Einheit des Leibes Christi bei Gregor von Nyssa**, p.231.

divine power, the end of each created being is simultaneously linked with its beginning.

Conflict between Gregory's concept of apokatastasis or subjection and "first fruits of the common dough" is brought together in a combination of Origen's and Athanasios' ideas pertaining to soteriology. We must keep in mind this tension when reading Gregory of Nyssa, for the importance of Gregory's body of theology hinges upon his theology of the image of God in man; for Christ's body is finally perfected in an original likeness to God. The Fifteenth Homily on the Song Commentary contains Gregory's eschatological form of the body of the redeemed, his high point on this subject. It is here that perfection is symbolized by a dove, that is, the Holy Spirit who is seen as the principle of unity. This is in contrast to the treatise on subjection whose principle is Christ. Regarding glory, the Fifteenth Homily says:

I think it is better to state the divine words of the Gospel: "That they may be all one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us" (Jn 17.21). Glory is the bond of this unity; the Holy Spirit is said to be this glory which cannot be denied by anyone prudently examining our Lord's words. He says, "The glory which you have given me, I have given to them." Indeed Christ gave this glory to his disciples when he said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." He received this glory which he already had before the world's beginning when he clothed himself with human nature which was glorified by the Spirit. Such a relationship in the glory of the Spirit is distributed to everyone united with Christ, beginning with the disciples.

Now read 1320 of the treatise on the Son's subjection where the process of Christ becoming present in his body, the Church, is identified with the Holy Spirit. It is here that the separation between the human and divine beings is bridged and can become a unity without mixture in the Holy Spirit:

I think that Christ's own glory is meant to be the Holy Spirit which he has given to his disciples by breathing upon them, for what is scattered cannot otherwise be united unless joined together by the Holy Spirit's unity.... The Spirit is glory, as Christ says of the Father: "Glorify me with the glory

which I had with you before the world was made" (Jn 17.5). The Word is God who has the Father's glory, and became flesh during these last days. It is necessary for the flesh to become what the Word is (that is, divine) by uniting itself to him; this is effected when the flesh receives that which the Word had before the world was made. This is none other than the Holy Spirit.

The Treatise

[M.1304] All the utterances of the Lord are holy and pure as the prophet says [cf. Ps 33.4-5]. When the mind (nous) has been purified as silver in fire and cleansed of every heretical notion, it has the capacity of noble utterances and a splendor which is in accord with truth. Before this, however, I think it is necessary to attest to the brilliance and purity of Saint Paul's teachings: in paradise he was initiated into the knowledge of unintelligible things. Having Christ speaking within himself, Paul uttered such things which anyone would utter who was taught by such a teacher, guide and master as the Word. Since evil frauds lay hands on the divine silver to make it base by mixing it with heretical and adulterated conceptions which obscure the Word's brightness and the Apostle's mystical perceptions, they either do not understand these perceptions or they resolve wickedly to choose selectively among them in order to defend their own wicked behavior, having appropriated them for their own wicked purposes. Such persons claim, in order to diminish the glory of the Only-Begotten [Son] of God, that the apostle's words agree with them when he says, "Then the Son will be subjected (hupotagestetai) to him who has subjected all things to himself" [1Cor 15.28]. Thus they would say such a style of speaking reveals a certain servile subjection of the Son to the Father]. For this reason it seemed necessary to diligently examine what is being said here that we may show that the apostolic silver is truly pure, separated and unmixed from every kind of sordid and heretical concept. We, for our part, know that such a saying or word [that is, hupotasso] has many meanings in Holy Scripture and is not always suited to the same purposes: now it signifies one thing, and at another time something else, for instance [M.1305] slaves are to be subjected to their masters.

Man's irrational nature is to be subjected to God of which the prophet says, "He put all things under his feet" [Ps 8.8]. As for those taken captive in battle it says, "He subjected peoples under us and nations under our feet" [Ps 46.4]. Yet again mentioning

those who have been saved through knowledge, the prophet says in the person of God, "He subjected other peoples under me" [Ps 59.10]. Thus, it behooves us to see how what was examined in this psalm verse can be applied to Psalm 61: "Will not my soul be subjected to God?" [Ps 61.2]. That which is brought to our attention by our enemies from all these examples is taken from the Epistle to the Corinthians, namely, "then the Son himself will be subjected to the One who subjects all things to himself." Because this text can be understood in many ways, it would be helpful if each use of the word [subjection] is examined so that we may know the proper meaning the apostle had in mind by the term "subjection."

We say that those vanquished in battle unwillingly and forcefully submit themselves to their victors--this is a sign of subjection. If any opportunity arises which may offer hope of overcoming their masters, the captives who consider it bad and disgraceful to be in such a state once again rise up in rebellion. Irrational (alogos) beasts are subject to men endowed with reason (logikos); such is the order of things. How necessary it is for that which is inferior to be subjected to that which enjoys a superior lot by nature! Those under the yoke of servitude as some consequence of the law--even if they are equal in nature (to their masters) but are unable to resist the law--hear the state of subjection, having inevitably been brought to this state out of necessity.

On the other hand, the mark of submission to God is, as we have learned by the prophecy, "To God be subjected, my soul, for from him is my salvation" [Ps 61.2]. When the apostle's text is brought forward by our adversaries, that is, saying that the Son must be subjected to the Father, it follows that once its meaning has been clarified, we must ask those who are accustomed to attribute Paul's text to the Only-Begotten [Son] of God what they mean by subjection. But it is clear that the Son's subjection should not be understood according to any mode of human speech. An enemy vanquished in battle does not rise up a second time against his victors out of hope and eagerness [for overcoming them]. Neither through a lack of the good does an irrational beast have a natural, necessary subjection as in the case of sheep and cattle which are subjected to man. Similarly, neither does a bought or [M.1308] home-born slave ever expect to become free of slavery's yoke by law either through kindness or clemency. With regard to salvation's goal it is said that the Only-Begotten [Son] of God is subjected to the Father in the same way salvation from God is procured for mankind.

As for mutable [human] nature's participation (metousia) in the good, it is necessary for such a nature to be subjected to God by means of which we have fellowship (koinonia) in this good. Subjection has no place in God's immutable and unchanging power; in it is contemplated every good name, intelligence, incorruptibility and blessedness. This power always remains as it is; neither does it have the capacity to become better nor worse. Also, neither does God's power receive increase in the good nor a downward inclination to a worse condition. Rather, God's power makes salvation spring up for others while having no other function than bestowing salvation.

What can reasonably be said as to the meaning of subjection? Everything which has been examined is found quite remote from a proper understanding and discussion about the Only-Begotten [Son] of God. If it is necessary to attribute the kind of subjection spoken of in Luke's Gospel to Christ--"The Lord was obedient [subjected] to his parents until he reached twelve years of age" [2.51]--the meaning implied in this text does not apply to the God who existed before all ages; the same holds true when applied to his real Father. Christ was tempted in our human nature [literally, 'there,' ekei] in everything according to our likeness except sin [Heb 4.15] and advanced through the stages proper to our human existence. -Just as a little child, Christ received a newborn infant's nourishment, that is, butter and milk. While advancing into adolescence, Christ did not avoid anything related or pertaining to that particular stage of life, but was an example (tupos) of good conduct (eutaxia) for that particular age.

Since the understanding of some persons is imperfect regarding these matters, the function of Christ's youth is to lead to a better state by what is more perfect. Thus the twelve-year-old child [Jesus] was subject to his mother; Christ showed us that which is perfected through advancement, although he was perfect beforehand. Rightly did he take subjection as a means to the good. He who is perfect in every good and was incapable of assuming any kind of diminution--because his nature is self-sufficient and cannot be lessened--is subjected for a reason beyond the range of thoughtless persons.

Christ associated himself (sunanastrepho) with our human nature and experienced the stage of childhood through which he effected the obedience [subjection] proper to this time of youth. It is clear that Christ progressed from that state to a perfect age when he no longer relied upon a mother's authority. His mother urged him to manifest his power in Cana of Galilee when there was a lack of wine at the

wedding feast, and wine was needed for the celebration. He did not refuse those in need but rejected his mother's request as no longer being appropriate for his present age (kairos) of life. He said, "What do you have to do with me, woman?" [Jn 2.4]. "Do you wish to have power over me now at this stage of my life? Has not [M.1309] my hour come which shows that I have a mind and free will of my own?" If the just measure of our parents' subjection in this life according to the flesh is shaken off--for it has a place in our present existence--no one is able to command Christ whose lordship remains forever. The divine and blessed life is his own which always abides in him and never admits of transformation due to change.

Because the Word, the Only-Begotten [Son] of God from the beginning, is alien from every aberration and change, how can what now is not a reality exist afterwards? The Apostle does not say that the Son is always subjected but that he will be subjected at the final consummation of all things. If subjection is said to be good and worthy of God, how can this good be apart from God? The good is equally in both persons--in the Son who is subjected and in the Father who receives his Son's subjection. Such a good is lacking to both Father and Son at the present. What the Father does not have before all ages neither does the Son have; at the fulfillment of time this good will be present to Father. On the other hand, there will be a certain addition and increase in God's own glory which at present he does not have. How does this relate to what is unchangeable? That which will exist afterwards but not now refers to our mutable human nature. If subjection is good, the good now consists of believing in God; if such a good is unworthy of God, neither can it exist now nor in the future. However, the Apostle claims that the Son is to be subjected; He is not so at the present.

Does the term "subjection" have another meaning which is far removed from any kind of heretical perversity? What, then, is it? Perhaps by connecting what has also been written in this part [of First Corinthians] to the text at large, we may obtain an idea of what Paul means. When Paul wrote against the Corinthians who had received their faith in the Lord, they held the teaching of the Resurrection as a myth saying, "How can the dead rise? And what kind of body will they have?" [1Cor 15.35]. By what diverse and varied ways do bodies return to existence after death and disintegration after having been destroyed either by carnivorous animals, reptiles or animals which swim, fly or are four-footed beasts? Paul sets before the Corinthians many arguments, entreating them not to compare God's power to their own human capacity nor to

estimate anything as being impossible regarding man as well as God. However, one may consider God's greatness from examples well-known to us. Thus God placed in man the marvelous example of seeds in their bodies which are always renewed by his power [1Cor 15.37]. God's wisdom is not exhausted. It is found in myriad bodily forms of all descriptions-- those which are rational, irrational, air-borne and on the earth as well as those which we see in the heavens, such as the sun and other stars. Each one having been begotten by the divine power is a certain proof that God will resurrect our bodies.

[M.1312] All things come to manifestation not from any underlying matter (hule) but from the divine will acting as matter and substance for such created things; it is easier to mold that which already exists into its proper shape (schema) than to bring into being that which had no substance and essence right from the beginning. In the text [cf. 1Cor 15] Paul showed that the first man was dissolved into the earth through sin and was regarded as being of the earth. It followed that all who took their origin from this first man became earthly and mortal. Another consequence necessarily resulted by which man is renewed once again from mortality into immortality. Similarly, the good begotten in human nature was bestowed upon every person as one entity, just as evil was poured into a multitude of persons by one man through succeeding generations. These words can be used for confirming Paul's teaching. "The first man," he says, "was from the earth; the second man is from heaven. As it was with the man of dust, so it is with those of the dust; as it is with the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven" [1 Cor 15.47-48]. These and similar reflections confirm the fact of the Resurrection.

By many other arguments Paul thwarted heretics with syllogisms. He showed that the person not believing in the resurrection of the dead does not admit of Christ's Resurrection. Through the web of mutual connections there comes the inevitable conclusion--"If there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ risen. If Christ has not risen, our faith in him is vain" [1Cor 15.16]. If the proposition is true, namely that Christ is risen from the dead, it is necessarily true that this connection spoken of is true, that there is a resurrection of the dead. For by a particular demonstration the universal is presented at the same time. On the contrary, if anyone says the universal is false, that is, the resurrection of the dead, neither is the truth found in an individual example such as Christ's Resurrection from the dead. Paul therefore compels the Corinthians by syllogisms to accept his teaching on the Resurrection. From it he claims that if the

Resurrection does not exist, its universal confirmation is concluded. For with a specific proof the general principle is also revealed. And on the contrary, if anyone were to say that the general principle is false (that there is a resurrection of the dead), then neither would the specific be found true (that Christ was raised from the dead). Paul adds to this fact that as all have died in Adam all will be restored to life in Christ. Paul clearly reveals here the mystery of the Resurrection. Anyone who looks at what stems from the Resurrection readily sees its consequence, the goal for which all men hope and for which they direct their prayers.

[M.1313] Here, then, is the object of our treatise: I will first set forth my own understanding of the text and will add the Apostle Paul's words as applied to my understanding. What does Paul teaching consist of? Evil will come to nought and will be completely destroyed. The divine, pure goodness will contain in itself every nature endowed with reason; nothing made by God is excluded from his kingdom once everything mixed with some elements of base material has been consumed by refinement in fire. Such things had their origin in God; what was made in the beginning did not receive evil. Paul testifies to the truth of this. He said that the pure and undefiled divinity of the Only-Begotten [Son] assumed man's mortal and perishable nature. However, from the entirety of human nature to which the divinity is mixed, the man constituted according to Christ is a kind of first fruits of the common dough (oion aparche tis tou koinou phuramatos). It is through this [divinized] man that all mankind is joined to the divinity.

Since every evil was obliterated in Christ--for he did not make sin-- the prophet says, "No deceit was found in his mouth" [Is 53.9]. Evil was destroyed along with sin, as well as the death which resulted; death is simply the result of sin. Christ assumed from death both the beginning of evil's destruction and the dissolution of death; then, as it were, a certain order was added. Decrease of the good always results by straying from its principle, whereas the good is found closer to us insofar as it lies in each one's dignity and power; thus a result follows from the action preceding it: after the man in Christ who became the first fruits of our human nature received in himself the divinity, He became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep and the first born from the dead once the pangs of death have been loosened. After this person has completely separated himself from sin and has utterly denied in himself the power of death and destroyed its lordship and authority and might--if anyone like Paul may be found who

became a mighty imitator of Christ in his rejection of evil--such a person will fall in behind the first fruits at Christ's coming (parousia).

And, on the other hand--I say this as an example--there is Timothy who as much as he could was also imitating his teacher; there are other persons not quite like him who, one after another, gradually suffer a loss of goodness and follow behind certain people who are always ready to anticipate and lead until the followers, by continual imitations, resemble their leaders in whom there is little good because evil abounds. In the same way there is a conformity that comes from those who are less flawed and as a consequence, turn from those who excel in evil by following their own inclinations and who are driven back from better things until at the last gasp of evil growth in goodness achieves the destruction of evil. Similarly, by a growing resemblance to less evil persons, those who excelled in doing evil enter the way of persons being led into what is better until through progress in the good they put an end to their evil ways by the destruction [M.1316] of wickedness. The goal of our hope is that nothing contrary to the good is left but that the divine life permeates everything. It completely destroys death, having earlier removed sin which, as it is said, held dominion over all mankind. Therefore every wicked authority and domination has been destroyed in us. No longer do our passions rule our [human] nature since it is necessary that none of them dominate--all are subjected to the one who rules over all. Subjection to God is complete alienation from evil. When we are removed from evil in imitation of the first fruits [Christ], our entire nature is mixed with this selfsame fruits. One body has been formed with the good as predominant; our body's entire nature is united to the divine, pure nature. This is what we mean by the Son's subjection-- when in his body Christ rightly has the subjection brought to him, and he effects in us the grace of subjection.

Such is our understanding of these teachings which we have received from the great Saint Paul. It is time now to quote the Apostle himself on these matters: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 'For God has put all things in subjection under his feet' [a reference to Ps 8.6]. But when it says, 'All things are put in subjection under him,' it is plain that he is accepted who put all things under him. When all things are

subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who puts all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone" [1Cor 15.22-28].

Towards the end of his words Paul plainly speaks of the nonexistence (anuparktos) of evil by stating that God is in all things and present to each one of them. It is clear that God will truly be in all things when no evil will be found. It is not proper for God to be present in evil; he will not be in everything as long as some evil remains. If it compels us to truly believe that God is in everything, then evil cannot be seen as existing along with faith; God cannot be present in evil. However, for God to be present in all things, Paul shows that he, the hope of our life, is simple and uniform. No longer can our new existence be compared to the many and varied examples of this present life. By the words quoted above, Paul shows that God becomes all things for us. He appears as the necessities of our present life or as examples for partaking in the divinity. For God to be our food, it is [M.1317] proper to understand him as being eaten; the same applies to drink, clothing, shelter, air, location, wealth, enjoyment, beauty, health, strength, prudence, glory, blessedness and anything else judged good which our human nature needs. Words such as these signify what is proper to God.

We learn from the examples mentioned above that the person in God has everything which God himself has. To have God means nothing else than unity with him. Unity means to be one body with him as Paul states, for all who are joined to the one body of Christ by participation are one body with him. When the good pervades everything, then the entirety of Christ's body will be subjected to God's vivifying power. Thus the subjection of this body will be the subjection of the Church. Regarding this point Paul says to the Colossians, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church of which I became a minister according to his dispensation" [Col 1.24]. To the Church at Corinth Paul says, "You are the body of Christ and his members" [1Cor 12.27]. To the Ephesians Paul more clearly puts this teaching when saying, "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and builds itself up in love" [Eph 4.15-16].

Christ eternally builds himself up by those who join themselves to him in faith. A

person ceases to build himself up when the growth and completion of his body attains its proper measure. No longer does he lack anything added to his body by building since he is wholly constructed upon the foundation of prophets and apostles. When faith is added, the Apostle says, "Let us attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" [Eph 2.13].

If the head, in turn, builds up the body, it joins, connects and brings together everything else for which it was born according to the measure of its function such as the hand, foot, eye, ear or any other part completing the body in proportion to each person's faith. By so carrying out these functions, the body builds itself up as Paul says above. It is clear that when this is accomplished, Christ receives in himself all who are joined to him through the fellowship of his body. Christ makes everyone as limbs of his own body; even if there are many such limbs, the body is one. By uniting us to himself Christ is our unity; having become one body with us through all [M.1320] things, he looks after us all. Subjection to God is our chief good when all creation resounds as one voice, when everything in heaven, on earth and under the earth bends the knee to him and when every tongue will confess that has become one body and is joined in Christ through obedience to one another; at this point he will bring into subjection his own body to the Father.

Let not what is said here sound strange to anyone because we ascribe to the soul a certain means of expression taken from the body. That which is read as pertaining to the fruitfulness of the land may also be applied to one's own soul: "Eat, drink, and be merry" [Lk 11.19]. This sentence may refer to the fullness of the soul. Thus the subjection of the Church's body is brought to him who dwells in the soul. Since everything is explained through subjection as the book of Psalms suggests. As a result we learn that faith means not being apart from those who are saved, a fact we learn from the Apostle Paul.

By the Son's subjection Paul signifies the destruction of death. Two elements concur: the destruction of death and when everything will be completely changed into life. The Lord is life. According to the Apostle, Christ will have access to the Father with his entire body when he will hand over the kingdom to our God and Father. As it is often said, Christ's body consists of human nature in its entirety to which he has been

united. Because of this Christ is named Lord by Paul as mediator between God and man [1Tim 2.5]. He who is in the Father and has lived with men accomplishes intercession. Christ unites all mankind to himself and to the Father through himself. As the Lord says in the Gospel, "As you, Father, are in me, and I am in you, that they may be one in us" [Jn 17.21]. This clearly shows that having united himself to us, he who is in the Father effects our union (sunapheia) with this very same Father.

The Gospel then adds, "The glory which you have given to me I have given to them" [vs. 22]. I think that Christ's own glory is meant to be the Holy Spirit which he has given to his disciples by breathing upon them, for what is scattered cannot otherwise be united unless joined together by the Holy Spirit's unity. "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" [Rom 8.9]. The Spirit is glory as Christ says of the Father: "Glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world was made" [Jn 17.5]. The Word is God who has the Father's glory and became flesh during these last days. It is necessary for the flesh to become what the Word is (that is, to become divine) by uniting itself to him; this is effected when the flesh receives that which the Word had before the world was made. This is none other than the Holy Spirit, that same Holy Spirit existing before the ages together with the Father and the Son. Hence the text says, "The glory which you have given me, I have given to them" [M.1321] in order that "the unity given through the Holy Spirit to me might be given to you through me."

Let us consider the words following those quoted above from the Gospel: "That they may be one as we are one. You in me and I in them, because I and you are one, in order that they may be perfectly one" [Jn 17 .21-23]. I there is no need for exegesis of these words which agree with what we have already explained above because the text itself clearly sets forth the teaching on unity. "In order that they may be one as we are one." It cannot be otherwise--"that all may be one as we are one"--unless the disciples, being separated from everything dividing them from each other, are united together "as we are one," that "they might be one, as we are one." How can it be that "I am in them?" For "I alone cannot be in them unless you also are in them, since both I and you are one. Thus they might be perfectly one, having been perfected in us, for we are one."

Such grace is more clearly shown by the following words: "I have loved them as you have loved me" [Jn 17.23]. If the Father loves the Son, all of us have become Christ's

body through faith in him. Thus, the Father who loves his own Son loves the Son's body just as the Son himself. We are the Son's body. Paul's words are now clear: the Son's subjection to his Father signifies that he knows our entire human nature and has become its salvation. The text to which Paul is referring might become clearer to us from his other insights. I especially recall one of his many reverent testimonies without quoting it at length. Paul says of himself that "with Christ I am crucified. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" [Gal 2.20]. If Paul no longer lives but Christ lives in him, everything which Paul does and says is referred to Christ living in him. Paul's words are spoken by Christ when he says, "Do you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me?" [2Cor 13.3]. Paul claims that the good works of the Gospel are not his; he attributes them to the grace of Christ dwelling within him. If Christ living in Paul works and speaks those things as a result of this indwelling, Paul has relinquished everything which formerly dominated him when he was a blasphemer, persecutor and behaved arrogantly. Paul looked to the true good alone, and by it made himself submissive and obedient.

Once Paul has been subjected to God, he is brought to the One who lives, speaks and effects good things. The supreme good is subjection to God. This fact which occurred in one person [Paul] will be harmoniously applied [M.1324] to every human being "when," as the Lord says, "the Gospel will be preached throughout the world" [Mk 16.15]. All who have rejected the old man with its deeds and desires have received the Lord who, of course, effects the good done by them. The highest of all good things is salvation effected in us through estrangement from evil. We are separated from evil for no other reason than for being united to God through subjection. Subjection to God then refers to Christ dwelling in us. What is beautiful is his; what is good is from him which God expresses through the prophets. Because subjection is both beautiful and good--Christ himself demonstrated this to us--the good is entirely from him who is good by nature, as the prophet says.

No one who looks at the term "subjection" as generally used spurns it. The great Paul in his wisdom knew how to use the outward appearance of words. He knew how to adapt such appearances by joining them together in his own mind to see if the common usage of words may be employed for other meanings. One such occurrence of this reads as follows: "He emptied himself" [Phil 2.3], "No one will make void my boasting" [1Cor 9.15], "faith is made void" [Rom 4.14] and "In order that the cross of

Christ may not be without effect." What use are these expressions to their author? Who can judge him saying, "I am desirous of you" [1Th 2.8]? Such words as these show a loving attitude.

From where does Paul's lack of arrogance, which is love, come? It is revealed through his statement that love does not boast [1Cor 13.4]. Strife is full of disputes and is vengeful as the term *eritheia* signifies [selfish or factious ambition]. It is clear that *erithos* [a worker in wool] is derived from the term *eritheia*, and we are accustomed to signifying diligent work with regards to wool (*eria*) by the term *eritheia*. Paul finds pleasure in such cold etymologies and by them he desires to show the sense intended by these words. Many other examples may be examined closely in which the Apostle's words are found. They do not serve the common use of speech, but Paul freely brings his own peculiar understanding to them while avoiding the common usage. Hence, another meaning of subjection is understood by Paul as opposite to the common one.

The exposition of the term "subjection" as used here does not mean the forceful, necessary subjection of enemies as is commonly meant; on the other hand, salvation is clearly interpreted by subjection. Clear proof of the former meaning is definitely made when Paul makes a twofold distinction of the term "enemy." He says that enemies are to be subjected; indeed, they are to be destroyed. The enemy to be blotted out from human nature is death whose principle is sin along with its [M.1325] domination and power. In another sense the enemies of God which are to be subjected to him attach themselves to sin after deserting God's kingdom. Paul mentions this in his Epistle to the Romans: "For if we have been enemies, we have been reconciled to God" [Rom 5.10]. Here Paul calls subjection reconciliation, one term indicating salvation by another word. As salvation is brought near to us by subjection, Paul says in another place, "Being reconciled, we shall be saved in this life" [Rom 5.10]. Paul says that such enemies are to be subjected to God and the Father; death no longer is to have authority. This is shown by Paul saying, "Death will be destroyed," a clear statement that the power of evil will be utterly removed; persons are called enemies of God by disobedience, while those who have become the Lord's friends are persuaded by Paul saying, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: 'Be reconciled to God [2Cor 6.20]."

According to the promise made in the Gospel, we are no longer slaves of the

Lord, but once reconciled, we are numbered among his friends. However, "it is necessary for him to reign until he places his enemies under his feet." We reverently take this as Christ valiantly holding sway in his power; the strong man's ability in battle will cease when all opposition to the good will be destroyed. Once the entire kingdom is gathered to himself, Christ hands it over to God and the Father who unites everything to himself. The kingdom will be handed over to the Father; all persons will yield to God [Christ] through whom we have access to the Father.

When all enemies have become God's footstool, they will receive a trace of divinity in themselves. Once death has been destroyed--if there are no persons who will die, not even death would exist--we will be subjected to him; but we should take this as some sort of servile humility. Our subjection consists of a kingdom, incorruptibility and blessedness living in us; this is Paul's meaning of being subjected to God. Christ perfects his good in us by himself and effects in us what is pleasing to him. According to our limited understanding of Paul's great wisdom which we received, we have only understood part of it. The Apostle's intent was not to expose heretical teachings which is what you would gather from the text being treated. If what was said by our inquiry has been sufficient for you, it must be attributed to God's grace. Should our inquiry appear insufficient, we will eagerly offer its completion proved that you make it known to us by writing and if through our prayers what is hidden has been manifested by the Holy Spirit.

Gospel (Lk 1.39-56)

Vs. 39: In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah,

-“in those days:” a time intended to introduce a series of events but lacks a special temporal location. Compare with vs. 5 (“in the days of Herod, king of Judea”) and vs. 24 (“after these days his wife Elizabeth conceived”).

-*with haste* (spoude): also implies diligence as in Rom 12.11: “Never flag in *zeal*, be aglow with the Spirit.” Combined with the verb “to arise,” it can indicate resolve or purpose for the journey ahead which was obviously fraught with difficulty of travel, i.e., the “hill country.”

Vs. 40: and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

A continuation of the previous verse. Many verses in this excerpt from the Gospel begin with “and” as to indicate continuous action and to show a connection of events. Note the parallel between Mary’s “arising,” going “with haste” and finally “entering” the house.

-*Entered* (eiserchomai): the preposition eis (*into*) prefixed to the verb and combined with another eis indicates seriousness of intent as well as an abiding there for an extended period of time (“three months,” vs. 56).

-*Greeted* (aspazomai): “And if you *salute* only your brethren, what more are you doing than others” [Mt 5.47]? This verb can also mean to “bid farewell.”

Vs. 41: And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit

-Note the parallel between Elizabeth’s hearing the *greeting* (aspasmos) and the babe (John the Baptist) who *leaped* (skirtao) in her womb. For two Old Testament LXX uses of this verse: 1) Gen 25.22: “The children *struggled* together within her” which is in reference to Jacob and Esau. 2) The mountains *skipped* like rams, the hills like lambs.”

-*Babe* (brephos): in the sense of a fetus or a newly born child. “Like newborn *babes*, long for the pure spiritual milk” [1 Pt 2.2].

-Immediately following this hearing/greeting, Elizabeth was *filled* (pleroo) with the Holy Spirit. This verb connotes a bringing to pass as well as perfection. Cf. 1.15: “and he will be *filled* with the Holy Spirit” in reference to the birth of John the Baptist. I.e., both unborn son and mother partook of the same fullness.

Vs. 42: and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”

A continuation from the previous verse; again, note “and” which connects all events together and brings them into a harmonious whole.

-*Exclaimed* (anaphoneo): the only use of this verb in the New Testament. For an Old Testament use (LXX), cf. 1 Chron 15.28: “So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with *shouting*.”

-*Blessed* (eulogemenos): used twice in this verse and different from makarios which is used in connection with the Beatitudes. This adjective has the root for the noun logos (*word*); it literally means, “well said.” “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has *blessed* us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.”

-*Among* (en): literally, “in.”

-*Womb*: compare with Lk 11.27: “A woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, ‘Blessed is the *womb* that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!’” Here the adjective makarios is used as opposed to eulogemenos.

Vs. 43: And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

-*Granted* (pothen): instead of a verb in English, the Greek has the equivalent of “whence.”

-The “angel of the Lord” (cf. vs. 11, Gabriel but not revealed at first) prophesied to Zechariah that his wife would give birth to a special child though not the Messiah. In the verse at hand, Elizabeth is quick to recognize that Mary is the mother of her *Lord* or Kurios and therefore has a superior position. I.e., the relationship between Elizabeth and Mary foreshadows a similar relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

Vs. 44: For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy.

-*Behold* (idou): same expression used by Mary earlier: “*Behold*, I am the handmaid of the Lord.”

-Note the intimate relationship between Mary’s *greeting* (aspasmos; cf. vs. 21)—rather, “voice” which intensifies it—and John having *leaped* (skirtao again, cf. vs. 41).

-Two interesting uses of prepositions: literally, “*into* (eis) my ears” and “leaped *for* (en, in) joy.”

Vs. 45: And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

-*Blessed* (makarios): contrast with eulogemenos noted earlier. Makarios is rather static compared with the Hebrew ‘ashry used, for example, in the opening words of the Psalter: “*Blessed* is the man...” ‘Ashry derives from the same verbal root as the relative

pronouns, “who, which, that.” It connotes a state of transition, of moving forward and not standing still.

-*Fulfillment* (teleiosis): compare with “filled” of vs. 21. This noun also means “accomplishment, “consummation.” “Now if *perfection* had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood” [Heb 7.11].

-“*From* the Lord” (para): this preposition can also mean “beside,” intimating something like “in the company”/“presence of.” It is frequently used in the Last Discourse: “For all that I have heard *from* (para) my Father I have made known to you” [Jn 15.15].

Vs. 46: And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,

-Vss. 47-55 contain what the Catholic Church calls the Magnificat, much of which is taken from 1 Sam 2.1-10. Therefore this excerpt should be kept parallel to the Magnificat. Frequent mention to this text (i.e., in Hebrew) will be noted and inserted throughout.

-*Magnifies* (megalouno): in the sense of extolling, celebrating. “None of the rest dared join them, but the people *held* them in *high honor*” [Acts 5.13]. In the verse at hand, it is not so much Mary doing this but her *soul* or *psuche* or one’s vital force which contains the seat of feelings and desires. The Hebrew for *psuche* here is *lev* or *heart*.

Vs. 47: and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

-Here we have mention of Mary’s *spirit* or *pneuma* which differs from her *psuche* of the previous verse. The Samuel text lacks an equivalent.

-*Rejoices* (agalliao): in the sense of expressing extreme joy. “And you were willing to *rejoice* for a while in his (John the Baptist) light” [Jn 5.35]. The Hebrew equivalent is *halatz*: “Let not my enemies *exult* over me” [Ps 25.2]. Such rejoicing is done “in God” or literally, *upon* (epi) God. The Samuel text reads literally, “My horn is exalted in the Lord.” The Hebrew for *Savior* is *Yeshuah*, the proper name for Jesus; the preposition *b-* is prefixed to it or “*in* my Savior.”

Vs. 48: for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;

-*Regarded* (epiblepo): connotes a sense of care or concern: “and you *pay attention* to the

one who wears the fine clothing" [Jms 2.3].

-The object of such "looking upon (epi)" is Mary's *low estate* (tapeinosis) which also can mean a type of spiritual abasement: "who will change our *lowly* body (i.e., 'the body of lowliness') to be like his glorious body" [Phil 3.21].

-*Handmaiden* (doule): to which belongs tapeinosis; doule is the female form of doulos or *slave*. "Behold, I am the *handmaid* of the Lord" [1.38].

-*Behold* (idou): as used in vs. 44 in order to introduce "all *generations*" (genea). "Look toward heaven and number the stars...So shall your *descendants* be" [Gen 15.5].

-*Call blessed* (makarizo): cf. makarios as in vs. 45. The only other New Testament reference is Jms 5.11: "Behold, we *call* those *happy* who were steadfast."

Vs. 49: for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

-Compare *mighty* (dunatos) with *great things* (megala); the former belongs to God and the latter to Mary and may be taken to represent a transference from one to the other or from the divine to the human. The action is in the past tense which is interesting to keep in mind because Mary's child Jesus is not yet born.

-*"Holy and terrible is his name"* [Ps 111.9]!

Vs. 50: And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation.

-*Mercy* (eleos): the equivalent to the Hebrew chesed, often translated as *loving kindness*. Such eleos literally is transmitted "*into* (eis) generation and generation."

-*"As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him"* [Ps 103.13].

Vs. 51: He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

-*Shown* (poieo): literally, "made."

-*"Arm:"* the agent by which divine kratos (*strength*) is imparted. Compare with dunatos and megala, vs. 49.

-*Scattered* (diaskorpizo): also as "to squander," "to waste:" "but to gather into one the children of God who are *scattered* abroad" [Jn 11.52]. Such dispersal is made more intense by the preposition dia (*through*) which indicates thoroughness.

-The object of this scattering are persons who are *proud* or huperephanos: "Clothe

yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the *proud* but gives grace to the humble'" [1 Pt 5.5]. Quotation is from Prov 3.34.

-Such pride has a specific location or origin: not simply in the *heart* (kardia) but in the *imagination* or dianoia. This term has a wide variety of meanings and applies to the faculty of understanding, feeling and desire. It also means "thought." "We all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and *mind*, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" [Eph 2.3]. The verse at hand literally reads, "in the imagination of the heart of theirs."

Vs. 52: he has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of low degree;

-*Put down* (kathaireo): in the sense of bringing to destruction or ruin. "I will *pull down* my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods" [Lk 12.18]. The object of the verb in vs. 52 is *mighty* (dunastes) in the sense of a prince or royal minister. "Who made you a *ruler* and a judge over us" [Acts 7.27]?

-*Exalted* (hupsoo): the opposite of kathaireo; here in reference to persons of *low degree* or tapeinos, the adjective related to Mary's "low estate" in vs. 48.

Vs. 53: he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.

-*Filled* (emplemi): a verb closely related vs. 41, "And Elizabeth was *filled* (pleroo) with the Holy Spirit." The object of such filling is *good things* (agathon); it can pertain to physical nourishment but has a broader meaning as being filled with divine benefits. Cf. Ps 107.9 which closely parallels the verse at hand: "For he satisfies him who is thirsty, and the hungry he fills with *good things*."

-*Sent away* (exapostello): note the two prepositions comprising this verb to emphasize the "emptiness" of the rich: ex (*from* in the sense of "out") and apo (*away from*); i.e., two "froms" to indicate complete dismissal.

Vs. 54: He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy,

-*Helped* (antilambano): the preposition anti suggests doing or taking something in return. "In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must *help* the weak" [Acts 13.25].

-The object of such reciprocal assistance is Israel as *servant* or paidos or more accurately,

“child.”

-God’s help is effected with the assistance of the recollective faculty or *remembrance* (mimneskomai). “He has *remembered* his steadfast love and faithfulness” [Ps 98.3].

This verb is used in the Hebrew sense of *zakar* (*to remember*); from it is derived the noun *zakar* (*male*) or agent for propagation of the human species.

-Such divine remembering is bound up with *mercy* or *eleos* noted vs. 50 as translation of the Hebrew *chesed* which has a deeper, more inclusive sense.

Vs. 55: as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever.”

The close of the Magnificat which ends with the beginning, that is, the divine promise to Abraham in Gen 17.7, 18.18 and 22.17. The first Genesis verse reads: “And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.”

-“Fathers” could also apply to those patriarchs existing before and after Abraham.

-*Posterity* (sperma): literally, “seed.” “And in your *posterity* shall all the families of the earth be blessed” [Acts 3.25 citing Gen 22.18].

-*Forever* (eis ton aiona): literally, “into the ages.” Note the use of *pros* (*to, towards*, in reference to “our fathers” and “into (eis) the ages.” I.e., both suggest an orientation towards the future which lacks cessation.

Vs. 56: And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

-That is, Elizabeth, after which Mary returned home, literally, “into (eis) her house.”

This concluding verse sets the stage for the birth of John the Baptist (vss. 57+). John is the herald of Jesus Christ, but in a sense, Mary’s abiding with Elizabeth during her pregnancy reverses the role: Jesus heralds the birth of John.

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