

*SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH*

*LECTURES*  
*IN THE*  
**SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH**

**2003**

**FR. TADROS Y. MALATY**

***SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH  
AND THE  
CONTEMPORARY CHURCH***

I hope in the Lord that I give a brief idea concerning the concept of “school” in the Early Church, the main Christian schools appeared in the East and the West, the characteristics of the Antiochene School, and the Fathers of the Antiochene School.

Here, I mention to the importance of these schools, especially the Alexandrian and the Antiochene Schools.

1. The early Fathers of the Alexandrian School present to us how we deal with science and philosophy and to witness to our Gospel among the well-educated people.
2. The later Fathers of the same school present to us how we defend our faith, especially against the heretics in a soteriological attitude, or in pastoral goal. In other words, our defense for faith is not aim in itself, but it is for the spiritual of the believers, and for gaining ever the heretics and their followers.
3. The moderate Fathers of the Antiochene School present to us a living image of the importance of the historico-grammatical interpretation of the holy Scripture.

We cannot ignore the differences between the two schools, but I hope that this book explains the need of the contemporary Church to the attitudes of the two schools together, under the guidance of the power to witness to the Gospel in all circumstances and explain the word of God in its deep spiritual meanings without ignoring the historical and grammatical meanings.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH

## EARLY SCHOOLS OF THOUGHTS

In the history of Christian thought the notion of “*school*” does not mean a special building for teaching, nor a seminary in its modern meaning. A school is often distinguished by what its members taught, yet at the same time directs attention to the role of tradition in shaping theological conceptions. The School should present the living traditional thought of the Church, which must continue through all ages, without preventing the contemporary believers from being authentic thinkers, who present what they received according to the circumstances of the contemporary Church. The notion of “school” is not bound to a peculiar time. The school has to adopt a certain set of ideas, a way of interpreting the holy Scripture, a form of spirituality, a style of *pedagogy* (education), a method of theological dialectics, or an institution.

## *FIRST: EASTERN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS*

### 1. THE SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA<sup>1</sup>

The school of Alexandria has been called the “*first Christian academy*” or the “first Catholic university.” It was established to face the Greek world, not as an enemy, but to attract the well-educated people and philosophers to Christianity. It used philosophy as a weapon in dealing with pagan philosophers, and thus beating them by their own game. It was seen as a school of advanced studies in Christian doctrine, an institute of higher Christian studies, a school for Christian philosophers whose purpose was to satisfy the thirst of the Alexandrian Christians for religious knowledge, elevate faith to knowledge, and to establish a scientific theology on the basis of faith. It offered the world the first systematic theological studies.

Christian education started together with preaching, especially in Alexandria. According to St. Jerome, it was founded by St. Mark himself<sup>2</sup>, as a Catechetical School, where candidates were admitted to learn Christian faith and some Biblical studies to be qualified for baptism.

By the second century it became quite influential on church life. The apologetical and anti-heretical literature constituted the first stage in the formation of the science of theology. The law of the intellectual life and growth demanded that theology be developed as systematically and comprehensively as possible, and thus be raised to the rank of a science.

This Theological School of Alexandria first became very famous in 180 AD when it was directed by St. Pantaenus. St. Clement, his pupil and successor, made the first attempt to build up a system of theology.

In the 3rd century this school overthrew polytheism by scientific means, at the same time it conserved anything that was of value in Greek science and culture. The Alexandrians wrote for the educated of the whole world; they transported Christianity into the world culture.

When Bishop Demetrius entrusted the direction of the school to the young Origen it achieved under him its highest reputation. Under the influence of St. Clement and Origen the

---

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Malaty : *The School of Alexandria*, 1995, ch. 1.

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

Alexandrian School interpreted the holy Scripture according to the allegorical method of exegesis, which had long been used by the Greek philosophers for interpreting the poets. Jewish scholars such as the religious philosopher Philo also adopted it for the interpretation of the Old Testament to reconcile Judaism with Hellenism, particularly Platonism. The Alexandrian theologians adopted Philo's method of interpretation, Christianized it, giving it a Christological and more spiritual understanding<sup>3</sup>. They were convinced that the literal or historico-grammatical exegesis is suitable for the mass of Christians, but can't satisfy the curiosity of the more spiritually advanced. It leads those to whom God would reveal Himself from the sensible to the intelligible<sup>4</sup>. St. Clement believed that this method should be used because God's bountifulness was such that it would be folly to believe that could only be one teaching in a particular text. He reveals Himself to men according to their level of perception they possess. At the same time it would produce results unworthy of God or contrary to faith; hence they sought to find a deeper, mysterious meaning with individual Biblical sayings and facts.

The allegorical approach was adopted for apologetical and theological purposes. Origen discusses two problems which the early Church faced, concerning the Old Testament:

a. The Jews who stick to the letter of the prophecies of the Old Testament, were expecting that the Messiah would fulfill them 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>.

b. The Gnostics rejected the Old Testament, for they were scandalized by some passages which refer to God as being angry, or that He regretted or changed His mind. They interpreted these passages literally and not spiritually<sup>6</sup>.

The School of Alexandria reached its peak under Origen who founded the theological system, and developed the allegorical exegesis of the Holy Scriptures. He believed that the words of the Scriptures are its body, or the visible element, that hides its spirit, or the invisible element. This spirit is the treasure hidden in a field; hidden behind every word<sup>7</sup>, every letter, but even every iota used in the written word of God<sup>8</sup>. Thus "*every thing in the Scripture is mystery*"<sup>9</sup>. Origen says, "*If therefore both the Lord and God are Spirit, we ought to hear spiritually those things the Spirit says*"<sup>10</sup>.

In the fourth and fifth centuries the School experienced a second spring. The deans of the School faced many theological problems, and defended the orthodox faith, specially against Arianism and Nestorianism. While St. Athanasius and St. Cyril continued the practice of the allegorical method of the interpretation of the holy Scripture, they paid special attention to the ways in which it supports the orthodox faith. They became more theologically oriented in their exegesis, not only for apologetical disputes, but also for pastoral concerns.

As Origen exaggerated in using allegory there was an opposite respond, even in Egypt. In the third century Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, wrote a "*Refutation of the Allegorists*." St. Jerome, under the influence of his Jewish mentors, who maintained that the purpose of all interpretation

---

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35-36.

<sup>4</sup> *St. Clement: Miscellanies* 6:15:126.

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

<sup>6</sup> *In Lev. Hom.* 3:3.

<sup>7</sup> *In Hom. Lev.* 4:8.

<sup>8</sup> *In Hom. Jerm.* 39.

<sup>9</sup> *In Hom. Gen.* 10:1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

is to translate the words of God into life, turned from allegorical hermeneutics to an increasing respect for the literal meaning of the Scripture<sup>11</sup>.

Two other Schools appeared as a reaction of the spread of the theology of the School of Alexandria, one is considered as an extension to it, and the other as against it. J. Quasten says, "Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine became a battlefield of Origen's friends and opponents. It is interesting to note that even his adversaries owe him more they admit... Two schools became the centers of the controversy; the one at Caesarea in Palestine, founded by Origen himself, carried on his work after his death; the other, at Antioch in Syria, was established in opposition to his allegorical interpretation of Scripture<sup>12</sup>."

The School of Antioch, influenced by the Jewish teachers of Antioch, adopted the literal meaning of the Scripture. It was founded by *Lucian* who laid great stress on a literal rendering of the Biblical text, and a historical and grammatical study of its sense. It reached the height of its fame while *Diodore of Tarsus* was its head. He and his disciples *St. John Chrysostom*, *Melitius of Antioch*, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, *Theodoret of Cyrus* upheld the principles of Lucian.

However, under the influence of the Antiochian Exegetical School the later Alexandrians differed from their predecessors in that they used the allegorical exegesis of Scripture almost exclusively for the purposes of edification, whereas in their scholarly and polemical discussions they preferred the historical and grammatical sense without ignoring the allegorical sense (Neo-Alexandrian School).

## 2. THE SCHOOL AT CAESAREA

Caesarea was privileged to become Origen's refuge after the exile from Egypt. He founded a new school at Caesarea in Palestine (232 AD). Here a remarkable Christian library was soon established; it owed its growth especially to the efforts of the later director of the school, the priest Pamphilus. It was a center of scholarship and learning. Here St. Gregory Thaumaturgus and Eusebius of Caesarea received their theological training. Through Caesarea the Alexandrian tradition influenced the leading theologians of Cappadocia, especially St. Basil the Great and the two Gregorians, who sought to reconcile the spirit of Alexandria with that of Antioch.

## 3. THE ANTIOCHIAN SCHOOL

The allegorizing tendencies of the Alexandrian School were explicitly opposed by a group, which appeared towards the end of the 3rd century. This was the Antiochian school, also called the "exegetical school," because its followers worked mainly in the field of Scriptural exegesis. It explained the Scripture mainly according to their historical and grammatical sense.

Many scholars state that we are in need of the two schools. Dockery says, "The Alexandrian *allegoria* led the soul into a realm of true knowledge where the vision of truth could be discovered. The Antiochene *theoria* led humans into a truly moral life that developed in goodness and maturity that would continue into eternity."

**Lucian of Samosata** (312) is held to be the founder of this school; he taught at Antioch, the second great city of the Greek East famous for its true pagan schools, from the sixties of the 3rd century.

The greatest period of this school was introduced by **Diodore of Tarsus**. He received a thorough secular and theological education in his native city of Antioch and at Athens; later he was for a long time teacher at Antioch, where he established the fame of its Exegetical School. St. John

<sup>11</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical interpretation, Then and Now*, 1992, p. 105.

<sup>12</sup> Quasten: *Patrology*, vol.2, p. 121.

Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia were his most renowned disciples. He was banished from Antioch by the Emperor Valens, after whose death in 378 AD he became Bishop of Tarsus.

**Theodore of Mopsuestia**, the greatest exegete of the Antiochian school wrote commentaries on almost the whole Bible. The Nestorian church appeals to his authority as "the exegete" par excellence. But he also treated in his writings many theological questions of his time in a thoroughly independent way. Like his master Diodore, he was considered orthodox during his life; only after his death, during the Nestorian controversy, was he attacked as holding heretical Christological views, Nestorius having been his pupil.

**Nestorius** and **Theodoret of Cyrus** also belong to this theological school. A one-sided use of the historico-grammatical method led some of its representatives into errors that are partly to be explained by a rationalistic attitude (the desire to rid Christian doctrine as far as possible from all elements of mystery): into Arianism, Macedonianism, Appollinarianism, Pelagianism, and Nestorianism.

After the condemnation of Nestorius, the Antiochian theology continued to be cultivated at Nisibis and Edessa among the Nestorians<sup>13</sup>.

#### 4. THE NATIONAL SYRIAN SCHOOL OF EDESSA

Antioch influenced the **School of Edessa** which dated from the first half of the 3rd century. This theological school of Edessa was a seminary for the Persian clergy and the center of academic and literary activity in Syria. It flourished in the 4th century in Mesopotamia; its greatest master was St. Ephraem the Syrian (306-373), the most important writer of the Syrian patristic age, and reckoned as one of the greatest of the Syrian Fathers and poets. He is styled "Lyre of the Holy Spirit," and his praises were sung by the whole East.

The school was devoted to the literal interpretation of Scripture. The East-Syrian school is Oriental as compared with the West-Syrian. It is more poetical, mystical, and contemplative, averse to change or evolution, or speculative thought. The Church of Syria was deeply and irreparably injured by the Christological heresies, and Edessa was the last prop of Nestorianism in the Empire. Zeno closed it in 489 for this reason, but from its ruins rose the Nestorian school of Nisibis in Persia<sup>14</sup>.

#### 5. THE NESTORIAN SCHOOL OF NISIBUS

It is founded by **Bishop Bar Saumas** (450-95), produced its first famous teacher in Marseus.

**Marseus**, one of the most important representatives of Nestorianism. He became head of the school of Edessa in 437 AD; after his expulsion (457 AD) he founded the School of Nisibus at the invitation of Bishop Bar Sauma. He died shortly after 503 AD, aged 103; he is important as a poet. Metrical homilies and dialogue songs as well as liturgical hymns are among his works besides his Old Testament Scripture commentaries.

#### 6. THE SCHOOL OF EVAGRIAN MYSTICISM<sup>15</sup>

**Evagrius of Pontus**, a disciple of the two Macarii<sup>16</sup>, surnamed Ponticus, is the first monk to have written numerous and comprehensive works that were of great influence in the history of Christian piety. He is in fact the founder of monastic mysticism and the most fertile and interesting spiritual author of the Egyptian desert. The monks of the East and West alike studied

<sup>13</sup> Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 816.

<sup>14</sup> Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, 1968, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> Quasten: *Patrology*, vol.3, p. 169 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Socrates : *H.E.* 4:23.

his writings as classical documents and invaluable text books. His ideas live in Palladius, in the Byzantine writers, such as John Climacus, Hesychasts, Maximus Confessor, Nicetas Stethetos down to the Hesychasts; in the Syrian authors Philoxenus of Mabbug, Isaac of Ninive, John Bar Caldon up to Barhreaus; and in the West in John Cassian. In fact, the great Oriental School of Evagrian mysticism reaches from the fourth to the fifteenth, nay to the twentieth century.

His spirituality is definitely based on the mysticism of the great Alexandrian.

## **7. THE REALISTIC-TRADITIONALISTIC SCHOOL<sup>17</sup>**

**St. Epiphanius of Salamis** (c. 315-403), in Cyprus, is the earliest representative of this school of this thought. He was born of Christian parents in Palestine near Eleutheropolis, and devoted himself from his youth to the study of languages and sacred sciences. He mastered Greek, Syria, Hebrew (Aramic), Coptic, and knew some Latin. Hilarion exercised considerable influence over the youth of Palestine and Epiphanius was led to visit Egypt to learn about the ascetic life. He returned home and founded, c. 335, a monastery whose head he remained for thirty years. In 367 the bishops of Cyprus chose him for his learning and piety to be their metropolitan in Constatia, the ancient Salamina. Mortification in his life, sanctity, activity in the spread of monasticism, fiery zeal for the defense of orthodox doctrine - these were the distinguishing marks of Epiphanius.

St. Epiphanius of Salamis was an ardent upholder of the faith of the Fathers, he was against all metaphysic speculation. This explains his complete inability to understand Origen, which grew into a real hatred of him. He held Origen responsible of Arianism, and regarded his allegorical interpretation as the root of all heresies, and condemned Origenism as the most dangerous of them<sup>18</sup>. In 392, he went to Jerusalem, the home of Origen's most determined and influential admirers, and in the presence of John the bishop of the city, and a great multitude assembled in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, he delivered a vehement sermon against Origen. John refused to condemn Origen and Epiphanius broke off communion with him. Rufinius took John's side, while St. Jerome was changed from an ardent admirer of Origen into an enemy of him. He attempted to obtain a condemnation of Origen from John, but the bishop refused. Epiphanius then ordained Paulinian, St. Jerome's brother, in John's diocese, and against John's will. Theophilus of Alexandria finally reconciled them. In Egypt a quarrel occurred between Theophilus of Alexandria and the famous "Tall Brothers." The former he admired Origen at first, but under the pressure of multitude of monks he declared himself anti-Origenist about 399 and expelled Egyptian Origenist monks, called the "Tall Brothers," from the Nitrian desert. St. Epiphanius, at a synod held in 402 in Cyprus condemned Origen and his writings. They went to Constantinople for refuge and St. John Chrysostom was in their side. St. Epiphanius went to Constantinople in order to wage war in person against St. John Chrysostom.

## ***SECOND: WESTERN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL***

### **THE AFRICAN SCHOOL**

Under the title "*Tertullian and the African School*," Schaff writes:

The Western church in this period exhibits no such scientific productiveness as the Eastern. The apostolic church was predominantly Jewish, the ante-Nicene church, Greek, the post-Nicene, Roman. The Roman church itself was first predominantly Greek, and her earliest writers - Clement, Hermas, Irenaeus, Hippolytus - wrote exclusively in Greek, Latin Christianity begins to appear in literature at the end of the second century, and then not in

<sup>17</sup> *Quasten: Patrology, vol. 3, p. 384.*

<sup>18</sup> *Adv. Haer. 64*

Italy, but in North Africa, not in Rome, but in Carthage, and very characteristically, not with converted speculative philosophers, but with practical lawyers and rhetoricians... North Africa also gave to the Western church the fundamental book - the Bible in its first Latin version, the so-called *Itala*, and this was the basis of Jerome's *Vulgata* which to this day is the recognized standard Bible of Rome...

Quintus Septimius Tertullianus is the father of the Latin theology and church language<sup>19</sup>.

Patrick J. Hamell states, [The Western literature is in Latin, is Roman in spirit, sober, practical, with less idealism and less tendency to speculation than the Greek writings. Its purpose is generally the necessary and the useful. There is great variety and versatility in writings and authors. The apologetic element is predominant - Tertullian and Hypolytus (). Greek. Hippolytus and Victorinus of Pattau represent exegesis. Commodian is the first of the Christian-Latin poets. The writers are few, and mainly from Africa. One great confronting them was terminology. This is one of their great triumphs, the invention, the fashioning of technical language, and the chief glory for it goes to Tertullian, who exercised a tremendous influence on Western Theology<sup>20</sup>.]

Quintus Septimius Tertullianus was born in Carthage in 160, son of a centurion in the service of the proconsul of Africa. He received a very thorough education, studied law and became an advocate. About 193 he became a Christian, and was ordained priest and began a long literary career in defense of Christianity. About 202 or 205 he became a Montanist and attacked the orthodox church violently. He founded the Tertullianists, and lived to a very advanced age (died after 220). He is the most prolific of all the Latin writers, most original and personal. He often writes without moderation, sweeps away opposition rather than convinces. His expression is bold, concise, rugged, involved; he does not bother with beauty of form.

---

<sup>19</sup> Philip Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 372.

<sup>20</sup> Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, 1968, p.70.



## THE SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH

### ANTIOCH

In size and importance, Antioch in Syria was the third city of the Roman Empire. Antioch or *Antakya*, city in Turkey, and capital of the *il* (province) of Hatay in southern Turkey, stood on a narrow strip of land twenty miles from the Mediterranean, wedged between the Orontes River (*Turkish Asi Nehriy*) and a chain of mountains running parallel to the coast. Antioch was set in the southernmost end of a rectangle where Mountain Silipius and river almost meet<sup>21</sup>. It was the ancient capital of the Seleucid dynasty in Syria and of a province of the Roman Empire. The city was founded in 301 BC by Seleucides I, a general in the army of Alexander the Great, and became the center of the Seleucid Kingdom. Strategically located at the cross-roads of important caravan routes, it soon became a center of commerce and one of the leading cities of the world, famous for a magnificence of architecture rivaled only by Rome and Alexandria. When Syria was conquered by Rome in 64 BC, Antioch became the eastern capital of the Roman Empire. The Romans added to the architecture splendors of the city, building temples, palaces, and theaters, extending the aqueduct and paving the main street with marble.

Antioch was the center of Christendom outside Palestine. The Apostles preached there before starting out on their missionary journeys, and in Antioch the term Christian, designating converts of St. Paul, first came into use (Acts 11:26). The community strongly supported St. Paul's anti-Judaizing policy. According to tradition, the first bishop of the city was St. Peter, and by the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the Church had a well-established organization, with the celebrated St. Ignatius as its bishop. By the 4th century, the see ranked after Rome and Alexandria as the third patriarchal see of Christendom, reaching its greatest extent of jurisdiction at the end of that century. Gradually, however, the rise in power of the see of Constantinople, and to a less extent the erection of Jerusalem into a Patriarchate, reduced the importance of Antioch, and its influence also suffered later the Nestorians. St. Chrysostom says, "Our city is the head and mother of the cities which to the east<sup>22</sup>."

The devastations of war and persistent earthquakes, including one in 526 AD that repeatedly killed 250,000 people, reduced the once great city to run importance.

Antioch was captured temporarily by the Persians in 540 and 611, and was absorbed into the Arab caliphate in 637. The Byzantine recaptured the city in 969, and it served as a frontier fortification until taken by the Seljuq Turks in 1084. In 1084 it was captured by the crusades and was taken by the Mamluks in 1268.

Antioch was captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1516 and it remained a part of the Ottoman Empire until shortly after World War I, when it was conveyed to Syria under a French mandate. The province of Hatay, of which *Antakya* is the capital, became autonomous in 1938, and the following year was ceded to Turkey.

### THE SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH

Modern scholars normally consider **Lucian of Antioch** as its founder, or at any rate, of Antiochian exegetical doctrine. Lucian was a priest martyred in 312 AD. In fact, we know nothing of Lucian's specific exegetical activity, and the little information which we possess about him is hard to interpret that it would be best to ignore the position which modern scholars have given him, locating the real beginning of the school as such with **Diodore of Tarsus** in the final decades of the 4th century.

<sup>21</sup> Robert L. Wilken: *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, University of California Press, 1983, p.1.

<sup>22</sup> *Statues* 3:1 PG 49:47.

Coming to the Antiochian school proper, we should clarify at once that the word “school” in this context should not suggest an actual *didaskaleion*, like that of Alexandria, i.e. a scholastic institution, properly organized and placed under the patronage and supervision of the local Bishop. Schaff says, "The Antiochian School was not a regular institution with a continuous succession of teachers, like the Catechetical School of Alexandria, but a theological tendency, more particularly a peculiar type of hermeneutics and exegesis which had its center in Antioch<sup>23</sup>." At Antioch, we have instead a group of exegetes and theologians, some of whom, like Diodore, also had a private and personal teaching role. The group was closely united within itself, less by student-teacher relationships than by a common stamp of theology and exegesis.

With regard to exegesis scholars had long contrasted this school with that of Alexandria, as promoting a literal style of exegesis. But recent decades have seen a tendency to reconsider the opposition between the two schools, recalling some non-literalist approaches in the Antiochian writers. In fact, Diodore juxtaposes allegory and *theoria*, so that, for him, while allegory weakens and abuses the letter of the text, *theoria* recognizes a higher level of meaning which overlies the literal, without deleting or weakening it.

We can start with **Diodore**, the actual founder of the school, who was active in the final decades of the 4th century, whose important distinction between allegory and *theoria* has already been mentioned. All the surviving texts present him as strongly literalist.

We know less about Diodore than about his pupil **Theodore of Mopsuestia**. As a general rule, he accepts the Christological interpretation of a text only if it is applied to Christ in the New Testament in the most explicit way; he cannot be satisfied with a mere allusion. We might add that he alone among early exegetes does not accept the traditional interpretation of the couple in the Song of Songs as Christ and the Church and reads the work as a simple love song, for which reason he rejects its full canonicity. It is indisputable that Theodore has reduced the presence of Christ in the Old Testament to the barest necessary minimum. He tends, like his Jewish contemporaries, to see the prophecies, which Christians and often earlier Jews had taken to be messianic, as having been fulfilled in the post-exilic period of Israel's history and thus he viewed the Old Testament dispensation in itself, with very few direct links with the dispensation of the New.

This literalism in harmony with the texts of the period translated itself into an interest in the history of Israel. As far as we can gather from surviving material, Theodore prefaces his commentary on each of the minor prophets, and even on individual psalms, with an introduction fixing its historical setting and general features precisely and he develops his commentary entirely in line with these programmatic prefaces. The commentary flows swiftly, packed with historical references and alert to grammatical and linguistic features of the text, all with the aim of setting out accurately its literal meaning. The tendency towards conciseness is that, on occasion, parts of his commentaries are nothing more than paraphrases of the scriptural text itself.

In the introduction to his commentary on St. John, Theodore observes that the business of exegesis is to explain difficult expressions in the Biblical text, without superfluous digressions which are permitted, even required of the preacher. He is obviously alluding to the verbose commentaries of the Alexandrian exegetes and the contrast between the conciseness of the Antiochian commentaries and the prolixity of the Alexandrians (Origen, Didymus) does indeed highlight their divergent approach to Scripture. The Antiochian perceives in the raised text a precise meaning to the illustrated without frills in a reading which adheres to the literal sense. The Alexandrian sees it as

---

<sup>23</sup> *History of the Christian Church, vol. 2., p. 816*

pregnant with meaning and with depth of mystery, to be read at several levels and needing patient excavation to uncover, at least partly, its richness of meaning.

**Marcellus of Ancra**<sup>24</sup> (died on 374) a strong supporter of the *Homoousion* at the Council of Nicaea. In 336 he was deposed from his see on the ground of certain statements in his work against the Arian Asterius. He was restored on the death of Constantine (337), but c.339 again expelled. The Westerns accepted his orthodoxy at Councils held at Rome c. 430 and at Sardica in 343, on the ground that the offending passages were merely conjectures. The Easterns was more critical of his support embarrassing. Marcellus taught that in the unity of the Godhead the Son and the Spirit only emerged as independent entities for the purposes of Creation and Redemption. After the redemptive work is achieved they will be resumed again into the Divine Unity and “God will be all in all”. The clause in the “Nicene Creed, “whose Kingdom shall have no end”, was inserted to combat his teaching. The Creed which Marcellus embodied in his epistle to Pope Julius<sup>25</sup> () is generally considered a primary witness for the history of the Old Roman Creed.

**Theodoret**, who was active a few decades after Theodore and John Chrysostom, wrote several specifically exegetical works, interest us especially because, while clearly of an Antiochian persuasion, he takes pains to moderate the rigid literalism of Diodore and Theodore, making room for the traditional Christological interpretation of the Old Testament.

The commentary on the Song of Songs represents the high point of Theodoret’s divergence from Theodore and thus likewise the greatest rapprochement to Alexandrian hermeneutics. Without naming him specifically, his intention is to read against Theodore’s claim that the Song of Songs was purely a profane love song and he recognized its traditional Christological and ecclesiastical significance. Given too the clearly homogeneous character of the love-song of the bride and groom, it must rarely be interpreted in a similarly homogeneous manner i.e. in a completely allegorical sense.

All these are signs weariness which herald the end of the heyday of Antiochian exegesis.

## ITS PROGRAM

The students as well as the ordained teachers lived in the *Asketerion*, and special rules regulated the daily program of this cenobite.

The students joined the *Asketerion* for ascetic-theological training and promised to remain unmarried.

Study hours were long. The principal subject of the curriculum was the Bible. In addition questions of dogmatic, apologetics, and ethics were studied<sup>26</sup>. Philosophy was taught.

Diodore, in contrasting the exegetical methodology of the school of Alexandria declared, “We demand them to know that we prefer much more the historical comprehension of the text than the allegorical<sup>27</sup>.”

## STAGES OF THE ANTIOCHIAN SCHOOL

Mar Severus Ephraem Barsoum states<sup>28</sup> that the modern scholars see that the history of this school is divided into three periods:

<sup>24</sup> Cross: *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, P. 869-870.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Epiphanius: *Adver. Haer.* 72.

<sup>26</sup> Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos: *Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Bible*, Paulist Press, 1989, p.11, 12

<sup>27</sup> J. Ph. De Barjeau: *L'ecole exegetique d'Antioche*, 35, n.3.

<sup>28</sup> Metropolitan of Syria and Lebanon, who became Patriarch Mar Ignatius Ephraem I Barsoum (died in 1957): *The Theological Antiochian School, El-Kods (Jerusalem) 1930*, p. 3ff (in Arabic); Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, 1968, p. 92.

1. **Its establishment** (260-360). It is founded by Lucianus and Dorotheus, who were prominent.
2. Its great period or **the golden stage** (360-430). It reached its peak under Diodore. The Fathers of this period Flavian, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodert of Cyrus, and above all St. Chrysostom.
3. The period of decadence (after 430). It started to decline by the appearance of Nestorianism. Its followers were admitted to the School of Edessa, until it was ruined. Then they went to Nisibin in 489.

## THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANTIOCHIAN THEOLOGY

1. Man's creatureliness. The School stressed the *humanity* of Jesus Christ in its Christology. The later heresies centered principally on the person of Christ - was He true God and true Man? How many persons in Christ? Errors often arose from a too zealous defence of orthodoxy in one point. Nestorius was combating the loss of human will in Christ, and held there were two persons in Christ<sup>29</sup>.

2. The *Dyophysieis* (Two natures) of Christ. In theology the Antiochians affirmed clearly the distinction of the three *Hypostaseis*, to ensure the reality of their existence, thereby risking the possibility of being accused of holding the theory that the *Hypostaseis* are not only a substance but differ from one another by a substance. For this reason, many of them opposed *homo-ousios*, and the misuse of the word by Paul of Samosata in the previous century helped them to this<sup>30</sup>.

3. The historico - grammatical method of exegesis the Holy Scriptures. The School opposed to the allegorical interpretation of Alexandria a prudent, literal sense, either proper or metaphorical, insisting on the helps afforded by language-study. Occasionally the spirit was neglected for the letter. For the mystical they substituted a moral teaching (especially St. John Chrysostom). They cultivated Aristotelian philosophy<sup>31</sup>.

## THE FATHERS OF THE SCHOOL AND ITS FOLLOWERS<sup>32</sup>

1. Eusebius of Nicomedia (then of Constantinople) 341\*.
2. Eustathius of Antioch 324-337\*.
3. Mari of Chalcedon (kady Kouri), who was alive in 343)
4. Theogenes of Nicea.
5. Nestorius of Cappadocia.
6. Arius, priest in Alexandria 336\*.
7. Theonotius of Antioch 344-357\*.
8. Marcos of Ancra 347.
9. Theodore of Hereclia 355\*.
10. Eusebius of Hems 341-359\*.
11. Eudicus of Antioch (afterwards of Constantinople) 369\*.
12. Eunomius of Cosicius 361-383\*.
13. Carlus of Jerusalem 386\* Tixirion attributed him to the School of Alexandria more that of Antioch<sup>33</sup>.
14. Melitius of Antioch 381\*.
15. Diodore of Tarsus 391 or 394\*.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, 1968, p. 92-93.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, 1968, p. 92.

<sup>31</sup> Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, 1968, p. 92.

<sup>32</sup> Metropolitan Mar Severus Ephram Barsum, p.10-11.

<sup>33</sup> History of Dogmas, vol. 2, p. 10.

16. Evgarius of Antioch 388-394\*.
17. Flevian I of Antioch 381-404\*.
18. St. John Chrysostom of Constantinople 407\*.
19. Theodore of Mopseustia 392- 428\*.
20. Polycronius of Ephemia 410-430\*.
21. Nestorius of Constantinople 427-ca. 450\*.
22. Theodoret of Cyrus 423-458\*.
23. Anba Marcos, an Egyptian monk.
24. Hedrianus, a priest and monk.
25. St. Nilus of Sinai 430\*
26. Anba Isidore of El-Pharama (Palsuim) 434\*.
27. Proclus of Constantinople 434-446\*
28. St. Cassian, abbot of St. Victor's Monastery 435\*.
29. Victor the Antiochian Priest.
30. Basil of Erenopolis.

## PROBLEMS OF THE SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH

The association of Lucian, the founder of that school, with Paul of Samosata and later with his disciple Aruis kept him under suspicion for his adoptionist Christology<sup>34</sup>. He accepted the pre-existence of Christ, but insisted that this had not been from all eternity. Many of his students, who included Aruis and Eusebius of Neco-media, came to serve in the most important sees in the East, and as fellow disciples of Lucian were sympathetic to Arius, Lucian is often called the father of Arianism<sup>35</sup>

Arius received his theological training in the School of Antioch, whose teaching led to the great "Trinity controversy." After Eustathis, the most reputed representatives of the orthodox faith at the council of Nicenea had been deposed in 326 AD, it remained in the hands of the Arians until 360. There can not be any doubt that the great number of bishops of the Patriarchate belonged to the different Arian parties. Yet it would be unjust to assume that the teaching of the School of Antioch inevitably had to end up in Arianism. The fact is that the most famous writers of this ecclesiastical province, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore, John Chrysostom, and Theodoret of Cyrus, defended the Nicene faith against the Arians, Though they must be regarded as the main representatives of the school of Antioch.

Nestorius and Theodoret of Cyrus also belong to this theological school. A one-sided use of the historico-grammatical method led some of its representatives into errors that are partly to be explained by a rationalistic attitude (the desire to rid Christian doctrine as far as possible from all elements of mystery): into Arianism, Macedonianism, Appollinarianism, Pelagianism and Nestorianism.

J. Quasten states: [However, the rationalistic tendencies of this school, which tried to eliminate the elements of mystery from Christian doctrine, brought a number of its representatives into conflict with the traditional teaching of the church. Arius, a disciple of Lucian, was not the only heretic who received his theological training at Antioch. Nestorius and, as well as Theodore of Mopsuestia...<sup>36</sup>]

---

<sup>34</sup> *The earliest adoptionist seems to be a second century shoemaker of Byzantium teaching at Rome, Theodotus by name. For him, Jesus was merely man, though born of a virgin according to divine will. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, He did not become God but received the power to work miracles, for a spirit, the heavenly Christ, descended upon Him and dwelt within Him. The condemnation of Theodotus by Victor of Rome (d. 198) did not prevent one of his disciples, Theodotus the Banker, from alleging that Jesus was even inferior to Melchizedek, since the latter is fatherless, motherless, without genealogy, whose beginning and end is neither comprehended nor comprehensible. A far troublesme advocate of Adoptionism was Paul of Samosata. He reasoned that "the Word is from above, Jesus Christ is man from hence; (Mary) gave birth to a man like us, though better in every way, since He was of the Holy Spirit." Apparently, he did not say that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one and the same, but gave the name God to the Father who created all things, that of Son to the mere man and that of Holy Spirit to the grace which dwelt in the apostles. The Logos, the expression of god's immanent rationality, descended upon the man,, Jesus, born of Mary, but their mode of union was simply a coming together. The Logos does not enter into substantial union with the man, for this would compromise the dignity of the Logos. It was Jesus' moral progress that won for Him the title Son of God. It seems that Paul applied the term homoousios to the relationship of the Logos to God the Father. According to Athanasius he used it in a reductio ad absurdum arguing that the Logos and the Father could not be consubstantial, using the word in its material sense, as two pennies are consubstantial because both are of the same substance, copper. If consubstantiality were true of Father and Son, Athanasius said Paul reasoned, there must then be Antioch antecedent substance of which both would partake, a manifest absurdity. Hilary of Poitiers says that Paul claimed that the Logos was homoousios with the Father, that is He was identical with the Father, one and the same as the Father, opposing the contention of his episcopal accusers that the Word was a substance (ousia), that is, a real entity distinct from the Father. The bishops assembled in Antioch in 268 deposed him and condemned both his adoptionist teaching and his use of consubstantial. [Leo Donald Davis: *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787)*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1990, p. 40-41].*

<sup>35</sup> D.S.Wallace-Hadrill: *Christian Antioch*, Cambridge Universty Press, 1982.

<sup>36</sup> *Patrology*, vol.3, p.3.

About the year 373 Apollinaris was lecturing there<sup>37</sup>.

---

<sup>37</sup> *R. V. Sellers : Two Ancient Christologies, SPCK 1954, Introduction.*

## THE ALEXANDRIAN AND ANTIOCHIAN CHRISTOLOGICAL THOUGHTS<sup>38</sup>

Many scholars attribute the problem of the Christological formula concerning the nature of Christ "*Mia-physis and Dyophysies*" to the controversy between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian theology. While the Alexandrian school adopted the "hypostasis union" or the "nature union" of the Godhead and manhood to assert the oneness of Jesus Christ, the Antiochian School accepted the "indwelling theology," that is, the Godhead dwells in manhood, as if Jesus Christ were two persons in one, to assert that no confusion had occurred between the Godhead and manhood, and to avoid attributing human weakness to His divinity. The starting point of the Alexandrian School was John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh," while that of the Antiochian was Colossians 2:9 "For in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Before discussing the differences between the two Schools, I would refer to the following remarks:

1. Usually scholars speak of the controversy between the two schools, ignoring that they agreed on many points. Every school had its own aspects but was not isolated from the other. Sellers in his book "Two Ancient Christologies," states that we are in need of these two ancient Christologies. He states, "As is claimed in this work, if we are to see old things in a new light, we must turn to our treasure, and out of it bring forth together both these ancient Christologies, since the one without the other cannot be deemed wholly satisfactory<sup>39</sup>."

2. The problem issued not from the two schools, but from those who misinterpreted these Schools' concepts or formulas, like Apollinaris, Eutyches, Diodore, Nestorius, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodore of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa. It is noteworthy that Apollinaris of Laodicea and Eutyches of Constantinople who accepted the Alexandrian formula "*Mia-physis*" were not Alexandrian, nor had they the Alexandrian system of theology.

3. The imperial and church politics played their role in this controversy to create a huge gap between the leaders of these schools, which ended by the serious split that occurred within the Church from the fifth Church.

### THE ALEXANDRIAN *HYPOSTATIC* UNION

The unity of God was first in the thought of the Alexandrians, and this they stressed though enemies might accuse them of Sabellianism<sup>40</sup>.

St. Cyril, in his struggle against Nestorius explained the "*hypostatic union*" as a "personal union," "natural union" and "real unification." The Word of God united our nature to Himself and made it His own, that is, in Him is effected a real unification of Godhead and manhood. In other words this theory does not ignore the difference of natures, but it insisted on the oneness of Christ by declaring His one incarnate nature of two, without confusion of natures or separation. It conserves at least two ideas<sup>41</sup>:

1. The Logos, an eternal *hypostasis*, united to Himself manhood, which has not its existence before incarnation and is not separate from the Godhead. It became individuated, thereby receiving its *hypostatic* status in union with the Logos. Manhood was not an independent *hypostasis* over and against the Logos, it is *hypostatic* in the union.

<sup>38</sup> Fr. Malaty: *The Terms Physis & Hypostasis in the Early Church, Alexandria 1987, p. 11.*

<sup>39</sup> p. VII.

<sup>40</sup> Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology, 1968, p. 92.*

<sup>41</sup> V.C. Samuel: *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined, Madras 1977, p. 249f.*



2. The union of the natures was inward and real. For "*hypostasis*" is the entire "*ousia*" which has come into concrete existence, while "*prosopic union*" signifies the external aspect of the object or person, whereby one hypostasis of a class is distinguished from another.

St. Cyril rejected the Antiochian theory of "*indwelling*," that is, the Godhead of Christ dwelt in His manhood, or the theory of "*conjunction*" or "*close participation*" as insufficient to reveal the real unification, but permits the division of natures of Christ as Nestorius taught.

### **THE ANTIOCHIAN *DYOPHYSEIS* (TWO NATURES)**

The Antiochian leaders treated the "*hypostatic*" union of Cyril with suspicion, as if it were Apollinarian. They adopted the theory of the indwelling of the Logos in the manhood, to assert Christ's manhood and to confirm Him as a real and perfect man. Nestorius declared this theory when he refused to call St. Mary "*Theotokos*," and rejected the Alexandrian statement: "the Son of God died."

Apollinaris of Laodicea used the Alexandrian formula "one nature" in his own theological system. In his eagerness to defend the Church faith against Arianism he believed that the Logos was united only with the corporeality of man and replaced the soul. In other words, as the Arians could not accept the Godhead of Christ, because it made Him of two persons: God and man, Apollinaris states that Christ has no human soul, believing that thus he asserts the hypostatic union. He believed that the manhood of Christ is incomplete.

It seems to the Antiochians that hypostatic union has this result, i.e., the humanity of Christ is incomplete. They used to attribute Apollinarianism to the great fathers of Alexandria, such as SS. Athanasius and Cyril.

The reaction is their adoption to the "*Dyophysies*" theory to assert three facts in the incarnation:

1. The manhood of Christ was real and perfect. The Antiochians stress on the genuine and complete humanity of Jesus Christ.
2. There was no confusion between the natures of Christ.
3. The Godhead is impassible, God did not suffer, nor did He die.

These facts are assured by the true Alexandrian fathers, but not by Eutyches and Apollinaris who were truly not Alexandrian.

### **THE ANTIOCHIAN *DYOPHYSEIS* AND THE SEPARATION OF NATURES**

Frances Young states, "The principal representatives of Antiochene theology were Diodore of Tarsus, the teacher of John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrillus, the friend and defender of Nestorius. The reputation of all three has suffered through association with Nestorianism, but there has been a reassessment in modern times, not least of the theology of Nestorius himself<sup>42</sup>."

Sellers who defends the Antiochian Christology saying that they speak of a "complete union," and insist that it is one which is altogether indivisible<sup>43</sup>, states<sup>44</sup> that they refer to the Godhead and manhood not only as "natures" and "ousiai" (essences) but also as *hypostasies*

<sup>42</sup> *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 1983, p.28.

<sup>43</sup> Sellers: *The Council of Chalcedon SPCK 1961*, p. 171.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid* 176.

(*substantiae*) and that there is no hypostasis without its prosopon, (both the Godhead and manhood i.e. Christ are seen each with its prosopon - each that is, as possessing its "appearance," its "individuality," and its "person").

## THE "INDWELLING" THEORY AND THE HISTORIC-GRAMMATICAL METHOD OF EXEGESIS

The Antiochians adopted the theory of "*indwelling*" not just as a contrast to the Alexandrian theology of the *hypostatic union*, but in harmony with their interest in the historic grammatical method of the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures. Meyendorff says: "The rigorist critical approach of men like Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theodoret led them to study the Gospel text literally in order to describe the history of our salvation rather than to explain it. Since they maintained a literal interpretation of the Old Testament, the Antiochians tended, in their exegesis of the Gospels and Epistles to take chiefly into consideration the historical Jesus, the aim and the end of the history of Israel, in the full reality of his human nature<sup>45</sup>." In other words, their interest in the literal interpretation of the holy Scripture incited them to assert the reality of the historical Jesus in His "*human nature*" independent of the divine Logos, who dwells in him (according to their expression).

R. V. Sellers says:

[(Eustathius) says that the Logos "dwelt in," "was clothed with," and "bore" the manhood, which he frequently designates "the Man of Christ." Such expressions may lead us to think that his is the doctrine, not an incarnation, but of a divine indwelling in a man who is conjoined with the Logos in a moral relationship. But certain other considerations must be taken into account before arriving at a verdict. Eustathius we find, alludes to the manhood as "the own temple<sup>46</sup>," "the own house<sup>47</sup>," "the own body<sup>48</sup> of the Logos, and what is more definitely states that the Logos built a temple and bore the manhood, comparing in a body with man<sup>49</sup>. Surely evidence is sufficient to warrant the conclusion that this teacher would say that the Logos himself has become man in Jesus Christ<sup>50</sup>.]

V He (the Logos) voluntarily gave up his own body to the destruction of death for the sake of the salvation of men<sup>51</sup>.

### Eustathius

The Antiochians' writing show that they hold that the effecting of man's redemption is the purpose of the Incarnation. Nestorius affirms it is to renew in man the divine image which was his at the first that the Logos takes man's fallen nature upon him [Because in fact He took this (likeness) in order to abolish the guilt of the first man, and in order to give to his nature the former image which he had lost through his guilt rightly he took that which had proved itself guilty and had been made captive and had been subjected to servitude, with all the bonds of scorn and contempt<sup>52</sup>.]

The second of the soteriological conceptions of the Antiochians - the concepts, that is, that through his *perfect obedience to the will of the Logos* who "*took*" Him, the Man plays his

<sup>45</sup> *Christ in the Eastern Christian Thought*, 1969, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Discourse on Prov. 8.22 PG 18.681C.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid PG 18:680A.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid PG 18:677C.*

<sup>50</sup> R. V. Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p. 124.

<sup>51</sup> *de anima PG 18:689 A.*

<sup>52</sup> *Nestorius:Bazar, p. 212, 213 (R. V. Sellers: Two Ancient Christologies, SPCK 1954).*

part in this work of effecting the world's redemption... They do not think that the Logos dwelt in a mere man, as He dwelt in the prophets, neither do they regard the man as a man who, on account of his progress in a life of obedience, was at length rewarded with a seat at God's right hand. Rather is it fundamental to their doctrine that this Man is the Chosen One of God, foreordained as the instrument of the Logos as he comes down to restore the human race, and that in Him, as the Chosen One, the Logos dwells from the first<sup>53</sup>.]

Paul of Samosata states that the Logos in the human Jesus was different from the divine indwelling in the saints<sup>54</sup>.

The Antiochians were accustomed to refer to the Incarnation as the "taking on the part of the Logos, and what is more, to allude to Christ's manhood as "the Man," the Man whom the Logos assumed<sup>55</sup>."

Nestorius believed that St. Cyril, by introducing his "*hypostatic union*," speaks as if the divine Logos were deprived of His nature in the Incarnation<sup>56</sup>.

Theodoret states: [Those who believe that after the union there was one nature of Godhead and manhood destroy by this reasoning the peculiarities of the nature; and their destruction involves the denial of either nature. For the confusion of the united (natures prevents us from recognizing either that the flesh is flesh or that God is God)<sup>57</sup>.]

✠ **Alexandrians:** This very God of very God unites to Himself our nature.

✠ **Antiochians:** Jesus is the Perfect Man, who obeyed with his own free will the will of the Logos who assumed Him as Adam the Second in new of human race. [The Man whom the Logos took to himself, they insist, is altogether unique among men<sup>58</sup>.]

✠ **Alexandrians:** The Logos has so entered into human experiences that the passion has real meaning for Him as Incarnate Logos, he has become the Suffering One.

✠ **Antiochians:** They insist that it was Christ and not the Logos who suffered.

They were fearful lest possibility should be attributed to the Logos in His divine nature. The Alexandrians and the Antiochians maintain that all the actions and sayings reported of Jesus Christ in Scripture are those of the one Person, the Logos as he has become man.

<sup>53</sup> Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p 130.

<sup>54</sup> Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p 130-131.

<sup>55</sup> Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p 121.

<sup>56</sup> Bazar p 145, 147, 149, 155 & 157 (Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*).

<sup>57</sup> Dial. 3 ed. Schulze, I, p 268.

<sup>58</sup> *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p. 118.

## PROBLEMS OF CHRISTOLOGY AND THE ALEXANDRIAN AND ANTIOCHIAN SCHOOLS

To explain the differences between the two Christian Schools concerning the Christology, I give here a summary of the main ideas that appeared almost in the fourth century:

**1. Arius:** Nestorius in his “*Bazaar of Heracleides*<sup>59</sup>” states that the Arians profess that Christ is neither God whole and without needs, nor yet a man, but half God and half man. Christ is **imperfect man**, as he has no soul. He was created *ex nihilo*, from nothing, before the creation of the world. He did not sin. He is **imperfect God**, and is not equal with the Father, because he is not uncreate and without needs; but he is able to save men. He is the Son of God as all men are sons of God, by adoption. The second creature was the Holy Spirit. The Father alone is true God. The Council of Nicaea (325) condemned this and taught the Son of God is of the same substance or nature as the Father, and equal to Him (*homo-ousios to patri*).

Perhaps it was from Lucian that Arius drew certain Antiochian positions: a taste for the literal exegesis of Scripture, a determination to preserve the unicity of God, tendency to distinguish between the Logos and God<sup>60</sup>.

Arius held that the soul of the Son replaced the soul of the man Jesus, and used this assertion as proof of the changeability and creatureliness of the Son<sup>61</sup>.

**2. St. Cyril:** Christ is **Perfect God and Perfect Man**. As an Alexandrian he desired to emphasize the oneness of the Person or *Hypostasis* of Christ. Christ has “one incarnate nature of God the Logos. This nature of two natures which cannot be distinguished except in thought. St. Cyril insists on the term “hypostatic union” or “natural union,” between the divinity and humanity of Christ, so that we may not fall in the error of two sons. He rejected the Antiochian terminology who called the union of the two natures an indwelling, connection, close participation, considering these terms as insufficient<sup>62</sup>.

**3. Apollinaris of Laodicea, Syria (c. 310-c. 390):** Christ is **Perfect God and Imperfect Man**. 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 (*puch*) and rational soul (*nous*). The Logos took the body with the irrational soul without the human spirit (soul), for Godhead took its place. He states: [The divine energy fulfills the role of the animating spirit ( $\psi\chi\gamma\sigma$ ) and of the human mind ( $\nu\sigma\sigma$ )<sup>63</sup>. It is not important to discuss if he was a dicotomist, 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 untied to the body received from the Virgin Mary. This solution commended itself to Apollinaris as a way of escape from all the difficulties and as the correct interpretation of St. John 1: 14 “The Word become flesh<sup>64</sup>.”

Christ could not have a complete humanity of two reasons:

<sup>59</sup> *Bazaar of Heracleides*, 1:1:5.

<sup>60</sup> Leo Donald Davis: *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787)*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1990, p. 51.

<sup>61</sup> Leo Donald Davis: *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787)*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1990, p. 104.

<sup>62</sup> Fr. T. Malaty: *The Coptic Orthodox Church as a church of Erudition and Theology*, Alexandria, 1986, p. 105.

<sup>63</sup> Frag. 2 (Lietz).

<sup>64</sup> Fr. T. Malaty: *The Coptic Orthodox Church as a church of Erudition and Theology*, Alexandria, 1986, p. 86.

\* Two beings already perfect, God and man, cannot produce unity, but only a hybrid.

\* The rational soul constitutes the seat and the center of the power of self-determination for good or evil, which attributes the possibility of sin to Christ.

Apollinaris was one of the most fertile and versatile ecclesiastical writers of his time - primarily and exegete<sup>65</sup>.

**4. Eutyches (c. 378-454):** Christ is **Perfect God** and **Imperfect Man**. Eutyches was not a true theologian, nor he knew the Alexandrian theological system, but he sometimes used orthodox statements, perhaps because he was deiever, or he was cautious not to lose his fame, position and priesthood. To assure the one nature of Christ, he said that there was two natures before the union, but only one after it, for the divine nature absorbed the human one, and manhood was toptally lost<sup>66</sup>.

**5. Eunomius:** In his *First Apology*<sup>67</sup> he explains that the true name for the divinity is “*Ungenerated*.” The concept of “*Unbegotten*” enables us to distinguish God from every other being. The Son is begotten, and therefore, of a different nature than God the Father. He is created from nothing. Eunomius differs from Arius in so far as he concedes that Christ was adopted as son of God from the beginning, not as a reward after a life of virtue.

---

<sup>65</sup> Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, 1968, p. 90.

<sup>66</sup> Fr. T. Malaty: *The Coptic Orthodox Church as a church of Erudition and Theology*, Alexandria, 1986, p. 117.

<sup>67</sup> PG 30:835-868

## THE ALEXANDRIAN AND ANTIOCHIAN CHRISTOLOGICAL THOUGHTS<sup>68</sup>

Many scholars attribute the problem of the Christological formula concerning the nature of Christ "*Mia-physis and Dyophysis*" to the controversy between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian theology. While the Alexandrian school adopted the "hypostasis union" or the "nature union" of the Godhead and manhood to assert the oneness of Jesus Christ, the Antiochian School accepted the "indwelling theology," that is, the Godhead dwells in manhood, as if Jesus Christ were two persons in one, to assert that no confusion had occurred between the Godhead and manhood, and to avoid attributing human weakness to His divinity. The starting point of the Alexandrian School was John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh," while that of the Antiochian was Colossians 2:9 "For in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Before discussing the differences between the two Schools, I would refer to the following remarks:

1. Usually scholars speak of the controversy between the two schools, ignoring that they agreed on many points. Every school had its own aspects but was not isolated from the other. Sellers in his book "Two Ancient Christologies," states that we are in need of these two ancient Christologies. He states, "As is claimed in this work, if we are to see old things in a new light, we must turn to our treasure, and out of it bring forth together both these ancient Christologies, since the one without the other cannot be deemed wholly satisfactory<sup>69</sup>."

2. The problem issued not from the two schools, but from those who misinterpreted these Schools' concepts or formulas, like Apollinaris, Eutyches, Diodore, Nestorius, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodore of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa. It is noteworthy that Apollinaris of Laodicea and Eutyches of Constantinople who accepted the Alexandrian formula "*Mia-physis*" were not Alexandrian, nor had they the Alexandrian system of theology.

3. The imperial and church politics played their role in this controversy to create a huge gap between the leaders of these schools, which ended by the serious split that occurred within the Church from the fifth Church.

### THE ALEXANDRIAN *HYPOSTATIC* UNION

The unity of God was first in the thought of the Alexandrians, and this they stressed though enemies might accuse them of Sabellianism<sup>70</sup>.

St. Cyril, in his struggle against Nestorius explained the "*hypostatic union*" as a "personal union," "natural union" and "real unification." The Word of God united our nature to Himself and made it His own, that is, in Him is effected a real unification of Godhead and manhood. In other words this theory does not ignore the difference of natures, but it insisted on the oneness of Christ by declaring His one incarnate nature of two, without confusion of natures or separation. It conserves at least two ideas<sup>71</sup>:

1. The Logos, an eternal *hypostasis*, united to Himself manhood, which has not its existence before incarnation and is not separate from the Godhead. It became individuated, thereby receiving its *hypostatic* status in union with the Logos. Manhood was not an independent *hypostasis* over and against the Logos, it is *hypostatic* in the union.

<sup>68</sup> Fr. Malaty: *The Terms Physis & Hypostasis in the Early Church, Alexandria 1987, p. 11.*

<sup>69</sup> p. VII.

<sup>70</sup> Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology, 1968, p. 92.*

<sup>71</sup> V.C. Samuel: *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined, Madras 1977, p. 249f.*

2. The union of the natures was inward and real. For "*hypostasis*" is the entire "*ousia*" which has come into concrete existence, while "*prosopic union*" signifies the external aspect of the object or person, whereby one hypostasis of a class is distinguished from another.

St. Cyril rejected the Antiochian theory of "*indwelling*," that is, the Godhead of Christ dwelt in His manhood, or the theory of "*conjunction*" or "*close participation*" as insufficient to reveal the real unification, but permits the division of natures of Christ as Nestorius taught.

### **THE ANTIOCHIAN *DYOPHYSEIS* (TWO NATURES)**

The Antiochian leaders treated the "*hypostatic*" union of Cyril with suspicion, as if it were Apollinarian. They adopted the theory of the indwelling of the Logos in the manhood, to assert Christ's manhood and to confirm Him as a real and perfect man. Nestorius declared this theory when he refused to call St. Mary "*Theotokos*," and rejected the Alexandrian statement: "the Son of God died."

Apollinaris of Laodicea used the Alexandrian formula "one nature" in his own theological system. In his eagerness to defend the Church faith against Arianism he believed that the Logos was united only with the corporeality of man and replaced the soul. In other words, as the Arians could not accept the Godhead of Christ, because it made Him of two persons: God and man, Apollinaris states that Christ has no human soul, believing that thus he asserts the hypostatic union. He believed that the manhood of Christ is incomplete.

It seems to the Antiochians that hypostatic union has this result, i.e., the humanity of Christ is incomplete. They used to attribute Apollinarianism to the great fathers of Alexandria, such as SS. Athanasius and Cyril.

The reaction is their adoption to the "*Dyophysies*" theory to assert three facts in the incarnation:

1. The manhood of Christ was real and perfect. The Antiochians stress on the genuine and complete humanity of Jesus Christ.
2. There was no confusion between the natures of Christ.
3. The Godhead is impassible, God did not suffer, nor did He die.

These facts are assured by the true Alexandrian fathers, but not by Eutyches and Apollinaris who were truly not Alexandrian.

### **THE ANTIOCHIAN *DYOPHYSEIS* AND THE SEPARATION OF NATURES**

Frances Young states, "The principal representatives of Antiochene theology were Diodore of Tarsus, the teacher of John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrillus, the friend and defender of Nestorius. The reputation of all three has suffered through association with Nestorianism, but there has been a reassessment in modern times, not least of the theology of Nestorius himself<sup>72</sup>."

Sellers who defends the Antiochian Christology saying that they speak of a "complete union," and insist that it is one which is altogether indivisible<sup>73</sup>, states<sup>74</sup> that they refer to the Godhead and manhood not only as "natures" and "ousiai" (essences) but also as *hypostasies*

<sup>72</sup> *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 1983, p.28.

<sup>73</sup> Sellers: *The Council of Chalcedon SPCK 1961*, p. 171.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid* 176.

(*substantiae*) and that there is no hypostasis without its prosopon, (both the Godhead and manhood i.e. Christ are seen each with its prosopon - each that is, as possessing its "appearance," its "individuality," and its "person").

## THE "INDWELLING" THEORY AND THE HISTORIC-GRAMMATICAL METHOD OF EXEGESIS

The Antiochians adopted the theory of "*indwelling*" not just as a contrast to the Alexandrian theology of the *hypostatic union*, but in harmony with their interest in the historic grammatical method of the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures. Meyendorff says: "The rigorist critical approach of men like Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theodoret led them to study the Gospel text literally in order to describe the history of our salvation rather than to explain it. Since they maintained a literal interpretation of the Old Testament, the Antiochians tended, in their exegesis of the Gospels and Epistles to take chiefly into consideration the historical Jesus, the aim and the end of the history of Israel, in the full reality of his human nature<sup>75</sup>." In other words, their interest in the literal interpretation of the holy Scripture incited them to assert the reality of the historical Jesus in His "*human nature*" independent of the divine Logos, who dwells in him (according to their expression).

R. V. Sellers says:

[(Eustathius) says that the Logos "dwelt in," "was clothed with," and "bore" the manhood, which he frequently designates "the Man of Christ." Such expressions may lead us to think that his is the doctrine, not an incarnation, but of a divine indwelling in a man who is conjoined with the Logos in a moral relationship. But certain other considerations must be taken into account before arriving at a verdict. Eustathius we find, alludes to the manhood as "the own temple<sup>76</sup>," "the own house<sup>77</sup>," "the own body<sup>78</sup> of the Logos, and what is more definitely states that the Logos built a temple and bore the manhood, comparing in a body with man<sup>79</sup>. Surely evidence is sufficient to warrant the conclusion that this teacher would say that the Logos himself has become man in Jesus Christ<sup>80</sup>.]

V He (the Logos) voluntarily gave up his own body to the destruction of death for the sake of the salvation of men<sup>81</sup>.

### Eustathius

The Antiochians' writing show that they hold that the effecting of man's redemption is the purpose of the Incarnation.

**Nestorius** affirms it is to renew in man the divine image which was his at the first that the Logos takes man's fallen nature upon him [Because in fact He took this (likeness) in order to abolish the guilt of the first man, and in order to give to his nature the former image which he had lost through his guilt rightly he took that which had proved itself guilty and had been made captive and had been subjected to servitude, with all the bonds of scorn and contempt<sup>82</sup>.]

The second of the soteriological conceptions of the Antiochians - the concepts, that is, that through his *perfect obedience to the will of the Logos* who "*took*" Him, the Man plays his

<sup>75</sup> *Christ in the Eastern Christian Thought*, 1969, p. 5.

<sup>76</sup> *Discourse on Prov. 8.22 PG 18.681C.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid PG 18:680A.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid PG 18:677C.*

<sup>80</sup> R. V. Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p. 124.

<sup>81</sup> *de anima PG 18:689 A.*

<sup>82</sup> *Nestorius:Bazar, p. 212, 213 (R. V. Sellers: Two Ancient Christologies, SPCK 1954).*



part in this work of effecting the world's redemption... They do not think that the Logos dwelt in a mere man, as He dwelt in the prophets, neither do they regard the man as a man who, on account of his progress in a life of obedience, was at length rewarded with a seat at God's right hand. Rather is it fundamental to their doctrine that this Man is the Chosen One of God, foreordained as the instrument of the Logos as he comes down to restore the human race, and that in Him, as the Chosen One, the Logos dwells from the first<sup>83</sup>.]

**Paul of Samosata** states that the Logos in the human Jesus was different from the divine indwelling in the saints<sup>84</sup>.

The Antiochians were accustomed to refer to the Incarnation as the "taking on the part of the Logos, and what is more, to allude to Christ's manhood as "the Man," the Man whom the Logos assumed<sup>85</sup>."

**Nestorius** believed that St. Cyril, by introducing his "*hypostatic union*," speaks as if the divine Logos were deprived of His nature in the Incarnation<sup>86</sup>.

**Theodoret** states: [Those who believe that after the union there was one nature of Godhead and manhood destroy by this reasoning the peculiarities of the nature; and their destruction involves the denial of either nature. For the confusion of the united (natures prevents us from recognizing either that the flesh is flesh or that God is God)<sup>87</sup>.]

✠ **Alexandrians**: This very God of very God unites to Himself our nature.

✠ **Antiochians**: Jesus is the Perfect Man, who obeyed with his own free will the will of the Logos who assumed Him as Adam the Second in new of human race. [The Man whom the Logos took to himself, they insist, is altogether unique among men<sup>88</sup>.]

✠ **Alexandrians**: The Logos has so entered into human experiences that the passion has real meaning for Him as Incarnate Logos, he has become the Suffering One.

✠ **Antiochians**: They insist that it was Christ and not the Logos who suffered.

They were fearful lest possibility should be attributed to the Logos in His divine nature. The Alexandrians and the Antiochians maintain that all the actions and sayings reported of Jesus Christ in Scripture are those of the one Person, the Logos as he has become man.

<sup>83</sup> Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p 130.

<sup>84</sup> Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p 130-131.

<sup>85</sup> Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p 121.

<sup>86</sup> Bazar p 145, 147, 149, 155 & 157 (Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*).

<sup>87</sup> *Dial.* 3 ed. Schulze, I, p 268.

<sup>88</sup> *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p. 118.

**THE ANTIOCHIAN FATHERS  
AND THE (SECOND)  
COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE  
- 553 AD<sup>89</sup>**

**EMPEROR JUSTINIAN I (527-565)**

This learned and unweariedly active ruler, ecclesiastically devout, used to spend whole nights in prayer and fasting, and in theological studies and discussions. He placed his throne under the special protection of the blessed Virgin and the archangel Michael. He adorned the capital and the provinces with costly temples and institutions of charity; and he regarded it as his special mission to unite all parts of the Church, and to establish the genuine orthodoxy for all time to come. His famous wife Theodora, displayed the greatest zeal for the Church and for ascetic piety, was secretly devoted to the non-Chalcedonian view. She brought him to favor the liturgical formula of the non-Chalcedonian “God was crucified for us,” so that he sanctified it in a church decree (533)<sup>90</sup>.

Moreover, the exile of St. Dioscorus, Pope of Alexandria, and the persecutions that the Copts and Syrians suffered by their brothers in Christ caused many troubles to the Byzantine Empire. In 543, in order to quit the minds of Christians, and restore the spiritual unity of the empire, the emperor Justinian condemned the “*Three Chapters*” (the writings of three Nestorian authors, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, and Ibas), which were included in the documents of the Synod of Chalcedon<sup>91</sup>.

**THE (SECOND) COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

The emperor Justinian and Vigilius, bishop of Rome (537 - 555) decided to summon this council after the latter withdrew his "Judgment" condemning the "*Three Chapters*." This "Judgment" had been issued on 11 April 548 but the bishops of the west, and especially of Africa unanimously opposed it. The council was summoned by Justinian to Constantinople to condemn the Origenistic errors also. Vigilius would have preferred to convene it in Sicily or Italy so that western bishops might be present. It assembled on 5 May 553 in the great hall attached to Hagia Sophia cathedral.

Since the Roman bishop refused to take part in the Council, because Justinian had summoned bishops in equal numbers from each of the five patriarchal sees, so that there would be many more eastern than western bishops present, Eutychius, patriarch of Constantinople, presided. The decrees of the council were signed by 160 bishops, of whom 8 were Africans.

Vigilius, the Roman bishop, at first protested against the Council. on 14 May 553. Vigilius issued his "Constitution," which was signed by 16 bishops (9 from Italy, 2 from Africa, 2 from Illyricum, and 3 from Asia Minor). This rejected sixty propositions of Theodore of Mopsuestia, but spared his personal memory, and refused to condemn either Theodoret or Ibas since. Nevertheless, the council in its 8th session on 2 June 553 again condemned the "*Three Chapters*," for the same reasons as Justinian had done so, in a judgment which concludes with 14 anathemas.

The Council of Constantinople condemned the “*Three Chapters*,” viz.-

1. The person and works of Theodore of Mopsuestia.

---

<sup>89</sup> Introduction and translation taken from *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman P. Tanner

<sup>90</sup> Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, p. 768ff.

<sup>91</sup> The author: *Christology, According to the Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches, Alexandria*, p. 17.

2. The writings of Theodoret against Cyril of Alexandria.
3. The letter of Ibas of Edessa to Maris the Persian.

After considering the matter for six months, Vigilius anathematized Theodore and condemned his writings, and those of Theodoret, and Ibas. On 23 February 554, in a second "Constitution," he tried to reconcile the recent condemnation with what had been decreed at the Council of Chalcedon.

It is worthy to note that Vigilius' role in the "Three Chapters Controversy" has been cited at the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) by the opponents of papal infallibility in doctrinal matters as historical evidence against the Roman claim in this doctrine<sup>92</sup>.

The statement of the Council against the "*Three Chapters*" contains the followings:

1. A justification for holding a council, and not depending on the decision of bishop of Rome alone.
2. A justification for condemning heretics who already died.
3. A justification for not condemning Theodore in his life. There was a hope that he and his followers were led away from their mistake.
4. The need of condemning Theodore:
  - a. He is the teacher of Nestorius, and defender of his heresy.
  - b. The defenders of Theodore omitted some of the writings of the Fathers, and distorted some quotations of their writings.
5. The Council quoted few of Theodoret's heretical writings against true faith, against the twelve chapters of holy Cyril and against the first synod of Ephesus.

It is worthy to note that the Council of Chalcedon did not use Cyril's twelve chapters against Nestorius. On the contrary, it absolved Theodoret and Ibas who were well-known as Nestorians. H. Chadwick states, "Of the Nestorians, Theodoret and Ibas of Edessa were restored to office, while Nestorius himself was condemned as a heretic<sup>93</sup>."

It was permitted to Theodoret to attend the first session of the Council of Chalcedon, although the imperial secretary, Constantine, commenced by reading the letter sent by Theodosius to Dioscorus on 30 March 449<sup>94</sup>, which contained the injection that Theodoret of Cyrus should not be allowed to attend the Synod, except at the special request of the bishops assembled there<sup>95</sup>.

6. The letter which is alleged to have been written by Ibas to Mari the Persian was brought and it was read. Its heretical character was immediately apparent to everyone. It defends Theodore and Nestorius. It was demonstrated in that Ibas was previously accused of the same heresy which is contained in this letter.

Tixeront called Ibas a "sworn enemy<sup>96</sup>" of Cyril. The Roman legates at the Council of Chalcedon insisted that his letter to Maris of Ardaschir was orthodox<sup>97</sup>.

---

<sup>92</sup> J.D. Douglas: *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1978, p.1018; E.A. Livingstone: *The Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1977, p. 514, 539.

<sup>93</sup> H. Chadwick: *The Early Church*, 1974, p. p.203; *The author: The Coptic Orthodox Church as a Church of Erudition and Theology*, 1986, p.142.

<sup>94</sup> *Mansi VI*, 588.

<sup>95</sup> *Sellers: The Council of Chalcedon*, spck 1961, p.104-5.

<sup>96</sup> *History of Dogmas*, vol. 3, p. 52.

<sup>97</sup> *Mansi VII*, 261.

## SENTENCE AGAINST THE "*THREE CHAPTERS*"

The (second) Council of Constantinople set the following statement against the "Three Chapters."

Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, as we are told in the parable in the gospel, gives talents to each one according to his ability, and at the proper time asks for an account of what has been done by each one. If the person to whom only one talent has been given is condemned because he has not worked and increased it, but has only preserved it without diminishment, how much more serious and more frightening must be the condemnation to which the person is subjected who not only fails to look after himself but scandalizes others and is a cause of offense to them? It is clear to all believers that when a problem about the faith comes up it is not only the heretical person who is condemned but also the person who is in a position to correct the heresy of others and fails to do so. To those of us to whom the task has been given of governing the church of the Lord, there comes a fear of the condemnation which threatens those who neglect to do the Lord's work. We hurry to take care of the good seed of faith protecting it from the weeds of heresy which have been planted by the enemy. *We observed that the pupils of Nestorius were trying to bring their heresy into the church of God by means of the heretical Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia and his books as also by the writings of the heretical Theodoret and the disgraceful letter which is alleged to have been sent by Ibas to Mari the Persian.* Our observations prompted us to correct what was happening. We assembled in this imperial city, summoned here by the will of God and the command of the most religious emperor.

The most religious Vigilius happened to be present in this imperial city and took part in all the criticisms against the three chapters. He had frequently condemned them by word of mouth and in his writings. Later he gave a written agreement to take part in our council and to study with us the three chapters so that we could all issue an appropriate definition of the true faith. The most pious emperor, prompted by what was acceptable to us, encouraged a meeting between Vigilius and ourselves because it is proper that the priesthood should impose a common conclusion to matters of common concern. Consequently we asked his reverence to carry out his written undertakings. It did not seem right that the scandal over these three chapters should continue and that the church of God should be further disturbed. In order to persuade him, we reminded him of the great example left us by the apostles and of the traditions of the fathers. Even though the grace of the holy Spirit was abundant in each of the apostles, so that none of them required the advice of another in order to do his work, nevertheless they were loathe to come to a decision on the issue of the circumcision of gentiles until they had met together to test their various opinions against the witness of the holy Scriptures...

The truth cannot be made clear in any other way when there are debates about questions of faith, since everyone requires the assistance of his neighbor. As Solomon says in his proverbs: A brother who helps a brother shall be exalted like a strong city; he shall be as strong as a well-established kingdom. Again in Ecclesiastes he says: Two are better than one, for they have a good reward for their toil. And the Lord himself says: Amen I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Vigilius was frequently invited by us all, and most distinguished judges were sent to him by the most pious emperor. Eventually he promised to give judgment personally on the three chapters. When we heard this promise, we remembered the warning of the Apostle that each of us shall give an account of

himself to God. We were afraid of the condemnation which threatens those who scandalize one of the least important, and of the much more serious one which threatens those who scandalize so very Christian an emperor, the people and all the churches. We also remembered what was said by God to Paul: Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not be silent; for I am with you, and nobody shall be able to harm you. When we met together, therefore, we first of all briefly made a confession of the faith which our Lord Jesus Christ true God, handed down to his holy apostles and by means of them to the holy churches, the same faith which those who afterwards were holy fathers and doctors handed down to the people entrusted to them. We confessed that we believe, protect and preach to the holy churches that confession of faith which was set out at greater length by the 318 holy fathers who met in council at Nicaea and handed down the holy doctrine or creed. The 150 who met in council at Constantinople also set out the same faith and made a confession of it and explained it. The 200 holy fathers who met in the first council of Ephesus agreed to the same faith. We follow also the definitions of the 630 who met in council at Chalcedon, regarding the same faith which they both followed and preached. We confessed that we held to be condemned and anathematized all those who had been previously condemned and anathematized by the Catholic Church and by the aforesaid four councils. When we had made this confession in this way, we made a start on the examination of the three chapters. First, we considered *Theodore of Mopsuestia. When all the blasphemies in his works were exposed, we were astonished at God's patience, that the tongue and mind which had formed such blasphemies were not straightway burned up by divine fire. We would not even have allowed the official reader of these blasphemies to continue, such was our fear of the anger of God at even a rehearsal of them (since each blasphemy was worse than the one before in the extent of its heresy and shook to their foundation the minds of their listeners)*, if it had not been the case that those who reveled in these blasphemies seemed to us to require the humiliation which their exposure would bring upon them. All of us, angered by the blasphemies against God, burst into attacks and anathemas against Theodore, during and after the reading, as if he had been living and present there. We said: *Lord, be favorable to us; not even the demons themselves have dared to speak such things against you.*

O his intolerable tongue! O the wickedness of the man ! O the proud hand he raised against his Creator! This disgraceful man, who had made a promise to understand the Scriptures, did not remember the words of the prophet Hosea: Woe to them, for they have strayed from me! They have become notorious because of their impiety towards me. They spoke evil things about me, and after they had considered them, they spoke even worse things against me. They will fall into a trap because of the depravity of their tongues. Their contempt will be turned inwards on themselves, because they have broken my covenant and acted impiously against my law. The impious Theodore deserves to come under these curses. He dismissed the prophecies about Christ and he vilified, as far as he could, the great mystery of the arrangements that have been made for our salvation. In many ways he tried to demonstrate that the divine word was nothing but fables composed for the amusement of the gentiles. He ridiculed the other condemnations of the impious made by the prophets, especially the one in which holy Habakkuk says of those who teach false doctrines: Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink of the cup of his wrath, and makes them drunk, to gaze on their caverns. This refers to their teachings which are full of darkness and quite separate from the light.

Why ought we to add anything more? Anyone who wishes can consult the volumes of the heretical Theodore or the heretical chapters from his heretical books

which have been included in our acts. Anyone can see his unbelievable folly and the disgraceful utterances made by him. We fear to continue and to rehearse again those shameful things. *The writings of the holy fathers against him were also read out to us. We heard what had been written against his folly which was more than all the other heretics, and the historical records and imperial laws which set out his heresy from its beginning.* Despite all this, those who defended his heresy, delighting in the insults offered by him to his Creator, declared that it was improper to anathematize him after his death. Although we were aware of the ecclesiastical tradition concerning heretics, that they are anathematized even after death, we deemed it necessary to go into this matter as well and it can be found in the acts how several heretics were anathematized after they were dead. In many ways it has become clear to us that those who put forward this argument have no concern for God's judgments, nor for the pronouncements of the apostles, nor for the traditions of the fathers. We would willingly question them concerning what they would say about the Lord, who said of Himself: He who believes in him is not condemned, he who does not believe in Him is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the Only-Begotten Son of God. And about that claim of the Apostle: Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what you have received, let him be accursed. As we said earlier, I repeat once more: If anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you have received, let him be accursed.

Since the Lord declares that the person is judged already, and the Apostle curses even the angels if they instruct in anything different from what we have preached, how is it possible even for the most presumptuous to assert that these condemnations apply only to those who are still alive? Are they unaware, or rather pretending to be unaware, that to be judged anathematized is just the same as to be separated from God? The heretic, even though he has not been condemned formally by any individual, in reality brings anathema on himself, having cut himself off from the way of truth by his heresy. What reply can such people make to the Apostle when he writes: As for someone who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned.

It was in the spirit of this text that Cyril of holy memory, in the books which he wrote against Theodore, declared as follows: "Whether or not they are alive, we ought to keep clear of those who are in the grip of such dreadful errors. It is necessary always to avoid what is harmful, and not to be worried about public opinion but rather to consider what is pleasing to God." The same Cyril of holy memory, writing to bishop John of Antioch and to the synod which met there about Theodore who was condemned with Nestorius, says, "It was necessary that a brilliant festival should be kept since all those who had expressed opinions in accordance with Nestorius had been rejected, whoever they were. Action was taken against all those who believed, or had at any time believed, in these mistaken views. *This is exactly what we and your holiness pronounced: 'We anathematize those who assert that there exist two sons and two Christs. He who is preached by you and us is, as was said, the single Christ, both Son and Lord, the only-begotten as man, as learned Paul says.'*" Moreover in his letter to the priests and fathers of monks, Alexander, Martinian, John, Pargorius and Maximus, and to those who were living as solitaries along with them, he says: "*The holy synod of Ephesus, meeting in accordance with the will of God, has pronounced sentence against the heresy of Nestorius and has condemned according to justice and with accuracy both Nestorius himself and all those who might later, in inane fashion, adopt the same opinions as he held, and those who had previously adhered to the same opinions and who were bold*

*enough to put them in writing, placing upon them all an equal condemnation.* It was quite logical that when a condemnation was issued against one person for such stupidity in what he said, then that condemnation should apply not only to that person alone but also, so to speak, against all those who spread the heresies and untruths. They express these falsehoods against the true dogmas of the church, offering worship to two sons, trying to divide what cannot be divided, and introducing to both heaven and earth the offense of the worship of man. But the sacred band of heavenly spirits worship along with us only one lord Jesus Christ.” *Moreover, several letters of Augustine of sacred memory, who was particularly outstanding among the African bishops, were read in which he indicates that it is correct to condemn heretics even after their death.* Other most reverend bishops of Africa have also observed this church custom; moreover *the holy church of Rome has issued anathemas against certain bishops even after they were dead, although they had not been accused on matters of faith while they were alive; the acts of our deliberations bear witness to both these cases. Since the followers of Theodore and his heresy, who are plainly opposed to the truth, have tried to adduce some sections of the writings of Cyril and Proclus of holy memory, as though these were in favor of Theodore,* it is appropriate to apply to these attempts the observation of the prophet when he writes: The ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them. These followers have willfully misunderstood what the holy fathers wrote, even though it was true and appropriate; they have quoted these writings, dissembling excuses for their own iniquities. *It seems that the fathers did not lift the anathema against Theodore but rather used the language of concession in order to lead away from their mistake those who offered some defense of Nestorius and his heresy; their aim was to lead them to perfection and to instruct them that not only was Nestorius, the disciple of heresy, condemned but also his teacher Theodore.* The fathers indicate their intention in this matter despite the conciliatory forms used: Theodore was to be anathematized. This has been very clearly shown to be the case by us in our acts from the works of Cyril and Proclus of blessed memory in respect of the condemnation of Theodore and his heresy. This conciliatory attitude is also to be found in the holy Scriptures. The apostle Paul employed this tactic at the start of his ministry when he was dealing with those who had been Jews; he circumcised Timothy so that by this conciliation and concession he might lead them to perfection. Afterwards, however, he ruled against circumcision, writing on the subject to the Galatians: Now I Paul say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. *We found that the defenders of Theodore have done exactly what the heretics were accustomed to do. They have tried to lift the anathema on the said heretical Theodore by omitting some of the things which the holy fathers had written, by including certain confusing falsehoods of their own, and by quoting a letter of Cyril of blessed memory, as if all this were the evidence of the fathers.* The passages which they quoted made the truth absolutely clear once the omitted sections were put back in their proper place. *The falsehoods were quite apparent when the true writings were collated.* In this matter those who issued these empty statements are those who, in the words of Scripture, rely on lies, they make empty pleas; they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, they weave the spider’s web.

After we had investigated in this way Theodore and his heresy, we took the trouble to quote and include in our acts a few of *Theodoret’s heretical writings against true faith, against the twelve chapters of holy Cyril and against the first synod of Ephesus.* We also included some of Theodoret’s writings on the side of the heretical

Theodore and Nestorius so that it would be made clear, to the satisfaction of anyone reading our acts, that these opinions had been properly rejected and anathematized.

Thirdly, *the letter which is alleged to have been written by Ibas to Mari the Persian* was brought under scrutiny and we discovered that it too ought to be officially read out. When the letter was read out, *its heretical character was immediately apparent to everyone*. Until this time there had been some dispute as to whether the aforesaid three chapters ought to be condemned and anathematized. Since the supporters of the heretics Theodore and Nestorius were conspiring to strengthen in another way the case of these men and their heresy, and were alleging that *this heretical letter, which approves and defends Theodore and Nestorius, had been accepted by the holy council of Chalcedon, it was therefore necessary for us to demonstrate that that holy synod was unaffected by the heresy which is present in that letter*, and that clearly those who make such allegations are doing so not with the assistance of the holy council but so as to give some support to their own heresy by associating it with the name of Chalcedon. It was demonstrated in our acts that *Ibas was previously accused of the same heresy which is contained in this letter*. This accusation was leveled first by *Proclus* of holy memory, bishop of Constantinople, and afterwards by *Theodosius* of blessed memory and *Flavian*, the bishop there after Proclus, both of whom gave the task of examining the whole matter to Photius, bishop of Tyre, and to Eustathius, bishop of the city of Beirut. When Ibas was later found to be blameworthy, he was deposed from the episcopate. This being the state of affairs, how could anyone be so bold as to allege that that heretical letter was accepted by the holy council of Chalcedon or that the holy council of Chalcedon agreed with it in its entirety? So as to prevent those who misrepresent the holy council of Chalcedon in this way from having any further opportunity to do so we instructed that there should be a formal reading of the official pronouncements of the holy synods, namely the first of Ephesus and that of Chalcedon, on the subject of the letters of Cyril of holy memory and of Leo of blessed memory, formerly pope of older Rome. We gathered from these authorities that nothing which has been written by anyone ought to be accepted unless it has been shown conclusively that it is in accord with the true faith of the holy fathers. Therefore we broke off from our deliberations so as to reiterate in a formal declaration the definition of faith which was promulgated by the holy council of Chalcedon. We compared what was written in the letter with this official statement. When this comparison was made, it was quite apparent that the contents of the letter were quite contradictory to those of the definition of faith. The definition was in accord with the unique, permanent faith set out by the 318 holy fathers, and by the 150, and by those who gathered for the first council at Ephesus. The heretical letter, on the other hand, included the blasphemies of the heretical Theodore and Nestorius and even gave support to them and describes them as doctors, while it condemns the holy fathers as heretics. We make it quite clear to everyone that we do not intend to omit what the fathers had to say in the first and second investigations, which are adduced by the supporters of Theodore and Nestorius in support of their case. Rather these statements and all the others were formally read out and what they contained was submitted to official scrutiny, and we found that they had not allowed the said Ibas to be accepted until they had obliged him to anathematize Nestorius and his heretical doctrines which were affirmed in that letter. This was the view not only of the two bishops whose interventions some have tried to misapply but also of the other religious bishops of that holy council. They also acted thus in the case of Theodoret and insisted that he anathematize those opinions about which he was accused. If they would permit the acceptance of Ibas only if he condemned the



heresy which was to be found in his letter, and on condition that he subscribed to a definition of faith set out by the council, how can an attempt be made to allege that this heretical letter was accepted by the same holy council? We are rightly told: What partnership has righteousness with iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What participation has the temple of God with idols? Now that we have given the details of what our council has achieved, we repeat our formal confession that we accept the four holy synods, that is, of Nicaea, of Constantinople, the first of Ephesus, and of Chalcedon. Our teaching is and has been all that they have defined concerning the one faith. We consider those who do not respect these things as foreign to the Catholic Church.

Furthermore, we condemn and anathematize, along with all other heretics who have been condemned and anathematized by the same four holy councils and by the holy, catholic and apostolic church, Theodore, formerly bishop of Mopsuestia, and his heretical writings, and also what Theodoret heretically wrote against the true faith, against the twelve chapters of holy Cyril and against the first synod of Ephesus, and we condemn also what he wrote defending Theodore and Nestorius. Additionally, we anathematize the heretical letter which Ibas is alleged to have written to Mari the Persian. This letter denies that God the Word was made incarnate of the ever virgin Mary, the holy mother of God, and that he was made man. It also condemns as a heretic Cyril of holy memory, who taught the truth, and suggests that he held the same opinions as Apollinaris. The letter condemns the first synod of Ephesus for deposing Nestorius without proper process and investigation. It calls the twelve chapters of holy Cyril heretical and contrary to the orthodox faith, while it supports Theodore and Nestorius and their heretical teachings and writings. Consequently we anathematize the aforesaid three chapters, that is, the heretical Theodore of Mopsuestia along with his detestable writings, and the heretical writings of Theodoret, and the heretical letter which Ibas is alleged to have written. We anathematize the supporters of these works and those who write or have written in defense of them, or who are bold enough to claim that they are orthodox, or who have defended or tried to defend their heresy in the names of holy fathers or of the holy council of Chalcedon...

### **ANATHEMAS AGAINST THE "*THREE CHAPTERS*"**

The (second) Council of Constantinople set the following statement against the "*Anathemas*."

1. If anyone does not confess that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have one nature or essence, that they have one power and authority, that there is a consubstantial Trinity, one Deity to be adored in three *hypostaseis* or persons: let him be anathema. There is only one God and Father, of whom all things are, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and one Holy Spirit, in whom all things are.

2. If anyone does not confess that the Word of God has two nativities, that which is before all ages from the Father, outside time and without a body, and secondly that nativity of these latter days when the Word of God came down from the heavens and was incarnate by the holy and glorious Mary, mother of God and ever-virgin, and was born from her: let him be anathema.

3. If anyone declares that God the Word who performed miracles is not identical with the Christ who suffered, or alleges that God the Word was with the Christ who was born of woman, or was in Him in the way that one might be in another, but that our lord Jesus Christ was not one and the same, the Word of God incarnate and made human, and that the wonders and the

sufferings which He voluntarily endured in the flesh were not of the same Person: let him be anathema.

4. If anyone says that the union of the Word of God with man was only according to grace, or of principle of action, or of dignity or in respect of equality of honor, or in respect of authority, or of some relation, or of some affection or power, or if anyone alleges that it is in respect of good will, as if God the Word was pleased with the man, because he was well and properly disposed to God, as Theodore claims in his madness; or if anyone says that this union is only according to similarity of name, as the Nestorians allege, who call the Word of God Jesus and Christ, and even designate the human separately by the names "Christ" and "Son," speaking thus clearly of two different Persons, and only pretending to speak of one Person and one Christ when the reference is to His title, honor, dignity or adoration; finally if anyone does not accept the teaching of the holy fathers that the union occurred of the Word of God with human flesh which is possessed by a rational and intellectual soul, and that this union is by synthesis or by person, and that therefore there is only one person, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, one member of the Holy Trinity: let him be anathema.

As the word "union" can be understood in many different ways. The supporters of the wickedness of Apollinaris and Eutyches have asserted that the union is produced by a confusing of the uniting elements, as they advocate the disappearance of the elements that unite. Those who follow Theodore and Nestorius, rejoicing in the division, have brought in a union which is only by affection. The holy Church of God, rejecting equally the wickedness of both sorts of heresy, states her belief in a union between the Word of God and human flesh which is by synthesis, that is according to *hypostasis*. For in the mystery of Christ the union according to synthesis preserves the two natures which have combined without confusion and without separation.

5. If anyone understands the expression "one hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ," so that it means the union of many *hypostaseis*, and if he attempts thus to introduce into the mystery of Christ two *hypostaseis*, or two persons, and after having introduced two persons then talks of one Person only in respect of dignity, honor or adoration, as both Theodore and Nestorius have written in their madness; if anyone slanders the holy synod of Chalcedon, as though it had used this expression in this impious sense, and does not confess that the Word of God is united with the flesh *hypostatically*, and that therefore there is but one hypostasis or one person, and that the holy synod of Chalcedon thus made a formal statement of belief in the single subsistence of our lord Jesus Christ: let him be anathema. There has been no addition of person or hypostasis to the Holy Trinity even after one of Their members, God the Word, becoming human flesh.

6. If anyone declares that it can be only inexactly and not truly said that the holy and glorious ever-virgin Mary is the mother of God "*Theotokos*," or says that she is so only in some relative way, considering that she bore a mere man and that God the Word was not made into human flesh in her, holding rather that the nativity of a man from her was referred, as they say, to God the Word as he was with the man who came into being; if anyone slanders the holy Synod of Chalcedon, alleging that it claimed that the virgin was the mother of God only according to that heretical understanding which the blasphemous Theodore put forward; or if anyone shall call her man-bearer or the Christ-bearer, that is the mother of Christ, suggesting that Christ is not God; and does not formally confess that she is properly and truly the mother of God, because he who before all ages was born of the Father, God the Word, was incarnate in these last days and has been born to her, and it was in this religious understanding that the holy Synod of Chalcedon formally stated its belief that she was the mother of God: let him be anathema.

7. If anyone using the expression, "in two natures," does not confess a belief in our one Lord Jesus Christ, understood in both His divinity and His humanity, so as by this to signify a difference of natures of which an ineffable union has been made without confusion, in which neither the nature of the Word was changed into the nature of the manhood, nor was the nature of the manhood changed into that of the Word (for each remained what it was by nature, even when the union by hypostasis had taken place); and if anyone understands the two natures in the mystery of Christ in the sense of a division into parts, or if he expresses his belief in the plural natures in the same Lord Jesus Christ, God the Word incarnate, but does not take in contemplation only the difference of the natures which compose Him, a difference which is not destroyed by the union (for he is One from both and the two exist through the one) but uses the plurality to suggest that each nature is possessed separately and has a subsistence of its own: let him be anathema.

8. If anyone confesses a belief that a union took place out of the two natures divinity and humanity, or speaks about the one nature of God the Word made flesh, but does not understand these things according to what the holy Fathers have taught, namely that from the divine and human natures a union by hypostasis took place, and that one Christ was formed, and from these expressions tries to introduce one nature or essence made of the deity and human flesh of Christ: let him be anathema. In saying that it was in respect of hypostasis that the Only-Begotten God the Word was united, we are not alleging that there was a confusion made of each of the natures into one another, but rather that each of the two remained what it was, and in this way we understand that the Word was united to human flesh. So there is only one Christ, God and man, the same being consubstantial with the Father in respect of His divinity, and also consubstantial with us in respect of our humanity. Both those who divide or split up the mystery of the divine dispensation of Christ and those who introduce into that mystery some confusion are equally rejected and anathematized by the Church of God.

9. If anyone says that Christ is to be worshipped in his two natures, and by that wishes to introduce two adorations, the one peculiar to God the Word and the other peculiar to the man; or if anyone, so as to remove the human flesh or to mix up the divinity and the humanity, monstrously invents one nature or essence brought together from the two, and so worships Christ, but not by a single adoration God the Word incarnate with His own flesh, as has been the tradition of the Church from the beginning: let him be anathema.

10. If anyone does not confess his belief that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified in the flesh, is truly God and the Lord of glory and one of the Holy Trinity: let him be anathema.

11. If anyone does not anathematize Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Apollinaris, Nestorius, Eutyches and Origen, as well as their heretical books, and also all other heretics who have already been condemned and anathematized by the holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and by the four holy Synods which have already been mentioned, and also all those who have thought or now think in the same way as the aforesaid heretics and who persist in their error even to death: let him be anathema.

12. If anyone defends the heretical Theodore of Mopsuestia, who said that God the Word is one, while quite another is Christ, who was troubled by the passions of the soul and the desires of human flesh, was gradually separated from that which is inferior, and became better by his progress in good works, and could not be faulted in his way of life, and as a mere man was baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the holy Spirit, and through this baptism received the grace of the holy Spirit and came to deserve sonship and to be adored, in the way that one adores a statue of the emperor, as if he were God the Word, and that he became after his

resurrection immutable in his thoughts and entirely without sin. Furthermore this heretical Theodore claimed that the union of God the Word to Christ is rather like that which, according to the teaching of the Apostle, is between a man and his wife: The two shall become one. Among innumerable other blasphemies he dared to allege that, when after his resurrection the Lord breathed on his disciples and said, Receive the holy Spirit, he was not truly giving them the holy Spirit, but he breathed on them only as a sign. Similarly he claimed that Thomas's profession of faith made when, after his resurrection, he touched the hands and side of the Lord, namely My Lord and my God, was not said about Christ, but that Thomas was in this way extolling God for raising up Christ and expressing his astonishment at the miracle of the resurrection. This Theodore makes a comparison which is even worse than this when, writing about the acts of the Apostles, he says that Christ was like Plato, Manichaeus, Epicurus and Marcion, alleging that just as each of these men arrived at his own teaching and then had his disciples called after him Platonists, Manichaeans, Epicureans and Marcionites, so Christ found his teaching and then had disciples who were called Christians. If anyone offers a defense for this more heretical Theodore, and his heretical books in which he throws up the aforesaid blasphemies and many other additional blasphemies against our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, and if anyone fails to anathematize him and his heretical books as well as all those who offer acceptance or defense to him, or who allege that his interpretation is correct, or who write on his behalf or on that of his heretical teachings, or who are or have been of the same way of thinking and persist until death in this error: let him be anathema.

13. If anyone defends the heretical writings of Theodoret which were composed against the true faith, against the first holy synod of Ephesus and against holy Cyril and his Twelve Chapters, and also defends what Theodoret wrote to support the heretical Theodore and Nestorius and others who think in the same way as the aforesaid Theodore and Nestorius and accept them or their heresy and if anyone, because of them, shall accuse of being heretical the doctors of the church who have stated their belief in the union according to subsistence of God the Word; and if anyone does not anathematize these heretical books and those who have thought or now think in this way, and all those who have written against the true faith or against holy Cyril and his twelve chapters, and who persist in such heresy until they die: let him be anathema.

14. If anyone defends the letter which Ibas is said to have written to Mari the Persian, which denies that God the Word, who became incarnate of Mary the holy mother of God and ever virgin, became man, but alleges that he was only a man born to her, whom it describes as a temple, as if God the Word was one and the man someone quite different; which condemns holy Cyril as if he were a heretic, when he gives the true teaching of Christians, and accuses holy Cyril of writing opinions like those of the heretical Apollinaris; which rebukes the first holy synod of Ephesus, alleging that it condemned Nestorius without going into the matter by a formal examination; which claims that the twelve chapters of holy Cyril are heretical and opposed to the true faith; and which defends Theodore and Nestorius and their heretical teachings and books. If anyone defends the said letter and does not anathematize it and all those who offer a defense for it and allege that it or a part of it is correct, or if anyone defends those who have written or shall write in support of it or the heresies contained in it, or supports those who are bold enough to defend it or its heresies in the name of the holy fathers of the holy synod of Chalcedon, and persists in these errors until his death: let him be anathema.

Such then are the assertions we confess. We have received them from

1. holy Scripture, from
2. the teaching of the holy fathers, and from

3. the definitions about the one and the same faith made by the aforesaid four holy synods.

Moreover, condemnation has been passed by us against the heretics and their impiety, and also against those who have justified or shall justify the so-called "Three Chapters," and against those who have persisted or will persist in their own error. If anyone should attempt to hand on, or to teach by word or writing, anything contrary to what we have regulated, then if he is a bishop or somebody appointed to the clergy, in so far as he is acting contrary to what befits priests and the ecclesiastical status, let him be stripped of the rank of priest or cleric, and if he is a monk or lay person, let him be anathema.

## 1

## MAN'S CREATURELINESS

Many scholars see the core of Alexandrian theology as "*Deification*," or the grace of renewal<sup>98</sup>. By deification the Alexandrians mean the *renewal of human nature* as a whole, to attain sharing in the characteristics of our Lord Jesus Christ in place of the corrupt human nature, or as the apostles state that the believer may enjoy "the partaking in the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4), or the new man in the image of His Creator (Col. 3:10). The core of the Alexandrian theology can be revealed through St. Athanasius' statement that the Word of God became man (*enethraposen*) so that we might be made gods (*theopiethomen*). Some scholars state that this theology is a natural result of practicing severe asceticism by the Alexandrian theologians. They ignored actual life on earth to participate in divine life. In other words, they abolished the boundaries between God and man, concentrating on what is divine even in their daily life.

Although the Alexandrian theologians were ascetics, they did not despise their own bodies, nor deny our Lord's manhood, but they concentrated on the soteriological aspect. Even in their apologetic works they concentrate on the work of Christ as the Redeemer of the world.

Their asceticism was biblical; it did not hate the body, nor denied human free-will, nor despised earthly life with its properties. It is noteworthy that even the Egyptian hermits considered extreme ascetic practices evil, in the same way as luxury.

The Antiochians, as Sellers states, are supremely interested in *man the moral being*, and in particular concentrated on *his power of self-determination*<sup>99</sup>. Sellers also says: "They may be called *anthropologists*, but their anthropology is intimately associated with their ethical and soteriological ideas<sup>100</sup>."

✠ What possible relation can exist between one who is eternal and another who at one time was non-existent and came to existence later?<sup>101</sup>

**Theodore of Mopsuestia**

✠ So great is the interval from man to God as no language can at all express. If men are not of the same *ousia* as God, and indeed they are not, still they have been called his image, and it was fitting that they should receive honor on account of this appellation<sup>102</sup>.

✠ What has God in common with man? Why do you mix that which cannot be mixed? Why confound things which are separate, and why bring low what is above?<sup>103</sup>

**St. John Chrysostom**

✠ The Maker is in every way other than that which is made<sup>104</sup>.

**Nestorius**

✠ He is God, and we are men, and the difference between God and man is incalculable<sup>105</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> The author: *School of Alexandria*, 1994, p. 15.

<sup>99</sup> Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon*, p. 253.

<sup>100</sup> Sellers, p. 164.

<sup>101</sup> A. Mingana : *The Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, p. 45; Cf. R. V. Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954.

<sup>102</sup> *On the Statues*, hom.3:19.

<sup>103</sup> *On the Statues*, hom.3:2.

<sup>104</sup> *Bazar of Heracleides*, p. 27 ( tran. by G.R. Driver, L. Hodgson ).

<sup>105</sup> *Dial.3*.

## Theodoret

Such statements can easily lead us to suppose that the basic of the doctrinal system of the Antiochians is the infinite difference between God and man. Sellers states: "It is after said that these teachers are first and foremost anthropologists, having very little interest in soteriology<sup>106</sup>."

Dormer also says: "This school devoted itself with all its weight, and with whatever creative power it could boast to anthropology- indeed in general to the historical and empirical aspects of theological inquiries<sup>107</sup>." Harnack says, "(These teachers) rarely took the doctrine of redemption and perfection as the starting point of their arguments, or, when they did, conceived of it in such a way that the question is not of restitution, but of the still defective perfection of the human race, a question of the new second *Katastasis* (stage)<sup>108</sup>."

Sellers states that although the Antiochians were at first and foremost anthropologists, but they did not ignore the soteriological thoughts. He says, "But , as it seems to us, there are good grounds for saying that the Antiochians are indeed interested in soteriology, even if as must be confessed, their thoughts are not fully developed. As we have said, these are humanists, and consequently, we find that one of their fundamental ideas is that if man is to be redeemed, there must come into the world a man who in his perfect obedience to the will of God , will be the Man, the Second Adam, the first fruits of a renewed humanity and a renewed creation<sup>109</sup>." The Antiochians stress on the genuine and complete humanity of Jesus Christ, who had to advance in moral goodness and achieve a redemptive victory for humankind as a man<sup>110</sup>.

## MAN'S CREATURELINESS AND ARIANISM

Arianism and Nestorianism are correlated with the fathers of this School, because of its concentration on "man's creatureliness."

Arius who was zeal to simplify Christianity to the pagans, was his Antiochian background, his strongest interest was *the distinguish between man and God as absolutely One and transcendent, distant, unknown, inaccessible, and incommunicable, hidden in eternal mystery and separated by an infinite chasm from men*<sup>111</sup>. Thus he understated Monotheism as a numerical and could not understand the unity of the Holy Trinity in one essence. To emphasize that, he declares that God created the Logos before time<sup>112</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. The Logos was made flesh, and the Logos fulfilled in Jesus the function of the human soul. Thus, he became a perfect man who had the power to save men who became sinners. In other words, Aruis was a perfect man, but not perfect God.

Aruis also believed that the Holy Spirit is the first of the creatures of the Logos, he is still less god than the Logos.

By this theology, Aruis isolated God from men, revealed Him solid, destroyed the eternal love among the Holy Trinity, ruined the mystery of salvation, ignored the prophecies<sup>113</sup>.

## MAN'S CREATURELINESS AND NESTORIANISM

<sup>106</sup> R. V. Sellers: *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p. 116.

<sup>107</sup> *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, II, p 25.

<sup>108</sup> *History of Dogmas*, IV, p166,169.

<sup>109</sup> *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954, p. 117.

<sup>110</sup> Dckery, p. 127.

<sup>111</sup> J.F. Buthume - Barker: *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, 1920, p. 158.

<sup>112</sup> Athanas. de Synod. 16.

<sup>113</sup> Fr. T. Malaty: *The Coptic Orthodox Church as a church of Erudition and Theology*, Alexandria, 1986, p.81.

This attitude had its effect in adopting their theology of "*dyophysis*." Sellers says: [We must notice that, fundamental to the thought of the Antiochians, is the doctrine of the essential difference between God the Creator and man the creature... When they refer to the divine and human *ousiai* (essences), they seem to set God in his eternity and man in his transience as complete opposites... All that exists can be divided into what is uncreated and what is created... This thought, as should be understood, lies at the very heart of the teaching of the Antiochians, and is the ultimate ground of their insistence on the "two natures" in Jesus Christ, and the necessity of "dividing" and separating them<sup>114</sup>.

Green also deals with this idea, as he says: [The notion of man as a creature with a free, rational and mutable soul. Salvation was still thought of in terms of immortality and immutability, but this destiny was only possible provided man exercised his freedom of choice... The natural (*hypostatic*) union, first of all, meant a loss of human freedom. The divinity, according to Nestorius' rendering of Cyril's views, acted as a "*Deus ex machina*" in Christ. There was no experience of freedom in the life of our Lord, God manipulated it all... if the union were described as natural, then it has nothing to do with Christ's human will and freedom. Nestorius claims that the tendency of this Alexandrian way of thought is to deny the humanity of our Lord. Like Apollinaris, 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 role of the divinity... Nestorius firmly states that the divine nature and the human nature in Christ are separate and autonomous<sup>115</sup>.

## THE ANTIOCHIANS AND THE BIBLICAL CRITICISM

The Antiochians' emphasis on the human element of the text allowed for a critical reading of the holy Scripture that accounted for doctrinal development within the text itself. This human emphasis scarred the School's reputation<sup>116</sup>.

---

<sup>114</sup> Sellers, p. 162-4.

<sup>115</sup> R. Green: *Theodore of Mopseustia*, 1961, p. 25, 38.

<sup>116</sup> Dockery, p.127.



## EARLY ANTIOCHIAN EXEGESIS

**ST. THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH<sup>1</sup>**

Some scholars believe that St. Theophilus of Antioch, who became bishop of Antioch about A.D. 169, was the most widely-known representative of the early Antiochian School. He was born near the Euphrates, and was of mature age when converted, received a Greek education and had a knowledge of Hebrew.

St. Theophilus wrote on many subjects. He possessed an easy and elegant style, and was a writer with personal and original ideas.

St. Theophilus emphasized the historical meaning of the Biblical text, the Old Testament was also given a Christian interpretation, not unlike the interpretations of Jesus and the apostles, that is, God generated the Logos and through the Logos he made all things (John 1:3). Truly his letters to *Autolycus* were more an apologetical work than an exegetical one, but section two of his second letter gives us some indication of the nature of his method of interpretation. In his comment on Genesis 3:8, when he was confronted with an anthropomorphism that appeared to contradict the omnipresence of God, he did not shift to allegorical exegesis to handle the enigma, but instead viewed the passage literally and historically as a Theophany of the second *Hypostasis* of God<sup>2</sup>.

*You will say, then to me: You have said that God ought not to be contained in a place, and how do you now say that He walked in Paradise?*

*Hear what I say. The God and Father, indeed, of all cannot be contained, and not found in a place, for there is no place for His rest; but His Word, through whom He made all things, being His Power and His Wisdom, assuming the person of the Father and Lord of all, went to the garden in the Person of God, and conversed Adam<sup>3</sup>.*

John Rogerson has observed, "Genesis 1 is defended as an authentic account of how the world was created, the account being inspired by the Logos of God<sup>4</sup>.

St. Theophilus placed great stress on the Old Testament as a historical book containing the authentic history of God's dealing with his people. He went so far as to establish a biblical chronology from the creation to his own day<sup>5</sup>.

**HIS WRITINGS**

1. *Discourse to Autolycus*: It consists of three books:

- Book one treats of the faith of Christians in an invisible God (2-12), and of the name 'Christian.'
- Book two discusses the folly of the heathen idolatry, and sets forth the teaching of the prophets of God.
- Book three is a repudiation of anti-Christian calumnies, and asserts that the holy Scriptures are more ancient than Greek history and literature.

2. St. Theophilus composed works on *the origins of mankind* according to the holy Scripture and mythology. Now these works are lost.

3. He also composed *controversial writings; pastoral writings; commentaries on the holy Scripture*, of which only fragments quoted by St. Jerome remain.

<sup>1</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical interpretation, Then and Now*, 1992, p. 103ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Duane A. Garret: *Chrysostom's Interpretatio in Isaiam, an English Translation with an Dnalysis of its Hermeneuticus* (Lewiston N.Y.: Edwin Mellen 1992), P. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup> To *Autolycus* 2:22.

<sup>4</sup> Rogerson, Rowland, and Lindars: *The Study and use of the Bible*, 37.

<sup>5</sup> To *Autolycus* 2:14).

## LATER ANTIOCHIAN EXEGESIS

## LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA

Modern scholars normally consider Lucian as the founder of Antiochian School. Lucian was born at Samosata (ca. 240) and completed his education at Antioch, the second great city of the Greek East famous for its true pagan schools, from the sixties of the 3rd century. In addition to his study at Antioch, he attended school of Caesarea, where he became acquainted with the allegorical method, as well as methods of text-critical studies<sup>6</sup>. His reputation suggests that he was a fine classical scholar and preacher, and supposedly was well versed in Hebrew. Lucian was an eminent presbyter of Antioch and martyr of the Diocletian persecution, renewed by Maximin. Very little is known of him. He was transported from Antioch to Nicomedia, where the emperor then resided, made a noble confession of his faith before the judge and died under the tortures in prison (312). His memory was celebrated in Antioch on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January. His piety was of the severely ascetic type<sup>7</sup>.

In fact, we know nothing of Lucian's specific exegetical activity, and the little information which we possess about him is hard to interpret that it would be best to ignore the position which modern scholars have given him, locating the real beginning of the school as such with Diodore of Tarsus in the final decades of the 4th century.

Lucian emphasized careful textual criticism, and philological and historical studies. Following the paths of the pagan schools in the city, Lucian and the Antiochians applied classical learning of rhetoric and philosophy. The result was a sober-minded hermeneutic emphasizing the literal developed a typological exegetical approach very similar to early Christian typology.<sup>8</sup>

His memory was obscured by the suspicion of unsoundness in the faith. Eusebius twice mentions him and his glorious martyrdom, but is silent about his theological opinions. St. Alexander of Alexandria, in an encyclical of 321, associates him with Paul of Samosata and makes him responsible for the Arian heresy. Arius and the Arians speak of him as their teacher. His association with Paul of Samosata and later with his disciple Aris kept him under suspicion for his adoptionist Christology. He accepted the pre-existence of Christ, but insisted that this had not been from all eternity. The charge brought against him and his followers is that he denied the human soul of Christ (the Logos taking the place of the rational soul). Many of his students, who included Aris and Eusebius of Nicomedia, came to serve in the most important sees in the East, and as fellow disciples of Lucian were sympathetic to Arius, Lucian is often called the father of Arianism<sup>9</sup>.

On the other hand Pseudo-Athanasius calls him a great and holy martyr, and Chrysostom preached a eulogy on him Jan. 1. 387. Baronius defends his orthodoxy, other Catholics deny it. Some distinguished two Lucians, one orthodox, and one heretical; but this is a groundless hypothesis<sup>10</sup>.

Hefele assumes to the same effect that Lucian first sympathized with his country man, Paul of Samosata, in his humanitarian Christology, and hence was excommunicated for a while, but afterwards renounced this heresy, was restored, and acquired great fame by his improvement of the text of the Septuagint and by his martyrdom<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 106.

<sup>7</sup> Shaff: *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 368.

<sup>8</sup> See Bruce M. Metzger, "Lucian and the Lucianic Recension of the Bible," *NTS* 8 (1962): 194-96; also Rihard M. Davdson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical*

<sup>9</sup> D.S. Wallace-Hadrill: *Christian Antioch*, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

<sup>10</sup> Shaff: *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 369.

<sup>11</sup> Hefele, *Concilienyesh.*, vol. I., p. 258 sq. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).

The contradictory reports are easily reconciled by the assumption that Lucian was a critical scholar with some peculiar views on the Trinity and Christology which were not in harmony with the Nicene orthodoxy.

The creed which goes by his name and was found after his death, is quite orthodox as far as it goes, and was laid with three similar creeds before the Synod of Antioch held A.D. 341, with the intention of being substituted for the Creed of Nicea. It resembles the creed of Gregory Thaumaturgus, is strictly trinitarian and acknowledges Jesus Christ "as the Son of God, the only begotten God, through whom all things were made, who was begotten of the Father before all ages, God of God, Whole of Wholem One of One, Perfect of Perfect, King of Kings, Lord of Lords the living Word, Wisdom, Life, True Light, Way, Truth, Resurrection, Shepherd, Door, unchangeable and unalterable the immutable Likeness of the Godhead, both of the substance and will and power and glory of the Father, the first-born of all creation, who was in the beginning with God, the Divine Logos, according to what is said in the Gospel: "And the Word was God (John 1:1), through whom all things were made" (ver. 3), and in whom "all things consist" (Col.1:17): who in the last days came down from above, who in the last days came down from above, and was born of a Virgin, according to the Scripture, and became man, the Mediator between God and man,"

Lucian is known also by his critical revision of the text of the Septuagint and the Greek Testament. Jerome mentions that copies were known in his days as "*exemplaria Luciana*," but in other places he speaks rather disparagingly of the texts of Lucian, and of Hesychius, a bishop of Egypt (who distinguished himself in the same field). In the absence of definite information it is impossible to decide the merits of his critical labors. His Hebrew scholarship is uncertain, and thus we do not know whether his revision of the Septuagint was made from the original.

As to the New Testament, it is likely that he contributed much towards the Syrian recension (if we may so call it), which was used by Chrysostom and the later Greek fathers, and which lies at the basis of the *textus receptus*<sup>12</sup>.

---

<sup>12</sup> Shaff: *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, p. 368-269.

## DIODORE OF TARSUS

The greatest period of this school was introduced by Diodore of Tarsus. His disciples were Meletius of Antioch, John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Nestorius and Theodoret of Cyrus also belong to this theological school. A one-sided use of the historico-grammatical method led some of its representatives into errors that are partly to be explained by a rationalistic attitude (the desire to rid Christian doctrine as far as possible from all elements of mystery): into Arianism, Macedonianism, Appollinarianism, Pelagianism and Nestorianism.

### *Diodore of Tarsus*

Diodore (died ca. A.D. 394), was born of noble parentage, an illustrious Antioch family. He was highly gifted and industrious and received the best education his age could receive in his native schools and at Athens. After his studies in Athens, Diodore returned to oversee a monastery near Antioch for many decades. As head of the Antioch school, he continued the tradition of adhering to the literal and historical exegesis of Scripture. He served as bishop of Tarsus (ca. A.D. 378-394). During this time he wrote many significant exegetical and polemical works against allegorical interpretation, among them an important commentary on the Book of Psalms. Despite some lines assigned to him<sup>13</sup>. In these fragments, the Antiochian was expressed in almost classical formulations. According to Henry B. Swete, "The few fragments which remain exhibit him as a typical Antiochian, clear-sighted, practical, averse to mysticism and allegory<sup>14</sup>."

After his studies in Athens, Diodore (d.ca. A.D. 394), a native of Antioch, returned to oversee a monastery there. As head of the Antioch school, he continued the tradition of adhering to the literal and historical exegesis of Scripture. He served as bishop of Tarsus (ca. A.D. 378-390). During this time he wrote many significant exegetical and polemical works against allegorical interpretation, among them an important commentary on the Book of Psalms. Despite some lines assigned to him.<sup>15</sup> In these fragments, the Antiochian was expressed in almost classical formulations. According to Henry B. Swete, "The few fragments which remain exhibit him as a typical Antiochian, clear-sighted, practical, averse to mysticism and allegory<sup>16</sup>."

In the eyes of Diodore, allegorical interpretation was foolishness: it introduced silly fables in the place of the text. He contended that allegorizers abolish history and make one thing mean another.<sup>17</sup> The distinctive feature in the Antiochian hermeneutical method was *theoria*.<sup>18</sup> At this point, Diodore rejected the Alexandrian opinion that the reference of the prophets to the coming of Christ was something added to the original prophecy, that it was an allegorical understanding. By the use of *theoria*, the Antiochenes maintained that the prophet himself foresaw both the immediate event which was to come in the history of ancient Israel and the ultimate coming of Christ.<sup>19</sup> The prophets' predictions were at the same time both historical and christocentric. The Antiochians argued that the double sense was different and distinct from that which the allegorists superimposed upon an original literal meaning. Diodore argued that the messianic or prophetic meaning did not depreciate the literal meaning but rather was grounded upon it. This

<sup>13</sup> Altaner, *Patrology*, 369. It seems that large portions of Diodore's work are preserved in an eleventh-century manuscript under the name of Anastasius of Nicea. Both the prologue to the Psalter and the preface to Psalm 118 contain important hermeneutical reflections.

<sup>14</sup> Henry B. Swete, *Patristic Study* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1902), 99

<sup>15</sup> Altaner, *Patrology*, 369. It seems that large portions of Diodore's work are preserved in an eleventh-century manuscript under the name of Anastasius of Nicea. Both the prologue to the Psalter and the preface to Psalm 118 contain important hermeneutical reflections.

<sup>16</sup> Henry B. Swete, *Patristic Study* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1902), 99

<sup>17</sup> Karlfried Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 21.

<sup>18</sup> As noted, Diodore wrote on the difference between *Theoria* and *Allegory*, of which only fragments remain. The five volumes of *Throfore of Mopsuestia Concerning Allegory and History Against Origen* were ordered burned at the Second Council of Constantinople in A.D. 553, and are no longer extant. I am most appreciative for Duane Garrett's insights regarding the significance of *theoria* in the Antioch school, ordered burned

<sup>19</sup> Raymond E. Brown, "Hermeneutics," in *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall).

meaning was understood to be real and intelligible to all, not hidden and discernible only to the spiritually mature, as the Alexandrian allegorists maintained.

This analysis, with which we agree, was offered by Jean Danielou, Origen, trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 164-99. He concludes that in both Antioch and Alexandria, true biblical, historical typology was conducted, though in Alexandria the typology became blurred by elements of non-Christian exegesis. Jacques Guillet, "Let exegeses d'Alecondrie et Antioche: Conflit ou malentendu?" *Recherches de science religieuse* 34 (1957): 257-302, is correct in suggesting that the Alexandrian exegesis can be classified as symbolic-typological interpretation, and the Antiochian as prophetic-typological interpretation. He is incorrect, however, in concluding that the differences between the two schools were caused only by a fundamental misunderstanding of each other.

## DIODORE THE APOLOGETIC

Circumstances made Diodore an apologetic and polemic in character. In Antioch the conflict between the Church and the Arians was very bitter, and especially under the Arian emperors Constantius (337-361), and Valens (364-378).

Julian the Apostate, who tried to restore paganism, carried a bitter hatred towards him. In his letter, published later (545-551) by Facundus of Hermiane, Julian states that Diodore had arranged his malignant tongue against the ancient gods with the wisdom of Athens herself. Diodore was a close friend of Flavian, who was elected in 381 as successor to Melitius, the bishop of Antioch. Theodoret states that "Flavian and Diodore rose like a great rock in the ocean on the firm sides of which the towering waves broke in vain... Diodore wise and strong was like a broad clear river, the waters of which slacked the thirst of his own people but swept away the blasphemies of enemies<sup>20</sup>." He defended the divinity of Christ. Later, however, he was condemned as the author of Nestorianism at a synod of Antioch (499 AD).

Diodore had to fly from Antioch in 372. He met St. Basil. He was made bishop of Tarsus (378), and took place in the Council of Constantinople.

Against the Apollinarians he had he had resolutely defended the full divinity and humanity of Christ, and had been singled out in Theodosius I's letter ratifying the Council of Constantinople of 381 as Antioch orthodox model for other bishops<sup>21</sup>.

## HIS WRITINGS

He was a copious writer. All his writings were lost, only fragments remain.

1. Commentaries on the whole Bible, adopting the historico-grammatical method and opposing the mystico-allegorical interpretation of Alexandria.
2. "*On the difference between Theory and Allegory.*" A work of great importance in the study of hermeneutical principles.
3. *Apologetic and Dogmatic works*, known only by their titles.
4. "*Contra Astronomos astrologos, et Fatum,*" consists of eight books.
5. "*Contra Manichaeos,*" consists of twenty-five books.

## HIS DOCTRINE

During his life, Diodore was highly esteemed as a pillar of orthodoxy. He defended the Nicene faith against pagans and heretics.

His writings contain in germ the errors that his disciple Theodore was to develop into Nestorianism. In seeking to defend Christ's divinity against the Arians and His humanity against the Apollinarians, he weakened the union of the divine and human so that it became a mere indwelling of the Logos in a man.

<sup>20</sup> Theodoret: H.E. 4:22.

<sup>21</sup> Leo Donald Davis: *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787)*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1990, p. 142-3.

#### *SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH*

Diodore distinguished two subjects in Christ's person - God the Word and the man born of Mary, the form of God and the form of a servant. The complete human nature of Christ was the temple in which the Word dwelt. Yet in the indwelling of the Word in the man Jesus was different from the indwelling of God in the prophets. In the prophets God dwelt in a transitory fashion, but the Word permanently and completely filled the Son of David with glory and wisdom. Still the conjunction of Word and Man was not of essence but of grace. Grace informed but did not change the nature of the man; it imparted to the Son of Mary power and wisdom but did not change the human subject of attribution. Grace established unity where by one honor and one worship was addressed to Christ. "The unity of worship," argued Diodore, "does not imply the blasphemous worship of a man, since the man is worshipped because of his union with the Word. On the other hand, the unity of worship does not imply a union of essence. The human and divine essences remain distinct." Diodore insisted that we do not say that there are two sons of one Father, but one is by nature Son of God, God the Word. And we say that one born of Mary is by nature David's son, but by grace the Son of God. By nature there are two; by grace, honor and worship there is one. Diodore decisively rejected the one nature theory of the Apollinarians. If the Word and His flesh were related to each other as human soul to body such that the Word was in some sense the subject of Christ's human attributes, then the Word would be subject to limitation and change - something unthinkable in relation to God<sup>22</sup>.

In 483 St. Cyril of Alexandria wrote three books against Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore accusing them as originators of Nestorianism.

---

<sup>22</sup> Leo Donald Davis: *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787)*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1990, p. 143.

## EUSTATHIUS OF ANTIOCH <sup>23</sup>

Born at Side in Pamphylia, he was the bishop of Beroea in Syria before he was appointed in 323 or 324 to the see of the Syrian capital.

He was the first to speak at the Council of Nicea in 325, and when the Emperor Constantine entered the assembly of the assembled bishops, he had the honor to greet him with an welcome address<sup>24</sup>. It was the same emperor who in 330 drove him into exile to Trajanopolis in Thracia after the Arian synod at Antioch had deposed him, in 326, He must have died before the year 337, when Constantine recalled the banished bishops.

### HIS WRITINGS

He wrote many treatises against the Arians<sup>25</sup>. Nevertheless, most of his writings are lost.

#### *1- De Anima*

It seems to have consisted of two parts. The first is a refutation of the philosophers, mostly Platonian and their views regarding the relationships between soul and body. The second attacks the Arian doctrine of Logos assumed a human body without a human soul. The fragments which are found; defend the complete divinity and complete humanity of Christ without the slightest indication The Eustathius forwarded a view which could have led to the Nestorian Christology of later Antiochians as has been asserted occasionally.

#### *2- De Engastrmytho Adversum Origenem.*

#### *3- On The Witch Of Endor Against Origen. ( 1 Kings 28 )*

The only completely preserved work. In this work he rejects not only interpretation of this particular passage, but also the entire allegorical exegesis, because it deprives the Scripture of its historical character.

#### *4- Adversus Arianos:* It consists of eight books at least.

### HIS CHRISTOLOGY

Eustathius has been accused of being in his Christology to be a successor of Paul of Samosata, and a forerunner to Nestorius. Although it very difficult to have a complete picture of his works, because only very little of work is in existence today, however this little amount is enough to support the above accusation. He clearly recognizes the “*communicato idiomatum*”<sup>26</sup>. He uses the term *Theotokos* without any reservations for the blessed Virgin<sup>27</sup>.

He is the first to attempt a *Logos-Man* Christology against the Logos-Sarx doctrine. Thus he wins a position of importance in the history of dogmas. He perceived that the Arians could use the formula “*logos-Sarx*” to show that Christ assumed a human body without a soul, they could then attribute all the changes to the Logos Himself, and thus deprive Him of his divinity. For this reason he resorts to the “*Logos-Man*” formula and makes such a sharp distinction between the two natures in Christ. It is in his emphasis on the whole man in Christ against *Logos-Sarx* Christology of the Arians that he covers formulas which could be misunderstood, like “*αγθρωπο θεοποπος.*” Thus he can be made suspect of Adoptianism or Nestorianism.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Quasten: *Patrology*, Vol 3, p. 302 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Theodoret: *H.E.* 1:7.

<sup>25</sup> St Jerome: *Ep.* 70:4; 73:2.

<sup>26</sup> His letter on Melchisdach, fragment 70.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, fragment 68.

<sup>28</sup> Quasten, vol 3, p. 305.

## EUNOMIUS OF CYZICUS

He is the first the well read defender and leader of Neo-Arianism. Eudoxius of Antioch ordained him a deacon, and in 360, after he had become bishop of Constantinople, he promoted him to the see of Cyzicus. The people, unable to endure his empty and arrogant parade of language, drove him out of their city. He withdrew to Constantinople, and taking up his abode with Eudoxius, was regarded as a titular bishop. He retired to his estate in Chalcedon (Philostorgius His. Ecc 9:4). In 383, he attended a synod at Constantinople, and was shortly afterwards exiled by the Emperor Theodosius. He lived until 394 in Halmyris in Moesia, Caesaria in Cappadocia, and in near-by Dacora.

### HIS WRITINGS

His works were very numerous, and provoked many refutations. This Didymus the Blind, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Sophronius, Apollinarius of Laodicea, and Theodore of Mopsuestia wrote against him. Four years after his death, successive imperial edicts from the time of Arcadius in 398, ordered his writings to be burnt, and made the possession of them a capital crime, very little remains of his extensive literary activity.

#### 1. *First Apology*<sup>29</sup>

A short treatise, in which he explains that the true name for the divinity is “*Ungenerated*.” The concept of “*Unbegotten*” enables us to distinguish God from every other being. The Son is begotten, and therefore, of a different nature than God the Father. He is created from nothing. Eunomius differs from Arius in so far as he concedes that Christ was adopted as son of God from the beginning, not as a reward after a life of virtue.

#### 2. *Second Apology*

It consists of at least three books, most probably five. The first two refuted the first book of Basil’s *Adv. Eunomium*, the third, the second.

#### 3. *Confessions Of Faith*

In 383, he wrote a formal profession of faith which he sent to the Emperor Theodosius. St. Gregory of Nyssa severely criticized it in detailed refutation.

#### 4. *Commentary On The Epistle To The Romans*

Nothing remains of his commentary on the Apostle’s Epistle to the Romans, which consisted of seven books<sup>30</sup>.

#### 5. *Letters*

Photius<sup>31</sup> read 40 letters of Eunomius. Philostorgius preferred them to any other of his writings<sup>32</sup>.

---

<sup>29</sup> PG 30:835-868.

<sup>30</sup> Socrates: H.E. 4:7.

<sup>31</sup> Bibleth. 38

<sup>32</sup> H.E. 10:6.



## APOLLINARIUS OF LAODICEA

Apollinarius is the author of the first great Christological heresy. Born about 310 at Laodicea in Syria. He was a close friend of St. Athanasius, and for this reason was excommunicated in 342 by George, the Arian bishop of his native city. Nevertheless, he received Athanasius on his return from exile in 346 and about 361 became bishop of the Nicene community of Laodicea, a position which he occupied until he died. He was a very successful teacher who combined classical erudition with rhetorical ability, so that even St. Jerome was among his pupils at Antioch in 374.

St. Gregory of Nyssa wrote his “*Antirrheticus*” in 385 ad against him.

In this zeal for opposing Arianism, he was led to devise his theory. He was zeal for the absolute unity of Godhead and manhood in Jesus Christ, and the divinity of the Redeemer. He believes that in Christ were to be found the human body and the irrational soul, but he had not the spirit or *mondo* as the rational soul and the controlling and determining principal. It was replaced by the Divine Logos. Thus, He possessed perfect Godhead but not complete manhood. He gave for this two reasons:

1. The metaphysical reason is that two beings already perfect, God and man, cannot produce unity, but only hybrid. Two holes cannot be one whole.

2. The psychological reason is that the rational soul constitutes the seat and center of the power of self- determination for good or evil, which would attribute the possibility of sin To Christ. But the Savior must be without sin, if redemption is to be accomplished.

**In his defense of the Cyrillic formula “One incarnate nature of the God Word (μιαφνει θεον λογομ ζεεαρκωμεγη “ he did not use the Alexandrian theology in interpreting it.**

## MELITIUS BISHOP OF ANTIOCH (360-381)<sup>33</sup>

Melitus was translated from the see of Sebasate to Antioch in 360, and both Arians and Nicenes looked for his support. An orthodox inaugural sermon on Prov. 8:22 led to his immediate exile by the emperor Constantius; but when he returned in 362 under Julian, he failed to secure the support of Athanasius for his claim to the se. He was twice banished under Valens, from 365 to 366 and from 371 to 378, St, Basil being unswerving in support of his claims, but Alexandria wavering and Rome hostile. He was finally restored in 378 and presided at the Council of Constantinople of 381, during which he died. The schism at Antioch called by his name (not be confused with the Melitian Schism in Egypt half a century earlier) arose from the presence of two rival orthodox parties at Antioch which failed to co-operate. The supporters of Eustathius (bishop of Antioch c.324-330) suspected the theology of Melitus and created the schism by securing the consecration of one Paulinus in 362. Though it lasted until after the death of Melitus, canonical right was on his side,

---

<sup>33</sup> F.L. Cross: *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1984, p. 900

## ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

St. John Chrysostom was the most prominent personality among the Antiochians for the effectiveness and the power of his oratory, which shows itself particularly in the systematic explanation of many books of both the Old and New Testament. Though his theology was neither systematic, precise, nor original, his sermons drew insightful spiritual and moral applications from a grammatical and literal exegeses of Scripture.

### HIS BACKGROUND

His theological education included, in addition to Aristotelian philosophy, the works of the Cappadocian father, Josephus, and Holy Scripture<sup>34</sup>.

### HIS HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH<sup>35</sup>

1. His work followed the Antiochian principles of exegesis so carefully exemplified in Theodore's efforts on the same biblical material. While remaining loyal to the principles of the Antiochian school, Chrysostom was not averse on occasion to citing the figurative meaning of a passage, thus demonstrating more flexibility than Theodore.

He is of less interest from the specifically exegetical standpoint, since the primary objective of his *theoretical* output was to draw out of the sacred text a lesson to educate, warn, or edify his listeners, rather than to illustrate the text for its own sake. It will be enough to note that the myriad possibilities which John would find in the text which had just been read to his congregation are based on a rigorously literal reading of it, something which shows his full adherence to Antiochian exegetical precepts. His predominantly ethical or exhortatory interest accounts for the fact that often the actual illustration of the text remains superficial. It is symptomatic that his homilies on St. Matthew are, on the whole, much more expansive than those on St. John, because the first Gospel is particularly suited to moral teaching, while the fourth Gospel invites a more theological explanation which, a few specific cases apart, holds less interest of John. The illustration of the letters of St. Paul is similarly deficient.

The Antioch preacher's interpretation of the Song of the Vineyard demonstrates his hesitancy to push the details of biblical language for allegorical meaning. Concerning "he built a watchtower" (Isa. 5:2), Chrysostom suggested that it might mean the wall of the city, or the Mosaic law, or God's providence<sup>36</sup>. He argued that the details of the Song have no allegorical significance but were given only to reinforce its main point, primarily that God 'has done everything he could and has shown them every consideration. By contrast he noted that Cyril of Alexandria said that the tower was the temple and the wine vat was the altar<sup>37</sup>. Chrysostom, on the other hand, referring to allegorical exegesis, argued, "I disdain this exegesis, and consider the literal to be more accurate<sup>38</sup>."

The crucial proof-text for advocates of allegorical interpretation was, of course, Galatians 4:22-24. Like Theodore, Chrysostom distinguished between the genre of allegory and allegorical hermeneutics. Concerning Paul's usage of *allegoreo*, Chrysostom explained:

*By a misuse of language he (Paul) called the type allegory. What he means is this: he history itself not only has the apparent meaning but also proclaims other mat-*

<sup>34</sup> Baur: *John Chrysostom and His Time*, I, p. 90-98.

<sup>35</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 115ff.

<sup>36</sup> St. John Chrysostom: *Interpretation in Isaiah 5:3*, Dockery, p. 117ff.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:7.

ters; therefore, it is called allegory. But what did proclaim? Nothing other than everything that now is<sup>39</sup>.

Here Chrysostom reflected the Antiochian concept of *theoria*. Elsewhere he explained the relation of two meanings of Scripture by a parallel from art:

*The type is given the name of the truth until the truth is about to come; but when the truth has come, the name is no longer used. Similarly in painting: an artist sketches a king, but until the colors are applied he is not called a king; and when they are put on the type is hidden by the truth and is not visible; and then we say, "Behold the King"<sup>40</sup>.*

2. His printed treatises and six hundred sermons contain about eighteen thousand Scripture references, about seven thousand from the Old Testament and eleven thousand from the New<sup>41</sup>. His citations often differ from contemporary texts both because of the different textual sources he used and because of his habit of citing from memory, weaving together passages from different sections of Scripture and improvising as his rhetoric moved him along<sup>42</sup>.

The Bible, according to Chrysostom, represented a supreme act of God's accommodation or condescension (*sunkatabasis*) to humankind<sup>43</sup>.

Chrysostom's most effective works were from the Gospels of John and Matthew and the Pauline Epistles.

Chrysostom rejected out of hand any allegorical interpretation of a passage that failed to agree with Scripture's interpretation of itself. Thus, the rule that Scripture interpreted Scripture took precedence over all others.

Chrysostom avoided treating Old Testament passages allegorically of Christ and the Church; instead he sought typological meanings when the text allowed for it<sup>44</sup>.

The Antiochian school distinguished allegorical interpretation from typological in two primary ways. Typological interpretation attempted to seek out patterns in the Old Testament to which Christ corresponded, while allegorical exegesis depended on accidental similarity of language between two passages. Second, typological interpretation depended on a historical interpretation of the text. The passage, according to the Antiochians, had only one meaning, the literal (extended by *theoria*), and not two as suggested by the allegorists. In the typological approach, the things narrated by the text had to be placed in relationship to things which were not in the text, but which were still to come.

Chrysostom rejected crudely literal interpretations of the Bible from both the Antiochian laity and the criticisms of the Alexandrians. He was cautious that no figurative expression in the Bible be misunderstood either from a too literal or a too fanciful interpretation.

For Chrysostom, theology and hermeneutics were not theoretical exercises, but practical and pastoral. He believed the biblical message made changes in people's lives. He declared that the Scriptures' divine message prepared people for good works.

## **THE APOSTLE PAUL AS A HERMENEUTICAL TEST CASE IN THE ALEXANDRIAN AND ANTIOCHIAN SCHOOLS<sup>45</sup>**

How the two schools viewed Paul's thought, with special reference to the apostle's instruction on soteriology and the spiritual life.

<sup>39</sup> St. John Chrysostom: *Commentary on Galatians 4:24*.

<sup>40</sup> St. John Chrysostom: *Homily on Phiippians 10*.

<sup>41</sup> Baur: *John Chrysostom and His Time, I, p. 15-16*.

<sup>42</sup> Pelikan: *Preaching of Chrysostom, Homilies on the Sermon on the Mount, Philadelphia, 1967, p. 35-36*.

<sup>43</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now, p. 115*.

<sup>44</sup> Rogers, Jack B. and Mckim: *Authority and Interpretation of the Bible, 1979 Eerdmans 1979 p. 20-22*.

<sup>45</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now, p. 120*.

## **THE NEW LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER<sup>46</sup>**

Origen set the whole concept of grace in a broad cosmic setting. Faith is a gift of God according to the proportion of grace given. For Origen, saving faith itself is not the act of women and men alone, but their acts rewarded and reinforced by the grace of God.

Chrysostom regarded the desire to respond to God's liberating work as a joint operation of God and humanity. He interpreted the words, "it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose," to mean if humans will on their part, then God gives strength to the willing. Chrysostom could proclaim that the efforts of men and women took the initiative so that grace was a response of God to Humanity.

## **PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT<sup>47</sup>**

Origin in a person's character could not be changed overnight; the conversion of the will might be immediate, but the development of the habit of consistently good actions was a slow and laborious business. Thus, daily renewal was no mere continuation of the past experience but a developing process of growth.

Chrysostom's concept of progressive faith was positive and was not viewed in opposition to sight of wisdom. Chrysostom construed faith working with reason. Ratiocination was never able to bring about perfection, Faith was understood as the appropriate means to apprehend true spiritual matters.

## **FORGIVENESS AND GOOD WORKS<sup>48</sup>**

Origen often introduced certain restrictions into the range of forgiveness. Origen tended to restrict forgiveness to past sins only. Origen was quick to observe that good works must accompany true faith for genuine forgiveness to take place. Works without faith might carry honor, but were unable to bring persons to eternal life. On the other hand, faith without any good works was sufficient to save one from destruction, but could not bring men and women to true glory. This approach was distinctively Origen.

Theodore, another Antiochian, stressed the concept of forgiveness as a future reality. Ultimate salvation was equated with resurrection. The idea of faith and forgiveness had a necessary future reference in Antiochian thought, implying belief in something not yet fully possessed. It was closely associated with themes of promise and hope. While this eschatological emphasis was stressed in Ephesians and Colossians, Theodore stressed that this was the standard teaching in all of Paul's epistles.

## **THE NEW LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY<sup>49</sup>**

### **Baptism and Union<sup>50</sup>**

Origen maintained that baptism which was not preceded by moral dying with Christ was not really baptism at all. Likewise, he said Christians do not really believe that Christ has been raised from the dead unless he is risen and is living in their hearts as the embodiment of all Christian virtues.

Theodore insisted that baptism represented the moment of the believers' transference to resurrection life. Yet, the transference was not full reality but took place at the level of prefigurative symbol.

---

<sup>46</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 121.

<sup>47</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 121.

<sup>48</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 122.

<sup>49</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 123.

<sup>50</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 123.

For Chrysostom, the heart of the mystery of union with Christ was found in faith and baptism. At baptism there was not a change of nature, but a ruling purpose in the life of believers. This change did not guarantee a life of virtue, but it did make such a life achievable.

### **The Dynamics of New Life<sup>51</sup>**

Origen pointed out that Paul regularly spoke of resurrection as a present reality, as well as a more literal future<sup>52</sup>.

He acknowledged that believers have a fullness of God's gifts. He preferred to stress the incompleteness of the Christian's present position. While believers were to live in the hope of the glory of God, there must still be an even greater glory that will come in the future.

The focus of Paul's thought, as interpreted by Origen, rested in the future rather than in the past or the present.

Chrysostom. States that true believers have put on the new person in their baptism, the Antiochians maintained, but this still needed to be actualized in life and works. Christians have been buried with Christ, but there was still a need mortify the sinful members of their bodies while on the earth. Chrysostom interpreted Paul to mean that sin died at the time of the believer's baptism, but it could be brought to life again.

It was Chrysostom's belief that the ultimate outcome of sin after conversion was final<sup>53</sup>, yet the living out of the new life could bring about differing actions and an endless variety of quality among different members in the community.

Because their lives prove worthless, some will be saved by fire; this did not mean they will enter into the lower stages of heaven, but will be preserved alive in the eternal torments of fire<sup>54</sup>.

Chrysostom believed that Christians were essentially still in pilgrimage. They had received the earnest of the Spirit on the basis of faith, but the full gift still awaits the completion of a life of good works. Believers do possess some good gifts such as freedom from sin, obedience to righteousness, sanctification, and the attainment of eternal life, but still more awaits the future. He maintained that eschatological gifts, while present hidden truths, could be experienced in this life as a reality, but they could also be lost. The ultimate gifts were considered eternal and irrevocable<sup>55</sup>.

### **New Life and Freedom<sup>56</sup>**

St. Clement, an Alexandrian, treated much of the law as a tutor to bring people to Christ and as the first stage in confining the reign of sin<sup>57</sup>. Likewise, Origen, typical of most early commentators, declared that as Moses gave the first law to those who had come out of Egypt and were beginning their journey to the holy land, so Christ provided a second law for the Christian pilgrimage. Pauline injunctions concerning Christian behavior were often spiritualized by Origen because he believed their literal meaning was platitudinous, absurd, or irrelevant<sup>58</sup>.

According to Origen, the keeping of certain laws was essential for salvation; others were matters left to the freedom of choice<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 123-4.

<sup>52</sup> Origen: *Commentary on Romans* 5:2; 8:19.

<sup>53</sup> St. Chrysostom: *Homilies on Romans* 6:16.

<sup>54</sup> St. Chrysostom: *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* 3:12-15.

<sup>55</sup> St. Chrysostom: *Homilies on Romans* 8:18-23.

<sup>56</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, p. 124-6.

<sup>57</sup> St. Clement: *Stromata* 2:35:2.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Elinar Mollard: *The Conception of the Gospel in the Alexandrian Theology* (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1938), p. 118.

<sup>59</sup> Origen: *Fragments on Ephesians* 4:25-26.

For example, Origen considered that marriage was the way of the unprofitable servant who only did his duty, but celibacy was the good way that excelled and surpassed duty<sup>60</sup>.

Chrysostom developed this idea further, and two standards of spirituality were established.

If Christians have been freed from the law, it is that they may pass beyond it, not that they may transgress it. Those who are spiritual should move beyond the realm of law keeping to abound more in greater obedience<sup>61</sup>.

The insight of Theodore and Chrysostom is apparent in their understanding of the relation of Paul's moral teaching to the pattern of Paul's thought as a whole.

Exhortation to moral obedience was built upon doctrinal truth. Theodore observed that Paul's teaching on the question of certain foods (Rom. 14) was based not only on creation but also on Christ's sacrificial death<sup>62</sup>.

Humility was the root of virtue, and humility could be discovered in the extent of Christ's incarnation and salvific work (Phil. 2:5-8). Thus, behind the precepts of regular Christian living lay the matchless wonders of divine grace (Rom. 11:33-12:2).

This reassessment looks favorably upon two features of Antiochian thought:

(1) its stress on the genuine and complete humanity of Christ, who had to advance in moral goodness and achieve a redemptive victory for humankind as a man, and (2) its stress upon literal and historical interpretation of Scripture in reaction against allegorical exegesis. This emphasis upon the literal, historical, and human represented a new advance in patristic exegesis in discontinuity with what had been previously practiced.

Yet, in continuity with earlier practices, the Antiochians read Scripture christologically. This was accomplished through typological exegesis similar to that of Jesus, the apostles, and Justin. We have noted that their typological usage emphasized the historicity of the parallel event. The term used to describe this twofold aspect of a text, its literal meaning and typological correspondence, was *theoria*. Despite their ingenious effort to dissociate *theoria* from allegorical hermeneutics, the difference was not always as clear as one might wish. But this is not unusual, for practice seldom reaches the consistent level of theory.

In 392, **St. Epiphanius of Salamis** went to Jerusalem, the home of Origen's most determined and influential admirers, and in the presence of John the bishop of the city, and a great multitude assembled in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, he delivered a vehement sermon against Origen. Jerome was changed from an ardent admirer of Origen into an enemy of him. He attempted to obtain a condemnation of Origen from John, but the bishop refused. Epiphanius broke off church connection with John of Jerusalem. In Egypt a quarrel occurred between Theophilus of Alexandria and the famous "Tall Brothers," as the latter were admirer of Origen. They went to Constantinople and St. John Chrysostom was in their side. Epiphanius went to Constantinople in order to wage war in person against John Chrysostom.

✠ So great is the interval from man to God as no language can at all express. If men are not of the same *ousia* as God, and indeed they are not, still they have been called his image, and it was fitting that they should receive honor on account of this appellation<sup>63</sup>.

✠ What has God in common with man? Why do you mix that which cannot be mixed? Why confound things which are separate, and why bring low what is above?<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Origen: Fragments on 1 Corinthians 7:25.

<sup>61</sup> St. Chrysostom: Commentary on Galatians 5:13.

<sup>62</sup> Theodore on Romans 14:1-4. In *Epistolae b. Pauli commentarii*.

<sup>63</sup> *On the Statues, hom. 3:19.*

<sup>64</sup> *On the Statues, hom.3:2.*

**DEACONESS<sup>65</sup>**

Apropos of Phoebe, St. Chrysostom wrote only this: “*See how Paul honors her, for he mentions her ahead of everybody else, and he calls her his sister: it is no small thing to be called the sister of Paul.*” He added a mention of her dignity: St. John Chrysostom did not go any deeper into the matter than that: he enumerated none of the activities by which Phoebe merited the praise of Paul, and he certainly made no connection between the title *διακονοῦν* of given to her by Paul and any ecclesiastical institution of the church of Antioch.

---

<sup>65</sup> A.G. Martimort: *Deaconess, A Historical Study*, 1986, p. 117.



THEODORE OF TARSUS, St. (c. 602-90), Abp. Of Canterbury. He was Antioch Asiatic Greek, educated at Tarsus and Athens. While not yet a subdeacon he was recommended to Pope Vitalian for the Abp. of Canterbury by Hadrian, Antioch African monk to whom the see had been offered. Vitalian consecrated him in 668; but the Pope, fearing that his orthodoxy might be corrupted by his Greek upbringing, arranged for Benedict Biscop and Hadrian to accompany him to Britain, After a visitation of the whole of England, he set about reforming the government of the Church by dividing dioceses and extending the episcopate, In 673 he summoned, and presided over, the first important synod of the whole English Church at Hertford, and in 680 he held another great synod at Hatfield, where a declaration of orthodoxy was drawn up and forwarded to Rome at the request of Pope Agatho. By such methods he unified the English Church and established the metropolitan authority of the see of Canterbury. He also did much to prepare the way for the parochial system. His active interference in the diocese of York created serious difficulties with St. Wilfrid (q.v. for details). Though he remained throughout his life a devoted scholar, none of his writings survive. The "Penitential" traditionally attributed to Theodore is of a later date. Feast day, 19 Sept.

## **THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA<sup>1</sup>**

### **(ca. 350-428)**

The discovery in the last fifty years of manuscripts and fragments comprising both original writings and Syriac translations of his works made a revival of interest in his works.

#### **HIS EDUCATION**

Theodore, the greatest interpreter of the Antiochians, was born ca. 350 in Antioch, when the Arians were in the ascendancy throughout the province of Syria. According to his friend and companion St. John Chrysostom, he was a man of noble birth and an heir to large estates<sup>2</sup>. Probably his parents were Christians<sup>3</sup>.

He studied literature and rhetoric under the guidance of the famous rhetorician and philosopher Libanius. His fellow students were from Chrysostom who became archbishop of Constantinople (398-403) and Maximus who became bishop of Cilicia. Sozomen states that he was "a man well versed in the arts and sciences of the rhetors and philosophers<sup>4</sup>."

#### **HIS MONASTIC LIFE**

Theodore left the Museum and the Forum and following the example and advice of his former fellow student, John Chrysostom, retired with Maximus to the monastic school of Diodore and Carterius in the vicinity of Antioch<sup>5</sup>. St. John Chrysostom who considered admitting to monastic life as an escape from earth to heaven<sup>6</sup>, says: "(The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos: *Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Bible*, Paulist Press, 1989; David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now*, 1992; R. V. Sellers : *Two Ancient Christologies*, SPCK 1954..

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Theodorum lapsam II*, PG 47:309.

<sup>3</sup> *Theodoret: H.E. 5:4.*

<sup>4</sup> *H.E. 8:2.*

<sup>5</sup> *Socrates H.E. 6:3, Theodoret H.E. 5:27.*

<sup>6</sup> *PG 62:575.*

monk) dwells as if in another world, in heaven itself, he never speaks except in the heavenly things, the bosom of Abraham, the crowns of the Saints, and the heavenly hosts who surround Christ, induced his friend to this angelic life<sup>7</sup>.”

St. Chrysostom in his work “**Comparison between a king and monk** (*Comparatio regis et monachi*)<sup>8</sup>” states that the king rules cities, peoples and armies, while the monk rules his own desires. The king fights barbarians to extend his land and his riches, while the monk fights the Satan, converts the souls and receives a crown from Christ. The king spends his day and night in sufferings and solving problems, while the monk spends his life in joy and peace. It is too hard for a king to restore his empire if he loses it, while the monk easily stands up after his fallen down. Concerning death, who does not fear from the death of the king, while all men are in comfort in monk’s death. Thus St. John Chrysostom attracted Theodore among other young people to embrace the monastic life.

Theodore was admitted to the communal monasticism. The monks dwelt in separate cells, under the guidance of an abbot. They awake before the sunshine, start their day by singing hymns, and communal churches. Then they went to their works, landmarks, copying manuscripts etc. and sold them and distributed their prices among the poor men and the needy. St. John Chrysostom states that they lived without wear. If any one dies they do not weep, but offer thanksgiving to God.

It was not merely a monastic and ascetic community, but it was interesting in interpreting the holy Scripture according to the Antiochian historico-grammatical method.

A sudden reaction happened. He left the monastic school and life, and returned to the Forum, and assumed his juristic studies. Theodore was seduced by a beautiful lady, called Hermoine. St. Chrysostom dealt with this problem as an excellent physician of souls. He did not rebuke him on his fall, but through love and kindness he helped him in his weakness and discovered the divine love to him. He sent to him two eloquent epistles “*Paraereses ad Theodorum lapsum*”<sup>9</sup>, asking him to repent and return to the monastic life. He writes, “He who sins falls in a human weakness, but who continues in his sinning abolishes his humanity and becomes a demon. Not falling in sin but remaining in sinning destroys the soul.”

St. Chrysostom tried to persuade Theodore to return to *Asketerion*. In his letter he states, “I shed tears... because you have withdrawn yourself from the list of the brethren, and have contemptuously obliterated your covenant with Christ... Now your friends are praying for you... At any rate I will try, with the life-boat of this letter, to save you from shipwreck... If you have not completely forgotten me, then rejoice me by answering it<sup>10</sup>.”

Theodore listened to the brotherly admonitions of his friend, returned to the monastery and rededicated himself to his obedience with devotion. On his return Diodore and Carterius were in charge of the *Asketerion*.” Theodore had an opportunity to carry on studies in exegesis and theology under the guidance of Diodore.

---

<sup>7</sup> PG 58:643.

<sup>8</sup> PG 47:387-392.

<sup>9</sup> PG 47:277-316.

<sup>10</sup> *Ad Theodorum lapsum* PG 47:309-316.

In 383 Flavian of Antioch ordained Theodore presbyter while he was about 33 years old. He fervently opposed the errors of the Arians, Eunomians, Apollinarists, Origenists, and Persian magic, and he dedicated in the Antiochian schism, which threw the church into confusion for a whole century.

Through his effectiveness as teacher and presbyter at the principal church in Antioch, and his productive literary work. Theodore's fame and authority grew from year to year.

In 392 he was promoted, after the death of Bishop Olympios, to the see of Mopsuestia, "the heart of Mopsus," in Cilicia Secunda.

In the year 394, Theodore accompanied Flavian to a synod at Constantinople which was to decide the question concerning the see of Bostra in the Patriarchate of Antioch. The clergy and the people of the capital were both astonished by the wisdom and eloquence of the Syrian Bishop. The fame of Theodore had spread in the city, and Emperor Theodosius I invited him to preach in the imperial court. Theodosius declared that he had never met with such a teacher<sup>11</sup>.

His exiled friend John Chrysostom sent him a letter from Pontius, asking him his aid through his uncle, Paeanius, who held a public office in Constantinople<sup>12</sup>. After his meditation, St. Chrysostom wrote to him "Exiled, as I am I reap no ordinary comfort from having in Cilicia such a treasure, such a mine of wealth, as the lone of your vigilant and brave heart<sup>13</sup>. At the Council of Constantinople in 553 some fathers rejected the authenticity of this letter.

Towards the end of the year 428, after receiving Nestorius, who was on his way to claim the throne of Constantinople, Theodore died at the end of a ministry of forty-five years.

---

<sup>11</sup> *Mansi, III, 857.*

<sup>12</sup> *St. Chrysostom: Ep 204 PG 52: 724-725.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ep. 112 PG 668-669.*

## HIS WRITINGS

Theodore's contribution to the patristic literature was substantial. His literary activity began at an early age, possibly while he was still a student under Diodore and Carterius, and continued until at least the end of the second decade of the fifth century<sup>14</sup>. Joseph S. Assemani states "Theodore the interpreter had written forty one volumes<sup>15</sup>." St. Cyril of Alexandria, Theodore's later adversary, states, "The great Theodore has written twenty extensive books against Arian and Eunomian heresies, and besides these he has interpreted the gospel and apostolic writings<sup>16</sup>."

He was an interpreter of the Bible. Leontius of Byzantium affirms that Theodore wrote commentaries on the whole books of the Bible. He composed in addition a large number of dogmatic and controversial treatises which prove his keen interest in most of the religious issues of his day and attest that he was engaged in a theological dialogue throughout his lifetime.

The best catalogue of the titles of his writings is that of the Nestorian Ebedjesu from the beginning of the fourteenth century (in J. S. Assemani *Bibl. or Clem. Vat. III, 1, 30ff*) and that in the Chronicle of Seert from the first half of the thirteenth century<sup>17</sup>.

As Theodore was condemned in the (second) Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 553, many of his works have been lost to us.

### 1. *On Genesis*

A commentary in three volumes. Aleph requested him to write a commentary on the Pentateuch, something which he did in three volumes.

Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople (c. 819-895) states:

Read the work of Theodore of Antioch entitled *Commentary on Genesis* (the history of Creation), the first book which contains seven volumes. The style is neither brilliant nor very clear. The author avoids the use of allegory as much as possible, being only concerned with the interpretation of history. He frequently repeats himself, and produces a disagreeable impression upon the reader. Although he lived before Nestorius, he vomits up his doctrines by anticipation. This is that Theodore of Mopsuestia, from whom on several occasions John Philoponus (as the letter himself says) demanded a serious explanation of his method of interpretation in his own work on the Creation<sup>18</sup>.

The commentary has been lost, and only a few fragments have come down to us.

### 2. *On Exodus*

The catenae have preserved three excerpts which explain Exodus 25:8-20. (the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat), Exod. 25:23-29 (the table of shewbread), and Exod. 25: 30-38 (the seven - branch menorah).

The catenae have also preserved a few lines on Theodore's commentary on Joshua 7:45, and on Judges 13:25 and 15:17.

### 3. *On The Psalms*

<sup>14</sup>Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos, p. 27.

<sup>15</sup>*Bibliotheca Orientalis, Romae, 1726, III, cap CIX, 30.*

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos, p. 27.

<sup>17</sup>*Quasten: Patrology, vol. 3, p. 402.*

<sup>18</sup>(SPCK) PG 103:72.

He wrote it for Cadron, his brother. In a book bears the title “*On Allegory and History*,” Theodore apologizes to Cedron that his commentary on the Psalms was written in haste because of lack of time<sup>19</sup>.

He probably composed it when he was scarcely twenty years of age, when he was associated with Didore in the School of Antioch. Robert Devereese succeeded in recovering the greater part of the text from a host of manuscripts. The text is in great part in the original Greek, and partly in Latin translation.

In the opinion of Theodore, David, the author of the whole Psalter, anticipated the future innovation of his people in history through an extraordinary illumination of his mind by God’s Spirit<sup>20</sup>.

The range of David’s telescopic view of Israel’s consummation in history covered only the main events from the era of Solomon to the Macabean insurrections<sup>21</sup>. David’s prophetic psalms in their scope and perspective are thoroughly *theocentric* and *Israelitic* and not Messianic<sup>22</sup>.

Quasten states:

Theodore is the first interpreter to insist that the Psalms must be read against a historical background. He recognizes the Dividic authorship of all the Psalms but at the same time was convinced that the context and the setting of many of the Psalms are altogether unsuitable to David. His solution to this problem is that those Psalms which reflect another period were written by David, but as a prophet revealing the future state of Israel. Thus he classifies the Psalms chronologically from David to the Maccabees. He maintains that the prophetic horizon of David did not reach further than the Maccabees, and that there is consequently know directly Messianic passage in the Psalms. He justifies the Messianic use in the New Testament as an accommodation. But he recognizes four exceptions: 2, 3, 44, 109, though he does not regard even this as properly Messianic in the sense of referring to the future prepared for the chosen people, he explains them as describing the incarnation and the church. He rejects the Messianic interpretations proposed by the allegorical school of Alexandria which violate his sound principle that each Psalm must be treated as a literary whole and that a verse cannot be divorced from its context. He refuses to admit any change of person, time or situation and the same Psalm. Thus if a Psalm refers to the future, it refers entirely to the future. He declares the titles of the Psalms posterior additions. On the whole, his commentary corroborates the more moderate of the opinions which have been held about Theodore of Mopsuestia as interpreter of Holy Scripture, that without rejecting the mystical interpretation or denying the existence of typology in Scripture, he used it far less than the Alexandrian divines or even St. John Chrysostm<sup>23</sup>.

#### **4. On The Twelve Prophets**

---

<sup>19</sup> PL 67: 602.

<sup>20</sup> Zaharopoulos, ch. 6, *Psaumes* 43.

<sup>21</sup> R. Devereese: *Essai sur Theodore*, 73.

<sup>22</sup> Zaharopoulos, p145.

<sup>23</sup> Quasten: *Patrology*, vol. 3, p. 404-5.

The only one of Theodore's many exegetical compositions surveying in its original text, perhaps because it offers almost nothing of Christological import. Though Theodore more readily admits directly Messianic passages in the prophets, he refers many texts generally regarded, even now, as Messianic, to the restoration of the Jewish state or to the victories of the Maccabees<sup>24</sup>.

### **5. On 1 And 2 Samuel**

He wrote this commentary at the request of a friend, Baliou.

### **6. On The Book Of Job**

The Acts of the Council of Constantinople in 553 have preserved five extracts from this work. Ebedjesus states that Theodore dedicated this commentary to Cyril of Alexandria. Theodore rejected Job also as canonical, as he believed that Job was an Edomite who had heathen associates.

### **7. On The Book Of Ecclesiastes**

In the Acts of Council of Constantinople (553) Theodore is charged of having taught that Solomon did not write the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes with the prophetic charisma, but through his wisdom and experience<sup>25</sup>.

### **8. On The Song Of Songs**

Leontius of Byzantium noted: "In his impudent and immoderate recklessness, having understood the Song of Songs according to prostituted language and judgment, he cut it off from the Holy Books<sup>26</sup>."

He considers the book a nuptial poem written by Solomon concerning his marriage to an Egyptian princess, and refuses to grant it a deeper meaning. Any allegorical and mystical interpretation must be given up<sup>27</sup>. However, the inference is not thereby warranted that he composed a commentary on the Song of Songs.

### **9. On The Major Prophets**

His comments on Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Daniel have been lost; not even a single fragment survives.

### **10. The Gospels**

According to Ebedjesu Theodore expounded Matthew for Julius; Luke and John for Eusebius. His commentaries on the synoptic gospels have been lost, only a few fragments exist. The commentary on the Gospel of John in Syriac version was discovered in 1868. Maurice F. Wiles claims that for Theodore, the Gospel according to St. John [had the fullest measure of historical reliability as a first hand account, with greater attention to chronological exactitudethan any of the other Gospels. It was also composed with the express purpose of supplementing those other records by bringing out more fully the underlying theological truth, especially of Christ's divinity<sup>28</sup>.]

Theodore's concern for the historical circumstances of the life of Jesus did not keep him from offering a full-orbed and wholehearted theological interpretation about the person of Christ. Yet, his concern for the historical all too often kept him from grasping

<sup>24</sup>Quasten: *Patrology*, vol. 3, p. 405.

<sup>25</sup>Mansi IX, 223.

<sup>26</sup>PG 86: 1365 D.

<sup>27</sup>H. Kihn: *Theodore von Mopsuestia und Junilius Africanus als Exegeten*, 59.

<sup>28</sup>David S. Dockery: *Biblical interpretation, Then and Now*, 1992, p. 111.

the eternal dimensions of the fourth gospel. Three brief examples provided by Wiles illustrate this point:

In 1:51 Jesus promises to Nathaniel a vision of the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man; Theodore interprets this as a reference to the literal angelic visitations at the temptation, in Gethsemane, at the time of the resurrection and of the ascension. In 5:25 Jesus declares that “the hour...now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live”; Theodore refers simply to the widow of Nain’s son, to Jairus’ daughter and to Lazarus. In 14:18 and 28, Jesus promises to his disciples that he will come to them; Theodore finds the fulfillment of that promise in the historical happenings of the post-resurrection appearances<sup>29</sup>.

### 11. *The Pauline Epistles*

A considerable number of Theodore’s writings on Paul have come down to us. The minor epistles, i.e. From Galatians to Philemon, have been preserved in a Latin translation of the Fifth Century, which H.B. Swete discovered and published from two manuscripts of the ninth and tenth centuries, together with the Greek fragments found in *Cod. Coisl. 204*. It was long attributed to Ambrose, the sanctity of whose name helped to preserve it from being disregarded. Fragments from Theodore’s lost commentaries on Paul’s major epistles survives. He considered the epistle to the Hebrews as Pauline.

Certainly Theodore seems far more at home as an interpreter of the Pauline Epistles. One major difficulty for the Antiochene hermeneutical approach was Paul’s use of the term *allegoroumena* in Galatians 4:24 in connection with the story of Sarah and Hagar. Theodore argued that by allegory, Paul knew the Hellenistic term but not the Hellenistic application which would treat the texts like dreams in the night; he gave history priority over all other considerations<sup>30</sup>.” Because of the historical considerations, Theodore maintained that Paul was making a comparison (*similitudo*), and the comparison was worthless unless the two things compared really were historical (*rebus stantibus*)<sup>31</sup>. The very division of time between the two events, Hagar’s story and the Judaizing controversy in Galatia, implied that both really happened. Thus we can see that Theodore rejected allegorical interpretation completely. Yet, Theodore did include metaphorical meaning as part of the literal meaning<sup>32</sup>.

Theodore’s exegesis was the purest representation of Antiochene hermeneutics<sup>33</sup>. Theodore was first to treat the Psalms historically and systematically, while treating the Gospel narratives factually, paying attention to the particles of transition and to the minutiae of grammar and punctuation. His approach can be described as “anti-allegorical”, while rejecting interpretations that denied the historical reality of what the scriptural text affirmed. This was evident in our brief look at his exegesis of Galatians 4. Even where allegorical interpretation could have possibly served to his advantage to bring unity to the

<sup>29</sup> Wiles: *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, p. 506.

<sup>30</sup> *Theodore Epistolas b. Pauli commentarii* 1.73-74; cf. Theodore, “Commentary on Galatians 4:22-31,” trans. Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, 95-103; Dockery, p. 112.

<sup>31</sup> *Theodore Epistolas b. Pauli* 1.76-78. For objections to the distinction between allegorical and typological interpretation, see Paul K. Jewett, “Concerning the Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 17 (1954): 1-20; Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 82-83; James D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 93-133; Dockery, p. 112.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Greer: *Theodore of Mopsuestia* 108-9. Cf. Robert J. Kepple, “An Analysis of the Antiochene Exegesis of Galatians 4:24-26,” *Westminster Theological Journal*, 39 (1976): 239-249; Dockery, p. 112.

<sup>33</sup> Wiles: *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 489-490, notes that because of this, he was given the title *The Interpreter*.

overall biblical message, he failed to use it or see its value. For instance, this he could have done with the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, but as we have seen he chose instead to reject Job and the Song from the biblical canon<sup>34</sup>.

The great value of allegorical interpretation from the Alexandrians was that it made possible a theologically unified interpretation of the Bible as a whole. Theodore, attempting to present a unified theological exposition, viewed the Bible as a record of the historical development of the divine redemptive plan. Ultimately, this history must be understood from the perspective of the purposes of God to provide the setting of God's gracious act in Christ Jesus, by which the new age of salvation was realized. The law and the prophets were to be interpreted typologically as types of Christ. Through the hermeneutical tool, *theoria*, the reality of the Old Testament history in its own setting could likewise be maintained. This key plus the stress on historical development was the strength of Theodore's creative interpretation. We must now examine the hermeneutical practices and contributions of Theodore's friend and fellow disciple, John Chrysostom<sup>35</sup>.

## 12. Other Works

Ebedjesus states:

[There still is his book on the **Sacrament** and another on **Faith**; he wrote one volume on the **Priesthood** and a book on the **Holy Spirit** in two volumes; one volume on the **Incarnation**, and two volumes *against Eunomius* and two volumes **against those who affirm that sin is innate in the human nature**, he wrote two books against **Magic** and one book on **Monasticism**; he also wrote volumes against **Allegorists**, one defending Basil, and another on the **Assemente and Assumpt**s, also the book of **Pearls** in which his letters were collected; finally a sermon on **Legislatio**, by which he terminated his writings.]

---

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 509-510, Dockery, p. 112.

<sup>35</sup> Dockery, p. 112, 113.



# THEODORE AND THE HISTORICO-GRAMMATICAL METHOD

Theodore, in his theological studies at the school of Antioch adopted the so-called historico-grammatical method in the interpretation of the Bible.

He proved to be regarded as the number one *theoretician* of that historic institution who has exemplified in his own writings the basic text of his school<sup>36</sup>.

## HIS SENSE OF BIBLICAL HISTORY

Theodore's sense of biblical history as well as his interest in the historical context is attested in the following three methods :

1. To each of his commentaries Theodore prefixed a general introduction in which he discussed each book of the bible as a whole. The authorship, date and content were carefully studied. The actual motives and insights of the writers were investigated, and great care was displayed in placing the books in correct historical settings.

2. The Old Testament prophets are set within the historical framework provided by their oracles. Prophecy is firmly grouped in history; and prophetic insight arises from the illumination of the human mind by the Spirit of God as that mind wrestles with the problem of interpreting God's will in the midst of the concrete historical situation.

3. As his commentaries developed, Theodore was carefully never to break the thread of historical continuity. Great stress was laid upon historical facts and events suggested by the texts.

He was particularly critical of the Alexandrian allegorists whom he preferred to name mythologues<sup>37</sup>.

## ALLEGORY AND HISTORY

Theodore directs attacks against the methods of the allegorists. He composed a work entitled "*On Allegory and History*," which has been lost. He blamed the fathers for their obscuring of the literal or historical meaning of the sacred text<sup>38</sup>. Even Chrysostom was blamed<sup>39</sup>, while of Origen and his followers, Theodore said that they distorted, by their dreams, the meaning of the biblical history and scripture together<sup>40</sup>.

[One may ask what the difference is between allegorical exegesis and historical exegesis, we answer that the difference is great and not small. While the first leads to impiety, blasphemy, and untruth, the other is conformed to truth and faith. It was the impious Origen of Alexandria who invented the art of allegory. Versed in the works of poets and Platonists, he believed that the Holy scripture should be explained in terms of fables..

Those insane people have not perceived that the apostles in quoting the sayings of the Old Testament do not quote them in only one way, sometimes they quote them in to show their fulfillment, at another times as an example for the exhortation and correction

---

<sup>36</sup> Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> PG 66: 377C, 417D-420A; 513D-516A; 517D.

<sup>39</sup> In Amosi- prologue PG 66:245B; John Chrysostom: In Isaiam cap VI PG 56: 67f.

<sup>40</sup> Swete: Theodori episcopi Mopsuestini, I:73-75,82,1.75; 83,11.2-3; 86,1.5ff).

of their readers, or else to confirm the doctrine of the faith although these sayings were uttered for other purposes according to the historical circumstances<sup>41</sup>.]

Theodore designed by expressions such as :

“*the literal exegesis*<sup>42</sup>,”

“*the truth of the saying according to its literal meaning*<sup>43</sup>,”

“*the literal notion of the word*<sup>44</sup>,”

“*the context indicates*<sup>45</sup>,”

“*the context of the languages*<sup>46</sup>,”

“*the historical interpretations of the Psalms*<sup>47</sup>,”

“*according to the historical testimony*<sup>48</sup>,” and

“*the historical circumstances*<sup>49</sup>.”

The foregoing expressions illustrates the esteem in which Theodore held the grammatics - historical interpretation of the Bible. In point of fact, in the field of patristic exegesis, no exegete, to our knowledge, stressed the principals of a rational exegesis with greater emphasis and universality than the bishop of Mopsuestia<sup>50</sup>.

An interpreter must avoid the extremes of crude literalism and fanciful allegorism<sup>51</sup>.

Of the members of the school of Antioch, Theodore, to our knowledge, is the only one who explicitly included all sorts of senses, whether metaphorical or symbolical, in the grammatical-historical interpretations<sup>52</sup>.

Theodore expressed in a clear fashion what Diodore of Tarsus (d. ca. 390), the true founder of the School of Antioch, established. The latter described the guiding principal of the Antiochian exegesis in the following formula: “We do not forbid the higher interpretation and *theoria*, for the historical narrative does not exclude it, but is on the contrary the basis and substructure of loftier insights. We must, however, be on our guard against letting the *theoria* do away with the historical basis, for the result would then be, not *theoria*, but allegory<sup>53</sup>.”

## TYPOLGY

The Antiochians read Scripture christologically. This was accomplished through typological exegesis similar to that of Jesus, the apostle, and St. Justin. We have noted that their typological usage emphasized the historicity of the parallel event. The term used to describe this twofold aspect of a text, its literal meaning and typological correspondence, was *theoria*. Despite their ingenious effort to dissociate *theoria* from allegor-

<sup>41</sup> J. M. Voste: *L'oeuvre exegetique de Theodore de Mopsuestia*, Revue Biblique XXIX, no. 4, October 1929, p 544- 546.

<sup>42</sup> Psaumes 334:1.30.

<sup>43</sup> In Zachariae 9:10 PG 66: 557A.

<sup>44</sup> In Joelis 2:32, PG 66: 232A.

<sup>45</sup> Psaumes 491,1:15; 281:11,9-12; 365,1.5; 467,11.13-17; 501:1,8.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid 281,1.3, In Michaae 5:1-2 PG 66: 372.

<sup>47</sup> Psaumes 194, 1:14.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid 2:11,4-5; 3:11 ,25.

<sup>49</sup> In Zachariae 9:8-10. PG 66: 556 D-557 D.

<sup>50</sup> Zaharopoulos, p123.

<sup>51</sup> Psaumes 302,1:8.

<sup>52</sup> Zaharopoulos, p124; PG 66: 232BC; Psaumes 41: 11.18-20; 62:1.20; 96,1.16; 138,1-10 fragmentum in Exodum 26:35 PG 66: 648 AB.

<sup>53</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, NY 1958, p76-77.

ical hermeneutics, the difference was not always as clear as one might wish. But this was not unusual, for practice seldom reaches the consistent level of theory<sup>54</sup>.

D.S. Dockery says<sup>55</sup>:

[In order to understand Theodore's method, it is necessary to recognize his distinction between typological, allegorical, and prophetic material. K.J. Woolcombe's useful summary of early church typology follows. While not directly related to the Antiochene school, it is nevertheless extremely helpful:

Allegorism, typology, and the fulfillment of prophecy are consequently to be differentiated. St. Paul's interpretation of the story of Hagar in Gal. 4 is an example not of typological, but of allegorical, exegesis. The account of the Triumphal Entry in Matt. 21 is a record of the fulfillment of Zech. 9:9, and not typological writing. Admittedly, typological writing and the fulfillment of prophecy overlap each other to a certain extent: in Matt. 21:14 the reference to the blind and the lame has probably been borrowed from the story of David's capture of Jerusalem. There is also a close resemblance between St. Paul's Allegorism and his typological exegesis, because his allegorism was of the historical kind. But the similarities between Allegorism, typology and the study of the fulfillment of prophecy are not so close as to justify ignoring the differences between them, and using one of the terms to cover all<sup>56</sup>.

Although this is a useful summary, in reality Theodore did not always clearly make such distinctions. Perhaps, as Rowan A. Greer has suggested, it is better to think of typological exegesis as the normative method of Antiochene exegesis. Allegorical exegesis, if legitimate at all, and distinct from Alexandrian allegorical practices, represented "left wing typology," while fulfillment of prophecy represented "right wing typology"<sup>57</sup>.]

To begin with topological interpretation of the Bible was approved by Theodore, but he was hesitant in applying the method.

Typology is not an interpretation of biblical texts, but an historical comparison of events. Not every event of the Old Testament has its correspondence or imitation in the N. T.

He refused to recognize more than 3 types which satisfied the strict criteria stipulated by him:

1. The sprinkling of the doorpost with blood by the Israelites on the eve of the exodus.  
The proof texts Theodore cited 1 Cor 10:11, Heb 9:13
2. The brazen serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14).
3. Jonah's incarceration in the great fish and his mission (Matt 12: 40,41).

## THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL

In his opinion all the prophets of Israel were *ecstatic personalities*, and this state of mind resulted from their certainty that they clearly stood in a personal relationship with the eternal God. Prophetic inspiration is not a mechanical communication dictated in

<sup>54</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical interpretation, Then and Now*, 1992, p. 127.

<sup>55</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical interpretation, Then and Now*, 1992, p. 110.

<sup>56</sup> K.J. Woolcombe: *The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology*, in *Essays on Typology*, comp. G.W.H. Lampe and K.J. Woolcombe (London: SCM, 1957), 42.

<sup>57</sup> Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, London 1961, p.94.

Hebrew by the Spirit of God, but an inner experience known during an ecstatic state when the prophet witnessed unutterable and terrifying experiences<sup>58</sup>.

From the moment of their call these men were prophets; this does not mean that they were under the influence of the prophetic charisma at every moment, but whenever they felt that they were inspired by the living God<sup>59</sup>.

The prophets were the confidants and spokesmen of God, because they made known the will of God, and events of the future. In commenting upon Amos 3:7 Theodore states:

[Accordingly we prophets do not utter our voice without reason, because we say as much as God had given us to tell. God wants the things which he intends to bring out for your own instruction as well as the events which will take place in the future to be made known to you by us the prophets<sup>60</sup>.]

Prophetic inspiration, according to the understanding of Theodore, means *human possession by the Spirit of God*<sup>61</sup>.

It was the energizing power of God's Spirit that inspired the prophets.

[The *energy* of God is called by the prophet "*word of the Lord*," because by this energy the prophets received the revelations of the things to come through a spiritual grace. This sacred revelation also is called by the prophet "*vision*" because through this they were receiving knowledge of obscure things.

Since the prophets were accepting in the depth of their own souls unspoken thoughts and images through a spiritual energy, and they were understood the instruction of what they learned as if it were someone speaking to them- during the energy of the divine spirit in their inner soul- for this reason the prophet calls it both "*vision*" and "*word of the Lord*"<sup>62</sup>.

In other words prophetic inspiration is not a communication of words but a spiritual experience, the Spirit of God awaking in the inward part of a prophet's being, thoughts and images by a spiritual perception without sensible forms. The God of the prophets is not God Absconditus but God revelatus, who reveals his will in the soul of the prophets in an inner vision. The word of God is not imposed on the human senses as an audible communication, and is not expressed in Hebrew or Aramaic. The human speech became the vehicle of inspiration. The voice it could have filled all the inhabited world<sup>63</sup>.]

[By ecstasy all of the prophets were receiving the knowledge of the most unutterable things; for it permitted them, by keeping their minds out of the view which was shown to them. The grace of the Spirit by removing their minds to a different state enabled the prophets to view the indicated vision. But whenever the prophets found themselves in this state of mind the Spirit granted them such an instruction that it created the impression that they were hearing someone speaking and teaching them<sup>64</sup>.]

---

<sup>58</sup> Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> In *Oseae* 1:1 PG 66:125-128A.

<sup>60</sup> PG 66:616.

<sup>61</sup> In *Zachariae* 13:7 PG 66: 585C.

<sup>62</sup> In *Abdiam* 1:1 PG 66:308 CD.

<sup>63</sup> In *Zachariae* 1:9-10 PG 66: 509 A.

<sup>64</sup> *Na* 1:1 PG 66:401, 404.

Theodore has been accused of having anthropomorphic understanding of inspiration<sup>65</sup>. This charge has arisen from Theodore's teaching that the prophets, during the states of inspiration, had the impression that someone was speaking to them.

## **THE OLD TESTAMENT MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS<sup>66</sup>**

The early Church did not hesitate to interpret the Old Testament as being prophetic of Christ and His church.

### **Jesus and Christological Hermeneutics**

The New Testament account of the minister of Jesus maintains that Jesus himself instructed his followers to show that his life and ministry fulfilled Scriptures<sup>67</sup>. Although Jesus interpreted the Scriptures in a manner similar to His contemporary Jewish exegetes, there also was novelty in His method and message.

This new method was a christological meaning that Jesus read the old Testament in light of Himself. For example, in John 5:39-40, it is recorded that Jesus said: "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me." And in John 5:46: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me." On the Emmaus road Jesus said, "How slow of heart (You are) to believe all that and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:26-27).

**Jesus understood the Old Testament christologically**, and it is from Him that the church derives its identification of Jesus with Israel.

Jesus saw foreshadowings of Himself and His work.

The whole of the Old Testament pointed to Him. He embodied the redemptive destiny of Israel, and in the community of those who belong to Him that status and destiny are to be fulfilled.

Because Jesus saw himself as the representative of Israel, words originally spoken of the nation could rightly be applied to him, and because Jesus is the representative of humankind, words spoken originally by the psalmist can be fulfilled by Him. (cf. John 13:18; 15:25; 19:28). For Jesus, the key to understanding the Old Testament was located in His own life and work, for everything pointed to Himself. The New Testament writers, following the pattern of Jesus, interpreted the Old Testament as a whole and in its parts as a witness to Christ.

The biblical writers saw that at almost every point His life had fulfilled the Old Testament. His birth had been foretold (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Mic. 5:2; Matt. 2:6); as had the flight to Egypt (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15); the slaughter of the innocent children by Herod (Jer.31:15; Matt. 2:18); and his upbringing in Nazareth (cf. Matt. 2:23). The overall impact of his ministry had been described (Isa. 42:1-4; Matt.12:17-21), as well as His use of parables in His teaching (Isa. 6:9-10; Ps 78:2; Matt. 13:14-15, 35). The message of Jesus' passion is filled with allusion to the Old Testament, including accounts of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5), the cleansing of the temple (Isa. 56:7; Ps.69:9; Matt. 21:13), and the events surrounding the cross (John 19:24, 28, 36-37).

<sup>65</sup> J.S. Romanidis. *Highlights in the Debate over Theodore's Christology.. The Greek Theological Review V, no. 2 (winter 1959 - 1960) p. 179 f.*

<sup>66</sup> Zaharopoulos, ch. 4, David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now, Baker Book House, 1992, ch. 1.*

<sup>67</sup> John Rogerson, Christopher Rowland, and Barnabas Lindars: *The History of Christian Theology, vol. 2, ed. Paul Avis, 3 vol.*

St. Augustine's explanation of Ps. 59: "It is difficult for one to find in the psalms any utterance except those of Christ and the Church, or of Christ alone, or of the Church alone, as much as we belong to both"<sup>68</sup>.

Theodore firmly refused to allow that the Son-the Logos and the Holy Spirit were revealed as *hypostasies* to the prophets, and in addition, he maintained that no prophet spoke concerning Christ in a direct predictive oracle. We do not know if he had changed his view in this subject, for in his "*Commentary on the Book of Psalms*" he had recognized direct predictions of Christ and had limited the number of psalms which he accepted to be directly predictions of the incarnation and the church to four (2;8;45;110)<sup>69</sup>. Theodore distinguished between these four genuinely messianic and those which are entirely historical. All others could be understood as pointing to Christ in typological sense.

The evangelists made use of this text as referring to the Lord (Mark 15:35, John 19:29), and the Lord Himself applied the utterance "the Zeal for your house shall eat me up" to Himself (John 2:17, Ps 69:10), the blessed Paul, on the other hand, talking about the Jews, quoted from the same Psalm the text, "Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, etc." (Rom.11:9, Ps 69:23); and finally the blessed Peter, speaking about Judah, quoted the utterance, "Let his habitation be made dissoluble" (Acts 1:20; Ps 69:26), although the circumstances for each case have been entirely different.

"Shall we say that this Psalm must be understood to speak at one moment of those people, at another of Him, and at another moment of somebody else? NO, the Psalmic utterance in question are referring to the apostatized Jews and reproach their ingratitude. But the use of the testimonies has been applied to analogous circumstances"<sup>70</sup>.

The surprising thing about this is that Theodore advanced this interpretation when he was dealing with Ps. 21, which is regarded even by the gospel writers as a clear foretelling of the crucified Messiah. He says, [Those commentators who claim that this Psalm is related to the Person of Christ ought to know that they can be accused of recklessness because the second half of the opening saying of the psalm does not allow such an interpretation, How could Christ ever speak of His sins? This is no doubt that the Lord pronounced the opening words of the psalm when he was hanging on the Cross in order to express His passion as well as His submission to His Father's will; but this does not mean necessarily that the psalm is related to Him. Actually, He does not use the words as if they had been accomplished by Him, but only in the sense that during the turmoil of His pathos he found the occasion to use them in a right way, because they fit suitably pious men whenever they find themselves in the agony of suffering<sup>71</sup>.]

A similar statement came from Theodore's pen when commenting on Ps 30:6 (H. 31:5), when text, according to Luke's narrative (23:46), Jesus adopted and applied to Himself at the moment of His death. The utterance, "into your hand I commit my spirit", quoted by the Lord could not be a messianic oracle, but rather a simple meaningful expression which Jesus applied to Himself.

He says, [Since the Lord has used this saying while He was fixed on the cross, we note that the prophecy did not predict that, just as some had imagined so, but on the contrary toward the peril of suffering, He adapted these words through custom<sup>72</sup>.]

<sup>68</sup> In Psalm 59, PL 36:713.

<sup>69</sup> Zaharopoulos 171.

<sup>70</sup> Psaumes 454-455.

<sup>71</sup> Psaumes 121.

<sup>72</sup> Psaumes 137-8.

In his view Old Testament does not present Christ to us, it rather prepares the way for, and leads the way to Christ<sup>73</sup>.

[The doctrine concerning the Father and the Son was kept to be promulgated by Christ our Lord, who taught His disciples that which *was unknown before*, and was not revealed to men, and ordered them to teach it to others also in saying to them plainly “Go you and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” He ordered his disciples to teach all the nations that which was lacking to make the teaching of the prophets perfect.<sup>74</sup>]

[The words of the New Testament concerning Christ were found in the prophets of the Old Testament; they were indeed found in the prophets as a symbol and a sign whereby the Jews expected Christ to appear to them as a man, but none of them was aware of the divinity of the Only Begotten Son- The Word- God<sup>75</sup>.]

Theodore was not interested in messianic eschatology and made no effort to discover Christian history in Hebrew prophecy because he knew, and so stated emphatically, that prophecies dealt primarily with the prophet’s time and the immediate future.. In many prophetic oracles or particular prophetic verses which both the New Testament authors and the fathers took as plain predictions of the Messiah. Theodore could find neither a direct messianic element nor a typological prediction of Christ, but referred them exclusively to persons and events in Israel’s national history .

The immediate result of such an interpretation was the elimination of all purely messianic exegesis from texts in which many exegetes found direct or indirect predictions of things Christian.] Zaharopoulos, p 156.

Theodore tried hard to create a new terminology which would not suggest the idea of the fulfillment of prophecies. His suggestive language adumbrated in a primitive way the current teaching of critical scholars<sup>76</sup>.

Zaharopoulos said the above mentioned statement for Theodore could not interpret the book of the Song of Songs in terms of an allegory of the Love of Christ for his Church.

## **HEADLINES OF THEODRE’S METHOD OF INTERPRETATION<sup>77</sup>**

1. Theodore seems to have employed a more Jewish exegesis than many of his contemporaries<sup>78</sup>.

2. In his study of the Old Testament, it is clear that Theodore’s knowledge of the languages did not carry him too far. Because of his deficiency in Hebrew, Theodore was forced to rely on translations. He accepted the Septuagint as the authorized version<sup>79</sup>.

3. In his interpretation of the Bible there is a remarkable freedom for research with strikingly few dogmatic preconceptions.

Following in the footsteps of Diodore, he made a strong and fearless plea for independent and critical interpretation free from encumbering official tradition, Jewish or

<sup>73</sup> Zaharopoulos p.155.

<sup>74</sup> A. Mingana (ed: *Woodrook Studies, vol V: Commentary of Theodore Mopsuestia on the Nicene Creed* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1932).

<sup>75</sup> *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, 25.

<sup>76</sup> Zaharopoulos, p. 157.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Dimitri Z. Zaharopoulos: *Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Bible*, Paulist Press, 1989

<sup>78</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical interpretation, Then and Now*, 1992, p. 109.

<sup>79</sup> Dockery, p. 110.

Christian. He maintained that such interpretation should be based largely on internal evidence from the text.

4. His criticism was particularly strong against allegorists and official biblical tradition, so far as it then existed.

5. He was courageous enough to teach that the Old Testament is not one single book but many, coming from different periods of history, and exhibiting diverse spirits and teachings. The teaching of Christ and the apostles, in his opinion, is not identical with that of the Old Testament, but essentially harmonious with it.

6. His scientific method is best seen in his literary and historical criticism of the Hebrew Canon. He was practically the only one among early Christian Scholars, not excluding even Jerome, who restricted canonicity to the Palestinian Jewish Old Testament HE also treated problems of biblical introduction in his commentaries and elsewhere with considerable freedom.

7. In his opinion all the prophets of Israel were ecstatic personalities, and this state of mind resulted from their certainty that they clearly stood in a personal relationship with the living God. Prophecy was independent of any particular state of life because it originated from a positive action of God's Spirit without the influence of a religious institution.

He showed only a very nominal interest in theories about prophecy as long-range prediction. In most emphatic terms, he taught that most of the prophets seemed to be proclaiming oracles the resolution of which appeared to be near at hand. Most oracles were given in particular historical setting.

8. The Old Testament texts lent themselves to this use because of their hyperbolic imagery and blessings and not fulfillment of prophecies.

9. In his theology of the Bible the Son- Logos and the Holy Spirit as hypostases of the Trinity were never revealed in the Old Testament.

10. Multiple meanings in one biblical text were, in his judgment, absurd. Allegorical interpretation be held to be myth & logical.

11. In his exegetical system typological interpretation is almost completely absent. In his commentary on the book of Jonah, he states that typology is not an interpretation of texts from the two testaments having an inner and mystical correspondence with each other, but merely an external comparison of events in the two testaments based on their outward resemblances and similarities. A typology must always be sustained by a New Testament proof text.

12. Much of Theodore's critical method has been suppressed for centuries. It has been revived and extended in the post-reformation era and in our times.

## **THEODORE AS AN ANTECEDENT OF MODERN CRITICISM**

In some respects, a forerunner of the modern biblical scholarship<sup>80</sup>. Zaharopoulos<sup>81</sup> states that Theodore is accepted along with Origen (185-254 ), Jerome (342-420), Ibn Ezra (1088-1167), and Spinoza (1632-1677), as an antecedent of the modern era of criticism.

---

<sup>80</sup> Zaharopoulos, p. 50.

<sup>81</sup> chapter 7.



Theodore assumed, as many modern critics do, that all prophets were ecstatic men<sup>82</sup>.

---

<sup>82</sup> Zaharopoulos, p. 98.

## HIS THOUGHTS

### THEODORE AND APOLLINARISM

Theodore in his controversial works against the Arians and Apollinarians stoutly defended the full humanity of Christ. Like Gregory of Nyssa he insisted that since sin originated in the soul, Christ must assume a human soul in order to redeem it. Whereas the Apollinarians insisted that the Word fulfilled the place of the human soul in Jesus as the vital animating force and rational directive principle. Theodore pointed out that this theory did away with any sensible weakness, like hunger, thirst and weariness in the Lord's humanity since the Godhead would thereby supply any deficiencies in the flesh. Moreover, he argued, this scheme would allow no room for Christ's fear and His need for prayer. For Theodore, the Word took to Himself not just a body but a complete man, body and soul. The soul of Christ was a real principle of human life and activity. Theodore took seriously the Lord's earthly life in which He underwent growth in mind and body and struggled with temptation<sup>83</sup>.

### THEODORE AND NESTORISM

Theodore's catecheses recently discovered him shown as a zealous shepherd and excellent homeliest. But he was accused of Nestorism and Pelagianism.

His most famous pupils were John, bishop of Antioch, Ibas of Edessa, and Nestorius.

Some scholars state that he was Nestorian before Nestorius<sup>84</sup>, as he was guided by a metaphysical moralism which constrained the complete reunion of the superior divine nature with the inferior human one.

His orthodoxy was questioned three years after his death at the Council of Ephesus (431) by Charisius who introduced a creed linked with the name of Theodore. Afterwards, Rabboula, bishop of Edessa started attacks against him by charging that in his writings Theodore denied that Mary was *Theotokos*. He ordered all existing manuscripts of Theodore's writings confiscated and burned. Acacius, bishop of Melitene in Armenia Secunda, in his letter to Sabak, Catholicos of Armenia, advises the Armenian Christians to avoid those who are "imbred with the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the evil poison of Nestorius"<sup>85</sup>.

St. Cyril of Alexandria, in a letter to Acacius wrote: "For Theodore was not the disciple of Nestorius, but rather the other way around, and both speak as from one mouth, emitting one and the same poison of heterodoxy from their hearts"<sup>86</sup>.

Cyril's judgment on Theodore was not shared by the followers of the school of Antioch. The fight was carried on by Theodore's students: by Ibas of Edessa, John of Antioch, and Theodoret.

### THEODORE AND PELAGIANISM

Theodore was accused of being a Pelagian also. His doctrine is substantially Pelagian, for he denies original sin<sup>87</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> Leo Donald Davis: *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787)*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 1990, p. 143-4.

<sup>84</sup> Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, p. 112.

<sup>85</sup> F S Sullivan : *The Christology of Mopsuestia* p. 6.

<sup>86</sup> *Ep 69 Ad Acacius PG 77: 340 AB.*

<sup>87</sup> Patrick J. Hamell: *Handbook of Patrology*, p. 113.

## BAPTISM AND UNION<sup>88</sup>

Origen understood baptism as the act of initiation into the believing community. In Romans 6, Paul described baptism as being buried with Christ, but burial logically presupposed death. Origen maintained that baptism which was not preceded by moral dying with Christ was not really baptism at all. Likewise he said Christians do not really believe that Christ has been raised from the dead unless he is risen and is living in their hearts as the embodiment of all Christian virtues<sup>89</sup>.

Theodore insisted that baptism represented the moment of the believers' transference to resurrection life<sup>90</sup>. Yet, the transference was not full reality but took place at the level of prefigurative symbol. Baptism imparted the first-fruits of the Spirit, but Theodore insisted that the real evidence to justify Paul's theological assertions could not be found in believer's present experience, but only in the future<sup>91</sup>.

For Chrysostom, the heart of the mystery of union with Christ was found in faith and baptism. At baptism there was not a change of nature, but a ruling purpose in the life of believers. This change did not guarantee a life of virtue, but it did make such a life achievable<sup>92</sup>.

## DEACONESS<sup>93</sup>

Martimort in his dealing with the "Functions of Deaconess" states that St. Epiphanius (c. 375) affirms "Deaconesses are instituted *solely* for service to women, to preserve decency as required, whether in connection with their baptism or in connection with any other examination of their bodies<sup>94</sup>."

St. Severus, while he was exiled, was asked to distinguish between the ordination of male priests and deacons, who were necessary for the holy Sacrifice, and the ordination of deaconesses. He replied:

"In the case of deaconess, especially in convents, ordination is performed less with regard to the needs of the mysteries than exclusively with regard to doing honor...

In the cities, deaconesses habitually exercise a ministry relating to the divine bath of regeneration in the case of women who are being baptized<sup>95</sup>."

Martimort states that most modern historians of the liturgy have often assumed that the evidence of *Didascalia* and the *Apostolic Constitutions* was in itself enough to establish that a practice of the involve of the deaconesses in baptisms of women was universal within the Church. However the fact is that this assumption is vulnerable to a considerable number of objections.

[The first of these objections is the silence on the subject of the baptismal catechisms, which have been preserved for us from both Antioch and Jerusalem and which date from the end of the fourth century. These baptismal catechisms are contemporaneous with the *Panarion* of St. Epiphanius. Neither St. John Chrysostom, nor Theodore of Mopsuestia nor the bishop of Jerusalem - whether St. Cyril of Jerusalem or his successor - made mention of any assistance rendered by deaconesses at baptism, even

<sup>88</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical interpretation, Then and Now*, 1992, p. 123.

<sup>89</sup> Origen: *Commentary on Romans 6:3-4*.

<sup>90</sup> Theodore on *Galatians 2:15-16*.

<sup>91</sup> Theodore on *Ephesians 2:7*.

<sup>92</sup> Chrysostom: *Homilies on Romans 6:12*.

<sup>93</sup> A.G. Martimort: *Deaconess, An Historical Study*, Ignatius Press San Francisco, 1982.

<sup>94</sup> See Chapter 5, 2A (Martimort, p. 127).

<sup>95</sup> E.W. Brooks: *The Sixth Book of the Selected letters of Severus*, vol. 2, pt. 1, London, Williams and Norgate, 1903, p. 193-194.

though adult catechumens were almost certainly still in the majority of their day. All three of these prelates, however, did specify that candidates for baptism were obliged to disrobe completely<sup>96</sup> - according to St. John Chrysostom, it was the priest who disrobed them.<sup>97</sup> They also specified that the prebaptismal anointing was done over the whole body,<sup>98</sup> “from the hair on their heads down to their toes,” according to the bishop of Jerusalem<sup>99</sup>. It appears that the bishop himself did not carry out the anointing, according to St. John: *απαν τοςωμα αλειφεισθαι παρσκευμαζει* “. <sup>100</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia was more explicit:

*“You receive the sacred anointing, while the one on whom the pontifical dignity has fallen says: ‘Be anointed, (name), in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’ Those who designated for this service must anoint the entire body.”<sup>101</sup>*

In this passage, Theodore provided no hint of who was “designated for this service.” Mitchell writes, “Perhaps those were designated for this service were the deacons and deaconess mentioned in the Didascalia and the Apostolic Constitution.”

Piédagnal states that silence here can be explained in two ways, either their participation was taken for granted to such a point that it didn’t occur to anyone to mention it, or their participation was in fact established in every area.

As for 1 Timothy 3, the mention of “the women” there seemed perfectly straightforward to all three of the Aniochain exegetes; there was apparently no doubt in their minds that “the women” about whom the apostle spoke were indeed women deacons. Theodore of Mopsuestia expressed himself on this subject as follows: that the women also should be chaste. This does not mean that the wives of deacons were established in this service, but that any women who were established in it to exercise the same office as the deacons had to be as distinguished in their zeal for virtue as those same deacons... After having mentioned cases of women given the responsibility of the diaconate, mention which is explicable because of the similarity of the names, (Paul) went to pick up the thread again of what he had been saying about deacons. And he added: “Let deacons be the husband of one wife”<sup>102</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Homelies catechetiques*, 14, 1 and 8, trans. R. Tonneau R. Devreese, ST 145, Bibl. Apost. Vaticana, PP. 401; (or John) of Jerusalem, *Catechese mystagogique* 2,2, ed. A. Piedagnel, SC 126 (Paris: Le Cerf, 1966), P. 104. Total nudity was only required for the prebaptismal anointing that preceded the immersion; for the exorcisms, the catechumens removed only their outer garment and stood barefooted upon a hair cloth.

<sup>97</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Catechese III*, in A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia Graca sacra* (Saint Petersburg, 1909), P. 173: cf. *Catechese Stravonikita Cerf*, 1957), P. 147.

<sup>98</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Catechese Stravaonikita II*, 24 Wenger, *Theodore of Mopsuestia, Homelie 14*, nn. 1, 8, ed. Tonneau-Devreese, pp. 401, 419: “anointed all over”.

<sup>99</sup> St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechese mystagogique* 2,2, P. 106: *απ ακβων κοβυφισ τριψων εως των κατατατων*.

<sup>100</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *Catechese Stravonikita II*, Wenger, P. 146. In “Catechism III” in the edition of Papadopoulos-Kerameus (P. 173) it is Christ himself who *αφραγιζεσθαι κελεμει*

<sup>101</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Homélie Cathétique* 14,8. Tanneau-Devreese, P. 419

<sup>102</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, In *Epistolas b. Pauli Commentarii*, ed. H.B. Swete, Vol. 2

(Cambridge University Press, 1882), pp. 128-29. We do not have the Greek text of this commentary, only the Latin text. Theodore goes on to say that we shouldn’t be surprised that Paul mentioned neither subdeacons nor lectors since these degrees must have been created later in response to the needs of the ministry, but they were not degrees that were conferred before the needs of the ministry, but there were not degrees that were conferred before the altar because their conferral involved no service before the altar (*ibid.* pp. 132-34).

St. John Chrysostom was briefer in his comment but no less clear:

“The women likewise.” He ment the (women) deacons. There are those who say he was talking about women in general. No, that is not the case. It would have made no sense to have inserted here something about women in general in this particular place. He was referring to those having the dignity deacons be the husband of one wife. “This too is appropriately said also of woman deacons, for this is necessary, useful and proper in the highest degree in the Church<sup>103</sup> .

Theodoret wrote:

“The women likewise,” that is to say, the (womwn) deacons (diakonous), “must be serious, no slanderes, but temperate, faithful in all things.” What he prescribed for men, (he prescribed in similar terms equally for women. For just as he required deacons to be “serious “, so he required womwn to be serious. Just as he required deacons not to be “double tongued deacons not to be “addicted to musch wine.” So he required the women to be temperate<sup>104</sup> .

Theodore of Mopsuestia, however. Certainly went counter to the prevailing confusion between deaconesses and widows. In commenting on 1 Timothy 5:9, “Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than six years of age, having been the wife of one husband”, he explained as follows:

The apostle believed himself above all to have indicated the age that must be attained by those to be received into the order of widows. Certain if it was possible to ordain people, however, paying little attention to his motive in providing this indication, have wondered if it was possible to ordain deaconesses at a younger age, higher order of widows. These people have not understood that if (the apostle) had wished to prescribe such an age rule for ordination, he would certainly have prescribed it first of all for priests and bishops. But this is manifestly not the case. Paul never believed that function should be determined in accordance with age. Timothy, after all, was very young.

The point here is that widows performed no functions, but they did receive a subsidy from the Church that was supposed to enable them to live a contemplative life. St. John Chrysostom went even farther on thid particular point : “Just as today there are what are called ‘choirs of virgins’ so formerly there were choirs of widows<sup>105</sup>.’ It is, therefore, a no longer existing institution. By his time this “order” condidted merely of the needy being helped by the Church.

## **SUBDEACONS AND LECTORS (READERS)**

The ordination of subdeacons took place, neither at the altar, nor during the encharistic celebration. Theodore of Mopsuestia in his commentary on 1 Tim 3:14-15 says,

---

<sup>103</sup> St. John Chrysostom, In Epist. 1 ad Timoth. 3, Homil. 11:1 PG 62, col. 553. Cf. J. Lecuyer, Saint Jean Chrysostome et L’ordre du diaconat, in Melanges Liturgiques offerts au R.P. Dom Benard Barend Botte (Louvain: Mont Cesar, 1972), P, 309.

<sup>104</sup> Theodoret, Inter. Epist. 1 ad

<sup>105</sup> St. John Chrysostom: In illud “Vidua eligatur non minus sexaginta annis” PG 51:323.

*We need not be surprised if the apostle seems not to have mentioned either subdeacons or lectors. The fact is that these functions were added later to the ministers necessary for the good functioning of the Church; this was because the multitude of believers demanded that these ministers be performed by others. For this reason subdeacons and lectors do not receive ordination before the altar, because they are not ministers of mysteries, properly speaking. Lectors do the readings, subdeacons prepare in the diaconicon that which is necessary for the deacons, work and watch over the lighting for the church. Only priests and deacons carry out the ministry of the mysteries as such: the priests accomplish this through the exercise of their sacerdotal ministry, and the deacons by providing service for the accomplishment of these holy things.*

## **BAPTISM AS A RETURN TO THE PARADISAL INNOCENCE**

*Since Adam was naked at first and did not blush for shame for himself, but required a garment separate from himself only after having sinned against the commandment of God and become mortal thereby, you, who are presenting yourself for the gift of holy baptism, so that you may henceforth be born of garment separate from yourself - this garment that is the index of your mortality, the convincing proof of the judgment that sentenced (man) to have to wear a garment<sup>106</sup>.*

-----  
 He is not God alone nor man alone, but He is truly both by nature that is to say God and man: God the word who assumed, and man who was assumed. It is the one who was in the form of God. The one who is in the form of God is God by nature, who assumed the form of a servant, while the one who is in the form of a servant is the one who is man by nature and who was assumed for our salvation.

The one who assumed is not the same as the one who was assumed nor is the one who was assumed the same as the one who was assumed, but the one who assumed is God while the one who was assumed is man. The one who assumed is by nature that which God the father is by nature, as he is God with God, and he is that which the one with whom he was, is, while the one who is assumed is by nature that which David and Abraham, whose son from whose seed he is, are by nature. This is the reason why he is both the Lord and son of David: Son of David because of his nature, and Lord because of the honor came to him. And he is high above David because of the nature that assumed Him (*Cat. Hom.* 8,1 Mingana).

But this clear distinction between the two natures does not result in two persons or *prosopa*:

In their profession of faith our blessed Fathers [at Nicaea] wrote... they followed the Sacred Books which speak differently of natures while referring [them] to one *prosopa* on account of the close union that took place between them, so that they might not be believed that they were separating the perfect union between the one who was assumed and the one who assumed. If this union were destroyed the one who was assumed would not be seen more than a mere man like ourselves (*Cat. Hom.* 6,3 Migana ).

<sup>106</sup> *Theodore of Mopsuestia, Homélie Catéchétique 14:8, ed. Trans. Tonneau-Devreese, p. 417-19.*

This union is never broken up, as Theodore states in another passage of the eighth homily:

In this way the Sacred Books teach us the difference between the two natures, and so it is indispensable for us to ascertain who is the one who assumed and the one who was assumed. The one who assumed is the Divine nature that does everything for us, and the other is the human nature which was assumed on behalf of all of us by the One who is the cause of everything, and is united to it in an ineffable union which will never be separated... The Sacred Books also teach us this union, not only when they impart to us the knowledge of each nature but also when they affirm that what is due to the one is also due to the other, so that we would understand the wonderfulness and the sublimity of that union that took place ( *Cat. Hom. 8,10 Migana* ).

We should also be mindful of that inseparable union which that form of man can never and under no circumstances be separated from the Divine nature which put it on. The distinction between the natures does not annul the close union nor does the close union destroy the distinction between the natures, but the natures remain in their respective existence while separated, and the union remains intact, because the one who was assumed is united in honour and glory with the one who assumed according to the will of the one who assumed him.

From the fact that we say two natures we are not constrained to say two Lords nor two sons; this would be extremely folly. All things that in one respect are two and in another respect one, their union through which they are one does not annul the distinction between the natures, and the distinction between the natures impedes them from being one. ( *Cat. Hom. 8,13 Migana* )

The clarity of these passages is extraordinary in a document which precedes the writings of Cyril of Alexandria and the definition of Ephesus, though they are not sufficient to prove Theodore's orthodoxy. There is no doubt that exaggerations and omissions are found in the system of Theodore, and his terminology, *homo assumptus* as well as his antithesis *filius Dei-Filius Davidis* sometimes objectionable. His understanding of the impeccability of Christ cannot be accepted because he thinks of *impeccantina* rather than impeccability. He lacked the true conception of the immutability of Christ and of the *communicato idiomatum*. But all these shortcomings do not entitle us to impute to him errors of which he was not guilty, nor to refuse him his due in the development of theology. It has to be kept in mind that Theodore's lifetime the doctrine of the Person of Christ, of the relation between *physis*, *hypostasis* and *prosopon* had not been formulated by any Ecumenical Council. It would be an anachronism to condemn him for failure to adhere to the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon. But Grillmeier after a careful examination of his authentic writings has come to the conclusion that nobody contributed more to the progress of Christology in the generation of theologians between 381 and 431 than Theodore of Mopsuestia. If his doctrine contained some dangerous tendencies, it is equally true that it had also positive elements which point in the direction of Chalcedon and prepared its formula (cf. fragmentum *De incarnatione* VIII 62: ed. Sachau 69).

His refutation of Apollinaris and the Logos-Sarx Christology deserves great credit. He succeeded where Athanasius failed, namely, in assigning to the soul of Christ the theo-

logical importance which is absolutely necessary. The fifth *Catechetical Homely* is very valuable for an appreciation of his contribution to the advancement of the Christological doctrine:

The partisans of Arius and Eunomius, however, say that He assumed a body but not a soul, and that the nature of the Godhead took the place of the soul.



# THE LIFE OF THEODORET OF CYRUS<sup>1</sup>

## HIS BACKGROUND<sup>2</sup>

Theodoret of Cyrus (ca. A.D. 393-466) was the last of the major representatives of the Antiochian School. He has been generally regarded as one of the great exegetes of the Greek Church. J.W. Wand described Theodoret as “*the Augustine of the East*”<sup>3</sup>. He noted his importance by saying. “He was a great pastor as well as a first-class theologian, who had won back ten thousand Marcionites to the Catholic fold<sup>4</sup>.” His contributions did not display much originality, yet he moved beyond the traditional Antiochian pattern with his openness to allegorical exegesis. His work can be described as eclectic and encyclopedic. Jean Daniélou has observed that in this sense Theodoret was more representative of all Greek learning than of just the Antiochian School<sup>5</sup>.

## PARENTAGE, BIRTH, AND EDUCATION

Theodoret spoke only sparingly of his formative years, but it is probable that he was raised in a home of moderately wealthy Christian parents. This can be deduced from his discussion of his family having employed persons to work the family land<sup>6</sup>. He also noted his mother’s work among the monks.

At Antioch at the close of the fourth century there were living a husband and wife. They were childless. The young bride was married at seventeen, at the age of twenty-three she was attacked by a painful and incurable disease in one of her eyes. One of her domestic servants, compassionating her distress, informed her that the wife of Pergamius, at that time in authority in the East, had been healed of a similar disease by Petrus, a famous Galatian solitary who was then living in the upper stage of a tomb in the neighborhood, to which access could only be obtained by climbing a ladder. The afflicted lady, hastened to climb to the recluse’s cell, arrayed in all her customary elaborate costume, with earrings, necklaces, and the rest of her ornaments of gold, her silk robe blazing with embroidery, her face smeared with red and white cosmetics, and her eyebrows and eyelids artificially darkened. "Tell me," said the hermit, on beholding his brilliant visitor, "tell me, my child, if some skillful painter were to paint a portrait according to his art’s strict rules and offer it for exhibition, and then up were to come some dauber adventurous off his pictures on the stimulus of the moment, who should find fault with the artistic picture, lengthen the lines of brows and lids, make the face whiter and heighten the red of the cheeks, what would you say? Do you not think the original painter would be hurt at this insult to his art and these needless additions of an unskilled hand." These arguments, we learn, led eventually to the improvement of the young Antiochian gentlewoman both in piety and good taste and her eye is said to have been restored to health by the imposition of the sign of the cross.. Six years longer the husband and wife lived together a more religious life, but still unblest with children. Among the ascetic solitaries whom the disappointed husband begged to aid him in his prayers was one Macedonius,

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, vol. 3, p.1ff.*

<sup>2</sup> *David S. Dockery: Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now, Baker Book House, 1992, p. 146ff.*

<sup>3</sup> *Wand: A History of the Early Church to A.D. 500, London, 1937, p. 239.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid., p. 240.*

<sup>5</sup> *Jean Daniélou, A.H. Couration and John Kent: Historical Theology, vol. 2 of the Pelican Guide to Modern Theology, ed. R.P.C. Hanson, 3 vol, 1969, p. 107-8.*

<sup>6</sup> *Theodoret: Letter 113.*

distinguished, from the simplicity of his diet, as "the barley eater." In answer to his prayers, it was believed, a son was at last granted to the pious pair. The condition of the boon being that the boy should be devoted to the divine service, he was appropriately named at his birth "Theodoret," or "Given by God."

Of the exact date of this birth, productive of such important consequences to the history and literature of the Church, no precise knowledge is attainable. The less probable year is 386 as given by Garnerius, the more probable and now generally accepted year 393 follows the computation of Tillemont.

## HIS EDUCATION

His writings evidence classical training and a familiarity with a wide spectrum of classical Greek poets, philosophers, and orators. Theodoret himself, while Bishop of Cyrus, encouraged the children of the wealthy in Cyrus to attend the schools of the rhetoricians.

Theodoret was educated in Antioch, where he spent his initial twenty-three years of life. His education also included training in Christian theology through the church, his family, and particularly through the writings of Diodore, Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

While yet in his swaddling bands the little Theodoret began to receive training appropriate to his high career, and, as he himself tells us, with the pardonable exaggeration of enthusiasm, was no sooner weaned than he began to learn the apostolic teaching. He said, "*From my mother's breath I have been nurtured on an apostolic teaching*<sup>7</sup>." Moreover, the following telling remark indicates his Christian heritage: "*Even before my conception my parents promised to devote me to God; from my swaddling bands they devoted me according to their promise and educated me accordingly*<sup>8</sup>."

The family traditionally had played an important role among Christian Antioch, a role which received its classic expression in the fourth-century work of John Chrysostom, on *Vainglory and the Education of the Young*<sup>9</sup>.

Theodoret evidences a heavy debt to the Antiochian tradition. By Theodoret's time, this instruction was conveyed to believers through catechetical instruction and preaching while those seeking ordination were often trained by learned church leaders. The indirect influence of the Antiochian giants was obviously felt by the time of Theodoret. In Letter 16, Theodoret mentioned Diodore and Theodore as his teachers (*tous didaskaltous*), but the context of the statement and the fact that Diodore was probably dead at the time of Theodoret's birth, coupled with the fact that Theodore had moved to Mopsuestia by 393, suggests that Theodoret was making reference to indirect influence rather than actually sitting under their tutelage<sup>10</sup>. Thus it was the Antiochian tradition, more than direct teaching by the Antioch theologians, that shaped Theodoret's exegesis.

Among his earliest impressions were the lessons and exhortations of Peter of Galatia, to whom his mother owed so much, and of Macedonius "the barley eaters" who had helped to save the Antiochians in the troubles that arose about the statues. Of

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Peter Brown: *The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity*, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 61 (1971), p. 80-81.

<sup>8</sup> Theodoret: Letter 81.

<sup>9</sup> On the influence of the Alexandrian and Antiochian schools in the fifth century, see H.I. Marrou, *Education in Late Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb, New York: Sheer and Ward, 1956, p. 328.

<sup>10</sup> Theodoret: Letter 16.

the latter Theodoret quotes the earnest charges to a holy life, and in his modesty expresses his sorrow that he had not profited better by the solitary's solemn entreaties. If however Macedonius was indeed quite ignorant of the Scriptures, it may have been well for the boy's education to have been not wholly in his hands. It is not impossible that he may have had a childish recollection of Chrysostom, who left Antioch in 398. To Peter he used to pay a weekly visit, and records how the holy man would take him on his knees and feed him with bread and raisins. A treasure long preserved in the household of Theodoret's parents was half Peter's girdle, woven of coarse linen, which the old man had one day wound round the loins of the boy. Frequently proved an unfailing remedy in various cases of family ailment, its very reputation led to its loss, for all the neighbors used to borrow it to cure their own complaints, and at last an unkind or careless friend omitted to return it.

When a stripling Theodoret was blessed by the right hand of Aphraates the monk, of whom he relates an anecdote in his *Ecclesiastical History*, and when his beard was just beginning to grow was also blessed by the ascetic Zeno.

At this period he was already a lector and, was therefore probably past the age of eighteen. By this time his general education would be regarded as more or less complete, and to these earlier years may be traced the acquaintance which he shows with the writings of Homer, Thucydides, Plato, Euripides, and other Greek classics. Lighter literature, too, will not have been excluded from his reading, if we accept the genuineness of the famous letter on the death of Cyril, and may infer that the dialogues of Lucian are more likely to have amused the leisure hours of a lad at school and college than have intruded on the genuine piety and marvelous industry of the Bishop of Cyrus.

Like his predecessors in the Antiochian School, Theodoret demonstrated intellectual resources of remarkable depth which enabled him to meet the challenges which needed to be addressed in exegeting the Scriptures and expounding church doctrine. It is clear from Theodoret's writing that he was quite accomplished in Greek as well as Syriac<sup>11</sup>. When working with only a modest acquaintance with Hebrew, but is said to have been unacquainted with Latin. Such a presume to be an inference froth a passage in one of his works in which he tells us "*The Romans indeed had poets, orators, and historians, and we are informed by those who are skilled in both languages that their reasonings are closer than the Greeks' and their sentences more concise. In saying this I have not the least intention of disparaging the Greek language which is in a sense mine, or of making an ungrateful return to it for my education, but I speak that I may to some extent close the lips and lower the brows of those who make too big a boasting about it, and may teach them not to ridicule a language which is illuminated by the truth.*" But it is not clear from these words that Theodoret had no acquaintance with Latin. His admiration for Western theology as well as his natural literary and social curiosity would lead him to learn it.

In his *Ecclesiastical History*<sup>12</sup> there is a possible reference to Horace. Theodoret's chief instructor in theology was the great light of the school of Antioch, Theodore of Mopsuestia. He also refers to his obligations to Diodore of Tarsus. Accepting 393 as the date of his birth and 392 as that of Theodore's appointment to his see, it would seem that the younger theologian must have been rather a reader than

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Ramsy Macmullen: *Provincial Languages in the Roman Empire*, *American Journal of Philology*, 1966, p.1-17.

<sup>12</sup> H. E. III. 16

a hearer as well of Theodore as of Diodore. The friendship of Theodoret for Nestorius may have begun when the latter was a monk in the convent of St. Euprepius at the gates of Antioch.

## HIS MONASTIC LIFE

In 416, on the death of his parents he distributed all the property that he inherited from them, and embraced a life of poverty, retiring, he was admitted to the monastery in Nicerte, a village three miles from Apamea, and seventy-five from Antioch, in the monastery of which he passed seven calm and happy years, occasionally visiting neighboring monasteries and perhaps during this period paying the visit to Jerusalem which left an indelible impression on his memory. "*With my own eyes,*" he writes, "*I have seen that desolation. The prediction rang in my ears when I saw the fulfillment before my eyes and I lauded and worshipped the truth.*" Of the peace of Theodoret's earlier manhood Dr. Newman says in a sentence less open to criticism than another which shall be quoted further on, "*There he laid deep within him that foundation of faith and devotion, and obtained that vivid apprehension of the world unseen and future which lasted him as a secret spring of spiritual strength all through the conflict and sufferings of the years that followed.*"

In his letter to the Consul Nomus, Theodoret defending himself, refers to his ascetic life, writing:

*In so many years I never took an obol nor a garment from any one. Not one of my domestics ever received a loaf or an egg. I could not endure the thought of possessing anything save the rags I wore*<sup>13</sup>

## EPISCOPATE AT CYRUS

In 423, much against his own will, he was raised to the episcopate of Cyrus, a town in the province of Euphratensis in Syria, and he ruled this see of eight hundred churches with great diligence and ability. Not the least of his pastoral cares was the eradication of heresy, for Cyrus was a stronghold of Arians, Eunomians, Marcionites, and Encratites, as well as of Jews and pagans. By 449 he could claim that not a single heretic was to be found in his diocese<sup>14</sup>.

In his letters to! statesmen and churchmen, he repeatedly mentioned to his effort in refuting the heretics, and their hatred towards him.

He wrote to the Consul Nomus,

*"All this I did not effect with impunity; many a time I my blood was shed; many a time was I stoned by them and brought to the very gates of death*<sup>15</sup>.

In his letter to Domnus, bishop of Antioch, he writes:

*"By the help of God's Grace working with me more than a thousand souls did I rescue from the plague of Marcion; many others from the Arian and Eunomian factions did I bring over to our Master Christ. I have done pastoral duty in eight hundred churches, for so many parishes does Cyrus contain; and in them, through your prayers, not even one tare is left, and our flock is delivered from all heresy and error. He who sees all things knows how many stones have been cast at me by evil heretics, how many conflicts inmost*

---

<sup>13</sup> Letter 81 to the Consul Nomus.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Halton: *Theodoret of Cyrus on Divine Providence (ACW)*, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Letter 81 to the Consul Nomus

*of the cities of the East I have waged against pagans, against Jews, against every heresy*<sup>16</sup>.

In his letter to Aphthonius, Theodritus, Nonnus, Scylacius... Magistrates of the Zeugmatensis, he writes:

*I therefore rejoice with you in your struggles on behalf of the apostolic doctrines and your following of the famous Naboth in more excellent things. Naboth for his vineyard's sake suffered most unrighteous slaughter, because he would not give up the heritage of his fathers. You are fighting, not for vineyards, but for divine doctrines*<sup>17</sup>.

He was elected Bishop of Cyrus, a small town near Antioch, a diocese for which he provided oversight with great wisdom and zeal for thirty-five years.

Cyrus or Cyrrhus was a town of the district of Syria called after it Cyrestica. The capital of Cyrestica was Gindarus, which Strabo describes as being in his time a natural nest of robbers. Cyrus lies on a branch of the river OEnoparas, now Aphreen, and the site is still known as *Korosh*. A tradition has long obtained that it received the name of Cyrus from the Jews in honor of their great benefactor, but this is more than doubtful. The form Cyrus may have arisen from a confusion with a Cyrus in Susiana. The Cyrestica is a fertile plain lying between the spurs of the Alma Dagh and the Euphrates, irrigated by three streams and blessed with a rich soil. The diocese, which was subject to the Metropolitan of Hierapolis, contained some sixteen hundred square miles and eight hundred distinct parishes each with its church. But Cyrus itself was a wretched little place scantily inhabited. The people of the town as well as of the diocese seem to have been poor in orthodoxy as well as in pocket, and the rich soil of the district grew a plentiful crop of the tares of Arianism, Marcionism, Eunomianism and Judaism. Such was the diocese to which.

Theodoret was consecrated at about the age of thirty, A.D. 423. Of the circumstances of this consecration we have no evidence. Garnerius conjectures that he must have been ordained deacon by Alexander who succeeded Porphyrius at Antioch. He was probably appointed, if not consecrated, to succeed Isidore at Cyrus, by Theodotus the successor of Alexander on the patriarchal throne of Antioch. In this diocese certainly for five and twenty years, perhaps for five and thirty, with occasional intervals he worked night and day with unflagging patience and perseverance for the good of the people committed to his care, and in the cause of his Master and of the truth. The ecclesiastic of these early times is sometimes imagined to have been a morose and ungenial ascetic, wasting his energies in unprofitable hair-splitting, and taking little or no interest in the every day needs of his contemporaries. In marked contrast with this imaginary bishop stands out the kindly figure of the real bishop of Cyrus, as the modest statements and hints supplied by his own letters enable us to recall him. As an administrator and man of business he was munificent and efficient. Stripped, as we have already learnt, of his family property by his own act and will, he must have been dependent in his diocese on the revenues of his see. From these, which cannot have been small, he was able to spend large sums on public works. Cyrus was adorned with porticoes, with two great bridges, with baths, and with an aqueduct, all at Theodoret's expense.

---

<sup>16</sup> Letter 83 to Dioscorus, Archbishop of Alexandria.

<sup>17</sup> Letter 125.

On assuming the administration of his diocese he took measures, he tells us, to secure for Cyrus "*the necessary arts*," and from these three words we need not hesitate to infer that architects, engineers, masons, sculptors, and carpenters, would be attracted "*from all quarters*" to the bishop's important works. And for this increased population it is interesting to note that Theodoret provided competent practitioners in medicine and surgery, in which it would seem he was not himself unskilled. His keen interest in the temporal needs of his people is shown by the efforts he made to obtain relief for them from the cruel pressure of exorbitant taxation. So unendurable was the tale of imposts under which they groaned that in many cases they were deserting their farms and the country, and he earnestly appeals to the empress Pulcheria and to his friend Anatolius to help them. The tender sympathy felt by him for all those afflicted in body and estate, as well as in mind, is shown in his letters on behalf of Celestinianus, or Celestiacus, a gentleman of position at Carthage, who had suffered cruelly during the attack of the Vandals, and in the admirable and touching letters of consolation addressed to survivors on the deaths of relatives. That these should have been religiously preserved need excite no surprise. Of the terms on which he lived with his neighbours we can form some idea from the justifiable boast contained in his letter to Nomus. In the quarter of a century of his episcopate, he writes, he never appeared in court either as prosecutor or defendant; his clergy followed his admirable example; he never took an obol or a garment from any one; not one of his household ever received so much as a loaf or an egg; he could not bear to think that he had any property beyond his few poor clothes. Yet he was always ready to give where he would not receive, and in addition to all the diocesan and literary work which he conscientiously performed, he spent more time than he could well afford in all sorts of extra diocesan business which his position thrust in his way. In his letter to the Consul Nomus, he writes:

*From the revenues of my see I erected public porticoes; I built two large bridges; I looked after the public baths. On finding that the city was not watered by the river running by it, I built the conduit, and supplied the dry town with water*<sup>18</sup>.

He was unceasing in his efforts to win heathen, heretics and Jews to the true faith. His diocese, when he assumed its government, was a very hotbed of heresy. Nevertheless in the famous letter to Leo he could boast that not a tare was left to spoil the crop. His fame as a preacher was great and wide, and makes us the more regret that of the discourses which in turn roused, cheered, and blamed, so little should survive. The eloquence, so to say, of his extant writings, gives indications of the force of spoken utterances not less marked by learning and literary skill. Two of his letters give vivid pictures of the enthusiasm of oriental auditors in Antioch, once so populous and so keen in theological interest, where now, amid a people numbering only about a fiftieth part of their predecessors of the fifth century, there is not a single church. We see the patriarch John in a frenzy of gladness at Theodoret's sermons, clapping his hands and springing again and again from his chair; we see the heads of the congregation receiving the bishop of Cyrus with frantic delight as he came down from the pulpit, flinging their arms round him, kissing now his head, now his breast, now his hands, now his knees, and hear them exclaiming, "This is the Voice of the Apostle!" But Theodoret had to encounter sometimes the fury of opposition. Again and again in his campaign against heretics and unbelievers he was stoned, wounded,

---

<sup>18</sup> Letter 112 to Domnus, bishop of Antioch.

and brought nigh unto death. "He from whom no secrets are hid knows all the bruises my body has received, aimed at me by ill-named heretics, and what fights I have fought in most of the cities of the East against Jews, heretics, and heathen."

## **THEODORET AND NESTORIANISM**

Theodoret's Christological opinions have been a matter of controversy, but it seems to be conceded by many scholars that he held Nestorian views at least till 434-5 and possibly until Chalcedon, but abandoned them at the latest after 451.

On one occasion Theodore gave offense while preaching at Antioch by refusing to give to the blessed Virgin the title *Theotokos*. He afterwards retracted this refusal for the sake of peace. The original objection and subsequent consent have a curious significance in view of the subsequent careers of his two famous pupils, Theodore and Nestorius. Of the school of Antioch as distinguished from that of Alexandria it may be said broadly that while the latter showed a tendency to unity of conception, the former, under the influence of the Aristotelian philosophy, favored analytic processes. And while the general bent of the school of thinkers among whom Theodoret was brought up inclined to a recognition of a distinction between the two natures in the Person of Christ, there was much in the special teaching of its great living authority which was not unlikely to lead to such division of the Person as was afterwards attributed to Nestorius. Such were the influences under which Theodoret grew up.

Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, was bound by ties of close friendship both to Theodoret and to John, Patriarch of Antioch. In August, 430, the western bishops, under the presidency of the Celestine, Bishop of Rome, assembled in council at Rome, condemned Nestorius, and threatened him with excommunication. Shortly afterwards a council of Alexandria, summoned by St. Cyril, endorsed this condemnation and dispatched it to Constantinople. Then John received from Celestine and Cyril letters announcing their common action. When the couriers conveying these communications reached Antioch they found John surrounded by Theodoret and other bishops who were assembled possibly for the ordination of Macarius, the new bishop of Laodicea. John took counsel with his brother bishops, and a letter was dispatched in their common name to Nestorius, exhorting him to accept the term *Theotokos*, round which the whole war waged; pointing out the sense in which it could not but be accepted by every loyal Christian, and imploring him not to embroil Christendom for a word. This letter has been generally attributed to Theodoret. John and his friends were distressed at Cyril's condemnation of Nestorius, and asked Theodoret to refute Cyril. The strong language employed in the letter conveys an idea of the heat of the enthusiasm with which Theodoret catered on the task, and his profound conviction that Cyril was himself falling headlong into the Apollinarian pit. An eager war of words waged over Nestorius between Cyril and Theodoret, each denouncing the other for supposed heresy on the subject of the incarnation.

Theodoret's loyal love for Nestorius led him to give his friend credit for meaning what he himself meant. While he was driven to contemplate the doctrines of Cyril in their most dangerous exaggeration, he shrank from seeing how the Nestorian counter statement might be dangerously exaggerated. Cyril, in his letter to Euoptius, earnestly disclaims both forms of Apollinarianism: the notion of a mindless manhood in Christ and the notion of a body formed out of Godhead.

Theodoret disputes with great earnestness that God cannot be said to suffer. But he thereby means Christ's divine nature against Apollinaris, which held even Deity, itself passible. Cyril on the other side against Nestorius as much contents that whosoever will deny very God to have suffered death does forsake the faith. Which notwithstanding to hold were heresy, if the name of God in this assertion did not import as it does the person of Christ, who being verily God suffered death, but in the flesh, and not in that substance for which the name of God is given him." As to the part played by Theodoret throughout the whole controversy we may conclude that though he had to own himself beaten intellectually, yet the honors of the moral victory remain with him rather than with his illustrious opponent. Not for the last time in the history of the Church a great duel of dialectic issued in a conclusion wherein of the champion who was driven to say, "I was wrong," the congregation of the faithful has yet perforce felt that he was right. The end is well known. Theodosius summoned the bishops to Ephesus at the Pentecost of 431. There arrived Cyril with fifty supporters early in June; there arrived Theodoret with his Metropolitan Alexander of Hierapolis, in advance of the rest of the Orientals. The Cyrillians were vainly entreated to wait for John of Antioch and his party, and opened the Council without them. When they arrived they would not join the Council, and set up their own "Conciliabulum" apart. Under the hot Levantine sun of July and August the two parties denounced one another on the one side for not accepting the condemnation of Nestorius, which the Cyrillians had passed in the beginning of their proceedings, on the other for the informality and injustice of the condemnation. Then deputies from the Orientals, of whom Theodoret was one, hurried to Constantinople, but were allowed to proceed no further than Chalcedon. The letters written by Theodoret at this time to his friends among the bishops and at the court, and his petitions to the Emperor, leave a vivid impression of the zeal, vigour and industry of the writer, as well as of the extraordinary literary readiness which could pour out letter after letter, memorial after memorial, amid all the excitement of controversy, the weariness of travel, the sojourning in strange and uncomfortable quarters, and the tension of anxiety as to an uncertain future. Though Nestorius was deposed his friends protested that they would continue true to him, and Theodoret was one of the synod held at Tarsus, and of another at Antioch, in which the protest against Cyril's action was renewed. But the oriental bishops were now themselves undergoing a process of scission, John of Antioch and Acacius of Beroea heading the peacemakers who were anxious to come to terms with Cyril, while Alexander of Hierapolis led the irreconcilables. Intellectually Theodoret shrank from concession, but his moral instincts were all in favor of peace. He himself drew up a declaration of faith which was presented by Paul of Emesa to Cyril, which Cyril accepted. But still true to his friend, Theodoret refused to accept the deposition of Nestorius and his individual condemnation, and it was not till several years had elapsed that, moved less by the threat of exile and forfeiture, as the imperial penalty for refusing to accept the position, than by the entreaties of his beloved flock and of his favorite ascetic solitaries that he would not leave them, Theodoret found means of attaching a meaning to the current anathemas on Nestorianism, not, as he said, on Nestorius, which allowed him to submit. He even entered into friendly correspondence with Cyril. But the truce was hollow. Cyril was indignant to find that Theodoret still maintained his old opinions. At last the protracted quarrel was ended by Cyril's death in June, 444. On the famous letter over which so many battles of criticism have been fought we have already spoken. If it was really written by Theodoret, to which



opinion my own view inclines, there is no reason why we should damn it as "a coarse and ferocious invective." If genuine, it was clearly a piece of grim pleasantry dashed off in a moment of excitement to a personal friend, and never intended for the publicity which has drawn such severe blame upon its writer. But though the death of Cyril might appear to bring relief to the Church and Empire as well as to his individual opponents, it was by no means a ground of unmixed gratification to Theodoret. Dioscorus, who succeeded to the Patriarchate of Alexandria, however Theodoret in the language of conventional courtesy may speak of the new bishop's humble mindedness, inherited none of the good qualities of Cyril and most of his faults. Theodoret, naturally viewed with suspicion and dislike as the friend and supporter of Nestorius, gave additional ground for ill-will and hostility by action which brought him into individual conflict with Dioscorus. He accepted the synodical letters issued at Constantinople at the time of Proclus, and so seemed to lower the dignity of the apostolic sees of Antioch and Alexandria; he also warmly resented the tyrannical treatment of his friend Irenaeus, bishop of Tyre. Irenaeus had indeed in the earlier days of his banishment to Petra after his first condemnation in 435 attacked Theodoret for not being thoroughly Nestorian, but Theodoret was able to claim Irenaeus as not objecting to the crucial term *Theotokos*, reasonably understood, and accepted him as unquestionably orthodox. When therefore Dioscorus, the Archimandrite Eutyches, and his godson the eunuch Chrysaphius attacked Domnus for consecrating Irenaeus to the Metropolitan see of Tyre, Theodoret indignantly protested and counselled Domnus as to how he had best reply. But Dioscorus and his party had now the ear, and guided the fingers, of the imperial weakling at Constantinople, and the deposition of Irenaeus (Feb. 17, 448) was followed after a year's successful intrigues by the autograph edict of Theodosius confining Theodoret within the limits of his own diocese as a vexatious and turbulent busybody.

Theodoret tried to defend himself, sending letters to St. Dioscorus of Alexandria, other bishops and statesmen. Here I quote some statements from these letters:

*They armed even Alexandria against me and by means of their worthy instruments are dinning into all men's ears that I am preaching two sons instead of one*<sup>19</sup>.

## **THEODORET'S HATRED TO ST. CYRIL**

On the occasion of the death of St. Cyril, Theodoret writes:

*Knowing that the fellow's malice has been daily growing and doing harm to the body of the Church, the Lord has lopped him off like a plague and "taken away the reproach from Israel." His survivors are indeed delighted at his departure. The dead, maybe, are sorry. There is some ground of alarm lest they should be so much annoyed at his company as to send him back to us, or that he should run away from his conductors like the tyrant of Cyniscus in Lucian*<sup>20</sup>.

*Great care must then be taken, and it is especially your holiness's business to undertake this duty, to tell the guild of undertakers to lay a very big and heavy stone upon his grave, for fear he should come back again, and show his changeable mind once more. Let him take his new doctrines to the shades below, and preach to them all day and all night*<sup>21</sup>.

---

<sup>19</sup> Letter 82 to Eusebius, bishop of Ancyra.

<sup>20</sup> Letter 180 of Theodoret, as some suppose, to Damnus, bishop of Antioch, written on the death of Cyril of Alexandria.

<sup>21</sup> Letter 180 of Theodoret, as some suppose, to Damnus, bishop of Antioch, written on the death of Cyril of Alexandria.

*But I am wasting words. The poor fellow is silent whether he will or no, " his breath goes forth, he returns to his earth in that very day his thoughts perish. " He is doomed too to silence of another kind. His deeds, detected, tie his tongue, gag his mouth, curb his passion, strike him dumb and make him bow down to the ground<sup>22</sup>.*

*On seeing the Church freed from a plague of this kind I am glad and rejoice; but I am sorry and do mourn when I think that the wretch knew no rest from his crimes, but went on attempting greater and more grievous ones till he died. His idea was, so it is said, to throw the imperial city into confusion by attacking true doctrines a second time, and to charge your holiness with supporting them. But God saw and did not overlook it. " He put his hook into his nose and his bridle into his lips, " and turned him to the earth whence he was taken<sup>23</sup>.*

## **THE TWELVE CHAPTERS**

*We have assembled together, and read the Egyptian Letter (presumably the letter written by Cyril to Acacius, setting forth his own view, and representing that peace might be attained if the Orientals would give up Nestorius, Mansi V. 831.); we have carefully examined its purport, and we have discovered that its contents are quite in accordance with our own statements, and entirely opposed to the Twelve Chapters, against which up to the present time we have continued to wage war, as being contrary to true religion<sup>24</sup>.*

*Let no one therefore persuade your holiness that I have accepted the Egyptian writings as orthodox, with my eyes shut, because I covet any see. For really, to speak the truth, after frequently reading and carefully examining them, I have discovered that they are free from all heretical taint, and I have hesitated to put any stress upon them, though **I certainly have no love** for their author, who was the originator of the disturbances which have agitated the world. For this I hope to escape punishment in the day of Judgment, since the Judge examines motives. But to what has been done unjustly and illegally against your holiness, not even if one were to cut off both my hands would I ever assent, God's grace helping me and supporting my infirmity. This I have stated in writing to those who require it. I have sent to your holiness my reply to what you wrote to me, that you may know that, by God's grace, no time has changed me like the centipedes and chameleons who imitate by their color the stones and leaves among which they live<sup>25</sup>.*

## **UNDER THE BAN OF THEODOSIUS AND OF THE LATROCINIUM**

Theodoret was at Antioch when Count Rufus brought him the edict. His friends would have detained him, but he hurried away. On reaching Cyrus he wrote to his friend Anatolius warmly protesting against the cruel and unjust action taken against him, and informing the patrician that Euphronius, a military officer, had traveled hard on the track of Rufus to ask for a written acknowledgment of the receipt of the edict of relegation. The letters written at this crisis by the indignant pen of the maligned scholar and saint have a peculiar value, at once biographical, literary, and

---

<sup>22</sup> Letter 180 of Theodoret, as some suppose, to Damnus, bishop of Antioch, written on the death of Cyril of Alexandria.

<sup>23</sup> Letter 180 of Theodoret, as some suppose, to Damnus, bishop of Antioch, written on the death of Cyril of Alexandria.

<sup>24</sup> Letter 171 to John, bishop of Antioch, after the reconciliation.

<sup>25</sup> Letter 172 to Nestorius.

theological. To Eusebius bishop of Ancyra he sends an important catalogue of his works. To Dioscorus, the chief of the cabal against him, he sends a summary of his views on the incarnation and the nature of our Lord, couched in such terms as might perhaps in earlier days have shortened his great controversy with Cyril. But the opponents of Theodoret were not in a mood to be moved by any formulation of the terms of his faith. Dioscorus received the letter with insult, and publicly joined in the shout of anathema which he permitted to be raised against his hated brother. The condemnation of Eutyches by Flavian's Constantinopolitan Synod had roused the Eutychian party to leave no stone unturned to secure its reversal and crush it and all who upheld it. Of the latter Theodoret was the most prominent, the ablest and perhaps the holiest. Hence he was the natural representative and personification of the doctrines that Dioscorus sought to decry and degrade. The sixth Council of Ephesus met in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin on August 8, 449. Eutyches was acquitted. Flavian was condemned. Ibas of Edessa, Domnus of Antioch, and Theodoret of Cyrus were deprived of their sees. The disgraceful scenes of violence which marked every stage of this shameful ecclesiastical gathering have been described again and again with the vivid detail rendered possible by the exactitude of contemporary narrative, but, inasmuch as Theodoret was condemned in his absence we are concerned here less with the manner in which his condemnation was brought about than with the steps he took to protest against and to reverse it. To the prisoner of Cyrus a courier would bring intelligence of the riots and tricks of the council. At last came news of the crowning wrong. On the indictment of an Antiochene presbyter named Pelagius, Theodoret was condemned as an enemy of God, a disseminator of poison, a false teacher deserving to be burnt. In support of the accusation was quoted the careful theological statement addressed by Theodoret to the monks in the Euphratensis and the Osroene which appears as Letter CLI., as well as citations from his works at large. Dioscorus described the absent defendant as a blasphemous enemy of God and the Emperor whose life had been spent in damning souls. Theodoret was sentenced not merely to deposition from his see but to degradation from the priesthood and to excommunication, and his books were ordered to be burnt. So the great council ended with the deposition of Flavian of Constantinople, Eusebius of Dorylaeum, Daniel of Carrae, Irenaeus of Tyre, Aquilinus of Biblus, and Domnus of Antioch as well as of Theodoret. Eutyches the heretic Archimandrite was restored and the brutal Dioscorus seemed master of Christendom. One word of manly Latin had broken in on the supple suffrages of the servile orientals, the "Contradicitur" of Hilarius the representative of the Church of Rome. To that church, and to its illustrious bishop, Theodoret naturally turned in his hour of need. He implored his friend Anatolius to get him permission to plead his own cause in person in the West, or if not to let him retire to his old home at Nicerte. The latter alternative was conceded. In this retreat he received many proofs of the affectionate regard of his friends and offers of more practical help than his modest necessities demanded. Thence products of his facile pen travelled far and wide. The whole series of letters written at this period gives touching testimony to the gentle and forgiving spirit of the sorely tried bishop. There is nothing of the bitterness and fierce anger which appear sometimes in the earlier controversy with Cyril. He is refined, not soured, by adversity, and, though he never approached nearer to canonization than the acquisition of the inferior title of Blessed, he appears in these dark days as no unworthy specimen of the suffering saint. The chief interest of these letters is in truth moral spiritual and theological. This, however, has been obscured by the ecclesiastical interest which has been given them by the unwarranted attempt to

represent Theodoret's letter to Leo as an "appeal" to the see of Rome in the later and technical sense of the word. Whether St. Hilary of Arles ever did or did not give the lie to his short life of strenuous protest against the growing aggrandizement of the see of Rome, there is no doubt that before his death at the age of 41 in 449 his suffragans had been released by Leo from allegiance to a Metropolitan disobedient to the Roman chair, and that Valentinian had issued an edict confirming Leo's claims and making the authority of the Bishop of Rome supreme in the West. It would be useful to maintainers of the Roman supremacy if they could adduce instances of any assertion or acceptance of similar authority in the East. So it has been said that Theodoret appealed to the Pope. In a sense this is of course perfectly true. Theodoret did appeal to the Pope. But the whole superstructure of papal supremacy, so far as Theodoret is concerned, is really based upon a poor paronomasia. The bishop of Cyrus "appealed" to the bishop of Rome as any bishop believing himself to lie under an unjust sentence might appeal to any other bishop, and as Theodoret did appeal to other bishops. It is quite true that the church of Rome had many claims to honor and regard, as Theodoret himself felicitously and opportunely points out, and that the present occupant of its throne was a man of unblemished orthodoxy and of commanding personal dignity. But to recognize these facts is a long way from admitting that this very dignified see had either de facto or de jure any coercive jurisdiction over the Metropolitans of Alexandria or of Hierapolis, to the latter of whom Cyrus was subordinate. Theodoret himself quotes the crucial passage in St. Matthew's gospel apparently without any idea that the "Petra" means all the successors of the "Petrus." What Theodoret asked from Leo was not the sentence of a superior but the sympathy and support of an influential brother. What made it so peculiarly important that he should gain the ear and the approval of Leo was that Rome had been wholly unconcerned in the intrigue which condemned him. He could have had no more idea of papal authority in the later ultramontane sense than he could of the decrees of the Vatican Council. Bound as he was to do his utmost to vindicate not so much his own position and doctrinal soundness, as the truth now trampled on by the combined factions of Alexandria and the court, he naturally turned to Leo as alike the most respected and most independent bishop of his age. (5) Leo, however, could do little or nothing to help him. Theodosius, completely under the influence of Chrysaphius and Dioscorus, was quite satisfied as to the proper constitution and equity of the Latrocinium.

## **THEODORET AND CHALCEDON**

At the Council of Chalcedon, in 451, he met at first with great opposition. A special session considered the case and insisted on his pronouncing anathema against Nestorius. With great reluctance he finally did so: "Anathema to Nestorius and to all who not confess that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God and divide into two the only Son, the only-Begotten<sup>26</sup>."

In July, 450, Theodosius, while hunting in the neighbourhood of his capital, was thrown from the saddle into a stream, hurt his spine, and a few days afterwards died. With him died the cause of Eutyches and of Chrysaphius. The eunuch was promptly executed, and at last a Council was conceded to reconsider and rectify the crimes and blunders of the Latrocinium. But the Empress and her venerable husband did not wait for the Council to undo some of the wrong done to Theodoret, and the large place he filled in the eyes and estimation of the oriental world is shown by the interest shown at Constantinople in his behalf. The decree of relegation appears to

---

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Halton: *Theodoret of Cyrus on Divine Providence (ACW)*, p. 2.

have been rescinded, and he was free to present himself at the synod. On the first assembling of the five hundred bishops, under the presidency of the imperial Commissioners, (1) the minutes of the Latrocinium were read; the presence of Dioscorus was protested against by the Roman representation as having dared to hold a synod unauthorized by Rome; and the claim of Theodoret to sit and vote, allowed both by the imperial Commissioners and by the westerns, since Leo (2) had accepted him as an orthodox bishop, was vehemently resisted by the Eutychians. He entered, but at first did not vote, and his enemies at last succeeded in wringing from him a personal anathema not only of Nestorianism, but of Nestorius. The scenes reported in detail are too characteristic alike of the earlier Councils and of Theodoret to be omitted. "The illustrious Presidents and the honorable Assessors ordered that the most religious bishop Theodoret should enter, that he might be a partaker of the Council, because the holy Archbishop Leo had restored the bishopric to him; and the most sacred and pious Emperor determined that he was to be present at the Holy Council. And on the entrance of the most religious Theodoret, the most religious bishops of Egypt, Illyricum and Palestine called out: 'Have mercy upon us! The faith is destroyed. The Canons cast him out. Cast out the teacher of Nestorius.' The most religious bishops of the East and those of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace shouted out: 'We had to sign a blank paper; we were scourged, and so we signed. Cast out the Manichaeans; cast out the enemies of Flavian; cast out the enemies of the faith.' Dioscorus, the most religious bishop of Alexandria said: 'Why is Cyril being cast out, who is anathematized by Theodoret?' The Eastern and Pontic and Asian and Thracian most religious bishops shouted out: 'Cast out Dioscorus the murderer. Who does not know the deeds of Dioscorus?' The Egyptian and the Illyrian and the Palestinian most religious bishops shouted out: 'Long years to the Empress!' The Eastern and the most religious bishops with them shouted out: 'Cast out the murderers!' The Egyptians and the most religious bishops with them shouted out: 'The Empress has cast out Nestorius. Long years to the orthodox Empress! The Council will not receive Theodoret.' Theodoret, the most religious bishop, came up into the midst and said: 'I have offered petitions to the most godlike, most religious and Christ-loving masters of the world, and I have related the disasters which have befallen me, and I claim that they shall be read.' The most illustrious Presidents and the most honorable Assessors said: 'Theodoret, the most religious bishop, having received his proper place from the holy Archbishop of the renowned Rome, now occupies the place of an accuser. Wherefore, that there be no confusion in our proceedings, allow the things which have had a beginning to be finished. No prejudice will accrue to anyone from the appearance of the most religious Theodoret. Every argument for you and for him, if you desire to make one on one side or the other is of course reserved.' And after Theodoret, the most religious bishop, had sat down in the midst, the Eastern, and the most religious bishops who were with them, shouted out: 'He is worthy! He is worthy!' The Egyptians and the most religious bishops who were with them shouted out: 'Do not call him a bishop! He is not a bishop! Cast out the fighter against God! Cast out the Jew!' The Easterns and the most religious bishops who were with them shouted out: 'The orthodox for the Council! Cast out the rebels! Cast out the murderers!' The Egyptians and the most religious bishops who were with them shouted out: 'Cast out the fighter against God! Cast out the insulator of Christ! Long years to the Empress! Long years to the Emperor! Long years to the orthodox Emperor! Theodoret has anathematized Cyril.' The Easterns and the most religious bishops who were with them shouted out: 'Cast out the murderer Dioscorus!' The

Egyptians and the most religious bishops with them shouted out: 'Long years to the Assessors! He has not the right of speech. He is expelled from the whole Synod!' Basil, the most religious bishop of Trajanopolis, in the province of Rhodope, rose up and said: 'Theodoret has been condemned by us.' The Egyptians and the most religious bishops with them shouted out: 'Theodoret has accused Cyril: We cast out Cyril if we receive Theodoret. The Canons cast out Theodoret. God has turned away from him.' The most illustrious Presidents and the most honorable Assessors said: 'The vulgar cries are not worthy of bishops, nor will they assist either side. Suffer, therefore, the reading of all the documents.' The Egyptians and the most 11 religious bishops with them shouted out: 'Cast out one man, and we will all hear. We shout out in the cause of Religion. We say these things for the sake of the orthodox Faith.' The most illustrious Presidents and the honourable Assessors said: 'Rather acquiesce, in God's name, that the hearing of the documents should take place, and concede that all shall be read in proper order.' And at last they were silent, and Constantine, the most holy Secretary and Magistrate of the Divine Synod, read these documents." One more sad incident must be given -- the demand made at the eighth session that Theodoret should pronounce a curse on his ancient friend. "The most reverend bishops all stood before the rails of the most holy altar, and shouted "Theodoret must now anathematize Nestorius." Theodoret, the most reverend bishop, passed into the midst, and said: "I have made my petition to the most divine and religious Emperor, and I have laid documents before the most reverend bishops occupying the place of the most sacred Archbishop Leo; and if you think fit, they shall be read to you, and you will know what I think.' The most reverend bishops shouted 'We want nothing to be read -- only anathematize Nestorius.' Theodoret, the most reverend bishop, said: 'I was brought up by the orthodox, I was taught by the orthodox, I have preached orthodoxy, and not only Nestorius and Eutyches, but any man who thinks not rightly, I avoid and count him an alien.' The most reverend bishops shouted out: 'Speak plainly; anathema to Nestorius and his doctrine -- anathema to Nestorius and to those who defend him.' Theodoret, the most reverend bishop said: 'Of a truth I say nothing except so far as I know it to be pleasing to God. First I will convince you that I am here, not because I care for my city, not because I covet rank. Because I have been falsely accused, I come to satisfy you that I am orthodox, and that I anathematize Nestorius and Eutyches, and every one who says that there are two Sons.' Whilst he was speaking, the most reverend bishops shouted out: 'Speak plainly; anathematize Nestorius and those who think with him.' Theodoret, the most reverend bishop, said: 'Unless I set forth at length my faith I cannot speak. I believe' -- And whilst he spoke the most reverend bishops shouted: 'He is a heretic! He is a Nestorian! Away with the heretic! Anathema to Nestorius and to any one who does not confess that the Holy Virgin Mary is the Parent of God, and who divides the only begotten Son to two Sons.' Theodoret, the most reverend bishop, said, 'Anathema to Nestorius and to whoever denies that the Holy Virgin Mary is the Parent of God, and who divides the only begotten Son into two Sons. I have subscribed the definition of faith, and the epistle of the most holy Archbishop Leo.'"

## **RETIREMENT AFTER CHALCEDON, AND DEATH**

Some doubt hangs over the question whether after his vindication at Chalcedon Theodoret resumed his labours at Cyrus, or occupied himself with literary work in the congenial seclusion of Nicerte. Garnerius makes it about the time of his quitting Chalcedon that Sporacius charged him with the duty of writing on the Heresies, and if so his five books on this subject would seem to have constituted the

first fruit of his comparative leisure. Sporacius he styles his "Christ-loving Son," and no doubt owed something to the aid of the influential "Comes domesticorum," who was present at Chalcedon, when the question of his admission to the Council was being agitated. To this period has also been referred his commentary on the Octateuch. On Dr. Newman's statement that Theodoret made over the charge of his diocese to Hypatius (one of his chorepiscopi, who had been entrusted with his appeal to Pope Leo) and retired into his monastery, and there regaining the peace which he had enjoyed in youth, passed from the peace of the Church to the peace of eternity, Canon Venables remarks that there is no authority for so pleasing a picture, and that Tillemont contradicts it altogether. Garnerius quotes his congratulation to Sabinianus on leaving Perrha as suggestive of what conduct he might have preferred. It is at least certain that during this period he received a long and sympathetic letter from Leo, from which it is clear that the Roman bishop reposed great confidence in him. It is characteristic of one in whom the mere man was merged in the theologian and ecclesiastic that, as characteristic of one in whom the mere man was merged in the theologian and ecclesiastic that, as of the year of his birth, so of the year of his death, we have no specific information, and are compelled to form our conclusions on evidence which though valuable, is not overwhelming. Theodorus Lector, the composer of the *Historia Tripartita*, in the 6th century, states that Theodoret prepared a sepulchral urn for the burial of the famous ascetic Jacob; that he predeceased Jacob; but that Jacob was buried in it. Evagrius mentions Jacob Syrus as still living when the Emperor Leo sent his Circular Letter to the bishops in 458, though then he must have been in extreme old age. And Gennadius, who lived not long after Theodoret, says that he died in the reign of Leo. The evidence is not strong. Theodoret may have died some years before Jacob. But Gennadius probably knew. On the whole we may conclude that there is some probability that Theodoret survived till 458; none that he lived longer. Like Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, to whom, in his isolation, Dean Stanley compares him, Theodoret must have expired with the cry of "Peace, Peace," in his heart, if not on his lips. Garnerius is careful to prove that he died in "the peace of the Church," and appeals in support of this contention to the laudatory testimony of Popes Vigilius, Pelagius I., Pelagius II., and Gregory the Great. The peace of the Church, in the narrower sense, has not always been accorded to holy men and women who have assuredly departed this life in the faith and fear of their Lord. In its truer and holier connotation it coincides with a state in which we trust we may contemplate the godly old man of Cyrus, forgetting the storms that had beaten now and again on the life he was leaving behind him, and stepping quietly into the calm of the windless haven of souls, -- the Peace not of man, but of God.

### **THE CONDEMNATION OF "THE THREE CHAPTERS"**

A sketch of the life of Theodoret might well be supposed to terminate with his death. But it can hardly be regarded as complete without a brief supplementary notice of the posthumous controversy which has contributed to his fame in *Ecclesiastical History*. The Council of Chalcedon was designed to give rest to the Church, and to undo a great wrong, and catholic common sense has since vindicated its decisions. But it was not to be supposed that the opinions and passions which had achieved a combined triumph at Ephesus in 449 would die away and disappear in consequence of the imperial and synodical action of 451. The face of the world was changing. The vandal Genseric captured and pillaged Rome. The Teutonic races were pushing to a foremost place, and accepting first of all an Arian Christianity. Clovis represented orthodoxy almost alone. Theodoric, the Arian Ostrogoth, mastered Italy. Then the

turning tide saw Rome once again a city of sole empire, but not the chief city. The victories of Belisarius made of Rome a suburb of Constantinople, and empire and theology swayed and were swayed by the policy of Justinian and the palace plots of Theodora. All through monophysitism had had its friends and defenders. Metropolitan, monks, and mobs had anathematized one another for nearly a century. At Alexandria Dioscorus had won almost a local canonization, and the patriarch Timotheus, nicknamed "the Cat," had left a strong monophysite party, consolidated under Peter the Stutterer as the "acephali." At Antioch Peter the Fuller had anathematized all who refused to accept the Shibboleth he appended to the Trisagion, "who wast crucified on our account." Leo, Marcian's successor on the Eastern throne, had followed Marcian's theology, and Zeno, Leo; but the usurper Basiliscus had seen elements of strength in a bold bid for monophysite support. Zeno, on the fall of Basiliscus, had attempted to atone the disunited sections of Christendom by the henoticon, or edict of unity, but the henoticon had been for years a watchword of division. Anastasius had favoured the Eutychians. And in his reign Theodoret had been twice condemned, at the synods of Constantinople and Sidon, in 499 and 512. (7) Justin I., the unlettered barbarian, supported the Chalcedonians, but in 544 Belisarius had made the Eutychian Vigilius bishop of Rome. When Justinian aspired to become a second Constantine, and give theological as well as civil law to the world, it was proposed to condemn in a fifth oecumenical council certain so-called Nestorian writings, on the plea that such a condemnation might reconcile the opponents of Chalcedon. The writings in question were the Letter of Ibas of Edessa to Maris, praising Theodore of Mopsnestia; the works of Theodore himself, and the writings of Theodoret against Cyril. These three literary monuments were known as "the Three Chapters." Of the controversy of the Three Chapters it has been said that it "filled more volumes than it was worth lines." The Council satisfied nobody. Pope Vigilius, detained at Constantinople and Marmora with something of the same violence with which Napoleon I. detained Pius VI. at Valence, declined to preside over a gathering so exclusively oriental. The West was outraged by the constitution of the synod, irrespective of its decisions. The Monophysites were disappointed that the credit of Chalcedon should be even nominally saved by the nice distinction which damaged the writings, but professed complete agreement with the council which had refused to damn the writers. The orthodox wanted no slur cast upon Chalcedon, and, however fenced, the condemnation of the Three Chapters indubitably involved such a slur. Practically, the decrees of the fourth and fifth councils are mutually inconsistent, and it is impossible to accept both. Theodoret was reinstated at Chalcedon in spite of what he had written, and what he had written was anathematized at Constantinople in spite of his reinstatement. The 13 Canon of the fifth Council runs as follows, "if any one defends the impious writings of Theodoret which he published against the true faith, against the first holy synod of Ephesus and against the holy Cyril and his twelve chapters; and all that he wrote in defence of the impious Theodorus and Nestorius, and others who held the same opinions as the aforesaid Theodorus and Nestorins. defending them and their impiety, and accordingly calling impious the doctors of the church who confess the union according to hypostasis of God the Word in the flesh; and does not anathematize these writings and those who have held or do hold similar opinions, above all those who have written against the true faith and the holy Cyril and his twelve chapters, anti have remained to the day of their death in such impiety; let him be anathema." In this condemnation the works certainly included are Theodoret's "Objections to Cyril's Chapters," some of his letters, and, among his lost



works, the "Pentalogium," namely five books on the Incarnation written against Cyril and his supporters at Ephesus, of which fragments are preserved, and two allocutions against Cyril delivered at Chalcedon in 431, of which portions exist in the acts of the fifth Council, and do not exhibit Theodoret at his best. The Council has at least preserved to us an interesting little record of the survival at Cyrus of the memory of her great bishop, for it appears that at the seventh collation, held at the end of May, notice was taken of an enquiry ordered by Justinian respecting a statue or portrait of Theodoret which was said to have been carried in procession into his cathedral town, by Andronicus a presbyter and George a deacon. (1) A more important tribute to his memory is the fact that, though it officially anathematized writings some of which, composed in the thick of the fight, and soiled with its indecorous dust, Theodoret himself may well have regretted and condemned, the Council advisedly abstained from directly condemning a bishop whose character and person were protected by the notorious iniquity of the robber council that had deposed him, the friendship of the illustrious Leo, and the solemn vindication of the church in Synod at Chalcedon, as well as by his own confession of the faith, his repudiation of the errors of Nestorius, and the stainless beauty and pious close of his long life. No better reconciliation between Chalcedon and Constantinople can be proffered than that which Garnerius quotes from the letter said to have been written by Gregory the Great, though sent in the name of Pelagius II, to the Illyrians on the fifth council, "It is the part of unwarrantable rashness to defend those writings of Theodoret which it is notorious that Theodoret himself condemned in his subsequent profession of the right faith. So long as we at once accept himself and repudiate the erroneous writings which have long remained unknown we do not depart in any way from the decision of the sacred synod, because so long as we only reject his heretical writings, we, with the synod, attack Nestorius, and with the synod express our veneration for Theodoret in his right confession. His other writings we not only accept, but use against our foes." (1)

In the (second) Council of Constantinople the writings of Theodoret were condemned. The Council condemned the "*Three Chapters*," viz.,

1. The person and works of Theodore of Mopsuestia.
2. The writings of Theodoret against Cyril of Alexandria.
3. The letter of Ibas of Edessa to Maris the Persian.

The statement of the council against the "*Three Chapters*" contains the followings

[5. The council quoted few of Theodoret's heretical writings against true faith, against the twelve chapters of holy Cyril and against the first synod of Ephesus.

It is worthy to note that the Council of Chalcedon did not use Cyril's twelve chapters against Nestorius. On the contrary, it exonerated Theodoret and Ibas who were well-known as Nestorians. H. Chadwick states, "Of the Nestorians, Theodoret and Ibas of Edessa were restored to office, While Nestorius himself was condemned as a heretic<sup>27</sup>."

It was permitted to Theodoret to attend the first session of the Council of Chalcedon, although the imperial secretary, Constantine, commenced by reading the letter sent by Theodosius to Dioscorus on 30 March 449<sup>28</sup>, which contained the

---

<sup>27</sup> H. Chadwick: *The Early Church*, 1974, p. p.203; *The author: The Coptic Orthodox Church as a Church of Erudition and Theology*, 1986, p.142.

<sup>28</sup> *Mansi VI*, 588.

injection that Theodoret of Cyrus should not be allowed to attend the Synod, except at the special request of the bishops assembled there<sup>29</sup> ...

After we had investigated in this way Theodore and his heresy, we took the trouble to quote and include in our acts a few of *Theodoret's heretical writings against true faith, against the twelve chapters of holy Cyril and against the first synod of Ephesus*. We also included some of Theodoret's writings on the side of the heretical Theodore and Nestorius so that it would be made clear, to the satisfaction of anyone reading our acts, that these opinions had been properly rejected and anathematized.]

The **thirteenth Anathema** of the (second) Council of Constantinople against the "*Three Chapters*" is:

[13. If anyone defends the heretical writings of Theodoret which were composed against the true faith, against the first holy synod of Ephesus and against holy Cyril and his Twelve Chapters, and also defends what Theodoret wrote to support the heretical Theodore and Nestorius and others who think in the same way as the aforesaid Theodore and Nestorius and accept them or their heresy and if anyone, because of them, shall accuse of being heretical the doctors of the church who have stated their belief in the union according to subsistence of God the Word; and if anyone does not anathematize these heretical books and those who have thought or now think in this way, and all those who have written against the true faith or against holy Cyril and his twelve chapters, and who persist in such heresy until they die: let him be anathema.]

=====

Theodoret, whose name means "given by God," was born and educated in Antioch, where he spent his initial twenty-three years of life. He then left for the monastery in Nicerte in 416. Theodoret spoke only sparingly of his formative years, but it is probable that he was raised in a home of moderately wealthy Christian parents. This can be deduced from his discussion of his family having employed persons to work the family land<sup>30</sup>. He also noted his mother's work among the monks. Moreover, the following telling remark indicates his Christian heritage: "Even before my conception my parents promised to devote me to God; from my swaddling bands they devoted me according to their promise and educated me accordingly<sup>31</sup>." He was elected Bishop of Cyrus, a small town near Antioch, a diocese for which he provided oversight with great wisdom and zeal for thirty-five years.

His writings evidence classical training and a familiarity with a wide spectrum of classical Greek poets, philosophers, and orators. Theodoret himself, while Bishop of Curus, encouraged the children of the wealthy in Cyrus to attend the schools of the rhetoricians. His education also included training in Christian theology through the church, his family, and particularly through the writings of Diodore, Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. He said, "From my mother's breath I have been nurtured on A Apostolic teaching<sup>32</sup>. The family traditionally had played an important role among

---

<sup>29</sup> Sellers: *The Council of Chalcedon*, spck 1961, p.104-5.

<sup>30</sup> Theodoret: *Letter 113*.

<sup>31</sup> Theodoret: *Letter 81*.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Peter Brown: *The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity*, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 61 (1971), p. 80-81.

Christian Antioch, a role which received its classic expression in the fourth-century work of John Chrysostom, on *Vainglory and the Education of the Young*<sup>33</sup>.

Theodoret evidences a heavy debt to the Antiochian tradition. By Theodoret's time, this instruction was conveyed to believers through catechetical instruction and preaching while those seeking ordination were often trained by learned church leaders. The indirect influence of the Antiochene giants was obviously felt by the time of Theodoret. In Letter 16, Theodoret mentioned Diodore and Theodore as his teachers (*tous didaskaltous*), but the context of the statement and the fact that Diodore was probably dead at the time of Theodoret's birth, coupled with the fact that Theodore had moved to Mopsuestia by 393, suggests that Theodoret was making reference to indirect influence rather than actually sitting under their tutelage<sup>34</sup>. Thus it was the Antiochian tradition, more than direct teaching by the Antioch theologians, that shaped Theodoret's exegesis.

## **HIS HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH**

Theodoret's framework for his exegetical efforts was effected by two factors:

1. His pastoral orientation.
2. His theological concerns. Like St. Jerome and St. Augustine Theodoret developed an eclectic hermeneutical practice that sometimes emphasized the literal and sometimes the allegorical, but always the theological<sup>35</sup>.

Theodoret, who was active a few decades after Theodore and John Chrysostom, wrote several specifically exegetical works, interest us especially because, while clearly of an Antiochian persuasion, he takes pains to moderate the rigid literalism of Diodore and Theodore, making room for the traditional Christological interpretation of the Old Testament.

The Commentary on the Song of Songs represents the high point of Theodoret's divergence from Theodore and thus likewise the greatest reproachment to Alexandrian hermeneutics. Without naming him specifically, his intention is to read against Theodore's claim that the Song of Songs was purely a profane love song and he recognized its traditional Christological and ecclesiastical significance. Given too the clearly homogeneous character of the love-song of the bride and groom, it must rarely be interpreted in a similarly homogeneous manner i.e. in a completely allegorical sense.

Theodoret's exegesis, like that of Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine, was shaped by his pastoral context. In a letter addressed to the monks of Constantinople (ca. 449), Theodoret commented on his labors as Bishop of Cyrus:

*My task has been to contend on behalf of the apostolic decrees to bring the pasture of instruction to the Lord's flocks, and to this end I have written 35 books interpreting the divine scriptures and proving the falsehood of the heresies...not on behalf of a duality of sons, but of the Only-Begotten Son of God, against the heathen, against the Jew, I have never ceased to struggle, trying to convince the heathen that the Eternal Son of the ever living God is*

---

<sup>33</sup> On the influence of the Alexandrian and Antiochian schools in the fifth century, see H.I. Marrou, *Education in Late Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb, New York: Sheet and Ward, 1956, p. 328.

<sup>34</sup> Theodoret: Letter 16.

<sup>35</sup> David S. Dockery: *Biblical Interpretation, Then and Now*, Baker Book House, 1992, p.128.

*creator of the universe, and the Jew that about him the prophets uttered their predictions*<sup>36</sup>.

Theodoret was dependent almost entirely on the Greek text for his commentaries. Occasional references to a Hebrew or a Syriac reading indicate some familiarity with Hebrew and Syriac texts, but Theodoret showed no interest in confirming a text's reading based on the *hebraica veritas* (reliability of the Hebrew). Theodoret apparently utilized the original text most frequently to clarify an obscure Greek word or biblical name or to illuminate a discrepancy between versions of the Septuagint or between the Septuagint and Syriac. There are a few examples where Theodoret used the Hebrew as a corrective device in order to establish a more defensive text. He was certainly aware that the Hebrew lacked many psalm titles that appeared in the Septuagint. Yet, he consistently upheld the inclusion of the titles and emphasized the heading *eis to telos* (toward the completion or unto the end) as joining to the connection between the psalmist's words and the Christian age. The bishop's work as textual critic indicates that his primary work as an interpreter was to explain and clarify the text for a Christian readership, underlying his pastoral concerns and frameworks<sup>37</sup>.

Theodoret's primary audience for his biblical interpretation was clearly Christian and primarily the believers in his diocese. The fundamental reason for writing the commentaries was Theodoret's concern to nourish the flock. His commentaries were for the purpose of elucidating and the faith of his Christian readers. Such a purpose placed him in a path more consistent with the aspect of the Antiochian tradition shaped by the preacher John Chrysostom than that of Theodore of Mopsuestia. Theodore established this distinction, as noted by Maurice F. Wiles:

✠ He is God, and we are men, and the difference between God and man is incalculable<sup>38</sup>.

### **Theodoret**

Theodoret states: [Those who believe that after the union there was one nature of Godhead and manhood destroy by this reasoning the peculiarities of the nature; and their destruction involves the denial of either nature. For the confusion of the united (natures prevents us from recognizing either that the flesh is flesh or that God is God)<sup>39</sup>.]

### **DEACONESS**

*Cenchreae is a great agglomeration adjoining Corinth. The effectiveness of the preaching is to be admired: in a very short period of time, not only were the cities filled with piety but the countryside around them as well. The Church assembly at Cenchreae was already so considerable as to have a woman deacon, prominent and noble. She was so rich in good works performed as to have merited the praise of Paul*<sup>40</sup>.

---

<sup>36</sup> Theodoret: Letter 146.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. C. Thomas McCollough: Theodoret of Cyrus as Biblical Interpreter and the Presence of Judaism in Later Roman Syria (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1984), p.117-18.

<sup>38</sup> Dial. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Dial. 3 ed. Schulze, I, p 268.

<sup>40</sup> Theodoret, Interp. Epist. Ad Rom. 16:1. PG 85, cols. 217D, 220A

Theodoret went on to comment on the hospitality she must have extended to St. Paul. According to Theodoret, only large communities had deaconesses. Was he trying to suggest that the dignity accorded to her - to use the phraseology of St. John Chrysostom - was only conferred upon noble people, and that being “rich in a good works” presupposed being just rich, plain and simple?