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PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE  
THEOLOGY OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

HARRY A. WOLFSON

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CYRIL of Jerusalem, who flourished during the stormy years following the Council of Nicaea, is not counted among those Fathers whom we like to call philosophers. In his only complete work which is extant, the *Catecheses*, no philosophical discussions are introduced, either directly or indirectly, into his exposition of Christian doctrines. In fact, there is no mention of the term “philosophy” or of the name of any philosopher throughout that work. Only once is the term Aristotelian (Ἀριστοτελικόν) mentioned,<sup>1</sup> but this, strangely enough, is used as a description of Scythianus, the reputed founder of Manichaeism. In one place, discussing erroneous views about God, he happens to mention two such views: first, that “God is the soul of the world”; second, that “His power reaches only to heaven, but not to the earth as well.”<sup>2</sup> Philosophically-minded Fathers, such, for instance, as Tatian,<sup>3</sup> Athenagoras,<sup>4</sup> Clement of Alexandria,<sup>5</sup> Origen,<sup>6</sup> Lactantius,<sup>7</sup> and Augustine,<sup>8</sup> on quoting these two views, usually ascribe the former to Aristotle or the Stoics and the latter to Aristotle.<sup>9</sup> But Cyril refers both these views simply to the Greeks (Ἕλληνες), a term which throughout his work he uses in the general sense of Gentiles or heathen, as, for instance, when he speaks of those whom he calls “Greeks” as believing in “myths”<sup>10</sup> and as polytheists<sup>11</sup> and as worshippers of idols.<sup>12</sup> In another place, speaking of resurrection, he says: “Greeks contradict it.”<sup>13</sup> The reference evidently is not to the Greeks mentioned in the New Testament as not believing in the resurrection of Jesus,<sup>14</sup> or to the casual remarks in Homer or Sophocles that the dead cannot be called back to life;<sup>15</sup> it is a reference rather to such denial of the Christian belief in eschatological

<sup>1</sup> *Catech.* VI, 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* VIII, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Oratio ad Graecos* 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Supplicatio ad Graecos* 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Protrep.* 5<sup>96</sup> (PG 8, 169B; 172A); *Strom.* I, 11<sup>88</sup> (8, 149A); V, 14<sup>51</sup> (9, 129B); V 14<sup>90</sup> (9, 132B).

<sup>6</sup> *Cont. Cels.* III, 75; II, 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Div. Inst.* I, 5 (PL 6, 135A).

<sup>8</sup> *De Civ. Dei* V, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. my *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, I (1956), pp. 85–88.

<sup>10</sup> *Catech.* XII, 27; XIII, 37.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* VI, 11 and 17.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* VI, 10–11.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* XVIII, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Acts 17:32; 26:24.

<sup>15</sup> *Iliad* XXIV, 551; *Electra* 137 f.

resurrection as may be found in Celsus<sup>16</sup> and Plotinus,<sup>17</sup> for these "Greeks," he says, are to be answered "by reasonings (*λογισμῶν*) and demonstrations (*ἀποδείξεων*)." <sup>18</sup> Philosophically-minded Fathers, again, would have said here "philosophers contradict it"; and, in fact, Augustine does attribute the denial of the Christian belief in eschatological resurrection to "gentile philosophers."<sup>19</sup> To Cyril, evidently, philosophers did not constitute a special class of men, with a special discipline of their own. They were to him simply heathen. He lumps them together with all those who believed in myths and in many gods, and who worshipped idols.

But still, like the famous unwitting prose-speaking gentleman of Molière's play, Cyril speaks philosophy without being aware of it. And how could he help it! Christian doctrine ever since the middle of the second century, beginning with the Apologists, was presented as a philosophy. The Apologists, and others after them, introduced new philosophical concepts and new philosophical terms into Christianity, and not only did they restore the few philosophical terms and concepts of the New Testament to their original meaning, they also gave a philosophical interpretation to old scriptural terms and old scriptural concepts. All these gradually became part of Christian belief. Christian terminology and formulas became laden with deep philosophical meaning. All those who used them were thus unconsciously philosophers.

Such an unconscious philosopher also was Cyril of Jerusalem, which, in the course of this paper, I shall try to illustrate by two examples.

My first example is taken from his definition of faith.

"There is one sort of faith (*πίστεως*)," says Cyril, "the doctrinal, which implies an assent of the soul (*συγκατάθεσις τῆς ψυχῆς*) concerning some particular thing."<sup>20</sup>

This definition contains two terms, "faith" and "assent." Of these two terms, the term "faith" is used technically both as a religious term in Scripture and as an epistemological term in philosophy. As for the term "assent," however, while in philosophy it is used technically as the equivalent of the term "faith," in Scripture it is not used in any technical sense, though in a non-technical sense it occurs in the New Testament, once as a noun<sup>21</sup> and once as a verb.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Cont. Cels.* V, 14.

<sup>17</sup> *Enn.* III, 6, 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Catech.* XVIII, 10.

<sup>19</sup> *In Ps.* 88, 5 (*PL* 37, 1134).

<sup>20</sup> *Catech.* V, 10.

<sup>21</sup> 2 Cor. 2:16.

<sup>22</sup> Luke 23:51.

Let us then study the technical sense in which these two terms are used in philosophy,<sup>23</sup> and let us see whether that particular philosophical sense of these two terms is reflected in Cyril's definition of faith as an assent.

In Greek philosophy, the term "faith" has two technical meanings. First, in both Plato and Aristotle, it is used in the sense of a special kind of "opinion," or, as it is sometimes called, a "vehement assumption" (*ὑπόληψις σθοδρά*), in the general scheme of the division of knowledge into sensation (*αἴσθησις*), opinion (*δόξα*), and scientific knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*). Second, in Aristotle, it is used, not only in the sense of a particular kind of knowledge along with all the other kinds of knowledge, but also in the sense of a judgment of the truth of all the other kinds of knowledge, that is to say, as a judgment that the knowledge we have of a thing is self-consistent or that it corresponds to the reality of the thing — self-consistency and correspondence being, according to Aristotle, the two criteria of the truth of a thing. There is a certain faculty in our mind, he seems to say, by which we come to have faith and to become certain that the knowledge we possess is true. Taken in this sense, faith is said by Aristotle to be the judgment of the truth of both immediate knowledge, such as the primary premises, and of derivative knowledge, such as demonstrated conclusions. Thus, in one place he says that "things are true and primary which obtain faith (*πίστιν*), not on the strength of anything else, but of themselves,"<sup>24</sup> and in another place he says that there is "faith" also "on the strength of reason (*λόγου*),"<sup>25</sup> or "from induction and syllogistic proof."<sup>26</sup>

In exactly the same sense as that in which Aristotle uses the term "faith" the Stoics use the term "assent (*συγκατάθεσις*)." Assent is to them the judgment of the truth of our knowledge. And the knowledge of which assent is a judgment of its truth is, as in Aristotle, twofold in kind, either immediate knowledge or derivative knowledge. Thus with regard to immediate knowledge the Stoics are reported to have said that "all sensation is an assent"<sup>27</sup> or "cannot take place without assent,"<sup>28</sup> and that "the notions (*notitiae*) of things . . . can have no existence without assent";<sup>29</sup> with regard to derivative knowledge they are reported to have said that "all opin-

<sup>23</sup> The various brief analyses of the historical background of Cyril's statements on faith, which are interspersed in the next few pages, are summarizations, with some additions, of my discussion of "Faith and Reason" in *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, I, pp. 97-140.

<sup>24</sup> *Top.* I, 1, 100a, 30-100b, 18.

<sup>25</sup> *Phys.* VIII, 8, 262a, 18-19

<sup>26</sup> *De Soph. Elench.* 4, 165b, 27-28; *Anal. Post* II, 3, 90b, 14; *Top.* I, 8, 103b, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Arnim, *S.V.F.*, II, 72.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* II, 115; I, 61.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* II, 115.

ion (δόξα) and judgment (κρίσις) and assumption (ὑπόληψις) and learning (μάθησις) . . . is an assent.”<sup>30</sup>

While “faith” in Aristotle and “assent” in the Stoics are thus used in the same sense, Aristotle never uses “assent” and the Stoics never use “faith” in this sense of the judgment of the truth of knowledge. In Aristotle the word “assent” occurs only once in its verb form (συγκαταθήσεται),<sup>31</sup> and it is used in the sense of a moral judgment as to the goodness of a thing, and not as an intellectual judgment as to the truth of a thing; in the Stoics the term “faith” does occur often, but always in the sense of a “strong assumption (ὑπόληψις ἰσχυρά).”<sup>32</sup> But then comes Clement of Alexandria who, combining these two terms, the Aristotelian “faith” and the Stoic “assent,” defines “faith” as an “assent of the soul (ψυχῆς συγκατάθεσις).” And this “faith” which is “assent” is applied by him, as the one or the other of these terms is applied by Aristotle and the Stoics, to both immediate knowledge, which he describes by the Stoic, as well as the Epicurean, phrase as a “pre-conception (πρόληψις) of the mind,”<sup>33</sup> and derivative knowledge, which he describes by the Stoic terms quoted above as “opinion” and “judgment” and “assumption” and “learning.”<sup>34</sup>

This is Clement’s restatement in Stoic terms of Aristotle’s philosophical definition of “faith” as an epistemological concept.

Then, transferring this philosophical definition of faith as an epistemological concept to the scriptural use of the term faith as a religious concept, he says that primarily faith is “obedience to commandments (τὸ πείθεσθαι ταῖς ἐντολαῖς),”<sup>35</sup> which reflects the scriptural expression “I have believed the commandments (ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ἐπίστευσα),”<sup>36</sup> and in which the term τὸ πείθεσθαι, as in the New Testament, is used by him in the sense of both “obedience” and “assent.” This obedience or assent to commandments, like the faith of Aristotle and the assent of the Stoics, he says, is twofold in kind. Either it is a grasping of the teachings of Scripture “by faith” as one grasps an “indemonstrable primary premise,” inasmuch as the teachings of Scripture, being the voice of God, are “self-evidently true,”<sup>37</sup> or it is like an assent to the conclusion of a valid demonstration, in which case, the faith is called “scientific faith” (ἐπιστημονικὴ πίστις),<sup>38</sup> or “exact faith

<sup>30</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* II, 12<sup>55</sup> (PG 8, 992C).

<sup>31</sup> *Top.* III, 1, 116a, 11–12.

<sup>32</sup> Arnim, *S.V.F.*, III, 548 (p. 147, l. 11).

<sup>33</sup> *Strom.* II, 4<sup>20</sup> (PG 8, 948B).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. above n. 30.

<sup>35</sup> *Strom.* II, 11<sup>48</sup> (PG 8, 984C).

<sup>36</sup> Ps. 119:66.

<sup>37</sup> *Strom.* XII, 16<sup>95</sup> (PG 9, 532C).

<sup>38</sup> *Strom.* II, 11<sup>49</sup> (PG 8, 985A).

(ἀκριβῆς πίστις)"<sup>39</sup> or simply "gnosis."<sup>40</sup> But more than that, on the basis of scriptural proof-texts, he tries to show the permissibility as well as the usefulness of philosophy as a support of religious beliefs. "I call him truly learned," he says, "who brings everything to bear on the truth; so that, from geometry and music, and philosophy itself, culling what is useful, he guards the faith against assault."<sup>41</sup> Still he does not consider philosophically demonstrated faith superior to simple faith; both of them, according to him, are equally perfect and spiritual, for the teaching of Scripture, he argues, is "perfect and complete in itself," and therefore he "who knows what is perfect," whether he knows it with demonstration or without it, cannot be "imperfect";<sup>42</sup> and, using the term "gnostic" as a description of those who possess demonstrated faith and the term "psychical" of those who possess simple faith, he maintains that "there are not in the same Word some gnostics and some psychical men; but all who have abandoned the desires of the flesh are equal and spiritual before God."<sup>43</sup>

In the light of this, when Cyril defines faith as that "which implies an assent of the soul concerning some particular thing," it reflects a definition of religious faith in terms of philosophy.

But here a question comes up. While Clement's definition of religious faith as an assent, that is, a voluntary obedience to the teachings of Scripture, represents the generally accepted view among the Fathers of the Church, there were differences of opinion among them with regard to the usefulness of philosophy as a support of faith, and also with regard to the equality between simple faith and philosophically demonstrated faith. Clement himself speaks of those of his own time whom he describes as the "multitude" as those who "are frightened at the Hellenic philosophy, as children are at masks, being afraid lest it lead them astray."<sup>44</sup> No names are mentioned by him. But one of his contemporaries, Tertullian, writing in Latin and probably unknown to Clement, shared in this denial of merit to philosophy as a support of faith, though with some qualification. According to Tertullian, the search of philosophical demonstration for beliefs on the part of a believing Christian implies either that he had not really believed or that he ceased to believe, but to have ceased to believe means a desertion of faith, and a desertion of faith means a denial of faith. The search of philosophical demonstration on the part of a believer, he there-

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* I, 6<sup>38</sup> (PG 8, 278B).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* II, 11<sup>48</sup> (PG 8, 984C); VI, 17<sup>158</sup> (PG 9, 388A).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* I, 9<sup>48</sup> (PG 8, 740C).

<sup>42</sup> *Paedag.* I, 6<sup>26</sup> (PG 8, 280A); I, 6<sup>29</sup> (285A).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* I, 6<sup>31</sup> (288AB).

<sup>44</sup> *Strom.* VI, 10<sup>80</sup> (PG 9, 301A).



fore concludes, cannot pass with impunity, for “with impunity rambles [only] he who deserts nothing.”<sup>45</sup> From his own example, however, it may be inferred that he saw no danger in the use of philosophical demonstration for religious beliefs on the part of one who had acquired a knowledge of philosophy before he acquired faith. But in contrast to these two views, the views of Clement and Tertullian, there is a third view, the view of Origen. To Origen, faith demonstrated by reason is superior to simple faith. “There is a great difference,” he says, “between knowledge conjoined with faith and faith only,”<sup>46</sup> for, he argues, “in agreement with the spirit of Christianity, it is of much more importance to give our assent (*συγκατατίθεσθαι*) to doctrines upon grounds of reason and wisdom than upon that of faith only.”<sup>47</sup>

Exactly what is meant by the equality or inequality of these two kinds of faith is not clearly stated by any of the Fathers who deal with this problem. In the case of Clement it can be shown that by the equality of these two kinds of faith he does not mean an equality of reward in the hereafter, for in a passage in which he identifies simple believers and philosophically-minded believers respectively with those who perform good work out of fear of God and those who perform good work out of love of God, he says that “their rewards are different.”<sup>48</sup> Evidently what he means by the equality of these two kinds of faith is their equal ability to resist the seducement of false views. By the same token, when, in opposition to Clement, Origen maintains that philosophically demonstrated faith is superior to simple faith, he means thereby that the philosophically minded believer, whom, like Clement, he identifies with the lover of God as against the simple believer whom he identifies with the fearer of God,<sup>49</sup> is more strongly fortified against the seducements of false beliefs than the simple believer. This is also the meaning of Tertullian’s statement, quoted above, that “with impunity rambles [only] he who deserts nothing,” that is to say, only he who does not try to desert simple faith by the search for philosophical demonstration is without danger of falling into a denial of faith. And this, also, quite evidently, is the meaning of the term “merit” used by Thomas Aquinas<sup>50</sup> in his discussion of simple faith and philosophically demonstrated faith, for the expression “merit of faith” (*meritum fidei*) in that discussion is definitely not used by him in the sense of a difference in the “reward”

<sup>45</sup> *De Praeser. Haer.* 11.

<sup>46</sup> *In Joan.* XIX, 1 (PG 14, 529C); ed. Preuschen, XIX, 3, 20.

<sup>47</sup> *Cont. Cels.* I, 13.

<sup>48</sup> *Strom.* IV, 18<sup>113-5-114-1</sup> (PG 8, 1321BC).

<sup>49</sup> *In Gen., Hom.* VII, 4 (PG 12, 201B).

<sup>50</sup> *Sum. Theol.* II-II, qu. 2.

(*praemium vel merces*)<sup>51</sup> of these two kinds of faith, but rather in the sense of a difference in the strength of the faith to resist false teachings.<sup>52</sup>

In the light of these differences of opinion, when Cyril defines faith as that "which implies an assent of the soul concerning some particular thing," the following questions may be raised: Is that particular thing to be assented to as an immediately perceived truth or as a demonstrated truth? Are the two kinds of faith yielded by the two kinds of assent equal or unequal? If the latter, is their inequality of the Tertullianic or of the Origenian kind? No direct answers to these questions are given by Cyril. Let us then see what we may gather indirectly from some of his statements which deal with faith.

To begin with, there is a statement wherein, referring to the articles of faith which he has taught to his catechumens, Cyril warns them as follows: "Guard them with reverence, lest perchance the enemy spoil (*συλήση*) any of you who have been puffed up (*χαυνοθέντας*); lest some heretic pervert any of the truths delivered to you."<sup>53</sup>

This passage reflects Paul's warning: "Beware that any one spoil (*μή τις . . . ὁ συλαγωγῶν*) you through philosophy and vain deceit."<sup>54</sup>

Now it happens that this warning of Paul is interpreted by the Fathers in two ways. Tertullian takes it to mean that all philosophy is vain deceit; hence Paul's word is to him a warning against the use of philosophy even in support of the teachings of Scripture, and he exclaims: "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? . . . Our instruction comes from 'the porch of Solomon' [Acts 3:11, 5:12], who had himself taught that 'the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart' [Wisd. 1:1]. Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition."<sup>55</sup> Origen, however, takes it to refer, not to all philosophy, but only to that kind of philosophy which is vain deceit, and this because of its containing views "which are plausible in the eyes of the many, but which represent falsehood as truth."<sup>56</sup> Later, Augustine similarly takes it to refer only to philosophy which is vain deceit, namely, that kind of philosophy which Paul himself describes as being "after the rudiments of the world"; and,

<sup>51</sup> For "merit" in the sense of "reward," see *Sum. Theol.* I-II, 114, lc.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, 2, 10. The substance of this paragraph, by an oversight, was left out in my discussion of "Single Faith Theories" and "Double Faith Theory" in *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, I, pp. 106-111, 120-127.

<sup>53</sup> *Catech.* V, 13.

<sup>54</sup> Col. 2:8.

<sup>55</sup> *De Praeser. Haer.* 7.

<sup>56</sup> *Cont. Cels.* I, Praef. 5.

as if he had Tertullian's statement in mind, he says that Paul's condemnation of "philosophy and vain deceit" does not include the philosophy of the Platonists, which, he says, leads to "the belief in God and His Word."<sup>57</sup>

In the light of these two kinds of interpretation of Paul's warning against "philosophy and vain deceit," the question arises as to what Cyril's interpretation of it was. It will be noticed that in his paraphrase of Paul's warning, the indefinite "any one" of Paul is changed to "the enemy" and to "some heretic." Now, in Paul the indefinite "any one" quite evidently refers to a philosopher, for that "any one" is described as one who might spoil them "through philosophy and vain deceit." Consequently "the enemy" and "some heretic" in Cyril's warning must refer to someone who is a philosopher. Consequently, too, Cyril's expression "any of you who have been puffed up (*χαυνοθέντας*)" is to be taken to mean being puffed up with philosophical knowledge, and thus, despite the difference in the Greek term used in it for being puffed up, it would reflect Paul's statement that "knowledge puffeth up (*γνώσις φυσιοῖ*),"<sup>58</sup> for, according to Clement of Alexandria, the "knowledge" which "puffeth up" includes also the "knowledge of the philosophers of the Greeks."<sup>59</sup> But the question is, how did Cyril understand the warning of Paul upon which he based his own warning? Did he take it to mean, as did Tertullian, that all philosophy is vain deceit leading to heresy? In that case, by "the enemy" and "some heretic" he would mean every philosopher. Or, did he take it to mean, as did Origen, that only philosophy which is vain deceit leads to heresy? In that case, by "the enemy" and "some heretic" he would mean only the wrong kind of philosopher.

Then there is that mysterious strange woman, who, like the dark lady in the Sonnets, turns up occasionally in the pages of the Church Fathers.

In the works of Cyril, she turns up in the following passage:

"And the Greeks by their smooth tongue (*εὐγλωττίας*) draw you aside, 'for honey droppeth from the lips of a strange woman' [Prov. 5:3]."<sup>60</sup> In this passage, besides the direct quotation of the verse about the strange woman, the expression "the Greeks by their smooth tongue" contains also an allusion to the verse which says that wisdom "may keep thee from a strange and wicked woman, if she should make an attempt upon thee with pleasing words (*λόγοις τοῖς πρὸς χάριν*)."<sup>61</sup>

Now it happens that the "strange woman" in the Book of Proverbs is

<sup>57</sup> *Conf.* VIII, 2, 3.

<sup>58</sup> 1 Cor. 8:1.

<sup>59</sup> *Strom.* II, 11<sup>48</sup> (PG 8, 984B)

<sup>60</sup> *Catech.* IV, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Prov. 7:5 (LXX).

taken by some Fathers to refer to Greek philosophy. Thus Clement of Alexandria, in one passage,<sup>62</sup> raises the question whether or not the verses in the Book of Proverbs in which it is said that wisdom may “keep thee from a strange and wicked woman”<sup>63</sup> for from her lips “honey droppeth,”<sup>64</sup> refer to “Hellenic culture” and “philosophy.” His answer is that though they do so refer, they are not to be taken as a total condemnation of the use of Greek secular culture and philosophy, but admonish us only “not to linger and spend time with them.” In another passage,<sup>65</sup> in an allusion to those who were opposed to philosophy, he quotes them as saying: “They know that, after lending their ears to Hellenic studies, they will never subsequently be able to retract their steps.” The allusion here, again, is to the strange woman, concerning whom it is said in the Book of Proverbs that “none who go unto her return again.”<sup>66</sup> Similarly, when Gregory of Nyssa says that “secular knowledge is a spouse of foreign stock (ἡ ἐξ ἀλλοφύλων ὁμόζυγος),”<sup>67</sup> the reference is to that “strange (ἀλλοτρίας) woman”<sup>68</sup> from whom wisdom is said to keep one away, though it may include also a reference to Hagar, who in Philo is taken to symbolize secular knowledge as against wisdom,<sup>69</sup> and though, furthermore, it may also include a reference to the prohibition against marriage with heathen women lest their children might bring in heathen pollution.<sup>70</sup>

In the light of this interpretation of the “strange woman” as referring to philosophy, the question may be raised whether by the term “Greeks” in this passage Cyril means, as he does in other passages, heathen worshippers in general, or whether in this passage, because of his comparison of the “Greeks” to the “strange woman,” he means, specifically, Greek philosophy. Moreover, on the assumption that he means philosophy, the question is whether the scriptural warning against the “strange woman” is taken by him, as by Clement of Alexandria, only as a warning against the excessive use of philosophy, or whether it is taken by him, as by those contemporaries referred to by Clement of Alexandria, as a prohibition against the use of philosophy altogether.

Whatever his attitude may have been on all these points, it is certain that he was opposed to Origen’s view that philosophical speculation in

<sup>62</sup> *Strom.* I, 5<sup>29</sup> (PG 8, 720C-721A).

<sup>63</sup> Prov. 7:5 (LXX); cf. 5:2; 5:20

<sup>64</sup> Prov. 5:3 (LXX).

<sup>65</sup> *Strom.* VI, 11<sup>80</sup> (PG 9, 309C)

<sup>66</sup> Prov. 2:19.

<sup>67</sup> *De Vita Moysis* (PG 44, 336D-337A).

<sup>68</sup> Prov. 7:5.

<sup>69</sup> *Congr.* 27, 154.

<sup>70</sup> Exod. 34:15-16; Deut. 7:3-4

religious matters is necessary for the strengthening of religious beliefs. In one passage, after stating that the teachings of Christianity rest upon Scripture alone, and are to be demonstrated only "with the proof from the Scriptures," he says that we must not "be drawn aside by mere plausibility and artifices of speech. . . . For this salvation which we believe depends not on ingenious reasoning, but on demonstration of the Holy Scriptures."<sup>71</sup> Here "mere plausibility and artifices of speech" and "ingenious reasoning," which he contrasts with "demonstration of the Holy Scriptures" quite evidently refer to what Origen would call demonstration of philosophy. Having thus substituted the "demonstration of the Holy Scriptures" for what Origen would call the demonstration of philosophy, in another passage he then makes use of Origen's argument for attaching merit to simple faith without the demonstration of philosophy as a justification for his teaching to his catechumens a simple faith based only upon dogmatic assertions without "demonstration of the Holy Scriptures."

The argument as given by Origen reads as follows: "If it were possible for all to leave the business of life, and devote themselves to philosophy, no other method ought to be adopted by any one, but this alone. . . . But since the course alluded to is impossible partly on account of the necessities of life, partly on account of the weakness of men . . . what better method could be devised with a view of assisting the multitude, than that which was delivered by Jesus to the heathen? . . . For it is manifest that [if we were to insist upon faith arrived at through philosophy], all men, with very few exceptions, would fail to obtain this [amelioration of conduct] which they have obtained through a simple faith, but would continue to remain in the practice of a wicked life."<sup>72</sup>

The same argument as given by Cyril reads as follows: "For since all cannot read the Scriptures, some being hindered as to the knowledge of them by want of learning, and others by want of leisure, in order that the soul may not perish from ignorance, we comprise the whole doctrine of faith in a few lines."<sup>73</sup>

Quite evidently the passage in Cyril is based upon the passage in Origen, and the change in the use of the same argument from its application to philosophical demonstration as against simple faith, to an application to scriptural demonstration as against undemonstrated articles of belief, is deliberate; and the reason for this change, it is quite evident, is that to

<sup>71</sup> *Catech.* IV, 17.

<sup>72</sup> *Cont. Cels.* I, 9.

<sup>73</sup> *Catech.* V, 12.

Cyril philosophical demonstration is not necessary for the strengthening of religious beliefs.

And so Cyril's definition of faith as an assent, like that of Clement and Origen, reflects a philosophical source. But while it may be inferred from his writings that he did not recommend philosophy and that he may even have condemned it, it is not certain whether he condemned all philosophy or only the wrong kind of philosophy.

My second example is taken from Cyril's discussion of the Trinity.

On the whole, in his Trinitarian doctrine Cyril follows the Nicene Creed in its most essential contention, namely, in its rejection of Arianism, for while the name Arius or Arianism is not mentioned by him, when he says that God "did not bring forth the Son from non-existence into existence,"<sup>74</sup> or when he repudiates those "who dare to say that Christ was brought into existence out of non-existence,"<sup>75</sup> he definitely rejects Arianism. In two things, however, he does not follow the Nicene Creed: he does not use the expression "*homoousios* with the Father (*ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ*)" nor the expression "begotten of the *ousia* (*ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας*) of the Father." Instead, for the former expression he uses the expression "in all things like (*homoion*) to him that begot him (*τὸν ὅμοιον κατὰ πάντα τῷ γεννήσαντι*),"<sup>76</sup> or some similar expression in which the term *homoios* is used,<sup>77</sup> and for the latter expression he uses the expression "begotten of the Father (*γεννηθεὶς ἐκ πατρὸς*)."<sup>78</sup>

Now, as for the latter departure from the language of the Nicene Creed, it can be easily explained. To begin with, the Nicene Creed itself uses in its main formulation of the doctrine the phrase *ek tou patros*, and it introduces the phrase *ek tes ousias tou patros* only as an explanation of the former phrase. Then, from Athanasius' defense of the Nicene Creed we gather that the second phrase was introduced only in order to remove a certain misunderstanding that might arise with regard to the meaning of the original phrase.<sup>79</sup> So also from Eusebius' account of the proceedings at Nicaea we gather that the second phrase was not meant to add anything new to the first phrase.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the phrase *ek tes ousias tou patros* never evoked widespread opposition, as did the phrase *homoousion to patri*, and there

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* XI, 14.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* XV, 9.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* IV, 7.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* VI, 7; XI, 4; XI, 9.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* XI, 5.

<sup>79</sup> *De Decret.* 19.

<sup>80</sup> *Eusebii Epistola ad Caesarienses* 5 (PG 20, 1540C-1541A).

were those who used the former phrase, even though they were opposed to the use of the latter.<sup>81</sup> Finally, from Basil's correspondence with Apollinaris we may gather that those who opposed *ousia* opposed it only "in order to leave no room for *homoousios*."<sup>82</sup> Consequently, the omission by Cyril of the phrase containing the term *ousia* does not mean a departure from the Nicene Creed; it means, rather, the retention of only one phrase, the main phrase, of the two used in the Nicene Creed.

But with regard to the phrase *homoousion to patri*, which became a subject of long and bitter controversy, its omission by Cyril needs explanation. Undoubtedly the reason for his omission of the phrase was based upon objections raised against it by those who opposed the Nicene Creed. But what were those objections, and is there any intimation of any of these objections in Cyril?

One of the objections to the use of *homoousios* was the rumor current at that time that the term had been used by Paul of Samosata, and that it was, therefore, rejected by the third Council of Antioch,<sup>83</sup> which had taken place about sixty years before the Council of Nicaea. The rumor, it may be remarked, has so far not been substantiated.<sup>84</sup> Now it is quite possible that Cyril was influenced by this objection. Still, nowhere in his allusions to views which may be identified with those of Paul of Samosata, whom, by the way, he never mentions by name, does he give any intimation that he was aware of Paul's use of the term *homoousios*. The only inkling we can get as to what he thought was wrong with the Samosatene's conception of the Trinity is to be derived from his rejection of the view that the Word is unhypospatial (*ἀνυπόστατος*),<sup>85</sup> which would seem to refer to Paul of Samosata, for it agrees with the report that Paul of Samosata taught that the Word has no substance of his own,<sup>86</sup> and hence is unhypospatial.<sup>87</sup>

Another objection to the term *homoousios* was that it implied Sabellianism,<sup>88</sup> and it is this objection that is taken by Hefele<sup>89</sup> and Hagenbach<sup>90</sup> as the reason for the omission of the use of the term by Cyril. Here again it is quite possible that Cyril was influenced by this objection. But the fact

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Newman's excursus to his English translation of the *Epistola Eusebii in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IV, pp. 77 ff.

<sup>82</sup> *Epist.* 361.

<sup>83</sup> Athanasius, *De Synod.* 43.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte* § 9, with Leclercq's additional notes in his French translation; G. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate* (1923), pp. 258ff.

<sup>85</sup> *Catech.* IV, 8.

<sup>86</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* LXV, 1 (PG 42, 13 A).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 5 (20 B).

<sup>88</sup> Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* II, 18

<sup>89</sup> *Conciliengeschichte*, § 82 (I, 712).

<sup>90</sup> *Lehrbruch der Dogmengeschichte*, § 92.

is that in none of the passages in which he repudiates Sabellianism, in some of which he mentions Sabellius by name,<sup>91</sup> is any mention made of a connection between Sabellianism and the term *homoousios*. Moreover, the passage in Athanasius (*De Synod.* 12) upon which Hefele bases his statement contains no reference either to Sabellianism or to Cyril. Nor do the passages from Cyril cited by Hagenbach contain any reference to Sabellianism.

Still another objection was that the term *homoousios* does not occur in Scripture.<sup>92</sup> Here, too, it is quite possible that Cyril was influenced by this objection. But the fact is that, while Cyril stresses the view that the Christian faith is based only upon Scripture, he nowhere says that none but scriptural language is to be used in the formulation of the creed. Bethune-Baker's statement that Cyril of Jerusalem "protests against terms of human contrivance"<sup>93</sup> is not borne out by the text to which he refers.<sup>94</sup> All that Cyril says in the passage which Bethune-Baker cites is that "the Articles of Faith were not composed at the good pleasure of men: but the most important points chosen from all Scripture, make up the one teaching of the Faith."

Moreover, if the reason for Cyril's not using *homoousios* was that this term is not scriptural, then why does he use the term *homoios*? There is no passage in Scripture in which it is explicitly stated that the Word, that is, the preexistent Christ, is "like" (*homoios*) the Father. All we find in Scripture is a statement with regard to the born Christ, which reads: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do . . . these also doeth the Son likewise (*ὁμοίως*)."<sup>95</sup> But the likeness spoken of is a likeness in operation and not a likeness in nature. If this statement was taken by him as a justification for his use of the term *homoios*, why should he not have taken as a justification for the use of *homoousion* the expression τὸν ἄρτον τὸν ἐπιούσιον,<sup>96</sup> where *ousion* in *epiousion* is used, according to him, in the same sense as *ousion* in *homoousion*, for this expression is taken by him, not in the sense of "daily bread," but rather in the sense of "supersubstantial bread," and is explained by him to mean bread "appointed for the *ousia* of the soul."<sup>97</sup>

Then, also, if Cyril meant to follow the language of Scripture, why did

<sup>91</sup> *Catech.* XVI, 4; XVII, 34.

<sup>92</sup> Athanasius, *De Decret.* I, 1; *De Synod.* 28; Basil, *Epist.* 361.

<sup>93</sup> J. F. Bethune-Baker, *Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, 8th ed. (1949), p. 192.

<sup>94</sup> *Catech.* V, 12.

<sup>95</sup> John 5:19.

<sup>96</sup> Matth. 6:11.

<sup>97</sup> *Catech.* XXIII, 15.



he not use the term ἴσος, for it is this term that is used by Paul when he says that the preëxistent Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal (ἴσα) with God,"<sup>98</sup> and it is this term, too, that is used by John when he says that Jesus was accused of "making himself equal (ἴσον) with God."<sup>99</sup>

Again, if the objection to *homoousios* was that the term did not occur in Scripture, then why did Cyril use the term ἐννπόστατος as a description of both the Son<sup>100</sup> and the Holy Spirit?<sup>101</sup> If you say that the term *enhypos-tatos* is based upon the term *hypostasis*, a term which does occur in the New Testament,<sup>102</sup> and which is used both in the Nicene Creed and by Cyril himself,<sup>103</sup> then the question is why, on the basis of the scriptural term *hypostasis*, and after the analogy of the term *homoousios*, did he not coin the term ὁμοῦπόστατος? The term *homohypostatos* would have been a more suitable substitute for the objectionable *homoousios* than the term *homoios*. Cyril did not hesitate to make use of, or perhaps to coin, the term ὁμοιο-πρόσωπος in the sense of "of like face,"<sup>104</sup> and there is no reason why he should not have coined the term ὁμοῦπόστατος in the sense of "of the same *hypostasis*." Since he did not coin the term *homohypostatos* to take the place of the objectionable *homoousios*, he must have had some other objection to *homoousios*, an objection that would apply equally to *homohypo-statos*.

That objection, we shall try to show, is a philosophical objection, which was bruited about ever after the term *homoousios* was inserted in the Nicene Creed, and is reported by Athanasius and Basil. As reported by Athanasius it reads: "Some . . . say" that "he who speaks of *homoousios* speaks of three, one *ousia* presubstratal (οὐσίαν τινὰ προῦποκειμένην), and that those who are generated from him are *homoousioi*; and they add, 'if then the Son be *homoousios* with the Father, then an *ousia* must have been presubstrated (προῦποκείσθαι), from which they have been generated.'"<sup>105</sup>

As reported by Basil, it reads as follows: "With regard to *homoousios* be so kind as to explain to us more fully . . . how it may be used with sound logic in matters wherein there is discerned neither a common super-

<sup>98</sup> Phil. 2:6.

<sup>99</sup> John 5:18.

<sup>100</sup> *Catech.* XI, 10; XVII, 5.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.* XVII, 34.

<sup>102</sup> Heb. 1:3.

<sup>103</sup> *Catech.* VI, 7 *et passim*.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* XII, 14. The term ὁμοιοπρόσωπος occurs in Apollonius Dyscolus (see latest edition of Liddell and Scott, s.v.), but it is used by him in the grammatical sense of "in the same person."

<sup>105</sup> *De Synod.* 51 (PG 26, 784BC).

stratal genus (*γένος κοινὸν ὑπερκείμενον*) nor a substratal pre-existing material (*ὕλικὸν ὑποκείμενον προὔπαρχον*).<sup>106</sup>

The philosophical considerations involved in these objections need explaining, and the best way to explain them is to give a brief account of the various meanings of the term *ousia* and *homoousios* as used in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>107</sup>

Prior to the Nicene Creed the unity of the three persons of the Trinity was designated by two terms, one in Greek and one in Latin. The Greek term was *ousia*, and it was introduced by Origen. The Latin term was *substantia*, and it was introduced by Tertullian. The Greek term was used by Origen in the sense of Aristotle's second *ousia*, that is, in the sense of species or genus. Inasmuch as for Origen, as well as for all the Fathers, the persons of the Trinity were individual species rather than mere individuals, the term *ousia*, when it was used by him as a designation of their common unity, was used, not in the mere sense of species or in the mere sense of genus, but rather in the combined sense of specific genus, after the analogy of a combination of Aristotle's unity of species and unity of genus, illustrated respectively by the example of "man" in its relation to individual human beings, and by the example of "animal" in its relation to "horse, man, and dog." The Latin term *substantia* was used by Tertullian either as a translation of the Greek *hypostasis* in the sense of *hypokeimenon* or of the Greek *ousia* in its Stoic sense of matter, and hence as the equivalent of *hypokeimenon*. In either case it is used by Tertullian in the sense of substratum, after the analogy of Aristotle's unity of substratum, illustrated by the example of "water" in its relation to "oil and wine."

Corresponding to these two conceptions of the common unity of the Trinity, the one described by Origen with the term *ousia* and the other described by Tertullian with the term *substantia*, are the terms *homoousios* as it is actually used by Origen, and *homoousios*, in its Latin form *consubstantialis*, as it could have been used by Tertullian. When applied to the Father and the Son, for instance, Origen's *homoousios* would mean that the Father and the Son, each of them an individual species, are of the same specific genus, whereas Tertullian's *homoousios*, in its Latin translation, would mean that the Father and the Son, each of them, again, an individual species, are of the same substratum.

In the light of these two conceptions of the common unity of the Trin-

<sup>106</sup> *Epist.* 361 (PG 32, 1101).

<sup>107</sup> The brief analysis of the meanings of *ousia* and *homoousios* in the next few paragraphs is based upon my discussion of "The Mystery of the Trinity" in *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, I, pp. 305-363.

ity, and also in the light of the corresponding two meanings of the term *homoousios*, the term *ousia*, as well as its equivalent *hypostasis*, which is used in the Nicene Creed as a description of the common unity of the Trinity, and similarly the term *homoousios* which is also used therein, would lend themselves to two possible interpretations, even though on the basis of internal evidence it can be shown that these terms are used in the Tertullianic sense of substratum. Consequently, when the opponents of the Nicene Creed began to raise objections against the use of the term *homoousios*, the objections were so phrased as to apply to both possible interpretations of the term.

It is against the interpretation of *homoousios* as meaning "of the same substratum" that the objection quoted by Athanasius argues that the term would imply a "presubstratal *ousia*," and it is against the interpretation of *homoousios* as meaning either "of the same specific genus" or "of the same substratum" that the objection quoted by Basil argues that the term would imply either a "common superstratal genus" or a "substratal pre-existing material."

The full meaning of the argument in its two alternative forms given by Basil may be unfolded as follows: Suppose, the argument starts in its first alternative form, you take *homoousios* to mean "of the same specific genus." But what is a species, and what is a genus, and what is a specific genus? Each is, of course, a universal. But what are universals: are they real or not? The Platonists say that universals are real; they are ideas which exist over and above and beyond individuals. Someone, therefore, who is a Platonist, would take the common *ousia* of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit as existing over and above and beyond the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. There would thus be an additional person, who is distinct from the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Instead of a Trinity there would thus be a Quaternity. But suppose, the argument continues in its second alternative form, you take *homoousios* to mean "of the same substratum," after the analogy of water in its relation to oil and wine in Aristotle's example of the unity of substratum. But water has an existence prior to, and apart from, oil and wine. Some one, therefore, misled by the term *homoousios*, might take the *ousia* of the three persons of the Trinity to have an existence apart from the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Again, instead of a Trinity there would thus be a Quaternity. Now this second form of the argument, directed against *homoousios* assumed to mean "of the same substratum," could also be used as an argument against the term *homohypostatos*, that is, "of the same hypostasis," inasmuch as sameness of *hypostasis*, in this case, would have the meaning of the sameness of sub-

stratum. It is for this reason, we may therefore conclude, that Cyril, on deciding not to use *homoousios*, decided also not to coin in its place the new term *homohypostatos*, but to use the expression *homoios kata panta* or *en pasin homoios*.

It is these philosophical arguments against the use of *homoousios*, which, as we have tried to show, explain Cyril's failure to coin the new term *homohypostatos*, that also explain, we may assume, at least in part, why Cyril did not use the term *homoousios* in his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. So when reasons are sought for Cyril's failure to use the term *homoousios*, and mention is made of the alleged rejection of that term by the third Council of Antioch, or the Sabellian connotation of that term or its non-scriptural origin, mention should also be made of the philosophical arguments that were raised against it.

We have thus shown by two examples what philosophical implications are to be discerned in Cyril's theology. Cyril was not a professed philosopher: his task was to expound theological doctrines to simple believers, not to explain them to philosophers. But the doctrines which he tried to expound had, before they reached him, already gone through a process of philosophical reasoning; so whatever he says, as well as whatever he refrains from saying, reflects that background of philosophical reasoning.