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Patrology II

Radical, Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



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PATROLOGY II

Josephus, Flavius (A.D. 37 or 38-circa 101), Jewish historian, born in Jerusalem of both, royal and priestly lineage. His original name was Joseph Ben Matthias. A man, both learned and worldly, he was a member of the Pharisees, and also a public figure, who, before the Jewish revolt against Rome (66), had made friends at the court of Emperor Nero.

The parts played in the revolt by the Zealots, and their opponents, the Pharisees, who considered it futile, led to ambiguity in the historical record of the role of Josephus, a Pharisee, in the conflict. His own writings present two conflicting accounts of his mission in the province of Galilee (in what is now, Israel). According to one account, he took command of the Jewish forces, there, to lead the Galilean phase of the revolt, but the other later account, contends that he sought to subdue the revolt, rather than lead it. Whichever story may be true, apparently he prepared Galilee for the coming onslaught, and in 67, valorously repulsed the advance of Vespasian, the Roman general, who was soon to become emperor, defending the fortress of Jotapata for 47 days, before surrendering. Josephus would have been sent as a prisoner to Nero had he not had the wit to prophesy that his captor, Vespasian, would himself, one day, be emperor. This prophecy accorded with Vespasian's ambitions, and the general kept Josephus with him, thus probably saving his life. While Vespasian's prisoner, Josephus saw the subjugation of Galilee and Judea. Subsequently freed, he adopted Vespasian's family name, Flavius. Accompanying another future emperor, Vespasian's son, Titus, he witnessed Titus's siege of Jerusalem, in 70. Thereafter, enjoying imperial patronage, under Titus and his brother's successor, Domitian, Josephus lived until his death, in Rome, and devoted himself to his writing.

His works include, *The Jewish War* (in 7 books), which he wrote to dissuade his people and other nations from courting annihilation by further revolt against an all-powerful Rome; *Jewish Antiquities* (in 20 books), a history of the Jews, from the creation to 66,

that eloquently demonstrates how his people had flourished under the Law of God; an autobiography, *Life*; and *Against Apion*, a refutation of charges against the Jews, made by the anti-Semitic Greek grammarian, Apion (flourished 1st century) and other like-minded writers. The last named, is invaluable, because Josephus recapitulates writings on Jewish history, that are no longer extant.

Justin Martyr, Saint (100?-165?), philosopher, theologian, and one of the earliest apologists of the Christian Church, who sought to reconcile Christian doctrine and pagan culture. He was born in Flavia Neapolis (now Nablus, West Bank), a Roman city, built on the site of the ancient Shechem, in Samaria. His parents were pagans. As a young man, Justin devoted himself to the study of Greek philosophy, notably the writings of Plato and the Stoic philosophers. Justin first encountered Christianity, in Ephesus. After his conversion to the religion, he went to Rome, where he established a school. He died in Rome, as a martyr, during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius.

The books that are ascribed to Justin, with certainty, are the two *Apologies for the Christians*, which comprise an erudite defense of Christians against charges of atheism and sedition in the Roman state, and the *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, which professes to be the record of an actual discussion at Ephesus. The *Apologies* were addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius, but they were intended primarily for, the educated public of the provinces. Their central theme is the divine plan of salvation, fulfilled in Christ the Logos. In Justin's view, Christianity was the final revelation toward which Greco-Roman philosophy had gradually been moving. He was the first writer of the early Church to introduce philosophical terminology into the discussion of Christian teachings. Although Justin was not an original thinker, his works are valuable for the information they give about the 2nd-century Christian Church.

Lactantius

Lucius Caelius (or Caecilius?) Firmianus Lactantius was an early Christian author who wrote in Latin (c. 240 - c. 320 A.D.). Lactantius a native of North Africa, was a pupil

of Arnobius (according to Methodius, *Chastity* 9.2) and taught rhetoric in various cities of the Eastern Roman Empire, ending in Constantinople. He wrote apologetic works explaining Christianity in terms that would be palatable to educated pagans, while defending it from pagan philosophers. His *Divinae Institutiones* (“Divine Institutions”) is an early example of a systematic presentation of Christian thought. He was considered somewhat heretical after his death, but Renaissance humanists picked up renewed interest in Lactantius, more for his good elaborately rhetorical Latin style, than for his theology.

Lactantius was born a pagan and in his early life taught rhetoric in his native place, which may have been Cirta in Numidia, where an inscription mentions a certain, L CAECILIUS FIRMIANUS.

Lactantius had a successful public career, at first. At the request of Emperor Diocletian, he became an official professor of rhetoric in Nicomedia, the voyage from Africa described in his poem, *Hodoeporicum*. Having converted to Christianity, he would have been dismissed after the publication of Diocletian’s first, “Edict against the Christians” (February 24, 303), and as a Latin *rhetor*, he lived in poverty according to Jerome and eked out a living by writing, until Constantine became his patron. The new emperor appointed the aged scholar, 311 or 313; he had to find a home elsewhere. The friendship of the Emperor Constantine raised him from penury and tutor, in Latin, to his son, Crispus, whom Lactantius may have followed to Trier in 317, when Crispus was made Caesar and sent to the city. Crispus was put to death, in 326, but when Lactantius died, and in what circumstances, is not known.

Like so many of the early Christian authors, Lactantius depended on classical models and true to the requirements of his profession, he is polished, rather than profound. He well merit’s the designation of the “Christian Cicero” (*Cicero Christianus*) bestowed on him, by the humanists, for he exhibits many of the shortcomings, as well as the graces of his master.

Works

* *De Opificio Dei*, (“The Works of God”), an apologetic work, written in 303 or 304, during Diocletian’s persecution, and dedicated to a former pupil, a rich Christian named, Demetrianus. The apologetic principles underlying all the works of Lactantius are well set forth in this treatise.

* *The Divine Institutions (Divinarum Institutionum Libri VII)*, written between 303 and 311. This is the most important of the writings of Lactantius. As an apologetic treatise, it was intended to point out the futility of pagan beliefs and to establish the reasonableness and truth of Christianity, as a response to pagan critics. It was also the first attempt at a systematic exposition of Christian theology, in Latin, planned on a broad scale, sufficiently broad enough, to silence all opponents. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* said, “The strengths and the weakness of Lactantius are nowhere better shown, than in his work. The beauty of the style, the choice and aptness of the terminology, cannot hide the author’s lack of grasp on Christian principles and his almost utter ignorance of Scripture.”

* An *Epitome* of the “Divine Institutions,” is a summary treatment of the subject.

* *De Ira Dei* (“On the Wrath of God”), directed against the Stoics and Epicureans, dealing with anthropomorphic deities.

* *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, has an apologetic character, but has been treated as a work of history, by Christian writers. The point of the work is to describe the frightful deaths of the persecutors of Christians: Nero, Domitian, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and the contemporaries of Lactantius himself, Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Maximus. This work is taken as a chronicle of the last and greatest of the persecutions, in spite of the moral point each anecdote has been arranged to tell. Here, Lactantius preserves the story of Constantine I’s, vision of the labarum, before his conversion to Christianity. The full text is found in only one manuscript, which bears the title, *Lucii Caecilii liber ad Donatum Confessorem de Mortibus Persecutorum*.

* Widely attributed to Lactantius, although it shows no overt sign of Christianity, the charming poem, *The Phoenix (de Ave Phoenix)* tells the story of the death and rebirth of that mythical bird. That poem, in turn, appears to have been the principal source for

the famous Anglo-Saxon poem to which the modern title, *The Phoenix*, is given.

Leo I, Saint, called The Great (400?-461), Pope from 440 to 461, the greatest administrator of the ancient Church, who established the primacy of the bishop of Rome over other bishops. Leo was probably born in the Tuscany region of Italy, and he was active in helping his predecessor, Sixtus III, resist Nestorianism and Pelagianism, in Rome, long before his election to the papacy. He was elected bishop of Rome while in Gaul on a diplomatic mission for the imperial government; he was consecrated upon his return to Rome on September 29, 440. He concentrated on creating a strong central government in the Church and suppressing heresy. Leo asserted his authority throughout the West. In Italy, he maintained firm control over the bishops, including the powerful see of Milan. In Africa, which was traditionally protective of its ecclesiastical autonomy, Leo's rulings on various issues were actively sought and eagerly accepted. In Spain, which was dominated by Visigoths, who embraced Arianism, Leo answered the bishops' appeal for help against an outbreak of Priscillianism, an esoteric Spanish heresy, that shared some of the traits of Dualism and modal Monarchianism. When Bishop Hilary of Arles challenged Leo in a synod in Rome, Leo had him confined to his diocese by imperial decree. In 455, Leo personally confronted Attila the Hun, near the northern Italian city of Mantua, and persuaded him not to sack Rome. Although Leo was unable to prevent the sack of the city of Gaiseric and his Vandals three years later, he nevertheless succeeded, in saving its inhabitants from a general massacre.

Leo was equally assertive in the East, although he did not always receive the same Imperial, or even Episcopal, support. His greatest triumph, there, was the Council of Chalcedon in 451, over which his own legates presided. The Council was summoned to condemn the teachings of the Byzantine monk, Eutyches, whose views had been endorsed by the "Robber Council," held at Ephesus, in 449. Eutyches embraced a form of Monophysitism, the doctrine that Christ has only one (divine) nature. Leo's views on the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures were formulated in his *Tome* (449) - his doctrinal letter to the patriarch of Constantinople - that was endorsed by the

Council of Chalcedon with the famous words, "Peter has spoken through Leo."

Leo's surviving sermons and letters convey clear formulations of belief and discipline, without being otherwise, exceptional. His great administrative accomplishment was to fuse ecclesiastical procedures and papal primacy with Roman law. He died, in Rome, on November 10, 461, and his feast day is November 10. Leo was proclaimed, a Doctor of the Church, in 1574.

Liguori, Saint Alphonsus (1696-1787), Italian prelate and theologian, born in Naples. In 1732, he founded the missionary congregation of Liguorians, or Redemptorists, in order to spread religion among the poor. He was appointed bishop of Sant' Agata dei Goti, near Naples, in 1792. Liguori wrote, on almost all theological subjects, and his *Theologia Moralis* (Moral Theology, 1753) has been reprinted many times. *Le Glorie di Maria* (The Glories of Mary, 1750) is the best known of his popular works. Liguori developed a principle in casuistry, known as equiprobabilism, whereby in matters of conscience, the laxer course may be followed when opinions, on both sides, are equally probable. He was canonized in 1839, designated a Doctor of the Church in 1871, and declared a patron of confessors and moralists in 1950. His feast day is August 2.

Marcion (circa 100-160), founder of a Christian sect, born in Sinope, Pontus (now Sinop, Turkey), and probably, the son of the bishop of that city. He went to Rome about 140. Several years later, differing with the established Christian Church, on doctrine, he was excommunicated as a heretic and founded his own sect. The Marcionite sect, highly ascetic and celibate, grew rapidly until it was second in strength only to the original Church; it had Churches and an Episcopal hierarchy and practiced the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, the latter without the use of wine.

Marcion rejected the Old Testament and almost all of the New Testament, including the accounts of the incarnation and the resurrection, basing his teachings on ten of the Epistles of St. Paul and on an altered version of the Gospel of Luke. His tenets included a belief in the eternity of matter, which was later developed by the Greek teacher,

Hermogenes and a dualistic interpretation of God, whereby God is divided into the just God of Law, who was the Creator of the Old Testament, and the good God, the infinitely superior deity, revealed by Jesus Christ. Marcionism flourished in the West, until about the 4th century, when it was probably absorbed, by Manichaeism; traces of it remained in the East into medieval times. An important rival to the established Church, Marcionism was attacked by such Christian writers as Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian.

Saint Maximus (d. 250) is a Christian saint and martyr. Evidence for his story comes from an *acta* that is part of the “proconsular acts,” a text created by the clerk of the tribunal of the Roman Catholic Church that established the martyrology.

The emperor, Decius published a decree ordering the veneration of busts of the deified emperors. Failure to pay homage to these idols would be punished by torture. The merchant, Maximus, originally from Asia, was called before the consul, Optimus. Maximus provided his name, profession, and identity, as a Christian.

When Optimus ordered Maximus to “Sacrifice to save your life; if not I shall make you die in torment,” Maximus answered, “I have always wished it; it is in order to pass out of this short and miserable life to the life eternal, that I have declared my faith.”

Maximus was tortured on the rack and by being beaten with rods, and he would not recant. Therefore, Optimus ordered him to be stoned. Accordingly, on May 4, 250, Maximus was led outside the city walls and stoned to death.

His feast day in the Roman Catholic Church, is April 30.

Felix Marcus Minucius was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of the Latin apologists for Christianity.

Of his personal history, nothing is known, and even the date at which he wrote can be only approximately ascertained. Jerome (*De vir. ill.* 58) speaks of him as, “*Romae insignis causidicus*,” but in that he is probably only improving on the expression of Lactantius (*Inst. div.* v. 1) who speaks of him as, “*non ignobilis inter causidicos loci*.” He is now exclusively known by his *Octavius*, a dialogue on Christianity between the pagan, Caecilius Natalis and the Christian Octavius Januarius, a provincial lawyer, the friend and fellow-student of the author. The scene is pleasantly and graphically laid on the beach at Ostia on a holiday afternoon, and the discussion is represented as arising out of the homage paid by Caecilius, in passing, to the image of Serapis. His arguments for paganism (possibly modeled on those of Celsus) are taken up seriatim by Octavius, with the result that the assailant is convinced. Minucius, himself plays the part of umpire. The form of the dialogue is modeled on the *De natura deorum* and *De divinatione* of Cicero and its style is both, vigorous and elegant, if at times, not exempt from something of the affectation of the age. Its Latinity is not of the specifically Christian type. If the doctrines of the Divine unity, the resurrection, and future rewards and punishments be left out of account, the work has less the character of an exposition of Christianity, than of a philosophical and ethical polemic, against the absurdities of Polytheism. While it thus has much in common with the Greek Apologies, it is full of the strong common sense, that marks the Latin mind. Its ultimate appeal is to the fruits of faith.

The *Octavius* is admittedly earlier than Cyprian’s *Quod idola dei non sint*, which borrows from it; how much earlier can only be determined by settling the relation in which it stands to Tertullian’s, *Apologeticum*. Since A. Ebert’s exhaustive argument, in 1868, repeated in 1889, the priority of Minucius has been generally admitted; the objections are stated in the *Dict. Chr. Biog.* article by G. Salmon. Editions: F. Sabaeus-Brixianus, as Bk. viii. of Arnobius (Rome, 1543); F. Balduinus, first separate edition (Heidelberg, 1560); Migne, *Patrol. Lat.* iii. 239; Halm in *Corp. Scr. Lcd. Lat.* (Vienna, 1867); HA Holden. Translations: R. E. Wallis, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. iv.; AA Brodribb’s, *Pagan and Puritan*.

Novatian (200?-258?), Roman theologian, who became the second anti-Pope in 251. A leader among the Roman clergy, Novatian espoused a rigorism in Church discipline that

was akin to Montanism.

After the martyrdom of Pope Fabian, in 250, during the persecutions of Emperor Decius, the Roman Church postponed electing a successor. In 251, the Church elected Cornelius, as Pope. Cornelius advocated the forgiveness and re-admittance of Christians who had committed apostasy under persecution. Novatian, however, believed that after baptism there could be no forgiveness for grave sins. He had, himself, consecrated Pope by three bishops from southern Italy and went into schism with his followers; in 251, they were excommunicated by Cornelius. The Novatianists established their own Church, which endured, until they were formally reunited with the Catholic Church by the Council of Nicaea, in 325. Novatian himself is thought to have been martyred during the persecutions of the Roman Emperor Valerian.

Novatian was the first Roman theologian to write in Latin. Two of his nine known treatises have survived: *On the Trinity* and *On Jewish Foods*.

Latin NOVATIANUS, the second anti-Pope in papal history, in 251. He was the first Roman theologian to write in Latin and inspired the Novatian Schism -- a break from the Christian Church, by rigorists, who condemned apostasy. (His name was certainly Novatianus, not Novatus, as given by the Greeks).

Novatian was ordained, at Rome, and about 250, became a leader of the Roman clergy, in whose name he wrote two letters to Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, concerning the *lapsi* -i.e., those early Christians, who renounced their faith, during the persecutions. He had shared with Cyprian, a moderate attitude toward apostates, but, when Cornelius was elected Pope, in 251, Novatian became the champion of rigorism. By then, he had a high reputation, as a learned theologian. While a majority favored Cornelius, as Pope, a minority declared itself for Novatian, and he set himself up, as anti-Pope. His rigorist doctrine was uncompromising, and, by denying the administration of penance, he refused to admit the *lapsi* into the Church. Novatian and his followers were excommunicated at a synod, convened by Cornelius, in 251.

Although Cyprian and Cornelius joined forces against the Novatianists, the schism developed into a sect, that spread across the empire and lasted for several centuries. Despite opposition, Novatian managed to build his own Church with his own bishops throughout Christendom. During the persecution of Christians, from 251 to 253, he fled Rome. The assertion of the Church historian, Socrates (d. c. 445), that Novatian was martyred about 258, under the Roman Emperor Valerian, appears confirmed by the inscription, “novatiano . . . martyri” found in a cemetery near San Lorenzo, Rome, in 1932.

Novatian’s apologetic *De trinitate* (“On the Trinity”), considered to be his most important work, summarizes and defends the Orthodox doctrine of the Trinity against contemporary heresies. In *De cibis Judaicis* (“Concerning Jewish Foods”), he points out, that dietary laws and other practical prohibitions of the Old Testament, must be understood Spiritually, rather than literally. In *De spectaculis* (“On Spectacles”), he condemns Christians who attended public games, and, in *De bono pudicitiae* (“Concerning the Value of Chastity”), he praises chastity.

Origen (circa 185-c. 254), celebrated Christian writer, teacher, and theologian of antiquity.

Also known as Origenes and surnamed, Adamantius, Origen was born in Alexandria, Egypt. According to standard Church histories, he was a student of Clement of Alexandria. Origen taught in the city for about 28 years, instructing Christians and pagans. He composed his major dogmatic treatises there and began his many critical works.

Visiting in Palestine, in 216, Origen, a layperson, was invited by the bishop of Jerusalem and the bishop of Caesarea, to lecture in the Churches on the Scriptures. About 230, the same bishops ordained him, a presbyter, without consulting Origen’s own bishop, Demetrius of Alexandria. Demetrius objected, and two synods were held, at Alexandria, the first forbidding Origen to teach there and the second, depriving him of his priesthood.

Origen, then settled, at Caesarea, and founded a school of literature, philosophy, and theology. During the persecutions of the Christians, in 250, under Emperor Decius, Origen was imprisoned and tortured. Released in 251, but weakened by injuries, he died about 254, probably in Tyre.

Origen may well have been the most accomplished Biblical scholar of the early Church. His accomplishments, as an exegete and student of the text of the Old Testament, were outstanding. He was a voluminous writer, whose works include letters, treatises in dogmatic and practical theology, apologetics, exegeses, and textual criticism. *Contra Celsum* (Against Celsus), is a closely reasoned long apologetic work, refuting arguments advanced by the philosopher, Celsus, an influential 2nd-century Platonist of Alexandria, and perhaps, the first serious critic of Christianity.

In addition, Origen is regarded as, the father of the allegorical method of Scriptural interpretation. He taught the principle of the threefold sense, corresponding to the threefold division of the person into body, Spirit, and soul, and which was then a common concept. He was a Platonist and endeavored to combine Greek philosophy and the Christian religion. He developed the idea of Christ, as the Logos, or Incarnate Word, who is with the Father from eternity, but he taught also, that the Son is subordinate to the Father, in power and dignity. This latter doctrine and others, such as that of the pre-existence of the soul, were severely criticized by many of Origen's contemporaries and by subsequent writers. Theories that were developed from his doctrines became the subject of considerable theological controversy during the Middle Ages.

Origen

b. c. 185, probably Alexandria, Egypt

d. c. 254, Tyre, Phoenicia [now Sur, Lebanon]

Latin, IN FULL OREGENES ADAMANTIUS, the most important theologian and Biblical scholar of the early Greek Church. His greatest work is the *Hexapla*, which is a synopsis

of six versions of the Old Testament.

Life

Origen was born of pagan parents, according to the Neoplatonist philosopher, Porphyry, but of Christian parents, according to the ecclesiastical historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, whose account is probably more accurate. Eusebius stated, that Origen's father, Leonides, was martyred in the persecution of 202, so that Origen had to provide for his mother and six younger brothers. At first, he lived in the house of a wealthy lady. He then earned money, by teaching grammar and lived a life of strenuous asceticism. Eusebius added, that he was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, whom he succeeded, as head of the Catechetical school under the authority of the bishop, Demetrius. Eusebius also alleged, that Origen, as a young man, castrated himself so as to work freely in instructing female catechumens; but this was not the only story told, by the malicious, about his extraordinary chastity, and thus, it may merely have been hostile gossip. Eusebius' account of Origen's life, moreover, bears the embellishments of legends of saints, and needs to be treated with this in mind.

According to Porphyry, Origen attended lectures, given by Ammonius Saccas, the founder of Neoplatonism. A letter of Origen mentions his "teacher of philosophy," at whose lectures he met Heraclas, who was to become his junior colleague, then his rival, and who was to end as bishop of Alexandria, refusing to hold communion with him. Origen invited Heraclas to assist him with the elementary teaching, at the Catechetical school, leaving himself free for advanced teaching and study. During this period, (from c. 212), Origen learned Hebrew and began to compile his *Hexapla*.

A wealthy Christian, named Ambrose, whom Origen converted from the teachings of the heretical Valentinus, and to whom he dedicated many of his works, provided him with shorthand writers. A stream of treatises and commentaries began to pour from Origen's pen. At Alexandria, he wrote *Miscellanies* (Stromateis), *On the Resurrection* (*Peri anastaseos*), and *On First Principles* (*De principiis*). He also began his immense commentary on St. John, written to refute the commentary of the Gnostic follower of

Valentinus, Heracleon. His studies were interrupted by visits to Rome (where he met the theologian, Hippolytus), Arabia, Antioch, and Palestine.

Because of his reputation, Origen was much in demand, as a preacher, a circumstance that provoked the disapproval of Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, who was anxious to control this free lay teacher and especially angry, when Origen was allowed to preach at Caesarea Palestine. In about 229-230, Origen went to Greece to dispute with another follower of Valentinus, Candidus. On the way, he was ordained presbyter, at Caesarea. The Valentinian doctrine that salvation and damnation are predestinate, independent of volition, was defended by Candidus, on the ground that Satan is beyond repentance; Origen replied that if Satan fell by will, even he, can repent. Demetrius, incensed at Origen's ordination, was appalled by such a doctrinal view and instigated a synodical condemnation, which, however, was not accepted in Greece and Palestine. Thenceforth, Origen lived at Caesarea, where he attracted many pupils. One of his most notable students was Gregory Thaumaturgus, later bishop of Neocaesarea.

From Caesarea, Origen continued his travels. In 235, the persecution of Maximinus found him in Cappadocia, from which he addressed to Ambrose, his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*. During this period falls the "Discussion with Heracleides," a papyrus, partially transcribing a debate at a Church council (probably, in Arabia), where a local bishop was suspected of denying the pre-existence of the divine Word and where obscure controversies raged over Christological issues and whether the soul is, in actuality, blood. During the persecution under the emperor Decius (250), Origen was imprisoned and tortured, but survived to die several years later. His tomb, at Tyre, was held in honor, and its long survival is attested by historians of the period of the Crusades.

Influence

If orthodoxy were a matter of intention, no theologian could be more orthodox than Origen, none more devoted to the cause of Christian faith. His natural temper is world denying and even illiberal. The saintliness of his life is reflected in the insight of his commentaries and the sometimes quite passionate devotion of his homilies. The influence of his Biblical

exegesis and ascetic ideals is hard to overestimate; his commentaries were freely plagiarized by later exegetes, both Eastern and Western, and he is a seminal mind for the beginnings of Monasticism. Through the writings of the monk, Evagrius Ponticus (346-399), his ideas passed not only into the Greek ascetic tradition, but also to John Cassian (360-435), a Semi-Pelagian monk (who emphasized the worth of man's moral effort), and to the West. Yet, he has been charged with many heresies.

In his lifetime, he was often attacked, suspected of adulterating the Gospel, with pagan philosophy. After his death, opposition steadily mounted, respectful in the Greek Christian Methodius of

Olympus' criticism of his spiritualizing doctrine of the Resurrection (c. 300), offensive in Epiphanius' (375), a refuter of Christian heresies, violent in Jerome's anti-Origenist quarrel with Rufinus (c. 393-402). Origen had his defenders, especially in the East (Eusebius of Caesarea; Didymus the Blind, the head of Catechetical School of Alexandria; Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, to some degree; and especially the Cappadocian Fathers -- i.e., Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa); but, in the West, Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* (398), caused scandal, and in the East, the cause of Origen suffered by the permanent influence of Epiphanius' attack.

In the 6th century, the "New Laura" (monastic community), in Palestine, became a centre for an Origenist movement among the monastic intelligentsia, hospitable to speculations about such matters, as pre-existent souls and universal salvation. The resultant controversy led Justinian I, to issue a long edict denouncing Origen (543); the condemnation was extended also, to Didymus and Evagrius, by the fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (553). Nevertheless, Origen's influence persisted, such as in the writings of the Byzantine monk, Maximus the Confessor (c. 550-662) and the Irish theologian, John Scotus Erigena (c. 810-877), and since Renaissance times, controversy has continued, concerning his orthodoxy, Western writers being generally more favorable than Eastern Orthodox.

The chief accusations against Origen's teaching are the following: making the Son inferior to the Father, and thus being, a precursor of Arianism, a 4th-century heresy that denied that the Father and the Son were of the same substance; spiritualizing away the resurrection of the body; denying hell, a morally enervating universalism; speculating about pre-existent souls and world cycles; and dissolving redemptive history into timeless myth by using allegorical interpretation. None of these charges is altogether groundless. At the same time, there is much reason to justify Jerome's first judgment, that Origen was the greatest teacher of the early Church, after the Apostles.

Theological System

Origen's experience, as a teacher, is reflected in his continual emphasis upon a scale of Spiritual apprehension. Christianity, to him, was a ladder of divine ascent, and the beginner must learn to mount it with the saints in a never-ceasing advance.

Everything in Origen's theology ultimately turns upon the goodness of God and the freedom of the creature. The transcendent God is the source of all existence and is good, just, and omnipotent. This omnipotence is never mere power emptied of moral quality; one cannot appeal to it to rationalize absurdity or the extraordinary. In overflowing love, God created rational and Spiritual beings through the Logos (Word); this creative act involves a degree of self-limitation on God's part.

In relation to the created order, God is both, conditioned and unconditioned, free and under necessity, since He is both, transcendent to and immanently active, in it. In one sense, the cosmos is eternally necessary to God, since one cannot conceive such goodness and power, as inactive, at any time. Yet, in another sense, the cosmos is not necessary to God, but is dependent on His will, to which it also owes its continued existence. Origen was aware that there is no solution of this dilemma. The rational beings, however, neglected to adore God, and fell. The material world was created, by God, as a means of discipline (and its natural catastrophes such as, earthquakes and plagues, remind man, that this world is not his ultimate destiny). Origen speculated, that

souls fell varying distances, some to be angels, some descending into human bodies, and the most wicked, becoming devils. (Origen believed in the pre-existence of souls, but not in transmigration, nor in the incorporation of rational souls, in animal bodies). Redemption is a grand education, by providence, restoring all souls to their original blessedness, for none, not even Satan, is so depraved and has so lost rationality and freedom, as to be beyond redemption. God never coerces, though with reformative intention, He may punish. His punishments are remedial; even if simple believers may need to think of them as retributive, this is pedagogic accommodation to interior capacity, not the truth.

The climax of redemption, is the incarnation of the pre-existent Son. One soul had not fallen, but had remained in adoring union, with the Father. Uniting Himself with this soul, the divine Logos, who is the second *hypostasis* (Person) of the triad of Father, Son, and Spirit (subordinate to the Father, but on the divine side of the gulf, between infinite Creator and finite Creation), became incarnate in a body derived from the Virgin Mary. So intense, was the union between Christ's soul and the Logos, that it is like the union of body and soul, of white-hot iron and fire. Like all souls, Christ's had free will, but the intensity of union destroyed all inclination for change, and the Logos united to Himself, not only soul, but also body, as was apparent when Jesus was transfigured. Origen, influenced by a semi-Gnostic writing, the *Acts of John*, thought that Jesus' body appeared differently to different observers, according to their Spiritual capacities. Some saw nothing remarkable in Him, others recognized in Him, their Lord and God. In his commentary on St. John, Origen collected titles of Christ, such as Lamb, Redeemer, Wisdom, Truth, Light, Life. Though the Father is One, the Son is many, and has many grades, like rungs in a ladder of mystical ascent, steps up to the Holy of Holies, the beatific vision.

The union of God and man, in Christ, is pattern for that of Christ and the believer. The individual soul, as well as the Church, is the bride of the Logos, and the mystery of that union, is portrayed in the Song of Solomon, Origen's commentary, on which was regarded, by Jerome (in the period of his enthusiasm for Origen), as his masterpiece. Thus, redemption restores fallen souls from matter to Spirit, from image to reality, a principle

directly exemplified both, in the sacraments and in the inspired Biblical writings, in which the inward Spirit is veiled under the letter of law, history, myth, and parable. The commentator's task, is to penetrate the allegory, to perceive within the material body of Scripture, its soul and Spirit, to discover its existential reference for the individual Christian. Correct exegesis (critical interpretation), is the gift of grace, to those Spiritually worthy.

Origen viewed both, the Biblical revelation and the Spiritual life of the believer, as progressive processes. The Church is the great "school of souls," in which, erring pupils are disciplined: elementary education in this life, higher education in the world to come, where the atoning and sanctifying process will continue in a purging baptism of fire. Hell cannot be an absolute, since God cannot abandon any creature; because of His respect for freedom, it may take time, but God's love will ultimately, triumph. Christ's work remains unfinished, until He has subdued all to Himself. Heaven is not necessarily absolute, because freedom is an inalienable characteristic of the rational creature. "If you remove free will from virtue, you destroy its essence." Because the redeemed remain free, when all souls have been restored, the whole drama may begin again. The Stoics believed in world cycles, determined by fate. Origen thought them possible for the opposite reason, because freedom means, that there is no ultimate finality.

Origen of Alexandria is considered one of the greatest of all Christian theologians. As a philosopher, he is famous for composing the seminal work of Christian Neoplatonism, his treatise, *On First Principles*. Origen lived through a turbulent period of the Christian Church, when persecution was wide-spread and little or no doctrinal consensus existed among the various regional Churches. In this environment, Gnosticism flourished, and Origen was the first truly philosophical thinker to turn his hand, not only to a refutation of Gnosticism, but to offer an alternative Christian system, that was more rigorous and philosophically respectable, than the mythological speculations of the various Gnostic sects. Origen was also an astute critic of the pagan philosophy of his era, yet, he also learned much from it, and adapted its most useful and edifying teachings, to a grand elucidation of the Christian faith. Porphyry (the illustrious student of Plotinus), though a

tenacious adversary of Christianity, nevertheless grudgingly admitted, Origen's mastery of the Greek philosophical tradition. Although Origen did go on to compose numerous Biblical commentaries and sermons, his importance for the history of philosophy rests mainly, on two works, the systematic treatise, *On First Principles*, and his response to the pagan philosopher, Celsus' attack on Christianity, the treatise, *Against Celsus*. Since the purpose of this course is to introduce students and interested laypersons to the philosophy of Origen, it will be necessary to focus mainly, on the treatise, *On First Principles*, which is the most systematic and philosophical of Origen's numerous writings. In this work, Origen establishes his main doctrines, including that of the Holy Trinity (based upon standard Middle Platonic triadic emanation schemas); the pre-existence and fall of souls; multiple ages and transmigration of souls; and the eventual restoration of all souls, to a state of dynamic perfection, in proximity to the godhead. He is unique among Platonists of his era, for introducing history into his cosmological and metaphysical speculations, and his insistence on the absolute freedom of each and every soul, thereby denying the fatalism, that so often found its way, into the more esoteric teachings of the various philosophical and mystery schools of his day.

1. Origen's Life and Times

Origen was, according to Eusebius, "not quite seventeen," when Septimius Severus' persecution of the Christians began, "in the tenth year of [his] reign," (*Ecclesiastical History*; tr. Williamson, p. 179), which gives the approximate date of Origen's birth, as 185/6 A.D. He died around the reign of Gallus, which places his death in 254/5 A.D. Origen lived during a turbulent period of the Roman Empire, when the barbarian invasions were sweeping across Europe, threatening the stability of the Roman Empire. His was also a time of periodic persecution against Christians, notably during the reigns of the Emperors, Severus, Maximin, and Decius, so that Origen's life began and ended with persecution.

His family was devoutly Christian, and likely highly educated; for his father, who died a martyr, made sure that Origen was schooled, not only in Biblical studies, but in Hellenistic

education, as well. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History*, tr. Williamson, p. 182), tells us, that Origen was only seventeen when he took over as Headmaster (*didaskalos*), of the Christian Catechetical School, at Alexandria. He became interested in Greek philosophy, quite early in his life, studying for a while under Ammonius Saccas, (the teacher of Plotinus) and amassing a large collection of philosophical texts. It is probably around this time, that he began composing, *On First Principles*. However, as he became ever more devoted to the Christian faith, he sold his library, abandoning, for a time, any contact with pagan Greek wisdom, though he would eventually return to secular studies (Greek philosophy), from which, he derived no small measure of inspiration, as Porphyry (recorded in Eusebius) makes quite clear, as he continued with his ever more sophisticated elucidation of Biblical texts.

2. His Intellectual Heritage: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian

Origen's debt to Holy Scripture is obvious; he quotes the Bible at great length, often drawing together seemingly disparate passages, to make a profound theological point. Yet, his thought is all the while, informed by his Greek philosophical education, specifically that of the Middle Platonic tradition, notably the works of the Jewish Platonist, Philo of Alexandria and the Neopythagorean philosopher, *Numenius of Apamea* (fl. 150-176 A.D.). Origen shares, with Philo, an insistence on the free will of the person, a freedom that is direct evidence of humanity's likeness to God - for, like God's Being, human existence is free from all necessity. From Numenius, Origen likely adopted the conception of a "second god," proceeding from a first, ineffable, being called, the One, "First God," or Father. Numenius referred to this "second god," as Demiurge or craftsman, and taught that he created the cosmos, by imitating the intellectual content of the "First God." Origen applied this basic notion to his doctrine of Christ, whom he also called Demiurge (*Commentary on John 1:22*), and went on to describe Christ, as a reflection of the Truth of the Father, stating that, compared to human beings, Christ is Truth, but compared to the Father, He is falsehood (Jerome, *Epistle 92*, quoting Origen; see also, *On First Principles 1.2.6.*).

Another extremely important part of Origen's intellectual heritage is the concept of *apokatastasis* or "restoration of all things." This term first appears, as a philosophical concept, in the writings of the Stoics, whose materialistic Pantheism, led them to identify, Zeus, with the pure, "crafts manly" fire, pervading and constituting the cosmos. According to the Stoics, this fire expands and contracts, according to a fixed cycle. They called the contraction a, "conflagration" (*ekpurosis*), destroying the cosmos, yet, only temporarily. This contraction was described, as Zeus, returning to his own thoughts, to contemplate the eternal perfection of his mind/cosmos (the material cosmos, being the expression of his mind, or Logos). The expansion would occur when Zeus, once again, expressed his mind in the creation of the material cosmos; this re-creation or reconstitution of the cosmos, is what the Stoics called, *apokatastasis*. Some Stoics argued, that since Zeus is perfect mind, then every reconstitution of the cosmos will resemble identically, the one that preceded it. This Stoic doctrine was to have an immense influence on the development of the so-called, esoteric tradition in the Hellenistic era, notably, the Hermetic school, Gnosticism, and Astrology, with all of which Origen was, in varying degrees, familiar.

In Origen's time, Christianity as a religion, had not yet developed a system of theology, as a basis of orthodoxy; therefore, in addition to a wide variety of opinions regarding the faith, there were also various sects, each claiming to possess the truth of the Christian faith. Foremost among these sects, was the group of schools, loosely labeled, 'gnostic.' The Valentinian school (founded by Valentinus, an outstanding teacher and philosopher, who was at one point, a candidate for bishop of Rome), was the most philosophically accomplished of the Christian Gnostic sects. In his, *Commentary on John*, Origen refutes the doctrines of a Valentinian Gnostic, named Heracleon, who had earlier written a commentary on the same Gospel. While Origen's opposition to Gnosticism precluded any doctrinal influence, he saw in Gnosticism the value of a system, for it was precisely, by virtue of their elaborate and self-consistent systems, that the Gnostics were successful in gaining adherents. Since there were no non-Gnostic Christian theological systems, in his day, it was up to Origen to formulate one. This was the program of his treatise, *On First Principles*.

3. The Philosophical System of Origen

Origen was the first systematic theologian and philosopher of the Christian Church. Earlier Christian intellectuals had confined themselves to apologetic and moralizing works; notable among such writers is *Clement of Alexandria* (d. 215 A.D.), who, like Origen, found much of value in Hellenic philosophy. Before proceeding with an examination of Origen's system, it must be noted, that scholars are divided over the question of whether or not his *On First Principles*, contains a system. Henri Crouzel (1989), for example, has argued, that the presence of contradictory statements in certain portions of the treatise, as well as in other texts, is proof against the claim, that Origen was presenting a system. Hans Jonas (1974), on the other hand, recognized a clear system in, *On First Principles* and gave a convincing elucidation of such. The reason for this scholarly divide is mostly due to the lack of a precise definition of 'system' and 'systematic.' If one approaches Origen's text expecting a carefully worked-out system of philosophy in the manner of a Kant or a Hegel, one will be disappointed. However, if one reads the text with an eye for prominent themes and inner consistency of such themes with one another, a system does emerge. As John Dillon has pointed out, Origen succeeded in luring away several students of the renowned Platonic teacher, Ammonius Saccas, to study with him, and, Dillon convincingly observes, this would not have been possible if Origen did not have some system to offer (Dillon, in Kannengiesser, Petersen, ed., 1988, p. 216, and footnote). It must also be pointed out, that the text of *On First Principles*, that we possess, is not complete. Origen's original Greek is preserved only in fragments, the remainder of the text is extant, only in a Latin translation, by Rufinus, who was a defender of Origen, against posthumous charges of heresy. While Rufinus' translation is, as far as we can tell, faithful in most respects, there is ample evidence that he softened certain potentially troublesome passages in an ill-guided attempt to redeem his beloved teacher. When reading Origen's treatise, then, one would do well to keep this in mind, should one stumble across seemingly contradictory passages, for one has no way of knowing what the original Greek might have said.

a. The Trinity

Origen begins his treatise, *On First Principles*, by establishing, in typical Platonic fashion, a divine hierarchical triad; but instead of calling these principles by typical Platonic terms, like monad, dyad, and world-soul, he calls them, “Father,” “Christ,” and “Holy Spirit,” though he does describe these principles, using platonic language. The first of these principles, the Father, is a perfect unity, complete unto Himself, and without body - a purely Spiritual mind. Since God the Father is, for Origen, “personal and active,” it follows that there existed with Him, always, an entity upon which to exercise His intellectual activity. This entity is Christ the Son, the Logos, or Wisdom (*Sophia*), of God, the first emanation of the Father, corresponding to Numenius’ “second god,” as we have seen above (section 2). The third and last principle of the divine triad, is the Holy Spirit, who “proceeds from the Son, and is related to Him, as the Son, is related to the Father” (A. Tripolitis 1978, p. 94). Here is Origen, explaining the status of the Holy Spirit, in a passage preserved in the original Greek:

The God and Father, who holds the universe together, is superior to every being that exists, for He imparts, to each one, from His own existence, that which each one is; the Son, being less than the Father, is superior to rational creatures alone (for He is second to the Father); the Holy Spirit is still less, and dwells within the saints, alone. So that, in this way, the power of the Father is greater than that of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and that of the Son is more than that of the Holy Spirit, and in turn, the power of the Holy Spirit exceeds that of every other Holy Being (Fragment 9 [Koetschau] tr. Butterworth 1966, pp. 33-34, and footnote).

This graded hierarchy reveals an allotment of power to the second and third members of the Trinity: the Father’s power is universal, but the Son’s corresponds only to rational creatures, while the Spirit’s power corresponds strictly to the “saints,” or those who have achieved salvation. Such a structure of divine influence on the created realm, is found much later, in the system of the Neoplatonic philosopher, Proclus (see J. Dillon, in G.

Vesey, ed. 1989).

b. Souls and their Fall

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According to Origen, God's first creation was a collectivity of rational beings, which he calls, *logika*. "Although Origen speaks of the *logika*, as being created, they were not created, in time. Creation, with respect to them, means that they had a beginning, but not a temporal one" (Tripolitis 1978, p. 94). Further, Origen explains, that the number of these rational beings, is necessarily limited, since an infinite creation would be incomprehensible, and unworthy of God. These souls were originally created, in close proximity to God, with the intention that they should explore the divine mysteries in a state of endless contemplation. They grew weary of this intense contemplation, however, and lapsed, falling away from God and into an existence on their own terms, apart from the divine presence and the wisdom to be found there. This fall was not, it must be understood, the result of any inherent imperfection in the creatures of God, rather, it was the result of a misuse of the greatest gift of God, to His creation: freedom. The only rational creature, who escaped the fall and remained with God, is the "soul of Christ" (Origen, *On First Principles* 2.6.5.; Tripolitis 1978, p. 96). This individual soul is indicative of the intended function of all souls, i.e., to reveal the divine mystery in unique ways, insofar as, the meaning of this mystery is deposited within them, as theandric (God-human) potentiality, to be drawn out and revealed through co-operation with God (*On First Principles* 2.9.2-8). As Origen explains, the soul of Christ was no different from that of any of the souls that fell away from God, for Christ's soul possessed the same potential for communion with God, as that of all other souls. What distinguished the soul of Christ from all others - and what preserved Him from falling away - was His supreme act of free choice, to remain immersed in the divinity.

What are now souls (*psukhe*) began as *minds*, and though boredom or distraction, grew "cold" (*psukhesthai*), as they moved away from, the "divine warmth" (*On First Principles* 2.8.3.). Thus, departing from God, they came to be clothed in bodies, at first, of "a fine ethereal and invisible nature," but later, as souls fell further away from God, their bodies

changed “from a fine, ethereal and invisible body, to a body of a coarser and more solid state. The purity and subtleness of the body, with which a soul is enveloped, depends upon the moral development and perfection of the soul to which it is joined. Origen states, that there are varying degrees of subtleness, even among the celestial and Spiritual bodies” (Tripolitis 1978, p. 106). When a soul achieves salvation, according to Origen, it ceases being a soul, and returns to a state of pure “mind” or *understanding*. However, due to the fall, now “no rational Spirit can ever exist without a body” (Tripolitis 1978, p. 114), but the bodies of redeemed souls are “Spiritual bodies,” made of the purest fire (see A. Scott 1991, Chapter 9).

c. Multiple Ages, Metempsychosis, and the Restoration of All

Origen did not believe in the eternal suffering of sinners in hell. For him, all souls, including the devil himself, will eventually achieve salvation, even if it takes innumerable ages to do so; for Origen believed that God’s love is so powerful, as to soften even the hardest heart, and that the human intellect - being the image of God - will never freely choose oblivion over proximity to God, the font of Wisdom Himself. Certain critics of Origen have claimed that this teaching undermines his otherwise firm insistence on free will, for, these critics argue, the souls must maintain the freedom to ultimately reject or accept God, or else free will becomes a mere illusion. What escapes these critics is the fact that Origen’s conception of free will, is not our own; he considered freedom in the platonic sense of the ability to choose the good. Since evil is not the polar opposite of good, but rather simply, the absence of good - and thus, having no real existence - then to ‘choose’ evil, is not to make a conscious decision, but to act, in ignorance, of the measure of all rational decision, i.e., the good. Origen was unable to conceive of a God who would create souls that were capable of dissolving into the oblivion of evil (non-being) for all eternity. Therefore, he reasoned, that a single lifetime is not enough for a soul to achieve salvation, for certain souls require more education or ‘healing,’ than others. So, he developed his doctrine of multiple ages, in which souls would be re-born, to experience the educative powers of God, once again, with a view to ultimate salvation. This doctrine, of course, implies some form of transmigration of souls or *metempsychosis*. Yet, Origen’s

version of metempsychosis was not the same as that of the Pythagoreans, for example, who taught that the basest of souls will eventually become incarnated, as animals. For Origen, some sort of continuity between the present body, and the body in the age to come, was maintained (Jerome, *Epistle to Avitus* 7, quoting Origen; see also *Commentary on Matthew* 11.17). Origen did not, like many of his contemporaries, degrade the body to the status of an unwanted encrustation, imprisoning the soul; for him, the body is a necessary principle of limitation, providing each soul with a unique identity. This is an important point for an understanding of Origen's epistemology, which is based upon the idea, that God educates each soul according to its inherent abilities, and that the abilities of each soul will determine the manner of its knowledge. We may say, then, that the uniqueness of the soul's body, is an image of its uniqueness of mind. This is the first inkling of the development of the concept of the person and personality in the history of Western thought.

The restoration of all beings (*apokatastasis*) is the most important concept in Origen's philosophy, and the touchstone, by which, he judges all other theories. His concept of universal restoration is based on equally strong Scriptural and Hellenistic philosophical grounds and is not original, as it can be traced back to Heraclitus, who stated that "the beginning and end are common" (Fragment B 103, tr. J. Barnes 1987, p. 115). Considering that Origen's later opponents based their charges of heresy largely on this aspect of his teaching, it is surprising to see how well-grounded, in Scripture, this doctrine really is. Origen's main Biblical proof-text is 1 Corinthians 15:25-28, especially verse 28, which speaks of the time "when all things shall be subdued unto Him [Christ], then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him, that put all things under Him, *that God may be all in all*" (KJV, my emphasis). This Scriptural notion of God being "all in all" (*panta en pasin*) is a strong theological support for his theory of *apokatastasis*. There are, of course, numerous other passages in Scripture, that contradict this notion, but we must remember that Origen's strength resided in his philosophical ability to use reason and dialectic in support of humane doctrines, not in the ability to use Scripture in support of dogmatical and anti-humanistic arguments. Origen imagined salvation, not in terms of the saved rejoicing in heaven and the damned suffering in hell, but as a reunion of all

souls with God.

4. Important Themes in Origen's Philosophy

While Origen's lengthy treatise, *On First Principles*, contains numerous discussions of a wide variety of issues relevant to the Christianity of his day, as well as to broader philosophical concerns, certain key themes do emerge that are of universal and timeless value for philosophy. These themes are: free will; the educational value of history; and the infinity and eternal motion (becoming) of human beings.

a. Free Will

Origen's conception of freedom, as discussed above, was not the same as modern conceptions. This is not to say, that his conception was wrong, of course. For Origen recognized freedom, only in reason, in rationality, which is precisely the ability to recognize and embrace the good, which is for him, God. Irrationality is ignorance, the absence of a conception of the good. The ignorant person cannot be held responsible for his ignorance, except to the extent, that he has been lazy, not applying himself to the cultivation of reason. The moral dimension of this conception of freedom is, that ignorance is not to be punished, but remedied, through education. Punishment, understood in the punitive sense, is of no avail and will even lead to deeper ignorance and sin, as the punished soul grows resentful, not understanding why he is being punished. Origen firmly believed, that the knowledge of the good (God) is itself enough to remove all taint of sin and ignorance from souls. A 'freedom' to embrace evil (the absence of good) would have made no sense to Origen, who, as a Platonist, identified evil with enslavement and goodness with freedom. The soul, who has seen the good, he argued, will not fall into ignorance again, for the good is inspiring and worthy of eternal contemplation (see *Commentary on Romans* 5.10.15).

b. Education and History

Origen may rightfully be called the first philosopher of history, for, like Hegel, he

understood history, as a process involving the participation of persons, in grand events, leading to an eventual culmination or 'end of history.' Unlike mainstream Christian eschatology, Origen did not understand the end of history, as the final stage of a grand revelation of God, but rather, as the culmination of a human-divine (co-operative) process, in which the image and likeness of God (humanity) is re-united with its source and model, God Himself (see *Against Celsus* 4.7; *On First Principles* 2.11.5, 2.11.7; Tripolitis 1978, p. 111). This is accomplished through education of souls, who, having fallen away from God, are now sundered from the divine presence and require a gradual re-initiation into the mysteries of God. Such a reunion must not be accomplished, by force, for God will never, Origen insists, undermine the free will of His creatures; rather, God will, over the course of numerous ages, if need be, educate souls, little by little, leading them eventually, by virtue, of their own growing responsiveness, back to Himself, where they will glory in the uncovering of the infinite mysteries of the eternal Godhead (*On First Principles* 2.11.6-7).

c. Eternal Motion of Souls

A common motif in Platonism during, before, and after Origen's time is, *salvific stasis*, or the idea that the soul will achieve complete rest and staticity, when it finally ascends to a contemplation of the good. We notice this idea early on, in Plato, who speaks in the *Republic* (517c-d, 519c-e) of a state of pure contemplation, from which, the philosopher is only wrenched, by force or persuasion. In Origen's own time, Plotinus developed his notion of an "about-face" (*epistrophe*) of the soul, resulting in an instant union of the soul with its divine principle, understood as an idealized, changeless form of contemplation, allowing for no dynamism or personal development (see *Enneads* 4.3.32, 4.8.4, for example). Influenced indirectly by Plotinus, and more directly by later, Neoplatonists (both Christian and Pagan), the Christian theologian, St. Maximus the Confessor, elaborated a systematic philosophical theology, culminating in an eschatology, in which, the unique human person was replaced by the overwhelming, transcendent presence of God (see *Chapters on Knowledge* 2.88). Origen managed to maintain the transcendentality of God, on the one hand, and the dynamic persistence of souls in being,

on the other. He did this by defining souls, not by virtue of their intellectual content (or, in the Plotinian sense, for example, by virtue of their 'prior' or higher, constitutive principle), but rather, by their ability to engage in a finite manner, with the infinite God. This engagement is constitutive of the soul's existence, and guarantees its uniqueness. Each soul engages uniquely, with God, in contemplating divine mysteries, according to its innate ability, and this engagement persists for all eternity, for the mysteries of the Godhead are inexhaustible, as is the enthusiastic application of the souls' intellectual ability.

5. Origen's Importance in the history of Philosophy

Throughout this course, Origen's importance has largely been linked to his melding of philosophical insights with elucidations of various aspects of the Christian faith. Yet, his importance for Hellenistic philosophy is marked, and though not quite as pervasive as his influence on Christian thought, is nevertheless worth a few brief remarks. His role in the formation of Christian doctrine is more prominent, yet, because of its problematical nature, will be treated of only briefly.

a. Hellenistic Philosophy

Origen's debt to Hellenistic (Greek) philosophy is quite obvious; his influence on the development of later Pagan philosophy is - at least, from the perspective of most contemporary scholarship - rather less obvious, but it is there. His Trinitarian doctrine, for example, consisted of a gradation of influence beginning with the Father, whose influence was of the most general, universal kind, binding together all things; the influence of the Son extended strictly to sentient beings; the Holy Spirit's influence extended only to the 'elect' or saints, who had already achieved salvation (Dillon, in D. J. O'Meara, ed., 1982, p. 20; see also, *On First Principles* 1.3.5.). This conception, found later, expression in Proclus' *Elements of Theology* (Proposition 57), where he elucidates this formulation: "Every cause, both operates prior to its consequent and gives rise to a greater number of posterior terms" (tr. Dodds). For Origen, the pre-existent souls, through their fall, gave

rise to a history over which both, the Father and the Son, came to preside, while the Holy Spirit only enters into human reality to affect a salvific re-orientation toward God, that is already the result of an achieved history. The Holy Spirit, then, may be understood, as the final cause, the preparatory causes, of which, are the Father and Son, the mutual begetters of history. A bit later, the Pagan philosopher, Iamblichus reversed this Origenian notion, claiming that the influence of the divine became stronger and more concentrated the further it penetrated into created reality, extending in its pure power, even to stones and plants. In this sense, the Holy Spirit, limited as it is (according to Origen), to interaction with the saints alone, gives way to the universal power of the Father, which extends to the furthest reaches of reality. Iamblichus saw no reason to divide the divinity into persons or emanative effects; rather, he saw the divinity, as operative, in varying degrees, at every level of reality. At the lowest level, however, this power is most effective, imparting power to plants and stones, and providing support for the theurgical practice, advocated by Iamblichus (Olympiodorus, *Commentary on Alcibiades I*, 115A; Psellus, *Chaldaean Expositions* 1153a10-11; Dillon, ed., O'Meara 1982, p. 23).

b. Christianity

Origen's ideas, most notably those in the treatise, *On First Principles*, gave rise to a movement in the Christian Church, known as Origenism. From the third through the sixth centuries, this movement was quite influential, especially among the monastics, and was given articulate - if excessively codified form - by the theologian, *Evagrius Ponticus* (ca. 345-400 A.D.). It is to be noted, that the Spirit of philosophical inquiry, exemplified by Origen, was largely absent from the movement, bearing his name. A far more creative use of Origen's concepts and themes was made by *Gregory of Nyssa* (d. ca. 386 A.D.), who adopted Origen's doctrine of *apokatastasis* or "restoration of all things." Gregory was also responsible for articulating more clearly than did Origen, the notion that redeemed souls will remain in a state of dynamic intellectual activity (see Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration*, esp. Chapters 26 and 35). After the posthumous condemnation of Origen (and Origenism) in the fifth century, it became increasingly

difficult for mainstream theologians to make use of his work. *Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite* (5th or 6th century A.D.), drew upon Neoplatonic philosophy, especially *Proclus* (411-485 A.D.), and *Iamblichus* (ca. 240-325 A.D.), and though he followed in Origen's footsteps in this use of pagan wisdom, he never mentioned his predecessor by name. In the seventh century, *Maximus, the Confessor* (ca. 580-662), who may be called the last great Christian Neoplatonist, set about revising Origen's doctrines in a manner more acceptable to the theological climate of the early Byzantine Church. Maximus changed the historicism of Origen into a more introspective, personal struggle to attain the divine vision, through asceticism and prayer, the result being, a total subsumption of the person by the Godhead. This was Maximus' vision of salvation: the replacement of the ego, by the divine presence (see L. Thunberg 1985, p. 89; also, Maximus, *Chapters on Knowledge* 2.88). While there is much that may be called brilliant and even inspiring in Maximus' philosophical theology, this loss of the centrality of the person - as unique, unrepeatable entity - in the cosmic process of salvation led to the loss of a sense of co-operation of humanity and God, and sapped Christianity of the intellectual vigor that it displayed in the period leading up to the establishment of a theocratical Byzantine state.

Thankfully, Origen's legacy was not lost. He was an inspiration to the Renaissance Humanists, and more recently, to certain Existentialist Christian theologians, notably, *Nicolas Berdyaev* (1874-1948), whose insistence on the absolute autonomy and nobility of the person in the face of all objectifying reality, is an echo across the ages of the humanism of Origen. Berdyaev, himself, admits Origen's influence on his thought (as well as that of Gregory of Nyssa), and insists that the doctrine of hell and the eternal suffering of sinners, is not compatible with authentic Christianity. He also places a great importance on history, and even broaches a modern, de-mythologized conception of metempsychosis, in terms of a universal, shared history, of which, all persons are a part, regardless of their temporal specificity. History, according to Berdyaev (and in this, he follows Origen), binds all of humanity together. No soul will be saved in isolation; all must be saved together, or not be saved at all. Berdyaev wrote numerous works, a few of the most important are *Slavery and Freedom* (Eng. tr. 1944), *The Beginning and the End* (Eng. tr. 1952), and *Truth and Revelation* (Eng. tr. 1962).

6. Concluding Summary

Origen was an innovator in an era when innovation, for Christians, was a luxury ill-afforded. He drew upon pagan philosophy in an effort to elucidate the Christian faith in a manner acceptable to intellectuals, and he succeeded in converting many gifted pagan students of philosophy, to his faith. He was also a great humanist, who believed that all creatures will eventually achieve salvation, including the devil, himself. Origen did not embrace the dualism of Gnosticism, nor that of the more primitive expressions of the Christian faith, still extant in his day. Rather, he took Christianity to a higher level, finding in it, a key to the perfection of the intellect or mind, which is what all souls are, in their pure form. The restoration of all souls, to a purely intellectual existence, was Origen's faith, and his philosophy was based upon such a faith. In this, he is an heir to Socrates and Plato, but he also brought a new conception into philosophy - that of the creative aspect of the soul, as realized in history, the culmination, of which, is salvation, after which follows, an eternal delving into the deep mysteries of God.

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Pachomius (ca. 292-348), also known as **Abba Pachomius** and **Pakhom**, is generally recognized, as the founder of cenobitic monasticism. His saint day is celebrated on 9 May.

Pachomius was born, in 292, in Thebes (Luxor, Egypt) to pagan parents. According to

his hagiography, he was swept up in a Roman army recruitment drive at the age of 20, against his will, a common occurrence during the turmoil's and civil wars of the period, and held in captivity. It was here, that local Christians would daily bring food and comforts to the inmates, which made a lasting impression on him, and he vowed to investigate Christianity further, when he got out. As fate would have it, he was able to get out of the army without ever having to fight, and converted, and was baptized (314). He then came into contact with a number of well-known ascetics and decided to pursue that path. He sought out the hermit, Palaemon and came to be his follower (317).

Pachomius set out to lead the life of a hermit, near St. Anthony of Egypt, whose practices he imitated. An earlier ascetic, named Marcarius had earlier created a number of proto-monasteries called, "larves," or cells, where holy men would live in a community setting who were physically or mentally unable, to achieve the rigors of Anthony's solitary life. Pachomius set about organizing these cells into a formal organization.

Up to this point in time, Christian asceticism had been solitary or *eremitic*. Male or female monastics lived in individual huts or caves and met only for occasional worship services. Pachomius seems to have created the community or *cenobitic* organization, in which, male or female monastics lived together and had their possessions in common, under the leadership of an abbot or abbess. Pachomius, himself, was hailed as, "Abba" (father), which is where we get the word Abbot from. This first cenobitic monastery was in Tabennisi, Egypt. He is also credited with being the first Christian to use and recommend use of a prayer rope. He was visited once, by Basil of Caesarea, who took many of his ideas and implemented them, in Caesarea, where Basil also made some adaptations that became the ascetic rule, or *Ascetica*, the rule still used today, by the Orthodox Church, and comparable to that of the Rule of St. Benedict in the West.

He established his first monastery between 318 and 323. The first to join him was his elder brother, John, and soon more than 100 monks lived at his monastery. He came to build six or seven more monasteries and a nunnery, and after 336, Pachomius spent most of his time at his Pabau monastery. From his initial monastery, demand quickly grew and

by the time of his death, in 345, by one count, it is estimated there were 3,000 monasteries dotting Egypt from north to south. Within a generation, after his death, this number grew to 7,000 and then moved out of Egypt into Palestine and the Judea Desert, Syria, North Africa, and eventually, Western Europe.

Though Pachomius sometimes acted as lector for nearby shepherds, he nor any of his monks, became priests. St. Athanasius visited and wished to ordain him, in 333, but Pachomius fled from him. Athanasius' visit was probably a result of Pachomius' zealous defense of Orthodoxy against Arianism.

He remained abbot to the cenobites for some forty years. When he caught an epidemic disease (probably plague), he called the monks, strengthened their faith, and appointed his successor. He then departed, in peace, on 15 May, 348.

Pamphilus, presbyter of Caesarea (late 3rd century - martyred February 309), chief among Biblical scholars of his generation, was the friend and teacher of Eusebius, who recorded details of his career in a three-book, *Vita*, that has been lost.

Eusebius, *Martyrs of Palestine*, attests that Pamphilus was of a rich and honorable family of Bierut, but the assertion that he gave all his property to the poor and attached himself to the "perfect men," does not square with his magnificent patronage of the library, at Caesarea, and his constant generosity to scholars, through his lifetime. Photius (*Codex* 118), quotes Pamphilus's *Apology for Origen*, to the effect that Pamphilus went to Alexandria, where his teacher was Pierius, the head of the famous catechetical school there, before settling in Caesarea Maritima, where he was ordained priest and was made presbyter. In Alexandria, Pamphilus became devoted to the works of Origen.

The library at Caesarea

Pamphilus, not unlike the humanists of the Renaissance, devoted his life to searching out

and obtaining copies which he collected in the famous library that Jerome was later to use, and established a school for theological study (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, VII.xxxii.25). In the scriptorium, a necessary adjunct to all libraries of Antiquity, he oversaw the production of accurate edited copies of Scripture. Testimonies to his zeal and care in this work are to be found in the colophons of Biblical MSS. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* (1xxv) says, that Pamphilus “transcribed the greater part of the works of Origen with his own hand,” and that “these are still preserved in the library of Caesarea.” He, himself, was a possessor of “twenty-five volumes of commentaries of Origen,” copied out by Pamphilus, which he looked upon, as a most precious relic of the martyr. Among other priceless lost treasures in the library, Jerome knew the copy of the Aramaic (so-called, “Hebrew”) text of the *Gospel of Matthew* (See *Gospel of the Hebrews*). Eusebius (VI, xxxii) refers to the catalogue of the library that he appended to his life of Pamphilus. A passage from the lost life, quoted by Jerome, (*Adversus Rufinem*, I, ix), describes how Pamphilus supplied poor scholars with the necessaries of life, and, not merely lent, but gave them copies of the Scriptures, of which, he kept a large supply. He, likewise, bestowed copies on women, devoted to study. The great treasure of the library, at Caesarea, was Origen’s own copy of the *Hexapla*, probably the only complete copy, ever made. It was consulted by Jerome (“In Psalmos comm.,” ed., Morin, pp. 5, 21; “In Epist.ad Tit.”). The collections of the library suffered during the persecutions under Diocletian, but was repaired subsequently, by bishops of Caesarea (Jerome, *Epistles* xxxiv). It was noted in the 6th century, but Henry Barclay Swete (*Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, pp. 74-5) was of the opinion, that probably did not long survive the capture of Caesarea by the Saracens, in 638, though a modern historian would attribute more destruction to its previous capture by the Persians.

The Diocletian persecution began, in 303. In 306, a young man named, Apphianus - a disciple of Pamphilus, “while no one was aware; he even concealed it from us, who were even in the same house” (Eusebius, “Martyrs of Palestine”) - interrupted the governor in the act of offering sacrifice, and paid for his boldness with a terrible martyrdom. His brother, Aedesius, also a disciple of Pamphilus, suffered martyrdom about the same time, at Alexandria, under similar circumstances. Pamphilus’s turn, came in November, 307.

He was brought before the governor, and, on refusing to sacrifice, was cruelly tortured, and then relegated to prison. In prison, he continued copying and correcting MSS. He also composed, in collaboration with Eusebius, an *Apology for Origen*, in five books, which Eusebius edited and added a sixth. Pamphilus and other members of his household, men "in the full vigor of mind and body," were without further torture, sentenced to be beheaded, in February, 309. While sentence was being given, a youth named, Porphyrius - "the slave of Pamphilus," "the beloved disciple of Pamphilus," who, "had been instructed in literature and writing" - demanded the bodies of the confessors, for burial. He was cruelly tortured and put to death, the news of his martyrdom being brought to Pamphilus before his own execution.

Pamphilus' works

* Of the *Apology for Origen*, only the first book is extant, in a Latin version, made by Rufinus. It begins with describing the extravagant bitterness of the feeling against Origen. He was a man of deep humility, of great authority in the Church of his day, and honoured with the priesthood. He was above, all things, anxious to keep to the rule of faith, that had come down from the Apostles.. The soundness of his doctrine, concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation, is then vindicated by copious extracts, from his writings.

Then, nine charges against his teaching are confronted, with passages, from his works. St. Jerome stated in his "De Viris illustrious," that there were two apologies - one by Pamphilus and another by Eusebius.

He discovered his mistake, when Rufinus's translation appeared in the height of the controversy over Origen, and rushed to the conclusion, that Eusebius was the sole author. He charged Rufinus, among other things, with palming off, under the name of the martyr, what was really the work of the heterodox, Eusebius, and with suppressing unorthodox passages. As to the first accusation, there is abundant evidence that the "Apology" was the joint work of Pamphilus and Eusebius. Against the second may be set, the negative testimony of Photius, who had read the original; "Photius, who was severe to excess towards the slightest semblance of Arianism, remarked no such

taint in the Apology of Origen, which he had read in Greek” (Ceillier). The Canons of the alleged Council of the Apostles, at Antioch, were ascribed by their compiler (late fourth century) to Pamphilus (Adolf von Harnack, *Spread of Christianity*, I, 86-101).

* The ascription to Pamphilus, by Gemadius, of a treatise “Contra mathematicos” was a blunder due to a misunderstanding of Rufinus’s preface to the “Apology.”

* A Summary of the Acts of the Apostles among the writings, associated with Euthalius, bears in its inscription, the name of Pamphilus (P. G., LXXXIX, 619 sqq.).

David Hume adopted the evocative pseudonym, Pamphilus, for his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.

Papias (working in the 1st half of the 2nd century) was one of the early leaders of the Christian Church, canonized as a saint. Eusebius calls him, “Bishop of Hierapolis” (modern Pamukkale, Turkey), which is 22km from Laodicea and near Colossae (see *Epistle to the Colossians*. 4:13), in the Lycus river valley in Phrygia, Asia Minor, not to be confused with the Hierapolis of Syria.

His *Interpretations of the Sayings of the Lord* (his word for “sayings,” is *logia*) in five books, would have been a prime early authority in the exegesis of the sayings of Jesus, some of which, are recorded in the Gospel of Matthew and Gospel of Mark, Papias’ own authority being, “the presbyter, John” and hearers of the Apostles, whom he also terms, “presbyters.” His book, however, has utterly disappeared, known only through fragments, quoted in later writers, with neutral approval in Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies*, and later, with scorn by Eusebius of Caesarea, in “Ecclesiastical History,” the earliest surviving history of the early Christian Church.

Eusebius held Papias in low esteem, but accounts of his motivation differ: the influence which his work had in perpetuating, through Irenaeus and others, belief in a millennial reign of Christ upon earth, that would soon usher in a new Golden Age. Or perhaps resistance among Petrine Christians to accepting a Johannine Gospel. Eusebius calls

Papias, “a man of small mental capacity” (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.13), who mistook the figurative language of Apostolic traditions. Whether this was so, to any degree, is difficult to judge without the text available; but, Papias’s millennialism was nearer in Spirit to the actual Christianity of the sub-Apostolic age, especially in Western Anatolia, than Eusebius realized.

Yet, Papias admits in one of the fragments of his treatise, that he had in no way, been a hearer or eye witness of the Apostles themselves. He says, he gathered material from those who were their followers:

“I will not hesitate, to add also for you, to my interpretations what I formerly learned, with care, from the Presbyters and have carefully stored in memory, giving assurance of its truth. For I did not take pleasure, as the many do, in those who speak much, but in those who teach what is true, nor in those who relate foreign precepts, but in those who relate the precepts which were given by the Lord to the faith, and came down from the Truth itself. And also, if any follower of the Presbyters happened to come, I would inquire for the sayings of the Presbyters, what Andrew said, or what Peter said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James or what John or Matthew or any other of the Lord’s disciples, and for the things which other of the Lord’s disciples, and for the things which Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, were saying. For I considered that I should not get so much advantage from matter, in books, as from the voice which yet lives and remains.”

Thus, Papias reports he heard things that came from an unwritten, oral, tradition of the Presbyters, a “sayings,” or *logia* tradition, that had been passed from Jesus to such of the Apostles and Disciples, as he mentions in the fragmentary quote.

About the origins of the Gospels, Papias (according to Eusebius) wrote this:

“Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order, that he related the sayings or deeds

of Christ. For he neither, heard the Lord, nor accompanied Him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions to the necessities [of his hearers], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings.

Wherefore, Mark made no mistake, in thus, writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing, he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements.

Matthew put together the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them, as best he could."

Other Traditions Related by Papias

Papias also related a number of traditions that Eusebius had characterized as, "some strange parables and teachings of the Saviour, and some other more mythical accounts." For example, Eusebius indicated, that Papias heard stories about Justus, surmamed Barsabas, who drank poison, but suffered no harm and another story, via a daughter of Philip, the Evangelist concerning the resurrection of a corpse (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3.34.377-392).

According to a scholium, attributed to Apollinaris of Laodicea, Papias also related a tradition on the death of Judas Iscariot, in which Judas became so swollen he could not pass where a chariot could easily pass, and was crushed by a chariot, so that his bowels gushed out (Papias *Fragment 3*, 1742-1744).

Papias' dates

About his date, which is important in connection with his credibility, there is Irenaeus' statement, later in the 2nd century, that Papias was, "a hearer of John, and companion of Polycarp, a man of old time." If Polycarp was, in fact, born not later than A.D. 69, (see entry Polycarp), then there may be no reason to depend on a further, but disputed tradition, that Papias shared in the martyrdom of Polycarp, (*ca* A.D. 155). In sum, the fact that Irenaeus thought of Papias, as Polycarp's contemporary and "a man of the old time,"

together with the affinity between the religious tendencies, described in the fragment from Papias's Preface quoted by Eusebius, and those reflected in the *Epistles* of Polycarp and Ignatius, all point to his having flourished in the first quarter of the 2nd century.

Indeed, Eusebius, who deals with him, along with Clement and Ignatius, (rather than Polycarp) under the reign of Trajan, and before referring at all to Hadrian's reign, suggests that he wrote about A.D. 115. It has been usual, however, to assign to his work a date, c. 130-140, or even later. No known fact, is inconsistent with, c. 60-135, as the period of Papias's life. Eusebius (3.36) calls him, "bishop" of Hierapolis, but whether with good ground, is uncertain.

Patrick, Saint (389?-461?), called the Apostle of Ireland, Christian prelate. His birthplace is uncertain, but it was probably in southwestern Britain; his British name was Succat. At 16 years of age, he was carried off by Irish marauders and passed his captivity, as a herdsman, near the mountain Slemish in county Antrim (according to tradition), or in county Connacht (Connaught). The young herdsman saw visions, in which, he was urged to escape, and after six years of slavery, he did so, to the northern coast of Gaul. Ordained a priest, possibly by Saint Germanus, at Auxerre, he returned to Ireland. Sometime after 431, Patrick was appointed successor to St. Palladius, first bishop of Ireland. Patrick concentrated on the west and north of Ireland, establishing his see at Armagh. Patrick's two surviving works are written, in Latin, and demonstrate his acquaintance with the Vulgate translation of the Bible. In one of these works, the *Confessions*, Patrick portrays himself, as an ignorant yokel, in an unequal contest with the powerful and learned adherents of Pelagianism. His reported use of the shamrock, as an illustration of the Trinity, led to its being regarded as the Irish national symbol. A strange chant of his, called the *Lorica*, is preserved in the *Liber Hymnorum* (Book of Hymns), and what purports to have been a hand bell, he used during Mass, is shown in the National Museum in Dublin. His traditional feast day is March 17.

Paulinus of Nola

Pontius Meropius Anicius Paulinus, St. Paulinus of Nola (Bordeaux, c. 354 - June 22, 431, in Nola, outside Naples).

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Paulinus was from a notable senatorial family with possessions in Aquitaine, northern Spain, and southern Italy. He was educated in Bordeaux, where his teacher, the poet, Ausonius, also became his friend. His normal career, as a young member of the senatorial class, did not last long - he served as governor of the south Italian province of Campania, but returned to Bordeaux, where he became a serious Christian - in Paulinus's day, the upper classes were in large part, Christian, but not strongly observant. When their only child, a son, died in infancy, he and his wife, Therasia seem to have considered withdrawing from secular life, and began the process, by moving from Bordeaux to Barcelona, in about 390.

Like Augustine of Hippo, who had been ordained against his will, in Hippo Regius, in 391, by a crowd cooperating with Bishop Valerius, Paulinus was persuaded, in Barcelona, by a crowd at Christmas time, in about 395, to receive ordination. Paulinus refused to remain in Barcelona, though, and he and his wife moved to Campania. Married priests were not uncommon, even in the West, in the early Church, but Paulinus had definite interests in Monasticism.

Paulinus had developed a fondness for the 4th century martyr, St. Felix of Nola, when he had lived in Campania before, and they settled near Felix's tomb; Paulinus rebuilt the complex, greatly enlarging the shrine and building guest houses for pilgrims. Paulinus wrote an annual hymn in honor of St. Felix, for the feast day, when processions of pilgrims were at their peak. In these hymns, we can understand the personal relationship Paulinus feels between himself and his "invisible friend," Felix, his advocate in heaven. His poetry shares with much of the work of the early 5th century, an ornateness of style that classicists of the 18th and 19th century found cloying and dismissed, as decadent.

Many of Paulinus's letters to his contemporaries, including Ausonius and Sulpicius Severus in southern Gaul, Victricius of Rouen in the northern Gaul, and Augustine in Africa, are preserved. Paulinus may have been indirectly responsible for Augustine's, *Confessions*: Paulinus wrote to Alypius, Bishop of Thagaste and close friend of Augustine, asking about his conversion and taking up of the ascetic life. Alypius's autobiographical response does not survive; Augustine's answer to that question, is the *Confessions*.

Around 410, Paulinus was chosen bishop of Nola. Like a growing number of aristocrats in the late 4th and early 5th centuries, who were entering the clergy, rather than taking up the more usual administrative careers in the imperial service, Paulinus spent a great deal of his money on his chosen Church and city.

We know about his buildings for St. Felix, from literary and archeological evidence, especially from his long letter to Sulpicius Severus, describing the arrangement of the building and its decoration. He includes a detailed description of the apse mosaic over the main altar and gives the text for a long inscription he has written to be put on the wall under the image. By explaining how he intends the visitors to understand the image over the altar, Paulinus provides rare insight into the intentions of a patron of art, in the later Empire.

Modern Devotion of St. Paulinus Today

The people of modern day Nola and the surrounding regions remain devoted to St. Paulinus. His feast day is celebrated annually, in Nola, during La Festa dei Gigli (the Feast of the Lilies), in which, Gilgi, several large statutes, in honor of the saint, are carried around the city. In the United States, the descendants of immigrants from Nola continue the tradition in Brooklyn, Harlem, and on Long Island.

Polycarp, Saint (69?-155?), Christian prelate, one of the Apostolic Fathers, bishop at Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey) during the first half of the 2nd century. He received a visit

and an Epistle from another of the Apostolic Fathers, Ignatius of Antioch, just prior to Ignatius of Antioch, just prior to Ignatius's martyrdom (perhaps, in 116). Toward the end of his life, he represented the Churches of Asia Minor, in meetings with Anicetus, bishop of Rome; one topic of the talks was the dating of Easter. Polycarp was martyred, at Smyrna, at the age of 86. According to the Christian martyr and theologian, Irenaeus, who was his pupil, Polycarp spoke with the Apostle, John the Evangelist; however; this person was probably John the Presbyter, whom Polycarp's contemporary Papias, expressly distinguished from John the Apostle and Evangelist. A letter from Polycarp to the Church, at Philippi, survives, as does a letter from Saint Ignatius of Antioch to Polycarp.

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP or THE LETTER OF THE SMYRNAEANS

INTRODUCTION

For background, The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, and the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, (both available on The Seraphim Files) should be read in connection with this Epistle from the Smyrneans about the martyrdom of Polycarp.

The Apostle John, author of the Gospel of John and Revelation, was a "pillar" of the Church, in Jerusalem, and later moved to Ephesus, for the rest of his ministry. During the reign of the tyrannical Roman Emperor, Domitian (A.D. 81-96), he was exiled to the nearby island of Patmos, where he wrote Revelation about A.D. 95. Upon the emperor's death, he returned to Ephesus to resume his episcopacy and to write his Gospel about A.D. 96. The last remaining of the Twelve Apostles, John was nearly a hundred when he died about A.D. 96-100 (The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp was written within a decade of St. John's death).

He was this last of the Twelve Apostles, who ordained Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, a city north of Ephesus. When St. Ignatius passed through Smyrna on his way to martyrdom, Polycarp was perhaps no more than thirty-five. The Epistles of Ignatius were collected by Polycarp, a fact mentioned by Irenaeus, Origen,

Eusebius, Jerome, Athanasius, Theodoret, and other ancients.

After a lifetime of exemplary ministry, Polycarp was martyred at the age of eighty-six. This Epistle of the Smyrneans is the first example of Christian Martyrology. One item of Commentary

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In 3:2 and 9:2 appears the phrase, “Away with the atheists.” Roman persecutors, called the Christians “atheists,” because they refused to worship the Roman gods. In 9:2, Polycarp says, “Away with the atheists” in irony, referring to the unbelieving Romans in the stadium.

In a similar vein, early Christians were also called “agnostics” in contrast to the Gnostics, who claimed direct knowledge of God. (An atheist is one who believes God does not exist; an agnostic is one who doesn’t know whether or not God exists). The Christian religion is based on believing in revelation (faith), not on direct knowledge. Thus, the startling (to modern ears) of St. Augustine to the effect that because he was an agnostic, he was a Christian!

Prologue

The Church of God, which sojourns (temporarily lives) at Smyrna, to the Church of God, which sojourns in Philomelium, and to all the brotherhoods of the Holy and Universal Church, sojourning in every place; mercy and peace and love from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied.

1:1

We write unto you, brethren, an account of what befell those that suffered martyrdom and especially the blessed Polycarp, who stayed the persecution, having as it were set, his seal upon it by his martyrdom. For nearly all the foregoing events, came to pass, that the Lord might show us, once more, an example of martyrdom, which is conformable to the Gospel.

1:2

For he lingered, that he might be delivered up, even as the Lord did, to the end that we too might be imitators of him, not looking only to that which concerns ourselves, but also to that, which concerns our neighbors. For it is the office of true and steadfast love, not only to desire that oneself be saved, but all the brethren, also.

2:1

Blessed, therefore, and noble are all the martyrdoms, which have taken place, according to the will of God (for it behooves us to be very scrupulous and to assign to God, the power over all things).

2:2

For who could fail to admire their nobility and patient endurance and loyalty to the Master? Seeing that when they were so torn by lashes that even as far as the veins and arteries and inward mechanism of their flesh were visible, they endured patiently, so that the very bystanders had pity and wept; while they themselves reached such a pitch of bravery, that none of them uttered a cry or a groan, thus showing to us all, that at that hour, the martyrs of Christ being tortured, were absent from the flesh, or rather, that the Lord was standing by and conversing with them.

2:3

And giving heed unto the grace of Christ, they despised the tortures of this world, purchasing at the cost of one hour, a release from eternal punishment. And they found the fire of their inhuman torturers, cold: for they set before their eyes, the escape from the eternal fire, which is never quenched; while with the eyes of their heart, they gazed upon the good things, which are reserved for those that endure patiently, things which neither ear has heard nor eye has seen, neither have they entered into the heart of man, but were shown by the Lord, to them, for they were no longer men, but angels already.

2:4

And in like manner, also those that were condemned to the wild beasts, endured fearful

punishments, being made to lie on sharp shells and buffeted with other forms of manifold tortures, that the devil might, if possible, by the persistence of the punishment, bring them to a denial; for he tried many wiles against them.

3:1

But thanks be to God; for He truly prevailed against all. For the right noble Germanicus, encouraged their timorousness through the constancy which was in him; and he fought with the wild beasts in a signal way. For when the proconsul wished to prevail upon him and bade him have pity on his youth, he used violence and dragged the wild beast towards him, desiring the more speedily to obtain a release from their unrighteous and lawless life.

3:2

So, after this, all the multitude, marveling at the bravery of the God-beloved and God-fearing people of the Christians, raised a cry, "Away with the atheists; let search be made for Polycarp."

4:1

But, one man, Quintus, by name, a Phrygian newly arrived from Phrygia, when he saw the wild beasts, turned coward. It was he, who had forced himself and some others to come forward of their own free will (and recant their faith). The proconsul, by much entreaty, persuaded this man to swear the oath and to offer incense. For this cause, therefore, brethren, we praise not those who volunteer to recant, since the Gospel does not so teach us.

5:1

Now, the glorious Polycarp, at the first, when he heard it, so far from being dismayed, wanted to remain in town; but the greater part persuaded him to withdraw. So, he withdrew to a farm, not far distant from the city, and there he stayed with a few companions, doing nothing else, night and day, but praying for all men and for the Churches throughout the world, for this was his constant habit.

5:2

And while praying, he fell into a trance, three days before his arrest, and he saw his pillow burning with fire. He turned and said to those that were with him: "It must needs be, that I shall be burned alive."

6:1

Since those that were in search of him persisted, he departed to another farm. Immediately, they who were in search of him, came up, and not finding him, they seized two slave lads, one of whom confessed under torture;

6:2

for it was impossible for him to lie concealed, seeing that the very persons who betrayed him were people of his own household. And the captain of the police, who chanced to have the very name, being called Herod, was eager to bring him into the stadium, that he might fulfill his appointed lot, being made a partaker with Christ, while they - his betrayers - underwent the punishment of Judas, himself.

7:1

So taking the lad with them, on the Friday about the supper hour, the police and horsemen went forth with their accustomed weapons, hurrying as against a robber. And coming up in a troop late in the evening, they found the man himself (Polycarp) in bed in an upper chamber in a certain cottage; and though he might have departed from there to another place, he would not, saying, "The will of God be done."

7:2

So, when he heard that they were come, he went down and conversed with them, the bystanders marveling at his age and his constancy, and wondering why there should be so much eagerness for the apprehension of an old man like him. At that, he immediately gave orders that a table should be spread for them to eat and drink at that hour, as much as they desired. And, he persuaded them to grant him an hour, so he might pray unmolested;

7:3

and on their consenting, he stood up and prayed, being so full of the Grace of God, that for two hours he could not hold his peace, and those that heard were amazed, and many repented that they had come against such a venerable old man.

8:1

But when at length, he brought his prayer to an end, after remembering all who at any time had come in his way, small and great, high and low, and all the Universal Church throughout the world, the hour of departure being come, they seated him on a donkey and brought him into the city, it being a high Sabbath.

8:2

And he was met by Herod, the captain of police and his father, Micetes, who also removed him to their carriage and tried to prevail upon him, seating themselves by his side and saying, "Why, what harm is there in saying, Caesar is Lord, and offering incense," with more to this effect, "and saving yourself?" But he, at first, gave them no answer. When however, they persisted, he said, "I am not going to do what you counsel me."

8:3

Then, they, failing to persuade him, uttered threatening words and made him dismount with speed, so that he bruised his shin, as he got down from the carriage. And without even turning round, he went on his way promptly, and with speed, as if nothing had happened to him, being taken to the stadium; there being such a tumult in the stadium, that no man's voice could be so much as heard.

9:1

But, as Polycarp entered into the stadium, a voice came to him from heaven; "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man." And no one saw the speaker, but those of our people, who were present, heard the voice. And at length, when he was brought up, there was a great tumult, for they heard that Polycarp had been apprehended.

9:2

When then he was brought before him, the proconsul asked whether he were the man. And on his confessing that he was, he tried to persuade him to a denial saying, "Have respect to your age," and other things, in accordance therewith, as it is their habit to say, "Swear by the genius of Caesar; repent and say, "Away with the atheists." Then Polycarp, with solemn countenance, looked upon the whole multitude of lawless heathen that were in the stadium, and waved his hand to them; and groaning and looking up to heaven, he said, "Away with the atheists."

9:3

But when the magistrate pressed him hard and said, "Swear the oath, and I will release you; revile the Christ," Polycarp said, "Eighty-six years, have I been His servant, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King, who saved me?"

10:1

But, on his persisting again and saying, "Swear by the genius of Caesar," he answered, "If you suppose vainly that I will swear by the genius of Caesar, as you say, and feign that you are ignorant who I am, hear you plainly: I am a Christian. But, if you would learn the doctrine of Christianity, assign a day and give me a hearing."

10:2

The proconsul said, "Prevail upon the people." But Polycarp said, "As for yourself, I should have held you worthy of discourse; for we have been taught to render, as is proper, to princes and authorities, appointed by God, such honor as does us no harm; but as for these, I do not hold them worthy, that I should defend myself before them."

11:1

Whereupon the proconsul said: "I have wild beasts here and I will throw you to them, except you repent." But, he said, "Call for them, for the repentance from better to worse is a change not permitted to us; but it is a noble thing to change from that which is improper to righteousness."

11:2

Then he said to him again, "If you despise the wild beasts, I will cause you to be consumed by fire, unless you repent." But Polycarp said: "You threaten that fire which burns for a season and after a little while is quenched: for you are ignorant of the fire of the future judgment and eternal punishment, which is reserved for the ungodly. But why do you delay? Come, do what you will."

12:1

Saying these things and more besides, he was inspired with courage and joy, and his countenance was filled with grace, so that not only did it not drop in dismay at the things which were said to him, but on the contrary, the proconsul was astounded and sent his own herald, to proclaim, three times, in the midst of the stadium, "Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian."

12:2

When this was proclaimed by the herald, the whole multitude, both of Gentiles and of Jews, who dwelt in Smyrna, cried out with ungovernable wrath and with a loud shout, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the puller down of our gods, who teaches multitudes not to sacrifice nor worship." Saying these things, they shouted aloud and asked the Asiarch Philip to let a lion loose upon Polycarp. But, he said, that it was not lawful for him, since he had brought the sports to a close.

12:3

Then they thought fit to shout out, with one accord, that Polycarp should be burned alive. For it must needs be that the matter of the vision should be fulfilled, which was shown him concerning his pillow, when he saw it on fire while praying, and turning round, he said prophetically to the faithful who were with him, "I must needs be burned alive."

13:1

These things then happened with so great speed, quicker than words could tell, the crowds immediately collected timber and sticks from the workshops and baths, and the

Jews, more especially, assisted in this, with zeal, as is their custom.

13:2

But when the pile was made ready, divesting himself of all his upper garments and losing his belt, he endeavored also to take off his shoes, though not in the habit of doing this before, because all the faithful, at all times, vied eagerly who should soonest touch his flesh. For he had been treated with all honor for his holy life, even before his gray hairs came.

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13:3

Immediately then, the instruments that were prepared for the pile were placed about him. As they were going likewise to nail him to the stake, he said: "Leave me as I am; for He that has granted me to endure the fire will grant me also to remain at the pyre unmoved, even without the security which you seek from the nails."

14:1

So they did not nail him, but tied him. Then he, placing his hands behind him and being bound to the stake, like a noble ram out of a great flock for an offering, a burnt sacrifice made ready and acceptable to God, looking up to heaven he said: "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Your beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of You, the God of angels and powers and of all creation and of the whole race of the righteous, who live in Your presence;

14:2

I bless You because You have granted me this day and hour, that I might receive a portion amongst the number of martyrs in the cup of Your Christ unto resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and of body, in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. May I be received among these in Your presence, this day, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as You did prepare and reveal it beforehand, and have accomplished it, You that art the faithful and true God.

14:3

For this cause, you and for all things, I praise You, I bless You, I glorify You, through the eternal and heavenly High-Priest, Jesus Christ. Your beloved Son, through Whom, with Him and the Holy Spirit, be glory, both now and ever and for the ages to come. Amen.”

15:1

When he had offered up the Amen and finished his prayer, the firemen lighted the fire. And, a mighty flame flashing forth, we to whom it was given to see, saw a marvel, yea and we were preserved that we might relate to the rest what happened.

15:2

The fire, making the appearance of a vault, like the sail of a vessel, filled by the wind, made a wall round about the body of the martyr; and it was there in the midst, not like flesh burning, but like a loaf in the oven or like gold and silver, refined in a furnace. For we perceived such a fragrant smell, as if it were the wafted odor of frankincense or some other precious spice.

16:1

So, at length, the lawless men, seeing that his body could not be consumed by the fire, ordered an executioner to go up to him and stab him with a dagger. And when he had done this, there came forth [a dove and] a quantity of blood, so that it extinguished the fire; and all the multitude marveled that there should be so great a difference between the unbelievers and the elect.

16:2

In the number of these latter was this man, the glorious martyr Polycarp, who was found an Apostolic and prophetic teacher in our own time, a bishop of the Holy Church, which is in Smyrna. For every word which he uttered from his mouth, was accomplished and will be accomplished.

17:1

But, the jealous and envious Evil One, the adversary of the family of the righteous, having seen the greatness of his martyrdom and his blameless life from the beginning, and how he was crowned with the crowns of immortality and had won a reward which none could gainsay, managed that not even his poor body should be taken away by us, although many desired to do this, and to touch his holy flesh.

17:2

So, he put forward Nicetes, the father of Herod and brother of Alce, to plead with the magistrate not to give up his body, "lest," so it was said, "they should abandon the crucified one and begin to worship this man"- this being done at the instigation and urgent entreaty of the Jews, who also watched when we were about to take it from the fire, not knowing that it will be impossible for us either, to forsake at any time, the Christ who suffered for the salvation of the whole world of those that are saved - suffered though faultless for sinners - nor to worship any other.

17:3

For Him, being the Son of God, we adore, but the martyrs as disciples and imitators of the Lord, we cherish as they deserve for their matchless affection towards their own King and Teacher. May it be our lot also, to be found partakers and fellow-disciples with them.

18:1

The Centurion therefore, seeing the opposition, raised on the part of the Jews, set him in the midst and burnt him, after their custom.

18:2

And so we afterwards, took up his bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place;

18:3

Where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness

and joy, and to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest, and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so hereafter.

19:1

So, it befell the blessed Polycarp, who having with those from Philadelphia, suffered martyrdom in Smyrna - twelve in all - is especially remembered more than the others by all men, so that he is talked of, even by the heathen in every place: for he showed himself, not only a notable teacher, but also, a distinguished martyr, whose martyrdom all desire to imitate, seeing that it was after the pattern of the Gospel of Christ.

19:2

Having, by his endurance, overcome the unrighteous ruler in the conflict and so received the crown of immortality, he rejoices in company with the Apostles and all righteous men, and glorifies the Almighty God and Father, and blesses our Lord Jesus Christ, the saviour of our souls and helmsman of our bodies and shepherd of the Universal Church, which is throughout the world.

20:1

You indeed, required that the things which happened, should be shown unto you at greater length; but we for the present, have certified you, as it were, in a summary through our brother, Marcianus. When then, you have informed yourselves of these things, send the letter likewise, to the brethren which are farther off, that they also may glorify the Lord, who makes election from His own servants.

20:2

Now unto Him that is able to bring us all by His grace and bounty unto His eternal kingdom, through His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, be glory, honor, power, and greatness forever. Salute all the saints. They that are with us, salute you, and Euarestus, who wrote the letter, with his whole house.

21:1

Now, the blessed Polycarp was martyred on the second day of the first part of the month, Xanthicus, on the seventh before the calends of March, on a great Sabbath, at the eighth hour. He was apprehended by Herod, when Philip of Tralles was high priest, in the proconsulship of Statius Quadratus, but in the reign of the Eternal King, Jesus Christ. To Whom be the glory, honor, greatness, and eternal throne, from generation to generation. Amen.

22:1

We bid you God speed, brethren, while you walk by the Word of Jesus Christ, which is according to the Gospel; with Whom be Glory to God, for the salvation of His Holy elect; even as the blessed Polycarp suffered martyrdom, in whose footsteps may it be our lot, to be found in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

22:2

This account, Gaius copied from the papers of Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp. The same also lived with Irenaeus.

22:3

And I, Socrates wrote it down in Corinth from the copy of Gaius. Grace be with all men.

22:4

And I, Pionius again, wrote it down from the aforementioned copy, having searched it out (for the blessed Polycarp showed me in a revelation, as I will declare in the sequel), gathering it together when it was now well nigh worn out by age, that the Lord Jesus Christ may gather me also, with His elect, into His Heavenly Kingdom; to Whom be the Glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

(The three preceding verses appear in the Moscow Manuscript, as follows):

22:2

This account, Gaius copied, from the papers of Irenaeus. The same lived with Irenaeus, who had been a disciple of the holy Polycarp. For this, Irenaeus, being in Rome, at the time of the martyrdom of the bishop Polycarp, instructed many; and many most excellent and orthodox treatises by him, are in circulation. In these he makes mention of Polycarp, saying that he was taught by him. And he ably refuted every heresy, and handed down the Catholic Rule of the Church, just as he had received it from the saint. He mentions this fact also, that when Marcion, after whom the Marcionites are called, met the holy Polycarp, on one occasion, and said, "Recognize us, Polycarp," he said in reply to Marcion, "Yes indeed, I recognize the firstborn of Satan." The following statement also is made, in the writings of Irenaeus, that on the very day and hour, when Polycarp was martyred, in Smyrna, Irenaeus being in the city of the Romans, heard a voice as of a trumpet saying, "Polycarp is martyred."

22:3

From these papers of Irenaeus, then, as has been stated already, Gaius made a copy, and from the copy of Gaius, Isocrates made another, in Corinth.

22:4

And I, Pionius again, wrote it down from the copy of Isocrates, having searched for it, in obedience, to a revelation of the holy Polycarp, gathering it together, when it was well nigh, worn out by age, that the Lord Jesus Christ, may gather me also, with His elect into His Heavenly Kingdom; to Whom be the Glory with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

The Encyclical Epistle of the Church at Smyrnam Concerning the Martyrdom of the Holy Polycarp (Palm DOC)

ST. POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA, MARTYR

From his acts, written by the Church of Smyrna in an excellent circular letter to the

Churches of Pontus, immediately after his martyrdom, a piece abridged by Eusebius, b. 4, c. 14, highly esteemed by the ancients. Joseph Scaliger, a supercilious critic, says that nothing in the whole course of Church history, so strongly affected him, as the perusal of these acts, and those relating to the martyrs of Lyons; that he never read them, but they gave him extraordinary emotions. *Animad. in Chron. Eusebii*, n. 2183 & c. They are certainly most valuable pieces of Christian antiquity.

A.D. 166

ST. POLYCARP was one of the most illustrious of the Apostolic Fathers, who, being the immediate disciples of the Apostles, received instructions from their mouths, and inherited, of them, the Spirit of Christ in a degree so much the more eminent, as they lived nearer the fountain head. He embraced Christianity very young, about the year 80, was a disciple of the Apostles, in particular of St. John, the Evangelist, and was constituted by him, Bishop of Smyrna, probably before his banishment to Patmos, in 96, so that he governed that important see, seventy years. He seems to have been the angel or bishop of Smyrna, who was commended above all the bishops of Asia, by Christ Himself, in the Apocalypse, and the only one without a reproach. Our Saviour encouraged him, under his poverty, tribulation, and persecutions, especially the calumnies of the Jews, called him rich in grace, and promised him the crown of life, by martyrdom. This saint was respected by the faithful, to a degree of veneration. He formed many holy disciples, among whom, were St. Irenaeus and Papias. When Florinus, who had often visited St. Polycarp, had broached certain heresies, St. Irenaeus wrote to him, as follows: "These things were not taught you, by the bishops, who preceded us. I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat, to preach the Word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he everywhere came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment, the majesty of his countenance, and of his whole exterior, and what were his holy exhortations to the people. I seem to hear him now relate how he conversed with John and many others who had seen Jesus Christ; the words he had heard from their mouths. I can protest before God, that if this holy bishop had heard of any error like yours, he would have immediately stopped his ears, and cried out, according to his custom,

Good God! that I should be reserved to these times to hear such things! That very instant, he would have fled out of the place in which he had heard such doctrine.” St. Jerome mentions that St. Polycarp met at Rome, the heretic, Marcion, in the streets, who resenting that the holy bishop did not take that notice of him, which he expected, said to him, “Do you not know me, Polycarp?” “Yes,” answered the saint, “I know you to be the firstborn of Satan.” He had learned this abhorrence of the authors of heresy, who knowingly and willingly, adulterate the divine truths, from his master, St. John, who fled out of the bath, in which, he saw Cerinthus. St. Polycarp kissed, with respect, the chains of St. Ignatius, who passed by Smyrna on the road to his martyrdom, and who recommended to our saint, the care and comfort of his distant Church of Antioch, which he repeated to him in a letter, from Troas, desiring him to write in his name, to those Churches of Asia to which he had not leisure to write himself. St. Polycarp wrote a letter to the Philippians shortly after, which is highly commended by St. Irenaeus, St. Jerome, Eusebius, Photius, and others, and is still extant. It is justly admired both, for the excellent instructions it contains and for the simplicity and perspicuity of the style, and was publicly read in the Church, in Asia, in St. Jerome’s time. In it, he calls a heretic, as above, the eldest son of Satan. About the year 158, he undertook a journey of charity, to Rome, to confer with Pope Anicetus about certain points of discipline, especially about the time of keeping Easter, for the Asiatic Churches kept it on the fourteenth day of the vernal equinoctial moon, as the Jews did, on whatever day of the week it fell; whereas Rome, Egypt, and all the West, observed it on the Sunday following. It was agreed, that both might follow their custom without breaking the bands of charity. St. Anicetus, to testify his respect, yielded to him, the honor of celebrating the Eucharist in his own Church. We find no further particulars, concerning our saint, recorded before the acts of his martyrdom.

In the sixth year of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, Statius Quadratus being proconsul of Asia, a violent persecution broke out in that country, in which, the faithful gave heroic proofs of their courage and love of God, to the astonishment of the infidels. When they were torn to pieces with scourges till their very bowels were laid bare, amidst the moans and tears of the spectators, who were moved with pity at the sight of their torments, not

one of them gave so much as a single groan, so little regard had they, for their own flesh in the cause of God. No kinds of torture, no inventions of cruelty, were forborne to force them to a conformity to the pagan worship of the times. Germanicus, who had been brought to Smyrna with eleven or twelve other Christians, signalized himself above the rest, and animated the most timorous, to suffer. The proconsul in the amphitheater called upon him, with tenderness, entreated him to have some regard for his youth, and to value at least, his life, but he, with a holy impatience, provoked the beasts to devour him, to leave this wicked world. One Quintus, a Phrygian, who had presented himself to the judge, yielded at the sight of the beast let out upon him, and sacrificed. The authors of these acts, justly condemn the presumption of those who offered themselves to suffer, and say that the martyrdom of St. Polycarp was conformable to the Gospel, because he exposed, not himself, to the temptation, but waited till the persecutors laid hands on him, as Christ our Lord taught us, by his own example. The spectators, seeing the courage of Germanicus and his companions, and being fond of their impious bloody diversions, cried out, "Away with the impious! let Polycarp be sought for!" The holy man, though fearless, had been prevailed upon by his friends to withdraw and conceal himself in a neighboring village, during the storm, spending most of his time in prayer. Three days before his martyrdom, he, in a vision, saw his pillow on fire, from which he understood, by revelation, and foretold his companions, that he should be burnt alive.

When the persecutors were in quest of him, he changed his retreat, but was betrayed by a boy, who was threatened with the rack, unless he discovered him. Herod, the Irenarch, or keeper of the peace, whose office it was to prevent misdemeanors and apprehend malefactors, sent horsemen, by night, to beset his lodgings. The saint was above stairs, in bed, but refused to make his escape, saying, "God's will be done." He went down, met them at the door, ordered them a handsome supper, and sired only some time for prayer, before he went with them. This granted, he began his prayer, standing, which he continued in that posture for two hours, recommending to God, his own flock and the whole Church with so much earnestness and devotion, that several of those that were come to seize him, repented they had undertaken the commission. They set him on an ass, and were conducting him towards the city, when he was met on the road by Herod

and his father, Nicetes, who took him into their chariot, and endeavored to persuade him to a little compliance, saying, "What harm is there in saying, Lord Caesar, or even in sacrificing, to escape death?" By the word, Lord, was meant nothing less than a kind of deity or godhead. The bishop, at first, was silent, in imitation of our Saviour, but being pressed, he gave them this resolute answer, "I shall never do what you desire of me." At these words, taking off the mask of friendship and compassion, they treated him with scorn and reproaches, and thrust him out of the chariot with such violence, that his leg was bruised by the fall. The holy man went forward cheerfully to the place where the people were assembled. Upon his entering, a voice from heaven was heard by many, "Polycarp, be courageous, and act manfully." He was led directly to the tribunal of the proconsul, who exhorted him to respect his own age, to swear by the genius of Caesar, and to say, "Take away the impious," meaning the Christians. The saint, turning towards the people in the pit, said, with a stern countenance, "Exterminate the wicked," meaning by this expression, either a wish that they might cease to be wicked by their conversion to the faith of Christ, or this was a prediction of the calamity which befell their city in 177, when Smyrna was overturned by an earthquake, as we read in Dion and Aristides. The proconsul repeated, "Swear by the genius of Caesar, and I discharge you; blaspheme Christ." Polycarp replied, "I have served Him these fourscore and six years, and He never did me any harm, but much good, and how can I blaspheme my King and My Saviour? If you require of me to swear by the genius of Caesar, as you call it, hear my free confession - I am a Christian; but, if you desire to learn the Christian religion, appoint a time, and hear me." The proconsul said, "Persuade the people." The martyr replied, "I addressed my discourse to you, for we are taught to give due honor to princes, as far as is consistent with religion. But, the populace is an incompetent judge to justify myself before." Indeed, rage rendered them, incapable of hearing him.

The proconsul, then assuming a tone of severity, said: "I have wild beasts." "Call for them," replied the saint: "for we are unalterably resolved not to change from good to evil. It is only good to pass from evil to good." The proconsul said: "If you condemn the beasts, I will cause you to be burnt to ashes." Polycarp answered, "You threaten me with a fire, which burns for a short time and then goes out, but are yourself ignorant of the judgment

to come, and of the fire of everlasting torments, which is prepared for the wicked. Why do you delay? Bring against me what you please." Whilst he said this and many other things, he appeared in a transport of joy and confidence, and his countenance shone with a certain heavenly grace and pleasant cheerfulness, insomuch that the proconsul himself was struck with admiration. However, he ordered a crier to make public proclamation, three times, in the middle of the Stadium (as was the Roman custom, in capital cases): "Polycarp hath confessed himself a Christian." At this proclamation, the whole multitude of Jews and Gentiles gave a great shout, the latter crying out, "This is the great teacher of Asia; the father of the Christians; the destroyer of our gods, who preaches to men not to sacrifice to or adore them." They applied to Philip the Asiarch to let loose a lion upon Polycarp. He told them that it was not in his power, because those shows had been closed. Then they unanimously demanded that he should be burnt alive. Their request was no sooner granted, but everyone ran with all speed, to fetch wood from the baths and shops. The pile being prepared, Polycarp put off his garments, untied his girdle, and began to take off his shoes, an office he had not been accustomed to, the Christians having always striven who should do these things for him, regarding it as a happiness to be admitted to touch him. The wood and other combustibles were heaped all round him. The executioners would have nailed him to the stake; but, he said to them: "Suffer me to be as I am. He who gives me grace to undergo this fire, will enable me to stand still without that precaution." They therefore contented themselves with tying his hands behind his back, and in this posture looking up towards heaven, he prayed as follows: "O Almighty Lord God, Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, God of angels, powers, and every creature, and of all the race of the just, that live in Thy presence! I bless Thee for having been pleased in Thy goodness to bring me to this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of thy martyrs, and partake of the chalice of Thy Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life, in the incorruptibleness of the Holy Spirit. Amongst whom grant me to be received, this day, as a pleasing sacrifice, such as one as Thou thyself hast prepared, that so Thou mayest accomplish what Thou, O true and faithful God! hast foreshown. Wherefore, for all things I praise, bless, and glorify thee, through the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, with whom, to Thee and the Holy Ghost, be glory now and forever. Amen." He had

scarce said Amen, when fire was set to the pile, which increased to a mighty flame. But, behold a wonder, say the authors of these acts, seen by us, reserved to attest it to others; the flames forming themselves into an arch, like the sails of a ship, swelled with the wind, gently encircled the body of the martyr, which stood in the middle, resembling not roasted flesh, but purified gold or silver, appearing bright through the flames; and his body sending forth such a fragrancy, that we seemed to smell precious spices. The blind infidels were only exasperated to see his body could not be consumed, and ordered a spearman to pierce him through, which he did, and such a quantity of blood issued out of his left side, as to quench the fire. The malice of the devil ended not here: he endeavored to obstruct the relics of the martyr being carried off by the Christians; for many desired to do it, to show their respect to his body. Therefore, by the suggestion of Satan, Nicetes advised the proconsul not to bestow it on the Christians, lest, said he, abandoning the crucified man, they should adore Polycarp: the Jews suggested this, "Not knowing," say the authors of the Acts, "that we can never forsake Christ, nor adore any other, though we love the martyrs, as his disciples and imitators, for the great love they bore their King and Master." The Centurion, seeing a contest raised by the Jews, placed the body in the middle, and burnt it to ashes. "We, afterwards, took up the bones," say they, "more precious than the richest jewels or gold, and deposited them decently in a place at which may God grant us to assemble with joy, to celebrate the birthday of the martyr." Thus, these disciples and eye-witnesses. It was at two o'clock in the afternoon, which the authors of the acts call the eighth hour, in the year 166, that St. Polycarp received his crown, according to Tillemont; but in 169, according to Basnage, his tomb is still shown with great veneration, at Smyrna, in a small chapel. St. Irenaeus speaks of St. Polycarp, as being of an uncommon age.

The Epistle of St. Polycarp to the Philippians, which is the only one among those which he wrote, that has been preserved, is, even in the dead letter, a standing proof of the Apostolic Spirit with which he was animated, and of that, profound humility, perfect meekness, burning charity, and holy zeal, of which, his life was so admirable, an example. The beginning is an effusion of Spiritual joy and charity, with which, he was transported at the happiness of their conversion to God, and their fervor in divine love. His extreme

abhorrence of heresy makes him immediately fall upon that of the Docetae against which he arms the faithful, by clearly demonstrating that Christ was truly made man, died, and rose again: in which his terms admirably express his most humble and affectionate devotion to our divine Redeemer, under these great mysteries of love. Besides walking in truth, he takes notice, that to be raised with Christ in glory, we must also do His will, keep all His commandments, and love whatever He loved; refraining from all fraud, avarice, detraction, and rash judgment; repaying evil with good, forgiving and showing mercy to others, that we ourselves may find mercy. "These things," says he, "I write to you on justice, because you incited me; for neither I, nor any other like me, can attain to the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, into whose Epistles, if you look, you may raise your Spiritual fabric, by strengthening faith, which is our mother, hope following, and charity towards God, Christ, and our neighbor, preceding us. He who has charity is far from all sin." The saint gives short instructions to every particular state, then adds, "Everyone who hath not confessed that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is anti-Christ; and who hath not confessed the suffering of the cross, is of the devil; and who hath drawn the oracles of the Lord to his passions, and hath said, that there is no resurrection nor judgment, he is the oldest son of Satan." He exhorts to watching, always in prayer, lest we be led into temptation; to be constant in fasting, persevering, joyful in hope, and in the pledge of our justice, which is Christ Jesus, imitating his patience; for, by suffering for His name, we glorify Him. To encourage them to suffer, he reminds them of those who had suffered before their eyes: Ignatius, Zozimus, and Rufus, and some of their own congregation, "who are not," says our saint, "in the place which is due to them with the Lord, with whom they also suffered."

Polycarp - Martyrdom

Polycarp - A Father of the Christian Church

Polycarp is a celebrated figure in the history of Christianity. A direct pupil of the Apostle John, Polycarp lived between 70 and 155 A.D., connecting him to both the Biblical Apostles and the age of the early Church Fathers. Several ancient sources document the contributions of Polycarp to Christianity, including his letters written to the Church at

Philippi, in which he encourages the members to remain strong in their faith and to flee from materialism. He also instructs the members in the proper handling of financial dishonesty, that was creeping into the Church. Polycarp served as the bishop of the Church at Smyrna (modern day Izmir), and was recognized as one of the early combatants of Christian heresies. He rejected the teachings of Marcion, an influential heretic, who tried to create a “new brand” of Christianity by redefining God and rejecting Old Testament teachings. In his well-known thesis, Polycarp combats Gnostic heresies, that were beginning to spread throughout the Christian Church.

Polycarp - A Martyr for Truth

Polycarp's greatest contribution to Christianity may be his martyred death. His martyrdom stands as one of the most well documented events of antiquity. The emperors of Rome had unleashed bitter attacks against the Christians, during this period, and members of the early Church recorded many of the persecutions and deaths. Polycarp was arrested on the charge of being a Christian - a member of a politically dangerous cult, whose rapid growth needed to be stopped. Amidst an angry mob, the Roman proconsul took pity on such a gentle old man and urged Polycarp to proclaim, “Caesar is Lord.” If only Polycarp would make this declaration and offer a small pinch of incense to Caesar's statue, he would escape torture and death. To this, Polycarp responded, “Eighty-six years, I have served Christ, and He never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King, who saved me?” Steadfast in his stand for Christ, Polycarp refused to compromise his beliefs, and thus, was burned alive at the stake.

Polycarp - A Relevant Testimony for our Lives

Polycarp's martyrdom is historical reality. He died for one reason - his unyielding faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. Yet, Polycarp's well-recorded death is only one of many lives that were given to reveal and proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ. In light of the cruel and torturous deaths of the first and second generations Christians, all theories that Christianity is a fabricated myth, created for the personal gain of its followers, must be rejected. Even today, many will die for a belief, but none will die for a lie. God allows the

deaths of His saints, not because He is a helpless or indifferent Lord, but because their deaths are powerful declarations of the free gift of life, that is offered to us, through the Person of Jesus Christ. If you have any doubts about the truth of Christ, as revealed in the Bible, re-examine the Biblical text in light of the willful deaths of nearly all of its writers, men who were eye-witnesses to Christ's life and ministry. Polycarp, like many other Christians, to this day, was only able to die for Christ, because he lived for Christ. His life was radically transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit - the desires, worries, pains, and fears of this world, no longer bound him. Polycarp's life and death provides an inspirational example for all Christians. He gave his earthly life for Christ, and in the midst of his sacrifice, he gained eternal life.

Biographical sketches of memorable Christians of the past

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna and Martyr

23 February 156

Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna (today known as Izmir), a city on the west coast of Turkey. The letters to the "seven Churches in Asia," at the beginning of the Book of Revelation, include a letter to the Church in Smyrna, identifying it, as a Church undergoing persecution.

Polycarp is said to have known the Apostle John, and to have been instructed, by him, in the Christian faith. Polycarp, in his turn, was known to Irenaeus, who later became Bishop of Lyons, in what is now, France. We have (1) Irenaeus's brief memoir of Polycarp; (2) a letter to Polycarp from Ignatius of Antioch, written around 115 A.D., when Ignatius was passing through Turkey, being sent, in chains, to Rome to be put to death; (3) a letter from Polycarp to the Church at Philippi, written at the same time; and (4) an account of the arrest, trial, conviction, and martyrdom of Polycarp, written after his death, by one or more members of his congregation.

Polycarp was denounced to the government, arrested, and tried, on the charge of being a Christian. When the proconsul urged him to save his life by cursing Christ, he replied: "Eighty-six years, I have served Him, and He never did me any wrong. How can I

blaspheme my King, who saved me?” The magistrate was reluctant to kill a gentle old man, but he had no choice.

Polycarp was sentenced to be burned. As he waited for the fire to be lighted, he prayed:

Lord God Almighty, Father of your blessed and beloved child, Jesus Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of you, God of angels and hosts and all creation, and of the whole race of the upright, who live in your presence: I bless you that you have thought me worthy of this day and hour, to be numbered among the martyrs and share in the cup of Christ, for resurrection to eternal life, for soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. Among them, may I be accepted before you today, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, just as you, the faithful and true God, have prepared and foreshown and brought about. For this reason and for all things I praise you, I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, your beloved child, through whom be glory to you, with Him and the Holy Spirit, now and for the ages to come. Amen.

The fire was then lit, and shortly thereafter, a soldier stabbed Polycarp to death, by order of the magistrate. His friends gave his remains honorable burial, and wrote an account of his death to other Churches.

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

Chapter I. - Praise of the Philippians.

Chapter II. - An Exhortation to Virtue.

Chapter III. - Expressions of Personal Unworthiness.

Chapter IV. - Various Exhortations.

Chapter V. - The Duties of Deacons, Youths, and Virgins.

Chapter VI. - The Duties of Presbyters and Others.

Chapter VII. - Avoid the Docetae, and Persevere in Fasting and Prayer.

Chapter VIII. - Persevere in Hope and Patience.

Chapter IX. - Patience Inculcated.

Chapter X. - Exhortation to the Practice of Virtue.

Chapter XI. - Expression of Grief on Account of Valens.

Chapter XII. - Exhortation to Various Graces.

Chapter XIII. - Concerning the Transmission of Epistles.

Chapter XIV. - Conclusion.

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

Polycarp, and the presbyters with him, to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi: Mercy to you, and peace from God Almighty, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, be multiplied.

Chapter I. - Praise of the Philippians.

I have greatly rejoiced with you in our Lord Jesus Christ, because ye have followed the example of true love [as displayed by God], and have accompanied, as became you,

those who were bound in chains, the fitting ornaments of saints, and which are indeed the diadems of the true elect of God and our Lord; and because the strong root of your faith, spoken of in days long gone by, endureth even until now and bringeth forth fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins, suffered even unto death, [but] “whom God raised forth the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave.” “In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;” into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that “by grace ye are saved, not of works,” but by the will of God, through Jesus Christ.

Chapter II. - An Exhortation to Virtue.

“Wherefore, girding up your loins,” “serve the Lord in fear” - and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and “believed in Him, who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory,” and a throne at His right hand. To Him, all things in heaven and on earth are subject. Him every Spirit serves. He comes as the Judge of the living and the dead. His blood will God require of those who do not believe in Him. But, He who raised Him up from the dead will raise up us also, if we do His will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; “not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing,” or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: “Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; and once more, “Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of God.”

Chapter III. - Expressions of Personal Unworthiness.

These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I take anything upon myself, but because ye have invited me to do so. For neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul. He, when

among you, accurately and steadfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive. And, when absent from you, he wrote you a letter which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given you, and which, being followed by hope, and preceded by love towards God, and Christ, and our neighbor, "is the mother of us all." For, if anyone be inwardly possessed of these graces, he hath fulfilled the command of righteousness, since he that hath love, is far from all sin.

Chapter IV. - Various Exhortations.

"But the love of money is the root of all evils." Knowing, therefore, that "as we brought nothing into the world, so we can carry nothing out," let us arm ourselves with the armor of righteousness; and let us teach, first of all, ourselves to walk in the commandments of the Lord. Next, [teach] your wives [to walk] in the faith given to them, and in love and purity, tenderly loving their own husbands in all truth, and loving all [others], equally in all chastity; and to train up their children in the knowledge and fear of God. Teach the widows to be discreet, as respects the faith of the Lord, praying continually for all, being far from all slandering, evil-speaking, false-witnessing, love of money, and every kind of evil; knowing that they are the altar of God, that He clearly perceives all things, and that nothing is hid from Him, neither reasonings, nor reflections, nor anyone of the secret things of the heart.

Chapter V. - The Duties of Deacons, Youths, and Virgins.

Knowing, then, that "God is not mocked," we ought to walk worthy of His commandment and glory. In like manner, should the deacons be blameless before the face of His righteousness, as being the servants of God and Christ, and not of men. They must not be slanderers, double-tongued, or lovers of money, but temperate in all things, compassionate, industrious, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the servant of all. If we please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as He has promised to us, that He will raise us again from the dead, and

that if we live worthily of Him, “we shall also reign together with Him,” provided only, we believe. In like manner, let the young men also be blameless in all things, being especially careful to preserve purity, and keeping themselves in, as with a bridle, from every kind of evil. For it is well, that they should be cut off from the lusts that are in the world, since “every lust warreth against the Spirit;” and “neither fornicators, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the Kingdom of God,” nor those who do things inconsistent and unbecoming. Wherefore, it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ. The virgins, also, must walk in a blameless and pure conscience.

Chapter VI. - The Duties of Presbyters and Others.

And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always “providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and man;” abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unjust judgment; keeping far off from all covetousness, not quickly crediting [an evil report] against anyone, not severe in judgment, as knowing that we are all under a debt of sin. If then, we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and “we must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and must everyone give an account of himself.” Let us, then, serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He, Himself has commanded us, and as the Apostles who preached the Gospel unto us, and the Prophets who proclaimed beforehand, the coming of the Lord [have alike taught us]. Let us be zealous in the pursuit of that which is good, keeping ourselves from causes of offence, from false brethren, and from those, who in hypocrisy, bear the name of the Lord, and draw away vain men into error.

Chapter VII. - Avoid the Docetae, and Persevere in Fasting and Prayer.

“For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is anti-Christ;” and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither, a

resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the Word, which has been handed down to us, from the beginning; “watching unto prayer,” and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications, the all-seeing God, “not to lead us into temptation,” as the Lord has said: “The Spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Chapter VIII. - Persevere in Hope and Patience.

Let us then, continually persevere in our hope, and the earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ, “who bore our sins in His own body on the tree,” “who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth,” but, endured all things for us, that we might live in Him. Let us then, be imitators of His patience; and if we suffer for His name’s sake, let us glorify Him. For He has set us, this example in Himself, and we have believed that such is the case.

Chapter IX. - Patience Inculcated.

I exhort you all, therefore, to yield obedience to the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience, such as ye have seen [set] before your eyes, not only in the case of the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the Apostles. [This do] in the assurance that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and that they are [now] in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also, they suffered. For they loved not this present world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes, was raised again, by God, from the dead.

Chapter X. - Exhortation to the Practice of Virtue.

Stand fast, therefore, in these things, and follow the example of the Lord, being firm and unchange-able in the faith, loving the brotherhood, and being attached to one another, joined together in the truth, exhibiting the meekness of the Lord in your intercourse with

one another, and despising no one. When you can do good, defer it not, because “alms delivers from death.” “Be all of you, subject one to another, having your conduct blameless among the Gentiles,” that ye may both, receive praise for your good works, and the Lord may not be blasphemed through you. But woe to him, by whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed! Teach, therefore, sobriety to all, and manifest it also, in your own conduct.

Chapter XI. - Expression of Grief on Account of Valens.

I am greatly grieved for Valens, who was once a presbyter among you, because he so little understands the place that was given him [in the Church]. I exhort you, therefore, that ye abstain from covetousness, and that ye be chaste and truthful. “Abstain from every form of evil.” For if a man cannot govern himself, in such matters, how shall he enjoin them on others? If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the heathen. But, who of us are ignorant of the judgment of the Lord? “Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world?” as Paul teaches. But, I have neither seen nor heard of any such thing among you, in the midst of whom the blessed Paul labored, and who are commended in the beginning of his Epistle. For he boasts of you in all those Churches, which alone then, knew the Lord; but we [of Smyrna] had not yet known Him. I am deeply grieved, therefore, brethren, for him (Valens) and his wife; to whom may the Lord grant, true repentance! And be ye then, moderate in regard to this matter, and “do not count such, as enemies,” but, call them back as suffering and straying members, that ye may save your whole body. For by so acting, ye shall edify yourselves.

Chapter XII. - Exhortation to Various Graces.

For I trust that ye are well versed in the Sacred Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you; but to me, this privilege is not yet granted. It is declared then, in these Scriptures, “Be ye angry, and sin not,” and, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Happy is he who remembers this, which I believe to be the case with you. But, may the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Son of God, and our everlasting High Priest, build you up in faith and truth, and in all meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, forbearance, and purity; and may He bestow on you a lot and portion among His saints, and on us with you, and on all that are under heaven, who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who “raised Him from the dead.” Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings, and potentates, and princes, and for those that persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be manifest to all, and that ye may be perfect in Him.

Chapter XIII. - Concerning the Transmission of Epistles.

Both you and Ignatius wrote to me, that if any one went [from this] into Syria, he should carry your letter with him; which request I will attend to if I find a fitting opportunity, either personally, or through some other acting for me, that your desire may be fulfilled. The Epistles of Ignatius written by him to us, and all the rest [of his Epistles] which we have by us, we have sent to you, as you requested. They are subjoined to this Epistle, and by them, ye may be greatly profited; for they treat of faith and patience, and all things that tend to edification in our Lord. Any more certain information you may have obtained respecting both Ignatius himself, and those that were with him, have the goodness to make known to us.

Chapter XIV. - Conclusion.

These things I have written to you by Crescens, whom up to the present time, I have recommended unto you, and do now recommend. For he has acted blamelessly among us, and I believe also among you. Moreover, ye will hold his sister in esteem when she comes to you. Be ye safe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Rufinus of Assisi

According to legend, **Rufinus of Assisi** was the first bishop of Assisi, Italy, during the first (or third?) century and converted the town to Christianity. He is said to have died, as a martyr, at Costano, but his acts of martyrdom are pure legendary. He is probably identical with the saint denoted as, “episcopus Marsorum” (bishop of the Marche).

His remains were put to rest in a Roman sarcophagus from the 3rd century. The front is sculpted in low relief with the myth of Diana and Endymion. It is now located under the main altar of the Cathedral of San Rufino, the third Church erected over his remains.

The memorial day of this patron saint of Assisi, is 30 July.

Sebastian, Saint (lived early 3rd century), Roman Christian martyr. According to the fictitious *Acts of Saint Sebastian*, a 5th-century work wrongly attributed to Saint Ambrose, Sebastian was a captain of the Praetorian Guard, but was also secretly, a Christian who made many converts. When the Roman emperor, Diocletian learned of his faith, he ordered Sebastian shot to death by archers. The arrows did not kill him, however, and a Christian widow, named Irene, took him away and tended his wounds. As soon as he recovered, Sebastian returned to the emperor and denounced him for his cruelty. Diocletian then ordered him beaten to death. The first martyrdom of Saint Sebastian was a favorite subject for Italian painters of the Renaissance (14th century to 17th century). He is often depicted with an arrow or pierced through the chest by an arrow. The saint's aid was invoked against plague. His feast day is January 20.

Socrates Scholasticus

This article is about the Byzantine Church historian. For the famous ancient Greek philosopher, see Socrates. For this page, we will sometimes refer to “Socrates Scholasticus,” as merely, “Socrates.”

Socrates Scholasticus was a Greek Christian Church historian; born at Constantinople,

c. 380. The date of his death is unknown; even in ancient times, nothing seems to have been known of the life of Socrates, except what can be gathered from notices in his, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (“Church History”).

His teachers were the grammarian, Helladius and Ammonius, who came to Constantinople from Alexandria, where they had been pagan priests. A revolt, accompanied by an attack on the Pagan Temples, had forced them to flee. This revolt is dated about 390.

That Socrates later profited by the teaching of the sophist, Troilus, is not proven. No certainty exists as to his precise vocation, though it may be inferred from his work, that he was a layman. On this title-page of his history, he is designated as a *scholasticus* (lawyer).

In later years, Socrates traveled and visited, among other places, Paphlagonia and Cyprus (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.12.8, 2.33.30).

The Historia Ecclesiastica

The history covers the years 305-439, and experts believe it was finished about 439, in any case, during the lifetime of Emperor Theodosius II., i.e., before 450. The purpose of the history is to give a continuation of the work of Eusebius of Caesarea (1.1). It relates, in simple language, what the Church experienced from the days of Constantine to the writer’s time. Ecclesiastical dissensions occupy the foreground, for when the Church is at peace, there is nothing for the Church historian to relate (7.48.7). In the preface to Book 5, Socrates defends dealing with Arianism and with political events, in addition to writing about the Church.

Socrates seems to have owed the impulse to write his work to a certain Theodorus, who is alluded to in the proemium to the second book as, “a holy man of God,” and seems therefore, to have been a monk or one of the higher clergy. The later historians, Sozomen

and Theodoret, drew upon Socrates' work for their own histories.

The *Historia Ecclesiastica* was first edited, in Greek, by Robert Estienne, on the basis of *Codex Regius* 1443 (Paris, 1544); a translation into Latin, by Johannes Christopherson (1612), is important for its various readings. The fundamental edition, however, was produced by Valesius (Paris, 1668), who used the *Codex Regius*, a *Codex Vaticanus*, and a *Codex Florentinus*, and also employed the indirect tradition of Theodorus Lector (*Codex Leonis Alladi*).

English Translations

English translations of his writings can be found in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.

Sozomen

Salminius Hermias Sozomen (c. 400 - c. 450) was a historian of the Christian Church. Variations on his name include **Sozomen**, **Salamanes** or **Salaminus Hermias Sozomenus**.

He was born around or before 400 in Bethelia, a small town near Gaza.

Family and Home

He came from a wealthy Christian family of Palestine.

What he has to tell us of the history of South Palestine was derived from oral tradition. He appears familiar with the region around Gaza, and mentions having seen Bishop Zeno of Majuma, the sea-port of Gaza.

Grandfather

Sozomen wrote that his grandfather lived at Bethel, near Gaza, and became a Christian together with his household, probably under Constantius II. A neighbor named Alaphrion was miraculously healed by Saint Hilarion, who cast out a demon from Alaphrion.

Sozomen's grandfather and Alaphrion, along with their families, became zealous Christians. These were the beginnings of Christianity, in that location. The grandfather became within his own circle, a highly esteemed interpreter of Scripture. The descendants of the wealthy Alaphrion founded Churches and convents in the district, and were particularly active in promoting monasticism. Sozomen, himself, had conversed with one of these, a very old man. He tells us that he was brought up under monkish influences and his history bears him out.

Education

Sozomen seems to have been brought up in the circle of Alaphrion and acknowledges a debt of gratitude to the monastic order. His early education was directed by the monks in his native place. It is impossible to ascertain what curriculum he followed in these monastic schools, but his writings give clear evidence of the thoroughness with which he was grounded in Greek studies.

As a man, he retained the impressions of his youth, and his great work later was to be also a monument of his reverence for the monks, in general, and for the disciples of Hilarion, in particular.

Lawyer

As an adult, he acquired training as a lawyer. He studied law in Beirut. He then went to Constantinople to start his career as a lawyer. While thus engaged, he conceived the project of writing a history of the Church.

First work

Sozomen wrote two works on Church History.

His first work covered the History of the Church, from the Ascension of Jesus to the defeat of Licinius in 323, in twelve books. His sources for it, included Eusebius of Caesarea, the Clementine Homilies, Hegesippus, and Sextus Julius Africanus.

Although he mentions this first work in his later work, it is not now extant; no known copies exist.

Historia Ecclesiastica

Sozomen's second and longer work was a continuation of the first. He planned to continue the history of Eusebius, covering the period between 323 and 439. The period, actually covered in his work, ends at 425.

He wrote it in Constantinople, somewhere around the years 440 to 443. He dedicated this work to Emperor Theodosius the Younger.

Contents

The nine books of which it is composed begin with Constantine and come down to the death of Honorius (423).

The books are arranged according to the reign of the Roman Emperors:

- * I and II: the reign of Constantine (323-37)
- * III and IV: the reigns of his sons (337-61)
- * V and VI: the reigns of Julian, Jovian, Valentinian I, and Valens (361-75)
- * VII and VIII: the reigns of Gratian, Valentinian II, Theodosius I, and Arcadius (375-408)

* IX: the reign of Theodosius the Younger (408-39)

The existing ninth book is incomplete. In his Dedication of the work, he states that he intended to cover up the seventeenth consulate of Theodosius, that is, to 439. The extant history ends about 425, so about half a book appears to be missing.

Scholars disagree on why the end is missing. Albert Guldenpenning supposed that Sozomen, himself, suppressed the end of his work because, in it, he mentioned the Empress Aelia Eudocia, who later fell into disgrace through her supposed adultery. However, it appears that Nicephorus, Theophanes, and Theodorus Lector did read the end of Sozomen's work, according to their own histories, later. Therefore, most scholars believe that the work did actually come down to that year, and that consequently, it has reached us only in a damaged condition.

Sources

Sozomen borrowed heavily from other sources for his work.

Socrates Scholasticus

The source for about three-fourths of his material was the writings of Socrates Scholasticus. The literary relationship of these writers appears everywhere. Valesius asserted that Sozomen read Socrates, and Hussey and Guldenpenning have proved this. For example, Socrates, in I., x., relates an anecdote, which he had heard, and says that neither Eusebius nor any other author reports it, yet, this anecdote is found in Sozomen, I., xxii., the similarity of diction showing that the text of Socrates, was the source.

The extent of this dependence cannot be accurately determined. Sozomen used the work of Socrates, as a guide to sources and order. In some matters, such as in regard to the Novatians, Sozomen is entirely dependent on Socrates.

Other Sources

But, Sozomen did not simply copy Socrates. He went back to the principal sources, used by Socrates and other sources, often including more from them, than Socrates did.

He used the writings of Eusebius, the first major Church historian. The *Vita Constantini* of Eusebius is expressly cited in the description of the vision of Constantine.

Sozomen appears also to have consulted the *Historia Athanasii* and also the works of Athanasius, including the *Vita Antonii*. He completes the statements of Socrates from the *Apologia contra Arianos*, lix. sqq., and copies Athanasius' *Adv. Episcopos Aegypti*, xviii.-xix.

Rufinus is frequently used. Instructive, in this respect, is a comparison of Sozomen, Socrates, and Rufinus on the childhood of Athanasius. Rufinus is the original; Socrates, expressly states, that he follows Rufinus, while Sozomen knows Socrates' version, but is not satisfied with it and follows Rufinus more closely.

The ecclesiastical records, used by Sozomen, are principally taken from Sabinus, to whom he continually refers. In this way, he uses records of the synods from that of Tyre (335) to that of Antioch in Caria (367).

For the period from Theodosius I, Sozomen stopped following the work of Socrates and followed Olympiodorus of Thebes, who was probably Sozomen's only secular source. A comparison with Zosimus, who also made use of Olympiodorus, seems to show, that the whole ninth book of Sozomen, is mostly an abridged extract from Olympiodorus.

Sozomen used many other authorities. These include sources relating to Christianity in Persia, monkish histories, the *Vita Martini* of Sulpicius, the works of Hilarius, *logoi* of Eustathius of Antioch, the letter of Cyril of Jerusalem to Constantius, concerning the miraculous vision of the cross, and Palladius.

He also used oral tradition, adding some of the most unique value to his work.

Critique

The work of Sozomen is interesting and valuable for many reasons. In the first place, he pays more attention than any of the older historians, to the missionary activity of the Christians, and to him, we are indebted for much precious information about the introduction of Christianity among the Armenians, the Saracens, the Goths, and other peoples. The history is especially rich in information, regarding the rise and spread of monasticism, and the labours of the early founders of monasteries and monastic communities.

The history, as a whole, is fairly comprehensive, and though his treatment of affairs in the Western Church is not full, his pages abound in facts not available elsewhere and in documentary references of the highest importance. The spirit and interest of Sozomen's history, is clearly apparent; he

follows the thread of the narrative of Socrates, but seeks to improve upon and to excel his original, by elegance of diction, and by the use of excellent sources, of which, he makes skillful use.

Sozomen made a painstaking effort to be acquainted with all the sources of information on the subjects which he touched, and he had a passionate desire for the truth. Generally, he follows his authorities closely, sometimes almost literally; when they differ, he occasionally gives the various versions.

The historical exposition is altogether impersonal; Sozomen assumes (III., xv.), that the task of history is to assemble facts without adding anything to them, hence, he indulges in little criticism, and usually adopts the views of his sources. This he does, to such an extent, that he has been charged with Arianism and Novatianism. In reality, in accord

with his legal training, he has no opinion in theological questions; at the same time, he was thoroughly pious and a great admirer of Monasticism.

In his attitude towards the Church, in his treatment of the Scriptures, and in his views of the hierarchy and ecclesiastical order and dignity, he is always animated by feelings of submission and respect. He was filled with a profound conviction of the Providential purpose of Christianity, and of its mission, under Divine guidance, for the regulation of the affairs of mankind.

In doctrinal matters, he aimed constantly, at being in thorough accord with the Catholic party, and was a consistent opponent of heresy, in all its forms. But, while he maintained a constant attitude of hostility to Arianism, Gnosticism, Montanism, Apollinarianism, etc., he never assailed the leaders of these heresies or allowed himself to indulge in bitter personal attacks. "Let it not be accounted strange," he says, "if I have bestowed commendations upon the leaders or enthusiasts of the above-mentioned heresies. I admire their eloquence and their impressiveness, in discourse. I leave their doctrine to be judged by those whose right it is" (III., xv).

Because much of Sozomen's work follows Socrates, he has been criticized, as attempting to compose a better Church History, than that of Socrates, but only being partially successful. He frequently offers additional material, but rarely improves upon his prototype. Sozomen did not track chronological data as closely as Socrates.

There are many faults and shortcomings in his work. Of many of these, he himself, was conscious, but it was not in his power to correct them. Frequently, it was hard for him to know the truth, because of the mass of divergent evidence with which he had to deal, frequently, there was not enough evidence, but in every case, he aimed at expressing the truth and at making his work serve some useful purpose in the defense or elucidation of Christian ideas.

Publication

The work of Sozomen, was first printed (*editio princeps*) by Robert Estienne, at Paris, in 1544, on the basis of Codex Regius, 1444. There are later editions by Christopherson and Ictrus (Cologne, 1612).

A noteworthy edition was done by Valesius (Cambridge, 1720), who used, besides the text of Stephens, a *Codex Fucetianus* (now, at Paris, 1445), "Readings" of Savilius, and the indirect traditions of Theodorus Lector and of Cassiodorus-Epiphanius.

Hussey's posthumous edition (largely prepared for the press, by John Barrow, who wrote the preface), is important, since in it, the archetype of the *Codex Regius*, the *Codex Baroccianus* 142, is collated for the first time. But, this manuscript was written by various hands and at various times, and therefore, is not equally authoritative, in all its parts.

There is an excellent English translation by Chester David Hartranft, with a learned, though somewhat diffuse introduction, in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, II (published New York, 1890).

Categories: Based on Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia / 1911 Britannica / Derived from Catholic Encyclopedia / Ancient Roman Christianity / Roman era historians / Patristic historical writings

Sulpicius Severus

Saint Sulpicius Severus (c. 360 - between 420 and 425), wrote the earliest biography of Saint Martin of Tours.

Sulpicius Severus was an aristocrat of Aquitaine, intended for an administrative career and educated in the classical manner, who, after the early death of his wife, renounced

his career and entered the monastic life.

Sulpicius' correspondence with his friend, Paulinus of Nola, tells us something of Sulpicius' own life and opinions and more of his actions in founding a monastery and decorating its buildings. Both men, members of the late Roman senatorial aristocracy, turned to ecclesiastical careers.

Sulpicius wrote a world chronicle, (*Chronicorum Libri duo* or *Historia sacra*), which extends from the creation of the world, to A.D. 400, omitting the historical events, recorded in the New Testament writings. It is an important source of information for the Arian controversy, especially with regard to Gaul.

Sulpicius's life of Saint Martin of Tours, was begun during the lifetime of St. Martin (who died, only in 397) and remained the most popular biography of that very popular saint.

Sylvester I, Saint (?-335), Pope from 314 to 335, the first Pope to hold office after the Roman emperors, Constantine the Great and Licinius, gave legal standing to the Christian Church, in 313. Sylvester was born in Rome. The Council of Nicaea (325) was the most important event of his reign. A document called the, Donation of Constantine, relates that the emperor conferred on Sylvester and his successors ecclesiastical primacy over the great patriarchates and temporal sovereignty over Italy and the Western Empire, but the document has long been recognized, as an 8th-century forgery. Despite later legend, which maintained that Sylvester converted Constantine the Great, cured him of leprosy, and imposed on him, the penance of closing all Pagan Temples of Rome. Sylvester, in fact, played a minor role in the momentous events of his own reign. His feast day is December 31.

Tatian

Tatian was an early Assyrian (Aturaya) Christian writer and theologian of the second century.

Life

Concerning the date and place of his birth, little is known beyond what he tells about himself, in his, *Oratio ad Graecos*, chap. xlii (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ii. 81-82): that he was born in “the land of the Assyrians;” current scholarly consensus, is that he died, c. 185, perhaps in Assyria.

He enjoyed a good education and became acquainted with Greek culture. Extensive travels led him through different countries and showed him the nature of Greek education, art, and science. He, himself, states, that he studied the Pagan religions.

Finally, he came to Rome, where he seems to have remained for some time. Here, he seems to have come, for the first time, in touch with Christianity. According to his own representation, it was primarily his abhorrence of the Pagan cults, that led him to spend thought on religious problems. By the Old Testament, he says, he was convinced of the unreasonableness of Paganism. He adopted the Christian religion and became the pupil of Justin Martyr. It was the period when Christian philosophers competed with Greek sophists, and like Justin, he opened a Christian school in Rome. It is not known how long he labored in Rome without being disturbed.

Following the death of Justin, in 165, the life of Tatian, is to some extent, obscure. Irenaeus remarks (*Haer.*, I., xxvlii., 1., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, i., 353) that after the death of Justin, he was expelled from the Church for his Encratitic view (Eusebius claims, he founded the Encratitic sect), as well as for being a follower of the Gnostic leader, Valentinius. It is clear, that Tatian left Rome, perhaps to reside for a while, in either Greece or Alexandria, where he many have taught Clement. Epiphanius relates, that Tatian established a school in Mesopotamia, the influence of which, extended to Antioch in Syria, and was felt in Cilicia and especially in Pisidia, but his assertion cannot be verified.

The ascetic character, which Syriac Christianity bore, as late as the time of Aphraates,

was not impressed upon it, by Tatian, but has roots, that reach deeper.

Tatian was the first, to give the Syriac congregations the Gospel, in their own language. The Syrian Church possessed and used the Gospel from the very beginning, until the time of Rabbula only in the form of the *Diatessaron*; it is probable, therefore, that Tatian not only brought the *Diatessaron* into Syria, but also developed there, a successful missionary activity in the last quarter of the second century. A later age, he did not realize that the Syrian ascetic tendencies had been transmitted from Semitic primitive Christianity, hence, it regarded Tatian as a sectarian, the head of the Encratites.

The early development of the Syrian Church furnishes a commentary on the attitude of Tatian in practical life.

Thus, for Aphraates, baptism conditions the taking of a vow in which the catechumen promises celibacy. This shows how firmly the views of Tatian were established, in Syria, and it supports the supposition, that Tatian was the missionary of the countries around the Euphrates.

Writings

His *Oratio ad Graecos (Address to the Greeks)* tries to prove the worthlessness of Paganism, and the reasonableness and high antiquity of Christianity. It is not characterized by logical consecutiveness, but is discursive in its outlines. The carelessness in style, is intimately connected with his contempt of everything Greek. No educated Christian has more consistently separated from Paganism; but, by overshooting the mark, his scolding and blustering philippic lost its effectiveness, because it lacks justice. His tendency to attack Greek philosophers, by mocking their misfortunes (such as, an unfortunate death, or being sold into slavery) could also be considered an *ad hominem* fallacy. However, as early as Eusebius, Tatian was praised for his discussions of the antiquity of Moses and of Jewish legislation, and it was because of this chronological section, that his *Oratio*, was not generally, condemned.

His other major work was the *Diatessaron*, a “harmony” or synthesis of the four New Testament Gospels into a combined narrative of the life of Jesus. Ephraim, the Syrian, referred to it, as the *Evangelion da Mahallete* (“The Gospel of the Mixed”), and it was practically, the only Gospel text used in Syria, during the third and fourth centuries.

In the fifth century, the *Diatessaron* was replaced in the Syrian Churches by the four original Gospels. Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa, ordered the priests and deacons to see that every Church should have a copy of the separate Gospels (*Evangelion da Mepharreshe*), and Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, removed more than two hundred copies of the *Diatessaron* from the Churches in his diocese.

A number of recensions of the *Diatessaron* are available. The earliest, part of the Eastern family of recensions, is preserved in Ephraim’s *Commentary* on Tatian’s work, which itself, is preserved in two versions: an Armenian translation preserved in two copies, and a copy of Ephraim’s original Syriac text from the late 5th/early 6th century, which has been edited by Louis Lelow (Paris, 1966). Other translations include translations made into Arabic, Persian, and Old Georgian. A fragment of a narrative about the Passion found in the ruins of Dura-Europos, in 1933, was once thought to have been from the *Diatessaron*, but more recent, scholarly judgement does not connect it directly to Tatian’s work.

The earliest member of the Western family of recensions is the Latin *Codex Fuldensis*, written at the request of Bishop Victor of Capua, in 545. Although the text is clearly dependent on the Vulgate, the order of the passages is distinctly how Tatian arranged them. Tatian’s influence can be detected much earlier in such Latin manuscripts, as the Old Latin translation of the Bible, in Novatian’s surviving writings, and in the Roman Antiphony. After the *Codex Fuldensis*, it would appear that members of the Western family lead an underground existence, popping into view over the centuries, in an Old High German translation (c. 830), a Dutch (c. 1280), a Venetian manuscript of the 13th century, and a Middle English manuscript from 1400, that was once owned by Samuel Pepys.

In a lost writing, entitled, *On Perfection according to the Doctrine of the Saviour*, Tatian designates matrimony as a symbol of the tying of the flesh to the perishable world and ascribed the “invention” of matrimony, to the devil. He distinguishes between the old and the new man; the old man is the law, the new man, the Gospel. Other lost writings of Tatian include a work written before the *Oratio ad Graecos*, that contrasts the nature of man with the nature of the animals, and a *Problematon biblion*, which aimed to present a compilation of obscure Scripture sayings.

Theology

The starting-point of Tatian’s theology is a strict Monotheism, which becomes the source of the moral life. Originally, the human soul possessed faith in One God, but lost it with the fall. In consequence, man sank under the rule of demons into the abominable error of Polytheism. By Monotheistic faith, the soul is delivered from the material world and from demonic rule and is united with God. God is Spirit (*pneuma*), but not the physical or stoical *pneuma*; He was alone before the creation, but He had within Himself, potentially the whole creation.

The means of creation was the *dynamis logike* (“power expressed in words”). At first, there proceeded, from God, the Logos, who, generated in the beginning, was to produce the world by creating matter from which the whole creation sprang. Creation is penetrated by the *pneuma hylikon*, “world Spirit,” which is common to angels, stars, men, animals, and plants. This world Spirit is lower than the divine *pneuma*, and becomes, in man, the *psyche* or “soul,” so that on the material side and in his soul, man does not differ essentially from the animals; though at the same time, he is called to a peculiar union with the divine Spirit, which raises him above the animals. This Spirit, is the image of God, in man, and to it, man’s immortality is due.

The first-born of the Spirits fell and caused others to fall, and thus, the demons originated. The fall of the Spirits was brought about through their desire to separate man from God, in order that he might serve, not God, but them. Man, however, was implicated in this

fall, lost his blessed abode, and his soul was deserted by the divine Spirit, and sank into the material sphere, in which, only a faint reminiscence of God remained alive.

As by freedom, man fell, so, by freedom, he may turn again to God. The Spirit unites with the souls of those who walk uprightly; through the prophets, he reminds men of their lost likeness to God. Although Tatian does not mention the name of Jesus, his doctrine of redemption culminates in his Christology.

References

Tatian, Address, 42 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2, 81-82).

Tertullian (160?-220?), the first important Christian ecclesiastical writer, in Latin, whose work is remarkable for its blunt sarcasm, epigrammatic phrasing, aggressive partisan Spirit, and skillful -though sometimes specious - reasoning. Tertullian was born, Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, in Carthage, the son of a Roman centurion. He trained for a career in law and practiced his profession in Rome. Sometime between 190 and 195, while still in Rome, he became a convert to the Christian faith, and it is evident that he visited Greece and possibly, Asia Minor. In 197, he returned to Carthage, where he married and became a presbyter of the Church. About 207, he aligned himself with Montanism, a sect that encouraged prophesying and espoused a rigorous form of asceticism. The Montanists, increasingly in conflict with Church authorities, were finally declared, heretical.

A zealous champion of Christianity, Tertullian wrote many theological treatises, of which 31, have survived. In his various works, he strove either to defend Christianity, to refute heresy, or to argue some practical point of morality or Church discipline. His views on ethics and discipline, rigorously ascetic, from the first, became progressively more harsh, in his later works. After espousing Montanist doctrines, he was a severe critic of Orthodox Christians, whom he accused of moral laxity.

Tertullian profoundly influenced the later Church Fathers, especially Saint Cyprian - and through them, all Christian theologians of the West. Many of his works are accepted, as Orthodox by the Roman Catholic Church and are included in the recognized body of patristic literature.

Tertullian's writings demonstrate a profound knowledge of Greek and Latin literature, both Pagan and Christian. He was the first writer, in Latin, to formulate Christian theological concepts, such as the nature of the Trinity. Having no models to follow, he developed a terminology derived from many sources, chiefly Greek and the legal vocabulary of Rome. His legal turn of mind, imprinted on this newly minted theological language of the West, a juridical character that has never been erased.

The most famous work by Tertullian, is *Apologeticus* (197?), an impassioned defense of Christians against Pagan charges of immorality, economic worthlessness, and political subversion. Of his doctrinal treatises refuting heresy, the most important is *De Praescriptione Hereticorum* (On the Claims of Heretics), in which he argued, that the Church alone, has the authority to declare what is and is not Orthodox Christianity. In other writings, he strongly disapproved of second marriages, exhorted Christians not to attend public shows, and favored simplicity of dress and strict fasts. Like all Montanists, Tertullian held, that Christians should welcome persecution, not flee from it. Christian historians value many of his writings, especially *De Baptismo* (On Baptism) and *De Oratione* (On Prayer), for the light they throw on contemporary religious practices.

Tertullian

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, anglicized as **Tertullian**, (ca. 155-230), was a Church leader and prolific author, during the early years of Christianity. He was born, lived, and died in Carthage, in what is today, Tunisia.

Tertullian denounced Christian doctrines, he considered heretical, but later in life, adopted

views that came to be regarded, as heretical themselves. He was the first great writer of Latin Christianity, thus sometimes known as the, “father of the Latin Church.” He introduced the term, Trinity, as the Latin *trinitas*, to the Christian vocabulary and also probably of the formula, “three Persons, one

Substance,” as the Latin “tres Personae, una Substantia” (itself from the Koine Greek, “treis Hypostases, Homousios”) and also the terms, *vetus testamentum* (“Old Testament”) and *novum testamentum* (“New Testament”). In his, *Apologeticus*, he was the first Latin author to qualify Christianity, as the ‘vera religio,’ and symmetrically relegating the classical Empire religion and other accepted cults, as mere ‘superstitions.’ Tertullian left the Church of Rome, late in his life and joined the heterodox Montanists, thus explaining his failure to attain sainthood.

Life

Of his life, very little is known, and that little is based upon passing references in his own writings, and upon Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. Eccl.* II., ii., 4, and Jerome, *De viris illustribus* (On famous men) chapter 53.

His father held a position (*centurio proconsularis*, “aide-de-camp”) in the Roman army in Africa. Roman Africa was notoriously the home of orators and this influence can be seen in his style, with its archaisms or provincialisms, its glowing imagery, and its passionate temper. He was a scholar, having received an excellent education. He wrote at least three books, in Greek, to which he himself refers; but, none of these are extant. His principal study was jurisprudence, and his methods of reasoning reveal striking marks of his juridical training. He shone among the advocates of Rome, as Eusebius reports.

His conversion to Christianity took place about 197-198 (cf. Adolf Harnack, Bonwetsch, and others), but its immediate antecedents are unknown, except as they are conjectured, from his writings. The event must have been sudden and decisive, transforming, at once, his own personality; he, himself said, that he could not imagine a truly Christian life without

such a conscious breach, a radical act of conversion: “Christians are made, not born” (*Apol*, xviii).

In the Church of Carthage, he was ordained a presbyter, though he was married - a fact, which is well established, by his two books to his wife. In middle life (about 207), he broke with the Catholic Church and became the local leader and the passionate and brilliant exponent of Montanism, that is, he became a schismatic. But, even the Montanists were not rigorous enough for Tertullian, who broke with them, to found his own sect. The statement of Augustine (*De Haeresibus*, lxxxvi), that before his death, Tertullian returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church, is very improbable.

His sect, the Tertullianists, still had, in the times of Augustine, a basilica in Carthage, but in that same period, passed into the Orthodox Church. Jerome says, that Tertullian lived to a great age. In spite of his schism, Tertullian continued to fight heresy, especially Gnosticism; and by the doctrinal works, thus produced, he became the teacher of Cyprian, the predecessor of Augustine, and the chief founder of Latin theology.

Writings

General character

Thirty-one works are extant, together with fragments of more. Some fifteen works in Latin or Greek are lost, some as recently as the 9th century (*De Paradiso*, *De superstitione saeculi*, *De carne et anima* were all extant in the now damaged *Codex Agobardinus* in 814 A.D.) Tertullian’s writings cover the whole theological field of the time - apologetics against Paganism and Judaism, polemics, polity, discipline, and morals, or the whole re-organization of human life on a Christian basis; they give a picture of the religious life and thought of the time which is of the greatest interest to the Church historian.

Chronology and contents

The chronology of these writings is difficult to fix with certainty. It is in part determined by the Montanistic views that are set forth in some of them, by the author's own allusions to this writing or that as ante-dating others (cf. Harnack, *Litteratur* ii. 260-262), and by definite historic data (e.g., the reference to the death of Septimius Severus, *Ad Scapulam*, iv.). In his work against Marcion, which he calls his third composition on the Marcionite heresy, he gives its date as the fifteenth year of Severus' reign (*Adv. Marcionem*, l. 1, 15).

The writings may be divided with reference to the two periods of Tertullian's Christian activity, the Catholic and the Montanist (cf. Harnack, ii. 262 sqq.), or according to their subject-matter. The object of the former mode of division, is to show, if possible, the change of views Tertullian's mind underwent. Following the latter mode, which is of a more practical interest, the writings fall into two groups. Apologetic and polemic writings, like *Apologeticus*, *De testimonio animae*, *Adv. Judaeos*, *Adv. Marcionem*, *Adv. Praxeam*, *Adv. Hermogenem*, *De praescriptione hereticorum*, *Scorpiace* counteract Gnosticism, etc. The other writings are practical and disciplinary, e.g., *De monogamia*, *Ad uxorem*, *De virginibus velandis*, *De cultu feminarum*, *De patientia*, *De pudicitia*, *De oratione*, *Ad martyras*, etc.

Among the apologetic writings, the *Apologeticus*, addressed to the Roman magistrates, is the most pungent defense of Christianity and the Christians, ever written, against the reproaches of the Pagans, and one of the most magnificent legacies of the ancient Church, full of enthusiasm, courage, and vigor. It first clearly proclaims the principle of religious liberty, as an inalienable right of man, and demands a fair trial for the Christians before they are condemned to death.

Tertullian was the first to break the force of such charges, as that the Christians sacrificed infants at the celebration of the Lord's Supper and committed incest; he pointed to the commission of such crimes, in the Pagan world, and then proved by the testimony of Pliny, that Christians pledged themselves not to commit murder, adultery, or other crimes; he adduced also, the inhumanity of Pagan customs, such as feeding the flesh of gladiators to beasts. The gods have no existence, and thus, there is no Pagan religion,

against which, Christians may offend. Christians do not engage in the foolish worship of the emperors; they do better, they pray for them. Christians can afford to be put to torture and to death, and the more they are cast down, the more they grow; "In the blood of the martyrs lies the seed of the Church" (*Apologeticum*, 1). In the *De Praescriptione*, he develops as its fundamental idea, that, in a dispute between the Church and a separating party, the whole burden of proof lies with the latter, as the Church, in possession of the unbroken tradition, is by its very existence, a guarantee of its truth.

The five books against Marcion, written in 207 or 208, are the most comprehensive and elaborate of his polemical works, invaluable for the understanding of Gnosticism. Of the moral and ascetic treatises, the *De patientia* and *De spectaculis* are among the most interesting, and the *De pudicitia* and *De virginibus velandis*, among the most characteristic.

Theology

General character

Though thoroughly conversant with the Greek theology, Tertullian was independent of its metaphysical speculation. He had learned from the Greek apologies, and forms a direct contrast to Origen, who drew much of his theories, regarding creation, from middle Platonism. Tertullian, the prince of realists and practical theologian, carried his realism to the verge of Materialism. This is evident, from his ascription to God of corporeity and his acceptance of the traducian theory of the origin of the soul. He despised Greek philosophy, and, far from looking at Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek thinkers whom he quotes as forerunners of Christ and the Gospel, he pronounces them, the patriarchal forefathers of the heretics (*De anima*, iii.). He held up to scorn their inconsistency, when he referred to the fact, that Socrates, in dying, ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Aesculapius (*De anima*, i.). Tertullian always wrote under stress of a felt necessity. He was never so happy as when he had opponents like Marcion and Praxeas, and, however abstract the ideas may be which he treated, he was always moved by practical considerations, to

make his case clear and irresistible. It was partly this element which gave to his writings, a formative influence upon the theology of the post-Nicene period, in the West, and has rendered them fresh reading, to this day. He was a born disputant, moved by the noblest impulses known in the Church. It is true, that during the third century, no mention is made of his name by other authors. Lactantius, at the opening of the fourth century, is the first to do this, but Augustine treats him openly, with respect. Cyprian Tertullian's North African compatriot, though he nowhere mentions his name, was well read in his writings, as Cyprian's secretary, told Jerome.

Specific teachings

Tertullian's main doctrinal teachings are as follows:

1. The soul was not pre-existent, as Plato affirmed, nor subject to metempsychosis or reincarnation, as the Pythagoreans held. In each individual, it is a new product, proceeding equally with the body from the parents, and not created later and associated with the body (*De anima*, xxvii.). This position is called, traducianism, in opposition to 'creationism,' or the idea that each soul is a fresh creation of God. For Tertullian, the soul is, however, a distinct entity and a certain corporeity, and as such, it may be tormented in Hell (*De anima*, lviii.).

2. The soul's sinfulness is easily explained by its traducian origin (*De anima*, xxxix.). It is in bondage to Satan (whose works it renounces, in baptism), but has seeds of good (*De anima*, xli.), and when awakened, it passes to health, and at once, calls upon God (*Apol.*, xvii.) and is naturally Christian. It exists, in all men alike; it is a culprit, and yet, an unconscious witness by its impulse to worship, its fear of demons, and its musings on death to the power, benignity, and judgment of God, as revealed in the Christian's Scriptures (*De testimonio*, v.-vi.).

3. God, who made the world out of nothing, through His Son, the Word, has corporeity though He is a Spirit (*De praescriptione*, vii.; *Adv. Praxeam*, vii.). However, Tertullian used 'corporeal' only in the stoic sense, to mean something with actual existence, rather than the later idea of flesh. In the statement of the Trinity, Tertullian was

a forerunner of the Nicene doctrine, approaching the subject from the standpoint of the Logos doctrine, though he did not fully state the immanent Trinity. A contraction of two Latin words: tri (three) and unitas (one), tri-unitas (three in one) pointed to God, as one God, in substance and nature, but three in person - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In his treatise against Praxeas, who taught Patripassianism, in Rome, he used the words, "Trinity and economy, persons, and substance." "The Son is distinct from the Father, and the Spirit, from both, the Father and the Son" (*Adv. Praxeam*, xxv.). "These three are one substance, not one person; and it is said, 'I and My Father are One,' in respect, not of the singularity of number, but the unity of the substance."

The very names "Father" and "Son" indicate the distinction of personality. The Father is One, the Son is One, and the Spirit is One (*Adv. Praxeam*, ix.). The question, whether the Son was coeternal with the Father, Tertullian does not set forth, in full clarity; and though he did not fully state the doctrine of the immanence of the Trinity, he went a long distance in the way of approach to it.

4. In soteriology, Tertullian does not dogmatize, he prefers to keep silence at the mystery of the cross (*De Patientia*, iii.). The sufferings of Christ's life, as well as of the crucifixion, are efficacious to redemption. In the water of baptism, which (upon a partial quotation of John 3:5) is made necessary (*De baptisate*, vi.), we are born again; we do not receive the Holy Spirit in the water, but are prepared for the Holy Spirit. We, little fishes, after the example of the *ichthys*, fish, Jesus Christ, are born in water (*De Baptisate*, i.). In discussing whether sins committed, subsequent to baptism may be forgiven, he calls baptism and penance, "two planks," on which, the sinner may be saved from shipwreck – language which he gave to the Church (*De penitentia*, xii.).

5. With reference to the rule of faith, it may be said, that Tertullian is constantly using this expression, and by it, means now, the authoritative tradition handed down in the Church, now the Scriptures themselves, and perhaps also, a definite doctrinal formula. While he nowhere gives a list of the books of Scripture, he divides them into two parts and calls them, the *instrumentum* and *testamentum* (*Adv. Marcionem*, iv. 1). He distinguishes between the four Gospels and insists upon their Apostolic origin, as accrediting their authority (*De praescriptione*, xxxvi.; *Adv. Marcionem*, iv. 1-5); in trying to account for Marcion's treatment of the Lucan Gospel and the Pauline writings he

sarcastically queries whether the “shipmaster from Pontus” (Marcion) had ever been guilty of taking on contraband goods or tampering with them after they were aboard (*Adv. Marcionem*, v. 1). The Scripture, the rule of faith, is for him, fixed and authoritative (*De corona*, iii.-iv.). As opposed to the Pagan writings, they are divine (*De testimonio animae*, vi.). They contain all truth (*De praescriptione*, vii., xiv.) and from them, the Church drinks (*potat*) her faith (*Adv. Praxeam*, xiii.). The prophets were older than the Greek philosophers and their authority is accredited by the fulfilment of their predictions (*Apol.*, xix.-xx.). The Scriptures and the teachings of philosophy are incompatible, in so far as, the latter are the origins of sub-Christian heresies. “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” he exclaims, “or the Academy with the Church?” (*De praescriptione*, vii.). Philosophy, as pop-Paganism, is a work of demons (*De anima*, i.); the Scriptures contain the wisdom of heaven. However, Tertullian was not averse to using the technical methods of Stoicism to discuss a problem (*De anima*). The rule of faith, however, seems to be also applied by Tertullian, to some distinct formula of doctrine, and he gives a succinct statement of the Christian faith, under this term (*De praescriptione*, xiii.).

Moral principles

Tertullian was a determined advocate of strict discipline and an austere code of practice, and like many of the African Fathers, one of the leading representatives of the rigorist element in the early Church. These views may have led him to adopt Montanism with its ascetic rigor and its belief in chiliasm and the continuance of the prophetic gifts. In his writings on public amusements, the veiling of virgins, the conduct of women, and the like, he gives expression to these views.

On the principle, that we should not look at or listen to what we have no right to practice, and that polluted things, seen and touched, pollute (*De spectaculis*, viii., xvii.), he declared a Christian should abstain from the theater and the amphitheater. There Pagan religious rites were applied and the names of Pagan divinities invoked; there the precepts of modesty, purity, and humanity were ignored or set aside, and there, no place was offered

to the onlookers for the cultivation of the Christian graces. Women should put aside their gold and precious stones, as ornaments (*De cultu*, v.-vi.), and virgins should conform to the law of St. Paul, for women, and keep themselves strictly veiled (*De virginibus velandis*). He praised the unmarried state, as the highest (*De monogamia*, xvii.; *Ad uxorem*, i. 3), called upon Christians, not to allow themselves to be excelled in the virtue of celibacy by Vestal Virgins and Egyptian priests, and he pronounced second marriage, a species of adultery (*De exhortations castitatis*, ix.).

If Tertullian went to an unhealthy extreme in his counsels of asceticism, he is easily forgiven when one recalls his own moral vigor and his great services, as an ingenuous and intrepid defender of the Christian religion, which with him, as later with Martin Luther, was first and chiefly an experience of his own heart. Because of his schism with the Church, he, like the great Alexandrian Father, Origen, has failed to receive the honor of canonization.

Tertullian is occasionally considered as an example of the misogyny of the early Church Fathers, on the basis of the contents of his '*De Cultu Feminarum*,' section I.I, part 2 (trans. C.W. Marx): "Do you not know that you are Eve? The judgment of God, upon this sex, lives on in this age; therefore, necessarily the guilt should live on also. You are the gateway of the devil; you are the one who unseals the curse of that tree, and you are the first one to turn your back on the divine law; you are the one who persuaded him whom the devil was not capable of corrupting; you easily destroyed the image of God, Adam. Because of what you deserve, that is, death, even the Son of God had to die."

See also

* English translation of Tertullian's writings can be found in volume III of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.

Footnotes

1. < *A History of Christian Thought*, Paul Tillich, Touchstone Books, 1972. (p. 43).
2. < B. B. Warfield, in *Princeton Theological Review*, 1906, pp. 56, 159.

References

* Initial text of article from *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Philip Schaff, public domain

* *This Holy Seed: Faith, Hope, and Love in the Early Churches of North Africa*
Robin Daniel, Tamarisk Publications, 1993.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (circa 350-428), theologian of the school of Antioch, whose use of philological critical, and historical methods in Biblical exegesis anticipated modern Biblical Scholarship. Born in Antioch, he studied under the Pagan rhetorician Libanus, and in 369, entered the monastic school of Diodore (circa 330-c.390), a bishop of Tarsus, where he remained for about ten years. He was ordained in 381; in 392, he became bishop of Mopsuestia (now Misis, Turkey), where he died in 428.

In his Biblical commentaries, Theodore rejected allegorical interpretation, emphasizing instead, literal meaning and historical context. His theological works were particularly concerned with the state of immortality, which he understood as a conjunction of the human and divine pre-figured by the union of humanity and God in Christ and initiated through the reception of the sacraments. Theodore's interpretation of the two natures (human and divine) of Christ was considered orthodox during his lifetime, but was associated at the Council of Ephesus (432) with the teachings of his pupil, Nestorius (died about 451), which the Council declared heretical. Although the Nestorian Church subsequently came to consider Theodore its primary theological authority, scholars have recently re-examined his surviving works and have found them Orthodox, rather than

Nestorian, in tendency.

Theognostus Of Alexandria

3rd century Greek theologian, writer, and prominent head of Alexandria's Catechetical school, at that time, the intellectual centre for Hellenistic Christianity. Reputed to be one of the Greek Church's distinguished teachers, Theognostus assumed the leadership of the school, c. 265, although the precise line of succession is not certain. His principal work, the *Hypotyposeis* (Greek: "Outlines"), is a doctrinal compendium, in seven books, intended for use at the school.

Adhering to the teaching of Origen, a theologian of the 2nd-3rd century, Theognostus organized his work and adopted his terminology from his master's *Peri archon* ("On First Principles"). The *Hypotyposeis* was acclaimed by Gregory of Nyssa, a 4th-century intellectual leader of the Eastern Church, but was sharply attacked, almost five centuries later, by the Byzantine patriarch, Photius of Constantinople, whose *Myriobiblion* ("Library"), or *Bibliotheca*, has preserved the fullest account of the work. Interpreting Theognostus' text, as subordinating the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father, Photius scorned, what he considered, Origenistic views of the divine Trinity. Yet, the orthodox Athanasius of Alexandria appealed to the *Hypotyposeis* during the 4th-century controversy with Arianism, a heretical movement, teaching that Christ is inferior to the divine nature, being the human form of the created Logos (Word).

The *Hypotyposeis* reflected other Origenistic opinions, contrary to Neoplatonism, such as the non-eternity of matter and the rational possibility of Christ's incarnation, tenets characteristic of the Christianized Hellenistic philosophy, at the Alexandrian school. Despite his criticism, Photius still commended Theognostus' treatment of Christ's redemptive work and admired the clarity of his Attic literary style. An English translation of the extant fragments of the *Hypotyposeis* is contained in the collection, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Alexander Roberts (ed.), vol. 6 (1885). Newly discovered remains of the second book were published by Franz Diekamp, in 1902.

Theophilus of Alexandria

Theophilus of Alexandria, (died 412) was the Nicene patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt (385-412).

He was patriarch, at a time of conflict between the newly dominant Christians and the Pagan establishment in Alexandria, each supported by a segment of the Alexandrian populace. In 391, Theophilus (according to Rufinus and Sozomen), discovered a hidden Pagan Temple. He and his followers displayed the Pagan artifacts to the public, which offended the Pagans enough, to provoke an attack on the Christians. The Christian faction counter-attacked, forcing the Pagans to retreat to the Serapeum. A letter was sent by the emperor, that Theophilus should grant the offending Pagans pardon, but destroy the Temple.

The destruction of the Serapeum was seen by many ancient and modern authors, as representative of the triumph of Christianity, over other religions; when Christians lynched Hypatia, they acclaimed Theophilus's successor, Cyril, as "the new Theophilus, for he had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city" (*Chronicle* of John of Nikiu).

Theophilus turned on the followers of Origen after having supported them, for a time. He was apparently also an opponent of the Nestorians. He was accompanied by his nephew, Cyril, to Constantinople, in 403, and was present at the "Synod of the Oak," that deposed John Chrysostom.

Surviving works

- * Correspondence with St. Jerome, Pope Anastasius I and Pope Innocent I
- * Tract against Chrysostom
- * Homilies translated by St. Jerome (preserved in Migne)
- * Other homilies survive only in Coptic and Ge'ez translations

Theophilus of Antioch

There is also a Theophilus of Alexandria (c. A.D. 412).

Theophilus, Patriarch of Antioch (Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* iv. 20; Jerome *Ep. ad Algas. quaest.* 6), succeeded Eros c. 169, and was succeeded by Maximus I c. 183, according to Clinton (*Fasti Romani*), but these dates are only approximations. His death probably occurred between 183-185 (Lightfoot, *S. Ignatius*, vol. ii. p. 166).

We gather from his writings, that he was born a Pagan, not far from the Tigris and Euphrates, and was led to embrace Christianity by studying the Holy Scriptures, especially the prophetic books (*Apolo-gia ad Autolyicum* i.14, ii.24). He makes no reference to his office in his existing writings, nor is any other fact in his life recorded. Eusebius, however, speaks of the zeal which he and the other chief shepherds displayed in driving away the heretics who were attacking Christ's flock, with special mention of his work against Marcion (*Ecclesiastical History* iv. 24). He made contributions to the departments of Christian literature, polemics, exegetics, and apologetics. Dr. Sanday describes him as, "one of the precursors of that group of writers who, from Irenaeus to Cyprian, not only break the obscurity which rests on the earliest history of the Christian Church, but alike in the East and in the West, carry it to the front in literary eminence, and distance all their heathen contemporaries"

(*Studia Biblica*, p. 90). Eusebius and Jerome mention numerous works of Theophilus existing in their time. They are:

1. the existing *Apolo-gia* addressed to Autolyucus;
2. a work against the heresy of Hermogenes;
3. against that of Marcion;
4. some catechetical writings;
5. Jerome also mentions having read some commentaries on the Gospel and on

Proverbs, which bore Theophilus's name, but which he regarded, as inconsistent with the elegance and style of his other works.

The Apologia and Autolycum

The one undoubted extant work of Theophilus is his, *Apologia ad Autolycum*, in three books. Its ostensible object is to convince a Pagan friend, Autolycus, a man of great learning and an earnest seeker after truth, of the divine authority of the Christian religion, while at the same time, he exhibit's the falsehood and absurdity of Paganism. His arguments, drawn almost entirely from the Old Testament, with but very scanty references to the New Testament, are largely chronological. He makes the truth of Christianity depend on his demonstration, that the books of the Old Testament were long anterior to the writings of the Greeks and were divinely inspired. Whatever truth the Pagan authors contain, he regards as borrowed from Moses and the Prophets, who alone, declare God's revelation to man. He contrasts the perfect consistency of the divine oracles, which he regards as a convincing proof of their inspiration, with the inconsistencies of the Pagan philosophers. He contrasts the account of the creation of the universe and of man, on which, together with the history contained in the earlier chapters of Genesis, he comments at great length, but with singularly little intelligence, with the statements of Plato, "reputed the wisest of all the Greeks" (iii. 15, 16), of Aratus, who had the insight to assert, that the earth was spherical (ii. 32, iii. 2), and other Greek writers, on whom, he pours contempt as mere ignorant retailers of stolen goods. He supplies a series of dates, beginning with Adam and ending with Marcus Aurelius, who had died shortly before he wrote, thus dating this work to the years of the reign of Commodus. Theophilus regards the Sibylline books, as authentic and inspired productions, quoting them largely, as declaring the same truths with the Prophets. The omission, by the Greeks of all, mention of the Old Testament, from which, they draw all their wisdom, is ascribed to a self-chosen blindness, in refusing to recognize the only God and in persecuting the followers of the only fountain of truth (iii. 30 and following). He can recognize, in them, no aspirations after the divine life, no earnest groping's after truth, no gleams of the all-illuminating light. The Pagan religion was a mere

worship of idols, bearing the names of dead men. Almost the only point in which he will allow the Pagan writers to be in harmony with revealed truth, is in the doctrine of retribution and punishment after death for sins committed in life (ii. 37, 38). Henry Wace believes, “the literary character of the *Apologia* deserves commendation. The style is characterized by dignity and refinement. It is clear and forcible. The diction is pure and well-chosen. Theophilus also displays wide and multifarious though superficial reading, and a familiar acquaintance with the most celebrated Greek writers. His quotations are numerous and varied.” However, Henry Chadwick, in his *The Early Church* (London, 1967) describes the *Apologia* as, “a rambling defense of Christianity.” Donaldson, is likewise harsh in his *History of Christian Literature*, pointing out Theophilus’s many blunders, which include misquoting Plato several times (iii. 6, 16), ranking Zopyrus among the Greeks (iii. 26), and speaking of Pausanias, as having only run a risk of starvation, instead of being actually starved to death in the Temple of Minerva.

Theophilus’s critical powers were not above his age. He adopts Herodotus’s derivation (ii. 52) of *qeus* from *tiqmi*, since God set all things in order, comparing with it, that of Plato (*Crataeus* 397C) from *qeein*, because the Deity is ever in motion (*Apologia* i. 4). He asserts that Satan is called the dragon (Greek *drakon*) on account of his having revolted *apodedrakenai* from God (ii. 28), and traces the Bacchanalian cry, “Evoe” to the name of Eve, as the first sinner. His physical theories are equally embarrassing. He ridicules those who maintain the spherical form of the earth (ii. 32) and asserts that it is a flat surface covered by the heavens as by a domical vault (ii. 13). His exegesis is based on allegories usually of the most arbitrary character. He makes no attempt to determine the real meaning of a passage, but seeks to find some recondite Spiritual truth, a method which often leads him to great absurdities. He discovers the reason of blood coagulating on the surface of the ground in the divine word to Cain (Genesis 4:10-12), the earth struck with terror, refusing to drink it in.

Theophilus’s testimony to the Old Testament is copious. He quotes, very largely, from the Pentateuch and to a smaller extent, from the other historical books. His references to Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, and Jerome are copious, and he quotes from Ezekiel, Hosea,

and other minor Prophets. His direct evidence, respecting the Canon of the New Testament, does not go much beyond a few precepts from the Sermon on the Mount (iii. 13, 14), a possible quotation from Luke 18:27 (ii. 13), and quotations from Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 1 Timothy. More important, is a distinct citation from the opening of the Gospel of St. John (1:1-3), mentioning the evangelist by name, as one of the inspired men, by whom, the Holy Scriptures were written (ii. 22). The use of a metaphor, found in 2 Peter 1:19, bears on the date of that Epistle. According to Eusebius, Theophilus quoted the Book of Revelation, in his work against Hermogenes; a very precarious allusion has been seen in ii. 28, cf. Revelation 12:3, 7, etc. A full index of these and other possible references to the Old and New Testament, is given by Otto (*Corp. Apol. Christ.* ii. 353-355). Theophilus transcribes a considerable portion of Genesis, chapters 1-3, with his own allegorizing comments upon the successive work of the creation week. The sun is the image of God; the moon of man, whose death and resurrection are pre-figured by the monthly changes of that luminary. The first three days before the creation of the heavenly bodies, are types of the Trinity - the first place in Christian writings where that terminology is known to occur (ii.15): i.e. "God, His Word, and His Wisdom."

The silence, regarding his *Apology*, in the East, is remarkable; we fail to find the work mentioned or quoted by Greek writers, before the time of Eusebius. Several passages in the works of Irenaeus, show an undoubted relationship to passages in one small section of the *Apologia* (Iren. v. 23, 1; Autol. ii. 25 init.: Iren iv. 38, I, iii. 23, 6; Autol. ii. 25: Iren iii. 23, 6: Autol. ii. 25, 26), but Harnack thinks it probable, that the quotations, limited to two chapters, are not taken from the *Apologia*, but from Theophilus's work against Marcion (cf. Mohler, *Patr.* p. 286; Otto, *Corp. Apol.* II. viii. p. 357; Donaldson, *History of Christian Literature* iii, 66). In the West, there are a few references to the *Autolytus*. It is quoted by Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* i. 23) under the title, *Liber de Temporibus ad Autolytum*. There is a passage, first cited, by Maranus, in Novatian (*de Trin.* c. 2) which shows great similarity to the language of Theophilus (*ad Autol.* i. 3). In the next century, the book is mentioned by Gennadius (c. 34), as "tres libelli de fide." He found them attributed to Theophilus of Alexandria, but the disparity of style caused him to question the authorship. The notice of Theophilus, by Jerome, has been already referred to. Dodwell found

internal evidence, in the reference to existing persecutions and a supposed reference to Origen and his followers, for assigning the work to a younger, Theophilus, who perished in the reign of Septimius Severus (*Dissert. Ad Irenaeus* 44, 50, pp. 170 ff. ed. 1689). His arguments have been carefully examined by Tillemont

(*Mem. eccl.* iii. 612 notes), Cave (*Hist. Lit.* i. 70), Donaldson (ii. 65), and Harnack (p. 287), and the received authorship, fully established. Compare W. Sanday in *Stud. Bibl.* (Oxford, 1885), p. 89.

Editions

Migne's *Patr. Gk.* (t. vi. col. 1023-1168), and a small edition (Cambridge 1852) by W. G. Humphry. Otto's edition in the *Corpus Apologet. Christ. Saec. Secund.*, vol. ii. (Jena 1861) is by far, the most complete and useful. English translation by Belty (Oxford 1722), Flower (London, 1860), and Marcus Dods (Clark's Ante-Nicene Library).

Victor I, Saint (?-199), Pope from 189 to 199, born in Africa, the first Pope of Latin, rather than Greek culture. The main controversy of his pontificate involved the Quartodecimans, Christians in Asia Minor, who observed Easter on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan. Victor summoned a Council, in Rome, at which he threatened Quartodeciman bishops with excommunication, if they failed to keep the Roman date for Easter. His action is believed to be the first display of Papal Supremacy over the Eastern Church, and its severity, earned Victor a stiff rebuke from Irenaeus. Victor condemned the heresy of Dynamic Monarchianism, which taught that Jesus was an ordinary human being, until his baptism, and excommunicated Theodotus, one of its leading proponents. Victor replaced Greek with Latin, as the official language of the Roman Church.

Vincent of Lerins, Saint (died before 450), theologian, noted for his *Commonitoria*, which contains the Vincentian Canon, a formula for determining orthodoxy. In about 425, he became a monk at the abbey on the island of Lerins (near present-day Cannes, France). About 435, he wrote, under the pseudonym Peregrinus ("pilgrim,") two volumes,

called *Commonitoria*, of which, only one has survived. This work was intended to address the growing problem of conflicting theological opinions. The Vincentian Canon, strongly emphasized tradition, defining orthodoxy as, “what has been believed everywhere, always, and by all.” The *Commonitoria*, by implication, attacked St. Augustine, whose doctrine of predestination and grace, Vincent considered a disturbing innovation. His own position was that of Semi-Pelagianism, which acknowledged the necessity of grace, but held that the human will also have a role in achieving salvation.

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