

# SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA

Long before the establishment of Christianity in Alexandria, the city was famous for its many schools. By far, the largest school was the "*Museum*," which was founded by Ptolemy and became the most famous school in the East. In addition, there were the "*Serapeum*" and the "*Sebastion*." Each of these three schools had its own huge library<sup>1</sup>. Justo L. Gonzalez states that the *Museum's* library, whose directors were among the most remarkable scholars of the world, grew to the point where it housed 700,000 volumes, making it an arsenal of knowledge that was astounding for its time. The *Museum*, as its name proclaims, was dedicated to the Muses, and was a sort of university in which the most distinguished writers, scientists, and philosophers gathered and worked. Largely because of these institutions, Alexandria soon became famous as a rich center of knowledge<sup>2</sup>. Numerous Jewish schools were also scattered everywhere.

In other words, Alexandria, the cosmopolitan city, was chosen as a home for learning<sup>3</sup>, and a unique center of a brilliant intellectual life<sup>4</sup>, where Egyptian, Greek and Jewish cultures together with eastern mystic thoughts were nourished and gave rise to a new civilization. Philip Schaff states,

Alexandria ... was the metropolis of Egypt, the flourishing seat of commerce, of Grecian and Jewish learning, and of the greatest library of the ancient world, and was destined to become one of the great centers of Christianity, the rival of Antioch and Rome. There the religious life of Palestine and the intellectual culture of Greece commingled and prepared the way for the first school of theology

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<sup>1</sup>C. Bigg: *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, Oxford, 1913, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez: *A History of Christian Thought*, Nashville, 1970, p. 186-7.

<sup>3</sup>H. M. Gwatkin: *Early Church History*, London 1909, vol. 2, p.155.

<sup>4</sup>J. Lebreton : *Hist. of the Primitive Church*, London 1949, vol. 3, p. 731.

Joseph Wilson Trigg says, [*Alexandria was thus easily the greatest intellectual center of the Roman Empire when Origen lived there. We have Alexandria to thank for Origen's compelling intellectual drive and his astonishingly wide interests.*] *Origen*, SCM Press, 1985, p. 7.

which aimed at a philosophic comprehension and vindication of the truths of revelation<sup>1</sup>.

In such an environment, there was no alternative but to establish a Christian Institution<sup>2</sup> to enable the church to face the battle which was waged by these powerful schools.

It is highly probable that there were well-educated Christians in Alexandria in apostolic times. In the Acts of the Apostles (18:24 ff.), St. Luke tells of Apollos who was learned a Jew of Alexandria and mighty in the scriptures; he may well have learnt there the knowledge of Jesus that he possessed before he met Aquilla and Priscilla.

## **THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

St. Jerome records that the Christian School of Alexandria was founded by St. Mark himself<sup>5</sup>. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to establish it to teach Christianity, as this was the only way to give the new religion a solid foundation in the city<sup>3</sup>.

The School became the oldest center for sacred sciences in the history of Christianity<sup>4</sup>. In it, the first system of Christian theology was formed and the allegorical method of biblical exegesis was devised. In this context, Dom. D. Rees states, "The most renowned intellectual institution in the early Christian world was undoubtedly the Catechetical School (*Didascaleion*) of Alexandria, and its primary concern was the study of the Bible, giving its name to an influential tradition of scriptural interpretation. The preoccupation of this school of exegesis was to discover everywhere the spiritual sense underlying the written word of the Scripture<sup>5</sup>."

## **ITS DEVELOPMENT**

The Christian School started as a Catechetical School, where candidates were admitted to learn the Christian faith and some

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<sup>1</sup>*Philip Schaff: History of the Christian Church, vol. 2, p. 352.*

<sup>2</sup>*De Viris Illustribus 36.*

<sup>3</sup>*Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate: St. Mark & the Coptic Church, 1968, p 61.*

<sup>4</sup>*Quasten: Patrology, vol. 2.*

<sup>5</sup>*Nelson : A New Catholic Comm. on the Holy Scripture, 1969, p. 15.*

Biblical studies to qualify for baptism. Admittance was open to all people regardless of culture, age or background.

By the second century it became quite influential on church life as can be seen from the following:

1- It was able to satisfy the thirst of the Alexandrian Christians for religious knowledge, encourage higher studies and create research work in a variety of fields.

2- It gave birth to numerous spiritual and well-known church leaders along the years. Many of them deserving to sit on the throne of St. Mark.

3- Through its missionary zeal, it was able to win many souls to Christianity from Egypt and abroad.

4- In a true ecumenical spirit, it attracted students from other nations, many of whom became leaders and bishops in their own churches.

5- It established a common awareness of the importance of education as a basic element in religious structure.

6- It offered the world the first systematic theological studies.

7- It used philosophy as a weapon in dealing with pagan philosophers, and thus beating them by their own game<sup>1</sup>.

## **ITS PROGRAM**

1. It would have been a grave error to have confined the School's activities to theology<sup>2</sup>. Its teaching was encyclopaedic; first presenting the whole series of profane sciences, and then rising to moral and religious philosophy, and finally to Christian theology, as set forth in the form of commentaries on the sacred books. This encyclopaedic conception of teaching was an Alexandrian tradition, for it was also found in Alexandrian pagan and Jewish schools.

2. From St. Clement's trilogy, consisting of his chief three works: *Protrepticus (An Exhortation to the Heathen)*, *Pedagogus (the Tutor)*, and *Stromata (Miscellanies)*, which broadly outlined the School's program at his time, we may conclude that three courses were available:

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas: *Dict. of the Christian Churches*, p.26;

<sup>2</sup>Atiya: *Hist. of Eastern Church*, p. 33; Mourad Kamel: *Coptic Church*, p. 36.

- a. A special course for non-Christians, which introduced candidates to principles of Christianity.
  - b. A course on Christian morals.
  - c. An advanced course on divine wisdom and sufficient knowledge for the spiritual Christian.
3. Worship went side by side with study in the School<sup>1</sup>. Teachers and their students practiced prayer, fasting and diverse ways of asceticism. In purity and integrity their lives were exemplary. Celibacy was a recommended ideal, and was observed by many. In addition to continence in food and drink, they were also continent in earthly possessions<sup>2</sup>.

### **ITS DEANS**

A quick glimpse of the names which headed the Christian School of Alexandria provides self-evidence of the history of the school and its rank among similar institutions. Among these are Athenagoras, Pantaenus, Clement, Origen, Heraclas, Alexander, Dionysius, Theognostes, Peter, Macarius, Didymus the Blind, as well as Athanasius the Apostolic, Cyril of Alexandria, Dioscorus etc.

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<sup>1</sup>*J. Lebreton, p. 732.*

<sup>2</sup>*Coptic Patriarchate: St. Mark, p.63*

# THE DEANS OF THE SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA

## 1. ATHENAGORAS THE APOLOGIST

We don't know much about his life. He is a philosopher holding an academic position in the *Museum* at Alexandria, and is regarded as a leader in paganism. He was attracted to search in Christianity for mistakes and corruption just as other Platonic philosophers.

He was anxious to write against Christianity. He read the Holy Scriptures in order to aim his shafts of criticism more accurately, but he was so powerfully seized by the Holy Spirit that he became a defender of the faith he was attacking. Not only was he converted to Christianity (c. 176), but he also became one of the most famous deans of the Christian Theological School<sup>1</sup>.

### **HIS PLEA (Embassy, Presbeia, or Legatio)**

In c. 177 A.D Athenagoras wrote a plea (37 Chs.) on behalf of Christianity, addressed to the emperor and his co-ruler son. The purpose was to show the falsity and absurdity of the calumnies against Christians and ends in a calm entreaty for just judgment. He proved that Christian worship and teachings were more reasonable and moral than those of their accusers. He appealed to Greek philosophers and poets, in support of his claims.

### **ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**

This treatise (25 chs) is the first attempt ever made a Christian writer to prove this dogma by means of philosophical arguments and not by revelation and the biblical texts alone<sup>2</sup>. It is probably the best early Christian treatise on the subject<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> William Scodel : *Athenagoras*, Oxford 1972, p IX.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Gregorius: *The Coptic Church* (paperback) p 4.

<sup>3</sup> Altaner: *Patrology*, p 130.

In his work he also refutes all the philosophical arguments raised by the scholars of his day against this dogma.

He states that the possibility of the resurrection is proved by God's omnipotence (1-10). It is necessary for the following reasons:

1- Because man as a rational, is destined for eternal survival (11-17).

2- Because of the necessity of a retribution in the next world in which the body, too, must share (18-23).

3- Because man is destined to eternal bliss, which he found on earth (24. 25)

## **2. ST. PANTAENUS THE PHILOSOPHER**

Pantaenus was one of the greatest deans of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, so much that the historian Eusebius believed that he was its first head.

St. Clement of Alexandria spoke of him as the greatest and most perfect teacher, although he knew many teachers but found solace in him alone. He described his meeting with him in these terms, "It was the last in relation to the philosophers but the first in its effects... He was indeed like the Sicilian bee and, having feasted on the flowers of the field in the prophets and the Apostles, he deposited in the souls of his hearers an incorruptible treasure of knowledge<sup>1</sup>".

### **PANTAENUS AND PHILOSOPHY**

Pantaenus was a well-known Stoic, he embraced Christianity at the hands of Athenagoras. In 181 A.D he succeeded his teacher as dean of the Theological (Catechetical) School. To him was attributed the introduction of philosophy and science into the School to gain the heretics and educated pagans. Origen gives testimony by saying that in studying the Greek philosophy he was imitating Panteanus who gained many educated people through his philosophical knowledge. This attitude was introduced by Pantaenus, developed by his disciple St. Clement of Alexandria and finally progressed by Origen

### **PANTAENUS AND THE COPTIC ALPHABET**

Apart from being a great teacher, he is credited as the one who introduced the Coptic Alphabet, by using the Greek letters added to seven letters from the ancient Demotic letters. Thus, the Holy Bible was translated to the Coptic language under his guidance. Scholars give a special interest to this translation being on an equal footing with the original Greek text<sup>2</sup>.

All our religious literature was translated into this language as the last phase in the evolution of the ancient Egyptian, and the Coptic writers began to use it instead of Greek.

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<sup>1</sup> *St. Clement of Alexandria : Strom. 1: 11: 2.*

<sup>2</sup> *St. Mark & The Coptic Church, p. 67.*

## **PANTAENUS AS A PREACHER**

The School of Alexandria was not merely a scholarly religious institution, but it was an inseparable part of the church. Its leaders were spiritual churchmen. They devoted themselves to studying and teaching the Holy Scripture and the Christian doctrines, and offering themselves to their disciples as an example of ascetic life as witnesses who preached the Gospel and sought the salvation of the world.

Pantaenus was not only a teacher, but also "a helper to many people" closely identified with a flock, who called him, "Our Pantaenus."

In 190 A.D Pope Demetrius selected him for the Christian mission to preach in India leaving the School under the guidance of his disciple, and follower Clement of Alexandria. He also preached in Ethiopia, Arabia and Yemen<sup>1</sup>.

In his journey he brought the Gospel of St. Matthew written in his own hand in Hebrew, brought by Bartholomew the Apostle<sup>2</sup>.

## **HIS WRITINGS**

Pantaenus explained all the books of the Holy Writ, from Genesis to Revelation, so that his contemporaries called him, "the Explicant of the Word of God." Unfortunately nothing remained of his writings except the few excerpts mentioned in St. Clement's books.

## **HIS BIRTHPLACE**

Finally we have to mention that Pantaenus was an Alexandrian native<sup>3</sup>. The fifth-century historian Philip of Side says that he came from Athens, but this was probably just a guess because of his philosophical interests. Some Scholars assumed that he came from Sicily, for his disciple St. Clement called him "the Sicilian bee," but this does not follow since Sicilian honey is still worldfamed, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Anba Isidors: Al- Kharida El-Naphisa Fi Tarikh El-Kanisah, vol. 1, 1964, p. 133-4 (in Arabic).*

<sup>2</sup> *Tolinton: Clement of Alexandria, London, 1914, vol. 1, p 14.*

<sup>3</sup> *Murad Kamel, p. 37.*



it may be merely a tribute to the sweetness and nourishment derived from his teaching<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *John Ferguson: Clement of Alexandria, N.Y. 1974, p.14.*

### 3. ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

Titus Flavius Clement was the father of Christian philosophy of Alexandria<sup>1</sup>, and was versed in the Holy Scripture. He was born around the year 150 A.D, and was of pagan parents. Concerning his birth-place, there were already two traditions in the time of St. Epiphanius<sup>2</sup> (the fourth century), giving Athens or Alexandria. The second, arose from his long stay in that city, while the first agrees better with his book "*Stromata*" (1:11).

Nothing is known about the date, circumstances and the motives of his conversion, but it was known that he made extensive travels to Southern Italy, Syria, and Palestine. His purpose was to seek instructions from the most famous Christian teachers. He was searching unceasingly for God. At the end of his journey he reached Alexandria where Pantaenus' lectures had such attraction to him that he settled there and made this city his second home<sup>3</sup>.

Of his teacher Pantaenus he stated:

[When I came upon the last (teacher), he was the first in power, having tracked him out concealed in Egypt, I found rest. He, the true, the Sicilian bee gathering the spoil of the flowers of the prophetic and apostolic meadow, engendered in the souls of hearers a deathless element of knowledge] ANF

He became the disciple, and assistant of St. Pantaenus. He was ordained a priest in Alexandria, discharged his catechetical duties with great distinction and succeeded St. Pantaenus as head of the School before 190 A.D. Among his disciples were Origen and Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem.

In the time of severe persecution by Septimus Severus about 202 A.D, he was forced to leave Alexandria to take refuge (probably in Palestine and Syria). In 215 A.D he died without seeing Egypt again.

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<sup>1</sup> Schaff: The History of Christian Church, vol. 2, p. 782.

<sup>2</sup> Adv. Haer. 32:6.

<sup>3</sup> Quasten: Patrology, vol. 2, p. 5.

Eusebius describes him as "practised in scripture"<sup>1</sup>; St. Cyril of Alexandria describes him as "fond of learning" and "exceptionally expert in Greek History"<sup>2</sup>; St. Jerome as producing "notable volume full of learning and eloquence, using both Scripture and secular literature"<sup>3</sup>, and Socrates as "full of all wisdom"<sup>4</sup>.

Ferguson states, "Clement was religious-minded. He was seeking God. But God had to satisfy him religiously, intellectually and morally. He found that the God of the Christian could do so"<sup>5</sup>.

## **ST. CLEMENT'S VIEW OF PHILOSOPHY**

I have already mentioned to St. Clement's view of philosophy when I speak of the outlines of the Alexandrian theology.

St. Clement was the first Christian writer who brought Christian doctrine face to face with the ideas and achievement of the time. He believed that the very constitution of the Church and Holy Scriptures was not incompatible with Greek philosophy. He believed that there is no enmity between Christianity and philosophy. For, in his estimation, philosophy was not the work of darkness, but in each of its forms a ray of light coming from Logos. The aim of the philosophy of all schools was also the aim of Christianity, i.e. a nobler life. The difference was this: while the ancient philosophers had been unable to get more of the glimpses of the truth, it was left to Christianity to make known in Christ the perfect truth<sup>6</sup>.

In this effect he wrote: [Philosophers are children until they have been made men by Christ<sup>7</sup>.]

Philosophy - in his point of view - has two aspects, one of them is a gift of God which He bestowed to philosophers to prepare Greeks (pagans) to accept the Christian truth; and the other is human,

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius: H.E. 5:11.

<sup>2</sup> In Jul. 7:231; 6:205.

<sup>3</sup> Vir Illus.38.

<sup>4</sup> Socrates: H.E. 2 : 35.

<sup>5</sup> Ferguson: Clement of Alexandria, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> . W. Fairweather: Origen and Greek Patristic Theology, Edinburgh 1901, p15.

<sup>7</sup> cf. Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty: The Early Fathers of the School of Alexandria. p. 72-6. (in Arabic).

which men spoiled by their own evils. For this reason, at one moment St. Clement explains that Plato plagiarised Moses and the Prophets without making proper acknowledgments; moreover that Greek philosophy, like the Law of Moses according to St. Paul, was given as a tutor to bring the Greeks to Christ and as a restraint on sin<sup>1</sup>.

St. Clement knew the world both in its Paganistic and its Christian aspects. The Greek classics were as familiar to him as the Christian Scripture. He was equally at home with Greek Philosophy and the Pauline theology. Thus, he believed that the church learning, but rather that she can Christianize the pagan world through its education and culture!

In this point St. Clement is considered as the precursor and forerunner of Origen, without whom Origen, as we know him, could not have been<sup>2</sup>.

### **ST. CLEMENT'S VIEW OF GNOSIS "knowledge"**

We have seen that before St. Clement, the word "*gnostic*" was identified as a heretic, for throughout the first two centuries a heresy appeared under the title "gnostics" in various forms. Some gnostics had pagan attitudes, others Jewish and others Christian. One of their fundamental claims was that the soul can achieve the Supreme God through knowledge (*gnosis*) and not through faith. St. Clement did not attack "gnosis" but revealed the supreme Christian *gnosis*. According to him, the word "*gnostic*" does supreme Christian *gnosis*. According to him, the word "*gnostic*" does not refer to a heretic but to a spiritual believer, who accepts *gnosis* as a divine gift. He states, "*Here are the notes that characterise our gnostic: first, contemplation; then the fulfilment of the precepts; finally the instruction of good men. When these qualities are encountered in a man, he is a perfect gnostic. But if one of them is missing, then his gnostic is crippled*<sup>3</sup>".

Walter Volker has well brought out that, while St. Clement's *gnosis* is animated by basic concern for regulating one's life, it is

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Chadwick : The Early Church, 1969, p96.

<sup>2</sup> W. Fairweather , p.13.

<sup>3</sup> Strom. 2 : 10 : 46.

above all a knowledge of the Scriptures in which everything is illuminated through Christ (the Logos), in the light of the tradition of the Church<sup>1</sup>.

Here are some of his essential texts concerning gnosis:

Gnosis is the principle and author of every action conforming to the Logos<sup>2</sup>.

The grace of gnosis comes from the Father through the Son<sup>3</sup>.

Baptism makes it possible for us, by making God known to us from the fact that the eyes of our soul are purified<sup>4</sup>.

Christ gives us gnosis through reading Scriptures in Tradition<sup>5</sup>.

The Gnostic is called to know God (ginoskein) or epignonai<sup>6</sup>; to see God<sup>7</sup> and to possess Him<sup>8</sup>.

It is to the extent that the Gnostic attains this state that becomes the equal of the angels<sup>9</sup>.

Gnosis becomes firmly founded through charity<sup>10</sup>, and charity is perfected by gnosis<sup>11</sup>.

God is love and He is Knowable (gnostos) to those who love Him... We must enter into His intimacy by the divine "agape" so that we can contemplate the like by the like<sup>12</sup>.

Those who know (the Son), He calls sons gods<sup>13</sup>. The Logos of God was made man so that you might learn how man can become god<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Walther Volker: *Der wahre Gnostiker nach Clemens Alexandrinus*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1952; Louis Bouyer: *The Spirituality of the N.T. & The Fathers*, 1960, p 265f;

<sup>2</sup> *Strom* 6: 69: 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 5: 71: 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Paed* 1: 28: 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Strom* 7: 103: 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* 2: 47: 4; 7: 47: 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* 7: 68: 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Prot.* 106: 3: 113: 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Strom.* 7: 57: 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Strom* 6: 9: 78.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid* 7: 59: 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid* 5: 1: 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* 6: 16: 146.

## HIS WRITINGS

The chief work of St. Clement is the trilogy, which consists of:

- 1 - The Exhortation of the Greeks (*Protrepticus*).
- 2 - The Tutor (*Paedagogus*).
- 3 - The *Stromata*, Carpets or Miscellaneous studies.

The trilogy, in fact, gives reliable information regarding his theological system. He believes that God's plan for our salvation takes three steps; first, the Word of God, or the Logos invites mankind to abandon paganism through the Faith, then reforms their lives by moral precepts. Finally He elevates those who have undergone this moral purification to the perfect knowledge of divine things, which he calls "Gnosis" (Knowledge). In other words the work of Christ is considered an invitation to abandon idolatry, redemption from sin and finally redemption from error which left mankind blind and helpless.

This divine program from our salvation had its reflection on the Alexandrian School at the time of St. Clement. The school concentrated its program on the same three steps, (conversion of pagans to Christianity, practising the moral precepts, instructing Christian to attain perfect knowledge of doctrine).

### 1) THE EXHORTATION TO THE GREEKS (HEATHEN) (*Protrepticus*):

This treatise stands in the tradition of apologetic writing, with a vehement note criticising the superstition, crudity and eroticism of pagan cults and myths, and observing that the great philosophers, despite their realisation of the corruption of paganism, had failed to break with it<sup>2</sup>.

It was probably written about 190 A.D. It is a warm exhortation, addressed to the pagans, aiming at their conversion by listening to the Logos, who is called "*Protrepticus*," i.e. the Converter, for He is not only the sole Master who invites us to

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<sup>1</sup> *Prot. 11.*

<sup>2</sup> H. Chadwick: *The Early Church*, 1969, p. 94.

abandon paganism, but also through Him alone we seek total conversion.

[If the Sun did not exist, night would be everywhere, in spite of the other stars. Similarly, if we did not know the Logos and He did not enlighten us, we should be no better than chickens fattened in darkness and destined for the spit.

Let us receive the Light, in order to receive God ... <sup>1</sup>]

[What then is the address I give you ?

I urge you to be saved.

This Christ desires.

In One word, He freely bestows life to you<sup>2</sup>.]

The purpose of this work is to induce the pagans to accept the only true religion, the teaching of the Logos, who after being announced by the prophets, has appeared as Christ.

The immoralities of the Greek mythology, the prostitution of Greek art, and the vagaries of the philosophers, were unsparingly set forth with an extraordinary amount of direct quotation, often of Greek classics now lost. Yet these philosophers, St. Clement went on to say, sometimes did find the truth in part and spoke by divine inspiration, Plato, Socrates, and Pythagoras. This truth however is mixed with error and must be refined. It contrasted the purity and mobility of the teachings of the prophets and of Christ. The result was taken to be conversion.

He assures that the Logos is not hidden from anyone, for He is the general light who shines now on all the world, which is no longer in darkness, therefore let all hurry to their salvation and renewal (ch. 9).

At the end of this work St. Clement defines it as follows:

[What then is the address I give you?

I urge you to be saved.

This Christ desires.

In one word, He freely bestows life on you.

And who is He?

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<sup>1</sup> Prot. 11:113:3, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 11:117:3.

Briefly learn, the Word of incorruption that generates man by bringing him back to the truth - the goad that urges to salvation - He who expels destruction and pursues death - He who builds up the temple of God in men that He may cause God to take up His abode in men. <sup>1]</sup>

Eusebius states that it was suitable for Clement to declare the foolishness of paganism, for he passed through it and escaped from its plague.

## 2. THE TUTOR (*Paedagogus*)

In this work St. Clement calls for enjoining the Christian life under the guidance of its Teacher and Instructor (Christ).

This work presents the continuation of the "Exhortation," a practical instruction dealing with the conduct of social and personal life of those who followed the advice given in his first treatise and accepted the Christian faith.

Its aim is to teach those who are converted to Christianity to practise the new life and to be in the likeness of Christ. It reveals the personality of *the Paedagogus*.

[Who is the Tutor?

He is the Son of God, the Immaculate Image of the Father, who became close to us through His human form.

He is without sin, the ideal Model whom we must strive to resemble. <sup>2]</sup>

It consists of many moral commandments, but its aim is to be in **the likeness of Christ**, being children of God, who must be holy and heavenly citizens. He asks us to complete in our souls the beauty of the Church, as we are young children with a good mother (the church).

[Being baptized, we are illuminated;  
illuminated we become sons;  
being made sons, we are made perfect;  
being made perfect, we are made immortal. <sup>3]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Protrept. 11, 117, 3-4, ANF

<sup>2</sup> Paed. 1:2:2:1,2.

<sup>3</sup> Paed. 1,6,26,1.



The work consists of three books:

The first speaks of the Tutor who educates all our life, forgives our sins (ch. 1), reveals His great mercies (ch. 2), teaches women as well as men (chs. 3,4). Finally it explains the methods of education and its basis (chs. 7-13).

[His aim is to improve the soul, not to teach, and to train it up to a virtuous, not to an intellectual life. <sup>1</sup>]

St. Clement states that [Pedagogy is a training of children. <sup>2</sup>]

The second book deals with many practical questions for the newly converted. He shows how the Christian is to dress (including jewellery and cosmetics), walk, talk, look, even laugh, also a Christians attitude towards amusements and public spectacles.

The third book deals with the elements of the real beauty, and concluded it by explaining the aim of these moral commandments.

### **3. THE MISCELLANIES (STROMATA)**

He also calls it "Carpets," the title which was used by many philosophers at that time.

J. Quasten says: [At the end of the introduction to his Tutor Clement remarks:

Eagerly desiring then to perfect us by a gradation conducive to salvation, suited for efficacious discipline, a beautiful arrangement is observed by the all-benignant Word who first exhorts, then trains, and finally teaches<sup>3</sup>.

From these words it appears that Clement intended to compose as the third part of his trilogy a volume entitled the *Teacher...*

Thus he abandoned his plan and chose the literary form of the Stromata or "Carpets," which was more suited to his genius, allowing him, as it did, to bring in splendid and extensive discussions of details in a light, entertaining style. The name, *Carpets*, is similar to others used at the time, like *The Meadow*, *The Banquets*, *The Honeycomb*. Such titles indicated a genre favoured by philosophers of the day, in

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<sup>1</sup> Paed. I, 1,1,4.

<sup>2</sup> Paed. 1,5,12,1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 1,1,3,3 ANF.

which they could discuss most varied questions without strict order or plan and pass from one problem to another without systematic treatment, the different topics being woven together like colours in a carpet.]

It consists of 8 books, in its rough copy, therefore the topics are not well-ordered. He himself says that this work looks like a field full of all kinds of plants, the person who seeks will find what he desires. It has been well described as "a heterogeneous mixture of science, philosophy, poetry and theology," controlled by the conviction that Christianity can satisfy man's highest intellectual yearnings. It aims at presenting a scientific account of the revealed truths of Christianity.

In this work he attacked the Gnostic heretics, for they place a wide gulf between God and the world and a narrow gulf between God and the soul.

The work consists of eight books. In the first seven books he compiled numerous treatises of varied character somewhat difficult to construe. He Himself says that a book of this kind is like a field full of all sorts of plants; a man who is diligent, can find there, what he is seeking for but he must look for it (6:2:4 -8). The mysteries of knowledge cannot be made too plain to readers who are unfit for it (5:8,9).

His discussion are most interesting as they make known to us the master of the School of Alexandria and also the Christians who were around him. E.de Faye says that "this work is perhaps the most important of all Christian writings of the second and third centuries, and at the same time there is not one that is more difficult."

The contents of the 8 books are as follows:

Book 1: Philosophy is a divine gift, but he fears from using it so much, looking to the philosophers as children if they are compared with the believers.

Book 2: The nature of faith by which man became in the likeness of God.

Book 3: The Christian marriage.

Book 4: The true gnostic (the spiritual Christian) who has knowledge in his conduct.

Book 5: Faith and hope, and the hidden education.

Book 6: A comparison between the Christian philosophy which attains the glory of the gospel, acknowledges mysteries, and passionlessness, and the Greek philosophy which has a very superficial knowledge, although it is a divine gift.

Book 7: The Christian gnosis alone is the true worshipper and the real philosopher, who grows up to become in the likeness of God. The pagans made their gods on their likeness. The foolishness of heretics.

Book 8: This book is missing. The eighth book does not appear to be a continuation of the seventh but a collection of sketches and studies used in other sections of the work.

It seems therefore that they were not intended for publication, but rather that they were issued after his death against his intention.

### **WHO IS THE RICH MAN THAT IS SAVED ? (*Quis dives salvetur ?*)**

A delightful tract or sermon on Mark 10:17-31, greatly appreciated in antiquity. Some rich Alexandrian merchants were in despair for they thought that richness makes salvation impossible; therefore, St. Clement show that wealth was not in itself evil, for sin, but not wealth, depraved man from salvation. Wealth is a divine gift, we can use it for our benefit and for other's advantage, if we are not enslaved to it. The rich men support the needy!

[Let no man destroy wealth, rather than the passions of the soul, which are incompatible with the better use of wealth.

So that becoming virtuous and good, he may be able to make a good use of these riches.

The renunciation, then, and selling of all possessions, is to be understood as spoken of the passions of the soul.

I would then say this.

Since some things are within and some without the soul, and if the soul makes a good use of them, they also are reputed good, but if a bad, bad; - whether does He who commands us to alienate our possessions repudiate those things, after the removal of which the passions still remain, or those rather, on the removal of which wealth even becomes beneficial?

If therefore he who casts away worldly wealth can still be rich in the passions, even though the material (for their gratification) is absent, - for the disposition produces its own effects, and strangles

the reason, and presses it down and inflames it with its inbred lusts,-it is then of no advantage to him to be poor in purse while he is rich in passions. For it is not what ought to be cast away that he has deprived himself of what is serviceable, but set on fire the innate fuel of evil through want of the external means (of gratification). <sup>1]</sup>

At the end St. Clement tells the story of St. John and the young who had fallen among the robbers, to prove that even the greatest sinner can be saved if he just repents.

## **OTHER WORKS**

1. **Outlines (*Hypotyposes*):** This work is lost. According to Eusebius<sup>2</sup> it consists of eight books, containing allegorical interpretations of some verses from the Old Testament.

2. On the Passover.

Eusebius<sup>3</sup> states that he wrote this book at the request of the contemporarists to record the traditions which he had heard from the early fathers, for the benefit of the future generations.

3. On Fasting.

4. On evil-speaking.

5. **On Patience:** A discourse to the newly baptized.

6. **Against the Judaizers:** On the rules of the Church addressed to Alexander of Jerusalem.

7. **On Providence** ( 2 books ).

8. On the Prophet Amos.

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<sup>1</sup> chs. 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius: H. E. 6:13:2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 6:13:9.

# HIS THEOLOGY AND THOUGHTS

We already spoke about his view of philosophy in its relation to faith, and of *gnosis* (knowledge).

1. Concerning **philosophy** J. Quasten says: [Thus Clement goes far beyond Justin Martyr, who speaks of the seeds of the Logos to be found in the philosophy of the Greeks. He compares it to the Old Testament in so far as it trained mankind for the coming of Christ. On the other hand, Clement is anxious to stress the fact that philosophy can never take the place of divine revelation. It can only prepare for the acceptance of the faith. Thus, in the second book, he defends faith against the philosophers.]

2. His theology concentrates on the **Christian education**. He assures that the Logos is the educator who practises his educational work throughout the history of mankind. He worked through the prophets, and the philosophers, until finally He descended to our world, to renew it.

He not only offers commandments but has the power to renew the life of man in its wholeness. He educates man to be able to discover the truth in Jesus Christ, and create a zeal and desire to know and love truth.

The truth that is revealed in Christ is not theoretical nor philosophical ideas, but a power to practise goodness, virtue, and to love.

The Church is the place where Christ teaches and educates His believers.

3. Christ's saving work

J.N.D. Kelly says:

[In expounding Christ's saving work Clement carries on the tradition we have already studied... Thus he speaks<sup>1</sup> of Christ's laying down his life as a ransom (λύτρον) on our behalf, redeeming us by His blood, offering Himself as a sacrifice, conquering the Devil, and interceding for us with the Father. These are, however, conventional phrases as used by him, and this is not the aspect of Christ's

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<sup>1</sup> Quis div, 37:4; Paed. 1:5:23; 1:11:97; 3:12:98; Protr. 11:111; 12:120.

achievement which makes the chief appeal to him. His most frequent and characteristic thought is that Christ is the teacher Who endows men with true knowledge, leading them to a love exempt from desires and a righteousness whose prime fruit is contemplation. He is their guide at the different levels of life, “instructing the gnostic by mysteries, the believer by good hopes, and the hard-hearted by corrective chastisement<sup>1</sup>.” It is as teacher that He is “the all-healing physician of mankind<sup>2</sup>,” Who bestows immortality as well as knowledge<sup>3</sup>. “God’s will,” he remarks<sup>4</sup>, “is the knowledge of God, and this is participation in immortality.” “So man is deified: “the Word... became man so that you might learn from man how man may become God<sup>5</sup>.” As God Christ forgives us our sins, while the function of His humanity is to serve as a model so as to prevent us from sinning further<sup>6</sup>.] <sup>7</sup>.

3. The **Holy Scripture** is the voice of God who works for man's goodness. It also, as interpreted by the Church, is the source of Christian teaching<sup>8</sup>. St. Clement loved the Holy Scriptures, especially the book of Psalms, Proverbs, Wisdom, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the sermon on the mount, Gospel of St. John, etc.

St. Clement blamed the mistakes of heretics on their habit of “resisting the divine tradition<sup>9</sup>,” by which he meant their incorrect interpretation of Scripture; the true interpretation, he believed, was an apostolic and ecclesiastical inheritance<sup>10</sup>. The heretics quoted and warped the meaning of some verses, so as to render them fruitless.

He used the allegorical interpretation of the Bible which hides the truth and at the same time reveals it. It hides the truth from the

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<sup>1</sup> Strom. 7:2:6.

<sup>2</sup> Paed. 1:2:6.

<sup>3</sup> Protr. 12:120:3.

<sup>4</sup> Strom. 4:6:27.

<sup>5</sup> Protr. 1:8:4.

<sup>6</sup> Paed. 1:3:7.

<sup>7</sup> J.N.D. Kelly: Early Christian Doctrines, 1977, p. 183-4.

<sup>8</sup> Stromata 7:16:39.

<sup>9</sup> Stromata 7:16:103.

<sup>10</sup> Kelly, p. 47.

ignorant, whose eyes are blinded by sin and pride, hence they are prevented from knowledge of the truth. At the same time it always reveals what is new to the renewed eyes of the believers.

He is considered as the first Christian theologian who used the allegorical interpretation, giving a cause of using it in a practical way. He says that the Bible has hidden meanings to incite us to search and discover the words of salvation, and to be hidden from those who despise them. The truth is the pearls which must not be offered to the swines.

The Bible looks like St. Mary the virgin who brought forth Jesus Christ and her virginity was preserved. Thus we discover spiritual meanings of the Bible, but its meaning is still virgin, as it has many hidden spiritual meanings.

4. To attain the **knowledge of God** we are in need to enter in three stages:

a. The purification from sin, for sin prevents us from acknowledging the divine secrets.

b. We must see beyond the literal meanings of the text, and the naive materialistic interpretations.

c. Vision of God: The knowledge of God is a divine gift. Christ Himself is our knowledge, whoever attains Him embraces knowledge.

5. The **Goodness of God**: His goodness is revealed through His love for us, at a time when we are strangers and far from Him. He embraces all the world, desiring their own salvation. His goodness is revealed by changing even the evil things to our edification and goodness.

No man is perfect in his goodness, therefore he is in need of the Logos, the source of salvation, who grants us the likeness of God.

6. **Baptism**: He speaks of baptism as a spiritual regeneration, enlightenment, adoption to the Father, immortality, remission of sins<sup>1</sup>. Baptism imprints a seal, or stamp, which in fact the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> Paedagogus 1:6:26

7. As a **Churchman** he loved the church, her tradition and laws. The sign of our membership of the Church is our spiritual knowledge of God. Its unity is based on the oneness of faith. Her (the Church) motherhood is correlated to the fatherhood of God.

Like God Himself the **Church** is one<sup>1</sup>; it is also the virgin mother of Christians, feeding them on the Logos as holy milk<sup>2</sup>. It becomes the gathering of the elect<sup>3</sup>, an impregnable city ruled by the Logos<sup>4</sup>. It is an icon of the heavenly Church, that is why we pray that God's will may be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven<sup>5</sup>.

a. The Order of **Priesthood** ( Bishops, Priests and Deacons ) is not based only on distributing the responsibilities but also on the participation in serving the Lord Himself through which they attain angelic and heavenly glories.

The Priest must grow in spiritual knowledge to be equal with the angels.

He states that the pious and righteous gnostic who teach and do God's will are its true priests and deacons, even if they have never been promoted to such office on earth<sup>6</sup>.

b. The Church was spending all night in singing hymns and celebrating the **Eucharistic liturgy** at the dawn (1 Thess. 5:6-8).

c. He mentions the order of **praying towards the East**, as a symbol of our new birth, and our illumination by the sun of the righteousness<sup>7</sup>.

d. He mentions how the believer must prepare himself or herself before entering the Church.

e. He mentions that the Church in his days did not use **musical instruments**. Jesus Christ Himself is the lyre of the Church<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Paedagogus 1:4:10.

<sup>2</sup> Paaedagogus 1:6:42; 1:5:21.

<sup>3</sup> Stromata 7:5:29.

<sup>4</sup> . Stromata 4:26:172.

<sup>5</sup> Stromata 4:8:66; J.N.D. Kelly: Early Christian Doctrines, 1977, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> J.N.D. Kelly: Early Christian Doctrines, 1977, p. 202.

<sup>7</sup> Stromata 6:13.

<sup>8</sup> Paed. 2:4.



f. The **Eucharist**: a wonderful sacrament! By it our archaic bodily corruption is taken away. To drink Jesus' blood, he states<sup>1</sup>, is to participate in His incorruptibility, and those who drink His blood are sanctified in body and soul. We accept our Lord and hide Him within us, who educates the motions of our bodies<sup>2</sup>.

g. He was interested in the Church sacraments, especially **Baptism**, as a new birth by which we receive Christ Himself in our lives and attain His knowledge. Baptism is called illumination, perfection, washing from our sins, and forgiveness of sins, etc.

e. He defended the Christian **marriage**, as a type of the church, and defended the equality between a husband and his wife.

#### 8. Love and Fear of God

J. Quasten says: [The basic principle by which the Logos educates His children is love, whereas the education of the Old Dispensation is based on fear...

Clement refers here to the heretical doctrine of the Marcionites that the God of the Old Testament is not the same as that of the New. Fear is good if it protects against sin:

The bitter roots of fear arrest the eating sores of our sins. Wherefore also fear is salutary, if bitter. Sick, we truly stand in the need of the Saviour; having wandered, of one to guide us; blind, of one to lead us to light; thirsty, of the fountain of life of which whosoever partakes shall no longer thirst (John 4,13-14); dead, we need life; sheep, we need a shepherd; we who are children need a tutor while universal humanity stands in need of Jesus... You may learn if you will the crowning wisdom of the all-holy Shepherd and Tutor, of the omnipotent and paternal Word, when He figuratively represents Himself as the Shepherd of the sheep. And He is the Tutor of the children. He says therefore by Ezechiel directing His discourse to the elders and setting before them a salutary description of His wise solicitude: "And that which is lame I will bind up, and that which is sick I will heal, and that which has wandered I will turn

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<sup>1</sup> Paed. 2:2:20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 1:6.

back; and I will feed them on my holy mountain" (Ez. 34,14,16). Such are the promises of the good Shepherd.

Feed us, the children, as sheep. Yea, Master, fill us with righteousness. Thine own pasture; yea, O Tutor, feed us on Thy holy mountain the Church, which towers aloft, which is above the clouds, which touches heaven<sup>1</sup>·]

**9. The Doctrine of Man:** J.N.D. Kelly says:

[In his primitive state, according to Clement<sup>2</sup>, man was childlike and innocent, destined to advance by stages towards perfection. Adam, he states<sup>3</sup>, "was not created perfect in constitution. but suitable For acquiring virtue... For God desires us to be saved by our own efforts." Progress therefore depended upon free-will, on which Clement places great emphasis. The fault of Adam and Eve consisted in the fact that, using their volition wrongly, they indulged in the pleasures of sexual intercourse before God gave them leave<sup>4</sup>. Not that sex was wrong in itself (Clement strongly repudiates<sup>5</sup> the Gnostic suggestion that it is), but the violation of God's ordinance was. As a result they lost the immortal life of Paradise, their will and rationality were weakened, and they became a prey to sinful passions<sup>6</sup>. But while Clement accepts the historicity of Adam, he also regards him as symbolizing mankind as a whole. All men, he teaches<sup>7</sup>, have a spark of the divine in them and are free to obey or disobey God's law, but all except the incarnate Logos are sinners<sup>8</sup>. They are, as it were, sick, blind and gone astray; they are enslaved to the elements and the Devil; and their condition can be described as death<sup>9</sup>. He nowhere hints, however, that they are involved in Adam's

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<sup>1</sup> Paed. 1,9,83,2-84,3 ANF.

<sup>2</sup> Prot. 11:111; Strom. 2:22. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Strom. 6:12:96).

<sup>4</sup> Prot. 11:111; Strom. 3:17:103.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Strom. 3:12:88f.;3:17:102).

<sup>6</sup> Strom. 2:19:98; Paed 1:13, 101; Protr. 11:111.

<sup>7</sup> Protr. 6:68; Strom. 2:15:62; 3:9:63ff.; 4:24:153.

<sup>8</sup> Paed. 1:2:4; 3:12,93.

<sup>9</sup> Protr. 1:6 f.; 11:114; Paed. 1:9; Strom. 1:11:53; etc.

guilt and in one passage<sup>1</sup> vehemently denies that a new-born baby which has not performed any act of its own can have “fallen under the curse of Adam.” In another<sup>2</sup> he explains Job 1, 21 (“Naked I came from my mother’s womb”) as implying that a child enters the world exempt from sin. On the whole, his insistence against the Gnostics that only the personal misdeeds that men have committed are imputable to them leaves no room for original sin in the full sense. On the other hand, although certain contexts<sup>3</sup> might seem to suggest that the connexion between the general human sinfulness and Adam’s transgression amounts to no more than imitation, he in fact envisages it as much more intimate. His teaching<sup>4</sup> seems to be that, through our physical descent from Adam and Eve, we inherit, not indeed their guilt and curse, but a disordered sensuality which entails the dominance of the irrational element in our nature<sup>5</sup>.]

### QUOTATIONS FROM ST. CLEMENT<sup>6</sup>

- ❖ The heavenly guide, the Logos, is called "Protreptikos" or "Converter" when He invites mankind to salvation ... But when He functions as a physician and a teacher ... He will receive the name of "Pedagogue" ... Thus the Logos wishing to achieve our salvation step by step, follows an excellent method:: He converts in the first place, then He disciplines and finally He instructs.
- ❖ Just as the will of God is in action, and is called the world, so its intention is the salvation of men, and is called the Church.
- ❖ The mother leads her little children, and we seek for our mother, the Church.
- ❖ The Lord, after His resurrection, gave the gnosis to James the Just, to John and to Peter; these transmitted it to the other apostles, and

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<sup>1</sup> . Strom. 3:16:100.

<sup>2</sup> Strom. 4:25:160.

<sup>3</sup> Esp. adumbr. in Jud. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Strom. 3:16:100 f.; 3:9:63-5.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, p. 179-180.

<sup>6</sup> Paed 1:1; 1:6:27; 1:5:21; Eusebius: H.E.2:1.

the other apostles to the seventy disciples, one of whom was Barnabas.

## 4

# ORIGEN

J. Quasten states, "The School of Alexandria reached its greatest importance under St. Clement's successor, Origen<sup>1</sup>, the outstanding teacher and scholar of the early church,...a man of encyclopaedic learning, and one of the most original thinkers the world has ever seen<sup>2</sup>." The Coptic Church was compelled to excommunicate him because of some false ideas that he believed in, like the salvation of the devil, and the universal salvation of all the human race, besides his acceptance of priesthood after making himself eunuch. Other churches excommunicated him, his followers, and their writings after his death in the Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D.

### ORIGEN'S BOYHOOD

Origen, a true son of Egypt, was born probably in Alexandria, in or about 185 A.D. His father Leonides was very careful to bring him up in the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, and the child displayed a precocious curiosity in this respect<sup>3</sup>.

"Everyday he would set him to learn a passage (from the Bible) by heart ... The Child was not content with the straightforward, obvious meaning of the Scriptures, he wanted something more, and even at that time would go in pursuit of the underlying sense. He ever embarrassed his father by the questions he asked ... <sup>4</sup>."

Eusebius, the historian, tells us that Leonides<sup>5</sup>, seeing his son's fondness of the Word of God during his boyhood, was accustomed to go up to Origen's bed while he was asleep, uncover his

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<sup>1</sup> Origen means "Son of Or (Horus), the Egyptian sun-god."

<sup>2</sup> Quasten: Patrology, vol. 2, p.37.

<sup>3</sup> J. Lebreton: The history of the Primitive Church, 1948, p.773

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius : H.E. 6:2:7 -11.

<sup>5</sup> "Leonides" means "son of Lion."

chest and reverentially kiss it as a dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. He thought of himself as blessed in being the father of such a boy<sup>1</sup>.

### **LEONIDES' MARTYRDOM**

Besides being fed on the Holy Scriptures, Origen was exposed to the influence of Martyrdom. The persecution against Christians which arose in the tenth year of Septimius Severus (202 A.D.) bore with special severity upon the Egyptian Church<sup>2</sup>. Leonides was arrested and thrown into prison. Origen, who has not then completed his seventeenth year ardently desired to attain the Martyr's crown with his father. He was only prevented from achieving this desire by his mother who, at a critical moment, hid all his clothes, and so laid upon him the necessity of remaining at home<sup>3</sup>, to look after his six brothers. He strongly urged his father to remain firm by writing to him, "Do not dream of changing your mind for our sake... "

### **TEACHER OF LITERATURE**

Leonides was beheaded and his goods were confiscated. Origen's refuge was with a noble lady of Alexandria, who helped him for a time, but he could not be comfortable there. For, a heretic teacher, called "Paul of Antioch", had so captured this simple lady by his eloquence that she had harboured him as her philosopher and adopted son, and gave him permission to propagate his heresy by means of lectures, called in her house.

Origen, as an orthodox believer felt no comfort, left the house and maintained himself and his family by teaching secular literature and grammar.

Through his teachings to pagans. Origen's faith found expressions as often as he had occasion to refer to the theological position of pagan writers. As a result, some pagans applied to him for instruction in Christianity. Among others, two brothers, Plutarch and

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius :H.E 6:2:11.

<sup>2</sup> W. Fairweather: Origen & Greek Patristic Theology, Edinburgh, 1901, p37.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Drewery: Origen & The Doctrine of Grace, London, 1906, Introd.

Heraclas, of whom the former was martyred and the latter was yet to hold the bishopric of Alexandria<sup>1</sup>.

## **ORIGEN AND THE SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA**

The Catechetical School of Alexandria which had been dispersed by the persecutions and the departure of St. Clement left it without a teacher. St. Demetrius, Pope of Alexandria appointed Origen as the head of the school, when he was eighteen years old, due to his Christian zeal to preach and catechise. The post was an honourable one, but it was not without its dangers, for the persecution begun by the edicts of Severus (202) was still raging, threatening especially the converts and their masters.

Origen, immediately gave up all other activities and sold his beloved books<sup>2</sup>, and devoted himself exclusively to his new duties as a catechist.

About the year 215, St. Alexander of Jerusalem regarded Origen, his master and friend, the successor to the venerable deans of the Alexandrian School Pantaenus and Clement, but - in his eyes - greater than these. On the day following the death of St. Clement, Alexander wrote to Origen: "We knew those blessed fathers who proceeded us and with whom we ourselves shall soon be: Pantaenus the truly blessed master, and also the venerable Clement, who became my own master and assisted me and possibly others. Through these I came to know you, although excelling, my brother<sup>3</sup>".

Here, I would like to refer to Origen's role in the development of this school.

1 - Origen threw himself with the utmost ardour not only in studying the teaching the Holy Scripture, but also giving his life as an example of evangelical life. His disciple St. Gregory the Wonder-maker says that "he stimulated us by the deeds he did more than by the doctrines he taught".

Eusebius also tells us that, "he taught as he lived, and lived as he taught; and it was especially for this reason that with the co-

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<sup>1</sup> Fairweather, p.39.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius: H.E. 6:3:1-8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 6:14:8-9.

operation of the divine power, he brought so many to share his zeal". He adds, " he preserved in the most philosophical manner of life, at one time disciplining himself by fasting, at another measuring out the time for sleep, which he was careful to take, never on a couch, but on the floor, and indicated how the Gospel ought to be kept which exhorts us not to provide two coats nor to use shoes, nor indeed, to be worn out with thoughts about the future<sup>1</sup>."

He tried to lead his disciples and his hearers along the same way of asceticism and mortification which he imposed upon himself from his youth. To asceticism we must join prayers, with the aim of freeing the soul and enabling it to be united with God. That is what a Christian seeks by observing virginity<sup>2</sup>, by drawing from the world while living in the world<sup>3</sup>, sacrificing as much as possible good fortune<sup>4</sup>, and despising human glory<sup>5</sup>.

The presence of women at his lectures and the consequent possibility of scandal suggested to him a literal acting on the words of the Gospel "there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" Matt. 19:12, and his self-mutilation was later brought against him by Pope Demetrius.

2 - At the beginning, Origen's aim was concentrated on preparing the catechumens to receive baptism, not only by teaching them the Christian faith but also by giving them instructions concerning the practical aspects of Christian life.

"If you want to receive Baptism," he says<sup>6</sup>, "you must first learn about God's Word, cut away the roots of your vices, correct your barbarous wild lives and practice meekness and humility. Then you will be fit to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit."

3 - Origen's task was not to prepare those people flocking in increasing numbers to sit at his feet, to be baptised, but rather to be

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid 6:3:9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> In Num. hom 11:3.

<sup>3</sup> In Lev. hom 11:1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 15:2.

<sup>5</sup> In Joan. 28:23.

<sup>6</sup> In Leirt. hom 11:3.



martyred. Those who were close to him knew that they were running the risk of Martyrdom.

Eusebius describes the part Origen played at the time of persecution. "He had a great name with the faithful", he says<sup>1</sup>, "due to the way he always welcomed the holy martyrs and was so attentive to them, whether he knew them or not. He would go to them in prison and stay by them when they were tried and even when they were being led to death... often, when he went up to the martyrs unconcernedly and saluted them with a kiss regardless of the consequences, the pagan crowd standing by became very angry and would have rushed upon him and very nearly made an end of him."

4 - As his crowd of disciples flocked to him from morning to night, Origen realised that he had to divide them into two classes, so he chose his disciple Heraclas, an excellent speaker, to give the beginners the preparatory subject of Christian doctrines, while he devoted himself to instructing the advanced students in philosophy, theology and especially the Holy Scriptures.

5 - Origen gained a great number of pupils from the pagan School of philosophy. He felt that he was in need of deeper philosophical training, and this could be found in the lectures of Ammonius Saccas, a well-known Alexandrian philosopher (174-242 A.D.), taught Platonism, and from him Plotinus (205-270 A.D.), learned Neoplatonism. This philosopher was attracted by the Theological School of Alexandria, converted to Christianity and wrote several books on it.

It is noteworthy, that Origen, unlike St. Clement, was not a philosopher who had been converted to Christianity, nor was he is sympathy with philosophy. Perhaps because he was afraid of the beauty of philosophical forms or expressions as a dangerous spare that might entrap or distant him. Perhaps it was only that he had no time for such trifles<sup>2</sup>.

In fact, Origen was a true missionary who realised that he must study philosophy just to be able to expound Christianity to the

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<sup>1</sup> Eus. H.E. 6:3:3-7.

<sup>2</sup> H. Chadwick: the Early Church, 1969, p100.

leading minds of his day and to answer their difficulties and stress the factors in Christianity likely to appeal to them most<sup>1</sup>.

In a letter written in defence of his position as a student of Greek philosophy he says<sup>2</sup>: "when I had devoted myself entirely to the Scriptures, I was sometimes approached by heretics and people who had studied the Greek sciences and philosophy in particular, I deemed it advisable to investigate both the doctorial views of the heretics and what the philosophers claimed to know of the truth. In this I was imitating Pantaenus who, before my time, had acquired no small store of such knowledge and had benefited many people by it."

**Now, what is Origen's point of view on philosophy and pagan learning?**

According to Origen, "*all wisdom is from God*<sup>3</sup>," whether it be knowledge of philosophy, of geometry, of medicine or music<sup>4</sup>. In fact, he condemns it as he says, "*Do not covert the deceptive food philosophy provides, it may turn you away from the truth*<sup>5</sup>," it is because the pagans spoiled it by introducing their errors, that it teaches nothing of God's will<sup>6</sup>.

He indicated the errors in philosophical systems, and endeavoured to preserve his disciples from them, but above all he was anxious lest they should be led astray by a strange master, who would lead them to forget Christ, or at least might lessen the exclusive fidelity which they owe to him. His ideal was St. Paul, and he wished to say in his turn. "Who shall separate us from the Charity of Christ?". He added, "*I can say this in all confidence: neither the love of profane letters, nor the sophisms of philosophers, nor the frauds of astrologers concerning the supposed courses of the stars, nor the divination of demons, full of lies, nor any other science of the future*

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<sup>1</sup> Danielou J: Origen, 1953, p73.

<sup>2</sup> Eus. 6:9:12, 13.

<sup>3</sup> In Num. hom 18:3.

<sup>4</sup> In Gen. hom 11:2.

<sup>5</sup> In Lev. hom 10:2.

<sup>6</sup> In Ps. hom 26:3, 6.

*sought by evil artifices, will be able to separate us from the Charity of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord<sup>1</sup>."*

His system in teaching philosophy and pagan leanings can be summarised in two points:

1 - Origen used to start his teaching with "rhetoric", then some scientific knowledge such as physics, mathematics, geometry and astronomy<sup>2</sup>. This was only a preparation, followed by the study of philosophy.

2 - He wished his disciples to know something about all the philosophical theories except that of Abecareans, and not to stress on one of them. St. Gregory the Wonder-maker gives an account of this system by saying<sup>3</sup>, "*In every philosophy he picked out what was true and useful and set it before us, while what was erroneous he rejected ... He advised us not to give our allegiance to any one philosopher even though he should be universally acclaimed as perfect in wisdom, but to cleave to God alone and His prophets.*"

## **ORIGEN'S JOURNEYS**

1 - About the year 212 Origen went to Rome, during the pontificate of Zephyrinus, and in his presence St. Hippolytus gave a discourse in honour of the Saviour<sup>4</sup>.

2 - Shortly before the year 215, we find him in Arabia, where he has gone in order to instruct the Roman Governor at the latter's own request. He was also called to Arabia several times for discussions with bishop<sup>5</sup>. Eusebius mentions two of those debates, in the year 244 A.D. an Arabian synod was convened to discuss the christological views of Beryllus, Bishop of Bostra. The synod, which was largely attended, condemned Beryllus, because of his monarchianism (one person as Godhead), had vainly tried to bring him round to the Orthodox position<sup>6</sup>. Origen hurried to Arabia and

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<sup>1</sup> In Judic. hom 3:3: (5:5); See Lebreton, p.805-6.

<sup>2</sup> Or. Paneg. 6:8. PG. 10:1072 a-c.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 6:14, 15. PG. 10:1902c, 1903b.

<sup>4</sup> St. Jerome: De Viris Illustribus 61.

<sup>5</sup> C. Knetschmar: Origens Und dei Arber, Zeilsch. Theolo. Kirsh 50 (1953) p.258-280.

<sup>6</sup> Fairweather, p60.

succeeded in convincing Beryllus, who seemed even to have written a letter of thanks to Origen<sup>1</sup>.

This link with Arabia is a continuation of Pantaenus's<sup>2</sup>.

3 - Around the year 216 A.D., when the Emperor Caracalla looted the city of Alexandria, closed the schools, persecuted the teachers and massacred them, Origen decided to go to Palestine. There, he was welcomed by his old friend Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, and subsequently by Theoctistus, Bishop of Caesarea (in Palestine) who jointly invited him to exposed the Scriptures in the Christian assemblies before them. Pope Demetrius was very angry for, according to the Alexandrian Church custom, laymen should not deliver discourse in the presence of the bishops. He ordered the immediate return of Origen to Alexandria, and the letter loyally obeyed the summons, and everything seemed to settle down as it had been before. This incident was a prelude to the conflict which was to break out some fifteen years later.

4 - At the beginning of the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235), the Emperor's mother, Mamaea summoned Origen to come to Antioch in order that she might consult him on many questions. According to Eusebius, Origen abode for some time at the royal place and after hearing powerful testimony to the glory of the Lord and the worthy of divine instructions "hastened back to his School<sup>3</sup>".

5 - Origen's next journey was into Greece, and involved two years absence from Alexandria. He went in response of Achia, apparently to act the part of peace-maker, and was bearer of written credentials from his Bishop<sup>4</sup>. His route lay through Palestine and at Caesarea, he was ordained a priest, by the Bishop of this country<sup>5</sup>. To them it seemed unfitting that a spiritual counsellor of high authorities like Origen should be no more than a layman. Moreover, they desired to avoid all risk of further rebukes from Pope Demetrius by licensing Origen to preach in their presence.

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome: Catal c.60

<sup>2</sup> J. Danielou: The Christian Centuries, vol. 1, p.184.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius: H. E. 6:21:3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Fairweather, p50.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius 6:23:4.

Pope Demetrius counted this ordination much worse offence than the former one, considering it as invalid, for two reasons:

A - Origen had received priesthood from another bishop without permission from his own bishop.

B - Origen's self-mutilation was against his ordination. Until today no such person (who practises self-mutilation) can be ordained.

## **ORIGEN'S CONDEMNATION**

Bishop Demetrius called a council of bishops and priests who refused to abide by the decision, that Origen must leave Alexandria<sup>1</sup>, but this did not content bishop Demetrius. He called another council of bishops only (in the year 232), and deprived him of the priesthood as the ordination was invalid and he became unfit for catechising.

1 - He believed souls were created before the bodies, and they are bound to bodies as a punishment of previous sins they had committed<sup>2</sup>. The world sense is for them only a place of purification.

2 - The soul of Christ had a previous existence before the Incarnation and it was united with divinity.

3 - All creation will return back to its origin in God, and all mankind will be saved (eternal punishment has an end)<sup>3</sup>.

4 - Satan and all evil spirits will be saved<sup>4</sup>. As he was blamed for this, he protested that "even an idiot could not hold such a thesis<sup>5</sup>."

Anyhow, the sentence of the council was enforced in Egypt and recognised in the West, but it was disregarded by the churches of Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia and Achaia, in which Origen was well-known<sup>6</sup>."

Origen obeyed abhorring schism, and with noble Christian unselfishness counted his expulsion from the place that was dearest to

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<sup>1</sup> H.M. Gwatkin: Early Church History, London 1909, vol. 2, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> De Princ. 1:8:1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 1:6:2; 3:6:6

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 3:6:6; Contra Celsus 8:72.

<sup>5</sup> Fragment of a letter to his friends, quoted by Rufinus "Deadulteratione Librorum Origenis."

<sup>6</sup> Gwatkin, p.192.

him than any on earth, as not too great a sacrifice in order to maintain the unity of the Church. For although he had powerful friends in Alexandria and overseas and might have become the leader of a great party to fight the Bishop - but never did thus! He calmly left Alexandria, Feeling that nobody could deprive him of his beloved church, as he says, "It sometimes happens that a man who has been turned out is really still inside, and one who seems to be inside may really be outside<sup>1</sup>."

## **A NEW SCHOOL**

Origen left Alexandria and made his new home in Caesarea, in Palestine, where he was gladly welcomed by the bishops. "They attached themselves to him as to a unique master, and they entrusted him with the explanation of the holy Scriptures and with the whole of Church teaching<sup>2</sup>", Bishop Theoktistus induced Origen to found a new school of theology there, over which he presided for almost twenty years. In this School he taught St. Gregory the Wonder-Worker for five years.

At the bishop's request Origen also exposed the Scripture, at least twice a week, on Wednesday and Fridays<sup>3</sup>. The new task increased Origen's humility, for he believed that the preacher had to be first and foremost a man of prayer. Many times when he was faced with a specially difficult passage, he would often stop and ask his hearers to pray with him for a better understanding of the text<sup>4</sup>.

During the persecution initiated by Maximin, Origen took refuge in Cappadocian Caesarea. His old friends Ambrosius and Protoktetuis, a priest of Caesarea, were seized and thrown into prison. He wrote and dedicated to them his treatise, "Exhortation to Martyrdom", in which he regarded martyrdom as one of the proofs of the Truth of Christianity, and a continuation of the work of redemption.

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<sup>1</sup> In Lev. hom 14:3.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius: H.E. 6:27.

<sup>3</sup> In Num. hom 15:1; In Jesu Nave hom, 20; In 1 Sam. hom 2.

<sup>4</sup> In Gen. Hom 2:3.

Ambrose and Protoktetius were set at liberty and Origen returned to Caesarea in Palestine.

Travelling to Athens through Bithynia, he spent several days at Nicomedia. there he received a letter from Julius Africanus, who asked him about the story of Susanna as an authentic portion of the Book of Daniel. Origen replied in a lengthy letter form Necomedia.

Under the reign of Decius (249 - 251), persecution rose again and Origen was arrested. his body was tortured, he was tormented with a heavy iron collar and kept in the innermost den in the prison. For several days his feet were tied together to a rock; and he was threatened with being burned at the stake<sup>1</sup>.

Eusebius describes his suffering in the following terms:

[The number and greatness of Origen's sufferings during the persecution, the nature of his death..., the nature and the number of bonds which the man endured for the word of Christ, punishments as he lay in iron and in the recesses of his dungeon; and how, when for many days his feet were stretched four spaces in that instrument of torture, the stocks, he bore with a stout heart threats of fire and everything else that was inflicted by his enemies; and the kind of issue he had thereof, the judge eagerly striving with all his might on no account to put him to death; and what sort of sayings he left behind him after this, sayings full of help for those who need consolation.] (*Eusebius: Hist. Eccl. 6,39,5*).

Origen bore all these sufferings bravely. He did not die of this persecution, but he died shortly afterwards and perhaps due to them.

Before he died Dionysius of Alexandria, who had succeeded Heraclas as Pope of Alexandria, sent him a letter an martyrdom, to led to any renewal of Origen's old relation with the Alexandrian Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius : H.E. 6:39:5.

In 217 A.D, or soon after Origen made a great friend in Ambrose, a man of means and position whom he had won from Valentinian heresy. According to Eusebius, Origen began his commentaries on the divine Scriptures being urged thereto by Ambrose, his friend and publisher. He employed innumerable incentives, not only exhorting him by word, but furnishing abundant means. For he dictated to more than seven amanuenses, who relieved each other at appointed times. And he employed no fewer copyists, besides girls who were skilled in elegant writing. Ambrose furnished the necessary expense in abundance.

Origen was the most prolific Christian writer of antiquity. St. Epiphanius declared that he wrote 6000 works, doubtless meaning rolls, or scrolls of ordinary length. St. Jerome said, "Which of us can read all that he has written?!"

About 2000 titles being listed by Eusebius and about 800 by St. Jerome. We possess only a small remnant of his work, and only half of what remains is in Greek, the remainder in Latin versions, St Jerome and Rufinus translated him, while St. Basil and St. Gregory of Nzianzus compiled an anthology (*Philokalia Origenis*).

The greater part of Origen's writings has perished as a result of the violent quarrels which broke out concerning his orthodoxy. Not only the reading of his works was proscribed but even preserving any of them was considered as an illegal deed.

The remains are mostly preserved - not in the original Greek but in Latin translations, notably those by Rufinus of Aquileia and St. Jerome.

The complete list of his writings that Eusebius added to the biography of his friend and teacher Pamphilus was lost. According to St. Jerome who used it, Origen's treatises are two thousand. St .Epiphanius<sup>1</sup> estimates his literary productions as six thousand, perhaps an exaggerated number. Anyhow, St. Jerome's question, "which of us can read all that he has written?" is a sufficient testimony to the magnitude of Origen's literary works.

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<sup>1</sup>Adv. Hear. 64;63.



The Latin translations of Origen's works, especially those by Rufinus, are not accurate. For he wanted to adopt his author to the Latin-Speaking public and therefore did not hesitate to bridge some passages that seemed to him to be too long or to add explanations when he thought it advisable.

Rufinus thought that Origen's books had been altered by heretics, and he had the right to expurgate next...<sup>1</sup>.

The chief classes of his work are:

We have already mentioned his work, the "*Hexapla*," or the six-fold writing. It is the first attempt at establishing a critical text of the Old Testament. It was an immense task to which Origen dedicated his whole life<sup>2</sup>; began at Alexandria, it was finished probably at Tyre. Only fragments remain of the Greek, but a greater part of it has reached us in Syriac version made in 616 or 617 A.D by Paul, bishop of Tella.

In this field Origen's labours are prodigious and range over nearly the entire field of Scriptures. It is said that he used to spend almost all the night kneeling, praying and reading the Bible. His exegetical writings are in numerous and were of three main types:

1. **Scholia** or brief notes on difficult points of sacred Scripture, especially grammatical difficulties.

2. **Homilies**, or popular expositions on some selected chapters or verses from the Holy Scriptures, which he delivered in liturgical meetings, aimed at popular edification.

3. **Commentaries**, or exhaustive or learned notes. In spite of the allegoric and dogmatic elements with which they are cumbered, in many respects still serve as models for commentators.

They are a strange mixture of philological, textual, historical, etymological notes and theological and philosophical observation<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to the historical and literal senses, he used the mystical, inner and spiritual senses, employing the allegorical mode of interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup>Danielou: Origen, 1953, p X-XII.

<sup>2</sup>Quasten, vol 2, p44.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid 48.

His work in interpretation covered every book of the Old and New Testaments. His homilies or expository sermons numbered: 28 on Numbers, 26 on Joshua, 32 on Isaiah, 45 on Jeremiah, 25 on Matthew, 39 on Luke, 27 on Acts, etc.

These are only a few of the items given in a long list of the works of Origen found in a letter from Jerome to Paula and Eustochium. This list reached at least 444 for the Old Testament and 130 for the New. But, of these, only 21 have survived in the Greek original and only 186 in Latin translation.

His commentaries are: 25 books on the Minor Prophets, 25 on Matthew, 32 on John, 15 on Romans, 15 on Galations, etc.

The commentaries ran to at least 177 books (rolls) for the Old Testament, and 114 for the New. Of these only 16 books are preserved in Greek. It must be added that no small amount of Origen's exegetical work survived piecemeal in the Catenas - those collection of valuable observations found in the early writer's. These began to be made very early, and by A.D. 500, in the hands of Procopius of Gaza, were in full swing.

The most important apologetical work is his "**Contra Celsus**," a treatise composed of eight books written in answer to a detailed and far reaching attack by Celsus (180 A.D.).

Celus, was a highly cultivated man, possessing in particular an excellent knowledge of Plato. He was familiar not only with Greek thought and literature of the period but also he has some acquaintance with the Old Testament, knew the four Gospels and had an idea of the main thread of the Pauline theology. He attacked the Old Testament and at the same time used the Jewish arguments against Christianity.

Needless to say that Origen's apology against Celsus is of great value. It is marked by keen spiritual insight, vast erudition, masterly ability and mature thought<sup>1</sup>.

The "True Discourse (*Alethes Logos*)" of Celsus was a violent attack on Christianity and a defence of the state religion, depending on the faults Judaism and Platonic philosophy had to find with Christian teaching. This work had almost no effect on Egypt and

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<sup>1</sup>Fairweather, p110, 111.

Palestine, and it had been long disappeared. But Ambrose asked his friend to reply to Celsus. At first he states that the life and authority of Christ are well known, and Celsus' work cannot shake the faith of any Christian (Pref 3). But on the demand of Ambrose he wrote this reply, using many quotations from philosophical writers, showing that he was more educated than Celsus. He wrote it to those who are weak in faith (Rom 14:1).

[When false witnesses testified against our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, He remained silent; and when unfounded charges were brought against Him, he returned no answer, believing that His whole life and conduct among the Jews were a better refutation than any answer to the false testimony, or than any formal defence against the accusations. And I know not, my pious Ambrose, why you wished me to write a reply to the false charges brought by Celsus against the Christians and to his accusations directed against the faith of the Churches in his treatise; as if the facts themselves did not furnish a manifest refutation and the doctrine a better answer than any writing, seeing it both disposes of false statements and does not leave to the accusations any credibility or validity.] Preface 1 ANF.

[For I do not know in what rank to place him who has need of arguments written in books in answer to charges of Celsus against the Christians, in order to prevent him from being shaken in his faith and to confirm him in it. But nevertheless, since in the multitude of those who are considered believers some such persons might be found as would have their faith shaken and overthrown by the writings of Celsus, but who might be preserved by a reply to them of such nature as to refute his statements and to exhibit the truth, we have deemed it right to yield to your injunction and to furnish an answer to the treatise which you sent us, but which I do not think that any one, although only a short way advanced in philosophy, will allow to be a "True Discourse," as Celsus has entitled it.] 4, ANF.

In this Origen explains the following points:

a. Celsus thinks that he knows "everything," while he did not need the Old and New Testaments. We who studied them cannot dare to say that we know everything, for we love the truth (1:12).

b. Celsus as a true Greek was proud of the Hellenic philosophy. Origen declares that the superiority of the Gospel over the Hellenic philosophy:

[The Gospel has a demonstration of its own, more divine than any established by Grecian dialectics. And this diviner method is called by the apostle the "manifestation of the Spirit and of power": of "the Spirit," on account of the prophecies which are sufficient to produce faith in any one who reads them, especially in those things which relate to Christ; and of "power," because of the signs and wonders which have been performed as can be proved both on many other grounds and on this, that traces of them are still preserved among those who regulate their lives by the precepts of the Gospel.] 1,2 ANF.

c. Christians are simple people, but it does not mean that they are ignorant. Simplicity has its knowledge and living fruits. Christianity presents milk to the children and food for the mature.

d. Celsus ignores the prophecies concerning Christ (1,50).

e. Mentioning the weakness of the disciples and apostles assures the genuinity of the gospels. The promise of Christ that his gospel would spread all over the world had been fulfilled. It the work of the divine grace which attracts the souls to follow our Lord Jesus Christ with them.

[The word of God (1 Cor. 2:4) declares that the preaching, although in itself true and most worthy of belief, is not sufficient to reach the human heart, unless a certain power be imparted to the speaker from God and a grace appear upon his words; and it is only by the divine agency that this takes place in those who speak effectually. The prophet says in the sixty-seventh Psalm that "the Lord will give word with great power to them who preach." If then it should be granted that the same doctrines are found among the Greeks as in our own Scriptures, yet they do not possess the same power of attracting and disposing the souls of men to follow them.] 6,2 ANF.

f. The apostles' despise of death and their success assures the resurrection of Christ.

g. Christianity has the power of the renewal of the human nature. Sinners are changed to saints. They have the power of the Holy Spirit operating in them:

[And there are still preserved among Christians traces of that Holy Spirit which appeared in the form of a dove. They expel evil spirits and perform many cures and foresee certain events, according

to the will of the Logos. And although Celsus or the Jew whom he has introduced may treat with mockery what I am going to say, I shall say it nevertheless-that many have been converted to Christianity as if against their will, some sort of spirit having suddenly transformed their minds from a hatred of the doctrine to a readiness to die in its defense.] 1,46 ANF.

h. Christians obey the rulers, but in the Lord. They never accept the heathen worship.

[Celsus remarks: "What harm is there in gaining the favour of the rulers of the earth, whether of a nature different from ours, or human princes and kings? For these have gained their dignity through the instrumentality of gods." ] 8,63 ANF.

[There is One whose favour we should seek and to whom we ought to pray that He would be gracious to us-the Most High God, whose favour is gained by piety and the practice of every virtue. And if he would have us to seek the favour of others after the Most High God, let him consider that, as the motion of the shadow follows that of the body which casts it, so in like manner it follows, that when we have the favour of God, we have also the good will of all angels and spirits who are friends of God.] 8,64 ANF.

[Moreover, we are to despise ingratiating ourselves with kings or any other men, not only if their favour is to be won by murders, licentiousness or deeds of cruelty, but even if it involves impiety toward God or any servile expressions of flattery and obsequiousness, which things are unworthy of brave and high-principled men who aim at joining with their other virtues that highest of virtues, patience and fortitude. But whilst we do nothing which is contrary to the law and word of God, we are not so mad as to stir up against us the wrath of kings and princes, which will bring upon us sufferings and tortures or even death. For we read: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God, Whosoever therefore resists the power, resists the ordinance of God" (Rom. 13:1,2).] 8,65 ANF.

Origen's other apologetic or polemic works are no more than the taking-down of the disputations with various persons: Bassus, Beryllus of Bastra, a Valentinian named Candidus, and some Jews. Thus are mentioned by Afficanus, Eusebius, Jerome, or Rufinus but are no longer extant except for the "Dialogue with Heraclides."

a. *De Principiis*, or **On First Principals** (*De Principiis - Peri Archon*): A dogmatic treatise in four books; this is the first attempt ever made towards the formation of Christian Theology<sup>1</sup>.

The Greek original has perished, as has also the literal Latin translation made by St. Jerome. The surviving version is a free Latin translation published in Rome in A.D. 398-99 by Rufinus, who witnesses that he made many changes in the text to purify it from obscure statements.

In this work, Origen defended the Orthodox dogma against the Gnostics, written to the well educated people and not to the popular. It is the first philosophical attempt to explain salvation.

These books deal respectively with God, the creation of the world, the fall of man, redemption through Jesus Christ, sin, human freedom, the Holy Scriptures as a source of belief.

In the introduction, Origen shows that the source of all religious truth is our Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself is the Truth:

[All who believe and are assured that grace and truth were obtained through Jesus Christ, and who know Christ to be the truth, agreeably to his own declaration, "I am the truth" John 14:6, derive the knowledge (gnosis) which incites men to a good and happy life from no other source than from the very words and teaching of Christ. And by words of Christ we do not mean those on which he spoke when he became man and tabernacled in the flesh, for before that time, Christ, the Word of God, was in Moses and the prophets. For without the Word of God, how could they have been able to prophesy of Christ? And were it not our purpose to confine the present treatise within the limits of all attainable brevity, it would not be difficult to show, in proof of this statement, out of the holy Scriptures, how Moses or the prophets both spoke and performed all they did through being filled with the Spirit of Christ... Moreover, after his ascension into heaven he spoke in His apostles, as is shown by Paul in these words: "Or do you seek a proof of Christ who speaks in me" (2 Cor. 13,3).

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<sup>1</sup>Drewery, p6.

Since many, however, of those who profess to believe in Christ differ from each other, not only in small and trifling matters, but also on subjects of the highest importance,... it seems on that account necessary first of all to fix a definite limit and to lay down an unmistakable rule regarding each one of these, and then to pass to the investigation of other points... as the teaching of the Church, transmitted in order succession from the apostles, and remaining in the Churches to the present day, is still preserved, that alone is to be accepted as truth which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition.] Preface 1-2 ANF.

The enemies of Origen used it as a material to accuse him of heresy, in his own days and after his death. St. Jerome states that Origen wrote to Fabianus, bishop of Rome assuring that some articles mentioned in his work is against his own view, and that his friend Ambrose published it in a hurry<sup>1</sup>.

The works consist of four books treating the following topics:

- a. God and the world of spirits
- b. The world and man; redemption of man and his end.
- c. Human freedom and final triumph of the good.
- d. The Scripture as the source of faith and the three modes of Scriptural interpretation.

[The way, then, as it appears to us, in which we ought to deal with the Scriptures and exact from them their meaning is the following, which has been ascertained from the Scriptures themselves. By Solomon in the Proverbs we find some such rule as this enjoined repeating the divine doctrines of Scripture; "And do thou portray them in a threefold manner, in counsel and knowledge, to answer words of the truth to them who propose them to thee" (Proverbs 22,20,21) The individual ought then to portray the ideas of Holy Scripture in a threefold manner upon his own soul in order that the simple man may be edified by the flesh as it were of the Scripture, for so we name the obvious sense, while he who has ascended a certain way (may be edified) by the souls as it were. The perfect man again (may receive edification) from the spiritual law, which has a

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<sup>1</sup>Jerome, Ep. 41.

shadow of good things to come. For as a man consists of body, soul and spirit, so in the same way does Scripture, which has been arranged to be given by God for the salvation of men.] 4,1,11 ANF.

b. Discussion with Hereclides<sup>1</sup>

Among a number of papyri found at Toura near Cairo in 1941 is a codex of about the end of the sixth century containing the text of a discussion between Origen and Bishop Heraclides. It represents a complete record of an actual discussion, which had taken place in a church in Arabia in the presence of the bishops and the people about the year 245. Origen seems to be in full possession of his authority as a teacher.

The first part of it has a discussion about the Father and the Son. Origen refers to Scripture in order to show in what sense two can be one:

I. Adam and Eve were two but one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

II. He (the just man) who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him (Cor. 6:17).

III. "Our Lord and Saviour is in His relation to the Father and God of the universe not one flesh, nor one spirit, but what is much higher than flesh and spirit, one God".

At the end of the discussion he deals with the immortality of the soul. Bishop Philippus is the one who asks this question. Origen replies that the soul is on the one hand immortal, on the other mortal, depending entirely on the three different kinds of death: [death to sin (Rom. 6:2), death to God (Ezech 18:4), and natural death]. To the third one, the soul is not subject, though those in sin desire it, they cannot find it (Rev. 9:6). The soul may be subject to the first or the second kind of death, and may thus be called mortal.

c. On the Resurrection (*Peri Anastasius*)

As a prelude to his work, "On First Principiis." Jerome's list of Origen's works mentions also to dialogues, "On the Resurrection," now lost.

4. Miscellanies or *Stromata* (Carpets)

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<sup>1</sup>Quasten, vol. 2, p. 62-4.



Like his teacher St. Clement, Origen left behind him his "Stromata," in ten books, which have been lost, except for a few small fragments. The title indicates a variety of subject discussion not in any particular order.

## 5 - PRACTICAL WRITINGS

a. **On Prayer:** It is the oldest scientific discussion of Christian prayer in existence. A treatise addressed to his friend Ambrose and unknown lady, Tatiana, perhaps the sister of Ambrose, written in 233 or 234 A.D, dealing with prayer in general and the Lord's Prayer in particular. In it, Job is held up as "the athlete of virtue." It reveals more clearly than any of his other writings the depth and warmth of Origen's religious life.

The introduction opens with the statement that what is impossible for human nature becomes possible by the grace of God and the work of Christ and the Holy Ghost in our prayers and lives. Such is the case with prayer. We pray to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

b. **Exhortation to Martyrdom (*Exhortatio ad Martyrium*).** He wrote it in Caesarea of Palestine in 235 A.D. at the beginning of the persecution of Maximianus. He addressed it to Ambrose and Protocotius the priest of Caesarea, who were cast in prison. He declares martyrdom as his sweet desire that his soul demanded.

He explains that by martyrdom, a man can offer himself as a true priest in sacrifice to God, for "Just as Jesus redeemed us by His precious blood, so by the precious blood of the Martyrs others may also be redeemed. Martyrdom is "a golden work," "the cup of salvation."

This work may be divided into five parts:

a. Remaining steadfast in tribulation, because after a short time of suffering our reward will be eternal (chs. 1-2). Martyrdom is a duty of every true Christian because all who love God wish to be united with Him (chs. 3-4). Only those can enter eternal happiness who courageously confess the faith (ch. 5).

b. Apostasy and idolatry.

c. The real exhortation to martyrdom.

d. Scriptural examples of perseverance and endurance:

e The necessity, the essence and the kinds of martyrdom. The Christians are obliged to suffer such a death in order to repay God for all the benefits He bestowed upon them .

Chapters 45 and 46 deal with a side issue, the veneration of the demons and the question with what name to invoke God. The last part of the essay summarises the exhortations and admonitions for courage perseverance under duress ad danger, emphasising the duty of every Christian to stand the test in times of persecution (chs. 47-49).

(3) **On the Feast of Resurrection (*Peri Pascha*), or the Easter:** The same codex, found at Toura in 1941, that contains the "Discussion with Heraclides", also preserve fragments of a treatise of Origen "On Easter" of which very little was hitherto known.

J. Quasten says: [In his work *First Principles* Origen remarks (2,10,1): 'We ought first to consider the nature of the resurrection, that we may know what that body is which shall come either to punishment or to rest or to happiness; which shall question in other treatise which we have composed regarding the resurrection we have discussed at great length, and have shown what our opinions are regarding it' (ANF). Eusebius mentions two volumes *On the Resurrection* (*Hist Eccl.* 6,24,2). The list of St. Jerome names *De resurrectione libros II* but adds *et alios resurrectione dialogos II*. It seems that later were both combined into one. Pamphilus (*Apol. pro Orig.* 7), Methodius of Philippi (*De resurr.*) and Jerome (*Contra Joh. Hier.* 25-26). From Methodius we learn that Origen rejected the idea of a material identity of the risen, with the human, body and its parts. St. Jerome's remark (*Epist.* 70,4) that in this study Origen compared Christian doctrine with the teaching of ancient philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Numenius and Cornutus.]

d. **Letters:** St. Jerome cites four different collections of Origen's correspondence. One of them counted nine volumes. These letters perhaps are the same that Eusebius gathered into a collection, perhaps in the days when he catalogued the Origen library of Caesarea for his teacher and patron Pamphilus<sup>1</sup> edited and which

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<sup>1</sup>Eusebius: H.E 6:36:3.

contained more than one hundred epistles. Only two letters have survived complete:

I. The Philokalia contains in chapter 13 a communication with Origen addressed to his former pupil, St. Gregory the Wonder-Maker. In it Origen urges his pupils to make full use, in advancing the Christian cause, of all that Greek thought had achieved. Christianity can use the Greek philosophy as the Jews used the gold and silver they took from the Egyptians. He also asked him to persist in studying the Bible, and in prayers to understand the divine mysteries.

II. A letter addressed to Julius Africanus, in defence of Susanna as a part of the Book of Daniel, written in 240 A.D. from the house of his friend Ambrose in Nicomedeia.

# ORIGEN AND ALLEGORISM

## Origen And the Scripture

St. Gregory the Wonder-Maker praises Origen as an interpreter of the Scripture by saying<sup>1</sup>: "The Spirit who inspires the prophets... honoured him as a friend, and had appointed him His interpreter... ," "He had the power to listen to God and understand what He said and then to explain it to men that they too might understand."

Eusebius tells us that Origen spent the greater part of his nights in studying the Holy Scriptures<sup>2</sup>. It was the centre of his life<sup>3</sup>, the well-spring of his personal religious life and the instrument for striving after perfection.

He made a close study of the text, and in order to fit himself for this task he learnt Hebrew<sup>4</sup>, and made a collection of current versions of the Old Testament and composed his "Hexapla'.

## The Literal meaning

Origen discussed two problems which were faced by the early Church, concerning the Old Testament:

1 - The Jews were expecting that the Messiah would fulfil the prophecies of the Old Testament literally such as He must be their King who reigns over the whole world. Therefore, they refused Jesus as the true Messiah<sup>5</sup>.

2 - The Gnostics rejected the Old Testament, for they were scandalised by some passage which refer to God as being angry, or that He repented or changed His mind... They were scandalised because they interpreted them literally and not spiritually<sup>6</sup>...

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<sup>1</sup> St. Gregory Thaum. PG 10: 1093c, 1096a.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius: H.E. 6:39.

<sup>3</sup> Danielou: Origen, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Jerome: De Vir. Illustr. 54.

<sup>5</sup> De Principiis 4:2:1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Origen sees that these two sets of people misinterpreted the Scripture as they held the literal sense exclusively. For this reason he set his theory that there are three various meanings in Scriptures, the literal, the moral and spiritual meanings.

### **Origen's Theory**

According to Origen<sup>1</sup> the words of Scriptures should be printed in the soul in one of three ways:

1- The simple people or the uneducated should be edified by the letter itself, which we call the obvious meaning or the straightforward historical sense.

2- People at the higher level should find edification for their souls by the moral meaning, or the lessons of the texts for the will..

3- The perfect should be edified by the mystical sense with relation to Christ, or the spiritual Law, as it contains the shadow of the blessings to come.

Man is composed of body, soul and spirit, and the structure of Scripture has been planned by God for man's salvation in the same way.

Origen found in the Ark of Noah a materialisation to his theory, as it was built of three-stories. The bottom served as the foundation which refers to the literal or the historical explanation of Scripture, the higher is the spiritual or the mystical, while the middle represents the moral one<sup>2</sup>.

### **Allegorism**

According to Origen the understanding of Scripture is "the art of arts", and "the science<sup>3</sup>. The words of the Scripture are its body, or the visible element, that hides its spirit, or the invisible element. The spirit is the treasure hidden in a field: hidden behind every word<sup>4</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> De Princip. 4:2:4.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. Gen 2:6.

<sup>3</sup> Comm. John 23:46

<sup>4</sup> Hom. Levit. 4:8.

every letter but even behind every iota used in the written word of God<sup>1</sup>. Thus 'every thing in the Scripture is mystery<sup>2</sup>."

This spiritual understanding of the Scripture is a grace given to the perfect believers by Christ. For only those who have the Spirit of Jesus can understand their spiritual meaning<sup>3</sup>, i.e. to enter this chamber of eternal marriage between Christ and the soul.

We obtain this grace through praying, as we must weep and beg the Lord to open our inner eyes like the blind man sitting by the road side at Jericho (Mat. 20:30). Origen says that we must pray for we are often beside the wells of running water-God's Scripture-and we yet fail to recognise them by ourselves.

From the Law to the Gospel

The law is a shadow of the Gospel, and the latter in turn is a shadow of the kingdom to come.

In one of his commentaries on the Canticle of Canticles, Origen explains this relation between the Law and the Gospel by saying:

[When Christ came, He first stayed a while on the other side of the wall. The wall was the Old Testament, and He stayed behind it until He revealed Himself to the people. But the time come as last and He began to show Himself at the windows. The windows were the Law and Prophets, the predictions that had been made about Him. He began to be visible through them. He began to show Himself to the Church, who was sitting indoors, ie., she was engrossed in the letter of the Law. He asked Her to come out and join Him. For unless she went out, unless she left the letter to the Spirit. She would never be able to join Christ, would never become one with her Bridegroom. That was why He had called to her and asked her to leave the things she could see for the things she could not see. That was why He wanted her to leave the Law for the Gospel<sup>4</sup>.]

## **ALLEGORISM AFTER ORIGEN**

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<sup>1</sup> Hom. Jerm. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. Gen. 10:1.

<sup>3</sup> In Ezk. Hom 11:2.

<sup>4</sup> Comm. Cant. 3.

J.N.D. Kelly says:

[The Alexandrian theologians who followed them, from Dionysius to Cyril, were all to a greater or lesser extent infected with their predilection for allegory; and the same can be said of the Palestinian (Epiphanius was a notable exception) and Cappadocian fathers. Through their influence the allegorizing tradition passed to the West, and is visible in the expository writings, for example, of Hilary and Ambrose. The greatest of Latin exegetes, Jerome, though in his later days he became suspicious of allegorism, accepted<sup>1</sup>.

Origen's three senses of Scripture, deeming<sup>2</sup> that recourse to the spiritual meaning was made necessary by the anthropomorphisms, inconsistencies and incongruities in which the Bible abounded; and Augustine employed allegory with the greatest freedom, delighting particularly in the mystical significance of names and numbers<sup>3</sup>.]

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<sup>1</sup> Ep. 120:12; cf. in Am. 4:4; in Ezech. 16:31.

<sup>2</sup> In Matt. 21:5; in Gal. 5:13.

<sup>3</sup> Kelly, p. 74-5.

# Origen And Origenism

As I have offered a brief account on Origen's activities in preaching the word of God, in writing bible commentaries in abundance and in gaining some philosophers to the faith, I can say that it is extremely difficult to assess him, for even in his days many churchmen like St. Epiphanius of Salamis and St. Jerome in his later period attacked Origen's writings as heretical. They explained the mixture of orthodoxy and heresy in his writings by the hypothesis that his real intentions were heretical, but that he had introduced orthodox ideas to confuse the simple. At the same time many churchmen also insisted on declaring that he desired nothing as much as to be a loyal member of the church<sup>1</sup>.

His supporters made a huge split among the Egyptian monks, and pushed Pope Theophilus of Alexandria to commit his serious fault: The condemnation of St. John Chrysostom, the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Lastly, if the Coptic Church had excommunicated Origen during his life to prevent her members from accepting ideas, the Chalcedonian Churches took this decision after his death, in the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D.

Now, I would desire to give a brief account of his doctrinal faults, which he himself declared were introduced into his writings to deform his personality.

1- **The Pre-existence of souls:** From the time of Plato, this idea had led many thinkers astray; it seemed to them to provide the solution of this difficult problem: how can the original inequality of souls be explained without calling in question the equitable Providence of God<sup>2</sup>." According to Plato, God is not responsible; the soul chose its lot before its birth. Origen accepted this hypothesis, but he set aside Plato's idea of a transference of souls from one human

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<sup>1</sup> H. Chadwick: The Early Church, Penguin books, 1974, p. 112,113.

<sup>2</sup> Lebreton, p. 783 - 4.



body to another<sup>1</sup>, and rejected the Pythagorean metempsychosis, which teaches that human souls pass into the bodies of animals<sup>2</sup>. He states that all souls are eternal, created by God, and equal to one another<sup>3</sup>, and the world of sense is for them only a place of purification.

2- **The final restoration of the devil** and all rational beings to God's happiness and friendship. Origen was the first Christian Universalist<sup>4</sup>. In his youthful work "De Principiis"<sup>5</sup> he taught a final restoration, but he seems at least to have modified it, and exempted Satan from final repentance and salvation. J.N.D. Kelly says: [Even the Devil, it appears, will participate in the final restoration. When Origen was taken to task on this point, he indignantly protested, according to his later champion Rufinus<sup>6</sup>, that he had held no such theory. But the logic of his system required it, since otherwise God's dominion would fall short of being absolute and His love would fail of its object; and the doctrine is insinuated, if not explicitly taught, in his writings<sup>7</sup> as well as taken for granted by his adversaries<sup>8</sup>.<sup>9</sup>.]

In commenting on the Pauline phrase "body of Christ", Origen says that this body "is all mankind-rather perhaps the totality of every created thing<sup>10</sup>."

### **3 - The mode of the resurrection:**

According to Origen, God is Spirit, and all representation of Him under human form or attributes is untrue to His real nature<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Contra Celsum 4:17.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 5:49; 8:30.

<sup>3</sup> De prin. 2.96.

<sup>4</sup> Schaff :Hist. of the Church vol. 2, p. 611.

<sup>5</sup> De Principiis 1:6:1,2.

<sup>6</sup> De adult. lib. Orig. PG 17:624 f.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. De Princ. 1:6:3.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Jerome, c. Joh. Hieros.16.

<sup>9</sup> Kelly, p. 474.

<sup>10</sup> Eric G. Joy: the Church, S.P.C.K, 1977, p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> J.F. Bethune - Baker: An Introduction. of the Early Hist. of Christian Doctrine, 1920, p152.

Jestinian in his letter to Mannas charged Origen with affirming that "in the resurrection the bodies of men rise spiracle. This charge is not yet confirmed, for Origen in his writings was defending the Church doctrine in the resurrection of the body against two different ideas:

a - The crude literalism which pictured the body as being reconstituted, with all its physical functions on the last day.

b - The perverse spiritualism of the Gnostics and Manichees, who proposed to exclude the body from salvation.

The explanation he advanced<sup>1</sup> started with the premises that "the material substream" of all bodies, including men, is in a state of constant flux, its qualities changing from day to day, whereas they all possess a "distinctive form" which remains unchanged. The development of a man from childhood to age is an illustration, for his body is identically the same throughout despite its complete physical transformation; and the historical Jesus provides another, since His body could at one time be described as without form or comeliness (Is 53:2), while at another it was clothed with the splendour of the Transfiguration<sup>2</sup>.

Tixeront states that these Origenist doctrines had not much importance especially in the East, but their effects were felt in the Latin Church<sup>3</sup>. St. Demetrius Pope of Alexandria condemned Origen and his teachings in a local council. St. Theophilus, Pope of Alexandria, who, after favouring Origen's disciples, became their opponent, succeeded in having his doctrine condemned in a council of Alexandria in the year 399, prevailed upon St. Epiphanius to likewise in a council of Cyprus, in the year 399 or 401, and entered into correspondence with St. Jerome for the purpose of persuading him to translate into Latin his own paschal and synodal letters on the subject.

In the West, St. Jerome at first intensely admired Origen, and St. Ambrose had largely drawn from Origen's writings. It was chiefly Rufinus, however, who by his translation of the "De Principiis (Pari-

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<sup>1</sup> Sel. in Ps. 1:5.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, p. 471.

<sup>3</sup> Tixeront: History of Dogmas, 1914, vol. 2, p. 333.

Arkhon)" in the year 397 A.D., contributed to spread abroad in the West the Origenist doctrines<sup>1</sup>. These doctrines soon found many supporters among priests, monks, and especially among the laity<sup>2</sup>. These doctrines - in a way or another - had their effects on St. Augustine<sup>3</sup> and on Orosius<sup>4</sup> which were held in the name of God's mercy and of the redeeming efficacy of the true faith in Jesus Christ<sup>5</sup>.

In the year 400 A.D Anastasius of Rome condemned Origen's teaching while the Emperor forbade the reading of his books<sup>6</sup>.

In 542/3 A.D. Emperor Justinian published a long refutation of Origenism as a serious heresy. In 553 A.D. this heresy was condemned in the Second Council of Constantinople.

## **THE ORIGENISTS AND THE TRAGEDY OF ST. CHRYSOSTOM<sup>7</sup>**

Origen's doctrines concerning the pre-existence of souls, the final restoration of all rational beings and the mode of resurrection contributed to bring about condemnation of Origen at Alexandria during his lifetime. He was obliged to leave his home and to settle in Palestine, where he established a School of theology. After his death his writings found those who admire them, especially in Nitria among the Egyptian monks, where Ammonius and his three brothers ( the Tall Brothers<sup>8</sup>) lived. They established and Origenist group, occupied occupied in studying the Holy Scripture. On the contrary the monks of Scetis who were very simple, involved in practical worship, looked to the Origenists as enemies of the true monastic life in the desert.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p. 331

<sup>2</sup> Jerome: Ep. 62:2; 85:3; 127:9; Anastasius: Ep. 1:3 (PL 80:16).

<sup>3</sup> Augustine: De Civ. Dei 21:17-22; De fide et operibus 1:21; Enchiridion 67,112, In Psalm 80:20 etc...

<sup>4</sup> De aebitrii libertate (PL 31:1185).

<sup>5</sup> Enchir. 112; De Civit Dei 21:26:1; 24:3.

<sup>6</sup> Anast: Ep 1,2.

<sup>7</sup> H. Chadwick: The Early Church, ch. 13; Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty: St. John Chrysostom, Alexandria 1980, p. 67-84.

<sup>8</sup> Soc. H.E. 6:7.

A dispute occurred between the Oreginists of Nitria and the Scetis monks who in their simplicity accepted "anthropomorphism" thinking that the Godhead had a human form. At first St. Theophilus supported the Origenists. In 399 A.D. his paschal encyclical contained a long attack on the naive "Anthropomorphites." The anti-Origenists answered by descending in force from Scetis to Alexandria.

Thousands of monks surrounded the Pope's residence in anger. He said to them, "when I see you I see God's face". By this wise reply they belied that he accepted their belief "anthropomorphism" for he said "God's face," and returned to Scetis. The tall Brothers blamed St. Theophilus and described him as a cowardly and faint hearted man. They began to attack him openly especially when he refused their demand to receive St. Isidore in communion. St. Isidore was a priest-monk interested in the ministry of the poor, sick and foreigners. It is said that a rich woman gave him money to spend on the needy and not to tell the Pope so that he would not use it in building the churches. The Pope took knowledge of this matter and entered into a dispute with St. Isidore, who escaped to Nitria, where the Origenists received him in reverence.

Anyhow, one of the Origenists went to Theophilus and interceded for Isidore, but the discussion ended by the prison of the Origenist. His brothers entered jail and there they restored, refusing to go out until the Pope himself came and apologised to them. They left jail after the Pope did accordingly.

In the second paschal letter (400 A.D.) the Pope attacked Origenism as a heresy. The Origenists created many troubles in Nitria against the Pope, and when he sent some bishops to discuss the matter they resorted in the Church and refused to meet them. The pope excommunicated Amoun and his brothers in a local council, and when he visited the desert some monks wanted to kill the Tall Brothers, but they escaped into a tomb while their cells were burnt. At last they left Egypt together with St. John Cassian, St. Isidore and about eighty monks<sup>1</sup> (Evagrius had died in January 399 just before

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<sup>1</sup> Soz.: H.E. 8:13.

the storm broke). They went to Palestine on their way to Constantinople to complain at court and to put their case to the Patriarch John Chrysostom.

Pope Theophilus sent a syndical letter to 17 bishops in Palestine and 15 in Cyprus, to explain the Origenist' doctrines<sup>1</sup>. St. Jerome who had once translated some of Origen's works and praised him as "the greatest teacher of the church since the apostles" now became violently anti-Origenist. He encountered the Palestinian bishop to help Pope Theophilus in his struggle against the Origenists. St. Epiphanius of Salamis played the same role in Cyprus<sup>2</sup>.

The Origenists went to Constantinople where St. Chrysostom received them, to reconcile them with their Pope. St. Epiphanius went to Constantinople where he attacked St. John Chrysostom for receiving those heretics. The Empress Eudoxia who hated St. Chrysostom used Pope Theophilus as a tool for revenge. The council of Oak was held in 403 A.D., under the presidency of Theophilus to condemn St. Chrysostom, who was exiled to Comana (Tokat) where he died on 14 September 407 A.D.

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome: Ep 92.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome: Ep 90, 92.

## HIS THEOLOGY AND THOUGHTS

1. We have already mentioned him as the establisher of the mode of the **allegorical interpretation** as a system.

Origen appealed<sup>1</sup> again and again to the Scripture as the decisive criterion of dogma. The Church drew her catechetical material from the prophets, the gospels and the apostles' writings. Her faith was buttressed by Holy Scripture supported by common sense<sup>2</sup>.

Origen believed that the dogmas are common to the Old and New Testaments; forming a kind of symphony<sup>3</sup>, and that there is no iota of difference between them<sup>4</sup>. Thus he early paved the way for the classic doctrine which St. Augustine was to formulate in the epigram: "In the Old Testament the New is concealed, in the New the Old is revealed<sup>5</sup>."

2. Origen was not like his teacher St. Clement, a philosopher who was converted to Christianity, therefore he was not so kind towards the Greek philosophy. He concentrated on assuring its falseness and insufficiency, because he was **afraid from the beauty of the philosophical expressions** that it may deceive believers.

He studied philosophy not out of love, but to preach those who had a philosophical education. In fact he gained many students from the Museum. In this he initiates St. Pantenus.

Sometimes he praises philosophy and sciences. In his letter to St. Gregory Thaumaturgus he states that philosophy looks like gold which the Hebrews took from Egypt, instead of using it in establishing the Tabernacle they made the golden bull.

He warns us from philosophy, for the pagans abused it by mixing their own errors with the truth, and this it cannot teach the

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<sup>1</sup> De Principiis 1:Praef.:10; 1:5:4; 2:5:3.

<sup>2</sup> De Principiis 3:6:6; Kelly p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> In Joh. 5:8.

<sup>4</sup> In Matt. Comm 14:4.

<sup>5</sup> Quaest. in hept. 2. q. 73.; Kelly, p. 69.

will of God<sup>1</sup>. He also declares that philosophy has no power to renew our nature.

We can use philosophy as Moses had the advantage of the advice of Jethron, his father-in-law.

He dealt with many philosophical problems, such as man's free-will, the divine Providence, the relative between God and man etc....

He did not believe in a certain philosophy, but chose what is good in every theory.

**3. The Holy Trinity:** Origen is quite familiar with the term *trinity*<sup>2</sup>. J.N.D. Kelly says: [The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are, Origen states, “three Persons” (*Hypostaseis*)<sup>3</sup>. This affirmation that each of the Three is a distinct *hypostasis* from all eternity, not just as manifested in the “economy,” is one of the chief characteristics of his doctrine, and stems directly from the idea of eternal generation<sup>4</sup>.]

He refuses and rejects the moralistic negation of the distinction of the three divine persons. That he teaches subordinationism has been both affirmed and denied; St. Jerome does not hesitate to accuse him of doing so, while St. Gregory Thaumaturgos and St. Athanasius clear him of all suspicion. Modern authors like Regnon and Prat also acquit him.

As the Father's offspring, He participates in His Godhead; He is Son of God by nature, and His nature is one with the Father's<sup>5</sup>. He issues from Him as the will from the mind, which suffers no division in the process<sup>6</sup>.

[The Three, on his analysis, are eternally and really distinct; They are separate hypostases or even, in his crude-sounding language, “things.” No doubt he tries to meet the most stringent demands of monotheism by insisting that the fullness of unoriginate

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<sup>1</sup> In Psalms 36:3,6.

<sup>2</sup> In Joh. 1:39:270; 6:33:166; In Jos. hom. I:4:I.

<sup>3</sup> In Joh. 20:22:182 f.; 32:16:192 f.

<sup>4</sup> J.N.D. Kelly: p. 129.

<sup>5</sup> In Joh. 2:2:16; 2:10:76; 19:2:6.

<sup>6</sup> De Principiis 1:2:6; 4:4:1.); Kelly, p. 130.

Godhead is concentrated in the Father, Who alone is “the fountain-head of deity<sup>1</sup>.” “But the Son and the Spirit are also in their degrees divine, possessing, though derivatively, all the characteristics of deity; distinct from the world of creatures, they cooperate with the Father and mediate the divine life flowing from Him.” This vision of “the adorable, everlasting Triad<sup>2</sup>,” of which he detected an anticipation in the thrice-repeated “holy” of Isaiah’s seraphim, was to inspire generations of later Greek theologians<sup>3</sup>.]

[The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are, Origen states, “three Persons” (*Hypostaseis*)<sup>4</sup>. This affirmation that each of the Three is a distinct *hypostasis* from all eternity, not just as manifested in the “economy,” is one of the chief characteristics of his doctrine, and stems directly from the idea of eternal generation<sup>5</sup>.]

According to Origen, the Son proceeds from the Father not by a process of division, but in the same way as the will proceeds from reasons<sup>6</sup>.

4. **God the Father** is as the absolute Being incomprehensible. He becomes comprehensible through the Logos, who is Christ. He can be recognised through his creatures, too, as the sun through its rays:

[Our eyes frequently cannot look upon the nature of the light itself—that is, upon the substance of the sun: but when we behold his splendour or his rays pouring in, perhaps, through windows or small openings to admit the light, we can reflect how great is the supply and source of the light of the body. So, in like manner, the works of Divine Providence and the plan of this whole world are a sort of rays, as it were, of the nature of God, in comparison with His real substance and being. As therefore, our understanding is unable of itself to behold God Himself as He is, it knows the Father of the

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<sup>1</sup> Frag. in Hebr. 2:3:20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 6:33:166; 10:39:270.

<sup>3</sup> J.N.D. Kelly: p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> In Joh. 20:22:182 f.; 32:16:192 f.

<sup>5</sup> J.N.D. Kelly: p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> Quasten: Patrology, vol. 2, p. 77.



world from the beauty of His works and the comeliness of His creatures<sup>1</sup>.]

Origen is very anxious to avoid assigning any anthropomorphically features to the divinity. He defends the changeless character of God especially against the pantheistic and dualistic concepts of the Stoics, Gnostics and Manicheans. In answer to Celsus, who accused the Christians of attributing change to God, he states:

[Now it appears to me that the fitting answer has been returned to these objections, hen I have related what is called in Scripture the 'condescension' of God to human affairs; for which purpose He did not need to undergo a transformation, as Celsus thinks we assert, nor a change from good to evil, nor from virtue to vice, nor from happiness to misery, nor from best to worst. For, continuing unchangeable in His essence, He condescends to human affairs by the economy of His providence. We show, accordingly, that the Holy Scriptures represent God as unchangeable, both by such words as 'Thou art the same,' and 'I change not' (Ps. 101,27; Mal. 3,6); whereas the gods of Epicurus, being composed of atoms, and as far as their structure is concerned, capable of dissolution, endeavour to throw off the atoms which contain the elements of destruction. Nay, even the god of the Stoics, as being corporeal, at one time has his whole essence composed of the guiding principle when the conflagration of the world takes place; and at another, when a rearrangement of things occurs, he again becomes partly material. For even Stoics were unable distinctly to comprehend the natural idea of God, as being altogether incorruptible and simple, and uncompounded and indivisible<sup>2</sup>.]

5. **Jesus Christ**, the Only Begotten Son admired the faith of men (Matt 8:10), while he was not admired with gold, wealth, kingdoms etc. Nothing is so precious to Him like faith<sup>3</sup>.

Faith for Him is not just a thought or some word we utter, but a practical acceptance of God's work in our lives<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> De princ. I,I,6 ANF.

<sup>2</sup> Contra Cels. 4,14 ANF.

<sup>3</sup> In Matt 10:19.

The aim of faith is to attain the knowledge of the Father, through the unity with the Son who alone knows Him<sup>2</sup>. By this knowledge (contemplation in God) the soul becomes perfect, ie, return to her original goodness.

Knowledge inflames our love, grants us perfection of the soul, its purification, and this it attains the likeness to the Son of God.

Since everything is eternal in God, this generating act is eternal also: *aeterna ac sempiterna generatio*<sup>3</sup>. For the same reason the Son has no beginning. There is no time that He was not<sup>4</sup>:

The relation of the Son to the Father is, therefore, that of the unity of substance.

Origen, who gave the Greek Christology the scientific terms, *physis, hypostasis, ousia, homousios, theanthropos*, is the first to use the designation God-man (*theanthropos*)<sup>5</sup>, to affirm Jesus' humanity against the Gnostics. He also affirmed the unity of Christ's nature. He stated that "Christ" though designated by a name which connotes His divinity, human attributes can be predicated of Him and *vice versa*. He said:

[The Son of God, through whom all things were created in named Jesus Christ and the Son of man. For the Son of God also is said to have died-in reference, namely, to that nature which could admit of death; and He is called the Son of man, who is announced as about to come in the glory of God the Father, with the holy angels. And for this reason, throughout the whole of Scripture, not only is the divine nature spoken of in human words, but the human nature is adored by appellations of divine dignity<sup>6</sup>.]

Concerning the **redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ**, J.N.D. Kelly<sup>7</sup> says that the Logos is our Teacher, Law-giver and

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<sup>1</sup> In John. 19.

<sup>2</sup> In John 1:16.

<sup>3</sup> In Jer. 9:4; De Princ. I:2:4.

<sup>4</sup> De Princ. 1:2:9 f.; 4:4:I; In Rom. I:5.

<sup>5</sup> In Ez. hom. 3:3.

<sup>6</sup> De Princ. 2,6,3 ANF.

<sup>7</sup> see J.N.D. Kelly, page 184-5

Model<sup>1</sup>; etc. by associating with Him we lose our deadness and irrationality, becoming “divinely possessed and rational<sup>2</sup>.” He is “the Pattern of the perfect life,” the Exemplar of true virtue into whose likeness Christians are transformed<sup>3</sup>, thereby being enabled to participate in the divine nature<sup>4</sup>. As he puts it<sup>5</sup>, “Discoursing in bodily form and giving himself out as flesh, he summons to himself those who are flesh, in order that he may first of all transform them into the likeness of the Word who has been made flesh, and after that may exalt them so as to behold Him as He was before He became flesh;” and again<sup>6</sup> “with Jesus humanity and divinity began to be woven together, so that by fellowship with divinity human nature might become divine, not only in Jesus Himself, but also in all those who believe and embrace the life which Jesus taught, the life which leads everyone who lives according to His commandments to friendship with God and fellowship with Him.”

Origen, exhausts the work of the Redeemer. His death, he declares<sup>7</sup>, “not only has been set forth as an example of dying for religion, but has affected a beginning and an advance in the overthrow of the evil one, the Devil, who dominated the whole earth.” From the moment of His birth His life was a conflict with the powers of darkness<sup>8</sup>. His passion and resurrection signified their final defeat, and Origen appeals<sup>9</sup> to Col. 2,15 as proving that the savior’s death has a twofold aspect, being both an example and also the trophy of His victory over the Devil, who in effect was nailed to the cross with his principalities and powers...

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<sup>1</sup> De princ.4:1:2; 4:3:12; Contra Cels. 2:52;3:7.

<sup>2</sup> In Joh. 1:37:268.

<sup>3</sup> Contra Cels. 8:17.

<sup>4</sup> De Princ.4:4:4.

<sup>5</sup> Contra Cels. 6:68.

<sup>6</sup> Contra Cels. 3:28.

<sup>7</sup> Contra Celsus 7:17.

<sup>8</sup> Contra Celsus 1:60:6:45; hom. in Luc. 30:31.

<sup>9</sup> Hom. in Jos 8:3; in Matt 12:40.

He speaks<sup>1</sup> of Jesus delivering up His soul, or life, not indeed to God, but to the Devil in exchange for the souls of men which the Devil had claimed as due because of their sinfulness. The Devil accepted the exchange, but could not hold Jesus, who proved stronger than death, in his clutches and was thus cheated of his victim.

Origen interprets Christ's death as an act of vicarious substitution or propitiatory sacrifice. He argues<sup>2</sup> that, as the Leader of the Church, Jesus is the head of a body of which we are members; He has taken our sins upon Himself, has borne them and has suffered freely for us. As a true priest, He has offered the Father a true sacrifice in which He is Himself the Victim, thereby propitiating the Father<sup>3</sup>.

In this mood Origen applies<sup>4</sup> Is.53:4 f. to Christ's passion, stating that "He too has borne our sins and has been bruised because of our iniquities, and the punishment which was owing to us, in order that we might be chastised and might obtain peace, has fallen on Him".

#### 6. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate:

[David says: "To you I have lifted up my eyes, You who dwell in heaven, "Ps. 123:1; "To You, O God, have I lifted up my soul" Ps. 25:1... How? The soul is lifted up and follows the Spirit... It even comes to be in Him<sup>5</sup>.]

[Indeed, St. Paul says, "the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts, knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God," Rom 8:26,27. The Spirit cries, "Abba, Father, in the hearts of the blessed people and He knows by careful attention our sighs in this tabernacle, sighs suitable of weighing those who have fallen or have transgressed. he intercedes on our behalf, taking on Himself our groanings because of His great love and pity for men.

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<sup>1</sup> In Matt.16:8; 12:28; In Joh.6:53:274: Hom. In Exod. 6:9; etc.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. in Lev. 1:3.

<sup>3</sup> In Rom. 3:8.

<sup>4</sup> In Joh. 28:19:165.

<sup>5</sup> On Prayer 8:2.

By His wisdom he sees that our souls have been humbles to dust (Ps. 44:45)... and so He "makes intercession with God" not by using any "groanings" but those "which cannot be utters.

And this Spirit, not content with making intercession to God, intensifies His intercession and "More than making intercession" in the case, I believe, of those who are "more than conquerors," Rom. 8:37... <sup>1]</sup>

[I will pray with the Spirit, and I will also pray with understanding. I will sing with the Spirit and I will also sing with understanding." 1 Cor. 14:15...For neither can our mind pray unless the Spirit prays first for it.. so that we can not even sing and say hymns to the Father in Christ with proper rhythm, melody, measure, and harmony unless the Spirit Who searches everything, even the depth of God (1 Cor. 2:10), first praises and sings hymns to Him...

I believe that it was a result of seeing the human weakness that is incapable of praying as one ought to pray, and realizing this, that one of the Lord's disciples when he herd the wise and mighty words spoken by Him in His prayer to the Father, said to the Lord when he had finished praying: "Lord, teach us to pray" Luke 11:1... <sup>2]</sup>

[Prayer is such a great task that it requires the Father to shed light upon it, His "first born word" to teach it, and the spirit to work within us to enable us to understand and speak rightly of so great a subject<sup>3</sup>.]

[But meanwhile Moses cries out to the Lord. How does he cry out? No sound of his cry is heard and yet God says to him. "Why do you cry out to me? Exod 14:15. I should like to know how the saints cry out to God without a sound. The Apostle teaches, "God has given the Spirit of his Son in our hearts crying: "Abba, Father! Gal. 4:6. And he adds, "The Spirit himself intercedes for us with indescribable groans." And again, "He who searches the heart knows what the Spirit desires because he pleads for the saints according to God." So,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid 2:3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 2:4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 2:6.

therefore, when the Holy Spirit intercedes with God, the cry of the saints is heard through silence<sup>1</sup>.]

[He prays for those who pray and appeals along with those who appeal. But, He does not pray for servants who do not pray continuously through Him, nor will He be the Advocate with God for His own if they are not obedient to His instructions that they "always ought to pray and not lose heart" Luke 18:1<sup>2</sup>.]

The Holy Spirit grants comfort through tribulations

[For it is not to all, but to Paul and those like him, that this present tribulation is said to be momentary and light, because they have the perfect charity of god in Christ Jesus poured out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5)<sup>3</sup>.]

7. Through love we can acknowledge God:

[We must realize how many things ought to be said about (this)love, and also what great things need to be said about God, since He Himself is "Love." For "as no one knows the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son, Who is Love Himself, except the Father. Moreover, in like manner, because He is called Love, it is thee Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, who alone knows what is in God; just as the spirit of man knows what is in man (1 Cor. 2:11). Here then the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father (John 15:26), ranges, searching for souls worthy and able to receive the greatness of this love, that is of God, which He desires to reveal to them<sup>4</sup>.]

8. **The blessings of Baptism:** Origen lays a great stress on the spiritual efficacy of baptism. He insists on penitence, sincere faith and humility as its prerequisites<sup>5</sup>. He explains that through baptism the believer is united with Christ in His death and resurrection, and that it is the unique means of obtaining remission of sins<sup>6</sup> It frees us from the power of the Devil and makes us members of the Church as

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<sup>1</sup> In Exod. hom. 5:4

<sup>2</sup> On Prayer 10:2.

<sup>3</sup> Song of Songs: Prologue.

<sup>4</sup> Comm. on Song of Songs, Prologue.

<sup>5</sup> Levit. hom. 6:2; Lucan hom. 21; Exod. hom. 10:4,

<sup>6</sup> Exhort. ad Martyr. 30.

Christ's body<sup>1</sup>. [*Baptism is named "the washing of generation," being accompanied by the renewing of the Spirit, who still broods over the water*<sup>2</sup>.]

[The Holy Spirit creates for Himself a new people and renews the face of the earth; when through the grace of the Spirit, men "put off the old man with his doings," Col 3:9, and begin to "walk in the newness of life" Rom. 6:4<sup>3</sup>.]

**Baptism and the adoption to the Father** by the grace of the Holy Spirit. On our side we must call our God, "our Father," not only by our lips but through our whole saintly life, which fits our adoption to the Father.

[Because of the "Spirit of sonship" we have learned, in the general letter of John concerning those born of God, that "no one born of God commits sin, for His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God," 1 John 3:9..., they may not say "Our Father" only half way. Such people add to their works their hearts, which are the fountain and origin of good works which lead to righteousness, while the mouth joins in harmony and confesses to achieve salvation (Cf. Rom. 10:10) <sup>4</sup>.]

**Baptism of infants:** The early church stressed seriously in demanding the baptism of children, so that grace touches their own salvation. Every human being is born in sin and for this reason it is an apostolic tradition to baptize the newly born:

[The Church has received a tradition from the Apostles to give baptism even to little ones. For since the secrets of divine mysteries had been entrusted to them, they know that there are in all people genuine defilements of sin, which ought to be washed away through water and Spirit<sup>5</sup>.]

[If you like to hear what other saints have felt in regard to physical birth, listen to David when he says, I was conceived, so it runs, in iniquity and in sin my mother hath borne me (Ps. 50,7),

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<sup>1</sup> Exod. hom. 5:5; Rom. hom. 8:5.

<sup>2</sup> In Joan. t. 6:33.

<sup>3</sup> De Principiis 1:3:7.

<sup>4</sup> On Prayer 22:2, 3.

<sup>5</sup> In Romans, book 5:9.

proving that every soul which is born in the flesh is tainted with the stain of iniquity and sin. This is the reason for that saying which we have already quoted above, No man is clean from sin, not even if his life be one day long (Job 14,4). To these, as a further point, may be added an inquiry into the reason for which, while the church's baptism is given for the remission of sin, it is the custom of the Church that baptism be administered even to infants. Certainly, if there were nothing in infants that required remission and called for lenient treatment, the grace of baptism would seem unnecessary<sup>1</sup>.]

The Church has received from the apostles the custom of administering baptism even to infants. For those who have been entrusted with the secrets of the divine mysteries, knew very well that all are tainted with the stain of original sin, which must be washed off by water and the spirit<sup>2</sup>.

9. The **Eucharist**: He told Celsus that we consume bread which by virtue of the prayer has become body, which sanctifies those who use it with a sound purpose<sup>3</sup>. He refers to the reverence shown to the Eucharist<sup>4</sup>. He designates the Eucharist the Logos Himself<sup>5</sup>.

10. **Grace** is God's power we attain freely but not without conditions.

11. **Penance and Forgiveness of Sins**<sup>6</sup>: Origen stresses on different occasions that strictly speaking there is only one forgiveness of sins, that of baptism, because the Christian religion gives the power and grace to overcome sinful passion<sup>7</sup>. However, there are a number of means to obtain remission even of sins committed after baptism. Origen lists seven of them: martyrdom, almsgiving, forgiving those who trespass against us, conversion of a sinner (according to Jac. 5,20), charity (according to Luke 7,47) and finally:

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<sup>1</sup> In Lev. hom. 8,3 SPCK.

<sup>2</sup> In Rom. hom. 5,9.

<sup>3</sup> Contra Celsus 8: 33.

<sup>4</sup> In Exod. hom. 13:3.

<sup>5</sup> In Matt. 11:14.

<sup>6</sup> Quasten, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Exh. ad mart. 30.



In other words, Origen knows of a remission of sins to be obtained through penance and by a confession of sins before a priest. The latter decides whether the sins should be confessed in public or not.

[But observe carefully to whom you confess your sins; put the physician to the test, in order to know whether he is weak with weak, and mourner with those that mourn. Should he consider your disease to be of such a nature that it must be made known to, and cured in the presence of the assembled congregation, follow the advice of the experienced physician<sup>1</sup>.]

[That the thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed..." Luke 2:35.

There were evil thoughts in men, and they were revealed for this reason, that being brought to the surface they might be destroyed, slain, put to death, and He Who died for us might kill them. For while these thoughts were hidden and not brought into the open they could not be utterly done to death. Hence, if we have sinned we also ought to say, "I have made my sin known to You, and I have not hidden my wickedness. I have said I will declare my unrighteousness to the Lord against myself" (9Ps. 32:5). For if we do this and reveal our sins \not only to God but also to those who can heal our wounds and sins, our wickedness will be wiped out by Him who says, "I will wipe out your wickedness like a cloud," Isa. 44:2..

Certainly, the Christian should be under strict discipline (more than those men of the Old Testament times), because Christ died for him... Now listed to all the ways of remission of sins in the Gospels:

First, we are baptized for the remission of sins.

Second, there is the remission in the suffering of martyrdom.

Third, the remission given in return for works of mercy (Luke 11:44).

Fourth, the forgiveness through out forgiveness of others, (Matt. 5:14, 15)...

Fifth, the forgiveness bestowed when a man "has converted a sinner from the error of his ways," James 5:20.

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<sup>1</sup> In Ps. hom. 37,2,5.

Sixth, sins are remitted through abundance of love (Luke 7:4).

In addition, there is also a seventh way of forgiveness which is hard and painful, namely the remission of sins through penitence when "the sinner washes his ben with tears, and tears are his bread by day and night," Ps. 6:6, 42:3; and when he does not hold back in shame from declaring his sin to the priest of the Lord and asking for medicine (James 5:14)...<sup>1</sup>.]

12. **Angels, demons and men** were created equal; differences even among heavenly creatures is a result of a their conduct, that depended on their own will.

God gave angels the care of all of creation; rational and irrational.

Before conversion, man subjects to demons, but after conversion he is under the care of a private angel who incites him to do good and to defend him against the evil angels.

Angels participate with us in our worship. When the church assembles, the angels of the believers also assemble with them as a hidden church.

13. **Souls pre-existed**, when they fell in sin they were clothed with material bodies and came to the world for purification by imposing punishment upon them. The sins committed by the souls in the preceding world explains the different measure of graces which God bestows on every one and the diversity of men here on earth.

Origen's doctrine of the pre-existence of souls is connected with his idea of a universal resorption. At the end the death will be conquered and all souls, even demons, will be saved. All rational creatures will be equal at the end<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps by this doctrine he tried to give a solution to the problem of the divine justice. For many philosophers were asking: Where is the divine justice, while some babes are born in good health and in luxury while others inherits diseases and poverty? Some are calm by nature while others are nervous?

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<sup>1</sup> In Leviticum hom. 2:4.

<sup>2</sup> De Princip 1:6.

It is noted that Origen (and Evagrius his disciple) who believed in the pre-existence of the soul of man declared that in Christ the Logos dwelt in the soul that pre-exists the body<sup>1</sup>. But the Alexandrians elsewhere outlined the features of the "Incarnate Logos" so powerfully that an idea of the "incarnation of souls" was excluded<sup>2</sup>.

As he believed in the reexistence of souls he regards the heavenly Church as the assembly of all the saints, having existed since before creation<sup>3</sup>.

14. **Tradition** or "the Canon of Faith" is the body of beliefs currently accepted by Christians He states that the Church tradition is handed down from the apostles and is preserved in the Church.:

[The teaching of the Church is preserved unaltered, handed down in unbroken succession from the apostles and is existing to this day in the churches<sup>4</sup>.]

15. **The Doctrine of Man:** J.N.D. Kelly states:

[Origen is a firm exponent of the theory of the pre-existence of all individual souls. In the beginning, he explains<sup>5</sup>, God out of His goodness created a fixed number of rational essences, all of them equal and alike (there was no reason for any diversity), and all of them endowed with free-will-thus he strives to defend the divine justice and the principle of liberty against the Gnostics. Since these souls were free, it rested with their own volition to advance by imitating God, or to fall away by neglecting Him, to depart from good being tantamount to settling down to evil. With the unique exception of Christ's pre-existent soul<sup>6</sup>, all these rational beings opted in varying degrees for the latter; the result was their fall, which gave rise to the manifold and unequal gradations of spiritual existence. "Before the ages," he writes, "they were all pure intelligences (νοεζ), whether

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<sup>1</sup> Comm. in Joan 20:19.

<sup>2</sup> Aloys Grillmeier: *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, London 1975, p. 381; Fr. T.Y. Malaty: *The Terms Physis & Hypostasis in the Early Church*, Alexandria 1987, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Song of Songs 2.

<sup>4</sup> *De Principiis*: Praef. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 2:9:6.

<sup>6</sup> *De Principiis* 2:6:3; cf. Jerome: *Epistle* 124:6.

demons or souls or angels. one of them, the Devil, since he possessed free-will, chose to resist God, and God rejected him. All the other powers fell away with him, becoming demons, angels and archangels according as their misdeeds were more, or less, or still less, heinous. Each obtained a lot proportionate to his sin. There remained the souls; these had not sinned so grievously as to become demons or so venially as to become angels. God therefore made the present world, binding the soul to the body as a punishment... Plainly He chastises each to suit his sin, making one a demon, another a soul, another an archangel<sup>1</sup>.”...

There are passages in his writings especially in his *Commentary on Romans*, where he appears to accept the doctrine that the whole race was present in Adam's loins and “sinned in him.” It is difficult, however, to take them at their face value, for we know that in his translation adjusted his teaching in the interests of orthodoxy<sup>2</sup>.]

16. The holy Scripture is **the book of the Church** which we receive through the Church tradition:

[By tradition, I knew the four gospels, and that they are the true ones<sup>3</sup>.]

He believes that the true understanding of the Scripture is only found in the Church:

[The true disciple of Jesus is he who enters the house, that is to say, the Church. He enters it by thinking as the Church does, and living as she does; this is how he understands the Word. The key of the Scriptures must be received from the tradition of the Church, as from the Lord Himself<sup>4</sup>.]

Origen in his exegesis of the holy Scripture refers to the tradition and to the writings of the Fathers (presbyters) of the Church. For example, concerning the parable of the good Samaritan, he writes: [*One of the presbyters said that the man who was going down to Jericho is Adam, Jerusalem is the Paradise, Jericho the world, the*

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<sup>1</sup> De Principiis 1:8:1.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, p. 180-1.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty: Tradition and Orthodoxy, Alexandria 1979, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Yves Conger: Tradition and the life of the Church, London 1964, p.83.

*thieves the evil powers, the Samaritan is Christ.*] J. Danielou says that Origen means here with "the one of the presbyters" St. Irenaeus<sup>1</sup>.

17. **The Church:** Origen describes the Church as the assembly of believers, or the congregation of Christian people<sup>2</sup>, ministered by the clergymen<sup>3</sup>.

The Church is the Body of Christ, animated by Him as an ordinary body is animated by the soul, and the believer who belongs to her is his member<sup>4</sup>.

a. The Church is the **body of Christ:**

[We say that the Holy Scriptures declared the body of Christ, animated by the Son of God, to be the whole Church of God, and the members of his body—considered as a whole—to consist of those who are believers; since, as a soul vivifies and moves the body, which of itself has not the natural power of motion like a living being, so the Word, arousing and moving the whole body, the Church, to befitting action, awakens, moreover, each individual member belonging to the Church, so that they do nothing apart from the World<sup>5</sup>.]

b. The Church is the **City of God:** He is the first to declare the Church to be the city of God here on earth<sup>6</sup>, existing for the time being side by side with the secular state<sup>7</sup>.

Enlighten by the Logos the Church becomes the world of worlds. As he believes in the universal restoration, the Church for him comprises the whole of humanity, but the whole rational creatures<sup>8</sup>.

c. There can be no salvation without this Church. Thus he states: *Extra hanc domum, id est ecclesiam, nemo salvatur*<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Origen: Lucas Hom. 34; J. Danielou: *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, p. 49.]

<sup>2</sup> In Ezek. hom 1:11; in Exod. 9:3.

<sup>3</sup> Against Celsus 8:75; in Jer. hom. 11:3.

<sup>4</sup> Against Celsus 6:48; in Matt. 14:17.

<sup>5</sup> Contra Cels. 6,48 ANF.

<sup>6</sup> In Jer. hom. 9.2; In Jos. hom. 8.7.

<sup>7</sup> Quasten, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> Hom. in 36 ps. 2:1.

<sup>9</sup> In Jos. hom.3,5.

18. He was proud that he was a **churchman**. Even when he was excommunicated he never attacked the church.

The church is the ark of salvation, receives light from Jesus Christ, has the ability to interpret the Holy Scripture.

He held fast the church tradition, and tried to use philosophy to interpret it.

He depicts a living picture of the Liturgy of Eucharist in his days, and praised Baptism as a new birth, participation in the divine nature, acceptance membership of the body of the church, return to Paradise and receiving a general priesthood.

19. Origen affirms **St. Mary's perpetual virginity** in his homilies on Leviticus<sup>1</sup>. In another place he says:

[A certain tradition has come to us to this effect... Mary, after giving birth to the Saviour, went in to adore and stood in that place for virgins (in the Temple). Those who knew that she had borne a son tried to keep her away, but Zachary said to them: She is worthy of the place of virgins, for she is still a virgin<sup>2</sup>.]

Origen represents St. Mary as the patroness of the virgins, or the Virgin of the virgins:

[It would have been unbecoming to attribute to anyone other than Mary the title of '**The First Virgins**.'<sup>3</sup>]

20. Origen alludes to St. Mary as restoring the womankind the honour it had lost through Eve's sin; in this way woman "finds salvation in child bearing" 1 Tim. 2:15. He says:

[The joy trumpeted by Ghabriel to Mary destroyed the sentence of sorrow levelled by God against Eve<sup>4</sup>.]

[Just as sin began with the woman and then reached the man, so too the good tidings had their beginning with the women \*Mary and Elizabeth).] [*Lucan. Hom. 8.*]

21. Origen interpreted the sword that would pierce St. Mary according to Simeon's prophecy (Luke 2:35) as doubts that would

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<sup>1</sup> In Lev. hom. 8:2. PG 12:493f.

<sup>2</sup> Comm. in Mat. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Comm. in Mat. 10:17 PG 13:878A.

<sup>4</sup> Lucan. Hom. 6.

invaded her on seeing her Son crucified. He stated that, like all human beings, she needed redemption from her sins<sup>1</sup>.

22. Origen speaks about the **soul's maternity**. St. Mary, as the mother of God, represents the Church, whose members spiritually bear God in their souls, Origen looked to the spiritual life of the Christian after baptism as the growth of Christ Himself within their motherly souls.

[Just as an infant is formed in the womb, so it seems to me that the Word of God is in the heart of a soul, which has received the grace of baptism and thereafter perceives within itself the word of faith ever more glorious and more plain<sup>2</sup>.]

[It would be wrong to proclaim the incarnation of the Son of God from the holy Virgin without admitting also His incarnation in the Church... Everyone of us must, therefore, recognize His coming in the flesh by the pure Virgin, but at the same time we must recognize His coming in the spirit of each one of us<sup>3</sup>.]

[Hear this, O shepherds of the churches,  
O shepherds of God.

All through time the angel comes down and announces to you that today and every day  
the Redeemer is born,  
that is Christ the Lord<sup>4</sup>!]

22. The Sacrament of Marriage and the divine grace

[Since God has joined together (a man and a woman in marriage), for this reason there is a grace-gift for those joined together by God. Paul know this, and declares that equally with the purity of the unmarried state is marriage according to the word of God a grace-gift (Origen quotes 1Cor 7:7). Those who are joined together by God obey in thought and deed the command "husbands, love your wives...." Eph 5:25<sup>5</sup>.]

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<sup>1</sup> Hom. in Lucas 17

<sup>2</sup> Hom. on Exod. 10:4.

<sup>3</sup> De Sargiusga 8:2.

<sup>4</sup> Hom. on Luke 12.]

<sup>5</sup> Comm. Matt. 14:16 on 19:3-12 (B. Dewery.

**23. Eschatology and The Kingdom of God:** Our eternal life in fact is an extension to the kingdom of God that we attain her.

[In the third century Origen developed these and kindred ideas, interpreting the kingdom of God either as the apprehension of divine truth and spiritual reality<sup>1</sup>, or (this in explanation of Luke 17,21) as the indwelling of the Logos or the seeds of truth implanted in the soul<sup>2</sup>, or as “the spiritual doctrine of the ensouled Logos imparted through Jesus Christ<sup>3</sup>.” “The intelligence (νοῦς) which is purified”, he wrote, “and rises above all material things to have a precise vision of God is deified in its vision<sup>4</sup>;” and since true knowledge, on his view, presupposes the union of knower and object, the divine gnosis of the saints culminates in their union with God<sup>5</sup>.]

24. The Destiny of the Body:

[His task was the twofold one of expounding the truth against

(a) the crude literalism which pictured the body as being reconstituted, with all its physical functions, at the last day, and

(b) the perverse spiritualism of the Gnostics and Manichees, who proposed to exclude the body from salvation.

The explanation he advanced<sup>6</sup> started with the premiss that the “material substratum” of all bodies, including men, is in a state of constant flux, its qualities changing from day to day, whereas they all possess a “distinctive form” which remains unchanging. The development of a man from childhood to age is an illustration, for his body is identically the same throughout despite its complete physical transformation; and the historical Jesus provides another, since His body could at one time be described as without form or comeliness (Isa. 53,2), while at another it was clothed with the splendour of the Transfiguration.

From this point of view the resurrection becomes comprehensible. The bodies with which the saints will rise will be

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<sup>1</sup> Sel in ps. 144:13.

<sup>2</sup> In Joh. 19:12:78.

<sup>3</sup> In Matt. 10:14.

<sup>4</sup> In Joh. 32:27:338.

<sup>5</sup> In Joh. 19:4:23f.; Kelly, p. 470.

<sup>6</sup> Sel. in ps. 1:5.



strictly identical with the bodies they bore on earth, since they will have the same “form”, or *eidos*. On the other hand, the qualities of their material substrata will be different, for instead of being fleshly qualities appropriate to terrestrial existence, they will be spiritual ones suitable for the kingdom of heaven. The soul “needs a better garment for the purer, ethereal and celestial regions<sup>1</sup>,” and the famous Pauline text, 1 Cor. 14,42-4, shows that this transformation is possible without the identity being impaired. As he explains the matter<sup>2</sup>, when the body was at the service of the soul, it was “psychic;” but when the soul is united with God and becomes one spirit with Him, the selfsame body becomes spiritual, bodily nature being capable of donning the qualities appropriate to its condition<sup>3</sup>.]

#### 25. The Last Judgement:

[n his treatment of the judgment we meet with the same characteristic tension between the desire to retain traditional dogma and the desire to reinterpret it in a manner palatable to intelligent believers.

The judgment itself will be enacted at the end of the world, and a definitive separation will then be made between good and bad<sup>4</sup>.]

[The Saviour will not appear in any given place, but will make Himself known everywhere; and men will present themselves before His throne in the sense that they will render homage to His authority. They will see themselves as they are, and in the light of that knowledge the good and the bad will be finally differentiated. Needless to say, there is no room here for millenarianism, and Origen castigates<sup>5</sup> the follies of literalist believers who read the Scriptures like the Jews and cherish dreams of dwelling in an earthly Jerusalem after the resurrection, where they will eat, drink and enjoy sexual intercourse to their hearts’ content<sup>6</sup>.]

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<sup>1</sup> Contra Celsus 7:32.

<sup>2</sup> De Principiis 3:6:6; Contra Celsus 3:41f.

<sup>3</sup> Kelly, p. 471.

<sup>4</sup> In Matt. Comm. ser. 70.; Kelly, p. 472.

<sup>5</sup> De Principiis 2:11:2.

<sup>6</sup> Kelly, p. 473.

["Each sinner", he states, "kindles his own fire... and our own vices form its fuel<sup>1</sup>." In other words, the real punishment of the wicked consists in their own interior anguish, their sense of separation from the God Who should be their supreme good<sup>2</sup>.]

[He is satisfied, however, that in fact they must one day come to an end, when all things are restored to their primeval order. This is his doctrine of the *apocatastasis*, in which his eschatology, as indeed his whole theological system, culminates, and which postulates that the conclusion of the vast cosmic evolution will be identical with its beginning<sup>3</sup>.]

[Even the Devil, it appears, will participate in the final restoration. When Origen was taken to task on this point, he indignantly protested, according to his later champion Rufinus<sup>4</sup>, that he had held no such theory<sup>5</sup>.]

[When they reach heaven, he explains, the redeemed will apprehend the nature of the stars and the reasons for their respective positions. God will disclose the causes of phenomena to them; and at a later stage they will reach things which cannot be seen and which are ineffable<sup>6</sup>.]

## 5. HERACLAS

Heraclas, is one of the most remarkable of Origen's pupils. Even before Origen, he had studied the New-Platonic philosophy under Ammonius Saccas . In a fragment of a letter quoted by Eusebius, Origen states: "*I met the latter (Heraclas), at the house of the teacher of philosophical sciences, where he had studied already for five years before I began to attend these lectures. During this time, Heraclas abandoned the ordinary dress, which he had worn previously, and put on the mantle of a philosopher which he has*

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<sup>1</sup> De Principiis 2:10:4; cf. Jerome: in Eph. 5:6.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> Kelly, p. 473-4.

<sup>4</sup> De adult. lib. Orig. PG 17:624 f.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, p. 474.

<sup>6</sup> Kelly, p. 485.

*retained until now, hoping to study the books of the Greeks as much as possible*<sup>1</sup>."

Heraclas, who devoted all his time to philosophy was invited by Origen to attend the School of Alexandria. At first he was a pupil to Origen, then assistant and finally successor to him after his flight to Palestine.

On the other hand, St. Demetrius, Bishop (Pope) of Alexandria, who discovered Heraclas' spiritual abilities to preach, catechize and guide the believers, ordained him a priest then proto-priest, giving him permission to preach in the cathedral. He converted many pagans to Christianity and showed great love towards the believers. In 224 A.D he was elected as a successor to St. Demetrius .

### **POPE OF ALEXANDRIA**

His bishopric is of interest on this account: as his people suffered persecution he visited the cities and countries throughout Egypt, strengthening them. On his visits he ordained about twenty bishops to take care of God's people . The people and the presbyters of Egypt who loved him, decided to distinguish him from the rest of the bishops by calling him, in Coptic, Papa or Pope, which means "Father." Thus, the first prelate in Christendom to bear this title was Heraclas before it was used in Rome<sup>2</sup>.

### **POPE HERACLAS AND ORIGEN**

It is said that Pope Heraclas urged the great master Origen to return to Alexandria<sup>3</sup>, but he refused, giving an excuse that the School of Alexandria was already established while that of Caesarea was in need of his care<sup>4</sup>.

### **WITH JULIUS AFRICANIUS**<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius: *H.E.* 6:16:12.

<sup>2</sup> Iris Habib El-Masry states that this title was used early as Aenianus, the second Patriarch of Alexandria, as is cited by the historian El-Maqrizi.

<sup>3</sup> Philip Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 463.

<sup>4</sup> W. Budge : *The Ethiopian Synxarium*, vol 2, p 337,338.

<sup>5</sup> Julius Afrivanus, the Christian chronographer and universal historian, an older friend of Origen, lived in the first half of the second century at Emmaus (Nicomopolis), in Palestine, made journeys to Alexandria, where he heard the lectures of Heraclas, to Edessa,

Through his virtuous life, St. Heraclas not only converted some Egyptian pagans but foreigners also. Julius Africanus, the well-known pilgrim and historian, who wrote the history of the world from its creation to 221 A.D, visited the Pope in Alexandria, and there he was converted to Christianity<sup>1</sup>.

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*Armenia and Phrygia, and was sent on an embassy to Rome in behalf of the rebuilding of Emmaus which had been ruined (221). He died about A.D. 240 in old age. He was not an ecclesiastic, as far as we know, but a philosopher who pursued his favorite studies after his conversion and made them useful to the church. He may have been a presbyter, but certainly not a bishop. He was the forerunner of Eusebius, who in his Chronicle has made copious use of his learned labor and hardly gives him sufficient credit, although he calls his chronography "a most accurate and labored performance." He was acquainted with Hebrew. Socrates classes him for learning with Clement of Alexandria and Origen. His chief work is his chronography, in five books. It commenced with the creation (B. C. 5499) and came down to the year 221, the fourth year of Elagabalus.*

<sup>1</sup> Paul d'Orleans: *Les Saints d'Egypte*, Jerusalem 1923, t. 2, p. 197.

## 6. ST. DIONYSIUS OF ALEXANDRIA

St. Athanasius calls St. Dionysius “Teacher of the Church Universal<sup>1</sup>.” He was also called “the Great,” because of his courage and steadfastness in the struggle and troubles of his life, and his zealous activity in the edification of the church. St. Basil of Caesarea refers to him as "a person of canonical authority" (*kacoclkos*). He took a prominent and important part in all the leading movements and controversies of the day, and his opinions always carried great weight, especially in Eastern Christendom. His writings are freely referred to and quoted by many fathers of the church, such as Eusebius<sup>2</sup>, St. Athanasius, St. Basil and Fr. John of Damascus.

### HIS CONVERSION TO CHRISTIAITY

Dionysius who was born in Alexandria (A.D. 190) of pagan parents, was a worshipper of stars and a successful physician.

It was his wide reading that led him to embrace the Christian faith. For once he bought some papers of the Epistles of St. Paul from an old Christian women. After reading them he hurried to her asking for more. She led him to the church and introduced him to the priest. Dionysius embraced Christianity and attended the Christian School. At first he became one of Origen's pupils then he succeeded Heraclas as the head of the school for about sixteen years (231-246).

In one of his letters, St. Dionysius states that God revealed Himself to him through his extensive readings, saying to him<sup>5</sup>: “Study anything you lay your hand on; you are competent to examine and prove everything - this gift was from the start the cause of your faith.” He accepted the vision and never abandoned the desire of reading unorthodox books. This enabled him to carry the attack into the enemy’s country.

### THE DEAN OF THE CATECHETICAL SCHOOL

He was not less than thirty, when he became head of the Catechetical School. When St. Demetrius died in 231, Heraclas, who for some years had been associated with Origen at the Catechetical School and had just been left in charge of it by him on his final retirement that year from Alexandria, was elected Bishop, while Dionysius, who had himself been a pupil of Origen there, was appointed to fill the vacancy he created. It is possible that the treatise

[*peri fesious*], was composed while Dionysius held this important post, and that a commentary on Ecclesiastes, some genuine fragments of which probably remain, belongs to the same period. The former of these is much the more valuable work, for in it for the first time a Christian undertook systematically to refute the atomistic theories of Epicurus and his followers.

He became a presbyter in 233.

## **POPE OF ALEXANDRIA**

In 247 A.D. St. Dionysius was elected as Pope of Alexandria, and had the difficult task of preserving his church in the midst of persecution.

His reign, in fact, was full of troubles, such as:

(1) In 250 A.D, the Decian persecution was raged. Decius's reversal of his predecessor's policy towards the Christians was probably due to reasons of state and expediency rather than, as Eusebius implies, to mere spite and hatred of Philippus and all his ways. Anyhow, the severity of the Decian persecution is undoubted, and it fell with great force upon the church at Alexandria. The Prefect of Egypt, Sabinus, lost no time in attacking Dionysius and his followers. Many endured tortures or death, or both. St. Dionysius waited quietly four days in his own home while the secret-service agent despatched by the prefect searched everywhere for him except his house, from which he did not stir. At last he came out, and thus exposed himself, like St. Cyprian, to the suspicions of cowardice.

The soldiers arrested him together with some of his deacons and brought back to Taposiris. One of the deacons, called Timotheus, fled from the soldiers' hands, met in the street a Christian coming to a wedding feast and told him about the Pope's imprisonment. All the people who were in the feast hurried to the prison, stormed the police quarters, making making a lot of noise. The soldiers fled in fear, leaving the gates opened, while the Pope was sleeping. He refused to leave the prison but his people insisted to carry him, from his hands and legs. They placed him on a bare-backed donkey, and went away with him to a peaceful spot in the Libyan desert, where he stayed until the persecutions abated.

(2) In 257 A.D. another persecution was conducted by the Emperor Valerian and he was exiled to Libya. In his exile he

managed not only to hold meetings and converted many of the heathen but also to exert such influence on his church of Alexandria as to keep services going there also.

In Alexandria Aemilianus, prefect of Egypt, declared himself emperor, and civil war broke out which ended in his capture by the imperial general Theodotus, who sent the rebel chains to Rome. The war, however, devastated the city and depleted the population. Plague was imminent and famine was at the door.

Because of his church position, education and wisdom he was much involved with combating heresies not only which arose in Egypt but also everywhere in the Universal Church of his days, such as the Schism of Novatius who was ordained illegally bishop of Rome, the heresy of Nepos, Bishop of Arsinoe (in Fayoum), Sabelius bishop of Ptolmais (the Five Western countries), Paul of Samosate, and the dispute over the heretical baptism between Stephen of Rome and Cyprian of Corthage.

Concerning his writings Neale states that the absence of these writings is one of the greatest loss that befell in the church history.

## **A - MEDIATOR BETWEEN ST. CYPRIAN AND ST. STEPHEN**

St. Dionysius was an important churchman, whose influence reached far beyond the borders of his own diocese<sup>1</sup>. For instance, he mediated in the heated dispute over heretical baptism between St. Cyprian of Carthage and St. Stephen of Rome.

In Asia Minor and in Africa baptism by heretics was not recognized, while in the West baptism with water in the name of the Trinity or of Christ was held valid by whomsoever performed. Before the middle of the third century, however, the difference of practice gradually became more and more a matter of controversy. In or about A.D 230 two synods were held one after the other at Iconium<sup>1</sup> and at Synnada<sup>2</sup> which confirmed the opinion that heretical baptism was invalid: and some twenty-five years later on Cyprian of Carthage convened several synods in North Africa, which arrived at the same conclusion.

To Cyprian the baptism of heretics and schismatics was invalid, for they are outside the Church and there is no salvation outside the church, for, he cannot have God for his Father who has

not the church for his mother. The penitent - in fact - was not rebaptised but baptised for the first time.

Stephen, Bishop of Rome was known to be of a contrary opinion, and a deputation of bishops from Carthage waited upon him. He refused to see them, and answered an official letter by excommunicating those who did not agree with him. Severe language was now used on both sides, and other leading Churchmen of the day were naturally drawn into the discussion.

St. Dionysius, who shared Stephen's views, but not his temper tried to mediate<sup>12</sup>, he decided not to rebaptise heretics and schismatics, and at the same time it did not break with the churches who did so. Dionysius's shared in this dispute by sending letters. Fragments of five letters on this subject have come down to us, all addressed to the Church of Rome or rather to representative members of that Church, the first of them probably written in 254 when the Novatianist schism was subsiding, and the others belonging to the year 357. He stated that the circumstances of different churches requiring different methods. In his letters he concentrated on the unity of the church and among the bishops which is essential, even if there was different opinions in dealing with this problem.

After Stephen's death, St. Dionysius faced a problem, a believer from Alexandria came to him weeping begging him to rebaptise him, for he was baptised by heretics some time ago and used to receive the Communion in the Church after his repentance, but this deeply worried him. St. Dionysius could not dare to baptise him, telling him that his participation in the Communion was enough. Under his pressing solicitation and continuous weeping he wrote to his brother Xsetos, Bishop of Rome asking his advice...

It is worthy to note that St. Cyprian's view was accepted afterwards by the whole Church in the East and West.

### **WITH NEPOS, BISHOP OF ARSINOE**

On his pastoral trip throughout the countries of his see, St. Dionysius met Nepos, Bishop of Arsinoe (in Fayoum), who used the Revelation of St. John for his chiliastic views, refusing Origen's allegorical interpretation. The Pope summoned a local council in Arsinoe and explained to Nepos and his followers how the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, and that believers should not hope in an earthly



kingdom and pleasures. They were convinced by his words which were full of love.

In Alexandria, the Pope wrote two books “On Promises,” in which he says, [I am very glad to mention the faith of my children, the people of Arsinoe, their love and their understanding. For we discussed the subject with patience and long-suffering in more detail. I feel pleased that my children upon discovering their error did not consider it shame nor hesitated in declaring that. The presbyter Corasius, as a leader, gave a good proof that he was an ideal example in his love towards accepting the truth. It is a pleasure that the people of Arsinoe attributed my denial of the heresy to my sincere fatherhood.]

After interpreting chapter 20 of the Revelation mentioning the promises of God, he praised Bishop Nepos, saying: [ I love Nepos and praise his effort in seeking the truth. I praise him for setting up the hymns which his people always sing. But my love to the truth surpasses my love for him, therefore I denied his heresy.]

## **HIS WRITINGS**

Though he wrote much, his writings exist only in fragments mainly in the extracts preserved by Eusebius, Athanasius and others.

His writings deal with practical as well as doctrinal questions, and his letters show that he took an active part in all the great dogmatic controversies of his time<sup>13</sup>.

### **1 - ON NATURE**

In this work St. Dionysius refutes, in the form of a letter addressed to his son Timothy, Epicurean materialism. This work shows that he had a good knowledge of Greek philosophy and was a very able writer. He testifies in a very convincing way to the order in the universe and divine providence against the materialistic explanation of the world<sup>14</sup>.

### **2 - ON PROMISES**

### **3 - REFUTATION AND APOLOGY**

This work in four books is addressed to his namesake at Rome. For the Roman Dionysius had invited the Alexandrian One to explain himself regarding his belief in the trinitarian doctrine<sup>15</sup>.

Dionysius of Alexandria answered with the “Refutation and Apology.”

In his letter he explains the relation of the Father to the Son, which was the main point in the trinitarian controversy:

[There certainly was not time when God was not the Father ...

Being the Brightness of the eternal Light, He (the Son) Himself also is absolutely eternal. For since Light is always in existence, it is manifest that Its Brightness also exists ...

Therefore the eternal Brightness shines forth before Him, and co-exists with Him, in that, existing without a beginning, and always begotten. He always shines before Him; and He is the Wisdom which says: “I was that wherein He delighted, and I was daily His delight before His face at all times” (Prov. 8: 30 ).

Since, therefore, the Father is eternal, the Son also is eternal, Light from Light .]

## **HIS LETTERS**

Eusebius makes frequent use of St. Dionysius’ letters as an important source of the history of his life and times. He sent a letter to Novatius who was illegally ordained the Bishop of Rome. In his decent letter he asked him to retire from this post even if he would be martyred, for avoiding schism is more glorious than martyrdom. “For in the one case a man is a martyr for the sake of his own single soul, but in the other for the sake of the whole church<sup>16</sup>.”

Another letter he addressed to Basilides, Bishop of Pantopolis in which he answers several questions regarding the duration of Lent and the physical conditions required for the reception of the Eucharist.

The third letter is addressed to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, in which he deals with the vexed problem of forgiveness after apostasy during persecution. In the course of his letter he recounts the following: [ I shall set forth for you this one example that happened amongst us: There was a certain Serapion amongst us, an old man and a believer, who lived blamelessly for a long time, but in time of the trial fell. This man oftentimes besought (absolution), and no one paid him heed. For indeed he had sacrificed. And, falling sick, he continued for three successive days speechless and unconscious; but on the fourth day he rallied a little, and calling his grandson to him, he said: “How long, my child, do you hold me back? Haste you, I

pray, and grant me one of the presbyters". And having said this he again became speechless. The boy ran for the presbyter. But it was night, and he was unwell and could not come. Yet since I had given an order that those who were departing this life, if they besought it, and especially if they had made supplication before, should be absolved, that they might depart in hope, he gave the little boy a small portion of the Eucharist, bidding him soak it and let it fall in drops down into the old man's mouth .]

The fourth letter (On Martyrdom) is addressed to the great master Origen<sup>17</sup> who was in prison at Tyre.

Lastly Eusebius mentions the Paschal letters written every year by St. Dionysius in which he announces the date of Easter and the beginning of the Lent. These letters took the form of pastoral letters exhorting the congregation to observe Lent and the Easter season spiritually. He also took the occasion to discuss important church questions of the time.

1. *De Seyt. Dion.* 6.

2. Eusebius quoted from his writings in his work "Praeparatio Evagelica."

3. C.L. Feltoe: *St. Dionysius of Alexandria*, SPCK, p. 9, 10.

4. C.L. Feltoe: *St. Dionysius of Alexandria*, SPCK, 1918, p. 9, 10.

5. *Third letter on baptism addressed to Philemon the Roman Presbyter. Eusebius 7: 7: 1 - 3.*

6. C.L. Feltoe: *St. Dionysius of Alexandria*, SPCK, p. 12, 13.

7. *A military policeman.*

8. Eusebius H.E. 6:40.

9. J.W. Wand: *A History of the Early Church to A.D. 500*, 1974, p 61.

10. Presented by Eusebius: H.E. 7: 22 ; Schaff: *Anti-Nicene Christianity*, vol 2, p.

11. Quasten: *Patrology*, vol 2, p 102.

12. Wand, p 108-109.

13. Quasten: *Patrology*, vol. 2, p. 102.

14. *Ibid* 1o3.

15. *St. Athanasius: Ep. de Sct. Dion.*, 13.

16. Eusebius: H.E. 6:45.

17. *Ibid* 7:39.

في هذا الفصل يوجد خطأ ما في ال Footnots غير مسلسلة ولا تطابق

Because of the waves of persecution, the sources of history differ in arranging the Deans of the School at this period<sup>1</sup> (the third century), especially among Theognostus and Pierius. Cove sees that Theognostus succeeded Pierius, while Routh<sup>1</sup> sees the reverse. He was the successor to Dionysius the Great as head of the school of Alexandria, which he directed from ca. 265 to 282.

Theognostus is an Alexandrian priest and theologian, about whom little is known, only through quotations in the writings of Photius<sup>2</sup>, St. Athanasius<sup>3</sup> and St. Gregory of Nyssa<sup>4</sup>, do we learn about this saint. Eusebius and St. Jerome do not mention him. St. Athanasius appealed to his writings in his struggle against Arianism .

A small fragment of the second book, which Diekamp discovered in a Venetian manuscript of the fourteenth century.

According to Photius his dogmatic work "*Hypotyposesis*," in seven books, followed the doctrine of Origen, especially in his subordinationism.

Read the work by Theognostus of Alexandria, entitled *The Outlines of the Blessed Theognostus of Alexandria, Interpreter of the Scriptures*, in seven books.

In the first book he treats of the Father, and endeavors to show that He is the Creator of the universe, in opposition to those who make matter co-eternal with God.

In the second, he employs arguments to prove that it is necessary that the Father should have a Son; and when he says Son, he demonstrates that He is a creation, and has charge of beings endowed with reason. Like Origen, he says other similar things of the Son, being either led astray by the same impiety, or (one might say) eager to exert himself in his defense, putting forward these arguments by way of rhetorical exercise, not as the expression of his

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<sup>1</sup>*Reliq. Sacr.* 3:408.

<sup>2</sup>*Bibl. Cod.* 106.

<sup>3</sup>*Epist. 4 to Serapion, 11; idem, Defense of the Nicene Definition, 25.*

<sup>4</sup>*Against Eunomius, 4:6.*

real opinion; or, lastly, he may allow himself to depart a little from the truth in view of the feeble condition of his hearer, who is perhaps entirely ignorant of the mysteries of the Christian faith and incapable of receiving the true doctrine, and because he thinks that any knowledge of the Son would be more profitable to the hearer than never to have heard of Him and complete ignorance of Him. In oral discussion it would not appear absurd or blameworthy to use incorrect language, for such discussions are generally carried on according to the judgment and opinion and energy of the disputant; but in written discourse, which is to be set forth as a law for all, if any one puts forward the above defense of blasphemy to exculpate himself, his justification is a feeble one.

As in the second book, so in the third, in treating of the Holy Spirit, the author introduces arguments by which he endeavors to show the existence of the Holy Spirit, but in other respects talks as much nonsense as Origen in his *Principles*.

In the fourth book, he talks similar nonsense about angels and demons, attributing refined bodies to them.

In the fifth and sixth, he relates how the Savior became incarnate, and attempts, after his manner, to show that the incarnation of the Son was possible. Here, also, he trifles greatly, especially when he ventures to say that we imagine the Son to be confined now to this place, now to that, but that in energy alone he is not restricted.

In the seventh book, entitled 'On God's Creation,' he discusses other matters in a greater spirit of piety--especially at the end of the work concerning the Son.

His style is vigorous and free from superfluities. He uses beautiful language as in ordinary Attic, in such a manner that he does not sacrifice its dignity for the sake of clearness and accuracy<sup>1</sup>.

Although he spoke of the Son as a creature, he affirmed that the derived from the essence (ousia) of the Father<sup>2</sup>.

## God

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<sup>1</sup>Quasten: *Patrology*, vol 2, p. 109-110.

<sup>2</sup>Everett Ferguson: *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 1990, p.894.

Theognostus, master of the school of Alexandria in the second half of the third century, declared<sup>1</sup> that the Son's essence (*ousia*) is derived not out of nothingness, but out of the Father's *ousia*, as radiance comes from light and vapour are neither identical with the sun or with water nor alien from them, so the *ousia* of the Son is neither identical with nor alien from the Father. He is an effluence of the Father's *ousia*, however, He suffers no partition in the process.

### Was Pierius Origenist?

The deans of Alexandria: Dionysius, Theognostus and Pierius have long been regarded as followers of Origen, while St. Peter has been as the one who first broke ranks, who turned against the famous teacher or against his teaching<sup>2</sup>.

Tim Vivian says<sup>3</sup>, [Undoubtedly, Theognostus was Origenist in his teaching; Photius's censure of him shows this. But with regard to the details of that Origenism, Photius must be used with extreme caution. So little is known about Theognostus or his work that very little can be said. Radford observes that he was appealed to by both Origenists and Arians, and quotes Diekamp; "The mind of Theognostus, like that of Origen, worked alternately on two lines, one leading to Arianism, the other to *Homoousianism*<sup>4</sup>."] We have to put in our consideration that St. Athanasius calls Theognostus an excellent teacher<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>*St. Athanasius: De Decretis 25.*

<sup>2</sup>*Tim Vivian: St. Peter of Alexandria, Bishop and Martyr, Philadelphia, 1988, p. 111; Bienert: Dionysius von Alexandrien: Zur Frage des Origenismus im dritten Jahrhundert, Berlin, 1978,1-2.*

<sup>3</sup>*Tim Vivian: St. Peter of Alexandria, Bishop and Martyr, Philadelphia, 1988, p. 115.*

<sup>4</sup>*L.B. Radford: Three Teachers of Alexandria: Theognostus, Pierius and Peter, Cambridge, 1908, p. 18, 23.*

<sup>5</sup>*De decretis 25.*

*For more study: A. Harnack: Die Hypotyposen des Theognost (TU 24:3). Leipzig, 1903, 73-92.*

## 8. PIERIUS

He was an educated presbyter, an eminent exegete and preacher. According to Eusebius, he was “noted for his life of extreme poverty and for his learning in philosophy. He was exceedingly well practised in the deeper study of divine things and in expositions thereof, as well as in public discourses in church<sup>1</sup>.”

He was the teacher of the Martyr Pamphilus, a great admirer of Origen, a presbyter and theological teacher at Caesarea in Palestine. St. Jerome calls him “Origen Junior,” as he writes:

Pierius, presbyter of the church at Alexandria, in the reign of Carus and Diocletian, at the time when Theonas ruled as bishop in the same church, taught the people with great success and attained such elegance of language and published **so many treatises on all sorts of subjects (which are still extant)** that he was called Origen Junior. He was remarkable for his self-discipline, devoted to voluntary poverty and thoroughly acquainted with the dialectic art. After the persecution, he passed the rest of his life at Rome. There is extant a long treatise of his *On the Prophet Hosea*, which from internal evidence appears to have been delivered on the vigil of Passover<sup>2</sup>.

St. Jerome's report that he passed the rest of his life at Rome does not contradict other testimonies that he suffered for his faith at Alexandria; Photius states, “According to some, he suffered martyrdom, according to others, he spent the rest of his life in Rome after the persecution<sup>3</sup>.” Most probably, both statements are true. He suffered, but did not die, in the persecution of Diocletian<sup>4</sup>.

Deans who succeeded Pierius were Arshelaus, Peter the Last Martyr, Serapion, bishop of Themius, Macarius, Didymus The Blind.

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<sup>1</sup>*Eusebius: H.E. 7:32:27 (LCL).*

<sup>2</sup>*De viris illustrib. 76 (LNPF).*

<sup>3</sup>*Bibl. cod. 119*

<sup>4</sup>*J. Quasten: Patrology, vol. 2, p. 111.*

## HIS WRITINGS<sup>1</sup>

St. Jerome states that Pierius published many treatises on all sorts of subjects.

1. St. Jerome refers to a long treatise *On the Prophet Osee*. By the term, treatise (*tractatus*), St. Jerome apparently means sermon, since he states that it was delivered on the vigil of Easter.

2. Photius read a work of Pierius containing twelve *logio*. He said, The style is clear and brilliant, and so to say, spontaneous; there is nothing elaborate about it, but as it were unpremeditated, it flows along evenly, smoothly and gently. The work is distinguished by a wealth of argumentation. It contains much that is foreign to the present institutions of the Church, but is possibly in accordance with older regulations. In regard to the Father and the Son his statements are orthodox, except that he asserts that there are two substances and two natures, using these terms (as is clear from what follows and precedes the passage) in the sense of hypostasis, not in the sense given by the adherents of Arius. But in regard to the Holy Ghost his views are dangerous and impious; for he declares that His glory was less than that of the Father and the Son.

3. *On St. Luke's Gospel*: Photius said,

There is a passage in the treatise entitled *On St. Luke's Gospel*, from which it can be shown that the honor and dishonor of the image is the honor and dishonor of the prototype. It is hinted, in agreement with Origen's absurd idea, that souls have a pre-existence.

4. *On Easter and the prophet Hosea*. The author discusses the Cherubim made by Moses and Jacob's pillar.

5. *On the Mother of God*.

6. *The Life of St. Pamphilus*. It is an eulogy on his pupil, who was martyred in A.D 309.

### Was Pierius Origenist?

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<sup>1</sup>For more details see L.B. Radford: *Three Teachers of Alexandria: Theognostus, Pierius and Peter*, Cambridge, 1908, p. 44-57; J. Quasten: *Patrology*, vol. 2, p. 111-113.



As we have said, the deans of Alexandria: Dionysius, Theognostus and Pierius have long been regarded as followers of Origen, while St. Peter has been as the one who first broke ranks, who turned against the famous teacher or against his teaching<sup>1</sup>.

Photius accused Pierius of subordinationism and believing in the pre-existence of souls. Tim Vivian says that Photius anti-Origenist must be used with extreme caution<sup>2</sup>. Radford in his discussion of Pierius is almost wholly dependent on Photius, yet he never discusses Photius's bias. He also said, [Once again Photius must be trusted only in a general sense - that is, Pierius was undoubtedly Origenist - but when Photius reports that Pierius spoke of two "ousia" and two "physeis," considerable skepticism is warranted. Pierius was known later as "Origen the Younger," and Bienert, following Harnack, says that this shows "how alive was the heritage of Origen in the Alexandrian Church<sup>3</sup>.]

St. Epiphanius mentions a church dedicated to Pierius in Alexandria<sup>4</sup>. His feast day in the Western Church November 4.

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<sup>1</sup>*Tim Vivian: St. Peter of Alexandria, Bishop and Martyr, Philadelphia, 1988, p. 111; Bienert: Dionysius von Alexandrien: Zur Frage des Origenismus im dritten Jahrhundert, Berlin, 1978,1-2.*

<sup>2</sup>*Tim Vivian: St. Peter of Alexandria, Bishop and Martyr, Philadelphia, 1988, p. 115.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid, 116.*

<sup>4</sup>*Everett Ferguson: Encyclopaedia of Early Christianity, 1990, p. 734.*

## 9. ST. DIDYMUS THE BLIND

St. Didymus was born about the year 313 A.D; he had lost his sight at the age of four. He had never learned to read in school, but through his eagerness for education he invented the engraved writing to read with his fingers, fifteen centuries before Braille used it. He also memorized by heart the entire Holy Bible and the church doctrines.

St. Athanasius did not hesitate to place him in the highly responsible position as Head of the School<sup>1</sup>, and there he labored for half a century (346-398 A.D). Among his pupils were St. Gregory the Nazianzen, St. Jerome, Rufinus and Palladius. St. Jerome mentioned him repeatedly as his “magister<sup>2</sup>”, praised his learning, and testified to his influence on the divines of his time in the West as well as in the East<sup>3</sup>. Rufinus<sup>4</sup> calls him a “prophet” and “apostolic man.”

### HIS ASCETICISM

Didymus maintained a cell at Cellia,<sup>5</sup> the adjunct to the Nitrian monastic administration and the location of many of the more accomplished solitaries<sup>6</sup>.

Apparently it was at Cellia that he was visited and instructed by Anthony<sup>7</sup> before the latter’s death in 356 and later seen by visitors visitors in 394-395.<sup>8</sup> Palladius says he met him four times in the 10 years before 398, when he died at 85.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rufinus H.E. 2: 7

<sup>2</sup> Epist. 50: 4; 84: 3; *Comm. in Osee proph., prol., Comm. in Epist. ad Ephcs. prol.*

<sup>3</sup> *Liber de Spir. Sanc., Praef. ad Paulin.*

<sup>4</sup> Rufinus: *Apol. in Hier.* 2: 25

<sup>5</sup> *H. mon. (Gk)* 20.7, 12 (*contra N. Russell/Ward* 1981, 136 n. 7).

<sup>6</sup> *Jon F. Dechow: Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity, Mercer, 1988, Page 159-161.*

<sup>7</sup> *Pall. H. Laus.* 4.3.

<sup>8</sup> *H. mon. (Gk)* 20.12.

<sup>9</sup> *H. Laus.* 4.1. *But Jerome, in 392, says he was past 83 (Vir. ill. 109 [PL 23:743B]), Jon F. Dechow: Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity, Mercer, 1988, Page 159-161.*

It is not only by his learning that St. Didymus attracted his contemporaries; but by his asceticism as well. He lived almost a hermit's life. St. Anthony visited him several times and St. Palladius paid him four visits during a period of ten years. He relates these two stories concerning him<sup>1</sup>:

1- Once when he tried to make me say a prayer in his cell and I was unwilling, he told me this story: Into this cell Anthony entered for the third time on a visit to me. I besought him to say a prayer and he instantly knelt down in the cell and did not make me repeat my words, giving me by his action a lesson in obedience. So if you want to follow in the steps of his life, as you seem to, since you are solitary and living away from home to acquire virtue lay aside your contentiousness.

2- He told me this also: "As I was thinking one day about the life of the wretched Emperor Julian - and by reason of my thoughts I had not tasted bread even up to late evening - it happened that I saw in a trance white horses running with riders and proclaiming, "Tell Didymus, today at the seventh hour Julian died. Rise then and eat", they said, "and send to Athanasius the Bishop,

that he too may know". "And I marked", he said, "the hour and month and week and day", and it was found to be so"<sup>2</sup>.

### **DIDYMUS, ORIGEN, JEROME AND RUFINUS<sup>3</sup>**

The links between Didymus, Origen, Jerome and Rufinus are useful to consider the points of similarity and contrast between Didymus and his master Origen.

Very shortly after his death, Didymus' name was dragged into the bitter personal battle between Jerome and Rufinus. Both men had known and admired him; Rufinus had studied with him for several years, and Jerome, in addition to translating the *De Spiritu Sancto*, had healed some praise upon him.

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<sup>1</sup> Palladius: *Laus. His.* ( translated by W.K.L. Clarke, N.Y 1918 ) ch. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See also Sozomen: *H.E.* 6: 2 ; Theodoret: *H.E.* 3: 24.

<sup>3</sup> Jon F. Dechow: *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity*, Mercer, 1988, Page 159-161; Aladdair Heron: *The Holy Spirit in Origen and Didymus the Blind: A shift in Perspective From the Third to the Fourth Century* [*Studies in Early Christianity, A collection of Scholarly Essays*, edited by Everett Ferguson, vol. 1, p. 252 ff].

While Jerome was careful to insist that Didymus was Orthodox, at least in respect of the Trinity<sup>1</sup>, the charge that he was too favorable towards Origen seems most to have influenced subsequent attitudes to him.

Didymus himself seems to have believed that he was loyally following Origen, and the Origen's teaching was defensible.

Aladdair Heron<sup>2</sup> states "It is apparent that Didymus has inherited from Origen not only specific points of detail, but the whole framework of thought... He has not, however, adopted the whole of Origen's teaching on the Trinity and the Holy Spirit, But only one side of it. For Origen combined this perspective with others which were to some degree in tension with it. Didymus has in effect constructed a complete system out of one part of Origen's, and so eliminated these tensions."

St. Didymus or one of his circle may have written an anonymous *Defense of Origen* in the tradition of the *Defense of Origen* by Pamphilus and Eusebius. He also defended Origen's *On First Principles* in a work now lost<sup>3</sup>. St. Jerome calls him "*the most open champion of Origen*"<sup>4</sup> and asserts his adherence to Origen's cosmology and views of the angels" fall, the preexistence of souls, the resurrection, and the final restoration (*apokatastasis*) of all things.<sup>5</sup> He echoed Origen on the "garments of skins" (Gen 3.21).<sup>6</sup> His lost work, *On Incorporeality (De incorporeo)*,<sup>7</sup> probably contained teachings about corporeality and resurrection at odds with Epiphanius" position. His importance as a spokesman for Origen is

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<sup>1</sup> *Adv. Ruf. II:16... pro Didymo, qui certe in Trinitate catholicus est.*

<sup>2</sup> Aladdair Heron: *The Holy Spirit in Origen and Didymus the Blind: A shift in Perspective From the Third to the Fourth Century [Studies in Early Christianity, A collection of Scholarly Essays, edited by Everett Ferguson, vol. 1. p. 261.]*

<sup>3</sup> *Jer. Ruf. 2.16 (PL 23:459AB), Soc. H.e. 4.25.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ruf. 1.6 (PL 23:420A).*

<sup>5</sup> *Jer. Ep. 84.3.3; Ruf. 1.6, 2.16, 3.27, 28 (PL 23:420A, 459AB, 499A, 500C).*

<sup>6</sup> *Didym. Gen. (3.21) 106.8-108.15 (SC 233 [Nautin 1976] 248-254), esp. 107 c.n. 1. See 329, 331 below.*

<sup>7</sup> *Jo. D. Parall. (PG 96:524D).*

underscored, though negatively, in the condemnation of him, with Origen and Evagrius, by the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553.

† † †

## HIS WRITINGS

The greater part of St. Didymus' writings was lost. The only major work to survive intact was St. Jerome's Latin translation of his *De Spiritu Trinitate Sancto*<sup>1</sup>. A good number have been recovered among Toura papyri. There are also grounds for regarding as his both the large work *De Trinitate*<sup>2</sup> first ascribed to him two hundred years ago by Mingarelli, and the fourth and fifth books of the *Adversus Eunomium*<sup>3</sup> of Basil<sup>4</sup>.

### 1 - EXEGETICAL WORKS

Palladius states that he interpreted the Old and New Testaments word by word. According to St. Jerome, he wrote commentaries on the Psalms, Job, Isaiah, Osee and Zacharias. Casiodorus mentions a commentary on the Proverbs. Some of the papyri discovered at Toura in Egypt in 1941 contain excerpts of considerable length from Didymus' explanations on Genesis, Job and Zacharias.

"The large number of quotations extant enables us to gain an impression of Didymus' allegoric - mystical method of exegesis which proves him a true follower of Origen. Like the Alexandrian master, he shows an interest in textual criticism and compares the different manuscripts of the Septuagint as well as the Hexapla. But his endeavor to determine the exact reading does not prevent a freely figurative interpretation. Thus he was convinced that the whole of the Old Testament contains an important Christian message and that every psalm points to Christ"<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> PG 39:1031-1086.

<sup>2</sup> PG 39: 269-992.

<sup>3</sup> Pg 29: 671-768.

<sup>4</sup> Aladdair Heron: *The Holy Spirit in Origen and Didymus the Blind: A shift in Perspective From the Third to the Fourth Century* [Studies in Early Christianity, A collection of Scholarly Essays, edited by Everett Ferguson, vol. 1. p. 252.]

<sup>5</sup> Quasten, *Patrology*, vol 3, p 91.

He also composed commentaries on some books of the New Testament such as the Gospel of Matthew, that of John, the Acts, I & II Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians.

## **2 - ON THE TRINITY (*De Trinitate*)**

This work in three books, was composed between 381 and 392 A.D., survived perhaps as it was not marred by Origenism.

## **3 - ON THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Greek original has been lost, while a Latin translation is extant.

The fact that the *De Spiritu Sancto* survives only in St. Jerome's translation, which was completed ca. 387, raises a preliminary question. ***How far is the translation reliable?***

St. Jerome appears to have been almost painfully precise in his rendering, anxious to reproduce the Greek as accurately as possible, even including explanatory comments where it might have been easier to paraphrase<sup>1</sup> retaining Greek terms<sup>2</sup> and generally using the most literal Latin equivalents throughout. Moreover he makes it clear in his preface that his noble motive was to show how other Latin writers (and by this he means Ambrose in particular) had made unacknowledged borrowings from Greeks, and that his work is to be taken as a translation, not as something of his own. It is also perhaps significant that although Jerome made great play with the inaccuracies of Rufinus' work on the *De Principiis*, Rufinus does not seem to have felt able to hurl the same charge back at him in respect of the *De Spiritu Sancto*. (He did claim in his preface to the *De Principiis* that he had followed Jerome's example in improving minor blemishes in Origen; but that is a different matter!) Given Jerome's brilliance as a translator, his avowed motive, and the internal evidence of the text, we may feel confident that it is reliable.

It has commonly been estimated that the original date of writing this work as in the 370s, and so as being roughly midway between Athanasius' *Letters to Serapion* (358/9A.D) and *the Council*

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<sup>1</sup> 1044C; 1048A; 1075D.

<sup>2</sup> 1069D; 1081D.

of *Constantinople* (381 A.D), and perhaps a little earlier than Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto* (ca. 375). More recently the suggestion has been advanced that it should be placed much earlier, even before the *Letters to Serapion*. In that event it would claim to rank as the first full-scale defense of the divinity of the Holy Spirit; and this in turn would demand a re-evaluation of Didymus' originality and significance. The arguments in favor of this re-dating are not however very strong, and on balance the period around 370 A.D seems more probable.

The central theme of the work is that the qualities and nature of the Holy spirit are identical with those of the Father and the Son, and differ *toto caelo* from those of all created beings. Didymus' conception of the character of this contrast between divine and creaturely being is thus fundamental to the entire argument.

#### **4- AGAINST THE MANICHAEANS**

Manichaean asceticism was seen by the Church of Egypt as a dangerous perversion of an exalted form of Christian living. Thus, a circular letter was issued and composed around 300 A.D. by the Bishop of Alexandria himself, probably, Theonas, Patriarch of Alexandria from 288-300. Athanasius' writings reveal a vigorous attack upon Manichaeism. In many of his writings, Didymus of Alexandria (c. 313-398) attacked Manichaeism, and in addition, he is the author of a short treatise *Against the Manichaeans*.

This treatise is extant in Greek and consists of 18 short chapters.

#### **5 - OTHER WORKS**

In his work "*On the Trinity*" St. Didymus refers to another work by his pen which he calls "*The First Word*," he also refers to his treatise "*Sanctarum Volumen*" in his work "*On the Holy Spirit*" 5, 12. His (lost) *Book of Sects (Volumen sectarum)*<sup>1</sup> suggests there was a comprehensive Origenist heresiology.

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<sup>1</sup> Mentioned in *Spir. 5, 21 (PG 39:1037B, 1052B)*.



According to Socrates<sup>1</sup>, Didymus devoted a work to the defense and exposition of Origen's "*On First Principles*".

Fr. John Damascene<sup>2</sup> mentions two others works of Didymus "*Ad Philosophum*" and "*De Incorpora*."

Some works preserved under other names of the Fathers, were dictated by him<sup>3</sup>.



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<sup>1</sup> Socrates: H.E. 4: 25.

<sup>2</sup> Socra Parallela PG 96: 248, 524.

<sup>3</sup> See Quasten, vol 3, p 89-90.

# HIS THEOLOGY AND THOUGHTS

## THE HOLY TRINITY

Strongly anti-Arian<sup>1</sup> and anti-Manichean,<sup>2</sup> Didymus was orthodox on the Trinity,<sup>3</sup> the Holy Spirit,<sup>4</sup> and the soul of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

**St. Didymus of Alexandria** asserts the single will of the Holy Trinity<sup>6</sup>. **St. Cyril**<sup>7</sup> confirms the unity of the Holy Trinity's activity; for the Father works but through the Son in the Spirit; and the Son works, but as the power of the Father, since His individual being is from the Father and in the Father; and the Holy Spirit works, because He is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. experienced by Christ that "*neither befit the godhead nor flesh which is without a soul.*"

## CHRISTOLOGY<sup>8</sup>

St. Didymus apparently first thought in terms of a *Logos-sarx* Christology. In his controversy with Arians and with Apollinarianism and Docetism, he was led to teach the full reality of Christ's humanity. In particular he saw the need for emphasis on the soul of Christ as things were

St. Didymus considered the soul in its role as a physical factor and reached towards an understanding of its theological aspect: its capacity to bear the original image of God and to offer complete obedience to God.

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<sup>1</sup> *Didym. Eun.* 4-5 (PG 29:671-774).

<sup>2</sup> *Didym. EcclT.* (9.9a) 274.18-275.6 (PTA 24:8-10), *Man.* (PG 39:1085-1110), and occasional references in *Trin.* (PG 39:269-992) and *Didym./Jer. Spir.* (LT, PG 39:1031-1086; PL 23:101-154).

<sup>3</sup> *Trin.*, e.g., 2.5.1, 2.6.4, 2.8.4; *Spir.* 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> *Didym. Trin.*, e.g., 1.18-19, 27, 31; 2.5-6, 10, 23; 3.1; *Spir.*, e.g., 4, 9, 28, 34, 36-37.

<sup>5</sup> *Didym. Trin.* 3.2.27; 3.6, 12-13, 21; *Spir.* 52; *Ps.* (PG 39:1233A-C, 1284C, 1465C).

<sup>6</sup> *De Trinit.* 2:1.

<sup>7</sup> *Dial. 9 de Trinit; Comm. on St. John.*

<sup>8</sup> Michael O'Carroll: *Verbum Caro*, Collegeville, 1992, p. 48.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

St. Didymus said that He who filled all creatures had to be of a different *substantia* than all other creatures<sup>1</sup>. He believes in the Old Testament had received grace from no less than “the Spirit, who is inseparable from the Father and the Son<sup>2</sup>.”

## GOD AND CREATURES<sup>3</sup>

Underlying all that Didymus says is *first of all a twofold contrast between the being of God and that of creatures. God “is simple and of an uncompounded and spiritual nature, and has neither ears nor organs with which He sends forth a voice, but is a unique and incomprehensible substance, not composed of members or parts<sup>4</sup>.”* This does not apply to any created being, not even the invisible<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, God is infinite, whereas all created beings have a nature which is circumscribed and limited, the visible by place and the invisible by the nature of their being<sup>6</sup>. There is thus a distinction among creatures between the visible and the invisible<sup>7</sup>; but more radical still is the ultimate ontological contrast between God and creatures of all kinds.

From the nature of this fundamental contrast follow three other differences which he specially emphasizes.

1. The being of God is “simple.” God is by His very nature Goodness, Holiness, Wisdom and so on. What He has, He is by definition: there is no room in his “simplicity” for any attribute or quality which is not inherent in His own Being, not simply an aspect of Himself. God “*makes those good to whom He imparts Himself, Himself not having been made good by another, but subsisting (sc. As*

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<sup>1</sup> Spirit 8 PG 39:1040.

<sup>2</sup> Didym: Spirit 43 PG 39:1071.

<sup>3</sup> Alasdair Heron: *The Holy Spirit in Origen and Didymus the Blind: A shift in Perspective From the Third to the Fourth Century* [Studies in Early Christianity, A collection of Scholarly Essays, edited by Everett Ferguson, vol. 1. p. 265.]

<sup>4</sup> PG 39:1064B.

<sup>5</sup> PG 39:1037A.

<sup>6</sup> PG 39:1037C.

<sup>7</sup> PG 39:1035C.

Good)<sup>1</sup>". The Son "*is sanctity*<sup>2</sup>", "*is Himself... the fullness of all good things*<sup>3</sup>". The Holy Spirit is "*the fullness of the gifts of God*", "*substantially*", "*the substance of sanctification*<sup>4</sup>." Creatures on the other hand do not possess holiness, goodness or wisdom out of their own substance or nature, but "*through communication*<sup>5</sup>" from another. Even "*the angels are holy by participation in the Holy Spirit and by the indwelling of the Only-begotten Son of God, who is Holiness and the Communication of the Father... not of their own substance... but by participation in the Holy Trinity*<sup>6</sup>."

Similar to his master, Origen, St. Didymus states that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit possess their attributes substantially, whereas creatures only receive good qualities as "accident<sup>7</sup>." All creatures are accordingly changeable<sup>8</sup>, whereas the Father, Son the Holy Spirit are not<sup>9</sup>.

2. Because God possesses His attributes by His very nature, He cannot lose them or be deprived of them: they belong to Him immutably and unchangeable. Any being on the other hand which must receive qualities from elsewhere - and such are all creatures - is necessarily capable of change and alteration<sup>10</sup>. What is unchangeable is eternal; what is mutable, creaturely; and so no creature is unchangeable or eternal<sup>11</sup>. What can be altered must also have been made and have a beginning, whereas what is incorruptible is also eternal<sup>12</sup>. So Didymus repeatedly asserts of all three divine persons that they are incorruptible,

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<sup>1</sup> PG 39:1036D.

<sup>2</sup> PG 39:1038C.

<sup>3</sup> PG 39:1077C.

<sup>4</sup> PG 39:1036A.

<sup>5</sup> PG 39:1038C; 1052A.

<sup>6</sup> PG 39:1038C.

<sup>7</sup> *De Principiis* 1:8:3.

<sup>8</sup> *De Principiis* 1:2:4.

<sup>9</sup> *De Principiis* 1:3:4.

<sup>10</sup> PG 39:1035C.

<sup>11</sup> PG 39:1044Df.

<sup>12</sup> PG 39:1083Df.

immutable, unalterable<sup>1</sup>, while every creature is by nature mutable<sup>2</sup>. This was indeed the reason why the devil could fall<sup>3</sup>, while the angels who did not remained loyal through obedience, not because of inherent incapacity to change<sup>4</sup>.

3. A third point of difference, closely bound up with the preceding ones, is, in St. Jerome's terminology, that the nature of God is *capabilis*, that of creature is *capax*. St. Jerome himself seems to have felt that these expressions would be less than transparent to his Latin readers, for he added a word of explanation at 1044C.D; "He calls *capabilis* a substance which is received by several others, and gives them a part in itself; and *capax* one which is filled through the communication of another substance, and which, receiving another substance (sc. into itself) is itself not received (sc, by another)."

### **CAPABILIS AND CAPAX**

Origen states that creatures are all *capax* of good and evil<sup>5</sup>, whereas the Father, Son and Holy Spirit do not receive anything from without<sup>6</sup>.

The reception of good gifts by creatures is enabled by the presence of God himself. Holiness is given by participation in the Spirit<sup>7</sup>; the Father and the Son indwell those who are *capaces* of them<sup>8</sup>; them<sup>8</sup>; participation in holiness, wisdom and divinity - i.e. in the Trinity Trinity - is full blessedness<sup>9</sup>. The link between the *capabilis*\ *capax* distinction and the others is brought out by St. Didymus at 1036Df;

*"Everything which is capax of any good thing from outside itself is distinct from that (sc. divine) substance; and such are all the creatures. But God, since He is good, is the fountain and source of all*

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. 1035C; 1036C; 1041A; 1055C; 1977C; 1080B.

<sup>2</sup> PG 39:1036C.

<sup>3</sup> PG 39:1083C.

<sup>4</sup> PG 39:1044Df.

<sup>5</sup> *De Principiis* 1:2:4.

<sup>6</sup> *De Principiis* 1:8:3.

<sup>7</sup> *De Principiis* 1:1:3.

<sup>8</sup> *De Principiis* 1:1:2.

<sup>9</sup> *De Principiis* 1:6:2.

good things. Thus He makes good those to whom He imparts Himself, Himself not having been made good by another, but subsisting (sc. as good). Hence He is *capabilis*, but not *capax*.

So too the Only-begotten Son. . . is *capabilis*, but not *capax*. . . the invisible creation. . . is not *capabilis*, but *capax*; for if it were *capabilis* it would not be *capax* of any good thing, but would subsist by itself as simple, but (sc. in fact) it is in receipt of goodness from elsewhere.”

Similarly he argues that the Holy Spirit is not *capax*<sup>1</sup> but *capabilis* - and therefore uncreated<sup>2</sup>.

The *capabilis capax* distinction in effect sums up and focuses all the other differences between divine and creaturely being and is indeed pivotal in Didymus’ entire argument. It also shows that his concern was not merely to contrast the being of God and of creatures, but also to establish a connection between them. Because the nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is *capabilis*, creatures, who are by contrast *capaces*, may receive and participate in the divine being itself, and so share in the qualities which are inherent in God, but which they must receive from without themselves.

The metaphors of “*fountain*”<sup>3</sup> and “*fullness*”<sup>4</sup> applied to the divine persons implicitly underline the fact that created beings are in and by themselves “*empty*,” but that the divine gifts overflow to them from the being of God.

Serve to emphasize the very different respective roles of God and of creatures who must be made holy, good and wise by him.

This making holy, good and wise is not simply a matter of some external operation of God upon creatures, nor of the mere infusion of qualities into them. It is a genuine participation in God, enable by a genuine communication of himself, a real “*indwelling*” in created beings. The angels “*are holy by participation in the Holy Trinity*”<sup>5</sup>. The same language of communication, participation, filling and

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<sup>1</sup> PG 39:1036A..

<sup>2</sup> PG 39:1044C.

<sup>3</sup> PG 39:1036A,D; 1073C..

<sup>4</sup> PG 39:1036A; 1040BC; 1077C.

<sup>5</sup> PG 39:1038C.

indwelling is used throughout the work of created beings in general<sup>1</sup>. God who is *capabilis* can be really and substantially present in His creatures. That is itself a mark of His divinity, and in particular of the divinity of the Holy Spirit<sup>2</sup>, who shares with the Father and the Son this ability to “*indwell the soul and mind of man*”<sup>3</sup>.”

St. Didymus goes to some lengths to demonstrate that any devilish “*indwelling*” is purely metaphorical; that of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by contrast is to be taken literally.

## **HIS OPPOSITE OF SUBORDINATIONISM**

Alasdair states:

For the argument here (from 1054Cf ) is that the whole Trinity dwells in believers. 1065Cf: “The son is said to receive from the Father those things in which he himself subsists. For the Son is nothing other than those things which are given to him by the Father, and the Spirit is no other substance than that which is given to him by the Son”. There too, however, the context makes it clear that what is meant is the opposite of any subordinationism: giving and receiving in the Trinity do not involve either diminution or change, but the sharing of the one divine substance. Insist that where one is, all are, and that to participate in one is to share in all, as he emphasizes at 1069BC:

*“Wherever the Holy Spirit may be, there too is Christ, and from wherever the Spirit of Christ should depart, from there Christ also departs. . . If one wished to express the converse one might say: If any one is Christ’s so that Christ is in him, then the Spirit of God is in him. And this must also be taken in the same way about God the Father. If anyone does not possess the Spirit of God, he is not God’s. Again, if one wished to express the converse, one might say: If anyone is God’s, the Spirit of God is in him... All of these prove the inseparable and indivisible substance of the Trinity”<sup>4</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. 1035C; 1039C; 104BC; 1054C; 1055C; 1078A; 1078C.

<sup>2</sup> PG 39:1054Cf.

<sup>3</sup> PG 39:1082C.

<sup>4</sup> Alasdair Heron: *The Holy Spirit in Origen and Didymus the Blind: A shift in Perspective From the Third to the Fourth Century* [Studies in Early Christianity, A collection of Scholarly Essays, edited by Everett Ferguson, vol. 1. p. 262.]

# SPIRITUALITY ACCORDING TO ST. DIDYMUS

## 1. SPIRITUALITY AND DWELLING OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE RATIONAL CREATURES

At 1055A St. Didymus remarks that “*in another place (sc. in Scripture) the nature of every rational creature is said to be the habitation of the Savior*<sup>1</sup>.”

## 2. GROWTH AND DECLINE OF SPIRITUALITY

The presence or the indwelling of God in believer’s life is not automatic, nor, once given, is it impossible to lose it. Not only men but all rational creatures are mutable, and can fall away; this was the reason for the fall of the devil and his angels<sup>2</sup>. So too of men.

“*The Holy Spirit is only put onto those who turn away from their faults and follow after the choir of virtues and live according to these virtues, and through them by faith in Christ. But if then through gradual negligence they begin to turn to what is worse, then they stir up the indwelling Holy Spirit against themselves, and turn him who gave him to enmity*<sup>3</sup>.”

## 3. DIVINE GRACE AND SPIRITUAL STRUGGLING

Participation in the divine nature is granted only to the “worthy” and may be withdrawn if they prove “unworthy<sup>4</sup>.”

St. Didymus speaks sometimes as if the mortification of the flesh<sup>5</sup> or the overcoming of mental “perturbations<sup>6</sup>” are preconditions for the gift of the Spirit; but he also ascribes mortification<sup>7</sup> or the

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<sup>1</sup> PG 39:1055A.

<sup>2</sup> PG 39:1083C.

<sup>3</sup> PG 39:1075C.

<sup>4</sup> *De Principiis* 1:3:7.

<sup>5</sup> PG 39:1069C.

<sup>6</sup> PG 39:1061C.D.

<sup>7</sup> PG 39:1070B.



conquering of perturbation<sup>1</sup> to the Spirit Himself. Nor is clarity greatly increased when he comments that “*those who have often received the benefits of God know that they have achieved them more by His grace and mercy than by their own efforts*”<sup>2</sup>!

St. Didymus is not in fact concerned with the issues which would only arise sharply with Pelagius; he is describing the dynamic of an ongoing interaction rather than the priorities in its beginning. In that context, he gives special prominence to two motifs: the pure heart and being worthy, which appear repeatedly<sup>3</sup>. He brings then both out very clearly:

*“The Spirit glorifies the Son, presenting him and making him openly known to those who are worthy to recognize and see him with a pure heart, and so to know him as the splendor of the substance and the Image of the invisible God. Again, the Image shows himself to pure minds, and glorifies the Father. . . The father too reveals the Son to those who have deserved to attain the goal of knowledge. . . the son himself gives the Holy Spirit to those who have prepared themselves to be worthy of his gift”*<sup>4</sup>.

## **SPIRITUALITY AND KNOWLEDGE**

The ultimate goal of this participation in the Trinity is “*blessed and eternal life among the sons of God*”<sup>5</sup>, but it also brings a host of different gifts adapted to the individual<sup>6</sup>.

Three in particular seem however to lie especially close to the Didymus’ heart:

- knowledge and divine truth.

*“He himself redeemed them, and bore them up, and exalted them.” (Isa. 63, 9) For He bears up and exalts the saved, and raises the redeemed on high upon the wings of virtue, and through erudition and knowledge of the truth. Not only for one day or two, but for all the days*

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<sup>1</sup> PG 39:1068B.

<sup>2</sup> PG 39:1761C.

<sup>3</sup> PG 39:1042B; 1055A; 1056A; 1058C; 1063BC; 1064A.

<sup>4</sup> PG 39: 1066AB.

<sup>5</sup> PG 39:1070BC.

<sup>6</sup> PG 39:1041A.

*of eternity He dwells in them and with them, giving them life to the very end of the age, being Himself the author of their salvation. Enlightening their hearts all the days of the age, He does not allow them to wander in the darkness of ignorance and error<sup>1</sup>.”*

- Peace and joy which that knowledge brings.

This knowledge, however, is not something merely intellectual or theoretical in an abstract sense. It is rather a fruit of the divine indwelling, a participation in Him in whom knowledge itself subsists.

*“The Holy Spirit, who comes in the name of the Son, sent by the Father, will teach everything to those who are complete in the faith of Christ - everything which is spiritual and intellectual, and in brief all the mysteries of truth and of wisdom. He will teach, not like a teacher or the master of a discipline which he himself has learnt from elsewhere. . .but being himself, so to speak, the art and doctrine and wisdom. and the Spirit of truth, he invisibly insinuates into the mind the knowledge of divine things<sup>2</sup>.”*

- Authority upon demons.

*“Just as it is the fault of the fleshy to be wise about the things of the flesh, to think about those things which are corporeal, so by contrast it is the strength of the spiritual always to think upon the things which are heavenly and eternal, and to speak to those things which are of the Spirit. But the wisdom of the flesh. . .kills. . .whereas the wisdom of the Spirit gives tranquillity of mind, and peace, and life eternal to all who possess it. When they have received it they will have all perturbations and all kinds of faults, and the very demons themselves. . .beneath their feet<sup>3</sup>.”*

## **MARRIAGE<sup>4</sup>**

Didymus the Blind, in his Commentary on Ecclesiastics, found among the "Tura" Papyri, and in the eighth chapter of his

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<sup>1</sup> PG 39:1073Df.

<sup>2</sup> PG 39:1061Bf.

<sup>3</sup> PG 39:1068B.

<sup>4</sup> See Fr. Metthias F. Wahba: *The Doctrine of Sanctification in relation to marriage according to St. Athanasius, Ottawa, 1993, ch. II, p. 99-100*

Contra Manichaeus, reports in detail about a conversation with a Manichaean of the legitimacy of marriage, He explains that the body is not naturally evil, and that it was not wrong for a Christian to marry, but it was wrong for an ascetic to do so, as he had submitted himself to a different code.

## **CREATION**

As St. Didymus the Blind, who closely followed Origen's doctrine of creation, put it: "*angels and archangels and the whole of the rational creation have not had a beginning*<sup>1</sup>."

Didymus by contrast believed that the blessed angels stood fast in loyal obedience to the Trinity<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Didymus, In Genesim 76. Didymus quotes Job 38:7 a text which Origen himself uses to demonstrate that angels existed before the creation of the world. cf. Commt 15,27 GCS X 429, 14-27.*

<sup>2</sup> *PG 39:1045Af.*

## **10. ST. PETER THE LAST MARTYR**

He was born in answer to his mother's prayers, who pleaded in tears that God may grant her son to serve Him all his life. He was ordained a "reader" (Agnostos) at the age of seven, a deacon at the age of twelve, and a priest at the age of sixteen years. It is said that many times he saw the hand of the Son of God giving the communion to the believers through the hand of Pope Theona. He was dedicated so much to Bible studies that he was qualified to be the head of the school of Alexandria, and deserved to be called: "The Excellent Doctor" in Christianity.

While he was a priest he conquered Sabellius, bishop of Ptolemais, who denied the Holy Trinity, considering them as three modes of Gods' self-manifestation.

During the persecution of Diocletian and Maximianus, in 302 A.D., he was ordained as Pope of Alexandria. Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis (Assiut) made a schism in the church and ordained bishops and priests (outside his parish).

He ordained Arius a deacon than a priest in Alexandria, and when he noticed in the sermons that he denied the Godhead of Christ and His inequality to the Father he excommunicated Arius. In the prison, he warned his disciples - Achillaus and Alexander to take heed of Arius, for he had seen Christ in a vision with a torn garment; and when he asked Christ about the case He answered that Arius did tear his garment.

A large crowd surrounded the prison to save their pope, in 311 A.D. In order to avoid any blood shedding, he sent secretly to the commander to plan for his martyrdom without killing his people.

He wrote many theological treatises and letters which contain his canons, especially that which deals with those who denied faith through persecution.

Now, I shall leave the writing about some Fathers of the Alexandrian School, such as SS. Athanasius, Cyril the Great and Dioscorus, to the next chapters which deal with Ecumenical Councils and the controversy about the nature of Jesus Christ etc...

# **THE SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL**

Scholars who study the first ecumenical councils, get to know the Alexandrian theologians as leaders and pioneers of the Christian faith and thought on an ecumenical level. Their prominence was not based on any political power, because Alexandria was under the Roman empire and subsequently was ruled by the Byzantines, until the Arab conquest of Egypt. Their strength was based on their deep spiritual, pious, theological and biblical thought and studies.

The Alexandrian fathers were not looking for leading positions for personal gains, but it was the openness of their hearts with divine love and their deep studies that attracted many people to be admitted to the school of Alexandria and to the Egyptian desert, where they learned the Alexandrian theology and were introduced to the Ascetic life by the Egyptian monks. The Copts, by their adherence to the Orthodox (true) faith since early Christianity, played a positive role in solving many theological problems in both the east and the west. They did not interfere in other churches problems, but because of their spirit of love and unity they were called upon and consulted by other churches.

The emperors accepted the Christian faith and the waves of persecution calmed down, the heretics found a great opportunity to spread their adverse teachings, especially Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Apollinarius etc.. It became imperative for the Alexandrian fathers to play a positive role in trying to win back these heretics to the true faith in long suffering, but not on the account of the evangelical church faith.

Now, I will limit my writing to role played by certain Alexandrian fathers in the Ecumenical Councils, leaving aside two separate chapters for St. Dioscorus and the position taken by the Council of Chalcedon because of its importance and of how the Chalcedonian Churches perceive us, and because of some who do not understand the truth of our belief in the nature of Jesus Christ.

## **POPE ATHANASIOS THE APOSTOLIC AND THE COUNCIL OF NICEA:**

In our book: "The Coptic Orthodox Church as a Church of Erudition and Theology", I dedicated a special chapter on Pope Athanasios and Arianism . I will limit myself here to what St. Gregory of Nazianzen said, "When I praise Athanasios, virtue itself is my theme; for I name every virtue as often as I mention him he possessed all virtues. He was the true pillar of the church. His life and conduct was an example for Bishops, and his doctrine represents the Orthodox creed".

St. Athanasios was ordained Patriarch (Pope) of Alexandria in 328 A.D., and he presided over the church for forty six years, of which over 17 years were spent in exile on account of his vigorous opposition to the spread of Arianism, which had the support of certain Emperors. He was exiled five times.

Due to the spread of Arianism, which denied the divinity of Christ and considered Him a creature found before all times, and an instrument for creation, who played the roll of the mediator between God and the world. In 325 A.D the first Ecumenical Council was held in Nicea. Arianism also maintained that the Holy Spirit is not God but is still less God than the Logos.

It was Emperor Constantine who invited the Council, that was attended by 118 Bishops, among them was Pope Alexanderius of Alexandria, accompanied by St. Athanasios his secretary at that time. He was a young man, and as a deacon was not allowed to participate in the discussions. It wa said that the Pope ordained him a priest in order to be able to take part in the discussions. St. Athanasios entered into a dialogue with Arius and his followers and completely defeated them with his solid theological knowledge and reasoning. He wrote the creed which recited by all churches today. When the council was over, he left, accompanied by the admiration of all the bishops assembled there and by the hatred of the heretical party which raised so many storms against him.

John Henry Newman, wrote of Athanasios, "That extraordinary man...a principal instrument after the Apostles and by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been conveyed and secured to the world".

## **POPE TIMOTHY (TIMOTHIOUS) AND THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

The second Ecumenical Council was held in 381 A.D at Constantinople, at the invitation of Emperor Theodosius the great. The council was attended by 150 Bishops, tottry Macedonius who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He was a follower of Arius and managed to become the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Pope Timothy played a vital role in the council, and according to Sozomen he chaired the council. The council dealt at first very effectively with theological matters, then it discussed some administrative issues, and here the temporal pride entered the church. The council put the Church of Alexandria after the Churches of Rome and Constantinople, the former being the capital and the latter because it was the "New Rome". At this point the Pope and the Bishop withdrew from the council. This withdrawal from the council did not in any way affect our appreciation for them, we remember them in every liturgy of Eucharist. It did not affect the position of Alexandria, for we find William Worrell writing about the ecumenical movement, "The See [of Alexandria] was the most important in the church, as the city was the most important in the whole of the East. To the prestige of ancient Egypt and Hellenistic Alexandria, the reputation of Christian learning and the power of leadership were added.

### **POPE CYRIL THE GREAT AND NESTORIANISM**

On the 22nd of June 431 A.D., the Third Ecumenical Council was held in Ephesus, at the order of Emperor Theodosius the lesser. It was attended by 200 Bishops, and St. Cyril the Great, Pope of Alexandria, chaired the council. The council convened to try Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, for he divided Christ into two separate persons: The Son of God and the Son of Man. St. Cyril stressed on the unity of the Godhead and manhood without mixing or mingling. He also stressed on the title "Theotokos", i.e., "The Mother of God" for St. Mary, in order to clarify that who was born from her is truly God the Incarnate Word, and not an ordinary man on whom the Godhead descended subsequently.

I have already discussed this subject in the book , "Church of Erudition and Theology".

1. Oration 21.
2. The Penuine Dict. of Saints, p. 53
3. Sozomen: H.E. 7:7,9

4. A Short Account of Copts, Michigan, 1945, p. 117.

He was anxious to write against Christianity. He read the Holy Scriptures in order to aim his

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## 11- ST. ATHANASIUS AND ARIANISM

St. Gregory of Nazianzen introduced his panegyric of this saint with these words: “When I praise Athanasius, virtue itself is my theme; for I name every virtue as often as I mention him who was possessed of all virtues. He was the true pillar of the Church. His life and conduct were the rule of bishops, and his doctrine the rule of the Orthodox faith<sup>1</sup>” St. Epiphanius called him: “the Father of Orthodoxy<sup>2</sup>”.

### HIS BOYHOOD

St. Athanasius was born in Upper-Egypt about the year 297 A.D His parents' names are unknown. They were Christians<sup>3</sup>, and their virtue was remarkable. They left Upper-Egypt and settled in Alexandria.

There is a tradition, related by Rufinius<sup>4</sup>, that Athanasius attracted the notice of St. Alexander, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, as he was playing at “baptism” with solemnity and dignity on the seashore with some boys. The Pope was very pleased with Athanasius, who was acting as a bishop, called his mother and advised her to give a good education to her son. She, in return, asked him to take care of her son if he would accept him as his disciple.

Athanasius copied diligently the virtues of his Pope, imbibed his maxims of piety and holy zeal. In 312 A.D the Pope appointed him “reader”, in 318 ordained him deacon and employed him as his secretary.

### THE SPIRIT OF MARTYRDOM AND ASCETICISM

Besides his discipleship to St. Alexander there were two other great influences in his life:

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<sup>1</sup> *Oratione 21.*

<sup>2</sup> *Schaff: Hist. of the Christian Church, 1950, vol 3, p 886.*

<sup>3</sup> *Some historians state that they were pagans [J. Texeront: Handbook of Patrology, trans. by Ramers, 1939, p 152.*

<sup>4</sup> *H.E. 1: 14.*

1- From his seventh year to the fifteenth he lived the period of the severe persecution (303-311 A.D). Among the Alexandrian martyrs and confessors there were many whom he knew, from whom he had learned the Orthodox faith and a loving intimacy with the Holy Scriptures. He did not accompany them to the arena of persecution, but his heart was aflame with divine love, facing every struggle for the sake of Christ.

2- As he heard about St. Anthony the hermit, he hurried to the wilderness and lived with him for about three years, practising the ascetic and righteous life and the deep fellowship with God. Providence arranged this close relationship with St. Anthony so that in his exiles and fleeings he never felt lonely and instead he thought of it as a good opportunity for him to have a bit of solitude and seclusion, praying for his people and writing to them. He was obliged to become the historian of St. Anthony and the propogandist of monasticism wherever he went.

### **AT THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF NICEA**

When as deacon Athanasius accompanied the Pope to the first ecumenical council of Nicea in 325, he at once distinguished himself there by his zeal and ability in refuting Arianism. He put the Creed which all churches recite today.

When the council was over, he left, accompanied by the admiration of the 318 bishops assembled there and by the hatred of the heretical party which raised so many storms about his life.

John Henery Newman wrote of him as “that extraordinary man... a principal instrument after the Apostles by which the sacred truths of Chrisianity have been conveyed and secured to the word<sup>1</sup>”. Lydia Kesich says: “If Athanasius had not stood up for our faith, perhaps the Church would not be the same today<sup>2</sup>”.

### **POPE ATHANASIUS**

In 328 A.D Pope Alexander died, and the presbyters and the people elected Athanasius to preside the Church of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Penguin Diet, of Saints, p 53.*

<sup>2</sup> *L. Kesich: They walked with God.*

Alexandria. He fled to the wilderness considering himself unworthy for this service. But they searched and found him hiding at his teacher's residence "Abbot Anthony". He ordained Frumentius as the first bishop of Ethiopia, under the name "Abbot Salama the First" in 330 A.D. He presided over the church for forty six years, of which over seventeen were passed in exile on account of his vigorous opposition to the spread of Arianism, which had the support of certain emperors. He was exiled five times:

- 1 - Under Constantine (335-337) to Trève.
- 2 - Under Constantius (339-346) visited Rome.
- 3 - Under Constantius (356-362) lived in the Egyptian desert.
- 4 - Under Julian (362-363) lived in the Egyptian desert.
- 5 - Under Valens (365-366) lived in the Egyptian desert.

## **THE MELITIANS<sup>1</sup> AND ARIANS**

The Melitians seemed to be very zealous for the Christian faith, making a schism for a long time in the Egyptian Church as they refused the return of the clergy who had weakened before the persecution, and put obstacles before the laity who repented. It is not strange that they entered with the Arians - who denied the true divinity of Christ - into a mutual conspiracy against the truth. The two parties forgot every enmity and agreed to persecute the Church in the person of her Pope, Athanasius.

## **SETTING IN OF TROUBLES**

In 330 A.D, the Arian bishop of Nicomedia, Eusebius, asked Constantine to write to Athanasius, bidding him to readmit Arius into his communion. St. Athanasius refused the emperor's demand, for he was not affected by the Arian's flattering words nor by the emperor's threats.

Eusebius wrote to the Egyptian Melitians urging them to impeach Athanasius for personal misconduct. They brought charges that he had levied a general tribute of linen for use in his own church, and made other petty accusations. At his trial before the emperor he

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<sup>1</sup> Due to Melitius (often, but wrongly, spelled Melatius), bishop of Lycopolis (Assuit) in Egypt [See Fr. T. Malaty: *Pope Peter I, Melebourne 1975, p 10-12*].

cleared himself and returned in triumph to Alexandria, bearing with him a letter of approval from Constantinople, wherein he calls him a man of God and a most venerable man.

### **THE COUNCIL OF TYRE (335 A.D)**

Athanasius was soon afterwards accused of murdering the Melitian Arsanius, having ravished a virgin consecrated to God, bidding his deputy Macarius to break the chalice of a supposed priest called Ischyras and other crimes. Constantine was shocked at these serious accusations and sent an order to the Pope to clear himself in a council, which was to be held at Caesarea, in Palestine (333-334), whereof Eusebius, one of the Arian party, was a bishop. The Pope refused to be present at this council. His enemies accused him of pride and stubbornness before the emperor who began to entertain a bad opinion of him, and ordered another council to assemble in Tyre, where he commanded Athanasius to appear.

In Tyre the Melitians devices were discovered, and the Arians would have torn him to pieces had not the imperial governor interposed and rescued him out of their hands. He fled immediately to Constantinople, while the council deposed him in his absence.

He met the emperor in the street and declared the situation to him, but the emperor changed his mind and confirmed the sentence of the council, banishing him to Treve. This was because he heard that the Pope had threatened to interfere with the shipment of corn from Egypt to Constantinople.

In May 337 A.D Constantine died, and his son Constantine the Younger restored the Pope to his see. In 338 A.D St. Anthony came to Alexandria to assure him of his admiration and respect.

### **THE FLIGHT TO ROME**

Two years later Constantine the Younger was killed in a battle in Aquileia. Eusebius of Nicomedia had completely won over the emperor Constantius, within whose portion of the empire Alexandria was situated. New scandals were invented and Athanasius was accused of raising tumults and seditions, promoting bloodshed and keeping for himself the corn which Constantine had destined for the support of widows and clergymen. The attestations of the bishops who had received it in Lybia justified him and covered his accusers with confusion.

However, Athanasius was declared deposed by a council held at Antioch (339), where the Eusebian party elected Pistus, an excommunicated priest, as archbishop of Alexandria in his stead. When he proved to be unsuitable, they ordained the Cappadocian Gregory by force. St. Athanasius was forced to flee to Rome, where Pope Julius welcomed him.

In 342 A.D. St. Athanasius met Constans, the Western Emperor, in Milan. The Eusebians stirred up his brother Constantius, the Eastern Emperor, by accusing the Pope that he had demanded from Constans to summon a council of the Western and Eastern bishops, ignoring Constantius. The Pope proved to Constantius that this idea came from Constans himself before they met.

In 343 A.D. the council was held at Sardica (Sofia), on the border line of the two empires, but the eastern (arian) bishops withdrew to Philippi in Thrace, on the opposite side of Sardica, in the Eastern limits. They anathematized Athanasius, Julius of Rome and those who caused Athanasius to be readmitted to communion. At Sardica, the western bishops excommunicated eleven Arian bishops.

St. Athanasius was forbidden to enter Alexandria, but God's providence disgraced the Arian wickedness. For it is said that Constans sent two old bishops to his brother in the East. During their trip, at Antioch the Arians enticed a wicked woman to enter their rooms. On her entrance she looked like a venerable old man, she cried as the people crowded to confess openly before them. Constantius discovered the Arians' deceit, consequently he asked those who were exiled to return to their sees, and sent three letters to St. Athanasius. The latter visited the emperor before his return to Alexandria.

## **SYNODS OF ARLES AND MILAN**

Constans, the supporter of St. Athanasius, died in the revolt of Magnentius (350 A.D.) and a national war broke out between Constantius and Magnentius for 3 years. In 353 Constantius - the enemy of Athanasius - became the sole ruler of the whole empire. The Arians accused the Pope that he had suspicious relations with the murderer Magnentius. Constantius obtained a condemnation of Athanasius and his supporters by a synod assembled at Aries (353) and another one at Milan (355) called by Liberius of Rome, Julius' successor.

Duke Syrianus with a force of soldiers invaded the church of Theonas on the night of 8 February 356, when Athanasius and the

congregation were holding a vesper service. The Pope was removed to safety by his supporters. He disappeared and hid in the desert for the next six years.

Early in the year 357 A.D his substitute, George of Cappadocia, entered Alexandria, Violence was used to subdue Athanasius supporters and churches were handed over to the Arians. But Gregory's policy aroused such resistance that in fear for his life he withdrew from Alexandria the following year. He returned to Alexandria (in 361 A.D) but the pagans murdered him, (perhaps to rob his possessions).

St. Athanasius' exile ended in February 362 A.D, when Julian became emperor and permitted the bishops exiled by Constantius to return. In Alexandria, St. Athanasius summoned a council, called the "Council of Confessors" as all the bishops who were present had suffered for their faith.

The energetic activities of St. Athanasius aroused Julian's displeasure. He ordered him to leave Egypt, describing him as a disturber of the peace and an enemy of the gods. He escaped to his father's tomb for six months, but the Emperor insisted that he must leave Alexandria. He asked the prefect of Alexandria to plan to murder him. The Pope fled to Upper Egypt by the way of the Nile and when the ruler's ship reached the Pope's boat, he stood up and said to the soldiers that Athanasius was not far from them. They did not know him sailing very quickly to catch him; while he returned to a city near Memphis for a while. He was then transported to several monasteries in Upper Egypt (at Thebaid).

In June 363 A.D Julian was murdered, and all the bishops returned from their exile. St. Athanasius returned to his see, summoned a council that sent a letter to the Emperor Jovian, explaining the Nicene faith. The Pope paid a visit to Jovian who welcomed him and gave him letters on his return to Alexandria.

## **HIS LAST EXILE**

Jovian died at the beginning of the following year, and his successor Valentinian, though a supporter of the Nicene faith, appointed his brother Valens, who had Arian sympathies, as fellow Augustus in the East.

Valens commanded all bishops exile by Constantius and recalled by Julian to leave their sees. For the fifth time St. Athanasius

had to leave Alexandria. He spent about nine months (May 365 - February 366 A.D) in a hiding place, to return under the pressure of his people.

He returned at the age of seventy, to spend the last seven years of his life in peace. In 369 A.D he summoned a local council in Alexandria to discuss the Orthodox faith, and in May 373 A.D, he departed in the Lord.

## **HIS WRITINGS**

It is astonishing that despite such privations and amidst all his activities he found time for a great number of literary production.

An eighth-century monk wrote: "If you find a book by Athanasius and have no paper on which to copy it, write it on your shirts".

It is divided into:

### **1 - APOLOGETICAL and dogmatic writings such as:**

- a - "Against the heathen" and "The Incarnation of the Word".
- b - Three discourses against the Arians.

### **2 - THE LETTERS: This includes:**

- a - The Festal letters.
- b - Four letters to Serapion.
- c - Doctrinal letters on the "Teaching of Dionysius, on the decrees of Nicea and several others dealing with Incarnation.
- d - Official episcopal letters.

### **3 - HISTORICAL-POLEMICAL writings:**

- a - Apology against the Arians.
- b - Apology against Constantius.
- c - Apology for his flight.
- d - History of the Arians.

### **4 - ASCETIC corpus include:**

- a - The life of Anthony.
- b - A number of Treatises on Virginité etc.
- c - The pseudo-Athanasius Life of Synctetica.
- d - Fragments of other treatises on virginité in Coptic, Syrian and Armenian translations.

### **5 - EXEGETICAL writings:**

a - On the interpretation of the Psalms.

b - Commentary on Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and Genesis.

## **HIS CHARACTER**

2 - St. Athanasius was greatly affected by the martyrs he saw in his boyhood. He conceived their victory even upon death through their peity in Jesus Christ, or through their unity with the Father in His Son by the Holy Spirit. Following their steps, he desired to offer his life as a daily sacrifice, on behalf of the Church Faith. In this spirit, he became a true leader, whose authority was never contested<sup>1</sup>. He believed that he was doing Christ's work, and that final victory would come from God, meanwhile he spared no means of achieving it. He never despaired even during the darkest hour of strife.

2 - His writings reveal the intelligence and clarity of an outstanding personality<sup>2</sup>. He declares: "It is the business of religion not to impose but to persuade<sup>3</sup>". It is noteworthy that St. Athanasius believed that the essential cause of heresies is the dependence upon "reason" without "faith", subsequently he established priority of faith over reason<sup>4</sup>. He says: "And how do the impious men venture to speak folly, as they ought not, being men and unable to find out how to describe even what is on earth?" But why do I say "what is on earth?" Let them tell us their own nature if they can discover how to investigate their own nature<sup>5</sup>?..."

3 - His intimate friendship and close relation with his tutor, St. Anthony the Great, and other monks, all through his life, influenced his theological concepts. To him theology is not a purely metaphysical truth, it is a truth whose supernatural influence must be reflected in everyday life<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Tixeront - Raemers: Handbook of Patrology, p 153.*

<sup>2</sup> *Hans Von Campenhausen: Fathers of the Greek Church, p 71.*

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Arian 67.*

<sup>4</sup> *Quasten: Patrology, vol 3, p 66.*

<sup>5</sup> *In Illud. Omnia, 6.*

<sup>6</sup> *Tixeront, p 154.*



It simply serves the practical demands of piety in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. He was not a Christian philosopher, and was very far from being a mere dogmatic theologian. His main interest was pastoral. His one desire was to forward the salvation of souls<sup>1</sup>.

He offers a model of the close relation between church dogma and piety. He says: "For faith and godliness are allied to each other, and sisters; and he who believes in Him is godly, and he also is godly, believes the more<sup>2</sup>...

In all his discourses against the Arians, he reveals the renewal and regeneration of our own nature by the Crucified Son of God.

"If then for our sake He sanctifies Himself (John 17: 18, 19), and does this when He is become man, it is very plain that the Spirit's descent on Him in Jordan was a descent upon us because He bears our body<sup>3</sup>".

"When He is said to be anointed in human respect (Ps. 45: 7, 8), we it is who in Him are anointed; since also, when He is baptized, we it is who in Him are baptized<sup>4</sup>". "He was not man and then became God, but He was God, and then became man to deify us<sup>5</sup>".

4 - St. Athanasius devoted himself to reading the Holy Scripture (The Old and New Testaments) and to practise the effect of the word of God. He did not write a commentary on it, but offered all his writings as biblical. He believed that heretics deceive simple believers by offering quotations of the Holy Scriptures and reject other parts of it. They pretend like their father "the devil" John 8: 44, to study and to quote the language of Scripture to deceive others by their craftiness<sup>6</sup>. He says:

"The tokens of truth are more exact as drawn from Scripture, than from other sources<sup>7</sup>".

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<sup>1</sup> *J.W.C. Wand Doctors and Councils, 1962, p 29.*

<sup>2</sup> *Paschal Ep. 11: 9.*

<sup>3</sup> *Against Arians 1: 47.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid 1: 48.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid 1: 39.*

<sup>6</sup> *To the Bishops of Egypt 4.*

<sup>7</sup> *De Decretis 32.*

5 - In his study of the sacred writings, the tradition of the Church was his guide, while he diligently sought in the writings of the ancient doctors as he testifies<sup>1</sup>. In another place he declares that he had learned it from holy inspired masters and martyrs of the divinity of Christ<sup>2</sup>. He says: “This then I consider the sense of this passage, and that, a very ecclesiastical sense<sup>3</sup>”.

6 - As a pious churchman he was a lover of worship, practised the means of grace deeply with spiritual devotion.

A - When the General Syrianus attempted to arrest him, the Pope was leading his people in a vigil service. He wrote indirectly, concerning his practice of vigil services.

B - Through his experience he spoke of the effect of participating in the Eucharist, saying: “We are deified not by partaking of the body of some man, but by receiving the Body of the Word Himself<sup>4</sup>”.

7 - in his controversy against heretics his aim was very clear, and his heart was full of comprehensive love. He was very eager for the unity of the Church, and did not struggle concerning terms and words<sup>5</sup>, but sought to attract even the heretics to pious life based on the evangelic truth. Quasten says: “Despite his uncompromising hostility towards error and the fierceness with which he opposed it, he had the quality, rare in such a character, of being capable, even in the heat of battle, of tolerance, and moderation towards those who had in good faith been led astray<sup>6</sup>”.

## **THE THEOLOGY OF ST. ATHANASIUS**

We are indebted to St. Athanasius for purifying the universal faith from Arian heresy and attitude. I think, we have to study the Arian heresy to declare the theology of St. Athanasius.

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<sup>1</sup> *Oral. Contra Gents 1.*

<sup>2</sup> *Lib. de Incarn. 66.*

<sup>3</sup> *Against Arians 1: 44 (See Paschal Ep. 2: 6).*

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. ad Maximum 61: 2.*

<sup>5</sup> *Tomus ad Antiochenas 8.*

<sup>6</sup> *Quasten: Patrology, vol 3, p 20.*

## ARIANISM

Arius (256-336 A.D) was a native of Libya, received his theological training at Antioch in the School of Lucian<sup>1</sup>. From Antioch he went to Alexandria, where St. Peter, Pope of Alexandria, ordained him deacon<sup>2</sup>. The Pope excommunicated him, but Achillas ordained him priest and put him in charge of the Church of Baucalis, the principal Church of Alexandria. He succeeded as a preacher, but through pride he gave priority to reason than to faith in his theological study. His doctrine was a typical product of theological rationalism<sup>3</sup>.

Arius tried to interpret the Christian revelation in which a way as to render it acceptable to men whose whole conception of God and life was heathen. In doing this he demonstrated his lack of a strong grip of the essential principles of the Christian concept and of sound judgement and insight<sup>4</sup>. We can summarize his theology in the following points:

1 - His strongest interest was the maintenance of Monotheism, and a first principle with him was "simplicity" - the singleness - of God, as absolutely One and transcendent, distant, unknown, inaccessible, and incommunicable, hidden in eternal mystery and separated by an infinite chasm from men<sup>5</sup>. Thus he understood "Monotheism" as a numerical and could not understand the "unity" of the Holy Trinity in one essence.

2 - To create the universe, God created the Logos before time<sup>6</sup>, time<sup>6</sup>, from nothing, as an instrument of creation. Therefore He was not truly God by nature, but the Son of God in a moral sense. He is an intermediate being between God and the world.

3 - The Logos was made flesh in the sense that He fulfilled in Jesus Christ the function of a soul.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Sozomen: H.E. 1 : 1 5*.

<sup>3</sup> *Quasten: Patrology, vol 3, p 8*.

<sup>4</sup> *J.F. Buthume- Barker: An Introd. to the Early Hist, of Christian Doctrine, 1920, p 156-7*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p 158.

<sup>6</sup> *Athan. de Synod. 16*.

4 - The Holy Spirit is the first of the creatures of the Logos, He is still less God than the Logos.

By this theology, Arius isolated God from men, revealed Him solid, destroyed the eternal love among the Holy Trinity, ruined the mystery of salvation, ignored the prophecies and denied the true renewal of our nature through adoption and unity with God the Father in His Son.

## **ST. ATHANASIUS AND ARIANISM**

In his controversy against Arianism St. Athanasius did not use philosophy but concentrated on faith depends on the divine inspiration.

We can summarize his theology in one sentence: “God took our humanity so that we can share His life”. In the Old Testament. God spoke to us through His prophets, but in the New Testament He came to us by sending His Only-Begotten Son so that our nature may be renewed in Him.

## **THE HOLY TRINITY**

St. Athanasius states: [“There is then a Triad, holy and complete, confessed to be God in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, having nothing foreign or external mixed with it, not composed of one that creates and one that is originated, but all creative, and it is consistent and in nature indivisible, and its power to act is one. **The Father does all things through the Word in the Holy Spirit.** Thus the unity of the Holy Triad is preserved. Thus one God is preached in the Church, “who is over all, and through all and in all” Eph 4: 6... It is a Triad not only in name and form of speech, but in truth and actuality<sup>1</sup>].

St. Athanasius recalls repeatedly the comparison of light issuing from the sun, so familiar to the School of Alexandria, in order to demonstrate that begetting in God differs from human begetting because God is indivisible<sup>2</sup>.

## **LOGOS AND REDEMPTION**

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<sup>1</sup> *F.p. ad Serapion 1.*

<sup>2</sup> *Quasten, vol 3, p 68 [Or. Arian 2: 41; 3: 3].*

The root of the Athanasian doctrine of the Logos is the idea of redemption<sup>1</sup>. He claims fervently that only God can save the fallen race<sup>2</sup> [Soteriological interest].

1 - We would not have been redeemed if God Himself had not become man, for man was in need of the Creator to redeem his fallen nature to its origin, bestowing upon it the image of God, and restoring it from corruption to incorruption. In Him mankind overcame death and was recreated<sup>3</sup>.

2 - As the Son of God, one with the Father in essence (ousia), He offered Himself as a sacrifice that can pay our debt of sins and achieve divine justice and mercy at the same time.

3 - He is God who overcame the devil not only for Himself but for all of us.

4 - He - as the True God - restored our honour, bestowing upon us the adoption of the Father in Him by the Holy Spirit.

**St. Athanasius says:** “He was made man that we might be gods<sup>4</sup>” “For as, although there be one Son by nature, True and Only-Begotten, we too become sons, not as He in nature and truth, but according to the grace of Him that calleth, and though we are men from the earth, are yet called gods<sup>5</sup>”.

5 - The Incarnation introduced us to God, the Incarnate Logos reveals the Father to us, and the Father attracts us to the Son (John 17: 26; 6: 44).

## **CHRISTOLOGY<sup>6</sup>**

1 - St. Athanasius declares that the incarnation and the death of Christ were not to the shame of God but to the glory of God and have given us even more reason to adore the Lord<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Quasten, vol 3, p 70.*

<sup>2</sup> *J.N.D. Kelly: Early Christian Doctrines, 1960, p 284.*

<sup>3</sup> *De Incern. 8, 9.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid 54.*

<sup>5</sup> *Or. Arians, Disc. 3: 19.*

<sup>6</sup> *Quasten, vol 3, p 72-76.*

<sup>7</sup> *Or. Arian 1: 42.*

2 - He reveals the “unity of Christ's nature”, in accurate terms, as he states, [Being Son of God in truth, He became also at the same time “firstborn among many brethren”. Wherefore neither was there one Son of God before Abraham, another after Abraham; nor was there one that raised up Lazarus, another that asked concerning him, but the Same it was that said as man, “Where does Lazarus lie?”. John 11: 34; and as God raised him up, the same that as man and in the body spat, but divinely as Son of God opened the eyes of the man blind from his birth; and while, as Peter says (1 Pet. 4: 1), in the flesh He suffered, as God He opened the tomb and raised the dead<sup>1</sup>.

3 - He took perfect and complete manhood. St Athanasius says, [The Savior had not a body without a soul, not without sense or intelligence, for it was not possible, when the Lord had become man for us, that His body should be without intelligence, nor was the salvation effected in the Word Himself of the body only, but of the soul also<sup>2</sup>].

4 - The Logos is not an external instrument for creation, God was not in need of an instrument for creation or even for salvation. The Logos is one with the Father in essence. [For if the Divine essence be not fruitful itself, but barren, as they hold, as a light that lightens not, and a dry fountain, are they not ashamed to speak of His possessing framing energy<sup>3</sup>].

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

He defends the divinity of the Holy Spirit in his reply to the Arians who believed that He was a creature and less than the Logos. He also wrote about the Holy Spirit in four letters addressed to Bishop Serapion. His theology concerning the Holy Spirit is the same concerning Christ. The Holy Spirit must be God, because if He were a creature, we should have no participation of God in Him.

1 - He states, [If by participation in the Spirit, we are made “sharers in the divine nature” 2 Pet. 1: 4... It is not to be doubted that His nature is of God<sup>4</sup>].

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<sup>1</sup> *Tom. ad Ant 7.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Or. Arian 2 : 2 .*

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. ad Serapion 1: 24.*

2 - St. Athanasius definitely states that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father<sup>1</sup>.

3 - St. Athanasius declares the work of the Holy Spirit in our life. He is the fountain of the true sanctification, by Him we receive the anointment and the stamp to be partakers of Christ, partakers in the divine nature. Through Baptism and Chrism we enjoy the membership of the Church by Him. It is the Holy Spirit that designates bishops to feed God's sheep.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid 1 : 2.*

## **12. ST ATHANASIUS and APOLLINARIANISM**

### **FRIEND OF ST. ATHANASIUS**

Apollinarius the younger (c. 310 - c. 390 A.D) was the son of a grammarian of Beirut, also named Apollinarius the Elder, in conjunction with him who rewrote much of the Bible in classical forms when the Emperor Julian (361 - 3 A.D) forbade Christians to use the pagan classics. A vigorous advocate of orthodoxy against the Arians, he became a close friend of st. Athanasium<sup>1</sup>.

[Apollinaris was Bishop of Laodicea in Syria, and had already established himself as a fervent Nicene, and a brilliant and resourceful opponent of Julian's pagan revival. He was regarded quite rightly as the best theologian of the day after Athanasius, and Basil of Caesarea was one out of many of the younger generation of Christians who had consulted him<sup>2</sup>].

### **APOLLINARIUS & THE ALEXANDRIAN THEOLOGY**

In his eager to defend the orthodox faith against the Arians, Apollinarius used the Alexandrian terms of theology, but he tried to systematize the church theology in his own way. Thus he inclined into a serious heresy. According to St. Gregory of Nazianzus<sup>3</sup>, the beginnings of the Apollinariainism can be dated as early as c. 352 A.D It was not until the council of Alexandria, however, that its teaching became a public issue, for delgates of Apollinarius were sent to this council to support St. Athanasius. In 372 A.D St. Athanasius

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<sup>1</sup> Cross: *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p 72.

<sup>2</sup> W.H.C. Friend: *The Early Church*, 1973, p 183-4.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 102: 2.



wrote two books, to refute his heresy without referring to his name, perhaps because of his old friendship with Apollinarius<sup>1</sup>.

Because of the close friendship between Apollinarius and St. Athanasius, his use of the Alexandrian theological terms, especially the term “mia-physis tou theo logou Sarkomine” and his defence of the hypostatic unity between Christ's Godhead and manhood, the opponents of Alexandria usually accuse our theology as apollinarian, even some contemporary scholars believe the same.

## **APOLLINARIUS' THEOLOGY**

1 - He believed that the Arians could not accept the Godhead of Christ because It made of Him two persons: God and man. To resolve this problem he said that human nature consists of body, animal soul (*ψυχη*) and rational soul (*νους*). The Logos took the body with the irrational soul without the human spirit (soul), for Godhead took its place. He states: [The divine energy fulfils the role of the animating spirit (*ψυχης*) and of the human mind (*νοου*)<sup>2</sup>. It is not important to discuss if he was a dicotomist, i.e., believed that man has two elements: body and soul or he was tricotomist, i.e., believed that man has three elements: body, animal soul and rational soul. What is important, he believed that the Godhead or the Logos was united only with the corporeality of man and replaced the soul that united to the body received from the Virgin Mary. This solution commended itself to Apollinarius as a way of escape from all the difficulties and as the correct interpretation of St. John 1 : 14 “The Word became flesh”.

Christ could not have a complete humanity for two reasons:

a - The metaphysical reason is that two beings already perfect, God and man, cannot produce unity, but only a hybrid. This interpretation of unity in Christ depends on the “one nature of Christ” in a static way<sup>3</sup>, which is too far from the Alexandrian Theology.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Epiphanius: *Adv. Haer* 77: 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Frag. 2* (Lietz., 204).

<sup>3</sup> Aloys Grillmeier: *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 1975, p 334.

b - The physical reason is that the rational soul constitutes the seat and the centre of the power of self determination for good or evil, which attributes the possibility of sin to Christ. A human mind, he explained, is “fallible and enslaved to filthy thoughts<sup>1</sup>”. Excluding man's soul and mind ensures the Saviour's sinless and excludes the possibility of existing two contradictory wills and intelligences in Christ<sup>2</sup>.

2 - The Godhead was in unity to the body He took from the Virgin Mary, replacing the human soul. Thus He was a “heavenly being”, not because His body came down from heaven, but fleshly nature became divine through union with the Godhead<sup>3</sup>.

Kelly states: [This was his theory<sup>4</sup> that the Word was the sole life of the God - man, infusing vital energy and movement into Him even at the purely physical and biological levels. If it objected that this makes Him different from ordinary men, Apollinarius had no hesitation in agreeing. He found<sup>5</sup> confirmation of the difference in the wording of such texts as “Found as man” and “In the likeness of men”, and he suggested<sup>6</sup> that the theological significance of the virgin birth lay precisely in the fact that divine spirit replaced the spermatic matter which gives life to ordinary men<sup>7</sup>].

It is noteworthy that Apollinarius and Eutyches afterwards were accused that they stated that Christ had the form of man but had not the reality of His mother's body. J. Stevensons says; [This was not really the view of Eutyches but of some of his supporters and of some Apollinarians, who held that the flesh of Christ existed in heaven before the incarnation<sup>8</sup>]. He offered this comment on the Tome of Leo which accused Eutyches with this charge. I would admit that although our church looks to Apollinarius and Eutyches as

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly: *Early Christian Doctrines*, 1978, p 293.

<sup>2</sup> Frag. 2 (Lietz. 204).

<sup>3</sup> Aloys Grillmeier, p 33; *Apoll. ad Serapion*, Frag 160.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. *De incarnatione unigeniti (on the Incarnation of the Only - Begotten 11-13 (Lietz. 160).*

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Frag. 45. (Lietz. 214).

<sup>6</sup> *De un. 3; Frag 142 (Lietz. 191, 241).*

<sup>7</sup> J.N.D. Kelly: *Early Christian Doctrines*, 1978, p 292.

<sup>8</sup> J. Stevensons: *Creeds, Councils and controversies, S.P.C.K, 1973, p 323.*

heretics, but they did not believe that the flesh of Jesus Christ was heavenly, nor their supporters, but it was their opponents' point of view concerning them, as a result of other beliefs. Many theologians accused others with beliefs the latter did not declare or just think.

3 - Apollinarius tried to systematize - in his own way - the Alexandrian theology to safeguard the unity of the Saviour in the light of the Nicene affirmation, insisting that Christ was one hypostasis and *mia* (one) *physis*.

He delighted to speak<sup>1</sup> of Christ as "God incarnate" (*θεος ενσῶχος*), "flesh-bearing God" (*θεος σαρχοφάρος*) or 'God born of a woman'. By such descriptions he did not mean that the flesh was, as it were, simply an outward covering which the Word had donned, but rather it was joined in absolute oneness of being with the Godhead from the moment of its conception. "The Flesh", he states, "is not something superadded to the Godhead for well-doing, but constitutes one reality or nature with It<sup>2</sup>". The Incarnate is, in effect, "a compound unity in human form"<sup>3</sup>.

He says, [Holy Scripture makes no difference between the Logos and His flesh, but the same (*αυτος*) in one *physis*, one hypostasis, one power (*ενεργεια*), one *prosopon*, fully God and man<sup>4</sup>]. In his letter to Dionysius he states that if we speak of two *physeis* this gives the best possible foothold for anyone wishing to destroy the unity in Christ. For there can only be a division where there is a duality.

Kelly says<sup>5</sup>, [Like all Alexandrian thinkers, he (Apollinarius) accepts and exploits the "Communicatio idiomatum", stating that "the flesh of the Lord, while remaining flesh even in the union (its nature being neither changed nor lost) shares in the names and properties of the Word; and the Word, while remaining Word and God, in the incarnation shares in the names and properties of the flesh"..... Lastly, inasmuch as the flesh actually participates in the

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly, p 291; Frag. 108, 109, 49, 52 (Lietz. 232, 233, 216).

<sup>2</sup> Frag. 36 (Lietz 212).

<sup>3</sup> Ep to Dionysius 1: 9 (Lietz 260).

<sup>4</sup> *De fide et incarnatione (on Faith and the Incarnation)* 6, (Lietz, 198 - 9).

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, p 295.

properties of the Word, Apollinarius draws the inference that the divine nature is imparted to the faithful when they consume the Lord's body at the eucharist. "The holy flesh", he remarks, "is one nature (*συνουσία*) with the Godhead, and infuses divinity into those who partake of it<sup>1</sup>", and as a result "we are saved by partaking of it as a food<sup>2</sup>". In other words, the believer is deified by assimilating the deified flesh of the Redeemer].

## **IS THE ALEXANDRIAN THEOLOGY APOLLINARIAN?**

To confirm the belief of the "two natures of Christ (dyophriseis)" of the council of Chalcedon (451 A.D), many scholars state that st. Cyril quoted statements of Apollinarius as if it were of st. Athanasius. Others look to the Alexandrian Fathers as the way that prepared the Apollinarian heresy. Here I would offer some quotations of those scholars, then discuss the true relation between Alexandria and Apollinarianism.

W.H.C. Frend says, [Many of Cyril's ideas were taken directly from Apollinarian writings circulating under the names of orthodox leaders such as Athanasius and Pope Julius<sup>3</sup>].

J. Stevenson comments on the Epistle "Ad Iovinum": [This Apollinarian Epistle was attributed to Athanasius, and may have been so regarded by Cyril of Alexandria<sup>4</sup>].

Rowan A. Greer says: [Like Apollinarius, Cyril runs the risk of denying autonomy or reality to the will and soul of Christ, and substituting for the exercise of these human faculties the automatic rule to the divinity.... The Alexandrians, of course, attributing everything to the divine nature, distinguished only between those things proper to Him by nature and those not.... Apollinarianism which was closely related to the Alexandrian way of thought....<sup>5</sup>].

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<sup>1</sup> *Frag. 155 (Lietz, 249).*

<sup>2</sup> *Frag. 116 (Lietz, 235).*

<sup>3</sup> *Frend, p 225.*

<sup>4</sup> *Creeds, Councils.... p 96.*

<sup>5</sup> *Theodore of Mopsuestia, 1961, p 38, 41, 49.*

It is no wonder that this attitude appears among some scholars, especially those who try to prove that Nestorius and his teacher Theodore were not truly Nestorians. Moreover, since the Arab conquest in Egypt there was no theological relation between the Alexandrian Church and the other churches for long time. The Western theologians usually have their ideas about our church not from our own sources. Consequently they accuse us of beliefs we neither accept nor profess.

Now, what about the relation between the Alexandrian theology and Apollinarianism?

1 - In fact Apollinarius as a close friend of St. Athanasius adopted many of his theological terms and quoted some of his statements and those of the Early Fathers of Alexandria. It was not the writings of Apollinarius that were attributed to St. Athanasius even by St. Cyril, for if it was so why didn't the members of the council of Chalcedon themselves say so?! I think it was easier for them to discover this matter because they were closer to the age of Apollinarius and Cyril than the modern scholars, especially that the heresy of Apollinarius was discussed all over the Christian world at that time, and the writings of SS. Athanasius and Cyril were copied in many churches.

2 - Some scholars think that St. Athanasius' theology opened the way to Apollinarianism in many aspects:

a - His theology concentrated on the "flesh" of Jesus Christ and not on His complete manhood, i.e. the body and the soul.

b - Usually he confirmed the unity of Christ's Godhead and flesh, confirming His divine nature as if the human nature was lost. He attributes the titles and properties properities of Godhead to His manhood. (*communicatio idiomatum*).

c - Apollinarius used some terms and quoted some statements from Athanasius.

Now, we have to notice in St. Athanasius' theology the following remarks:

I - If St. Athanasius concentrated on the "flesh" of Christ, it was not to deny the Redeemer human soul. The holy Scripture itself used to call men as "flesh" (Matt. 24: 32). St. Athanasius, who spoke about the "Incarnation of the Logos", intended by "Incarnation" that the Logos became man.

II - Before the appearance of the Apollinarian heresy no body denied Jesus' human soul but many gnostics denied His body as a real one. They looked to the body as a dark element, Jesus never took it. St. Athanasius in refuting this attitude concentrated on the "body" of Christ and its relation to his Godhead.

In his book "De Incarnatione Verbi Die" he says: [But these things (He ate and suffered) are said of Him... to show Him to have a body in truth and not in seeming<sup>1</sup>].

Moreover he faced the Arians who accused the believers as worshippers of the man Jesus christ. They denied Christ's Godhead because of his reality as the Son of man. He would confirm that Christ's Flesh was not an abstacle in accepting Him as the Logos and the Son of God. Here there is no place to speak of His soul but to confirm His divinity in spite of the reality of His incarnation.....

In his letter to Adelphius he states:

[Let them learn from your piety that this error of theirs belongs to Valentinus and Marcion, and to Manichaeus, of whom some substituted (the idea of) Appearance for Reality, while the others, dividing what is indivisible, denied the truth that "the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us" John 1: 14....

We do not worship a creature. For be the thought. For such an error belongs to heathens and Arians. But we worship the Lord of creation, Incarnate, the Word of God. For it the flesh also is in itself a part of the created world, yet it has become God's body. And we neither divide the body, being such, from the Word, and worship it by itself, nor when we wish to worship the Word do we set Him far apart from the Flesh, but knowing, as we said above, that "the Word was made flesh", we recognize Him as God also, after having come in the flesh. Who, accordingly, is so senseless as to say to the Lord: "Leave the Body that I may worship Thee".....?

But the leper was not one of this sort, for he worshipped God in the Body, and recognized that He was God, saying: "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean" Matt. 8: 2. Neither by reason of the flesh did he think the Word of God a creature; nor because the Word

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<sup>1</sup> *De Inc. Verbi Dei* 18.

was the maker of all creation did he despise the Flesh which He had put on. But he worshipped the Creator of the universe as dwelling in a created temple, and was cleansed. So also the woman with an issue of blood, who believed, and only touched the hem of His garment, was healed (Matt 9: 20), and the sea with its foaming waves heard the incarnate Word, and ceased its storm (Matt 8: 26).... These things then happened, and no one doubted, as the Arians now venture to doubt, whether one is to believe the incarnate Word<sup>1</sup>.....]

It is clear that St. Athanasius in mentioning the “Flesh” does not deny the human soul of Christ, because it was not a matter of discussion.

III - In the previous text St. Athanasius confirms the (hypostatic) unity between the Logos and the Flesh (manhood), calling the flesh “God's body”, and attributes to It the work of the “Incarnate Logos”, for It is His own and became one with Him without separation. But it does not mean that a confusion, mixture or change had happened. He confirms that this flesh was created and we do not “worship it by itself”, but because It became one with the Logos.

VI - It is clear that St. Athanasius did not mean by the “incarnation” or by “Christ's Flesh” the body without human soul, for he used to attribute to Him functions which concern the human soul. I give here some statements:

[If then He wept and was troubled, it was not the Word, considered as the Word, who wept and was troubled, but it was proper to the flesh, and if too He besought that the cup might pass away, it was not the Godhead that was in terror, but this affection too was proper to the manhood<sup>2</sup>].

[He knows (the day and the hour), but as showing His manhood, in that to be ignorant (Mark 13: 32) is proper to man, and that He had put on flesh that was ignorant, being in which He said according to the flesh: “I know not”<sup>3</sup>].

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<sup>1</sup> *Ep 60 ad Adelphium 2 - 4.*

<sup>2</sup> *Against the Arians, Disc. 3: 29 (56).*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid 3: 28 (45).*

3 - In our traditional liturgies prayers we usually say: “He was incarnated and became man”... that is He became complete man, by taking our humanity.

The “Syriac Fraction” which we use in the celebration of Eucharist, confirms that on the cross the soul of our Lord departed His body but His Godhead departed not His soul nor His body.

4 - The “mia - physis” (one nature) of Christ according to Apollinarius differs than that of the Alexandrian thought. According to him, the two elements of Jesus' nature were united in such a way that the human element was partly sacrificed. The Alexandrian Theology is based on the “salvation or the renewal of our human nature in Jesus Christ”. This occurred by the Incarnation, for the Logos took our humanity not to renew our body only but our nature as a whole, which consists of body and soul. This idea will be discussed in more details, in other book.



## 13 - ST. CYRIL AND NESTORIANISM

St. Cyril's name is forever connected with the second great Christological controversy, which led to the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D) and the condemnation of Nestorius<sup>1</sup>. He is reckoned as one of the outstanding Fathers and theologians of the Church. The patristic understanding of the Incarnation owes more to Cyril of Alexandria than to any other individual theologian<sup>2</sup>.

### HIS BOYHOOD

His wealthy and pious grandparents lived in Memphis, which was called Arcadia (recently Meet-Rahena in the south of Giza). On the death of the grandparents, the Ethiopian nursemaid who was heathen, but heartily loved Christianity, took care of the two children: Theophilus and his young sister (Cyril's mother). She accompanied the children to the temple of Artimus and Apollon. On their arrival many idols fell down, and the nursemaid became afraid. She escaped to Alexandria and met St. Athanasius who related to her what happened to her in the temple. She was converted and the three were baptized.

Theophilus was consecrated Pope of Alexandria and his sister lived in a virgin's community until she was married to a pious man from Mehallet-el-bourg (Didoyscya) north of Mehalla - al -Kobra. Cyril was born, in Alexandria, between 375 and 380 A.D, and evidently received his classical and theological training at this great centre of learning, besides the instruction he had received from his uncle.

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<sup>1</sup> Quasten: Patrology, Vol 3, p 116.

<sup>2</sup> L.R. Wickhan: Cyril of Alexandria, Select Letters, Oxford 1983, p XI.

He was very intelligent, gifted by his angelic voice in reading the Gospel and reciting the church hymns, besides his excellent ability for learning by heart the Holy Scripture.

### **IN SECETIS' WILDERNESS**

He states: [From early years we learned the Holy Scriptures and were nurtured at the hands of holy and orthodox fathers<sup>1</sup>]; here he may mean "monks" by the word "fathers." According to Severus Ibn-al-Muquafaa he was sent by his uncle to St. Macarius' Monastery, where he became a disciple of St. Serapion the Great. After 5 years his uncle summoned him, appointed him deacon, then a priest to assist him in taking care of his people. Usually he accompanied him in the important meetings, even in the "Synod of the Oak," near Chalcedon where St. John Chrysostom was condemned in 403 A.D.

### **POPE OF ALEXANDRIA**

When the Alexandrian Pope Theophilus died on October 15, 412 A.D, the government wanted a certain archdeacon Timothy to succeed, but two days afterwards Cyril, the nephew of the late patriarch, was elected and consecrated. According to the Coptic rite he visited the Monastery of St. Macarius where he served the first Liturgy of the Eucharist.

### **HIS STRUGGLE**

In 433 A.D St. Cyril was occupied in refuting the charges of the impious Julian mentioned in his three books: "Against the Galileans" (362- 363 A.D). Ten of the thirty books of Cyril survive.

He came into conflict with the Novations who refused the repentance of those who denied their faith through persecution. Many troubles happened to the Christians through the Jews who represented a very strong community in Alexandria. They raised an outcry that a certain church was on fire, and then slaughtered all the Christians who turned out to

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<sup>1</sup> E. Schwartz: Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, 1:1:3, p 22.

save it. St. Cyril did his best to drive all Jews out of the city. His relentless fight against the last remnants of paganism was most probably the reason why he has been accused, as Socrates<sup>1</sup> insinuated, of being responsible for the murder of Hypatia, a female neoplatonist philosopher and close friend of Orestes, city prefect. She was brutally done to death (March 415 A.D) by some Christians<sup>2</sup>.

### **ST. CYRIL AND ST. CHRYSOSTOM**

He summoned a local council in Alexandria, where he admitted the name of St. John Chrysostom to the diptychs, i.e., the roll of those whose names should be included in the prayers of the Liturgy. He called him a “holy bishop” and quoted him<sup>3</sup>. According to some scholars he took a contrary view to his uncle in this matter<sup>4</sup>, but according to our Coptic point of view he fulfilled his uncle’s advice, who repented while he was on his death bed.

### **ST. CYRIL AND NESTORIUS**

It was on April 10, 428 A.D, that Nestorius, a monk of Antioch and disciple of Theodore was consecrated Patriarch of Constantinople. He used the term Christotokos (mother of Christ) for St. Mary, and not Theotokos<sup>5</sup>. The battle lines were clearly drawn when one of his priests “Anastasius” whom he had brought from Antioch, preached before St. Cyril in December 428 A.D, saying: [Let no one call Mary “Theotokos,” for Mary was but a woman, and it is impossible that God should be born of a woman<sup>6</sup>].

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<sup>1</sup> H.E. 7:15.

<sup>2</sup> Quasten: Patrology, vol 3, p 117.

<sup>3</sup> Oratis ad Dorninas 15.

<sup>4</sup> Wickham, p XIII.

<sup>5</sup> Fr. Malaty: St. Mary in the Orthodox Concept, 1978, p 37- 39.

<sup>6</sup> Socrates: H.E. 7:32.

This teaching Nestorius publicly approved, and he himself preached a course of sermons in which he drew a plain distinction between the man Jesus, born of Mary, and the Son of God who dwelt in him. There were two distinct persons in Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, who were united not hypostatically by only morally. Christ should be called not God but “ God-bearer (Theoporon), in much the same way as the saints can be called, because of the divine grace given to them. Subsequently, Mary was not the mother of God, but of the man Jesus in whom the Godhead dwelt.

Nestorius and his followers criticized the Wisemen for their kneeling to the Child Jesus, and preached that the divinity was separated from the humanity at the moment of Crucifixion. The matter came to St. Cyril, Pope of Alexandria, who took occasion in his annual paschal letter (A.D. 429), without any personal reference to Nestorius, to state the doctrine of the Incarnation in the clearest and simplest terms:

Namely that the real, true and perfect manhood in Christ was united to His divinity in one divine Person. Again, four months later, he wrote another letter to the monks of Egypt on the same subject, to put them on their guard. These letters coming to the notice of Nestorius stirred him to great wrath, and he engaged one Photius to answer them. He wrote to the court of Constantinople, trying to enlighten and win the support of the Emperor and the princesses who exercised so much influence on the mind and heart of Theodosius II.

St. Cyril sent letters to Nestorius in which he explains the nature of Christ, as the Incarnate Son of God, one Person, and declared St. Mary’s right to be called “Theotokos.” In his second letter to Nestorius (February, 430 A.D) he writes, *[We do not mean that the nature of the Word was changed and became flesh, or that it was transformed into a complete human being consisting of soul and body; but rather we affirm this, that the Word, hypostatically united to himself flesh, animated with living soul, in a manner mysterious and inconceivable, and became man, and was called Son of Man, yet not merely by way of divine favor or good will, nor again by the simple assumption to himself of a human person, and that while the natures which were joined together to form a real unity were*

*diverse, one Christ and Son came from both of them - not implying that the difference between the natures was abolished through their union but that instead Godhead and manhood have given us the one Lord, Christ and Son by their mysterious and inexpressible unification. He was not at first born as an ordinary man of the holy Virgin, and then the Word simply descended upon him, but having been made one with the flesh from the very womb itself, he is said to have submitted to a birth according to the flesh, as appropriating and making his own the birth of his own flesh... Thus we confess one Christ and Lord, not “worshipping” a man “along with” the Word but worshipping one and the same Christ because the body of the Lord is not alien from the Lord, with which body also he sits with the Father himself... But if we reject this **hypostatic union** either as impossible or unseemly, we fell into the error of making two sons... Thus shall we find the holy Fathers to have held. So did they make bold to call the holy Virgin “Theotokos,” Not as though the nature of the Word’ or his Godhead had its beginning from the holy Virgin, but forasmuch as His holy Body, endued with a rational soul, was born of her, to which Body also the Word was hypostatically united, on this account He is said to have been born after the flesh<sup>1</sup>.]*

Afterwards a local council was held in Alexandria, and a syndical letter was sent to Nestorius, clarifying the same doctrines mentioned in St. Cyril’s letters, and concluding with “The Twelve Articles or Anathemas.”

## **WAS NESTORIUS TRULL Y NESTORIAN?**

The discovery early this century of the “Book of Heraclides” a prolix apologia which Nestorius wrote some twenty years after the main controversy and in which he avowed<sup>2</sup> himself satisfied with the Christology of Leo

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<sup>1</sup> Wickham, p 7 - 11; J. Stevenson: Creeds, Councils and Controversis, S.P.C.K., 1966, p 277 - 8. PG 77:44 -50.

<sup>2</sup> Heraclides (ed. Nau) p 514; 519.

canonized at Chalcedon<sup>1</sup>, created a new attitude among some scholars, who regarded him as essentially orthodox but the victim of ecclesiastical politics. They consider him not a heretic but he represented the Antiochian Christology, who set the spark to the controversy between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian theology.

1. In their defense they cannot deny Nestorius' statements which declare that God cannot have a mother<sup>2</sup>, and no creature could have engendered the Godhead; Mary bore a man, the vehicle of divinity but not God, but they state that his theory was not based on the dualist concept of Christ as two sons, but essentially he tried to avoid all suspicions of a confusion or mixing of the natures. He objected to the Alexandrian habit of speaking of God being born and dying, and Mary bearing the divine Word - expressions which he considered<sup>3</sup> contrary to the practice of the Scripture and the creed. Those scholars look to Nestorius' theory as an echo of the Antiochene theology in defense against the Alexandrian theology of the "**hypostasis union**," which I will discuss in more detail.
2. By opposing the Alexandrian theory he concentrated on the manhood of Christ, as he thought that the Alexandrians denied the existence of Christ's human soul. He stated<sup>4</sup> that it is vitally important that Christ should have lived a genuinely human life of growth, temptation and suffering; if the redemption was to be effected, the second Adam must have been a real man. Yet an authentically human experience would have been impossible if the Lord's humanity had been fused with, or dominated by, His divinity. Hence the two, divinity and humanity, must have existed side by side, each retaining its peculiar properties and operation, unimpaired. Each was a nature (???) a term which in his

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<sup>1</sup>Kelly: Early Christian Doctrines, 1978, p 312.

<sup>2</sup> Ser. 1 (Loofs, 252).

<sup>3</sup>Kelly, p 312. Cyril c. Nest. Frag.35- 40 (Loofs 278; 295- 7).

<sup>4</sup> Heraclides 132-7; Ser. 1 (Loofs 254 f.), Kelly 312- 3.

vocabulary<sup>1</sup> connoted, not simply a collection of qualities in the abstract, but the concrete character of a thing. As he explained<sup>2</sup> he could not think of two natures except as each having its prosopon (i.e., its external aspect, or form, as an individual) and its hypostasis (i.e. concrete substance). By this he meant to convey, not that each nature was an actually subsistent entity, but that it was objectively real<sup>3</sup>.

3. Nestorius refused the hypostatic union, saying: [The union of God the Word with them (i.e. the body and human soul) is neither hypostatic nor natural but voluntary<sup>4</sup>.] Though speaking on occasion of a “union” (enwsij), the term he preferred was “conjunction” (sunafeia) which seemed to avoid all suspicion of a confusion or mixing of the natures.
4. His way of describing this unity or conjunction was to say that there was but one (en or monadicon) prosopon in the God-man, using the word in its ordinary sense of an individual considered from the point of view of his outward aspect or form. He stated, [Christ, Who is the prosopon of union<sup>5</sup>]. He assumed<sup>6</sup> that each of the natures continued to subsist in its own prosopon as well as in the “prosopon of union,” or the “common prosopon.”

Now modern scholars are sharply divided<sup>7</sup>. But this is not a new attitude, for Nestorius found many theologians and churchmen who would support him because of his acceptance of the Tome of Leo and his praising it, as we will see in discussing “St. Dioscorus and Eutychianism,”

According to Tixeront<sup>8</sup> Nestorius was a heretic but the school of Antioch was responsible. St. Cyril was right in

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<sup>1</sup>Kelly, p 313. 17- Heracl. 304 f., 442f.

<sup>2</sup> Heracl. 304 f., 442f.

<sup>3</sup>Kelly, p 313.

<sup>4</sup> Heracl. 262.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 212; 250; 307.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 305.

<sup>7</sup>Kelly, p 312.

<sup>8</sup> History of Dogmas, 1916, vol.3, p 10 f.

pointing to Diodore (dean of the Antiochian school) as a forerunner of Nestorius. In his eagerness to maintain the integrity of the two natures in Jesus Christ against the Apollinarianists, Diodore emphasized the distinction between the Son of God and the son of David whom the former assumed and in whom He dwelt<sup>1</sup>. Hence it is only through a figure of speech (**cata c psicwd**) and because the son of David was the tabernacle of the Logos, that we may say of the Logos, the Son of God, that He is the son of David. The Logos is not the son of David; He is His Lord<sup>2</sup>; He is not the son of Mary<sup>3</sup>... Therefore Therefore the man born of Mary is the Son of God, not by nature but by grace, the Word alone is so by nature<sup>4</sup>. Tixeront concludes: [He probably maintained, at least in words, the unity of person<sup>5</sup>, and certainly looked upon the man in Jesus as worthy of adoration together with the Word. But, notwithstanding his endeavor thus to preserve and justify the current language, it is quite evident that several of his assertions cannot be accepted and that, while he attempts to emphasize the non-confusion of the two natures in Christ, he unduly separates and isolates them<sup>6</sup>]

Theodore, the disciple of Diodore, is generally regarded as the true Nestorius, i.e., the theoretical exponent of the heresy to which the Patriarch of Constantinople gave his name<sup>7</sup>. Tixeront mentions many quotations of Theodore by which he confirms the unity of the natures, and he concludes: [Now, in spite of what he says to the contrary, these statements of Theodore show evidently that he believes in two sons in Jesus Christ, just as in two lords. While there is only one sonship and

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<sup>1</sup> PG 77: 1559

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 1560.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 1561 A.

<sup>6</sup> p 13.

<sup>7</sup> Tixorent, vol.3, p 13.



one lordship, essential in the Word, adoptive and participated in Jesus, there are two subjects of that lordship and sonship<sup>1</sup>]

Now, concerning Nestorius, he usually repeats the statement:[There are two natures in but One person (???)]. How does Nestorius understand this “one prosopon”?

Like Theodore, he seems now and then to look upon it merely as a communication of dignity, power, authority and adorable prerogatives, made by the divine nature or the Logos to His humanity<sup>3</sup>.

He failed to explain satisfactorily the unity of person in Christ, and to draw the necessary consequences from that unity<sup>4</sup>. He stated:

[When the Holy Writ intends to mention Christ’s birth from the Blessed Virgin or His death, it does not say “God” but either “Christ” or “the Son” or “the Lord,” because these appellation can be applied to the two natures, either to the one or to the other, or to both<sup>5</sup>].

[... Although being one, is two-fold, not in dignity, but in nature<sup>6</sup>].

[The natures subsist in **their prosopons** and in their natures, and in « **the prosopon of union** »<sup>7</sup>).

[The divinity makes use of the prosopon of the humanity and the humanity of that of the divinity<sup>8</sup>).

[Am I, then, the only one who calls Christ “double”? Does he not designate himself both as a temple that can be destroyed and as a God...?<sup>9</sup>].

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid 20.

<sup>2</sup> Loofs 171; 176, 196, 224, 280 (Tixorent, p 23).

<sup>3</sup> Loofs 196; 280; 281; 224 (Tixorent, p 24).

<sup>4</sup> Tixorent, vol. 3, p 26.

<sup>5</sup> Loofs 273, 274, 269.

<sup>6</sup> Loofs 281; cf. 273, 275, 209 etc.

<sup>7</sup> Heracl. 194.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 212, 213.

<sup>9</sup> Serm. Theod, (Loofs 259)

## **THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS**

In June 22, 431 A.D, the Third Ecumenical Council was held at Ephesus, over which St. Cyril president. It was opened without waiting for the arrival either of the Syrian bishops, headed by John of Antioch, who formed the party most likely to take a sympathetic view of Nestorius, or of the delegates of Celestine, bishop (Pope) of Rome.

The Council first had the Creed of Nicea read, then St. Cyril's second letter to Nestorius (Ep. 4) and the latter's reply. That reply was immediately condemned by some bishops, and a general anathema pronounced against the heresiarch. There followed the reading of the letter of Celestine and the Roman synod to Cyril (Ep. 12) and the synodal letter of Cyril and the council of Egyptian bishops (Ep. 17). Lastly, against a Patristic memoir compiled from the writings of the Fathers on the Incarnation there was arrayed a collection of twenty fragments taken from the writings of Nestorius<sup>1</sup>.

Nestorius was deposed from his see and excommunicated, his doctrines condemned, the creed of Nicea reaffirmed, and formal approval was given to the title "Theotokos,"

Besides the Nestorian heresy, the council discussed the Pelagianism which holds that man can take the initial and fundamental steps towards salvation through his own efforts, independent divine grace.

## **AN OPPOSITE COUNCIL**

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<sup>1</sup> These texts were taken from SS. Peter of Alexandria, Athanasius, Julius I of Rome, Felix 1 of Rome, Theophilus of Alexandria, Cyprian, Ambrose, Gregory of Nazianus, Atticus of Constantinople and Amphilochius of Iconium. Tixeront (vol. 3, p 45, n 120) states that the two fragments credited to Popes Julius and Felix are apocryphal and have Apollinarius for their author. But it is clear when any statement declares the "one nature" of Christ the Chalcedonians attribute to the Apollinarians, and believe that it is apocryphal.

On the arrival of John of Antioch, joined by Theodoret of Cyrrhus and other bishops, a rival meeting was held at which St. Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus were excommunicated and deposed as guilty of violence and heresy. Forty three bishops subscribed to that sentence, which was delivered to the Emperors and the princesses, and to the clergy, senate and people of Constantinople<sup>1</sup>.

Every party had its supporters into the court, and the Emperor, more or less uncertain, did not know which side to support. St. Cyril was put into jail for two months and was permitted to return to his see, but Nestorius was exiled into Egypt where he died in Upper Egypt. Until today there is a hill which is called "Hill of Nestorius," where he was huried and the Egyptians used to throw stones on his grave so that it became a hill.

A reconciliation between John and Cyril was finally effected in 433 A.D, but the dispute between the Antiochene and the Alexandrian theology was temporarily stopped to reappear in an extreme degree in the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.

### **REUNION OF 433**

The emperor himself exerted his influence to re-establish peace between St. Cyril and John of Antioch, for each represented a different theological point of view. John sent Paul of Emesa to Alexandria with credentials for Cyril, and a profession of faith that was to serve as the basis of an agreement. St. Cyril accepted it and sent back to Antioch his famous letter "Laetentur caeli<sup>2</sup>," i.e., the "Formulary of Reunion of 433," The problem was externally solved, but the "Reunion" itself was being taken in a different way by the Alexandrian and the Antiochene sides<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Mansi IV ˆ: 1260 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel, pxix.

The “Formularly of Reunion” in fact did not suffice the two parties. St. Cyril accepted it just as it led the Antiochenes to accept the Council of Ephesus (431) unconditionally. He made this point clear, in his letters to Acacius of Melitene, Valerian of Iconium and Succensus of Diacaesarea. He wrote to Acacius that the reunion was an attempt to bring about peace in the Church<sup>1</sup>. In his letters to Acacius, Valerian and Succensus he defends himself in accepting the reunion, explaining that the Antiochenes had raised three main objections to the Council of Ephesus, namely:

- 1- Cyril’s theological position as reflected in his writings, particularly in the anathemas, was heretical.
- 2- Nestorius was not a heretic, and his condemnation was unjustifiable.
- 3- The Council. of Ephesus which had declared the first orthodox and decided against the second was a heretical gathering.

Now, we can understand why St. Cyril accepted the “reunion,”

The Antiochenes also were not satisfied by the reunion; many of them who accepted it raised men in important sees to attack the Alexandrian terms of Christology. Theodoret, as an example, accepted it but he refused to condemn Nestorius.

After a sort of introduction, the Formula says<sup>2</sup>.

[We confess, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, perfect God and perfect Man, consisting of a rational soul and a body, begotten of the Father before the ages as touching his Godhead, the same, in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, as touching his Manhood; the same of one substance with the Father as touching his Godhead, and one substance with us as touching

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<sup>1</sup> PG 77: 184 A, B.

<sup>2</sup> St. Cyril: Ep 39; Bindley- Green, p 141 - 4, J. Stevenson,p 291.

his Manhood. For of two natures a union has been made. For this cause we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord.

In accordance with this sense of the unconfused union, we confess the holy Virgin to be Theotokos, because God the Word became incarnate and was made man, and from the very conception united to himself the temple taken from her. And as to the expressions concerning the Lord in the Gospels and Epistles, we are aware that theologians understand some as common, as relating to one Person, and others they distinguish, as relating to two natures, explaining those that befit the divine nature according to the Godhead of Christ, and those of a humble sort according to His Manhood.]

## **HIS WRITINGS<sup>1</sup>**

St. Cyril is one of the greatest figures of early Christian literature. His writings reveal a depth of thought and richness of ideas, a precision and clarity of argument that prove the speculative and dialectic talent of the author, and make his writings first class sources for the history of dogma and Christian doctrine.

His literature was devoted to exegesis and polemics against the Arians until 428, then was almost completely taken up by his refutation of the Nestorian heresy.

### **1 - Commentaries on the O.T.**

I. The 17 books: “**The Adoration and Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth**” present in the form of a dialogue between St. Cyril and Palladius an allegoric or typological exegesis of specifically chosen passages of the Pentateuch.

Book 1: The sin of Adam and Eve and the deliverance of man from slavery of sin and Satan.

2, 3: Justification through Christ.

4, 5: The resolution of the human will to persevere and preserve it.

6: The basis of our salvation is the love of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Quasten: Patrology, vol 3, p 119- 13S.

7 – 8: and the love of neighbor.

9 – 13: The Church and priesthood.

14-15: The spiritual worship of the Christians, foreshadowed in the institutions of the Old Testament.

17: The feasts of the Jews, especially the Pasch.

II. Glaphyra

13 Books contain expositions of select Pentateuch passages.

III: Comm. on Isaiah.

IV: Comm. on the Minor Prophets.

## **2- Comm. on the N.T.**

I. Comm. on the Gospel of St. John.

II. Comm. on the Gospel of St. Luke.

III. Comm. on the Gospel of St. Matthew.

## **3 - Dogmatic-Polemical Writings Against the Arians.**

I. Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate.

II. De Sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate.

## **4- Dogmatic-Polemical Writings against the Nestorians.**

I. Adversus Nestorii blasphemias.

The first of the anti-Nestorian treatises is the “Five Tomes against Nestorius” composed in the spring of 430.

II. De recta fide (On the True Faith).

III. The twelve Anathemas against Nestorius.

IV. Apologeticus ad imperatorem.

This is an apology to the Emperor Theodosius II immediately after Cyril’s release and his return to Alexandria. He justifies therein his actions, both before and during the Council of Ephesus.

V. Scholia de incarnatione Inigenitae.

Composed after 431, gives first an explanation of the names of Christ, Emmanuel and Jesus, and then defines the hypostatic union as opposed to a mixture or external association only.

VI. Adversus nolentes confiterie sanctam Virginem esse Deiparam (Against those that do not acknowledge Mary to be the Mother of God).

VII. Contra Diodorum et Theodorum.

Against Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, the teachers of Nestorius.

VIII: Quod unus Sit Christus.

Dialogue on the unity of person in Christ.

**5 - Apology against Julian dedicated to Theodosius**

**II.**

**6 - Paschal letters.**

Eusebius tells us that “Dionysius wrote festal letters in which he raises his voice to make solemn pronouncements about the feast of Easter.” Those by St. Dionysius of Alexandria are the first examples we possess. The practice was continued in Alexandria. We possess Paschal letters by SS. Athanasius, Peter of Alexandria and Cyril.

**7 - Sermons: Not more than 22 sermons remain of all his sermons.**

**8 - Letters.**

## **HIS CHARACTER**

- 1- By the exception of his point of view concerning St. John Chrysostom, many scholars looked to Cyril of Alexandria as a carbon copy of his uncle Theophilus<sup>1</sup>. His uncle intended him to be his successor. He prepared him, we may guess, for high office and ensured the solid grounding in Biblical study by high-standard Christian authorities for his future. The influence he exercised on Cyril was deep and lasting; so we may guess from the continuity of policy between uncle and nephew. The same respect for the monks of Egypt, the same vigorous measures against paganism and heresies, the same repudiations of any pretensions by the bishops of the eastern capital to interfere in their see, are to be observed.

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<sup>1</sup> Wickham, p. XIII.

2- Because of his warm eagerness to preach Christianity and to purify it from every heresy some ancient and modern scholars describe him as severe and violent, while we read his words<sup>1</sup>:

[I live in peace; there is nothing that I detest more than quarrels and disputes. I love everybody, and if I could gain one of the brethren by losing my possessions and goods, I am willing to do so joyfully because it is concord that I value most... But there is question of the faith and of a scandal which concerns all the churches of the Roman Empire... The sacred doctrine is entrusted to us... How can we remedy those evils?... I am ready to endure with tranquility all blame, all humiliations, all injuries provided that the faith is not endangered. I am filled with love for Nestorius; nobody loves him more than I do...]

Because of his excellent gifts in refuting 'the heresies, the heretics hated him especially the Nestorians. According to the acts of Chalcedon, Theodoret suggested that a large, heavy stone be placed on his tomb lest he provoke the dead so much that they send him back<sup>2</sup>.

## **THE THEOLOGY OF ST. CYRIL**

### **1 - Theological Method**

I. In his system he gave Patristic testimonies supported by Scriptural ones in technical skill and perfection. He called himself, "a lover of sound doctrine, treading in the religious footsteps of the Fathers<sup>3</sup>."

II. As the Arians were accustomed to use proofs from reason, he used the same way in his writings against them.

III. Wickham says: (Cyril's education made him we may say, a deeply impressive and deeply learned theologian with a daunting knowledge of the Bible and able to cope fluently with the complexities of Trinitarian discussion. It did

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<sup>1</sup> A. Kerrigan: St. Cyril of Alexandria Interpreter of the O. T. (Analecta Biblica 2) Rome 1952, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Young: From Nicea to Chalcedon, 1983, p 242.

<sup>3</sup> Third letter to Nestorius.



not give him intellectual curiosity; and indeed, it is a gift he would have scorned. Indeed it gave him beliefs as solid as a pyramid whose mode of expressions altered little, over the years<sup>1</sup>. Cyril owed little, then, directly to secular culture. Who amongst Christian writers influenced him most? His clearest debt is to Athanasius and one of his earliest work, the “Thesaurus,” is, in the main a digest of Athanasius Discourses against the Arians<sup>2</sup>

## **2 - Christology**

In his early writings against the Arians he repeats the same Athanasius attitudes and expressions. It is in the year 429/430 A.D that St. Cyril devoted himself to a deeper investigation of the Christological doctrine in order to prepare himself for a refutation of Nestorius. He declares that the Word became man but did not assume a man<sup>3</sup>. He teaches the “hypostatic” union of the Logos and the flesh which He united to Himself<sup>4</sup>, confirming this unique unity and giving details of its consequences, which we can summarize in the following points.

**1 - Necessity of the Hypostatic Union:** St. Cyril states: [If we reject this hypostatic union either as impossible or unmeet, we fall into the error of making two sons<sup>5</sup>.]

**2 - Hypostatic Union and Nestorian Terminology:** St. Cyril insists on the term “hypostatic Union,” rejecting the terminology of Nestorius who called the union of the two natures (Godhead and manhood) an “indwelling” or a “connection,” or “close participation,” considering these terms as insufficient.

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<sup>1</sup> Wickham alludes here to St. Cyril’s expression concerning the nature of Christ, (one nature of the Word of God Incarnate) which the Council of Chalcedon altered.

<sup>2</sup> Wickham, p XV

<sup>3</sup> Ep 4S to Succensus.

<sup>4</sup> Second letter to Nestorius (Ep 4).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

He states:

[We do not say either that the Word of God dwelt in him who was born of the Holy Virgin as in an ordinary man, lest Christ should be deemed a divinely inspired man<sup>1</sup>, for though the Word dwelt in us (John 1:14), and, as it is said, all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ bodily (Col. 2:9), yet we recognize that “being made flesh” is not to be defined by us as an “indwelling” of the Word in him in the same manner as when he is said to dwell in the saints, but that having been united -by a union of natures and not converted into flesh, He brought to pass such an indwelling as the soul of man may be said to have in relation to its own body.

There is then one Christ, Son and Lord, not as though He were a man possessing a connection with God simply by a unity of dignity or authority...

Moreover, we do not understand the manner of connection to do that of juxtaposition, for this does not suffice to express a union of natures.

Nor do we understand the union to be in the way of a relationship of participation as we, being joined to the Lord, as it is written, are one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17), but rather we reject the term “connection” altogether, as insufficient to designate the union<sup>2</sup>.]

He understood the Nestorian terminology concerning the unity that it supposed a merely external association between the Word and an ordinary man. From this point of view the incarnation became an illusion, a matter of “appearance” and “empty words<sup>3</sup>.” The redemption was undermined, since Christ’s sufferings and saving acts were, presumably, not those

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<sup>1</sup> Theodoret, apparently falsely, claimed this as a classic designation of Christ in reply to Cyril’s fifth Chapter. (E. Schwarz: *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 1, 1, 6 p 126).

<sup>2</sup> Third letter to Nestorius (Ep 17).

<sup>3</sup> *Apol. c. Orient* PG 76: 324.

of God incarnate but of one who was a mere man<sup>1</sup>. Similarly the conception of Christ as the second Adam inaugurating a new, regenerated race of mankind demanded, he thought<sup>2</sup>, a much more intimate union of the Word with the flesh than Nestorius postulated<sup>3</sup>.

### **3 - The Hypostatic Union and the Nestorian Dualism:**

St. Cyril repeatedly confirms the Hypostatic Union as the opposite of the Nestorian Dualism, He did not hesitate to say that we are left in ignorance, and that at bottom the unity of Jesus Christ exceeds our comprehension and is unspeakable<sup>4</sup>. He teaches that the union began with the conception of Jesus. It is not a man who was born of Mary, but the Word of God according to the humanity. [For there was not born of the Holy Virgin, first an ordinary man, into whom the Word afterwards came down, but having united Himself (to the flesh) in the womb (of Mary) the Word was born according to the flesh, ascribing to Himself the birth of a flesh that is His own<sup>5</sup>.]

He confirmed that in the “union” the humanity is not a “person,” not because He was incomplete man, but because the humanity does not exist apart (idicwc=j). it does not exist by itself, nor does it belong to itself, for it belongs to the Word, who has made it His own<sup>6</sup>.

### **4 - The Hypostatic Union without Confusion:**

St. Cyril affirms that this hypostatic Union of the two natures had been realized without mixture or change or confusion (*synchysis*). He sates:

[Following in every point the confessions of the Holy Fathers, which they have drawn up under the guidance of the Holy Spirit speaking in them, and keeping close to their

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<sup>1</sup> E.g.c. Nest. 3:2; 4:4; S:l.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 1:1; cf. Adv. Anthrop 10; Ep. 4S PG 77: 113.

<sup>3</sup>Kelly, p 318.

<sup>4</sup> Tixeront, vol 3, p 63.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Tixeront, p 66, 67.

intentions taking the royal highway as it were, we affirm that the very Only-Begotten Word of God, begotten of the very substance of the Father..., for our salvation came down, and of His condescension emptied Himself, and became Incarnate and was made Man, that is to say, having taken flesh of the Holy Virgin, and made it His own from the womb. He vouchsafed to be born as we, and came forth as a human being from a woman, without abandoning what He was, but remaining, even when He assumed flesh and blood, what He was, God in nature and in truth.

We declare that the flesh was not converted into the divine nature, and that neither was the ineffable nature of God the Word debased perverted into the nature of flesh, for He is unchangeable and unalterable, ever remaining the same according to the Scriptures (John 8: 35; 10: 30; Mat. 3: 6)<sup>1</sup>...

It seems that St. Cyril was accused by some opponents as believing in the confusion of the two natures by affirming the hypostatic union and the “mia-physis” (One incarnate nature of the Word of God). However, he wrote to John of Antioch (23, April): [But let your Holiness vouchsafe to stop the mouths of those who say that there was a mixture or confusion or blending of God the Word with the flesh, for it is likely that some are spreading the report also that I hold or say this. But so far am I from holding anything of the sort that I look upon those as mad who at all imagine that “shadow of turning” Jam. 1: 17 can befall the divine nature of Word<sup>2</sup>...].

Kelly states: [The divinity and the humanity, he pointed out<sup>3</sup>, were utterly different in essence, and while the union excluded all division it could not eliminate that difference. On the contrary, despite the fact that the God-man is ‘one nature,’ each of the elements in His being ‘remains and is perceived in

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<sup>1</sup> Third letter to Nest.

<sup>2</sup> Ep 39.

<sup>3</sup> C. Nest. 2:6.

its natural property<sup>1</sup>.’ Any suggestion that ‘the difference of natures was abolished by the union’ was to be rejected<sup>2</sup>.]

### **5 - Hypostatic Union and Worshipping Christ:**

**St. Cyril** states: [Confessing then the Word has been hypostatically united with flesh, we worship one Son and Lord, Jesus Christ, without separating man and God, as though they were, connected by a unity of dignity and authority, nor surely calling the Word of God “Christ” in one sense; and in like manner Him who is of the woman “Christ” in another sense, but recognizing the Word of God the Father with His own flesh one Christ and only one. For then he was anointed humanly alongside us, given though He is of the Holy Spirit without measure to those who are worthy to receive as says the blessed John the Evangelist (John 3: 34)<sup>3</sup>.]

St. Cyril who affirms the hypostatic union refused venerating Christ’s manhood because of His Godhood or along with Godhood, for this inspires separation, and makes of Him two Christs. We offer single worship to the One Christ who is the Incarnate Word of God.

He states:

[We refuse to say of Christ: “I venerate the possessed because of the Possessor; I revere the one visible because of the Invisible,” It is a horrible thing to add to this, “the assumed” is called God along with the assumer. To say this is once more to divide Him into two Christs and to posit man separately on his own and to do the same with God <sup>4</sup>.]

### **6 - Hypostatic Union and the Divine Sacrifice:**

As a consequence of the Hypostatic union of the two natures in one without change or confusion (*synchysis*) the passions, crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus can be

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<sup>1</sup> Ep. 46 (ad Succen 2) PG 77: 241.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 4 (ad Nestor. 2); Kelly, p 321.

<sup>3</sup> ad Nest. 3

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

attributed to the Incarnate Logos. Thus the divine sacrifice could be realized and our salvation become in hand.

St. Cyril says, [We confess also that the very Son, begotten of God the Father... though being in His own nature impassible, suffered for us in flesh, according to the scriptures, and was in His Crucified “Body impassibly appropriating and making His own the sufferings of His own flesh. And “by the grace of God He tasted death also for every man” (Heb. 2: 9), yielding to death His own body, though originally and by nature “Life,” and Himself the “Resurrection”...

We celebrate the service of unbloody sacrifice in the churches, and so approach the mystic Benedictions, and are sanctified, being made partakers of the holy flesh and precious blood of Christ the Savior of us all, receiving not mere flesh, God forbid!, nor flesh of a man hallowed by connection with the Word in some unity of dignity or as having God dwelling in him, but as Life-giving of a truth and the very own flesh of the Word Himself. For being, as God, Life by nature, when He became one with His own flesh, He made that flesh life-giving. So that though He says to us, “Verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood” (John 6: 53), yet we shall not account it were the flesh of an ordinary man... but as having become of a truth the own flesh of Him, who for our sakes became and was called Son of Man<sup>1</sup>.]

In St. Cyril’s opinion<sup>2</sup>, Nestorius had deprived the Eucharist of being the life-giving force and reduced it to cannibalism, since on his premises only the body of a man lay on the altar and the flesh consumed by the faithful was not truly vivified by the Logos<sup>3</sup>.

3 - Like St. Athanasius he accepts and exploits the “Communicatis idiomatum” (Communion of idioms), stating that the flesh of Christ shares in the names and properties of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> c. Nest. 4:S; 4:6; Ep. ad Nest 3:7; Ep 17.

<sup>3</sup>Kelly, p 318.

Word and vice versa. In other words it is necessary to ascribe to the person of the Word Incarnate the actions, passions, and properties both of the Godhead and manhood. It is correct to say that: [the Word of God suffered in flesh, and became first-begotten from the dead<sup>1</sup>]. [We must therefore confess that the Word has imparted the glory of the divine operation to His own flesh, while at the same time taking to Himself what belongs to the flesh<sup>2</sup>.]

However, St. Cyril does not fail to remark that this way of speaking is legitimate only if we consider the divinity and the humanity “in the union<sup>3</sup>,” for the divinity itself did not suffer; the Word of God, as such, was not born of the Blessed Virgin; He was not seized, neither bound nor wounded; nor did He die; during the Passion, He was just impassible as the flame into which a red hot iron is plunged; the iron, indeed suffers from the contact, but not the flame<sup>4</sup>.

4 - As. St. Cyril used the term (One nature) many scholars believe that he quoted it from the Apollinarian writings as if it were St. Athanasius’ term, but they assure that he was not Apollinarian. Kelly states: [By “flesh” he meant<sup>5</sup> human nature in its fullness, including a rational soul; he took the refutation of Apollinarianism for granted. This humanity was real and concrete<sup>6</sup>.]

## **ONE NATURE (MIA-PHYSIS) OF CHRIST**

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<sup>1</sup> Anath 12.

<sup>2</sup> De incarn. Unigen. PG 7S:1241; Cf. Schol de incarn 9 PG 75:1380.

<sup>3</sup> Homil. paschal 17:2 PG 75:777.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 45; Ep 4; Adv. Nest. blasph. 5: 4; Quod unus sit Christus. PG 75: 236; 45; 232; 1337, 1357. Tixeront, vol3, p 68.

<sup>5</sup> Ad regin 1:13; De in~arn. Unigen; Quod unus sit Christus.

<sup>6</sup>Kelly, p 319.

St. Cyril used the term: “one incarnate nature of God the Logos,” as a tool to conserve the church’s faith in the Person of Jesus Christ, especially against Nestorianism.

I have already explained this term in my book: “Christology according to the Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches,” Here I would stress these points.

- 1- This term is Athanasius’ term, but the traditional church term, by which the Church affirms the hypostatic union without separation or confusion.
- 2- Apollinarius used it<sup>1</sup>, and for this reason Cyril’s opponents sometimes accused him with Apollinarianism<sup>2</sup>, but he was too far from the theologian systematic Apollinarianism<sup>3</sup>.
- 3- St. Cyril’s term” mia-physis “differs from Eutyche’s one nature, St. Cyril affirms the united nature “out of two natures<sup>4</sup>” without confusion, while Eutyche believed in the absorption of Christ’s manhood which had been totally lost.
- 4- St. Cyril’s belief in “one united nature out of two natures” was declared clearly, repeatedly and in detail in his two letters addressed to Succensus, bishop of Diocaesarea, in which we remark the following points:
  - A. In these two letters St. Cyril refuted Diodore’s dyophysieis (two-natures) which caused dualism in the personality of Jesus Christ. St. Cyril affirms that Jesus Christ is one and the same Christ who is the Son of God and became flesh. St. Cyril who was well-educated in Greek literature Knew the distinction between “physis” and “hypostasis,” “Physis” to him was not merely some characteristics of a being but it is too close to one’s substance. Thus if we speak about two

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<sup>1</sup> Apollinaris’ belief in one nature based on denying Jesus’ human nature. In his desire to affirm the oneness of Jesus Christ he said that the Godhead replaced the human soul. By this belief Jesus Christ’s manhood is incomplete.

<sup>2</sup> First letter to Succensus (Ep 45:5).

<sup>3</sup> Wikham, p 19 n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ep 45:6 (First letter to Succensus).



natures of Christ it implies two persons, as Diodore and his disciples like Nestorius said. It was too difficult for St. Cyril to accept the “two natures,” because of his defense against Nestorianism,. He states:

[We do not damage the concurrence into unity by declaring it was effected “out of two natures,” however, after the union we do not divide the natures from each other and do not sever the one and indivisible into two sons but say “one Son” and as the fathers have put it, “one incarnate nature of the Word<sup>1</sup>.”]

B - St. Cyril explains the unity of the two natures into one by man himself who is composed of body and soul, of two different natures, but we believe that we have one united human nature<sup>2</sup>.

C- St. Cyril refuted the claims of the Nestorians against the “one incarnate nature of the Word,” explaining that this belief does not mean that God experienced suffering in His own nature<sup>3</sup>, nor that a sort of merger and mixture occurred between Godhead and manhood<sup>4</sup>, or that manhood had been lost<sup>5</sup>.

Here, we refer to the misunderstanding of the Chalcedonian churches towards us, as they believed that we are monophesites, as if we are Eutychians, In the last two decades many conferences were held to set a formula that suffices the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches concerning the nature of Christ, to declare the close concepts of the two parties in spite of the difference in terminology.

## MARIOLOGY

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<sup>1</sup> Ep 45:7 (see also his letter to Eulogius).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ep 46:1.

<sup>4</sup> Ep 46:4.

<sup>5</sup> Ep 46:4.

St. Cyril asserts the “Theotokos” (Mother of God) for St. Mary as a sign of the orthodox faith that Jesus Christ who was born and crucified is truly the Incarnate Son of God. This term had been employed by the School of Alexandria for a long time. The English translation “Mother of God” brings into prominence that thought of the glory of her motherhood, the Greek term fixes attention rather on the Godhead of Him who was born<sup>1</sup>. To deny that she was “Theotokos” was really to deny that He who was born of her was Incarnate God. St. Cyril starts his 12 “Anathemas” thus: “Whoever does not acknowledge Emmanuel to be truly God and hence the holy Virgin “Theotokos,” for she gave fleshly birth to the Word of God made flesh, shall be anathema.”

He devoted to the defense of the “Theotokos” two whole treatises, the “*Quod Sancta Virgo Deipara sitet non Christipara*” and the “*Quod beata Maria sit Dei para*,” besides considerable portions of other works, for instance, the first book of the “*Adversus Nestorii blasphemias*,” and the first part of the “*De recta fide ad reginas*”<sup>2</sup>.

### QUOTATIONS OF ST. CYRIL

- † Death devoured the Lamb on behalf of all, and then vomited all in Him and with Him. For we were all in Christ, who died and rose again on our account, and on our behalf (In John 1:29).
- † One man would not have been recompense adequate for all mankind, had he been merely a man. But if He is to be conceived of as God incarnate, suffering death in flesh which was His own, then the whole creation would be a small thing in comparison with Him, and the death of one flesh an abundant ransom for the flesh of all. For the flesh was the flesh of the Word who was begotten from God the Father (de rect. fid. 2:7).

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<sup>1</sup> J. F. Bethume-Baker: An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine, 1920, p 362.

<sup>2</sup> Tixeront, vol 3, p 69.

† He is sanctified with us, although He is Himself the Sanctifier of all creation; that you might not see Him refusing the measure of human nature, Who consented for the salvation and life of all to become man (In Luc. hom. 12).

† † †

## 4 - ST. DIOSCORUS & EUTYCHIANISM

### THE RETURN OF THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY

The condemnation of Nestorius at the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (in 431 A.D) inflamed the controversy between the supporters of the Alexandrian theology and those of the Antiochene theology. John of Antioch and his supporters condemned St. Cyril and his supporters. In 433 A.D the “Formula of Reunion” or “the Union Symbol” was declared, but it had not given universal satisfaction. Neither of the great parties was as a whole content with the term of the Union Symbol<sup>1</sup>. Now, The circumstances had been changed and the controversy returned in a more severe form that created a bitter schism in the Church, through the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D At Edessa, in 435 A.D a newly elected bishop Ibas turned out to be a zealous disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia (an Antiochene leader) and the dogmatic controversy now began to concentrate on Theodore's writings. John of Antioch was replaced in 443 by his nephew Domnus, who had a weak and unstable character, a man only capable of sensible decisions when he had Theodoret of Cyrus at hand to advise him<sup>2</sup>. In the year 444 St. Cyril died and was succeeded by archdeacon Dioscorus, who had accompanied him to the council of Ephesus<sup>3</sup>. The Chalcedonians usually describe him with bad characteristics.

Schaff says that he [surpasses him (Cyril) in all his bad qualities, while he fell far behind him in intellect and in theological capacity<sup>4</sup>].

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<sup>1</sup> J.N.D. Kelly: *Early Christian Doctrines*, 1978, p 330.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Chadwick: *The Early Church*, 1974, p 200.

<sup>3</sup> P. Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*, vol 3, p 736.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Latourette says: [a man fully as zealous as himself for the prestige and theology of his see and who went beyond Cyril in emphasizing the divine nature in Christ<sup>1</sup>].

On the other hand the non-Chalcedonians venerate him as “the postolic preacher and Christ's true martyr<sup>2</sup> the knee to Baal in the assembly of schism<sup>3</sup>”.

J. Neale describes him as [a man of excellent disposition, and much beloved for his humility. These virtues were adorned with his fiery zeal for the faith and his presence of mind<sup>4</sup>].

At Constantinople Proclus was succeeded (446) by Flavian a diffident man unendowed with eloquence<sup>5</sup>. He seems to believe in “one incarnate nature of the Word of God out of the two<sup>6</sup>”, but Theodoret of Cyrhus changed his mind.

## ST. DIOSCORIUS & THEODORET OF CYRHUS

According to church tradition St. Dioscorius sent letters to his brothers the bishops, after his ordination, as a symbol of the apostolic communion. Theodoret of Cyrhus, who was struggling against St. Cyril on behalf of Nestorius, sent a letter of flattery to the new Patriarch, praising his modesty and decency<sup>7</sup>. Theodoret declared his enmity to St. Dioscorius, for the latter sent a letter to Domnus of Antioch, blaming him kindly and openly for his encouragement to Theodoret to preach the people with the Nestorian dualism of the Person of Christ, despising the Council of Ephesus and declaring that Nestorius was not a heretic. Domnus sent a kindly reply to St.

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette: *A History of Christianity*, 1953, p 170.

<sup>2</sup> *The Chronicle of Zachariah of Mitylene*, trans. by F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, p 46, 120.

<sup>3</sup> Severius of Antioch: *Ep 2 to Sergium*.

<sup>4</sup> J. Neale: *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, vol. 1, p 278, 301.

Iris Habib El-Masry: *The Story of the Coptic Church*, vol.2, p 15 (in Arabic).

إيريس حبيب المصري: قصة الكنيسة القبطية، ج 2، ص 15.

<sup>5</sup> H. Chadwick, p 200.

<sup>6</sup> Tixeront: *History of Dogmas*, vol.3, p 77, 78.

<sup>7</sup> Archimandrite V. Guettee: *Histoire de l'Eglise*, Paris 1806, t.4, p 483.

Dioscorius, telling him that he enjoyed his letter because of his love and openness<sup>1</sup>.

## ST. DIOSCORUS & EUTYCHES

Eutyches (c. 378-454) was an archimandrite of a monastery at Constantinople where about three hundred monks lives under his guidance. He was an old ascetic, endowed with eloquence but he was not a true theologian. He played a serious role in the split that occurred in the Church from the fifth century.

Bishop Gregorius Boulos Behnam of Bagdad gives us an account of Eutyches, character and his role in the current church events in the fifth century<sup>2</sup>.

Eutyches had widespread fame throughout the see of Constantinople, within the monastic circles, the imperial court and among the people. This is due to his intelligence, eloquence, his ascetic life and his close relations with the imperial court especially through his kinsman Chrysaphius, the grand chamberlain.

As a friend of St. Cyril, he received from him a copy of the decisions of the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D, and cherished it ever since<sup>3</sup>, He accepted the Alexandrian Christological formula “one incarnate nature of the Word of God” without sound theological basis. In fact, he did not represent the Alexandrian theology nor the Antiochian. But his eager opposition to Nestorianism, which was spread in this area and his defence of the Alexandrian formula led him to another heresy, as he denied that the manhood of Christ was consubstantial with us. He said that there were two natures before the

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<sup>1</sup> Mar Sawirius Yacoub Thomas, *Metropolit of Beirut, Damascus and its connections for the Syrian Orthodox: The History of the Syrian Antiochene Church*, vol 2, p 90-3.

مار ساويروس يعقوب توما متروبوليت بيروت ودمشق وتابعها للسريان الأرثوذكس: تاريخ الكنيسة السريانية الأنطاكية ج 2، ص 93-90.

<sup>2</sup> Gregorius Boulos Behnam: *Pope Dioscorius of Alexandria, Defender of the Faith (444-454)*, Cairo 1968, p 76-119 (in Arabic).

غريغوريوس بولس بهنام مطران بغداد والبصرة: البابا ديسقورس الإسكندري، حامي الإيمان، 444-454 م، القاهرة 1968، ص 119-76.

<sup>3</sup> *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum (A C O)*, Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1933, II, i, p 91.

union, but only one after it, for the divine nature absorbed the human one, and manhood was totally lost.

Bishop Behnam<sup>1</sup> states that Eutyches was a friend of Eusebius of Dorylaeum (in Phrygia) who firmly believed in the Nestorian dualism of the Person of Jesus Christ. Through his extreme thoughts he could not gain Eutyches from his heretical ideas. The two persons were proud, had their own widespread fame, and discussions pushed the two towards more extreme ideas, and their close friendship was turned into severe hatred.

### **Eutyches' Theology**

It is not difficult for any scholar to discover the character of Eutyches and his theology just from reading his answers during the discussions with him in councils of (448 A.D. and 449 A.D.). He was not a theologian, nor did he know the Alexandrian theological system, but he sometimes used orthodox statements, against his main ideas. Perhaps because he was shaky in theological knowledge, or because he was a deceiver, or even because he was cautious not to lose his fame or his position and priesthood.

After the home synod of Constantinople in 448 A.D., he sent his confession of faith to the emperor, which, if it represented his real position, it contains no "Eutychian heresy".

He states: [We proclaim Jesus Christ our Lord, born of God the Father without a beginning...,

Who for us and for our salvation was born of Mary the Virgin...,

taking a rational soul and body;

perfect God and perfect man;

the same being consubstantial with the Father as to Godhead, and... consubstantial with us as to manhood.

Confessing then Christ to be "from" two natures after the incarnation...,

We affirm that he is one Christ, one Son, one Lord, in one hypostasis, and one prosopon.

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<sup>1</sup> G.B. Behnam, p 79.

We do not therefore refuse to maintain that he is one nature of God the Word incarnate and made man, because he is one from both, the same being our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>1</sup>].

### **Condemnation of Eutyches**

A struggle occurred between Eutyches and the Antiochian leader Theodoret of Cyrhus, whose loyal love for Nestorius led him to give his friend credit for meaning what he himself meant<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand in his bitter hatred St. Cyril and his writings, especially the “Twelve Anathemas” he accused St. Cyril of Apollinarianism. He published a long attack against St. Cyril and Eutyches [but he did not mention his.name], entitled “Eranistes<sup>3</sup>” or “Beggar”, divided into 3 sections<sup>4</sup>:

1 - The first seeks to demonstrate that the divine nature is immutable. In effect such a statement denies St. Cyril's statement of the “Theotokos” and the “Communicatio idiomatum<sup>5</sup>”.

2 - The second section seeks to show that the two natures exist unconfused in Christ, refusing the unity of natures.

3 - The third section is designed to show that God the Word is impassible. He attacks the fourth Anathema of St. Cyril which states that it is impossible to divide between two persons or hypostasis, the expressions used in the writings of the New Testaments.

St. Cyril confirms the three points: the immutability of the Godhead, the non-confusion of natures and the impassibility of the Logos; but the book attacks the Cyrillian theology, especially calling St. Mary the Theotokos, the “one nature” of Christ, and the “communicatio idiomatum”.

Flavian of Constantinople advised Eusebius of Dorylaeum to meet the old abbot privately and settle the dispute between them, believing that Eutyches' views had no effect outside his monastery,

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<sup>1</sup> *A C O, II, i, p 35.*

*V.C. Samuel: The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined, Indian Theological Library No. 8, Madras, 1977, p 15 n. 36.*

<sup>2</sup> *N & P.N. Fathers, S. 2, vol 3, p 5.*

<sup>3</sup> *"Eranistes" means one who makes a garment from discord rags, or it means a beggar.*

<sup>4</sup> *Rowan A. Greer; Theodore of Mopsuestia, 1961, p 35-36.*

<sup>5</sup> *See chapters 1, 2 [the theology of St. Athanasius and the theology of St. Cyril].*



and that on his death nobody would have an interest in them<sup>1</sup>. Eusebius as an experienced fighter<sup>2</sup> and according to Jalland was “possessed of most of the qualities of which religious fanatics and persecutors are made<sup>3</sup>”, and Duschene describes him as “a man of litigious and headstrong temper<sup>4</sup>”, persisted in condemning him before a council.

The council of Constantinople was held from 8th to 22nd of November 448 A.D to condemn Eutyches. Eusebius presented a “libel” against him accusing him of slandering orthodox writers and holding heretical views himself, and demanded from Flavian that Eutyches be called for his self-defence<sup>5</sup>. Eutyches refused to appear before the council till the seventh session, offering many excuses like his senility, illness or the ascetic tradition that prevented him to leave the monastery.

The discussions of these first six sessions are unknown except for some statments, in which the bishops who were assembled attribute to St. Cyril the “two natures after the union<sup>6</sup>”.

Before the council, Eutyches declared that he accepted the teaching of Nicea and Ephesus and affirmed that [after He (Jesus) became man, that is after our Lord Jesus Christ was born, God the Word is worshipped as one nature, namely as God who has become incarnate<sup>7</sup>].

He devied<sup>8</sup> ever having said that Jesus, flesh came from heaven; but he laughed on hearing this accusation against him.

He repeated that Christ took flesh of the Virgin Mary<sup>9</sup>, and added that it was a complete incarnation (enanthropisai), but he refused to concede that His flesh was consubstantial with us<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> G.B. Behnam, p 81.

<sup>2</sup> V.C. Samuel, p 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 16; Trever Gervasse Jalland: *The Life and Times of St. Leo the Great, S.P.C.K., 1941, p 215.*

<sup>4</sup> John Murray ; *The Early History of the Church, 1924, vol III, p 280.*

<sup>5</sup> *ACO II, i, p 100-101 paras. 225-230; Mansi VI, 652.*

<sup>6</sup> G.B. Behnam, p 82-87.

<sup>7</sup> *ACO II, i, p 124; Samuel, p 17, n 46.*

<sup>8</sup> *Eduards Schwartz: Der prozess des Eutyches, 1929, p 15.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid* 23.

Eusebius insisted on his answering these two questions:

1 - Was Christ consubstantial with us?

2 - Were there in Him two natures after the Incarnation?

Concerning the first question he declared: [Till this day, I have not spoken of the body of our Lord that it was the same substance as ours. But I confess that the Virgin was consubstantial with us, and that our God became incarnate from her<sup>2</sup>].

When Basil of Seleucia commented that if the mother was consubstantial with us, He Himself, being called the Son of Man, must be consubstantial with us<sup>3</sup>, he replied: [As you now say I agree in everthing<sup>4</sup>].

He was hesitating in this matter, as it was clear from his reply to Flavian: [I am afraid to say this, because I know Him to be my God, and

because I have not dared to investigate His nature. Now, that your holiness

34 permits it, I say this<sup>5</sup>].

J. Kelly gives an excuse to Eutyches for his hesitation, saying: [His hesitations about “consubstantial with us” were due to his exaggerated suspicion that it might be twisted to imply the Nestorian conception of the humanity as being an individual man whom the Godhead assumed<sup>6</sup>].

Concerning the second question, he replied: [I have read the blessed Cyril, the holy fathers and the holy Athanasius. They speak of “from (of) two natures” as referring to the “before of the union”. As for “after the union and the incarnation” they did not affirm two natures but one<sup>7</sup>].

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 15.

<sup>2</sup> *ACO II, i, p 142:516 (Samuel, p 20, 21).*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 142:519.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* 142:520.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 143:524.

<sup>6</sup> *Kelly, p 333.*

<sup>7</sup> *AGO II, i, p 144:535.*

Basil of Seleucia said that if he did not admit two natures, he would be maintaining confusion and mixtures<sup>1</sup>.

Flavian gave the verdict that Eutyches was a follower of Valentinus and Apollinarius, and the council excommunicated Eutyches and deposed him from the government of his monastery and the exercise of priesthood<sup>2</sup>.

Tixeront states: [Flavian was probably not sorry to get rid of an overzealous partisan of the Patriarch of Alexandria (St. Cyril)<sup>3</sup>]. Cyril<sup>3</sup>]. Kelly say, [He was not Docetist or Apollinarian; nothing could have been more explicit than his affirmation of the reality and completeness of the manhood<sup>4</sup>].

Bishop Behnam on presenting the discussions and the acts of this council gives two comments; the first is that the bishop would not gain Eutyches to the truth, but to oblige him to accept the Nestorian dualism of the Person of Christ without discussion, the second is that Eutyches in his answers was not clear, to conceal his principal view<sup>5</sup>.

Rene Dragust followed by Thomas Camelat and J.N.D. Kelly, concedes that Eutyches was not a confirmed heretic. Kelly states: [What Eutyches' actual doctrine was has never been easy to determine. At a preliminary examination, before the envoys of the synod he declared that "after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ I worship one nature, viz. that of God made flesh and became man"... The traditional picture of Eutyches, it is clear, has been formed by picking out certain of his statements and pressing them to their logical conclusion<sup>6</sup>]. Trevor G. Jobland<sup>7</sup> remarks that the condemnation of Eutyches by the council of Constantinople was a hasty action.

## **Eutyches' appeal to the Emperor and Bishops**

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 144:546f.

<sup>2</sup> *Mansi VI*, 748.

<sup>3</sup> *Tixeront*, vol 3, p 79.

<sup>4</sup> *Kelly*, p 333.

<sup>5</sup> *Behnam*, p 90-92.

<sup>6</sup> *Kelly*, p 332.

<sup>7</sup> *The Life and Times of St. Leo the Great*, p 216.

Eutyches condemnation produced many troubles in Constantinople. His supporters, especially in the monastic circles accused Flavian and his supporters of Nestorianism. Flavian excommunicated the leaders while Eutyches appealed to Rome, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Thessalonica<sup>1</sup>, and through his friend Chrysophius, the grand Chamberlian, he lodged a complaint to the emperor saying that those who judged him desired to accept the Nestorian dualism, and that the minutes of the council had been falsified.

Leo of Rome wrote to Eutyches, praising his zeal in defending against the Nestorian dualism, and at the same time wrote to Flavian to be kind Eutyches<sup>2</sup>. But he changed his mind perhaps when he heard that the Emperor wrote to St. Dioscorus, Pope of Alexandria, summoning him to a council to be held to discuss this matter. Leo, who had no real knowledge of the nature of the conflict between the Alexandrian and Antiochian Christology sent his tome (letter) to Constantinople on 13 June 449, not to work for the reconciliation of the parties but to disform the Alexandrian theologians. Tixeront's comment on this tome is: [This letter has always been regarded as a dogmatic document of exceptional value. Yet, it is decidedly inferior, in theological inspiration, to the work of Cyril, and strictly so-called speculation hardly finds any place in it at all. St. Leo does not discuss or demonstrate; he judges and settles difficulties<sup>3</sup>].

Leo was occupied with "papacy" more than the dogma of the church as we will see through the current events of the fifth century. His principal aim was to exercise supremacy over the whole church throughout the world. J.W.C. Wand states: [Leo was one of the greatest of all ecclesiastical statesmen, and has been called the Father of the Papacy<sup>4</sup>].

This attitude was clear, as he wrote back to the emperor that there was no need for a council, but that he was nominating Julius of Puteoli, presbyter Renatus and deacon Hilary as his delegates simply to

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<sup>1</sup> *Tixeront*; vol 3, p 80; *Jalland* 216-7, *Behnam* 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Behnam*, p 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Tixeront*, vol 3, p 81.

<sup>4</sup> *A History of the Early Church to A.D 500*, 1965, p 237.

satisfy the emperor<sup>1</sup> declaring that his tome was enough to offer the needed guidance.

It is noteworthy that even in this century in all the correspondances between the Bishop of Rome and other Bishops or the emperors there was not trace to the title "Pope". This title is derived from the Coptic, meaning "Father" and it was used to refer to the Bishops of Alexandria by his people, but not having the meaning of "Papacy" which the Roman Church uses lately.

## **THE SECOND COUNCIL OF EPHESUS IN 449 A.D**

Emperor Theodosius II, who convened the council, asked Dioscorus to exercise supreme authority over it as president<sup>2</sup>, and required Juvenal of Jerusalem and Thalassius of Caesarea in Copadocia to be co-presidents with him<sup>3</sup>

Before discussing its decisions, I would mention that the Chalcedonians believe that if the Council of Chalcedon in 451 caused a split in the church, it was just a reaction to the Council of Ephesus in 449, which Leo of Rome called "Latrocinium" or Robber-Synod, and their historians and theologians accuse St. Dioscorus as a violent man who guided the council on behalf of the Alexandrian theology. As an example, R.V. Sellers states: [One of the "violent men" in the history of the Early Church, Dioscorus, bishop of Alexandria, could Arouse the bitter hostility of those who were not of his way of thinking, and the admiration of those who were devoted to the Anti-Nestorian cause... Clearly, it was the day of opportunity for Dioscorus, who, now that he was armed with such powerful support, was determined to put down all opposition to the Alexandrian way of belief...<sup>4</sup>]

## **WAS ST. DIOSCORUS VIOLENT?**

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<sup>1</sup> *ACO II, i, p45:10.*

<sup>2</sup> *ACO II, i, p 68-69:24.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid 74:52.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Council of Chalcedon, S.P.C.K. 1961, p 30, 77.*

Bishop Gregorius Behnam, after publishing the imperial letter of the two Emperors Theodosius II and Valentinus, translated from the Syriac to Arabic, gives the following remarks:

1 - The Council was not held on the demand of Pope Dioscorus, and there were no previous letters between the Alexandrian Pope and the emperors. It means that St. Dioscorus demanded no personal benefit.

2 - The imperial letter did not describe St. Dioscorus with titles more honourable than others<sup>1</sup> 10... This means that there was no previous agreement between the emperor and St. Dioscorus.

3- The imperial letters discover the increased theological troubles that spread in the see of Constantinople<sup>2</sup>. It was the emperor's demand that St. Dioscorus should haste to put an end to these theological troubles. It is noteworthy that St. Dioscorus did not declare any new formula<sup>3</sup>, but sought to preserve the traditional church formula.

4 - Decisions were accepted through voting, and we do not hear that one of the bishops who were present resented or withdrew from the Council<sup>4</sup>.

5 - In the opening word which Juvenal of Jerusalem addressed, he describes Leo of Rome as a "saint" and "lover of God", and gave Domnus of Antioch the same title "lover of God"... These titles reveal the council's spirit.

6 - When Leo of Rome asked the emperor of the West, Valentinus, his mother and his sister Pulcheria to intercede before Theodosius II, to summon another council, the latter sent them a letter praising the Council of Ephesus, that it was controlled by the fear of God, and the members held fast to the true faith and the Fathers' canons, and that he himself examined it and found it satisfactory<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Behnam, p 25, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 21.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p 40.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p 36.

7 - In the imperial message at the opening of the Council, the emperor declared that he prevented Theodoret of Cyrus to be present because of the pains that believers - even in the villages - suffered from the Nestorians<sup>1</sup>. In fact, Dioscorus was not violent, but the Nestorians were thus, as the emperor himself witnessed.

I can add some other remarks:

8 - In fact, until the last moment of this council, St. Dioscorus did not speak an evil word against Rome, while Leo in his epistles refers to our Pope as “that Egyptian plunderer”, and “preacher of the devil's errors”, who tried to force his “villainous blasphemies” on his brethren<sup>2</sup>. We will see how the Patriarch of Constantinople and others refused to attribute to our Pope heresy.

9 - The Chalcedonians usually depend on the acts of the Council of Chalcedon in accusing St. Dioscorus with violence. We will discuss these accusations afterwards, but I would here mention that it was natural for Nestorians to accuse our Pope thus to conceal their violent behaviour through out the see of Constantinople as Theodosius II witnessed, and also their violent behaviour with Eutyches and his supporters. Eutyches in his appeal to the bishops [asserted that during the trial he had expressly stated that he was ready to follow what these should determine, but that Flavian had refused to accept this appeal; and he protested against the violence with which he had been treated both at the Synod and afterwards by the populace<sup>3</sup>]. We know that Flavian excommunicated many leaders of monks because of their support to Eutyches against the Nestorian dualism.

10 - Some scholars used to describe the Alexandrian theologians and Fathers with violence, even SS. Athanasius and Cyril. I would explain the Alexandrian behaviour:

a - We must distinguish their holding fast to the orthodox faith without any inclination to use violence. Our Fathers were usually suffering on behalf of their faith and not persecuting others.

b - It is a gift of God that the Church of Alexandria had never enjoyed secular authority, like Rome or Constantinople.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p 41-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Leo, Epist.* 109, 123.

<sup>3</sup> *Sellers*, p 70.

c - When Ecumenical Councils condemned heretics and exiled them, even if the president was Alexandrian, it was not the decision of the bishop who presided the assembly; and the decision had to be referred to the emperor who was not Egyptian at all but Roman or Byzantine.

For example when the case of Ibas of Edessa was discussed, it was not Dioscorus who was violent, but the bishops assembled cried out: "Let Ibas be burnt in the middle of Antioch", "even demons are more modest than Ibas, for these did acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God", "Nestorius and Ibas should be burnt together!... Satan and his son to the fire, both together!"

The acts of the council witness that St. Dioscorus was not violent, but usually he was firm to get rid of the Nestorian attitudes.

## **THE DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

### **1 - The Rehabilitation of Eutyches**

It was not the error of St. Dioscorus that this council rehabilitated Eutyches, for these reasons:

a - Leo of Rome wrote to Pulcheria, saying that Eutyches inclined into heresy because of his ignorance, if he repents he will be treated kindly<sup>1</sup>. Leo declared the same idea in his letters to Julius of Cios (448-458) and to Flavian<sup>2</sup>.

b - Eutyches declared orthodox statements, as: [For He who is the Word of God came down from heaven without flesh and was made flesh from the very flesh of the Virgin unchangeably and inconvertibly, in a way He Himself knew and willed. And He who is always perfect God before the ages was also made perfect man in the end of days for us and for our salvation<sup>3</sup>].

He affirmed that he held fast the faith of Nicene and Ephesus and the Cyril's statements. He also anathematized Manes, Valentinus,

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<sup>1</sup> *Mgr. Héféle: Histoire des Conciles, Paris 1869, t. 2, p 55.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid, p 556-8.*

<sup>3</sup> *V.C. Samuel, 31.*



Apollinarius and Nestorius together with those who had said that the Lord's flesh descended from heaven<sup>1</sup>...

Sellers says: [To bring these proceedings to a close, Dioscorus then requested each bishop to state his opinion concerning the orthodoxy of Eutyches, and, beginning with Juvenal and Domnus, one hundred and eleven bishops, Basil and Seleucus among them, together with the abbot Barsumas, accepted his confession of faith and agreed that he should be reinstated<sup>2</sup>].

## 2 - Condemnation of Flavian, Domnus etc...

The minutes of these proceedings are available in the Syriac version<sup>3</sup>, from which we notice:

a - The main charge against them was their Nestorian views which were wide spread in this area. Chadwick states: [the council went on to depose the leading Nestorians<sup>4</sup>].

b - For example, concerning Ibas of Edessa, among the documents that were read was the letter to Maris of Ardaschir in Persia. All the bishops voted against him as a Nestorian. At Chalcedon the delegates of Leo judged the letter as orthodox, while on 553 the Chalcedonians themselves anathematized it together with the writings of Theodore and Theodoret, conforming the sentence of the council of 449 and not of Chalcedon.

c - In the cases of Daniel of Charrae the nephew of Ibas and Sophronius of Constantina in Osrhone, cousin of Ibas, Juvenal was discussing the matter and not St. Dioscorus. They were accused of Nestorianism, and Sophronius gave himself over to astrology and the magical arts<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sellers, p 79.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p 81.

<sup>3</sup> Johannes Fleming: *Abten de Ephesinischen Synade Rom Jahre 449*, Berlin 1917. S.G.F. Perrey: *The Second Synod of Ephesus*, Dartford, 1875-81, contains an English translation from the Syriac Version. Bishop Gregorius B. Behnam also has Arabic translation from the Syriac Version.

<sup>4</sup> For details see Behnam, p 48-51.

<sup>5</sup> Sellers, p 84; Behnam 52, 53, 56.

d - Irenaeus of Tyre, twice-married, who had aided and abetted Nestorius, after returning from the exile he deserved, had “proved himself a tyrannous wolf of the people of Tyre”, was also deprived of the priestly office<sup>1</sup> and with him his “fellow-heretic” Aquilinus, whom he had made Bishop of Byblus<sup>2</sup>. The first was previously condemned and exiled, and the second was disobedient to the Archbishop, Dornnus, for he left his people and fled to Irenaeus...

In condemning them St. Dioscorus was not severe in the discussions like other bishops.

e - Concerning Theodoret of Cyrus, it was well-known that he was trained from childhood to old age in the Nestorian blasphemies<sup>3</sup>, and he had a bitter hatred against St. Cyril and his writings, as we have already seen.

f - Concerning Domnus, Archbishop of Antioch, it is clear that St. Dioscorus did his best to gain him but not regardless of the orthodox faith. When he heard that Domnus summoned Theodoret to preach to the people at his cathedral, praising him by clapping hands, and setting a house for him near the cathedral he sent him a letter, full of love and openness. Domnus answered, thanking him for his love. As Domnus did not stop from summoning Theodoret to preach he sent him another letter, but Domnus replied that he denied the “Anathemas” of Cyril.

Throughout discussing this case St. Dioscorus rarely spoke, leaving the floor to others especially Juvenal and Thalassius, the two co-presidents.

g - Flavian who once accepted the formulas, “one incarnate nature of the Word of God” and “of two natures<sup>4</sup>”, under the influence of Eusebius of Dorylaeum accepted the formula “in two natures”. After condemning Eutyches in the home council in 448 he caused many troubles on behalf of the Nestorians. Afterwards the emperor Theodosius II was not satisfied with the attitude which

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<sup>1</sup> *S.G.F. Perrey, 171f; Behnam 53-54.*

<sup>2</sup> *Perry, 182f; Behnam 54-56.*

<sup>3</sup> *Perry, 253; Behnam 57-60.*

<sup>4</sup> *Sellers, p 72, n. 4.*

Flavian adopted<sup>1</sup>. When he was condemned in this Council (Ephesus 449), instead of expressing any self-defence or repentance he left the council together with Eusebius.

### **3 - The omission of The Tome of Leo**

The Roman bishop considered this omission as a despise of his Petrine authority, describing the council as “the Robbers' Council”.

It is noteworthy that this “Tome” was not written as a document to the council, but as a letter to the emperor and a copy had been sent to the council handed by the delegates. Metropolitan Methodios of Aksum states: [The fact that the letter was submitted to the Synod was enough. Leo's representatives were present and they could have made his view known. Even to-day, circular letters are submitted to the Synods, but not necessarily read<sup>2</sup>].

Rev. Samuel states, [... the document had been given wide publicity in the east from about the middle of June 449, and that its contents had been known to the delegates to the council of 449 even before they had met. They had in fact, learned that it was on able defence of the “two natures after the union”. In the context of the conflict between the Alexandrine and the Antiochene sides, many of these men would stand by the former in opposition to the “two natures”... Therefore, to say that in his “autocracy” and “violence” Dioscorus had hindered its reading to the council is neither fair to the man for borne out by any evidence. We have stronger evidence, on the other hand, to venture the conjecture that the council of 449 did not read the “Tome” out of respect for the see of Rome<sup>3</sup>].

Perhaps, because of its Nestorian attitude the bishops did not read it to avoid any struggle against Rome, especially as Nestorius declared his approval towards this tome. H. Chadwick says: [Nestorius, reading the tome in his lonely exile, left that the truth had been vindicated at last, and that he could die in peace<sup>4</sup>].

## **LEO OF ROME & THE COUNCIL OF CHALCELON**

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<sup>1</sup> Sellers, p 72, *See the letter of Theodosius to the Ephesine Synod (Mansi, VI, 597).*

<sup>2</sup> Methodios Fouyas: *Theological and Historical Studies; vol 8, Athens 1985, p 14 (n. 3).*

<sup>3</sup> Samuel, p 37, 38.

<sup>4</sup> H. Chadwick, p 202.

The delegates of Rome returned to their Bishop declaring their failure in protecting Flavian and his company. Leo wrote to Theodosius II against St. Dioscorus, and to the Church of Constantinople and lastly asked Valentinian III, through his wife Eudoxia and his mother Galla Placidia, to write to his brother Theodosius concerning Dioscorus and the council of Ephesus of 449, but Theodosius refused his demand praising St. Dioscorus and the council of Ephesus.

Leo realized his aim as many events served him:

1 - Leo received appeals from those who opposed the council of Ephesus (449), like Flavian who sent a letter with Hilary the Roman deacon<sup>1</sup>, another was sent from Eusebius who soon afterwards came to Rome to plead his cause in person, and a third one was sent from Theodoret<sup>2</sup>. A kind of coalition was organised with Rome against Alexandria. Until this time the theological matters usually occupied essentially the Eastern Bishops, even the Ecumenical Councils were held by a summon of the Emperor of the East, but without ignoring the Emperor of the West. It was a golden chance for Leo to interfere in these theological disputes especially against Alexandria.

As Rome was not directly under the political control of Theodosius II, Leo could exercise freedom in such matters, calling the council of Ephesus (449) "Latrocinium" (Robbers' Synod).

2 - The death of Flavian, which occurred probably not long after his condemnation, was an event which elicited sympathy for the cause of Leo, particularly in Constantinople. This incident came to be interpreted in later times by the opponents of the council of 449 as having been caused by physical injuries inflicted on him at the council<sup>3</sup>.

It is noteworthy that this charge against the council is false for many reasons:

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<sup>1</sup> *Came to light last century (Sellers, p 88 n. 1).*

<sup>2</sup> *Theodoret, Ep 113.*

<sup>3</sup> *Samuel, p 41.*

a - How did he died in or soon after August 449<sup>1</sup>, while Leo addressed a letter to him on 13 October 449?! Chadwick and Grillemier maintain that he died in February 450.

b - There was no need for violence in the council that condemned him, for there was no need for his signature as a condemned man<sup>2</sup>. In fact he left the council together with Eusebius and the statement of condemnation was sent to the emperor. On the contrary, Flavian and his supporters used violence before holding this council against the monks who supported Eutyches... Also in the Council of Chalcedon our Pope Dioscorus was ill-treated and he sent some of his teeth and hair beard, to Alexandria as a symbol of his struggle for the orthodox faith.

c - In the Council of Chalcedon (451) one of the charges set against St. Dioscorus was that he unjustly condemned Flavian, but we do not see in the council's acts that Flavian died because of ill-treatment in the Council of Ephesus.

3 - On July 28, 450 Theodosius died and his sister Pulcheria and her consort Marcian were declared emperors on 28 August 450.

Archimandrite V. Gueteé describes Pulcheria and her sisters “Virgins-queen (Vierges-Reines)<sup>3</sup>”. She was eager that her family preserve the Roman kingdom. She persuaded her sisters to vow virginity and live with her in a special ward at the imperial palace. Her aim was to be sure that they would not marry persons who might receive the throne. Anyhow as Theodosius II had no son she asked him to remarry; but he sent to the Scetis (in Egypt) and asked the elders in this matter. One of the elders, Isidore, refused. Pulcheria pressed on her brother, who sent again to the elders, and those went to Isidore's tomb and asked the departed elder in the matter. They heard a voice that even if he marries ten women he will not have a son. The emperor's messenger Martinius and his son Zios had been martyred in the desert before returning to the emperor, and they are buried in the

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<sup>1</sup> Sellers 82, n. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Behnam, 69f.

<sup>3</sup> t 4, p 303.

Monastery of the Virgin Mary (The Syrian)<sup>1</sup>. Any how when Theodosius died, Pulcharia denied her vow and married Marcian, receiving an absolution from Leo of Rome<sup>2</sup>.

Pulcheria was a woman of remarkable ability and indomitable will, had practically managed the affairs of the state and interfered into the church affairs to elevate the see of Constantinople. She removed Chrysaphius - the grand Chamberlain - from her way by a sentence of death, and banished Eutyches to Doliche in north Syria<sup>3</sup>. Now, she supported "Rome" against "Alexandria". She and her husband gathered signatures on the "Tome" of Leo, to be introduced as a basic paper at Chalcedon against the Alexandrian theologians. At the same time she decided not to let Rome enjoy supreme authority in the Church; she refused Leo's demand to hold a council in Italy, but insisted that it would be held in the East. When he saw that matters were turning out well and that it was impossible to hold the desired council in Italy, he expressed a wish that no council be held at all<sup>4</sup>, but Marcian and Pulcheria were bent on having one.

4 - H. Chadwick states that Anatolius, the successor of Flavian who decided to reassert the full claims of Constantinople to be the second see of Christendom, saw that the situation provided a golden chance of persuading Rome to accept these claims.

## **ST. DIOSCORIUS & THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON**

Although the Council of Chalcedon is believed to have condemned Eutyches, the man whom it really dealt with not the old monk, but the Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria, for Eutyches was not present at the council but he was away in north Syria, where he had been exiled even before the council met<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> للمؤلف قاموس آباء الكنيسة وقديسيها، إسكندرية 1985، ص 655.

<sup>2</sup> إيريس حبيب المصري: قصة الكنيسة القبطية، ج 2، 1983، ص 43.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel, p 42.

<sup>4</sup> Ep 83; Texorent, p 85.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel, p 45.

In fact, St. Dioscorus was condemned not because of theological heresy but due to political circumstances which played the principal role in this council.

The Greek Professor Rev. Romanides says: [Dioscorus was considered quite orthodox in his faith by such leading Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon as those represented by Anatolius of Constantinople<sup>1</sup>].

Tixeront states, [Dioscorus was deposed... The motives were not directly doctrinal... Dioscorus emphatically asserted that his doctrine was no less than that of Cyril and that, although he admitted but one after the union, he rejected absolutely any admixture and change of the united natures<sup>2</sup>].

Metropolitan Methodios of Aksum states:

[Information which we possess does not depict Dioscorus as a heretic. From available information it is obvious that he was a good man and even Bishop Leo himself tried to take him on his side... Likewise Emperor Theodosius in a letter to Dioscorus calls him a man who radiates the Grace of God, a humble man and of orthodox faith.

Several times in the course of the Council Patriarch Dioscorus declared his faith. He was not condemned because he was heretical but because he refused to communicate with Leo, the Archbishop, and because he refused to come to the Council although he was invited to do so three times.

This evidence is sufficient for us to look for other reasons for Dioscorus' condemnation. Rome was annoyed by the extraordinary vitality of the Church of Alexandria and its active Patriarch<sup>3</sup>].

R.V. Sellars states: [At Chalcedon, Anatolius, bishop of Constantinople - who at the same time, was ready to confess that the Alexandrian ' had filled the whole world with storm and tempest ' - could declare that the accused had been deprived, not on account of erroneous belief, but because he had dared to excommunicate the

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<sup>1</sup> *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, vol 10, No 2, p 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Mansi VI*, 676, 677, *Tixeront*, vol 3, p 87.

<sup>3</sup> *Methodios Fouyas*, p 14.

Bishop of Rome, and though cited three times, had deliberately absented himself from meeting of the Council<sup>1</sup>].

J. Lebon<sup>2</sup> also-acknowledges Dioscorus and the leaders of the movement against Chalcedon like Timothy Aelurus of Alexandria (457-477 A.D), Philoxenos of Mabbogh (d.c. 523 A.D) and Severus of Antioch (512-528 A.D) as orthodox in their theological position and not teachers of heresy.

## LEO OF ROME & EUTYCHES

Now, Leo who found The emperors of the East determined to hold the Council in the East, sent a letter to declare that he would send delagates to the Council. For the first time Leo describes Eutyches as being malicious and wicked like Nestorius<sup>3</sup>. Before, he wrote to the emperor telling him that we must not doubt in Eutyches even if he sinned... and not to investigate the bishops' faith but accept their repentance<sup>4</sup>. This sudden change means nothing but that a conspiracy was hatched against St. Dioscorus.

### SESSION: 1

## CHARGES AGAINST ST. DIOSCORUS

On 8th October 451, the council was held in Chalcedon instead of Nicea. At the opening session Marcian and Pulcheria were present. Rome and Constantinople had superiority because of the capitals of the two empires, but St. Dioscorus sat at the right hand of the emperors because of the theological position of Alexandria.

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<sup>1</sup> Sellers, p 30, 31.

<sup>2</sup> J. Lebon: *Le Christologie du Monophysisme Syrien*, in "Das Konzil Von Chalkedon, vol 1, p 578-9.

"*La Monophysisme Severien*, Louvain 1909.

V.C. Samuel, p.

<sup>3</sup> Guetée, t 4, p 580.

إبريس حبيب المصري، ج 2، ص 47؛

مجمع خلفيدون: ترجمة إلى العربية عن الأصل اللاتيني المحفوظ بمكتبة الفاتيكان الراهب فرنسيس ماريا، وصادق عليه ثلاثة كرادلة، طبع في رومية سنة 1694، ص 74-76.

[*Council of Chalcedon; trans. by Francis Mria, from the Latin version preserved at the Vatican into the Arabic, Rome 1694, p 74-76.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p 72-74.



When the judges started to declare the order of the acts of the council, Paschasinus said, “We have orders from the most blessed and apostolic man, the bishop of the city Rome, who is **the head of all churches**, enjoining that Dioscorus should not have a place in the synod. If this is violated, he should be cast out. We are obliged to obey this injunction. Your excellency may order, therefore, so that either he goes out or we depart<sup>1</sup>”. When the judges asked about what Dioscorus did against the laws, the other Roman delgate replied: “He had seized the office of judge, and dared to conduct a council, without the Authorization of the apostolic see a thing which has never happened and which ought not to happen<sup>2</sup>”.

Now I would discuss all the charges which were brought against our Pope.

## **1 - HIS PRESIDENCE OVER THE EPHESIAN COUNCIL**

a - It is clear that it was not in fact a charge against Dioscorus but it was an attempt to give the Roman bishop a supreme authority over the Universal Church. The commissioners themselves who were not convinced, after exchanging words, unwillingly required St. Dioscorus to move from his seat in the assembly to a place in the middle reserved for the accused.

b - It was not Dioscorus who had summoned the Ephesian Council but the emperors, and their letters are still survive

c - It is astonishing that Leo, who protested against the Ephesian Council as illegal since he did not give permission for it, while we find him sending his delgates to the Council, and they were angry as Leo's Tome was not read.

d - It was not Dioscorus alone who was president over the council, but there were two co-presidents (Juvenal and Thalssius) attending by an imperial order.

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<sup>1</sup> *ACO II, i, p 65:5.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid 65:9; Mansi VI: 581; Michael 1:187; Behnam, p 134.*

## 2 - THE STORY OF THE BLANK PAPERS

Now, as the Alexandrian Patriarch left his place, the deposed Nestorian Eusebius accused him that he ill-treated him together with Flavian, and that he tried to establish Eutychianism as orthodoxy, through the Ephesian Council. St. Dioscorus requested starting by discussing the subject of the faith but the commissioners demanded investigating the personal charges against him.

As the minutes of the Ephesian Council were offered to be read, St. Dioscorus asked why he was set apart for a trial while Juvenal and Thalassius were also presidents and decisions were taken in agreement<sup>1</sup>. Here to make him solely responsible, Stephen of Ephesus said that they were forced to sign blank papers, through violence.

This story was fabricated for many reasons:

a - Eusebius of Dorylaeum who was present at the Ephesian Council did not mention the story of the blank papers in his petitions to the emperor<sup>2</sup>.

b - If this story were true why did they wait for over two years to hear it for the first time on October 451 from the men who had signed the Tome of Leo and agreed to support It?!

c - When St. Dioscorus asked them concerning the recording of the acts of the Ephesian Council, they confessed that every bishop was accompanied by a clerk and there were many copies of the acts recorded by the clerks of Juvenal, Thalassius, Elesuis of Coronth etc... How then had they signed blank papers?!

d - When the bishops were asked about the excommunication of Flavian they did not say that they had signed blank papers, but said twice: "We all have sinned, we ask for pardon<sup>3</sup>".

e - Throughout the acts of the Chalcedonian Council, the bishops' discussions reveal that this story was fabricated. For example, Stephen at first said that Dioscorus -alone- was responsible for signing blank papers. Afterwards he himself said that while the

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<sup>1</sup> *ACO II, i, p 75:53.*

<sup>2</sup> *Samuel, p 50.*

<sup>3</sup> *ACO II, i, p 94:181, 183.*

secretaries had been recording the minutes, the secretaries of Dioscorus came and took away from them their writing tablets, wishing to make them copy what they had with them<sup>1</sup>. Theodore of Claudiopolis said, “Dioscorus and Juvenal extended to us blank papers<sup>2</sup>”.

f - St. Dioscorus blamed openly the bishops who said that they had signed blank papers like Stephen or those who said that they had signed in agreement with other bishops, like Basil of Seleucia in Issauria, because it is the bishop's duty to be brave especially when he signs what concerns the precious Faith<sup>3</sup>.

### **3 - THE REHABILITATION OF EUTYCHES**

When they discussed the words of Eutyches, his accuser said that Eutyches was a liar. St. Dioscorus explained that his concern is not persons but the apostolic faith, and that if Eutyches held what is opposite to the church's faith he would be condemned<sup>4</sup>.

In fact, it was Eutyches' own responsibility before God if he was a liar, because God alone knows the heart. When he declared an orthodox faith, even if it was not his real faith the council could not condemn him.

On the contrary we condemn what happened at the Council of Chalcedon, for Theodoret of Cyrus, who was condemned for his Nestorianism, was permitted to be present at the council from the first session<sup>5</sup>, before discussing his case.

### **4 - THE CONDEMNATION OF FLAVIAN AND EUSEBIUS**

The commissioners asked how Eutyches who had not accepted the Formulary of Reunion of 433 was acquitted while Flavian and Eusebius who had accepted were excommunicated.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* p 87, 88:123-132.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 76:6z.

<sup>3</sup> *Behnam*, p 140-142, *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon in Arabic*, p 99-101; 74-75.

<sup>4</sup> *ACO II*, i, p 92:168.

<sup>5</sup> *Mansi VI*, 589.

Here the main problem was raised, for St. Dioscorus explained how St. Cyril - confirmed by St. Athanasius - refused the formula “two natures after the union” as unlawful, but used “one incarnate nature of God the Word”. On hearing “one nature”, some bishops shouted, [Eutyches says these things! Dioscorus says these things!]. Here St. Dioscorus clarified the Alexandrian point of view, saying: [We do not speak of confusion, neither of division, nor of change. Let him who says confusion, change or mixture, be anathema<sup>1</sup>].

Eustathius of Berytus defended himself confirming that it should be one nature according to the testimony of the most blessed Athanasius<sup>2</sup>. He also said: [If I stated wrongly, see the work of Cyril... If anyone affirms “one nature” in order to explain away the flesh of Christ which is con-substantial with us, he is anathema. So also he who speaks of “two natures”, In order to divide the Son of God is anathema<sup>3</sup>]. He pointed out, Flavian himself had used the expression “one incarnate nature of God the Word” in the confession of faith which he sent to Theodosius<sup>4</sup>.

Juvenal, who had till then stood firm on the side of Dioscorus, began to waver and said the same like Eustathius.

Now, Dioscorus declared that Flavian had been justly deposed because he had spoken of “two natures after the union” and that he had with him passages from the writings of the holy Fathers, Athanasius, Gregory and Cyril that sanction only “one incarnate nature God the Word<sup>5</sup>”.

St. Dioscorus tried to make his position clear, that he did not accept “two natures after the union<sup>6</sup>”, but he had no objection to “From two natures after the union<sup>7</sup>”. Thus he was not supporting the

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<sup>1</sup> *ACO II, i, p 112:263; Mansi VI, 676f.*

<sup>2</sup> *ACO II, i, 112-261.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid 113:265-6, Mansi VI, 677.*

<sup>4</sup> *Sellers, p 106; ACO HI, i, p 113:267.*

<sup>5</sup> *Mansi VI: 684, ACO II, i, p 117:299.*

<sup>6</sup> *ACO II, i, p 120:331.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid 120:332.*

the “two natures before the union”, and nature after “the union” of Eutyches.

The verdict of the Commissioners was announced:

Dioscorus of Alexandria, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Thalassius of Caesarea in Capadocia, Eusebius of Ancyra, Eustathius of Berytus and Basil of Seleucia in Isuria - these were the men who had been really responsible for the decisions of the second council of Ephesus, and should as such all be deposed<sup>1</sup>.

At the close of the first session - and contrary to what the Pope (Leo) had planned should be the main business of the Council<sup>2</sup> - the commissioners decided that a discussion on the question of the right faith should take place at the next meeting<sup>3</sup>, and that every delegate might produce in writing a statement of the faith, bearing in mind that the emperor believed in accordance with the decrees of Nicea and Constantinople, together with the writings of the holy Fathers, Gregory, Basil, Hilary, Ambrose and the two letters of Cyril which had been approved at the first council of Ephesus<sup>4</sup>, and with the tome of Leo.

V.C- Samuel notices here that they refer to the two canonical letters of Cyril, i.e the Second and Third letters addressed to Nestorius, but in fact the last one with its anathemas was not read at Chalcedon. The documents read were the Second letter and the Formulary of Reunion, to establish the Antiochene interpretation of the union of 433 as against that of the Alexandrian side<sup>5</sup>.

## **THE SECOND SESSION** (on 10th October<sup>6</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 117:299.

<sup>2</sup> *Sellers*, p 109.

<sup>3</sup> *Mansi VI*, 936.

<sup>4</sup> *Sellers*, p 109; *ACO II*, i, 195:1068.

<sup>5</sup> *Samuel*, 58.

<sup>6</sup> *J.N.D. Kelly refers to this session as the third [See Early Christian Creeds, Longmans 1950, p 296. He remarks that Mansi had counted it the second while Schwartz has restored the order (ibid 297, n. 1). Honigman also describes the meeting of 13 October as the second session. They do this because Schwartz in his edition of the minutes puts those of the meeting on 13 October before those of the session on 10 October, on the ground that the minutes of the former was approved by the council before the letter.*

This session did not produce better results, despite the absence of the heads of the Ephesine Council whose deposition was announced the day before.

1 - The assembly most strongly protested against the suggestion that they should dare to draw up “another exposition of the faith in addition to what had been taught by the Fathers and set down in writing<sup>1</sup>“ They cried: [The canon does not permit another exposition. Let the teaching of the Fathers prevail<sup>2</sup>].

2 - Although many bishops signed the Tome of Leo before holding the council<sup>3</sup>, when it was read at this session there were men who raised objections to three passages in the Tome (especially the bishops of Illyricum and Palestine). Atticus of Nicopolis asked for a time to compare it with the third letter of St. Cyril to Nestorius.

The Illyrians pleaded that mercy should be shown to the heads of the Ephesine Council and even to Dioscorus<sup>4</sup>, but no attention was paid to them.

At the close of the session the commissioners declared that the next session would be after five days in order that those who had doubts about the Tome may meet with Anatolius of Constantinople and clear their misgivings<sup>5</sup>. This period was given to secure the acceptance of the Tome from all the members.

### **THE THIRD SESSION** (on 13th October)

Suddenly the five-days recess was not respected, but on 13th October the council met under the presidency of the Roman legate Paschasinus, and it was attended by neither the commissioners nor the six condemned men. Rev. V.C. Samuel slates that the minutes contain no mention about the number of bishops who attended this meeting, which does not even deserve to be counted as a session, but it is clear that their number was small, that it was held in the martyrion

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<sup>1</sup> *Sellers, 109, Mansi VI, 953.*

<sup>2</sup> *Mansi VI, 953.*

<sup>3</sup> *Sellers, pill.*

<sup>4</sup> *Sellers, pill, Mansi VI, 975.*

<sup>5</sup> *ACO II, i, 279:31.*

of St. Euphemia<sup>1</sup> (a small chapel) instead of the Church of Euphemia<sup>2</sup>.

As they desired to realize the formalities so that their statement would be canonical, they summoned Pope Dioscorus thrice, and when he said that he was in custody so that he could not go with them to the meeting unless he was given permission by the authorities<sup>3</sup>, they answered that it is not their duty to do so<sup>4</sup>.

It is said that afterwards they brought a permission, but he put conditions for his attendance: The presence of the commissioners and those who were condemned with him.

In his absence four men from Alexandria (a priest, 2 deacons and one layman) offered petitions against him containing false charges, that do not deserve any attention from us.

The main charge against him was that he prevented sending corn to Lybia... the same charge which agitated Constantine against Si Athanasius.

Other charges like: he had a dissolute life, there was much disaffection against him in Alexandria, he had ill-treated them all in various ways and that he opposed Cyril in theology... These charges were false, for history itself witnesses how he was most warmly loved and honored by a vast majority of the people of Egypt.

Also they admitted that he excommunicated Leo, but as Rev. Samuel states he did so as a reciprocal action<sup>5</sup>.

The Roman legates said: [Leo... by the agency of ourselves and the present council deprived him of all episcopal dignity and severed him from every priestly function<sup>6</sup>]. The Pope of Alexandria

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 199:2.

<sup>2</sup> *Mansi VI: 564, 937...*, Samuel, p 59.

<sup>3</sup> *ACO 11, i, 206-207: 14:19.*

*The Council of Chalcedon (in Arabic, translated from the Latin version) p 172.*

*Mar S.J. Thomas, vol 2, p 174.*

*Michael 3:195.*

*Behnam, p 147-150.*

<sup>4</sup> *I. El Masry, p 63.*

إيريس حبيب المصري ، ص 63.

<sup>5</sup> *Samuel, p 62.*

<sup>6</sup> *ACO II, i, 227-225:94.*

was not deposed by the assembly of bishops but by the Pope of Rome. The assembly did only appropriate the decision given by the Head of the Universal Church itself. No one at the council commented on these far-reaching claims<sup>1</sup>. In fact it was not a statement for theological dogma but for defending the Roman Popal supremacy.

### **WHY WAS POPE DIOSCORUS DEPOSED?**

The statement against St. Dioscorus did not mention any charges except his refusal to the summons of the Council thrice...

[On account of contempt of sacred canons and your contumacy towards this holy and ecumenical council, whereby, in addition to other offences of which you have been convicted, you did not respond even to the third summons of this holy and great synod, which were administered to you in accordance with the divine canons, and answer charges against you: Know then, that you have been deposed on the thirteenth day of the present month, October, by the holy and ecumenical synod from your episcopate and deprived of all ecclesiastical rank<sup>2</sup>].

Bishop Behnam<sup>3</sup> after mentioning the comments of some bishops of this Council on this statement which declare that Dioscorus was worthy to be condemned for he despised the Council and refused to be present, says that by referring to this charge alone in the statement of the council and the comments of the bishops, it is clear that other charges against him were faint!

Mar S.J. Thomas<sup>4</sup> refers to the comment of the commissioners themselves, who left sorrow for the deposition of Dioscorus and said to the bishops that they are responsible before God concerning this statement. But it was the desire of the empress also to get ride of the Alexandrian Pope.

According to the letter of the council to Leo of Rome, Dioscorus was deposed for these reasons<sup>5</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> *V.C. Samuel*, p 65, n. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *ACO II, i, p 237-238:99; The Council of Chalcedon (trans. into Arabic from Latin) p 187-190.*

<sup>3</sup> *Behnam*, p 148-9.

<sup>4</sup> *The History of the Syrian Antiochene Church*, vol 2, p 177.

<sup>5</sup> *N. & P N. Frs, Series 2, vol 12, p 72.*



1 - He deposed that blessed shepherd of the saints at Constantinople, Flavian, who displayed such Apostolic faith, and the most pious bishop Eusebius.

2 - He acquitted Eutyches by his terror-won votes.

3 - He excommunicated Leo.

4 - He refused to accept the Tome of Leo.

In fact the Council waited for the chance to depose our Pope to satisfy the desire of Leo of Rome as the minutes of the Council and the cor-respondance between Leo and the Nestorians clearly reveal.

Iris H. EL-Masry<sup>1</sup> states that the chalcedonians deposed our Pope for the latter excommunicated Leo of Rome because of his nestorianism, and it was not the only excommunication for the Bishop of Rome. To cite some examples:

1 - St. Hilary of Poitiers, who subjected the Roman Bishop excommunicated Liberius of Rome for his Arianism.

2 - Honorius of Rome was excommunicated by the Council of Constantinople in 680 A.D.

3 - In the ninth century, Photius of Constantinople excommunicated Nicolas I of Rome, for believing that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Anyhow, Rome tried to disform the character of St. Dioscorus. W.H.C. Frend states: [Dioscorus has gone down as one of the great villains of ecclesiastical history, but this is not how he appeared to his contemporaries at the time of his consecration or even to later historians<sup>2</sup>].

V.C. Samuel<sup>3</sup> states that Anatolius of Constantinople referred to the condemnation of Dioscorus on 3 occasions, giving 3 different causes:

1 - On 13 Oct., after supporting the Roman legates, he remarked that Dioscorus should be punished because he had slighted the assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Story of the Coptic Church (in Arabic) vol 2, p 66f.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Rise of The Monophysite Movement, Cambridge 1972, p 26.*

<sup>3</sup> *V.C. Samuel, p 69.*

2 - On 22 Oct., he declared that Dioscorus had not been condemned because of any erroneous belief on his part, but because he had excommunicated Leo of Rome and disobeyed the assembly call.

3 - In his letter to Leo after the Council of Chalcedon, he stated that Dioscorus had been condemned for the sake of peace in the Church. The reason was very important in his point of view. Peace in the Church at that time was very much tied up with the acceptance of the Tome of Leo, for Pulcheria and Marcian had supported it.

## **ST. DIOSCORUS IN EXILE**

St. Dioscorus was exiled in Gangra in Paphlagonia on the southern side of the Black Sea, for about five years. He was ill-treated and died because of the cruelty and violence he suffered.

Two bishops, the archdeacon Peter and his secretary Theopistus, who wrote his biography, accompanied their beloved Pope voluntarily. Makarius of Edko could not accompany them for the Pope asked him to return to his country to enjoy the crown of martyrdom there<sup>1</sup>.

A ship of an Egyptian merchant stranded near the shore of Gangra. The merchant wept on seeing his Pope in exile, but the latter comforted him, saying: [We are in peace as long as we preserve the faith we have received from our Fathers, even if we are in suffering and chains. Because of the merchant's importunity St. Dioscorus received some gold from him and distributed them to the needy.

His disciple Theopistus tells us that St. Dioscorus preached among the heathens and the Nestorians there and through his love gained many souls for the kingdom of Christ.

St. Paphnotius, an abbot of a Pachomian monastery visited him in the exile. They were meditating in the holy scripture, especially the burning bush (Exod. 3) as a symbol of the unity of the Godhead and manhood of Christ. They were praising God by singing hymns.

## **WAS DIOSCORUS EUTYCHIAN?**

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<sup>1</sup> *Iris H. El-Masry, vol 2, p 74-75.*

1 - R.V. Sellers, in his book: "The Council of Chalcedon"<sup>1</sup>, states: [At Chalcedon, Anatolius, bishop of Constantinople - who, at the same time, was ready to confess that the Alexandrian "had filled the whole world with storm and tempest"<sup>2</sup> - could declare that the accused had been deprived, not on account of erroneous belief, but because he had dared to excommunicate the Bishop of Rome, and though cited three times, had deliberately absented himself from meetings of the Council<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, his own statements show that for him the Lord's manhood is real - for he is no follower of Apollinarius - and remains real in its union with the divine Logos. Indeed he is most explicit on this point: "Omitting many urgent matters, this I declare: that no man shall say that the holy flesh which our Lord took from the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Spirit, in a manner which he himself knows, was different from or foreign to our body... For Paul has said... 'It was right that in everything he should be made like unto his brethren' Heb. 2:16, 17, and that word, 'in everything', does not suffer the subtraction of any part of our nature,... The flesh which was born of Mary was compacted with the soul of the Redeemer, that reasonable and intelligent soul, without the seed of man... For he was like us, for us, and with us, not in phantasy, not in mere semblance, according to the heresy of the Manichaeans, but rather in actual reality from Mary the 'Theotokos'...<sup>4</sup>"]

In his letter to the monks of the Henaton, a monastery situated nine miles from Alexandria, he states, [God the Logos, consubstantial with the Father, at the end of the ages for our redemption became consubstantial with man in the flesh, remaining what He was before<sup>5</sup>]

He asserts the unity of the two nature in One, without confusion of their properties, as he says:

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<sup>1</sup> Sellers, p 30, 31.

<sup>2</sup> See the letter of Anatolius to Leo, written after Chalcedon. (Leo, Ep. 101:2).

<sup>3</sup> Mansi, VI, 104.

<sup>4</sup> From the letter of Dioscorus to Secundinus.

<sup>5</sup> S.G.F. Perry: *The Second Synod of Ephesus*, p 393.

[I know full well, having being brought up in the faith, that he has been begotten as God, and that the Same has been begotten of Mary as man. See him walking on the sea as man, and Creator of the heavenly hosts as God<sup>1</sup>...]

[We confess One and the Same to be the Redeemer, our Lord and God, although we see' him to have become by Economy man. Hold to the confession, therefore, of the Fathers, and do not listen to the soul-destroying words of the heretics, nor hold intercourse with those who divide into two Him who is One; for one is our Redeemer, as I said, although out of compassion for us He became man<sup>2</sup>].

2 - It is noteworthy that the acts of the Council of Chalcedon concentrated on the Eutychian heresy, assuring that there was no absorption of the Manhood into the Godhead of Christ, and the properties of each nature remain. St. Dioscorus declared in the first meeting that he is not responsible for Eutyches' doctrines, but only for the Fathers' doctrines which he received. The problem for him was his refusing the expression "in two natures", for after unity Jesus Christ was One nature "of two natures". He explained in detail that he did not mean by the "One nature" the absorption of Christ's manhood at all.

While the Council offered a new formula of Faith "in two natures" to preserve the Church from Eutychianism, St. Dioscorus held fast the traditional term "One nature of the Incarnate Word of God" to preserve the Church from Nestorianism.

## **DEFENCE OF THE CHALCEDONIAN DEFINITION**

Many Western scholars are interested in the defence of the Council of Chalcedon and its definition like R.V. Sellers<sup>3</sup> and Aloys Grillmeier<sup>4</sup> Rev. V.C. Samuel sees that their defence is based on 3 questionable assumptions<sup>5</sup> which he refutes. I refer below to these assumptions besides other assumptions:

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 392.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* 393.

<sup>3</sup> *Sellers (Part II, p 208)*.

<sup>4</sup> *Grillmeier, p 480f.*

<sup>5</sup> *Samuel, p 178f.*

1 - Eutyches was in fact a confirmed heretic. This assertion was unproved for the following reasons:

a - Eutyches, as we have seen, was not a theologian, but an old monk, and he was hesitating in his statements. He did not have the same effect like Nestorius who attracted many bishops. The council not only ignores Nestorianism under the pretence of defending the orthodox faith against Eutychianism, but as we will see held some Nestorian attitudes.

b - If the Council was held to discuss Eutychianism, they should have brought Eutyches from his exile to question him.

2 - The definition of Chalcedon had been proved by the Council members unanimously and by a spontaneous decision arrived at by them in the face of a theological need. The Council's minutes confirms that there were no theological discussions in the Council. Taking the incident of 22<sup>nd</sup> of October seriously, it reveals that the Council's definition was the creation of the state-supported party under the leadership of the Roman legates, who wanted it to be consonant with the "Tome of Leo".

3 - Many of the extensive collections of patristic texts which the non-Chalcedonians offered were taken from the Apollinarian writings<sup>1</sup>. This assertion is unproved for the following reasons:

a - No one in the fifth and the sixth centuries said that these excerpts in question were of heretical origin.

b - St. Severius of Antioch and others, were referring to an established tradition, by quoting passages taken from the Fathers of the Church starting with Ignatius of Antioch and ending with Cyril of Alexandria, to show that the Council of Chalcedon renounced it in favour of a position which in substance was Nestorian.

c - Those scholars admitted that none of the leaders approved by the non-Chalcedonian side has ever been guilty of holding to an Apollinarian Christology.

d - Sellers who defends the Chalcedonian formula witnesses that the majority of the members of the Council believed that the Christological formula "one incarnate nature" was the Church

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<sup>1</sup> Sellers, p 256.

formula handed down by St. Athanasius. He states: [What Chalcedon did was to exclude any false interpretation of the Alexandrian formulas, but not the formulas themselves, provided these were rightly understood. After all, the Council could hardly have condemned the use of the “one incarnate nature”, seeing that, as was then believed, it had been handed down by Athanasius himself<sup>1</sup>].

4 - The Chalcedonian council does not ignore the Alexandrian theology and does not anathematize the Alexandrian formulas<sup>2</sup>. Sellers repeatedly confirms that the Council does not reject the Alexandrian formulas but their false interpretation<sup>3</sup>. He comments on the Chalcedonian “Definitio”: "The synod anathematizes those who first idly talked of the natures of the Lord as being two 'before the union', and then conceive but one 'after the union' ", saying: [But as we have said, this does not mean that the Chalcedonian Fathers rejected the use of Cyril “after the union, one incarnate nature of the divine Logos”. What they rejected was a false interpretation of the formula<sup>4</sup>].

He also believes that the Chalcedonian “Definitio” is in harmony with the Cyrillian teaching<sup>5</sup>.

Many scholars try to declare the Chalcedonian “Definitio” as an action of (reconciliation) between the Alexandrian and the Antiochene theology.

These assumptions will be discussed in the following book “The Alexandrian Theology”, God willing.

## **WHY WE REJECT THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON?**

We do not reject it for its refutation Eutychianism, for we also deny it, but for the Nestorian attitude which appears from the following points:

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid* 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* 226.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 284f.

1 - It did not use Cyril's twelve chapters against Nestorius. On the contrary it exonerated Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa who were well-known as Nestorians. H. Chadwick states: [Of the Nestorianizers, Theodoret and Ibas of Edessa were restored to office, while Nestorius himself was condemned as a heretic<sup>1</sup>].

It was agreed to permit Theodoret the Nestorian to attend the first session before discussing his case. Sellers states: [The imperial secretary, Constantine, commenced by reading the letter sent by Theodosius to Dioscorus on 30 March 449<sup>2</sup>, which contained the injunction that Theodoret of Cyrus should not be allowed to attend the Synod, except at the special request of the bishops assembled there. No sooner had Constantine concluded the reading of the letter than the commissioners demanded that the Bishop should be introduced to the Council, on the grounds that he had been reinstated by Leo, and that Marcian had ordered that he should take part in the proceedings<sup>3</sup>. When Theodoret entered, and took his place beside Eusebius as another accuser of Dioscorus, uproar ensued<sup>4</sup> - till condemning such "vulgar shouts" as altogether unworthy of the episcopate, the commissioners bade both sides to acquiesce in the reading of the documents in their proper order; the case of the Bishop of Cyrus, they ruled that it would be reviewed in due course<sup>5</sup>. course<sup>5</sup>]. The opposition party hailed him<sup>6</sup> as "Jew", "fighter against against God", "insulter of Christ", and "he who had anathematized the holy Cyril".

Theodoret refused even the reunion of 433 in the beginning, but he accepted it in 435, and continued in the fellowship of John of Antioch, making even an uneasy peace with St. Cyril.

On October 26th, 451 A.D when the hishops asked him to anathematize Nestorius, he replied that he condemned him. As they repeated their demand and he did not anathematize Nestorius, they

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<sup>1</sup> H. Chadwick: *The Early Church*, p 203

<sup>2</sup> *Mansi VI*, 588.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* 589.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* 589f.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 592; *Sellers*, 104-5.

<sup>6</sup> *Mansi VI*, 589f.

shouted: “He is a heretic! He is a Nestorian! Away with the heretic!” Then he anathematized Nestorius.

Concerning Ibas who was exonerated on 27 October, Tixeront calls him a “sworn enemy<sup>1</sup>” of Cyril. It is enough to mention that the Roman legates insisted that his letter to Maris of Ardaschir was orthodox<sup>2</sup>, the same letter was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 553 A.D

2 - The Chalcedonian Definition of faith had been realized under the pressure of the imperial commissioners together with the legates of Rome. Aloys Grillmeier states: [It was only under constant pressure from the emperor Marcian that the Fathers of Chalcedon agreed to draw up a new formula of belief. Even at the fourth session of the council, on October 17th, 451. the delegates of the emperor heard the synod once again endorse its purpose to create no new formula over and above the creeds of Nicea and Constantinople<sup>3</sup>]. Tixeront also states: [Most of the Fathers were opposed to a new formula of faith, but wished merely to approve certain documents, the contents of which would express their own belief<sup>4</sup>].

It was the emperors' orders that the council had to declare a new formula to bring the entire church in the east under the leadership of Constantinople. Emperors - for political purposes - were been to bring down Alexandria from the hegemony which it enjoyed in the east and to set up Constantinople in its place<sup>5</sup>. They used Leo as a tool to realize their desire through his enmity to Alexandria looking upon it as an obstacle in realizing his papal supreme authority on the church over all the world.

Anyhow, on October 22nd, 451, the eastern bishops came to the meeting with a draft statment of the formula to be adopted by the Council. According to Tixeront [its text is lost. All we know for certain is that it asserted that Jesus Christ is “**of**” two natures *ex dvo*

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<sup>1</sup> vol 3, p 52.

<sup>2</sup> Mansi VII, 261.

<sup>3</sup> P. 543.

<sup>4</sup> vol 3, p 89.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel, p 80.



*4.vaeuv*<sup>1</sup>. The expression was accurate, but ambiguous, and in a particular way, unsatisfactory, since Dioscorus himself had declared that he held it<sup>2</sup>. However, the formula was accepted by most members of the Council, except the papal legates and some Orientals (who held Nestorian attitudes)<sup>3</sup>.

When Anatolius asked: “Does the definition satisfy you?”, The majority said: [The definition satisfies all; this is the faith of the Fathers: he who thinks otherwise is a heretic. If anyone thinks differently, let him be anathema. Cast out the Nestorians. This definition satisfies all. He who does not condemn Nestorius, let him go out of the Synod<sup>4</sup>].

Under the threatening of the Roman legates the commissioners asked for a new statment, but the bishops insisted that this was the definition of the orthodox<sup>5</sup>.

Kelly states: [It should be noted that the imperial commissioners, in their desire to avoid a split, had to exert considerable pressure before agreement... Only by dint of consummate skill and diplomacy was the assembly induced to accept the necessary amendments<sup>6</sup>].

V.C. Samuel remarks that the imperial commissioners - laymen who according to the bishops on October 13th, were not required to be present when the case of Patriarch Dioscorus was being discussed<sup>7</sup>, now made a final effort in stating the Church faith formula. This pointed out: [Dioscorus has stated that he accepted the “from two natures” but did not admit “two natures”. Leo has affirmed that two natures have been united without confusion, change and separation in Christ, the Only Son, our Saviour, whom do you follow, holy Leo or Dioscorus?]

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<sup>1</sup> *Mansi VII, 104.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid 105.*

<sup>3</sup> *vol. 3, p 89.*

<sup>4</sup> *ACO II, i, p 319:6.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid 319:11.*

<sup>6</sup> *Kelly, p 334.*

<sup>7</sup> *ACO II, i, 210:36.*

According to the minutes, the bishops agreed to follow Leo...  
Why?

a - According to Hefele there is a break in the minutes<sup>1</sup>. It is clear that the commissioners pointed to Leo as a defender against Eutychianism, and thus they diverted the bishops sight from defending the faith against Nestorianism. This is clear from the bishops' answers: [as Leo, so we believe, those who are opposed are Eutychians. Leo has converted orthodoxy<sup>2</sup>].

b - The commissioners did not argue that Dioscorus was a heretic, and that the new formula "in two natures" had the same idea of "from two natures... and that the new one confirmed the union of the two natures without change, division or confusion in Christ<sup>3</sup>".

3 - The main reason for rejecting the Council of Chacedon is its basic paper "**Tome of Leo**". As a matter of fact while the non-Chalcedonians from the early ages, in their refutation of the council, attack the tome more than the council's definition, the Byzantine Chalcedonians do not comment on the tome as much as on the Chalcedonian definition, by explaining the latter along the lines of Cyrillian Christology, which brought their interpretation of Chalcedon near to our Christological position<sup>4</sup>.

This tome sets a new Christological formula: "in two natures" instead of the Cyrillian formula: "one incarnate nature of God the Word". The new one does not assure the hypostatic unity.

It is noteworthy that the acceptance of the tome as a document of faith was declared on October 17, while St. Dioscorus was deposed by the meeting on October 13, after the members of the council had individually signed it. Yet many of the eastern area approved it only as a concession to the bishop of Rome, whom the imperial authority supported.

In the session of October 10, the bishops of Illyricum and Palestine pointed to three passages in the Tome which seemed to them to imply the Nestorian doctrine of "dividing" the natures and

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<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Council...*, p 345.

<sup>2</sup> *ACO II, i, 321:26*.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid 321:28*

<sup>4</sup> *Greek Orthodox Theological Review, vol 10, n. 2, p 47; our book: Christology, 1986, P12.*

seeing in Christ two persons<sup>1</sup>. Even when they subscribed they accepted it not as a really necessary confession of the faith, but simply as a profession which in the light of the assurance given to them by the Roman legates, they would accommodate<sup>2</sup>.

Tixeront who defends the Council of Chalcedon states: [Hence, misunderstandings continued, and a considerable group of bishops persisted in believing that the 'Council of Ephesus had been condemned by that of Chalcedon, and St. Cyril's Christology rejected in St. Leo's letter. This was too much for men who were firmly set against Nestorianism and unwilling to receive, even apparently, any dictates from the West. Being called upon to choose, as they thought, between the Pope and St. Cyril, they preferred to stand firmly by the great Doctor of Alexandria<sup>3</sup>].

The Greek Prof. Rev. Florovsky says: [The tome of Leo, if taken alone by itself, could have created the impression of an excessive opposition of two natures especially by its persistent attribution of particular acts of Christ to different natures, without any adequate emphasis on the unity of Christ's Person, although the intention of the Pope himself was sound and orthodox. However the interpretations of the Tome by the Roman Catholic historians and theologians in modern times quite often transfer a certain quasi Nestorian bias, to which attention has been called recently by some Roman Catholic writers themselves<sup>4</sup>].

Metropolitan Methodios states, [The recognition by the well known Letter of (St.) Leo, Bishop of Rome, to Flavian Archbishop of Constantinople, is considered by our Non-Chalcedonian brothers as an unsurmountable obstacle in our efforts to be united with them. Non-Chalcedonians believe that two "physeis and ousiai" in one person is nestorianizing. This is supported by the fact that Leo's Tome was praised by Nestorius himself who said: "On reading that

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<sup>1</sup> *Sellers, p 110.*

<sup>2</sup> *ACO II, i, 298:9.*

<sup>3</sup> *vol 3, p 94.*

<sup>4</sup> *Greek Orth. Theo. Review, vol 10, n 2, p 32*

letter I thanked God because the Church of Rome held an orthodox confession of Faith<sup>1</sup>".

To-day some scholars state that according to the Tome of Leo "Christ is no longer one" but divided against Himself<sup>2</sup>...

I will return to the Tome of Leo in more details in discussing: "The Alexandrian Theology" if God permits.

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### كلمة شكر

أشكر الأحياء المباركين على مراجعة النص الإنجليزي والبروفات، أخص بالذكر جناب القس متى باسيلي، مدام ماري روز يوسف حلیم، صبحي قلته، المهندس نبیه فانوس والمهندس ناجي الفونس. الرب يديم محبتهم.

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<sup>1</sup> Methodios Fouyas, *Archbishop of Theateira and Great Britan: Theological and Historical Studies*, vol 8, Athens 1985, p 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Sellers, p