THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I
ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

Prepared by the Instructor

Fall 2021
SYLLABUS

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THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I: ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL
Remote Course via Audio Recordings and Moodle-Zoom due to Distance Learning needs

Instructor: Fr. Augustine Thompson, O.P.
Phone: 510-596-1800
ZOOM Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30-11:30 By appointment only—when made I will send an invitation to the Zoom meeting and the exact time.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
History of the Church from the Apostolic Period until the end of the Middle Ages, focusing, in particular, on its transformation from a small Jewish sect into the international Church of the middle ages. Some attention will be paid to the development of doctrine, but more emphasis will be placed on piety and worship, dissent, missions, mysticism, ecclesiastical organization, and Church relations to secular government. The course will use a lecture / class discussion format.

This semester DSPT will be completely distance learning due to the needs of certain non-resident students. Recordings of the lectures will be emailed to the class in time for the scheduled session, but may be listened to at any time before the arrival of the next lecture recording. Discussions will be by ZOOM meetings at the scheduled time. You will receive an invitation to log-in; do so 10 minutes before class time. The course will be approximately 35% Zoom sessions, 65% recorded lectures. If in-person classes resume at some point in the semester we will return to sessions at DSPT. See Technology Requirements at the end of the Syllabus.

Required Reading (Prices on Amazon.com)
The Bible.

Other Requirements of Course:
1. A Test on the Ancient Period (30% of grade) at home “under classroom conditions”.
2. A Test on the Medieval Period (30% of grade)
3. Two careful essays as described below (each worth 20%)—due in instructor’s email box in PDF format by noon on specified days
4. Active participation in ZOOM discussions (has effect on grade).
HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I:
SYLLABUS

WEEK ONE: THE ANCIENT RELIGIOUS WORLD
Read: “Non-Christians on Christianity” and
1 Corinthians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon in NT (all in Reader)
Optional reading: Bettenson, pp. 1–4

Sep. 7 — Lecture 1: Introduction to Ancient Religious Culture
Sep. 10 — Lecture 2–3: Mediterranean Religion (And Guided Discussion)

WEEK TWO: SUB-APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY
Have Read:
Hegesippus and Papias (Reader); 1 Clement, Ignatius (except Romans),
and Letter of Polycarp and Barnabas in ECW

Sept. 14 — Discussion 1: Christianity at A.D. 100
Sept. 17 — Lecture 4–5: Forming Christian Identity

WEEK THREE: DOCETISM AND Gnosticism
Have Read: Gnostic and Montanist Texts in Reader
Optional reading: Bettenson, pp. 67-74.

Sept. 21 — Discussion 2: The Gnostic Alternative
Sept. 24 — Lecture 6–7: Persecution and Martyrdom

WEEK FOUR: THE PERSECUTED CHURCH
Have Read: “Romans,” “Martyrdom of Polycarp,” in ECW
Passion of Perpetua and other Martyr Acta (packet).

Sept. 28 — Discussion 3: The Cult of the Martyrs

WEEK FIVE: LATE CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITY
Have read: Constantine, Oration to the Saints (packet)
Optional reading: Hilgarth, pp. 11–64.

Oct. 5 — Discussion 4: Constantine’s Oration
Oct. 8 — Lecture 10: The Imperial Church
WEEK SIX: AUGUSTINE
Have Read: Augustine’s Confessions

Oct. 12 — Lecture 11–12: The End of Empire
Oct. 15 — Discussion 5: Confessions

WEEK SEVEN: AFTER EMPIRE
Optional reading: Hilgarth, pp. 65–177

Oct. 19 — TEST ON ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY at home under "classroom conditions"
Oct. 22 — Lecture 13: Carolingian Christianity

READING WEEK (Oct. 24–30): No class

WEEK EIGHT: MAKING THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH
Have Read: Investiture Documents (packet)

Nov. 2 — Lecture 14–15: The Gregorian Reform (REFLECTION PAPER 2 DUE 1 at Noon)
Nov. 5 — Discussion 6: Medieval Church and State

WEEK NINE: HIGH MEDIEVAL RELIGION
Read: Little Flowers, part 1–2 (parts 3 & 4 optional)

Nov. 9 — Lecture 16: Medieval Religious Experience
Nov. 12 — Lecture 17–18: The New Piety

WEEK TEN: RELIGIOUS ALTERNATIVES
Finish Little Flowers; read Francis’s Testament (packet)
Optional reading: Bettenson, pp. 116–32.

Nov. 16 — Discussion 7: Little Flowers
Nov. 19 — Lecture 19–20A: Medieval Dissent

WEEK ELEVEN: HERESY
Read: Cathar Documents (packet)
Optional reading: Bettenson, pp. 132–35

Nov. 23 — Discussion 8: Catharism
Nov. 25-26: Thanksgiving Break (no class)

WEEK TWELVE: SCHOLASTICISM TO SCHISM
Optional reading: Bettenson, pp. 135–51

Nov. 30 — Lecture 20B-21: The Medieval Papacy
Dec. 3 — Lecture 22: Late Medieval Crises
WEEK THIRTEEN: THE MYSTICAL ALTERNATIVE

Have Read: Catherine of Genoa
Optional reading: B. Groeschel, "Introduction," ibid., pp. 1–43
Optional reading: Bettenson, pp. 166–82.

Dec. 7 — Discussion 9: Purgation and Purgatory
Dec. 10 — Lecture 23: Towards the Reformation? (REFLECTION PAPER 2 DUE 1 at Noon)

EXAM WEEK:

Dec. 14 — TEST ON MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY at home under "classroom conditions"
Course Outcomes, Grading Rubrics, and Technology Requirements

Course Goals

This introductory level survey course seeks to impart to students:

1. A sufficient understanding of the institutional, intellectual, and cultural history of the Church from the post-Biblical period to the end of the Middle Ages sufficient to allow them intellectual integration of deeper studies on these thinkers or those influenced by them.

2. A sense of the ever provisional nature of all historical studies, which should encourage the students to model the academic humility and openness to contrasting opinions and methods that inform historical debate.

3. By reading difficult and alien writers on their own and achieving the mastery necessary to perform well on the course exams, the students should begin to develop the self-direction necessary for their future historical study.

4. Since the essay questions for the exams will be distributed before the exam and the students encouraged to work together preparing their answers, the course will foster a climate of collaboration and common ownership proper to research work and teaching.

5. By encountering a thought world that is profoundly different from our own modern one, students will acquire new perspectives that will allow them to prophetically challenge the commonplaces and prejudices of modern culture.

Course Outcomes

1. A broad knowledge of the history of the ancient and medieval Church as a whole, including non-normative Christianity ("heresies") in both periods.

2. Beyond the broad outlines, ability to produce more focused and critical written reflections of a collection of ancient Christian texts (martyr acta or the writing of Ignatius of Antioch) and one of medieval Christian texts (the Little Flowers of St. Francis).

3. The ability to communicate the fruits of their study, especially in class discussions.

4. The ability to bring sound historical conclusions to bear on contemporary theological and ecclesiastical issues, especially during discussions.

5. An understanding of the historical relations between the Church and non-Christian religions, in particular ancient paganism and medieval Islam.

Grading Rubrics

“A” signifies a comprehensive and accurate general understanding of the development of ancient and medieval Christianity and a sure and solid control of the ideas of all authors studied.

“A-“ signifies a generally solid familiarity with the development of ancient and medieval Christianity and the ability to sketch out the basic ideas of the major authors and most minor authors studied.

“B+” signifies a basic familiarity with the general development of ancient and medieval Christianity,
but somewhat sketchy recall of the ideas of individual authors, including the major ones. This is only marginally satisfactory in master’s level work, even in an introductory class.

“B” signifies even less secure understanding of development and serious lacunae for even major authors. As such, although passing, this is probably not sufficient quality for master’s credit.

Below a “B” means that, for all intents and purposes, the performance is so poor that it should not be used to fulfill requirements in a master’s program.

NOTE: If you need special arrangements to meet the course requirements for reasons of some documented disability, please see the instructor after the first meeting of the seminar.

Technology Requirements

All students should have access to technology sufficient to complete the course successfully. This includes a computer, laptop, or tablet, with webcam & microphone, with an updated operating system (Windows, Mac, Linux) and an updated internet browser (Chrome, Firefox); high speed internet bandwidth (preferably 10 mbps or greater but at least 3 mbps); Zoom and Moodle software, and the ability to use them. If students experience any difficulties with Moodle, Zoom, or other technology, they can contact Moodle support at moodle@gtu.edu. Students will receive a response within 24 hours.
HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY I:
PAPER TOPICS AND WRITING

There are two short reflection papers required in this course, both to be about 7 to 10 pages maximum. The focus on two phenomena that help form how Christians thought about themselves: Church Leadership and Martyrdom in ancient Christianity and the “New Piety” identified with the Franciscans in the High Middle Ages.

TOPIC FOR PAPER ONE

Chose one of the two following options.

A. Using the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch as your source, propose and defend a thesis concerning Ignatius’s understanding of the nature of the Christian community, his “ecclesiology.” (Do not write a paper contrasting his views with those of the “New Testament”—it did not exist in the form we know it until after A.D. 150.)

B. Using the “Passion of Perpetua,” the “Martyrdom of Polycarp,” the “Letter of Ignatius to the Romans,” and other martyr texts in the reader if you with, propose and defend a thesis concerning the way second-century Christians understood martyrdom and how it related to the life of the community. (You should not write a paper that focuses on the personalities of the writers).

TOPIC FOR PAPER TWO

Identify and discuss some aspect of medieval Christian piety as expressed by the authors of the Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi. Pick a theme to develop it using this document as your source. A sampling of themes is given on the reading guide for the Little Flowers. You need not restrict yourself to those themes, but you must have a specific theme. (A book report on the Little Flowers is not an acceptable paper; nor is a biography of St. Francis—remember that the stories in the Little Flowers are often of dubious historical value.)

SOURCES AND METHOD

These papers are an exercise in analyzing historical texts. DO NOT go to the library to look up what “the experts” think. I want to see YOU grapple with these texts. Historians do not have much more than you have. Follow these steps:

1) Finish reading the source readings before the are discussed in class. As you are reading them, watch for attitudes, ideas, theological issues, or topics that are both important to the author of the work and of interest to you.

2) Next, reread the source materials, taking WRITTEN notes (I suggest copying out relevant passages verbatim) on parts of the work that relate to the theme or thesis you are working on.

3) Reread your notes. Ask yourself, what questions do I need to answer as I develop the theme/thesis of my paper? Four to five questions are usually right for a 7 to 10 page paper. These
will become the Roman Numeral Divisions of your outline.

4) Draw up an outline for the paper and organize your written notes so that they are in the order of the outline. Your outline will probably be about 1 1/2 type written single-spaced pages and will have as its lowest level divisions the topic sentences of the paragraphs of the paper.

5) Write a draft of the paper. This is done by expanding the outline and putting in footnote references to the sources that you have collected in your notes. Reread the, adjust transitions, correct grammar and spelling, remove typos. Prepare the final copy and submit it on time.

SUGGESTIONS (WARNINGS?)

CHOOSE A TOPIC/THESIS THAT IS RELATED TO YOUR SOURCES! Some issues (“Papal Authority and the Bible,” “Women’s Role in Medieval Marriage,” etc.) may be of great interest but might be impossible to write using the sources available to you.

DO NOT WASTE PRECIOUS PAGES on a biographies of Ignatius, Perpetua, Polycarp, or Francis of Assisi. Avoid like sin generalized (stereotyped?) characterizations of ancient and medieval Christianity. The paper’s introduction should state your thesis; the paper should demonstrate and elaborate on it; the conclusion should tell the reader why your insights are important for an understanding these long-dead Christian folk. I cannot see how this kind of project can be accomplished in less than seven pages.

BUT I WILL NOT ACCEPT A PAPER OVER TEN PAGES.

If you have some doubt about your desired topic, see me during office hours.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

GENERAL HISTORIES


PERIODICAL AND BOOK INDEXS

Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiasticque
Medioevo latino

ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY AND MEDITERRANEAN RELIGIONS

Robin Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1988)

THE GREAT CHURCH TRADITION


THE HERETICAL ALTERNATIVE


PERSECUTION AND MARTYRDOM

Hippolyte Delehaye, Sanctus: Essai sur le culte des saints dans l'antiquité (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1927)
THE CHRISTIAN EMPIRE

Ramsay MacMullen, Constantine (Abingdon UK: Routledge, 2014)
Ramsay MacMullen, Christianizing the Roman Empire: A.D. 100-400 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984)
Peter Brown, "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: A Parting of the Ways," in Society and the Holy.

OVERVIEWS AND BACKGROUND: THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

R. W. Southern, Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages (Harmondsworth UK: Penguin, 1973)
C. S. Lewis, The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1964)

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH: TOPICAL

Stephen Kuttner, Harmony from Dissonance: An Interpretation of Medieval Canon (LaTrobe PA: Archabbey Publications, 1960)
Uta-Renate Blumenthal, Papal Reform and Canon Law in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries (London: Routledge, 2020)

HIGH-MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN PIETY

Herbert Grundmann, Religious Movements of the Middle Ages: The Historical Links Between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women’s Religious Movement in the Twelfth and
XI

Thirteenth Century, with the Historical Foundations of German Mysticism (Notre Dame IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2005)


Rosalind B. Brooke, Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe, 1000-1300 (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1996)


André Vauche, Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint (New Haven: Yale Univ. Pres, 2012)


MEDIEVAL DISSENT


R. I. Moore, Origins of European Dissent (London: Allen Lane, 1977)


Robert E. Lerner, The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages (Notre Dame IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2007)

Jeffrey Burton Russell, Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1965)


Robert Lerner, Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages (Notre Dame IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1972)


THE PAPACY


Walter Ullmannn, A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages, 2. ed. (Milton Park UK: Routledge, 2003)


LATE-MEDIEVAL CHRISES AND PIETY

Tamar Herzig, *Savonarola’s Women: Visions and Reform in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008)

A POST-MEDIEVAL POSTSCRIPT

Course Goals and Outcomes

This introductory level survey course seeks to impart to students:

O 1. A broad knowledge of the history of the ancient and medieval Church as a whole, including non-normative Christianity (“heresies”) in both periods.

O 2. Beyond the broad outlines, ability to produce more focused and critical written reflections: one on a collection of ancient Christian texts (martyr acta or the writings of Ignatius of Antioch) and one of medieval Christian texts (the Little Flowers of St. Francis).

O 3. The ability to communicate the fruits of their study, especially in class discussions.

O 4. The ability to bring sound historical conclusions to bear on contemporary theological and ecclesiastical issues, especially during discussions.

O 5. An understanding of the historical relations between the Church and non-Christian religions, in particular ancient paganism and medieval Islam.

The professor will assess these outcomes through:

A. Individual participation in class discussions.
B. Essay questions on written examinations.
C. Source text identification on written examinations.
D. Interpretive essays on historical sources.
COURSE GOALS AND CURRICULAR OUTCOMES TABLE

In the following table, each Course Outcome is listed, followed by course activities and/or assignments by which the Course Outcome is to be measured, along with the DSPT Institutional Outcomes and Program Outcomes (here: MA-Theology-Thesis and MA-Theology-Exam) to which the given Course Outcome contributes. Descriptions of the DSPT Institutional Goals and MDiv Program Outcomes are listed on the following page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Outcome</th>
<th>Activities &amp;/or Assignments To Measure Course Outcome</th>
<th>Related Program and Institutional Goals/Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. 1. A broad knowledge of the history of the ancient and medieval Church as a whole, including non-normative Christianity ("heresies") in both periods. | A. Class Participation  
B. Written Exam Essays  
C. Source Text Identifications  
D. Interpretive essays | IG-A1. Integrative Thinking  
IG-A3. Self-Direction  
MATHG1-foundational knowledge  
MATHG2-specialized knowledge  
MATHTG3-writing skills  
MATHEG3-communication skills |
| 2. Beyond the broad outlines, ability to produce more focused and critical written reflections: one on a collection of ancient and medieval Christian texts. | C. Source Text Identifications  
D. Interpretive essays | IG-A1. Integrative Thinking  
IG-A3. Self-Direction  
MATHG2-specialized knowledge  
MATHTG3-writing skills  
MATHEG3-communication skills |
| 3. 3. The ability to communicate the fruits of their study, especially in class discussions. | A. Class Participation  
B. Written Exam Essays  
D. Interpretive essays | IG-A1. Integrative Thinking  
IG-A2. Intellectual Humility  
IG-A3. Self-Direction  
IG-B1. Ability to Collaborate  
MATHG1-foundational knowledge  
MATHEG3-communication skills |
| 4. 4. The ability to bring sound historical conclusions to bear on contemporary theological and ecclesiastical issues, especially during discussions. | A. Class Participation | IG-A1. Integrative Thinking  
IG-A2. Intellectual Humility  
IG-B1. Ability to Collaborate  
MATHG1-foundational knowledge  
MATHEG3-communication skills  
MATHG4-Aquinas / modern theology |
| 5. 5. An understanding of the historical relations between the Church and non-Christian religions, in particular ancient paganism and medieval Islam. | A. Class Participation  
B. Written Exam Essays | IG-A1. Integrative Thinking  
IG-A2. Intellectual Humility  
IG-B1. Ability to Collaborate  
MATHG2-specialized knowledge  
MATHTG3-writing skills  
MATHEG3-communication skills |

DSPT Goals and Outcomes

DSPT Institutional Goals:

Pedagogical Goal: Deep Learning. Motivated by a thirst for truth, the disciplined inquirer is a life-long learner who recognizes fundamental principles in a given field of inquiry and applies them in creative or innovative ways to broader contemporary issues which are of importance to Church, the academy, and/or society. Disciplined inquiry includes the following characteristics:
A1. Integrative Thinking: the ability to recognize, understand, retain, integrate, and apply the fundamental principles operative in a field of inquiry, and use them to make synthetic judgments.

A2. Intellectual Humility: an orientation of mind and heart that fosters intellectual collaboration, precludes both rigidity and passivity of mind, and recognizes that contrary opinions are not a threat, but provide the opportunity to test and deepen one's own grasp of the truth.

A3. Self-Direction: the disposition to take primary responsibility for one's own education, manifested in a keen intellectual interest in the topic of studies, and the ability to teach oneself through a habit of skilled and responsible research and resilient exploration.

**Vocational Goal: Collaborative Leadership.** A collaborative leader inspires within others the desire to realize the common good by articulating to academy or society a coherent vision rooted in the mission of the Church, all the while leading by example.

B1. Ability to Collaborate: expressed in good listening and communication skills which foster decisions stemming from and leading to an open, transparent, and mutually enriching dialog with others in order that the gifts of all can be appropriately acknowledged and utilized.

Abbreviations: IGA1-Integrative Thinking, IGA2-Intellectual Humility, IGA3-Self-Direction, IGB1-Ability to Collaborate

**MATh – Exam Option: Goals**

1. a foundational knowledge of the fundamental areas of theological inquiry in the Roman Catholic tradition (reflected in the required core areas);
2. a specialized knowledge of one area of theological inquiry (area of concentration) chosen by the student;
3. the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively through scholarly research and writing;
4. the ability to integrate contemporary theological issues with the tradition of the Catholic Church, especially with the theological tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Abbreviations: MAThEG1-foundational RC knowledge, MAThEG2-specialized knowledge, MAThEG3-communication skills, MAThEG4-integrating RC & Aquinas & contemporary theol,

**MATh – Thesis Option: Goals**

I.a foundational knowledge of the fundamental areas of theological inquiry in the Roman Catholic tradition (Biblical Studies, historical theology, dogmatic theology, and moral theology);
II.a specialized knowledge of one area of theological inquiry (area of concentration) chosen by the student;
III.the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively through scholarly writing;
IV.the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively through oral presentations and discussions;
V.the ability to integrate contemporary theological issues with the tradition of the Catholic Church, and where possible with the theological tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Abbreviations: MAThTG1-foundational RC knowledge, MAThTG2-specialized knowledge, MAThTG3-writing skills, MAThTG4-oral communication skills, MAThTG5-integrating RC & Aquinas & contemporary theol.
Discussion 1:

CHRISTIANITY AT A.D. 100

Read in preparation: Barnabas, Clement, First Six Letters of Ignatius (not Romans); and in Bible 1 Corinthians.

What errors about Christ are attacked by Ignatius?

Is Christ divine (cf. Eph., Smyrn.)?
Does Christ have a real body and did he really suffer on the cross (cf. Trall.)?
How does Ignatius relate the eucharist and Christ’s suffering (cf. Smyrn. 7)?
What is the status of Jewish practices in Ignatius’ Church
(c.f. Magnesians, Philadelphians)?
If you know Paul’s letters, contrast his treatment of Judaism with that of Ignatius.

What is Ignatius view of Church organization?
What role does Eucharist play in life of Church?
How does Ignatius treat bishops?
What is the role of the bishop and other officials?
What is role of the “clergy” (literally “presbytery”--literally elders, but from which we get the word “priest”)?
What is the role of deacons?
How does Ignatius relate these two groups to the people and to the bishop?

How does Ignatius relate the bishop to God (cf. Magnesians)
How is the bishop related to the Eucharist (cf. Smyrn.)
What is the bishops teaching role (cf. Ephesians)?
What does Ignatius say on marriage and chastity (cf. to Polycarp)?

How does Ignatius’ Church compare to that of the Clement and the Pastorals?
In Ignatius’ letters how do individual Churches relate to one another?
Can you identify what books of the New Testament Ignatius seems familiar with?
Read: Gnostic Texts in this packet

Gnosticism was not a single coherent theology or religious organization, although all “Gnostic” texts show certain similarities. This week’s readings include “Thunder-Perfect Mind,” perhaps the most famous of all Gnostic texts. It is so unusual in form and content that some have wondered if it is “Christian” at all. The other three examples are all “Valentinian” Gnostic in origin: that is to say they mimic older “Orthodox” stories and genres of writing and come from the largest Gnostic group (or at least the one that produced the most extant writing). As you read these texts, try to answer the following general questions:

1. How do these texts approach “God” and ultimate realities. How is the God of these texts different from the God of the orthodox Christianity?

2. What is the status of creation and matter in these texts? How is this different from the views of the Catholic or Great Church?

3. What does salvation mean for these authors? What is the role of “Christ”? How does this differ from the Christ of the Catholic Gospels?

4. Can you make any guesses about how Gnostic Christian communities were organized and lead? Is it different from the Church of Ignatius and the martyrs?

5. Bauer has suggested that there were more Gnostics in the 100s and 200s than Catholic Great Church Christians (the famous “Bauer Thesis”). What would people have found appealing in this movement?

6. Even if Bauer is wrong, there were still lots of Gnostics around in the second and third century. By 300 there were none. Before that date Catholic Christians were a persecuted minority, so repression by them cannot explain the disappearance. As far as we can tell the Gnostic movement just “died.” What aspects of this popular movement can you detect that explain its rapid decline and disappearance?
Discussion 3:
The Cult of the Martyrs

Read all texts but focus on the following:

Guide Questions on Martyrdom of Polycarp.

What is the charge against Polycarp?
What is his defense?
How does he define his beliefs?
Some see eucharistic references in cc. 14-15; what do you think?
What is the attitude of his followers toward Polycarp’s dead body? What is the authorities attitude about his body?

Guide Questions on Ignatius to the Romans?

How does Ignatius conceive of his death?
How does he relate his death to Christ’s and to the Eucharist?
Do you think he has a death wish?
If you were a pagan, what would you think of this letter?

Guide Questions to Passion of Perpetua

Why is Perpetua arrested?
What is her father’s role in this story?
What is the attitude of the authorities toward her?

Her visions:
  Describe the first vision and what message Perpetua sees in it. (p. 218-19)
  Describe her second vision (p. 220). What is the status of her brother? What does she do for him? What is its effect?
  Describe the third vision (p. 221-22). Why would it assure her of “victory”?
  What is Saturus vision? How does it relate the martyrs to Church authorities?

How do the martyrs approach their death?
  Why is it called a “second baptism”?
  According to this text why should Christians venerate the martyrs?
Discussion 4:  
**Constantine’s “Oratio to the Saints”**

As you read this document, think of it as an opportunity to get an idea of how the first Christian emperor understood (or failed to understand) his new faith and its relationship to paganism. Especially important is how he relates Christianity to the Greek and Roman cultural and religious heritage. Here is a breakdown of the structure of the oration, with things to consider in each part.

1. The Failure of Paganism
   - Why are idolatry and polytheism wrong? How does he prove this?
   - How does he view the physical universe? What does it tell us about God?
   - How does he evaluate Greek Philosophy?
   - What is the status of reason?
   - Does Paganism (still the great majority of the empire) have a future?
     - Why or why not?

2. The Truth of Christianity
   - What did God accomplish in Christ?
   - How does he reply to Pagan objections?
   - How does he think of Adam and Eve, the Fall, and sin?
   - How does Christianity change the world? Is he optimistic or pessimistic?

3. Constantine’s Proofs of Christianity
   - What events of Old Testament history does he draw on to prove Christianity.
   - What testimonies from paganism does he use? How convincing are they?
   - Which seems more important, the pagan witness or the biblical?
     - What texts does he present?
     - What are their origins?
     - Which seem most important to him?
   - Does his exposition suggest any reflection on events from his conversion to 235?

4. Constantine’s conception of his role
   - Throughout the oration Constantine presents himself as a servant of Christ
   - How does he reflect on his rise to emperorship?
   - How did he merit this rule?
   - What is the nature of his rule?
   - How does he relate to God?

Finally, consider that most of the bishops at Antioch had suffered through the last persecution. Try to place yourself in their place. How would you react to this new convert and his explication of your faith?
Discussion 5:
**Augustine’s Confessions**

*Guide questions on Confessions, book II*

Why does Augustine spend so much time on the “Pears Incident”?
  - Why did he commit this sin?
  - Why did he love the act of sinning itself?
  - Can the “Pear Incident” be related to the problem of sexual sin?

According to Augustine, what hope is there for a sinner?

Confessions, *III, esp. c. vi-x.*

Why did Augustine join the Manicheans?
  - What did the Manicheans teach? How did they attempt to disprove Catholicism?
  - Thinking of Augustine the Man, what would have drawn him to this group and its view of the world?

Taken as a whole, how did Manicheanism solve Augustine’s dilemmas about sin and evil?
  - Why do you think he became dissatisfied?
  - Why did his Manichean Faith come into crisis at the beginning of book IV?

FROM WHERE IS AUGUSTINE COMING?

What was the problem with the Manicheans? (*Confessions, V, iii-x*)

Describe Augustine’s relationship with his mother. (cf. that with his father)

In book V, chapter x, Augustine encounters the Skeptics:
  - What has drawn Augustine to it?
  - What problems about God, Evil and Christ is Augustine struggling with?

In book VI, Augustine meets Ambrose:
  - What is drawing him to Christianity now or holding him back?

In book VII, chapters vii-xvii:
  - What does Augustine learn while reading the “books of the Platonists”?
  - Why was it good to read the Platonists before reading the Bible?

WHERE IS AUGUSTINE GOING? (book VIII)

Why did Victorinus refuse to become a Christian?

What impact does the Life of St. Antony (chapter vi) have on Augustine? Why?
  - What is holding Augustine back from Christianity now?
  - Does a human being have two natures?

Describe Augustine’s state of mind before and after the incident in the garden (chapter xii).
Discussion 6:
THE INVESTITURE CONFLICT

1. What are Simony and “Lay Investiture”?  
   How are they related to the Carolingian Church-State System?  
   Summarize the positions of Peter Damian and Humbert on Reform.

2. What was Gregory VII’s program?  
   What is his view of the make-up of the Church?  
   How does his condemnation of lay investiture fit into this program?

3. How did the Gregorian Crisis develop?  
   Outline the development of the crisis chronologically.  
   What is Gregory’s complaint against Henry?  
   What is Henry’s charge against Gregory?  
   How do Gregory and Henry justify their depositions?

The Royal and Papal Positions  
1. What is Gregory’s Position on Church and State?  
   What are the nature and sources of ecclesiastical authority?  
   What is the origin of temporal authority?  
   What is the proper relation of Church and State?

2. What is the Royalist Position?  
   What are the origins of royal and church authority?  
   Who should rule the Church? Why?  
   Why is the King “God through Grace”?  

3. Be ready to contrast the Gregorian and Royal Positions, on Sources of authority, relative power, “division” or “union” of Church and State.

Attempts at Compromise

1. How does Manegold modify the Gregorian Position?  
   What does he concede to the Royalist Position?  
   What does he mean by the separation of temporal and spiritual jurisdiction?  
   Would the York Anonymous or Gregory reject this compromise? Why?

2. How does De Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda modify the Royalist Position, or does it?  
   What does he concede to the Gregorian Position on the power of the Pope?  
   How does he understand the separation of temporal and spiritual authority?  
   Would the York Anonymous or Gregory reject this compromise? Why?
Discussion 7:
ST. FRANCIS AND FRANCISCANISM

Readings: The Testament (in reader) and the Fioretti

**On the Testament:**

1. How does Francis see his role in the foundation of his order?
2. What is Francis attitude toward the Church hierarchy? Toward the sacraments, in particular, the Eucharist?
3. How much of the Testament is related to poverty? Does this seem to be the major thrust of Francis’ words?
4. What is Francis attitude toward obedience? What does he think of heresy?
5. What do you make of Francis’ forbidding interpretation of the Rule?

**On the Little Flowers (Fioretti)**

Choose from the Little Flowers and be ready to describe one story for each of the following themes (a total of 9 different stories!). Each story should throw light on the Franciscan attitude toward that topic. (Remember, this material dates from 70 years after Francis death, so be ready to relate each event to Francis’ own writings.)

The Love of God
True Spiritual Happiness
Obedience
Prayer and contemplation
Poverty, Riches and Money
Francis and nature
Francis attitude toward Christ and Christ’s Death
Miracles
The Order of Friars Minor itself
Discussion 8:  
**CATHARISM: “THE GOOD CHRISTIANS”**

Read This week’s readings include two pieces of Cathar Scripture and the only extant Cathar rituals.

Guide Questions for the “Vision of Isaiah” (two versions!)
- Who is Isaiah, the “author” of this text? (See the Book of Isaiah in Bible.)
- What are the parts of the universe that he sees?
  - Describe the heavens and their inhabitants.
  - What is found in the highest heaven?
- After reading the Cathar of 1321's version
  - How is this text different from the first “Vision of Isaiah”?
  - What is the conception of earthly and physical realities in these texts?

Guide Questions for the “Secret Supper”
- Who is John, the narrator of this text? (See Gospel of John, chapters 13-17.)
- What does Christ teach him? About the origin of the World? About Christ’s own 
  - mission? About Angels and Demons?
- What does he say about the origins of human beings?
- How can humans find salvation?

Generally on the Cathar Scriptures
- How does their version of Christ’s life compare to the medieval Catholic one?
- How does their version of Christ’s mission of salvation compare?
- How do they understand the role of the devil and material things?
- Why might some medieval people find this theology more satisfying than medieval 
  Catholic theology?

Guide Questions for the Cathar Rituals (read the introduction too)
- What are the basic ceremonies of the Cathars? (know: the Giving of Lord’s Prayer, the 
  - Consolamentum, the Service, the Melioramentum)
- How are they conducted? What do they mean?
- How do they reflect the theology of our earlier texts?
- What would have made them attractive to medieval people?
- What is the role of repeated phrases and words? Of preaching?
- What is the role of Cathar “clergy” (Perfects, elders, priors) in Cathar worship?
- How does it differ from the role of medieval Catholic clergy?
  - What acts of worship do Cathar “clergy” lead/perform?
- Why might some medieval people find this worship more satisfying than the medieval 
  Catholic Eucharist (the Mass)?
Discussion 9:
CATHERINE OF GENOA

Read: Catherine of Genoa, *Spiritual Dialogue* and *Purgation*

Part I (pp. 91-114) correlates with Catherine’s early life (1447-1475): her period of spiritual isolation, her “conversion” in 1474, her penances and extraordinary fasts.

Part II (pp. 115-133) correlates with her maturity (1476-1510), her mystical experience, service to the sick, directress of the Pammatone Hospital (1490), her final illness, and her dismissal, on Jan. 10, 1510, of her spiritual director.

Part III (pp. 133-150), her final illness (from Jan. to Sept. 15, 1510).

Questions for Part I
- Why is there a struggle between [Catherine’s] Body and Soul?
- What are Body and Soul’s needs? Why are they easy or hard to meet?
- How does Self-Love help Soul and Body solve their problem?
- What is the result of Self-Love’s solution for Soul?
- How does God come to Soul’s rescue?
- How does Catherine experience God after her “Conversion” (p. 110)
- What role has Penance (denying the bodily desires) now?
- How has Soul’s attitude toward the Body and Self-Love changed?

Questions for Part II
- Now that Catherine’s Soul is in God’s presence what happens?
- What is Soul’s attitude toward God? Toward herself?
- How do Soul’s visions of God help resolve her crisis?
- What is the affect of God’s presence on Soul? Where is God found?
- How does it change the relationship with Body? With penance?
- What affect does the experience of God have on Human Frailty?
- What is the affect of “Naked Love of God” on Catherine?
- Why is service not opposed to Mystical Union? Can Union exist without it?
- What is Spirit’s response to the hesitations of Human Frailty?
- What is Catherine’s “last temptation”? Do you think she overcome it?

Questions for Part III (Most of this part is by “Catherine-observers,” not Catherine.)
- How do the observers’ theology, ideas, and interests differ from Catherine’s?
- What do Catherine’s words in part 3 tell us about her views of suffering and death?
- How do Catherine’s words in this section relate to the rest of the dialogue?
### Dates for Early Christianity to A.D. 150

(Fixed dates and events in **bold**)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26-36</td>
<td><strong>Governorship of Pontius Pilate in Judea (Josephus)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td><strong>Crucifixion of Jesus (Tacitus)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Martyrdom of Stephen?</td>
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<td>40s</td>
<td>Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15)</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>Execution of James the Greater (Acts 12: 2)</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td><strong>Claudius expels Jews (and Christians?) from Rome (Suetonius)</strong></td>
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<td>49-51</td>
<td><strong>Paul active in Corinth under Gallio (Gallio inscription)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Paul’s letters: 1 Thes., 1-2 Cor., Phil., Gal., Rom., Philemon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Composition of James??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td><strong>Killing of James in Jerusalem (Josephus)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 64      | **Nero blames fire of Rome on Christians (Tacitus)**  
Traditional Date of “First” or “Neronian” Persecution |
| 60-70   | Composition of Jude, 1 Peter? |
| 64      | Death of Peter and Paul in Rome |
| 60s-70s | Composition of 1 Thessalonians, Colossians, and Ephesians? |
| 66      | Flight of Christians to Pella from Jerusalem (Eusebius 3.5.3) |
| 70      | **Fall of Jerusalem and destruction of Temple (many sources)** |
| 70s     | Final redaction of Mark? |
| 70-80   | Composition of Hebrews? |
| 70-96   | Composition of 1 Clement |
| 70-100  | Composition of Barnabas?? |
| 80-90   | Composition of 1-2 Timothy and Titus? |
| ca. 90  | **Domitian interrogates Jesus’ relatives (Hegesippus)**  
Traditional Date of “Second” or “Domitian’s” Persecution |
| 90-100  | First part of *Shepherd* of Hermas composed?? |
| 90-100  | Redaction of *Didache*??? (Dates from 40 to 180 have been suggested) |
| 90-100  | Composition of Revelation |
| 90-110  | Final redaction of 1-3 John, John’s Gospel? |
| 110-114 | **Pliny investigates Christians in Bithynia (Pliny’s letters)** |
| 110-117 | **Ignatius investigates Christians in Bithynia (Ignatius’ letters)**  
Traditional Date of “Third” or “Trajan’s” Persecution |
| 120-130 | Composition of 1 Peter |
| Post 130 | Composition of earliest Non-Canonical and “Gnostic” Gospels, Acts, Epistles, etc. |
| 130s    | Writings of Papias |
| 140-50s | Final redaction of *Shepherd* of Hermas |
| 155/6   | **Polycarp martyred** |
| 155-160 | Composition of *Martyrdom of Polycarp* |
| 155-165 | Writings of Justin Martyr (died ca. 165) |
NON-CHRISTIANS ON CHRISTIANITY
To A.D. 160

Very few pre-160 comments on Jesus of Nazareth, his followers, and the early Church are extant; all major ones are included here. Note that some of these (Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius) are presented as history, others report hearsay or second-hand reports (Pliny, Hardrian, Fronto, Epictetus, Galen), while others are fictionalized presentations (Lollianus, Lucian). Also included are the most important passages touching on Christ from the Jewish Talmud—the compilation of which lies well outside this period. The texts are given in order of composition.

FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS (Jewish Historian, c. A.D. 37-c.100)

_Jewish Antiquities_ 18.5.2 (John the Baptist, ca. 30; cf. Mt 14; Mk 6:14-29)

Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod’s army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment for what he did against John, called the Baptist, a good man who commanded the Jews to exercise virtue by righteousness toward each other and piety toward God and then to be baptized. That washing would be acceptable to him if they used it not for the forgiveness of sins but for bodily purification, since the soul had been forgiven already through righteousness. When the crowds came to him, they were greatly moved by his words, and Herod, who feared that John’s great influence over the crowds might bring them under his power and cause them to rebel (for they seemed to do everything he said), thought it best to put him to death and prevent any mischief he might cause. He did this, least he spare a man who might make him repent before it was too late. So, on account of Herod’s suspicious temper, he was sent as a prisoner to Macher, the castle I previously mentioned, and was put to death there. So the Jews thought that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment on Herod to mark God’s displeasure with him.

_Jewish Antiquities_ 18.3.3 (Jesus, ca. 30; scholarly suggestions of probable Christian interpolations in italics)

About this time lived Jesus, a man full of wisdom, if indeed one may call him a man, for he was a wonder-worker and the taught those who listen to truth with pleasure. He attracted to himself many Jews and many of Greek origin. Christ was this man. On the accusation of the leading men of our people, Pilate condemned him to death on a cross; nevertheless those who previously loved him still believed in him. For on the third day he again appeared to the living, just as, in addition to a thousand other things, prophets sent by God had foretold. And to the present day the race of those who call themselves Christians after him has not ceased.

_Here is a version of the same text (which lacks interpellations) found in a ninth-century Arabic version of Josephus. Text from Schlomo Pines, An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum and its Implications (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1971):

At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not
abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he would perhaps be the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day.

*I think this represents what Josephus actually wrote and is translated from an uninterpolated version of the Greek.*

*Jewish Antiquities* 20.9.1 (Death of the apostle James, 62)

[The procurator] Festus was now dead, and Albinus [the new procurator] was on the road; so he [the new high priest Ananias] assembled the sanhedrin of judges and brought before them James, the brother of Jesus, called Christ, and some others. And when he had procured an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned. But those who were more just among the people, uneasy at this breach of the law, disliked what he had done. So they sent to the king [Agrippa] asking him to order Ananias not to act this way in the future and to condemn what had been done. And some went to meet Albinus, who was returning from Alexandria, and explained to him that it was unlawful for Ananias to assemble the Sanhedrin without his consent. So he wrote to Ananias and threatened to punish him for his action. So King Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, after he had ruled three months, and made Joshua ben Damneh high priest.

**CORNELIUS TACITUS** (Roman Historian, c.55-120)

*Annals* 15.44.2-8 (Nero and Christians, ca. 64)

But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiation of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the burning [of Rome] was the result of his order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, those called Christians by the populace. Christ, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, but this most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular.

Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man’s cruelty, that they were being destroyed.
SUETONIUS (Roman Historian, 75-150)

*Lives of the Caesars*, Claudius 25.4 (Expulsion of Jews, ca. 50–”Chrestus” may be a mistake for “Christ”; cf. Acts 18:2)

Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, Claudius expelled them from Rome.

*Lives of the Caesars*, Nero 16.2 (Nero’s Persecution, ca. 64)

Punishment was inflicted [by Nero] on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition.

PLINY THE YOUNGER (Roman Governor of Bithynia and author, 62?-ca.113)

*Letters* 10.96-97 (Inquiry about Christians, ca. 110; Trajan’s reply)

Pliny to the Emperor Trajan.

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better give guidance to my hesitation or inform my ignorance? I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent. And I have been not a little hesitant as to whether there should be any distinction on account of age or no difference between the very young and the more mature; whether pardon is to be granted for repentance, or, if a man has once been a Christian, it does him no good to have ceased to be one; whether the name itself, even without offenses, or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished.

Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome.

Soon accusations spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ--none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do--these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but rather not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not to falsify their trusts, nor to refuse to return a pledge when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of
food—ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden secret associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed, and that from everywhere sacrificial animals are coming, for which until now very few purchasers could be found. Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded.

Trajan to Pliny.

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it—that is, by worshiping our gods—even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.

HADRIAN (Roman Emperor, 117-138)

Letter to Minucius Fundanus, in Justin, Apology 68.5-10 (On Christians, ca. 124)

Hadrian to Minucius Fundanus, [Roman governor of Bithynia].

I have received your letter written to me by his excellency Serennius Granianus, your predecessor. It is not my intention to leave the matter uninvestigated, for fear of causing the men embarrassment and abetting the informers in their mischief-making. If then the provincials can so clearly establish their case against the Christians that they can sustain it in a court of law, let them resort to this procedure only, and not rely on petitions or mere clamor. The most satisfactory course, if anyone should wish to prosecute, is for you to decide the matter. So if anyone prosecutes them and proves them guilty of any illegality, you must pronounce sentence according to the seriousness of the offense. But if anyone starts such proceedings in the hope of financial gain, then for goodness sake arrest him for his shabby trick, and see that he gets his deserts.

EPICTETUS (Greek Philosopher, c.50-130)

Discourses 4.7 (On Christians’ lack of fear of death)

Is it then possible for a man through madness, as the Galileans through habit, to be so disposed [as not to fear death]?
FRONTO (Roman Rhetorician, 100-166)

Quoted in Minucius Felix, Octavianus 9.5-6 (Supposed Christian rituals)

A young baby is covered over with flour, the object being to deceive the unwary. It is then served before the person to be admitted into the rites. The recruit is urged to inflict blows on it—they appear to be harmless because of the covering of flour. Thus the baby is killed with wounds that remain unseen and concealed. It is the blood of this infant—I shudder to mention it—it is this blood that they lick with thirsty lips; these are the limbs they distribute eagerly; this is the victim by which they seal their covenant.

On a special day they gather in a feast with all their children, sisters, mothers—all ages and all sexes. There, flushed with the banquet after such feasting and drinking, they begin to burn with incestuous passions. They provoke a dog tied to the lamp-stand to leap and bound towards a scrape of food they have tossed out of reach of his chain. By this means the light is overturned and extinguished, and with it common knowledge of their actions; in the shameless dark with unspeakable lust they copulate in random unions, all equally being guilty of incest, some by deed, but all by complicity.

LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA (Greek Satirist, c.120-c.180)

Passing of Peregrinus 11-14, 16 (Satire on the Cynic Peregrinus and Christians)

During this period he [Proteus Peregrinus] apprenticed himself to the priests and teachers of the Christians in Palestine and became an expert in that astonishing religion they have. Naturally, in no time at all he had them looking like babies and he became their prophet, leader, synagogue-leader, and what not, all by himself. He expounded and commented on their sacred writings and even wrote a number himself. They looked up to him as god, made him their lawgiver and put his name down as official patron of their sect, or at least vice-patron, second to that man they still worship today, the one who was crucified in Palestine because he had brought this new cult into being.

Well then, Proteus was arrested for being a Christian, and thrown in jail, an event that set him up for his future career: now he had standing, a magic aura, and the public notoriety that he was so in love with. Once he was behind bars, the Christians, who considered this a catastrophe, moved heaven and earth to get him free. When this proved impossible they went all out to do everything else they could for him. From the crack of dawn you could see gray-haired widows and orphan children hanging around the jail, and the bigwigs of the sect used to bribe the jailers so they could spend the night with him inside. Full-course dinners were brought to him, their holy scriptures were read to him, and our excellent Peregrinus—he was still going under that name at the time—was hailed as a latter day Socrates. From as far away as Asia Minor Christian communities sent committees, paying their expenses out of the common fund, to help him with advice and consolation.

The efficiency the Christians show whenever matters of community interest like this happen is unbelievable; they literally spare nothing. And so, because Peregrinus was in jail, money poured in from them; he picked up a very nice income this way. You see, for one thing, the poor devils have convinced themselves they’re all going to be immortal and live forever, which makes most of them take death lightly and voluntarily give themselves up to it. For another, that first lawgiver of theirs persuaded them that they’re all brothers the minute they deny the Greek gods (thereby breaking our law) and take to worshiping him, the crucified sophist
himself, and to living their lives according to his rules. They scorn all possessions without
distinction and treat them as community property; doctrines like this they accept strictly on faith.
Consequently, if a professional crook who knows how to capitalize on a situation gets among
them, he makes himself very rich overnight, laughing up his sleeve at these simpletons.

As it happened, Peregrinus was released from jail by the governor of Syria. The governor
had a penchant for philosophy and was fully aware that Peregrinus was enough of a nut to
welcome the death that would give him a martyr’s acclaim. So he set him free without even the
usual flogging. . . . So Peregrinus took to the road a second time. For travel expenses he had the
Christians—with them as his guardians there was nothing he had to do without—and he kept
himself going this way for some time. Then he committed some outrage against them too—I think
he was eating the things they are not supposed to eat—and, since they would no longer have
anything to do with him, he was hard up. So he decided to recant and ask the city for this
property back.

Alexander the Fake Prophet 25, 37 (Alexander’s supposed conflict with Christians)

Alexander began a campaign of intimidation against them [the Epicureans who opposed
him]. He announced that Pontus was full of atheists and Christians who had the effrontery to
utter the worst possible slanders against him, and he ordered the everyone who wanted to stay in
his good graces to stone the offenders.

[Alexander] worked up a mystery cult of his own, complete with torchbearers and
presiding priests. It lasted three whole days in a row. On the first there was, at Athens, an initial
proclamation. Here it took the form: “If any atheist, Christian, or Epicurean has come here to spy,
let him be gone. And may the true believers of the god conduct their rites with heaven’s
blessing.”

LOLLIANUS (Roman Romance-writer, II cent.)

Papyrus fragment of a Romance (Supposed Christian rituals)

At this moment another naked man arrived with a purple belt around his loins. He threw
the boy’s body on his back, struck it, opened it, removed the heart and placed it over the fire.
Then he took the roasted heart off the fire and cut it into halves. He sprinkled it with barley and
drenched it with oil. When it was sufficiently prepared, he distributed portions of it to the
initiates, and when they were holding them in their hands, he made them swear an oath by the
blood of the heart, not to leave in the lurch or betray, even if they would be arrested, or if they
would be tortured, or if their eyes would be dug out.

GALEN (Greek Physician, c.130-c.200)

On Changes of the Pulse 2.4; 3.3 (Christian credulity)

[Although an opinion] is commonly spoken of by prominent people, cogent
demonstration [is desired] or it would be like one coming into the school of Moses and Christ
and just hearing talk of unproven laws.

One might more easily teach new ideas to the followers of Moses and Christ than to
physicians and philosophers who cling fast to the teachings of their schools.
On Hippocrates’ Anatomy (Christian behavior)

Most people are unable to follow any demonstrative argument consecutively; hence they need parables, and benefit from them just as we now see the people called Christians drawing their faith from parables and miracles, and yet sometimes acting in the same way as those who practice philosophy. For their contempt of death and of its sequel is patent to us every day, and likewise their restraint in sexual matters. For they include not only men but also women who refrain from sex throughout their whole life; and they also number individuals who, in self-discipline and self-control in matters of food and drink, and in their keen pursuit of justice, have attained a pitch not inferior to that of genuine philosophers.

MISHNAH (Jewish legal discussions compiled in the II cent.)

Yebamot 4.13 (The possible reference to Jesus in the Mishnah)

Rabbi Simeon son of Azzai said, “I have found a family register in Jerusalem where it says, ‘So-and-so is a bastard born to a married woman.’”

BABYLONIA TALMUD (Jewish legal discussions compiled in the V-IX cent)

Sanhedrin 43a (Jesus’ trial and execution)

On the eve of Passover they hanged Jesus the Nazarene, and the herald went before him for forty days, saying Jesus the Nazarene is going forth to be stoned in that he had practiced sorcery and beguiled and led Israel astray. Let everyone knowing anything in his defence come and plead for him. But they found nothing in his defense and hanged him on the eve of Passover.

Ulla says, “Would it have been supposed that Jesus the Nazarene, an insurrectionary, had anything in his favor? He was a deceiver and the Merciful one has said [Deut. 13: 8], ‘Nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him.’” But it was different with Jesus the Nazarene, for he was near to the kingdom.

Sanhedrin 67a (Witnesses supposedly against Jesus)

It is handed down that according to the Law that concealment is not used except in the case of a deceiver. How do they deal with him? They light a lamp for him in the inner chamber and set witnesses in the outer chamber to hear what he says without him seeing them.

And one says to him, “Tell me what you said in private,” and he tells him. And another says to him, “Should we forsake the Lord our God who is in heaven and practice false worship?” If he repents of them, good.

If he says, “That is our duty and we should do it,” the witnesses, who heard from outside are to bring him before the court and stone him. This was what they did to the son of Stada [i.e. Jesus] in Lydda, whom they hanged on the eve of the Passover.

Shabbat 104b (Jesus’ supposed paternity)

It is reported that Rabbi Eliezer said to the wise men, “Did the son of Stada not bring spells with him form Egypt hidden in a cut made in his flesh?”

They said to him, “But he was a fool and you cannot use a fool to prove an argument.”
“Is the son of Stada also the son of Pandira?”
Rabbi Hisda said, “Stada was the husband, the lover was Pandira.”
“Wasn’t the husband Pappos the son of Judah and the mother Stada?”
“The mother was Mary, the women’s hair dresser, as we say in Pumbeditha, ‘Such an one is false to her husband.’”

*Abodah Zarah* 17a (Rabbi Eliezer and the Apostle James discuss the law)

Rabbi Eliezer said: “Once I was walking in the upper street of Sepphoris and I found a man who was one of the disciples of Jesus the Nazarene, whose name was James of Kefar Sekaniah.

He said to me, ‘It is written in your Law [Deut. 23:19], “You shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog into the House of the Lord your God as payment of any vow.” What may be done with it?’

I gave no answer. He said to me, “Jesus the Nazarene taught me, [Micah 1: 7], ‘From the hire of a harlot she gathered them and to the hire of a harlot they shall return.’ Use it to build a latrine for the high priest.”

And the saying pleased me, and for this I was arrested for heresy; and I transgressed what is written in the Law [Prov. 5: 8], “Keep your way far from her,” that is, from heresy, “and ‘do not go near the door of her house,’ that is, of government.”

I. Although there are not many texts, they seem all to be independent reports. They also show a certain convergence. So what do these non-Christian texts tell us about JESUS?

1) By the time of they wrote, “Christ” had become more a name than a title (Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny).
2) He had been active in Palestine, especially in Judea (Josephus, Talmud, Tacitus, Lucian).
3) He was executed (Josephus, Tacitus, Talmud, Lucian).
4) A movement had appeared identified by his name (Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, Lucian).

*There is attestation to a lesser degree that:*

7) He was a teacher (Josephus, Talmud, Lucian)
6) He was a wonder-worker (Josephus, Talmud)
7) He was executed under Pontius Pilate (Tacitus, Josephus), at the time of Tiberius Caesar (Tacitus).
8) Jewish authorities had a role in the execution (Josephus, Talmud).

II. What does their convergent testimony suggest about HIS FOLLOWERS?

1) They were a religious movement—as opposed to a political or magical one. The labels used are “superstition” (Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny), and “cult” (Lucian).
2) They were persecuted and occasionally killed (Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny, Hadrian, Lucian).
3) They held private rites (Pliny, Lollianus, Fronto).
Beyond this, particular reports must be evaluated individually.
HEGESIPPUS, MEMOIRS, Book 5

Excepts preserved in Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

Hegesippus was a Christian convert from Judaism and wrote a collection of memoirs that concerned, in part, the history of the Jerusalem Church and the rise of the first heresies. He was already an adult in A.D. 130, visited Rome in the 150s, and probably completed his memoirs by 175. The are lost except for the sections preserved in Eusebius, which, with one exception, compose a more or less continuous extract from Book 5. Some of this report seems legendary and it should be treated with caution. Eusebius’s summaries of Hegesippus are given in italics.

(EH 4.8.2) In honor of them [heros and notable people] they [the pagans] erected cenotaphs and temples, as they still do. One of these was Antinous, a slave of Hadrian Caesar’s, in memory of whom the Antinoian Games are held. He was my own contemporary. Hadrian (130/1) even built a city called after him, and appointed prophets.

***

(EH 4.22.4) There were various groups in the Circumcision, among the Children of Israel, all hostile to the tribe of Judah and the Christ. They were these: Essenes, Galileans, Hemerobaptists, Masbotheans, Samaritans, Sadducees and Pharisees. (EH 2.23.4-17) Control of the Church passed to the apostles, together with the Lord’s brother James, whom everyone from the Lord’s time to our own has called the Righteous, for there were many Jameses, but this one was holy from his birth; he drank no wine or intoxicating liquor and ate no animal food; no razor came near his head, he did not smear himself with oil, and took no baths. He alone was permitted to enter the Holy Place, for his garments were not of wool but of linen. He used to enter the sanctuary alone, and was often found on his knees beseeching forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel’s from his continually bending them in worship of God and beseeching forgiveness for the people. Because of his unsurpassable righteousness he was called the Righteous and Oblias—in our own language “Bulwark of the People and Righteousness”—fulfilling the declarations of the prophets regarding him.

Representatives of the seven popular sects already described by me asked him what was meant by “the door of Jesus,” and he replied that Jesus was the Savior. Some of them came to believe that Jesus was the Christ; the sects mentioned above did not believe in a resurrection or in One who is coming to give each man according to what his deeds deserve, but those who did come to believe did so because of James. Since therefore many even of the ruling class believed, there was an uproar among the Jews, Scribes, and Pharisees, who said there was a danger that the entire people would expect Jesus as the Christ. So they collected and said to James, “Be good enough to restrain the people, for they have gone astray after Jesus in the belief that he is the Christ. Be good enough to make the facts about Jesus clear to all who come for the Passover day. We all accept what you said: we can vouch for it, and so can all the people, that you are a righteous man and take no one at his face value. So make it clear to the crowd that they must not go astray as regards Jesus: the whole people and all of us accept what you say. So take your stand on the Temple parapet, so that from that height you may be easily seen, and your words audible to the whole people. For because of the Passover all the tribes have gathered and the Gentiles
So the Scribes and Pharisees made James stand on the Sanctuary parapet and shouted to him: “Righteous one, whose word we are all obliged to accept, the people are going astray after Jesus who was crucified; so tell us what is meant by ‘the door of Jesus.’” He replied as loudly as he could: “Why do you question me about the Son of Man? I tell you, he is sitting in heaven at the right hand of the Great Power, and he will come on the clouds of heaven.” Many were convinced and gloriéd in James’ testimony, crying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” Then again the Scribes and Pharisees said to each other: “We made a bad mistake in affording such testimony to Jesus. We had better go up and throw him down, so they will be frightened and not believe him.” “Ho, ho!” they cried out, “even the righteous one has gone astray!”—fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, “Let us remove the righteous one, for he is unprofitable to us. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their works.” So they went up and threw down the righteous one. Then they began to say to each other “Let us stone James the Righteous,” and they began to stone him, as in spite of his Fall he was still alive. But he turned and knelt, uttering the words: “I beseech you, Lord God and Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.” While they pelted him with stones, one of the descendants of Rechab the son of Rachabim—the priestly family to which Jeremiah the Prophet bore witness, called out: “Stop! what are you doing? the righteous one is praying for you.” Then one of them, a fuller, took the club which he used to beat out the clothes and brought it down on the head of the righteous one. Such was his martyrdom. He was buried on the spot, by the Sanctuary, and his headstone is still there by the Sanctuary. He was proved a true witness to Jews and Gentiles alike that Jesus is the Christ.

Immediately after this Vespasian began to besiege them. (EH 3.20.1-2) And there still survived of the Lord’s family the grandsons of Jude, who was said to be his brother, humanly speaking. These were informed against as being of David’s line, and brought by the bailiff before Domitian Caesar, who was as afraid of the advent of Christ as Herod had been before. Domitian asked them whether they were descend from David and they admitted it. Then he asked them what property they owned and what funds they had at their disposal. They replied they had only 9,000 denarii between then, half belonging to each; this, they said, was not available in cash, but was the estimated value of only twenty-five acres of land, from which they raised the money to pay their taxes and the wherewithal to support themselves by their toil.

Then he continues, they showed him their hands, putting forward as proof of their toil the hardness of their bodies and the calluses impressed on their hands by their incessant labor. When asked about Christ and his kingdom—what it was like, and where and when it would appear—they explained that it was not of this world or anywhere on earth but angelic and in heaven, and would be established at the end of the world, when he would come in glory to judge the living and the dead and give every man payment according to his conduct. On hearing this, Domitian found no fault with them, but despised them as beneath his notice and let them so free and issued orders terminating the persecution of the Church.

(EH 3.32.5-6) Consequently they came and presided over every church, as being witnesses and members of the Lord’s family, and since profound peace came to every church they survived till the reign of Trajan Caesar—till the son of the Lord’s uncle, the aforesaid Simon son of Clopas, was similarly informed against by the heretical sects and brought up on the same charge before Atticus, the provincial governor, so that all including the governor, were astounded that at the age of 120 he could endure it; and he was ordered to be crucified. (EH 4.22.4) When
James the Righteous had suffered martyrdom like the Lord and for the same reason, Symeon, the son of his uncle Clopas was appointed bishop. He being a cousin of the Lord, it was the universal demand that he should be the second.

They used to call the Church a virgin for this reason that she had not yet been seduced by listening to nonsense. But Thebuthis because he had not been made bishop began to seduce her by means of the seven sects (to which he himself belonged) among the people. From these came Simon and his Simonians, Cleobius and his Cleobienes, Dositheus and his Dositheans, Gorthaeus and Gorathenes, and the Masbotheans. From these were derived the Menandriansists, Marcionists, Carpocratians, Valentinians, Basilidians, and Saturnilians, every man introducing his own opinion in his own particular way. From these in turn came false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, who split the unity of the Church by poisonous suggestions against God and against his Christ. (EH 3.32.2-3) Some of these charged Simon son of Clopas with being a descendant of David and a Christian; as a result he suffered martyrdom at the age of 120, when Trajan was emperor and Atticus was consular governor (106/7). The same writer tells us that in the sequel when members of the royal house of Judah were being hunted, Symeon’s accusers were arrested too, on the ground that they belonged to it.

(EH 4.22.1-2) Hegesippus appends the following to his remarks on Clement’s Epistle to the Corinthians: The Corinthian church continued in the true doctrine until Primus became bishop. I mixed with them on my voyage to Rome and spent several days with the Corinthians, during which we were refreshed with the true doctrine. On arrival in Rome, I pieced together the succession down to Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus, Anicetus being succeeded by Soter and he by Eleutherus. In every line of bishops and in every city things accord with the preaching of the Law, the Prophets, and the Lord.

* * *

It is likely that the list of Roman bishops (the oldest extant) compiled by Hegesippus underlies Eusebius’ history of the Roman Church. Hegesippus’ list of the early popes can thus be reconstructed as follows from Eusebius:

Peter the Apostle, died 64.
Linus, 64-91 (cf. 2 Tim. 4: 21)
Anencletus, 79-91
Clement, 91-99 (cf. Phil. 4: 3; his letter to the Corinthians is extant)
Evaristus, 99-107
Alexander, 107-117 (in whose reign Ignatius of Antioch died in Rome)
Sixtus, 117-127
Telesphorus, 127-137 (the only II cent. pope whose martyrdom is certain)
Hyginus, 137-140
Pius, 140-154 (who may have been the brother of Hermas)
Anicetus, 154-166 (during whose reign Hegesippus arrived in Rome)
Soter, 166-175 (at whose election Hegesippus was present)
Eleutherius, 175-189 (who had been Anicetus’ deacon)
PAPIAS OF HIEROPOLIS

THE SAYINGS OF THE LORD EXPLAINED, Book 4

Excerpts preserved in Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.39

Papias of Hierapolis lived between about 60 and 135, he may have met the Apostle John; he certainly knew hearers of Jesus’ disciples. Eusebius gives us three quotes from his book (now lost), which are important witness to beliefs ca. 120 about the slow disappearance of oral transmission and the composition of the books of the New Testament to replace it.

I shall not hesitate to furnish you, along with the interpretations, with all that in days gone by I carefully learned from the elders and have carefully recalled, for I can guarantee its truth. Unlike most people, I felt at home not with those who had a great deal to say, but with those who taught the truth; not with those who appeal to commandments from other sources but with those who appeal to the truth itself.

Whenever anyone came who had been a follower of the elders, I inquired into the words of the elders, what Andrew or Peter had said, or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other disciple of the Lord, and what Ariston (cf. 1 Pet. 1: 23) and the elder John, disciples of the Lord, were saying. For I did not imagine that things out of books would help me as much as the utterances of a living and abiding voice.

* * *

This, too, the elder [John] used to say, “Mark, who had been Peter’s interpreter, wrote down carefully, but not in order, all that he remembered of the Lord’s sayings and doings. For he had not heard the Lord or been one of his followers, but later, as I said, one of Peter’s. Peter used to adapt his teaching to the occasion, without making a systematic arrangement of the Lord’s sayings, so that Mark was quite justified in writing down some things just as he remembered them. For he had one purpose only—to leave out nothing he had heard, and to make no misstatement about it.

* * *

Matthew compiled sayings in the Aramaic language and everyone translated them as best they could.
SECOND-CENTURY GNOSTIC TEXTS

THE THUNDER, PERFECT MIND
(Nag Hammadi Codex 6 13.1-21, 32)

This text, the title of which is itself uncertain, is a good example of the kind of paradoxical poetry that gave Gnosticism much of its appeal. In fact, we are not sure that it was even written by a Christian Gnostic—the author may have been Jewish or Pagan—but it was read in Christian Gnostic circles. Read it to get the feel of Gnostic literature.

I was sent forth from the power,
and I have come to those who reflect upon me,
and I have been found among those who seek after me.

Look upon me, you who reflect upon me,
and you hearers, hear me.

You who are waiting for me, take me to yourselves.
And do not banish me from your sight.
And do not make your voice hate me, nor your hearing.
Do not be ignorant of me anywhere or any time. Be on your guard!

Do not be ignorant of me.

For I am the first and the last.
I am the honored one and the scorned one.
I am the whore and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin.
I am the mother and the daughter.
I am the members of my mother.
I am the barren one
and many are her sons.
I am she whose wedding is great,
and I have not taken a husband.
I am the midwife and she who does not bear.
I am the solace of my labor pains.
I am the bride and the bridegroom,
and it is my husband who begot me.
I am the mother of my father
and the sister of my husband
and he is my offspring.
I am the slave of him who prepared me.
I am the ruler of my offspring.
But he is the one who begot me before the time on a birthday.
And he is my offspring in due time and my power is from him.

I am the staff of his power in his youth,
and he is the rod of my old age.
And whatever he wills happens to me.
I am the silence that is incomprehensible
and the idea whose remembrance is frequent.
I am the voice whose sound is manifold
and the word whose appearance is multiple.
I am the utterance of my name.

Why, you who hate me, do you love me,
and you hate those who love me?
You who deny me, confess me,
and you who confess me, deny me.
You who tell the truth about me, lie about me,
and you who have lied about me, tell the truth about me.
You who know me, be ignorant of me,
and those who have not known me, let them know me.

For I am knowledge and ignorance.
I am shame and boldness.
I am shameless; I am ashamed.
I am strength and I am fear.
I am war and peace.
Give heed to me.
I am the one who is disgraced and the great one.

Give heed to my poverty and my wealth.
Do not be arrogant to me when I am cast out upon the earth,
and you will find me in those that are to come.
And do not look upon me on the dung-heap
nor go out and leave me cast out,
and you will find me in the kingdoms.
And do not look upon me when I am cast out among those who
are disgraced and in the least places,
nor laugh at me.
And do not cast me out among those who are slain in violence.
But I, I am compassionate and I am cruel.

Be on your guard!
Do not hate my obedience
and do not love my self control.
In my weakness, do not forsake me,
and do not be afraid of my power.
For why do you despise my fear
and curse my pride?
But I am she who exists in all fears
and strength in trembling.
I am she who is weak,
and I am well in a pleasant place.
I am senseless and I am wise.

Why have you hated me in your counsels?
For I shall be silent among those who are silent,
    and I shall appear and speak,
Why then have you hated me, you Greeks?
    because I am a barbarian among the barbarians?
For I am the wisdom of the Greeks
    and the knowledge of the barbarians.
I am the judgement of the Greeks and of the barbarians.
I am the one whose image is great in Egypt
    and the one who has no image among the barbarians.
I am the one who has been hated everywhere
    and who has been loved everywhere.
I am the one whom they call life,
    and you have called death.
I am the one whom they call the law,
    and you have called lawlessness.
I am the one whom you have pursued,
    and I am the one whom you have seized.
I am the one whom you have scattered,
    and you have gathered me together.
I am the one before whom you have been ashamed,
    and you have been shameless to me.
I am she who does not keep festival,
    and I am she whose festivals are many.
I, I am godless,
    and I am the one whose God is great.
I am the one whom you have reflected upon,
    and you have scorned me.
I am unlearned,
    and they learn from me.
I am the one that you have despised,
    and you reflect upon me.
I am the one whom you have hidden from,
    and you appear to me.
But whenever you hide yourselves,
    I myself will appear.
For whenever you appear,
    I myself will hide from you.
[ . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .]

Take me to yourselves from understanding and grief.
And take me to yourselves in places that are ugly and in ruin,
    and rob from those which are good even though in ugliness.
Out of shame, take me to yourselves shamelessly;
    and out of shamelessness and shame, upbraid my members in yourselves.
And come forward to me, you who know me and you who know my members,
    and establish the great ones among the small first creatures.
Come forward to childhood,
    and do not despise it because it is small and it is little.
And do not turn away from greatnesses in some part of the smallnesses, for the smallnesses are known from the greatnesses.

Why do you curse me and honor me? 
You have wounded and you have had mercy. 
Do not separate me from the first ones you have known. 
And do not cast anyone out nor turn anyone away
[ . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ]
[ . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ]
I know the first ones and those after them know me.

[ . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ]
I am the knowledge of my inquiry, and the finding of those who seek after me, and the command of those who ask of me, and the power of the powers in my knowledge of the angels, who have been sent at my word, and of gods in their seasons by my counsel, and of spirits of every man who exists with me, and of women who dwell within me.

I am the one who is honored, and who is praised, and who is despised scornfully. 
I am peace, and war has come because of me.
I am an alien and a citizen.
I am the substance and the one who has no substance.

Those who are without association with me are ignorant of me, and those who are in my substance are the ones who know me. 
Those who are close to me have been ignorant of me, and those who are far away from me are the ones who have known me.

On the day when I am close to you, you are far away from me and on the day when I am far away from you I am close to you.

I am [. . ] within.
I am [. . ] of the natures. 
I am the creation of the spirits. 
I am control and the uncontrollable. 
I am the union and the dissolution. 
I am the abiding and I am the dissolving. 
I am the one below, and they come up to me.
I am the judgement and the acquittal. 
I, I am sinless, and the root of sin derives from me.
I am the hearing which is attainable to everyone
and the speech which cannot be grasped.
I am a mute who does not speak,
and great is my multitude of words.

Hear me in gentleness, and learn of me in roughness.
I am she who cries out,
and I am cast forth upon the face of the earth.
I prepare the bread and my mind within.
I am the knowledge of my name.
I am the one who cries out,
and I listen.
[ ................. ]
[ ................. ]
[ ................. ]
I am the one who is called Truth
and iniquity.

You honor me and you whisper against me.
Judge them before they give judgement against you,
because the judge and partiality exist in you.
If you are condemned by this one, who will acquit you?
Or, if you are acquitted by him, who will be able to detain you?
For what is inside of you is what is outside of you,
    and the one who fashions you on the outside is the one who shaped the
    inside of you.
And what you see outside of you,
    you see inside of you;
    it is visible and it is your garment.
Hear me, you hearers
    and learn of my words, you who know me.
I am the hearing that is attainable to everything;
I am the speech that cannot be grasped.
I am the name of the sound
    and the sound of the name.
I am the sign of the letter
    and the designation of the division.
[ . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
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[ . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
And I will speak his name.

Look then at his words
    and all the writings which have been completed.
Give heed then, you hearers
    and you also, the angels and those who have been sent,
    and you spirits who have risen from the dead.
For I am the one who alone exists,
    and I have no one who will judge me.

For many are the pleasant forms which exist in
    numerous sins,
    and incontinencies,
    and disgraceful passions,
    and fleeting pleasures,
which men embrace until they become sober
    and go up to their resting place.
And they will find me there,
    and they will live,
    and they will not die again.
THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH
(Nag Hammadi Codex 1 16, 31-43, 24)

The Gospel of Truth is a Valentinian Gnostic text, possibly written by Valentinus himself. Notice how different it is in form from an “orthodox” gospel. This text was probably prepared as an introduction to Valentinian Christianity for those converting from the “orthodox” Church to Gnostic Christianity. So it is a good text for getting an introduction to Gnostic doctrine.

The gospel of truth is joy to those who have received from the Father of truth the gift of knowing him by the power of the Logos, who has come from the Pleroma and who is in the thought and in the mind of the Father; he it is who is called Saviour since that is the name of the work which he must do for the redemption of those who have not known the Father. For the name of the gospel is the manifestation of hope, since that is the discovery of those who seek him, because the All sought him from whom it had come forth. You see, the All had been inside of him, that illimitable, inconceivable one, who is better than every thought.

This ignorance of the Father brought about terror and fear. And terror became dense like a fog, that no one was able to see. Because of this, error became strong. But it worked on its material substance vainly, because it did not know the truth. It was in a fashioned form while it was preparing, in power and in beauty, the equivalent of truth. This then, was not a humiliation for him, that illimitable, inconceivable one. For they were as nothing, this terror and this forgetfulness and this figure of falsehood, whereas this established truth is unchanging, unperturbed and completely beautiful. For this reason, do not take error too seriously. Thus, since it had no root, it was in a fog as regards the Father, engaged in preparing works and forgetfulness and fear in order, by these means, to beguile those of the middle and make them captive. The forgetfulness of error was not revealed. It did not become light beside the Father. Forgetfulness did not exist with the Father, although it existed because of him. What exists in him is knowledge, which was revealed so that forgetfulness might be destroyed and that they might know the Father, if they then came to know the Father, from that moment on forgetfulness will cease to exist.

That is the gospel of him whom they seek, which he has revealed to the perfect through the mercies of the Father as the hidden mystery, Jesus the Christ. Through him he enlightened those who were in the darkness because of forgetfulness. He enlightened them and gave them a path. And that path is the truth which he taught them. For this reason error was angry with him, so it persecuted him. It was distressed by him, so it made him powerless. He was nailed to a cross. He became a fruit of the knowledge of the Father. He did not, however, destroy them because they ate of it. He rather caused those who ate of it to be joyful because of this discovery. And as for him, them he found in himself, and him they found in themselves, that illimitable, inconceivable one, that perfect Father who made the all, in whom the All is, and whom the All lacks, since he retained in himself their perfection, which he had not given to the all. The Father was not jealous. What jealousy, indeed, is there between him and his members? For, even if the Aeon had received their perfection in himself, giving it to them as a way to return to him and as a knowledge unique in perfection. He is the one who set the all in order and in whom the all existed and whom the all lacked. As one of whom some have no knowledge, he desires that they know him and that they love him. For what is it that the All lacked, if not the knowledge of the Father?

He became a guide, quiet and in leisure. In the middle of a school he came and spoke the Word, as teacher. Those who were wise in their own estimation came to put him to the test. But
he discredited them as empty-headed people. They hated him because they really were not wise men. After all these came also the little children, those who possess the knowledge of the Father. When they became strong they taught the aspects of the Father’s face. They came to know and they were known. They were glorified and they gave glory. In their heart, the living book of the Living was manifest, the book which was written in the thought and in the mind of the Father and, from before the foundation of the All, is in that incomprehensible part of him.

This is the book which no one found possible to take, since it was reserved for him who will take it and be slain. No one was able to be manifest from those who believed in salvation as long as that book had not appeared. For this reason, the compassionate, faithful Jesus was patient in his sufferings until he took that book, since he knew that his death meant life for the many. Just as in the case of a will which has not yet been opened, for the fortune of the deceased master of the house is hidden, so also in the case of the All which has been hidden as long as the Father of the All was invisible and unique in himself, in whom every space has its source. For this reason Jesus appeared. He took that book as his own. He was nailed to a cross. He affixed the edict of the Father to the cross. Oh, such great teaching! He abases himself even unto death, though he is clothed in eternal life. Having divested himself in these perishable rags, he clothed himself in incorruptibility, which no one could possibly take from him. Having entered into the empty territory of fears, he passed before those who were stripped by forgetfulness, being both knowledge and perfection, proclaiming things that are in the heart of the Father, so that he became the wisdom of those who have received instruction. But those who are to be taught, the living who are inscribed in the book of the living, learn for themselves, receiving instructions from the Father, turning to him again.

Since the perfection of the All is in the Father, it is necessary for the All to ascend to him. Therefore, if one has knowledge, he gets what belongs to him and draws it to himself. For he who is ignorant, is deficient, and it is a great deficiency, since he lacks that which will make him perfect. Since the perfection of the All is in the Father, it is necessary for the All to ascend to him and for each one to get the things which are his. He registered them first, having prepared them to be given to those who came from him. These whose name he knew first were called last, so that the one who has knowledge is he whose name the Father has pronounced. For he whose name has both been spoken is ignorant. Indeed, how shall one hear if his name has not been uttered. For he who remains ignorant until the end is a creature of forgetfulness and will perish with it. If this is not so, why have these wretches no name, why do they have no sound? Hence, if one has knowledge, he is from above. If he is called, he hears, he replies, and he turns toward him who called him and he ascends to him and he knows to what he is called. Since he has knowledge, he does the will of him who called him. He desires to please him and he receives rest. He receives a certain name. He who thus is going to have knowledge knows whence he came and whither he is going. He knows it as a person who, having become intoxicated, has turned from his drunkenness and having come to himself, has restored what is his own.

He has turned many from error. He went before them to their own places, from which they departed when they erred because of the depth of him who surrounds every place, whereas there is nothing which surrounds him. It was a great wonder that they were in the Father without knowing him and that they were able to leave on their own, since they were not able to contain him and know him whom they were, for indeed his will had not come forth from him. For he revealed it as a knowledge with which all its emanations agree, namely, the knowledge of the living book which he revealed to the Aeons at last as his letters, displaying them that these are not merely vowels nor consonants, so that one may read them and think something void of meaning; they are letters which convey the truth. They are pronounced only when they are known. Each letter is a perfect truth like a perfect book, for they are letters written by the hand of
the unity, since the Father wrote them for the Aeons, so that they by means of his letters might come to know the Father.

While his wisdom mediates on the logos, and since his teaching expresses it, his knowledge has been revealed. His honor is a crown upon it. Since his joy agrees with it, his glory exalted it. It has revealed his image. It has obtained his rest. His love took bodily form around it. His trust embraced it. Thus the logos of the Father goes forth into the All, being the fruit of his heart and expression of his will. It supports the All. It chooses and also takes form of the All, purifying it, and causing it to return to the Father and the Mother, Jesus of the utmost sweetness. The Father opens his bosom, but his bosom is the Holy Spirit. He reveals his hidden self which is his son, so that through the compassion of the Father the Aeons may come to know him, end their wearying search for the Father and rest themselves in him, knowing that this is rest. After he had filled what was incomplete, he did away with form. The form of it is the world, that which it served. For where there is envy and strife, there is incompleteness; but where there is unity, there is completeness. Since this incompleteness came about because they did not know the Father, so when they know the Father, incompleteness, from that moment on, will cease to be. As one’s ignorance disappears when he gains knowledge, and as darkness disappears when light appears, so also incompleteness is eliminated by completeness. Certainly, from that moment on, form is no longer manifest, but will be dissolved in fusion with unity for their works lie scattered. In time unity will make the spaces complete. By means of unity each and one will understand itself. By means of knowledge it will purify itself of diversity with a view towards unity, devouring matter within itself like fire and darkness by light, death by life.

Certainly, if these things have happened to each one of us, it is fitting for us, surely, to think about the All so that the house may be holy and silent for unity. Like people who have moved from a neighborhood, if they have some dishes around which are not good, they usually break them. Nevertheless the householder does not suffer a loss, but rejoices, for in the place of these defective dishes there are those which are completely perfect. For this is the judgement which has come from above and which has judged every person, a drawn two-edged sword cutting on this side and that. When it appeared, I mean, the Logos, who is in the heart of those who pronounce it—it was not merely a sound but it has become a body—a great disturbance occurred among the dishes, for some where emptied, other filled: other were provided for, others were removed; some were purified, still others were broken. All the spaces were shaken and disturbed for they had no composure nor stability. Error was disturbed not knowing what it should do. It was troubled; it lamented, it was beside itself because it did not know anything. When knowledge, which is its abolishment, approached it with all its emanations, error is empty, since there is nothing in it. Truth appeared; all its emanations recognized it. They actually greeted the Father with a power which is complete and which joins them with the Father. For each one loves truth because truth is the mouth of the Father. His tongue is the Holy Spirit, who joins him to truth attaching him to the mouth of the Father by his tongue at the time he shall receive the Holy Spirit.

This is the manifestation of the Father and his revelation to his Aeons. He revealed his hidden self and explained it. For who is it who exists if not it is the Father himself. All the spaces are his emanations. They knew that they stem from him as children from a perfect man. They knew that they had not yet received form nor had they yet received a name, every one of which the Father produces. If they at that time receive form of his knowledge, though they are truly in him, they do not know him. But the Father is perfect. He knows every space which is within him. If he pleases, he reveals anyone whom he desires by giving him a form and by giving him a name; and he does give him a name and cause him to come into being. Those who are not yet exist are nothing. But they are in him who will desire that they exist when he pleases, like the
event which is going to happen. On the one hand, he knows, before anything is revealed, what he will produce. On the other hand, the fruit which has not yet been revealed does not know anything, nor is it anything either. Thus each space which, on its part, is in the Father comes from the existent one, who, on his part, has established it from the nonexistent. . . . he who does not exist at all, will never exist.

What, then, is that which he wants him to think? I am like the shadows and phantoms of the night. When morning comes, this one knows that the fear which he had experienced was nothing. Thus they were ignorant of the Father; he is the one whom they did not see. Since there had been fear and confusion and a lack of confidence and double-mindedness and division, there were many illusions which were conceived by him, the foregoing, as well as empty ignorance—as if they were fast asleep and found themselves prey to troubled dreams. Either there is a place to which they flee, or they lack strength as they come, having pursued unspecified things. Either they are involved in inflicting blows, or they themselves receive bruises. Either they are Falling from high places, or they fly through the air, though they have no wings at all. Other times, it is as if certain people were trying to kill them, even though there is no one pursuing them; or, they themselves are killing those beside them, for they are stained by their blood. Until the moment when they who are passing through all these things—I mean they who have experienced all these confusions—awake, they see nothing because the dreams were nothing. It is thus that they who cast ignorance from them as sheep do not consider it to be anything, nor regard its properties to be something real, but they renounce them like a dream in the night and they consider the knowledge of the Father to be the dawn. It is thus that each one has acted, as if he were asleep, during the time when he was ignorant and thus he come to understand, as if he were awakening. And happy is the man who comes to himself and awakens. Indeed, blessed is he who has opened the eyes of the blind. And the Spirit came to him in haste when it raised him. Having given its hand to the one lying prone on the ground, it placed him firmly on his feet, for he had not yet stood up. He gave them the means of knowing the knowledge of the Father and the revelation of his son. For when they saw it and listened to it, he permitted them to take a taste of it and to smell and to grasp the beloved son.

He appeared, informing them of the Father, the illimitable one. He inspired them with that which is in the mind, while doing his will. Many received the light and turned towards him. But material men were alien to him and did not discern his appearance nor recognize him. For he came in the likeness of flesh and nothing blocked his way because it was incorruptible and unrestrainable. Moreover, while saying new things, speaking about what is in the heart of the Father, he proclaimed the faultless word. Light spoke through his mouth, and his voice brought forth life. He gave them thought and understanding and mercy and salvation and the Spirit of strength derived from the limitlessness of the Father and sweetness. He caused punishments and scouring to cease, for it was they which caused many in need of mercy to astray from him in error and in chains—and he mightily destroyed them and derided them with knowledge. He became a path for those who went astray and knowledge to those who were ignorant, a discovery for those who sought, and a support for those who tremble, a purity for those who were defiled. He is the shepherd who left behind the ninety-nine sheep which had not strayed and went in search of that one which was lost. He rejoiced when he had found it. For ninety-nine is a number on the left hand, which holds it. The moment he finds the one, however, the whole number is transferred to the right hand. Thus it is with him who lacks the one, that is, the entire right hand which attracts that in which it is deficient, seizes it from the left side and transfers it to the right. In this way, then, the number becomes one hundred. This number signifies the Father.

He labored even at the Sabbath for the sheep which he found Fallen into the pit. He saved the life of that sheep, bringing it up from the pit in order that you may understand fully what the
Sabbath is, you who possess full understanding. It is a day in which it is not fitting for salvation to be idle, so that you may speak of the heavenly day which has no night and of the sun which does not set because it is perfect. Say then in your hearts that you are this perfect day and that in you the light which does not fail dwells. Speak concerning the truth to those who seek it and of knowledge to those who, in their error, have committed sin. Make sure-footed those who stumble and stretch forth thy hand to the sick. Nourish the hungry and set at ease those who are troubled. Foster men who love. Raise up and awaken those who sleep. For you are this understanding which encourages. If the strong follow this course, they are even stronger. Turn your attention to yourselves. Do not be concerned with other things, namely, that which you have cast forth from yourselves, that which you have dismissed. Do not return to them to eat them. Do not be moth-eaten. Do not be worm-eaten, for you have already shaken it off. Do not be a place of the devil, for you have already destroyed him. Do not strengthen your last obstacles, because that is reprehensible. For the lawless one is nothing. He harms himself more than the law. For that one does his works because he is a lawless person. But this one, because he is a righteous person,
does his works among others. Do the will of the Father, then, for you are from him.

For the Father is sweet and his will is good. He knows the things that are yours, so that you may rest yourselves in them. For by the fruits one knows the things that are yours, that they are the children of the Father, and one knows his aroma, that you originate from the grace of his countenance. For this reason, the Father loved his aroma; and it manifests itself in every place; and when it is mixed with matter, he gives his aroma to the light; and into his rest he causes it to ascend in every form and in every sound. For there are no nostrils which smells the aroma, but it is the Spirit which possesses the sense of smell and it draws it for itself to itself and sinks into the aroma of the Father. He is, indeed, the place for it, and he takes it to the place from which it has come, in the first aroma which is cold. It is something in a psychic form, resembling cold water which is . . . [manuscript damaged] . . . since it is in soil which is not hard, of which those who see it, think it is earth. Afterwards, it becomes soft again. If a breath is taken, it is usually hot. The cold aromas, then, are from the division. For this reason, God came and destroyed the division and he brought the hot Pleroma of love, so that the cold may not return, but the unity of the Perfect Thought prevail.

This is the word of the Gospel of the finding of the Pleroma for those who wait for the salvation which comes from above. When their hope, for which they are awaiting, is waiting—they whose likeness is the light in which there is no shadow, then at that time the Pleroma is about to come. The deficiency of matter, however, is not because of the limitlessness of the Father who comes at the time of the deficiency. And yet no one is able to say that the incorruptible One will come in this manner. But the depth of the Father is increasing, and the thought of error is not with him. It is a matter of Falling down and a matter of being readily set upright at the finding of that one who has come to him who will turn back. For this turning back is called Repentance. For this reason, incorruption has breathed. It followed him who has sinned in order that he may find rest. For forgiveness is that which remains for the light in the deficiency, the word of the pleroma. For the physician hurries to the place in which there is sickness, because that is the desire which he has. The sick man is in a deficient condition, but he does not hide himself because the physician possesses that which he lacks. In this manner the deficiency is filled by the Pleroma, which has no deficiency, which has given itself out in order to fill the one who is deficient, so that grace may take him, then, from the area which is deficient and has no grace. Because of this a diminishing occurred in the place which there is no grace, the area where the one who is small, who is deficient, is taken hold of.

He revealed himself as a Pleroma, in effect, the finding of the light of truth which has shined towards him, because he is unchangeable. For this reason, they who have been troubled
speak about Christ in their midst so that they may receive a return and he may anoint them with
the ointment. The ointment is the pity of the Father, who will have mercy on them. But those
whom he has anointed are those who are perfect. For the filled vessels is usually empty, and the
cause of its deficiency is the consumption of the ointment. For then a breath is drawn only
through the power which he has. But the one who is without deficiency—one does not trust
anyone beside him nor does one pour anything out. But that which is the deficient is filled again
by the perfect Father. He is good. He knows his plantings because he is the one who has planted
them in his Paradise. And his Paradise is his place of rest.

This is the perfection in the thought of the Father and these are the words of his
reflection. Each one of his words is the works of his will alone, in the revelation of his Logos.
Since they were in the depth of his mind, the Logos, who was the first to come forth, caused them
to appear, along with an intellect which speaks the unique word by means of a silent grace. It was
called Though since they were in it before becoming manifest. It happened, then, that it was the
first to come forth—at the moment pleasing to the will of him who desired it; and it is in the will
of that the Father is in rest and with which he is pleased. Nothing happens without him, nor does
anything occur without the will of the Father. But his will is incomprehensible. His will is his
mark, but no one can know it, nor is it possible for them to concentrate on it in order to possess
it. But that which he wishes takes place at the moment he wishes it—even if the view does not
please anyone: it is God’s will. For the Father knows the beginning of them all as well as their
end. For when their end arrives, he will question them to their faces. The end, you see, is the
recognition of him whom the beginning came forth and to whom will return all who have come
from him. For they were made manifest for the glory and the joy of his name.

And the name of the Father is the Son. It is he who, in the beginning, gave a name to him
who came forth from him—he is the same one—and he begot him for a son. He gave him his name
which belonged to him—he, the Father, who possesses everything which exists around him. He
possess the name; he has the son. It is possible for them to see him. The name, however, is
invisible, for it alone is the mystery of the invisible about to come to ears completely filled with
it through the Father’s agency. Moreover, as for the Father, his name is not pronounced, but it is
revealed through a son. Thus, then, the name is great. Who, then, has been able to pronounce a
name for him, this great name, except him alone to whom the name belongs and the sons of the
name in whom the name of the Father is at rest, and who themselves in turn are at rest in his
name, since the Father has no beginning? It is he alone who engendered for himself a name in the
beginning before he had created the Aeons, that the name of the Father should be over their heads
as a lord—that is, the real name, which is secure by his authority and by his perfect power. For the
name is not drawn from lexicons nor is his name derived from common name-giving. But it is
invisible. He gave a name to himself alone, because he saw it and because he alone was capable
of giving himself a name. For he who does not exist has no name. For what name would one give
him who did not exist? Nevertheless, he who exists also with his name and he alone knows it,
and to him alone the Father gave a name. The Son is his name. He did not, therefore, keep it
secretly hidden, but the son came into existence. He gave himself a name to him. The name, then,
is that of the Father, just as the name of the Father is the Son. For otherwise, where would
compassion find a name—outside of the Father? But someone will probably say to his companion,
“Who would give a name to someone who existed before himself, as if, indeed, children did not
receive their name from one of those who gave them birth?” Above all, then, it is fitting for us to
think this point over: What is the name? It is the real name. It is, indeed, the name which came
from the Father, for it is he who owns the name. He did not, you see, get the name on loan, as in
the case of other because of the form in which each one of them is going to be created. This,
then, is the authoritative name. There is no one else to whom he have given it. But it remained
unnamed, unuttered, till the moment when he, who is perfect, pronounced it himself; and it was he alone who was able to pronounce his name and to see it. When it pleased him, then, that his son should be his pronounced name and when he gave this name to him, he who has come from the depth spoke of his secrets, because he knew that the Father was absolute goodness. For this reason, indeed, he sent this particular one in order that he might speak concerning the place and his place of rest from which he had come forth, and that he might glorify the Pleroma, the greatness of his name and the sweetness of his Father.

Each one will speak concerning the place from which he has come forth, and to the region from which he received his essential being, he will hasten to return once again. And he want from that place—the place where he was—because he tasted of that place, as he was nourished and grew. And his own place of rest is his Pleroma. All the emanations from the Father, therefore, are Pleromas, and all his emanations have their roots in the one who caused them all to grow from himself. He appointed a limit. They, then, became manifest individually in order that they might be in their own thought, for that place to which they extend their thoughts is their root, which lifts them upward through all heights to the Father. They reach his head, which is rest for them, and they remain there near to it so that they say they have participated in his face by means of embraces. But these of this kind were not manifest, because they have not risen above themselves. Neither have they been deprived of the glory of the Father nor have they thought of him as small, nor angry, nor bitter, but absolutely good, unperturbed, sweet, knowing all the spaces before they came into their existence and having no need of instruction. Such are they who possess from above something of this immeasurable greatness, as they strain towards that unique and perfect one who exists there for them. And they do not go down to Hades. They have neither envy nor moaning, nor is death in them. But they rest in him who rests, without wearying themselves or becoming involved in the search for truth. But, they, indeed, are the truth, and the Father is in them, and they are in the Father, since they are perfect, inseparable from him who is truly good. They lack nothing in any way, but they are given rest and are refreshed by the Spirit. And they listen to their root; they have leisure for themselves, they in whom he will find his root, and he will suffer no loss to his soul.

Such is the place of the blessed; this is their place. As for the rest, then, may they know, in their place, that it does not suit me, after having been in the place of rest to say anything more. But he is the one in whom I shall be in order to devote myself, at all times, to the Father of the All and the true brothers, those upon whom the love of the Father is lavished, and in whose midst nothing in him is lacking. It is they who manifest themselves truly since they are in that true and eternal life and speak of the perfect light filled with the seed of the Father, and which is in his heart and in the Pleroma, while his Spirit rejoices in and glorifies in him whom it was, because the Father is good. And his children are perfect and worthy of his name, because he is the Father. Children of this kind are those whom he loves.
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARY

The Gospel of Mary is a very famous Gnostic text, using dialogue, a common Gnostic motif. The dialogue has an “anti-orthodox” sub-text. As you read it, notice how slow the disciples (all men—representing the Orthodox Tradition) are to understand Christ’s hidden coded message. In contrast, this special disciple, Mary Magdalen (representing the true Gnostic—as she often does) is very quick to understand and becomes the one to explain True Knowledge to the others.

<First 3 folios missing from manuscript>

<Peter speaking:> “Will matter then be destroyed or not?”

The Savior said, “All nature, all formations, all creatures exist in and with one another, and they will be resolved again into their own roots. For the nature of matter is resolved into the roots of its own nature alone. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Peter said to him, “Since you have explained everything to us, tell us this also: What is the sin of the world?”

The Savior said, “There is no sin, but it is you who make sin when you do the things that are like the nature of adultery, which is called sin. That is why the Good came into your midst, to the essence of every nature in order to restore it to its root.”

Then he continued and said, “That is why you become sick and die, for you are deprived of the one who can heal you. He who has a mind to understand, let him understand. Matter gave birth to a passion that has no equal, which proceeded from something contrary to nature. Then there arises a disturbance in its whole body. That is why I said to you to be of good courage, and if you are discouraged be encouraged in the presence of the different forms of nature. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Beware that no one lead you astray saying, ‘Lo here,’ or ‘Lo there!’ For the Son of Man is within you. Follow after him! Those who seek him will find him. Go then and preach the gospel of the Kingdom. Do not lay down any rules beyond what I appointed you, and do not give a law like the lawgiver lest you be constrained by it.”

When he said this he departed.

But they were grieved. They wept greatly, saying, “How shall we go to the Gentiles and preach the gospel of the Kingdom of the Son of Man? If they did not spare him, how will they spare us?”

Then Mary stood up, greeted them all, and said to her brethren, “Do not weep and do not grieve nor be irresolute, for his grace will be entirely with you and will protect you. But rather, let us praise his greatness, for he has prepared us and made us into men.”

When Mary said this, she turned their hearts to the Good, and they began to discuss the words of the Savior. Peter said to Mary, “Sister we know that the Savior loved you more than the rest of woman. Tell us the words of the Savior which you remember which you know, but we do not, nor have we heard them.”

Mary answered and said, “What is hidden from you I will proclaim to you.”

And she began to speak to them these words:

“I,” she said, “I saw the Lord in a vision and I said to him, ‘Lord I saw you today in a vision.’

He answered and said to me, ‘Blessed are you that you did not waver at the sight of me.
For where the mind is there is the treasure.’

I said to him, ‘Lord, how does he who sees the vision see it, through the soul or through the spirit?’

The Savior answered and said, ‘He does not see through the soul nor through the spirit, but the mind that is between the two that is what sees the vision and it is . . .’ “

<2 folios missing from manuscript>

<Mary speaking:> “And desire said, ‘I did not see you descending, but now I see you ascending. Why do you lie since you belong to me?’

The soul answered and said, ‘I saw you. You did not see me nor recognize me. I served you as a garment and you did not know me.’

When it said this, the soul went away rejoicing greatly. Again it came to the third power, which is called ignorance. The power questioned the soul, saying, ‘Where are you going? In wickedness are you bound. But you are bound; do not judge!’

And the soul said, ‘Why do you judge me, although I have not judged? I was bound, though I have not bound. I was not recognized. But I have recognized that the All is being dissolved, both the earthly things and the heavenly.’

When the soul had overcome the third power, it went upwards and saw the fourth power, which took seven forms. The first form is darkness, the second desire, the third ignorance, the fourth is the excitement of death, the fifth is the kingdom of the flesh, the sixth is the foolish wisdom of flesh, the seventh is the wrathful wisdom. These are the seven powers of wrath. They asked the soul, ‘Whence do you come slayer of men, or where are you going, conqueror of space?’

The soul answered and said, ‘What binds me has been slain, and what turns me about has been overcome, and my desire has been ended, and ignorance has died. In an aeon I was released from a world, and in a Type from a type, and from the fetter of oblivion which is transient. From this time on will I attain to the rest of the time, of the season, of the aeon, in silence.’ “

When Mary had said this, she fell silent, since it was to this point that the Savior had spoken with her. But Andrew answered and said to the brethren, “Say what you wish to say about what she has said. I at least do not believe that the Savior said this. For certainly these teachings are strange ideas.”

Peter answered and spoke concerning these same things. He questioned them about the Savior: “Did he really speak privately with a woman and not openly to us? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?”

Then Mary wept and said to Peter, “My brother Peter, what do you think? Do you think that I have thought this up myself in my heart, or that I am lying about the Savior?”

Levi answered and said to Peter, “Peter you have always been hot tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Savior knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us. Rather let us be ashamed and put on the perfect man, and separate as he commanded us and preach the gospel, not laying down any other rule or other law beyond what the Savior said.”

And when they heard this they began to go forth to proclaim and to preach.
THE TREATISE ON THE RESURRECTION
(Nag Hammadi Codex 1 43.25-50, 18)

This treatise is a classical exposition of the Valentinian Gnostic understanding of the body, the soul, and the "resurrection." In it Gnostic dualism and the evil of the physical order come to the fore—in contrast to the Orthodox tradition of the Incarnation and the redemption of the Body. This reading is a sample of Gnostic theology and it ends our selection from Gnosticism.

Some there are my son Rheginos, who want to learn many things. They have this goal when they are occupied with questions whose answer is lacking. If they succeed with these, they usually think very highly of themselves. But I do not think that they have stood within the Word of Truth. They seek rather their own rest, which we have received through our Saviour, our Lord Christ. We received it when we came to know the truth and rested ourselves upon it. But since you ask us pleasantly what is proper concerning the resurrection, I am writing you that it is necessary. To be sure, many are lacking faith in it, but there are a few who find it. So then, let us discuss the matter.

How did the Lord proclaim things while he existed in the flesh and after he had revealed himself as Son of God? He lived in this place where you remain, speaking about the Law of Nature—but I call it "Death!" Now the Son of God, Rheginos, was Son of Man. He embraced them both, possessing the humanity and the divinity, so that on the one hand he might vanquish death through his being Son of God, and that on the other through the Son of Man the restoration to the Pleroma might occur; because he was originally from above, a seed of Truth, before this structure had come into being. In this structure many dominions and divinities came into existence. I know that I am presenting the solution in difficult terms, but there is nothing difficult in the Word of Truth. But since the solution appeared so as not to leave anything hidden, but to reveal all things openly concerning existence—the destruction of evil on the one hand, the revelation of the elect on the other. This Solution is the emanation of Truth and Spirit, Grace is of the Truth.

The Saviour swallowed up death—of this you are not reckoned as being ignorant—for he put aside the world which is perishing. He transformed himself into an imperishable Aeon and raised himself up, having swallowed the visible by the invisible, and he gave us the way to our immortality. Then, indeed, as the Apostle said "We suffered with him, and we arose with him, and we went to heaven with him." Now if we are manifest in this world wearing him, we are that one’s beams, and we are embraced by him until our setting, that is to say, our death in this life. We are drawn to heaven by him, like beams by the sun, not being restrained by anything. This is the spiritual resurrection which swallows up the psychic in the same way as the fleshly.

But if there is one who does not believe, he does not have the capacity to be persuaded. For it is the domain of faith, my son, and not that which belongs to persuasion: the dead shall arise! There is one who believes among the philosophers who are in the world. At least he will arise. And let not the philosopher who is in this world have cause to believe that he is one who returns himself by himself—and that because of our faith! For we have known the Son of Man, and we have believed he rose from among the dead. This is he of whom we say, "He became the destruction of Death, as he is a great one in whom we believe." Great are those that believe.

The thought of those who are saved shall not perish. The mind of those who have known him shall not perish. Therefore, we are elected to salvation and redemption since we are predestined from the beginning not to Fall into the foolishness of those who are without
knowledge, but we shall enter into the wisdom of those who have known the Truth. Indeed, the Truth which is kept cannot be abandoned, nor has it been. “Strong is the system of the Pleroma; small is that which broke loose and became the world, but the All is what is encompassed. It has not come into being: it was existing.”

So, never doubt concerning the resurrection, my son Rheginos! For if you were not existing in flesh, you received the flesh when you entered this world. Why will you not receive the flesh when you ascend into the Aeon? That which is better than the flesh is that which is for the cause of life. That which came into being on your account, is it not yours? Does not that which is yours exist with you? Yet, while you are in this world, what is it that you lack? This is what you have been making every effort to learn.

The afterbirth of the body is old age, and you exist in corruption. You have absence as a gain. For you will not give up what is better if you depart. That which is worse than diminution, but there is grace for it.

Nothing, then, redeems us from this world. But the All which we are, we are saved. We have received salvation from end to end. Let us think in this way! Let us comprehend in this way!

But there are some who wish to understand in the enquiry about those things they are looking into, whether he who is saved, if he leaves his body behind, will be saved immediately. Let no one doubt concerning this . . . . Indeed, the visible members which are dead shall not be saved, for only the living members which exist within them would arise.

What, then, is the resurrection? It is always the disclosure of those who have risen. For if you remember reading in the Gospel that Elijah appeared and Moses with him, do not think the resurrection is an illusion. It is no illusion, but it is truth! Indeed, it is more fitting to say the world is an illusion, rather than the resurrection which has come through our Lord the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

But what am I telling you now? Those who are living shall die. How do they live in an illusion? The rich have become poor, and the kings have been overthrown. Everything is prone to change. The world is an illusion!—lest, indeed, I rail at things to excess!

But the resurrection does not have this aforesaid character, for it is the truth which stands firm; It is the revelation of what is, and the transformation of things, and a transition to newness. For imperishability descends upon the perishable; the light flows down upon the darkness, swallowing it up; and the Pleroma fills up the deficiency. These are the symbols and the images of the Resurrection. Christ it is who makes the good.

Therefore, do not think in part, O Rheginos, nor live in conformity with this flesh for the sake of unanimity, but flee from the divisions and the fetters, and already you have the resurrection. For if he who will die knows about himself that he will die, even if he spends many years in his life, he is brought to this—why not consider yourself as risen and already brought to this? If you have the resurrection but continue as if you are to die—why, then, do I ignore your lack of exercise? It is fitting for each one to practice in a number of ways, and he shall be released from this Element that he may not Fall into error but shall himself receive again what at first was.

These things I have received from the generosity of my Lord, Jesus Christ. I have taught you and your brethren, my sons, considering them, while I have not omitted any of the things suitable for strengthening you. But if there is one thing written which is obscure in my exposition of the Word, I shall interpret it for you when you ask. But now, do not be jealous of anyone who is in your number when he is able to help. Many are looking into this which I have written to you. To these I say: Peace be among them and grace. I greet you and those who love you in brotherly Love.
AUTHENTIC MONTANIST ORACLES

When reading these oracles remember the authors would report them have probably quoted them out of context. Also remember that they may have been intended as the words of God spoken through the prophet or as the words of the prophet him/herself.

Montanus

“I am the Lord God, the almighty dwelling in man.” (Epiphanius, Panarion 48.11)

“Neither the angle nor the envoy, but I the Lord God the Father have come.” (Epiphanius, Panarion 48.11, cf. Is. 63:9)

“Behold, man is like a lyre, and I flit about like the pick; man sleeps, and I awaken him; behold it is the Lord who changes the hearts of men and gives men a heart.” (Epiphanius, Panarion 48.4)

“Why do you call the more excellent man saved? For the just one, he says, will shine a hundred times brighter than the sun, and the little ones among you who are saved will shine a hundred times brighter than the moon.” (Epiphanius, Panarion 48.10)

Maximilla

“I am pursued like a wolf from the sheep. I am not a wolf. I am word, and spirit, and power.” (Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. 5.16.17, cf. Mt. 7:15, 1 Cor. 2:4)

“After me there will be no prophet, but the end.” (Epiphanius, Panarion 48.2.4)

“Here not me, but hear Christ.” (Epiphanius, Panarion 48.12.4)

“The Lord has sent me as partisan, revealer, and interpreter of the suffering, covenant, and promise. I am compelled to come to understand the knowledge of God whether I want to or not.” (Epiphanius, Panarion 48.13.1)

“[I] compelled those who were willing and those who were not.” (Epiphanius, Panarion 48.13.7)

Priscilla/Prisca

“They are flesh and they hate the flesh.” (Tertullian, Resurrection of the Flesh 11.2)

“For the purification produces harmony, and they see visions, and when they turn their faces downward they also hear salutary voices, as clear as they are secret.” (Tertullian, Exhortation to Chastity 10.5)
EARLIEST AUTHENTIC RECORDS
OF THE MARTYRS

The authentic records of the martyrs before the year 200 are of two types. The first and closest to the actual events are the court the extant Roman court records. These are called “acts of the martyrs.” Two sets of these still exist, the Acts of Justin and Companions (156) and the Acts of the Martyrs of Scilli in Africa (170). These are reproduced below in this packet.

The second type of records are eye-witness accounts, and they are referred to as the “passions of the martyrs”—the word “passion” here meaning “suffering and death,” as in the “Passion of Christ.” Four of these also exist in more or less complete form, the Passion of Stephen in Acts (ca. A.D. 35, which may not be by an eye-witness and is included here because it was a model for later descriptions of martyrdom), The Passion of Polycarp (156), the Passion of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne (177/8), and the Passion of Perpetua (202). There are fragments of two other passions, that of Carpus, Papyrus, and Agathonice (161/9), and that of Apollonius (180/5). These are two fragmentary to include here, but those interested my find them in E. C. E. Owen, Some Authentic Acts of the Early Martyrs (Oxford, 1927).

The above texts appear below in chronological order.

THE PASSION OF STEPHEN (ACTS 7-8)

6 And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.
9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.
11 Then they secretly instigated men, who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.”
12 And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us.”

15 And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. 7 1And the high priest said, “Is this so?”
2 And Stephen said: “Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ‘Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.’ Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot’s length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child. 4 And God spoke to this effect, that his posterity would be aliens in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and ill-treat them four hundred years. 7 But I will judge the nation which they serve,” said God, “and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.” 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became
the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him, and rescued him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him governor over Egypt and over all his household. Now there came a famine throughout all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction, and our fathers could find no food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent forth our fathers the first time. And at the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to Pharaoh. And Joseph sent and called to him Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five souls; and Jacob went down into Egypt. And he died, himself and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt till there arose over Egypt another king who had not known Joseph. He dealt craftily with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants, that they might not be kept alive. At this time Moses was born, and was beautiful before God. And he was brought up for three months in his father’s house; and when he was exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking the Egyptian. He supposed that his brethren understood that God was giving them deliverance by his hand, but they did not understand. And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and would have reconciled them, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren, why do you wrong each other?’ But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ At this retort Moses fled, and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it he wondered at the sight; and as he drew near to look, the voice of the Lord came, ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.’ And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. And the Lord said to him, ‘Take off the shoes from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have surely seen the ill-treatment of my people that are in Egypt and heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.’

This Moses whom they refused, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’ God sent as both ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush. He led them out, having performed wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as he raised me up.’ This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living oracles to give to us. Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside, and in their hearts they turned to Egypt, saying to Aaron, ‘Make for us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’
And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

‘Did you offer to me slain beasts and sacrifices, forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?

And you took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of the god Rephan, the figures which you made to worship; and I will remove you beyond Babylon.’

Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness, even as he who spoke to Moses directed him to make it, according to the pattern that he had seen. Our fathers in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations which God thrust out before our fathers. So it was until the days of David, who found favor in the sight of God and asked leave to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says,

Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool. What house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?

Did not my hand make all these things?’

You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth against him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.”

But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was consenting to his death.
THE ACTS OF
JUSTIN AND HIS COMPANIONS (165)

This text is our oldest transcript of the trial of a Christian martyr. It is the official court record of the trial of Justin, the famous Christian philosopher, and six other Christians who were tried and convicted by the Roman Prefect Quintus Junius Rusticus during the “Persecution of the emperor Marcus Aurelius” (ca. 165, at Rome). You may draw on this text and the following one when writing the paper on martyrdom.

Christian Prologue

1 In the time of the lawless partisans of idolatry, wicked decrees were passed against the godly Christians in town and country, to force them to offer libations to vain idols; and accordingly the holy men, having been apprehended, were brought before the prefect of Rome, Rusticus by name.

Court Record of Interrogation of Justin

When they had been brought before his judgment-seat, Rusticus the prefect said to Justin, “Obey the gods at once, and submit to the emperors.”

Justin said, “To obey the commandments of our Saviour Jesus Christ is worthy neither of blame nor of condemnation.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “What kind of doctrines do you profess?”

Justin said, “I have endeavoured to learn all doctrines; but I have found rest at last in the true doctrines, those namely of the Christians, even though they do not please those who hold false opinions.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “Are those the doctrines that please you, you miserable wretch?”

Justin said, “Yes, since I adhere to them as the right dogma.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “What is the dogma?”

Justin said, “That we worship the God of the Christians, whom we reckon to be one from the beginning, the maker and fashioner of the whole creation, visible and invisible; and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who had also been preached beforehand by the prophets as about to be present with the race of men, the herald of salvation and teacher of good disciples. And I, being a man, think that what I can say is insignificant in comparison with His boundless divinity, acknowledging a Certain prophetic power, since it was prophesied concerning Him of whom now I say that He is the Son of God. For I know that of old the prophets foretold His appearance among men.”

2 Rusticus the prefect said, “Where do you assemble?”

Justin said, “Where each one chooses and can: for do you fancy that we all meet in the very same place? Not so; because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “Tell me where you assemble, or into what place do you collect your followers?”

Justin said, “I live above one Martin, at the Timiotinian Baths; and during the whole time (and I am now living in Rome for the second time) I am unaware of any other meeting than his. And

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3 Notice the similarity of this profession of faith to the first part of the old Roman Baptismal Creed commonly called the “Apostles’ Creed.”
if any one wished to come to me, I communicated to him the doctrines of truth.”

Rusticus said, “Are you not, then, a Christian?”

Justin said, “Yes, I am a Christian.”

Examination of the Others

3 Then said the prefect Rusticus to Chariton, “Tell me then, Chariton, are you also a Christian?”

Chariton said, “I am a Christian by the command of God.”

Rusticus the prefect asked the woman Charito, “What say you, Charito?”

Charito said, “I am a Christian by the grace of God.”

Rusticus said to Eulpius, “And what are you?”

Eulpius, a slave of Caesar, answered, “I too am a Christian, having been freed by Christ; and by the grace of Christ I partake of the same hope.”

Rusticus the prefect said to Hierax, “And you, are you a Christian?”

Hierax said, “Yes, I am a Christian, for I revere and worship the same God.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “Did Justin make you Christians?”

Hierax said, “I was a Christian, and will be a Christian.”

And Paeon stood up and said, “I too am a Christian.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “Who taught you?”

Paeon said, “We received this good confession from our parents.”

Eulpius said, “I willingly heard the words of Justin. But from my parents also I learned to be a Christian.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “Where are your parents?”

Eulpius said, “In Cappadocia.”

Rusticus says to Hierax, “Where are your parents?”

And he answered saying, “Christ is our true father, and faith in Him is our mother; and my earthly parents died; and I, when I was driven from Iconium in Phrygia, came here.”

Rusticus the prefect said to Liberian, “And what say you? Are you a Christian, and unwilling to offer incense?”

Liberian said, “I too am a Christian, for I worship and reverence the one true God.”

Rusticus Threatens the Christians with Death

4 The prefect says to Justin, “Listen, you who are called a philosopher, and think that you know true doctrines; if you are scourged and beheaded, do you believe you will ascend to the heavens?”

Justin said, “I hope so; if I endure these things, I shall have his gifts. For I know that, to all who have thus lived, there is divine favor till the end of time.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “Do you suppose, then, that you will ascend to the heavens to receive some recompense?”

Justin said, “I do not suppose it, I know it and am fully persuaded of it.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “Let us, then, come to the what you must do. Gather here and offer sacrifice with one accord to the gods.”

Justin said, “No right-thinking person Falls away from piety to impiety.”

Rusticus the prefect said, “Unless you obey, you will be punished mercilessly.”

Justin said, “Through prayer we can be saved on account of our Lord Jesus Christ, even when we have been punished, because that will become our salvation and give us confidence at the most
awesome and universal judgment-seat of our Lord and Saviour.”

The others spoke similarly: “Do what you will, for we are Christians, and do not sacrifice to idols.”

5 Rusticus the prefect pronounced sentence, saying, “Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and obey the emperor’s command be scourged, and led away to suffer the punishment of decapitation, according to the laws.”

Christian Conclusion

The holy martyrs having glorified God, and having gone forth to the accustomed place, were beheaded, and completed their testimony by confessing the Saviour. And some of the faithful having secretly removed their bodies, laid them in a suitable place, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ having been with them, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
LETTER FROM THE CHURCHES OF VIENNE AND LYONS
ON THE GALLIC MARTYRS (177/8)

This letter is preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea’s Ecclesiastical History 5.1.2-5.2.8. The only earlier eye-witness description of a Christian martyrdom is the Martyrdom of Polycarp. Eusebius’ own remarks are in italics.

5 1 The most celebrated churches of Gaul sent an account of the martyrs to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, relating in the following manner what happened there. I will give their own words:

3 The servants of Christ residing at Vienne and Lyons in Gaul, to the brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia, who hold the same faith and hope of redemption, peace, grace, and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

4 Then, having related some other matters, they begin their account in this manner:

The greatness of the tribulation in this region, and the fury of the pagans against the holy ones, and the sufferings of the blessed martyrs we cannot recount accurately, nor indeed could they possibly be recorded. 5 For with all his might the Adversary fell upon us, giving us a foretaste of his unbridled activity at his future coming. He endeavored in every manner to practice and exercise his agents against the servants of God, not only shutting us out of houses, baths, and markets, but forbidding any of us to be seen in any place whatever.

6 But the grace of God led the fight against him, delivered the fight, and set them as firm pillars, able through patience to endure all the wrath of the Evil One. And they joined battle with him, undergoing all kinds of shame and injury; regarding their great sufferings as little, they hastened to Christ, manifesting truly that “the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us.” [Rom. 8:18]

Martyrdom of Vettius Epagathus

7 First of all, they endured nobly the injuries heaped upon them by the populace; clamors, blows, dragging, robberies, stoning, and imprisonments, and all things which an infuriated mob delights in inflicting on enemies and adversaries. 8 Then, being taken to the forum by the tribune and the authorities of the city, they were examined in the presence of the whole multitude, and having confessed Christ, they were imprisoned until the arrival of the governor.

9 When, afterwards, they were brought before him, and he treated us with the utmost cruelty, Vettius Epagathus, one of the brethren, and a man filled with love for God and his neighbor, intervened. His life was so consistent that, although young, he had attained a reputation equal to that of the elder Zacharias [Lk 1:6]: for he “walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,” and was untiring in every good work for his neighbor, zealous for God and fervent in spirit.

4 Most of the Gallic martyrs were immigrants from these cities in Asia Minor.

5 Meaning simultaneously the pagan emperor, the Devil, and the Antichrist.
Such being his character, he could not endure the unreasonable judgment against us, but was filled with indignation, and asked to be permitted to testify in behalf of his brethren, that there is among us nothing ungodly or impious. But those around the judgment seat cried out against him, for he was a man of distinction.

The governor refused to grant his just request, and merely asked if he also were a Christian. And he, confessing Christ this with a loud voice, was himself included in the roll of the martyrs, being called the “Advocate of the Christians,” but in himself having the Advocate, the Spirit, more abundantly than even Zacharias. He showed this by the fullness of his love, being full willing even to lay down his life in defense of the brethren. For he was and is a true disciple of Christ, who “follows the Lamb wherever he goes.” [Rev. 14: 4]

Some Deny Christ and Make False Accusations

Then the others were divided up, and the first martyrs were clearly ready and finished their confession of Christ with all eagerness. But some appeared unprepared and untrained, weak as yet, and unable to endure so great a conflict. About ten of these proved to have been still-born, causing us great grief and sorrow beyond measure, and hurting the zeal of the others who had not yet been seized, but who, though suffering all kinds of affliction, stayed constantly with the confessors of Christ and did not forsake them. Then all of us feared greatly because their wavering confessions, not because we dreaded the sufferings to be endured, but because we looked to the end, and were afraid that some of them might fall away.

But those who were worthy were seized day by day, replacing those who failed, so that all the zealous, and those who had established our community, were collected together from the two churches. Some of our pagan servants also were seized, as the governor had commanded that all of us should be examined publicly. These, being ensnared by Satan, and fearing for themselves the tortures which they beheld the holy ones endure, and being also urged on by the soldiers, accused us falsely of Thyestean banquets and Oedipean intercourse, and of deeds which are not only unlawful for us to speak of or to think, but which we cannot believe were ever done by men.

When these accusations were reported, all the people raged like wild beasts against us, so that even if any had before been moderate on account of friendship, they were now exceedingly furious and gnashed their teeth against us. And that which was spoken by our Lord was fulfilled: “The time will come when whoever kills you will think that he does God service.” [Jn 16: 2] Then the holy martyrs finally endured indescribable tortures, Satan striving earnestly that slanders might be uttered by them also.

Torture of Blandina

The whole wrath of the populace, governor, and soldiers was aroused exceedingly against Sanctus, the deacon from Vienne, and Maturus, a late convert, yet a noble combatant, and against Attalus, a native of Pergamum where he had always been a pillar and foundation, and Blandina, through whom Christ showed that things which appear mean and obscure and despicable to men are with God of great glory, through love toward him manifested in power, and not boasting in

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6 The “Advocate” or “Paraclet” was a title given by Christians to the Holy Spirit.

7 That is, they denied Christ.

8 In Greek mythology, Thyestes ate his children; Oedipus had children by his mother. We have encountered the accusations of incestuous orgies and cannibalism in other pagan documents.
appearance.

18. For while we all trembled, and her earthly mistress, who was herself also one of the confessors of Christ, feared that on account of the weakness of her body, she would be unable to make bold confession, Blandina was filled with such power as to be delivered and raised above those who were torturing her by turns from morning till evening in every manner, so that they acknowledged that they were conquered, and could do nothing more to her. And they were astonished at her endurance, as her entire body was mangled and broken; and they testified that one of these forms of torture was sufficient to destroy life, not to speak of so many and so great sufferings.

19. But the blessed woman, like a noble athlete, renewed her strength in her confession; and her comfort, refreshment, and relief from the pain of her sufferings was in exclaiming, “I am a Christian, and nothing vile is done by us.”

Torture of Sanctus

20. But Sanctus also endured marvelously and super-humanly all the outrages which he suffered. While the wicked men hoped, by the continuance and severity of his tortures to wring some lie from him, he girded himself against them with such firmness that he would not even tell his name, the nation or city to which he belonged, or whether he was bond or free, but answered in the Roman tongue to all their questions, “I am a Christian.”

21. He confessed this instead of name, city, race, and everything besides, and the people heard from him no other word. There arose therefore on the part of the governor and his tormentors a great desire to conquer him, but having nothing more that they could do to him, they finally fastened red-hot brazen plates to the most tender parts of his body.

22. These indeed were burned, but he continued unbending and unyielding, firm in his confession, and refreshed and strengthened by the heavenly fountain of the water of life, flowing from the mercy of Christ. And his body was showed forth his sufferings, being one complete wound and bruise, drawn out of shape, and altogether unlike a human form. 23. Christ, suffering in him, manifested his glory, delivering him from his adversary, and, making him an example for the others, showing that nothing is fearful where there is love of the Father, and nothing painful where there is the glory of Christ.

24. The wicked tortured him a second time after some days, supposing that with his body swollen and inflamed to such a degree that he could not bear the touch of a hand, if they should again apply the same instruments, they would overcome him, or at least by his death under his sufferings others would be made afraid. This on only did not occur, but, contrary to all human expectation, his body arose and stood erect in the midst of the subsequent torments, and resumed its original appearance and the use of its limbs; so that, through the grace of Christ, these second sufferings became to him, not torture, but healing.

Torture of Biblias

25. But the devil, thinking that he had already consumed Biblias, who was one of those who had denied Christ, desiring to increase her condemnation through the utterance of blasphemy, brought her again to the torture, to compel her, as already feeble and weak, to report wicked things about us. 26. But she recovered herself under the suffering, and as if awaking from a deep sleep and reminded by the present anguish of the eternal punishment in hell, she contradicted the blasphemers. “How,” she said, “could those eat children who do not think it lawful to taste the blood even of
irrational animals?\(^9\) And henceforward she confessed herself a Christian, and was given a place in the order of the martyrs.

_Torture of those in Prison_

\(^{27}\)But as Christ made the tyrannical tortures of no effect through the patience of the blessed, the devil invented other contrivances—confinement in the darkest and most loathsome parts of the prison, stretching of the feet to the fifth hole in the stocks, and the other outrages which the devil’s servants are accustomed to inflict upon the prisoners when furious and filled with the devil. A great many were suffocated in prison, being chosen by the Lord for this manner of death, that he might manifest in them his glory.

\(^{28}\)For some, though they had been tortured so cruelly that it seemed impossible that they could live, even with the most careful nursing, yet, destitute of human attention, remained in the prison, being strengthened by the Lord, and invigorated both in body and soul; and they exhorted and encouraged the rest. But such as were young, and arrested recently, so that their bodies had not become accustomed to torture, were unable to endure the severity of their confinement, and died in prison.

_Martyrdom of Bishop Pothinus_

\(^{29}\)The blessed Pothinus, who had was the bishop of Lyons, was dragged to the judgment seat. He was more than ninety years of age, and very infirm, scarcely indeed able to breathe because of physical weakness; but he was strengthened by spiritual zeal through his earnest desire for martyrdom. Though his body was worn out by old age and disease, his life was preserved that Christ might triumph in it.

\(^{30}\)When he was brought by the soldiers to the tribunal, accompanied by the civil magistrates and a multitude who shouted against him in every manner as if he were Christ himself, he bore noble witness.\(^{31}\)Being asked by the governor, “Who was the God of the Christians?” He replied, “If you are worthy, you will know.”

Then he was dragged away harshly, and received blows of every kind. Those near him struck him with their hands and feet, regardless of his age; and those at a distance hurled at him whatever they could seize; all of them thinking that they would be guilty of great wickedness and impiety if any possible abuse were omitted. For thus they thought to avenge their own deities. Scarcely able to breathe, he was cast into prison and died after two days.

_Those Who Denied Christ Arrested_

\(^{32}\)Then God gave a new opportunity, and Jesus’ compassion of Jesus was shown beyond measure, in a manner rarely seen among the brethren, but not beyond the power of Christ. For those who had denied Christ at their first arrest were imprisoned with the others and endured terrible sufferings, so that their denial was of no profit to them even for the present. But those who confessed Christ were imprisoned as Christians, no other accusation being brought against them. But the deniers were treated afterwards as murderers and defiled, and were punished twice as severely as the others.

\(^{33}\)For the joy of martyrdom, the hope of the promise, and the love for Christ and the Spirit of

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\(^9\) A reference to the ancient Christian avoidance of eating blood—one of the Jewish laws observed by ancient Christians [Acts 15: 20].
the Father supported the confessors; but their consciences so greatly distressed the deniers that they were easily distinguishable from all the rest by their very countenances when they were led forth. For the confessors went out rejoicing, glory and grace being blended in their faces, so that even their bonds seemed like beautiful ornaments, as those of a bride adorned with variegated golden fringes; and they were perfumed with the sweet savor of Christ, so that some supposed they had been anointed with earthly ointment.

But the deniers were downcast and humble and dejected and filled with every kind of disgrace, and they were reproached by the pagans as ignoble and weak, bearing the accusation of murderers, having lost the one honorable and glorious and life-giving Name. The rest, beholding this, were strengthened, and when apprehended, they confessed Christ without hesitation, paying no attention to the persuasions of the devil.

After certain other words they continue:

Martyrdom of Maturus and Sanctus

After these things, finally, various forms of martyrdom were devised. So as to plait a crown of various colors and of all kinds of flowers, they might present it to the Father. It was proper therefore that the noble athletes, having endured manifold strife and conquered grandly, should receive the crown, great and incorruptible. Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus were led to the amphitheater to be exposed to the wild beasts, and to give to the pagans public a spectacle of cruelty, a day for fighting with wild beasts being specially appointed on account of us.

Both Maturus and Sanctus passed again through every torment in the amphitheater, as if they had suffered nothing before, or rather, as if, having already conquered their antagonist in many contests, they were now striving for the crown itself. They endured again the customary running of the gauntlet, the violence of the wild beasts, and everything which furious people demanded or wished. At last, the iron chair in which their bodies being roasted, tormented them with the fumes. The persecutors did not stop at this, but became even more furious against them, determined to overcome their patience. But even so they did not hear a word from Sanctus, except the confession that he had uttered from the beginning.

These, then, after surviving a long time under torture, were at last sacrificed, having been made throughout that day a spectacle to the world, in place of the usual types of gladiatorial games.

Blandina Tortured Again

But Blandina was suspended on a stake and exposed to be devoured by the wild beasts who would attack her. And because she appeared as if hanging on a cross, and because of her earnest prayers, she inspired the other combatants with great zeal. For they looked on her in her conflict, and beheld with their outward eyes, in the form of their sister, him who was crucified for them, that he might persuade those who believe on him, that every one who suffers for the glory of Christ has fellowship always with the living God.

As none of the wild beasts touched her at that time, she was taken down from the stake and cast again into prison. So she was preserved for another contest, that, being victorious in more conflicts, she might make the punishment of the crooked serpent irrevocable; and, though small and weak and despised, yet clothed with Christ the mighty and conquering Athlete, she might arouse the zeal of the brethren, and, having overcome the adversary many times might receive, through her conflict, the crown incorruptible.
Attalus Reprieved

But Attalus was called for loudly by the people, because he was a person of distinction. He entered the contest readily on account of a good conscience and his genuine practice in Christian discipline, and because he was always a witness to the truth for us. He was led around the amphitheater, a tablet being carried before him on which was written in the Roman language, “This is Attalus the Christian.” The people were filled with indignation against him. But when the governor learned that he was a Roman citizen, he commanded him to be taken back with the rest of those in prison whom he had written about to Caesar, and whose answer he was awaiting.

Those who Denied Christ Confess Him

But the intervening time was not wasted nor fruitless to them; for by their patience the measureless compassion of Christ was manifested. For through their continued life the dead came alive, and the martyrs showed favor to those who had failed to confess Christ. The Virgin Mother had much joy in receiving alive those whom she had brought forth as dead. For through the martyrs’ example many who had denied Christ were restored, reborn, rekindled with life, and learned to confess Christ. And being made alive and strengthened, they went to the judgment seat to be again interrogated by the governor. God, who desires not the death of the sinner, but mercifully invites to repentance, treating them with kindness.

For Caesar commanded that they should be put to death, but that any who would again deny Christ should be set free. Therefore, at the beginning of the public festival which took place there, and which was attended by crowds of men from all nations, the governor brought the blessed ones to the judgment seat to make of them a show and spectacle for the multitude. So he examined them again and beheaded those who appeared to possess Roman citizenship, but he sent the others to the wild beasts.

And Christ was glorified greatly in those who had formerly denied him, for, contrary to the expectation of the pagans, they confessed Christ. For they were examined apart, in order to be set free; but by now confessing Christ, they were added to the order of the martyrs. But some continued in denial, who had never possessed a trace of faith, any apprehension of the wedding garment, or an understanding of the fear of God; but, as sons of perdition, they blasphemed the Way through their apostasy. But all the others were added to the Church.

Martyrdom of Alexander and Attalus

While these were being examined, a certain Alexander, a Phrygian by birth and physician by profession, who had resided in Gaul for many years, and was well known to all on account of his love to God and boldness of speech (for he was not without a share of apostolic grace), standing before the judgment seat, and, by signs encouraging them to confess Christ, appeared to those standing by as if in travail.

But the people being enraged because those who formerly denied now confessed, cried out against Alexander as if he were the cause of this. Then the governor summoned him and inquired who he was. And when he answered that he was a Christian, the governor, being very angry, condemned him to the wild beasts. And on the next day he entered along with Attalus. For to please the people, the governor had ordered Attalus again to the wild beasts.

And they were tortured in the amphitheater with all the instruments contrived for that

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10 That is, the Church.
purpose, and having endured a very great struggle, were at last sacrificed. Alexander neither groaned nor murmured in any manner, but communed in his heart with God.

But when Attalus was placed in the iron seat, and the fumes arose from his burning body, he said to the people in the Roman language: “See, it is you who feed on human flesh! We do not feel on human flesh; nor do any other wicked thing.”

And being asked, what name God has, he replied, “God has not a name as a man has.”

Martyrdom of Blandina and Ponticus

After all these, on the last day of the contests, Blandina was again brought in with Ponticus, a boy about fifteen years old. They had been brought every day to see the sufferings of the others and had been pressed to swear by the idols. But because they remained steadfast and despised them, the multitude became furious, so that they had no compassion for the youth of the boy nor respect for the sex of the woman.

Therefore they exposed them to all the terrible sufferings and took them through the entire round of torture, repeatedly urging them to swear, but being unable to effect this; for Ponticus, encouraged by his sister so that even the pagans could see that she was confirming and strengthening him, having nobly endured every torture, gave up his spirit.

But the blessed Blandina, last of all, having, as a noble mother, encouraged her children and sent them before her victorious to the King, endured herself all their conflicts and hastened after them, glad and rejoicing in her departure as if called to a marriage supper, rather than as foot for wild beasts. And, after the scourging, the wild beasts, and the roasting seat, she was finally enclosed in a net and thrown before a bull. And having been tossed about by the animal, but feeling none of the things which were happening to her, on account of her hope and firm hold upon what had been entrusted to her and her communion with Christ, she also was sacrificed. And the pagans themselves admitted that never among them had a woman endured so many terrible tortures.

Detention of the Martyrs’ Bodies

But not even thus was their madness and cruelty toward the holy ones satisfied. For incited by the Wild Beast, these wild and barbarous tribes were not easily appeased, and their violence found another peculiar opportunity in the dead bodies. For, through their lack of manly reason, the fact that they had been conquered did not put them to shame, but rather they enkindled their wrath as that of a wild beast, and aroused alike the hatred of governor and people to treat us unjustly; that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “He that is lawless, let him be lawless still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.”

For they cast to the dogs those who had died of suffocation in the prison, carefully guarding them by night and day, lest any one should be taken by us. And they exposed the remains left by the wild beasts and by fire, mangled and charred, and placed the heads of the others by their bodies, and guarded them in like manner from burial by a watch of soldiers for many days. And some raged and gnashed their teeth against them, desiring to execute more severe vengeance upon them; but others laughed and mocked at them, magnifying their own idols, and imputed to them the punishment of the Christians.

Even the more reasonable, and those who had seemed to sympathize somewhat, reproached them often, saying, “Where is their God, and what has their religion, which they have chosen rather than life, profited them?” So their conduct toward us was divided; but we were in deep affliction because we could not have the bodies. For neither did night avail us for this purpose, nor did money persuade, nor entreaty move to compassion; but they kept watch in every way, as if the prevention
of the burial would be of some great advantage to them.

62 In addition, they say after other things:

Destruction of Martyrs’ Relics

The bodies of the martyrs, having thus in every manner been exhibited and exposed for six days, were afterward burned and reduced to ashes, and swept into the Rhone by the wicked men, so that no trace of them might appear on the earth. 63 And this they did, as if able to conquer God, and prevent their new birth; that, as they said, “they may have no hope of a resurrection, through trust in which they bring to us this foreign and new religion, and despise terrible things, and are ready even to go to death with joy. Now let us see if they will rise again, and if their God is able to help them, and to deliver them out of our hands.” [Dan. 3: 15]

2 Such things happened to the churches of Christ under the above-mentioned emperor, from which we may reasonably guess what happened in other provinces. It is proper to add other selections from the same letter, in which the moderation and compassion of the confessors is recorded in the following words:

Humility of Confessors

2 They were so zealous in their imitation of Christ--“who, being in the form of God, counted equality with God a thing not to be grasped at” [Phil. 2: 6]--that, though they had attained such honor and had confessed Christ, not once or twice, but many times--having been brought back to prison from the wild beasts, covered with burns and scars and wounds--yet they did not proclaim themselves martyrs, nor did they allow us to address them by this name.

3 If any one of us, in letter or conversation, spoke of them as martyrs, they rebuked him sharply. But they conceded cheerfully the appellation of Confessor of Christ, the faithful and true Witness, firstborn of the dead, and God’s prince of the life; and they reminded us of the martyrs who had already departed, and said, “They are already martyrs whom Christ has deemed worthy to be taken up in their suffering, having sealed their testimony by their death; but we are only lowly and humble confessors.”

4 And they besought the brethren with tears that earnest prayers should be offered that they might be made perfect. They showed in their deeds the power of testimony, manifesting great boldness toward all the brethren, and they made plain their nobility through patience and fearlessness and courage, but they refused the title of martyrs to distinguish themselves from their brethren, being filled with the fear of God.

5 A little further on they say:

Confessors Forgive the Persecutors

They humbled themselves under the mighty hand, by which they are now greatly exalted. They defended all, but accused none. They absolved all, but bound none. And they prayed for those who had inflicted cruelties upon them, even as Stephen, the perfect martyr prayed, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” [Acts 7: 60] But if he prayed for those who stoned him, how much more did they pray for the brethren!
6And again after mentioning other matters, they say:

The Love of the Confessors

For, through the genuineness of their love, their greatest contest with him was that the Beast, being choked, might cast out alive those whom he supposed he had swallowed. For they did not boast over those who had denied Christ, but helped them in their need with those things in which they themselves abounded, having the compassion of a mother, and shedding many tears on their account before the Father.

7They asked for life, and he gave it to them, and they shared it with their neighbors. Victorious over everything, they departed to God. Having always loved peace, and having commended peace to us they went in peace to God, leaving no sorrow to their mother, nor division or strife to the brethren, but joy and peace and concord and love.

8This record of the blessed one’s affection toward those who had denied Christ is profitably added on account of the inhuman and unmerciful disposition of those who, after these events, acted cruelly toward members of Christ.
THE MARTYRS
OF SCILLI IN AFRICA

This is the oldest trial record for martyrs in Africa and the oldest dated Christian document in Latin. The twelve martyrs, four men and eight women, were condemned by the Proconsul Saturninus and beheaded on July 17, 180.

Court Record

When Praesens, for the second time, and Claudian were the consuls, on the seventeenth day of July, at Carthage, there were brought into the judgment hall Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Donata, Secunda and Vestia.

Interrogation of Speratus

Saturninus the proconsul said, “You can receive the pardon of our lord the Emperor, if you return to your senses.”
Speratus said, “We have never done ill, we have not lent ourselves to wrong, we have never spoken ill, but when ill-treated we have given thanks; because we pay heed to Our Emperor.”
Saturninus the proconsul said, “We too are religious, and our religion is simple, and we swear by the genius of our lord the emperor, and pray for his welfare, as you also ought to do.”
Speratus said, “If you will be kind enough to hear me, I can tell you about the mystery of simplicity.”
Saturninus said, “I will not listen to you, when you begin to speak evil against our sacred rites; rather swear by the genius of our lord the emperor.”
Speratus said, “The empire of this world I know not; but rather I serve that God whom no one has seen nor these eyes can see. I have committed no theft; but if I buy anything I pay the tax; because I know my Lord, the King of Kings and Emperor of All Nations.”

Interrogation of the Others

Saturninus the proconsul said to the rest, “Abandon this criminal practice.”
Speratus said, “It is an crime to murder, to give false witness.”
Saturninus the proconsul said, “Forget this nonsense.”
Cittinus said, “We fear none save our Lord God, who is in heaven.”
Donata said, “I honor Caesar as Caesar, but fear God.”
Vestia said, “I am a Christian.”
Secunda said, “What I am that I wish to be.”

Further Interrogation of Speratus

Saturninus the proconsul said to Speratus, “Will you persist in being a Christian?”
Speratus said, “I am a Christian.”
And with him they all agreed. Saturninus the proconsul said, “Do you want time to reconsider?”
Speratus said, “In a matter so straightforward there is no reconsidering.”
Saturninus the proconsul said, “What is there in your chest?”
Speratus said, “Books and the epistles of Paul, a just man.”
Saturninus the proconsul said, “Take a delay of thirty days and reconsider.”
Speratus said a second time, “I am a Christian.” And with him they all agreed.

_Sentence_

Saturninus the proconsul read out the decree from the tablet, “Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Donata, Vestia, Secunda and the rest having confessed that they live according to the Christian rite, since after opportunity having been offered them of returning to the custom of the Romans they have obstinately persisted, it is determined that they be put to the sword.”
  Speratus said, “We give thanks to God.”
  Nartzalus said, “To-day we are martyrs in heaven; thanks be to God.”
  Saturninus the proconsul ordered the herald to declared, “Speratus, Nartzalus, Cittinus, Veturius, Felix, Aquilinus, Laetantius, Januaria, Generosa, Vestia, Donata and Secunda, I have ordered to be executed.”
  They all said, “Thanks be to God.”

_Christian Conclusion_

And so all together they were crowned with martyrdom, and they reign with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.
THE PASSION OF
STS. PERPETUA AND FELICITAS

Preface

If ancient illustrations of faith which both testify to God’s grace and tend to man’s edification are collected in writing, so that by the perusal of them, as if by the reproduction of the facts, both God may be honored, and man may be strengthened; why should not new instances be also collected, that shall be equally suitable for both purposes—i.e. only on the ground that these modern examples will one day become ancient and available for posterity, although in their present time they are esteemed of less authority, by reason of the presumed veneration for antiquity?

But let men look to it, if they judge the power of the Holy Spirit to be one, according to the times and seasons; since some things of later date must be esteemed of more account as being nearer to the very last times, in accordance with the exuberance of grace manifested to the final periods determined for the world. For “in the last days, says the Lord, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and their sons and their daughters shall prophesy. And upon my servants and my handmaidens will I pour out of my Spirit; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

And thus we—who both acknowledge and reverence, even as we do the prophecies, modern visions as equally promised to us, and consider the other powers of the Holy Spirit as an agency of the Church for which also he was sent, administering all gifts in all, even as the Lord distributed to every one who carefully collects them in writing, commemorates them in reading to God’s glory; that so no weakness or despondency of faith may suppose that the divine grace was only among the ancients, whether in respect of the condescension that raised up martyrs, or that gave revelations; since God always carries into effect what he has promised, for a testimony to unbelievers, to believers for a benefit.

And we therefore, what we have heard and handled, declare also to you, brethren and little children, that you who were concerned in these matters may be reminded of them again to the glory of the Lord, and that you who know them by report may have communion with the blessed martyrs, and through them with the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honor, for ever and ever. Amen.

Perpetua’s First Vision

1 The young catechumens, Revocatus and his fellow-servant Felicitas, Saturninus and Secundulus, were apprehended. And among them also was Vivia Perpetua, respectably born, liberally educated, a married matron, having a father and mother and two brothers, one of whom, like herself, was a catechumen, and a son an infant at the breast. She herself was about twenty-two years of age. From this point onward she shall herself narrate the whole course of her martyrdom, as she left it described by her own hand and with her own mind. She said:

“While we were still with the persecutors, and my father, for the sake of his affection for me, was persisting in seeking to turn me away, and to cast me down from the faith—’Father,’ said I, ‘do you see, let us say, this vessel lying here to be a little pitcher, or something else?’

And he said, ‘I see it to be so.’

And I replied to him, ‘Can it be called by any other name than what it is?’
And he said, ‘No.’

‘Neither can I call myself anything else than what I am, a Christian.’

‘Then my father, provoked at this saying, threw himself upon me, as if he would tear my eyes out. But he only distressed me, and went away overcome by the devil’s arguments. Then, in a few days after I had been without my father, I gave thanks to the Lord; and his absence became a source of consolation to me. In that same interval of a few days we were baptized, and to me the Spirit prescribed that in the water baptism nothing else was to be sought for bodily endurance.

“After a few days we are taken into the dungeon, and I was very much afraid, because I had never felt such darkness. O terrible day! O the fierce heat of the shock of the soldiery, because of the crowds! I was very unusually distressed by my anxiety for my infant. There were present there Tertius and Pomponius, the blessed deacons who ministered to us, who had arranged by means of a gratuity that we might be refreshed by being sent out for a few hours into a pleasanter part of the prison. Then going out of the dungeon, all attended to their own wants. I suckled my child, which was now enfeebled with hunger. In my anxiety for it, I addressed my mother and comforted my brother, and commended to their care my son. I was languishing because I had seen them languishing on my account.

“Such solicitude I suffered for many days, and I obtained for my infant to remain in the dungeon with me; and immediately I grew strong and was relieved from distress and anxiety about my infant; and the dungeon became to me as it were a palace, so that I preferred being there to being elsewhere.

3”Then my brother said to me, ‘My dear sister, you are already in a position of great dignity, and are such that you may ask for a vision, and that it may be made known to you whether this is to result in a passion or an escape.’

“And I, who knew that I was privileged to converse with the Lord, whose kindnesses I had found to be so great, boldly promised him, and said, ‘Tomorrow I will tell you.’

“And I asked, and this was what was shown me. I saw a golden ladder of marvelous height, reaching up even to heaven, and very narrow, so that persons could only ascend it one by one; and on the sides of the ladder was fixed every kind of iron weapon. There were there swords, lances, hooks, daggers; so that if any one went up carelessly, or not looking upwards, he would be torn to pieces and his flesh would cleave to the iron weapons. And under the ladder itself was crouching a dragon of wonderful size, who lay in wait for those who ascended, and frightened them from the ascent.

“And Saturus went up first, who had subsequently delivered himself up freely on our account, not having been present at the time that we were taken prisoners. And he attained the top of the ladder, and turned towards me, and said to me, Perpetua, I am waiting for you; but be careful that the dragon do not bite you.”

“And I said, ‘In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall not hurt me.’

“And from under the ladder itself, as if in fear of me, he slowly lifted up his head; and as I trod upon the first step, I trod upon his head. And I went up, and I saw an immense extent of garden, and in the midst of the garden a white-hatred man sitting in the dress of a shepherd, of a large stature, milking sheep; and standing around were many thousand white-robed ones. And he raised his head, and looked upon me, and said to me, ‘You are welcome, daughter.’

“And he called me, and from the cheese as he was milking he gave me as it were a little cake, and I received it with cupped hands; and I ate it, and all who stood around said Amen. And at the sound of their voices I was awakened, still tasting a sweetness which I cannot describe. And I immediately related this to my brother, and we understood that it was to be a passion, and we ceased henceforth to have any hope in this world.”
Perpetua’s Trial and Second Vision

1 After a few days there prevailed a report that we should be heard. And then my father came to me from the city, worn out with anxiety. He came up to me, that he might cast me down, saying, ‘Have pity my daughter, on my grey hairs. Have pity on your father, if I am worthy to be called a father by you. If with these hands I have brought you up to this flower of your age, if I have preferred you to all your brothers, do not deliver me up to the scorn of men. Have regard to your brothers, have regard to your mother and your aunt, have regard to your son, who will not be able to live after you. Lay aside your courage, and do not bring us all to destruction; for none of us will speak in freedom if you should suffer anything.’

   “These things said my father in his affection, kissing my hands, and throwing himself at my feet; and with tears he called me not Daughter, but Lady. And I grieved over the grey hairs of my father, that he alone of all my family would not rejoice over my passion. And I comforted him, saying, ‘On that scaffold whatever God wills shall happen. For know that we are not placed in our own power, but in that of God.’ And he departed from me in sorrow.

2 Another day, while we were at dinner, we were suddenly taken away to be heard, and we arrived at the town-hall. At once the rumor spread through the neighborhood of the public place, and an immense number of people were gathered together. We mount the platform. The rest were interrogated, and confessed. Then they came to me, and my father immediately appeared with my boy, and withdrew me from the step, and said in a supplicating tone, ‘Have pity on your babe.’

   “And Hilarianus the procurator, who had just received the power of life and death in the place of the proconsul Minucius Timianianus, who was deceased, said, ‘Spare the grey hairs of your father, spare the infancy of your boy, offer sacrifice for the well-being of the emperors.’

   “And I replied, ‘I will not do so.’

   “Hilarianus said, ‘Are you a Christian?’

   “And I replied, ‘I am a Christian.’

   “And as my father stood there to cast me down from the faith, he was ordered by Hilarianus to be thrown down, and was beaten with rods. And my father’s misfortune grieved me as if I myself had been beaten, I so grieved for his wretched old age. The procurator then delivers judgment on all of us, and condemns us to the wild beasts, and we went down cheerfully to the dungeon.

   “Then, because my child had been used to receive suck from me, and to stay with me in the prison, I sent Pomponius the deacon to my father to ask for the infant, but my father would not give it him. And even as God willed it, the child no long desired the breast, nor did my breast cause me uneasiness, lest I should be tormented by care for my babe and by the pain of my breasts at once.

3 After a few days, whilst we were all praying, on a sudden, in the middle of our prayer, there came to me a word, and I named Dinocrates; and I was amazed that that name had never come into my mind until then, and I was grieved as I remembered his misfortune. And I felt myself immediately to be worthy, and to be called on to ask on his behalf. And for him I began earnestly to make supplication, and to cry with groaning to the Lord. Without delay, on that very night, this was shown to me in a vision.

   “I saw Dinocrates going out from a gloomy place, where also there were several others, and he was parched and very thirsty, with a filthy countenance and pallid color, and the wound on his face which he had when he died. This Dinocrates had been my brother after the flesh, seven years of age, who died miserably with disease—his face being so eaten out with cancer, that his death caused repugnance to all men. For him I had made my prayer, and between him and me
there was a large interval, so that neither of us could approach to the other. And moreover, in the same place where Dinocrates was, there was a pool full of water, having its brink higher than was the stature of the boy; and Dinocrates raised himself up as if to drink. And I was grieved that, although that pool held water, still, on account of the height to its brink, he could not drink.

“And I was aroused, and knew that my brother was in suffering. But I trusted that my prayer would bring help to his suffering; and I prayed for him every day until we passed over into the gladiatorial prison, for we were to fight in the gladiator show. Then was the birthday of Gaius Caesar, and I made my prayer for my brother day and night, groaning and weeping that he might be granted to me.

4“Then, on the day on which we remained in fetters, this was shown to me. I saw that that place which I had formerly observed to be in gloom was now bright; and Dinocrates, with a clean body well clad, was finding refreshment. And where there had been a wound, I saw a scar; and that pool which I had before seen, I saw now with its margin lowered even to the boy’s navel. And one drew water from the pool incessantly, and upon its brink was a goblet filled with water; and Dinocrates drew near and began to drink from it, and the goblet did not fail. And when he was satisfied, he went away from the water to play joyously, after the manner of children, and I awoke.

“And I understood that he was translated from the place of punishment.”

Perpetua’s Third Vision

3 1”Again, after a few days, Pudens, a soldier, an assistant overseer of the prison, who began to regard us in great esteem, perceiving that the great power of God was in us, admitted many brethren to see us, that both we and they might be mutually refreshed. And when the day of the exhibition drew near my father, worn with suffering, came in to me, and began to tear out his beard, and to throw himself on the earth, and to cast himself down on his face, and to reproach his years, and to utter such words as might move all creation. I grieved for his unhappy old age.

2The day before that on which we were to fight, I saw in a vision that Pomponius the deacon came hither to the gate of the prison, and knocked vehemently. I went out to him, and opened the gate for him; and he was clothed in a richly ornamented white robe, and he had on elaborate sandals. And he said to me, ‘Perpetua, we are waiting for you; come!’

“And he held his hand to me, and we began to go through rough and winding places. Scarcely at length had we arrived breathless at the amphitheater, when he led me into the middle of the arena, and said to me, ‘Do not fear, I am here with you, and I am laboring with you,’ and he departed.

“And I gazed upon an immense assembly in astonishment. And because I knew that I was given to the wild beasts, I marvelled that the wild beasts were not let loose upon me. Then there came forth against me a certain Egyptian, horrible in appearance, with his backers, to fight with me. And there came to me, as my helpers and encouragers, handsome youths; and I was stripped, and became a man. Then my helpers began to rub me with oil, as is the custom for contest; and I beheld that Egyptian on the other hand rolling in the dust.

“And a certain man came forth, of wondrous height, so that he even over-topped the top of the amphitheater; and he wore a loose tunic and a purple robe between two bands over the middle of the breast; and he had on sandals of varied form, made of gold and silver; and he carried a rod, as if he were a trainer of gladiators, and a green branch upon which were apples of gold. And he called for silence, and said, ‘This Egyptian, if he should overcome this woman, shall kill her with the sword; and if she shall conquer him, she shall receive this branch.’

“And he departed. And we drew near to one another, and began to deal out blows. He
sought to lay hold of my feet, while I struck at his face with my heels; and I was lifted up in the air, and began thus to thrust at him as if spurning the earth. But when I saw that there was some delay I joined my hands so as to twine my fingers with one another; and I took hold upon his head, and he fell on his face, and I trod upon his head. And the people began to shout, and my backers to exult. And I drew near to the trainer and took the branch; and he kissed me, and said to me, ‘Daughter, peace be with you,’ and I began to go gloriously to the Sanavivarian gate.

‘Then I awoke, and perceived that I was not to fight with beasts, but against the devil. Still I knew that the victory was awaiting me. This, so far, I have completed several days before the exhibition; but what passed at the exhibition itself let who will write.’

*Saturnus’ Vision*

> Moreover, also, the blessed Saturus related this his vision, which he himself committed to writing; he said:

> We had suffered and we were gone forth from the flesh, and we were beginning to be borne by four angels into the east; and their hands touched us not. And we floated not supine, looking upwards, but as if ascending a gentle slope. And being set free, we at length saw the first boundless light; and I said, ‘Perpetua,’ for she was at my side, ‘this is what the Lord promised to us; we have received the promise.’

> And while we are borne by those same four angels, there appears to us a vast space which was like a pleasure-garden, having rose trees and every kind of flower. And the height of the trees was after the measure of a cypress, and their leaves were Falling incessantly. Moreover, there in the pleasure-garden four other angels appeared, brighter than the previous ones, who, when they saw us, gave us honor, and said to the rest of the angels, ‘Here they are! Here they are!’ with admiration.

> And those four angels who bore us, being greatly afraid, put us down; and we passed over on foot the space of a furlong in a broad path. There we found Jocundus and Saturninus and Artaxius, who having suffered the same persecution were burnt alive; and Quintus, who also himself a martyr had departed in the prison. And we asked of them where the rest were. And the angels said to us, ‘Come first, enter and greet your Lord.’

> And we came near to place, the walls of which were such as if they were built of light; and before the gate of that place stood four angels, who clothed those who entered with white robes. And being clothed, we entered and saw the boundless light, and heard the united voice of some who said without ceasing, ‘Holy! Holy! Holy!’

> And in the midst of that place we saw as it were a old man sitting, having snow-white hair, and with a youthful countenance; and his feet we saw not. And on his right hand and on his left were four-and-twenty elders, and behind them a great many others were standing. We entered with great wonder, and stood before the throne; and the four angels raised us up, and we kissed him, and he passed his hand over our face. And the rest of the elders said to us, ‘Let us stand,’ and we stood and exchanged the Kiss of Peace.

> ‘And the elders said to us, ‘Come and enjoy.’

> ‘And I said, ‘Perpetua, you have what you wish.’

> ‘And she said to me, ‘Thanks be to God, that joyous as I was in the flesh, I am now more joyous here.’

> And we went forth, and saw before the entrance Optatus the bishop at the right hand, and Aspasius the priest, a teacher, at the left hand, separate and sad; and they cast themselves at our feet, and said to us, ‘Restore peace between us, because you have gone forth and have left us
“And we prostrated ourselves, and we embraced them; and Perpetua began to speak with them, and we drew them apart in the pleasure-garden under a rose tree. And while we were speaking with them, the angels said unto them, ‘Let them alone, that they may refresh themselves; and if you have any dissensions between you, forgive one another.’

“And they drove them away. And they said to Optatus, ‘Rebuke your people, because they assemble to you as if returning from the circus, and contending about factious matters.’ And then it seemed to us as if they would shut the doors. And in that place we began to recognize many brethren, and moreover martyrs. We were all nourished with an indescribable odor, which satisfied us.

“Then, I joyously awoke.”

_Felicitas in Prison_

5 The above were the more eminent visions of the blessed martyrs Saturus and Perpetua themselves, which they themselves committed to writing. But God called Secundulus, while he has yet in the prison, by an earlier exit from the world, not without favor, so as to give a respite to the beasts. Nevertheless, even if his soul did not acknowledge cause for thankfulness, assuredly his flesh did.

But respecting Felicitas (for to her also the Lord’s favor approached in the same way), when she had already gone eight months with child (for she had been pregnant when she was apprehended), as the day of the exhibition was drawing near, she was in great grief lest on account of her pregnancy she should be delayed—because pregnant women are not allowed to be publicly punished—and lest she should shed her sacred and guiltless blood among some who had been wicked subsequently. Moreover, also, her fellow-martyrs were painfully saddened lest they should leave so excellent a friend, and as it were companion, alone in the path of the same hope. Therefore, joining together their united cry, they poured forth their prayer to the Lord three days before the exhibition.

Immediately after their prayer her pains came upon her, and when, with the difficulty natural to an eight months’ delivery, in the labor of bringing forth she was sorrowing, some one of the servants of the jailers said to her, “You who are in such suffering now, what will you do when you are thrown to the beasts, which you despised when you refused to sacrifice?”

And she replied, “Now it is I that suffer what I suffer; but then there will be another in me, who will suffer for me, because I also am about to suffer for him.” Thus she brought forth a little girl, which a certain sister brought up as her daughter.

Since then the Holy Spirit permitted, and by permitting willed, that the proceedings of that exhibition should be committed to writing, although we are unworthy to complete the description of so great a glory; yet we obey as it were the command of the most blessed Perpetua, nay her sacred trust, and add one more testimony concerning her constancy and her loftiness of mind. While they were treated with more severity by the tribune, because, from the intimations of certain deceitful men, he feared lest they should be withdrawn from the prison by some sort of magic incantations, Perpetua answered to his face, and said, “Why do you not at least permit us to be refreshed, being as we are objectionable to the most noble Caesar, and having to fight on his birthday? Or is it not your glory if we are brought forward fatter on that occasion?”

The tribune shuddered and blushed, and commanded that they should be kept with more humanity, so that permission was given to their brethren and others to go in and be refreshed
with them; even the keeper of the prison trusting them now himself.

Moreover, on the day before, when in that last meal, which they call the free meal, they were partaking as far as they could, not of a ordinary supper, but of an Agape; with the same firmness they were uttering such words as these to the people, denouncing against them the judgment of the Lord, bearing witness to the felicity of their passion, laughing at the curiosity of the people who came together; while Saturus said, “Tomorrow is not enough for you, for you to behold with pleasure that which you hate. Friends today, enemies tomorrow. Yet note our faces diligently, that you may recognize them on that day of judgment.”

Thus all departed thence astonished, and from these things many believed.

The Martyrdom

6 The day of their victory shone forth, and they proceeded from the prison into the amphitheater, as if to an assembly, joyous and of brilliant countenances; if perchance shrinking, it was with joy, and not with fear. Perpetua followed with placid look, and with step and gait as a matron of Christ, beloved of God; casting down the luster of her eyes from the gaze of all. Moreover, Felicitas, rejoicing that she had safely brought forth, so that she might fight with the wild beasts; from the blood and from the midwife to the gladiator, to wash after childbirth with a second baptism.

And when they were brought to the gate, and were constrained to put on the clothing—the men, that of the priests of Saturn, and the women, that of those who were consecrated to Ceres—that noble-minded woman resisted even to the end with constancy. For she said, “We have come thus far of our own accord, for this reason, that our liberty might not be restrained. For this reason we have yielded our minds, that we might not do any such thing as this: we have agreed on this with you.”

Injustice acknowledged the justice; the tribune yielded to their being brought as simply as they were. Perpetua sang psalms, already treading under foot the head of the Egyptian; Revocatus, and Saturninus, and Saturus uttered threats against the gazing people about this martyrdom. When they came within sight of Hilarianus, by gesture and nod, they began to say to Hilarianus, “You judge us,” say they, “but God will judge you.”

At this the people, exasperated, demanded that they should be tormented with scourges as they passed along the rank of the wild beast gladiators. And they indeed rejoiced that they should have incurred any one of their Lord’s passions.

But he who had said, “Ask, and you shall receive,” gave to them when they asked, that death which each one had wished for. For when at any time they had been discoursing among themselves about their wish in respect of their martyrdom, Saturninus indeed had professed that he wished that he might be thrown to all the beasts; doubtless that he might wear a more glorious crown.

Therefore in the beginning of the exhibition he and Revocatus made trial of the leopard, and moreover upon the scaffold they were harassed by the bear. Saturus, however, held nothing in greater abomination than a bear; but he imagined that he would be put an end to with one bite of a leopard. Therefore, when a wild boar was supplied, it was the huntsman rather who had supplied that boar who was gored by that same beast, and died the day after the shows. Saturus only was drawn out; and when he had been bound on the floor near to a bear, the bear would not come forth from his den. And so Saturus for the second time is recalled unhurt.

Moreover, for the young women the devil prepared a very fierce cow, provided especially for that purpose contrary to custom, rivalling their sex also in that of the beasts. And so, stripped and clothed with nets, they were led forth. The populace shuddered as they saw one
young woman of delicate frame, and another with breasts still dropping from her recent childbirth. So, being recalled, they are unbound.

Perpetua is first led in. She was tossed, and fell on her loins; and when she saw her tunic torn from her side, she drew it over her as a veil for her middle, rather mindful of her modesty than her suffering. Then she was called for again, and bound up her dishevelled hair; for it was not becoming for a martyr to suffer with dishevelled hair, lest she should appear to be mourning in her glory. So she rose up; and when she saw Felicitas crushed, she approached and gave her her hand, and lifted her up.

And both of them stood together; and the brutality of the populace being appeased, they were recalled to the Sanavivarian gate. Then Perpetua was received by a certain one who was still a catechumen, Rusticus by name, who kept close to her; and she, as if aroused from sleep, so deeply had she been in the Spirit and in an ecstasy, began to look round her, and to say to the amazement of all, “I cannot tell when we are to be led out to that cow.”

And when she had heard what had already happened, she did not believe it until she had perceived certain signs of injury in her body and in her dress, and had recognized the catechumen. Afterwards causing that catechumen and the brother to approach, she addressed them, saying, “Stand fast in the faith, and love one another, all of you, and be not offended at my sufferings.”

“The same Saturus at the other entrance exhorted the soldier Pudens, saying, “Assuredly here I am, as I have promised and foretold, for up to this moment I have felt no beast. And now believe with your whole heart. Lo, I am going forth to that beast, and I shall be destroyed with one bite of the leopard.”

And immediately at the conclusion of the exhibition he was thrown to the leopard; and with one bite of his he was bathed with such a quantity of blood, that the people shouted out to him as he was returning, the testimony of his second baptism, “Saved and washed, saved and washed.”

Manifestly he was assuredly saved who had been glorified in such a spectacle. Then to the soldier Pudens he said, “Farewell, and be mindful of my faith; and let not these things disturb, but confirm you.”

And at the same time he asked for a little ring from his finger, and returned it to him bathed in his wound, leaving to him an inherited token and the memory of his blood. And then lifeless he is cast down with the rest, to be slaughtered in the usual place. And when the populace called for them into the midst, that as the sword penetrated into their body they might make their eyes partners in the murder, they rose up of their own accord, and transferred themselves whither the people wished; but they first kissed one another, that they might consummate their martyrdom with the kiss of peace.

The rest indeed, immoveable and in silence, received the sword-thrust; much more Saturus, who also had first ascended the ladder, and first gave up his spirit, for he also was waiting for Perpetua. But Perpetua, that she might taste some pain, being pierced between the ribs, cried out loudly, and she herself placed the wavering right hand of the youthful gladiator to her throat. Possibly such a woman could not have been slain unless she herself had willed it, because she was feared by the impure spirit.

O most brave and blessed martyrs! O truly called and chosen unto the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! whom whoever magnifies, and honors, and adores, assuredly ought to read these examples for the edification of the Church, not less than the ancient ones, so that new virtues also may testify that one and the same Holy Spirit is always operating even until now, and God the Father Omnipotent, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, whose is the glory and infinite power for
ever and ever. Amen.
THE EMPEROR CONSTANTINE THE GREAT
“Oration To the Assembly of the Saints.”

This oration is recorded by Eusebius of Caesarea as an appendix to his Life of Constantine. Scholarly consensus (not unanimous) agrees that it was a sermon by the emperor Constantine to an assembly, including bishops, priests, and laity at Antioch on Good Friday 325. At that time a Church council of bishops was meeting at Antioch to debate the theology of Arius. It is likely that it was during these events that Constantine was convinced to convok the Ecumenical Council of Nicea later in that year. This is the most extended religious text from the emperor’s pen and represents the quality of his understanding of Christianity and pagan culture.

The oddity of Constantine’s use of Pagan literary and oracular proof texts has often been commented on. One of the oddities of the oration is that he, a Latin speaker, is often quoting Latin texts like Virgil (“Maro”) in very strange Greek “translations.” Also interesting is his use of texts of the Sibyls that are Jewish and Christian forgeries. If you don’t know who Virgil and the Sibyls are and why would be important to a Roman, do a little research (even on Wikipedia).

CHAPTER I
Preliminary Remarks on the Feast of Easter: and how the Word of God, having conferred Manifold Benefits on Mankind, was betrayed by his Beneficiaries.

THAT light which far outshines the day and sun, first pledge of resurrection, and renovation of bodies long since dissolved, the divine token of promise, the path which leads to everlasting life -- in a word, the day of the Passion -- is arrived, best beloved doctors, and ye, my friends who are assembled here, ye blessed multitudes, who worship him who is the author of all worship, and praise him continually with heart and voice, according to the precepts of his holy word. But thou, Nature, parent of all things, what blessing like to this hast thou ever accomplished for mankind? Nay rather, what is in any sense thy workmanship, since he who formed the universe is himself the author of thy being? For it is he who has arrayed thee in thy beauty; and the beauty of Nature is life according to Nature’s laws. But principles quite opposed to Nature have mightily prevailed; in that men have agreed in withholding his rightful worship from the Lord of all, believing that the order of the universe depended, not on his providence, but, on the blind uncertainty of chance: and this notwithstanding the clearest announcement of the truth by his inspired prophets, whose words should have claimed belief, but were in every way resisted by that impious wickedness which hates the light of truth, and loves the obscure mazes of darkness. Nor was this error unaccompanied by violence and cruelty, especially in that the will of princes encouraged the blind impetuosity of the multitude, or rather itself led the way in the career of reckless folly. Such principles as these, confirmed by the practice of many generations, became the source of terrible evils in those early times: but no sooner had the radiance of the Saviour’s presence appeared, than justice took the place of wrong, a calm succeeded the confusion of the storm, and the predictions of the prophets were all fulfilled. For after he had enlightened the world by the glorious discretion and purity of his character, and had ascended to the mansions of his father’s house, he founded his Church on earth, as a holy temple of virtue, an immortal, imperishable temple, wherein the worship due to the Supreme Father and to himself should be piously performed. But what did the insane malice of the nations hereupon devise? Their effort was to reject the grace of Christ, and to ruin that Church which was ordained for the salvation of all, though they thus ensured the overthrow of their own superstition. Once more then unholy sedition, once more war and strife prevailed, with stiff-neckedness, luxurious riot, and that craving
for wealth which now soothes its victims with specious hope, now strikes them with groundless fear; a craving which is contrary to nature, and the very characteristic of Vice herself. Let her, however, lie prostrate in the dust, and own the victorious power of Virtue; and let her rend and tear herself, as well she may, in the bitterness of repentance. But let us now proceed to speak of topics which pertain to the Divine doctrine.

CHAPTER II
An Appeal to the Church and to his Hearers to pardon and correct the Errors of his Speech.

HEAR then, thou master of the ship, possessor of virgin purity, and thou Church, the cherisher of tender and inexperienced age, guardian of truth and gentleness, through whose perennial fountain the stream” of salvation flows! Be ye also indulgent, my hearers, who worship God sincerely, and are, therefore, the objects of his care: attending, not to the language, but to the truth of what is said; not to him who speaks, but rather to the pious zeal which hallows his discourse! For what will be the use of words when the real purpose of the speaker remains unknown? It may be, indeed, that I essay great things; the love of God which animates my soul, a love which overpowers natural reserve, is my plea for the bold attempt. On you, then, I call, who are best instructed in the mysteries of God, to aid me with your counsel, to follow me with your thoughts, and correct whatever shall savor of error in my words, expecting no display of perfect knowledge, but graciously accepting the sincerity of my endeavor. And may the Spirit of the Father and the Son accord his mighty aid, while I utter the words which he shall suggest to speech or thought. For if any one, whether in the practice of eloquence, or any other art, expects to produce a finished work without the help of God, both the author and his efforts will be found alike imperfect; while he has no cause to fear, no room for discouragement, who has once been blessed with the inspiration of Heaven. Wherefore asking your indulgence for the length of this preface, let us attempt the theme in its utmost scope.

CHAPTER III
That God is the Father of the Word, and the Creator of all Things; and that Material Objects could not continue to exist, were their Causes Various.

GOD, who is ever above all existence, and the good which all things desire, has no origin, and therefore no beginning, being himself the originator of all things which receive existence.

But he who proceeds from him is again united to him; and this separation from and union with him is not local, but intellectual in its character. For this generation was accompanied by no diminution of the Father’s substance (as in the case of generation by seed); but by the determining act of foreknowledge God manifested a Saviour presiding over this sensible world, and all created things therein. From hence, then, is the source of existence and life to all things which are within the compass of this world; hence proceed the soul, and every sense; hence those organs through which the sense-perceptions are perfected. What, then, is the object of this argument? To prove that there is One director of all things that exist, and that all things, whether in heaven or on earth, both natural and organized bodies, are subject to his single sovereignty. For if the dominion of these things, numberless as they are, were in the hands, not of one but of many, there must be a partition and distribution of the elements, and the old fables would be true; jealousy, too, and ambition, striving for superior power, would destroy the harmonious concord of the whole, while each of the many masters would regulate in a manner different from the rest the portion subject to his control. The fact, however, that this universal order is ever one and the same, is the proof that it is under the care of a superior power, and that its origin cannot be ascribed to chance. Else how could the author of universal nature ever be known? To whom first, or last, could prayers and supplications be
addressed? Whom could I choose as the object of my worship, without being guilty of impiety towards the rest? Again, if haply I desired to obtain some temporal blessing, should I not, while expressing my gratitude to the Power who favored my request, convey a reproach to him who opposed it? Or to whom should I pray, when desiring to know the cause of my calamity, and to obtain deliverance? Or let us suppose that the answer is given by oracles and prophecies, but that the case is not within the scope of their authority, being the province of some other deity’s? Where, then, is mercy? where is the provident care of God for the human race? Unless, indeed, some more benevolent Power assuming a hostile attitude against another who has no such feeling, be disposed to accord me his protection. Hence anger, discords, mutual censure, and finally universal confusion, would ensue, while each departed from his proper sphere of action, dissatisfied, through ambitious love of power, with his allotted portion. What, then, would be the result of these things? Surely this discord among the heavenly powers would prove destructive to the interests of earth the orderly alternation of times and seasons would disappear; the successive productions of the earth would be enjoyed no more: the day itself, and the repose of night which follows it, would cease to be. But enough on this subject: let us once more resume that species of reasoning which admits of no reply.

CHAPTER IV
On the Error of Idolatrous Worship.

WHATEVER has had a beginning, has also an end. Now that which is a beginning in respect of time, is called a generation: and whatever is by generation is subject to corruption, and its beauty is impaired by the lapse of time. How, then, can they whose origin is from corruptible generation, be immortal? Again, this supposition has gained credit with the ignorant multitude, that marriages, and the birth of children, are usual among the gods. Granting, then, such offspring to be immortal, and continually produced, the race must of necessity multiply to excess: and if this were so, where is the heaven, or the earth, which could contain so vast and still increasing a multitude of gods? But what shall we say of those men who represent these celestial beings as joined in incestuous union with their sister goddesses, and charge them with adultery and impurity? We declare, further, with all confidence, that the very honors and worship which these deities receive from men are accompanied by acts of wantonness and profligacy. Once more; the experienced and skillful sculptor, having formed the conception of his design, perfects his work according to the rifles of art; and in a little while, as if forgetful of himself, idolizes his own creation, and adores it as an immortal god, while yet he admits that himself, the author and maker of the image, is a mortal man. Nay, they even show the graves and monuments of those whom they deem immortal, and bestow divine honors on the dead: not knowing that that which is truly blessed and incorruptible needs no distinction which perishable men can give: for that Being, who is seen by the mental eye, and conceived by the intellect alone, requires to be distinguished by no external form, and admits no figure to represent its character and likeness. But the honors of which we speak are given to those who have yielded to the power of death: they once were men, and tenants, while they lived, of a mortal body.

CHAPTER V
That Christ, the Son of God, created All Things, and has appointed to Every Thing the Term of its Existence.

BUT why do I defile my tongue with unhallowed words, when my object is to sound the praises of the true God? Rather let me cleanse myself, as it were, from this bitter draught by the pure stream which flows from the everlasting fountain of the virtue of that God who is the object of my praise. Be it my special province to glorify Christ, as well by the actions of my life, as by that thanksgiving which is due to him for the manifold and signal blessings which he has bestowed. I affirm, therefore, that he has laid the foundations of this universe; and conceived the race of men, ordaining these
things by his word. And immediately he transferred our newly created parents (ignorant at first, according to his will, of good and evil) to a happy region, abounding in flowers and fruits of every kind. At length, however, he appointed them a seat on earth befitting creatures endued with reason; and then unfolded to their faculties, as intelligent beings, the knowledge of good and evil. Then, too, he bade the race increase; and each healthy region of the world, as far as the bounds of the circumambient ocean, became the dwelling-place of men; while with this increase of numbers the invention of the useful arts went hand in hand. Meantime the various species of inferior animals increased in due proportion, each kind discovering some characteristic quality, the special gift of nature: the tame distinguished by gentleness and obedience to man; the wild by strength and swiftness, and an instinctive foresight which warned them to escape from peril. The gentler animals he placed entirely beneath man’s protecting care, but entailed on him the necessity of strife with those of fiercer nature. He next created the feathered race, manifold in number, diverse in character and habits; brilliant with every variety of color, and endued with native powers of melody. Finally, having arranged with wise discrimination whatever else the compass of this world contains, and having assigned to every creature the stated term of its existence, he thus completed the beautiful order of the perfect whole.

CHAPTER VI

The Falsity of the General Opinion respecting Fate is proved by the Consideration of Human Laws, and by the Works of Creation, the Course of which is not Fortuitous, but according to an Orderly Arrangement which evinces the Design of the Creator.

THE great majority, however, in their folly, ascribe the regulation of the universe to nature, while some imagine fate, or accident, to be the cause. With regard to those who attribute the control of all things to fate, they know not that in using this term they utter a mere word, but designate no active power, nor anything which has real and substantial existence. For what can this fate be, considered in itself, if nature be the first cause of all things? Or what shall we suppose nature itself to be, if the law of fate be inviolable? Indeed, the very assertion that there is a law of fate implies that such law is the work of a legislator: if, therefore, fate itself be a law, it must be a law devised by God. All things, therefore, are subject to God, and nothing is beyond the sphere of his power. If it be said that fate is the will of God, and is so considered, we admit the fact. But in what respect do justice, or self-control, or the other virtues, depend on fate? From whence, if so, do their contraries, as injustice and intemperance, proceed? For vice has its origin from nature, not from fate; and virtue is the due regulation of natural character and disposition. But, granting that the varied results of actions, whether right or erroneous in themselves, depend on fortune or fate: in what sense can the general principle of justice, the principle of rendering to every one his due, be ascribed to fate? Or how can it be said that laws, encouragements to virtue and dissuasives from what is evil, praise, blame, punishment, in short whatever operates as a motive to virtue, and deters from the practice of vice, derive their origin from fortune or accident, and not rather from that of justice, which is a characteristic attribute of the God of providence? For the events which befall men are consequent upon the tenor of their lives. Hence pestilence or sedition, famine and plenty, succeed in turn, declaring plainly and emphatically that all these things are regulated with reference to our course of life. For the Divine Being delights in goodness, but turns with aversion from all impiety; looks with acceptance on the humble spirit, but abhors presumption, and that pride which exalts itself above what becomes a creature. And though the proofs of these truths are clear and manifest to our sight, they appear in a still stronger light, when we collect, and as it were concentrate our thoughts within ourselves, and ponder their causes with deep attention. I say, then, that it becomes us to lead a life of modesty and gentleness, not suffering our thoughts to rise proudly above our natural condition, and ever mindful that God is near us, and is the observer of all our actions. But let us still farther test
the truth of the proposition, that the order of the universe depends on chance or accident. Are we then
to suppose that the stars and other heavenly bodies, the earth and sea fire and wind, water and air,
the succession of the seasons, the recurrence of summer and winter, that all these have an undesigned
and fortuitous existence, and not rather that they proceed from the creative hand of God? Some
indeed, are so senseless as to say that most of these things have been devised by mankind because
of their need of them. Let it be admitted that this opinion has a semblance of reason in regard to
earthly and corruptible things (though Nature herself supplies every good with a lavish hand); yet
can we believe that things which are immortal and unchangeable are the inventions of men? These,
indeed, and all things else which are beyond the reach of our senses, and comprehended by the
intellect alone, receive their being, not from the material life of man, but from the intellectual and
eternal essence of God. Again, the orderly arrangement of these things is the work of his providence:
for instance, that the day, deriving radiance from the sun, is bright; that night succeeds his setting,
and the starry host by which night itself is redeemed from total darkness. And what shall we say of
the moon, which when most distant from, and opposite to the sun, is filled with light, but wanes in
proportion to the nearness of her approach to him? Do not these things manifestly evince the
intelligence and sagacious wisdom of God? Add to this that needful warmth of the solar rays which
ripen the fruits of the earth; the currents of wind, so conducive to the fertility of the seasons; the
cool and refreshing showers; and the harmony of all these things in accordance with which all are
reasonably and systematically conducted: lastly, the everlasting order of the planets, which return
to the selfsame place at their appointed times: are not all these, as well as the perfect ministry of the
stars, obedient to a divine law, evident proofs of the ordinance of God? Again, do the mountain
heights, the deep and hollow valleys, the level and extensive plains, useful as they are, as well as
pleasing to the eye, appear to exist independently of the will of God? Or do not the proportion and
alternate succession of land and water, serviceable, the one for husbandry, the other for the transport
of such foreign products as we need, afford a clear demonstration of his exact and proportionate
providential care? For instance, the mountains contain a store of water, which the level ground
receives, and after imbibing sufficient for the renovation of the soil, sends forth the residue into the
sea, and the sea in turn passes it onward to the ocean. And still we dare to say that all these things
happen by chance and accident; unable though we be to show by what shape or form this chance is
characterized; a thing which has no foundation either in intellect or sense existence; which rings in
our ears as the mere sound of an unsubstantial name!

CHAPTER VII
In regard to Things above our Comprehension, we should glorify the Creator’s Wisdom, and attribute their Causes to
him alone, and not to Chance.

IN fact, this word “chance” is the expression of men who think in haphazard and illogical fashion;
who are unable to understand the causes of these things, and who, owing to the feebleness of their
own apprehensions, conceive that those things for which they cannot assign a reason, are ordered
without reason. There are, unquestionably, some things which possess wonderful natural properties,
and the full apprehension of which is very difficult: for example, the nature of hot springs. For no
one can easily explain the cause of so powerful a fire; and it is indeed surprising that though
surrounded on all sides by a body of cold water, it loses none of its native heat. These phenomena
appear to be of rare occurrence throughout the world, being intended, I am persuaded, to afford to
mankind convincing evidence of the power of that Providence which ordains that two directly
opposite natures, heat and cold, should thus proceed from the self-same source. Many indeed, yea,
numberless, are the gifts which God has bestowed for the comfort and enjoyment of man; and of
these the fruit of the olive-tree and the vine deserve especial notice; the one for its power of
renovating and cheering the soul, the other because it ministers to our enjoyment, and is likewise
adapted for the cure of bodily disease. Marvelous, too, is the course of rivers, flowing night and day with unceasing motion, and presenting a type of ever-flowing, never-ceasing life: and equally wonderful is the alternate succession of day and night.

CHAPTER VIII
That God bestows an Abundant Supply of whatever is suited to the Wants of Man, and ministers but sparingly to his Pleasures; in Both Cases with a View to his Advantage.

LET what has been said suffice to prove that nothing exists without reason and intelligence, and that reason itself and providence are of God. It is he who has also distributed the metals, as gold, silver, copper, and the rest, in due proportion; ordaining an abundant supply of those which would be most needed and generally employed, while he dispensed those which serve the purposes merely of pleasure in adornment of luxury with a liberal and yet a sparing hand, holding a mean between parsimony and profusion. For the searchers for metals, were those which are employed for ornament procured in equal abundance with the rest, would be impelled by avarice to despise and neglect to gather those which, like iron or copper, are serviceable for husbandry, or house-building, or the equipment of ships; and would care for those only which conduce to luxury and a superfluous excess of wealth. Hence it is, as they say, that the search for gold and silver is far more difficult and laborious than that for any other metals, the violence of the toil thus acting as a counterpoise to the violence of the desire. And how many instances might still further be enumerated of the workings of that Divine Providence which, in all the gifts which it has so unsparingly conferred upon us, plainly urges us to the practice of self-control and all other virtues, and leads us away from unbefitting covetousness! To trace the secret reasons of all these things is indeed a task which exceeds the power of human faculties. For how can the intellect of a frail and perishable being arrive at the knowledge of perfect truth, or apprehend in its purity the counsel of God from the beginning?

CHAPTER IX
Of the Philosophers, who fell into Mistaken Notions, and Same of them into Danger, by their Desire of Universal Knowledge. -- Also of the Doctrines of Plato.

WE ought, therefore, to aim at objects which are within our power, and exceed not the capacities of our nature. For the persuasive influence of argument has a tendency to draw most of us away from the truth of things, which has happened to many philosophers, who have employed themselves in reasoning, and the study of natural science, and who, as often as the magnitude of the subject surpasses their powers of investigation, adopt various devices for obscuring the truth. Hence their diversities of judgment, and contentious opposition to each others’ doctrines, and this notwithstanding their pretensions to wisdom. Hence, too, popular commotions have arisen, and severe sentences, passed by those in power, apprehensive of the overthrow of hereditary institutions, have proved destructive to many of the disputants themselves. Socrates, for example, elated by his skill in argumentation, indulging his power of making the worse appear the better reason, and playing continually with the subtleties of controversy, fell a victim to the slander of his own countrymen and fellow-citizens. Pythagoras, too, who laid special claim to the virtues of silence and self-control, was convicted of falsehood. For he declared to the Italians that the doctrines which he had received during his travels in Egypt, and which had long before been divulged by the priests of that nation, were a personal revelation to himself from God. Lastly, Plato himself, the gentlest and most refined of all, who first essayed to draw men’s thoughts from sensible to intellectual and eternal objects, and taught them to aspire to sublimer speculations, in the first place declared, with truth, a God exalted above every essence, but to him he added also a second, distinguishing them numerically as two, though both possessing one perfection, and the being of the second Deity
proceeding from the first. For he is the creator and controller of the universe, and evidently supreme: while the second, as the obedient agent of his commands, refers the origin of all creation to him as the cause. In accordance, therefore, with the soundest reason, we may say that there is one Being whose care and providence are over all things, even God the Word, who has ordered all things; but the Word being God himself is also the Son of God. For by what name can we designate him except by this title of the Son, without Falling into the most grievous error? For the Father of all things is properly considered the Father of his own Word. Thus far, then, Plato’s sentiments were sound; but in what follows he appears to have wandered from the truth, in that he introduces a plurality of gods, to each of whom he assigns specific forms. And this has given occasion to still greater error among the unthinking portion of mankind, who pay no regard to the providence of the Supreme God, but worship images of their own devising, made in the likeness of men or other living beings. Hence it appears that the transcendent nature and admirable learning of this philosopher, tinged as they were with such errors as these, were by no means free from impurity and alloy. And yet he seems to me to retract, and correct his own words, when he plainly declares that a rational soul is the breath of God, and divides all things into two classes, intellectual and sensible: [the one simple, the other] consisting of bodily structure; the one comprehended by the intellect alone, the other estimated by the judgment and the senses. The former class, therefore, which partakes of the divine spirit, and is uncompounded and immaterial, is eternal, and inherits everlasting life; but the latter, being entirely resolved into the elements of which it is composed, has no share in everlasting life. He farther teaches the admirable doctrine, that those who have passed a life of virtue, that is, the spirits of good and holy men, are enshrined, after their separation from the body, in the fairest mansions of heaven. A doctrine not merely to be admired, but profitable too. For who can believe in such a statement, and aspire to such a happy lot, without desiring to practice righteousness and temperance, and to turn aside from vice? Consistently with this doctrine he represents the spirits of the wicked as tossed like wreckage on the streams of Acheron and Pyriphlegethon.

CHAPTER X
Of those who reject the Doctrines of Philosophers, as well as those of Scripture: and that we ought to believe the Poets in All Things, or disbelieve them in All.

THERE are, however, some persons so infatuated, that when they meet with such sentiments as these, they are neither converted or alarmed: nay, they even treat them with contempt and scorn, as if they listened to the inventions of fable; applauding, perhaps, the beauty of the eloquence, but abhorring the severity of the precepts. And yet they give credence to the fictions of the poets, and make both civilized and barbarous countries ring with exploded and false tales. For the poets assert that the judgment of souls after death is committed to men whose parentage they ascribe to the gods, ex-tolling their righteousness and impartiality and represent them as guardians of the dead. The same poets describe the battles of the gods and certain usages of war among them, and speak of them as subject to the power of fate. Some of these deities they picture to us as cruel, others as strangers to all care for the human race, and others again as hateful in their character. They introduce them also as mourning the slaughter of their own children, thus implying their inability to succor, not strangers merely, but those most dear to them. They describe them, too, as subject to human passions, and sing of their battles and wounds, their joys and sorrows. And in all this they appear worthy of belief. For if we suppose them to be moved by a divine impulse to attempt the poetic art, we are bound to believe them and to be persuaded of what they utter under this inspiration. They speak, then, of the calamities to which their divinities are subject; calamities which of course are altogether true! But it will be objected that it is the privilege of poets to lie, since the peculiar province of poetry is to charm the spirits of the hearers, while the very essence of truth is that things told be in reality exactly what they are said to be. Let us grant that it is a characteristic of poetry occasionally to conceal the
truth. But they who speak falsehood do it not without an object; being influenced either by a desire of personal gain or advantage, or possibly, being conscious of some evil conduct, they are induced to disguise the truth by dread of the threatening vengeance of the laws. But surely it were possible for them (in my judgment), by adhering faithfully to truth at least while treating of the nature of the Supreme Being, to avoid the guilt at once of falsehood and impiety.

CHAPTER XI
On the Coming of our Lord in the Flesh; its Nature and Cause.

WHOEVER, then, has pursued a course unworthy of a life of virtue, and is conscious of having lived an irregular and disorderly life, let him repent, and turn with enlightened spiritual vision to God; and let him abandon his past career of wickedness, content if he attain to wisdom even in his declining years. We, however, have received no aid from human instruction; nay, whatever graces of character are esteemed of good report by those who have understanding, are entirely the gift of God. And I am able to oppose no feeble buckler against the deadly weapons of Satan’s armory; I mean the knowledge I possess of those things which are pleasing to him: and of these I will select such as are appropriate to my present design, while I proceed to sing the praises of the Father of all. But do thou, O Christ Saviour of mankind, be present to aid me in my hallowed task! Direct the words which celebrate thy virtues, and instruct me worthily to sound thy praises. And now, let no one expect to listen to the graces of elegant language: for well I know that the nerveless eloquence of those who speak to charm the ear, and whose aim is rather applause than sound argument, is distasteful to hearers of sound judgment. It is asserted, then, by some profane and senseless persons, that Christ, whom we worship, was justly condemned to death, and that he who is the author of life to all, was himself deprived of life. That such an assertion should be made by those who have once dared to enter the paths of impiety, who have cast aside all fear, and all thought of concealing their own depravity, is not surprising. But it is beyond the bounds of folly itself that they should be able, as it seems, really to persuade themselves that the incorruptible God yielded to the violence of men, and not rather to that love alone which he bore to the human race: that they should fail to perceive that divine magnanimity and forbearance is changed by no insult, is moved from its intrinsic steadfastness by no revilings; but is ever the same, breaking down and repelling, by the spirit of wisdom and greatness of soul, the savage fierceness of those who assail it. The gracious kindness of God had determined to abolish iniquity, and to exalt order and justice. Accordingly, he gathered a company of the wisest among men, and ordained that most noble and useful doctrine, which is calculated to lead the good and blessed of mankind to an imitation of his own providential care. And what higher blessing can we speak of than this, that God should prescribe the way of righteousness, and make those who are counted worthy of his instruction like himself; that goodness might be communicated to all classes of mankind, and eternal felicity be the result? This is the glorious victory: this the true power: this the mighty work, worthy of its author, the restoration of all people to soundness of mind: and the glory of this triumph we joyfully ascribe to thee, thou Saviour of all! But thou, vile and wretched blasphemy, whose glory is in lies and rumors and calumny; thy power is to deceive and prevail with the inexperience of youth, and with men who still retain the folly of youth. These thou seducest from the service of the true God, and settest up false idols as the objects of their worship and their prayers; and thus the reward of their folly awaits thy deluded victims: for they calumniate Christ, the author of every blessing, who is God, and the Son of God. Is not the worship of the best and wisest of the nations of this world worthily directed to that God, who, while possessing boundless power, remains immovably true to his own purpose, and retains undiminished his characteristic kindness and love to man? Away, then, ye impious, for still ye may while vengeance on your transgressions is yet withheld; begone to your sacrifices, your feasts, your scenes
of revelry and drunkenness, wherein, under the semblance of religion, your hearts are devoted to profligate enjoyment, and pretending to perform sacrifices, yourselves are the willing slaves of your own pleasures. No knowledge have ye of any good, nor even of the first commandment of the mighty God, who both declares his will to man, and gives commission to his Son to direct the course of human life, that they who have passed a career of virtue and self-control may obtain, according to the judgment of that Son, a second, yea, a blessed and happy existence. I have now declared the decree of God respecting the life which he prescribes to man, neither ignorantly, as many have done, nor resting on the ground of opinion or conjecture. But it may be that some will ask, Whence this title of Son? Whence this generation of which we speak, if God be indeed only One, and incapable of union with another? We are, however, to consider generation as of two kinds; one in the way of natural birth, which is known to all; the other, that which is the effect of an eternal cause, the mode of which is seen by the prescience of God, and by those among men whom he loves. For he who is wise will recognize the cause which regulates the harmony of creation. Since, then, nothing exists without a cause, of necessity the cause of existing substances preceded their existence. But since the world and all things that it contains exist, and are preserved, their preserver must have had a prior existence; so that Christ is the cause of preservation, and the preservation of things is an effect: even as the Father is the cause of the Son, and the Son the effect of that cause. Enough, then, has been said to prove his priority of existence. But how do we explain his descent to this earth, and to men? His motive in this, as the prophets had foretold, originated in his watchful care for the interests of all: for it needs must be that the Creator should care for his own works. But when the time came for him to assume a terrestrial body, and to sojourn on this earth, the need requiring, he devised for himself a new mode of birth. Conception was there, yet apart from marriage: childbirth, yet pure virginity: and a maiden became the mother of God! An eternal nature received a beginning of temporal existence: a sensible form of a spiritual essence, a material manifestation of incorporeal brightness, appeared. Alike wondrous were the circumstances which attended this great event. A radiant dove, like that which flew from the ark of Noah, alighted on the Virgin's bosom: and accordant with this impalpable union, purer than chastity, more guileless than innocence itself, were the results which followed. From infancy possessing the wisdom of God, received with reverential awe by the Jordan, in whose waters he was baptized, gifted with that royal unction, the spirit of universal intelligence; with knowledge and power to perform miracles, and to heal diseases beyond the reach of human art; he yielded a swift and unhindered assent to the prayers of men, to whose welfare, indeed, his whole life was devoted without reserve. His doctrines instilled, not prudence only, but real wisdom: his hearers were instructed, not in the mere social virtues, but in the ways which conduct to the spiritual world; and devoted themselves to the contemplation of immutable and eternal things, and the knowledge of the Supreme Father. The benefits which he bestowed were no common blessings: for blindness, the gift of sight; for helpless weakness, the vigor of health; in the place of death, restoration to life again. I dwell not on that abundant provision in the wilderness, whereby a scanty measure of food became a complete and enduring supply for the wants of a mighty multitude? Thus do we render thanks to thee, our God and Saviour, according to our feeble power; unto thee, O Christ, supreme Providence of the mighty Father, who both savest us from evil, and impartest to us thy most blessed doctrine: for I say these things, not to praise, but to give thanks. For what mortal is he who shall worthily declare thy praise, of whom we learn that thou didst from nothing call creation into being, and illumine it with thy light; that thou didst regulate the confusion of the elements by the laws of harmony and order? But chiefly we mark thy loving-kindness, in that thou hast caused those whose hearts inclined to thee to desire earnestly a divine and blessed life, and hast provided that, like merchants of true blessings, they might impart to many others the wisdom and good fortune they had received; themselves, meanwhile, reaping the everlasting fruit of virtue. Freed from the trammels of vice, and imbued with the love of their fellow-men, they keep mercy ever
before their eyes, and hoping for the promises of faith; devoted to modesty, and all those virtues which the past career of human life had thrown aside [but which were now restored by him whose providence is over all]. No other power could be found to devise a remedy for such evils, and for that spirit of injustice which had heretofore asserted its dominion over the race of men. Providence, however, could reach the circumstances even here, and with ease restored whatever had been disordered by violence and the licentiousness of human passion. And this restoring power he exercised without concealment. For he knew that, though there were some whose thoughts were able to recognize and understand his power, others there were whose brutish and senseless nature led them to rely exclusively on the testimony of their own senses. In open day, therefore, that no one, whether good or evil, might find room for doubt, he manifested his blessed and wondrous healing power; restoring the dead to life again, and renewing with a word the powers of those who had been bereft of bodily sense. Can we, in short, suppose, that to render the sea firm as the solid ground, to still the raging of the storm, and finally to ascend to heaven, after turning the unbelief of men to steadfast faith by the performance of these wondrous acts, demanded less than almighty power, was less than the work of God? Nor was the time of his passion unaccompanied by like wonders: when the sun was darkened, and the shades of night obscured the light of day. Then terror everywhere laid hold upon the people, and the thought that the end of all things was already come, and that chaos, such as had been ere the order of creation began, would once more prevail. Then, too, the cause was sought of so terrible an evil, and in what respect the trespasses of men had provoked the wrath of Heaven; until God himself, who surveyed with calm dignity the arrogance of the ungodly, renewed the face of heaven, and adorned it with the host of stars. Thus the be-clouded face of Nature was again restored to her pristine beauty.

CHAPTER XII
Of those who are Ignorant of this Mystery; and that their Ignorance is Voluntary. The Blessings which await those who know it, especially such as die in the Confession of the Faith.

BUT it will be said by some, who love to blaspheme, that it was in the power of God to ameliorate and soften the natural will of man. What better way, I ask, what better method could be devised, what more effectual effort put forth for reclaiming evil man, than converse with God himself? Was not he visibly present to teach them the principles of virtuous conduct? And if the personal instructions of God were without effect, how much more, had he continued absent and unheard? What, then, had power to hinder this most blessed doctrine? The perverse folly of man. For the clearness of our perceptions is at once obscured, as often as we receive with angry impatience those precepts which are given for our blessing and advantage. In truth, it was the very choice of men to disregard these precepts, and to turn a deaf ear to the commandments so distasteful to them; though had they listened, they would have gained a reward well worthy such attention, and that not for the present only, but the future life, which is indeed the only true life. For the reward of obedience to God is imperishable and everlasting life, to which they may aspire who know him, and frame their course of life so as to afford a pattern to others, and as it were a perpetual standard for the imitation of those who desire to excel in virtue. Therefore was the doctrine committed to men of understanding, that the truths which they communicated might be kept with care and a pure conscience by the members of their households, and that thus a truthful and steadfast observance of God’s commands might be secured, the fruit of which is that boldness in the prospect of death which springs from pure faith and genuine holiness before God. He who is thus armed can withstand the tempest of the world, and is sustained even to martyrdom by the invincible power of God, whereby he boldly overcomes the greatest terrors, and is accounted worthy of a crown of glory by him to whom he has thus nobly testified. Nor does he himself assume the praise, knowing full well that it is God who gives the power both to endure, and to fulfill with ready zeal the Divine commands. And
well may such a course as this receive the meed of never-failing remembrance and everlasting honor. For as the martyr’s life is one of sobriety and obedience to the will of God, so is his death an example of true greatness and generous fortitude of soul. Hence it is followed by hymns and psalms, words and songs of praise to the all-seeing God: and a sacrifice of thanksgiving is offered in memory of such men, a bloodless, a harmless sacrifice, wherein is no need of the fragrant frankincense, no need of fire; but only enough of pure light to suffice the assembled worshipers. Many, too, there are whose charitable spirit leads them to prepare a temperate banquet for the comfort of the needy, and the relief of those who had been driven from their homes: a custom which can only be deemed burdensome by those whose thoughts are not accordant with the divine and sacred doctrine.

CHAPTER XIII
That there is a Necessary Difference between Created Things. That the Propensity to Good and Evil depends on the Will of Man; and that, consequently, Judgment is a Necessary and Reasonable Thing.

THERE are, indeed, some who venture with childish presumption to find fault with God in respect of this also, and ask why it is that he has not created one and the same natural disposition for all, but rather has ordained the existence of many things different, nay, contrary in their nature, whence arises the dissimilarity of our moral conduct and character. Would it not (say they) have been better, both as regards obedience to the commands of God, and a just apprehension of himself, and for the confirmation of individual faith, that all mankind should be of the same moral character? It is indeed ridiculous to expect that this could be the case, and to forget that the constitution of the world is different from that of the things that are in the world; that physical and moral objects are not identical in their nature, nor the affections of the body the same as those of the soul. [For the immortal soul far exceeds the material world in dignity, and is more blessed than the perishable and terrestrial creation, in proportion as it is noble and more allied to God.] Nor is the human race excluded from participation in the divine goodness; though this is not the lot of all indiscriminately, but of those only who search deeply into the Divine nature, and propose the knowledge of sacred things as the leading object of their lives.

CHAPTER XIV
That Created Nature differs infinitely from Un-created Being: to which Man makes the Nearest Approach by a Life of Virtue.

SURELY it must be the very height of folly to compare created with eternal things, which latter have neither beginning nor end, while the former, having been originated and called into being, and having received a commencement of their existence at some definite time, must consequently, of necessity have an end. How then can things which have thus been made, bear comparison with him who has ordained their being? Were this the case, the power to command their existence could not rightly be attributed to him. Nor can celestial things be compared to him, any more than the material with the intellectual world, or copies with the models from which they are formed. Nay, is it not absurd thus to confound all things, and to obscure the honor of God by comparing him with men, or even with beasts? And is it not characteristic of madmen, utterly estranged from a life of sobriety and virtue, to affect a power equivalent to that of God? If indeed we in any sense aspire to blessedness like that of God, our duty is to lead a life according to his commandments: so shall we, having finished a course consistent with the laws which he has prescribed, dwell for ever superior to the power of fate, in eternal and undecaying mansions. For the only power in man which can be elevated to a comparison with that of God, is sincere and guileless service and devotion of heart to himself, with the contemplation and study of whatever pleases him, the raising our affections above the things of earth, and directing our thoughts, as far as we may, to high and heavenly objects: for
from such endeavors, it is said, a victory accrues to us more valuable than many blessings. The
cause, then, of that difference which subsists, as regards the inequality both of dignity and power in
created beings, is such as I have described. In this the wise acquiesce with abundant thankfulness and
joy: while those who are dissatisfied, display their own folly, and their arrogance will reap its due
reward.

CHAPTER XV
Of the Saviour’s Doctrines and Miracles; and the Benefits he confers on those who own Subjection to him.

THE Son of God invites all men to the practice of virtue, and presents himself to all who have
understanding hearts, as the teacher of his saving precepts. Unless, indeed, we will deceive
ourselves; and remain in wretched ignorance of the fact, that for our advantage, that is, to secure the
blessing of the human race, he went about upon earth; and, having called around him the best men
of their age, committed to them instructions full of profit, and of power to preserve them in the path
of a virtuous life; teaching them the faith and righteousness which are the true remedy against the
adverse power of that malignant spirit whose delight it is to ensnare and delude the inexperienced.
Accordingly he visited the sick, relieved the infirm from the ills which afflicted them, and consoled
those who felt the extremity of penury and want. He commended also sound and rational sobriety
of character, enjoining his followers to endure, with dignity and patience, every kind of injury and
contempt: teaching them to regard such as visitations permitted by their Father, and the victory is
ever theirs who nobly bear the evils which befall them. For he assured them that the highest strength
of all consisted in this steadfastness of soul, combined with that philosophy which is nothing else
than the knowledge of truth and goodness, producing in men the generous habit of sharing with their
poorer brethren those riches which they have themselves acquired by honorable means. At the same
time he utterly forbade all proud oppression, declaring that, as he had come to associate with the
lowly, so those who despised the lowly would be excluded from his favor. Such and so great was the
test whereby he proved the faith of those who owned allegiance to his authority, and thus he not only
prepared them for the contempt of danger and terror, but taught them at the same time the most
genuine confidence in himself. Once, too, his rebuke was uttered to restrain the zeal of one of his
companions, who yielded too easily to the impulse of passion, when he assaulted with the sword,
and, eager to protect his Saviour’s life, exposed his own. Then it was that he bade him desist, and
returned his sword to its sheath, reproving him for his distrust of refuge and safety in himself, and
declaring solemnly that all who should essay to retaliate an injury by like aggression, or use the
sword, should perish by a violent death. This is indeed heavenly wisdom, to choose rather to endure
than to inflict injury, and to be ready, should necessity so require, to suffer, but not to do, wrong. For
since injurious conduct is in itself a most serious evil, it is not the injured party, but the injuring, on
whom the heaviest punishment must fall. It is indeed possible for one who is subject to the will of
God to avoid the evil both of committing and of suffering injury, provided his confidence be firm
in the protection of that God whose aid is ever present to shield his servants from harm. For how
should that man who trusts in God attempt to seek for resources in himself? In such a case he must
abide the conflict with uncertainty of victory: and no man of understanding could prefer a doubtful
to a certain issue. Again, how can that man doubt the presence and aid of God, who has had
experience of manifold dangers, and has at all times been easily delivered, at his simple nod, from
all terrors: who has passed, as it were, through the sea which was leveled by the Saviour’s word, and
afforded a solid road for the passage of the people? This is, I believe, the sure basis of faith, the true
foundation of confidence, that we find such miracles as these performed and perfected at the
command of the God of Providence. Hence it is that even in the midst of trial we find no cause to
repent of our faith, but retain an unshaken hope in God; and when this habit of confidence is
established in the soul, God himself dwells in the inmost thoughts. But he is of invincible power: the soul, therefore, which has within it him who is thus invincible, will not be overcome by the perils which may surround it. Likewise, we learn this truth from the victory of God himself, who, while intent on providing for the blessing of mankind, though grievously insulted by the malice of the ungodly, yet passed unharmed through the sufferings of his passion, and gained a mighty conquest, an everlasting crown of triumph, over all iniquity; thus accomplishing the purpose of his own providence and love as regards the just, and destroying the cruelty of the impious and unjust.

CHAPTER XVI

The Coming of Christ was predicted by the Prophets; and was ordained to be the Overthrow of Idols and Idolatrous Cities.

LONG since had his passion, as well as his advent in the flesh, been predicted by the prophets. The time, too, of his incarnation had been foretold, and the manner in which the fruits of iniquity and profligacy, so ruinous to the works and ways of righteousness, should be destroyed, and the whole world partake of the virtues of wisdom and sound discretion, through the almost universal prevalence of those principles of conduct which the Saviour should promulgate, over the minds of men; whereby the worship of God should be confirmed, and the rites of superstition utterly abolished. By these not the slaughter of animals alone, but the sacrifice of human victims, and the pollutions of an accursed worship, had been devised: as, for example, by the laws of Assyria and Egypt, the lives of innocent men were offered up in images of brass or earth. Therefore have these nations received a recompense worthy so foul a worship. Memphis and Babylon [it was declared] shall be wasted, and left desolate with their fathers’ gods. Now these things I speak not from the report of others, but having myself been present, and actually seen the most wretched of these cities, the unfortunate Memphis. Moses desolated, at the Divine command, the land of the once mighty Pharaoh, whose arrogance was his destruction, and destroyed his army (which had proved victorious over numerous and mighty nations, an army strong in defenses and in arms), not by the flight of arrows or the hurling of hostile weapons, but by holy prayer alone, and quiet supplication.

CHAPTER XVII

Of the Wisdom of Moses, which was an Object of Imitation to the Wise among Heathen Nations. Also concerning Daniel, and the Three Children.

No nation has ever been more highly blessed than that which Moses led: none would have continued to enjoy higher blessings, had they not willingly withdrawn themselves from the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But who can worthily describe the praises of Moses himself; who, after reducing to order an unruly nation, and disciplining their minds to habits of obedience and respect, out of captivity restored them to a state of freedom, turned their mourning into gladness, and so far elevated their minds, that, through the excess of contrast with their former circumstances, and the abundance of their prosperity, the spirit of the people was elated with haughtiness and pride? So far did he surpass in wisdom those who had lived before him, that even the wise men and philosophers who are extolled by heathen nations aspired to imitate his wisdom. For Pythagoras, following his wisdom, attained to such a pitch of self-control, that he became to Plato, himself a model of discretion, the standard of his own self-mastery. Again, how great and terrible the cruelty of that ancient Syrian king, over whom Daniel triumphed, the prophet who unfolded the secrets of futurity, whose actions evinced transcendent greatness of soul, and the luster of whose character and life shone conspicuous above all? The name of this tyrant was Nebuchadnezzar, whose race afterward became extinct, and his vast and mighty power was transferred to Persian hands. The wealth of this tyrant was then, and is even now, celebrated far and wide, as well as his ill-timed devotion to unlawful worship, his idol
statues, lifting their heads to heaven, and formed of various metals, and the terrible and savage laws ordained to uphold this worship. These terrors Daniel, sustained by genuine piety towards the true God, utterly despised, and predicted that the tyrant’s unseasonable zeal would be productive of fearful evil to himself. He failed, however, to convince the tyrant (for excessive wealth is an effectual barrier to true soundness of judgment), and at length the monarch displayed the savage cruelty of his character, by commanding that the righteous prophet should be exposed to the fury of wild beasts. Noble, too, indeed was the united spirit exhibited by those brethren (whose example others have since followed, and have won surpassing glory by their faith in the Saviour’s name), those, I mean, who stood unharmed in the fiery furnace, and the terrors appointed to devour them, repelling by the holy touch of their bodies the flame by which they were surrounded. On the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire, which was destroyed by thunderbolts from Heaven, the providence of God conducted Daniel to the court of Cambyses the Persian king. Yet envy followed him even here; nor envy only, but the deadly plots of the magians against his life, with a succession of many and urgent dangers, from all which he was easily delivered by the providential care of Christ, and shone conspicuous in the practice of every virtue. Three times in the day did he present his prayers to God, and memorable were the proofs of supernatural power which he displayed: and hence the magians, filled with envy at the very efficacy of his petitions, represented the possession of such power to the king as fraught with danger, and prevailed on him to adjudge this distinguished benefactor of the Persian people to be devoured by savage lions. Daniel, therefore, thus condemned, was consigned to the lions’ den (not indeed to suffer death, but to win unfading glory); and though surrounded by these ferocious beasts of prey, he found them more gentle than the men who had enclosed him there. Supported by the power of calm and steadfast prayer, he was enabled to subdue all these animals, ferocious as, by nature, they were. Cambyses, on learning the event (for so mighty a proof of Divine power could not possibly be concealed), amazed at the marvelous story, and repenting the too easy credence he had given to the slanderous charges of the magians, resolved, notwithstanding, to be himself a witness of the spectacle. But when he saw the prophet with uplifted hands rendering praises to Christ, and the lions crouching, and as it were worshiping, at his feet, immediately he adjudged the magians, to whose persuasions he had listened, to perish by the self-same sentence, and shut them up in the lions’ den. The beasts, erewhile so gentle, rushed at once upon their victims, and with all the fierceness of their nature tore and destroyed them all.

CHAPTER XVIII
Of the Erythraean Sibyl, who pointed in a Prophetic Acrostic at our Lord and his Passion. The Acrostic is “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, Cross.”

My desire, however, is to derive even from foreign sources a testimony to the Divine nature of Christ. For on such testimony it is evident that even those who blaspheme his name must acknowledge that he is God, and the Son of God if indeed they will accredit the words of those whose sentiments coincided with their own. The Erythraean Sibyl, then, who herself assures us that she lived in the sixth generation after the flood, was a priestess of Apollo, who wore the sacred fillet in imitation of the God she served, who guarded also the tripod encompassed with the serpent’s folds, and returned prophetic answers to those who approached her shrine; having been devoted by the folly of her parents to this service, a service productive of nothing good or noble, but only of indecent fury, such as we find recorded in the case of Daphne. On one occasion, however, having rushed into the sanctuary of her vain superstition, she became really filled with inspiration from above, and declared in prophetic verses the future purposes of God; plainly indicating the advent of Jesus by the initial letters of these verses, forming an acrostic in these words: **JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, SAVIOUR, CROSS.** The verses themselves are as follows:
Judgment! Earth’s oozing pores shall mark the day;
Earth’s heavenly king his glories shall display:
Sovereign of all, exalted on his throne,
Unnumbered multitudes their God shall own;
Shall sea their Judge, with mingled joy and fear,
Crowned with his saints, in human form appear.
How vain, while desolate earth’s glories lie,
Riches, and pomp, and man’s idolatry!
In that dread hour, when Nature’s fiery doom
Startles the slumb’ring tenants of the tomb,
Trembling all flesh shall stand; each secret wile,
Sins long forgotten, thoughts of guilt and guile,
Open beneath God’s searching light shall lie:
No refuge then, but hopeless agony.
O’er heaven’s expanse shall gathering shades of night
From earth, sun, stars, and moon, withdraw their light;
God’s arm shall crush each mountain’s towering pride;
On ocean’s plain no more shall navies ride.
Dried at the source, no river’s rushing sound
Shall soothe, no fountain slake the parched ground.
Around, afar, shall roll the trumpet’s blast,
Voice of wrath long delayed, revealed at last.
In speechless awe, while earth’s foundations groan,
On judgment’s seat earth’s kings their God shall own.
Uplifted then, in majesty divine,
Radiant with light, behold Salvation’s Sign!
Cross of that Lord, who, once for sinners given,
Reviled by man, now owned by earth and heaven,
O’er every land extends his iron sway.
Such is the name these mystic lines display;
Saviour, eternal king, who bears our sins away.

It is evident that the virgin uttered these verses under the influence of Divine inspiration. And I cannot but esteem her blessed, whom the Saviour thus selected to unfold his gracious purpose towards us.

CHAPTER XIX

That this Prophecy respecting our Saviour was not the Fiction of any Member of the Christian Church, but the Testimony of the Erythraean Sibyl, whose Books were translated into Latin by Cicero before the coming of Christ. Also that Virgil makes mention of the same, and of the Birth of the Virgin’s Child: though he spoke obscurely of this Mystery from Fear of the Ruling Powers.

MANY, however, who admit that the Erythraean Sibyl was really a prophetess, yet refuse to credit this prediction, and imagine that some one professing our faith, and not unacquainted with the poetic art, was the composer of these verses. They hold, in short, that they are a forgery, and alleged to be the prophecies of the Sibyl on the ground of their containing useful moral sentiments, tending to restrain licentiousness, and to lead man to a life of sobriety and decorum. Truth, however, in this case is evident, since the diligence of our countrymen has made a careful computation of the times;
so that there is no room to suspect that this poem was composed after the advent and condemnation of Christ, or that the general report is false, that the verses were a prediction of the Sibyl in an early age. For it is allowed that Cicero was acquainted with this poem, which he translated into the Latin tongue, and incorporated with his own works. This writer was put to death during the ascendancy of Antony, who in his turn was conquered by Augustus, whose reign lasted fifty-six years. Tiberius succeeded, in whose age it was that the Saviour’s advent enlightened the world, the mystery of our most holy religion began to prevail, and as it were a new race of men commenced: of which, I suppose, the prince of Latin poets thus speaks:

Behold, a new, a heaven-born race appears.

And again, in another passage of the Bucolics:

Sicilian Muses, sound a loftier strain.

What can be clearer than this? For he adds,

The voice of Cuma’s oracle is heard again.

Evidently referring to the Cumaean Sibyl. Nor was even this enough: the poet goes further, as if irresistibly impelled to bear his testimony. What then does he say?

Behold! the circling years new blessings bring:
The virgin comes, with her the long-desired king.

Who, then, is the virgin who was to come? Is it not she who was filled with, and with child of the Holy Spirit? And why is it impossible that she who was with child of the Holy Spirit should be, and ever continue to be a virgin? This king, too, will return, and by his coming lighten the sorrows of the world. The poet adds,

Thou, chaste Lucina, greet the new-born child,
Beneath whose reign the iron offspring ends,
A golden progeny from heaven descends;
His kingdom banished virtue shall restore,
And crime shall threat the guilty world no more.

We perceive that these words are spoken plainly and at the same time darkly, by way of allegory. Those who search deeply for the import of the words, are able to discern the Divinity of Christ. But lest any of the powerful in the imperial city might be able to accuse the poet of writing anything contrary to the laws of the country, and subverting the religious sentiments which had prevailed from ancient times, he intentionally obscures the truth. For he was acquainted, as I believe, with that blessed mystery which gave to our Lord the name of Saviour: but, that he might avoid the severity of creel men, he drew the thoughts of his hearers to objects with which they were familiar, saying that altars must be erected, temples raised, and sacrifices offered to the new-born child. His concluding words also are adapted to the sentiments of those who were accustomed to such a creed; for he says:

CHAPTER XX
A Farther Quotation from Virgilius Maro respecting Christ, with its Interpretation, showing that the Mystery was indicated therein darkly, as might be expected from a Poet.

A life immortal he shall lead, and be
By heroes seen, himself shall heroes see;
evidently meaning the righteous.
The jarring nations he in peace shall bind,
And with paternal virtues rule mankind.
Unbidden earth her earliest fruits shall bring,
And fragrant herbs, to greet her infant king.

Well indeed was this admirably wise and accomplished man acquainted with the cruel character of the times. He proceeds:

The goats, uncall’d, full udders home shall bear;
The lowing herds no more fierce lions fear.

Truly said: for faith will not stand in awe of the mighty in the imperial palace.

His cradle shall with rising flowers be crown’d:
The serpent’s brood shall die; the sacred ground
Shall weeds and poisonous plants refuse to bear;
Each common bush th’ Assyrian rose shall wear.

Nothing could be said more true or more consistent with the Saviour’s excellency than this. For the power of the Divine Spirit presents the very cradle of God, like fragrant flowers, to the new-born race. The serpent, too, and the venom of that serpent, perishes, who originally beguiled our first parents, and drew their thoughts from their native innocence to the enjoyment of pleasures, that they might experience that threatened death. For before the Saviour’s advent, the serpent’s power was shown in subverting the souls of those who were sustained by no well-grounded hope, and ignorant of that immortality which awaits the righteous. But after that he had suffered, and was separated for a season from the body which he had assumed, the power of the resurrection was revealed to man through the communication of the Holy Spirit: and whatever stain of human guilt might yet remain was removed by the washing of sacred lustrations.

Then indeed could the Saviour bid his followers be of good cheer, and, remembering his adorable and glorious resurrection, expect the like for themselves. Truly, then, the poisonous race may be said to be extinct. Death himself is extinct, and the truth of the resurrection sealed. Again, the Assyrian race is gone, which first led the way to faith in God. But when he speaks of the growth of amomum every where, he alludes to the multitude of the true worshipers of God. For it is as though a multitude of branches, crowned with fragrant flowers, and fitly watered, sprung from the self-same root. Most justly said, Maro, thou wisest of poets! and with this all that follows is consistent.

But when heroic worth his youth shall hear,
And learn his father’s virtues to revere.

By the praises of heroes, he indicates the works of righteous men: by the virtues of his Father he speaks of the creation and everlasting structure of the world: and, it may be, of those laws by which God’s beloved Church is guided, and ordered in a course of righteousness and virtue. Admirable,
again, is the advance to higher things of that state of life which is intermediate, as it were, between
good and evil, and which seldom admits a sudden change:

    Unlabored harvests shall the fields adorn,

that is, the fruit of the Divine law springs up for the service of men.

    And clustered gropes shall blush on every thorn.

Far otherwise has it been during the corrupt and lawless period of human life.

    The knotted oaks shall showers of honey weep.

He here describes the folly and obduracy of the men of that age; and perhaps he also intimates that
they who suffer hardships in the cause of God, shall reap sweet fruits of their own endurance.

    Yet, of old fraud some footsteps shall remain;
The merchant still shall plough the deep for gain:
    Great cities shall with walls becompassed round,
    And sharpened shares shall vex the fruitful ground:
    Another Tiphys shall new seas explore;
    Another Argo land the chiefs upon the Iberian shore;
    Another Helen other wars create,
    And great Achilles urge the Trojan fate.

Well said, wisest of bards! Thou hast carried the license of a poet precisely to the proper point. For
it was not thy purpose to assume the functions of a prophet, to which thou hadst no claim. I suppose
also he was restrained by a sense of the danger which threatened one who should assail the credit of
ancient religious practice. Cautiously, therefore, and securely, as far as possible, he presents the truth
to those who have faculties to understand it; and while he denounces the munitions and conflicts of
war (which indeed are still to be found in the course of human life), he describes our Saviour as
proceeding to the war against Troy, understanding by Troy the world itself. And surely he did
maintain the struggle against the opposing powers of evil, sent on that mission both by the designs
of his own providence and the commandment of his Almighty Father. How, then, does the poet
proceed?

    But when to ripen’d manhood he shall grow,

that is, when, having arrived at the age of manhood, he shall utterly remove the evils which
encompass the path of human life, and tranquilize the world by the blessings of peace

    The greedy sailor shall the seas forego;
    No keel shall cut the waves for foreign ware,
    For every soil shall every product bear.
    The laboring hind his oxen shall disjoin;
    But the luxurious father of the fold,
    With native purple, and unborrow’d gold,
    Beneath his pompous fleece shall proudly sweat;
And under Tyrian robes the lamb shall bleat.
Mature in years, to ready honors move,
O of celestial seed, O foster son of Jove!
See, laboring nature calls thee to sustain
The nodding flame of heaven, and earth, and main!
See to their base restored earth seas, and air;
And joyful ages, from behind, in crowing ranks appear.
To ring thy praise, would heaven my breath prolong.
Infusing spirits worthy such a song,
Not Thracian Orpheus should transcend my lays,
Nor Linus, crown’d with never-fading bays;
Though each his heavenly parent should inspire;
The Muse instruct the voice, and Phoebus tune the lyre.
Should Pan contend in verse, and thou my theme,
Arcadian judges should their God condemn.
Behold (says he) how the mighty world and the elements together manifest their joy.

CHAPTER XXI
That these Things cannot have been spoken of a Mere Man: and that Unbelievers, owing to their Ignorance of Religion, know not even the Origin of their own Existence.

IT may be some will foolishly suppose that these words were spoken of the birth of a mere ordinary mortal. But if this were all, what reason could there be that the earth should need neither seed nor plough, that the vine should require no pruning-hook, or other means of culture? How can we suppose these things to be spoken of a mere mortal’s birth? For nature is the minister of the Divine will not an instrument obedient to the command of man. Indeed, the very joy of the elements indicates the advent of God, not the conception of a human being. The prayer, too, of the poet that his life might be prolonged is a proof of the Divinity of him whom he invoked; for we desire life and preservation from God, and not from man. Indeed, the Erythraean Sibyl thus appeals to God: “Why, O Lord, dost thou compel me still to foretell the future, and not rather remove me from this earth to await the blessed day of thy coming?” And Maro adds to what he had said before:

Begin, sweet boy! with smiles thy mother know,
Who ten long months did with thy burden go.
No mortal parents smiled upon thy birth:
No nuptial joy thou know’st, no feast of earth.

How could his parents have smiled on him? For his Father is God, who is a Power without sensible quality, existing, not in any definite shape, but as comprehending other beings, and not, therefore, in a human body. And who knows not that the Holy Spirit has no participation in the nuptial union? For what desire can exist in the disposition of that good which all things rise desire? What fellowship, in short, can wisdom hold with pleasure? But let these arguments be left to those who ascribe to him a human origin, and who care not to purify themselves from all evil in word as well as deed. On thee, Piety, I call to aid my words, on thee who art the very law of purity, most desirable of all blessings, teacher of holiest hope, assured promise of immortality! Thee, Piety, and thee, Clemency, I adore. We who have obtained thine aid owe thee everlasting gratitude for thy healing power. But the multitudes whom their innate hatred of thyself deprives of thy succor, are equally estranged from God himself, and know not that the very cause of their life and being, and that of all the ungodly, is connected with the rightful worship of him who is Lord of all: for the world itself is
CHAPTER XXII
The Emperor thankfully ascribes his Victories and all other Blessings to Christ; and condemns the Conduct of the Tyrant Maximin, the Violence of whose Persecution had enhanced the Glory of Religion.

To thee, Piety, I ascribe the cause of my own prosperity, and of all that I now possess. To this truth the happy issue of all my endeavors the great city itself allows with joy and praise. The people, too, of that much-loved city accord in the same sentiment, though once, deceived by ill-grounded hopes, they chose a ruler unworthy of themselves, a ruler who speedily received the chastisement which his audacious deeds deserved. But be it far from me now to recall the memory of these events, while hold gentle words. Yet will I say one thing, which hazy shall not be unbefitting or unseemly. A furious, a cruel, and implacable war was maintained by the tyrants against thee, Piety, and thy holy churches: nor were there wanting some in Rome itself who exulted at a calamity so grievous to the public weal. Nay, the battlefield was prepared; when thou didst stand forth, and present thyself a voluntary victim, supported by faith in God. Then indeed it was that the cruelty of ungodly men, which raged incessantly like a devouring fire, wrought for thee a wondrous and ever memorable glory. Astonishment seized the spectators themselves, when they beheld the very executioners who tortured the bodies of their holy victims wearied out, and disgusted at the cruelties; the bonds loosened, the engines of torture powerless, the flames extinguished, while the sufferers preserved their constancy unshaken even for a moment. What, then, hast thou gained by these atrocious deeds, most impious of men? And what was the cause of thy insane fury? Thou wilt say, doubtless, these acts of thine were done in honor of the gods. What gods are these? or what worthy conception hast thou of the Divine nature? Thinkest thou the gods are subject to angry passions as thou art? Were it so indeed, it had been better for thee to wonder at their strange determination than obey their harsh command, when they urged thee to the unrighteous slaughter of innocent men. Thou wilt allege, perhaps, the customs of thy ancestors and the opinion of mankind in general, as the cause of this conduct. I grant the fact: for those customs are very like the acts themselves, and proceed from the self-same source of folly. Thou thoughtest, it may be, that some special power resided in images formed and fashioned by human art; and hence thy reverence, and diligent care lest they should be defiled: those mighty and highly exalted gods, thus dependent on the care of men!

CHAPTER XXIII
Of Christian Conduct. That God is pleased with those who lead a Life of Virtue: and that we must expect a Judgment and Future Retribution.

COMPARE our religion with your own. Is there not with us genuine concord, and un we not exercise,, not only sincere faith towards God, but fidelity in the relations of social life? Do we not pity the unfortunate? Is not ours a life of simplicity which disdains to cover evil beneath the mask of fraud and hypocrisy? Do we not acknowledge the true God, and his un is the life of wisdom; and they who have it are travelers, as it were, on a noble road which the pollutions of the body, does not wholly die: rather may he be said to complete the service appointed him by God, than to die. Again, he who confesses allegiance to God is not easily overborne by insolence or rage, but nobly stands under the pressure of necessity and the trial of his constancy is as it were, a passport to the favor of God. For we cannot doubt that the Deity is pleased with excellence in human conduct. For it would be absurd indeed if the powerful and the humble alike acknowledge gratitude to those from whose services they receive benefit, and repay them by services in return, and yet that he who is supreme and sovereign of all, nay, who is Good itself should be negligent in this respect. Rather does he follow us throughout the course of our lives, is near us in every act of goodness, accepts, and at once
rewards our virtue and obedience; though he defers the full recompense to that future period, when
the actions of our lives shall pass under his review and when those who are clear in that account shall
receive the reward of everlasting life, while the wicked shall be visited with the penalties due to their
crimes.

CHAPTER XXIV
Of Decius, Valerian, and Aurelian who experienced a Miserable End in consequence of their Persecution of the Church.

To thee, Decius, I now appeal, who has trampled with insult on the labors of the righteous: to thee,
the hater of the Church, the punisher of those who lived a holy life: what is now thy condition after
death? How hard and wretched thy present circumstances! Nay, the thy miserable fate, when
overthrown with all thine army on the plains of Scythia, thou didst expose the vaunted power of
Rome to the contempt of the Goths. Thou, too, Valerian, who didst manifest the same spirit of
cruelty towards the servants of God, hast afforded an example of righteous judgment. A captive in
the enemies’ hands, led in chains while yet arrayed in the purple and imperial attire, and at last thy
skin stripped from thee, and preserved by command of Sapor the Persian king, thou hast left a
perpetual trophy of thy calamity. And thou, Aurelian, fierce perpetrator of every wrong, how signal
was thy Fall, when, in the midst of thy wild career in Thrace, thou wast slain on the

CHAPTER XXV
Of Diocletian, who ignobly abdicated the Imperial Throne, and was terrified by the Dread of Lightning for his
Persecution of the Church.

DIOCLETIAN, however, after the display of relentless cruelty as a persecutor, evinced a
consciousness of his own guilt and owing to the affliction of a disordered mind, endured the
confinement of a mean and separate dwelling. What then, did he gain by his active hostility against
our God? Simply this I believe, that he passed the residue of his life in continual dread of the
lightning’s stroke. Nicomedia attests the fact; eyewitnesses, of whom I myself am one, declare it.
The palace, and the emperor’s private chamber were destroyed, consumed by lightning, devoured
by the fire of heaven. Men of understanding hearts had indeed predicted the issue of such conduct;
for they could not keep silence, nor conceal their grief at such unworthy deeds; but boldly and openly
expressed their feeling, saying one to another: “What madness is this? and what an insolent abuse
of power, that man should dare to fight against God; should deliberately insult the most holy and just
of all religions; and plan, without the slightest provocation, the destruction of so great a multitude
of righteous persons? O rare example of moderation to his subjects! Worthy instructor of his army
in the care and protection due to their fellow-citizens! Men who had never seen the backs of a
retreating army plunged their swords into the breasts of their own countrymen!” So great was the
effusion of blood shed, that if shed in battle with barbarian enemies, it had been sufficient to
purchase a perpetual peace. At length, indeed, the providence of God took vengeance on these
unhallowed deeds; but not without severe damage to the state. For the entire army of the emperor
of whom I have just spoken, becoming subject to the authority of a worthless person, who had
violently usurped the supreme authority at Rome (when the providence of God restored freedom to
that great city), was destroyed in several successive battles. And when we remember the cries with
which those who were oppressed, and who ardently longed for their native liberty implored the help
of God; and their praise and thanksgiving to him on the removal of the evils under which they had
groaned, when that liberty was regained, and free and equitable intercourse restored: do not these
things every way afford convincing proofs of the providence of God, and his affectionate regard for
the interests of mankind?
CHAPTER XXVI
The Emperor ascribes his Personal Piety to God; and shows that we are bound to seek Success from God, an attribute it to him; but to consider Mistakes as the Result of our own Negligence.

WHEN men commend my services, which owe their origin to the inspiration of Heaven, do they not dearly establish the truth that God is the cause of the exploits I have performed? Assuredly they do: for it belongs to God to do whatever is best, and to man, to perform the commands of God. I believe, indeed, the best and noblest course of action is, when, before an attempt is made, we provide as far as possible for a secure result: and surely all men know that the holy service in which these hands have been employed has originated in pure and genuine faith towards God; that whatever has been done for the common welfare has been effected by active exertion combined with supplication and prayer; the consequence of which has been as great an amount of individual and public benefit as each could venture to hope for himself and those he holds most dear. They have witnessed battles, and have been spectators of a war in which the providence of God has granted victory to this people: they have seen how he has favored and seconded our prayers. For righteous prayer is a thing invincible; and no one fails to attain his object who addresses holy supplication to God: nor is a refusal possible, except in the case of wavering faith; for God is ever favorable, ever ready to approve of human virtue. While, therefore, it is natural for man occasionally to err, yet God is not the cause first for our own individual security and then for the happy posture of public affairs: at the same time entreating the favor of Christ with holy prayers and constant supplications, that he would continue to us our present blessings. For he is the invincible ally and protector of the righteous: he is the supreme judge of all things, the prince of immorality, the Giver of everlasting life.
Unlike the middle ages, very little of female authorship is preserved from Ancient Christianity. I have therefore included even texts might be by women.

**FIRST CENTURY**: No serious suggestions of female authorship for any text.

**SECOND CENTURY**

*Montanist oracles:*


*Female authorship seems possible for this Gnostic text:*


Some have suggest women’s involvement in composition of the following because of their use of feminine images:


**THIRD CENTURY**


*Female involvement has been suggested for parts of this Gnostic text:*


**FOURTH CENTURY**


*The “Desert Mothers”:

Sycletica, St., d. ca. 400. Sayings, ibid., pp. 230-35.
Theodora, Amma. Sayings, ibid., pp. 82-84.


Six tomb inscriptions:

FIFTH CENTURY


Female authorship occasionally suggested for:

SIXTH CENTURY


Caesaria, St., d. 529. Letters. Ibid., pp. 85-124.


SEVENTH CENTURY


Female authorship possible for:

There may be actual words of Syrian Christian women in the saints’ lives collected in:

EIGHT CENTURY


Berthgyth, English nun. Selections from her letters and poems in Peter Dronke, Women Writers of the Middle Ages, pp. 30-31.


INVESTITURE CONTROVERSY DOCUMENTS

The Program of Gregory VII

Hildebrand was the youngest of the reforming cardinals whom Leo IX had gathered together at Rome. By the end of the pontificate of Alexander II (1061-73) he was almost the only survivor of the original group and had emerged as the dominant figure in the Roman curia. At the burial of Alexander, the Roman people began to shout that they wanted Hildebrand as their pope and, as he said, they “dragged [him] to the place of apostolic rule.” The cardinals were of the same mind as the people, and Hildebrand was duly elected, taking the name of Gregory VII. Later, that ordinary lay people should have made their opinion known was along enough to outrage the emperors, who expected their appointments of bishops and popes to be meekly accepted.

Moral Reform

Pope Gregory had won this popularity with ordinary people by his support for the reform movements that had tried to re-institute the ancient discipline of celibacy of the clergy (favored by ordinary people because it allowed priests more time to serve them and did not require the added expense of supporting their families), and the clergy’s tendency to adopt a high life-style and expect their people to pay for it. In the worst case, the clergy bought and sold positions from the king or local nobles (Simony).

Letter of Gregory to Otto, bishop of Constance (December 1074)

Gregory’s program of reform was set out in the first two years of his pontificate, before the open breach with the emperor Henry IV. In 1074 Gregory held a council at Rome which promulgated afresh reforming decrees against simony and clerical marriage. This legislation is described in the pope’s letter to Bishop Otto of Constance:

Gregory . . . to Otto, bishop of Constance, greeting . . .

A report has come to us with regard to Your Fraternity, which I have heard with grief and regret—a report which, if it had been made to us of the lowest member of the Christian community, would undoubtedly have called for a severe disciplinary sentence. While we were zealously striving to wipe out the heresy of Simony and to enforce the chastity of the clergy, inspired by apostolic authority and the authentic opinions of holy fathers, we enjoined upon our colleague, the venerable archbishop of Mainz, whose suffragans are numerous and widely scattered, that he should diligently impress this decree upon his whole clergy, in person and through his assistants, and should see that it was carried out without exception.

To you also, who preside over the numerous clergy and the widespread population of the church of Constance, it has, for the same reason, seemed good to us to send a special letter under our own seal. With this as your authority you can more safely and more boldly carry out our orders and expel from the Lord’s holy place the heresy of Simony and the foul plague of carnal contagion. The apostolic authority of St. Paul is here of especial force, where, counting in fornicators and adulterers

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with other vicious persons, he gives this plain decision: “With such a one, no, not to eat.” 

Furthermore the whole body of the Catholic Church consists of virgins or married persons or those holding themselves in restraint. Whoever, therefore, is outside those three classes is not to be counted among the sons of the Church or within the bounds of the Christian religion. Wherefore we also, if we should know for certain that even the lowest layman was involved in concubinage, would cut him off completely from the body and blood of the Lord until he should perform due penance. How then shall one be the distributor or server of the holy sacraments who cannot in any wise be partaker of them? Further, we are urged to this by the authority of the blessed Pope Leo [I] who deprived subdeacons of the right to marry, a decree to which his successors in the Holy Roman Church, especially that famous doctor Gregory [I], gave such force of law that henceforth the marriage bond has been absolutely forbidden to the three orders of priests, levites and subdeacons.

But when we, in our pastoral forethought, sent word to you that these orders were to be carried out you, not setting your mind on the things that are above, but on the things that are upon the earth, loosed the reins of lust within the aforesaid orders so that, as we have heard, those who had taken concubines persisted in their crime, while those who had not yet done so had no fear of your prohibitions. Oh, what insolence! Oh, what audacity, that a bishop should despise the decrees of the Apostolic See, should uproot the precepts of holy fathers-nay more, by orders from his high place and his priestly office should impose upon his subjects things contrary and repugnant to the Christian faith.

Wherefore we command you to present yourself before us at the approaching synod in the first week of Lent to give answer according to canon law as well for this disobedience and contempt of the Apostolic See as for all the other offenses charged against you.

Papal Power as Theorized by Advisors

In February of 1075 came the crucial decree prohibiting lay investiture, that is the secular, royal, appointment of bishops, priest, and even the pope. In March of that year there was inserted in the pope’s official Register the peculiar document known as the Dictatus Papae, which contained the first explicit claim that a pope could depose an emperor. The unusual form of the document has been much discussed and honest historians admit that we know nothing of who compiled it and why. Although Gregory probably would have favored some of the claims, it was not official. It probably represents the ideas of some legal experts in the papal court and is intended as headings for collecting legal evidence. It represents the strongest statement of papal authority before the 1300s. It may represent an “ideal world” of Gregorian Reformers rather than any practical program. It was never disseminated in the middle ages, but is famous in modern history books. Perhaps too much so.

, and the most convincing explanation of it is that the Dictatus presents chapter headings for a proposed collection of canons which would have supported each proposition with a selection of relevant authorities.

The Dictatus Papae (March 1075)

1. That the Roman Church was founded by God alone.

2Trans. S. Z. Ehler and J. B. Morrall, Church and State Through the Centuries (London, 1954), PP. 43-44
2. That the Roman Pontiff alone is rightly to be called universal.  
3. That he alone can depose or reinstate bishops.  
4. That his legate, even if of lower grade, takes precedence, in a council, of all bishops and may render a sentence of deposition against them.  
5. That the Pope may depose absent bishops.  
6. That, among other things, we also ought not to stay in the same house with those excommunicated by him.  
7. That for him alone it is lawful to enact new laws according to the needs of the time, to assemble together new congregations, to make an abbey of a canonry; and, on the other hand, to divide a rich bishopric and unite the poor ones.  
8. That he alone may use the imperial insignia.  
9. That the Pope is the only one whose feet are to be kissed by all princes.  
10. That his name alone is to be recited in churches.  
11. That his title is unique in the world.  
12. That he may depose Emperors.  
13. That he may transfer bishops, if necessary, from one See to another.  
14. That he has power to ordain a cleric of any church he may wish.  
15. That he who has been ordained by him may rule over another church, but not be under the command of others; and that such a one may not receive a higher grade from any bishop.  
16. That no synod may be called a general one without his order.  
17. That no chapter or book may be regarded as canonical without his authority.  
18. That no sentence of his may be retracted by any one; and that he, alone of all, can retract it.  
19. That he himself may be judged by no one.  
20. That no one shall dare to condemn a person who appeals to the Apostolic See.  
21. That to this See the more important cases of every church should be submitted.  
22. That the Roman Church has never erred, nor ever, by the witness of Scripture, shall err to all eternity.  
23. That the Roman Pontiff, if canonically ordained, is undoubtedly sanctified by the merits of St. Peter; of this St. Ennodius, Bishop of Pavia, is witness, many Holy Fathers are agreeable and it is contained in the decrees of Pope Symmachus the Saint.  
24. That, by his order and with his permission, subordinate persons may bring accusations.  
25. That without convening a synod he can depose and reinstate bishops.  
26. That he should not be considered as Catholic who is not in conformity with the Roman Church.  
27. That the Pope may absolve subjects of unjust men from their fealty.

Lay Investiture

It is impossible to read Gregory’s mind about political theory, but his moves to restore the moral quality of the clergy and end the buying and selling of bishoprics and pastorates is very clear. Gregory quickly came to see that no reform would be possible unless the appointment of bishops and clergy by kings and nobles did not end. This appointment was known as “Lay Investiture.” Gregory’s first prohibition of lay investiture was issued in February 1075. The text of the decree has not survived, but its substance was repeated in the later enactments given below, promulgated in November 1078 and March 1080 respectively.
Decrees against lay investiture

Inasmuch as we have learned that, contrary to the establishments of the holy fathers, the investiture with churches is, in many places, performed by lay persons; and that from this cause many disturbances arise in the church by which the Christian religion is trodden under foot: we decree that no one of the clergy shall receive the investiture with a bishopric or abbey or church from the hand of an emperor or king or of any lay person, male or female. But if he shall presume to do so he shall clearly know that such investiture is bereft of apostolic authority, and that he himself shall lie under excommunication until fitting satisfaction shall have been rendered.

Following the statutes of the holy fathers, as, in the former councils which by the mercy of God we have held, we decreed concerning the ordering of ecclesiastical dignities, so also now we decree and confirm; that, if any one henceforth shall receive a bishopric or abbey from the hand of any lay person, he shall by no means be considered as among the number of the bishops or abbots; nor shall any hearing be granted him as bishop or abbot. Moreover we further deny to him the favor of St. Peter and the entry of the church, until, coming to his senses, he shall desert the place that he has taken by the crime of ambition as well as by that of disobedience—which is the sin of idolatry. In like manner also we decree concerning the inferior ecclesiastical dignities.

Likewise if any emperor, king, duke, margrave, count, or any one at all of the secular powers or persons, shall presume to perform the investiture with bishoprics or with any ecclesiastical dignity—he shall know that he is bound by the bonds of the same condemnation. And, moreover, unless he come to his senses and relinquish to the church her own prerogative, he shall feel, in this present life, the divine displeasure as well with regard to his body as to his other belongings: in order that at the coming of the Lord, his soul may be saved.

The Role of the Laity

No king of the age could accept “Free election” of the clergy and bishops by the people and laity. The used bishops and priests as administrators in their governments and needed docile servants, not independent preachers of the Gospel. Church endowments supported all there was in the way of hospitals, schools, and social service. Kings handled only the military and court systems. The endowments of churches, hospitals, schools, and monasteries were enormous. Kings wanted clergy who would put this wealth up for use during wars and other royal projects. For kings, the clergy were their ministry of health, education, and welfare, not independent religious leaders.

The resistance of the powerful to his reform project convinced Gregory to turn to the ordinary Christians who had already supported him. One of Gregory’s most radical measures was giving layfolk authority to reject priests who failed to conform to his reform decrees. This gave the laity a new power over the royally appointed clergy! It was a form of grass-roots democracy that no king could tolerate.

Letter of Gregory to Otto, bishop of Constance (March 1075)

Those who obtain churches by the gift of money must forfeit them completely, and no one henceforth shall be permitted to buy or sell them. Also, those who Fall into the crime of fornication

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may not celebrate masses or serve at the altar in minor orders. We have further decreed that, if they disobey our statutes, or rather those of the holy fathers, let the people themselves in no way accept their ministrations, so that those who are not corrected by the love of God or the honor of their office may be brought to their senses by the shame of the world and the rebuke of the common people themselves!

*Was Gregory essentially a conservative or a revolutionary in the objectives he pursued? Both André Fliche and Walter Ullmann would argued in their different ways that he was really a traditionalist, continuing a line of papal policy that dated back to the early centuries of the church. Erich Caspar, on the other hand, called Gregory “the great innovator who stood all alone,” and the famous legal theorist Hal Berman, in Law and Revolution, described the eleventh-century reform movement as one of the four great “world-revolutions” of Western history. The first attempt to separate Church and State, the religious and political realms.*

Gregory certainly thought that he was being a traditionalist. All the reformers can be called conservatives in that they consciously aimed at reviving ancient laws of the church which had Fallen out of use in the chaos of preceding centuries. It is certainly true that canonical election and clerical celibacy belonged to the early tradition of the Western church and that lay investiture was a fairly recent innovation, unsupported by canonical authority; but it is no very uncommon paradox in Western history that the literal application by would-be reformers of half-understood old texts from a different historical epoch can have revolutionary implications for their own times.
THE STRUGGLE WITH HENRY IV

The Beginning of the Dispute

The struggle over royal control of the Church and freedom of election of bishops had existed since Constantine. In a disputed election to the diocese of Milan Pope Alexander II had already supported one candidate, the young king Henry IV another. At the time of Gregory’s election as emperor in 1073 his royal power was threatened by a great rebellion in Saxony, and he was in no position to make new enemies. He therefore wrote to Gregory most submissively, acknowledging Gregory as pope even though he had taken no part in Gregory’s election and promising to restore the duly elected new bishop of Milan in place of the man he had forced on the city earlier. He reneged. The people of Milan then rioted against troops sent to impose the unwanted royally appointed bishop. In December of 1075 Gregory wrote to him about this matter reproachfully and, for the first time and reminded that the king, like all other Christians, was bound by papal decrees in Church matters:

Letter of Gregory to Henry complaining of the king’s mistreatment of the church (December 1075)⁵

Gregory, bishop, servant of God’s servants, to King Henry, greeting and the apostolic benediction—but with the understanding that he obeys the Apostolic See as becomes a Christian king.

We marvel exceedingly that you have sent us so many devoted letters and displayed such humility by the spoken words of your legates, calling yourself a son of our Holy Mother Church and subject to us in the faith, singular in affection, a leader in devotion, commending yourself with every expression of gentleness and reverence, and yet in action showing yourself most bitterly hostile to the canons and. apostolic decrees in those duties especially required by loyalty to the Church. Not to mention other cases: the way you have observed your promises in the Milan affair, made through your mother and through bishops, our colleagues, whom we sent to you, and what your intentions were in making them is evident to all. And now, heaping wounds upon wounds, you have handed over the sees of Fermo and Spoleto—if indeed a church may be given over by any human power-to persons entirely unknown to us, whereas it is net lawful to consecrate anyone except after probation and with due knowledge.

It would have been becoming to you, since you confess yourself to be a son of the Church, to give more respectful attention to the master of the Church, that is, to Peter, prince of the Apostles. To him, if you are of the Lord’s flock, you have been committed for your pasture, since Christ said to him: “Peter, feed my sheep” (John 21:17), and again: “To thee are given the keys of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven” (Matthew 16:19). Now, while we, unworthy sinner that we are, stand in his place of power, still whatever you send to us, whether in writing or by word of mouth, he himself receives, and while we read what is written or hear the voice of those who speak, he discerns with subtle insight from what spirit the message comes. Wherefore Your Highness should beware lest any defect of will toward the Apostolic See be found in your words or in your messages and should pay due reverence, not to us but to Almighty God, in all matters touching the welfare of

the Christian faith and the status of the Church. And this we say although our Lord deigned to declare: “He who heareth you heareth me; and he who despiseth you despiseth me” (Luke 10: 16).

This edict [against lay investiture], which some who place the honor of men above that of God call an intolerable burden, we, using the right word, call rather a truth and a light necessary for salvation, and we have given judgment that it is to be heartily accepted and obeyed, not only by you and your subjects but by all princes and peoples who confess and worship Christ—though it is our especial wish and would be especially fitting for you, that you should excel others in devotion to Christ as you are their superior in fame, in station and in valor.

Nevertheless, in order that these demands may not seem to you too burdensome or unfair we have sent you word by your own liegemen not to be troubled by this reform of an evil practice but to send us prudent and pious legates from your own people. If these can show in any reasonable way how we can moderate the decision of the holy fathers [at the council] saving the honor of the eternal king and without peril to our own soul, we will condescend to hear their counsel. It would in fact have been the fair thing for you, even if you had not been so graciously admonished, to make reasonable inquiry of us in what respect we had offended you or assailed your honor, before you proceeded to violate the apostolic decrees. But how little you cared for our warnings or for doing right was shown by your later actions.

However, since the long-enduring patience of God summons you to improvement, we hope that with increase of understanding your heart and mind may be turned to obey the commands of God. We warn you with a father’s love that you accept the rule of Christ, that you consider the peril of preferring your own honor to him, that you do not hamper by your actions the freedom of that Church which he deigned to bind to himself as a bride by a divine union, but, that she may increase as greatly as possible, you will begin to lend to Almighty God and to St. Peter, by whom also your own glory may merit increase, the aid of your valor by faithful devotion.

Henry responded by summoning a council of German bishops and ordering them to denounce Gregory as a usurper of the papacy and accused him of perjury, immorality, and gross abuses of papal authority in the dioceses of Germany. This amounted to rejection of Gregory’s authority in German church matters. The German bishops appointed by Henry were glad to do so. Henry then sent a letter deposing Pope Gregory:

**Letter of Henry to Gregory rejecting him as pope (1076)**

Henry, King not by usurpation, but by the pious ordination of God, to Hildebrand, now not Pope, but false monk:

You have deserved such a salutation as this because of the confusion you have wrought; for you left untouched no order of the Church which you could make a sharer of confusion instead of honor, of malediction instead of benediction.

For to discuss a few outstanding points among many: Not only have you dared to touch the rectors of the holy Church—the archbishops, the bishops, and the priests, anointed of the Lord as they are—but you have trodden them under foot like slaves who know not what their lord may do. In crushing them you have gained for yourself acclaim from the mouth of the rabble. You have judged that all these know nothing, while you alone know everything. In any case, you have sedulously used

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this knowledge not for edification, but for destruction, so greatly that we may believe Saint Gregory, whose name you have arrogated to yourself, rightly made this prophesy of you when he said: “From the abundance of his subjects, the mind of the prelate is often exalted, and he thinks that he has more knowledge than anyone else, since he sees that he has more power than anyone else.”

And we, indeed, bore with all these abuses, since we were eager to preserve the honor of the Apostolic See. But you construed our humility as fear, and so you were emboldened to rise up even against the royal power itself, granted to us by God. You dared to threaten to take the kingship away from us—though we had received the kingship from you, as though kingship and empire were in your hand and not in the hand of God.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, has called us to kingship, but has not called you to the priesthood. For you have risen by these steps: namely, by cunning, which the monastic profession abhors, to money; by money to favor; by favor to the sword. By the sword you have come to the throne of peace, and from the throne of peace you have destroyed the peace. You have armed subjects against their prelates; you who have not been called by God have taught that our bishops who have been called by God are to be spurned; you have usurped for laymen the bishops’ ministry over priests, with the result that these laymen depose and condemn the very men whom the laymen themselves received as teachers from the hand of God, through the imposition of the hands of bishops.

You have also touched me, one who, though unworthy, has been anointed to kingship among the anointed. This wrong you have done to me, although as the tradition of the holy Fathers has taught, I am to be judged by God alone and am not to be deposed for any crime unless—may it never happen—I should deviate from the Faith. For the prudence of the holy bishops entrusted the judgment and the deposition even of Julian the Apostate not to themselves, but to God alone. The true pope Saint Peter also exclaims, “Fear God, honor the king” (1 Peter 2:17). You, however, since you do not fear God, dishonor me, ordained of Him.

Wherefore, when Saint Paul gave no quarter to an angel from heaven if the angel should preach heterodoxy, he did not except you who are now teaching heterodoxy throughout the earth. For he says, “If anyone, either I or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8). Descend, therefore, condemned by this anathema and by the common judgment of all our bishops and of ourself. Relinquish the Apostolic See which you have arrogated. Let another mount the throne of Saint Peter, another who will not cloak violence with religion but who will teach the pure doctrine of Saint Peter.

I, Henry, King by the grace of God, together with all our bishops, say to you: Descend! Descend!

Excommunication of Henry by Gregory (February 1076), trans. E. Emerton, Correspondence, pp. 90–91.

By February of 1076 Gregory replied to the emperor’s attempt to depose him with a decree in which he declared Henry excommunicated and deprived of the kingship until he repented. This was an unheard of decision and Gregory probably knew it. German kings had been deposing popes they found unworthy or uncooperative for a long time; no pope had ever resisted their will. Lacking any coercive power, Gregory’s deposition of the emperor took the form of an invocation of the help of the Apostle Peter:

O blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, mercifully incline thine ear, we pray, and hear me, thy servant, whom thou hast cherished from infancy and hast delivered until now from the hand of the wicked who have hated and still hate me for my loyalty to thee. Thou art my witness, as are also my Lady, the Mother of God, and the blessed Paul, thy brother among all the
saints, that thy Holy Roman Church forced me against my will to be its ruler. I had no thought of ascending thy throne as a robber, nay, rather would I have chosen to end my life as a pilgrim than to seize upon thy place for earthly glory and by devices of this world. Therefore, by thy favor, not by any works of mine, I believe that it is and has been thy will, that the Christian people especially committed to thee should render obedience to me thy especially constituted representative. To me is given by thy grace the power of binding and loosing in Heaven and upon earth.

Wherefore, relying upon this commission, and for the honor and defense of thy Church, in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through thy power and authority, I deprive King Henry, son of the emperor Henry, who has rebelled against thy Church with unheard-of audacity, of the government over the whole kingdom of Germany and Italy, and I release all Christian men from the allegiance which they have sworn or may swear to him, and I forbid anyone to serve him as king. For it is fitting that he who seeks to diminish the glory of thy Church should lose the glory which he seems to have.

And, since he has refused to obey as a Christian should or to return to the God whom he has abandoned by taking part with excommunicated persons, has spurned my warnings which I gave him for his soul’s welfare, as thou knowest, and has separated himself from thy Church and tried to rend it asunder, I bind him in the bonds of anathema in thy stead and I bind him thus as commissioned by thee, that the nations may know and be convinced that thou art Peter and that upon thy rock the son of the living God has built his Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

**Letter of Henry to the German bishops commanding them to reject Gregory as pope (1076)**

Henry immediately turned to his bishops and defended his decisions, expecting them to support his earlier deposition of the pope and to ignore Gregory’s response of excommunicating him:

... Let your good will stand by us, therefore, together with your power at this opportune time, the good will for which not only our need is earnestly longing, but also that of all your fellow bishops and brethren, nay rather, that of the whole oppressed Church. Certainly, you are not ignorant of this oppression. Only see to it that you do not withdraw assistance from the oppressed Church, but rather that you give your sympathy to the kingship and to the priesthood. Just as hitherto the Church was exalted by each of these offices, so now, alas, it is laid low, bereft of each; since one man has arrogated both for himself, he has injured both, and he who has neither wanted nor was able to be of benefit in either has been useless in each.

To keep you in suspense no longer as to the name of the man under discussion, learn of whom we speak: it is the monk Hildebrand (a monk indeed in habit), so-called pope who, as you yourself know clearly, presides in the Apostolic See not with the care of a pastor but with the violence of a usurper and from the throne of peace dissolves the bond of the one catholic peace. To cite a few things among many: without God’s knowledge he has usurped for himself the kingship and the priesthood. In this deed he held in contempt the pious ordinance of God, which especially commanded these two—namely, the kingship and the priesthood—should remain, not as one entity, but as two. In his Passion, the Savior Himself meant the figurative sufficiency of the two swords to be understood in this way: When it was said to him, “Lord, behold there are two swords here,” He answered, “It is enough” (Luke 22:38), signifying by this sufficient duality, that the spiritual and the

carnal swords are to be used in the Church and that-by them every hurtful thing is to be cut off. That is to say, He was teaching that every man is constrained by the priestly sword to obey the king as the representative of God but by the kingly sword both to repel enemies of Christ outside and to obey the priesthood within. So in charity the province of one extends into the other, as long as neither the kingship is deprived of honor by the priesthood nor the priesthood is deprived of honor by the kingship. You yourself have found out, if you have wanted to discover it, how the Hildebrandine madness has confounded this ordinance of God; for in his judgment, no one may be a priest unless he begs that [honor] from his arrogance. He has also striven to deprive me of the kingship-me whom God has called to the kingship (God, however, has not called him to the priesthood)-since he saw that I wished to hold my royal power from God and not from him and since he himself had not constituted me as king. And further, he threatened to deprive me of kingship and life, neither of which he had bestowed. . . .

Canossa and the Aftermath

His bishops did not rally to his cause. Henry’s desire to subjugate the papacy and church to his will had paralleled his suppression of the rights of the local nobles and princes. He had just finished military operations subjugating Saxony. They were alienated, just as the people of Milan had been alienated by his forcing them to accept his choice of bishop. Henry had gone too far and lost most support in Germany. His princes and nobles rose up in revolt. They now expected that Gregory would help rally all of Germany and North Italy to their cause: dethroning the emperor.

Henry’s oath at Canossa (January 1077)8

Henry outmaneuvered them in a surprising way. He left Germany quietly, travelled to Italy and found the pope at his residence in Canossa, where he was being protected by the Duchess Matilda of Tuscany, his strongest supporter. The king announced that he was repentant and wanted the pope’s forgiveness (and support against the nobles). Within three days of the king’s arrival, Gregory heard his confession and granted him full forgiveness and pardon.

I, Henry, king, within the term which our lord Pope Gregory shall fix, will either give satisfaction according to his decision, in regard to the discontent and discord for which the archbishops, bishops, dukes, counts and other princes of the kingdom of Germany are accusing me, or I will make an agreement according to his advice--unless some positive hindrance shall prevent him or myself--and when this is done I will be prepared to carry it out.

Item: If the same lord Pope Gregory shall desire to go beyond the mountains or elsewhere he shall be safe, so far as I and all whom I can constrain are concerned, from all injury to life or limb and from capture--both he himself and all who are in his company or who are sent out by him or who may come to him from any place whatsoever--in coming, remaining or returning. Nor shall he with my consent suffer any hindrance contrary to his honor; and if anyone shall offer such hindrance, I will come to his assistance with all my power.

Letter of Gregory to the German princes giving an account of the incident at Canossa (January 1077)9

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8 Trans. E. Emerton, Correspondence, pp. 112-13.

9 Trans. E. Emerton, Correspondence, pp. 111-12.
Even those modern historians, like Brian Tierney, who dislike Gregory intensely admit that he acted exactly as spiritual father and pastor. By not turning the emperor over to Matilda to be returned to Germany and the now victorious princes, Gregory had proved himself a very bad secular politician. When news of the forgiveness of Henry reached Germany, the princes were outraged at the pope’s naivete and what they considered his betrayal of their cause. Gregory struggled to defend his decision:

Whereas, for love of justice you have made common cause with us and taken the same risks in the warfare of Christian service, we have taken special care to send you this accurate account of the king’s penitential humiliation, his absolution and the course of the whole affair from his entrance into Italy to the present time.

According to the arrangement made with the legates sent to us by you we came to Lombardy about twenty days before the date at which some of your leaders were to meet us at the pass and waited for their arrival to enable us to cross over into that region. But when the time had elapsed and we were told that on account of the troublous times—as indeed we well believe—no escort could be sent to us, [and] having no other way of coming to you, we were in no little anxiety as to what was our best course to take.

Meanwhile we received certain information that the king was on the way to us. Before he entered Italy he sent us word that he would make satisfaction to God and St. Peter and offered to amend his way of life and to continue obedient to us, provided only that he should obtain from us absolution and the apostolic blessing. For a long time we delayed our reply and held long consultations, reproaching him bitterly through messengers back and forth for his outrageous conduct, until finally, of his own accord and without any show of hostility or defiance, he came with a few followers to the fortress of Canossa where we were staying. There, on three successive days, standing before the castle gate, laying aside all royal insignia, bare-footed and in coarse attire, he ceased not with many tears to beseech the apostolic help and comfort until all who were present or who had heard the story were so moved by pity and compassion that they pleaded his cause with prayers and tears. All marveled at our unwonted severity, and some even cried out that we were showing, not the seriousness of apostolic authority, but rather the cruelty of a savage tyrant.

At last, overcome by his persistent show of penitence and the urgency of all present, we released him from the bonds of anathema and received him into the grace of Holy Mother Church, accepting from him the guarantees described below. ... And now that these matters have been arranged, we desire to come over into your country at the first opportunity, that with God’s help we may more fully establish all matters pertaining to the peace of the Church and the good order of the land. For we wish you clearly to understand that, as you may see in the written guarantees, the whole negotiation is held in suspense, so that our coming and your unanimous consent are in the highest degree necessary. Strive, therefore, all of you, as you love justice, to hold in good faith the obligations into which you have entered. Remember that we have not bound ourselves to the king in any way except by frank statement—as our custom is—that he may expect our aid for his safety and his honor, whether through justice or through mercy, and without peril to his soul or to Our own.

The second deposition of Henry (March 1080)\(^\text{10}\)

Much to Gregory’s shock and horror, the princes refused to put down their arms and accept Henry as emperor. The pope called on them make peace but a horrible civil war broke out, the

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\(^{10}\)Trans. E. Emerton, *Correspondence*, pp. 149-52
princes rallying under the banner of Rudolf of Saxony as their candidate to replace Henry. Henry immediately wrote to Gregory saying that, as they were now reconciled, he was obligated to excommunicate the princes. Gregory tried to mediate the dispute, but neither side was interested in compromise. As Henry reconquered Germany, he dealt savagely with the traitor princes, removed bishops that had supported Gregory or the princes, and imposed his own choices of bishop on the cities he conquered. Finally, after three years of war, Gregory gave in to the demands of the princes, and the bishops whom Henry had expelled, and again excommunicated the emperor:

O blessed Peter, chief of the Apostles, and thou, Paul, teacher of the Gentiles, deign, I pray, to incline your ears to me and mercifully to hear my prayer. Ye who are disciples and lovers of the truth, aid me to tell the truth to you, freed from all falsehood so hateful to you, that my brethren may be more united with me and may know and understand that through faith in you, next to God and his mother Mary, ever virgin, I resist the wicked and give aid to those who are loyal to you. For you know that I entered holy orders not of my own pleasure, and that I accompanied the lord Pope Gregory [VI] unwillingly beyond the mountains, but still more unwillingly returned with my master Pope Leo [IX] to your special church, where I have served you as best I could; and then most unwillingly and unworthy as I was, to my great grief and with groans and lamentations I was set upon your throne.

I say this because it is not I that have chosen you, but you that have chosen me and laid upon me the heavy burden of your Church. And because you have commanded me to go up into a high mountain and denounce their crimes to the people of God and their sins to the sons of the Church, those limbs of the Devil have begun to rise up against me and have dared to lay hands upon me even unto blood.

The kings of the earth, and the princes, both secular and clerical, have risen up, courtiers and commons have taken counsel together against the Lord, and against you, his anointed, saying, “Let us burst their chains and throw off their yoke,” and they have striven utterly to overwhelm me with death or banishment.

Among these especially Henry, whom they call “king,” son of the emperor Henry, has raised his heel against your Church in conspiracy with many bishops, as well Germans as Italians, striving to bring it under his control by overturning me. Your authority withstood his insolence and your power defeated it. In confusion and humiliation he came to me in Lombardy begging for release from his excommunication. And when I had witnessed his humiliation and after he had given many promises to reform his way of life, I restored him to communion only, but did not reinstate him in the royal power from which I had deposed him in a Roman synod. Nor did I order that the allegiance of all who had taken oath to him or should do so in future, from which I had released them all at that same synod, should be renewed. I held this subject in reserve in order that I might do justice as between him and the ultramontane bishops and princes, who in obedience to your Church had stood out against him, and that I might establish peace amongst them, as Henry himself had promised me to do on his oath and by the word of two bishops.

The above-mentioned German bishops and princes, hearing that he had not kept faith with me, and, as it were, in despair about him, chose Duke Rudolf for their king, without my approval as you will bear witness. Then King Rudolf immediately sent an envoy to me declaring that he had assumed the government of the kingdom under compulsion, but nevertheless was prepared to obey me in every way. And to make this the more acceptable, from that time on he repeatedly sent me the same declaration, adding that he would confirm his promise by sending as hostages his own son and the son of his liegeman Bertald [of Zähringen].

Meanwhile Henry was beginning to beg for my help against Rudolf. I replied that I would
gladly take action after I had heard both sides in order that I might learn which was the more in accord with what was right. But he, thinking himself strong enough to overcome his opponent, paid no attention to my reply. Later, however, as he saw that he could not do as he had hoped, the two bishops of Verden and Osnabruck came to Rome on the part of his followers and at a synod requested me in behalf of Henry to do what was right by him. The envoys of Rudolf made the same request. Finally, by divine inspiration as I believe, I decreed at the same synod that a conference should be held beyond the mountains that peace might be restored there, or else that he should be recognized as king whose cause seemed to be the more just. For I, as you, my fathers and my lords, will bear me witness, have never to the present day taken either side except as justice required. And because I reckoned that the wrong side would not be willing to have a conference in which justice was to prevail, I excommunicated and placed under the bonds of anathema all persons, whether of a king or a duke or a bishop or of any vassal, who should try by any device to prevent the holding of a conference. But the aforesaid Henry together with his supporters, not fearing the perils of disobedience—which is the crime of idolatry-incurred excommunication by preventing a conference and bound himself in the bonds of anathema and caused a great multitude of Christians to be delivered to death, churches to be scattered abroad and almost the whole kingdom of the Germans to be desolated.

Wherefore, trusting in the justice and mercy of God and of his most worshipful mother Mary, ever virgin, and relying upon your authority, I place the aforesaid Henry, whom they call “king,” and all his supporters under excommunication and bind them with the chains of anathema. And again forbidding him in the name of Almighty God and of yourselves to govern in Germany and Italy, I take from him all royal power and state. I forbid all Christians to obey him as king, and I release all who have made or shall make oath to him as king from the obligation of their oath. May Henry and his supporters never, so long as they may live, be able to win victory in any encounter of arms.

But that Rudolf, whom the Germans have chosen for their king in loyalty to you, may rule and protect the kingdom of the Germans, I grant and allow in your name. And relying upon your assurance, I grant also to all his faithful adherents absolution of all their sins and your blessing in this life and the life to come. For as Henry is justly cast down from the royal dignity for his insolence, his disobedience and his deceit, so Rudolf, for his humility, his obedience and his truthfulness is granted the power and the dignity of kingship.

And now, most holy fathers and princes, I pray you to take such action that the whole world may know and understand that if you are able to bind and loose in Heaven, you are able also on earth to grant and to take away from everyone according to his deserts empires, kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, marquisates, earldoms and the property of all men. You have often taken patriarchates, primacies, archbishoprics and bishoprics away from wicked and unworthy men and have granted them to pious holders. And if you can give judgment in spiritual things, what may we not believe as to your power over secular things? Or, if you can judge the angels who guide all haughty princes, what can you [not] do to their servants? Now let kings and all princes of the earth learn how great is your power, and let them fear to neglect the commands of your Church. And against the aforesaid Henry send forth your judgment so swiftly that all men may know that he Falls and is overwhelmed, not by chance but by your power-and would that it were to repentance, that his soul be saved in the day of the Lord!

Gregory’s Defense of His Policy

Gregory’s decision to support Rudolf and the princes came just as Henry was crushing their army and dispersing their supporters. Even the bishops previously his supporters in Germany were disillusioned. He wrote to the one of his few remaining supporters, Hermann of Metz, to defend
himself. The result is the only time he ever systematically tried to explain his understanding of the relations of Church and state:

Letter of Gregory to Bishop Hermann of Metz (March 1081)\footnote{Trans. E. Emerton, \textit{Correspondence}, pp. 166-75.}

You ask us to fortify you against the madness of those who babble with accursed tongues about the authority of the Holy Apostolic See not being able to excommunicate King Henry as one who despises the law of Christ, a destroyer of churches and of the empire, a promoter and partner of heresies, nor to release anyone from his oath of fidelity to him; but it has not seemed necessary to reply to this request, seeing that so many and such convincing proofs are to be found in Holy Scripture. Nor do we believe that those who abuse and contradict the truth to their utter damnation do this as much from ignorance as from wretched and desperate folly. And no wonder! It is ever the way of the wicked to protect their own iniquities by calling upon others like themselves; for they think it of no account to incur the penalty of falsehood.

To cite but a few out of the multitude of proofs: Who does not remember the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: “Thou art Peter and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19). Are kings excepted here? Or are they not of the sheep which the Son of God committed to St. Peter? Who, I ask, thinks himself excluded from this universal grant of the power of binding and loosing to St. Peter unless, perchance, that unhappy man, being unwilling to bear the yoke of the Lord, subjects himself to the burden of the Devil and refuses to be numbered in the flock of Christ? His wretched liberty shall profit him nothing; for if he shakes off from his proud neck the power divinely granted to Peter, so much the heavier shall it be for him in the day of judgment. . . .

Thus Pope Gelasius, writing to the emperor Anastasius, gave him these instructions as to the right theory of the principate of the Holy and Apostolic See, based upon divine authority: “Although it is fitting that all the faithful should submit themselves to all priests who perform their sacred functions properly, how much the more should they accept the judgment of that prelate who has been appointed by the supreme divine ruler to be superior to all priests and whom the loyalty of the whole later Church has recognized as such. Your Wisdom sees plainly that no human capacity whatsoever can equal that of him whom the word of Christ raised above all others and whom the reverend Church has always confessed and still devotedly holds as its Head.”

So also Pope Julius, writing to the eastern bishops in regard to the powers of the same Holy and Apostolic See, says: “You ought, my brethren, to have spoken carefully and not ironically of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church, seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ addressed her respectfully, saying, ‘Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ For it has the power, granted by a unique privilege, of opening and shutting the gates of the celestial kingdom to whom it will.” To whom, then, the power of opening and closing Heaven is given, shall he not be able to judge the earth? God forbid! Do you remember what the most blessed Apostle Paul says: “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:3).

So Pope Gregory declared that kings who dared to disobey the orders of the Apostolic See should forfeit their office. He wrote to a certain senator and abbot in these words: “If any king, priest, judge or secular person shall disregard this decree of ours and act contrary to it, he shall be deprived of his power and his office and shall learn that he stands condemned at the bar of God for the wrong
that he has done. And unless he shall restore what he has wrongfully taken and shall have done fitting penance for his unlawful acts he shall be excluded from the sacred body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and at the last judgment shall receive condign punishment.” Now then, if the blessed Gregory, most gentle of doctors, decreed that kings who should disobey his orders about a hospital for strangers should be not only deposed but excommunicated and condemned in the last judgment, how can anyone blame us for deposing and excommunicating Henry, who not only disregards apostolic judgments, but so far as in him lies tramples upon his mother the Church, basely plunders the whole kingdom and destroys its churches-unless indeed it were one who is a man of his own kind?

As we know also through the teaching of St. Peter in his letter touching the ordination of Clement, where he says: “If any one were friend to those with whom he [Clement] is not on speaking terms, that man is among those who would like to destroy the Church of God and, while he seems to be with us in the body, he is against us in mind and heart, and he is a far worse enemy than those who are without and are openly hostile. For he, under the forms of friendship, acts as an enemy and scatters and lays waste the Church.” Consider then, my best beloved, if he passes so severe a judgment upon him who associates himself with those whom the pope opposes on account of their actions, with what severity he condemns the man himself to whom the pope is thus opposed.

But now, to return to our point: Is not a sovereignty invented by men of this world who were ignorant of God subject to that which the providence of Almighty God established for his own glory and graciously bestowed upon the world? The Son of God we believe to be God and man, sitting at the right hand of the Father as High Priest, head of all priests and ever making intercession for us. He despised the kingdom of this world wherein the sons of this world puff themselves up and offered himself as a sacrifice upon the cross.

Who does not know that kings and princes derive their origin from men ignorant of God who raised themselves above their fellows by pride, plunder, treachery, murder—in short, by every kind of crime—at the instigation of the Devil, the prince of this world, men blind with greed and intolerable in their audacity? If, then, they strive to bend the priests of God to their will, to whom may they more properly be compared than to him who is chief over all the sons of pride? For he, tempting our High Priest, head of all priests, son of the Most High, offering him all the kingdoms of this world, said: “All these will I give thee if thou wilt Fall down and worship me.” (Matthew 4:9).

Does anyone doubt that, the priests of Christ are to be considered as fathers and masters of kings and princes and of all believers? Would it not be regarded as pitiable madness if a son should try to rule his father or a pupil his master and to bind with unjust obligations the one through whom he expects to be bound or loosed, not only on earth but also in heaven? Evidently recognizing this, the emperor Constantine the Great, lord over all kings and princes throughout almost the entire earth, as St. Gregory relates in his letter to the emperor Mauritius, at the holy synod of Nicaea took his place below all the bishops and did not venture to pass any judgment upon them but, even addressing them as gods, felt that they ought not to be subject to his judgment but that he ought to be bound by their decisions.

Pope Gelasius, urging upon the emperor Anastasius not to feel himself wronged by the truth that was called to his attention said: “There are two powers, O august Emperor, by which the world is governed, the sacred authority of the priesthood and the power of kings, of these the priestly is by so much the greater as they will have to answer for kings themselves in the day of judgment; and a little further: “Know that you are subject to their judgment, not that they are to be subjected to our will.”

In reliance upon such declarations and such authorities, many prelates have excommunicated kings or emperors. If you ask for illustrations:
Pope Innocent excommunicated the emperor Arcadius because he consented to the expulsion of St. John Chrysostom from his office. Another Roman pontiff [Zachary] deposed a king of the Franks [Childeric], not so much on account of his evil deeds as because he was not equal to so great an office, and set in his place Pippin, father of the emperor Charles the Great, releasing all the Franks from the oath of fealty which they had sworn to him. And this is often done by Holy Church when it absolves fighting men from their oaths to bishops who have been deposed by apostolic authority. So St. Ambrose, a holy man but not bishop of the whole Church, excommunicated the emperor Theodosius the Great for a fault which did not seem to other prelates so very grave and excluded him from the Church. He also shows in his writings that the priestly office is as much superior to royal power as gold is more precious than lead. He says: “The honor and dignity of bishops admit of no comparison. If you liken them to the splendor of kings and the diadem of princes, these are as lead compared to the glitter of gold. You see the necks of kings and princes bowed to the knees of priests, and by the kissing of hands they believe that they share the benefit of their prayers.” And again: “Know that we have said all this in order to show that there is nothing in this world more excellent than a priest or more lofty than a bishop.”

Your Fraternity should remember also that greater power is granted to an exorcist when he is made a spiritual emperor for the casting out of devils, than can be conferred upon any layman for the purpose of earthly dominion. All kings and princes of this earth who live not piously and in their deeds show not a becoming fear of God are ruled by demons and are sunk in miserable slavery. Such men desire to rule, not guided by the love of God, as priests are, for the glory of God and the profit of human souls, but to display their intolerable pride and to satisfy the lusts of their mind. Of these St. Augustine says in the first book of his Christian doctrine: “He who tries to rule over men—who are by nature equal to him—acts with intolerable pride.” Now if exorcists have power over demons, as we have said, how much more over those who are subject to demons and are limbs of demons! And if exorcists are superior to these, how much more are priests superior to them!

Furthermore, every Christian king when he approaches his end asks the aid of a priest as a miserable suppliant that he may escape the prison of hell, may pass from darkness into light and may appear at the judgment seat of God freed from the bonds of sin. But who, layman or priest, in his last moments has ever asked the help of any earthly king for the safety of his soul? And what king or emperor has power through his office to snatch any Christian from the might of the Devil by the sacred rite of baptism, to confirm him among the sons of God and to fortify him by the holy chrism? Or—and this is the greatest thing in the Christian religion—who among them is able by his own word to create the body and blood of the Lord? or to whom among them is given the power to bind and loose in Heaven and upon earth? From this it is apparent how greatly superior in power is the priestly dignity.

Or who of them is able to ordain any clergyman in the Holy Church—much less to depose him for any fault? For bishops, while they may ordain other bishops, may in no wise depose them except by authority of the Apostolic See. How, then, can even the most slightly informed person doubt that priests are higher than kings? But if kings are to be judged by priests for their sins, by whom can they more properly be judged than by the Roman pontiff?

In short, all good Christians, whosoever they may be, are more properly to be called kings than are evil princes; for the former, seeking the glory of God, rule themselves rigorously; but the latter, seeking their own rather than the things that are of God, being enemies to themselves, oppress others tyrannically. The former are the body of the true Christ; the latter, the body of the Devil.

The former rule them selves that they may reign forever with the supreme ruler. The power of the latter brings it to pass that they perish in eternal damnation with the prince of darkness who is king over all the sons of pride. . . .

Let kings and princes fear lest the higher they are raised above their fellows in this life, the
deeper they may be plunged in everlasting fire. Wherefore it is written: “The mighty shall suffer mighty torments” (Wisdom 6:7). They shall render unto God an account for all men subject to their rule. But if it is no small labor for the pious individual to guard his own soul, what a task is laid upon princes in the care of so many thousands of souls! And if Holy Church imposes a heavy penalty upon him who takes a single human life, what shall be done to those who send many thousands to death for the glory of this world? These, although they say with their lips, mea culpa, for the slaughter of many, yet in their hearts they rejoice at the increase of their glory and neither repent of what they have done nor regret that they have sent their brothers into the world below. So that, since they do not repent with all their hearts and will not restore what they have gained by human bloodshed, their penitence before God remains without the fruits of a true repentance.

Wherefore they ought greatly to fear, and they should frequently be reminded that, as we have said, since the beginning of the world and throughout the kingdoms of the earth very few kings of saintly life can be found out of an innumerable multitude, whereas in one single chair of successive bishops--the Roman--from the time of the blessed Apostle Peter nearly a hundred are counted among the holiest of men. How can this be, except because the kings and princes of the earth, seduced by empty glory, prefer their own interests to the things of the Spirit, as pious pontiff’s, despising vainglory, set the things of God above the things of the flesh. The former readily punish offenses against themselves but are not troubled by offenses against God; the latter quickly forgive those who sin against them but do not easily pardon offenders against God. The former, far too much given to worldly affairs, think little of spiritual things; the latter, dwelling eagerly upon heavenly sub, despise the things of this world.

All Christians, therefore, who desire to reign with Christ are to be warned not to reign through ambition for worldly power. They are to keep in mind the admonition of that most holy pope Gregory in his book on the pastoral office: “Of all these things what is to be followed, what held fast, except that the man strong in virtue shall come to his office under compulsion? Let him who is without virtue not come to it even though he be urged thereto.” If, then, men who fear God come under compulsion with fear and trembling to the Apostolic See where those who are properly ordained become stronger through the merits of the blessed Apostle Peter, with what awe and hesitation should men like Saul and David become worse! What we have said above is thus stated in the decrees of the blessed pope Symmachus--though we have learned it by experience: “He, that is St. Peter, transmitted to his successors an unfailing endowment of merit together with an inheritance of innocence”; and again: “For who can doubt that he is holy who is raised to the height of such an office, in which if he is lacking in virtue acquired by his own merits, that which is handed down from his predecessor is sufficient. For either he [Peter] raises men of distinction to bear this burden or he glorifies them after they are raised up.”

Wherefore let those whom Holy Church, of its own will and with deliberate judgment, not for fleeting glory but for the welfare of multitudes, has called to royal or imperial rule--let them be obedient and ever mindful of the blessed Gregory’s declaration in that same pastoral treatise: “When a man disdains to be the equal of his fellow men, he becomes like an apostate angel. Thus Saul, after his period of humility, swollen with pride, ran into excess of power. He was raised in humility, but rejected in his pride, as God bore witness, saying: ‘Though thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?’” (r Kings 15:17) and again: “I marvel how, when he was little to himself he was great before God, but when he seemed great to himself he was little before God.” Let them watch and remember what God says in the Gospel: “I seek not my own glory,” (John 8:50), and, “He who would be first among you, let him be the servant of all” (Mark 10:44). Let them ever place the honor of God above their own; let them embrace justice and maintain it by preserving to everyone his right; let them not enter into the counsels of the ungodly, but cling to those of religion with all their hearts. Let them not seek to make Holy Church their maidservant...
or their subject, but recognizing priests, the eyes of God, as their masters and fathers, strive to do them becoming honor.

If we are commanded to honor our fathers and mothers in the flesh, how much more our spiritual parents! If he that curseth his father or his mother shall be put to death, what does he deserve who curses his spiritual father or mother? Let not princes, led astray by carnal affection, set their own sons over that flock for whom Christ shed his blood if a better and more suitable man can be found. By thus loving their own son more than God they bring the greatest evils upon the Church. For it is evident that he who fails to provide to the best of his ability so great and necessary an advantage for our holy mother, the Church, does not love God and his neighbor as befits a Christian man. If this one virtue of charity be wanting, then whatever of good the man may do will lack all saving grace.

But if they do these things in humility, keeping their love for God and their neighbor as they ought, they may count upon the mercy of him who said: “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart” (Matthew 11:29). If they humbly imitate him, they shall pass from their servile and transient reign into the kingdom of eternal liberty.

Letter of Gregory to all the faithful (1084), ed. E. Caspar. MGH Epistolae Selectae 11 (1920-23), p. 575.

Hear the end of his life, Gregory wrote again defending his defiance of the emperor and explaining his position;

... Ever since by divine providence Mother Church raised me, all unworthy and God knows unwilling, to the apostolic throne, I have been concerned above all that Holy Church, the bride of God, our lady and mother, should return to her own proper dignity and remain free, chaste, and catholic. But because these things were greatly displeasing to the ancient enemy, he armed his members against us to defeat them. Thus lie has achieved more against us - or rather against the Apostolic See - than he has been able to achieve since the time of the emperor Constantine the Great. And no wonder: for the nearer the time of Antichrist approaches the more he strives to destroy the Christian faith.

So now, my dearly beloved brothers, listen carefully to what I say. Throughout the whole world all who bear the name of Christian and truly understand the Christian faith know and believe that blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, is the father of all Christians and their chief pastor after Christ, and that the Holy Roman Church is mother and mistress of all the churches. If therefore you believe this and hold it without a doubt 1, as your brother and unworthy master, ask and command you by Almighty God to help and succor these your father and mother if you wish to gain through them absolution of all your sins, and blessing and grace in this world and the world to come. May Almighty God, from whom all good things proceed, enlighten your minds and make them grow in love of God and of your neighbor, so that you may deserve by your steady devotion to have your father and mother become your debtors, and enter without shame into their fellowship.

Whatever one thinks of the actions of the pope or emperor in this controversy, it is evident that Gregory’s arguments seem to rely on the same unitary vision of Church and society that had been used to justify the royal control of the Church. If there is really no difference between society and the Church, as the kings claimed, then the king as God’s appointed should be able to run Church affairs, appointing and dismissing popes and bishops. Gregory asserted the separation of Church and state and denied that the king, a secular ruler, had the power to run the Church. But when he was forced to defend his decision to defy the emperor, he relied on the same unitary vision:
since pastors are responsible for all their people’s souls, if the king commits sin, then it is the pope’s responsibility to correct him, and if necessary depose him. The king, when he claimed that Gregory had overstepped his role as a spiritual leader by becoming involved with political matters, he paradoxically accepted Gregory’s assertion that the secular and religious spheres were separate. This separation was exactly what Henry opposed. That both parties were inconsistent, which they were, is not surprising. What is surprising is that both king and emperor, for different reasons had used arguments based on the separation of Church and state.
THE WAR OF PROPAGANDA

The conflict between Gregory VII and Henry IV stimulated an unprecedented outburst of polemical pamphleteering, a new departure in the medieval tradition of political thought. As we have noted Gregory and Henry had confused rather than clarified the issues that divided them. From the reformers’ point of view the real need was to discriminate between the spheres of spiritual and temporal authority so clearly as to end the practice of kings arbitrarily appointing bishops and bestowing on them the symbols of their spiritual office. But Gregory found it impossible to conceive of any effective separation between church and state and by his claim to depose a king laid himself open to the charge of seeking supreme temporal and spiritual power for himself. The kings asserted a right to control religious affairs and appointment bishops and priest based on the theocratic assumption that the royal office was itself an office of the society that was itself identical to the church, in short, that the king was head of the church, but Henry had largely abandoned this ground when he insisted on a separation of priesthood and kingship in the course of his argument against Gregory, who had the high ground as his spiritual father.

There was a great need then for intellectuals to reconsider the theoretical issues that lay behind the open strife of pope and king. A striking feature of the whole debate is that hardly any of the major participants propounded really extreme doctrines of papal or royal theocracy. We will now examine some attempts to “re-imagine” the relationship of Church and state, of religion and society.

The “Anonymous of York”

The one who came closest to theorizing that the King was the literal head of the Church on earth and that the clergy were his servants was the anonymous royalist author of the so-called York Tractates, who wrote in England about 1100. It is often pointed out that the “Anonymous of York” held a theory of “sacral kingship” that was already somewhat archaic in his own day. He wrote as if neither Henry nor Gregory had invoked a separation of powers in their defenses of their positions.

**Tractatus Eboracenses** (c. 1100)\(^2\)

By divine authority and by institution of the holy fathers kings are ordained in the church of God and are consecrated at the altar with sacred unction and benediction, that they may have the power of ruling the people of the Lord, the Christian people, which is the holy church of God—a chosen race, a holy race, a purchased people (cf. 1 Peter 2:9). What else indeed is the church but the congregation of faithful Christians living together in the house of Christ in charity and in the one faith? Therefore kings receive in their consecration the power to rule this church, that they may rule it and strengthen it in judgement and justice and administer it in accordance with the discipline of the Christian law; for they reign in the church, which is the kingdom of God, and reign together with Christ, in order that they may rule, protect and defend it. To reign is to rule the subjects well and to serve God with fear. The episcopal order too is instituted and consecrated with sacred unction and benediction, that it also may rule the holy church according to the form of doctrine given to it by God Accordingly the blessed pope Gelasius speaks thus, “Two there are by which this world is chiefly ruled, the priestly authority and the royal power.” By t is world “ he means 1 church, which is a sojourner in this world. In this world then, the priestly authority and the royal power hold the

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principate sacred government. Some seek to divide the principate in this fashion, saying that the priesthood has the principate of ruling souls, the king that of ruling bodies, as if souls could be ruled without bodies and bodies without souls, which cannot be done by any means. For if bodies are well ruled it is necessary that souls are well rule too an vice versa since both are ruled for this purpose, a at e resurrection they may both be saved together.

Christ, God and man, is the true and highest king and priest. But he is king from the eternity of his divinity, not made, not created, not below or separate from the Father, but equal to and one with the Father. He is priest from his assumption of humanity, made and created according to the order of Melchisedech and so less than the Father. As king he created all things and rules and preserves all things, governing both men and angels. As priest he only redeemed men that they might reign with him. This is the sole reason why he was made priest, to offer himself as a sacrifice so that men might be made sharers of his kingdom and of his royal power. For everywhere in the Scriptures he promised the kingdom of heaven to the faithful but nowhere the priesthood. It is clear, therefore, that in Christ the royal power is greater and higher than the priestly in proportion as his divinity is greater and higher than is humanity. Hence some hold that among men likewise the royal power is greater and higher than the priestly and the king greater and higher than the priest, as being an imitation and emulation of the better and higher nature or power of Christ. And so it is not contrary to the justice of God, they say, if the sacerdotal dignity is instituted by the royal or subjected to it, for so it was done in Christ; he was made a priest by his royal power and was subjected to the Father in his priestly power while he was equal to him in his royal power. . . .

But now let us see what the king confers on a man who is to be created bishop by the prerogative of the pastoral staff. I think that he does not confer the order or right of priesthood, but what pertains to his own right and to the rule of worldly things, namely the lordship and guardianship of the things of the church, and the power of ruling the people of God, which is the temple of the living God, and the holy church, the bride of Christ our Lord. That a bishop has lordship over earthly things, that is, possession of estates, by the law of kings is stated by Augustine at the end of his sixth treatise on John where he says “Each man possesses all he does possess by human law for, by divine law, ‘the Lord’s is the earth and the fullness thereof’. . . . By human law and therefore by the law of emperors. . . .

No one should take precedence by right over [the king], who is blessed with so many and such great blessings, who is consecrated and made like unto God with so many and such great sacraments, for no one is consecrated and made like God with more or greater sacraments than he is, nor indeed with equivalent ones, and so no one is co-equal with him. Therefore he is not to be called a layman, for he is the anointed of the Lord, a God through grace, the supreme shepherd, master, defender and instructor of holy church, lord over his brothers, worthy to be adored by all men, chief and highest prelate. It is not to be said that he is inferior to the bishop because the bishop consecrates him, for it often happens that lesser men consecrate a greater, inferiors their superior, as when the cardinals consecrate a pope or suffragan bishops a metropolitan. This can be so because they are not the authors of the consecration but ministers. God makes the sacrament efficacious; they administer it.

Manegold of Lautenbach

More measured was the solution proposed by Manegold of Lautenbach, who was one of Gregory’s strongest supporters in Germany. His was probably the most “extreme” formulations of the Gregorian position, but is was no where near as extreme as that of the York Anonymous on the other side. Manegold built up an impressive picture of the supreme jurisdiction that inhered in the Roman church as the see of St. Peter and gave a wholly approving account of the proceedings in
Rome when Pope Gregory deprived Henry IV of his royal office. But he did not conclude his argument with an assertion that the pope possessed a superior temporal jurisdiction which empowered him to depose a king. Instead his thought moved off in a quite different direction and he propounded a primitive but quite explicit theory of social contract. This is not surprising since the common people everywhere generally supported the pope, not the emperor. In the end, all the pope was doing was calling a tyrant, a tyrant, in response to the people's conclusion that he had become an unjust ruler and worthy of being deposed.

Manegold’s Book for Gebehard (1080-85)\(^\text{13}\)

Since then it is evident from the aforementioned opinions of the holy fathers and from others, so numerous that it is irksome to include them, that the Roman church is distinguished with such great authority and indeed excels all the principalities and powers of this world in its singular and incomparable dignity, and since, according to the harmonious witness of the holy fathers, no one is permitted to judge its judgments or reverse its sentences and no one may rightfully have the will or power to disobey its decrees, anyone who has not remained in communion with it is a stranger and a sinner and an enemy of God, and whatever is done against its discipline can in no wise be held lawful. Let our conspirators see then, let them see, these men who publicly and contumaciously forsake the holy faith and the Catholic religion, how guilty they are of sacrilege, how inextricably they are bound by the knot of their innumerable wickednesses, these men who day by day destroy the souls of those whom they lead to despise the Roman see, who subject to the torment of eternal fire along with themselves as many as they seduce from its unity by their rash examples of sacrilege and their pestiferous arguments.

... As for the king himself, the author and fomenter of so much evil, the holy council decreed that the apostolic sword be unsheathed to cut him off from the body of the whole church and that, bound by the bond of anathema, he be deprived of the royal dignity. It absolved from their oaths all those who had sworn oaths to him and forbade anyone to serve him as king, for it was fitting that he who had presumed to annul and trample under foot the honor divinely conferred on St. Peter by special privilege should himself lose the honor that he seemed to possess, and that he who disdained to obey as a Christian should be judged unworthy to rule over Christians. ...

Just as the royal dignity and power surpasses all earthly powers, so too the man appointed to exercise it should not be base and infamous but should excel others in wisdom, justice and piety as he does in place and dignity. It is necessary, therefore, that the one who is to have charge of all and govern all should display greater virtue than others and should be careful to exercise the power committed to him with a fine balance of equity; for the people do not exalt him above themselves so as to concede to him an unlimited power of tyrannizing over them, but rather to defend them against the tyranny and wickedness of others. However, when he who is chosen to repress evil-doers and enemies just begins to cherish evil in himself, to oppress good men, to exercise over his subjects the cruel tyranny that he ought to ward off from them, is it not clear that he deservedly Falls from the dignity conceded to him and that the people are free from his lordship and from subjection to him since it is evident that he first broke the compact by virtue of which he was appointed? Nor can anyone justly or reasonably accuse the people of perfidy when it is evident that he first broke faith with them. To take an example from a meaner sphere, if a man hired someone for a fair wage to look after his swine and then found that he was not caring for them but stealing, killing and destroying them, would not the man withhold the promised wage from him and remove him ignominiously from his task of caring for the swine? Now, if this is observed in base things, that a man who does not care

\(^\text{13}\)Ed. K. Francke, MGH Libelli de Litate, I (Hanover, 1892), pp. 325, 358, 365, 391-92.
for his swine but destroys them shall not be kept as a swineherd, are there not just and reasonable
grounds for maintaining that, in proportion as humans differ from swine, so too it is more fitting that
anyone who does not strive to rule his subjects but rather to lead them into error should be deprived
of the power and authority over men that he has received? Why should we be surprised if this rule
is observed under the Christian religion when the ancient Romans in the days of the illustrious
Collatinus and Brutus, refusing to endure the pride of Tarquin because of the shameful deed which
his son, not he himself, had perpetrated against the noble matron Lucretia, expelled him and his son
from the country and from the kingship, and created a government by two consuls holding office for
a year to prevent anyone growing haughty through long exercise of authority. . . .

The nature of man excels that of all other living creatures in this, that, being capable of
reason whatever has not Fallen out by fortuitous hazard, it inquires into the causes of
things with rational judgement and considers not only what is done but why it is done. Since then
no one can make himself an emperor or king, the people raise some man above themselves for these
reasons, to rule and govern over them by virtue of his just authority, to apportion to each his own,
to protect the good, to repress the wicked and to deal out justice to all. If, however, he breaks the
compact by which he was elected and ruins and confounds what he was established to order
correctly, reason justly considers that he has absolved the people from their duty of submission to
him since he himself first broke the bond of mutual fidelity by which he was bound to them and they
to him.

**On Preserving the Unity of the Church**

*The imperialist argument in the Liber de Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda was more explicitly
dualistic. The author not only quoted Gelasius but insisted that the pope’s teaching required a real
division of authority between spiritual and temporal rulers. He used to the separation of Church
and state to defend Henry and so undercut Henry’s right to appoint bishops and depose the pope.
The special interest of his work is that he took up all the historical arguments that Gregory had
advanced in his letter to Hermann of Metz, rather than any real theoretical breakthrough.*

**On Preserving the Unity of the Church (1090-93)**

[Pippin], when he was head of the household in the Frankish kingdom, that is, prefect of the
palace, and all the royal power and dignity belonged to him, was the first of the prefects of the palace
to be chosen king. He was consecrated with the blessing of the holy Boniface, Archbishop of Mainz,
the judgement of Pope Zacharias having been obtained beforehand since the consent and authority
of the Roman pontiff seemed necessary for this matter. Burchard of Wurzburg, a bishop of holy life,
with other messengers fit for this mission, was sent to him by command of the princes to consult the
oracle of his opinion and receive his response concerning this question, how they alight reform the
realm of the Franks and bring it to the state of its former dignity. For a long time it had lacked the
prerogative of royal honor, since the one who was called king possessed nothing but the shadow of
an empty name. Neither the wealth nor the power of the kingdom nor any ordering of its affairs
rested with him but rather with the head of the household who controlled the palace. Therefore it
seemed to them just and fitting that hereditary succession to the whole royal dignity and power be
taken away from Hilderic [Childeric] and that the royal title be transferred to Pippin, at that time
prefect of the palace, who was worthy of it by virtue of his nobility and courage. Seeing that he
vigorously carried on the government of the household and of the armies of the realm it would be

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14 Ed. W. Schwenkenbecher, *MGH Libelli de LITE*, 2 (Hanover, 1892), pp. 185-87, 194-96.
appropriate for him to receive the title of king along with the labors and the duties of the office. When Pope Zacharias had considered this proposal and deemed it just and expedient he gave his consent to it and afterwards Pope Stephen confirmed this judgment. Pippin was made king by common consent of the princes, and Hilderic received the tonsured crown and the habit of monastic life in place of the empty name of king. Now if is so, or rather because this is so, it seems that the above-mentioned Pope Gregory, also called Hildebrand, unjustly imputed to Zacharias and Stephen, holy pontiffs of the Roman church, the acts of deposing Hilderic from the kingship solely by their own authority and of absolving the Franks from the oath of fidelity that they had sworn to him, when perchance the princes of the realm would have considered it unworthy to swear an oath to a man of the sort described above. He wrote this, along with much else, to Hermann, Bishop of Metz, in order to convince his party that they might safely abandon their king, as if this example proved that he had power to depose him. . . .

If [his] words had been tempered with the charity that edifies, the breach with the rulers of the world that now exists would not have arisen since, as the holy Pope Leo writes, “There can be no general security unless the things that pertain to the profession of religion are defended by royal and priestly authority.” So too Pope Gelasius declared, “Christ, mindful of human frailty, regulated with an excellent disposition what pertained to the salvation of his people. Thus he distinguished between the offices of both powers according to their own proper activities and separate dignities . . .” Since God himself has thus arranged things and has instituted these two, the royal power and the sacred authority of priests, by which this world is chiefly ruled, who can attempt to go against this except one who resists the ordinance of God? . . .

. . . The above-mentioned Pope Hildebrand cites St. Ambrose in his letter in order to strengthen and confirm his party in schism, saying that Ambrose excommunicated the emperor Theodosius for a certain sin. But St. Ambrose, who corrected with ecclesiastical discipline the emperor Theodosius when he was incited by the clamor of some of his supporters to avenge the grave crime of the Thessalonians, did not divide the church; rather he taught that we should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s. . . . It is this excommunication, which was profitable to the church and the emperor Theodosius alike, that is now cited in the letter with which we are dealing as a precedent for propagating a schism by which princes and nobles of the realm are separated from the companionship and service of their emperor. Ambrose, that strong tower and wall of the church, attempted nothing of the sort. . . . It is written indeed that Pope Innocent excommunicated the emperor Arcadius because he consented to the deposition of the holy bishop John. Where this is taken from is still unknown to us but we know for certain that it is not found in the Gesta Romanorum Pontificum or in the Liber Decretorum or in the Historia Tripertita, where we find more about that sentence of deposition than anywhere else. . . .

Ivo of Chartres

There was also an urgent need for someone to analyze what made spiritual office and temporal jurisdiction were two different, conceptually separable from one another. The canonist Ivo of Chartres took a major step in this direction in a pungent and penetrating letter (1097) to Archbishop Hugh of Lyons, the papal legate in France. Ivo was himself a supporter of the reform movement, but he asserted that the one really important thing according to Ivo was that bishops should be chosen by canonical election and without buying their office from the king. The king obviously could not bestow spiritual office; on the other hand, he did have a right to bestow the temporal possessions of the bishopric on the chosen candidate. It was of no great significance, Ivo thought, whether the king performed this legitimate function by conferring an episcopal staff or by some other symbolic ceremony.
You write that the chosen candidate [Daimbert] received episcopal investiture from the hand of the king, but we have not been informed of this by anyone who saw it. In any case, even if he did, we cannot see how the inclusion or omission of this investiture injured the faith or holy religion since it does not have the force of a sacrament in the making of a bishop. Again, it does not seem that kings are prohibited by apostolic authority from installing in bishoprics after canonical election has been held, for we read that supreme pontiffs of holy memory have sometimes interceded with kings on behalf of men elected to churches in order that the bishoprics to which they were elected might be granted to them by those same kings, and we read that others have delayed consecrations because royal installation did not follow the election. . . . Why should it matter whether this installation is accomplished by hand or by gesture, by word or by staff, when the kings do not intend to bestow anything spiritual but only to add their assent to the petition of the people, or to confer on the persons elected the ecclesiastical estates and other worldly goods which the churches receive through the munificence of kings. Thus Augustine writes in his sixth treatise on the Gospel of John, in the first part, ‘Does not a man possess whatever he possesses by human law? For by divine law ‘the Lord’s is the earth and the fullness thereof.’ By human law we say, ‘This estate is mine, this house is mine, this slave is mine.’ Take away the laws of the emperors and who will dare say, ‘This estate is mine, that slave is mine, that house is mine’. . . .”

Of these things [i.e., rules against lay investiture] were established by eternal law it would not lie within the power of rulers sometimes to judge strictly according to them, sometimes to relax them out of mercy so that men remain in dignities received in a fashion contrary to what they prescribe. But since in fact what they forbid is illicit essentially because it has been prohibited by rulers, so too the remission of them by rulers according to their own judgement is licit. We see no one or almost no one condemned for this kind of transgression but we see many disquieted, many churches despoiled, many scandals arisen, and a division between the kingship and the priesthood without whose harmonious cooperation there can be no sound and secure conduct of human affairs. . . . I do not say this as one who wants to set himself up against the apostolic see or resist its salutary decrees or cast doubt on the decisions of his superiors in so far as they are supported by cogent reasons and by the evident authority of the ancient fathers; but I do wish, together with many other devout persons, that the ministers of the Roman church, like experienced doctors, would concern themselves with curing the most grievous sicknesses and not have to hear their mockers saying, “You strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. You pay tithes on mint and anise and cummin but leave undone the weightier matters of the law” (cf. Matthew 23:23-24). . . .

Hugh of Fleury

The problem with Ivo’s solution was that the king giving the bishop his crosier or pastoral staff meant having a king give the bishop something that was intrinsically a symbol of religious authority. Hugh of Fleury, a who as a moderate royalist suggested, had the right to assent to an episcopal election on behalf of the layfolk, whose acceptance of a newly elected bishop was part of the established canonical procedure, and a right to invest the new bishop with the temporal lands and jurisdictions pertaining to his see. But he ought not to use the disputed symbols of staff and ring in doing so. The staff and ring were rather to be bestowed by the consecrating archbishop, since they symbolized the “care of souls.”

15Ed. E. Sackur, MGH Libelli de Lite, 2 (Hanover, 1892), pp. 644-46.
I think that a king, inspired by the Holy Spirit, can appoint a pious cleric to the honor of prelacy. The archbishop indeed ought to commit to him the care of souls. The most Christian kings and princes promoted holy men in the church according to this prudent custom down to our own times. ... If, indeed, a bishop has been elected by clergy and people reasonably and according to ecclesiastical custom the king ought not to use force against the electors tyrannically or harass them but rather should lawfully give his consent to the ordination. But if the one elected is found to be reprehensible, not only the king but the people of the province ought to withhold their assent and approval from his election and, moreover, they ought to expose publicly the crimes that mark him with detestable infamy so that by this reproach the audacity of the electors may be restrained. After the election the elected bishop ought to receive from the king’s hand, not the ring and staff but the investiture of secular things, and he ought to receive from the archbishop, among his orders, the care of souls through the ring or staff, so that this kind of business may be carried through without dispute and the privilege of his authority may be maintained by both earthly and spiritual powers. If this is regularly observed, what our Savior commanded in the Gospel will be fulfilled—“Render to Caesar the things that Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” (Luke 20:25). A procedure firmly and properly established will not be in doubt, and holy Church will be heed from a host of tribulations. For the king as was set out above, bears the likeness of God the Father, and the bishop of Christ. Although the Lord Jesus Christ himself seems to say in the Gospel to his disciples and their followers, “. . I appoint you to a kingdom as my Father has appointed me” (Luke 22.27). “I his was a kingdom of holy souls, not a kingdom of this world, as Christ witnessed at the time of his passion when he said to Pilate, kingdom is not of this world” (John

For, as the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “No one serving as God’s soldier entangles himself in earthly affairs (2 Timothy 2: 4).
CONCLUSION OF THE CONTEST

Having the people and clergy elect (with an involvement of the king—sometimes amounting to appointment so long as the clergy and people ritually said “okay”—and having the king then invest the new bishop with material goods by a rod, and the archbishop invest the new bishop with his spiritual authority by giving him his crosier, was a tidy legalism and eventually was accepted nearly everywhere. One can guess that such a charade would eventually become distasteful to some pope. And in 1111, the saintly pope Paschal II finally tried to put an end to it.

Paschal II and Henry V

The new emperor Henry V occupied Rome with a German army, demanding to be crowned as emperor. The issue was now clearer than ever before. The king would not give up his right to appoint bishops because they served him as functionaries in his government and he wanted obedient servants to support his policies. The pope would not accept royal right appointment because bishops because were ministers of God wielding a spiritual authority that was not derived from any lay ruler. Paschal suggested that the German churches renounce and return to the king all the property and secular responsibilities and offices that they had been given by the state. The bishops would become once more simple pastors of souls, living on the tithes and free gifts of the faithful. The king would no longer have any reason for meddling in their appointments on political grounds. The emperor accepted the solution and it was announced as part of the coronation ceremony of the new emperor:

Paschal’s renunciation of the regalia of the church (February 1111)\textsuperscript{17}

Bishop Paschal, servant of the servants of God. To his beloved son Henry and his successors, forever.

It is both decreed against by the institutions of the divine law, and interdicted by the sacred canons, that priests should busy themselves with secular cases, or should go to the public court except to rescue the condemned, or for the sake of others who suffer injury. Wherefore also the apostle Paul says: “If ye have secular judgments constitute as judges those who are of low degree in the church.” Moreover in portions of your kingdom bishops and abbots are so occupied by secular cares that they are compelled assiduously to frequent the court, and to perform military service. Which things, indeed, are scarcely if at all carried on without plunder, sacrilege, arson. For ministers of the altar are made ministers of the king’s court; inasmuch as they receive cities, duchies, margravates, monies and other things which belong to the service of the king. Whence also the custom has grown up-intolerably for the church—that elected bishops should by no means receive consecration unless they had first been invested through the hand of the king. From which cause both the wickedness of simoniacal heresy and, at times, so great an ambition has prevailed that the episcopal sees were invaded without any previous election. . . . And so, most beloved son, King Henry--now through our office, by the grace of God, emperor of the Romans--we decree that those royal appurtenances are to be given back to thee and to thy kingdom which manifestly belonged to that kingdom in the time of Charles, Louis, and of thy other predecessors. We forbid, and under

\textsuperscript{17}Trans. E. F. Henderson, \textit{Documents} (London, 1892), pp. 405-7.
sentence of anathema prohibit, that any bishop or abbot, present or future, invade these same royal appurtenances. In which are included the cities, duchies, margravates, counties, monies, toll, market, advowsons of the kingdom, rights of the judges of the hundred courts, and the courts which manifestly belonged to the king together with what pertained to them, the military posts and camps of the kingdom. Nor shall they, henceforth, unless by favor of the king, concern themselves with those royal appurtenances. But neither shall it be allowed our successors, who shall follow us in the apostolic chair, to disturb thee or thy kingdom in this matter. Furthermore, we decree that the churches, with the offerings and hereditary possessions which manifestly did not belong to the kingdom, shall remain free; as, on the day of thy coronation, in the sight of the whole church, thou didst promise that they should be. For it is fitting that the bishops, freed from secular cares, should take care of their people, and not any longer be absent from their churches. For, according to the apostle Paul, let them watch, being about to render account, as it were, for the souls of these [their people].

**Paschal’s concession of the privilege of investiture to Henry V (April 1111)**

*The result was a riot in St. Peter’s. The cardinals denounced the agreement, and the German bishops in the emperor’s entourage refused to be bound by the decision. The princes present shook their swords in anger. The church was not going to get out of secular affairs that easily. No secular wanted to take up all the material social functions (hospitals, schools, etc.) that the Church fulfilled and do this service themselves. No bishop wanted to find their service limited to prayer and conducting religious services: education and care of the sick and poor was a mission they believe they had received from God. Henry V probably never intended to comply with the agreement anyway: it was a quick way to get crowned and go back to Germany for business as usual. So, at the end of the coronation, he arrested the pope, put him in chains and took him to prison in Germany. The conditions in the prison were not good and eventually Paschal was broken. He capitulated on all points:*

Bishop Paschal, servant of the servants of God, to his most beloved son in Christ, Henry, glorious king of the Germans, and, through the grace of Almighty God, august emperor of the Romans, greeting and apostolic benediction.

The divine disposition has appointed that your kingdom should be singularly united with the holy Roman church. Your predecessors by reason of uprightness and greater virtue have obtained the crown of the city of Rome and the empire. To which dignity, viz.: that of the crown and the empire, the divine majesty has, most beloved son Henry, through the ministry of our priestship, brought thy person also. That prerogative, therefore, of dignity which our predecessors did grant to thy predecessors the catholic emperors, and did confirm by their charters, we also do concede to thee, beloved, and do confirm by the page of this present privilege: that, namely, thou may’st confer the investiture of staff and ring, freely, except through simony and with violence to the elected, on the bishops and abbots of thy kingdom. But after the investiture they shall receive the canonical consecration from the bishop to whom they belong. If any one, moreover, without thy consent, shall have been elected by the clergy and people, he shall be consecrated by no one unless he be invested by thee. Bishops and archbishops, indeed, shall have the right of canonically consecrating bishops or abbots invested by thee. For your predecessors have enriched the churches of their kingdom with such benefits from their royal appurtenances, that the kingdom itself should seek its chief safety in

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protecting the bishops and abbots; and popular dissensions, which often happen at elections, should be restrained by the royal majesty. Wherefore the attention of thy prudence and power ought the more carefully to be applied to this end: that the greatness of the Roman, and the safety of the other churches, should be preserved through still greater benefits-God granting them. . . .

The Concordat of Worms

The Church never accepted Paschal’s forced concession. When the emperor finally released him, a broken man, he himself repudiated it, and died soon after. The dispute was finally settled under the next pope, Calixtus II (1119-24), at the Synod of Worms (1122). Bishops in Germany were to be canonically elected by the clergy and people, but in the presence of the emperor or king (which effectively gave him veto power). The emperor gave up the practice of investing them with the ring and pastoral staff. But he could be present at the election and receive the new bishop’s oath of fealty for the temporal property and lands of his church. The compromise was accepted throughout Europe.

Concordat of Calixtus II and Henry V (September 1122)\textsuperscript{19}

Privilege of the pope

I, Bishop Calixtus, servant of the servants of God, concede to you, beloved son Henry—by the grace of God August Emperor of the Romans—that the election of those bishops and abbots in the German kingdom who belong to the kingdom shall take place in your presence without simony and without any violence; so that if any discord occurs between the parties concerned, you may—with the counsel or judgment of the metropolitan and the co-provincials—give your assent and assistance to the party which appears to have the better case. The candidate elected may receive the “regalia” from you through the scepter and he shall perform his lawful duties to you for them. But he who is elected in the other parts of the Empire shall, within six months, receive the “regalia” from you through the scepter and shall perform his lawful duties for them, saving all things which are known as pertaining to the Church. If you complain to me in any of these matters and ask for help, I will furnish you the aid, if such is the duty of my office. I grant true peace to you and to all those who are or have been of your party during this discord.

Privilege of the emperor

In the name of Holy and Indivisible Trinity. I, Henry, by the grace of God August Emperor of the Romans, for the love of God and of the Holy Roman Church and of the lord Pope Calixtus and for the healing of my soul, do surrender to God, to the Holy Apostles of God, Peter and Paul, and to the Holy Roman Church all investiture through ring and staff; and do agree that in all churches throughout my kingdom and empire there shall be canonical elections and free consecration. I restore to the same Roman Church all the possessions and temporalities [“regalia”] which have been abstracted until the present day either in the lifetime of my father or in my own and which I hold; and I will faithfully aid in the restoration of those which I do not hold. The possessions also of all other churches and princes and of every one else, either cleric or layman, which had been lost in that war, I will restore, so far as I hold them, according to the counsel of the princes or according to justice; and I will faithfully aid in the restoration of those that I do not hold And I grant a true peace to the lord Pope Calixtus and to the Holy Roman Church and to all who are or have been on its side. In

\textsuperscript{19} Trans. S. Z. Ehler and J. B. Morrall, Church and State Through the Centuries (London, 1954), pp. 48-49.
matters where the Holy Roman Church would seek assistance I will faithfully grant it; and in those where she shall complain to me, I will duly grant justice to her.

In the end royal power over the local churches continued. The clergy remained responsible for many things wholly secular, like courts and tax collection. Lip service was given to the right of the people and clergy to choose their pastors, but kings got the final say. Popes were recognized to have a spiritual (but not temporal) authority even over kings, but what they could do with it remained very unclear. No one was happy. Paschal, in his attempt to withdraw the Church from all secular affairs and return to a poor, chaste, simple state, was forgotten by everyone. But what he wanted remained very popular with ordinary people, the very ones who had supported Gregory from the beginning of the conflict. They would find new prophets to address their hopes, both heretical and orthodox. We will be looking at examples of each.
THE TESTAMENT OF ST. FRANCIS

The doctrine of Franciscan poverty is one of the most debated topics in medieval studies. It is of great importance since poverty played a role in nearly every medieval heresy (and in the rules of nearly every medieval religious order). Francis’ last statement on poverty and his way of life was made on his death bed and taken down by his followers.

This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance. When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me. After that I did not wait long before leaving the world.

And God inspired me with such faith in his churches that I used to pray with all simplicity, saying, “We adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all your churches in the whole world, and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

And God inspired me, too, and still inspires me with such great faith in priests who live according to the laws of the holy Church of Rome, because of their dignity, that if they persecuted me, I should still be ready to turn to them for aid. And if I were as wise as Solomon and met the worst priests in the world, I would still refuse to preach against their will in the parishes in which they live. I am determined to reverence, love and honor priests and all others as my superiors. I refuse to consider their sins, because I can see the Son of God in them and they are better than I. I do this because in this world I cannot see the most high Son of God with my own eyes, except for his most holy Body and Blood which they receive and they alone administer to others.

Above everything else, I want the Most Holy Sacrament to be honored and venerated and reserved in places which are richly ornamented. Whenever I find his most holy name or writings containing his words in an improper place, I make a point of picking them up, and I ask that they be picked up and put aside in a suitable place. We should honor and venerate theologians, too, and the ministers of God’s word, because it is they who give us spirit and life.

When God gave me some friars, there was no one to tell me what I should do; but the Most High himself made it clear to me that I must live the life of the Gospel. I had this written down briefly and simply and his Holiness the Pope confirmed it for me. Those who embraced this life gave everything they had to the poor. They were satisfied with one habit which was patched inside and outside, and a cord, and trousers. We refused to have anything more.

Those of us who were clerics said the Office like other clerics, while the lay brothers said the Our Father, and we were only too glad to find shelter in abandoned churches. We made no claim to learning and we were submissive to everyone. I worked with my own hands and I am still determined to work; and with all my heart I want all the other friars to be busy with some kind of work that can be carried on without scandal. Those who do not know how to work should learn, not because they want to get something for their efforts, but to give good example and to avoid idleness. When we receive no recompense for our work, we can turn to God’s table and beg alms from door to door. God revealed a form of greeting to me, telling me we should say, “God give you peace.”

The friars must be very careful not to accept churches or poor dwellings for themselves, or anything else built for them, unless they are in harmony with the poverty which we have promised in the Rule; and they should occupy these places only as strangers and pilgrims.

In virtue of obedience, I strictly forbid the friars, wherever they may be, to petition the Roman Curia, either personally or through an intermediary, for a papal brief, whether it concerns a
church or any other place, or even in order to preach, or because they are being persecuted. If they
are not welcome somewhere, they should flee to another country where they can lead a life of
penance, with God’s blessing.

I am determined to obey the Minister [the head] of the Order and the guardian [head of the
friars in a local community] whom he sees fit to give me. I want to be a captive in his hands so that
I cannot travel about or do anything against his command or desire, because he is my superior.
Although I am ill and not much use, I always want to have a cleric with me who will say the Office
for me, as is prescribed in the Rule.

All the other friars, too, are bound to obey their guardians in the same way, and say the Office
according to the Rule. If any of them refuse to say the Office according to the Rule and want to
change it, or if they are not true to the Catholic Faith, the other friars are bound in virtue of
obedience to bring them before the custodian [head of the friars in a geographical region] nearest the
place where they find them. The custodian must keep any such friar a prisoner day and night so that
he cannot escape from his hands until he personally hands him over to the Minister. The Minister,
then, is strictly bound by obedience to place him in the care of friars who will guard him day and
night like a prisoner until they present him before his lordship the Bishop of Ostia [Cardinal Ugolino,
later Pope Gregory IX], who is the superior, protector and corrector of this whole Order.

The friars should not say, this is another Rule. For this is a reminder, admonition,
exhortation and my testament which I, brother Francis, worthless as I am, leave to you, my brothers,
that we may observe in a more Catholic way the Rule which we have promised to God. The Minister
and all the other ministers and custodians are bound in virtue of obedience not to add anything to
these words or subtract from them. They should always have this writing with them, as well as the
Rule and the chapters they hold; when the rule is read, they should read these words also.

In virtue of obedience, I strictly forbid any of my friars, clerics or lay brothers, to interpret
the Rule or these words saying, “This is what they mean.” God inspired me to write the Rule and
these words plainly and simply, and so you too must understand them plainly and simply, and live
by them, doing good to the last.
CATHAR DOCUMENTS OF THE
THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

Bogomil Literature Adopted by the Cathars

The Cathars were a medieval Christian dualist group which believed in two gods (a good God who created spirit and an evil god—or Satan—who created matter and bodies). There were two general types of Cathars: an “absolute dualist” group who considered the two gods equal in power, and a “mitigated dualist” group that considered the evil god a rebel angel. The Cathars were most common in southern France and northern Italy. Two works which the Cathars took over from the Bogomils (an ancient dualist movement in the Balkans) are presented here: The Vision of Isaiah and The Secret Supper. The dates prefixed are those when the tract probably reached Western Europe, not when they were written.

The Vision of Isaiah, is an apocryphal work of great antiquity, probably composed about the end of the first century under Gnostic influence. Before A.D. 300 it had been joined to two other independently written items, The Martyrdom of Isaiah and The Testament of Hezekiah: the first, by a Jew or a Jewish Christian; the second, Christian in origin with traces of Gnosticism (an ancient dualist movement). The composite treatise circulated under the title, The Ascension of Isaiah. The Vision of Isaiah, which formed its second half, may also have had an independent tradition; at any rate, it was found as a separate work among Bogomils in the twelfth century. About the beginning of the thirteenth century it had reached Western Europe in Latin translation. The Catholic author Durandus of Huesca mentions it in a polemic against the Albigenses (southern French Cathars) in 1222 or 1223. The story of Isaiah’s vision was still being repeated by Albigensian heresiarchs in the fourteenth century. To show the persistence of the story, one of the later versions is translated here as an addendum to the translation of The Vision itself.

The Vision of Isaiah recounts that the spirit of the prophet was conducted by an angelic guide through the air of this world up through the firmament, where forces of Satan and of God were locked in battle; then up through seven heavens, where angels, their glory increasing with each heaven, sang praises to God. In the seventh heaven Isaiah saw not only angels but the righteous dead, who alone were able to behold the ineffable glory of the Father. There he heard the Father command His Son to descend to the earth and into hell to judge the rulers and angels or the world. Isaiah saw the Son on earth, saw Him seized and hung on the tree by the prince of this world, saw Him descend to hell to lay it waste—this part of the vision was omitted in the Bogomil version—and then, having despoiled the prince of death, arise on the third day.

When Isaiah had beheld the ascent of the Son of God again to heaven, he was told that what he had beheld no other eyes of flesh might see and that, when the time came, he and other righteous men would also receive their robes, thrones, and crowns of glory with God. It is easy to see why absolute dualists among the Cathars were attracted by the story, for it depicts a world in darkness and discord under Satan’s rule, and a struggle on the earth and in its atmosphere between satanic and divine power. God the Father is superior to the Son and, to the Holy Spirit. In His earthly sojourn, the Son never becomes truly man, and the souls of the righteous but not their carnal bodies are promised celestial reward in the last days.

Another Bogomil tract, The Secret Supper, is also known as Interrogatio Johannis the questions of John, because it presents Jesus as responding to John’s inquiries. The tract has come
down to us only in a Latin text. It was originally written in either Slavonic or Greek, and some of its doctrine is probably drawn from earlier apocrypha, but there is no doubt of its Bogomil character. It reached Italy toward the end of the twelfth century in the hands of Nazarius, a Cathar “bishop” from northern Italy. For him and his followers it afforded justification of many of their teachings, although a dissident faction, led by a certain Desiderius, about 1230 defied Nazarius and repudiated the authority of The Secret Supper. It seems to have influenced other Italian Cathar groups.

The Secret Supper depicts John the Evangelist at a Last Supper with Christ in heaven, where he questions the Lord about the origin of the world and man, the rule of Satan, Christ’s mission, and human salvation. Christ reveals that Satan, once second only to God and Christ in the powers of heaven, rebelled and won the allegiance of certain angels of the first five heavens. For this he and one third of the angels were cast out. In the firmament to which he was exiled, Satan found no peace until God allowed him seven days in which to build. In that time Satan made a universe consisting of the earth, a throne, the sun, the moon, the natural phenomena of this earth, its inhabitants, and his own angels. In man and woman he imprisoned Fallen angels from heaven; in Paradise he hid as a serpent to seduce Eve, who taught Adam to lust. Enoch and Moses were his servants. When Christ was sent to earth through the ear of an angel, Mary, Satan sent John the Baptist with the spirit of Elijah to resist Him. But the Last Judgment will result in Christ casting out evil and releasing His elect from their imprisonment, so that in heaven they may receive imperishable raiment, crowns, and thrones.

THE VISION OF ISAIAH

before 1222

Chapter I

The vision which Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw in the twentieth year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah: Isaiah the prophet, son of Amos, came to Hezekiah in Jerusalem; and after he had come in, he sat down upon the king’s couch. And all the princes of Israel and the counselors of the king and the eunuchs stood before him. And the prophets and the sons of prophets came from the villages and the fields and the mountains to salute him, when they learned that Isaiah had come from Gilgal, and to announce to him those things that were to come. Then he was speaking words of truth; the Holy Spirit came upon him and all saw and heard the words of the Holy Spirit. The king summoned the prophets, and all entered together, as many as were found there. Now there were the aged Micah and Ananiah, Joel, and as many of them as were found there, on his right hand and on the left. However, when they heard the voice of the Holy Spirit they fell to their knees and sang to the Highest God, who rests among the holy ones. Who bestowed such power of words in the world. Now, as he was speaking in the Holy Spirit in the hearing of all, he fell silent, and thereupon they saw one standing before him. His Isaiah’s eyes were open, yet his mouth was closed, but the inspiration of the Spirit was with him. And they did not think that Isaiah had been exalted, but the prophets recognized that it was a revelation. The vision which he saw was not of this world but of what is hidden from all flesh. And when he ceased to behold the vision, he returned to himself and recounted the vision to Hezekiah and his son Nasion.

Chapter II

and to Micah and the other prophets, saying, “When I prophesied what you heard, which you witnessed, I saw an angel, glorious not with the glory of the angels whom I have always seen, but having a particularly great glory and a light which I cannot describe. Taking me by the hand he led me on high, and I said, ‘Who are you, and what is your name, and why are you lifting me up like a
bird?’—for the ability to speak to him was given me. Then in answer he said to me, ‘When I shall bear you on high I will show you the vision which is the purpose for which I have been sent; then you will know who I am, but my name you do not know, because you wish to return again to your body. And when I raise you on high hereafter you will see.’ And I rejoiced because he answered me softly. And he said to me, ‘You have rejoiced because I replied gently to you, and you will see one greater than I am wishing to speak to you; one gentler and wiser, better and sweeter; for to this end was I sent, to explain all things to you.’ And we ascended, he and I, upon the firmament, and there I saw the great battle of Satan and his might opposing the loyal followers of God, and one surpassed the other in envy. For just as it is on earth, so also is it in the firmament, because replicas of what are in the firmament are on earth. And I said to the angel, ‘What is this war and envy and struggle?’ And in reply he said to me, ‘This is the devil’s war and he will not rest until He whom you wish to see comes to slay him with the spirit of His virtue. Thereafter, he raised me into that which is above the firmament, which is the first heaven. And I saw in the midst thereof a throne on which an angel was seated in great glory, and angels sat at his right and his left. Those on the right had a special glory, and they sang with one voice; and those who were on the left sang after them but their song was not like that of the ones on the right. And I questioned the angel who conducted me: ‘To whom is this song raised?’ And in reply he said to me, ‘To the great glory of God, who is above the seventh heaven, and to His beloved Son, from whom I was sent to you.’ And again he raised me up, into the second heaven; its height was the same as that of the first heaven above earth. And I saw there, just as in the first heaven, angels on the right and on the left. And the glory of these angels and their song were superior to those of the first heaven. And I fell on my face to adore him, and the angel who guided me said to me, ‘Adore not the angel nor the throne of this heaven. This is the reason why I was sent to guide you; adore Him only of whom I will tell you, and in like fashion adore Him who is above all angels, above thrones, and above the garments and crowns which you shall see hereafter.’ And he raised me, up to the third heaven. And I wondered, beholding such a multitude of angels arrayed in the ranks of their diverse goodness; each, having his own glory, glorified Him who is on high (Whose name is not revealed to all flesh), because He gave so much glory to the angels who are above each heaven. But in reply the angel said to me, ‘Why are you astonished that they are not all of one appearance? You have not yet seen the insuperable virtues and the thousands and thousands of thousands of angels.’

Chapter III

‘And thereafter he raised me into the air of the sixth heaven and I saw there a great glory which I had not seen in the fifth heaven. And I beheld angels in great glory. And the deeds of the virtues were honorable and pre-eminent; their song was holy and wonderful. And I said to the angel who guided me, ‘What is it that I see, my lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am not your lord but your
counselor.” And he spoke to me about the sixth heaven. Herein are neither throne nor angels on the left, but they receive their direction from the virtue of the seventh heaven, where dwells the mighty Son of God. And all the heavens and His angels hearken to Him, and I have been sent to bring you hither, so that you may see this glory and the Lord of all the heavens and His angels and virtues. Therefore, I say to you, Isaiah, no one who desires to return to the flesh of that world has seen what you see nor is able to see what you have seen; because it is your lot in the Lord to come here.’ And I magnified the Lord in song because thus I go into His lot. And he the angel said to me, ‘When you shall have returned here through the will of the Father, then you will receive your garment, and then you will be equal to the angels who are in the seventh heaven.’ And he led me into the sixth heaven, and neither thrones nor angels on the right and the left were there, but all had one appearance and identical song. And it was given me to sing with them; and the angel who was with me and I, myself, were even as their glory, and their glory was one. And they glorified the Father of all and His beloved Son and the Holy Spirit; all with one voice they sang, but not with a voice such as that of the fifth heaven, but with a different voice. And there was a great light there. And when I was in the sixth heaven I thought the light of the fifth heaven to be as darkness. I rejoiced greatly and sang to Him who gave such joy to those who received His mercy. And I begged the angel who guided me nevermore to return into that carnal world. Moreover, I say unto you that here is much darkness. But the angel who guided me said to me, ‘Since you rejoice in this light, how much more will you rejoice and exult when you see the light of the seventh heaven, in which sits the Heavenly Father with His only begotten Son; where lie the vestments and the thrones and the crowns of the righteous. And as to your plea not to return into your flesh, the time is not yet fulfilled for your coming here.’ And I sorrowed greatly at hearing these words.

Chapter IV

“And. he raised me up into the air of the seventh heaven and I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Why do you who desire to live in the flesh come here?’ And I was very much afraid and trembled. Again, I heard another voice saying, ‘Forbid him not to come in, since he is worthy of the glory of God, for here is his robe. And I questioned the angel who was with me, ‘Who is he who forbids me, and who is he who bids me come up?’ And he said to me, ‘The one who forbids is he, the angel who is above the angels singing in the sixth heaven; and He who commands is the Son of God, and His name you may not hear until you have departed from the flesh.’ When we ascended into the seventh heaven I saw there an astounding and indescribable light and innumerable angels. And I saw certain of the righteous who, stripped of fleshly robes, were in heavenly robes and standing in great glory. But they sat not on their thrones; moreover, their crowns of glory were not upon them. And I questioned the angel, saying, ‘Why have they received robes, and why have they not received thrones and crowns of glory?’ And he said to me, ‘Now they receive them not, until the Son first brings here those thrones and crowns, when He shall be in your likeness.’ And the prince of that world will stretch forth his hand upon the Son of God and will kill Him and hang Him on a tree, and he will kill Him not knowing who He is. And He will descend into hell and will lay it waste, with all the phantoms of hell. And He will seize the prince of death and despoil him, and crush all his powers, and will rise again on the third day; having with him certain of the righteous. And He will send His preachers into the whole world, and will ascend into heaven. Then these will receive their thrones and crowns.’ And after he said these words, I said to him, ‘In regard to that which I asked you in the first heaven, show me, for this you promised.’ And as I was addressing him, there was among those standing about us one angel, more glorious than he who conducted me and than all the angels. And he showed me a book, and opening it, gave it to me; and I saw writing which was not like that of this world. And I read it, and lo, there were the deeds of Jerusalem recorded there, and the works of all men were there, among whom also was I. I saw in truth that nothing which was done in the world
was hidden in the seventh heaven. And I questioned the angel, ‘Who is this who is pre-eminent over all the angels in his glory?’ And in reply to me he said, ‘He is the great angel, Michael, who prays constantly for humanity and humility.’ I saw many robes and thrones and crowns lying there. And I said to the angel, ‘For whom are these robes and crowns and thrones reserved?’ And he said to me, ‘Many of that world lost these crowns, who are believers in the world of Him of whom I have spoken to you.’ And, turning about, I saw the Lord in great glory and I was most sorely afraid. And all the righteous approached Him and adored Him singing with one voice and my voice was like unto theirs. And Michael, approaching Him, adored and together with him all the angels adored and sang. And I was again transfigured and was like the angels. Then the angel who conducted me said to me ‘Adore Him and sing.’ And I adored Him and sang. And the angel who conducted me said to me, ‘He is the Lord of all the glories which you have seen.’ And I saw another most glorious one, like unto Him in all things, and the righteous approached Him and adored Him and sang, and I sang with them and I was not transfigured into their aspect. And the angels came with them and adored Him, and I adored Him and sang. And again, I saw the other in great glory. And while walking, I questioned the angel, ‘Who is He?’ And he said to me, ‘Adore Him, for he is the angel of the Holy Spirit, who speaks in you and in all the righteous.’ And after that, another indescribable and ineffable glory was revealed which I could not behold with the opened eyes of my spirit, nor could the angel who conducted me nor all the angels whom I saw adoring the Lord. But I saw the righteous only in great glory beholding His glory. And my Lord approached first and then the angel of the spirit. And they adored Him and they sang together. Then all the righteous adored Him, and with them Michael and all the angels adored and sang.

Chapter V

“Thereafter I heard a voice there and the song which I heard in the six heavens rose up and was heard in the seventh heaven. And all glorified Him whose glory I could not behold. And the song of all six heavens was not only heard but seen. And the angel said to me, ‘He is the One Living Eternal, living in the highest eternity and resting among the holy ones; we cannot endure to name or see Him who is praised by the Holy Spirit in the mouths of the holy and righteous. And after that, I heard the voice of the Eternal saying to the Lord His Son: ‘Go forth and descend from all the heavens and be in the world, and go even to the angel who is in hell; transfiguring yourself into their form. And neither the angels nor the princes of that world shall know you. And you shall judge the prince of that world and his angels, and the rulers of the world, because they have denied me and said, “We are and without us there is no one.” Thereafter, you shall not transfigure yourself as you ascend through the heavens in great glory, and you will sit at my right hand. Then the princes and the virtues and all the angels and all the principalities of the heavens and of earth and of the lower regions will adore you.’ And I heard the Great Glory commanding my Lord. And then the Lord went out from the seventh heaven and descended into the sixth heaven. And the angel who guided me said to me, ‘Understand and see the manner of His transfiguration and descent.’ When the angels saw Him, they praised and glorified Him, for He was not transfigured into their image, and I sang with them. When He had descended into the fifth heaven, there at once He was transfigured into the form of those angels and they did not sing to Him or adore Him, for He was of a form like theirs. And He descended into the fourth heaven and appeared to them in their form. And they did not sing to Him for He was of a form like theirs. Moreover, He came into the third heaven, and into the second and the first, transfiguring Himself in each of them. Consequently, they did not sing to Him or adore Him, for He appeared to them in a form like theirs. And He showed them a sign. Moreover, He descended into the firmament and there gave the signs (signa), and His form was like unto theirs, and they did not glorify Him and they did not sing to Him. And He descended to the angels who were in this air as though He were one of them. And He gave them no sign, nor did they sing to Him.
Chapter VI

“And after these things, the angel said to me, ‘Know, Isaiah, son of Amos, this is why I was sent by God to show you all things. For no one before you has seen nor can anyone after you see what you have seen and heard.’ And I saw one like the Son of Man dwelling with men and in the world. And they did not recognize Him. And I saw Him ascending into the firmament and He was not transfigured into their form. And all the angels who were above the firmament were struck with fear at the sight and, adoring, they said, ‘How did you descend into our midst, Lord, and we did not recognize the King of Glory?’ And He ascended into the first heaven more gloriously and did not transfigure Himself. Then all the angels adored and sang, saying, ‘How did you pass through our midst, Lord, and we did not see or adore you?’ Thus He ascended into the second heaven and into the third and into the fourth and into the fifth and into the sixth, even to all the heavens, and His glories increased. When He ascended into the seventh heaven, all the righteous sang to him, and all the angels and virtues whom I could not see. I saw a wonderful angel sit at His left hand, who said to me, ‘This suffices you, Isaiah, for you have seen what no other son of the flesh has seen, which eyes cannot see nor ears hear, nor can it rise in the heart of man, how much God has prepared for all who love Him.’” And he said to me, ‘Return in your robe until the time of your days shall be fulfilled and then you shall come here.’ Having seen these things, Isaiah spoke to those standing about him; and, hearing these wonders, all sang and glorified the Lord, who gave such grace to men. And he said to Hezekiah the king, “The consummation of this world and works will be fulfilled in the last generations.” And he forbade them to proclaim these words to the children of Israel or to give them to any man to be recorded. But how many things will be understood by the king and by the utterances in the prophets! And thus be you also in the Holy Spirit, so that you may receive your robes and thrones and crowns of glory placed in the heavens. He ceased then to speak and went out from King Hezekiah.

The Vision of Isaiah AS RETOLD IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The witness testified that a heretic had told him: Once there was a good man of their sect who was in a quandary as to whether he held the right faith, and he besought God the Father to show him whether he held to a good faith and a right way, and also to show him His glory. And one day, while he was praying for this, an angel appeared to him and told him that he had come for the purpose of showing him the glory of the Holy Father and whether he held to the good faith and the right way. And he caused the man aforesaid to climb upon his shoulder and, carrying him, came to the first heaven after the turbulence of this world. And there he set him down. And the man saw the lord of the aforesaid world and heaven and, approaching him, sought to adore him, but was forbidden by the angel, who said he must not adore him because this was not his Father. Thereupon the angel, taking that good man on his shoulder, carried him to the second world and the second heaven, and there set him down. And the man saw the lord of the aforesaid world and heaven and, approaching him, sought to adore him, but was forbidden by the angel, who said he must not adore him because this was not his Father. Thereupon the angel, taking that good man on his shoulder, carried him to the second world and the second heaven, and there set him down. And the man, seeing the lord of the second world standing in greater glory than did the lord of the first, wished to adore him but was forbidden by the angel. And in the same way the man was carried by the angel through all the other heavens up to the seventh heaven, and he sought to adore the lords of the heavens and worlds, who were of the greater glory the higher they were, but was forbidden by the angel to adore them. Then, he was carried into the seventh heaven and beheld the Lord of that heaven; the angel told him that this was the Holy Father and that he should adore Him; and approaching the Father, the man adored Him. And the Holy Father questioned the man about whence he came. He answered: “From the land of tribulations.” And as the man

20 The following is part of the testimony of a witness before the Inquisition at Pamiers, 1321.
beheld in heaven great brilliance, many angels, beautiful groves and singing birds, and saw that joy
without sadness was there, that neither hunger nor thirst existed there, nor cold nor heat, but most
moderate temperatures, he said to the Holy Father that it would be pleasing to remain with Him
thenceforth. But the Holy Father replied that he could not remain there at that time, since flesh born
of corruption could not stay there, but it behooved him to descend to the land of tribulation and to
preach that faith which he knew, since that was His faith. And the man requested the Father to let
him stay with Him for a little while, which He conceded to him. And after a time, the angel told the
man to climb upon his shoulder, since the hour had come to descend. And the man answered that he
had not yet been with the Father as long as from the first to the third hour, but the angel told him that,
on the contrary, he had been there thirty-two years, and this he found to be true when he was on
earth. And having climbed upon the angel’s shoulder and descended through all the heavens, he
came to this earth. And afterward he preached what he had seen. And thus, the heretic said, their
faith and sect were confirmed.

THE SECRET SUPPER

circa 1190

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The questions of John, the apostle and evangelist, at a secret supper” in the kingdom of
heaven, about the governance of this world, about its ruler, and about Adam:

I, John, partner in tribulation so that I might be a partner in the kingdom of God, leaning on
the breast of Jesus Christ our Lord at the supper, said to Him: “Lord, who shall betray you?” And
the Lord said unto me: “He that shall have dipped his hand in the dish, into him shall Satan enter.
He shall betray me.”

I said, “Lord, before Satan fell, in what splendor did he attend the Father?” He said: “Among
the virtues of heaven and at the throne of the Father invisible; he was regulator of all things and sat
with my Father. He Satan it was who presided over the virtues of the heavens and those who
attended on the Father. His power descended from the heavens even unto hell, and arose even unto
the throne of the Father invisible. He had wardship of those splendors which were above all the
heavens. And he pondered, wishing to place his throne upon the clouds and to ‘be like the Most
High.’ When he had come down to lower air, he descried an angel seated upon the air, to whom he
said, ‘Open to me the portals of the air’; these the angels opened for him. And passing down, he
descried an angel who guarded the waters, to whom he said, ‘Open to me the portals of the waters’;
the angel opened them to him. And descending further, he found the whole earth covered with water;
walking beneath this, he came upon two fish, lying upon the waters. These, indeed, were yoked
together, and they bore up the whole earth at the bidding of the Father invisible. And passing down
further still, he found his hell, which is the Gehenna of fire; but thereafter he was unable to go further down, because
of the flame of the fire which was raging.

“The Then Satan retraced his path, filling himself with evil plots. He ascended to the angel who
was over the air and to the angel who was over the waters, and unto them said: ‘All things are mine.
If you hearken to me, I will place my throne over the clouds and I will be like the Most High. I will
bear the waters up above this firmament and I will gather the other waters into wide seas.’ After that
there shall not be water upon the face of the whole earth, and I shall reign with you forever and ever.’
Thus he spoke to the angels. He ascended to the very heavens, even unto the third heaven, subverting
the angels of the Father invisible, and saying to each of them, ‘How much do you owe your lord?’
The first answered, ‘A hundred barrels of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take the bill and sit down and write fifty.’ And he said to another, ‘Now you, how much do you owe your lord?’ Who said, ‘A hundred quarters of wheat.’ To him he said, ‘Take your bill and sit down quickly and write eighty.’ To the other heavens he ascended with like speech; he ascended even unto the fifth heaven, seducing the angels of the Father invisible.

“And a voice came from the throne of the Father, saying: ‘What are you doing, you devoid of hope, subverting the angels of the Father? Contriver of sin, do quickly what you have planned.’ Then the Father bade his angels, ‘Take from all the angels who hearkened to him the garments, the thrones, and the crowns’; and these angels took the vestments, the thrones, and the crowns from all the angels who hearkened to him.”

And once again I, John, questioned the Lord, saying, “When Satan fell, in what place did he dwell?” In answer He said to me: “Because of his self-exaltation, my Father decreed his transformation,” withdrawing from him the light of His glory. The face of Satan was like an iron glowing from the fire, and the whole aspect of his countenance was like that of a man . . . . And he had seven tails with which he drew away the third part of the angels of God. He was cast out from before the throne of God and from the stewardship of heaven. Falling down from heaven, Satan could find no peace in this firmament, nor could those who were with him. And he besought the Father, saying: ‘I have sinned. Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ The Lord was moved with pity for him and gave him peace to do what he would until the seventh day.

“Then Satan took his seat above the firmament and gave command to the angel who was over the air and the angel who was over the waters, so that they raised two thirds of the waters high into the air. Of the remaining third they formed wide seas. The division of the waters was by command of the Father invisible. Again Satan bade the angel who was over the waters, ‘Take a stand upon the two fish.’ And the angel raised the earth upward with his head, and dry land appeared and was . . . . When he took a crown from the angel who was over the air, from half of it he made himself a throne; and when he took a crown from the angel who was over the waters, from half he made the light of the moon and from half the light of day. From precious stones he made fire, and from fire he made all the host of heaven and the stars, and from them he made angels, his ministering spirits, according to the plan of the Governor Most High. He also made thunder, rain, hail, and snow, and over these he set his ministering angels.

“He commanded the earth to bring forth all living things—animals, trees, and herbs. The sea he commanded to bring forth fish; and the air, birds of the heavens. And he pondered on making man to serve him; he took clay of the earth and made man like unto himself. And he then bade an angel of the second heaven to enter the body of clay. Of this body he took a part and made another body in the form of a woman and bade an angel of the first heaven to enter into it. And the angels grieved deeply that they thus had a mortal form imposed upon them and that they now existed in different forms. And Satan bade them to perform the works of the flesh in their bodies of clay, but they did not know how to commit sin. The originator of sin accomplished his purpose by his seduction, in this way: He planted a paradise and set men therein and bade them not to eat of its fruits. The devil entered Paradise and planted a bed of reeds in the midst of Paradise; of his spittle he made a serpent and bade him remain in the reeds. Thus the devil concealed the knowledge of his deceit so that they would not perceive his treachery. He went in to them saying, ‘Eat of all the fruit in Paradise, but of the fruit of good and evil eat not.’ Thereafter the wicked devil, entering into the evil serpent, deceived the angel who was in the form of a woman and poured out upon her head a longing for sin, and Eve’s desire was like a glowing oven. Forthwith, the devil in the form of the serpent came out of the reeds and sated his lust on her with the serpent’s tail. That is why the offspring are called not sons of God but sons of the devil and sons of the serpent. fulfilling the diabolic desires of their father even unto the end of the world. After this, the devil poured out his longing upon the head of the
angel who was in Adam; and both angels were affected by a lust for debauchery, together begetting children of the devil and of the serpent, until the consummation of the world.”

After that I, John, questioned the Lord, saying, “Why do men say that Adam and Eve were made by God and placed in Paradise to keep His commandments, and that for transgression of the Father’s commandment they were delivered up unto death?” The Lord said unto me: “Hear, John, most beloved. Men are foolish who speak thus, for my Father did not, in transgression of His own law, shape bodies of clay, but by the Holy Spirit made only all the virtues of heaven. These, however, for their sins and by their Fall are found possessing bodies of clay and are delivered up to death.”

And still I, John, questioned the Lord, saying, “Lord, how did man have spiritual origin in a carnal body?” And the Lord said to me: “By their Fall spirits of heaven entered the female body of clay and took on flesh from the lusts of the flesh and took on spirit at the same time . . . . Spirit is born of spirit and flesh of flesh; and thus the reign of Satan ceases not in this world.”

And I questioned the Lord, saying, “For how long will Satan have dominion in this world over the essences of men?” And the Lord replied, “My Father will permit him to reign seven days, that is, seven ages.

Again I, John, questioned the Lord in this wise, “What will be the nature of this period of seven ages?” And He said to me: “From the time when the devil fell from the glory of the Father and desired his own glory, he took his seat among the clouds and sent forth his ministers, a searing fire, and . . . in the land from Adam to Enoch. And he sent his minister to Enoch and translated him above the firmament and displayed to him his divine nature. He then commanded that he be given quill and ink. Seating himself, Enoch wrote seventy-six books; these the devil bade him to take to earth. Enoch took the books and turned them over to his sons, and he taught them how to observe the form and place of sacrificial rites. This they did in such wise as to ‘shut the kingdom of heaven against men.’ And he the devil said to them, ‘See you that I am god and there is no other god beside me.’ Wherefore my Father sent me to this world to make manifest His name to men, that they might recognize the devil and his wickedness. But when Satan learned that I had come down to this world, he sent his angel to take three pieces of wood. These he gave to the prophet Moses for my crucifixion. This wood they have kept for me until the present. And he revealed to Moses his divinity and bade him give laws to the children of Israel and lead them on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

“When my Father thought to send me to this earth, He sent before me His angel, she who is called Mary, my mother, that she might receive me through the Holy Spirit. And when I descended, I entered and came forth through her ear. Now Satan, the prince of this world, knew that I was come to seek and ‘to save that which was lost’; and he sent his angel, the prophet Elijah, who baptized in water and was called John the Baptist. Now, Elijah asked the prince of this world how he might recognize Me. And the devil said to him, ‘Upon whom you see the Holy Spirit descending as a dove, and remaining upon Him, He it is that baptizes in the Holy Spirit and with fire.’ John asked this because he did not know me, but the one who sent him to baptize in water, he revealed me. John himself gave testimony: ‘I baptize in water unto penance, but He baptizes you with the Holy Spirit unto the remission of sins. He it is who is able to destroy and to save.’”

And again I, John, questioned the Lord, “Can man be saved through the baptism of John?” He replied: “Without my baptism, with which I baptize unto the remission of sins, I affirm that no one can receive salvation in God. For I am the bread of life that came down from the seventh heaven, wherefore whoso eats my flesh and drinks my blood, these shall be called the children of God.”

I inquired of the Lord, “What is the meaning of your ‘flesh’ and your ‘blood’?” To me the Lord answered: “Before the devil had Fallen with all the angelic host of the Father, the angels in their prayers glorified my Father by repeating this prayer, ‘Our Father who art in heaven.’ This chant ascended to the throne of the Father; but the angels from the time of their Fall could no longer glorify
God in this prayer."

And again I asked the Lord, "How is it that the whole world received the baptism of John, but yours is not accepted by all?" The Lord replied to me: "That is because their works are evil and they come not to the light. The followers of John marry and are given in marriage, whereas my disciples marry not at all but remain as the angels of God in the heavenly kingdom."

Then I said to Him, "If it is a sin to have knowledge of women, is it then unwise to marry?" And the Lord replied: "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who were born so from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made so by men; and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven."

Afterward, I questioned the Lord about the Day of Judgment, "What shall be the sign of your Coming?" In reply He said: "When the number of the just shall equal the number of those crowned angels who fell. Then shall Satan, raging mightily, be ‘loosed out of his prison.’ He shall war upon the just, who shall cry out to the Lord their God; forthwith the Lord God shall command the archangel to sound his trumpet, and the voice of the archangel shall go forth from the heavens and be heard even unto the nether regions. Then ‘the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall Fall from heaven. ’ And there shall be loosed from their foundations the four great winds; the earth, the sea, the mountains, and the hills shall tremble together. Then shall be revealed the sign of the Son, and all tribes of earth shall mourn. Immediately the heaven shall tremble and be darkened, the sun shall shine until the ninth hour. Then shall the Son of man be shown forth in his glory, and all the saints and angels with Him; they shall place, their seats above the clouds. And He shall sit upon the seat of His glory, with the twelve apostles upon their twelve seats of glory. The books shall be opened, and all the peoples of the earth shall be judged. Then shall the faith be proclaimed. Then shall the Son of man send forth His angels. They shall gather His elect from the heights even to the uttermost limits of the heavens and shall bring them, gathered into their fold, to me above the clouds, into the air. Then shall the Son of God send forth the evil demons and expel them in His wrath, together with all peoples who believed in him Satan . . . who said, ‘Let us eat, drink, and lay hold on the things of this world’; and let us see what manner of aid they shall have from those things. Forthwith all peoples shall stand in fear before the judgment throne. The two books shall be opened and they shall lay bare all peoples with their teaching; they shall glorify the just for their sufferings joined with good works. Glory and boundless honor shall be the reward of those who have cherished the angelic life; while the portion of the servants of iniquity shall be wrath, fury, distress, and displeasure. And the Son of man shall separate His just from the company of sinners and shall say to them, ‘Come, you blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’; while to the sinful He shall say, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.’ Others shall witness the final division and ‘the wicked shall be turned into hell.’ By the indulgence of my Father the unbelieving spirits shall at length withdraw from prison; ‘they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.’

“Then, by permission of my Father, gloomy darkness shall spread over the lower regions of the earth and a hell of fire shall burn all the land from its lowest depths even unto the air of the firmament. And the Lord shall be supreme in the firmament even unto the nether regions of the earth. Should a man of thirty years pick up a stone and let it drop, it would scarcely strike the bottom within the space of three years, so great is the depth of the pool of fire wherein dwell the sinners. Then Satan shall be bound and all his host, and he shall be cast into the pool of fire. The Son of God, with his elect, shall walk above the firmament; and He shall shut up the devil, binding him with unbreakable bonds, with sinners weeping, wailing, and crying out ‘Swallow us up, O land, hide us within yourself. Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. And Jesus shall lead them before the throne of the Father invisible and shall say to the Father, ‘Behold, I and my
children, whom God has given me. Just Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you in truth because you have sent me.’ And then the Father will reply to His Son, saying, ‘My beloved Son, sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool—thy enemies, who have denied me and said, ‘We are gods, and there is no other god beside us’; who killed your prophets and persecuted your just. You shall persecute them in the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

‘And then the Son of God shall sit on the right hand of his Father, and the Father shall command His angels that they minister unto them the just; and He shall place them in the choir of angels and clothe them in imperishable raiment; and He shall give them crowns never fading and seats unmoving. And God shall be in their midst. ‘They shall no more hunger nor thirst; neither shall the sun Fall on them, nor any heat. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.’ And the Son shall reign with his Holy Father, and his reign shall endure forevermore.”

The Catharist Rituals

The act of central importance in the religious life of the Cathars was the Consolamentum, a spiritual baptism received on admission to the true (Cathar) Church of Christ. The reception of the Consolamentum made one a “perfect.” When “perfected” Cathars imposed their hands on the body of the initiate while the Cathar Gospel book was held over his head, their prayers were believed to win him forgiveness for the sin committed at the Fall from heaven, as well as for his transgressions in this earthly life. Released from the power of the evil god, his soul would regain its guiding spirit and would find the way of return to its heavenly home. It was not easy to attain this consecrated state nor to follow the way of life required during the remaining bodily existence on earth.

Before being “perfected,” a Cathar believer had to undergo a period of probation, normally at least a year, during which he was instructed in the faith and disciplined in a life of rigorous asceticism. When the postulant was judged ready, the right and obligation of saying the Lord’s Prayer was conveyed to him in a short ceremony, in which he was instructed in the tradition of prayer as it was declared to have descended from the apostles. This preliminary rite brought him to the Church; he might then proceed, either at once or after further probation, to the Consolamentum, which would effect the complete spiritual transformation.

Thereafter, the Christian renounced the material world and accepted a strict moral and ethical code. His life was to be spent in imitation of the apostles. He was to return good for evil in every circumstance and suffer without retaliation the persecution which must be endured by every true follower of Christ. To kill, to lie, to take an oath was to commit mortal sin. Sexual relationships which would reproduce the bodies of this world were forbidden. Meat, eggs, and cheese, as products of coition, must not be used. Obeying these injunctions, the Cathar was assured that on the death of his body his soul would be released from its material prison and would find salvation.

In addition to the important ceremonies described above, other occasions for personal prayer and public worship marked the daily life of the Cathars. Summary descriptions of all these religious practices are plentiful in Catholic sources, but the two documents translated here give the rituals as used in the thirteenth century. One was written in Latin and is judged to have been composed in the second quarter of the thirteenth century in Italy. The writer had before him, and on occasion followed closely, a document written in Provençal, which influenced his Latin style. Later, some other hand interpolated a special interpretation of the phrase “supersubstantial bread.” The other ritual was written in Provençal in a manuscript of the Bible in that language, perhaps as late
as 1280, but this ritual may well represent early Catharist practice more closely than does the Latin version.

It adds to the two major ceremonies the formulas for the monthly confession called the Service and for the baptism of an invalid, together with certain rules of conduct. Between the Latin and Provençal texts there are minor differences in the phrasing of invocations, the sequence of actions, and the titles given to the presiding officials. Other, more significant differences are that in the Latin version the believer is instructed not to scorn his earlier baptism in the Roman faith, even though it was insufficient for salvation—no hint of this instruction appears in the Provençal text—and he promises more emphatically to live in obedience to the Church.

At the beginning of the ritual in Provençal is found a group of invocations and blessings, together with the Lord’s Prayer and the opening of the Gospel of John (1:1–17), all written in Latin. This may be only a catalogue of the formal phrases which are many times repeated, always in Latin, during the religious ceremonies described in the following parts of the ritual. While not insisting that this passage actually constitutes a separate ceremony, it is referred to here as Phrases for Worship.

The Service, described only in the Provençal ritual, was a monthly gathering for confession by the Perfect. Catholic sources usually refer to it as the Apparellamentum. The word “Service” is applied in the Latin ritual to acts at the close of the more important ceremonies and designates a short sequence of confession and prayer, the equivalent of The Double, described below.

The ministrants of the Prayer and the Consolamentum have different titles in the two documents. In the Provençal, the minister is called “the elder” (l’ancia) and is assisted by “one of the Good Men,” that is, by another perfected Cathar. In the Latin ritual, the presiding Cathar is the ordinatus, which we render in English as “prior”; and his assistant has the title of “elder” (ancianus). The sponsor who presented the postulant, and who probably was the Perfect in charge of the hospice where the believer spent his probationary term, is also called an elder in the Provençal text. Any Cathar who had not been disqualified by sin was able to minister the Consolamentum to a believer (at least two persons acting together were normally required), but it was primarily a function of the bishop, his sons, or the deacons: the three ranks of the Cathar hierarchy. In their absence, the ministry fell to those who had been perfected Cathars for the longest period of time.

The Melioramentum was the common form of greeting by believers to the Perfect at any time and, with certain changes of phrasing, was the manner in which one Cathar greeted another. It finds a place in the rituals as the formal salutation and leave-taking at the beginning and the end of the ceremonies. The Melioramentum consisted of saying three times, “Bless us; have mercy upon us,” accompanying each request with a prostration or genuflection, and following these with a plea that good be done to the believer. This was known as “worshiping the perfect”—because the perfect was considered to be on the way merging back into the Good God. “Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” was a phrase repeated almost as frequently as “Bless us; have mercy upon us”; it was said several times before and after the Lord’s Prayer and at numerous other moments. Sometimes it is indicated in the rituals only by the first word (Let us adore).

The Pardon was a formal exchange in which the presiding officials and the congregation asked forgiveness of their sins. They did so at the start of the ceremonies and at their conclusion. Just before receiving the Consolamentum, the believer also participated in the Pardon. The Latin and Provençal texts both prescribe much the same sequence of words and actions: the phrase “Bless us, etc.” thrice repeated by the congregation or the believer with genuflections, followed by “May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit forgive us (me) all our (my) sins. Let it be done unto us according to your word.” The reply of the ministrant was to repeat the request for forgiveness from God.
The Grace was the familiar invocation: “May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

The Act of Peace was performed at the end of the ceremony. Male heretics saluted each other with an embrace and a kiss on each cheek; women kissed the Gospel and each other, sometimes the shoulder or elbow of a man. Believers also shared in these acts.

Special terms designate multiple repetitions of the Lord’s Prayer. The Six of the Provençal ritual entailed six repetitions of the Lord’s Prayer, as is shown by comparison with the Latin text. The Double, which concluded major ceremonies, consisted of sixteen repetitions of the Prayer, accompanied by genuflections. The Double was also performed in private prayer and at the end of the day, though on occasion The Single could take its place.

THE RITUAL TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN TEXT

circa 1240–1250

The Ministration of the Holy Prayer

The ministrant is addressing the initiate: “‘The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For he that did prevail has failed, the scorner is consumed, and they are all cut off that watched for iniquity, that made men sin by word and supplanted him that reproved them in the gate.’”

On Compassion for the People.—“Thus, by virtue of these and many other proofs, is the understanding given that the Holy Father desires to have compassion on His people and to receive them into His peace and concord through the advent of His Son, Jesus Christ. This, then, is the reason why you are here in the presence of the disciples of Jesus Christ, where spiritually dwell the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as was previously disclosed: that you may become worthy to receive this Holy Prayer which the Lord Jesus Christ gave to His disciples, so that your supplications and prayers may be heard by our Most Holy Father, as David says, ‘Let my prayer be directed as incense in your sight.’”

On Receiving the Holy Prayer.—“Thus, you should know how you ought to receive this Holy Prayer, that is, ‘Our Father.’ The Prayer indeed is brief but it includes a great deal. He who should recite ‘Our Father,’ then must honor Him with good works. The Son is called ‘love of the Father’; hence, he who desires to be a son by inheritance keeps himself absolutely from evil deeds.

“The phrase ‘Our Father’ is an invocation, as though one were saying: O Father of those only who are to achieve salvation.

“‘Who art in heaven,’ that is, who dwells in the saints or in the heavenly powers. And, indeed, for that reason one says ‘Our Father who art in heaven’ to distinguish Him from the father of the devil, who is a liar and the father of the evil ones, namely, those who are utterly deprived of the mercy of salvation. And thus we say ‘Our Father!’

“‘Hallowed be your name.’ By the ‘name’ of God is meant the law of Christ, as if one were to say: May your law be confirmed in your people.

“‘Thy kingdom come.’ By the ‘kingdom’ of God is meant Christ, just as Christ says in the Gospel, ‘For lo, the kingdom of God is within you.’ Or, by the ‘kingdom’ of God is meant the people of God who are to achieve salvation, as if one were to say: Lord, lead your people out of the land of the enemy. Thus, the prophet Joel says: ‘Between the porch and the altar the priests, the Lord’s ministers, shall weep and shall say, “Spare, O Lord, spare your people and give not your inheritance
to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. Why should they say among the nations: Where is their God?’” And for that reason, Christians daily pray to their most benevolent God for the salvation of the people of God.

“‘Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven’; as though one were saying: So let your will be done in this people who cling to an earthly nature as it is done in the higher kingdom or in Christ, who says, ‘I came not to do my own will but the will of him that sent me, the Father.’

“‘Our supersubstantial bread.’ By ‘supersubstantial bread’ is meant the law of Christ which was laid upon the whole people. Isaiah, we believe, says of this bread: ‘And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, “We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by your name.”’ And David says: ‘I am smitten as grass and my heart is withered because I forgot to eat my bread.’ And in the Book of Wisdom it is written: ‘You feed you people with the food of angels and gave them bread from heaven prepared without labor, having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste. For your sustenance showed your sweetness to your children and, serving every man’s will, it was turned to what every man liked.’ And through Isaiah the Lord says: ‘Deal your bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harborless into your house; when you see one naked, cover him, and despise not your own flesh.’ Of this bread, we believe, Jeremiah says in Lamentations, ‘The little ones have asked for bread and there was none to break it unto them.’ And Christ says to the Jews in the Gospel of John: ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ And again, ‘I am the bread of life’—that is, I have the commandments of life. ‘He that comes to me shall not hunger, and he that believes in me shall never thirst.’ And again: ‘Amen, amen, I say unto you, he that believes in me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread’—that is, if any man shall keep my commandments—he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give to him is my flesh, for the life of the world’—that is, of the people. ‘The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat”’—as if one were to say: It was a question among the Jewish people just how Christ could give them His commandments to be kept, for they did not know the divinity of the Son of God. ‘Then Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say unto you; except you eat the flesh of the Son of man”’—that is, unless you keep the commandments of the Son of God—’and drink his blood’—that is, unless you accept the spiritual intent of the New Testament—‘you shall not have life in you. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the Last Day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.’” Elsewhere Christ says: ‘My meat is to do the will of my Father who sent me, that I may perfect his work’; and again, ‘He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, abides in me, and I in him.’” I Truly, therefore, false priests eat not the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ nor drink His blood, because they abide not in the Lord Jesus. Accordingly, the Blessed John says in his first Epistle: ‘But he that keeps His word, in him in very deed the charity of God is perfected, and by this we know that we are in Him. He that says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked.’

“Of this bread, we believe, is it written in the Gospel of the Blessed Matthew: ‘And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread I—that is, the spiritual commandments of the Law and the prophets—’and blessed’—that is, He praised and confirmed them—and broke’—that is, He expounded them spiritually—and gave to his disciples’—that is, He instructed them to keep them spiritually—and said, “Take ye’”—that is, keep them”—“and eat”—that is, preach to others. (Hence, it was said to the Blessed John the Evangelist, ‘Take the book, and eat it up,’ and so forth; ‘and he the angel said to me, “You must prophesy again to many nations, and peoples, and tongues, and kings.”’) ‘This is my body’—here He says of the bread, ‘This is my body’; earlier He said, ‘And
the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.’ He said, as we believe, ‘This is my body’ (or my flesh) in reference to the commandments of the Law and the prophets interpreted in a spiritual sense, as though He were saying: There am I, there dwell I. Therefore, the Apostle in the first Epistle to the Corinthians says: ‘The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread’ and of one chalice, that is, of one spiritual meaning of the Law, the prophets, and the New Testament. And again: ‘For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread and, giving thanks, broke, and said, “Take ye, and eat; this is my body, which shall be delivered for you”’—as though He were saying: These spiritual commandments of the Old Testament are my body, which for you is given unto the people. ‘This do for the commemoration of me.’ In like manner also the chalice, after He had supped, saying, ‘This chalice is the new testament in my blood. This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me.’” Herein is the understanding of ‘supersubstantial bread.’

“Then follows, ‘Give us this day’—that is, in this time of grace, or while we are in this temporal life, give us your power, that we may be worthy to fulfill the law of your Son, Jesus Christ.

“‘And forgive us our debts’—that is, charge not against us, who seek to observe the commandments of your Son, our sins of commission or omission.

“‘As we forgive our debtors’—that is, as we forgive them that persecute and do evil unto us.

“‘And lead us not into temptation’—that is, permit us not, after we undertake to keep your law, to be led further into temptation. For, truly, there is a carnal temptation and a diabolical temptation. The diabolical is that which proceeds from the heart and the prompting of the devil, for example, sin, evil thoughts, hatred, and the like. The carnal is that which springs from human nature, such as hunger, thirst, cold, and the like; these we cannot avoid. Whence the Apostle says, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: ‘Let no temptation take hold on you but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.’

“‘But deliver us from evil,’ that is, from the devil, who is the tempter of the faithful, and from his works.

“‘For Thine is the kingdom.’ This phrase is said to be in the Greek and Hebrew texts, as though one were saying: For this is the reason why you may do unto us that for which we pray, for we are your people.

“‘And the power,’ as though one were saying: You have the power to bring us to salvation.

“‘And the glory’—that is, praise and honor is yours, if this you do unto your people.

“‘Forever,’ that is, over divinely created beings.

“‘Amen,’ that is, without fail.

“Now, you must understand, if you would receive this prayer, that it is needful for you to repent of all your sins and to forgive all men, for in the Gospel Christ says, ‘But if you will not forgive men their sins, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.’ Also, it behooves you to resolve in your heart that, if God grants you the grace to receive it, you will keep this holy prayer throughout your whole lifetime, according to the usage of the Church of God, in obedience and chastity, and in all other good virtues which God shall deign to grant unto you. Wherefore we pray the good Lord, who granted unto the disciples of Jesus Christ the power to receive this prayer with steadfastness, that He grant unto you the strength to receive it with steadfastness to His honor and your salvation. Have mercy upon us.”

Then let the prior take the Book from the hands of the believer and say, “John” (if he is so named), “is it your will to receive this holy prayer as it has been expounded and to keep it throughout your whole lifetime, in chastity, truth, and humility, and in all other good virtues which God may
deign to grant unto you?”

And let the believer answer: “Yes, it is. Pray to the Holy Father that He grant His strength unto me.”

And let the prior say, “May God grant you the grace to receive it to His honor and your salvation.”

On the Ministry of the Church.—Then let the prior say to the believer, “Say the Prayer with me, word for word, and say the Pardon as this man says it.” And let the believer repeat the words of him who stands beside the prior. Then let the prior begin the Pardon. Thereafter, let him say the Prayer as is the custom. When the Prayer and Grace are finished, let the believer say with an obeisance before the prior, “Bless us; have mercy upon us. Amen. Let it be done unto us, Lord, according to your word.”

And let the prior say, “May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit forgive all your sins.”

And let the believer then rise. Let the prior say: “From God and from us, from the Church and its holy order, and from its holy commandments and disciples, may you have the power to say this prayer at your food and drink, by day and night, alone and in company, as is the custom of the Church of Jesus Christ; and you must never eat or drink without this prayer. If you are in default in this, something which you will announce to the prior of the Church as soon as you can, you shall bear that penance which he chooses to lay upon you. May the true Lord God give you the grace to keep this, to His honor and your salvation.”

Then let the believer make three obeisances, saying: “Bless us, bless us, bless us; have mercy upon us. May the Lord God render you rich reward for this good thing which you have done unto me for the love of God.”

Then if the believer is not to be consoled, it is in order to undertake the Service and to proceed to the Peace.

The Ministration of the Consolamentum

If the believer is to receive the consolamentum immediately after he has received the Prayer, then this believer should approach, accompanied by the one who is the elder of his house. They should make three obeisances before the prior and pray for the good of this believer. This done, the prior and the Christian men and women should say seven prayers to God, asking that the prior be heard; and when this has been done, let the prior say: “Brothers and sisters, if I have said or done anything against God and my salvation, pray to the Lord God for me, that He have mercy upon me.”

And let the elder who stands beside the prior say, “May the Holy Father, just, true, and merciful, Who in heaven and on earth has the power to forgive sins, forgive you and have mercy on all your sins in this world, and in the future may He have pity on you.”

Then let the prior say, “Amen. Let it be done unto us, Lord, according to your word.”

Then let all the Christian men and women make three obeisances, saying: “Bless us, bless us, bless us; have mercy upon us. If we have said or done anything against God and our salvation, pray to the God of mercy that He have pity on us. Bless us; have mercy upon us.”

And let the prior answer: “May the Holy Father, just, true, and merciful,” and so on, just as was said earlier.

On Accepting the Book.—When this has been done, let the prior arrange a table before himself. Then let the believer approach the prior and take the Book from the hands of the prior with three obeisances, as he did at the ministration of the Prayer, as set forth above.

Then let the prior say: “John, is it your will to receive the spiritual baptism of Jesus Christ
and pardon for your sins, through the supplications of good Christians, together with the imposition of hands, and to keep this throughout your whole lifetime in chastity and in humility, and in all other exemplary virtues which God may deign to grant unto you?”

And let the believer answer: “Yes, it is. Pray God to grant His strength unto me.”

Let the prior say: “May God grant you the grace to receive it to His honor and to your salvation.”

On the Sermon by the Prior.—Then let the prior begin to preach in this way, if he so chooses:

“O John, you must understand that now, for a second time, you come before God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit as you come before the Church of God, as was disclosed previously through the Scriptures, and you must understand that you are in the presence of the Church of God to receive pardon for your sins, through the supplications of good Christians, together with the imposition of hands. This is called the spiritual baptism of Jesus Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit as John the Baptist says, ‘I indeed baptize you in water unto penance, but He that shall come after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire’—that is, He will wash and cleanse you in spiritual understanding and good works. By this baptism is meant the spiritual rebirth of which Christ said to Nicodemus, ‘Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ Baptism means a laving or ‘super-baptism.’ Now, one must understand that Christ did not come to wash the filth of the flesh, but to cleanse the filth of God’s souls that have been soiled by contact with evil spirits. Thus, God said to the people of Israel through the prophet Baruch: ‘Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life; give ear, that you may learn wisdom. How happens it, O Israel, that you are in your enemies’ land? You have grown old in a strange country, you are defiled with the dead, you are counted with them that go down into hell! You have forgotten the fountain of life and of wisdom, for if you had walked in the way of God, you had surely dwelt in peace forever.’ And David says: ‘O God, the heathens are come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have made Jerusalem as a place to keep fruit.’” And in this way have the people of God been defiled by contact with evil spirits. Whence it has pleased the Most Holy Father to wash His people of the filth of sins through the baptism of His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Blessed Apostle says to the Ephesians: ‘Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the bath of water in the word of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.’

“And so, through the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Most Holy Father, the disciples of Jesus Christ were cleansed of the filth of their sins by His spiritual baptism. They received strength and authority from the Lord Jesus Christ, as He had received it from His Most Holy Father, so that they too might cleanse other sinners through His baptism. Thus, in the Gospel of the Blessed John one finds the words of Jesus Christ to His disciples after His resurrection: “As the Father has sent me, I also send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them, and he said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”, And in the Gospel of the Blessed Matthew, He says to His disciples: ‘Amen, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father who is in heaven.’ And again: “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” But they said, “Some John the Baptist, and some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Jesus said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answering, said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-
Jona, because flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven”—to you on behalf of all. “And whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.” And again, He says to His disciples: ‘Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.’ And again: ‘The eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And seeing Him, they adored; but some doubted. And Jesus, coming, spoke to them, saying, “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”’

“No wise man believes that the Church of Jesus Christ performs this baptism by imposition of hands without manifest proof from Scripture nor imagines that the Church of God performs this consecration out of the presumption and human intuition of its members or by unknown and unseen inspiration of spirits. No, the disciples of Jesus Christ actually went forth and stood with the Lord Jesus Christ, and they received from Him the authority to baptize and to forgive sins. So today do true Christians, who, as heirs of the disciples, in due order received from the Church of God the power actually to perform this baptism of the imposition of hands and to forgive sins. For it is plainly found in the New Testament Scriptures that after His ascension the disciples of Jesus Christ actually employed this ministry of the imposition of hands, as is clearly discussed in the Scriptures. In the Acts of the Apostles, it is written: ‘Now when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for He was not as yet come upon any of them, but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit.’ And again: ‘And it came to pass while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples. And he said to them, “Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?” But they said to him, “In what then were you baptized?” Who said, “In John’s baptism.” Then Paul said, “John baptized the people with the baptism of penance, saying that they should believe in Him who was to come after him, that is to say, in Jesus.” Having heard these things, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.’ And in the same book, Christ says to Ananias, ‘Arise, and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus. For behold he prays. (And he saw a man named Ananias coming in, and putting hands upon him, that he might receive his sight),’ and so forth. ‘And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house. And laying his hands upon him, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus has sent me, He that appeared to you in the way as you came, that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales and he received his sight, and rising up, he was baptized. And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened.’ And again: ‘And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux; to whom Paul entered in, and when he had prayed and laid his hands on him, he healed him.’ And to Timothy, the Apostle says, ‘For which cause I admonish you that you stir up the grace of God which is in you by the imposition of my hands’; and again, ‘Impose not hands lightly upon..."
any man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins.’ And to the Hebrews, the same Apostle speaks ‘of
the doctrine of baptisms and imposition of hands.’

‘And of this baptism the Blessed Peter, we believe, says in the first Epistle: ‘In the days of
Noah, when the ark was a building, wherein a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. Whereunto baptism being of the like form now saves you also, not the putting away of the filth of
the flesh but the examination of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’
But this ought to be pondered to some extent, because those who were saved in Noah’s ark,
according to the story in the Old Testament, had not really been saved, as it seems, because it is
found that Noah, with his sons, wives, and the living things, went out from the ark of his God and
planted a vineyard, drank wine, and was made drunk, fell down, and showed his shame. He cursed
his son, Canaan, saying, ‘Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be unto his brethren’—he
who was one of those saved from the ark. It is also found in the Old Testament that those who went
out from that ark and their descendants committed many and most shameful misdeeds, and afterward
they endured great want and severe hardships, with the result that they killed each other. Therefore,
we believe that the Blessed Peter spoke not of that Noah of the Old Testament nor of that ark, but
spoke of the ark of the testament which the Lord made for the salvation of His people of which the
Apostle says to the Hebrews: ‘By faith Noah, having received an answer concerning those things
which as yet were not seen, moved with fear, framed the ark for the saving of his house; by the which
he condemned the world and was instituted heir of the justice which is by faith.’ And Jesus the son
of Sirach says: ‘Noah was found perfect and in the time of wrath he was made a reconciliation.
Therefore was there a remnant left to the earth when the flood came. The covenants of the world
were made with him, that all flesh should no more be destroyed with the flood.’ And of this Noah
the Blessed Peter spoke in the second Epistle, we believe: ‘And spared not the original world, but
preserved Noah, the eighth person, the preacher of justice, bringing in the flood upon the world of
the ungodly.’ What is here expressed is that the Holy Father granted the Law and the Old Testament
unto His people. All those who entered into that ark—that is to say, all who have kept to that
testament—have been saved. And so, too, will be saved all who enter into the ark of the New
Testament and remain therein.

With regard to this, well could the Blessed Peter say, ‘Whereunto baptism being of the like
form now saves you’ as though he were saying: Just as those had been saved through that
dispensations, even so through the baptism of Jesus Christ, Christians are saved by a like form. With
this agrees what the prophet David says, ‘For God is our king before ages; he has wrought salvation
in the midst of the earth.’ And Jeremiah says, ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are
not saved.’ And of Christ the Apostle says to the Hebrews: ‘For it became Him for whom are all
things and by whom are all things, who had brought many children into glory, to perfect the author
of their salvation by His passion.’ And the Blessed Peter says: ‘Not the putting away of the filth of
the flesh saves us, but the examination of a good conscience toward God,’ as though he were saying:
Without this baptism we cannot be saved through the works of the Church, that is, without the
examination of a good conscience which is made toward God by the ministers of Christ. So the
Apostle says, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: ‘And I show unto you yet a more excellent way.
If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding
brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries; and all
knowledge, and if I should have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I
am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body
to be burned, and have not charity, it profits me nothing.’ This means that nothing avails without this
baptism of the spirit of charity. True Christians, then, taught by the primitive Church, actually
perform this ministry of the imposition of hands without which, we believe, no one can be saved.’
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On Reception of the Spiritual Baptism.—“Accordingly, you must understand that this is the reason for your presence here before the Church of Jesus Christ: It is the occasion of your receiving this holy baptism of the imposition of hands and receiving pardon for your sins by the examination of a good conscience which is made toward God by good Christians. Therefore, you should know that even as you are in the temporal sense in the presence of the Church of God, where spiritually dwell the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so spiritually you should be with your soul in the presence of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, prepared to receive this holy consecration of Jesus Christ. And even as you took into your hands the Book, in which are written the commandments, the precepts, and the admonitions of Christ, so, spiritually, you must admit the law of Christ into the works of your soul, to keep it throughout your whole lifetime, as is written: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’

“Consequently, you must understand how necessary it is that you love God in truth, in kindliness, in humility, in mercy, in chastity, and in other exemplary virtues, since it is written: ‘Chastity makes a man near to God; in like manner, however, corruption draws him away’; and again, ‘Chastity and virginity brings near to the angels.’ And Solomon says, ‘Incorruption brings near to God.’

“Also, you must understand how necessary it is that you be faithful and lawful in things of the world and in things of the spirit, for if you have not been faithful in worldly things we do not believe that you can be faithful in things spiritual, nor do we believe that you can attain salvation, for the Apostle says, ‘Nor thieves shall possess the kingdom of God.’ Then, too, you must make this commitment and promise to God: that you will never commit murder, adultery, or theft, open or secret, nor will you, of your own will, on any occasion, not even in matters of life and death, take an oath. For David says, ‘I will pay my vows to the Lord before all his people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.’ Moreover, you will make this commitment to God: that you will never, knowingly or of your own will, eat cheese, milk, the flesh of birds, of creeping things, or of animals, prohibited by the Church of God.

“Also, through the righteousness of Christ, it behooves you to endure hunger, thirst, dissension, persecution, and death; all these will you endure for the love of God and for your salvation.

“Also you must promise that you will, to the best of your ability, be obedient to God and to the Church, at the will of God and his Church, and that you will never put aside this gift of spiritual baptism—if the Lord shall grant unto you the grace to receive it—because of anything that may befall you, for the Apostle says to the Hebrews, ‘We are not the children of withdrawing unto perdition, but of faith to the saving of the soul.’ And again, in his second Epistle to Timothy, he says, ‘No man being a soldier to God entangles himself with secular businesses, that he may please Him to whom he has engaged himself.’ And in the Gospel of Luke Christ says, ‘No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.’ And Jesus the son of Sirach says: ‘He that washes himself after touching the dead, if he touches him again, what doth his washing avail? So a man that fasts for his sins and doth the same again, what doth his humbling himself profit him? Who will hear his prayer?’ And the Blessed Peter says in his second Epistle: ‘For if, flying from the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them and overcome, their latter state is become unto them worse than their former. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice than, after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb has happened to them: The dog is returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.’

“From this you must understand that if you shall receive this gift of God, it behooves you to
hold it in purity of heart and mind throughout your whole lifetime.

“Also, let no one conclude that through this baptism, which you receive in understanding, you disdain the other baptism—either Christian observance or any good thing which you have done or said up to the present moment; on the other hand, you must understand that it is fitting for you to receive this holy consecration of Christ as a supplement to that which was insufficient for your salvation.

“Now may the true Lord God grant you grace to receive this good, to His honor and your salvation. Have mercy upon us.”

On the Ceremony of the Consolamentum.—Then let the prior take the Book from the hands of the believer and say: “John” (if he be so named), “is it your will to receive this holy baptism of Jesus Christ as it has been explained and to hold it in purity of heart and mind throughout your whole lifetime and not to fail in it for any reason?”

And let John answer: “Yes, it is. Pray to the good Lord for me, to give me His grace.”

And let the prior say, “May the true Lord God grant you the grace to receive this gift, to His honor and to your good.”

Then let the believer stand, make an obeisance before the prior, and let him repeat the words of the elder who stands beside the prior, saying: “I come to God, to you, to the Church, and to your holy order to receive pardon and mercy for all my sins which were committed or given effect in me at any time up to this moment. Pray to God for me that He forgive me. Bless us; have mercy upon us.”

Then let the prior answer: “From God, from us, from the Church, from its holy order, and from its holy commandments and disciples, may you receive pardon and mercy for all the sins committed or given effect in you at any time up to this moment. May the Lord God of mercy forgive you and lead you to eternal life.”

And let the believer say, “Amen. Let it be done unto us, Lord, according to your word.”

Then let the believer, rising, place his hands on the table which stands before the prior, and let the prior hold the Book upon the believer’s head, and let all the other consecrated persons and Christians who are present place their right hands upon him. And let the prior say, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

And let him who is beside the prior say “Amen,” and let all the others repeat it aloud.

Then let the prior say: “Bless us; have mercy upon us. Let it be done unto us, Lord, according to your word. May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit forgive you and have mercy on all your sins. Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Holy Father, just, true, and merciful, forgive your servant, receive him into your righteousness. ‘Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,’ and so on. Let him repeat the Lord’s Prayer five times aloud and then “Let us adore,” thrice. And afterward, let him say the Lord’s Prayer once and then “Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” thrice. And then, “In the beginning was the Word,” and so on. When the Gospel has been read, let him thrice say “Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” and then one Prayer. Then let him say “Let us adore” thrice and proceed to the Grace. And let the Christian kiss the Book and thereafter make three obeisances, saying: “Bless us, bless us, bless us; have mercy upon us. May God render you rich reward for this good thing which you have done unto me for the love of God.”

Then let the consecrated persons, the Christian men and women, receive the Service, as is the, usage of the Church.

Let all good Christians pray to God on behalf of him who wrote these instructions. Amen. Thanks be to God.
Phrases for Worship

Bless us; have mercy upon us. Amen. Let it be done unto us according to your word. May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit forgive all your sins. Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Three times.)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our supersubstantial bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Three times.) May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Bless us; have mercy upon us. Let it be done unto us according to your word. May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit forgive you all your sins.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing. What was made in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shins in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but was to give testimony of the light. That was the true light, which enlightens every man that comes into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name; who are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bears witness of Him, and cries out, saying, “This was He of whom I spoke. He that shall come after me is preferred before me, because He was before me. And of His fullness we all have received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

The Service

We have come before God and before you and before the order of the Holy Church to receive the Service, pardon and penance for all our sins which we have committed in speech or thought, or effected from our birth to this moment. We ask mercy of God and of you, that you pray for us to the Holy Father of mercy to pardon us.

Let us adore God and acknowledge all our sins and our many grave offenses toward the Father, the Son, and the honored Holy Spirit, the honored Holy Gospels, and the honored holy apostles; by prayer and faith and by the salvation of all righteous, glorious Christians, and of blessed ancestors at rest, and of brothers here present, and we do so before you, Holy Lord, in order that you may forgive us for all wherein we have sinned. Bless us; have mercy upon us.

For many are our sins wherein we offend every day, night and day, in word, in deed, and by thought, voluntarily and involuntarily, and more by our will which evil spirits arouse in us, in the flesh in which we are clothed. Bless us; have mercy upon us.

But, whereas the holy word of God teaches us, in the same way that the holy apostles and our spiritual brothers declare unto us, that we should put aside every desire of the flesh and every
impurity, and that we should do the will of God by accomplishing perfect good, yet we, lax servants, not only do not the will of God as is fitting but more often we fulfill the desires of the flesh and the concerns of the world, thus doing harm to our souls. **Bless us, have mercy upon us.**

We go among worldly people, we mingle, talk, and eat with them, and thus we sin in many things so that we harm our brothers and our souls. **Bless us; have mercy upon us.**

With our tongues we fall into idle words, into vain conversations, into laughter, into mockeries and malicious acts, into detraction of brothers and sisters whom we are unworthy to judge, nor are we worthy to condemn their offenses. Among Christians we are sinners. **Bless us; have mercy upon us.**

The Service which we have received we have not kept as we should, neither the fast nor the Prayer. We have transgressed our days, we have betrayed our hours. While we are at holy prayer our minds turn away to carnal desires, to worldly concerns, wherefore in that hour we scarcely know what thing we offer to the Father of the Just. **Bless us; have mercy upon us.**

O Holy and Good Lord, we confess to you all those things which have befallen us, in our senses and in our thought, and all the multitude of our sins we place on the mercy of God and on the Holy Prayer and on the Holy Gospel, for many are our sins. **Bless us; have mercy upon us.**

O Lord, judge and condemn the imperfections of the flesh. Have no pity on the flesh, born of corruption, but show mercy to the spirit which is imprisoned. Direct for us the days, the hours, and the obeisances, the fasts, the prayers, and the preachings, as is the custom of Good Christians, that we be not judged or condemned among felons at the Day of Judgment. **Bless us; have mercy upon us.**

*The Ministration of the Prayer*

If a believer is in abstinence and if the Christians are agreed to administer the Prayer to him, let them wash their hands, and the believers likewise, if there be any. Then let one of the Good Men, he who stands next to the elder, make three obeisances to the elder. Then let him prepare a table, making three obeisances thereafter. And let him put a cloth on the table and make three more obeisances. And let him put the Book on the cloth. Then let him say, **Bless us; have mercy upon us.** And let the believer make his melioramentum and take the Book from the hand of the elder. And the elder should exhort him and preach to him with suitable scriptural verses. And if the believer is named Peter, let him speak to him thus:

“Peter, you must understand that when you are before the Church of God you are in the presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For the Church signifies a gathering together, and where there are true Christians, there are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as the divine Scriptures attest. For Christ has said in the Gospel of St. Matthew: ‘Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them’; and in the Gospel of St. John, He says, ‘If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him,’ And St. Paul says in the second Epistle to the Corinthians: ‘You are the temple of the living God; as God said through Isaiah, “I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”’ Wherefore, “Go out from among them, and be separate,” said the Lord, “and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, said the Lord Almighty.”’ And in another place, he Paul says, ‘Do you seek a proof of Christ that speaks in me?” And in the first Epistle to Timothy, he says: ‘These things I write to you, hoping that I shall come to you shortly but, if I tarry long, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.’ And the same Apostle says to the Hebrews, ‘But Christ is as the Son in his own house, which house are we.’
“Let the Spirit of God be with the faithful of Jesus Christ. Christ so declares in the Gospel of St. John: ‘If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever, the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not nor knows Him; but you shall know Him, because He shall abide with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.’ And in the Gospel of St. Matthew, He says, ‘Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.’ And St. Paul says in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: ‘Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which you are.’ So also Christ explains in the Gospel of St. Matthew, ‘For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you.’ And St. John in his Epistle says, ‘In this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of his spirit.’ And St. Paul says to the Galatians, ‘Because you are sons of God, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, “Aba! Father!”’

Thus it must be understood that the presentation which you make before the sons of Jesus Christ confirms the faith and preaching of the Church of God as Holy Scriptures give us to understand it. For the people of God departed in former times from their Lord God. They departed from the counsel and will of their Holy Father, as a result of the deception of evil spirits and submission to them. For these and many other reasons, is understanding given that the Holy Father desires to have compassion on His people and to receive them into His peace and concord through the advent of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Hence, this is the occasion of your presence here before the disciples of Jesus Christ, where spiritually dwell the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as was previously disclosed: that you may receive this holy prayer which the Lord Jesus Christ gave unto His disciples, so that your supplications and your prayers may be heard by our Holy Father. This is the reason why you must understand, if you would receive this holy prayer, that it is needful for you to repent of all your sins and to forgive all men. For our Lord Jesus Christ says, ‘If you will not forgive men their sins, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.’

Furthermore, it behooves you to resolve in your heart that, if God grants you the grace to receive it, you will keep this holy prayer throughout your whole lifetime, according to the usage of the Church of God, in chastity, in truth, and in all the other good virtues which God shall deign to grant unto you. Wherefore we pray the good Lord, Who granted unto the disciples of Jesus Christ the power to receive this holy prayer with steadfastness, that He grant unto you also the grace to receive it with steadfastness, to His honor and your salvation. Have you must do penance therefor.”

And let the believer say: “I receive it from God, from you, and from
And then let the elder say: “This holy prayer we deliver unto you, that you may receive it from God, from us, and from the Church, and that you may have the power to say it throughout your whole lifetime, by day and by night, alone and in company, and that you may never eat or drink without first saying this prayer. And if you should fail therein, you must do penance therefor.”’ And let the believer say: ‘I receive it from God, from you, and from the Church.” Then let him make his melioramentum and give thanks. And then let the Christians complete a Double with obeisances, and let the believer do the same.

**The Ministration of the Consolamentum**

If he is to receive the consolamentum forthwith, let him perform his melioramentum and take the Book from the hand of the elder. And let the elder exhort him and preach to him with suitable scriptural verses and in such words as are proper for the consolamentum. Let him speak thus:

“Peter, you wish to receive the spiritual baptism by which the Holy Spirit is given in the
Church of God, together with the Holy Prayer and the imposition of hands by Good Men. Of this baptism our Lord Jesus Christ says in the Gospel of St. Matthew to His disciples: ‘Going therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.’ And in the Gospel of St. Mark, He says: ‘Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be condemned.’ And in the Gospel of St. John, He says to Nicodemus: ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ And John the Baptist spoke of this baptism when he said, ‘I baptize with water but He that shall come after me is mightier than I, the strap of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.’ And Jesus says in the Acts of the Apostles, ‘For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

This holy baptism with the imposition of hands was instituted by Jesus Christ, according to that which St. Luke recounts, and He says that His friends shall perform it, as St. Mark relates, ‘They shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover.’ Ananias administered this baptism to St. Paul when the latter was converted and afterward Paul and Barnabas administered it in many places. And St. Peter and St. John administered it to the Samaritans, as St. Luke tells in the Acts of the Apostles: ‘Now when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He was not as yet come upon any of them. Then they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit.’ This holy baptism, by which the Holy Spirit is given, the Church of God has preserved from the apostles until this time and it has passed from Good Men to Good Men until the present moment, and it will continue to do so until the end of the world.

“And you must understand that power is given to the Church of God to bind and to loose, to pardon sins and to retain them, as Christ says in the Gospel of St. John: ‘“As the Father has sent me, I also send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them, and he said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”’” And in the Gospel of St. Matthew, He says to Simon Peter: ‘And I say to you, that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.’ And ‘Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by my Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’ And in another place He says, ‘Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils.’ And in the Gospel of St. John, He says, ‘He that believes in me, the works that I do he also shall do.’” And in the Gospel of St. Mark, He says: ‘These signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.’ And in the Gospel of St. Luke, He says, ‘Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you.’

“And if you have the will to receive this strength and power, you must keep all the commandments of Christ and of the New Testament to the utmost of your ability. Know that He has commanded that a man should not commit adultery, or kill, or lie; should swear no oath, nor pilfer or steal; he should not do to others that which he would not wish done to himself; he should forgive one who does evil to him and love his enemies; he should bless and pray for those who persecute and calumniate him; and if anyone strike him on one cheek, he should offer the other to him also; if
anyone take away his coat, he should let go unto him also his cloak; he should judge not nor condemn. And with these are many other commandments which are laid down for His Church by the Lord.

“And likewise, you must hate this world and its works and the things which are of this world. For St. John says in his Epistle: ‘Dearly beloved, love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof; but he that doth the will of God abides forever.’ And Christ says to the nations: ‘The world cannot hate you, but me it hates because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil.’ And in the book of Solomon is it written, ‘I have seen all the things which are done under the sun; and they are all vanities and torments of the spirit.’ And Jude the brother of James, says for our instruction in his Epistle, ‘Hating also the spotted garment which is carnal.’ Heeding these scriptural verses and many others, you must keep the commandments of God and hate this world. And if you do well to the end, we have hope that your soul will have eternal life.”

And let the believer say: “I have this will. Pray God for me to give me His strength.”

Then let one of the Good Men make his melioramentum with the believer before the elder and say: “Have mercy upon us. Good Christians, we pray you for the love of God to grant this good which God has given you unto this our friend.”

Then let the believer make his melioramentum and say: “Have mercy upon us. For all the sins which I have done, in word, thought, or deed, I ask forgiveness from God, from the Church, and from you all.”

Let the Christians say: “May they be forgiven you by God, by us, and by the Church; we pray God to forgive you.”

And then let them give him the consolamentum. Let the elder take the Book and place it on the believer’s head, and the other Good Men place each his right hand on him. Then let them say the Pardon” and the Let us adore thrice, and then, Holy Father, receive your servant in your righteousness and bestow your grace and your Holy Spirit upon him.

Then let them pray to God with the Prayer and let him who conducts the service say the Six in a low voice. When the Six is finished, let him say Let us adore thrice, the Prayer once in full voice, and then the Gospel. When the Gospel has been read, let them say Let us adore thrice, the Grace, and the Pardon. Then they should perform the Act of Peace with each other and with the Book. If there be believers present, let them perform the Act of Peace also. Let women believers, if there are any present, perform the Act of Peace with the Book and with each other. And then let them pray to God with a Double, with obeisances. And thus they will have administered the consolamentum.

Rules of Conduct for Various Occasions

The office of leading a Double or of saying the Prayer should not be confided to a layman. If Christians go into a dangerous place, let them pray to God using the Grace. And if one of them travels on horseback, let him say a Double. He should say the Prayer when embarking in a boat, when entering a town, or when crossing a stream by a plank or a dangerous bridge. When Christians encounter a man with whom they must have speech while they are praying to God, if they have said eight prayers, these can be counted as a Single; if they have finished sixteen, they can be accounted the Double. If they find some personal belonging along the road, let them not touch it unless they know that they can return it. If they see that persons to whom the object may be returned have passed that way ahead of them, let them take it to return it if they can. If this is not possible, they should put
it back in the place where it was found. If they happen upon an animal or a bird in a trap, let them not trouble themselves about it. And if a Christian wants to drink during the day, he should have prayed to God twice or more after eating. And if Christians drink after the evening Double, let them perform another Double. And if there are any believers present, they should stand while the Christians say the Prayer before drinking. And if a Christian man prays to God with Christian women, let him always lead in the Prayer. And if there is with the Christian women a believer to whom the Prayer has been administered, let him go apart and say it by himself.

The Ministration of the Consolamentum to the Sick

If Christians to whom the ministry of the Church is entrusted receive a message from a believer who is sick, they should visit him and inquire privately how he has borne himself toward the Church since he received the faith; whether he is in any way in debt to the Church or has done it any injury. If he owes it any debt and can pay, he should do so. If he is unwilling to do this, let him not be received. For if one prays to God on behalf of a lawbreaker or a dishonest man, the prayer can be of no avail. But he should not be turned away if he is unable to pay.

And the Christians should explain the abstinence and usages of the Church and ask whether, provided he is received, he is willing to observe them. This he should not promise unless he has the firmest intention of doing so. For St. John says that the portion of liars shall be in a pool of fire and brimstone. And if he says that he feels himself strong enough to endure all that abstinence, and if the Christians are agreed to receive him, they shall impose abstinence on him as follows: They shall ask him if he intends to refrain from lies and oaths and from transgressing the other prohibitions of God, if he intends to hold to the usages of the Church and the commandments of God and to keep his body and his goods—all that he now has and all that he may acquire—at the disposal of God, of the Church, and at the service of Christian men and women, from this time on and forever, to the utmost of his ability. And if he says “Yes,” let them reply: “We impose this abstinence upon you so that you may receive it from God, from us, and from the Church, and so that you may observe it as long as you live. For if you observe it well, together with your other obligations, we have hope that your soul will have life.” And he should say, “I receive it from God, from you, and from the Church.”

Then they should ask him if he wishes to receive the Prayer. If he says “Yes,” let them clothe him in shirt and breeches, if this is possible, and let them have him sit up, if he can raise his hands. And let them put a tablecloth or other cloth on the bed in front of him, and put the Book thereon, saying Bless us once, and Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit three times. And he should take the Book from the hand of the elder. And then, if the sick man is able to endure it, he who is conducting the administration should exhort him and preach to him with suitable scriptural texts. Then he should ask him, in regard to his covenant with them, whether his heart is fixed on holding to it and keeping it, as he has agreed. And if the answer is “Yes,” let them have him confirm it. Then they should minister the Prayer unto him and he should heed it carefully. And then let the elder say to him: “This is the Prayer which Jesus Christ brought into this world, Who taught it to the Good Men. You must never eat or drink anything without first repeating this prayer. And if you should do so through negligence, you must undergo penance therefor.” He should reply, “I receive it from God, from you, and from the Church.” And then let them give him the greeting used for women. And then they should pray to God in a Double with obeisances, and again put the Book before him. And he should say thrice Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Then let him take the Book from the hand of the elder, who should exhort him with scriptural texts and words such as are proper for the consolamentum. And then the elder should ask if he has it in his heart to keep and honor the covenant as he has agreed, and let them have him confirm it.

Then the elder should take up the Book, and the sick man should bow his head and say:
“Have mercy on us. For all my sins of word or thought or deed I ask pardon from God, from the Church, and from you all.” And the Christians should answer, “May you have pardon from God, from us, and from the Church; and we pray to God to pardon you.” And then let them console him by placing their hands and the Book on his head, saying: Bless us; have mercy upon us. Amen. Let it be done to us according to your word. May the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have mercy on you for all your sins. Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (saying this last three times). And then Holy Father, receive your servant in your justice and send your grace and your Holy Spirit upon him; or, if it is a woman, they should say Holy Father, receive your handmaiden in your justice and send your grace and your Holy Spirit upon her. And then let them pray to God with the Prayer and say the Six in a low voice, and, when the Six is finished, they should say three times Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the Prayer once in full voice, and then the Gospel. When the Gospel has been read, they should say three times Let us adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the Prayer once in full voice. And then let them give him the greeting used for a man. And then they should perform the Act of Peace among themselves and with the Book. And if there are believers, men or women, present, let them perform the Act of Peace. And then the Christians should ask for salvation and grant it.

And if the sick person dies, leaving them anything, or if he should give them anything, they must not keep it for themselves or take possession of it, but should put it at the disposal of the order. However, if the sick person lives, the Christians should present him to the order and pray that he receive the consolamentum again as soon as he can. And let him do as he wishes.