

APOLOGETIC WORD AT HEXAIMERON TO HIS BROTHER PETER

(Excerpts from the book APOLOGETIC WORD AT HEXAIMERON of St Gregory of Nyssa)

Ro version: <http://www.hexaimeron.ro/Hexaimeron/SfGrigorie.html>



... I do not see that only fire and water are acting as contrary elements, but I believe that in nature there is a true battle of opposites as I mentioned. For as heat manifests by acting contrary to cold, like moisture to dry, so is behaving contrary to one another the land density towards rare air due of course to their proper qualities. But as I can not say that one of these contrary qualities maintain its opposite, for example the burning of heavy materials would increase the scarcity of air, but the land density would have no rarity of the air as we could say that the characteristics of other elements would feed those of air, so could anyone not say that the cold and humidity are contrary to heat and drought, through all this I do not wish to conclude that each of these elements are mutually cause one another, or that nonexistent could cause some existing. If the power of each element would have been obvious with that purpose in each, in order to destroy its contrary, then there would be neither one nor the other. But, although the common experience confirms that this power of mutual destruction is equal, however, the power of the strongest produces danger to the defeated. If I threw into the fire any material and immediately we throw water over it, we can see how the destruction occurs in both. For what dominates each one that crushes one when it surrenders to the power of the stronger, however, if both the power of one and the other one is equal, then the destruction is tried of both parts and if no one fails to fully eradicate the other, however both grind, destroying each other.

As we would not say that it's a natural thing that the wild beasts give the power to destroy each other, so we will not say either that moisture and dryness are not so different because the one would be spared by the other if the this would favor the death of the other. Wherefore the more it seems appropriate to point out that things must be understood in their true meaning to say that "everything God made was very good" and that means perfect goodness, and refers to every creature in hand, which emerges from the adding "very", who wants to say that if such emphatic way that in case of that good nothing was missing as not to be considered...

"The earth abideth forever," Scripture tells us, does not decrease but not increase, just as air is maintained within its borders, and as the heat is not diminishing. And then only water among creatures would shrink?

In addition, if we compare them with each other, we see that during the burning fire rises far above its normal size. But also those who meditate on the highest things easily conclude that the sun itself is

incomparably greater than the earth. For the shadow of the earth does not extend far into the sky because the sun is shortened because of the size of the cone-shaped light. Or, if all that is made of water and land are so small only when we compare them with the sun, whose magnitude surpasses many times, then, how much time it would need this tiny water to serve as "food" to a fire so big?

For in all creatures is sown a natural force of attraction that would not seem strange at all that some small steam and dry as dust to mix and make one with the land. If all the moisture would be as an oily nature than its vapor, so heavy they are, would turn through combustion and evaporation in the black material that you know everyone, but because the vapors are naturally very fine and very transparent when they come into sudden contact with the heat are changing the quality from wet into dry, we should not forget that in themselves vapor are an element of pure air, whose delicate structure is beyond our power of knowledge. If someone would think that we should trust more in senses than the thinking and whether he would investigate with eyes too to see those little and invisible bits, he would observe this amount of particles only when he would see them through a window crossed for some sunshine glass with sun rays, when the crowd of those particles it is seen more clearly in that air field than the other portion. For here that lots of bits that float through the air, which can only be seen by sunlight, if someone turns his eyes could see how it floats down, one after another, the crowd of those bits of vapor. And what can be seen in a certain portion of the air is a sign that is happening all over the world because such a view is repeated incessantly everywhere, because everywhere the air is full of the same bits. So if this transmission bits through the air without interruption occurs, it is clear that this movement through the air does not end, nor is lost (because the heat of the fire is not felt if over those bits come some hit or any storm), so we must believe that the material comes from those vapors, whose presence we are talking about and which being moist are attracted to heat after they were scorched and charred were no longer remain in the air, but return back again on earth.

... But let us put these things aside and better to resume the thread of thought that we've fixed it at first. We should take into account that different elements have only one attribute, which is different from others, but are manifested in different capacities, some of which do not communicate among themselves but behave antagonistic with each other, while others work together and be reconciled even with those who are hostile. Thus, on earth and in water, dry and moisture do not mix with each other, but both of them are resistant to cold, this being considered even as a means of joining them. So they do not mix with air either because the first is heavy, while the other is light, but here too the moisture reconciles so saying both. Air does not mix with fire neither whereas the heat and cold difference separates them, but both have something in common, which reconciles them: both are light. Finally, the weight of the earth do not cope with lightness, with air, instead dryness is common to both and where applicable be close together in the same flue. What can we deduce from this review? That coldness can be seen both on land and in water and air, however, are best reconciled in the water, which retains its nature, banishing from her scorn and enmity arising from drought that has to heat.

As thus, dry comes naturally: from the heat, and fire can not be said that the it occurs only through consuming other materials, so you have to say that coolness can also be related to moisture, and if in the natural state the water is moist and cold in the same time, and if the appropriation of land is also coldness, then it follows that among them dry and cold and heat and cold cannot cope together at all. And if naturally was found that the cold water brought an increase in volume when it froze, in a logical way should be said that according to their natural properties, but also to the power which with they have been endowed, the water too is hidden in earth, but the earth is plenty in the deep of waters. And if naturally: it is not really allowed that water and cold to separate completely from each other, but even if it sometimes happens that one of these properties to be absorbed by another, yet even then we cannot say that this is the natural state, but that only because of a foreign force we now see them both united together.

For once with the scattering of the moisture in the air follows the cooling of the small vapor particles in the air; just like that, in the cool kept in the depths of the earth nor the moisture has left its quality akin, i.e. the coolness, but this power of coolness stored by nature in the earth turns into a kind of seed moisture, which begets this feature seamless, but which takes care that in case of too much cold to transform water into ice. In all these things, if someone would ask us accountable wondering what's

the cause that can change the solid state of a object into a liquid one, we are not able to answer... no to this question or many others, such as how is water dissolved in the air and how does it sit down, falling slowly, she who by her nature was heavy and that change has now made it lighter. That this is really happening is confirmed to us by our senses, but to explain how they occur in nature, the mind does not help us tell it. Instead, whoever wants to verify in an experimental way this opinion we shall gladly offer as proof the cases of those who dig pits. For when you dig through dry land you don't reach to water soon, but touching the land first feel that you meet some wet ground and as you dig deeper you feel that you come closer by cooler places and now that now the lumps that you remove are wetter, and if you dig deeper you reach a little muddy water. After that, more time digging, you touch the corner of a stone and then, just where the sun's rays penetrate less, although the size of the stone gave you the impression that nothing is to be found here, just where you are you see veins in which is coming from all directions the spring of the whole fountain.

...Therefore, the discussion so far is that the water above the firmament of heaven has a different structure than the wet one, from below, because from those said before we understood that by the vanishing of humidity is not feeding the power of fire since it is proved that in case of frost heat does not increase, but is off, and on a damp place even dried objects are destroyed, not increase. Wherefore it is time to turn the discussion in another direction, wondering how is to do that only after three days all the luminaries were created and all the stars in the sky? However I noticed that for each of the wonderful things God created, according to the history of Moses, preceded the divine word who commanded and gave us to understand that teaching dogmatic mystery remains etched not only in words, but that power full of creative wisdom that those we deem "very good" proves that they were perfect and even from the outset all were there because of God's work carried out in an order and wisdom, ordained, each according to their place according to imperishable divine power.

Finishing thus creating creatures, which we can perceive with the senses, Moses showed us that this is itself the whole world when he repeated the words: "From the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth", because these words means "the whole world" and what follows now tells us the description of creation of every thing. So, in the same time with everything else was created the beginning light too, as far as the darker sides of things still stood in the way of her penetration power, but from the moment that to the creature was the signal given by God to adorn the world, from then on the power of heating and lighting of the creature shown by the smoothness and movement, it gushed everywhere. And from that moment we can say that the universe was coagulated and formed, although for now, though united, she will always be divided into as many particles as they related. For it is clear from what we see neither the power light is not sure. And yet if someone would think that in her kind the light would be only one came from everywhere, it would not be wrong because from the beginning the word of God also expresses in a single voice the light in general without adding that they were made other luminaries. However, if one would take after what is seen, it would give to understand that it is a big difference between the light power of one or other of creatures.

Besides, the great Moses too was content to mention by name only the best known, namely the "the great light" and "the little light" while all others were called with just a generic name "stars." And if we were upset by the inability of our mind, which being beset by weaknesses can not track the smoothness of the divine wisdom, let someone be not at all surprised if one would think at the poverty of the human nature, according to which even that if you cannot to avoid error, it would be fine then at least to commit something good. I say this while thinking about the three days which I think was enough for all that is created can be seen in the light. For of course there are other means maybe, even if it is more appropriate than it tells us our power of understanding, through the unit of time we can measure the time passing, and showing the possibility to distinguish also the function of light and how much quantity of fire, or in what way was the separation of light after their way, although there are endless differences between them, after the position they are placed in the natural way and by the way in which the same power of nature put them. But there had been no disorder and no trouble because of the firm order placed by the divine wisdom according to each to their properties, so that, just as the ruler to have his own place, namely at about the middle, slightly to the south, slightly to the

north, around the Milky Way or on the Zodiac line, thus fulfilling the settlement of all stars in their own place, but each star to be not just any place, but everything to be seated in it's place, each ordained by equal size and power, each remaining unmoved and steadfast as the Creator's wisdom has ordained.

... And He put just above our heads the power of sunshine for his rays should not dark us because of his too great distance, but He worried that neither by too great closeness their power to get weak and, in the same way, He took care that out there, from the celestial spheres nor the heavy and weaker body of the moon to be drawn too low and to wander too close the lands of the earth, without forgetting, however, that neither her brilliance, however faint it may be, yet to not lose the power of lightning. It is true, that because of her nature being more cumbersome, the moon leaves you a sense of fatigue, but unlike the sun light, however she is not foreign when it comes to light. Moreover, despite our inability to know the full purpose of the wisdom with which have been created all creatures, from the way they were seen in the Creator's plan, I consider that, however, some order can be drawn clearly enough to by those who know how to distinguish somehow the things.

Returning, therefore the order in which they were created beings, look what we can say: because of its mobility, the first showing to the world was the universal light, which meant the fulfillment of celestial firmament and which fixes the circular path of the fire. Trough the he separation of heavier bodies, because of their finer nature, the less heavy bodies were separated, some getting into the ground, others remained in the water: once He put standing in the down realm, the lighter and smooth world of upper beings, as not all were of the same being with them, after a passage of time, separate themselves from the public communion and gather after common properties, among which stands out and the crowd of countless stars, each having its innate natural qualities and which reach just the highest place among creatures, where they remain each in their place, no stopping ever their circular path and never changing their place. For if their ordering is unchanged, however their nature is always in motion.

After the fastest follows, in the second place, one that is closest to that speed, reaching the second circle; after it that placed on the third and fourth place, until the seventh in speed. Because the more remote is each from the upper, the slower is this in the rotation speed. All these luminaries were created on day four, but not in the sense that the light was created only then, but that only then was specified the candle power of each, while those that surpass the others in size, namely the sun and moon, whose origin has been linked since the beginning also by the creation of light, but whose final disposition was made only after three days because anything that moves, moves in time and any choice also needs some time. Therefore no without reason was described so the created world by Moses, in order that its material organization to be understood, and especially the fact that all had been ordained by the power of Creator as said: the specific difference of those seen in the world was done in an orderly and logical sequence in a given area, then by revealing the public light, now allowing to discern in a particular way the lightning power of the sun and moon.

... so I think we need to think about the ones proposed, with the only difference from this given example that what is happening there is because of the weight, since what happens on realm above the sky firmament has exactly an opposite reason. For in the first creation of the world all tend to climb up because of their easiness and fineness, after how much speed had each one, according to his natural power, in the same way all of them hurry up, that they come to differ with each other according to their greater speed.