

CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

PART 6

“I NOW FEEL COMPELLED
INSTEAD TO WRITE TO
ENCOURAGE YOU TO
CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR
THE FAITH THAT WAS ONCE
FOR ALL ENTRUSTED TO
THE SAINTS.”

JUDE 1:3B NET



“BIBLE LESSON”

THOMAS HART BENTON
C. 1940





"It keeps me from looking at my phone every two seconds."



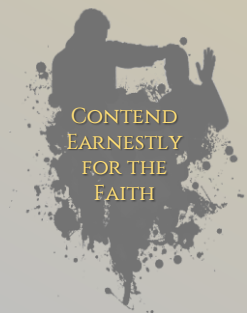
CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH SERIES OUTLINE

QUESTIONS:

1. WHAT IS THE “FAITH THAT WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS?”
2. WHO WERE THE SAINTS?
3. HOW *DID* THEY CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH?

TOPICS:

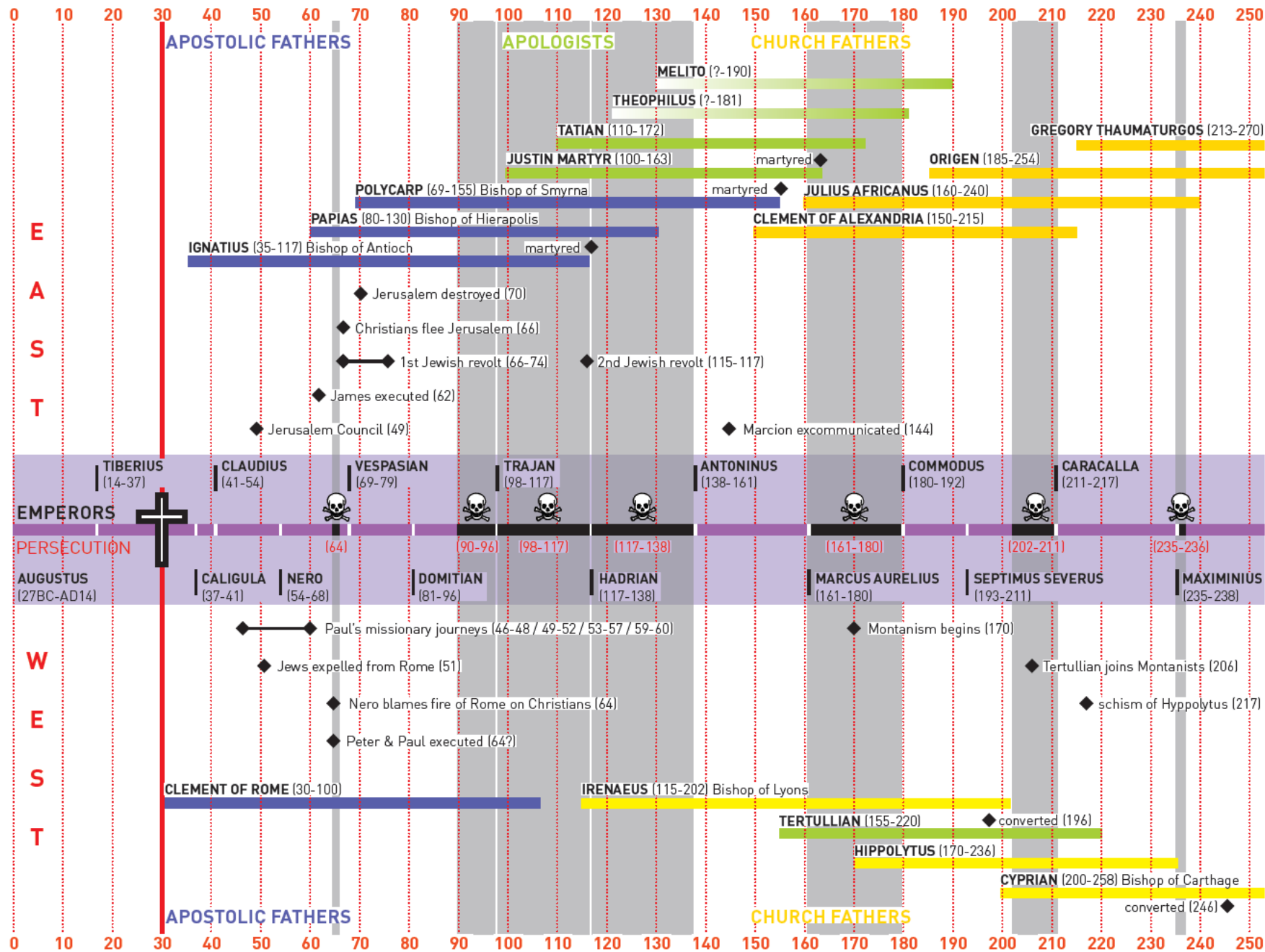
1. CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY
2. THE PROBLEM OF FALSE TEACHING
3. APOSTOLIC AND EARLY CHURCH FATHERS
4. CHURCH HISTORY





EARLY CHURCH HISTORY 0 - AD 250

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Persecution in the Early Church

0:11 / 33:05

Persecution

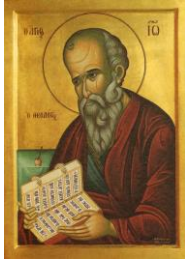
 Ryan Reeves

 16,222

16,011 views

APOSTOLIC CHAIN OF CUSTODY

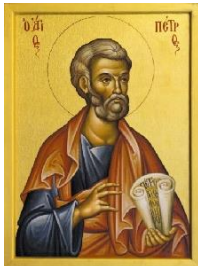
FROM JESUS TO THE 4TH CENTURY COUNCILS



JOHN IGNATIUS, PAPIAS, POLYCARP, IRANAEUS,
HIPPOLYTUS



PAUL LINUS, CLEMENT, EVARISTUS, ALEXANDER,
SIXTUS, TELESOPHORUS, HYGINUS, PIUS, JUSTIN
MARTYR TATIAN



PETER MARK, ANIANUS, AVILLIUS, KEDRON,
PRIMUS, JUSTUS, PANTAENUS, CLEMENT, ORIGEN,
PAMPHILUS, EUSEBIUS



The screen displays a timeline of the Apostolic Chain of Custody, showing the transmission of the Christian faith from the apostles to the early church fathers. The timeline is organized into three rows, each representing a different branch of the apostolic tradition. The first row, labeled 'Jesus' ministry' and '30-33AD', shows the apostles Paul, Clement, Alexander, Telesphorus, Pius, and Tatian, followed by Linus, Evaristus, Sixtus, Hyginus, and Justin Martyr. The second row shows John, Ignatius, Papias, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus. The third row shows Peter, Avilius, Primus, Pantaenus, Origen, and Eusebius, followed by Mark, Anianus, Kedron, Justus, Clement, Pamphilus, and Eusebius. The timeline ends with a box labeled 'Church council' and '363AD'. The man in the suit is pointing at the 'Church council' box.

Jesus' ministry
30-33AD

Paul Clement Alexander Telesphorus Pius Tatian
Linus Evaristus Sixtus Hyginus Justin Martyr

John Ignatius Papias Polycarp Irenaeus Hippolytus

Peter Avilius Primus Pantaenus Origen Eusebius
Mark Anianus Kedron Justus Clement Pamphilus

Church council
363AD

36:28 / 50:40

Evidence for Christianity | J. Warner Wallace

APOSTOLIC CHAIN OF CUSTODY (28:42 – 37:27)



IRANAEUS

IRENÆUS (CA. 125-202), BISHOP OF LYONS



IRANAEUS WAS PROBABLY BORN ABOUT THE YEAR 125, IN ONE OF THOSE MARITIME PROVINCES OF ASIA MINOR WHERE THE MEMORY OF THE APOSTLES WAS STILL CHERISHED AND WHERE CHRISTIANS WERE NUMEROUS. HE WAS MOST INFLUENCED BY POLYCARP WHO HAD KNOWN THE APOSTLES OR THEIR IMMEDIATE DISCIPLES.

MANY ASIAN PRIESTS AND MISSIONARIES BROUGHT THE GOSPEL TO THE PAGAN GAULS AND FOUNDED A LOCAL CHURCH. TO THIS CHURCH OF LYONS, IRENAEUS CAME TO SERVE AS A PRIEST UNDER ITS FIRST BISHOP, POTHINUS, AN ORIENTAL LIKE HIMSELF. IN THE YEAR 177, IRENAEUS WAS SENT TO ROME. THIS MISSION EXPLAINS HOW IT WAS THAT HE WAS NOT CALLED UPON TO SHARE IN THE MARTYRDOM OF POTHINUS DURING THE TERRIBLE PERSECUTION IN LYONS. WHEN HE RETURNED TO LYONS IT WAS TO OCCUPY THE VACANT BISHOPRIC. BY THIS TIME, THE PERSECUTION WAS OVER. IT WAS THE SPREAD OF GNOSTICISM IN GAUL, AND THE RAVAGES IT WAS MAKING AMONG THE CHRISTIANS OF HIS DIOCESE, THAT INSPIRED HIM TO UNDERTAKE THE TASK OF EXPOSING ITS ERRORS. HE PRODUCED A TREATISE IN FIVE BOOKS IN WHICH HE SETS FORTH FULLY THE INNER DOCTRINES OF THE VARIOUS SECTS, AND AFTERWARDS CONTRASTS THEM WITH THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES AND THE TEXT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.



IRENÆUS

HIS WORK, WRITTEN IN GREEK BUT QUICKLY TRANSLATED TO LATIN, WAS WIDELY CIRCULATED AND SUCCEEDED IN DEALING A DEATH-BLOW TO GNOSTICISM. AT ANY RATE, FROM THAT TIME ONWARDS, IT CEASED TO OFFER A SERIOUS MENACE TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH.



THE DATE OF DEATH OF IRENAEUS IS NOT KNOWN, BUT IT IS BELIEVED TO BE IN THE YEAR 202. THE BODILY REMAINS OF IRENAEUS WERE BURIED IN A CRYPT UNDER THE ALTAR OF WHAT WAS THEN CALLED THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN, BUT WAS LATER KNOWN BY THE NAME OF IRENAEUS HIMSELF. THIS TOMB OR SHRINE WAS DESTROYED BY THE CALVINISTS IN 1562, AND ALL TRACE OF HIS RELICS SEEMS TO HAVE PERISHED.



JUSTIN MARTYR



CHRISTIANS HAVE ALWAYS HAD TO RESPOND TO THE PHILOSOPHIES OF THEIR AGE. THE FIRST IN A LONG LINE OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS WAS JUSTIN. BUT HE WAS MORE THAN JUST AN EGGHEAD ACADEMIC. HE ADDRESSED HIS ARGUMENTS TO THE MIGHTY ROMAN EMPEROR HIMSELF, AND ENDED UP POURING OUT HIS LIFE IN A COURAGEOUS DEFENSE OF THE FAITH.

FLAVIUS JUSTINUS WAS BORN IN SAMARIA, NEAR WHERE JESUS HAD TALKED TO THE SAMARITAN WOMAN BY THE WELL (JOHN 4). JUSTIN, TOO, THIRSTED AFTER TRUTH AND EVENTUALLY DRANK OF THE WATER JESUS OFFERED. HE WAS THE FIRST CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER TO EXPLAIN CHRISTIANITY IN TERMS FAMILIAR TO STOICS AND THE FOLLOWERS OF PLATO.

AS A WELL-BORN ROMAN, JUSTIN RECEIVED A CLASSICAL EDUCATION IN GREEK AND LATIN. SEARCHING FOR TRUTH, HE STUDIED VARIOUS POPULAR PHILOSOPHIES. BUT NONE OF THEM FILLED HIS HUNGRY HEART. THE STOICS SHOWED LITTLE CONCERN WITH WHETHER GOD CARED FOR MAN OR NOT. THE FOLLOWERS OF ARISTOTLE'S PHILOSOPHY WERE MORE INTERESTED IN COLLECTING FEES THAN IN TEACHING TRUTH. THE PYTHAGORAENS REQUIRED INTENSIVE PREPARATION IN MUSIC, ARITHMETIC, AND GEOMETRY. FINDING THESE PHILOSOPHIES EMPTY, JUSTIN BECAME A PLATONIST BECAUSE HE ADMIRERD THE NOTIONS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD HELD BY SOCRATES AND PLATO.



JUSTIN MARTYR



ABOUT A.D. 132 WHILE WALKING IN CONTEMPLATION BY THE SEA, JUSTIN MET AN OLD MAN WHOSE NAME HAS BEEN LOST TO HISTORY, BUT WHOSE FAITHFUL WITNESS HAS BLESSED THE CHURCH DOWN TO THIS DAY. THE OLD MAN TALKED WITH JUSTIN AND PATIENTLY SHOWED HIM WEAKNESSES IN PLATO'S THINKING THAT JUSTIN HAD NOT SEEN BEFORE. PHILOSOPHERS COULD NOT ARRIVE AT FULL SPIRITUAL TRUTH THROUGH UNASSISTED REASON, SAID THE OLD MAN. BUT THE ANCIENT PROPHETS OF ISRAEL WHO KNEW GOD HAD REVEALED HIM AND FORETOLD THE COMING OF THE CHRIST. JUSTIN LISTENED AND BELIEVED. HE CONTINUED AS A TEACHER OF PHILOSOPHY, BUT HE NOW EXPLAINED CHRISTIANITY AS THE TRUE PHILOSOPHY.

HE BELIEVED THAT ALL TRUTH WAS GOD'S TRUTH. BORROWING FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN'S TREATMENT OF THE WORD ("LOGOS" IN GREEK), JUSTIN TAUGHT THAT ANY TRUTH IN THE GREEK OR PAGAN PHILOSOPHIES WAS THE WORD OR LOGOS REACHING OUT TO SINFUL HUMANITY. HE BELIEVED PLATO'S GOD WAS THE GOD OF THE BIBLE AND SOCRATES WAS A CHRISTIAN BEFORE CHRIST, JUST AS ABRAHAM WAS. MOSES AND THE OLD TESTAMENT WRITINGS WERE OLDER THAN THE GREEK PHILOSOPHIES, AND ANY TRUTH THE GREEKS HAD WAS BORROWED FROM THE JEWISH PROPHETS.



JUSTIN MARTYR



JUSTIN ARDENTLY DEFENDED THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AGAINST PAGANS, JEWS, AND HERETICS. HE TAUGHT IN ROME AT THE HOUSE OF MARTINUS ON THE VIA TIBURTINE AND WROTE WORKS WHICH EQUIPPED CHRISTIANS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME. HIS *APOLOGY*, WRITTEN ABOUT 150 AND ADDRESSED TO EMPEROR ANTONINUS PIUS, APPEALED FOR JUSTICE AND LIBERTY FOR CHRISTIANS

CHRISTIANITY WAS A PERSECUTED MINORITY IN JUSTIN'S DAY, AND HIS *APOLOGY* SHOWED THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH. AFTER REFUTING BASELESS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST CHRISTIANS, SUCH AS THAT THEY HAD CANNIBALISTIC RITUALS AND ENGAGED IN GROSS IMMORALITY, JUSTIN CONTRASTED THE MORAL POWER OF CHRIST'S TEACHING WITH IRRATIONAL PAGAN FABLES. JUSTIN APPEALED TO THE EMPEROR:

"IF THESE THINGS SEEM TO YOU TO BE REASONABLE AND TRUE, HONOR THEM; BUT IF THEY SEEM NONSENSICAL, DESPISE THEM AS NONSENSE, AND DO NOT DECREE DEATH AGAINST THEM WHO HAVE DONE NO WRONG...FOR WE FOREWARN YOU, THAT YOU SHALL NOT ESCAPE THE COMING JUDGMENT OF GOD..."



JUSTIN MARTYR



Relics of St. Justin and other early Church martyrs can be found in the lateral altar dedicated to St. Anne and St. Joachim at the Jesuit's Church in Valletta, Malta. The church of St. John the Baptist in Sacrofano, a few miles north of Rome, also claims to have his relics.

NOT ONLY DID JUSTIN TEACH CHRISTIANITY AS THE ULTIMATE TRUTH AND WRITE IN ITS DEFENSE, HE ALSO DEFENDED CHRISTIANITY IN PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS. TWO MEN HE PUBLICLY DEBATED IN ROME WERE THE HERETIC MARCION AND THE CYNIC PHILOSOPHER CRESCENS.

IT SEEMS THAT CRESCENS WAS HOT AT BEING DEFEATED IN PUBLIC DEBATE AND BROUGHT JUSTIN AND SIX OF HIS STUDENTS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ROMAN PREFECT, RUSTICUS, AROUND THE YEAR 165. WHEN THE CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS REFUSED TO SACRIFICE TO THE ROMAN GODS AS DEMANDED, THEY WERE CONDEMNED, SCOURGED, AND BEHEADED. STANDING A FIRM WITNESS TO CHRISTIAN TRUTH EVEN IN DEATH, JUSTIN GAINED THE NAME "MARTYR" BY WHICH HE IS STILL KNOWN.



TATIAN

TATIAN OF ADIABENE, OR TATIAN THE SYRIAN, OR TATIAN THE ASSYRIAN (C. 120 – C. 180 AD) WAS A SYRIAN CHRISTIAN WRITER AND THEOLOGIAN OF THE 2ND CENTURY.



TATIAN'S MOST INFLUENTIAL WORK IS *THE DIATESSARON*, A BIBLICAL PARAPHRASE, OR "HARMONY", OF THE FOUR GOSPELS THAT BECAME THE STANDARD TEXT OF THE FOUR GOSPELS IN THE SYRIAC-SPEAKING CHURCHES UNTIL THE 5TH-CENTURY, AFTER WHICH IT GAVE WAY TO THE FOUR SEPARATE GOSPELS IN THE PESHITTA VERSION.

CONCERNING THE DATE AND PLACE OF HIS BIRTH, LITTLE IS KNOWN BEYOND WHAT TATIAN TELLS ABOUT HIMSELF IN HIS *ORATIO AD GRAECOS*: THAT HE WAS BORN IN "THE LAND OF THE ASSYRIANS"; (REFERRING TO SYRIA) TATIAN WAS NOT BORN IN GEOGRAPHICAL ASSYRIA (MESOPOTAMIA), HE WAS BORN TO THE WEST OF THE EUPHRATES (SYRIA) SCHOLARLY CONSENSUS IS THAT HE DIED C. 185 AD, PERHAPS IN ADIABENE.

HE TRAVELED TO ROME, WHERE HE FIRST ENCOUNTERED CHRISTIANITY. DURING HIS PROLONGED STAY IN ROME, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN REPRESENTATION, HIS ABHORRENCE OF THE PAGAN CULTS SPARKED DEEP REFLECTIONS ON RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS. THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT, HE WROTE, HE GREW CONVINCED OF THE UNREASONABLENESS OF PAGANISM. HE ADOPTED THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION



TATIAN

AND BECAME THE PUPIL OF JUSTIN MARTYR. DURING THIS PERIOD CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS COMPETED WITH GREEK SOPHISTS. LIKE JUSTIN, TATIAN OPENED A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IN ROME. IT IS NOT KNOWN HOW LONG HE LABORED IN ROME WITHOUT BEING DISTURBED.



KNOWLEDGE OF TATIAN'S LIFE FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF JUSTIN IN 165 AD IS TO SOME EXTENT OBSCURE. IRENAEUS REMARKS THAT AFTER THE DEATH OF JUSTIN, HE WAS EXPELLED FROM THE CHURCH FOR HIS ENCRATITIC (ASCETIC) VIEWS. (EUSEBIUS CLAIMS HE FOUNDED THE ENCRATITIC SECT), AS WELL AS FOR BEING A FOLLOWER OF THE Gnostic LEADER VALENTINIUS. IT IS CLEAR THAT TATIAN LEFT ROME, PERHAPS TO RESIDE FOR A WHILE IN EITHER GREECE OR ALEXANDRIA, WHERE HE MAY HAVE TAUGHT CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA. EPIPHANIUS RELATES THAT TATIAN ESTABLISHED A SCHOOL IN MESOPOTAMIA, THE INFLUENCE OF WHICH EXTENDED TO ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, AND WAS FELT IN CILICIA AND ESPECIALLY IN PISIDIA.

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYRIAN CHURCH FURNISHES A COMMENTARY ON THE ATTITUDE OF TATIAN IN PRACTICAL LIFE. THUS FOR APHRAATES BAPTISM CONDITIONS THE TAKING OF A VOW IN WHICH THE CATECHUMEN PROMISES CELIBACY. THIS SHOWS HOW FIRMLY THE VIEWS OF TATIAN WERE ESTABLISHED IN SYRIA, AND IT SUPPORTS THE SUPPOSITION THAT TATIAN WAS THE MISSIONARY OF THE COUNTRIES AROUND THE EUPHRATES.



TATIAN



HIS *ORATIO AD GRAECOS* (ADDRESS TO THE GREEKS) CONDEMNS PAGANISM AS WORTHLESS, AND PRAISES THE REASONABLENESS AND HIGH ANTIQUITY OF CHRISTIANITY. AS EARLY AS EUSEBIUS, TATIAN WAS PRAISED FOR HIS DISCUSSIONS OF THE ANTIQUITY OF MOSES AND OF JEWISH LEGISLATION, AND IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS CHRONOLOGICAL SECTION THAT HIS *ORATIO* WAS NOT GENERALLY CONDEMNED.

HIS OTHER MAJOR WORK WAS *THE DIATESSARON*, A "HARMONY" OR SYNTHESIS OF THE FOUR NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS INTO A COMBINED NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF JESUS. EPHREM THE SYRIAN REFERRED TO IT AS THE *EVANGELION DA MEHALLETE* ("THE GOSPEL OF THE MIXED"), AND IT WAS PRACTICALLY THE ONLY GOSPEL TEXT USED IN SYRIA DURING THE 3RD AND 4TH CENTURIES. IN THE 5TH CENTURY, *THE DIATESSARON* WAS REPLACED IN THOSE SYRIAN CHURCHES THAT USED IT BY THE FOUR ORIGINAL GOSPELS. RABBULA, BISHOP OF EDESSA, ORDERED THE PRIESTS AND DEACONS TO SEE THAT EVERY CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A COPY OF THE SEPARATE GOSPELS (*EVANGELION DA MEPHARRESHE*), AND THEODORET, BISHOP OF CYRUS, REMOVED MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED COPIES OF *THE DIATESSARON* FROM THE CHURCHES IN HIS DIOCESE. A NUMBER OF RECENSIONS OF *THE DIATESSARON* ARE EXTANT. THE EARLIEST, PART OF THE EASTERN FAMILY OF RECENSIONS, IS PRESERVED IN EPHREM'S COMMENTARY ON TATIAN'S WORK, WHICH ITSELF IS PRESERVED IN TWO VERSIONS: AN ARMENIAN TRANSLATION PRESERVED IN TWO COPIES, AND A COPY



TATIAN

OF EPHREM'S ORIGINAL SYRIAC TEXT FROM THE LATE 5TH/EARLY 6TH CENTURY, WHICH HAS BEEN EDITED BY LOUIS LELOW (PARIS, 1966).



THE EARLIEST MEMBER OF THE WESTERN FAMILY OF RECENSIONS IS THE LATIN *CODEX FULDENSIS*, WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF BISHOP VICTOR OF CAPUA IN 545 AD. ALTHOUGH THE TEXT IS CLEARLY DEPENDENT ON THE VULGATE, THE ORDER OF THE PASSAGES IS DISTINCTLY HOW TATIAN ARRANGED THEM. TATIAN'S INFLUENCE CAN BE DETECTED MUCH EARLIER IN SUCH LATIN MANUSCRIPTS AS THE OLD LATIN TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE, IN NOVATIAN'S SURVIVING WRITINGS, AND IN THE ROMAN ANTIPHONY. AFTER THE *CODEX FULDENSIS*, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT MEMBERS OF THE WESTERN FAMILY LED AN UNDERGROUND EXISTENCE, POPPING INTO VIEW OVER THE CENTURIES IN AN OLD HIGH GERMAN TRANSLATION (C. 830), A DUTCH (C. 1280), A VENETIAN MANUSCRIPT OF THE 13TH CENTURY, AND A MIDDLE ENGLISH MANUSCRIPT FROM 1400 THAT WAS ONCE OWNED BY SAMUEL PEPYS.

IN A LOST WRITING ENTITLED ON PERFECTION ACCORDING TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE SAVIOR, TATIAN DESIGNATES MATRIMONY AS A SYMBOL OF THE TYING OF THE FLESH TO THE PERISHABLE WORLD AND ASCRIBED THE "INVENTION" OF MATRIMONY TO THE DEVIL. HE DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW MAN; THE OLD MAN IS THE LAW, THE NEW MAN THE GOSPEL. OTHER LOST WRITINGS OF TATIAN INCLUDE A WORK WRITTEN BEFORE THE *ORATIO AD*



TATIAN

GRAECOS THAT CONTRASTS THE NATURE OF MAN WITH THE NATURE OF THE ANIMALS, AND A *PROBLEMATON BIBLION*, WHICH AIMED TO PRESENT A COMPILATION OF OBSCURE SCRIPTURE SAYINGS.



THE STARTING-POINT OF TATIAN'S THEOLOGY IS A STRICT MONOTHEISM WHICH BECOMES THE SOURCE OF THE MORAL LIFE. ORIGINALLY, THE HUMAN SOUL POSSESSED FAITH IN ONE GOD, BUT LOST IT WITH THE FALL. IN CONSEQUENCE, UNDER THE RULE OF DEMONS, MAN SANK INTO THE ABOMINABLE ERROR OF POLYTHEISM. BY MONOTHEISTIC FAITH, THE SOUL IS DELIVERED FROM THE MATERIAL WORLD AND FROM DEMONIC RULE AND IS UNITED WITH GOD. GOD IS SPIRIT (PNEUMA), BUT NOT THE PHYSICAL OR STOICAL PNEUMA; HE WAS ALONE BEFORE THE CREATION, BUT HE HAD WITHIN HIMSELF POTENTIALLY THE WHOLE CREATION. SOME SCHOLARS CONSIDER TATIAN'S CREATION THEOLOGY AS THE BEGINNING OF TEACHING "EX NIHILO" (CREATION FROM "NOTHING"). THE MEANS OF CREATION WAS THE DYNAMIS LOGIKE ("POWER EXPRESSED IN WORDS"). AT FIRST THERE PROCEEDED FROM GOD THE LOGOS WHO, GENERATED IN THE BEGINNING, WAS TO PRODUCE THE WORLD BY CREATING MATTER FROM WHICH THE WHOLE CREATION SPRANG. CREATION IS PENETRATED BY THE PNEUMA HYLIKON, "WORLD SPIRIT," WHICH IS COMMON TO ANGELS, STARS, MEN, ANIMALS, AND PLANTS. THIS WORLD SPIRIT IS LOWER THAN THE DIVINE PNEUMA, AND BECOMES IN MAN THE PSYCHE OR "SOUL," SO THAT ON THE MATERIAL SIDE AND IN HIS SOUL MAN DOES NOT DIFFER ESSENTIALLY FROM THE ANIMALS; THOUGH



TATIAN

AT THE SAME TIME HE IS CALLED TO A PECULIAR UNION WITH THE DIVINE SPIRIT, WHICH RAISES HIM ABOVE THE ANIMALS. THIS SPIRIT IS THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN, AND TO IT MAN'S IMMORTALITY IS DUE.

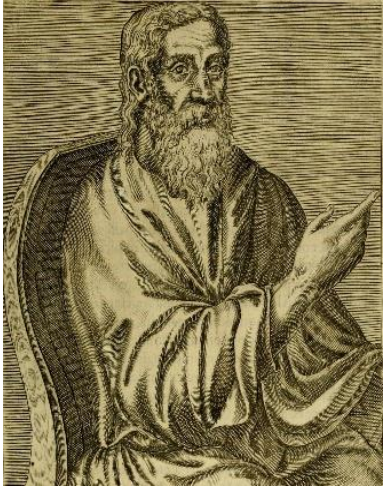


THE FIRST-BORN OF THE SPIRITS FELL AND CAUSED OTHERS TO FALL, AND THUS THE DEMONS ORIGINATED. THE FALL OF THE SPIRITS WAS BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH THEIR DESIRE TO SEPARATE MAN FROM GOD, IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT SERVE NOT GOD BUT THEM. MAN, HOWEVER, WAS IMPLICATED IN THIS FALL, LOST HIS BLESSED ABODE AND HIS SOUL WAS DESERTED BY THE DIVINE SPIRIT, AND SANK INTO THE MATERIAL SPHERE, IN WHICH ONLY A FAINT REMINISCENCE OF GOD REMAINED ALIVE.

AS BY FREEDOM MAN FELL, SO BY FREEDOM HE MAY TURN AGAIN TO GOD. THE SPIRIT UNITES WITH THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO WALK UPRIGHTLY; THROUGH THE PROPHETS HE REMINDS MEN OF THEIR LOST LIKENESS TO GOD. ALTHOUGH TATIAN DOES NOT MENTION THE NAME OF JESUS, HIS DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTION CULMINATES IN HIS CHRISTOLOGY.



CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA



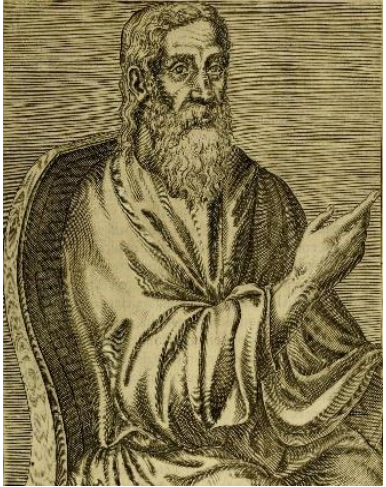
"LET US REMOVE THE IGNORANCE AND DARKNESS THAT SPREADS LIKE A MIST OVER OUR SIGHT, AND LET US GET A VISION OF THE TRUE GOD."

NEW AGE THOUGHT IS REALLY NOT ALL THAT NEW, NOR WAS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THE FIRST TIME CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO RESPOND TO THIS STRAIN OF RELIGIOUS TEACHING. ONE EARLY FORM OF NEW AGE TYPE THINKING WAS Gnosticism, which flourished in the second and third centuries, and one of the most effective Christian responders was Clement of Alexandria.

He was born Titus Flavius Clemens, most likely to pagan parents in Athens. As an adult, he sought out truth from a number of teachers in Greece, Lower Italy, Syria, Palestine, and finally Alexandria, a city of perhaps one million inhabitants. There he sat under Pantaenus, who taught Christianity in light of the scientific teachings of the day. In about 190, Clement opened his own "school," which was more like a cycle of conferences drawn out over years. He taught a "new philosophy" that addressed the cultural and philosophical concerns of the day. The "philosophy" was not all that new—Christianity—but Clement's teaching of it was. He wrote three books to expound his views.



CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA



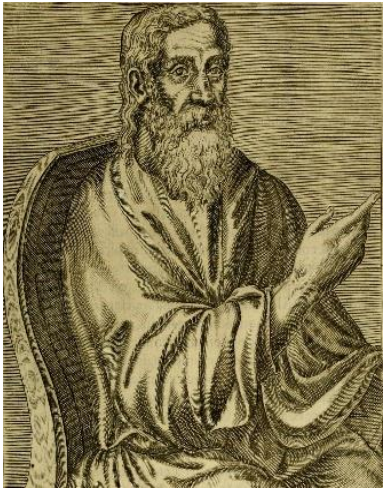
HIS EXHORTATION TO THE GREEKS WAS AN INTRODUCTORY PHILOSOPHICAL WORK FOR THE UNBAPTIZED, IN WHICH HE ATTEMPTED TO SHOW THE REASONABLENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. "AWAY THEN, AWAY WITH OUR FORGETFULNESS OF THE TRUTH!" HE EXHORTED. "LET US REMOVE THE IGNORANCE AND DARKNESS THAT SPREADS LIKE A MIST OVER OUR SIGHT, AND LET US GET A VISION OF THE TRUE GOD."

IN INSTRUCTOR, HE OUTLINED THE SPECIFIC DUTIES AND ETHICS TAUGHT BY THE "INSTRUCTOR" (I.E., THE LOGOS, OR CHRIST): "OUR SUPERINTENDENCE IN INSTRUCTION AND DISCIPLINE IS THE OFFICE OF THE WORD [LOGOS, IN GREEK], FROM WHOM WE LEARN FRUGALITY AND HUMILITY, AND ALL THAT PERTAINS TO LOVE OF FREEDOM, LOVE OF MAN, AND LOVE OF EXCELLENCE."

HIS MISCELLANIES IS A MULTICOLORED PATCHWORK OF TEACHINGS IN ADVANCED PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS, AND DISCIPLINED INSTRUCTION FOR "CHRISTIAN GNOSTICS" TO LEAD THEM INTO ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE (GNOSIS): "THE MAN OF UNDERSTANDING AND DISCERNMENT IS, THEN, A GNOSTIC. AND HIS BUSINESS IS NOT ABSTINENCE FROM WHAT IS EVIL ... OR THE DOING OF GOOD OUT OF FEAR ... NOR ANY MORE IS HE TO DO SO FROM HOPE OF PROMISED RECOMPENSE ... BUT ONLY THE DOING OF GOOD OUT OF LOVE, AND FOR THE SAKE OF ITS OWN EXCELLENCE IS THE GNOSTIC'S CHOICE."



CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA



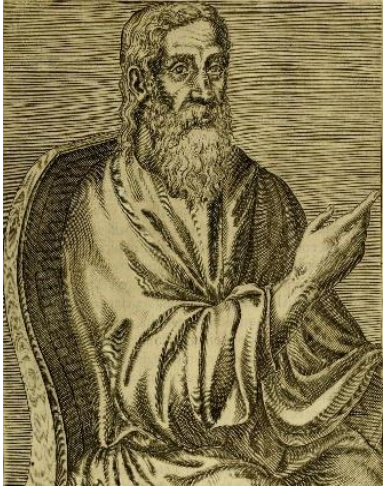
IF THIS SOUNDS MYSTICAL, IT IS. CLEMENT SOUGHT TO REACH THE LITERATI OF HIS DAY, AND Gnosticism was the rage. He sought to present the Christian faith in terms these people could recognize.

Clement didn't spend all his time on pagans but also sought to help the church. One of history's most famous sermons is Clement's. In it he tried to address a recurring problem in church history, but one which Christians were facing for the first time in his day: in light of Jesus' parable of the rich young ruler, what should rich Christians do with their wealth? Clement took an approach that has been debated but usually followed ever since.

Clement puts the issue this way: "Since possessions of one kind are within the soul, and those of another kind outside it, and these latter appear to be good if the soul uses them well, but if they are badly used—which of the two is it that he [Jesus] asks us to renounce?" He answers, "The Lord admits the use of outward things, bidding us put away, not the means of living, but the things that use these badly. And these are ... the infirmities and passions of the soul." In other words, it's our attitude toward possessions (i.e., greed), not the possessions themselves, that are the problem.



CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA



CLEMENT ALSO ADVOCATED USING THE VISUAL ARTS IN WORSHIP AT A TIME WHEN SOME EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE RELUCTANT TO EMPLOY PAINTING OR DRAWING, FEARING ATTENTION TO THEIR WORK MIGHT CONSTITUTE IDOLATRY. CLEMENT CONCLUDED THAT CHRISTIANS ARE NOT TO DEPICT PAGAN GODS, NOR SWORD OR BOW, NOR WINE CUPS, NOR REMINDERS OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY. INSTEAD, "LET OUR EMBLEM BE A DOVE, OR A FISH, OR A SHIP RUNNING BEFORE THE WIND, OR A MUSICIAN'S LYRE, OR A SHIP'S ANCHOR. AND IF THERE BE A FISHERMAN, HE WILL REMIND US OF AN APOSTLE, AND LITTLE CHILDREN BEING DRAWN UP OUT OF THE WATER."

HIS MINISTRY, BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE THE ALEXANDRIAN CHURCH, WAS CUT ABRUPTLY SHORT IN 202, WHEN PERSECUTION BROKE OUT DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS. CLEMENT WAS COMPELLED TO FLEE THE CITY. HE SETTLED IN CAPPADOCIA, AND BY 215 HAD DIED.

BUT HIS INFLUENCE DID NOT END WHEN HIS LIFE DID. HE WAS, ACCORDING TO TRADITION, THE TEACHER OF ORIGEN, A THEOLOGIAN OF IMMENSE INFLUENCE IN THE NEXT GENERATION. HIS MYSTICAL THEOLOGY MAY HAVE ALSO INFLUENCED PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS, WHO WAS THE THEOLOGIAN WHO SHAPED MEDIEVAL MYSTICISM. AND IN THE 1700S, JOHN WESLEY DREW ON CLEMENT'S DEPICTION OF THE TRUE Gnostic FOR HELP IN DESCRIBING CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.



ORIGEN

"WE WHO BY OUR PRAYERS DESTROY ALL DEMONS WHICH STIR UP WARS, VIOLATE OATHS, AND DISTURB THE PEACE ARE OF MORE HELP TO THE EMPERORS THAN THOSE WHO SEEM TO BE DOING THE FIGHTING."



THIS THIRD CENTURY "RELIGIOUS FANATIC" GAVE UP HIS JOB, SLEPT ON THE FLOOR, ATE NO MEAT, DRANK NO WINE, FASTED TWICE A WEEK, OWNED NO SHOES, AND REPORTEDLY CASTRATED HIMSELF FOR THE FAITH. HE WAS ALSO THE MOST PROLIFIC SCHOLAR OF HIS AGE (WITH HUNDREDS OF WORKS TO HIS CREDIT), A FIRST-RATE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER, AND A PROFOUND STUDENT OF THE BIBLE.

CHILD PRODIGY ORIGEN ADAMANTIUS ("MAN OF STEEL") WAS BORN NEAR ALEXANDRIA ABOUT A.D. 185. THE OLDEST OF SEVEN CHILDREN IN A CHRISTIAN HOME, HE GREW UP LEARNING THE BIBLE AND THE MEANING OF COMMITMENT. IN 202 WHEN HIS FATHER, LEONIDAS, WAS BEHEADED FOR HIS CHRISTIAN BELIEFS, ORIGEN WANTED TO DIE AS A MARTYR, TOO. BUT HIS MOTHER PREVENTED HIM FROM EVEN LEAVING THE HOUSE—BY HIDING HIS CLOTHES. TO SUPPORT HIS FAMILY, THE 18-YEAR-OLD ORIGEN OPENED A GRAMMAR SCHOOL, COPIED TEXTS, AND INSTRUCTED CATECHUMENS (THOSE SEEKING TO BECOME MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH). HE HIMSELF STUDIED UNDER THE PAGAN PHILOSOPHER AMMONIUS SACCAS IN ORDER TO BETTER DEFEND HIS FAITH AGAINST PAGAN ARGUMENTS. WHEN A RICH CONVERT SUPPLIED HIM WITH SECRETARIES, HE BEGAN TO WRITE.



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ORIGEN WORKED FOR 20 YEARS ON HIS *HEXAPLA*, A MASSIVE WORK OF OLD TESTAMENT ANALYSIS WRITTEN TO ANSWER JEWISH AND Gnostic CRITICS OF CHRISTIANITY. AN EXAMINATION OF BIBLICAL TEXTS, IT HAD SIX PARALLEL COLUMNS: ONE IN HEBREW, AND THE OTHER FIVE IN VARIOUS GREEK TRANSLATIONS, INCLUDING ONE HE FOUND AT JERICHO IN A JAR. IT BECAME AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CANON AND SCRIPTURAL TRANSLATION, BUT UNFORTUNATELY IT WAS DESTROYED. SO MASSIVE WAS IT THAT SCHOLARS DOUBT ANYONE EVER COPIED IT ENTIRELY.

THIS FIRST BIBLE SCHOLAR ANALYZED THE SCRIPTURES ON THREE LEVELS: THE LITERAL, THE MORAL, AND THE ALLEGORICAL. AS HE PUT IT, "FOR JUST AS MAN CONSISTS OF BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT, SO IN THE SAME WAY DOES THE SCRIPTURE." ORIGEN, IN FACT, PREFERRED THE ALLEGORICAL NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT ALLOWED FOR MORE SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATIONS, BUT MANY PASSAGES HE FOUND IMPOSSIBLE TO READ LITERALLY: "NOW WHAT MAN OF INTELLIGENCE WILL BELIEVE THAT THE FIRST AND THE SECOND AND THE THIRD DAY ... EXISTED WITHOUT THE SUN AND MOON AND STARS?" IN ANY EVENT, ORIGEN'S METHOD OF INTERPRETATION BECAME THE STANDARD IN THE MIDDLE AGES. ORIGEN'S MAIN WORK, *DE PRINCIPIS* (ON FIRST PRINCIPLES), WAS THE FIRST SYSTEMATIC EXPOSITION OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY EVER WRITTEN. IN IT HE CREATED A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY, SYNTHESIZING GREEK TECHNIQUE AND BIBLICAL ASSUMPTIONS. ADD TO THESE MASSIVE WORKS HIS HOMILIES AND



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COMMENTARIES, AND IT'S CLEAR WHY HE WAS REPUTED TO HAVE KEPT SEVEN SECRETARIES BUSY AND CAUSED JEROME (C.354–420) TO SAY IN FRUSTRATED ADMIRATION, "HAS ANYONE READ EVERYTHING THAT ORIGEN WROTE?"



ORIGEN HAS ALWAYS BEEN CONTROVERSIAL. HIS REPORTED SELF-MUTILATION, IN RESPONSE TO MATTHEW 19:12 ("... THERE ARE EUNUCHS WHO HAVE MADE THEMSELVES EUNUCHS FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN...") WAS CONDEMNED AS A DRASTIC MISINTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT. IN PALESTINE HE PREACHED WITHOUT BEING ORDAINED AND WAS SO CONDEMNED BY HIS BISHOP, DEMETRIUS. WHEN ON A SECOND TRIP, HE WAS ORDAINED BY THE SAME BISHOPS WHO HAD INVITED HIM TO SPEAK THE FIRST TIME, DEMETRIUS SENT HIM INTO EXILE.

WHILE SOME OF HIS WRITINGS ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN HYPOTHETICAL, ORIGEN DID TEACH THAT ALL SPIRITS WERE CREATED EQUAL, EXISTED BEFORE BIRTH, AND THEN FELL FROM GRACE. FURTHERMORE, "THOSE RATIONAL BEINGS WHO SINNED AND ON ACCOUNT FELL FROM THE STATE IN WHICH THEY WERE, IN PROPORTION TO THEIR PARTICULAR SINS, WERE ENSLAVED IN BODIES AS PUNISHMENT"—SOME DEMONS, SOME MEN, AND SOME ANGELS. HE ALSO BELIEVED THAT ALL SPIRITS, EVEN SATAN, COULD BE SAVED. "THE POWER OF CHOOSING BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL IS WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL," HE WROTE. MOST NOTABLY, HOWEVER, ORIGEN DESCRIBED THE TRINITY AS A HIERARCHY



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NOT AS AN EQUALITY OF FATHER, SON, AND SPIRIT. AND THOUGH HE ATTACKED Gnostic beliefs, like them, he rejected the goodness of material creation.



Three centuries after his death, the Council of Constantinople (553) pronounced him a heretic: "Whoever says or thinks that the punishment of demons and the wicked will not be eternal ... let him be anathema."

Some contend that Origen was merely trying to frame the faith in the ideas of his day; still his works were suppressed following his condemnation, so modern judgment is impossible.

Despite such condemnation, Origen said, "I want to be a man of the church ... to be called ... of Christ." His *Contra Celsum*, in fact, is one of the finest defenses of Christianity produced in the early church. Answering the charge that Christians, by refusing military service, fail the test of good citizenship, he wrote, "We who by our prayers destroy all demons which stir up wars, violate oaths, and disturb the peace are of more help to the emperors than those who seem to be doing the fighting."



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THE AUTHORITIES, HOWEVER, WERE NOT CONVINCED: IN 250 THE EMPEROR DECIUS HAD ORIGEN IMPRISONED AND TORTURED. HE WAS DELIBERATELY KEPT ALIVE IN THE HOPE THAT HE WOULD RENOUNCE HIS FAITH. BUT DECIUS DIED FIRST AND ORIGEN WENT FREE. HIS HEALTH BROKEN, ORIGEN DIED SHORTLY AFTER HIS RELEASE.



EUSEBIUS

"I FEEL INADEQUATE TO DO [CHURCH HISTORY] JUSTICE AS THE FIRST TO VENTURE ON SUCH AN UNDERTAKING, A TRAVELER ON A LONELY AND UNTRODDEN PATH."



IMAGINE WRITING A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH'S LAST THREE CENTURIES. NOW IMAGINE NO ONE HAS EVER WRITTEN SUCH A HISTORY BEFORE, SO THERE'S NO SINGLE COLLECTION OF KEY DOCUMENTS, NO BOOKS PROFILING KEY FIGURES, NO CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS, NOT EVEN A FIXED SYSTEM OF DATES. WHEN EUSEBIUS, BISHOP OF CAESAREA, UNDERTOOK SUCH AN EFFORT, HE FELT TREPIDATION: "I FEEL INADEQUATE TO DO IT JUSTICE AS THE FIRST TO VENTURE ON SUCH AN UNDERTAKING, A TRAVELER ON A LONELY AND UNTRODDEN PATH," HE WROTE IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO *THE CHURCH HISTORY* (OR *ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY*). "BUT I PRAY THAT GOD MAY GUIDE ME AND THE POWER OF THE LORD ASSIST ME, FOR I HAVE NOT FOUND EVEN THE FOOTPRINTS OF ANY PREDECESSORS ON THIS PATH, ONLY TRACES IN WHICH SOME HAVE LEFT VARIOUS ACCOUNTS OF THE TIMES IN WHICH THEY LIVED."

FOR THIS TEN-VOLUME WORK, EUSEBIUS IS KNOWN AS "THE FATHER OF CHURCH HISTORY." BUT IN HIS DAY, HE WAS AS MUCH A MAKER OF HISTORY AS A RECORDER OF IT.



EUSEBIUS



THERE WAS ONCE A BIOGRAPHY OF EUSEBIUS, WRITTEN BY HIS SUCCESSOR AS CAESAREA'S BISHOP, BUT LIKE SO MANY OTHER DOCUMENTS, IT IS LOST. SO WE KNOW NOTHING FOR CERTAIN ABOUT THIS HISTORIAN'S EARLY LIFE. HE WAS PROBABLY BORN IN PALESTINE, CERTAINLY BAPTIZED AT CAESAREA AND ORDAINED A PRESBYTER (ELDER) UNDER HIS TEACHER AND FRIEND, PAMPHILUS. SO CLOSELY DID HE FOLLOW THIS ORIGEN DEVOTEE THAT HE CALLED HIMSELF EUSEBIUS PAMPHILI, SON OF PAMPHILUS.

BUT IN 303 CAME DIOCLETIAN WHO ORDERED HIS "GREAT PERSECUTION," AND PAMPHILUS WAS MARTYRED WITHIN SEVEN YEARS. EUSEBIUS TOO, WAS IMPRISONED BUT MANAGED TO AVOID HIS MENTOR'S FATE. AROUND 313, ABOUT THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE'S EDICT OF MILAN, EUSEBIUS BECAME BISHOP OF THE PALESTINIAN CITY. THERE HE CONTINUED WORK ON HIS CHURCH HISTORY, WHICH HE BEGAN DURING THE PERSECUTIONS. HE ALSO WROTE A 15-VOLUME REFUTATION OF PAGANISM CALLED *PREPARATION*, AND *DEMONSTRATION OF THE GOSPEL*, DEMONSTRATING CHRIST'S FULFILLMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY; HE ALSO COMPLETED HIS *CHRONICLE OF WORLD HISTORY*. EUSEBIUS'S *HISTORY* WAS NOT WRITTEN SIMPLY TO RECORD THE DEEDS OF THE CHURCH AFTER CHRIST'S ASCENSION; HE WANTED TO SHOW THAT CHRISTIANITY, WITH CONSTANTINE'S CONVERSION, WAS THE PINNACLE OF HUMANITY'S LONG CLIMB. THE CHURCH HAD BEEN AN OPPRESSED MINORITY, BUT NOW IT COULD ENTER A PERIOD OF PEACE.



EUSEBIUS



JUST AS EUSEBIUS WAS WRITING ABOUT CHRISTIANITY'S DEFEAT OF PAGANISM, ONE OF ITS GREATEST THREATS WAS DEVELOPING ON THE INSIDE. ARIUS, A PRESBYTER FROM LIBYA, WAS GAINING FOLLOWERS AROUND THE EMPIRE, TEACHING, "THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE SON WAS NOT." EGYPTIAN BISHOP ALEXANDER AND HIS CHIEF DEACON, ATHANASIUS, FUMED AT THE TEACHING. THE ARGUMENT SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE, PROMISING TO RIP THE CHURCH IN TWO. CONSTANTINE—GOD'S CHOSEN INSTRUMENT, AS EUSEBIUS SAW HIM—CALLED THE COUNCIL OF NICEA TO CLOSE THE FISSURE.

SINCE HIS EARLIEST DAYS WITH PAMPHILUS, EUSEBIUS WAS ENTHRALLED WITH THE TEACHINGS OF ORIGEN, WHO HAS BEEN CRITICIZED FOR 1,800 YEARS FOR HIS BELIEF THAT THE TRINITY WAS A HIERARCHY, NOT AN EQUALITY. SO EUSEBIUS WAS LESS CONCERNED WITH ARIUS'S HERESY THAN THE THREAT OF DISUNITY IN THE CHURCH. WHEN ARIUS WAS CENSURED, EUSEBIUS—WHO THOUGHT THE ENTIRE DEBATE BROUGHT CHRISTIANITY THE "MOST SHAMEFUL RIDICULE"—WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO ASK THAT HE BE REINSTATED.

AT THE COUNCIL OF NICEA, EUSEBIUS (WHOSE NAME MEANS "FAITHFUL") ATTEMPTED TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE ARIANS AND THE ORTHODOX. BUT WHEN THE COUNCIL WAS OVER AND ARIUS WAS ANATHEMATIZED, EUSEBIUS WAS RELUCTANT TO AGREE WITH ITS DECISION. HE EVENTUALLY SIGNED THE DOCUMENT THE COUNCIL PRODUCED, SAYING, "PEACE IS THE OBJECT WHICH WE



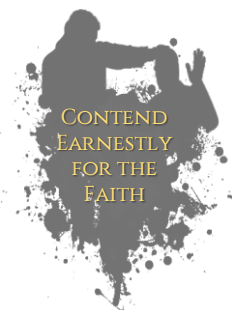
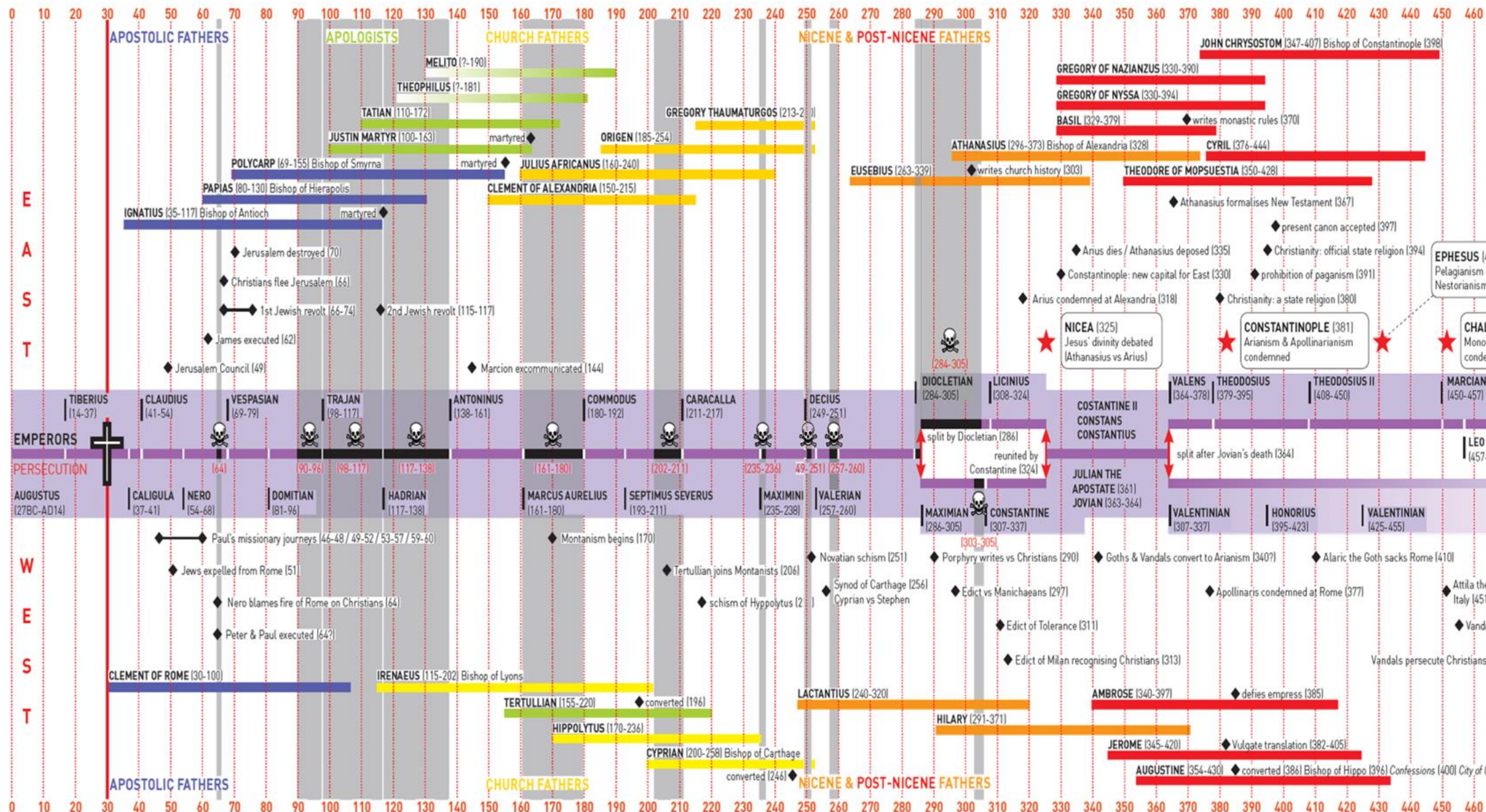
EUSEBIUS



SET BEFORE US." BUT A FEW YEARS LATER, WHEN THE TABLES FLIPPED AND ARIANISM BECAME POPULAR, EUSEBIUS CRITICIZED ATHANASIUS, HERO OF THE COUNCIL. HE EVEN SAT ON THE COUNCIL THAT DEPOSED HIM. EUSEBIUS WASN'T HIMSELF AN ARIAN—HE REJECTED THE IDEA THAT "THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE SON WAS NOT" AND THAT CHRIST WAS CREATED OUT OF NOTHING. HE SIMPLY OPPOSED ANTI-ARIANISM.

AS THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY CONTINUED TO RAGE, EUSEBIUS STAYED IN CAESAREA—DECLINING A PROMOTION TO BECOME BISHOP OF ANTIOCH—AND WROTE. AMONG HIS MOST FAMOUS WRITINGS OF THIS PERIOD WAS ANOTHER HISTORY: A PRAISE-FILLED LIFE OF CONSTANTINE, HIS ADORED POLITICAL LEADER.





CONTENTD
EARNESTLY
FOR THE
FAITH

DISCUSSION



“Never, ever, think outside the box.”

