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# The Apollinarist Doctrine and Its Rejection by St. Gregory of Nyssa

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## Abstract

From the misunderstanding of the unity of the person of Christ, Apollinaris of Laodicea came to the denial of the affirmation of the harmony between the two wills of Christ and at the same time to the denial of the rational soul of Christ. Apollinaris emphasizes the disunity in the person of Christ that is necessarily born in him because of the rational soul and, through it, in the human will as well. St. Gregory of Nyssa strongly criticized the Apollinaris' doctrine. He based his argument pointing out the truth that Christ can only be called man if he consists of a rational body and soul. In his treatise *Adversum Apollinarem*, St. Gregory exegetically addresses the Christological aspects misunderstood by Apollinaris and combats them step by step. Apollinaris' support of the pre-existence of the body of Christ ruins the teaching of the Incarnation and the Trinitarian teaching. St Gregory understands the two Pauline formulas “image of God” and “image of the servant” in Philippians 2, 6-12 as two distinct natures.

## Keywords:

person of Christ, rational soul, wills of Christ, image of God, image of the servant, natures

## **I. Apollinaris' misunderstanding of the unity of Christ's person, of the harmony between His two wills, divine and human. Denial of Christ's rational soul**

In this study I present some aspects of Apollinarism and St. Gregory of Nyssa's arguments against this doctrine.

A fragment of Apollinaris has been handed down to us from Anastasius the Sinai, fragment in which he tries to argue against the teaching of two wills in Christ:

“Two rational and will-endowed beings cannot stand together, lest one should come into conflict with the other on the basis of its own will and power of work. Therefore, the Word did not take a human soul, but only the seed of Abraham”<sup>1</sup>.

According to Apollinaris, the unity of Christ does not allow the joining of two spiritual principles,

“for if every rational soul by itself is powerful, because it is moved by a will of its own corresponding to its nature, there cannot exist in one and the same subject two opposing wills, because each rational soul does what it wills - it moves itself”<sup>2</sup>.

From the particularity of the human nous in relation to the divine, it follows that the divine will and the human will are not in harmony: “The Divine moves itself, that is, in accord with itself, for it is unchanging, but the human moves itself, yet inconstant, for it is changeable”<sup>3</sup>, i.e. unstable.

Only the freedom of choice as a “possibility of sin” is enough for Apollinaris to keep himself disunited with Christ. It would endanger salvation. A lack of sin based on human freedom and carried by divine grace would not be enough for the Saviour. On the contrary, it should be principled and absolute. In the Saviour, it is attributed to the Word

<sup>1</sup> H. LIETZMANN, *Apollinarios von Laodicea und seine Schule*, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1904, fr. 2, 11-15, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> H. LIETZMANN, *Apollinarios von Laodicea und seine Schule*, fr. 150, 23-27, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> H. LIETZMANN, *Apollinarios von Laodicea und seine Schule*, fr. 151, 30, p. 247.

as “unchanged Logos” (Λόγος ἄτρεπτος) that takes the place of the “unchanged soul” (νοῦς ἄτρεπτος). “It needed an unchanging rational soul so as not to fall prey to the body because of the weakness of knowledge, but to which the body conforms without constraint”<sup>4</sup>.

“Without constraint” means without the freedom of the accepted; in the freedom that He has, the Creator cannot interfere with the freedom that he created. Thus, in Christ, it is simply replaced; the body is dependent on the leading anyway. The body is “unconstrained”, conformed to God.

In the soteriological perspective, Apollinaris finds no constitutive place for the Saviour’s human soul. Because he did not want to admit the rational soul into Christ’s human nature, Apollinaris was forced to distinguish between the soul (φύλη) and the leading part of the soul (νοῦς)<sup>5</sup>. The starting point of his doctrine lies in his conception of the change of the human soul<sup>6</sup>. Although it is hard to say how Apollinaris developed his system, it is certain that it was also prompted by his opposition to Arianism and the Antiochene school.

In addition to denying Christ’s defiance of the Father, Arian affirmed that Christ, the Son of God was one who changed from good to evil. Apollinaris could not understand how the human nature of Christ could be attributed to a rational changeable soul (νοῦς τρεπτός). His erroneous position and doctrine is exposed in St. Gregory of Nyssa’s treatise *Adversus Apollinarem* in which we also find St. Gregory’s criticism of his doctrine.

Here we find Apollinaris’ statement to Arian:

“If there was in Christ a soul with God, the development of the body is not fulfilled in him. But when the work of the body (σάρκωσις) has no place in a rational soul (νοῦς) which moves and is free, this work, that is, the breaking of sin, is done in a body which is moved by another being led by the divine soul (νοῦς). In this destruction of sin our soul takes part, moving in itself, in so far as it is bound to Christ”<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> H. LIETZMANN, *Apollinarios von Laodicea und seine Schule*, fr. 76, 222, 22–24.

<sup>5</sup> J. LENZ, *Jesus Christus nach der Lehre des hl. Gregor von Nyssa*, Trier, 1925, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> R. SEEBERG, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, Bd. 2, Leipzig, 1910, p. 163.

<sup>7</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 38, PG 45, 1209 B sq.

“He who is human and subject to the common wickedness of men cannot save the world”<sup>8</sup>. The rational soul of man (νοῦς) is changeable, capable of sin<sup>9</sup>. Christ “does not destroy the guilt of men unless he became a sinless man and abolished the dominion of death over all men and died and rose again as a man”<sup>10</sup>. In addition to the statement that we cannot be saved by a sinful man, Apollinaris emphasizes the disunity in the person of Christ which is born in Him necessarily because of the rational soul (νοῦς) and through it also due to the human will. It is changeable while the divine is unchanging. But the question is how can two spiritual lives that want opposite things co-exist in one and the same subject? Such a being is drawn by opposite wills in opposite directions<sup>11</sup>.

The freedom of will has a special significance in Apollinaris’ system. It is through it that the person reaches fulfilment. If the human nature of Christ has a rational soul (νοῦς) and thus the freedom of will that comes from it, it was a subsistent and personal substance, i.e. a person. In this case the Incarnation was nothing more than a moral union of two autonomous beings. For Apollinaris, there was also the second possibility: the human nature of Christ lost the freedom it had in the beginning, and even all men and angels who after the rational soul could be of the same nature after him lost their free will. The loss of self-determination (αὐτεξούσιον) means the destruction of the being who chooses freely. This is why Christ from the beginning had no rational soul (νοῦς) and joined in one nature the unburied body (σάρξ ἔμψυχος)<sup>12</sup>.

## II. St. Gregory of Nyssa’s rejection of the falsity of Apollinaris’ doctrine. Affirmation and defence of the unity and fullness of the divine-human person of Christ and His rational soul

St. Gregory of Nyssa strongly criticized Apollinaris’ doctrine. As the basis of his argument, he stressed the truth that Christ can be called man only if he is of body and soul. This truth is reiterated by all the Church Fathers:

<sup>8</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 51, PG 45, 1245 B.

<sup>9</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 40, PG 45, 1213 B.

<sup>10</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 51, PG 45, 1245 D sq.

<sup>11</sup> APOLLINARIS OF LAODICEA, “Adv. Jul”, in: Fr. DIEKAMP, *Doctrina Patrum de Incarnatione Verbi*, Münster 1907, p. 307.

<sup>12</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 45, PG 45, 1232 A sq.

“For he is called man who consists of a rational soul and a body. In whom these two are not understood, how can the name of man be attributed to him? For we speak only of a man’s body and his soul, so long as each of the two is considered in itself. The union of these two is man and is called man”<sup>13</sup>.

“What do we call human? Both sides or one of them? It is clear that the union of both constitutes the living being, and it is not fitting that we remain any longer on the unquestionable and known things”<sup>14</sup>.

According to St. Gregory, only the rational soul deserves the name of soul: “I call only the rational soul and the unreasonable soul a soul, for that which is without reason is animal, not human”<sup>15</sup>. The rational soul is essential<sup>16</sup>, what is most important in man<sup>17</sup>, in rank he rises above all<sup>18</sup>. If Christ “was not of one mind with man in his most important part” as Apollinaris says<sup>19</sup>, then He is of a totally different nature, He is not human, He only has the appearance of a human<sup>20</sup>. All that is told about Him is only appearance: food, sleep, miracles, crucifixion, burial and resurrection.

Since Apollinaris also addresses in his doctrine aspects that he wants to argue exegetically, St. Gregory responds by combating him step by step with a profound exegesis based on the teaching of the Church. From the many Christological aspects we have chosen the scriptural place of Philippians 2, 6-11, that St. Gregory explains thus arguing against Apollinaris’ doctrine of the identical nature of Christ’s body with His holiness which is part of the divine nature of the Word. Against the idea that the “image of a servant” of which St. Paul speaks (Philippians 2, 7), there is νοῦς or the divine πνεῦμα, as St. Gregory points out in his commentary on the hymn of Philippians 2, 7; in becoming incarnate, Christ did not clothe Himself only with the body,

<sup>13</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 2, PG 45, 1228 B.

<sup>14</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *In Christi resurrectio*, 3, PG 46, 677 A.

<sup>15</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 55, PG 45, 1257 A.

<sup>16</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 22, PG 45, 1169 B sq.

<sup>17</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 23, PG 45, 1172 C.

<sup>18</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 34, PG 45, 1197 B.

<sup>19</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 23, PG 45, 1172 A sq.

<sup>20</sup> Saint GREGORY OF NYSSA, *Adversus Apollinarem*, 23, PG 45, 1172 B.

but made His own human nature endowed with reason. The affirmation of the Incarnate Word according to the Origen's model "νοῦς ἑνσαρκος" taken up by Apollinarius cannot be admitted. Since Apollinarius claimed that his formula proves the subject identity between the pre-existent Word and Christ, St. Gregory responds by showing that Apollinarius' conception of Christ's humanity as a bodily covering of the divine νοῦς does not lead to the Word's identity with Christ, but to a timeless confusion of His divine and human nature<sup>21</sup>. The claim of the pre-existence of the body of Christ shatters the Incarnation and Trinitarian teaching. Moreover, Apollinarius also comes to deny the kenosis of Christ. Moreover, Apollinarius envisaged of a nature of the bodily Father.

### III. The rejection of the Apollinarism by St. Gregory of Nyssa in his treatise *Adversus Apollinarem*. The exegesis on Christ "the image of God" and "the image of the servant"

In his commentary on the hymn of Philippians 2, 6-11, found in the work *Adversus Apollinarem*, St. Gregory goes through all the stages of the iconomy fulfilled by Christ through His saving acts: the Incarnation, the kenosis, death and Resurrection:

«He who was in the image of God» he [Paul] says (Philippians 2, 6). He did not say that [Christ] had the image of God, as is said of a being born after the likeness of God, but that He was in the very image of God. Indeed, all that is in the Father (John 17, 10; 16, 15) is in the Son. So are eternity, immeasurability, immateriality, incorporeality, so that in all, the image of the Father's being (Hebrews 1, 3) is preserved in the Son. «Being God in image » (Philippians 2, 6), what idea of difference or distinction of equality does it imply? How could that which is equal point to things which are distinct by nature? If indeed one is of a bodily nature and another bodiless, how could two

<sup>21</sup> GREGORII NYSSENI, *Opera III/1, Adversus Apollinarium*, , éd. Fr. MÜLLER, Leiden, 1958, pp. 167-168.

things which are not like one another be considered equal? «He emptied himself», [Paul] says, «taking the form of a servant» (Philippians 2, 7). What is the image of the servant? It is surely the body. Indeed we learned nothing else from the Fathers than this. Therefore he who declares that He has put on the image of a servant (the image, that is, the body), says that it is after the divine image, but the image of a servant which He takes is different by nature. However, the phrase «He humbled Himself» makes it clear that He was not always what we saw of Him, but that He was in the fullness of the Godhead (Colossians 2, 9), equal to God, inaccessible, unapproachable, and above all, unknowable through the littleness of the human who enjoyed no appreciation, but allowed Himself to be contained by the wicked nature of the body, when He «humbled Himself» as the Apostle says, reducing the inexpressible glory of His deity to the limits of our littleness, so that what He remained great, perfect and unapproachable, while what He took was on the scale of the greatness of our nature. «In appearance», [Paul] says, «being in the likeness of a man» (Philippians 2, 7), for clearly He does not always bear the likeness of such a nature, all the more so because He is not clothed in the likeness of the flesh. How could the uncreated be imprinted with the outlines of an appearance? On the contrary, [Christ] «is not in a likeness» (Philippians 2, 7) until he takes on a configuration and puts on that configuration. This is the nature of the body. «And being found in fashion as a man» (Philippians 2, 7), for evidently He does not always bear the likeness of such a nature, the more so as He is not clothed in the form of a bodily appearance. How could the contours of an appearance be imprinted by the incorporeal? On the contrary, [Christ] «is not in a form» (Philippians 2, 7) until he takes a configuration and clothes himself with it. This is the nature of the body. «Made in the likeness of men» (Philippians 2, 7), but through the mystery of virginity, so that it might become visible that He did not submit entirely to the laws of human nature, but

in a divine way made Himself a dwelling place in the world without needing the help of marriage for the formation of His own body. He is confessed not entirely as an ordinary man, because of what is distinct in His constitution, but as a man. And so He «humbled Himself» (Philippians 2, 8), becoming man, yet without changing. For if it had been this from the beginning, in what would humility have taken place? In reality, however, the Most High «humbled Himself» by uniting Himself with the descent of our nature. Indeed, by uniting Himself with the image of the servant that He took and becoming one with it, He made His own the sufferings of the servant, and just as it comes into us because of the natural connection of the limbs to each other as when something falls on the side of an angle, the whole body is affected together with the part that suffers, because emotion spreads simultaneously throughout the whole body, so He who united Himself with our nature made His own the sufferings, as Isaiah says: «He has taken upon Himself our sorrows and has burdened Himself with our sufferings» (Isaiah 53, 4), bearing for us the mortal wound, so that we might be healed by His wounds. Not that this is the deity himself who died, but this is the man who has grown with the deity through union with it, he whose nature can receive the wound. This is done that the way that to evil may be destroyed by the same ways that go the other way. Since by the disobedience (Genesis 3) of the first man (I Corinthians 15, 45) death entered the world, because of him, by the obedience to the second man (I Corinthians 15, 47), death is banished. He made himself «obedient unto death» (Philippians 2, 8), that through obedience he might cure the error of disobedience and that through the resurrection from the dead he might destroy forever the death that came with disobedience. For the resurrection of the dead from death constitutes a total destruction of death. «Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him» (Philippians 2, 9). This is like the seal of the previous idea. It is clear that that which is perfect does not need to be highly



exalted, but the bondage is lifted up to the height, having then become what it had not been before. Indeed, united with the Lord, human nature was exalted with deity, and what is highly exalted is what is lifted out of bondage. And the image of the servant is the low one, he who has become «Christ and Lord» (Acts 2, 36) through ascension. And because the human who is in Christ was called according to human tradition by a name which is proper to him because of the unexpectedly tidings which came to the Virgin from Gabriel, and that his humanity, as it was said, was called Jesus, the divine nature cannot be defined by a name, and the two have become one by virtue of mixture, God is named from humanity. «That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow» (Philippians 2, 10) and man is above every name, which is proper to the deity who cannot be shown by any lexical meaning, that what is perfect comes into bondage, what is low receives in return high properties. Indeed, as deity is named through man, so that which together with the deity was exalted from its bondage is above every name. As the shame of the image of the servant knows the exaltation to God, Who mixed with the servant, so is the adoration of the deity who places in service the whole creation addressed to Him Who has united Himself with the deity, and so «That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father» (Philippians 2, 10 -11). Amen”<sup>22</sup>.

#### **IV. Philippians 2, 6-11 in the profound theological exegesis of St. Gregory of Nyssa: the consubstantiality of Christ with the Father and with men**

In his treatise *Adversus Apollinarem*, St. Gregory focuses on two notions μορφή τοῦ θεοῦ and ἰσότης to prove the consubstantiality of the Father

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<sup>22</sup> GREGORII NYSSENI, *Opera III/1, Adversus Apollinarium*, p. 158, 31-162.

with the Son. Concerning the place in Philippians 2, 6 St. Gregory points out that the Apostle does not say of the Lord that he had a God-like countenance (οὐκ εἶπε μορφήν ἔχων ὁμοίαν θεοῦ), but that it was in this divine image (ἐν αὐτῇ ὑπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ μορφῇ) no attribute which is not divine can be attributed to Him before the Incarnation. This excludes the consubstantiality of the body with the Word, as Apollinaris states.

St. Gregory explains the image of God (μορφή τοῦ θεοῦ) that the Son of God had before the Incarnation in the sense of the extreme union that the Son has with the Begetter and the consubstantiality shown in the unchanged attributes that are in Both. He proves this with the places in John 17, 10: “All that is Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine”, John 16, 15: “All that the Father has is Mine” and at the same time refers to the Epistle to the Hebrews 1, 3: (χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως). The connection between μορφή and χαρακτήρ shows that in St. Gregory, as in the other Fathers contemporary with him, μορφή θεοῦ is understood as an expression similar to εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, present in II Corinthians 4, 4 and Colossians 1, 15, and in Hebrews 1, 3: χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, referring to the equality of rank between the Father and the Son.

This is shown by St. Gregory in his treatise *De perfectione*:

“By the word seal (χαρακτῆρ) we mark the equality of rank (τὸ ἰσοστάσιον). Indeed one cannot conceive (...) an inferiority of the seal (τοῦ χαρακτῆρος ἐλάττωσις) in relation to the being to which it is the seal (χαρακτηριζομένην ὑπόστασιν); but when we present to the soul the greatness of being, we measure the being at the same time as the seal that appears. Therefore we say that the Lord is the image of God: we do not diminish the Lord (κατασμικρύνων) by this idea of an image (τῇ τῆς μορφῆς ἐννοίᾳ), but we show the greatness of God by this image, thanks to which we can contemplate the unlimited greatness of God, which is not lacking by reference to His image, but which does not find the more the exceeding of His seal”<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> GREGORII NYSSENI Opera, VII/1, *De perfectione*, éd. W. JAEGER, Leiden, 1952, p. 188, 21-189, 12.

In many texts St. Gregory appropriates the places of Philippians 2, 6 and Hebrews 1, 3 understanding the image as the manifestation of the Father in the Son. The consequence of this argument arising from the consubstantiality between the Father and the Son is that the image of God indicates the divine nature of the Son. In this passage, for St. Gregory, as for other Fathers, μορφή applied to the deity of Christ points not only to the divine being, but also to its manifestation. St. Gregory understands the Pauline expression ὡν ἴσα θεῷ as showing the one and the same being of the Father and the Son, or consubstantiality (πῶς δ' ἂν ἐφαρμοσθεῖν τοῖς κατὰ τὴν φύσιν παρηλλαγμένοις τὸ ἴσον)<sup>24</sup>.

This exegesis reflects the rejection of Apollinaris' interpretation of the scriptural texts in Hebrews 1, 1 and Zechariah 13, 7. In regard to these, St. Gregory evokes the dyophysitism (ὁμοούσιος) of the Father with the Son. According to St. Gregory, because Apollinaris affirms the dyophysitism of the body of Christ with the Word (cf. Fragm 32-41), he acknowledges that the Son has a bodily nature, but because the nature of God is immaterial, he claims that the Son is no longer consubstantial with the Father: ὁ μὲν σαρκώδης τὴν φύσιν, ὁ δὲ καθαρεύων ἀπὸ σαρκός. Against Apollinaris, St. Gregory uses the text in Philippians to prove the unity and the dyophysitism of the Father and the Son (πῶς ἂν τις εἰς ἴσον ἄγοι τὸ τοιοῦτον τῷ μὴ τοιούτῳ)<sup>25</sup>.

In his argument against Apollinaris, St. Gregory never uses the notion of οὐσία to explain the divine image of the Son (μορφή τοῦ θεοῦ) in relation to the Father (Philippians 2, 6) and the image of the servant (μορφή δούλου) in relation to His humanity (Philippians 2, 7). In his treatise, *Adversus Apollinarem*, St. Gregory uses the notion φύσις to qualify the divine nature of the Son and His humanity (Philippians 2, 7). This lexical inflection is provided in *Adversus Apollinarem* by the doctrinal debate. If St. Gregory proves that there is one nature (φύσις) in the intertrinitarian relationship between the Father and the Son, it is logically impossible to argue that the Son constitutes one nature (μία φύσις) with the human body, as Apollinaris claims.

<sup>24</sup> GREGORII NYSSENI Opera, III/1, *Adversus Apollinarium*, p. 159, 10-11.

<sup>25</sup> GREGORII NYSSENI Opera, III/1, *Adversus Apollinarium*, p. 159, 13.

In contrast to the dispute with Eunomius in which St. Gregory proves that the Son is dyophysite to the Father and not inferior, in the dispute with Apollonius, he shows that the body is not an integral part of a single nature (μία φύσις) of the Word, but that it is assumed during the Incarnation. “He made Himself of no reputation as a servant by taking away” (Philippians 2, 7). After defining the image of God, St. Gregory exposes the teaching on the image of the servant. In general, when he speaks of the image of the servant (δουλική μορφή), he indicates that this is the body (πάντως τὸ σῶμα) stating that the image is the body (σὰρξ δέ ἐστιν ἡ μορφή) and connecting Philippians 2,7 to the prologue to the Gospel to John (1, 14): ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο. St Gregory makes σὰρξ and σῶμα equivalent in order to define the notion of μορφή which implies the idea of visibility.

Apollinaris understands the kenosis of Christ as the union of God with the body in the manner of the human compound, thus forming one nature. Thus the incarnate God presents only one nature. According to Apollinaris, even if the phrase μία φύσις is found in the comparative sentence evoking that case of the common man, it also applies to Christ<sup>26</sup>.

By defining the image of the servant (μορφή δούλου) as σῶμα or σὰρξ, St. Gregory responds directly to the Apollinarist theory of μία φύσις in Christ. He wants to prove that the body (σὰρξ) is not of a single nature of the incarnate Word, but a nature in itself, the latter being qualified “other by nature”. This phrase shows that St. Gregory understands the two Pauline phrasings “image of God” and “image of the servant” as two distinct natures (φύσις) even if the equivalence between μορφή and φύσις is not so explicit because φύσις is used to define quality in the form φύσει.

The fact that μορφή δούλου is understood by St. Gregory as σῶμα or σὰρξ or also human φύσις confirms St. Gregory’s exegesis in other works contemporary with the treatise *Adversum Apollinarem*, such as the treatise *De deitate Filii et Spiritus sancti*, dating from the same period (383), in which he explains the humility of the Son of God in the “image of the servant” (Philippians 2, 7) as “God’s condescension in the weakness of our

<sup>26</sup> H. GRELIER, *L argumentation de Gregoire de Nysse contre Apollinaire de Laodicee*, t. 2, Lyon, 2008, p. 399.

human nature” (τοῦ ταπεινώσαντος ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῇ τοῦ δούλου μορφῇ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ἀσθενὲς τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν παραδηλοῖ συγκατάβασιν)<sup>27</sup>.

This exegesis meets several times the teaching of St. Gregory on the Incarnation of the Word in the treatise *Adversum Apollinarem*: “The Word who was in the beginning and who was with God (John 1, 1), He who in the last days became flesh communicating to the impoverished of our nature His love for mankind” (ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὢν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὢν, ὁ ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων ἡμερῶν τῇ πρὸς τὸ ταπεινὸν τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν κοινωνία σὰρξ ὑπὸ φιλανθρωπίας γενόμενος)<sup>28</sup>.

These appropriations show St. Gregory’s theological coherence on the scale of doctrinal work<sup>29</sup> in his exegesis of Philippians 2, 7, which serves as an eminent model for understanding the Incarnation.

<sup>27</sup> GREGORII NYSSENI Opera, X/2, *De deitate Filii et Spiritus sancti*, éd. E. RHEIN, Leiden, 1996, p. 128, 5-7.

<sup>28</sup> GREGORII NYSSENI Opera, III/I, *Adversus Apollinarium*, p. 151, 14-16.

<sup>29</sup> H. GRELIER, *L’argumentation de Grégoire de Nysse contre Apollinaire de Laodicee*, t. 2, p. 400.