AGA

IST HERESIES

No 'Christ from above' but Jesus Christ

18.3 Who is he who thus shares with us in foods (cf. 1 Cor.10:16)? Is he the "Christ from above" invented by these people, the one who was extended on "Limit" and formed their "Mother"? Or the Emmanuel who is from the Virgin, who ate butter and honey and of whom the prophet said, "He is a man, but who will know him?" (Jer.17:9)? The same Christ was proclaimed by Paul: "I delivered to you first that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and was buried and rose the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor.15:3–4). Therefore it is obvious that Paul knew no Christ but the one who suffered and was buried and rose again, who was born, whom he called "man." For when he said, "If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead" (15:12), he adds, giving the reason for his incarnation: "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (15:21). And everywhere Paul used the name "Christ" in speaking of the passion of our Lord and his humanity and his being put to death; for example, "Do not destroy, by your eating, the one for whom Christ died" (Rom.14:15); and further, "But now you who were formerly far away have become near in the blood of Christ" (Eph.2:13); and again, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, made a curse for us, since it is written, 'Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree'" (Gal.3:13; Deut.21:23); and again, "And the weak one perishes with your knowledge, the brother for whom Christ died" (1 Cor.8:11). These texts show that an impassible Christ did not come down into Jesus, but Jesus, since he was Christ, suffered for us, slept and rose again, descended and ascended (Eph.4:10), the Son of God become Son of man. This is what his name indicates, since the name "Christ" implies him who anoints, him who has been anointed, and theunction with which he is anointed. He who anoints is the Father; and the Son has been anointed in the Spirit, which is the unction; as the Word said through Isaiah (61:1): "The Spirit of God is upon me, because he anointed me," signifying the Father as anointing, the Son as anointed, and the unction which is the Spirit.

The Incarnation

19.1 Those who say he is a mere man begotten by Joseph remain and die in slavery to the primal disobedience, not yet mingled with the Word of God the Father nor sharing in freedom through the Son, as he himself says: "If the Son set you free, you are truly free" (John 8:36). Ignorant of him who is Emmanuel born of the Virgin (Is.7:14), they are deprived of his gift, which is eternal life (John 4:10,14); not having received the Word of imperishability, they remain in mortal flesh; they are debtors to death, not receiving the antidote of life. To them the Word says, speaking of his gift of grace, "I said, You are all gods and sons of the Most High, but you die like men" (Ps.82:6–7). He undoubtedly addresses those who do not accept the gift of adoption but despise the Incarnation, the pure generation of the Word of God, depriving man of his ascension to God and being ungrateful to the Word of God who became incarnate for them. For this the Word of God became man, and the Son of God Son of man, that man, mingled with the Word and thus receiving adoption, might become a son of God. We could not receive imperishability and immortality unless we had been united to imperishability and immortality. And how could we have been united with imperishability and immortality unless imperishability and immortality had first been made what we are, so that what was perishable might be absorbed by imperishability and what was mortal by immortality (1 Cor.15:53–54) "that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal.4:5)?

19.2 This is attested by "Who will tell his generation?" (Is.53:8). For "he is man, but who will know him?" (Jer.17:9). The only one who knows him is the one to whom the Father in the heavens has revealed him (Matt.16:17), so that he understands that the Son of man (Matt.16:13), "born not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man" (John 1:13), is "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt.16:16). We have shown from the scriptures that not one among the sons of Adam is properly called God or Lord. It is evident, however, to all who possess even a moderate bit of the truth, that unlike all men of the past the Christ is properly proclaimed as God, Lord, eternal King, Only-begotten, and incarnate Word, by all the prophets and apostles and the Spirit itself. The scriptures would not give this testimony to him if he were a mere man like all others. But because, alone among all, he had in himself this brilliant origin (Is.53:8) from the Father Most High, and because he also received the brilliant birth from the Virgin (Is.7:14), the divine scriptures testify to him in a double manner: as man he is without beauty and capable of suffering (Is.53:2–3) and sits on the foal of an ass (Zech.9:9), is given vinegar and gall to drink (Ps.69:21), is rejected by the people and goes down to death (Ps.22:7,16); on the other hand he is holy Lord, marvelous Counselor (Is.9:6), beautiful in appearance (Ps.44:3), mighty God (Is.9:6), and coming on the clouds as universal Judge (Dan.7:13,26). The scriptures predicted all this of him.
19.3 For as the Lord was men in order to be tested, so also he was Word in order to be glorified; the Word was quiescent so that he could be tested, dishonored, crucified, and die, and the man was absorbed when the Lord conquered, endured, showed his goodness, rose, was assumed into heaven. This is the Son of God, our Lord, who was the Word of God, and Son of man as born of Mary; he came from human beings and was a man, and had a human birth and became Son of man.

This is why the Lord himself gave us a “sign in the deep and in the height” without man’s asking for it (Is. 7:11–12); for man did not hope that a virgin could become pregnant as a virgin and bear a son, and that this offspring would be “God with us” (7:14) and would descend to the earth below (Eph. 4:9) in search of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4–6) which was of his own fashioning (Gen. 2:7), and would ascend to the height, offering and commending to the Father that man who had been found producing in himself the first-fruits of man’s resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20) so that as the head rose from the dead, so also the rest of the body of every man who is found in life will rise when the time of his condemnation for disobedience is past, knit together through its joints and ligaments and made firm by growth from God (Col. 2:19), with each member having its own suitable place in the body (1 Cor. 12:18). This is why there are many abodes with the Father (John 14:2), because there are many members in the body (1 Cor. 12:12).

20.2 This, then, was God’s generosity. He allowed man to pass through every situation and to know death and then come to the resurrection from the dead, and learning by experience that from which he had been liberated, might always be grateful to the Lord, having obtained the gift of imperishability from him, and might love him more, for “he to whom more is forgiven loves more” (Luke 7:42–43). He will know himself as mortal and weak and will understand that God is immortal and powerful and can give the mortal immortality (1 Cor. 15:53) and the temporal eternity. Thus he will understand all the other miraculous powers of God manifested to him and instructed by them will think of God how great he is. For the glory of man is God, and the recipient of God’s activity and all his wisdom and power is man. As the physician is tested in the sick, so God is made manifest in men. This is why Paul says, “God assigned everything to disobedience so that he may have mercy on all” (Rom. 11:32). He is not speaking of spiritual Aeon of men but of man, who after disobeying God and being cast out of immortality then obtained mercy (1 Pet. 2:10) through the Son of God, receiving the adoption which is through him (Gal. 4:4–5). When man without conceit and boasting holds a true opinion of the creatures and their Creator, who is the all-powerful God who gives existence to all, and remains in his love (John 15:9–10) and submission and thanksgiving will receive a greater glory from him, progressing until he becomes like the one who died for him. He was made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” to condemn sin and expel it, thus condemned, from the flesh (Rom. 8:3) and also to call man to become like him, assigning him to God as imitator (Eph. 5:1), raising him into the kingdom of the Father and giving him the ability to see God and comprehend the Father. This Word of God which dwelt in man was made Son of man to accustom man to perceive God and to accustom God to dwell in man, according to the good pleasure of the Father.

Incarnation as recapitulation: Christ and Mary

21.9 And he recapitulated in himself the work originally fashioned, 21.10 because, just as through the disobedience of one man sin came in, and through sin death prevailed (Rom. 5:12, 19), so also through the obedience of one man justice was brought in and produced the fruit of life for the men formerly dead. And as the first-fashioned Adam received his substance from earth uncultivated and still virgin (“for God had not yet rained and man had not worked the earth”, Gen. 2:5) and was fashioned by the hand of God (Ps. 119:73), that is, by the Word of God, for “everything was made through him” (John 1:3) and “the Lord took dust from the earth and fashioned man” (Gen. 2:7), thus the Word, recapitulating Adam in himself, from Mary still virgin rightly received the generation that is the recapitulation of Adam. If then the first Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) had had a man for father and had been born of the seed of a man, the heretics could rightly say that the second Adam (15:47) was generated by Joseph. But if the first Adam was taken from the earth and fashioned by the Word of God, it was necessary that the Word himself, working in himself the recapitulation of Adam, possessed a like origin. One might object, why did God not take dust anew and why did he make what he fashioned proceed from Mary? So that there would not be another fashioning nor another work fashioned to be saved but that the same being might be recapitulated, with the likeness preserved.

22.2 Why would Christ have come down into her if he was to receive nothing from her? And if he had received nothing from Mary he would never have taken foods derived from the earth; after fasting
forty days like Moses and Elijah he would not have felt hunger because his body needed food: John his disciple would not have written of him: "Jesus sat, wearied from the journey" (John 4:6); nor would David have proclaimed, "They have added to the pain of my wounds" (Ps.69:26); he would not have wept over Lazarus (John 11:35); he would not have sweated drops of blood (Luke 22:44); he would not have said, "My soul grieves" (Matt.26:38), nor would blood and water have come forth from his pierced side (John 19:34). All these are signs of the flesh taken from the earth, which he recapitulated in himself, saving what he had formed.

22.3 This is why Luke presents a genealogy of seventy-two generations from the birth of our Lord back to Adam (Luke 3:23–38), linking the end to the beginning and indicating that he is the one who recapitulated in himself, with Adam, all the nations and languages and generations of men dispersed after Adam. Therefore Paul calls Adam the "figure of the one to come" (Rom.5:14) because the Word, Fashioner of all, preformed in Adam the future divine plan for humanity around the Son of God, since God first predestined the psychic man, obviously, to be saved by the spiritual. Since he who would save pre-existed, what would be saved had to come into existence so that the saving one would not be in vain.

The role of the Virgin Mary

22.4 Like the Lord, the Virgin Mary is also found obedient when she says, "Behold your servant, Lord, may it be for me according to your word" (Luke 1:38), but Eve, disobedient, for she disobeyed while still a virgin. For just as Eve had Adam for a husband but was still a virgin — for they were both naked” in Paradise “and had no shame” (Gen.2:25), since, recently created, they had no understanding of procreation: they had to grow up first and then multiply (1:28) – and by disobeying became the cause of death for herself and the whole human race; so also Mary, with a husband predestined for her but yet a virgin, was obedient and became the cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race. For this reason the Law calls the one betrothed to a man the wife of the one betrothing her, even though she is still a virgin, signifying the recycling that Mary effected for Eve. For what has been tied cannot be loosed unless one reverses the ties of the knot so that the first ties are undone by the second, and the second free the first: thus it happens that the first tie is unkotted by the second and the second has the place of a tie for the first. This is why the Lord said

that the first would be the last and the last first (Matt.19:30; 20:16); and the prophet indicates the same thing by saying, "In place of the fathers that they were, they became your sons" (Ps.45:16).

For the Lord, becoming the First-born from the dead (Col.1:18) and receiving the ancient fathers into his bosom, regenerated them into the life of God, himself becoming the first of the living because Adam had become the first of the dead. This is why Luke (3:23–38) began his genealogy with the Lord to trace it back from him to Adam, thus indicating that the fathers did not give life to the Lord but he regenerated them in the Gospel of life. So too the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by Mary's obedience, for what the virgin Eve had bound by her unfaith, the virgin Mary loosed by her faith."

23.3 Therefore at the beginning of Adam’s transgression, as the scripture tells, God did not curse Adam himself but the earth that he worked. As one of the ancients says, “God transferred the curse to the earth so that it would not continue in man.” In condemnation for his transgression man received weariness and earthly labor and eating bread by the sweat of his brow and returning to the earth from which he was taken (Gen.3:1–19); and likewise the woman received weariness and labor and groaning and the pangs of birth and servitude, that is, to her husband (3:16), so that they might not be accused by God and utterly perish or remain unpunished and despise God. The whole curse, however, fell upon the serpent who led them astray. "And God said to the serpent, ‘Because you did this, you are accursed among all the domestic animals and all the wild beasts of the earth’" (3:14). The Lord in the Gospel pronounced the same curse to those found on his left: "Depart, you accursed, into the eternal fire which my Father has prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt.25:41), signifying that the eternal fire has not been prepared primarily for man, but for the one who led him astray and made him sin and inaugurated apostasy, and for the angels who became apostates with him. This is the fire which they who like the angels persevere in wicked works, without penitence and return, will justly experience.

23.5 This is why God interrogates them, so that the accusation may fall upon the woman; then he interrogates her, so that she may turn the accusation against the serpent. She tells what had happened: "The serpent seduced me and I ate" (3:13). God did not interrogate the serpent, for he knew that he was the instigator of the transgression. But he made his curse fall first on him, so that he might turn to man with a second condemnation. For God hated the one who seduced man, while he gradually felt pity for the one seduced.