

Course Name: Patrology II

Course Description

Patrology in general is a very essential or back bone course for every aspects of Theology. It deals with the life, the doctrine and writings of Church Fathers. In the Holy Trinity University Addis Abeba (EOTC), we do have Four Patrology Courses: Namely Patrology I, II, III and IV. **Patrology is II** is the course of Church Fathers of Nicene and Post- Nicene Fathers. This period is known as golden age for the church because of the doctrine and teaching of the Church reach its climax. The conversion of Emperor Constantine, the Christianizing of the empire and the unity of the church and state well- established. The other point that makes this period different is the flowering of the monastic movement, the expansion and inspiration a hagiographical literatures.

Pre-Request Course: Patrology I

The objectives of this course are:-

- To introduce the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers
- Evaluate heretical teachings in the position of EOTC
- To know the patristic writings of the Church Fathers
- To defend and safeguard the church
- To respond for the wrong philosophical thoughts
- To deliver the lives, achievements, theology and doctrines of the Church Fathers
- The ultimate purpose of studying church Fathers is for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the believers

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to:

- Describe the concept of Patristic thoughts of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers
- Analyze the theological thoughts of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers
- Identify the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
- Examine the life and the writings of Church Fathers

Course Content

Chapter One

Nicene Fathers

- St. Peter the seal of Martyrs
- Arian controversy

Attendees of the Nicene Council

- St Alexander of Alexandria
- St. Hosius Corduba
- St. Eustathius of Antioch
- St. Thomas, Bishop of Mar'ash (Syria)
- St. Ambrose of Milan
- St. Jacob of Nisibis
- St. Athanasius the Apostolic

Effect of the Nicean council

- Didymus the Blind
- St. Ephraem the Syrian
- St. John Chrysostom

Monastic Life

- St. Anthony- Father of Monastic Life
- St. Pacomius

Chapter Two

Council of Constantinople

The Cappadocian Fathers

- St. Gregory Thaumaturgus Bishop of Neocaesarea
- St. Basil the Great of Caesarea
- St Gregory of Nazianzus the Theologian
- St Gregory of Nyssa

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

St Epiphanius of Salamis

St Theophilus of Alexandria

Augustine of Hippo

Chapter Three

Council of Ephesus

- St Cyril the Great
- St. Theodotus of Ancyra

Teaching and Learning Methods

- Lecture, Reflection, Creative Writing, Presentation, Cooperative learning

Assessment Methods

Activities	Weights
Class Participation	10
Self-Exam Test /Assignment/	40
Final Exam	50
Total Points	100

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Chapter 1

The First Ecumenical Council of NICEA (325)

1.1) Nicene Fathers

The First Council of Nicaea was the first ecumenical council of the Church. It was a council of Christian bishops convened primarily to deal with the rise of the heresy of Arius (priest of Alexandria, d. 336) who denied the consubstantiality of God the Son with God the Father, in Nicaea in Bithynia by the Roman Emperor Constantine I in AD 325. This was the first effort to attain **consensus** in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom.

The main reason for the convening of the First Ecumenical Council was the appearance and growing strength of the false teaching of the Alexandrian priest, Arius. The basic theory of the Arians' false teaching was that the Son of God was created that His existence had a beginning.

It was presided by St. Alexander of Alexandria, Hosius of Corduba, a bishop from the West and probably a Papal delegate and Eustasius of Antioch.

Much of the debate based on the difference between being **"born"** or **"created"** and being **"begotten"**. Arians saw these as the same; followers of Alexander did not. Indeed, the exact meaning of many of the words used in the debates at Nicaea. For the speakers of other languages; Greek words like "essence" (*ousia*), "substance" (*hypostasis*), "nature" (*physis*), "person" (*prosopon*) bore a variety of meanings drawn from pre - Christian philosophers, which could not but entail misunderstandings until they were cleared up.

The council condemned Arianism and defined that the Son was **"begotten, not made,"** and thus was of the "same substance" (i.e., *homo-ousion*) as the Father. The crowning achievement of this council was the production of a creed which would form the basis of our **"Nicene Creed."**

The Arian controversy was a Christological dispute that began in Alexandria between the followers of Arius (the *Arians*) and the followers of St. Alexander of Alexandria (now known as *homoousians*).

Homoousion: Ancient Greek: ὁμοούσιον, lit. 'same in being, same in essence', from ὁμός, *homós*, "same" and οὐσία, *ousía*, "being" or "essence") is a Christian theological term, most notably used in the Nicene Creed for describing Jesus (God the Son) as "same in being" or "same in essence"

with God the Father (ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ). The same term was later also applied to the Holy Spirit in order to designate him as being "same in essence" with the Father and the Son. Those notions became cornerstones of theology in Nicene Christianity, and also represent one of the most important theological concepts within the Trinitarian doctrinal understanding of God.

Alexander and his followers believed that the Son was of *the same* substance as the Father, co - eternal with him.

The Arians believed that they were different and that the Son, though he may be the most perfect of creations, was only a creation.

A third group (now known as *homoiousians*) tried to make a compromise position, saying that the Father and the Son were of *similar* substance.

The word *homoousia*, in particular, was initially disliked by many bishops because of its associations with Gnostic heretics (who used it in their theology), and because it had been condemned at the 264 - 268 Synods of Antioch¹. i.e. the Gnostics were the first to use the word ὁμοούσιος, while before the Gnostics there is no trace at all of its existence. The early church theologians were probably made aware of this concept, and thus of the doctrine of emanation, taught by the Gnostics. In Gnostic texts, the word ὁμοούσιος is used with the following meanings:

- Identity of substance between *generator and generated*.
- Identity of substance between things *generated of the same substance*.
- Identity of substance between the *partners of a syzygy*²

For example, **Basilides**, the first known Gnostic thinker to use ὁμοούσιος in the first half of the 2nd century AD, speaks of a **threefold sonship consubstantial**³ with the god who is

¹Beginning with three **synods** convened between 264 and 269 in the matter of Paul of Samosata, more than **thirty councils** were held in **Antioch** in ancient times. Most of these dealt with phases of the Arian and of the Christological controversies.

The Synod of Antioch in 341: **The council approved three creeds**. Its aim is; **repudiating certain Arian formulas** it avoids the orthodox term homoousios, fiercely advocated by Athanasius of Alexandria and accepted by the First Council of Nicaea (Nicaea I). The somewhat colourless compromise doubtless proceeded from the party of Eusebius of Nicomedia, and proved not unacceptable to the more nearly orthodox members of the synod.

² Celestial bodies

not. The **Valentinian Gnostic Ptolemy** says in his letter to Flora that it is the nature of the good God to beget and bring forth only beings similar to and consubstantial with, himself. The term ὁμοούσιος was already in current use by the 2nd-century Gnostics, and through their works it became known to the orthodox heresiologists⁴, though this Gnostic use of the term had no reference to the specific relationship between Father and Son, as is the case in the Nicene Creed.

The descriptions of the Basilidian system given by Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses*) and Hippolytus (*Philosophumena*), are so strongly divergent that they seem to many quite irreconcilable. According to Hippolytus, Basilides was apparently a pantheistic evolutionist; and according to Irenaeus, a dualist and an emanationist.

Homoousians believed that to follow the Arian view destroyed the unity of the Godhead, and made the Son unequal to the Father, in contravention of the Scriptures ("The Father and I are one", John 10:30). Arians, on the other hand, believed that since God the Father created the Son, he must have emanated from the Father, and thus be lesser than the Father, in that the Father is eternal, but the Son was created afterward and, thus, is not eternal. The Arians likewise appealed to Scripture, quoting verses such as John 14:28: "the Father is greater than I". Homoousians countered the Arians' argument, saying that the Father's fatherhood, like all of his attributes, is eternal. Thus, the Father was always a father, and that the Son, therefore, always existed with him.

Most significantly, it resulted in the first uniform Christian doctrine, called the Nicene Creed. With the creation of the creed, a precedent was established for subsequent local and regional council of Bishops (Synods) to create statements of belief and canons of doctrinal orthodoxy the intent being to define unity of beliefs for the whole of Christendom. This council also fixed the date of Easter.

³ Creation: According to Hippolytus, Basilides asserted the beginning of all things to have been pure nothing. He uses every device of language to express absolute nonentity. Nothing then being in existence, "not-being God" willed to make a not-being world out of not-being things. This not-being world was only "a single seed containing within itself all the seed-mass of the world," as the mustard seed contains the branches and leaves of the tree. Within this seed-mass were three parts, or son ships, and were consubstantial with the not-being God. This was the one origin of all future growths; these future growths did not use pre-existing matter, but rather these future growths came into being out of nothing by the voice of the not-being God.

⁴ a writer against heresies

Its main accomplishments were settlement of the Christological issue of the nature of the Son of God and his relationship to God the Father, the construction of the first part of the Creed of Nicaea, establishing uniform observance of the date of Easter, and promulgation of early canon law.

St. Alexander of Alexandria and Athanasius took the first position; the popular presbyter Arius, from whom the term Arianism comes, took the second. The council decided against the Arians overwhelmingly (of the estimated 250–318 attendees, all but two agreed to sign the creed and these two, along with Arius, were banished to Illyria).

The heresy of Arius began during Patriarch Peter of Alexandria. According to Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church teaching St. Peter had three pupils: namely Alexander, Archelaus and Arius.

1.2) St. Peter the seal of Martyrs (Dean: 17th pope of Alexandria: 293-311)

His father (Theodosius) was a priest in Alexandria, and his mother (Sofia) was a pious Christian. She had a vision of St Peter and St Paul, on their feast day, promising her a son. On the same day the following year, she gave birth to Peter. He grew very close to the Church and was ordained priest at the age of 16; then was selected to become the dean of the School of Alexandria. He succeeded Theonas as Pope of Alexandria.

Eusebius speaks in terms of the highest praise of St Peter. He refers to him as a divine bishop, both for the sanctity of his life, and also for his diligent study and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. He also styles him as “that excellent doctor of the Christian religion,” who, indeed, during the whole period of his episcopate, which he held for 12 years, obtained for himself the highest renown. He faced persecution as well as heresies and divisions within the Church. He had a dispute with Meletius, Bishop of Asyut, who took a hard-line with repenting Christians who denied the faith, as well as ordaining priests outside his jurisdiction.

St. Peter⁵ was educated at Alexandria by Arch bishop Theonas, whom he succeeded in that see A. D. 300. He governed the Church about three years before persecution broke out under Maximin.

In the third year of his episcopate, during the Diocletian persecution, he was obliged to flee from Alexandria to save his life. He sent out a warning against Meletius the intruded bishop of Lycopolis⁶ and excommunicated Arius. He presided over the Church of Alexandria with glory and imparted

⁵ According afore mentioned excerpts Philippus Sidetes, Theognostus was followed by Serapion by Peter.

⁶ Migne, PG., xviii., 509-510

great luster to its see by his deep piety and learning; until, by order of the Emperor Maximin, he was suddenly seized and beheaded, A. D. 311.

Of his various writings there are but fragments in existence. He wrote a book on penance, in reference to the great number that fell during the Diocletian persecution; of this there are still 15 canons extant; a book on the Divinity, and a treatise on the advent of Christ, wherein he clearly affirms the divinity of Christ and the consubstantiality of Father and Son; also a discourse upon the soul against the doctrine of pre-existence.

In the ninth year of the persecution (311) he offered himself to martyrdom in secret to spare his people who gathered at the jail from saving him. When offering a prayer requesting the persecution to end, a voice came from heaven and was heard by a saintly virgin who was standing nearby; it said, "Amen. May it be according to your wishes." After completing his prayer he was beheaded.²

In a fragment of his work on the Paschal Festival St Peter says: It is usual to fast on Wednesday, because of the Jews "taking counsel for the betrayal of the lord;" and on Friday "because He then suffered for our sake." "For", he adds, "we keep the lord's day as a day of gladness, because on it he rose again."⁷

Letters

The paschal epistle: St. Peter's chief work known as the canonical epistle contains fourteen penitential canons governing the future of the lapsed. It was written in 306

Another Paschal letter

- A letter concerning Melitius: St. Peter addressed it to his clergy, rebuking Melitius for invading his diocese and performing illegal ordinations
- A letter concerning Persecution and the celebration of the Eucharist
- A letter written during persecution
- A letter to Diocletian

⁷ (Eusebius says, he was "*Divinum episcoporum exemplar propter vitam et virtutem et in sacris literis peritiam.*" Editions and Literature. Migne, S. gr. XVIII, 449-522. Ceillier 1. c. IV, 17-25. Peters, in the Kirchenlexikon (2nd ed.) IX. Harnack 1. c., p. 443 sqq.)

- A letter to Bishop Appolonius of Lycopolis
- A letter during persecution concerning Heretics
- A letter about a visit to Oxyrhynchus⁸

Homilies

- The teaching Didascalia
- A Homily on riches
- On Epiphany

Theological works

On the Godhead:

- The act of the council of Ephesus (431) contain three quotations from this work. It is a defense of the true divinity of Christ and is against subordinationism.

On the Advent of our Saviour: -

- He wrote “all the signs which he showed and his miracles prove that He is God made man

On the Soul:

- Opposing Origen’s views on the pre-existence of souls and reincarnation

On the Resurrection Body: Against Origen’s doctrines

Miscellaneous Fragments

In fragment vii from the writings of St. Peter, he wrote:

Wretch that I am! I have not remembered that God observes the mind, and hears the voice of the souls. I turned consciously to sin, saying to myself. God is merciful, and will bear with me; and when I was not instantly smitten, I ceased not, but rather despised His forbearance, and exhausted the long-suffering of God.

The acts of the Martyrdom of St. Peter is extant in Coptic, Greek, Latin and Syriac versions.

⁸ **Oxyrhynchus** is a city in Middle Egypt located **about** 160 km south-southwest of Cairo in Minya Governorate.

1.3) Attendees of the Nicene Council

Emperor Constantine had invited all 1800 bishops of the Christian church (about 1000 in the east, a number of renowned Eastern saints were also present: besides Athanasius the Great were Nicholas of Myra, Spyridon of Trimythous, Alexander of Alexandria, and Paphnutius of Egypt and 800 in the west), Only a few bishops from the West were present: Marcus of Calabria, Nicasius of Dijon, Domnus of Stridon, Hosius of Cordoba, and Caecilian of Carthage. Pope St. Sylvester I of Rome was represented by two of his priests. But a lesser and unknown number attended. Eusebius of Caesarea counted 250, Athanasius of Alexandria counted 318, and Eustathius of Antioch counted 270 (all three were present at the council). Later, Socrates Scholasticus recorded more than 300, and Evagrius, Hilarius, Saint Jerome and Rufinus recorded 318.

The participating bishops were given free travel to and from their episcopal sees to the council, as well as lodging. These bishops did not travel alone; each one had permission to bring with him two priests and three deacons; so the total number of attendees would have been above 1800. Eusebius speaks of an almost innumerable host of accompanying priests, deacons and acolytes.

1.3.1) St Alexander of Alexandria (19th pope of Alexandria: 312-328)

St. Alexander (Alexandros) 19th Pope of the See of St. Mark⁹) was born in the city of Alexandria from Christian parents and grew up in serving the church. Pope Maximus ordained him a reader, Pope Theonas ordained him a deacon, Pope Peter (Petros the seal of the martyrs) ordained him a priest, and he was virgin and chaste.

When the time of Pope Petros (Peter) martyrdom drew near, Alexander and father Archelaus, who became Patriarch before him, went to him prison, and asked him to lift the excommunication from Arius¹⁰. Anba Petros excommunicated Arius again in their presence, and informed them that the Lord Christ appeared to him and ordered him not to receive him again and that father Archelaus will be Patriarch after him and after Abba Archelaus Pope Alexander will be ordained. He commanded that to the priests of Alexandria and ordered them not to accept Arius, and to have no fellowship with him.

⁹ 22 month of Baramouda (Coptic). Coptic Synaxarium. On the day of 44 A.M (April 17th, 328 A.D) Pope Alexander of Alexandria departed

¹⁰ የመምህሩን የተፋጻሚ ሰማዕት ዲጥሮስን ውግዘት ተላልፎ አረዮስን ከመቀበሉም በላይ ሥልጣኑ ክህነትን ሰጠ

When Pope Archelaus sat on the Chair and received Arius, he only lived for six months and died. When Pope Alexandros sat, the lay leaders came and asked him to receive Arius, but he refused and added curses to what were already upon him. He told them: Pope Petros had commanded Pope Archelaus and myself to do that, and when Pope Archelaus had received Arius, God speedily removed him from his office.

Pope Alexander expelled Arius from the country. Arius went to Emperor Constantine and complained of the unjust treatment of this Pope. Emperor Constantine assembled the Ecumenical council of the Three hundred and Eighteen in the city of Nicea. The council was presided by Pope Alexander. He debated with Arius and revealed his denial of Christ, then excommunicated him and those who follow his belief.

Alexander, along with rest of the fathers, uttered the creed, and drew up the Canon, the Law, and the Status that are still in hands of the Christian until this day. After he put down the regulations for Lent and the feast of Easter, he returned to Chair, victorious and triumphant. He shepherded his flock with best of care. He sat on the throne of the See of St. Mark for 15 years, 9th months and 20 days, then departed in peace.

One of the key figures at the council of Nicaea (325) who succeeded pope Achillas of Alexandria in 312. He is styled “the staunchest¹¹ upholder of evangelical doctrine,” “the patron and protector of apostolic doctrine,” and “that bishop of divine faith, full of wisdom and of zeal enkindled by the Holy Spirit. “During his papacy the Arian controversy arose and the Meletian schism continued.

He has the first to detect and condemn Arius, and taking his stand upon passages of Holy scriptures, he taught that the son of God was of one and the same majesty with the father, had had the same essence with the father who begat him.

He first tried to win Arius and his adherents through kindness, but as they insisted to preach their heresy, synod in Alexandria under the presidency of the pope together with 100 bishops censured the false teaching, degraded Arius from the order of priesthood, and excommunicated him and his adherents. This providing ineffectual, the ecumenical council of Nicaea was convened; in which Arius and Meletius were condemned. He is said by tradition to have never read the Gospels in

¹¹ Faithful

sitting postures, and to have never eaten on fasting days while the sun was in the sky¹². In 328 the pope died after enduring many trials in combating Arianism.

a) Epistle

St Epiphanius states that a collection of 70 letters by Pope Alexander existed. All of them were lost except for two very important encyclicals concerned with the Arian controversy.

In his epistles on the Arian heresy St Alexander wrote: but that the Son of God was not made “from things which are not,” and that there was no “time when he was not,” the evangelist John sufficiently shows, when thus writes concerning him: “the only-Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.”(Jn 1:18). For since that divine teacher intended to show that the Father and the Son are two things inseparable the one from the other, he spoke of him as being in the bosom of the Father...John says, “All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” (Jn 1:1-3). For if all things were made by him, how comes it that He who gave to the things which are made their existence, at one time Himself was not. For the Word which makes is not to be defined as being of the same nature with the things which are made; since indeed he was in the beginning, and all things were made by Him, and fashioned “from things which are not.”

b) Sermons

Of his sermons one is preserved in in a Syriac and a Coptic translation: *De anima et corpore deque passione Domini*. The introduction deals with the relation between soul and body; The main part which with the necessity and the fruit of the Lord's passion. It is strongly rhetorical in character.

1.3.2) Hosius Corduba

Hosius of Corduba¹³ (c. 256–359), also known as **Osius** or **Ossius**, was a bishop of Corduba (now Córdoba, Spain) and an important and prominent advocate for Homoousion Christianity in the Arian controversy that divided the early Christianity. He probably presided at the First Council of Nicaea and also presided at the Council of Serdica.¹⁴

¹² Bolland. Act. SS., Feb.26

¹³ የእስጳኝ ጳጳስ ደሉታ አቡነ ጎርጎርዮስ

¹⁴ The Council of Serdica, or Synod of Serdica (also Sardica located in modern day Sofia, Bulgaria), was a synod convened in 343 at Serdica in the civil diocese of Dacia, by Emperors Constans I, augustus in the West, and Constantius II, augustus in the East. It attempted to resolve the Arian controversy, and was attended by about 170 bishops. It was convened by the two augusti at the request of Pope Julius I.

1.3.3) Eustathius of Antioch (b. 324-326)

Eustathius of Antioch Born at side in Pamphylia, he was the bishop of Beroea in Syria, then bishop of Antioch toward the end of 324. He was the first to speak at the Council of Nicaea in 325, and when Emperor Constantine entered the assembly of the assembled bishops, he greeted him with a welcome address. It was the same emperor who in 330 drove him into exile to Trajanopolis in Thrace after Arian synod at Antioch had deposed him, in 326.

He must have died before the year 337, when Constantine recalled the banished bishops. Eustathius has been accused of being in his Christology a successor of Paul Samosata, and a forerunner to Nestorius. Although the few fragments of his works make it very difficult to give a complete picture of his teaching, they suffice to refute this accusation. He unreservedly uses the title Theotokos for the Virgin Mary.

He is the first to attempt a Logos-Man Christology against the predominant Logos-Sarx doctrine. However, it is only by an isolation of these words from his other affirmations that he can be made suspect of Adoptionism and Nestorianism.¹⁵

He wrote many treatises against the Arians:

1. **De Anima** in two parts. The first is a refutation of the philosophers; the second attacks the Arians.
2. **De Engastrmytho Adversum Origenem** (on the Witch of Endor Against Origen) (1 Samuel 28). In it, he ridicules Origen with great vehemence and attacks his allegorical exegesis.
3. **Adversus Arianos** in at least eight books is his most important work.
4. Exegetical treatises on the Psalms, especially Ps 15 and 92; and Proverbs *:22.
5. A letter to Pope Alexander of Alexandria refuting the Melchisedechians, who were of the opinion that the Priest-King of Salem was greater than Christ.

Fragments of his dogmatic writings show that his theology foreshadows Antiochian Christology.

1.3.4) St. Thomas, Bishop of Mar'ash (Syria)

St. Thomas, Bishop of Mar'ash (Syria)¹⁶ was an ascetic worshipper, who fasted and prayed continually, with many merciful deeds. Therefore, they ordained him a bishop for the city of

¹⁵ Quasten, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 305.

Mar'ash. He shepherded the flock of Christ with the best of care. When the infidel Emperor Diocletian reigned, he sent one of his representatives to the city of Mar'ash to torture the Christians. He started with this saint. He ordered the saint to worship the idols. The saint not only disobeyed him but also rebuked him on his idolatry. He tortured the saint severely by flogging, and dismemberment, then he cast him in an abandoned prison. From time to time, he ordered to dismember one of his organs. First they cut his ears, then nose, lips, his legs, then they smashed his teeth. He was left in this prison for twenty - two years. His congregation thought that he had died, and they celebrated an annual commemoration for him. A faithful woman came to him by night, and threw to him provisions through a small opening.

The saint remained in this condition until the righteous Emperor Constantine reigned and declared the glory of the Christian faith, and ordered the release of the faithful from prisons. The woman informed some priests of the whereabouts of this saint. The priests came to the saint, carried him to the church with songs and hymns. The people came forward for his blessing and kissed the places where he was dismembered.

When the Emperor assembled the council of Nicea, this saint was one of those attended. As the Emperor came to the council, he knelt before the fathers and kissed their hands. When he knew what had happened to this father, he asked for his blessings. As the council adjourned, he and the other bishops returned to their dioceses. He gathered his priests and congregation, read to them the creed that was instituted by the council, and also explained to them what was difficult to understand. Afterwards the saint lived for a short period then departed in peace, when his episcopate was about forty years.¹⁷ *May his prayers be with us and Glory be to God forever. Amen.*

Some said: some distinctive elements in the Nicene Creed, perhaps from the hand of Hosius of Cordova, were added.

Jesus Christ is described as "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God," confirming his divinity. When all light sources were natural, the essence of light was considered to be identical, regardless of its form.

¹⁶ ቶማስ ዘመርዓስ

¹⁷ Coptic Synaxarium (Coptic Orthodox Calendar). (The Twenty - Fourth Day of the Blessed Month of Misra)

Jesus Christ is said to be "begotten, not made," asserting his co-eternality with God the Father, and confirming it by stating his role in the Creation.

Finally, he is said to be "from the substance of the Father," in direct opposition to Arianism. Some ascribe the term *Consubstantial*, i.e., "of the **same** substance" (of the Father), to Constantine who, on this particular point, may have chosen to exercise his authority.

1.3.5) St. Ambrose of Milan

St. Ambrose, Latin **Ambrosius**, (born 339 CE, Augusta Treverorum, Belgica, Gaul [now Trier, Germany]—died 397, Milan [Italy]; feast day December 7), bishop of Milan, biblical critic, doctor of the church, and initiator of ideas that provided a model for medieval conceptions of church–state relations.

His literary works have been acclaimed as masterpieces of Latin eloquence, and his musical accomplishments are remembered in his hymns. Ambrose is also remembered as the teacher who converted and baptized Augustine of Hippo, the great Christian theologian, and as a model bishop who viewed the church as rising above the ruins of the Roman Empire. He is a patron saint of Milan and of beekeepers.

Early career

Though Ambrose, the second son of the prefect (imperial viceroy) of Gaul, was born in the official residence at Augusta Treverorum (now Trier, Germany), his father died soon afterward, and Ambrose was reared in Rome, in a palace frequented by the clergy, by his widowed mother and his elder sister Marcellina, a nun. Duly promoted to the governorship of Aemilia-Liguria about 370¹⁸, he lived at Milan and was unexpectedly acclaimed as their bishop by the people of the city in 374.

Ambrose, a popular outsider, chosen as a compromise candidate to avoid a disputed election, changed from an unbaptized layman to a bishop in eight days. Coming from a well-connected but obscure senatorial family, Ambrose could be ignored as a provincial governor. As bishop of Milan, he was able to dominate the cultural and political life of his age.

¹⁸ In 370 *the Consul Probus* appointed Saint Ambrose governor of the provinces of Liguria and Emilia in northern Italy.

The work of St. Athanasius “Vita Antoni” the writings of pilgrimages, such as St. John Cassian, Palladius and St. Jerome; the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (the sayings of the Fathers), the writings of some leaders of the monk, such as that of Isaac of Nineveh, uncover the ascetic life in the early church, as an evangelical life which touches the heart of the believer to enjoy the inner kingdom of God and to prepare his soul as a heavenly bride. They elevate his mind and soul to experience the pledge of the eschatological life.

1.3.6) Jacob of Nisibis

Jaint Jacob of Nisibis also known as **Saint Jacob of Mygdonia**. He also known as **Saint Jacob the Great, Saint James of Nisibis**, was the Bishop of Nisibis until his death. He was lauded / called/ as the "Moses of Mesopotamia", and was the spiritual father of the renowned writer and theologian Saint Ephrem the Syrian. Saint Jacob was the son of prince Gefal, and was born in the city of Nisibis in Mesopotamia in the 3rd century AD.

It is claimed that he was a relative of Saint Gregory the Illuminator. Gennadius (de Script, Eccl.c.I) reports that Jacob was confessor in the Maximinian persecution. Saint Jacob became a Confessor of the Faith for his suffering during persecution by Emperor Maximian. Saint Jacob became an anchorite in c. 280 in the mountains near Nisibis where, according to Saint Theodoret of Cyrrhus, he survived on herbs and fruits, and chose to wear no clothes, build shelter, or light fires for warmth.

The saint became famous, and received visits from Sheria, Bishop of Arbela (r. 304–316), according to the *Chronicle of Arbela*. **Gennadius II** (c. 1400 – c. 1473) was a Byzantine Greek philosopher and theologian, and Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople from 1454 to 1464. He was a strong advocate for the use of Aristotelian philosophy in the Eastern Church.

He was compelled by the popular demand to become bishop. Disagreement exists as to the date of the saint's consecration as bishop of Nisibis as it is argued it took place in c. 300, and he is recorded as the city's first bishop by Saint Ephrem the Syrian.

However, Saint Jacob is credited as the successor of Babu, the first bishop of Nisibis (r. 300–309), by the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, who Saint Ephrem states was in fact Saint Jacob's successor. In his *Chronography*, Elijah of Nisibis states that Saint Jacob was consecrated bishop in 308. His episcopate, according to Theodoret, was signalized by fresh miracles.

Saint Jacob was present at the first ecumenical council at Nicaea, and is venerated as a saint by the Church of the East, Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, and Eastern Catholic Churches. In 325, he was summoned to the council of Nicaea (Labbe, Council. ii.52, 76). A leading part is ascribed to him by Theodoret in its debates (Theod.u.s.p.III4). He is commended by St Athanasius, with Hosius, Alexander, Eustathius, and others (adv.Arian.t.i.p.252). He attended the First Council of Nicaea in 325, and opposed Arius. Saint Ephrem purportedly accompanied the saint to the council, however, this is considered apocryphal.

Saint Jacob attended the funeral of Saint Metrophanes of Byzantium in 326. As bishop of Nisibis, Jacob was the spiritual father of St Ephraem the Syrian, who was baptized by him and remained by his side as long as he lived.

Works

Gennadius speaks of Jacob as a copious (abundant) writer, and gives the titles of 26 of his treatises. Their titles - *de Fide, de Dilectione, de Jejuniis, de Oratione, de Bello, de Devotis, de Poenitentia, de Resurrectione*, etc.- correspond generally with those given by Gennadius, but the order is different. Several homilies previously attributed to Saint Jacob by Gennadius of Massilia and others are now understood to be the work of Saint Aphraates. The misidentification arose from Aphraates' assumption of the name Jacob upon becoming bishop. Letters and canons, as well as other works, formerly attributed to the saint are known to be written in a later period.

Eighteen were found by Assemani in the Armenian convent of St Anthony at Venice, together with a request for some of his works from a Gregory and Jacob's reply.

In the same collection, Assemani found the long letter of Jacob to the bishops of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, on the Assyrian schism. It is 31 sections, lamenting the divisions of the Church and the pride and arrogance which caused them, and exhorting them to seek peace and concord.¹⁹

St. James of Nisibis (St. James), a Syrian monk and first cousin of St. Gregory, was appointed the bishop of the Christian city Nisibis in Mesopotamia in 308 A.D. According to his disciple, St. Ephraem, James founded the basilica and theological School of Nisibis.

¹⁹ DD Wace & WC Piercy, eds, a Dictionary of Christian Biography, Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 1994, pp.549-550

Additionally, as it is said above he was recorded as a signatory for the canons produced at the first of three ecumenical councils accepted by the Armenian Church: the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. St. James played a leading role among the 318 Christian leaders present during the sessions of the Council of Nicaea, and merited the attention of St. Athanasius and other bishops of the Eastern as well as the Western churches. The most important canon created at the Nicaean Council was the Nicaean Creed, or the official declaration of the principal doctrines of the Armenian Church.

They solemnly chant the Creed at every Divine Liturgy as a formal declaration that we are unified by the same understanding of who God is, and who we are relative to Him—a declaration of faith that has united Christians throughout the world for 1,700 years. We affirm that our own faith is rooted and nourished by the “one, catholic and apostolic holy Church” with Jesus Christ as its head (Colossians 1:18).

The other two councils accepted by the Armenian Church are the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. and the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. A fourth council, the Council of Chalcedon held in 451 A.D., made formulations on the nature of Christ that were rejected by Armenian and other Oriental Orthodox churches, distinguishing them from Roman Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox churches.

St. James is also known for his divine vision on Mount Ararat, where he found the sacred relic of Noah’s Ark and brought it to the Armenian people.

According to tradition, while St. James preached in and around Nisibis, he heard that people doubted the story of Noah’s Ark. He was determined to provide his flock with evidence, so he set out on a journey to the top of Mount Ararat to find the remains of the ark. Sometime into his journey, before reaching his destination, he felt tired and decided to stop and rest before moving forward. After he continued on his journey, he took a second break.

However, when he awoke, he found himself in the spot that he originally chose as his resting place. He continued on his journey, yet he encountered the same phenomenon for seven years. Nevertheless, James carried forward, relying on his faith to see him to the end of his journey.

One day, while he slept, an angel appeared to him in a vision and brought him a piece of the wood from Noah’s Ark. The angel told him that he could not see any more of the ark, but that the wooden remnant would be proof enough for the naysayers (pessimism). St. James prayed to God to

produce an eternal miracle on the spot where he had the vision and immediately afterward a spring gushed forth, which exists to this day.

On the other hand it is said the relic of Noah's Ark received by St. James is currently in possession of Holy Etchmiadzin²⁰. The saint resolved to climb Mount Qardu, (**Mount** Judi also known as **Qardū**, is Noah's apobaterion or "Place of Descent", the location where the Ark came to rest after the Great Flood), traditionally believed to be the resting place of Noah's Ark, and recover a fragment of the ark upon hearing from the hermit Maroukeh that local people doubted the Great Flood.

Saint Jacob ascended the mountain and rested close to the summit; in his sleep, an angel placed a fragment of the ark close to him, and instructed him to awake. The saint brought the relic to the hermit Maroukeh and, according to the saint's hagiography, a sacred spring appeared where the saint had rested, reputed to have healing properties.

A number of miracles are credited to Saint Jacob by Saint Theodoret in *Historia Religiosa* (Religious History), in which the saint had a boulder (rock) explode beside a Persian judge who had given an unjust judgment. Also, in one incident, Saint Jacob cursed boastful, promiscuous (immoral) women by a spring so that their hair became white, and the spring disappeared. The women subsequently repented, and the spring returned, however, the women's hair remained white. As well as this, a group of people attempted to deceive the saint whereby they asked for money to fund the burial of a man they had lain down and covered with a sheet with the illusion of death; consequently, the man died, and the people repented and thus the man was resurrected as a result of Saint Jacob's prayers.

The *Chronicle of Edessa* states that the saint constructed the first church in Nisibis in c. 313–320. Miles, Bishop of Susa, is said to have contributed a large quantity of silk from Adiabene to the church's construction. The foundation of the School of Nisibis is also attributed to Saint Jacob.

The **Perso-Roman wars of 337–361** were a series of military conflicts fought between the Roman Empire and the Sasanian Empire between 337 and 361. They were a result of long-standing aggression between the rival powers over influence in the border kingdoms of Armenia and Iberia, as well as the desire of Shapur II, after his Arab campaign, to revoke the unfavorable terms of the Treaty of Nisibis, which had concluded the previous war between the empires. Though the

²⁰ **Etchmiadzin** Cathedral is the mother church of the Armenian Apostolic Church, located in the city of Vagharshapat

Romans under Constantius II were defeated in several sanguinary encounters, Shapur was unable to secure a decisive victory.

Saint Theodoret adds that the Iranian army was afflicted by a swarm of gnats and flies summoned by the saint, and Shapur II subsequently abandoned the siege. From 337-350, Shapur II attacked Nisibis on three occasions, as it was the great city of Northern Mesopotamia and the bulwark of the eastern provinces: the first Siege of Nisibis took place in A.D. 338; the second in A.D. 346; and the third in A.D. 350, lasting three months. In 350, according to the *Chronicon Paschale*, Saint Jacob helped defend Nisibis against Shapur II again, and as he was wearing the imperial regalia, was confused for Emperor Constantius II.

Saint Jacob was present at the siege of Nisibis by Shapur II, *Shahanshab* of Iran, in 337/338, and according to Saint Theodoret, with encouragement from the city's population and Saint Ephrem, Saint Jacob ascended the walls and prayed for the city, and cursed the besiegers (enemy). Shapur II challenged the saint to fight outside the city, where it was revealed he was an apparition and the Iranian army withdrew as a result.

The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* relates that he died on 15 July, the thirtieth day of the siege, according to the *Chronicle of 724*. Gennadius and Saint Ephrem record that Saint Jacob was buried within the walls of Nisibis. The saint is counted amongst the signatories of the Council of Antioch in 341, however, his presence at the council is unrecorded in other sources.

1.3.7) St. Athanasius the Apostolic (Born: ca. 297, pope: 328, d. 373)

a) His Life

St. Athanasius was born of Christian parents at Alexandria between 296 and 300 in Upper (Southern) Egypt in about 297. Early in life, he attracted the attention of Bishop Alexander, who took him into his house and gave him a careful religious and theological training, particularly in Holy Scripture and made him to attend the famous School of Alexandria.

According to Rufinus, Pope Alexander was impressed by the child Athanasius when he was acting out baptismal rites with other children on the shore at Alexandria. Pope Alexander ordained him a deacon at the age of 15 in 312, then a priest at the age of 21 in 318 and appointed him as his personal secretary.

He was likewise taught the spirit and practice of Christian asceticism under the guidance of St. Anthony. He sought the wisdom and discipleship of St. Anthony at the age of twenty. St. Athanasius would write the entire day and would read his writings at the feet of his teacher, at the end of the day. St. Anthony would listen, enraptured by his writings.

While St. Anthony would meditate, St. Athanasius would write. He wrote two books that are considered masterpieces: “On the Vanity of Idols” and “On the Existence of the One God”.

- Stayed with him for three years
- They prayed and worked diligently together.
- Wove baskets together

During his youth, St Athanasius spent time in the desert under the guidance of St Anthony the Great. St Athanasius regarded the monastic life as martyrdom and the monks the successors to the martyrs. He also looked upon monastic life as warfare against the enemy:

*“Living this life, let us be carefully on our guard and, as is written, ‘with all watchfulness keep our heart’ (Prov. 4, 23). For we have enemies powerful and crafty - the wicked demons; and it is against these that our wrestling is.”*³¹

St Athanasius is the grandest figure of the early Church after the time of the apostles. He was raised up to complete their testimony to the eternal Logos, and to suffer like them; hence his title, “the Apostolic.”

He accompanied Pope Alexander to the Council of Nicaea in 325. His courage, zeal, logic, and wisdom earned him the admiration of the 318 bishops in attendance and the envy of the Arian heretics.

He lived through the period of severe persecution under Diocletian (303 - 311) and knew many of the martyrs and confessors in Alexandria. He learned from them the true meaning of fighting for the faith.

St Athanasius spent most of his life combating the heresy of Arius. Although Arius and his adherents were condemned and excommunicated at the Council of Nicaea, they continued unrelentingly to cause trouble for St Athanasius and the Church.

St Gregory of Nazianzus, who was a contemporary of St Athanasius said of him:

In praising Athanasius, I shall be praising virtue. To speak of him and to praise virtue are identical, because he had, or, to speak more truly, has embraced virtue in its entirety. He was sublime in action, lowly in mind: inaccessible in virtue, most accessible in intercourse; gentle. Free from anger, sympathetic, sweet in words, sweeter in disposition; angelic in appearance, more angelic in mind; calm in rebuke, persuasive in praise, without spoiling the good effect of either by excess, but rebuking with the tenderness of a father, praising with the dignity of a ruler, his tenderness was not dissipated, nor his severity sour... In some cases eager to prevent a fall, in others devising means of recovery after a fall; simple in disposition...clever in argument, more clever still in mind. His disposition sufficed for the training of his spiritual children, with very little need of words. The honors at his departure surpassed even those of his return from exile; the object of many tears, his glory stored up in the minds of all, outshines all its visible tokens. This oration On the Great Athanasius was probably delivered in 380.

St. Athanasius is the steadfast champion of the true faith, the pillar of the Church, as St. Gregory of Nazianzus calls him.

He also says St. Athanasius *so, great was the sanctity of Athanasius, so wonderful his firmness of will and penetration of mind, so unblemished his orthodoxy*, that St. Gregory Nazianzen Called his life *"the pattern of*

the episcopate", His doctrine "the law of orthodoxy"; himself "a column of the Church". A man of God "and "a great guide of souls".²¹

His works bear admirable witness to every point of faith, and particularly to the mystery of the Trinity, which he expounds with wonderful clearness and depth. He also teaches that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father; calls Mary the Mother of God; acknowledges in the Eucharist the real Body and Blood of Christ; regards the Holy Scripture and tradition as the chief sources of faith; explains to catechumens and heathens the "disciplina arcani;" gives instructions on lay - communion, on the assemblies of the faithful, the mutual relations between the bishop and his flock, and other similar subjects.

His principal works are distinguished for dialectic skill, clearness of expression, and a well - sustained development of thought. He knew how to combine simplicity with loftiness of thought and how to add force and ardor of feeling to both, so that none of his contemporaries can be compared to him. He is one of the greatest men of all times, and fully deserves the surname of "the Great" and "the Father of Orthodoxy."²²

He is, at the same time, the God - given *physician of her wounds*, says St. Basil the Great²³, truly one of the most imposing figures in all ecclesiastical history. His life and sufferings are most closely connected with the history of Arianism.

In 319 Alexander ordained him deacon and made him his secretary and counselor. He accompanied him to the Council of Nicaea in 325, and he was a powerful adversary of the Arians²⁴. Alexander died April 17, 328 and Athanasius was unanimously chosen by the people to be his successor²⁵. He

²¹ Gregor. Naz., Orat. in laud. S. Athanasii.

²² Editions and Literature. Migne, S. gr. XXVXXVIII. Ceillier 1. c. V, 150 - 372. Holder, Athanasius der Grosse (2 Aufl. Mainz 1844). Atzberger, Die Logoslehre des Athanasius. München 1880. Pell, Lehre des heiligen Athanasius von der Siinde und Erlosung (Passau 1888). Strater, Die Erlosungslehre des hi. Athanasuis (Freiburg 1894). An English translation of the chief works of St. Athanasius, in "Select Library," etc. Ser. II. Vol. 4 (New York 1892). The Festal Letters of Athanasius, discovered in an ancient Syriac version and edited by W. Cureton (London 1848, 8 VO). An annotated translation of St. Athanasius by J. H. Newman (Parker).

²³ Ep. 82

²⁴ Socr., Hist, eccl., i.

²⁵ Athan., Apol. c. Arian, c. 6

became his successor in the see of Alexandria, to which he was actually elected after Alexander's death in 328, in spite of his own opposition.

Upon departure of Pope Alexandros, who prophesied that his successor would be St. Athanasius, all the bishops and the congregation chose St. Athanasius as the 20th Pope of the See of St. Mark²⁶ on 8 June 328.

At once the most hateful accusations were brought against him by the Arians, all of which he conclusively disproved. Nevertheless he was condemned by the Arians at their Synod of Tyre in 335 and banished by Constantine to Trier, whence he returned to Alexandria in 338 after the Emperor's death. But the hatred of the Arians was not satisfied; Constantius sided with them, and in 340 Athanasius was again obliged to take refuge in flight. The Arian Pistus²⁷, and afterward his fellow heretic George of Cappadocia, took possession of his see amid many bloody excesses.

Though he successfully refuted all their accusations, through the intrigues of the Arians he was banished **five times**, but his return was always, especially on the last occasion, in 365, hailed with joy by the people. As bishop, he ceaselessly combated, by word of mouth and writing, the heresies of Arius and the Apollinarists, and in consequence, suffered innumerable afflictions.

St Athanasius' exile in Gaul was the first of many; during his life, he was exiled on five separate occasions for a total of 17 years:

- Under Constantine (335-337) to Treves in Gaul.
- Under Constantius (339-346) visited Rome.
- Under Constantius (356 - 362) in the Egyptian desert.
- Under Julian (362 - 363) in the Egyptian desert; and
- Under Valens (365 - 366) in the Egyptian desert.

²⁶ Athanasius was the key spokesperson in refuting Arius (theory known as Arianism). St. Athanasius attended the first Ecumenical Council of Nicene in AD 325, was a deacon, was only 25 years old and Heroically defended the Apostolic faith.

²⁷ Alexander writes to the priests and deacons of Alexandria and Mareotis to call them together to pronounce judgment upon the heretics Arius and Pistus (who denied the Divinity of Christ), even though they had already agreed to his letter that condemned these heretics.

Pope Julius (337-352) pronounced Athanasius an innocent man, and the great Synod of Sardica in Moesia (343 or 344) declared him the rightful occupant of the see of Alexandria. However, it was only in 346 (Oct. 31.) that he was enabled to return to his native city. After the death of his brother Constans (350) the emperor Constantius was again moved by Arian intrigue to oppress the orthodox believers. Yielding to imperial behests the Synods of Aries (353) and Milan (355) deposed Athanasius from his see, into which his old enemy, the Arian George, violently intruded himself (356), while Athanasius fled to the monks in the deserts of Egypt.

Julian the Apostate recalled the banished bishops (362); by doing so he hoped to increase the discords of the Christians. But the conciliatory attitude of Athanasius, particularly at the Synod of Alexandria (362), opened a way to the return of many Semiarians. For this he was banished again in 362, on the pretext that he was a disturber of the peace. He was allowed to return by the orthodox Jovian (363-364) who treated him with much distinction. Valens, the successor of Jovian (364-378), was a bigoted Arian and a cruel persecutor both of the orthodox and the Semiarians.

A fifth time Athanasius was compelled to quit the city and to travel on (in the middle of 365) the road of exile. So great, however, was the resistance offered by his flock that at the end of four months Valens allowed him to return to Alexandria, where the faithful shepherd was henceforth permitted to live in peace until his death (May 2., 373). He had become the standard bearer of the entire East, while in the whole West, says St. Basil²⁸, no one was held in more general esteem.

It seemed that St Athanasius was the only leader who stood against the Arians, hence the Latin phrase “Athanasius contra mundum” - “Athanasius against the world”; it was his great encomium and the epitome of his glorious life and warfare.

Once up on a time when he told that the whole world was against him, he responded, “And I am against the world.” It was said that the entire world would have fallen to Arianism, if it was not for St. Athanasius.

St Athanasius' courageous battle against the Arian heresy saved the Church from disaster. For his life-long defense of the truth, St Athanasius is called the “Father of Orthodoxy.” He ordained Frumentius (Abbot Salama) as the first bishop of Ethiopia in 330. St Athanasius spent the last seven years of his life in Alexandria; he died on 15 May, 373. He presided over the Church for 46 years.

²⁸ Ep. 66.

The last years of his life, spent in comparative peace, he devoted to the duties of his pastoral charge, to literary labors, to purging the Church from error and increasing her glory. To his great consolation he lived to see the decline of Arianism. He died at an advanced age, May 2d, 373.

b) His famous works:

It is astonishing that despite such privations and amidst all his activities he found time for a number of literary productions. An eighth century monk wrote: “if you find a book by Athanasius and have no paper on which to copy it, write it on your shirts.”

Most of his writings are **anti-Arian treatises**.

Three Discourses against the Arians

Written during his third exile (356-362)

He set forth his theology as a **polemic in the struggle against Arianism**,

- 1) **The first** discourse refutes the **rational and exegetical arguments of the Arians**. He defends **the definition of faith of the Council of Nicaea** (325) that the Son is eternal, uncreated, unchangeable, and of one Divine Essence with the Father.
- 2) **The second** discourse deals mostly with **the interpretation of Proverbs 8:22**, the text which the Arians used as one of their main proofs for the created nature of the Son-Wisdom (“**He created me at the beginning of His works**”). In both the second and third discourse he analyzes **other Scriptural texts used by the Arians to refute Arian exegesis** Hebrews 3:2²⁹; Acts 2:36³⁰; Matthew 26:39³¹; 28:18³²; John 3:35³³; 12:27³⁴ Mark 13:32³⁵; and Luke 2:52³⁶.
- 3) The third oration explains **Divine consubstantiality**, and also the **significance of the passages in Scripture** which seem to detract from the divinity of Christ.

²⁹ እርሱ ከሙሴ ይልቅ የሚበልጥ ክብር እንዳለው

³⁰ እናንተ የሰቀላችሁትን ኢየሱስን እግዚአብሔር ጌታም ክርስቶስም እንዳደረገው

³¹ ሲጻልይ አባቴ ቢቻልስ ይህች ጽዋ ከእኔ ትለፍ

³² ሥልጣን ሁሉ በሰማይ በምድር ተሰጠኝ

³³ አባት ልጄን ይወዳል ሁሉን በእጄ ሰጥቶታል

³⁴ አሁን ነፍሴ ታወካለች ምንስ እላለሁ

³⁵ ስለዚያች ቀን ወይም ሰዓት ከአባት በቀር የሚያውቅ የለም

³⁶ ኢየሱስም ደግሞ በጥበብና በቁመት በሞገስም በእግዚአብሔርና በሰው ፊት ያድግ ነበር

c) On the Incarnation - De Incarnatione Verbi Dei

By: St. Athanasius

Creation and the Fall

On the Incarnation (De incarnatione Verbi Dei): written in 318 when St Athanasius was just 21 years of age, it is one of the most accurate and comprehensive works ever written on the doctrine of the Incarnation to date.

In on the Incarnation, he wrote: “in speaking of the appearance of the Savior amongst us, we must speak also of the origin of men, that you may know that the reason of His coming down was because of us, and that our transgression called forth the loving-kindness of the Word, that the lord should both make haste to help us and appear among men. For of His becoming incarnate we were the object, and for our salvation. He dealt so lovingly as to appear and be born even in a human body.

Thus, then, God has made man, and willed that he should abide in incorruption; but men, having despised and rejected the contemplation of God, and devised and contrived evil for themselves, received the condemnation of death. For his purpose then, the incorporeal and incorruptible and Immaterial Word of God comes to our realm. He took pity on our race, and had mercy on our infirmity, and condescended to our corruption, and, unable to bear that death should have mastery he takes unto himself a body, and that of no different sort from ours...And thus taking from our bodies one of like nature, because all were under the penalty of corruption of death He gave it over to death in the stead of all, and offered it to the father – doing this, moreover of his loving kindness.”

Here after you can read the details of Incarnation

(1)By God's grace, briefly indicated that the Word of the Father is Himself divine, that all things that are owe their being to His will and power, and that it is through Him that the Father gives order to creation, by Him that all things are moved, and through Him that they receive their being.

Now, Macarius, true lover of Christ, we must take a step further in the faith of our holy religion, and consider also the Word's becoming Man and His divine Appearing in our midst. That mystery the Jews traduce, the Greeks deride, but we adore; and your own love and devotion to the Word also will be the greater, because in His Manhood He seems so little worth.

For it is a fact that the more unbelievers pour scorn on Him, so much the more does He make His Godhead evident. The things which they, as men, rule out as impossible, He plainly shows to be possible; that which they deride as unfitting, His goodness makes most fit; and things which these wiseacres laugh at as "human" He by His inherent might declares divine. Thus by what seems His utter poverty and weakness on the cross He overturns the pomp and parade of idols, and quietly and hiddenly wins over the mockers and unbelievers to recognize Him as God.

Now in dealing with these matters it is necessary first to recall what has already been said. You must understand why it is that the Word of the Father, so great and so high, has been made manifest in bodily form. He has not assumed a body as proper to His own nature, far from it, for as the Word He is without body. He has been manifested in a human body for this reason only, out of the love and goodness of His Father, for the salvation of us men.

We will begin, then, with the creation of the world and with God its Maker, for the first fact that you must grasp is this: the renewal of creation has been wrought by the Self-same Word Who made it in the beginning. There is thus no inconsistency between creation and salvation for the One Father has employed the same Agent for both works, effecting the salvation of the world through the same Word Who made it in the beginning.

(2) In regard to the making of the universe and the creation of all things there have been various opinions, and each person has propounded the theory that suited his own taste. For instance, some say that all things are self- originated and, so to speak, haphazard. The Epicureans are among these; they deny that there is any Mind behind the universe at all.

This view is contrary to all the facts of experience, their own existence included. For if all things had come into being in this automatic fashion, instead of being the outcome of Mind, though they existed, they would all be uniform and without distinction. In the universe everything would be sun or moon or whatever it was, and in the human body the whole would be hand or eye or foot. But in

point of fact the sun and the moon and the earth are all different things, and even within the human body there are different members, such as foot and hand and head.

This distinctness of things argues not a spontaneous generation but a prevenient Cause; and from that Cause we can apprehend God, the Designer and Maker of all. Others take the view expressed by Plato, that giant among the Greeks. He said that God had made all things out of pre-existent and uncreated matter, just as the carpenter makes things only out of wood that already exists. But those who hold this view do not realize that to deny that God is Himself the Cause of matter is to impute limitation to Him, just as it is undoubtedly a limitation on the part of the carpenter that he can make nothing unless he has the wood.

How could God be called Maker and Artificer if His ability to make depended on some other cause, namely on matter itself? If He only worked up existing matter and did not Himself bring matter into being, He would be not the Creator but only a craftsman. Then, again, there is the theory of the Gnostics, who have invented for themselves an Artificer of all things other than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. These simply shut their eyes to the obvious meaning of Scripture.

For instance, the Lord, having reminded the Jews of the statement in Genesis, "He Who created them in the beginning made them male and female. . . ," and having shown that for that reason a man should leave his parents and cleave to his wife, goes on to say with reference to the Creator, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."³⁷ How can they get a creation independent of the Father out of that? And, again, St. John, speaking all inclusively, says, "All things became by Him and without Him came nothing into being."³⁸ How then could the Artificer be someone different, other than the Father of Christ?

(3)Such are the notions which men put forward. But the impiety of their foolish talk is plainly declared by the divine teaching of the Christian faith. From it we know that, because there is Mind behind the universe, it did not originate itself; because God is infinite, not finite, it was not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing and out of non-existence absolute and utter God brought it into being through the Word. He says as much in Genesis:

³⁷ Matt. xix. 4-6.

³⁸ John i. 3.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth³⁹; and again through that most helpful book *The Shepherd*, "Believe thou first and foremost that there is One God Who created and arranged all things and brought them out of non-existence into being."⁴⁰

Paul also indicates the same thing when he says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things which we see now did not come into being out of things which had previously appeared."⁴¹For God is good—or rather, of all goodness He is Fountainhead, and it is impossible for one who is good to be mean or grudging about anything. Grudging existence to none therefore, He made all things out of nothing through His own Word, our Lord Jesus Christ and of all these His earthly creatures He reserved especial mercy for the race of men.

Upon them, therefore, upon men who, as animals, were essentially impermanent, He bestowed a grace which other creatures lacked—namely the impress of His own Image, a share in the reasonable being of the very Word Himself, so that, reflecting Him and themselves becoming reasonable and expressing the Mind of God even as He does, though in limited degree they might continue forever in the blessed and only true life of the saints in paradise. But since the will of man could turn either way, God secured this grace that He had given by making it conditional from the first upon two things—namely, a law and a place. He set them in His own paradise, and laid upon them a single prohibition.

If they guarded the grace and retained the loveliness of their original innocence, then the life of paradise should be theirs, without sorrow, pain or care, and after it the assurance of immortality in heaven. But if they went astray and became vile, throwing away their birthright of beauty, then they would come under the natural law of death and live no longer in paradise, but, dying outside of it, continue in death and in corruption.

This is what Holy Scripture tells us, proclaiming the command of God, "Of every tree that is in the garden thou shalt surely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ye shall not eat, but in

³⁹ Gen. i. 1.

⁴⁰ *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Book 2. par 1.

⁴¹ Heb. xi. 3.

the day that ye do eat, ye shall surely die."⁴² "Ye shall surely die"—not just die only, but remain in the state of death and of corruption.

(4) You may be wondering why we are discussing the origin of men when we set out to talk about the Word's becoming Man. The former subject is relevant to the latter for this reason: it was our sorry case that caused the Word to come down, our transgression that called out His love for us, so that He made haste to help us and to appear among us. It is we who were the cause of His taking human form and for our salvation that in His great love He was both born and manifested in a human body. For God had made man thus (that is, as an embodied spirit), and had willed that he should remain in incorruption.

But men, having turned from the contemplation of God to evil of their own devising, had come inevitably under the law of death. Instead of remaining in the state in which God had created them, they were in process of becoming corrupted entirely, and death had them completely under its dominion.

For the transgression of the commandment was making them turn back again according to their nature; and as they had at the beginning come into being out of non-existence, so were they now on the way to returning, through corruption, to non-existence again. The presence and love of the Word had called them into being; inevitably, therefore when they lost the knowledge of God, they lost existence with it; for it is God alone Who exists, evil is non-being, the negation and antithesis of good. By nature, of course, man is mortal, since he was made from nothing; but he bears also the Likeness of Him Who is, and if he preserves that Likeness through constant contemplation, then his nature is deprived of its power and he remains incorrupt. So is it affirmed in Wisdom:

"The keeping of His laws is the assurance of incorruption."⁴³ And being incorrupt, he would be henceforth as God, as Holy Scripture says, "I have said, Ye are gods and sons of the Highest all of you: but ye die as men and fall as one of the princes."⁴⁴

⁴² Gen. ii. 16 f.

⁴³ Wisdom vi. 18

⁴⁴ Psalm lxxxii. 6 f.

(5) This, then, was the plight of men. God had not only made them out of nothing, but had also graciously bestowed on them His own life by the grace of the Word. Then, turning from eternal things to things corruptible, by counsel of the devil, they had become the cause of their own corruption in death; for, as I said before, though they were by nature subject to corruption, the grace of their union with the Word made them capable of escaping from the natural law, provided that they retained the beauty of innocence with which they were created.

That is to say, the presence of the Word with them shielded them even from natural corruption, as also Wisdom says: God created man for incorruption and as an image of His own eternity; but by envy of the devil death entered into the world."⁴⁵ When this happened, men began to die, and corruption ran riot among them and held sway over them to an even more than natural degree, because it was the penalty of which God had forewarned them for transgressing the commandment.

Indeed, they had in their sinning surpassed all limits; for, having invented wickedness in the beginning and so involved themselves in death and corruption, they had gone on gradually from bad to worse, not stopping at any one kind of evil, but continually, as with insatiable appetite, devising new kinds of sins. Adulteries and thefts were everywhere, murder and rapine filled the earth, law was disregarded in corruption and injustice, all kinds of iniquities were perpetrated by all, both singly and in common.

Cities were warring with cities, nations were rising against nations, and the whole earth was rent with factions and battles, while each strove to outdo the other in wickedness. Even crimes contrary to nature were not unknown, but as the martyr-apostle of Christ says: "Their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature; and the men also, leaving the natural use of the woman, flamed out in lust towards each other, perpetrating shameless acts with their own sex, and receiving in their own persons the due recompense of their pervertedness."⁴⁶

d) His apologetic works

His apologetic works date from the early years of his life.

Discourse against the Pagans: an apology for the Christian faith and a refutation of paganism.

⁴⁵ Wisdom ii. 23 f.

⁴⁶ Rom. i. 26 f

Jerome united them with the common title *Two Books against the Pagans*. In the Benedictine edition the series of his works opens with two apologetic treatises: *Oratio contra gentes*⁴⁷. *Oratio adversus (contra) gentes*," written in 47 chapters, an exposition of the origin and detestable character of heathenism; a demonstration of the existence of God and of the omnipotence, goodness, and wisdom of the Logos.

The first discourse or oration demonstrates **the falseness of paganism** and outlines **the path of ascent to the true knowledge of God and the Word** through introspection and through the contemplation of the external world in its harmony and beauty.

The first book lays bare in all its nudity and nullity the pagan pantheism and establishes Christian monotheism as the reasonable and necessary religion.

The second discourse or oration deals with **the truth and significance of the Incarnation**. Athanasius speaks of Scripture that "without a pure mind and without imitating the lives of the saints, no one can comprehend these holy words."

As it is highlighted above "Oration de incarnatione Verbi," in 57 chapters, on the necessity and possibility of the Incarnation, on the death of Christ upon the cross, and on the wonderful effects of Christianity as a proof of its divine origin. Both works, written with equal learning and literary skill, form in their connection a whole. *Oratio de incarnatione Verbi*⁴⁸, titles that are found apparently in all the manuscripts. They are in reality parts of a homogeneous work known to St. Jerome⁴⁹ as *Adversus gentes duo libri*.

The second book defends the Christian faith in - the Incarnation of the Divine Word against the objections of Jews and pagans. The work was written before the Arian controversies, about 320. It is a genuine work of Athanasius; the efforts of Schultze and Daseke to prove the contrary have utterly failed.

⁴⁷ Migne, PG., xxv. 3

⁴⁸ Ib., xxv. 95 198

⁴⁹ De viris ill., c. 87.

Dogmatic and Controversial

"Epistola ad Adelphium episcopum contra Arianos," an energetic refutation of Arianism and the later heresies of Nestorianism and Eutychianism.

Nearly all his doctrinal works are devoted to the overthrow of Arianism. The longest and most valuable of them is the ***Orationes IV contra Arianos***⁵⁰. Apology against the Arians (Apologia contra Arianos): considered the most authentic source of the history of the church in the first half of the 4th century. St Athanasius is far superior to any another historians of the period for his personal testimony to the facts, and for his great accuracy and use of actual documents.

- "Orationes IV adversus Arianos," on the eternity and consubstantiality of the Son; the unity of nature and the distinction of persons in the Father and Son;

Four Discourses against the Arians:

- In Discourse I, St Athanasius wrote of Arius and the Arian heresy: "The mockeries which he utters...repulsive and unreligious, are such as these: 'God was not always a Father;' but 'once God was alone, and not yet a Father, but afterwards He became a Father.' 'The Son was not always; for whereas all things were made out of nothing, and all existing creatures and works were made, so the Word of God Himself was 'made out of nothing.' And 'once he was not,' and 'He was not before His origination,' but He as others 'had an origin of creation.' 'For God,' he says, was alone, and the word as yet was not, nor the wisdom. Moreover he has dared to say, that 'the Word is not the very God,' though he is not called God, yet he is not very God,' but 'by participation of grace, he, as others, is God only in name...with such words has the unreligious spoken; maintaining that the Son is distinct by Himself, and in no respect partaker of the Father...Shall not all human kind at Arius' blasphemies be struck speechless, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, to escape hearing them or seeing their author?"
- For behold, we take divine Scripture and set it up as a light upon its candlestick, saying: - Very Son of Father, natural and genuine, proper to his essence, Wisdom only-begotten, and very and only Word of God is He; not a creature or work, but an offspring proper to the Father's essence. Wherefore, He is very God, existing one in essence with the very

⁵⁰ Migne, PG., xxvi. 11526.

Father...For he is the expression of the Father's person, and light from light, and power, and very image of the Father's essence...and he ever was and is, and never was not. For the Father being everlasting, His Word and Wisdom must be everlasting."

- The first book sets forth and develops the Orthodox doctrine of the eternal begotten of the Son from the Father and the substantial unity of both;
- The second and the third books are devoted to a detailed exposition of the pertinent scriptural texts;
- The fourth deals with the personal distinction of the Son from the Father.
- "Inverba: Omnia mihi tradita sunt a Patre meo, " against the Eusebians, who urged this text in favor of their position. Athanasius opposes the text, "Omnia quaecumque Pater habet, mea sunt."
- "Oratio maior de fide," in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Logos (incomplete).
- "Ad Iovianum de fide," an excellent exposition of the faith, written at the request of Jovinian.
- "Epistola ad Maximum philosophum," confuting the errors concerning the Person of the Redeemer.

e) **The Life of Antony**

He also wrote, *The Life of Antony*

- Contemporaries are unanimous in ascribing *The Life of St. Antony*, **the father of monasticism**, to Athanasius, written soon after the death of Antony (356), during the "Arian invasion" which forced Athanasius to leave Alexandria and take refuge in the remote desert.
- It was written for "**our brothers in another land**," in a country where monasticism only recently begun to appear. Athanasius saw in St. Antony "**a worthy model of asceticism**."
- The Life of St. Antony had great influence on **the development of hagiographic literature**, and especially on Jerome's *Life of Paul of Thebes*.

f) Letters to Serapion

Four Letters to Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis

"Epistole IV ad Serapionem," to confute those who, though they acknowledged the Son as God, yet held the Holy Ghost to be a creature.

The letter to the monks⁵¹, mutilated at the beginning, gives a history of Arianism from 335-357, and is usually entitled *Historia Arianorum*. The brief letter to bishop Serapion⁵², written soon after, 358, relates the terrible death of Arius.

It focuses on the divinity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit. These four letters comprise an integrated work. Not only are they **addressed to the same person** but they **deal with the same subject — the Holy Spirit**. In these letters Athanasius stresses that **our knowledge of the Spirit is derived from the Son**. His theology of the Holy Spirit is expressed very clearly in these important letters.

This work was written in the deserts of Egypt during his third exile (356-362). About the same time he wrote the four letters to Serapion, bishop of Thmuis⁵³ in refutation of those who admitted the divinity of the Son, but maintained that the Holy Spirit was a creature. Quite akin to the latter work is the treatise on the Trinity and the Holy Ghost (*Liber de Trinitate et de Spiritu Sancto*)⁵⁴.

g) Books against Apollinaris

"De incarnatione Domini nostri Jesu Christi contra Apollinarium libri II," in which the author not only refutes all the errors of the Apollinarists, but also defends the most important of the Christological doctrines with invincible force. This is one of the best works upon this subject.

The so-called books against Apollinaris⁵⁵ are referred by the Benedictine editors to the last years of Athanasius. The name of Apollinaris does not appear in the work itself, and there are reasons for doubting its authenticity⁵⁶.

⁵¹ Ib., xxv. 691-796

⁵² Ib., xxv. 685-690

⁵³ Ib., xxvi. 529

⁵⁴ Ib., xxvi. 1191-1213.

⁵⁵ Migne, PG., xxvi. 1093-1166.

Athanasius was more than once forced to defend **himself against libel or defamation**. He wrote **three apologetic works to justify himself**:

In his conflicts with the Arians, Athanasius often found himself compelled to appeal to the truth of history.

Three apologies were written by him, with a view to justify his conduct:

- The Apology against the Arians⁵⁷, written about 350 which includes all the documents relating to his case from his first two exiles and as an historical authority of primary importance;
- The Apology to the Emperor Constantius ⁵⁸, written in 356; and
- The Apology for his flight ⁵⁹, written in 357-358. Which Athanasius addressed to the entire Church and has, as such, remained one of his most famous works.

h) The historical and polemical⁶⁰ works

History of the Arians for Monks was written probably in 358 at the invitation of the monks with whom he had found refuge. In this work he attacks Emperor Constantius as a **precursor of the Antichrist, as a patron of heresy, and as an enemy of Christ**.

i) His Letter concerning the Decrees of the Council of Nicaea

His *Letter concerning the Decrees of the Council of Nicaea* was probably written about 350/351 and is a **defense of the Nicene definition**. The letters on the decrees of the Council of Nicaea⁶¹

- We believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth;
- And Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;
- Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary;
- Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried;
- He descended in Hades, the third day He rose from the dead;

⁵⁶ Draseke holds (1889) that these two books were composed at Alexandria soon after the death of the Saint, but by two distinct persons, the first (probably) by Didymus the Blind and the second (probably) by Ambrosius of Alexandria, a disciple of Didymus. (Hier., *De viris ill.*, c. 126)

⁵⁷ Ib & It; & gt; xxy 247

⁵⁸ Ib., xxv. 595- 642.

⁵⁹ Ib xxv & gt; 643-680.

⁶⁰ ሙጉታዊ ወይም ዘላፋዊ ሥራዎች

⁶¹ Ib., xxv. 415-476

- He ascended into Heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty
- From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead;
- And we believe in the Holy Spirit;
- The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; the communion of saints;
- We believe in one Baptism for forgiveness of sins;
- The resurrection of the body;
- And the life everlasting.

j) The Letter Concerning the Synods of Ariminum

*The Letter Concerning the Synods of Ariminum*⁶² in Italy and Seleucia in Isauria was written in the autumn of 359 and constitutes **an extensive report and analysis**. A letter of the year 359 reviews the history of the doings of the Councils of Rimini in Italy and of Seleucia in Isauria of the same year⁶³.

k) His Letter on the Opinions of Dionysius

Doctrinal letters on the “Teaching of Dionysius, “on the decrees of Nicaea, and several others dealing with the incarnation.

His *Letter on the Opinions of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria* is authentic; on the doctrine of Dionysius⁶⁴, bishop of Alexandria, belong to the years 350 354 (40, 3).

To these can be added **encyclical epistles** from the Alexandrian councils: *Tome to the People of Antioch*; *Letter to the African Bishops*, and others.

⁶² In 358, the Roman Emperor Constantius II requested two councils, one of the western bishops at Ariminum and one of the eastern bishops (planned for Nicomedia but actually held at Seleucia Isauria) to resolve the Arian controversy over the nature of the divinity of Jesus Christ, which divided the 4th-century church.

In early Christianity, one of the several 4th century church councils concerned with Arianism in (359 CE). It was called by the Pro-Arian Roman emperor Constantius II and held at Ariminum (Modern Rimini, Italy). It was attended by some 400 bishops of the Western Roman Empire, with the Eastern bishops simultaneously meeting at Seleucia (now Silifke, Turkey). The majority of the bishops at Ariminum were orthodox and accepted the faith of Nicea, but the Arian minority included skilled diplomats who successfully undid the orthodox decision of the majority when it reached the emperor. The orthodox bishops remaining at Ariminum were then forced to recant (እንዲተው) and subscribe (ቃል እንዲሰጡ/እንዲቀበሉ) to an Arian creed drawn up at Nice in Tjhracia. Pope Liberius soon repudiated this creed and declared the council of Ariminum without authority. The Orthodox fathers said same substance and the Arians said similar substance.

⁶³ Ib., xxvi. 681 - 794.

⁶⁴ Ib., xxv. 479522.

Dionysius of Alexandria: From 231-232 he was **the successor Heraklas as head-master of the Alexandrine catechetical school** and retained the office it would seem even after he had succeeded Heraklas (247-248) as bishop of Alexandria.

His own orthodoxy was the subject of controversy that broke out by the way some letters he wrote, after 257, in reference to Sabellianism⁶⁵. In order to emphasize very plainly the person distinction between the Father and the Son, Dionysius had made use of expressions and smiles that implied a distinction in substance and **reduced the Son to the rank of creature**.⁶⁶ For this a complaint was laid against him before Pope Dionysius (259-268) and was invited by the latter to explain his words. This he did in reply to the pope and more fully in the four books of his “refutation and defense”. They contain an exposition of his thoroughly orthodox teaching concerning the Trinity, and seem to have quite satisfied the Pope. The extant fragments have come down to us chiefly through citations in Athanasius and the St. Basil the Great.

l) Athanasius’ *Letter to the Amun*

Athanasius’ *Letter to the Amun* (written before 356) and his *Letter to Dracontius* (written about 354 or 355) were intended to instruct them **in the practice of ascetic discipline**.

m) Treatise on the Virginity

There is another treatise *The Virginity* that may be prized as genuine.

A number of Treatises on Virginity. Fragments of other treatises on virginity in Coptic, Syrian and Armenian translations.

St. Athanasius of Alexandria ca. 297-373: O noble Virgin, truly you are greater than any other greatness. For who is your equal in greatness, O dwelling place of God the Word? To whom among all creatures shall I compare you, O Virgin? You are greater than them all. O [Ark of the New] Covenant, clothed with purity instead of gold! You are the Ark in which is found the golden vessel containing the true manna, that is, the flesh in which divinity resides. Should I compare you to the fertile earth and its fruits? You surpass them, for it is written: “The earth is my footstool” (Isa. 66:1). But you carry within you the feet, the head, and the entire body of the perfect God.

⁶⁵ Eus. Hist. ecc., vii. 6, 26,1

⁶⁶ Ath., Ep. de sent. Dion., C.4.

If I say that heaven is exalted, yet it does not equal you, for it is written: “Heaven is My throne” (Isa. 66:1), while you are God’s place of repose. If I say that the angels and archangels are great — but you are greater than them all, for the angels and the archangels serve with trembling the One Who dwells in your womb, and they dare not speak in His presence, while you speak to Him freely.

If we say that the cherubim are great, you are greater than they, for the cherubim carry the throne (cf. Ps. 80:1; 99:1), while you hold God in your hands. If we say that the seraphim are great, you are greater than them all, for the seraphim cover their faces with their wings (cf. Isa. 6:2), unable to look upon the perfect glory, while you not only gaze upon His face but caress it and offer your breasts to His holy mouth...

As for Eve, she is the mother of the dead, “for in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22). Eve took [fruit] from the tree and made her husband eat of it along with her. And so they ate of that tree of which God had told them: “The day you eat of it, you shall die” (Gen. 2:17). Eve took [fruit] from it, ate some of it, and gave some to her husband [that he might eat] with her, He ate of it, and he died.

In you, instead, O wise Virgin, dwells the Son God: He, that is, Who is the tree of life. Truly He has given us His body, and we have eaten of it. That is how life came to all, and all have come to life by the mercy of God, your beloved Son. That is why your spirit is full of joy in God your Savior! (*Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought by Luigi Gambero. Homily of the Papyrus of Turin*)⁶⁷

n) Letters

He also wrote **paschal letters** which are important for the **chronology and history of the epoch**.

Festal or Easter (Christian Paschal) letters. In letter V for Easter of 333, St Athanasius wrote: “Again the time has arrived which brings to us a new beginning, even the announcement of the blessed Passover, in which the Lord was sacrificed. We eat, as it were, the food of life. And constantly thirsting we delight our souls at all times, as from a fountain, in his precious blood...He stands ready for those who thirst; and for those who thirst there is a Word our savior, ‘If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.’” (Jn 7:37).

⁶⁷ <https://classicalchristianity.com/2012/04/07/st-athanasius-on-the-mother-of-god/>

- There are also a fragment of the thirty-ninth letter (367) that contains **a list of the canonical books of Holy Scripture**, supplemented by **a list of books which were not included in the canon but which the fathers did not condemn for reading by the faithful**.
- In his Easter letter of 367, Athanasius was the first person to list the 27 books of the New Testament canon that are in use today.⁶⁸
- These are *the Wisdom of Solomon*; *the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach*; *Esther*; *Judith*; *Tobit* (Athanasius omitted the books of the *Maccabees*); the so-called “Doctrine of the Apostles” or *The Didache*; and *The Shepherd*.
- Two encyclical letters hold up to public scorn the unworthy conduct of his enemies: one written in 341 to all the bishops ⁶⁹, and another in 356 to the bishops of Egypt and Libya ⁷⁰.
- Two letters to Lucifer⁷¹, bishop of Cagliari, extant in Latin only and probably written in Latin, perhaps in 360, give lively expression to his admiration for the firm resistance of Lucifer to the attacks of the Arians. The synodal letter to the people of Antioch ⁷² and the letter to Rufinianus⁷³ treat of the measures taken at the Council of Alexandria (362) with regard to the reception of the Arians to ecclesiastical communion. The letter to the bishops of (Western) Africa ⁶ warns them against the intrigues of the Arians, and may have been written about 369.

o) Personal letters

- In his letter to Adelphius, St Athanasius wrote: “We do not worship a creature...But we worship the Lord of Creation, Incarnate, the Word of God. For if the flesh also is in itself a part of the created world, yet it has become God’s body.”

⁶⁸Livingstone, E. A.; Sparkes, M. W. D.; Peacocke, R. W., eds. (2013). The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. Oxford University Press. pp. 91–92. ISBN 978-0-19965962-3. OCLC 1023248322.

⁶⁹ Ib., xxv. 221- 240.

⁷⁰ Ib., xxv. 537- 594

⁷¹ Ib., xxvi. 1181 - 1186.

⁷² Ib., xxvi. 795- 810

⁷³ Ib., xxvi. 1179 -1182.

p) Exegetical works:

Most exegetical works are lost only fragments of his interpretations or commentaries of on the Psalms, Canticle of Canticles, St. Matthew, St. Luke, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, only fragments are preserved.

The Psalms have a particular and primary grace because the law and the prophets are combined in them. He expresses his general view of the Old Testament. It was written by one Spirit with NT and was written about our Savior. At the same time, they were written about each of us, as examples for our edification.

- "In interpretationem Psalmorum epistola ad Marcellinum," in 33 chapters, an impressive admonition to study the Psalms. *Letter to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms*
- "Expositiones in Psalmos," a short and chiefly mystical interpretation of the first 146 Psalms.
- "De titulis Psalmorum a kind of paraphrase of separate Psalm verses, with an explanation of the titles of Psalms.

q) Moral and Ascetical

- a. "Epistola ad Dracontium, monachorum praefectum, episcopatum fugientem," an effective admonition to accept the charge of the episcopate.
- b. "Epistola ad Amunem monachum," upon in deliberate stains of soul and body; on marriage and celibacy, the former, as he says, yielding a threefold reward, the latter a hundredfold.
- c. "Epistolae festales XV," a kind of Lenten pastoral letters upon fasting, extant in a Syriac translation. The "Symbolum Athanasianum," so-called, belongs to a later period;

1.4) Effect of the council

The long - term effects of the Council of Nicaea were significant. For the first time, representatives of many of the bishops of the Church convened to agree on a doctrinal statement. Also for the first time, the Emperor played a role, by calling together the bishops under his authority, and using the power of the state to give the Council's orders effect. This was the start of the Constantinian shift, an **entangling** of church and state that still gives rise to debate today.

In the short - term, however, the council did not completely solve the problems it was convened to discuss. The Arians and the Meletians soon regained nearly all the rights they had lost, and Arianism

continued to spread and to cause division in the Church during the remainder of the fourth century. Almost immediately, **Eusebius of Nicomedia** used his influence at court to sway Constantine's favour from the orthodox Nicene bishops to the Arians. **Eustathius of Antioch** was deposed and exiled in 330. **Athanasius**, who had succeeded Alexander as bishop of Alexandria, was deposed by the First Synod of Tyre in 335⁷⁴ and **Marcellus of Ancyra** followed him in 336. Arius himself returned to Constantinople to be readmitted into the Church, but died shortly before he could be received.

Constantine died the next year, after finally receiving baptism, from an Arian bishop⁷⁵, and "with his passing the first round in the battle after the Council of Nicaea was ended."⁷⁶

The Arians saw St. Athanasius as their principal foe and worked tirelessly against him. Through intrigue, lies, conspiracy, and threats they gained a following with hierarchs and civil authorities in the East. Eventually, they persuaded the Emperor Constantine to send him into exile in Gaul in 335.

With St. Athanasius in exile, Arius thought he could receive communion in Alexandria; when his attempt failed, he went to Constantinople to meet the Emperor Constantine. Arius convinced him that he upheld the true faith of the Church, and the Emperor accepted his statement. Eusebius and those with Arius then escorted him to the church.

Alexander, the bishop of Constantinople informed Arius he could not take part in communion since he was a heretic, but Arius said he had been invited by the Emperor and insisted that he would receive communion the next day. Alexander prayed fervently that he would not see such an atrocity and asked God that his life or Arius' life be taken.

⁷⁴ Athanasius' first problem lay with Meletius of Lycopolis and his followers, who had failed to abide by the First Council of Nicaea. That council also anathematized Arius. Accused of mistreating Arians and Meletians, Athanasius answered those charges at a gathering of bishops in Tyre, the First Synod of Tyre, in 335. There, Eusebius of Nicomedia and other supporters of Arius deposed Athanasius. On 6 November, both sides of the dispute met with Emperor Constantine I in Constantinople. At that meeting, the Arians claimed Athanasius would try to cut off essential Egyptian grain supplies to Constantinople. He was found guilty, and sent into exile to Augusta Treverorum in Gaul (now Trier in Germany). When Athanasius reached his destination in exile in 336, Maximin of Trier received him, but not as a disgraced person. Athanasius stayed with him for two years. Constantine died in 337 and was succeeded by his three sons, Constantine II, Constantius, and Constans. Paul I of Constantinople, who had also been banished by Constantius, also found shelter with Maximin, who cautioned the Emperor Constans against the Arians, revealing their plots.

⁷⁵ **Eusebius of Nicomedia** (/ju:'si:biəs/; Greek: Εὐσέβιος; died 341) was an Arian priest who baptized Constantine the Great on his deathbed in 337.

⁷⁶ Hist., eccl. IX, 6:

That evening when Arius and his supporters were parading through the city, celebrating their victory, Arius suffered a violent hemorrhage of the bowels and died instantly.

St Athanasius' exile in Gaul was the first of many; during his life, he was exiled on five separate occasions for a total of 17 years.

1.5) St. Gregory the Illuminator

Grigor Lusavorich; (c. 257 – c. 331) is the **patron saint and first official head of the Armenian Apostolic Church**. He was a religious leader who converted Armenia from paganism to Christianity in 301.

Early life

Gregory was the son⁷⁷ of the Armenian Parthian nobles⁷⁸ Anak the Parthian and Okohe. His father, Anak, was a Prince said to be related to the Arsacid Kings of Armenia or was from the House of Suren, one of the seven branches of the ruling Arsacid dynasty⁷⁹ of Sakastan.⁸⁰ Anak was charged with assassinating Khosrov II, one of the kings of the Arsacid dynasty and was put to death. Gregory narrowly escaped execution with the help of Sophia and Yevtagh, his caretakers. He was taken to Caesarea in Cappadocia where Sophia and Yevtagh hoped to raise him. Gregory was given to the Christian Holy Father Phirmilianos (Euthalius) to be educated and was brought up as a devout Christian.

Upon coming of age, Gregory married a woman called Miriam, a devout Christian who was the daughter of a Christian Armenian prince in Cappadocia. From their union, Miriam bore Gregory two children, their sons Vrtanes and Aristaces. Through Vrtanes, Gregory and Miriam would have further descendants and when Gregory died, Aristaces succeeded him. At some point, Miriam and Gregory separated in order that Gregory might take up a monastic life. Gregory left Cappadocia and went to Armenia in the hope of atoning for his father's crime by evangelizing his homeland.

⁷⁷ Hovannisian, *The Armenian People From Ancient to Modern Times, Volume I: The Dynastic Periods: From Antiquity to the Fourteenth Century*, p. 7

⁷⁸ Agat'angeghos, *History of the Armenians*, p. xxvii

⁷⁹ Terian, *Patriotism And Piety In Armenian Christianity: The Early Panegyrics On Saint Gregory*, p. 106

⁸⁰ Kurkjian, *A History of Armenia*, p. 97.

At that time Tiridates III, son of the late King Khosrov II, reigned. Influenced partly by the fact that Gregory was the son of his father's enemy, he ordered Gregory imprisoned for twelve (some sources indicate fourteen) years in a pit on the Ararat Plain under the present day church of Khor Virap located near the historical city Artashat in Armenia. Gregory was eventually called forth from his pit in c. 297 to restore sanity to Tiridates III, who had lost all reason after he was betrayed by Roman emperor Diocletian.

1.6) Didymus the Blind (b.ca. 313-d.ca. 398)

He was born ca. 313, and at the age of four, lost his sight entirely. He learned to write by means of wooden tablets in which the characters were engraved, and invented engraved writing for the blind.

Despite the tremendous handicap of lifelong blindness, he amassed an amazing treasure of erudition without ever going to school. He gained a comprehensive and thorough knowledge in philosophy, rhetoric, and mathematics.

The knowledge of which he gives proof of in his works supposes a bewildering memory. He became so familiar with the scriptures, that he knew them almost all by heart.

He attracted people not only by his teachings but also by his asceticism; he lived almost a hermit's life. St Athanasius did not hesitate to appoint him as the head of the catechetical school of Alexandria. He was the last of its famous teachers, since that celebrated institution closed down after his death.

He stood in high esteem with the Egyptian anchorites; with St Anthony in particular, who congratulated him, that, though blind to the perishable world of sense, he was endowed with the eye of an angel to behold the mysteries of God.³⁹

He was visited by St Anthony several times and by Palladius four times. Among his students and friends were Sts Gregory Nazianzen, St Jerome, Rufinus, Palladius.

St Jerome mentions Didymus as his magister, praises his learning, and testifies to his influence on the divines of his time in the West and in the East. Rufinus calls him "a prophet" and "apostolic man." He was 85 years old when he died ca. the year 398.

He interpreted many books of the Bible; a large number of quotations from his work still existing. He followed Origen in the allegorical method of interpretation and textual criticism.

1. Dogmatic Works

On the Trinity: 3 books written between 381 and 392; still existing.

On the Holy Spirit: The Greek original lost; the Latin translation still existing.

2. Exegetical Works

Old Testament: Psalms, Job, Isaiah, Zechariah, Proverbs.

New Testament: Gospels of Matthew and John, Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians.

His Theology

The Trinity: He concludes that there is only **one operation**⁸¹ of the three divine persons. He uses the catch-phrase “one essence, three hypostases.” He is above all, the theologian of the Trinity.

The Mother of God: He calls St Mary ‘Theotokos’, a title which originated in Alexandria, and he addresses her as ‘the perpetual virgin.’

Original sin: All the children of Adam have inherited the original sin from their parents.⁸²

The influence of Origen can be seen in his doctrines of Christology, the Holy Spirit, and Anthropology.

He defended the De Principiis of Origen; he was anathematized at the Council of Constantinople in 553 together with Origen and Evagrius Ponticus for their doctrines of the pre-existence of the soul and the Apokatastasis (universal salvation). The sixth council in 680⁸³ stigmatized Didymus as a defender of the abominable doctrine of Origen, and the seventh repeated this in 787.⁸⁴ As a result of the condemnation almost all of his works have perished.

⁸¹ The whole work of **creation and grace** is a single operation common to all three divine persons, who at the same time operate according to their unique properties, so that all things are from the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. The three persons are co-equal, co-eternal and consubstantial.

⁸² This is unacceptable in Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church teaching

⁸³ **Third Council of Constantinople**, (680–681), the sixth ecumenical council of the Christian church, summoned by the emperor Constantine IV and meeting at Constantinople. The council condemned the monothelites, among them Pope Honorius I, and asserted two wills and two operations of Christ.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

1.7) St. Ephraem the Syrian (ca.b.306-d.373)

St Ephraem: Deacon and Doctor of the Church is the most important writer of the Syrian patristic age and reckoned as one of the greatest of the Syrian fathers and poets

The Syrian venerated him, giving him especially the title *malphono* the teacher and also called him Harp of the Holy Spirit eloquent mouth doctor of the world and pillar of the church. Several of his hymns were adopted in Syrian liturgies and his praises were sung by whole East.

He was born at Nisibis of Christian parents, became an ascetic and was made headmaster of the school of Nisibis. He practiced **ascetic discipline** from his earliest youth, and was very close to Jacob, bishop of Nisibis.

He entered the **clergy** but never rose above the **diaconate**. However, he played **an active role in the life of his native city**.

St. Ephraem had two gifts: Gift of lyricism⁸⁵ and gift of tears. Weeping for Ephraem was the same as breathing the air for other men. His tears poured forth both day and night.” These were not tears of fear or guilty but tears of tenderness and compassion

The city was besieged by Sapor II in 338, 346 and 350 and passed into his hands in 363. St. Ephraem and most of the Christians went to Roman territory and lived at Edessa, where most of his writings were composed.

In 363, Nisibis was ceded to Persia and Ephraem withdrew to Edessa, where he devoted himself to literary activity and teaching in what was known as the “Persian School.” Apparently it was Ephraem, who had probably taught Biblical studies earlier, who founded the Biblical school in Edessa.

On his journey to Edessa he rescued the people of Samosata from the influence of false teaching of a counteract heresy by teaching Orthodoxy in hymns. He seemed to have resumed his hermit’s life near city.

According to tradition Ephraem was **present at the Council of Nicaea**, traveled through Egypt and Pontus, and visited with Basil the Great.

⁸⁵ ሀብተ በገና ሀብተ ድርሰት

He traveled to Caesarea to see St. Basil in 370 after seeing him in dream as a column of fire reaching from earth to heaven and is said to have received diaconate from him. He groaned in spirit when he saw him seated in a magnificent pulpit arrayed with shining garments. However, when he saw the Holy Spirit in a shape like a dove sitting upon his shoulder suggesting to him the words, St. Ephraem turned to praise him.

Two instances are given in the Acta of the influence of St. Ephraem's teaching on Basil:

It had been usual at Caesarea in the Doxology to say, Glory to be the Father, and to the Son, to Holy Spirit but after Ephraem's visit, St. Basil inserted and before the third clause. When the people murmured, he answered that his Syrian visitor taught him this and was necessary for the more clear manifestation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

In Gen. 1:2 the LXX renders The Spirit of God was borne upon the surface of the water. So St. Basil had understood it, but the Peshitta-Syriac versions render it -The Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters which St. Ephraem explained of the Spirit resting upon them with a warm and fostering influence as of a hen sitting upon her nest and so endowing them with the power of bringing forth the moving creature that hath life.

St. Basil gives two reasons for trusting his Syrian friend: First that Ephraem led a very ascetic life. Secondly, that St. Ephraem is an acute thinker, and has a thorough knowledge of the divine philosophy i.e. of the general sense of the Holy Scripture.

St. Ephraem says that the words simply mean that a wind was in motion; for the waters were instinct, he argues, with no creative energy till the fourth day.⁸⁶ St. Ephraem wrote about the first Adam- second Adam typology which could demand a logical extension the equation of Mary, not with Eve, but with earth from which the first Adam sprang: The Virgin earth of old gave birth to the Adam who is Lord of the earth, but today another virgin has given birth to Adam who is Lord of Heaven (H. Nativity. 1, 16).⁸⁷

St. Ephraem was an extraordinarily prolific writer Sosomen (III.16) reckoned that he had written 300,000 verses. St. Ephraem was the earliest advocate of the poetic genre of the madroshe, the

⁸⁶ DD Wace & WC Piercy, eds, A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 1994, pp. 549-550

⁸⁷ M Hansbury, trans., Jacob of Serug on the Mother of God, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1998, p.8

teaching songs, in communicating the Orthodox faith of the Church to a wide audience. Many of St. Ephraem's poetic works were translated into Greek by the latter part of the fourth century by Flavian of Antioch and Diodore of Tarsus.

The subjects of the hymns were the life of Christ including His nativity, Baptism, Fasting, Ministry, Passion, Resurrection and ascension. He also wrote about repentance, the dead, and the martyrs.

His major works fall into three categories:

Exegetical

His commentaries are in prose, and in the Antiochians tradition, excellent in their exposition. There are extant commentaries (Syriac) on Genesis and Exodus and Armenian versions of treatise on Tatian's Diatessaron, Acts of the Apostles, Epistle of St. Paul (including Corinthians and excluding one to Philemon).

Dogmatic –Polemical

Practically all his treatise is polemical –against Bardaisan, Marcion, etc. The fatalistic tenets of the Bardaisan, a gnostic who flourished at the end of the 2nd century, had been embodied in 150 Psalms. To combat their influence, St. Ephraem composed numerous hymns and trained young women who desired the conventual life, to sing them in chorus. On feasts of the Lord, days of the martyrs, and days of the week St. Ephraem would gather round him his choirs and so the poems of Bardaisan lost their influence.⁸⁸

He utilized verse forms in the fight against heresy and also to glorify God. The first Syrian poet was Bardesanes (“Bar-Daisan”), who was a heretic of Gnosticism and used metrical forms in his sermons. According to Theodoret, Ephraem decided to fight him with his own weapons. “Some time ago, Harmonius, the son of Bardesanes, composed several songs, and by uniting his impious teaching to these pleasant melodies he afforded his listeners great enjoyment as he led them to perdition. Ephraem therefore borrowed their melody but joined it to his own orthodox doctrine and in this way he provided his listeners with instruction that was as enjoyable as it was useful.” Some of Ephraem's poetry, his memre, orations were intended, for oral declaration or to be read aloud.

⁸⁸ Wace and Piercy, op.cit., p.296

He also left orations against Marcion and Manes (or Mani), against Julian the Apostate, and against the “sceptics” or Arians. The majority of Ephraem's writings are poetic and have a metrical form.

Homiletic

These are meter and the homilies usually run into equi-syllabic lines (seven –syllable lines – the Ephraemic meter). His moralizing discourses, monitory or penitential, form the greater part of his works. There are four poems against Julian the Apostate. His Poems are doctrinal, moral, polemical, liturgical, poems of Nisibis etc. and his harp resounds to the praises of St. Mary more frequently than that of any other poet or orator of Christian antiquity. He loves to sing of her stainless virginity, her truly divine maternity. At an early date his works were translated into Greek, Armenian, Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic.

He wrote in Hymns preserved in Armenian, no. i: Blessed is the person who has consented to become the close friend of faith and of prayer: he lives in single-mindedness and makes prayer and faith stops by with him. Prayer that rises up in someone’s heart serves to open up for us the door of heaven: that person stands in converse with the Divinity and gives pleasure to the Son of the God. Prayer makes peace with Lord’s anger and with the vehemence of his wrath. In this way too, tears that well up in the eyes can open the door of compassion.⁸⁹

Hymns: His funeral hymn and penitent hymns are particularly remarkable for their lyricism.

Holy Scripture is reverent, for the Divine books have been given to us from God through the Holy Spirit. They are the means of our salvation. The mysteries of the holy book and their wonderful harmony are accessible only to those who approach them with faith.

He succeeds in demonstrating **the organic integrity of both Testaments**, which together form “**a single body of truth.**” “This is a single word which was spoken by **a single pair of lips** for various generations.”

Freedom, the Image of God, and the fall

Man's likeness to God is revealed in his freedom. Because man contains the image of God within himself, man's thought possesses a kind of omnipresence and is capable of embracing all places.

⁸⁹ S. Brock, the Syriac Father, on Prayer and Spiritual life, Cistercian Publication, Michigan, 1987, PP.36

The first man was adorned with a “robe of glory” and with “heavenly garments” and the bliss and grandeur of man's state before the fall surpass description. We lost these through the lust and arrogant disobedience of the first Eve, but they are returned to us through the second Eve, the Virgin Mary.

Our first paradise is restored to us in the Church, and the tree of life is here replaced by the Eucharist. Ephraem interprets all Messianic references as prefiguration's.

He succeeds in demonstrating the organic integrity of both Testaments, which together form “a single body of truth.” “This is a single word which was spoken by a single pair of lips for various generations.”

Finally, Ephraem had a tendency to be satisfied with **definition through negation** and to avoid more **detailed examination**.

“I openly admit the insignificance of my being and I do not want to try to know my Creator because the Inaccessible One is awesome by His very nature.” He limits his inquiry to that which has been **revealed** and does not try to discover that which is **hidden** or which is not clearly expressed in Scripture and in the canons of faith.

Dogmatic Thought

Trinity:

He emphasizes the importance of an orthodox confession of the Trinity, for “without this it is impossible to live a true life.” The Trinity is a mystery but we have been enlightened by the testimony of God so that we can distinguish the names and recognize the indivisible unity and equality of the Divinity. There is neither separation nor merging in the Trinity, but “there is a great order.”

The Divine names are not merely names, but they designate actual persons. “If there is no person, then the name is only an empty sound.” The persons can be contemplated in the Divine names. The Son of God is the proper Son of the Father and everything that belongs to the Father belongs also to the Son.

The incomprehensible generation of the Son is natural and eternal, and in this same way the Father manifests the Spirit, Who proceeds eternally from His own essence. This Trinitarian dogma is brief and simple, but nevertheless it is completely clear. Possibly its lucidity is explained by the presence of Jacob, the bishop of Nisibis, at the Council of Nicaea. “The truth is written in few words,” Ephraem remarks. “Do not try to make long explanations.”

Christology

Ephraem's Christological beliefs are also clearly presented. Primarily, in opposition to the Docetists, he defends the completeness of the Incarnation. In connection with this he develops his teaching on the Mother of God as the Virgin Mother.

“Mary would be superfluous if Christ came to us as an apparition and God would be jesting in showing people the birth in the manger.” Christ is both God and man at the same time. “He is entirely of the lower order and entirely of the higher order, entirely in everything and entirely one.” Ephraem refers to “union” and stresses the indivisibility of this union and the unity of the Person of Christ.

He says little about redemption but his basic idea is clear: “Christ becomes similar to us in order to make us similar to Himself. The Immortal One comes down to mortals, makes them immortal, and ascends again to the Father.” He places particular emphasis on the sufferings of the Savior and on His descent to hell, from which He leads forth Adam as the dead rise from the dust and glorify their Savior.

Eschatology

Ephraem's depiction of **the last days** is both **poetic** and **lively**. Ephraem's description of the Last Judgment is similar to the dogma of Aphraates: **the righteous** are superior to judgment; average men will be judged, but sinners are beyond judgment.

His description of the institution of a new Easter through the Eucharist, and the true transformation of the Eucharistic gifts into the food of incorruptibility, is particularly vivid.

His realistic attention to detail is especially striking, and he remarks that the bread which the Savior offered to Judas had first been moistened in water, which **removed** His blessing from it. All of this is closer to mystical poetry than actual theology.

Anthropology

Ephraem in his anthropology primarily stresses man's freedom, which he sees as the source of responsibility and the desire to strive for God. This striving is a victory over necessity and nature, and it is also a liberation from the “power of the stars” and the elements.

The very question as to whether man is free proves that he is because “questions and skepticism arise from freedom.” “A nature which is deprived of freedom cannot ask questions. Questions are the work of freedom. Only a free nature can inquire.” Man's own internal experience testifies to his freedom.

The world is created by God and “there is nothing on earth that has not been authorized because the source of everything is God.” Therefore evil is not from nature or from material substance, and “There would be no evil if it were not for the will.” At the fall, freedom was distorted but not destroyed.

Man must make a choice, and “the nature of freedom is identical in all people,” So that if one man can be victorious, then this is possible for everyone. Man is created in the image of God, and this is revealed in his freedom and in his capacity to accept God's gifts. At his creation, man was endowed with immortality, wisdom, and knowledge, and he was clothed in light. At the fall he became mortal, and the first sin is still reverberating in us like an echo. Only Christ liberates men from this condemnation to death.

Ecclesiology:

Ephraem's writings on the Church are vivid and emotional. The Church is the Bride of Christ, the Courtyard of the Shepherd, and the House of God. This house stands on two columns, which are the visible world and the invisible world. Ephraem describes the continuity in the order of things from Adam to Christ, and also the continuity of the apostolic tradition, which has been transmitted through consecration and the laying on of hands.

For Ephrem, the Church is a place of sanctification which is realized through the sacraments. The first of these is baptism, the sacrament of forgiveness and adoption. The baptismal font is another Jordan, a boundary between life and death, and only the man who crosses to the other shore becomes a “citizen of the spiritual world.” At baptism, man “is led to freedom in the name of the

Trinity.” This sacrament is accomplished through anointing with oil, and Ephraem compares this to the Eucharist.

Sinners can again wash away their pollution by repentance, and especially by sincere sorrow and tears. “I dress myself in tears and thus I am adorned.” Tears magnify the beauty of the outer garments. At the same time Ephraem speaks about the power of the keys (priesthood), a power which has been given to the Church. The basic principle of his doctrine is that “the entire Church is a Church of those who are perishing and of those who repent.”

Resurrection of all:

The doctrine of the resurrection of all is essential for Ephrem, and he considers that without faith in the resurrection it is impossible to be a Christian and useless to participate in the sacraments, since it is the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, which testify to the resurrection. At the resurrection everyone will be made incorruptible but the bodies of sinners will be dark and they will show a terrible stench.

Righteous men will be unharmed, but sinners will remain in the flames. Just souls will enter the realm of bliss only after the resurrection because outside of their bodies they are insensible and cannot go beyond the boundary of earthly paradise. It is at this boundary that the souls of pardoned sinners will remain after judgment, but the souls of the righteous will then achieve the heights of blessedness. This will be their ultimate and eternal fate.

1.8) St. John Chrysostom (b.ca.347-d.407)

Known as the Golden mouth for the eloquence of his sermons. He was born in Antioch and raised by his mother. He became a monk and later was appointed deacon in 381, and then a priest in Antioch in 386.

His reputation as a preacher increases, and in 398, he was appointed as bishop of Constantinople against his will. The emperor was eventually convinced to exile him on three occasions and he died in exile. Referring to allegorical exegesis, he argued, I disdain this exegesis and consider the literal to be more accurate. While remaining, loyal to the principles of the antiochian School, Chrysostom was not averse on occasion to citing the figurative meaning of a passage, thus demonstrating more flexibility than Theodore.

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

In homily 6 on Matthew St. John Chrysostom wrote: How does Paul say, Rejoice in the Lord always? The joy he is speaking of springs from tears of mourning. For just as worldly joy comes with sorrow, godly tears produce never ending, unfading joy. The harlot... experienced joy when seized by his fire. Thoroughly warmed by repentance, she was moved by her longing desire for Christ. She loosened her hair, drenched His holy feet with her tears, wiped them with her tresses, and poured out all the ointment. But these were only outward expressions. Those emotions in her mind were much more fervent – things only God could see... For I seek those tears shed, not for display, but in repentance, I want those that trickle down secretly and in closet, out of sight, softly and noiselessly. I desire those that rise from depth of mind, those shed in anguish and sorrow, those which are for God alone.

Among the eastern fathers none has left so extensive a literary legacy as St. John Chrysostom. His writings are almost entirely preserved. His printed treatises and six hundred sermons contain about eighteen thousand Scripture references, about seven thousand from Old Testament and eleven thousand from New Testament.

Sermons

Exegetical Homilies on the New and Old Testaments: Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, Matthew, John, Acts of the Apostles, all the epistles of St. Paul including the Hebrews.

Dogmatic and Polemical Homilies on the Incomprehensible Nature of God, Baptismal Catechesis, Homilies against the Jews.

St. John Chrysostom says *"I, too, know many things but I do not know how to explain them. I know that God is everywhere and I know that he is everywhere in his whole being. But I do not know how he is everywhere. I know that he is eternal and has no beginning. But I do not know how. My reason fails to grasp how it is possible for an essence to exist when that essence has received its existence neither from itself nor from another. I know that he begot the Son. But I do not know how. I know that the Spirit is from him. But I do not know how the Spirit is from him."*⁹⁰

⁹⁰ St. John Chrysostom, On the Incomprehensible Nature of God: Sermon 1

. . . *Why should anyone describe the silly chatter of our own people? For these are not less than the attacks upon us from without, while they give the teacher even more trouble. Some out of an idle curiosity are rashly bent upon busying themselves about matters which are neither possible for them to know, nor of any advantage to them if they could know them. Others again demand from God an account of his judgments, and force themselves to sound the depth of that abyss which is unfathomable. "For thy judgments," saith the Scriptures, "are a great deep," and about their faith and practice thou wouldest find few of them anxious, but the majority curiously inquiring into matters which it is not possible to discover, and the mere inquiry into which provokes God. For when we make a determined effort to learn what He does not wish us to know, we fail to succeed (for how should we succeed against the will of God?); and there only remains for us the danger arising from our inquiry.*

Now, though this be the case, whenever anyone authoritatively stops the search, into such fathomless depths, he gets himself the reputation of being proud and ignorant; so that at such times much tact is needed on the Bishop's part, so as to lead his people away from these unprofitable questions, and himself escape the above-named censures. In short, to meet all these difficulties, there is no help given but that of speech, and if any be destitute of this power, the souls of those who are put under his charge (I mean of the weaker and more meddlesome kind) are no better off than ships continually storm-tossed. So that the Priest should do all that in him lies, to gain this means of strength.⁹¹

Understand what He was, and what He became for thy sake, and do not confuse things which are distinct, nor make the argument of his loving kindness an occasion for blasphemy. He was lofty, and she was lowly: lofty not by position but by nature. His essence was pure, and imperishable: His nature was incorruptible, unintelligible, invisible, incomprehensible, eternal, unchangeable, transcending the nature of angels, higher than the powers above, overpowering reason, surpassing thought, apprehended not by sight but by faith alone.

Angels beheld Him and trembled, the Cherubim veiled themselves with their wings, in awe. He looked upon the earth, and caused it to tremble: He threatened the sea and dried it up: He brought rivers out of the desert: He weighed the mountains in scales, and the valleys in a balance. How shall

⁹¹ St Chrysostom, On the Priesthood, Book 4, No. 5

I express myself? How shall I present the truth? His greatness hath no bounds, His wisdom is beyond reckoning, His judgments are untraceable, His ways unsearchable. Such is His greatness and His power, if indeed it is safe even to use such expressions. But what am I to do? I am a human being and I speak in human language: my tongue is of earth and I crave forgiveness from my Lord.

For I do not use these expressions in a spirit of presumption, but on account of the poverty of my resources arising from my feebleness and the nature of our human tongue. Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I utter these words not in presumption but because I have no others: nevertheless I do not rest content with the meanness of my speech, but soar upwards on the wings of my understanding. Such is His greatness and power. I say this, that without dwelling on the words, or on the poverty of the expressions, thou mayest also thyself learn to act in the same way. Why dost thou marvel if I do this, in as much as He also does the same, when He wishes to present something to our minds which transcends human powers? Since He addresses human beings He uses also human illustration, which are indeed insufficient to represent the thing spoken of, and cannot exhibit the full proportions of the matter, yet suffice for the infirmity of the hearers.⁹²

Moral discourses: In Kalendas celebrating the New Year, against the circus and Theatre etc.

Sermons for Liturgical Feasts

Occasional Discourses: the first Sermon, Homilies on the statues, two homilies on Eutropius

Treatises

On priesthood, on Monastic Life, on Virginité and Widowhood, concerning the Education of Children, on suffering, against Pagans and Jews.

1.9) Monastic Life

1.9.1) St. Anthony (b.251- d.3356)

He was born in Coma (Kemn el-arouse) in Middle Egypt. He was about 18 years of age when his parents died, leaving him guardian of his sister, Dious. About six months later (in ca.269) when he entered the church he was struck by the reading of the Gospel, If you would be perfect, go sell all you have, give to the poor and come, follow me (Matt.19:2).

⁹² St Chrysostom, Homily II on Eutropius

He sold about 300 acres of the fertile land, gave most of it to the poor keeping back only a little for his sister. Placing his sister in the charge of a community of virgins, he was now free to devote his life to asceticism under the guidance of a holy man living near Coma.

In ca. 285, St. Anthony left to strike out on his own in the Western Desert, and took shelter in an abandoned tomb carved in the side of a mountain. An obliging friend locked him in an empty vault and brought him bread from time to time. In his solitude he was fighting off the temptations of the flesh and attacks of demons.

He was about thirty when he left this retreat to move to the east bank of the Nile to the outer mountain at Pispir, where he lived in complete solitude. After about twenty years (ca. 305), his reputation attracted followers who stilled near him, and wished to copy his holy life. They broke down the door of his retreat and St. Anthony became their leader, teaching them constantly by word and example the ascetic life. Five years later, he again retired into solitude in the inner mountain (Mount Qolzum).

Anchoritism did not make St. Anthony a contemplative unconcerned with the fate of his brothers; it made him a spiritual father beyond all others. Thus he was obliged to visit Alexandria during the persecution against Christians engineered by Maximus Daza in 316, ministering to confessors in the prisoners.

Again he visited Alexandria to support Pope Athanasius against Arianism in 352. Pagans and Christians alike rushed out to greet the holy Adam. From many parts of the world people came to him, seeking cures of the body, mind and soul. He died at the age of 105.

According to St. Athanasius, St. Anthony was a man of divine wisdom of grace and urbanity, although he never learned to read and write. Saint Anthony said: Always have the fear of God before your eyes. Remember him who gives death and life. Hate the world and all that is in it. Hate all peace that comes from the flesh. Renounce this life, so that you may be alive to God, for it will be required of you on the day of judgment.

He also said to Abba Poemen this is the great work of man: always to take bale of his own sins before God and to expect temptation to his last breath.

Among the Philosophers

Once two philosophers came to him, thinking they could test him. When he met them, he said through an interpreter: why, philosophers, have you goes to so much trouble to come to a foolish man? When they said that he was not foolish, but very wise, he said to them: If you come to a foolish man, your trouble is to no purpose and if you think that I am wise, make yourselves what I am, for one ought to imitate the good. I am a Christian.

A Philosopher asked him: Father, how do you hold up deprived as you are of the solace of books? My book, philosopher, is nature and thus, I can read God's language at will.

Letters

He carried on a correspondence with monks as well as with emperors and high officials.

St. Athanasius states that the fame of St. Anthony reached emperors, for when Constantine and his sons Constantius and Constans heard about these things, they wrote frequently to him as a father and begged him to write back. However, he did not make much of the documents nor did rejoice over the letters.

He also wrote a letter to Balakius, an imperial officer, who bitterly persecuted Christians because of his zeal on behalf of the detestable Arians. And since he was so barbaric as to beat virgins and strip and flog monks. St. Anthony wrote: I see wrath coming upon you. Cease, therefore persecuting Christians, lest the wrath overtake you, for it is even so imminent

Seven other letters addressed to various monasteries in Egypt survive in versions.

A short but interesting letter addressed to the archimandrite Theodore and his monks reports of a private revelation regarding the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism. It is reproduced by bishop Amoun, a contemporary of St. Athanasius.

Sermons

There is a collection of twenty Sermons ad filios suos monachos mortuorum extant in Latin. None of these seem to be genuine. The only discourse of St. Anthony which we possess is found in his biography.

1.9.2) St. Pacomius (b.290-d.346)

St. Pachomius was born in Upper Egypt, of pagan parent, but he hated paganism from his boyhood. The Roman Emperor, Maximus(min), ordered the prefect of Egypt to send some of the troops based in Egypt to put an end to a revolt in Ethiopia. The troops were selected, among them was Pachomius. On their way, they had to stop at Latopolis (Esna) in Upper Egypt. There, Pachomius was impressed by the love of natives and he was told that Christians were merciful to all men, even to their enemies. Before reaching Ethiopia, the revolt was quelled. Back in Chenoboskion he was baptized (about 307) after spending some time as a catechumen.

St. Pachomius spent three years moving among villages, helping the needy and the afflicted. He became a disciple of St. Palaemon, the hermit, who lived in Kasr-el-Sayad. Under his guidance, St. Pachomius practiced a severe order of asceticism. He was sad as many believers longed for this way of life but couldn't practice it.

One day while he had wandered far in search of wood, an angel appeared to him and gave him the rules of the cenobitic order inscribed upon a brass tablet. These rules could be observed even by ordinary Christians. St. Palaemon who was very pleased, saying that it was God's will that a monastery would be established with this order blessed him, helped him to build a little lodge then went back to his own place, declaring his sincere desire to help him in establishing this new order.

By 315 St. Pachomius had a small group of disciples, who would eventually number in the thousands. When Tabennesis proved too small for the growing number of monks, St. Pachomius found it necessary to start other communities, beginning at nearby Phbow.

St. Pachomius preferred to invite priests of the neighbouring churches to celebrate the liturgies of the Eucharist so that no monk would seek ordination. Even if a priest wished to be a monk he did not perform the priestly duties.

As a military man, St. Pachomius was firm, but he obeyed the rules more than he gave orders to others. St. Pachomius was granted by grace to heal the sick, exorcise evil spirits, prophesy, see visions, know the secrets of the monks and see the souls of the departed rising to Paradise.

St. Pachomius' Rule in the World

St. Pachomius' rule was the prototype of eastern and western monastic rules. Originally in Coptic, it was translated into Greek, then Latin, by St. Jerome in 404-5. St. Basil used it. It influenced the regula vigilli (Gual 5th century). Benedict and Caesarea of Arles knew it. It played a large part in the spread of coenobitism in Ethiopia, Rome, Palestine, Asia Minor and Gual. St. Pachomius said:

Let us weep for ourselves whilst we still have the same time, so that when our departure cometh nigh we may not be found asking God for more time wherein to repent. A wretched thing is that soul, and greatly to be blamed, which hath left this world, but which had not dedicated itself to God and which had not lived worthily of its promise. Let us not then, O my brethren, allow this world, which is a small and contemptible thing, and which resembleth a fleeting shadow, to steal away from us blessed and immortal life.⁹³

Pachomius Rule

Palladius refers to the rules that were inscribed upon a brass table:

- Each man to eat and drink according to his strength
- Let three dwell in each cell
- Let them wear at night linen lebitons (a sleeveless garment) a girdle
- The whole community was to be divided into 24 sections, each of which was to be distinguished by one of the letters of the Greek alphabet, so that each might have a cognomen fitting to the grade of his conduct and habit
- A stranger of another monastery which has a different rule is not to eat with them, nor drink, nor enter into monastery, unless he happens to be on a (genuine) journey.

Other Pachomius Rules

The neophyte remained for a probationary period from one to three years, in which he had to prove the seriousness of his intention before acceptance.

- Food was offered twice a day, at noon and at night
- Work was compulsory even for the abbots of the monasteries

⁹³ EAW Budge, tras. The Paradise of the Holy Fathers, vol. 1, chatto & windus, London, 1907, p.296

- They prayed together thrice a day: in the morning, at noon and at night
- Monks lived in common with no private property and avoided contact with women
- St. Pachomius stressed obedience as essential to the cenobitic life
- Every monastery had its local administration subjected to the local abbot, who had an assistant, store-man and librarian. Also foreigners had their own supervisor of their own nationality.

Every three or four monastery lying near to one another were united in a clan, with a President elected from among their abbots, and the monks met periodically to discuss their local problems. The clans were united under a super-general, who was head of the principal monastery.

- The central administration was held in the chief monastery in Tabennesi, and then transferred to Phbow.
- Supervision of other monasteries took two forms:
- The visit of the superior-general to the monasteries
- Two general assemblies were held yearly in the chief monastery
- Sick monks and visitors were subject to certain rules.
- Monks were to keep away from contact with the world, although they were allowed to visit a sick parent or attend a funeral if accompanied by a companion. Some monks were allowed to sell the products of the monastery in the town and sometimes went all the way to Alexandria by boat.

Chapter Two

Council of Constantinople

2.1) Meletius of Antioch (360-381)

Armenian by origin, and a friend of Acacius of Caesarea. He was elected bishop of Sebaste in Armenia ca. 360. Late in 360 Eudoxius of Antioch was transferred to Constantinople, and Meletius was elected bishop of Antioch through Acacius' influence.

A few months later, when he professed the Nicene faith in a homily on Proverbs 8:22 preached before Constantius, the Arians immediately deposed and exiled him to Armenia and transferred his bishopric to Euzoius.

The traditional Nicenes however, disowned Euzoius but split among themselves; the majority adhered to the exiled Meletius, while the more orthodox party who had been known as the Eustathians, and with whom St Athanasius communicated, rejected a bishop of Arian consecration (Euzoius) and elected Paulinus, a presbyter of high character, who was ordained by Lucifer of Cagliari. On Constantius' death in ca. 362, Meletius returned to Antioch and recognized his community, as the most numerous, against the Arian community under Euzoius and the traditional Nicenes under Paulinus. This is referred to as the traditional Nicenes under Paulinus. This is referred to as the **Meletian Schism of Antioch**.

In 363 at Antioch, he presided over a small council which accepted the Nicene homoousios but gave it a homoeousian interpretation.

St Athanasius went to Antioch to make contact with him in order to attempt reconciliation between the Eustathians and the Meletians, but Meletius avoided meeting him.

Meletius was twice banished under Valens, from 365 to 366 and from 371 to 378, St Basil being unswerving in support of his claims, but Alexandria wavering, and Rome hostile.

He was finally restored in 378 and presided at the Council of Constantinople of 381, during which he died.

The schism ought now to have ended. Paulinus was still alive, and should have recognized as sole bishop. The Meletian party, however, irritated by his treatment of their leader secured the appointment of Flavian and this gave rise to fresh troubles.

The schism was practically ended in Flavian's lifetime, 85 years after the ordination of Paulinus by Lucifer.

Writings

- A synodal letter to the Emperor Jovian is reported under his name in Socrates Scholasticus.
- A homily by Meletius is preserved by St Epiphanius of Salamis.
- Most of the writings attributed to him are dubious.
- The other prominent figures of golden age are the Cappadocians who were responsible for the triumph of Nicene orthodoxy.

2.2) The Cappadocian Fathers

In the 4th century, two Cappadocian families produced a trio of saints and scholars, who may almost be said to have formed a local school of theological thought. The great Cappadocian fathers are St. Basil, Bishop of Caesarea; his brother St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa; and his friend St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the theologian bishop of Constantinople.

Harnack states that the Cappadocians used new forms to make the faith of St. Athanasius intelligible to contemporary thought, and thus established the Athanasius doctrine, though with modifications, on a secure basis. But it is easy to exaggerate the modifications; they are of the form rather than the substance. The cappadocians interpreted the older theology, they did not create a new one. The mission of Sts Basil, Gregory Nazianzus, and Gregory Nyssa, was distinct from that of St. Athanasius; and the church owes them, under God, a debt of gratitude. They reduced to working system provided with a terminology which appealed to the Greek understanding, a belief which it is the glory of St. Athanasius to have defended and saved.

2.2.1) St. Gregory Thaumaturgus Bishop of Neocaesarea b.ca.213-d.ca.270-275)

St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (the wonder worker) was born into pagan family in Cappadocian pontus.⁹⁴ After the death of his parents, he studied rhetoric, then law. Intending to go to Beirut to further his

⁹⁴ በእኛ ፍጥሞ ደሴት የሚገኝበት

legal education in 233, he instead went with his brother to Caesarea in Palestine where they both became pupils of Origen for five years.

By 238, he had returned to Pontus and sometimes in the 240's became bishop of Caesarea. He preached the Gospel in town and countryside with such zeal and success that at his death but a handful of pagans remained in all Pontus.

The Cappadocian Fathers of the 4th century venerated him as the founder of the Church of Cappadocia. He fled at the Decian persecution. He took part in the synod that excommunicated Paul of Samosata around 264. Macrina, the influential grandmother of Sts Basil and Gregory of Nyssa had been instructed by St. Gregory Thaumaturgos.

Five lives recount the miracles that earned him the name Thaumaturgos "wonder worker" only that by Gregory of Nyssa (PG 46, 893-959)⁹⁵ seems to contain some historical elements.

Gregory's influence depended much upon the widely circulating accounts of his miracles. He died in the reign of Aurelian (270-275). Gregory of Nyssa has left us his life. In his Third Homily on the Annunciation to Holy Virgin Mary, St. Gregory wrote:

Again we have the glad tidings of joy, again the announcements of liberty, again the restoration, again the return, again the promise of gladness, again the release of from slavery. An angel talks with the Virgin, in order that the serpent may no more have converse with the woman. St. Gabriel was sent to bear to Adam the signature of his restoration, St. Gabriel was sent to a virgin, in order to transform the dishonor of the female sex into honour, St. Gabriel was sent to prepare the worthy chamber for the pure spouse; St. Gabriel was sent to wed the creature with the creator; St. Gabriel was sent to a virgin espoused to Joseph, but preserved for Jesus the Son of God. The incorporeal servant was sent to the virgin undefiled. The light was sent that should announce the sun of righteousness. The dawn was sent that should precede the light of the day. St. Gabriel was sent to proclaim Him who is in the bosom of the Father, and who yet was to be in the arms of the mother.⁹⁶

The Creed or Exposition of Faith

A short one though restricted to Orthodox Dogma of the Trinity, gives a very exact statement of it. For example: There is one Lord, God of God, True Son of True Father... Eternal of Eternal. There

⁹⁵ A Di Berardino, ed Encyclopedia of the early Church, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992, p.830

⁹⁶ Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol.6, Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 1995, pp.65-66

is a perfect Trinity, in glory and in eternity... wherefore there is nothing either created or in servitude, nor nothing super induced, as if at some former period it was non-existent and at some later period it was introduced. And thus neither was the Son even wanting to Father, nor the Spirit to the Son.⁹⁷

The Greek text of this creed, besides being incorporated in Gregory of Nyssa's biography, is also extant in a large number of manuscripts; we have in addition, a Latin version by Rufinus (Hist. eccl.7, 26) and Syriac translation.

The so- called Canonical Epistle

Addressed to some unknown bishop who had consulted the author, derives its name from the fact that it has been embodied in the collection of canonical Epistles of the Greek Church.

The Metaphrase of Ecclesiastes

This is nothing more than a paraphrase of the Septuagint text of Ecclesiastes.

On the impassability and passability of god

This treatise, addressed to a certain Theopompus, is extant in a Syriac translation only. God cannot be subject to suffering, however, He is free in His decisions. By His voluntary suffering, the Son of God defeated death and proved His impassability

2.2.2) St. Basil the Great of Caesarea (ca.330-d.379)

He was one of the ten children, three of whom became bishops: St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Peter of Sebaste. His sister St. Macrina the younger was a model of ascetic life. He received his elementary trainings from his father Basil, the Son of St. Macrina the elder who was a pupil of St. Gregory the wonder worker.

St. Basil began his education at Caesarea, the Cappadocian capital, but presently proceeded to Constantinople, and from thence to Athens. At Athens he had for a fellow student Gregory, a son of a bishop of the small Cappadocian town Nazianzus, who had previously studied at Caesarea in Palestine, and at Alexandria under Didymus with whom he entered upon a lifelong friendship.

⁹⁷ Ibid

He returned to Caesarea ca. 356 to begin a career as a rhetorician but soon afterwards embraced monasticism. He journeyed through Egypt, Palestine and Syria in order to meet the most famous ascetics, after which he went into solitude near Neocaesarea.

When St. Gregory of Nazianzus visited him in 358, they prepared together the *Philocalia* and the two rules which had a decisive influence in the expansion of the cenobitic life, and earned St. Basil the name of the Lawgiver of Greek monasticism. In short times, he founded a number of monasteries.

Basil had one direct and definite goal throughout the course of his activity was: He wanted to gather together the divided forces of the Church in order to oppose heresy with a strong and organized body, united by strength of faith and purpose.

During his life he was abused, denounced, and condemned, but even Athanasius was able to foresee that “Basil became weak for the sake of the weak, and thus truly won the weak.”

Basil was one of the great organizers of monastic life and the father of monasticism in Asia Minor. He primarily supported the coenobitic ideal of communal life. The primary means to achieving this ideal is renunciation, not from disgust (hatred) with the world, but out of love for God. Love of God cannot be satisfied in the vanity and confusion of the world, and the ascetic must renounce and escape this confusion and noise. However, the Gospel does not separate love for God from love for one's neighbor.

Therefore, for Basil, hermitic seclusion, inspired by the desire to find personal salvation in isolation, is insufficient. It is even opposed to the law of love which “seeks nothing for itself.” Furthermore, the spiritual gifts of the anchorite are of no benefit to his brothers. Finally, isolation frequently leads to arrogance.

For all these reasons Basil summons ascetics to communal life and stresses the importance of love. “By living in a community the gifts given by the Spirit to one will also be given to the others.” In connection with this Basil refers to the description of the early Christian brotherhood in Jerusalem which is found in the *Acts of the Apostles*. He describes the early Church as the “body of Christ,” and urges a return to this type of communal life. A monastery should be a smaller Church, a smaller “body.”

In order to achieve this ideal Basil advises monks to take vows of obedience and subordination to their abbots “even until death.” The abbot is Christ Himself, and the organic integrity of the body requires that all of the body's members be subordinate to its head. In this type of community an ascetic, surrounded by his brothers, can follow his path of purification, love, and self-sacrifice, his “service of words” (“mental service”).

In 364 Eusebius, the metropolitan of Caesarea persuaded St. Basil to become a priest. He accepted and as Gregory of Nazianzus writes, was a good counselor, a skillful helper and expounder of the scriptures, an interpreter of his duties, the staff of his old age, the prop of his faith, more trustworthy than all his clerics, more experienced than any layman.⁹⁸ After Eusebius died in 370, St. Basil became his successor as bishop of Caesarea and metropolitan of Cappadocian.

He established hospitals for the sick and diseased, homes for the poor's and hospices for strangers and travelers. “Here **sickness teaches wisdom**, misfortune is not despised, and everyone is shown compassion.”

He fought against Arianism and was not intimidated by the Emperor Valens. When the prefect Modestus was sent by the Emperor to threaten him with confiscation and exile in order to obtain a signed statement of his adherence to Arianism, St. Basil replied:

*The confiscation of goods does not harm one who has nothing, unless perchance for these tortures and sufferings you need a cloak and a few books which are my whole life. Exile I do not know, for I am bound to no one place: not only this my own land in which I live, but the whole world into which I may be banished, I hold as my own, for the whole world is of God, whose dweller and so journeyer I am. These tortures, what harm could they do me. Of these things only are you Lord. But death would be an act of kindness for it will bring me nearer to God, from whom I live and for whom I have been created and to whom in the greater part I have died and towards whom I hasten also, let the Emperor hear this, that at all events you will not persuade us or win us over to the impious doctrine (Arianism), though you threaten with cruel deeds.*⁹⁹

Strongly affected by St. Basil's words, the Emperor annulled the decree for his banishment. St. Basil died in 379, aged not more than 50. St. Basil was the greatest orator or thinker, a strong advocate of monasticism, and a firm adherent of the Nicene faith. He was one of the most generous and

⁹⁸ J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol.3, Christian Classics, Maryland, p.192

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.206

sympathetic of men. These characteristics, combined with the attractiveness of a strong personality, give a singular charm to his writings.

Dogmatic Works

De Spiritu Sancto. He appeals to Scripture and early Christian tradition in support of the Catholic (universal) doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the book is at once well-reasoned and edifying in tone and substance

Contra Eunomium is a lengthy refutation of Anomoean Arianism. The work *Against Eunomius*¹⁰⁰, a refutation of an Apologia by Eunomius which has not survived, was composed in 363/365. Basil wrote an **extensive doctrinal epistle** *On the Holy Spirit*¹⁰¹ to Amphilochius of Iconium in about 375.

In his *In Hexaemeron* (a sermon on *Genesis* 1:1-26), which was apparently delivered on **fast days**, Basil provides a **literal and realistic exegesis of the Bible narration**.

A Commentary on Isaiah I-XVI has been attributed to Basil but probably does not belong to him, although it was written during his era. St. Basil compiled a commentary on Job, but this has been lost.

St. Basil's Epistles

Basil's epistles were collected by Gregory the Theologian, and 365 letters have survived (some of which are letters to, not by, Basil). Most of them were written after Basil became bishop, and they provide extremely valuable material for the history of the epoch. Several letters form almost complete theological treatises, especially Basil's well-known letter to his brother Gregory of Nyssa on Trinitarian theology.

Three epistles to Amphilochius of Iconium deal with Church rules, and selections from them were included in various canonical collections. Eighty-five canons have been taken from these letters and supplemented by seven more canons from other letters and from chapters 27 and 29 ("On the Meaning of Tradition") from Basil's book On the Holy Spirit. The majority of these canons deal

¹⁰⁰ Extremely proponent of Arianism finally condemned in 381

¹⁰¹ He is God. Holy Spirit and Son of God are not parts of God, the one completely God. Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Holiness. Holy Spirit is the third person of Godhead. Holy Spirit is Unique in person. Glory to be the Father, with the Son together with the Holy Spirit

with penance. They are a record of Church custom and tradition, and contain Basil's own additions of "material similar to that which I have been taught by my elders."

Homilies

The Hexaemeron, an exposition of the Psalms and addresses on a variety of subject, doctrinal and practical. He composed thirteen homilies on individual psalms, and here he uses an allegorical method of exegesis. Twenty-one other homilies were written on various themes, including On Intoxication, On Anger, and Against Money-Lenders.

Ascetic Writings

The Moralia, rules for the ordering of the life in the world especially the life of the clergy and two sets of regulate rules for the monastic state. The *Rule* exists in two forms, a short version and an expanded one.

The popularity of his writings was on asceticism. These writings have been gathered together to form a "book of ascetic practice". There is no doubt that it is authentic.

The first was compiled by Basil during his years of isolation in Pontus and contains forty-five canons or short explanations. The second was written in Caesarea and contains 311 canons. These are possibly based on the oral instructions which Basil delivered to the Caesarean monks.

There is also a collection of eighty *Moral Rules* which were intended not only for monks but for priests and Christians in general. Two sermons, *On God's Judgment* and *On Faith*, form an introduction to these.

Letters

366 letters have survived. They possess deep feeling, great warmth of affection and a fund of quiet humor, at times approaching to playfulness.

It must be remembered that we are reading the self-revelations of one who struggled with constant ill-health and whose days were full of distractions and anxieties from without

The liturgies of St. Basil

Three liturgies are attributed to St. Basil: that of the Byzantine Church; that of the Syrian Church and that of the Coptic Church, of which there is also Greek version

In the Anaphora of the Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil, he says:

*He was incarnate and became man, and taught us the ways of salvation. He granted us the birth from on high through water and Spirit. He made us unto Himself a congregation and sanctified us by Your Holy Spirit; He loved His own who are in the world, and gave Himself up for our salvation unto death which reigned over us, whereby we were bound and sold on account of our sins. He descended into Hades through the Cross.*¹⁰²

About beginning of His monastic life, St. Basil wrote: *Much time had I spent in vanity, and had wasted nearly all my youth in the vain labor which I underwent in acquiring the wisdom made foolish by God. Then once upon a time, like a man roused from a deep sleep, I turned my eyes to the marvelous light of the truth of the Gospel and I perceived the uselessness of the princes of this world that come to naught.*” *I swept many tears over my miserable life, and I prayed that guidance might be vouchsafed to me to admit me to the doctrines of true religion. First of all, I was minded to make some mending of my ways, long perverted as they were by my intimacy with wicked men. Then I read the Gospel and I saw there that a great means of perfection was the selling of one’s goods...the giving up of all care for this life, and the refusal to allow the soul to be turned by any sympathy to the things of earth.*¹⁰³

St Basil was inspired by the lives of the most famous ascetics in Egypt, Palestine, Syrian and Mesopotamia and he wrote:

*I admired their continence in living, and their endurance in toil. I was amazed at their persistency in prayer, and at their triumphing over sleep. Subdued by no natural necessity, ever keeping their soul’s purpose high and free in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, they never yielded to the body; they were never willing to waste attention on it. Always, as though living in a flesh that was not theirs, they showed in very deed what it is to sojourn for a while in this life, and what to have one’s citizenship and home in heaven. All this moved my admiration. I called these men’s lives blessed, in that they did indeed show that ‘they bear about in their body the dying of Jesus’, And I prayed that I too, as far as in me lay, might imitate them (LNPF).*¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² The Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil, St. John the beloved publishing House, Cairo, 1993, p.230

¹⁰³ BJ Kidd, ed., Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church, vol. 2, Macmillan, New York, 1932, p. 90.

¹⁰⁴ Quasten, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 253.

The Trullan¹⁰⁵ Synod refers to Basil “who gave to us in writing the religious rite of the sacraments” (Canon 32).

2.2.3) St Gregory of Nazianzus the Theologian (ca. b. 329-d.390)

Bishop of Constantinople (380-381).

St Gregory was born into an upper-class, landholding family in Cappadocia. His father, also a Gregory, was able to pay most of the cost of a new church building in Nazianzus. He was born about **330** at Arianzum, his father's estate near Nazianzus, “the smallest of cities” in southwestern Cappadocia. His father was the bishop of Nazianzus. His mother was the dominant personality in the family. He always maintained warm and close relations with his family and frequently recalled about them. He is called **“the Theologian”, rhetorical stylist, a trained orator and philosopher**

He had not always held Christianity in such high regard; his family had belonged to the Hypsistarii, a Hellenized Jewish sect that worshiped one God, observed the Sabbath, and kept the food laws, but rejected circumcision.

St Gregory's mother, Nonna, evidently was the Christian center of the family. She influenced her husband to become a believer. When the elder Gregory became a Christian, his paternal grandmother disowned him for a time. But during the younger Gregory's early adult years, Gregory the elder was bishop of Nazianzus.

St Gregory studied at Nazianzus, Caesarea in Cappadocia (where he first met Basil of Caesarea), Caesarea in Palestine, Alexandria, and finally Athens. He was also able to learn from Thespesius, a noted rhetorician.

Ca. 371, the Emperor Valens divided the civil province of Cappadocia in to two, naming Caesarea (the center of St Basil's metropolitan ship) as the capital of Cappadocia Prima, and Tyana as capital of Cappadocia Secunda. Anthimus, bishop of Tyana, insisted that the ecclesiastical divisions should be the same as the civil and claimed jurisdiction over some of St Basil's sees. St Basil objected and erected several new bishoprics to assert his rights and his position. Sasima was one of the towns selected, and St Basil consecrated St Gregory as its bishop.

¹⁰⁵ From Byzantine Greek τροῦλλος (*trouillos*, “a dome”), from Latin *trulla* (“a ladle”), in reference to the domed hall of the palace in Constantinople in which the council was held.

St Gregory never received possession of his see and he remained at Nazianzus assisting his father until his death in 374. St Gregory then took over the administration of Nazianzus for one year before withdrawing to Seleucia.

In 379, the Orthodox community in Constantinople urged St Gregory to reorganize their Church which was oppressed by a succession Arian emperors and archbishops. In December 380, when the new Emperor Theodosius entered Constantinople, St Gregory was made bishop of the city.

The Emperor convoked and opened the Council of Constantinople in May 381, but opposition at the Council to St Gregory's claim to the bishopric of Constantinople made him resign from the second see of Christendom within a few days.

He returned to Nazianzus, then in 384, once more citing ill health, he again retired to monastic life on the family estate and devoted himself to writing. He appears to have been a good pastor and administrator.

He is the “**Theologian**” of Greek Orthodox Christology, sharing the title with St John. Yet his works consist exclusively of orations, poems, and letters. He has won his right to the title chiefly by the singular merits of **five orations known as the “Theological.”**

The strength of St Gregory's teaching lies in a relatively pure Greek style, a vigorous and yet persuasive oratory, a facile and graceful expression of glowing thoughts. He is a consummate interpreter of Greek theology rather than an independent theologian. No one did so much to popularize the Catholic (universal) faith of the Holy Trinity; and there is perhaps no single book in Greek theology can be more confidently referred.

Having written most things during his lifetime with a view to a larger public, he was able to collect his letters and to edit and publish various other works. In his writings, St Gregory turned Hellenic and Hellenistic tradition to Christian use. He wrote more than 17,000 verses. Unlike the two Apollinaris of Laodicea, he did not think of versifying the Bible but of making Greek poetry carry Christian content.

Although his lines are not always markedly creative, he did write good elegies. His theological poetry, if often bland, fits the classical forms well. He used classical vocabulary and meter in works featuring Christian concepts and heroes. His greatest achievement in verse, however, is his

autobiographical poetry, which marks a new level of autobiography both in poetic form and in personal reflection.

1. **Five Theological Orations and Other Orations**

St Gregory's most important works are his Orations. 44 genuine discourses have become down to us. The bulk of them were preached at church services and the festivals of the Epiphany and the Pentecost etc. They reveal St Gregory at his best, both as orator and as Christian believer.

The Five Theological Orations on the Divinity of the Logos give evidence of his rhetorical skill and defense of the Nicene position and doctrine of the Trinity (27-31). They were delivered at Constantinople, probably in the year before the Second General Council 381, and they form at once a tremendous indictment of the Eunomians and Macedonians. These orations earned him the title, "The Theologian."

Forty-five of his sermons have been preserved, most of them written during his years in Constantinople. The thirty-eighth oration on the Theophany or Birth of Christ. This is the oldest known Christmas oration in the East and dates from 379 or 380. The forty-fifth oration on Easter explains the saving work of Christ and was written in Arianzum sometime after 383.

- Gregory also composed several **funeral orations**.

2. His **Panegyrics**

- Are splendid specimens of another kind of oratory. His funeral oration for St Basil is often considered the best.

3. **Thirty-Eight Dogmatic and Forty Moral Poems,**

- Besides **ninety-nine** on his own life and others to his friends.

4. His **Letters** to St Basil

Help us to follow the course of one of the most romantic of friendships. The letters to Cledonius on the Apollinarian controversy should be read for their theological interest. Three letters (Ep. 101-102; 202) are of such theological importance for Apollinarianism that they belong to a separate manuscript tradition. One letter to Nicobulus (Ep. 51).

5. The Liturgy of St Gregory

In early times, the Coptic Orthodox Church reserved the Liturgy of St Gregory for three solemn festivals the midnight liturgies of Christmas, Epiphany, and the Christian Pascha (the feast of the Resurrection). This tradition continues, however, it is also common to pray St Gregory's liturgy at any time during the liturgical year.

In the Anaphora of the Gregorian Liturgy, St Gregory says:

*Holy, Holy are You, O Lord and Holy in everything, and exceedingly elect is the light of your essence. And inexpressible is the power of your wisdom. No manner of speech is able to define the deep expanse of your love for mankind. You, as a lover of mankind, created me, a man. You had no need of my servitude. Rather, it was me who was in need of your lordship. Because of the multitude of your compassions, you formed me when I had no being. You set up the sky for me as a ceiling. You made the earth firm for me so that I could walk on it. For my sake you bridled the sea. For my sake you have revealed the nature of animals. You subdued everything under my feet. You did not permit me to lack anything from among the works of your honor.*¹⁰⁶

St Gregory explains Christ being born of a virgin as follows:

*A great thing is virginity and celibacy, a being ranked with the angels, and with the single nature; for I shrink from calling it Christ's, who, though He willed to be born for our sakes, by being born of a Virgin, enacted the law of virginity, to lead us away from this life, and cut short the power of the world, or rather, to transmit one world to another, the present to the future.*¹⁰⁷

Ways to Knowledge of God

The Importance of the Knowledge of God in Gregory's Thought

Gregory's doctrine on the ways of attaining knowledge of God is one of the most important aspects of his system of theology. For Gregory man's basic task in life is to know God, and through this man can achieve salvation and "deification." The created mind recognizes God and through intellectual contemplation is united, or reunited, with Him. In this way God is united with man when He assumes human nature through the human intellect, which is similar to His own.

¹⁰⁶ The Divine Liturgy of St Gregory the Theologian: According the Rites of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Pope Shenouda III Coptic Orthodox Theological College, Sydney, 2000, pp. 32-34.

¹⁰⁷ Quasten, op. cit., vol.v3, p, 253.

In his writings against Apollinarius Gregory states that “mind is united with mind, since this is what is closest to it.” The rationalistic Eunomian Anomoeans and Apollinarians who considers the human intellect (soul) hopelessly sinful and beyond purification. Gregory of Nyssa summarizes their thought: “It is impossible for human reason to be without sin”. In opposition to this teaching, Gregory sets forth a doctrine of the **limits of man's knowledge of God**, which can be achieved only through ascetic discipline.

To counteract the teaching of the Apollinarians he stresses that the human mind is created in the image of God and therefore radiant. Gregory frequently uses Platonic and Neoplatonic terminology. Because he believed that some of the philosophers who were secular or “alien” had nevertheless waged to approach the truths contained in the Bible. Therefore their terminology could be useful. Gregory was also motivated by the need to argue effectively against certain heretical sects whose doctrines were based on secular philosophy. Furthermore, the use of Platonic comparisons and imagery had been established by the practice of the school at Alexandria.

The Experience of Faith as Knowledge

Thus the Cappadocians adopt the ideas of Plotinus and Philo and distinguish between “what is transcendental” and “what is immanent” within the Divinity. The experience of faith cannot be fully conceptualized and therefore God cannot be named. He is a nameless God.

“O, You who are higher than anything, how else am I to express You? How can words give You praise? There are no words to express You. How can the mind gaze upon You? You are inaccessible to every mind. You are one and everything. You are not one, not single, and not everything. O, You of all names! How can I name You, who cannot be called one thing?”

Theology can only describe God apophatically, by prohibition and negation. Of all the positive names only the name “He who exists” truly expresses something about God and belongs properly to Him and only to Him, just as independent being belongs only to Him. God is above essence, category, and definition, and the name God is purely relative and designates Him only in His relation to creation.

2.2.4) St Gregory of Nyssa (b. ca. 330-d. ca. 395)

St Gregory of Nyssa was born in the city of Caesarea around 335. He is a younger brother of Basil the Great. Unlike Sts Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, he did not study at the great centers of higher learning. His education seems to have been influenced especially by his oldest sister Macrina (the younger), and later in both rhetoric and theology by St Basil.

Gregory names his sister Macrina as the other important teacher of his youth, and his reminiscences of her are full of gratitude. Grew up in an atmosphere of culture and asceticism, but little else is known about the details of his education.

He studied at home in Caesarea. His brother Basil was his teacher. He always spoke of Basil with reverence, describing him as the equal of the apostles who came after them only in time.

Basil taught him only rhetoric. He admitted,

"I lived with my brother for only a short period, and only received as much instruction from his divine tongue as was necessary for me to understand the ignorance of those uninitiated in the secrets of eloquence."

In his youth Gregory was greatly attracted by the study of philosophy. Even after he had entered the clergy as a reader he became a teacher of rhetoric and devoted himself to the study of pagan literature. But this displeased his family and friends.

Gregory the Theologian wrote to him in friendly reproof:

"What has happened to you, O wisest of men? Others do not praise you for this ignoble [shameful] glory or for your gradual descent to the lower life, or for your ambition, which, in the words of Euripides, is the worst of all demons . . . Why have you become angry with yourself that you should throw away the sacred books, filled with sweet waters, which you once used to read to the people . . . and take up with books filled with salt water that are impossible to drink? Why do you prefer to be called a rhetorician than Christian?"

Gregory admonished him to come to his senses and to vindicate himself before God and the faithful, before the altars and the sacraments from which he had distanced himself. He read Philo and Theognosts as well. He studied Origen, who had an enormous influence on him. Gregory's Origenism was later modified under the influence of Basil, who purposefully directed his epistle on Trinitarian terminology to Gregory in the fear that Gregory was straying from orthodoxy. Gregory's

enthusiasm for secular learning was only temporary, and he later condemned the worldly sciences as fruitless: *"They constantly suffer pains of labor which never culminate in new life."* However, he always remained a Hellenist through the influence of Origen.

Gregory acceded to the influence of his family and returned to the ministry. He was certainly married and did not join Sts Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus in their monastic retirement. He did return, however, into the full service of the Church and was ordained by St Basil in 371 to the modest bishopric of Nyssa in Cappadocia. In 371 he consecrated Gregory bishop of the town of Nyssa¹⁰⁸. Gregory helped his brother in the struggle against heresy not by his activity in Church administration but as a writer and theologian.

He was persecuted for his orthodoxy and brought to trial in Galatia. In 375 Demosthenes, the governor of Cappadocia whom Basil described as a "friend of the heretics," ordered him to be taken into custody. In 376 he was condemned in absentia for the misappropriation of funds and for his "illegal" consecration. Gregory spent three years in exile and returned to his see only in 379 after the death of Valens¹⁰⁹. He was greeted by popular rejoicing.

His return to Nyssa was shortly followed by the deaths of Basil and then Macrina. This was a heavy blow for Gregory¹¹⁰. One of his letters to the monk Olympius contains a moving account of the last days of his sister, who was herself an outstanding Christian and ascetic. Gregory considered himself the heir to his brother's labors and immediately began to work on the writings which Basil had left unfinished, including the commentary on the Hexaemeron and the polemic against Eunomius. Friends recognized him as a worthy successor to his brother.

At the Antiochene council of the 146 fathers in 379 he was sent on a mission to report on the condition of the Church in Arabia, which was rumored to be corrupt and heretical. Possibly he

¹⁰⁸ After Sts Basil's death in 379, Gregory became his recognized heir (St Gregory of Nazianzus, Ep. 76) in the struggle against extreme Arianism, as represented by Eunomius, and began the most fruitful period of his life.

¹⁰⁹ As an administrator, he was a disappointment to Basil (Ep. 58; 60; 100); because of accusations of mismanagement raised by the Arians, he was deposed in 376 but returned to his bishopric two years later.

¹¹⁰ In 379, he took part in the synod of Nicene party held in Antioch; returning from here, he visited his dying sister Macrina, superior of a monastery of women in Annesi (Ep. 19; Vita Macr).

visited the Holy Land at this time, but some scholars consider that this journey took place later. The Palestinian Church had been without spiritual leadership for some time (St. Cyril spent altogether thirteen years in exile) and corruption was widespread. Gregory was greeted with suspicion and immediately became involved in controversy with the Apollinarians.

The abuses in the Holy Land made a painful impression on Gregory, and for this reason he disapproved of the custom of pilgrimages. They could be especially harmful for women, whose purity and chastity were often endangered in the course of such voyages. Palestine was overflowing with vice and every kind of impiety.

Furthermore, Gregory wrote:

“Why should you try to do that which is not done by the saints or others who are close to the Kingdom of Heaven?” The Lord did not command us to go to Jerusalem as a good deed. “What advantage is gained by those who visit these places? It is not as if the Lord has been living there in the body until the present day, but has gone away from those of us who live in other lands; or as if the Spirit is flourishing in Jerusalem, but is unable to come to us here

. . . A change of place does not bring God closer to you. No matter where you may be, the Lord will come to you if your soul is such that He can dwell and walk in you. But if the inner man in you is full of deceit, then even if you stand on Golgotha, or on the Mount of Olives, or under the memorial of the Resurrection, you are as far from receiving Christ into yourself as one who has not even begun to confess faith in Him.” On the contrary, “the true Bethlehem, and Golgotha, and Mount of Olives, and Resurrection, are all found in the heart of the man who has God.” What will we find in Jerusalem that is new? “We will find that the Christ who was manifest there was the true God, but we confessed this before we came to Jerusalem, and after our journey our faith has neither diminished nor increased. We also knew that He became man through the Virgin before we were in Bethlehem. We believed in the Resurrection of the dead before we saw His tomb. We confessed the reality of the Assumption before we saw the Mount of Olives.” It is more important to “travel forth from the body to our Lord than to travel from Cappadocia to Palestine.”

On a mandate of this council, St Gregory traveled to the Roman province of Arabia to intervene in a conflict concerning the bishopric of its capital, Bostra. On this trip, he also visited Jerusalem to mediate in ecclesiastical controversies (Ep. 2.11-12) and in the process was constrained to defend

the Orthodoxy of his own Christology (Ep. 3). He confessed that he himself did not experience an increase in faith as result of his pilgrimage: “Change of places does not affect any drawing nearer unto God, but wherever you may be, God will come to you, if the chambers of your soul be found of such a sort that He dwell in you.”¹¹¹

In 381 Gregory took part in the Second Ecumenical Council. By this time he was a well-known and influential figure¹¹². Through an edict of the emperor on July 30, 381, Gregory was included among the bishops who were to be regarded by orthodox believers as the central authorities of the Church Communion. Prelates were nominated from each province, and Gregory shared the nomination from Pontus with Helladius of Caesarea and Otreius of Melitane. His later relations with Helladius caused him much difficulty.

In 382 and 383 Gregory was again present at the councils in Constantinople and continued his struggle against the Arians. He made the acquaintance of the nun Olympiada, who was greatly respected for her piety by John Chrysostom. In 394 Gregory participated in a council on the affairs of the Church in Arabia. This is the last event in his life of which we have definite knowledge. He probably died in 394. Even during the life of John Chrysostom he disappeared from public notice.

A few fragments of information have been preserved about the last years of his life and seem to indicate that his authority was widely respected and that he continued to be influential in Church affairs, although he probably spent little time in Nyssa.

Gregory's contemporaries considered him the great defender of orthodoxy against the Arians and Apollinarians, the “pillar of orthodoxy” and “the father of the fathers.” This reputation was later questioned during the era of Origenist controversy. At one point Gregory's name was not included in a list of the selected fathers and his immediate influence diminished.

Soon afterward, he traveled to Ibora and Sebaste in order to supervise the election of new bishops (Ep. 15; 18; 19; 22). In Sebaste, he himself was elected bishop, but he extricated himself, and, a short time afterward, his youngest brother, Peter, became bishop there.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 282.

¹¹² From May to July 381, St Gregory played an important role side by side with St Gregory of Nazianzus at the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople convoked by Theodosius I.

St Gregory's presence at the Constantinopolitan synod of 383 is attested by a sermon. He delivered sermons in the capital on the occasions of the death of the young princess Pulcheria in 385 and her mother the Empress Flaccilla soon afterwards. We know that he was present at the synod of Constantinople in 394; he died probably soon afterwards.

His range of thought is wide; with Origen, he enters on such vast problems as the origin of the soul, the nature of evil, the freedom of the will, the relation of matter to spirit, the constitution of the risen body, the restitution of all things.

But as J Quasten states: "he does not share Origen's ideas regarding the pre-existence and migration of souls and explicitly rejects the doctrine that they are enclosed in material bodies as a punishment for sins committed in a preceding world."¹¹³ In his treatment of great controversies of his time, St Gregory naturally far in advance of Origen, and follows in the steps of Sts Athanasius and Basil.

He is a mystic and an idealist. He is in some respects a greater theologian than St Gregory the Theologian. While the latter popularized Orthodox theology, the former was an original and constructive thinker.

Exegetical Works

His Exegetical Works are numerous, but less impressive than his works on doctrine. St Gregory's most intensive and mature works are the Song of Songs, and the Life of Moses, both treating especially the nature of Christian perfection as continuous progress, stem probably from St Gregory's last years (391-395). On the Making of Man and Hexaemeron explicitly complete and correct St Basil's homilies on creation and stem probably from 379-389.

As an exegetical Gregory continued the work of St. Basil, but some of his writings follow the Origenist tradition of commentary. The first group includes two supplementary treatises to the Hexaemeron (on the making of Man) and an apologetic explication on the Hexaemeron, which were composed soon after St. Basil's death.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 289.

Gregory's other exegetical works were written later in his later life and in these his method of interpretation is strictly allegorical. They are united by the common theme of the necessity of a moral and ascetic life as a way of knowledge God.

The most important of these are *On the Life of Moses* which clearly shows the influence of Philo, and a commentary of Fifteen Homilies on the Song of Songs which Gregory interprets in the Origenist tradition. Gregory defends the allegorical method of exegesis in the introduction to this commentary, which is dedicated to Olypiada. In his consideration the Song of Songs presages the spiritual wedding of the human soul and the Church with Christ, the most greatly desired heavenly Bridegroom.

In his *Accurate Exposition of Ecclesiastes* Gregory deals with the necessity of freeing the mind from passions so that it can ascend to that which is above the senses. He describes the stages leading to moral perfection in a homily *On the Titles of the Psalms*, paying particular attention to the sixth psalm.

Apparently he also wrote an explanation on Proverbs. Most of Gregory's exegesis is devoted to the Old Testament, and from the New Testament he has written only on the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer.

His exegetical works also include a homily *On the Ventriloquist*, a topic which had attracted the attention of Origen. In opposition to Origen Gregory supports the position of Methodius of Olympus and Eustathius of Antioch by asserting that it was a demon and not the spirit of Samuel which appeared to Saul.

Polemical Works

Gregory's polemical writings include twelve tracts against Eunomius, which examine the heretic's arguments against Basil's theology. The epistle to Ablabius *Against Those Who Falsely Accuse Us of Saying That There Are Three Gods* is also devoted to the defense of Basil's dogma.

In the last years of his life Gregory wrote two treatises against Apollinarius which provide a detailed exposition of Apollinarius' doctrine on the heavenly flesh of Christ and the absence in Christ of a human intellect. Gregory attacks not only Apollinarius himself but also his doctrines as they were

reinterpreted and debased by his disciples. He briefly deals with the same theme in the epistle To Theophilus of Alexandria.

Gregory also composed a homily on the Holy Spirit in opposition to the Macedonian Pneumatomachi. A homily against Arius and Sabellius has been ascribed to Gregory but was not written by him (it may be the work of Basil the Great).

Gregory's polemical writings include twelve tracts against Eunomius, which examine the heretic's arguments against Basil's theology.

Dogmatic Works

The most important is the twelve-book *Against Eunomius*. Other dogmatic works are treatises *Against Apollinaris* and *Macedonius*, a treatise against Tritheism addressed to Ablabius, a tract *Against Fatalism*, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, presented as a dialogue with the dying Macrina (who functioned as a teacher of Gregory), and the *Life of Macrina*.

The fundamentals of Gregory's doctrines are contained in his *Great Catechism* which he composed no later than 385. This work contains arguments against certain heresies but is not strictly polemical. It was primarily written as instruction for catechumens.

By means of Scripture and his own reasoning Gregory sets forth the orthodox doctrines of Faith, the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, Redemption, the Sacraments, Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Last Judgment. His other dogmatic works include a short treatise on the Holy Spirit written to Eustathius of Sebaste; an epistle to Simplicius on faith, which explains the dogma of the Divinity of the Word and Spirit; and *To the Greeks, On the Basis of Universal Ideas*.

A dialogue on the soul and resurrection, which is presented as being conducted by Gregory's sister Macrina, was written under the influence of Plato's *Phaedo*. It is one of his most personal works. Gregory deals with similar problems in the treatise *On the Premature Death of Infants*. A dialogue *On Fate* between a bishop and a pagan philosopher is a defense of free will against astrology and fatalism.

Ascetic and Moral Works

Among Gregory's ascetic and moral works are a long tract *On Virginity or Perfection*, which he wrote in his youth, and several shorter treatises:

What is the Christian Name and Profession? *On Perfection* and *What a Christian Should Be* and *on the Goal of Godly Life*, to the Monk Olympius. Gregory's ascetic ideal is expressed with particular clarity in his epistle on the Life of Macrina, which was written soon after her death.

Sermons

The most significant sermons are the orations on the great feasts: on Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost. He also composed orations of St. Stephen, Theodoret the Martyr, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, Ephraem the Syrian, and Gregory Thaumaturgus. His funeral orations are devoted to Basil and Meletius of Antioch, among others. He is at best in dealing with ascetic themes, which always had great personal interest for him.

His **Homilies** and **Orations** lack the eloquence of his namesake of Nazianzus.

On Virginity is St Gregory's first published writing, although its date can be set only approximately, between 370 and 379 (probably in the earlier years of this period).

- *On the Lord's Prayer*, *The Beatitudes* etc.

He wrote in *De virginitate* that virginity is:

The channel which draws down the Deity to share man's estate, it keeps wings for man's desire to rise to heavenly things, and is a bond of union between the Divine and the human, by its mediation bringing into harmony these existences so wildly divided...The real virginity, the real zeal for chastity, ends in no other goal than this, viz. the power of thereby of seeing God.¹¹⁴

Letters

Gregory has left at least 26 to 30 letters, most of which provide information on his personality and biography. His letter on pilgrimages to Jerusalem is especially significant.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 270, 271

The canonical epistle to Letoius contains eight rules and was included in the Nomocanon and other collections. His rules for penitential discipline were determined according to his knowledge of psychology, and were probably formed on the basis of Church tradition and his own experience as a clergyman.

Gregory also wrote an epistle on Easter, the “universal feast of creation,” which celebrates the resurrection of humanity, which had fallen through sin. His epistle 25 to Amphilochius is very interesting for the history of Christian art and architecture, for he describes in detail a martyrion in construction.

2.2.5) St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Life

He was born about 315 in Jerusalem. Some-time between 348 and 351 he became bishop of Jerusalem. In 381 Cyril participated at the Second Ecumenical Council. He died in 387. He is believed to support the anti-Nicene movement, first as a “Eusebian” and then as a “homoiousian,” Because of this some questioned his orthodoxy.

However, the testimony of the fathers at the Council of 382 dispels all doubt: “At various times he greatly struggled against Arianism.” Theodoret later refers to him as a “defender of the apostolic faith.”

Works

Most important among his works are the Procathechesis, the 18 Catecheses for Candidates for Baptism, and the Five Mystical Catecheses. These instructions are a rich source for the history of the ancient rite of baptism; they provide a reliable summary of the faith confessed at Jerusalem. Cyril also delivered a sermon on the cure of the paralytic.

Three fragments from a sermon “On the Marriage at Cana in Galilee” and One quotation from a sermon on the text “I am going to My Father”. His Letter to the Emperor Constantius on the miraculous appearance of the luminous cross in 351. The concluding doxology which contains the expression “consubstantial Trinity” completes the list of Cyril's known works.

Thought

Catechism in the Early Church

Candidates needed to have the permission of the bishop and were required to undergo a period of testing during which they were sponsored by baptized believers. Catechumens received the laying on of hands and were signed with the cross, and prayers were read over them. Catechumens were subject to Church supervision and discipline.

A candidate had to practice fasting and continence, and express penitence in words and deeds. For him this was a time of **exomologesis**, of public confession. **Invocations and exorcisms** were performed over him. Invocations consisted of prayers “taken from divine Scripture,” inbreathing of the Spirit, and the signing with the cross.

The Principle of Faith

The content of pre-baptismal instruction was primarily dogmatic. “The study of dogma is a great undertaking, and an earnest soul is necessary for this.” “The doctrine of the faith has been composed not by human reason, but has been made up of what is most essential in Scripture.” Therefore, every statement made in the creed expresses the whole content of Scripture in a few words. Since the study of doctrine requires an earnest soul, Cyril begins with a call to repentance, purification of conscience, forgiveness, and prayer.

He then presents a brief summary of indispensable dogmas. Besides the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and redemption, Cyril includes teachings on man, on the soul and body, on moral life, and on Holy Scripture.

2.2.6) St Epiphanius of Salamis (b. ca. 315-d. 403)

St. Epiphanius is the native of Palestine and bishop of Salamis in Cyprus. He is referred to as a zealous champion of Orthodox faith and monastic piety. Much of his early lifetime was spent with the monks of Egypt, among whom he not only acquired a burning zeal for ecclesiastical Orthodoxy and he forms of ascetic life, but also first came in contact with various kinds of heretics.

He founded a monastery at Eleutheropolis in Judea (ca. 335). The bishops of Cyprus made him their metropolitan in 367, because of his sincere concern for the faith and his organizational abilities. He encouraged ascetic life by word and example, leading St Jerome to call Cyprus a meeting place for

monks from the whole world. But his main concern was to keep them in purity of faith, for the guarantee of the Church's unity.

St Jerome visited St Epiphanius on his way to Bethlehem, bringing a train of monks to Cyprus, to salute, "the father of almost the whole episcopate, the last relic of ancient piety."¹¹⁵

A veteran of the struggle against Origenism, aged ca. 80, he was involved in St Theophilus' campaign against the Tall Brothers, who had taken refuge with St John Chrysostom. He had known them at the time of his education in the Egyptian monastery and had condemned their subordinationist Christology and their theories on pre-existence and resurrection.

St Jerome says he was averse to quarrels and was admired by the unlearned as well as the erudite; Socrates praises his piety and his rectitude; Sozomen admires him. Palladius of Helenopolis, so favorable to St Chrysostom, had nothing to say against St Epiphanius. Nor did the case of Origen do any immediate harm to St Epiphanius' reputation.

St Epiphanius labored to wipe out Apollinarian and Melitian sympathizers. After meeting St Jerome in Rome during 392, he joined forces with him in attempting to root out Origenistic influence, particularly within monastic communities.

He attacked John, bishop of Jerusalem, as an Origenist while a guest preaching in John's pulpit. In 400, he made his way to Constantinople to assist St Theophilus of Alexandria's apparent efforts against Origenism. He left Constantinople and died on the journey back to Cyprus.

St Epiphanius' reputation rests primarily on his attempts to refute heresy and uphold Nicene Orthodoxy. He was a heresy hunter who insisted on Nicene Orthodoxy.

1. He wrote the **Panarion**

It deals with 80 heresies in three books in which he attacked every heretical opinion and group known to him from the beginning of the Church through his own era.

It contains information unavailable elsewhere, and is by far the most extensive ancient account of heresies.

¹¹⁵ DD Wace & WC Piercy MA, eds, *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 1994, p. 300.

The Panarion is also called “Medicine Chest” in Greek. In it, he tried to furnish an antidote to those who have been bitten by the serpent of heresy and protect those who have remained sound in their faith.

2. **Ancoratus**- a doctrinal treatise

Though he did not himself attend the second ecumenical council of Constantinople (381), his shorter confession of faith, which is found at the end of his Ancoratus and seems to have been the baptismal creed of the Church of Salamis, agrees almost word for word with the Constantinopolitan formula.

In his Ancoratus, and still more in his Panarion, he attacked Origen as the ancestor of the Arian heresy and whose allegorical interpretation he regarded as the root of all heresies.

Condemning Origenism as the most dangerous of them, he was unyielding and relentless in his pursuit.

3. **De mensuris et ponderibus** (On Weights and Measures)

A work composed at Constantinople in 392 for a Persian priest.

It is the preliminary form of a dictionary of the Bible, which deals in its first part with the Canon and the translations of the Old Testament, in the second with biblical measures and weights, and in the third with geography of Palestine.

4. **De XII gemmis** (On Twelve Precious Stones in the breastplate of the high priest of the Old Testament)

It was written in 394 at the request of Diodore of Tarsus to whom it is dedicated. St Epiphanius said, “God sells righteousness at a very low price to those who wish to buy it; a little piece of bread, a cloak of no value, a cup of cold water, a mite.”¹¹⁶

2.2.7) **St Theophilus of Alexandria (ca. 385-412)**

St.Theophilus was the third successor to St Athanasius and the predecessor of St Cyril, his nephew, as pope of Alexandria.

¹¹⁶ B Ward, trans., the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, Cistercian Publications, Michigan, 1975, p. 59.

He shepherded the Church of Egypt for 28 years, fully conscious of the important role that his see had played in the history of both Church and empire.

He was undoubtedly a man of great intellectual ability. He made his tremendous influence felt in all the political questions that in his day affected either Church or state.

Three important events are especially connected with his name:

1. The decay of paganism in Egypt.
2. The controversy over Origen.
3. The deposition and exile of St John Chrysostom.

An ardent admirer of Origen until 399 and a friend of his adherents like John of Jerusalem, he later condemned him.

It seems that St Theophilus in one of his Paschal Letters had expressed himself in favor of God's incorporeity. Thereupon some monks conceived grave doubts regarding his Orthodoxy and sent a commission to examine him. To forestall a riot by these anthropomorphists and, also anxious for political reasons to come to terms with them he said to them, that as he saw them he beheld the face of God. Thus they imagined that he was anthropomorphist like them.

The Four Tall Brothers in the Nitrian desert, Dioscurus, Ammon, Eusebius and Euthymus, who were admirers of Origen, stirred against him. They went to St Chrysostom to complain about him before the emperor.

He condemned Origenism at a synod in Alexandria in 401.

The empress misused this problem and arranged for the holding of the Synod at Oak in 403 under the presidency of Pope Theophilus that deposed St John Chrysostom and sent him into exile.

In all justice, we must remember that most of our information comes from the enemies of Pope Theophilus, especially Palladius, *Dialogus de vita Joh. Chrysostomi*.

Arnobius (*Conflictus* 2, 18), Theodoret (*Ep.* 170), Leo the Great (*Ep.* 53.63.74), Vigilius Taps. (*C. Eut.* I, 15) and others regard St Theophilus as a Father of the Church.⁴¹

The *Apophthegmata Patrum* proves the reputation he enjoyed in monastic circles. He was on excellent terms with the two famous abbots Horsiesios and Ammon, whom he always venerated as his spiritual fathers.

The Coptic Church celebrates his feast on October 28 (Babah 18 according to the Coptic Calendar), the Syrian Orthodox in the same month. He must have been a prominent Church author; his literary bequest was of considerable volume cf. Theodoret, Ep.83; Leo M., EP. 75; Gelasius, Ep. 42, 3, 3; Gennadius, *De vir. Ill.*34). unfortunately, very little later.

1. Paschal Canon

He composed a table showing the Easter cycle for the years 380 to 479, which he sent to the victorious Emperor Theodosius about 388 or a little later.

2. Epistles

Several letters were translated into Latin by St Jerome and are preserved among his collected epistles.

- Ep. 92 to the bishops of Palestine and Egypt, reporting on a gathering in Alexandria ca. 399 against the Origenists. Two others were addressed in the summer of 400 to Jerome.
- Ep. 97 asking Jerome's aid in hunting out the Origenists.
- Ep. 89 introducing the monk Theodore, who was on his way to Rome.
- The last sent to St Epiphanius in 401, admonishes that a prelate to call a synod to condemn the Origenists.
- A communication to Abbot Horsiesios and another to the Pachomian monks in Phbow.
- We know of many more of his letters. Of some fragments remain, of others nothing.

3. Paschal letters

He composed a great number of Paschal letters: 26, at least, that we know of.

Three, preserved in translation of Jerome's were issued in 401, 402 and 404 and have an anti-Origenistic tendency, although they also polemize against Apollinaris of Laodicea.

4. Against Origen

Most probably this was merely a collection of the anti-Origenistic synodical and Paschal Letters.

5. Homilies

A homily on the judgment is preserved in its Greek text in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.

- A homily on Contrition and Abstinence is extant in a Coptic translation.
- A homily on the Cross and the Thief survives also in Coptic.
- A homily on the Institution of the Eucharist is really a discourse of Pope Theophilus directed against the Origenist monks.

Several homilies extant in Coptic and Ethiopic have not been edited as yet. Of others only fragments remain.

The number of fragments preserved in *Catenae* indicates that Pope Theophilus had a name as an exegete as well.

6. Spurious Writings

A large number of writings are of doubtful authenticity.

St Theophilus calls Christ, “Priest and Sacrificial Lamb, sacrificing and sacrificed, recipient and distributor.”

Chapter Three

The Council of Ephesus

On 22 June, 431, the Third Ecumenical Council was held at Ephesus, over which St Cyril presided. Nestorius was deposed from his see and excommunicated, his doctrines were condemned, the creed of Nicaea was reaffirmed, and formal approval was given to the title “Theotokos.”

The council discussed Pelagianism which holds that man can take the initial steps towards salvation through his own efforts, independent of divine grace.

The Antiochian side attacked the decisions of the third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in the year 431.

The Counter Council

John bishop of Antioch was delayed in attending on the date when the council convened. John came into the neighbourhood of Ephesus, and sent to St Cyril a letter, which is still extant, full of friendliness, setting forth the details of their delay but they were soon to arrive within five or six days. In spite of this St Cyril waited another 16 days and then two metropolitans of the patriarchate of Antioch came and repeatedly declared that “John had bid them say that they were no longer to defer the opening of the Synod on his account, but, in case it should be necessary for him to delay longer, they were to do what was to be done.”⁴⁹

When John of Antioch arrived, joined by Theodoret of Cyrus and 43 delegates, a rival meeting was held in which St Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus were deposed. St Cyril was jailed for two months and was then permitted to return to his see, but Nestorius was exiled to Petra in Arabia and then to the deserts of Egypt where he died ca. 449.

A reconciliation between John and St Cyril was finally effected in 433, but the dispute between the Antiochian and the Alexandrian theology was temporarily stopped to reappear in an extreme degree in the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

3.1) St Cyril the Great (the pillar of Faith b.ca.375-380, pope: 412, d.444)

St Cyril's name is forever connected with the second great Christological controversy, which led to the Council of Ephesus (431) and the condemnation of Nestorius.

St Cyril was born, in Alexandria, between 375 and 380, and received his classical and theological training besides the instruction he had received from his uncle, Pope Theophilus. He studied the works of Origen, St Athanasius and Didymus the Blind, and read the works of St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nazianzus. Also he studied the Hebrew and Syriac languages, but he wrote almost all his works in Greek, and perhaps little in Coptic. His uncle sent him to St Macarius' Monastery, where he became a disciple of St Serapion for 5 years.

His uncle appointed him deacon, then a priest. He accompanied him in the Synod of the Oak, where St John Chrysostom was condemned in 403. He succeeded Pope Theophilus in October 412. He fulfilled his uncle's advice by admitting the name of St John Chrysostom to the diptychs.

Stormy relations were established between him and Orestes, the prefect of Alexandria for his relentless fight against the last remnants of paganism. "The first outbreak of violence came when a great devotee of [St] Cyril...was caught eavesdropping on the occasion when the prefect was issuing regulations for the Jewish theatricals on the Sabbath. Orestes...arrested his [St Cyril's] supposed spy, and there and then publicly tortured him."

St Cyril's struggle with Alexandria's Jews dates back to the first years of his episcopate. F. Young says, "[St] Cyril complained to the Jewish leaders, who promptly plotted against the Christians. At night they raised an outcry that a certain Church was on fire, and then slaughtered all the Christians who turned out to save it. [St] Cyril promptly led a great army of Christians to the synagogues and drove all Jews out of the city."⁴⁵

St Cyril is a common father for the universal Church and his Cyrillian formula one incarnate nature of God the Word - *μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη* (*mia physis tou Theou Logou sesarkomene*) is the cornerstone in all ecumenical dialogues on Christology.

The Greek Church regards him as the ultimate authority in all Christological questions. He was called the 'Seal of the Fathers' by Anastasius Sinaita in the 7th century, and given the title 'Doctor ecclesiae' in 1882.

A doxology taken from the Greek Orthodox Church -

"Hail Translucent star, defending warrior to the Holy Virgin who shouted out above all the hierarchs at Ephesus that she was the Mother of God... Rejoice most blessed Cyril, spring of

theology and river of the knowledge of God. Never cease to intercede with Christ on our behalf ”— exemplifies the high esteem held by churches other than the Alexandrian Church.

The Syrian Orthodox Church also venerates St Cyril in her liturgy in the Commemoration of the Ascetic Fathers and Teachers (Malphone):

Particularly Mar Qoryllos (Cyril) the Great, the high tower who is in steadfastness and with all sincerity proved that the Word of God became man. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate.

St Cyril's feast day in the Coptic Orthodox Church is celebrated on 3 Apip (10 July), and in the Greek Orthodox Church on June 9 and again on January 19.

3.1.1) Cyril and Nestorianism

Nestorius publicly drew a plain distinction between the man Jesus, born of Mary, and the Son of God who dwelt in Him. There were two distinct persons in Christ, the Son of Mary and the Son of God, who were united not hypostatically but only morally. Christ should be called not God but “God-bearer (Theophoron).” Subsequently, Mary was not the mother of God, but of the man Jesus in whom the Godhead dwelt.

Nestorius and his followers criticized the wise men for their kneeling to the Child Jesus, and preached that the divinity was separated from the humanity at the moment of Crucifixion.

St Cyril sent letters to Nestorius in which he explains the nature of Christ, as the Incarnate Son of God, one Person, and declared St Mary's right to be called “Theotokos.” Nestorius said, “That which was formed in the womb of Mary is not God Himself...but because God dwells in Him whom He has assumed, therefore also He who is assumed is called God because of Him who assumes Him. It is not God who has suffered, but God was conjoined with the crucified flesh... We will therefore call the holy virgin *Oeooóxos* [the vessel of God] but not *eorókos* (God bearer).”⁴⁸

Afterwards a local council was held in Alexandria, and a synodical letter was sent to Nestorius, clarifying the same doctrines mentioned in St Cyril's letters, and concluding with **“The Twelve Articles or Anathemas.”**

In early 430 he addressed a second dogmatic epistle to Nestorius in which he elucidated the mystery of the Incarnation on the basis of tradition and the inalterable faith of the Church. This epistle was subsequently approved at the Council of Ephesus.

Finally, St Cyril released his Five Tomes against Nestorius, which he composed in the spring of 430.

3.2) St Timothy Aelurus (26th pope of Alexandria 457-477)

In the absence of the prefect of Alexandria, when the Copts heard that their pope Dioscorus had departed to the Lord while he was in exile, the people met with the clergymen and had his disciple Timothy ordained patriarch.

He was a monk from the monastery of Qalamon who had been ordained a priest in Alexandria by Pope Cyril the Great. Timothy was an ascetic zealous man, known for his theological knowledge.

When the ruler returned to Alexandria he considered their behavior as a rebellion against Byzantium (Constantinople). Therefore, he took the side of Proterius the alien patriarch, keenly persecuting the Copts. In spite of severe violence he only won to his side four bishops who followed the alien Patriarch. When Pope Timothy left Alexandria on a pastoral trip, Count Dionysius arrived at Alexandria to commit atrocities against the Coptic Church causing it to be wounded by Christian hands.

Upon the return of the pope, the Count closed the gates of the city to prevent him from entering it. A mob assembled and nothing could control their feelings. They clashed with the army and fought a battle in which there were many casualties. The mob entered the Church and killed Proterius the alien and burned his corpse in the street.

Pope Timothy and his brother were first exiled to Gangra and then to the Crimea.

The people of Gangra Island loved him and called him “the miracle-performer” and “the charitable.”

The ruler then appointed “Salophaciolus” as patriarch, and the people boycotted him for seven years.

In the year 475, Marcian the emperor died and was succeeded by Basiliscus. His physician who was from Alexandria interceded to the emperor to set the pope free.

The pope then left his exile and went to Constantinople to thank the emperor. There he was welcomed by both the Church and state. He requested from the emperor the return of the exiled bishops. He called for a council that was attended by 500 bishops. In the council he confirmed the anathema against the Eutychian heresy and the rejection of the Tome of Leo. Reconciliation among

the churches of Jerusalem, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria was established and lasted for a number of years.

When Professor Meyendorff wrote about him, and about Sts Severus of Antioch and Philoxenus of Mabbug he said that the non-Chalcedonians had at that time strong theologians contrary to the Chalcedonians.

In his exile, Pope Timothy was careful to send letters of faith his people.

He explained in these letters the faith of Church cautioning the people from the Eutychian thought, giving reference to the writings of St Dioscorus.

The treatise of St Timothy, the Pope Alexandria, written during the sixties of the 5th century when he was in his exile, reveals that St Dioscorus-his predecessor-was fighting against Nestorianism.

The writings and letters of Timothy are lost in the original language, but his final and most voluminous work survives in complete form only in an Armenian translation. It is titled, “The Book Written by Mar Timothy, Bishop of Alexandria, against the Synod of Chalcedon” and was written during his exile in the Crimea.

In it Timothy wrote:

On the fact that one must assert as one our Lord and God Jesus Christ with His flesh and must assign everything to Him, what is divine and what is human, and that he became co-essential with us according to the body but also remained God, and that it is godless to separate Him into two [natures]... wherein also is the refutation of the blasphemies contained in Leo’s Tome and of the godlessness of the definition of the synod held at Chalcedon¹¹⁷.⁶²

- Two more shorter works, one Against the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon, and one Against Leo’s Tome survive in Syriac translations.

His Theology

Following St Cyril, Timothy maintained that the nature of the incarnate Logos is one, since the humanity assumed by Him being without a specific hypostasis of its own. This humanity, however,

¹¹⁷ Grillmeier, op.cit., p. 13.

is whole and complete and is united to the divine nature without alteration or confusion, so that Christ, incarnate and becoming man according the economy, is co-essential with men according to the flesh. And co-essential with God the Father according to the divine nature. By virtue of this union, Timothy, like St Cyril could claim that the Logos, while remaining impassible in His divine nature suffered on the cross thanks to the flesh he assumed¹¹⁸.

3.3) Augustine of Hippo

Amongst many other things, introduced **Greek exegetical methods to the West.**

Augustine's writings

Were extremely intellectual, deeply influencing the future of Western theology.

He wrote extensively on the *Trinity, the doctrine of the Church, the doctrine of Grace and Free Will*, etc. but is most well-known for his essay in the philosophy of history, *The City of God*, and his autobiographical work, *The Confessions*.

All these Fathers were not merely great men and of interest in themselves, but they **played a great role in the history of a century** that is worth thoughtful consideration on the part of us people of the twentieth century.

He brought together the philosophy of Plato and doctrine of Nicea, the biblical allegories of Alexandria and historical research of Antioch, the sublimity of Eastern Theology with the pastoral practicality of the west.

His book- *The city of God* with Plato's republic and Aristotle's politics would become one of the foundational works in social thoughts.

He went to Carthage to study law, literature and philosophy. He became a professor there. At the age of 17 he took a mistress bore a son called Adeodatus in 372. He lived with her for 17 years. He was troubled by the problem of evil. He found that Evil is the absence of light.

He was attracted by Manicheans i.e. the existence of evil by denigration of both creator of God and His creation. His mother Monica had continually kept him in prayer, he tried to pray but reading OT unreflectively, he found its teachings contradictory and its laws absurd he abandoned the pursuit. He

¹¹⁸ Di Berardino, op.cit., p. 841.

returned to his faith in 387. His mother and his son died in 387. He knew sadness. In 395 he was ordained as a bishop. He played an active role in regional councils that set NT canon, at 5th c.

He dealt with three major heresies Manicheans, Donatism and Pelagiansim. He welcomed the Tertullianist and Montanists. He attracted heretics with charity and truth. He had after all, once lived in heresy himself. As Ambrose and Monica had been patient with him, he would be patient and perseverant (continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure or opposition) with others. Happy life exists- when man's chief good is both loved and owned. This chief good then must be something that can't be lost against the will. According to Augustine **Man** is consists of body plus soul

Holy Trinity

All those Catholic interpreters of the divine Scriptures, OT and NT whom I have been able to read, who have written before me concerning the Trinity, who is God, have purposed to reach, according to the Scriptures, this doctrine: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit **intimate a divine unity of one and the same substance in an indivisible equality**; and therefore that they are not three Gods, but one God: although the Father has begotten the Son and so He who is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and so He who is Son is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but only the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, Himself also co-equal with the Father and the Son, and pertaining to the unity of the Trinity.

Yet this unity was born of the Virgin Mary, and crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried, rose, again the third day ascended in the form of a dove upon Jesus when He was baptized; **nor** that, on the day of Pentecost, after ascension of the Lord, when "a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind" (Acts 2:2), the same Trinity rested on each of them as "tongues as of fire" (Acts 2:3), but only the Holy Spirit. Nor yet that this Trinity said from heaven, "This is my son" (Lk. 9:35), whether when He was baptized by St. John, or when the three disciples were with him on the mount, or when the voice sound, saying, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" (Jn. 12:28); but that it was a word of the Father only, spoken to the Son; although the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as they are indivisible, as work indivisibly.

The Father is God, and the Son God, and the Holy Spirit God, and yet that this Trinity is not three Gods, but one God. And they ask how they are to understand this: especially when it is said that the

Trinity works indivisibly in everything that God works, and yet that a certain voice of the Father spoke, which is not the voice of Son; and that none except the Son was born in flesh, and suffered, and rose again, and ascended into heaven; and that none except the Holy Spirit came in the form of dove.

They wish to understand how the Trinity uttered that voice which was only of the Father, and how the same Trinity created that flesh in which only the Son was born of the virgin; and how the very same Trinity itself wrought (shown) that form of a dove, in which only the Holy Spirit appeared. Otherwise, the Trinity does not work indivisibly, but the Father does something, the Son other thing and the Holy Spirit still others: or else, if they do some things together, some severally, then the Trinity is not indivisible.

It is difficulty, too, then, in what matter the Holy Spirit is in the Trinity, whom neither the Father, nor the Son, nor both have begotten, although He is the Spirit both of the Father and the Son.