

# The Christian Sun.

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"THE LORD GOD IS A SUN AND SHIELD."

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## CHURCH HISTORY,

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(Continued.)

Tertullian further says, "God was not always a Father or a Judge, since he could not be a Father before he had a Son, nor a Judge before sin. There was a time when both the Son and sin were not."—*Chap. iii., p. 334.*

Lactantius—"God before making the world, produced a holy and incorruptible Spirit, which he might call his Son, and afterwards by him created innumerable other Spirits called Angels. Christ taught us (that) one God alone (is) to be worshipped, neither did he ever call himself God."—*Iust. Lib. 4, p. 264.*

Hilary, who wrote after the Council of Nice, says, "God the Father, is the cause of all, without beginning, and solitary; but the Son was produced by the Father without time, and was created and founded before the ages. He was not before he was born; but he was born without time; he alone subsists from the Father alone."—*Lib. 4: 59.*

"The Church knows ONE unbegotten God, and ONE begotten Son of God. It acknowledges the Father without origin, and the Son from eternity; not himself without beginning."—*Priestly Cor. Chr. 1: 27.*

Novatian says, "God the Father is alone without origin; when he himself pleased the word was born."—*De Tri. Chap. 10: 31.*

Eusebius—"God at his pleasure begat the Son."—*Dr. Clarke, Trin. 252.*

Novatian—"Sabellians make too much of the divinity of the Son, when they say, it is that of the Father, extending the honor beyond bounds. The Son is indeed God; but God the Father of all, is the God of all."—*Dr. Priestly, Cor. Chr. 1: 29.*

Epiphanius—"There is only one God, the Father Almighty, from whom the only begotten Son truly proceeded."—*Ibid. p. 30.*

Origen—two Gods, etc.; the reply: "To them who charge us that we believe in two Gods, we reply, he who is God of himself, is the God—for which reason our Savior says, (John 17: 3) the only true God, but whatever is God besides him, by communication of his divinity, cannot be properly called the God, but a God. Many pious persons, through fear that they should make two Gods, fall into false and wicked notions."—*Id., p. 5. Do. p. 802.*

Eusebius—"If this makes them apprehend, lest we should seem to introduce two Gods, let them know, that though we do indeed acknowledge the Son to be God, yet there is absolutely but one God, even he who alone is without original, and unbegotten."—*Clarke on the Trinity, p. 307.*

Tertullian—"The unlearned, who are always the greater part of the body of Christians will have it that we worship two, and even three Gods; since the rule of faith transfers the worship of many Gods to the one true God; but that they are the worshippers of one God only. We say they hold the Monarchy. Even the Latins have learned to bawl out for the Monarchy, and the Greeks themselves will not understand the economy."—*Ad. Praxean, Sec. iii., p. 502.*

Novatian, A. D. 251. "The rule of truth teaches us to believe, after the Father, in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; our God, yet the Son of God, of that God who is one and alone, the Maker of all things."—*Chap. 9: 26.*

Eusebius of Casarea, A. D. 315. "The only begotten Son of God, and first-born of every creature, teaches us to call his FATHER THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and commands us to worship Him."—*Præp. Lib. 1: 15.*

"The prevailing view in the Western Church came to this: one divine essence in the Father and Son, but at the same time a subordination in relation of the Son to the Father."—*Neander 1: 605.*

HOLY GHOST.—"The Church Fathers conceived of the Holy Spirit as subordinate to the Father and the Son; the first of the beings produced by the Father through the Son."—*Neander 1: 608.*

Justin Martyr conceived of it as a Spirit "standing in some relation to the angels." Origen describes it "as the only begotten of the Father through the Son, to whom not only being, but also wisdom and holiness, is first communicated by the Son; dependent on him in all these relations."—*Neander 1: 609.*

In this chapter I have given the words of the principal Fathers of the first Centuries.

CONDEMNED OPINIONS OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES, RESPECTING GOD AND THE SON OF GOD.

The original meaning of the word heresy, is choice. On its passing from philosophy over into religion, it came to signify the opinions of one, who, not satisfied with the religion of the Apostles, chose to add to it, subtract from it, change or alter it to suit his view. The word is never spoken of in the New Testament as applied to Christians in a good sense; but we are commanded to reject the heretic, without reference to the comparative good or evil of his heresy. The earliest fathers strongly opposed heresy—but never permitted personal severity.

In looking over the rejected opinions concerning our divine Lord and Savior, it is not to be presumed that every thing condemned is heresy—by no means. Error itself may be clearly distinguished from heresy. But, to one idea, I will direct the notice of the reader, viz: That the doctrine of one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the true Son of the Father has never been condemned by any Council or Church; but that almost every other idea attached to, or relation supposed to exist, between the Father and the Son, has been condemned.

1. "Ebnionites.—No tradition respecting the founder of a sect called Ebnion, is supported on grounds of authentic history. Origen was the first to give the correct derivation of this word from the Hebrew, poor—which may signify the meagre nature of their faith, as hinted by Origen and others—for they believed in the simple humanity of Christ—or, the poverty of their circumstances—for they were of the ancient Jewish congregations, and poor in this world's goods—or, as they themselves professed, from the poverty of their spirit."—*Matt. v. 3. Neander 1: 350. Mosh. 1: 67-71.*

2. "Artemian, in the 2d century, taught that the ancient Christians, up to Victor, of Rome, 13th Bishop, all held that Christ was simply a man. He was easily confuted."

3. "Paul, of Samosata Bishop of Antioch, condemned by a Council in Antioch, A. D. 269, held that the Son and Holy Ghost existed in God, as reason and activity in man. That Jesus was born a very man, but that this Logos descended upon him, by which he wrought miracles; and thus he might, though not properly, be called God."—*Mosh. 1: 95. Condemned by a Council at Antioch, A. D. 269.*

4. "Noetus, of Smyrna, taught that the Supreme God, the Father, united himself to Jesus, the man, and was crucified."—*Hawies 1: 199. The followers of Noetus were also called Pat-*

ripasians, because they held that God, the Father, suffered."—*Mosh. 1: 95.*

5. Praxeas—"The heresy of Praxeas consisted in making the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all one and the same." "Tertullian informs us, that Praxeas first brought this evil from Asia into the Roman world, and seduced many."—*Milnor 1: 143.*

6. "Sabellius, of Africa, Bishop of Barca, maintained, 'that there was no distinct personality between the Father and Son; but that a certain energy, or portion of the divine nature, proceeding from the supreme parent, united to the Son of God, the man Jesus. He was confuted by Dionysius of Alexandria.'"—*Waddington, 78.*

7. "Beryllus denied the pre-existence of Christ as a person. He was confuted by Origen, and returned to the true doctrine."—*Mosh. 1: 95.*

8. "Montanists, from Montanus, in Asia Minor, A. D. 170, who professed to be the Paraclete, or Comforter; the same who had descended on the Apostles. His morality and self-denial was apparently very strict. Condemned by the Asiatic Councils."—*Waddington 78. Tertullian was a defender of the above sect.*

9. "Novatian, a Presbyter of Rome, austere, learned and talented. He refused to readmit to Church fellowship those who had apostatized in persecution, yet did not deny the possibility of their salvation, but would even re-baptize those of other societies who had received such penitent apostates. Cornelius, of Rome, the principal opponent of Novatian had motives for personal enmity against him."—*Hawies 1: 200. Wad. 79.*

"One principal objection against Novatian, was, that being penitent on a sick bed, he was baptized merely by aspersion, sprinkling—and the Roman Clergy had decided, that no person, thus baptized, only by sprinkling on a sick bed, should be ordained."—*Neander 1: 238.*

10. Gnosticism, or Gnostics—knowing. Some suppose that this sect existed previous to Christianity, and that they merely adopted such parts of the Christian religion as suited them, and engrafted it on to their system. That knowledge existed previous to Christianity, is true. That Christianity was engrafted on to this knowledge, is also true; and that many of the converts, Jewish, Oriental, Grecian, and Barbarian, retained many of their old opinions, is also true. Further than this is not true. Their name denoted knowledge, as professed to have the true knowledge of Christianity, and regarded other Christians as simple, ignorant, and barbarous. They have been regarded by some as the only philosophers of the times. Certainly they are very ignorant who suppose that the Apostles wrote against the Gnostics, when they spoke of a false Gnosticism.

I will now give an explanation of terms of the Gnostic system:

1. Primitive Father. By this term they alluded to the original source of all, being the undivided and infinite Jehovah.

2. Æons—that is, eternal beings, the gods; children, or offspring of the primitive; not by creation, but "emanation;" an evolution of numbers out of the original unity; an emanation of light from an original light; or, as expressed in the Nicene creed—God of God—light of light.

3. Pleroma—the whole emanation world, as distinguished from the temporal world—that is the spiritual, heavenly world.

4. Creation, matter, &c.—Matter is necessarily evil, and opposed to Spirit. It always existed, yet was inert and dead, possessing no active power until acted upon by Spirit.

5. The divine emanations of Æons become feebler the farther removed from the original parent. Hence the extremity of the series is imperfect, and sinks from the pleroma—spiritual world, into the chaos, or bordering void; kindles with its own native fire life in the inert matter, and is itself corrupted with the connection, and a new world starts into being beyond the pleroma. This answers to our world of evil spirits, Satan, &c. From this time two kingdoms existed; or the kingdom of light, and the kingdom of darkness—i. e. heaven and hell, or Gods, and devils.

6. As to the Creator of the World, they differed in this idea. Some supposed that a revolted æon formed it for a separate kingdom; but others and perhaps originally the majority, supposed that God the Supreme, appointed one of the Æons, called demiurge, to create it as his representative.

7. They supposed that the great mass of the Jews never rose above the knowledge of the demiurge to that of the invisible Supreme. They said—

8. "As far as the Supreme Æon who appeared in Christ is exalted above the angels and the demiurge, so far does Christianity transcend Judaism, and the whole earthly creation."

9. In Christ, the Supreme God, through his highest Æon, let himself down at once to this inferior system, to draw upward to himself those higher and kindred spiritual natures which are here held in bondage.

10. Christ was this Supreme Æon—the first emanation from the primitive Father, who united himself with the man Jesus, at his birth, or baptism, and left him at his crucifixion—Jesus the very man, or the man in appearance, only suffering.

11. Man consisted of matter necessarily evil, and of a spirit which was an emanation, or at least the offspring of God, through some remote link in the chain of emanation from the original parent—the primitive Father. Thus they made the soul a part of God, which longed to be relieved from this material body, and rise again to its native pleroma—so that they not only held to two Christs, a divine and human—or, two intellectual and personal natures, making not one but two Christs, God and man, but they also thus distinguished, though not in so clear a manner, between the spirit and body in man.

12. They made knowledge in religion the principal thing, yet neglected not practical duty. I have here stated the primitive and leading principles of the Gnostics. They held also many other peculiar principles; also sects among them differed much from these. Whoever wishes to investigate the subject farther can consult Neander 1: 366.

13. Sabians were originally the disciples of John the Baptist, who, contrary to the spirit of their Master, became hostile to Christianity. Norberg published their most important religious book, from which we discover that they became Gnostics.—They held that Fetahil was the world builder, whose awkwardness accounts for all its imperfections. They taught that the

seven star spirits, and twelve star spirits of the zodiac, who sprang from a connection between Fetahil and the spirit of darkness, play an important part in all evil, and originated both Judaism and Christianity. Neander 1: 376, and 383.

14. The Manichean system originated with Mani, of Persia. He was educated in the religion of Zoroaster, and afterward embraced Christianity. He first appeared as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, near the close of the reign of King Sapor I., A. D. 270. He was a profound mathematician and a talented painter, and was altogether a man of superior parts. He conciliated the favor of his Prince, but fled for safety from the Magians. After the death of Sapor in 272, he returned to Persia, but finally, after a disputation with the Magians, refusing to recant, he was flayed alive, and his skin stuffed and hung before the gates of the city, to terrify his followers. His views were strange, lofty, wild, and in general so foreign to Christianity, as to deserve no place here. With him Christianity was the soul of nature, or rather nature was a development of Christianity. His was that form of Gnosticism which attributed to Christ a shadowy body, not a real one. His true body was seen at the transfiguration.

Condemned in the Roman Empire, A. D. 296. Among those ancient systems, almost every form of modern theology on the divinity, is condemned. The nearest idea to truth is that of the Gnostics, in holding Christ as the first emanation from the primitive Father, and as much above demiurge, and the other Æons, (angels) as Christianity is above Judaism, or the material world; but those erred who denied the reality of his flesh.

In condemning the systems which I have noticed, the ancient Church condemned the following theories:

1. Humanitarianism, or Socinianism, held by the Ebionites.

2. That Christ existed in God as a faculty; as reason in man. Paul of Samosata.

3. That the Supreme God united himself to Jesus, and was crucified. Noetus.

4. That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were all but one, and the same. Praxeas.

5. That there was no distinct personality between the Father and the Son. Sabellius.

6. That Christ had no pre-existence as a person. Beryllus.

7. Sprinkling for baptism. Novatian.

8. That the divine Christ was not that Jesus, who was seen by men, but a distinct personal nature—the two nature scheme. Gnostics.

9. That Christ possessed not a real body. Mani.

These being condemned, we have the Christian doctrine demonstrated negatively, as it is in what the ancient Church believed positively—that is:

Christ not being a human being simply, but divine and pre-existent; and that he is not a part of God's self, but a distinct person; and not one and the same as the Father, must be the divine Son of God; for every other view of the matter has been condemned—but this, NEVER!!! While there is no way of illustrating or explaining upon that system which denies the Son, without falling into the one or the other of the above systems, which have been condemned as heretical. That there is one God the Father, no Council has dared to deny—and that there is one true Son of God, has ever prevailed—for, on this Rock the Church is built, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

EMINENT CHRISTIAN PREACHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH SUBSEQUENT TO THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

1st. Justin Martyr, A. D. 163.—"This father of the Church stands first in the ranks of the Alexandrian School. He was a native of Neapolis, in Samaria, had a learned education, and went to the famed school of Alexandria for improvement."—*Hawies 1: 160. See also 167.*

His conversion. "This great man was born at Neapolis. After receiving a philosophical education, he traveled in his youth to Alexandria. He gave himself up to the tuition of the Stoics, till he found that they could learn him nothing more of God. Next he sought truth of a Peripatetic, next of a Pythagorean, and last of a Platonic philosopher. While thus engaged, he says, 'as I was walking near the sea, I was met by an aged person of venerable appearance, whom I beheld with much attention. We soon entered into conversation, and upon my professing a love for private meditation, the venerable old man hinted at the absurdity of mere speculation. I expressed my ardent desire to know God. He pointed to the writings of the Hebrew prophets. He added, above all things, pray that the gates of light may be opened to you, for they are not discernible, nor to be understood by any one, except God and his Christ enable a man to understand.' After further conversation, he left me. I saw him no more; but immediately a fire was kindled in my soul, and I had a strong affection for the prophets, and for those men who are the friends of Christ. I weighed within myself the arguments of the aged stranger; and, in the end, I found the divine Scriptures to be the only sure philosophy."—*Milnor says of his conversion, he has shown us enough to make it evident, that conversion was then looked upon as an inward spiritual work in the soul. Coming to Rome, he met and refuted Marcion, the Gnostic. In A. D. 140, he published his excellent Apology. Not long after, he went to Ephesus, where his dialogue with Trypho the Jew occurred. He afterwards returned to Rome, where he had frequent contests with Crescens the philosopher, and soon after published his second Apology for the Christians. The sincerity of his Christian attachments outweighed every argument, and he was thrown into prison for the crime of being a Christian, with six of his companions. The Prefect inquired in what kind of learning he had been educated, and he related his experience. The Governor replied—*

Prefect. Wretch! art thou captivated with that religion?

Justin. I am, I follow the Christians, and their doctrine is right.

Pre. What is their doctrine?

Jus. We believe the one only God to be the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; and we confess our Lord Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, foretold by the prophets of old; and that he is now the Savior, teacher, and Master of those

who are duly submissive to his instruction, and that he will hereafter be the Judge of mankind, &c.

Pre. Where do the Christians usually assemble?

Jus. The God of the Christians is not confined to any place.

Pre. In what place do you instruct your scholars?

Jus. The place where I dwell.

Pre. If I scourge thee from head to foot, thinkest thou that thou wilt go to heaven?

Jus. I expect to enjoy the portion of all true Christians.

Pre. Do you think that you will go to heaven and receive a reward?

Jus. I know it! and have a certainty of it, which excludes all doubt.

Pre. All go together, and sacrifice to the gods.

Jus. No man whose understanding is sound, will desert the true religion.

Pre. Unless you comply you shall be tormented without mercy.

"All replied, we are Christians, and cannot sacrifice to idols." They were then scourged and beheaded, and their dead bodies interred by their Christian friends.

"His character. Thus slept in Jesus the philosopher Justin, A. D. 163. He is the first Christian since the Apostle's days, who added to an unquestionable zeal and love for the Gospel, the character of a man of learning and a philosopher. His religion was the effect of serious and long deliberation. He examined the various philosophic sects to find out God; and in God true happiness. He tried and found them all wanting. He sought him in the Gospel—he found him there; he confessed him; he gave up every thing for him; he was satisfied with his choice; but he never explicitly owns the doctrine of election."—*(Calvinism.)—See Milnor 1: 103-109.*

"He seems to confess Jesus as the true God, but we wish for a more explicit testimony—an Arian might do the same."—*Hawies, 1: 168, 169.*

Irenæus was a Greek, A. D. 178. "He with singular blessing spread the knowledge of salvation in Gaul. The labors of his ministry were great, and his writings still greater; but he quits the scriptural ground of God's election!"—*(Calvinism.)—Hawies, 1: 170.*

"He was a disciple of St. John he succeeded as Bishop of Lyons in 169. Accurately versed as he was in Grecian literature, he also took pains to learn the barbarous dialect of Gaul, &c., for the love of souls. He describes the faith of the Gauls, who believe in Jesus without paper or ink, having the doctrine of salvation written on their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and faithfully keeping up the ancient tradition concerning one God the Creator, and his Son Jesus Christ." Such was the universal Christian faith.—*Milnor 1: 130.*

That Irenæus believed that this Son of God was divine, and not simply the birth in this world, is proved by his own blessed language:

"If any one asks us, how is the Son produced from the Father, &c., no one knows, &c., but the Father who begat, and the Son who is begotten."—*Lib. 2, chap. 48, p. 176.*

(To be continued.)

## COMMUNICATIONS.

For the Christian Sun.

### "The Door into the Church."

BROTHER HAYES: In compliance with your request, in the Sun of April 28th, I will now offer a few thoughts in reference to the *Church Door*.

Before describing the "Door," it may be well to inquire, what is the Church? A door is the entrance into a building, and we must know the building if we would find the door. Whoever builds the church, of course may select the door; and if any men have a Church of their own, or under their control, they can have such a door as they choose. And it so happens that *water* is the door into some Churches, but probably *paper* constitutes the doors of more—men coming in by their creeds.

But I suppose your inquiry was in reference to the "Church of Christ." I think it is clear that Baptism, or any Church rule or rite, or anything that man can open or shut, cannot be the door into the Church of Christ. As the door is the entrance, all who pass through it are in the building, and all who do not pass through it are out of the building. Hence, if Baptism is the door into Christ's Church, all baptized persons are in that Church, and all unbaptized persons are out of it—no one can be baptized without being Christ's, nor be Christ's, without being baptized. If a hypocrite, or any unconverted man—any one that Christ did not receive—was ever baptized, then baptism was not the door to him, for he was out of Christ's Church, though he had been baptized. So if Christ ever received a disciple, before baptism, that ordinance was not the door to him, for he was in the Church before passing through that door.

Again, if water baptism is the door, then men are appointed Door-keepers, and whomsoever they put through, however unfit, is in the Church; and whomsoever they reject, or whoever neglects to call on them, however worthy, is out of the Church; and Christ himself cannot admit a member without their help, nor keep out one they put through the door. If men can put bad men through the door of Christ's Church, (and certainly they can baptize them,) and reject good men, they may defy the Lord himself and damn and save whom they will. But I suppose there is no intelligent man that strictly believes that baptism is the door into the Church of Christ, except those who believe in baptism for the remission of sins, though some may make it the door into *their branch* of it, yet receive members that others put through their door.

But let us consider, more distinctly, what is the Church of Christ? Is it not the full company of all who are re-

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