

ECCLESIOLOGICAL DOCETISM:

in Early and Medieval Dissent and Heresy in  
Eastern and Western Christianity.

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## Abstract of Thesis.

In the context of the continuity of Christology into ecclesiology, this thesis investigates the implications of a Docetic Christology and its consequences in the life of the church.

Against the background of the development of orthodoxy and heresy in earliest Christianity it indicates a docetic Christological/ecclesiological parallel found in the Gnostic dualist tradition, countered by the catholic one of a growing orthodoxy, and the continuing influences and implications in Alexandrian theology.

It notes in this setting the implicit docetic tendency in 'heretical' thought to undermine salvation history (Heilsgeschichte), as well as the element of timeliness which could separate orthodoxy from heresy.

It proceeds by looking at the exegesis of the New Testament and the Fathers of the church which indicates a Christological/ecclesiological continuity.

From this context it examines the understanding of Christ as tradition and Christ as corporate which continues into the Middle Ages.

It illustrates further, how concepts such as martyrdom and suffering bear an implicit relationship to Christology and ecclesiology.

In considering the views of medieval movements in the context of more orthodox understandings of their age, it explores the continuity of themes found in them from early heresy, particularly dualism and its effects. It notes in particular the role of Platonism in theological interpretation, and considers the place of the establishment of the church in the legitimising of a Christological/ecclesiological view.

These themes and concepts combine to demonstrate the implications of dokesis within an alternative understanding of the church, with the rejection of an incarnational theology, and the development of new criteria for Christian life.

In this respect it questions how the immediacy of mystical and spiritual experience relates to ecclesiology.

Taking into account the appeal to primitivism as a motive for reform which undermined the medieval synthesis and its doctrine of society, it reviews the late medieval concept of the invisible church, which prepared the way for the Reformation.

In this setting it examines the recurring themes which appear, and concludes by outlining the implications of ecclesiological docesis for the church of today.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the relationship of Christ to the church, in particular the consequences of the Incarnation within it, and investigates how developments in Christological heresy find their corollary in ecclesiology, with particular regard to Docetism which denied Christ's humanity. (Gk. dokesis='seeming')

Whilst New Testament scholars such as Cullmann place great emphasis on Christological/ecclesiological continuity, and this is axiomatic in many ecclesiological studies, there are only occasional indications (Wainwright, Meyendorff, Sherrard, Moore, Lossky) as to the implications of 'heretical' elements, in particular docesis, and the kind of church consequent upon this view. This study looks at how this docetic element continually appears in different historical contexts, arising from different influences and circumstances.

After surveying the developing nature of orthodoxy and heresy including criteria inherited from Judaism, it looks at the specific role and development of Christology and ecclesiology in the Gnostics, Marcionites and Montanists, noting the influence of Manichaeism. The particular docetic elements in both areas appearing in these groups were countered in the orthodox thought of Irenaeus, and Alexandrian theology was affected by gnostic elements with consequences not only for its own acceptance but Christology and ecclesiology as a whole.

The study suggests that whilst we cannot claim that every

This Diagram illustrates the trajectories of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy,' and in particular, the element of Docetism in the Christological and ecclesiological development within this.

The right hand line suggests the invisible idea of inner authenticity over against the visible continuity of the left hand line.

Christology has a one for one correspondence, we can outline certain derivatives and trajectories in the orthodox/heretical divide, which mark Christology and ecclesiology, of which dokesis is a clear example.

A context for this is given in New Testament exegesis which supports the assertion that the nature of Christ continues in the church, against the background of corporate personality, especially the Pauline theology of the Body of Christ. Following from this, Christ's humanity is important as a constituent determinative element in the nature of the church, and this is emphasised in the theme of suffering which forms a boundary between orthodox and heretic, and a consequent dokesis.

In the Fathers of the church the idea of the corporate Christ emphasises a visible nature especially in the continuance of the Body of Christ theme. The formation of the Christian tradition is regarded as Christ himself; the Paradosis = the Lord, Christ himself transmitted in the church. In this the church is more than the aggregate of Christians, with a character and holiness greater than the sum of its members, derived from the being of Jesus Christ. In particular the Greek Fathers emphasise the reality of the Incarnation as the basis for our salvation.

With the church regarded as Christ's outward and visible form, elements of this tradition may be similarly regarded e.g. scripture = the flesh of Christ.

This background is emphasised in Augustine's ecclesiology



which becomes the underlying view of the medieval Church, with a consequent danger that the church may be equated with the Kingdom of God.

This theme continues in the writers of the early Middle Ages and is well documented by de Lubac, Congar, Mersch and others.

Against this, the early dualist tradition develops in heretical movements which emphasise a consistent docetic Christology from Paulicians through to Catharism, and a consequent difficulty in coming to terms with outward institutional form.

In orthodox theologians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries who emphasise the union of Christ and the church there are trace elements of ideas which expanded would be regarded as heretical.

Consideration is then given to movements and individuals which exist uneasily within the context of the Catholic Church or separate with a preference for a more perfect spirituality, some tempted by supersessionism to improve on what they regard as a primitive understanding of Christ, others with an appeal to the undeveloped primitive church. Apart from any historical continuity it is possible that themes and ideals were rediscovered by asking similar questions or facing the same issues in different circumstances and coming to the same conclusions.

In looking at movements which contributed toward the Reformation, we see the increasing rejection of any

consecration theology and in particular the emergence of the idea of the invisible church which breaks the traditional catholic Christological/ecclesiological tie. This is found in Huss allied to predestinarianism and the distinction found previously in Donatist and Alexandrian theology of being 'in the church but not of it' which it is suggested reflects a docetic ecclesiological view.

In conclusion, it looks at some of the issues raised by docetic ecclesiology, such as the place of culture in Christology, and the element of development and change compared to what is changeless, and acknowledges the inherent dualism which some find in Christianity, and regard as explained or exacerbated by Platonism. In this context it investigates how Donatism and Iconoclasm may be related, and how heretical groups reject the church as redundant Judaism, foregoing the fulfilment of heilsgeschichte in Christ. It indicates further a persistent recurrence of 'puritanism', within heresy and gnosis, in particular the Donatist movement (Frend), and the tendency towards docetism in this.

The Constantinian establishment emerges as a legitimisation of incarnational theology in which learning and reason find a positive role, but which are rejected by those preferring a docetic ecclesiology.

An allied issue raised by this theme concerns the time of revelation in the Incarnation and its uniqueness, excessive

emphasis on Christ's divinity having a similar effect on Christology and ecclesiology as outright docetic rejection.

Is the relationship between a docetic Christology and church society simply fortuitous, in a way that an orthodox continuity is not ? Or do certain necessary effects follow from Christological categories and continue within other related areas of tradition ? This raises basic questions such as the relationship of God to humanity, and whether historical terms are adequate for a later context, transmissible from age to age for similar effects in different circumstances. Can the term Donatist ~~only~~ be properly used <sup>only</sup> of the fourth century controversy, and Docetism similarly for a first/second century view ?

Does Christology itself derive from ecclesiology as a kind of theological self-reflection ? Consideration should be given to the suggestion that where an explicit Christological/ ecclesiological continuity is lacking, there may be an implicit docetic element.

In the 'catholic' tradition the inner coherence of the church is integral to external structure, in which it is impossible to divorce the developing tradition made canonical from the continuing life of the church. For canonicity only has meaning in a living ecclesial context, as ecclesiology only has meaning in the context of the person of Christ, the biblical corpus being part of his complete traditio.

Excessive emphasis on the Holy Spirit leads away from incarnational Christology to Adoptionism, and it is suggested, a consequent ecclesiology. Traditional catholic Christology, set within a Trinitarian context, seeks to prevent such fragmentation. (BCC. Study 1990).

Where Christology is undervalued, charismatism tends to treat the church as an Adoptionist community without consistent organic divine/human origin. As a consequence this can lead to the apparently contradictory idea of invisible tradition and ultimately the inspired prophet over against the corporate nature of Christ in the church.

As might be expected this raises the related matter of how spirituality participates in the formation of dogma, and whether Christian experience can be regarded as part of the human dimension of a contemporary Christology, or whether it detracts from it.

The issues explored are important as they question what an adequate expression of the nature of salvation in the Christian tradition is, (world denying or world affirming ?) how we regard the 'interchange' (<sup>M.</sup>Hooker) in Christ affecting the structure of the Christian community, and this is to be set in the context of the contemporary debate in Christology, particularly the relationship of Christ to culture.

Ecclesiological dokesis severs the basis of the Incarnation in creation and redemption, questioning the relationship of

the spiritual to the material, word and meaning, form and content, canonicity to authenticity, the letter to the spirit, cultural consecration to cultural rejection, and the value of a theology of consecration in which time is sanctified in Christ.

Whilst there are many studies of the relationship between Christology and ecclesiology, there is no overall survey of what the consequences of dokesis in Christology might mean when taken to its logical conclusion in the life of the church.

The thesis concludes by drawing an inference as to what ecclesiological dokesis might mean for the church of today. A recognition of the effects of Christological dokesis in contemporary spirituality and ecclesiology could be a re-reading of ancient heresy into new circumstances, without acknowledging the gulf between the different world-views involved. Alternatively it can highlight the necessity to affirm Christ's humanity in the life of the church in contemporary moral and social issues, avoiding both oppressive corporateness and excessive individualism.

CHAPTER. 1.

THE HERETICAL IMPERATIVE

ORTHODOXY AND HERESY:  
DEVELOPMENT AND DEFINITION.

As the life of the Christian religion begins with Jesus of Nazareth and moves on into the life of the Church, in spite of some more 'structuralised' interpretations it might be illuminating to look for the tension between orthodoxy and heresy, as it developed, to the person and work of Jesus himself.

Jesus' ambiguous attitude concerning orthodoxy and heresy in Judaism appears to be reflected in both parties in the Church in Jerusalem; Paul and Stephen, as well as Peter and James, can consider themselves the true heirs of Jesus.

The theological differences between the disciples derives from the apparently ambiguous attitude of the Master himself. These differences were initially repressed by the Easter enthusiasm, but reappeared as this faded away.

Even if the orthodox Christian view is looked upon as a later construction, the divergent views could be seen as originating in the Jewish heretic Jesus.(1). Orthodox and heretics of later ages both lay claim to Jesus as their source, a continuing dichotomy in the life of the Church - the orthodox Jewish reaction to Jesus and the treatment of Christianity as an haireisis by Judaism both reflected in the way Christianity itself dealt with haireisis.

McEleney summarises the pattern of controversy between Jesus and Jewish representatives as;

1. a clash of opinions, leading to
2. the rejection of the opponent's right to speak
3. his work attributed to evil,
4. he is attacked in his person and way of life,
5. his views are said to be without authoritative basis in either scripture or tradition.
6. others are warned against him.
7. at times steps are taken to remove the threat



he poses - even to the employment of illegitimate means. (2)

He sees this pattern repeated in the New Testament letters.

It then remains questionable as to which of the different interpretations of Jesus, originally the heretical Jew, are to be regarded as primary.(3)

This is a question not simply concerning the person and work of Jesus, but of his intention, for one of the most disputed issues between orthodox and heretic related to the question of who had understood Jesus correctly. This is particularly true of Gnostics who claimed that they alone had understood what Jesus really meant.(4)

In this, eisegesis could have a prominent role, for as Bauer points out,

'at that time there was probably no version of Christianity that did not have at its disposal at least one written gospel in which Jesus appears as the bearer and guarantor of their particular view...and repulses those who think differently.'(5)

Not only do Gnostic views appear in their own 'canonical' writings, but they also appealed to those close to Jesus to derive authority from him, so that Mary Magdalene, for example, can stand as guarantor for a Gnostic tradition.

Similarly both orthodox and heretical apologists appeal to St. Paul. This is especially true in the dispute between orthodox and Marcionites. Paul can be viewed as either an orthodox believer or a spiritual illuminist, even as a renegade to some Jewish Christians.(6)

Such divergent interpretations point to the fact that by

the end of the first century there was no one definitive Christian faith which could be called the sole orthodoxy. Christians at this time were, as Burkitt says,

'feeling after a Christology about the personality of Jesus their Lord' (7),

and simultaneously coming to terms with their own identity, its interpretation, and their continued existence.

Within the Christian spectrum there was a tremendous variety, and the teaching which triumphed as orthodoxy was only one viewpoint which became predominant over a period of time. The orthodoxy of the second century is different from the orthodoxy of the fifth, and even in the same period in different areas standards of orthodoxy might differ.(8)

For example, Origen suggests that the prevailing standards of orthodoxy and heresy propounded by Hegesippus and Eusebius were inadequate for his day.(9).

This highlights the difficulty of arriving at an 'authentic' single Christianity, a more imperative issue as the church faced the second century Gnostic threat.

Development towards orthodoxy is a more gradual process, a low-grade infection of the same germ as heresy (10), a metaphor used of haireisis as something which struck at the heart of doctrinal consensus, and to which the parent body reacted,

'as to a virus, isolating it, building up resistance to it, expelling it from the body, sometimes with great cost to itself.'(11)

That there was ever one single pristine 'Christianity' is a retrospective sacralising of 'orthodoxy'.

This is not just a question of authenticity, but of legitimacy, as the orthodoxy of the fourth century would reveal, stimulated by imperial favour. (12)

In some areas the only form of Christianity originally known was what would be seen later as heretical. It is well known that this was the case at Edessa, according to Bauer;

'..east of Phrygian Hierapolis we could hardly discern any traces of orthodoxy. Christianity and heresy were synonymous there.'(13).

In the situation that prevailed at Edessa, the Bardesainites, later declared heretics, laid sole claim to the title 'Christians'.(14) In such a perspective, what is regarded as present orthodoxy is later seen as heretical.

Its own development and continuing history, with its divergent strands, forced the church to face the need for developing criteria, e.g. canonicity, orthodoxy, though the latter contains

'a broad acceptance of a living tradition, not of a precise theological scheme..'(15).

This is the breadth which is contained in Vincent of Lerins' formula.(16).

There were always diverse interpretations from the corpus of traditions about Jesus.

Heresy changed as the church shifted the emphasis from defining the locus of the 'true church' among a variety of sects to defining the content of true teaching, *diminishing*

the area of tolerable diversity.(17) With the blending of traditions, writings up to 200AD are difficult to categorise into orthodox or heretic, since belief and reflection in this period were fluid, with de-Christianising as well as conversion taking place, for political and religious reasons.(18) This took place within the varied thought forms of both Christianity and Gnosticism (19), Manichaeism and Gnosticism both drawing parasitically upon the Christian tradition, adapting its hymns, liturgies and other writings for their use.

Orthodoxy begins formulating around an intuitive consensus rather than just original formulas, rejecting heresy in a kind of Christian common sense guided, the church believed, by the Holy Spirit.(20) This called for discrimination between rival churches, which was no easy task since orthodox and heretic could live within the same community quite peacefully before the lines of demarcation were drawn, and one generation <sup>could</sup> tolerate ideas unacceptable to another.(21) Holding divergent views, heretic and orthodox could worship together, often using the same baptismal creed, even if unable to use a rule of faith in common.(22). Such difficulty in distinguishing between orthodox and heretic was marked at Alexandria, where they were parallel.  
(23).

As it developed it became important for orthodoxy to be able to claim sole authenticity. Irenaeus writing against the Gnostics

..'confronts their diversity with the unity of the worldwide catholic church..' (24),

diversity becoming synonymous with false belief.

In affirming the orthodoxy of the apostles Irenaeus says,

'.. the church throughout the world, having its origin from the apostles, perseveres in one and the same opinion....with regard to God and his Son..' (25)

In Pelikan's estimate this came to mean,

' The truth was one, and there could be no pluralism in its confession: one's opponents were not merely espousing a different form of Christian obedience, they were teaching false doctrine. The heretics were no less implacable than the orthodox in claiming that their position was the correct one'. (26)

Synonymous with this was the kind of historicism which began to sacralise the past, used in turn as a formative influence in the present.

The priority of 'orthodoxy' is an important argument for Tertullian who suggests that all truth precedes its copy, the likeness before the reality.(27) Origen also sees all heretics as first believers who then swerve from the rule of faith.(28) Similarly for the orthodox minority at Edessa, where Bishop Kuné is convinced that his faith is older than all heresy, and therefore must have appeared in Edessa earlier than heresy, and with an apostolic seal.(29) Hegesippus reiterates a similar view, believing that there was no heresy in the time of the apostles, and that the heretics spoiled the virgin church -a telling simile for his historicism.(30) Nevertheless whilst some fathers like Irenaeus and Tertullian see orthodoxy and heresy developing in a clear divide, it is different for others like Justin.(31)

With the one truth which some Fathers suggest has always

been so, develops the concept of the church as always having been one, and unchanging. Yet as Turner indicates, in particular with Tatian's writing, such precision is difficult to maintain since the writings of those who fell into heresy were circulated and used in the life of the Great Church, and Gnosticism with an ecclesial stance took over and reinterpreted the Church's literature.(32) Not all of the early churches rejected heresies such as Gnosticism; in some areas there was no deep gulf between them.

Orthodoxy looked to the transmitted past for validity. (33) It was the past, rather than just spiritual qualities, which appeared closest to Christ and the apostles. History and spiritual life and truth were bound up within the church's existence. It was assumed that Christian teaching had always been the same, whereas the heretics were innovators.(34) Authority and catholicity held the line against the Montanist and Gnostic challenge.

This does not mean that the orthodox were always in the majority. The orthodox were in a minority at Alexandria within a penumbra of heresy.(35) By the end of the second century Rome had emerged as the centre of orthodoxy and the final arbiter and interpreter of doctrine.(36)

Timeliness played an important role in theological disputes. The church as a whole was moving towards an orthodox consensus by the end of the second century, with other norms being accepted in place of spirit-filled ecstasy and prophetism. Legitimate ordination came to be of importance coincident with the Gospels based on greater historicity

being viewed with increasing validity and respect, and the establishment of hierarchy... (37)

Some resolution was sought between the two kinds of churches - those of 'legitimate' channels, and those focussed around 'spiritual' persons (Turner). Sometimes the distinction was a matter of degree rather than totally different outlooks. Frend views it as a choice for

... 'either an organised urban and hierarchical church with set forms of worship and discipline, and a set relationship with the outside world or a church of the Spirit in which men and women participated equally as vehicles of the Spirit. Once again, as in the old Israel, organisation triumphed.' (38).

The church opted for historicity and continuing life in the world, especially in view of the delay of the Parousia. This is important not simply in relation to its own self-understanding, but <sup>as to</sup> how the church's life was seen as deriving from Christ, who Christ was and is, Jesus' historicity related to the church's Christology.

With the commitment to historical existence came the necessity of rapprochement with imperial power, which influenced the formation of the orthodox consensus. (39) Under the Theodosian state-church orthodoxy was preserved, and <sup>was continued.</sup> Constantine's prohibition of heretical places of worship. Since some of the ideal of Christian kingship derived from the Old Testament, it would be illuminating to find if heresies which firmly rejected the Old Testament were equally vehement against the Christian emperor.

The pressure from haireisis, especially Gnosticism, forced the church to create dogmas and authorise creeds (40).

In opposition to heresy, the 'rule of faith' played a unique role, revealing to the church a self-conscious orthodoxy, which was also a defensive weapon. Expressions such as 'the rule of faith', 'the canon of truth' carried the idea of exclusion of error and a self-conscious authenticity.(40)

As heretics twisted and abused scripture, the Fathers appealed to the rule of faith together with the canonical writings, and the baptismal creeds were developed for use in apologetics. Variations in usages and forms narrowed towards orthodoxy.(41) The 'tradition of truth' legally safeguarded now continually faced the parallel development of another tradition- that of 'error'.

According to the orthodox the heathen world was ignorant, and heretic unbelievers conceited; after all they had the audacity to oppose the Great Church in which authoritative faith and true knowledge was found. Whilst persecution made martyrs, according to Tertullian, heresy created apostates, undermining the church by creating churches of their own.(42) Tension between the learned and the simple was a recurrent theological feature. When the church accused heretics of simplicity, they returned the compliment.(43)

Commonly the orthodox claimed to be followers of Christ whilst pointing out heretical groups as followers of a particular leader and named after him. Sometimes Catholics faced polemic like that in the Donatist schism which branded them 'the church of Judas'.(44) Orthodox and heretic laid claim to the title 'catholic', each insisting on their 'Christ' and claiming sole legitimacy,(45) though there was



some consistency in this, for both 'heretic' and 'orthodox' insisted in their own way that their view of Christ should correspond with their view of the church. The figure of Christ affects and determines the nature of the church. This is so, even when hairesis opts for non-historical interpretations, as well as when orthodoxy stakes its claim on the historical existence of Jesus and therefore history as an ally and not an enemy to the truth.

This was important both in the process of distinguishing the Great Church from the sects in its development, and the self-understanding of both the church and its rivals in relation to such questions as 'Where is the Church to be found?', 'What is its true teaching?' (46)

The Fathers, taking their stand in the Great Church, faced the threat of heresy, not only claiming history for the church, but emphasising it as the sphere of Christ's redemption, and by that the consecration of the physical and material order.

This is how Eusebius views the matter. Though scarcely an unbiased view, he has little reserve in embracing the Christian empire as a divine realm, with a consequent intolerance towards heresy. Selecting from previous church historians, he discriminates between the varying forms of Christianity. He is clear that it is the heretics who stray from the Great Church, seeking novelty and despising the truth, a similar charge to Irenaeus'. (47)

Hippolytus, who finds a common pattern of heresy among the sects, places himself in the difficult position of opposing

the Bishop of Rome, Callistus, claiming for his group the right to orthodoxy, as the community of those who live in holiness rather than 'self professed' Christians. He thus takes refuge in the spiritual, which begs the whole question of the relationship of the nature of the church to history, and its derivation from Christ.(48)

Such concentration on spiritual qualities rather than historical existence is, for Clement of Alexandria, quite obvious in the lives of sectarians who are labelled either libertine or Gnostic. Existence in historical time is for them either indifferent or immaterial (in both senses).(49) Tertullian accuses heretics of restlessness. For him the great philosophers are patriarchs of error.(50) Ignatius had earlier sought to draw boundaries between true and false Christians with severity, on the basis of being true to the church's historicity.(51) Epiphanius in his monumental Panarion shows concern for the way hairesis, with its illicit speculation, fragments the unity of the church.(52)

For all his emphasis on the rule of faith, Augustine finds precise definition of heresy difficult, whilst Jerome sees heresy as invented by schismatics to justify separation from the church.(53) Basil of Caesarea attempts some classification, though placing all hairesis, schisms or parasunagogai outside the Body.(54) Heresy could cover a multitude of views, and of the 'choices' available in the New Testament. Questioning makes men heretics, taking orthodox truths beyond legitimate bounds.(55)

Heresy may lead into schism, or be the post-schismatic

rationale of it, schism being closer to orthodoxy and not necessarily deviation in doctrine.(56) If left, doctrinal disagreement could create a rift through a radical or rigorous intransigent stance.

Prestige, commenting on Appollinarius' denial of a human mind in Christ declares,

'Psychology in ancient times at least, was ever the parent of heresy.'(57)

Heresies gathering in schools around their founders could originate in the personal idiosyncrasy of one dissenter. This is clear from the examples of Gnostic groups and their leaders, with recurring examples in the Middle Ages. Tertullian describes the root of heresy as personal choice in an area where it is not appropriate.(58)

In seeing heresy as a Christian phenomenon the question remains whether these could be called Christian choices, even if considered inappropriate.(59) Individuals might have highly personalistic views of Christian teaching, but how should and did these find corporate expression ? The content of the Christian tradition might be 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever', but how was this to be related to the unfolding of truth in the power of the Spirit? What should remain unchanged, and what should change in the church's life ? Was a continuing development legitimate ?

Time and historical circumstance played a large part in the creation of heresy. As in reactionary heresy in the Middle Ages, so in the formative years of Christian dogma it was

possible to become a heretic simply by standing still. Millenarianism was once a reputable view, though neither a mark of orthodoxy or heresy. In changed historical circumstances, no longer thought part of the core of Christian teaching, it was displaced and left to develop among the unorthodox fringe.(60)

Time moved on, and orthodoxy with it. Who was to decide whether doctrinal change and development was pandering to current trends, or legitimate adaptation and response to divine guidance ? Theology could become archaic.(61)

In this way Jewish Christians in failing to progress, are left to the sectarian ethos of Ebionitism, in a displacement of what had once been the sole repository of Christianity, forced by progress into an heretical mould in the third and fourth centuries. Primitive theology, (like the Son of Man title), could be made redundant, millenarianism and apocalyptic become outmoded.(62) Untimeliness, according to Prestige, brought Apollinarius into heresy.(63) To be ahead of his age might be the plea of every dissident leader - the curse of the true prophet, that the times are out of joint.

This can be seen too with reference to Donatism, which Markus describes as traditional African orthodoxy made heresy almost overnight.(64) Timeliness was important. Alexandrian Christianity could not wholly welcome philosophy as the handmaid to theology until the Gnostic threat had been overcome.

As the church entered upon the dialectic between heilsgeschichte and 'secular' history and the admission

procedures into its life became less stringent, was it claiming history for Christ ? Was it following a line of inevitable development as the 'soul in the body' of the Letter of Diognetus, or had it forfeited its spiritual title deeds and its inheritance ? Was historical development a fall from grace, or a fulfilment ?

Orthodoxy saw the church as the focal point of Christ's recapitulation of all things, including the sacred history of the Jews, the many all summed up in the One. Heresis was seen as disruptive and divergent.

In this context the 'visibility of grace' was important to Christians. Just as once the Jewish temple had gone, the way was open for Gnostic teachers to reinterpret Judaism in their favour, (65) so the visible locus was important for Christians, and not just in relation to cultic practice.

Later Christian thinking reveals a distinction between orthodox and heretical views on the 'house of God' traceable to the Hellenists' view given by Stephen in Acts. (66) Christians, when fully a religio licita developed a theology of sacred spaces in their use of buildings because under Constantine they opted for, or were taken over by, historicity. This was not simply what imperial opportunism demanded, perhaps more an expression of a facet of their corporate persona, its visible expression of their historical life united to the spiritual, just as they saw the two natures present in the one person of the Lord, a development from the Incarnation.

Heresy then has some responsibility for formulating orthodox thinking and dogma, even for its view of what the nature of heresy is.(67) Even heresies like Gnosticism had dissenters within their ranks in a descending (or ascending) spiral of ecclesiolae. Both orthodox and heretical development had hidden elements, but orthodoxy with its concentration on order over freedom gained the upper hand over its parasitic Gnostic rival.

The church's salvation for all triumphed over salvation for the elite alone, opting for a broader spectrum of tradition in the sanctification of time, to reflect the nature of the Christ in whom the church believed.(68).

Footnotes

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['To validate its existence the church looked increasingly not to the future illumined by the Lord's return, nor to the present, illumined by the Spirit's extraordinary gifts, but to the past illumined by the composition of the apostolic canon, the creation of the apostolic creed, and the establishment of the apostolic episcopate. To meet the test of orthodoxy, a movement or idea had to measure up to these norms.']
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THE GNOSTIC CHALLENGE.

By the end of the second century, Gnosticism was a major heretical threat to the church, especially in Africa, challenging the church's order and discipline.

The developing orthodoxy of the Great Church rejected Gnosticism, for it transposed the saving events beyond history. Some see the Gnostics as the enlightened speculative theologians of their day rather than troublesome deviants.(1).

The Gnostics' view of theology and history was important for the relationship of ecclesiology to Christology. Once the Christian kerygma was 'set free' from Jewish heilsgeschichte, what anchor was left for it in history ? Gnostics would suggest it needed none.

As a system, Gnosticism has a basis in pre-Christian Jewish speculative thinking and sectarianism, especially the Cabbala, on the heretical margins of Judaism, as in Christianity. Such Rabbinic speculation may be the source of the Gospel of Thomas. In orthodox Christian writers it appears as more an attitude than a dogmatic pattern.(2)

It finds reflection in the Didache, and in the distinction between common theology and deeper wisdom for the elite.(3) Some see Iranian influence responsible for Gnostic views in early Christianity, but Gnosticism also drew upon Hellenistic philosophy, Zoroastrianism and other oriental religions.(4)

A common apocalyptic binds Gnostic views together, seeing the world as negative, bad and unredeemable, and only the divine spark within man as capable of salvation, with little

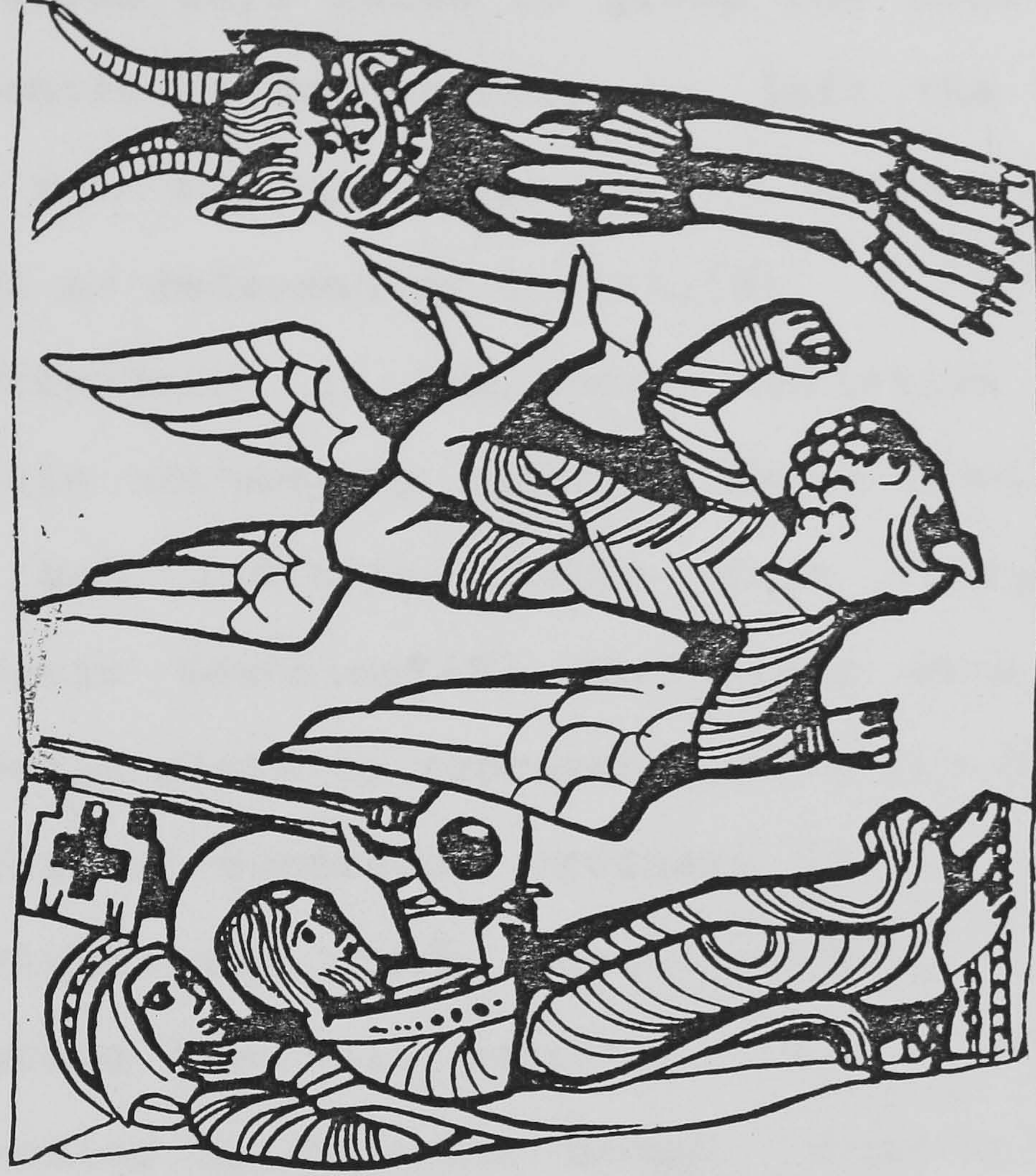
interest in the end or fulfilment of history. This loose tie to history may bear some relation to the loss of the Jewish temple.(5)

As with Christianity, Gnosticism was not simply a source from which all subsequent forms degenerated. As a parasitic syncretistic movement drawing upon non-Christian sources, influenced by and influencing, Christianity, it incorporated current ideas, especially Platonism. The Gnostic ideas of realities beyond, the sleep of the soul, and redeeming gnosis are all sympathetic to Platonism.(6)

Many of the church Fathers viewed philosophy as ever the parent of heresy, some fastening on Simon Magus in Acts as the prime suspect for its inception, succeeded in turn by Menander's syncretism. Both claimed divinity for themselves. Simon in self-transformation, saw himself as the Great Power, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, descending as the Saviour, through the aeons. Basilides developed Simonian teaching in Egypt. Irenaeus places his school mid-way between Judaism and Christianity.(7)

How far the Gnostic leader Valentinus deviated from Christianity is questionable. He may have lived within the Great Church, and even been an unsuccessful candidate for the episcopate at Rome. Valentinianism can be treated as a form of mysticism, though hardly biblical in the Christian sense, more mid-way between Christianity and paganism.

The church appears to play some role in Valentinus' system, yet however 'orthodox' it may appear, it is ultimately invisible. He develops a form of via negativa theology which



The Rise and Fall of Simon Magus:  
12th. Century capital by Gislebertus,  
Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun.



Irenaeus says fails to grasp the true doctrine of God. The Valentinian Bardesanes, who left the Great Church to form his own school, views man as mortal and only his immortal soul as redeemed by Christ.(8)

'Orthodoxy' in the early Christian centuries was not a static unchanging concept. As we have seen, in some places it was indistinguishable from 'heresy', in particular, Gnostic teaching.(9) Christians were quite aware of the Gnostic claim to represent authentic Christianity, and their offer to supersede ordinary Christian faith with greater insights and truth. Gnostics could represent those who had reached the full potential of Christian life, 'Catholics' becoming an inferior breed. Gnostic and Catholic held in common the idea of 'spiritual men', as well as other usages, so that it could be difficult to draw hard and fast lines between them.(10)

In Egypt, without an intermediate stage of Judaism, Gnosticism was a formative milieu for Christianity. Discrimination could be difficult in that some Gnostics had a form of ministry and eucharist, (though some like the Encratites appear to have used no wine), and some postpone baptism, a contemporary Christian practice.

Either Gnostics dilute the Faith, superseding it via elements alien to Christianity, or attempt to claim Hellenistic philosophy for Christ, by adapting it.(11) It may be that in some places the only distinguishing indications were acts such as the refusal of Trinitarian baptism.

The Gnostic View.

As a phenomenon preceding the church Gnosticism was concerned to find answers to questions. Irenaeus depicts heretics and philosophers as concerned with 'Whence is evil and why ?' 'Whence is man and how ?' and Valentinus with, 'Whence is God ?'(12)

Deriving from varieties of speculative Judaism, and rejecting God as lawgiver, it viewed creation as suspect, supported by popular Platonism. Such ideas emerged when Christian 'orthodoxy' was still fluid.(13). Gnosticism was anti-cosmic, dualistically rejecting the created order as the work of the Demi-Urge, the Old Testament inferior God, who was held in contempt. Gnostic believers are placed in conflict in this world seeking redemption to attain the Platonic other world. This created visible order is at enmity with invisible reality.(14) Concentration on the things of this world turns the Gnostic soul from its ultimate good. Worlds within worlds, aeon upon aeon created by the Demi-Urge conspire to imprison him within an alien environment, preventing ascension, freed from the body.(15) Through the passion and suffering of Sophia, who by repentance and restoration is exalted above other aeons, all things are created. The world is under the rule of the archons, antagonistic to God, the 'rulers' who appear in the Psalms, who hold man ignorant of his true destiny, soporific, unable to grasp the light imprisoned in the material. Such archons are the leaders of the Great

Church.(16)

Gnostics set themselves as orthodoxy over against ordinary believers, committing themselves to increasing allegorical interpretations.(17) Such radical dualism made it impossible for them to hold a consistent doctrine of God able to sustain his role in creation and redemption.(18)

The highest aeon was the best, spirit from above being good, flesh and matter from below, bad. The God of the Jews had produced an imperfect world from which men needed deliverance, a dualistic view consonant with some early Christian views, especially under the influence of Coptic Gnosticism, Platonism and other Hellenistic concepts.(19) Simonians sought to fuse classical Hellenism with Christian teaching, a conflation leading to rejection of the Old Testament, Hellenism threatening to subsume Christianity rather than vice-versa, with a re-interpretation of Christian tenets in a consistent dualism.(20) Christianity, however, was committed to a redemption in time and space, of the cosmos and the whole created order.

Gnosticism held as a central concern the problem of evil. seeking an explanation for the world's imperfection and inferiority.(21) The Gnostic God is fragmented and imprisoned in matter, and the world the result of Sophia's fall. In one sense theirs is a non-theology, an ultimate apophaticism, which can only be entered by gnosis, leaving little place for a divine intervention or incarnation. Gnostic revelation, the way of ascent, is redeeming

knowledge of the All.(22) The darkness of the Godhead is an unfathomable deep, from which the chain of emanations proceed, a kind of gnostic parallel to the orthodox Trinity. Both God and Christ are androgynous, containing male and female elements.(23) God is also referred to as Mother, which may reflect the feminine character given to the Spirit in early Christian thought.(24) Some Gnostic systems see God imprisoned in the world, in matter, fettered through Sophia's fall in vegetation, leaving a particle of light in primal man. The divine call awakes the sleeping soul of man, creating a break in the firmament enabling the spark of light in man to ascend, escaping the world of matter, via the passwords delivered by Gnostic teachers.

As the world was negative, so was man, or the self. Earthly existence is alienation. From the pre-cosmic fall the psychic element in man became subject to evil powers, man lost his soul in Adam, sleeping under the power of the archons, awaiting release of his spiritual soul. Man lives in a precarious world, thrown into an alien environment from which gnosis is the only release for the self (God), the inner light within, the Christ.(25) This frees from the constraints of morality too.

The saving events, vital to Christians, were only symbolic of light versus darkness, and redemption took place in another sphere, in which the blind awake to life, to a pneumatic experience of grace, though this was not uniform.(26) Such gnosis gave the believer radical freedom

consonant with his trans-historical state. This could display itself in extremes of libertinism or austere asceticism, the flesh being of secondary importance.

Many Gnostic groups were indifferent to moral issues.(27) While apparently close to Christian monasticism, whereas monastic orthodoxy denies the world, Gnosticism tends to denigrate it. Some groups rejected religious buildings, prefiguring medieval heretics.(28)

Gnostics tend towards syncretism, blending Christian ideas with other sources,(29) with an elitist ethos.(30)

Believed to be contemporary with Simon Magus, Basilides and his son Isidore maintain a literalist interpretation of scripture, with their own form of apostolic tradition, ostensibly from Peter's interpreter. Basilides uses Aristotelian elements, with a typical *via negativa* theology.(31)

The Gnostic believer's map of reality treated history as non-history, a mistake or an illusion. Interest centred around finding his true self. A Judeo-Christian heilsgeschichte was pointless, certainly not the bearer of revelation.

What then of the saving events if they did not save, or the life of the church if it mediated nothing ? Whilst in the first two centuries Gnosticism might enjoy relative peace within the Great Church (e.g.Valentinus), with an ostensible interest in redemption, it could not accept the Incarnation.(32) The epithet 'docetist' may have been used

initially for the Gnostic influence in the Gospel of Peter, and such a tendency appears in the Gospel of Truth.(33)

The Gnostic insistence that they possessed authentic Christianity was countered by the Fathers of the church who see Gnostic teaching as largely a disruptive element, and assume the worst. With Tertullian, many gather Gnostic groups under one category, aware of their encroaching adaptation of Christian material for their own use. Clement of Alexandria and Origen seek to counter the Gnostic threat by interpreting Gnostic concepts through Platonism, though risking, especially in the latter, their theological reputation.(34)

Why was it so vital that the Gnostic threat be countered ? In its a-historical view it hit at the anchor of Christian faith in history. Gnosticism transposed meaning and value beyond this world into the world of aeons, treating the visible world as non-existent. This undermined the Christian understanding of the world as the sphere of redemption and God's self-revelation. Once Christian historicity was threatened, so was the person and work of the Incarnate Lord, and consequent upon it the continuing historicity of Jesus of Nazareth in the life of the church. The one could not be threatened without endangering the other.

Gnosticism moved the ground on which Christians believed, and the certainty of their salvation, placing a question mark over apostolic truth. It placed a distinction between word and meaning, visible and invisible, spiritual and

material, creation and redemption, God and man. It created a gulf at the point orthodox understanding saw bridged by the person and work of Christ, and assured in the life of the church derived from the invisible made visible, God made man, the divine initiative.

### The Gnostic Christ and Salvation.

When we look at the Gnostic view of the nature of Christ, we can understand why the church reacted to the threat they posed, in reducing Christian history to allegory. Irenaeus gives the views of Gnostic leaders, on the person of Christ. For them, the one sent for the salvation of men is incorporeal, who came to destroy the God of the Jews.(35)

Jesus is the creation of an inferior God, his body is a phantom. This is the docetic view of Valentinus.

The Gnostic view is <sup>strangely</sup> similar to the early Christian Adoptionist position.(36)

Gnostics relate the redemption in Christ to the element in man having affinity with the Godhead, the appearance of Christ as revealer is redemption, an idea related to Jewish apocalyptic.(37) What however looks at first sight as a

communicatio idiomatum evaporates, for as in Basilides, there is no union between the Christ and the man Jesus.(38)

For him, Christ comes to free those who believe from the power of those who fashioned the world. The Body of Christ is spiritual, not carnal, since the divine cannot become incarnate, a Christology which determines Gnostic

ecclesiology.(39) The idea of Christ as a spiritual body, Hippolytus gives as characteristic of eastern Gnostics and of Marcion.(40) Physical birth belonged to the creator, and was unworthy of the true Christ. Gnostics question what kind of flesh Christ took.(41) Valentinus' docetic view believes that Jesus was not made of human flesh, but was artificially constructed as a resemblance. He sees each of the three worlds of the Pleroma needing a saviour.(42) Some think of Christ as able to transform his nature as he descends through the archons to hide from them, receiving something from each of the worlds he passes,(43) a view which echoes Irenaeus' idea of Christ bearing every age and condition of humanity.

Christ as impassible, spirit not matter, can be seen as the inspiration of the human Jesus, a 'Geistchristologie'.(44) Similarities occur in Ebionite and Elkesaite Christologies,(45) and Essene teaching. These have much in common with Adoptionism, which was played down by the Great Church in the face of the Gnostic threat, emphasis being placed upon the Gospel birth narratives rather than accounts of the Lord's baptism which gave the Gnostics opportunity to distinguish between the heavenly Christ and the earthly Jesus. Gnostic and Ebionite groups interpret this as the moment when the Spirit adopted the man Jesus. According to Paul of Samosata Christ took up his dwelling in the man Jesus at this point. Others like Cerinthus see a good eternal principle descending on a created being, with consequent denial of a miraculous birth. The Gnostic Pistis



Sophia holds an intermediate view.(46) The Spirit left Jesus before the crucifixion, so that the Godhead did not suffer. Christ the Saviour descends through the aeons to disclose cosmic esoteric knowledge to enable believers to ascend, a characteristic theme of Jewish Christian Gnosticism.(47) As Christ reascends he abandons the successive natures he has assumed.

In Valentinus' system Jesus is the Great High Priest, the spouse of Sophia, who delivers her from suffering.(48) This as with Valentinus generally, comes closer to Christian orthodoxy.(49) Although at first sight some Gnostic views seem to give elements of orthodox teaching about redemption, Gnosticism is essentially a religion of the self.(50) Gnosticism has no single view of the idea of Jesus Christ as redeemer. It is questionable whether redemptive ideas in it derive from Manichaeism. Most see redemption as related to the spark of light in man being set free. Gnostic language of the heavenly redeemer and the journey of the soul is not the expression of an orthodox Christology and soteriology.(51)

Peculiar to Gnosticism is the idea that God himself needs redemption from entanglement in creation. This concept is expressed in the idea of the Redeemed Redeemer. Christ needs redemption because he has become man, he is the 'saved saviour' who must fulfil in himself the purification and redemption he obtains for others.(52)

Jesus is also referred to as the Son of the Father, though

for Valentinus, this means he derives from the Demi-Urge in psychic likeness. There are similarities in Essene and Ebionite Christologies in which Christ is not Son of God but a higher archangel, a prince of light.(53) Such an angel Christology distances the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, and may have made its last appearance in Arianism.(54)

Sophia, who is the divine wisdom Gnostics see descending on Jesus at the Baptism, appears in the Teaching of Silvanus calling the believer to receive a gift. This Wisdom is Christ who makes the foolish wise.(55) Any suggested Gnostic incarnation derives from different intentions, as does the apparent suffering of Christ.(56) Gnostics had to decide to which realm Jesus belonged, and some resolved this dichotomy by placing him entirely in the realm of the heavenly.(57) The real mission of Jesus is teaching and preaching, enlightenment, as in Jewish Gnosticism.(58)

Nevertheless they elaborated on the person and work of Christ around the theme of the cross drawn from the Great Church. In their speculation they saw it as salvation through suffering but with a peculiar cosmic function.(59) The crucifixion was a cosmic drama, but Christ does not suffer, as Sophia leaves him before he is led away, or else Simon of Cyrene suffers in his place. Jesus gives power to the cross, and in places this appears to approach an orthodox understanding.(60) Philo's description of the Logos as 'the Name' finds its way into Gnostic thought via heterodox Jewish speculation. For some it seems equated with

the invisible part of Christ, Jesus being a revealed name and Christ a hidden name.(61) For Valentinians the Name is the divine essence; again we are closer here to orthodoxy. The Gnostic Jesus is more a guide than Messiah. Other Christological titles used may derive from Jewish speculation or Philonic exegesis.(62)

Two important Christological titles reappear in medieval thought. Many Gnostics speak of Christ as the Pearl, particularly in the poetic hymn in the Gospel of Thomas, where the Christology also appears docetic.(63) The other title is that of Jesus as Mother, though this title is more commonly used of the Holy Spirit in Gnostic terminology.(64)

Gnostic thought influenced orthodox Christology, as in some Pauline writings, and orthodox definitions and themes.(65). That Christology was important in its relation to ecclesiology, is a theme taken up by Schoedel who sees the reality of the Incarnation providing a positive view of pagan society in which the church is set.(66) The Gnostic picture of the world as such could hardly be described as positive. There is little Gnostic interest in the character of Christ being historically real, and since Christ was only seemingly real the same applies to orthodox 'outward Christians' whose faith is held to be a sham, and visible ecclesiastical authority disregarded.(67)

On the road to Chalcedon, Gnosticism left its mark, appropriating Jewish esotericism and Hellenistic speculation for its own purposes, and influencing the New Testament and the Fathers.

In Gnosticism it is impossible to have a two natures in one hypostasis Christology. Like their church the Gnostic theology is one of appearances. Insisting on reading beyond what was written and becoming authoritative, <sup>they moved</sup> into the world of the Cabbala and cultic dualism. The Gnostics removed Christ from the plane of history, and treated him as an alien who could not be consubstantial with us. If Christ has, in Gnostic terms, come and given us the means of return to the heavenly realm, there is no continuing commitment to this world, for the form of it is passing away.

How could such a Christology provide for the continuing life of the church? How could such 'Christology' pass into an adequate ecclesiology? It could provide for a cult association, (68) but was the Christian community not something more than this? There is no redemption of matter, Christ needs no Body now on earth. His teaching after the Resurrection is to provide a way of escape, not to send the church into its future mission in the world as the Father sent the Son. (69).

Footnotes.

1. H. Jonas.           The Gnostic Religion. Boston. (1963) 236  
[the first speculative theologians in the new age of religion,  
superseding classical antiquity]  
F.C.Burkitt.       Church and Gnosis. Cambridge. (1932) 27,28.  
cf. R.McL. Wilson.   The Gnostic Problem. London. (1958) 65,225.  
cf. A.H. Armstrong. The Self Definition of Christianity in Relation to  
Later Platonism. JCSD. op.cit. 76.  
A.Harnack.       History of Dogma.1. ET. N.Buchanan. London. (1905)  
228.  
M.Wiles.         Working Papers in Doctrine. London. (1976). 93.  
cf. A.D.Nock.       Gnosticism. Harvard Theological Review. 57 (1964)  
255ff., 261,273.  
H.Chadwick.       Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition.  
Oxford. (1966) 8,9.  
  
[the Gnostic crisis made the Church defensive about anything  
intellectual; the Church rejected Gnosticism because they used reason  
too little rather than too much. The Church needed reasoned argument  
to explain itself.]  
H.Koester.       Gnomai Diaphoroi: The Origin and Nature of  
Diversification in the History of Early  
Christianity. In J.M.Robinson & H.Koester.  
Trajectories Through Early Christianity. Philadelphia  
(1971). 115,116.  
  
2. J.Danielou.       The Theology of Jewish Christianity: A History of  
Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of  
Nicaea. ET. vol. 1. (Danielou I ) (1964) 69.  
B.A.Pearson.       Jewish Elements in Gnosticism and the Development of  
Gnostic Self-Definition. JCSD .op.cit. 159, 152.  
J.Pelikan.       Pelikan I op.cit. 83  
R.McL. Wilson.   op.cit. 73.  
J.Danielou.       Danielou I. op.cit. 26.  
R.McL. Wilson.   Gnosis, Gnosticism and the New Testament. in Le  
Origino Dello Gnosticismo. Colloquio di Messina. 1966  
Leiden. (1967) 514.  
F.F.Bruce.       Tradition Old and New. London. (1970). 105.  
A.D.Nock.       op.cit. 266.  
  
3. E.Flesseman van Leer. Tradition and Scripture in the Early Church.  
Assen. (1954) 15,16.  
  
4. J.Danielou.       Danielou I . op.cit. 8  
R.McL. Wilson.   The Gnostic Problem. op.cit. 69,70.  
  
5. R.M.Grant.       Gnosticism: An Anthology. London. (1961) Introduction  
15.

5. contd/.

K.Rudolph. Gnosis. ET. Edinburgh. (1983) 278.

[Gnosis involves a reinterpretation of apocalyptic.]

R.M.Grant. Gnosticism and Early Christianity. New York & London. (1966) 59

['As long as the Jewish community retained its centre in the temple worship of the one God, authorised teachers could explain that all the divine names refer to Him, but after the fall of the temple unauthorised teachers could easily argue that various gods were to be found in the texts.']

C.Rowland. Christian Origins. London. (1985) 41.

[The end of the temple gave the final impetus to locating the heart of religion in the Torah, the community, the divine presence in the hearts and lives of the pious.]

W.Bousset. Kyrios Christos. ET. J.Steely. New York. (1970) 246.

c.f.C.K. Barrett. Gnosis and the Apocalypse of John. in The New Testament and Gnosis. A.H.Logan & A.J.M.Wedderburn. (eds.) Edinburgh. (1983) 126.

J.Danielou. Danielou I. op.cit. 35,36,145,146.

Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture.: A History of Early Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicaea. ET. Vol.II. (Danielou II) (1973). 281.

The Origins of Latin Christianity: A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea. ET. Vol III. (Danielou III) (1977). 195.

6. H.D.Betz. Orthodoxy and Heresy in Primitive Christianity. Interpretation. Vol.19. (1965) 310

H.E.W. Turner. The Pattern of Christian Truth. London. (1955). 225.

M.Smith. The Secret Gospel. London. (1973) 137.

R.McL. Wilson. Gnosis, Gnosticism and the New Testament. op.cit. 513, 516.

A.Louth. The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition. Oxford. (1981). 1.

H.E.W. Turner op.cit. 219.

[sees Valentinus' system derived from Pythagoras]

W.H.C.Frend. The Rise of Christianity. London. (1984) 195,6.

H.Koester. Gnostic Sayings and Controversy Traditions. in C.W.Hedrick & R. Hodgson Jnr.(eds). Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity. Massachusetts. (1986) 134,5.

c.f.J.M.Robinson The Nag Hammadi Library and the Study of the New Testament. in A.H.Logan & A.J.M.Wedderburn. op.cit. 4,9,15.

[the Gospel of John and the influence of Gnosticism]

A.D.Nock. op.cit. 266,276.

6. contd/.

W.H.C.Frend. And I Have Other Sheep. In:  
The Making of Orthodoxy. R.Williams. (ed.) Cambridge.  
(1989). 34.

7. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 150.

Eusebius. History of the Church. ET. G.Williamson. London.  
(1965) 73,4. 87, 158.

[Simon's followers dissimulated in the church of his day, poisoning  
the church like a disease.]

8. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 111.

c.f.F.Wisse. Prolegomena to the Study of the New Testament and  
Gnosis. In A.H.Logan & A.J.M. Wedderburn. op.cit.  
139,140.

F.Legge. Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity vol. II.  
Cambridge. (1915) 133.

R.Williams. Arius: Heresy and Tradition. London. (1987).40

[disappointed ambition a stimulus for heresy in Arius and  
Valentinus.]

F.C.Burkitt. The Religion of the Manichees. Cambridge. (1925) 77

R.W.Thomson An Armenian List of Heresies. JTS. ns. October (1965)  
XVI part 2.. 362.

E.Pagels. Adam and Eve, Christ and Church, in A.H. Logan &  
A.J.M. Wedderburn. op.cit. 160,1,164,5.

[Adam and Eve a type of the Church for Valentinus - homoousios with  
the Church. Though the Church is constituted only by the elect they  
share a unique bond with Christ. Jesus invites the Church to enter  
his Body. Confirms Valentinus' nearness to Christian 'orthodoxy'  
while retaining a spiritualising emphasis. cf. fn. 49.]

R.M.Grant. Gnostic Spirituality. in Christian Spirituality:  
Vol.1. Origins to the Twelfth Century. Ed.B.McGinn,  
J.Meyendorff, J.Leclercq. London (1985). 46,59.

J.N.Sanders. The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church. Cambridge.  
(1943) 56,57,71.

9. F.H.Borsch. The Christian and the Gnostic Son of Man. London.  
(1970) 29. fn.1.

J.M.Robinson. The Nag Hammadi Library and the Study of the New  
Testament. In A.H.Logan & A.J.M.Wedderburn. op.cit. 8  
(quoting Koester).

K.Rudolph. 'Gnosis' and 'Gnosticism'. ibid. 23,4,28.

10. G.Vallee. A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics. op.cit. 18.

R.M.Grant. Augustus to Constantine. London. (1971). 151.

[the Gnostic gives the true explanation of difficult passages of  
scripture since he possesses the divine spark.]

H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 47.

[outstanding figures of the second century Great Church more likely  
to be nearer Gnosticism than orthodoxy.]

10. contd/.

H. von Campenhausen. Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power  
in the Church of the First Three Centuries. ET.  
London. (1965) 152

S.Runciman. The Medieval Manichee. Cambridge. (1947) 173.

S.N.C.Lieu. Manichaeism. Manchester. (1985) 45.

[Lieu sees no Gnostic church in the sense that there was a Marcionite  
one, but a profusion of Gnostic scholae.]

cf. A.Bohlig. The New Testament and the Concept of the Manichaeon  
Myth. In A.H. Logan & A.J.M. Wedderburn. op.cit. 90.

F.Wisse. op.cit. 139.

[for Justin 'haeresis' means 'school']

11. R.McL. Wilson. Gnosis and the New Testament. Oxford. (1968),11.12.

12. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 276.

['the Gnostic movement was originally a non-Christian phenomenon  
which was gradually enriched with Gnostic concepts, until it made its  
appearance as an independent Christian Gnosis']

H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 113

F.C.Burkitt. Church and Gnosis. op.cit. 7.

13. A.D.Nock. op.cit.276.

Tertullian Prescription for Heresies. 7.The Ante-Nicene Fathers.  
ET. Vol.III. Grands Rapids. (1978)

14. H.Jonas. op.cit. 25.

15. ibid. 52.

['the soul loses its place and wanders about and wherever it sees an  
escape it only passes from one world to another which is no less  
world.']

16. J.E. Menard. Normative Self Definition in Gnosticism. JCSD.  
op.cit. 142,3.

Second Treatise of the Great Seth. 60:13- 61:27. The  
Nag Hammadi Library. ET. op.cit. 334.

17. J.Fineman Gnosis and the Piety of Metaphor. In The Rediscovery  
of Gnosticism. Proceedings of the Yale Conference  
1978. Leiden. (1980) (REG).

18. R.M.Grant Gnosticism : An Anthology. op.cit. Introduction 17.

[ Gnostic dualism differs from apocalyptic in that it is not only  
related to time, but space as well.]

R.McL.Wilson. Gnosis, Gnosticism, and the New Testament. op.cit.  
511,512.

19. A.H.Armstrong. JCSD. op.cit. 76.

W.H.C. Frend. The Rise of Christianity. op.,cit. 196.



19. contd/.

G.Quispel The Gospel of Thomas Revisited. Actes de Colloque Internationale sur les Textes de Nag Hammadi. (ed.) B.Baric. Quebec. (1978). 245.

[Marcion and Bardesanes drew upon Iranian dualism.]

K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 285.

[ the bricks for Gnostic theology provided by Platonism with its emphasis on transcendence, together with Stoic immanence, influencing the inward/outward, microcosm/macrocosm, of Gnosticism.]

c.f.H.E.W. Turner. op.cit. 16.

R.Bultmann Gnosis. ET. London. (1952) 8.

H.Jonas. op.cit. 10,17.

20. R.M.Grant. Gnosticism and Early Christianity. op.cit. 78,9.,92.

R.M.Grant. Jesus After the Gospel. London. (1990). 44.

A.Harnack. History of Dogma. I. op.cit. 227-9, 232, 236.

[sees in the Hellenising of Christianity and the rejection of the Old Testament, the Hellenic spirit wanting to master Christianity, or an attempt to capture Hellenism for Christ. ]

G.Vallee. op.cit. 19,59.

cf. J.M.Robinson. On Bridging the Gulf From Q to the Gospel of Thomas (or Vice Versa). in C.W.Hedrick & R. Hodgson jnr. op.cit. 136.

[a sayings collection with no narrative or biography -congenial to Gnostic docetism.]

R.Williams. op.cit.89,107,131.

[Arius' relation to Gnosticism: he shares the same apophatic ethos and radical Hellenisation.]

21. J.Danielou Danielou I. op.cit. 73.

R.M.Grant. Gnostic Spirituality. op.cit. 45.

J.Zizioulas. The Early Christian Community. in B.McGinn, J.Meyendorff, & J.Lectercq. (eds.) op.cit. 35,37.

[Gnosticism undermined the material world, the Incarnation and the Church, and offered a knowledge based on personal communion, not on truth grasped by the mind.]

22. G.Vallee. op.cit. 19,59.

K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 148

J.E.Menard. op.cit. 149

R.M.Grant. Greek Apologists of the Second Century. London. (1988) 60,169.

23. B.Walker. Gnosticism. London. (1983) 32.

H.Jonas. op.cit. 149.

cf. E.Pagels. The Gnostic Gospels. London. (1980). 72.

24. H.Jonas. op.cit.223, 226.  
[the idea of 'Jesus hanging from every tree', more a kind of panentheism than simply pantheism.?)
- c.f. The Apocryphon of John. The Nag Hammadi Library.  
op.cit. 99,101,109.  
[God says, 'I am Father, I am Mother, I am Son'.,...'the first thought, the Mother-Father'.]
25. R.McL. Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. London. 1958. 45,6.  
H.Jonas. op.cit.65,86,270.  
['the inner duality of soul and spirit...holds out the possibility of stripping off one's soul and experiencing the divinity of the absolute self.']  
W.Bousset. op.cit. 249.
26. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 114, 154.  
['Gnosis has an exposing and soteriological function, it is redemption.']  
W.van Unnik. Newly Discovered Gnostic Writings. London (1960). 36.
27. H.Jonas. op.cit. 231.
28. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 270.  
H.Jonas. op.cit. 231.  
R.Williams. Does It Make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy ?  
In : The Making of Orthodoxy. R.Williams.(ed.)  
Cambridge. (1989). 6.
29. R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. op.cit. 69.  
J.M.Robinson. The Nag Hammadi Library. op.cit. Introduction. 9.  
['Gnostics were more ecumenical and syncretistic with regard to religious traditions than were orthodox Christians, so long as they found in them a stance congenial to their own.']  
A.Harnack. History of Dogma I. op.cit. 241.  
[no fixed boundaries between Christian and Gnostic, but a variety of belief and associations.]  
W.van Unnik. op.cit. 29,30.  
R.M.Grant. Gnosticism and Early Christianity. op.cit 89
30. W.H.C.Frend. The Rise of Christianity. op.cit. 199.
31. R.M.Grant. The Earliest Lives of Jesus. New York. (1961) 10.  
K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit.309-313.  
R.M.Grant. Gnosticism: An Anthology. op.cit. 126.
32. G.Quispel. Gnosis and the Apocryphon of John. REG. op.cit. 123.  
[Valentinus 'may have started as a Christian, have come into touch with a non-Christian sect, and later on have projected his own experiences and insights on the blueprint he was familiar with... '.]

32. contd/.

H.Koester. Three Thomas Parables. in A.H. Logan & A.J.M. Wedderburn (eds.) op.cit. 199.

[The Gnostic editor of the Gospel of Thomas deleted all references to heilsgeschichte.]

33. J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit.

R.M.Grant. The Bible of Theophilus of Antioch 187. in Christian Beginnings :Apocalypse to History. London. (1983)

34. R.M.Grant. Gnosticism and Early Christianity. op.cit. 3,93.

35. A.Grillmeier. Christ in Christian Tradition.I. ET. J.Bowden. London (1965) 23.

[The Church's dispute with the Gnostics brings to the fore the basic features of salvation history. The Christian redeemer figure is not the history of Christ but allegoric representations - Christ has no history.]

O.Cullmann. Salvation in History. ET. London. (1967). 25.

[the life and death struggle of second century Christians against Marcionism and Gnosticism over the Old Testament, over the retention or surrender of a salvation-historical approach to the Gospel.]

R.M.Grant. Gnosticism : An Anthology. op.cit. 26,30-32,34.

H.W. Attridge. The Gospel of Truth as an Exoteric Text. in C.W.Hedrick & R.Hodgson Jnr.(eds). op.cit. 245.

36. A.Harnack. History of Dogma. I. op.cit.232,259,260.

[Valentinus sees the body of Jesus as psychic and a phantom, docetic. Christ comes from above to dwell in Jesus.]

S.Runciman. The Medieval Manichee. Cambridge. (1947). 7,172.

cf. K.Rudolph. Gnosis and Gnosticism in A.H. Logan & A.J.M. Wedderburn (eds.) op.cit. 29

Y.Janssens. The Trimorphic Protennoia and the Fourth Gospel. Ibid. 241.

[the Son of Man title and docetism.]

J.Turner. Sethian Gnosticism: A Literary History. in C.W.Hedrick & R.Hodgson Jnr.(eds.) op.cit. 75.

R.M.Grant. Greek Apologists of the Second Century. op.cit. 129,130.

[Tatian's view has affinities with docetism.]

37. A.Harnack. History of Dogma.I. op.cit. 248,254.

R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. op.cit. 104, 162, 208.

cf. J.N.Sanders. The Fourth Gospel in The Early Church. op.cit. 43.

38. R.W.Thomson. An Armenian List of Heresies. op.cit.part 2. 362,3.

[Christ came from above and dwelt in Jesus. Jesus who remained passible died, Christ being impassible remained immortal.]

39. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 163.  
[Christology continues in the nature of the church. Oriental and Italian Gnostics were divided on this.]  
R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. op.cit. 249 fn.246.
40. J.Danielou. Danielou I. op.cit. 31.  
Hippolytus. Refutation of All Heresies. II, XV, ET: Ante-Nicene Christian Library Vol VI. A.Roberts & J.Donaldson. (eds.) Edinburgh. (1868)
- cf. J.N.Sanders. op.cit. 61.  
J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit. 75.
41. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 161.  
The Tripartite Tractate. The Nag Hammadi Library. ET. op.cit. 87
42. S.N.C.Lieu. op.cit. 49.  
W.Bousset. op.cit. 275.
43. R.M.Grant. Gnosticism and Early Christianity.. op.cit. 63.  
G.Quispel. The Demi-Urge in the Apocryphon of John 3. In Nag Hammadi and Gnosis. (ed.) R.McL.Wilson. Leiden. (1978).  
H.Jonas. op.cit. 127.  
W.Bousset. op.cit. 274.  
[the Redeemer assumes the nature of those he redeems - almost a corporate personality].
44. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 135.  
E.Pagels. Views of Christ's Passion. REG. op.cit. 275.
45. J.Danielou. Danielou I. op.cit.56-58,62,63,65. cf. 144.
46. ibid. 230,1.  
W.H.C.Frend. The Rise of Christianity. op.cit. 143.  
R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. op.cit. 102,3.
- c.f.J.Danielou Danielou I. op.cit. 31,68.  
F.Legge. op.cit. 60.  
R.M.Grant. Gnosticism : An Anthology. op.cit. 58. Sethian Ophites.  
R.W.Thomson. op.cit. 366.  
F.C.Burkitt. Church and Gnosis. op.cit. 72.
47. H.Jonas. op.cit. 67  
The Apocryphon of John. The Nag Hammadi Library. ET. op.cit. 115,116.  
H.Jonas. op.cit. 67.  
[Naassene 'Hymn of the Soul']

48. F.Legge. op.cit. 106,115.
49. R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. op.cit. 156,171,fn.95.
- c.f.K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit.155,165.
- M.Wiles. The Spiritual Gospel. Cambridge. (1960) 112.
- [Valentinian Christology built upon a one sided application of texts: the orthodox replied with an insistence on texts which emphasised his real humanity.]
50. J.Danielou. The Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture. A History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea. Vol. II. ET. London. (1973) 337,338.
- R.M.Grant/  
D.N.Freedman. The Secret Sayings of Jesus. op.cit. 167.
- [The Christology of the Gospel according to Thomas :Jesus is the 'inner man' where the believer's treasure is.]
51. R.M.Grant. Gnosticism: An Anthology. op.cit. 115
- K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 153.
- R.McL.Wilson. Gnosis and the New Testament. op.cit 29.
- K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 121.
- R.M.Grant. Gnosticism: An Anthology. op.cit. Introduction. 16.
- J.Menard. op.cit. JCSD 141.
52. The Tripartite Tractate. The Nag Hammadi Library ET. op.cit. 92
- [Angels need redemption as well as man. The Son needs redemption as well.]
- K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 122,3.
- H.Jonas. op.cit. 79.
- B.Walker. op.cit. 84.
- R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. op.cit. 75,6,218,227.
53. The Tripartite Tractate. op.cit. 62,63.
- R.M.Grant. The Valentinian System of Ptolemaeus. in: Gnosticism: An Anthology. op.cit. 177.
- J.Danielou. Danielou I. op.cit. 57.
54. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 143.
- [sees this kind of Christology having its last fling in Arianism.]
- J.Danielou. Danielou I. op.cit. 125-7.
55. The Teaching of Sylvanus. The Nag Hammadi Library. ET. op.cit. 349, 356,359.
- W.Bousset. op.cit. 276-9.
- [discussion of the Gnostic interpretation of baptism and its relation to Epiphany and Gnostic Christological development.]

55. contd/.

E.F.Osborn. Reason and The Rule of Faith in the Second Century AD. In: The Making of Orthodoxy. R.Williams.(ed.)  
op.cit. 40,41.

[Clement and Tertullian argue for the place of reason in their debate against the Gnostics who opted out of reason at the beginning of their speculations instead of at the end when reason could go no further.]

56. R.M.Grant. Gnosticism and Early Christianity. op.cit. 80.

H.Jonas. op.cit. 192.

57. F.C.Burkitt. The Religion of the Manichees. op.cit. 39.

58. H.Jonas. op.cit. 228.

c.f. The Letter of Peter to Philip. The Nag Hammadi Library. ET. op. cit. 395.

W.H.C.Frend. The Rise of Christianity. op.cit. 204.

R.Williams. Does It Make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy ?  
op.cit. 8.

[to be a Gnostic was to have received ennoia, enlightening insight; this is set within the context of the emphasis on initiation in charismatic and 'prophet' churches in Christianity.]

59. J.Danielou. Danielou I. op.cit. 278ff.,284.

60. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 160.

[The Gospel of Truth appears relatively close to orthodoxy. 'He was nailed to a tree, he nailed the decree of the Father to the cross...He humbled himself even to death, although eternal life clothed him.']

The Paraphrase of Shem: The Nag Hammadi Library. ET.  
op.cit. 323.

J.Danielou. Danielou II . op.cit.175.

The Gospel of Philip: The Nag Hammadi Library. ET.  
op.cit. 132.

[The Gospel of Philip has an element of recapitulation, though different from its sense in Irenaeus.]

R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. op.cit. 124.

61. R.Longenecker. The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity. London. (1970) 41,44,45.

c.f.J.Danielou. Danielou I . op.cit.153,160,161.

G.Quispel. The Demi-Urge in the Apocryphon of John. op. cit. 25.

62. W. van Unnik. op.cit. 51.

J.Danielou. Danielou.I.op.cit. 92,123,168,9.,215,219.

63. The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles: The Nag Hammadi Library. ET. op.cit. 265,267.

['the god of the glistening stone'.]

R.M.Grant. Gnosticism: An Anthology. op.cit. 116-122.

63. contd/.

H.Jonas. op.cit.112ff.

[the suffering of the Saviour in the poem is docetic.]

64. The Teaching of Sylvanus. op.cit. 360.

65. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 372.

H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 104.

[The homoousion which defeated Arianism was first used by the Gnostics, though 'the Gnostic use of the term differs widely from its later orthodox application']

W.Bousset. op.cit. 260.

A.Harnack. History of Dogma. I. 257. op.cit. 257.

[Gnosticism as the ancestor of orthodoxy. He questions whether Catholic theology has ever overcome docetism.]

H.Jonas. op.cit. 121.

66. W.R.Schoedel. Theological Norms and Social Perspectives in Ignatius of Antioch. JCS.D.op.cit. 55,56.

[the insistence on the reality of Christ's passion goes hand in hand with an insistence on the reality of the Incarnation'. ]

67. G.L.Prestige. God in Patristic Thought. London. (1964) 174.

R.H.Fuller. The Foundations of New Testament Christology. London. (1969). 97.

W.H.C.Frend. The Rise of Christianity. op.cit. 202.

E.Pagels. The Gnostic Gospels.. op. cit. 70.

[The confession of Christ's resurrection as the framework for clerical authority.]

Adam and Eve, Christ and Church. op.cit. 166.

W.Bousset. op.cit. 267,271,2,280.

C.K.Barrett. Gnosis and the Apocalypse of John op.cit. 135.

[to become Christian Gnosticism had to be historicised].

68. J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 374.

H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 276.

G.W.MacRae. Why The Church Rejected Gnosticism.JCS.D. op.cit. 132.

F.C.Burkitt. Early Eastern Christianity. London. (1904) 210,211.

D.L.Holland. Some Issues in Orthodox-Gnostic Polemics. Studia Patristica. XVII. Part II. Oxford. (1982). 214,218.

F.Wisse. op.cit. 141.

R.M.Grant. Gnostic Spirituality. op.cit. 47.

[There seems to be some relation between the usual Gnostic idea of a phantom Christ and the elusiveness of the Gnostic when pursued by the authorities.]

68. contd/.

R.Bultmann. Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting.  
ET. London. (1956) 201-3.

[Gnostics were organised as mystery communities in which their tradition was handed on, disregarding all earthly distinctions - fundamentally an invisible community, Gnostics had no need for cultus or community.]

cf. J.Igal. The Gnostics and 'The Ancient Philosophy' in Porphyry and Plotinus. In:  
Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought.  
H.J.Blumenthal & R.A.Markus. (eds.) London. (1981).  
144ff.

69. A.Grillmeier. Christ in Christian Tradition. II. op.cit.10.

J.Turner. op.cit. 85,6.

C.W.Hedrick. Intro. in C.W.Hedrick and R.Hodgson jnr. op.cit.  
6,7.

[Second century Gnostic systems in a diverse Christianity fell victim to Christian institutionalisation.]



MARCIONITES AND MONTANISTS.

Gnosticism was not alone in the second century in influencing the formulation of the church's orthodoxy. Marcionites and Montanists in their alternative communities both shared in this process, Marcion by questioning the continuum of heilsgeschichte, dispensing with the old Covenant, reducing the canon and truncating the faith, Montanists by superseding the apostolic legacy, making the witness of the Spirit supreme, and the faith ultimately unhistorical. The intentions of both groups continue to raise debate. Are they to be considered as part of orthodoxy, gradually being ousted over a period to the sectarian fringe? Were they tinged with, or part of Gnosticism? Apparent similarities to Catholics could mask their divergence as they were initially part of the Great Church.(1) Marcion may have emphasised forgotten elements of orthodoxy. His rejection of Judaism and its role in salvation history brings him close to Gnosticism;(2) Catholic and Marcionite communities seem to have been quite distinct by the mid-second century.(3)

Believing in the true guidance of the Spirit, Marcion professes a primitive Christian faith according to which Catholicism is a decline from Spirit and a return to law over grace, with a consequent effect on the church's visibility.(4) His questioning of the meaning and content of religion was countered by Roman orthodoxy, whilst many eastern Christians found it an echo of their own teaching and followed him.(5)

Under Marcionite influence, what may have been initially

scholae within orthodoxy developed into a complete alternative. Failing to convert the western church to his opinion, as unheeded reformers tend, he began again, emphasising his church as a supernatural creation, the Bride of Christ, Mother of the Redeemed, Marcionites in some places displacing orthodoxy as the form of faith, with a puritanical ascetic emphasis.(6)

Structures of order, discipline and worship appeared the same in both, apart from the Marcionite allowance for women to share a higher role (in pseudo-Gnostic fashion) than orthodoxy permitted. It may be that orthodoxy prevailed by assimilating some of Marcion's ideas, but affirming factors of which he was unaware. The orthodox emphasis on the church's visibility seems to have held no interest for him, in its historical tradition expressed in the episcopate, and this attitude together with other divergences may indicate an ultimate theological distinction in a different understanding of the Godhead.(7)

Initially Marcionites appear to have been able to shelter under the toleration afforded at the peace of the Church, Marcion leaving the Roman Church himself sometime in the mid second century. Celsus suggests there was division within the Marcionites themselves. Church Fathers like Tertullian write vehemently against him, Epiphanius remarking upon the Marcionite practice of allowing catechumens to attend the eucharist. Apollinarius' refutation emphasises their tenets of fasting, virginity, and teaching on the New Jerusalem, reflecting Montanist ideals. Some Marcionite ascetic

tendencies seem normal catholic practices, though the insistence that catechumens, even if married, should remain celibate, was not likely to appeal to the generality of the Great Church.(8)

There is a consistent view of Marcion as a religious genius and dissenter - differing from others classified as heretics in his Christian biblicism, though this appears to account inadequately for his rejection of the Old Testament.(9) Protestant hagiography tends to view him as firmly within the Christian milieu.

For Origen, Marcion's severance of Judaism from Christianity puts him outside the church as teaching..

..' a doctrine foreign to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has given the law and the prophets...'(10).

Conflicting sympathies place Marcionites half in and half out of the church. Marcionites refer to themselves as the Christians, the orthodox offended by being described as 'Messiah-worshippers', reminiscent of the situation at Edessa.(11) Church history, in Marcionite terms, is a story of decline and fall from pristine grace, their church alone remaining the authentic apostolic witness without accretions.(12)

Was Marcion a Gnostic ? What some see as the absence of pneumatism or illuminism suggests that the 'saved' are believers rather than Gnostics.(13). This however does not account adequately for Marcion's experiential dualism however Pauline he appears. He had after all attended Cerdo's lectures in Rome, and does refer to the descent of

the angels from the Pleroma, and in Valentinian style believes in many gods, though differing from Valentinus and Basilides in other ways, and saved from Gnostic syncretism by his biblical fundamentalism.(14) Eusebius points out a distinction between Marcionites and Gnostics in that the former have many martyrs, the latter, few.(15)

Marcion seems to speak of three oppositions, six different natures of the one nature, and one essence of the holy Trinity, believing in two gods, one good, one evil. Irenaeus classes him with Valentinus, and there are evidences of Manichaeism in him in his division between God and creation.(16) Marcion may simply be emphasising ideas coincident between Gnosticism and Christianity, such as repentance and atonement. It may be that he is a halfway stage between full Gnosticism and developing Christianity with Encratite emphases. He does use Gnostic ideas but without great dependence on the myth of Sophia.(17)

Marcionites offered a second and third baptism, baptism being performed whenever sin occurred, and they baptised on behalf of the dead. Such baptismal practice seems to reflect the disparity of their Christology.

Marcion's Christ.

Marcion is included under the aegis of Gnosticism in particular because of his Christology, though with some qualification.(18)

He sees Christ shedding his blood not to reconcile man and God, but to cancel the claim of the creator upon his creation. His Christ is a docetic phantom, the Christ being foretold by the prophets is Jesus only, and not the New Testament figure. He did none of the things foretold by the prophets, and the salvation derived through him is for the soul rather than the body. Jesus had no earthly body, he was not born.(19) His docetism has the oddity of emphasising the passion of Christ, the revelation of the unknown God, yet although Christ's sufferings appear real, his body is an illusion.

In removing the Old Testament from the Christian tradition, Marcion removed the genealogies of Christ leaving no coincidence with the historical Jesus. Jesus no longer had any roots.(20) Together with Valentinus Marcion is suggested as the preparation for Apollinarianism.(21)

Since the reality of Christ is integrally bound up with heilsgeschichte continued in the church's existence, a reduction in Christology, as the Fathers saw, reduces the church as well.

The Roman Church possibly sensed Marcion as a theological rather than a sociological threat to their own existence.

Marcion's severance of the genealogies of Christ accomplished a similar task to the Gnostic transposition into another realm.

Since history and matter were of little consequence, Marcion's docetism could not be the foundation of the ecclesiology of the Great Church. Such disparity lasted into the middle ages, ecclesiology consequent upon Christology.(22)

### Montanus.

If Marcion tries to shape Christology and the church without accretions, Montanus and his followers sought to supersede both by appeal to the Spirit. Like Mani, believing himself the Paraclete, Montanus too thought the church had declined from apostolic purity, seeking to restore eschatology, with prophetism and illuminism, to its former place, a policy restraining development and innovation,(23)- authentic primitive Christianity.

Montanus believed he received divine illumination and further revelation from God through the Spirit.

According to Eusebius he acquired a reputation for prophecy, and was a prophet of unbridled ambition whose manner of prophesying conflicted with church tradition. He cites the Montanist evidence for their own authenticity, that they have many martyrs, as an unacceptable proof. Montanism had much in common with Donatism and Nestorianism (24).

In some respect, as with Marcionites, Montanists were close to orthodoxy. Both Irenaeus and Montanus seem to agree on

..'the normative value of the written tradition'.(25)

Viewed as a heretic by the Great Church, Montanus exaggerated the role of the Holy Spirit, exalting experience over dogma and reason. Montanus sees himself as the personification of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Whereas the Great Church emphasised apostolicity and succession, Montanus emphasised prophetic a-historical succession regarding the decline of prophecy in the church as spiritual weakness.(26)

The orthodox view came to rely on normative historical precedent, external guarantees for sound doctrine, not spiritual inspiration. To rely on the latter would forfeit the Incarnation for a form of Adoptionism - the Spirit-inspired man. Montanus believed himself to be the unique instrument of the Paraclete, opposing his movement against the growing assured status of the church.(27)

Such reactionary heresy made division inevitable, as the church sought consolidation and settled down to historical existence.(28) Apologists for orthodoxy had then to be continually on the alert, for just as the church finally succeeded in gaining the upper hand over Gnosticism, and the canon of scripture was becoming fixed, Montanism appeared teaching Christians to expect new revelations outside the canon as the work of the Spirit.(29)

The time of revelation, according to Montanus, was not over. He made no distinction between the primordial time of



revelation and later development. The Church of the Spirit was not just an eclectic Body but an epicletic group, those upon whom the Spirit came, over against the visible historical continuum transmitted via the episcopate and visible orthodox communities in each place.

Tertullian in his Montanist phase seems to have been an exception in accepting the idea of institutional clerical office whilst holding Montanist views, though it is debatable whether he saw Montanus as a new Incarnation. Montanus' church, present wherever two or three were gathered, encouraged a cult of the 'good men' in Donatist pattern.(30) In countering Montanism the church limited inspiration to canonical scripture, and confined the work of the Spirit to authorised ministers in the succession.

Appealing beyond history, its lack of perspective and value for history and tradition left Montanism a staid ascetic movement after its initial impetus had petered out.(31) In attempting to impose their interpretation and ethos upon the tradition, Montanism attempted a kind of re-authenticating of Christianity. It is hard to see how such an ethos could have provided a church marking the sanctification of time.

The church as a community adopted by the Spirit, with a Christology reflecting this, is very close to Gnostic ideas, and later Paulician Christology and ethos.(32) Such a community develops into a society of spiritual charismatic adepts which pays little attention to incarnational authority, and is unable to supply an adequate doctrine of creation and redemption reconciling the invisible and

visible order. Montanist ecclesiology, like its Christology, was Adoptionist. In the name of primitivism it bypassed the continuing Christ in the tradition of the visible church for the Spirit above and beyond it, the inspired individual over against organic continuity and a correlated caste of spirituals rivalling the presbyterate.

It is not difficult to see in Montanism the reactionary reformist dissidence and Donatism, which we find later in medieval rigorist and spiritualist sects.

Whilst Marcion seeks to redefine the church's tradition, Montanus seeks to supersede it. Both founder on the rock of the relation of theology to the visible and historical, the crux of which lies in Christology.

Marcion's position in severing the church from Israel destroys the fulfilment of heilsgeschichte in Christ. Montanus treats the visible church as secondary, the church's paradosis as failure to express Christ adequately and authentically, the same intuition the Great Church attributed to both Marcion and Montanus, neither of whom provide the basis for the church deriving from the Incarnation.(33)

Footnotes.

1. E.C.Blackman. Marcion and His Influence. London. (1948). Intro. 9,11,13.  
R.Williams. Arius: Heresy and Tradition. London. (1987) 150.
2. Ibid. 127,125.
3. A.Harnack. History of Dogma. I. ET. N.Buchanan. London(1905) 281.  
[In mid-second century, wherever Catholic communities existed, Marcionite communities were found as well.]  
R.M.Grant. Religion and Politics at the Council of Nicea. 3. in Christian Beginnings: Apocalypse to History. London. (1983)  
W.H.C.Frend. Saints and Sinners in the Early Church. London. (1981) 51-5.  
[Marcionites create gathered churches although anti-institutional in their search with Gnostics for new truths.]
4. E.C.Blackman. op.cit. 16,17.
5. W.Bauer. Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity. Philadelphia. (1971) 132, 194.
6. E.C.Blackman. op.cit. 1-3.
7. R.S.Wilson. Marcion: A Study of a Second Century Heretic. London. (1932) 167,169,170.
8. Eusebius. History of the Church from Christ to Constantine. (trans.) G.A. Williamson. London. (1965) 223.
- cf. F.Wisse. fn. 8. 'The Gnostic Challenge.' Ch.1. p.41.  
R.M.Grant. Jesus After the Gospel. London. (1990). 86.
9. J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit. 80.  
F.C.Burkitt. The Religion of the Manichees. Cambridge. (1925). 80.
10. H.E.W.Turner. The Pattern of Christian Truth. London.(1955) 119 & fn.  
Origen. On Prayer. XXVII : 6. In Alexandrian Christianity. LCC Vol. II J.E.L.Oulton & H.Chadwick. (eds.) London. (1954) 368, and note 362.
11. W.Bauer. op.cit. 24.
12. R.M.Grant. The Earliest Lives of Jesus. New York. (1961) op.cit. 112.
13. H.Jonas. The Gnostic Religion. Boston. (1963) 140,143,144.  
[there is no pneumatism or illuminism in his teaching, no 'Gnosis transforming his nature, or bringing forth the hidden divine elements in him'...]
14. R.S.Wilson. op.cit. 200.  
E.C.Blackman. op.cit. 200

14. contd/.
- A.Harnack. History of Dogma I. op.cit. 267,270.
- R.W.Thomson. An Armenian List of Heresies. JTS. ns. Vol. XVI. part 2, (October 1965) 362.
15. Eusebius. op.cit. 16:22, 221.
16. E.C.Blackman. op.cit. 82
- S.Lieu. Manichaeism. Manchester. (1985) 82.
- Irenaeus. Against Heresies.XXV:3. ET. The Apostolic Fathers. Grand Rapids. (1981) 459.
17. W.H.C.Frend. The Rise of Christianity. London. (1984) 216.
- F.Legge. Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity. Vol.II. Cambridge. (1915) 45.
18. H.Jonas. op.cit. 137.
- [includes Marcion among the Gnostics for his Christological view, but qualifies this, suggesting that ' he alone took the passion of Christ seriously though the interpretation he put upon it was unacceptable to the church.']
- W.Bousset. Kyrios Christos. ET. E.J.Steely. New York. (1970) 250,1,254.
- U.Bianchi. Some Reflections on the Greek Origins of Gnostic Ontology and the Christian Origin of the Gnostic Saviour. In The New Testament and Gnosis. A.H.Logan & A.J.M.Wedderburn. (eds.) Edinburgh. (1983) 43,44.
- R.M.Grant. Greek Apologists of the Second Century. London.(1988) 64.
19. R.S.Wilson. op.cit.97,8; 110,125.
- W.Bousset. op.cit. 275.
- J.H.Waszink. Tertullian's Principles and Methods of Exegesis. In Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition. W.R.Schoedel & R.L.Wilken. (eds.) Theologie Historique 53. Paris. (1979). 25.
20. A.Harnack. History of Dogma.I. op.cit. 277,272.
- R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. London. (1958) 81.
- F.C.Burkitt. Church and Gnosis. Cambridge. (1932) 25.
- C.S.C.Williams. Eznik's Resume of Marcionite Doctrine. JTS. Vol. XLV. Oxford. (1944) 70-73.
21. W.H.C.Frend. The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Cambridge. (1972) 104.
22. R.S.Wilson. op.cit. 65.
- M.Loos. Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages. Prague. (1974) 69.
23. A.Harnack. History of Dogma II. ET. N. Buchanan. London. (1910) 105,6.

[Montanism as a form of reaction, trying to revive a former state of Christianity as a defence against innovation and secularism, trying to keep Christianity from developing into a new thing.]

23. contd/.

J.Pelikan. The Finality of Jesus Christ. London (1965) 39-41,47.

[according to Cyril of Jerusalem, Montanus identified himself with the Holy Spirit, more accurately he exemplified the practice of religious prophets as mouthpieces of the divine. According to Pseudo-Tertullian's 'Against all Heresies' Montanists go beyond the revelation in Christ. Their claim to universality is compromised by the assertion of finality for Montanus' revelations.]

H.Koester. Gnomai Diaphoroi: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity. Trajectories Through Early Christianity. J.M.Robinson & H.Koester. (eds.) Philadelphia. (1971). 155.

B.Gerhardsson. Tradition and Transmission in the Early Church. Lund. (1970) 29,46.

cf. R.Knox. Enthusiasm. London. (1984) edn. 31.

24. Eusebius. op.cit.206,217.

H.E.W. Turner. op.cit. 125.

W.H.C. Frend. The Donatist Church. Oxford. (1952) 59

W.H.C.Frend. Saints and Sinners in the Early Church. London. (1981) 69.

W.H.C.Frend. And I Have Other Sheep. John 10:16. In: The Making of Orthodoxy. R.Williams. (ed.) Cambridge. (1989). 29,35.

[Montanists addressed themselves as 'Christians for Christians', and have a similar background and provenance to Donatists.]

R.M.Grant. Greek Apologists of the Second Century. London. (1988) 88.

J.Pelikan. The Finality of Jesus Christ. op.cit. 31.

[Donatism and Montanism spoke for authentically Christian emphases being overlooked or slighted in the thought of Catholic Christendom.]

25. G.Vallee. op.cit. 39.

26. S.L.Greenslade. Schism in the Early Church. London. (1953). 110.

R.M.Grant. The Letter and The Spirit. London. (1957) 73,74.

H.E.W. Turner. op.cit. 126.

J.L.Ash Jnr. The Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy in the Early Church. Theological Studies. Vol. 37.(1976) 228,247,249,250.

[the establishment of the Church rather than formation of the canon excluded Montanism. ]

W.Bousset. op.cit. 263.

F.Wisse. The Use of Early Christian Literature as Evidence for Inner Diversity and Conflict. In Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Christianity. C.W.Hedrick & R.Hodgson jnr. (eds). Massachusetts, (1986) 186,7.

[reason = the basis of orthodoxy. The appeal to reason went hand in hand with catholicity.]

27. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 125.

A.Daunton Fear. The Ecstasies of Montanus. Studia Patristica XVII Part II. Oxford. (1982) 648.

J.Zizioulas. The Christian Community in Christian Spirituality: Vol.1. Origins to the Twelfth Century. (eds.) B.McGinn/ J.Meyendorff/ J.Leclercq. London. (1989) 40.

R.M.Grant. Augustus to Constantine. London. (1971). 159.

[Is the Montanist expectation of the New Zion related to the anti-building ideal of later sectarians ?]

28. H.E.W.Turner op.cit. 132.

[Montanism 'summoned the church to retrace its steps and in doing so may even betray a certain lack of faith in the guidance of the Paraclete..']

R.Knox. op.cit.25, 37, 40-51.

M.Wiles. The Christian Fathers. London. (1966) 164.

C.Rowland. Christian Origins. London. (1985) 151.

cf. P.Henry. Why is Contemporary Scholarship so Enamoured of Ancient Heretics ? Studia Patristica XVII Part 3 Oxford. (1982) 124.

29. S.L.Greenslade.op.cit. 110.

J.L.Ash.Jnr. op.cit. 243,245.

R.M.Grant. Augustus to Constantine. op.cit. 160, 168,9.

[Ignatius spoke 'with God's own voice' like Montanus, but Ignatius is Bishop of Antioch, not a Phrygian neophyte. Fresh revelation was undesirable according to church leaders. Montanists are like Gnostics at heart, sectarians.]

30. W.H.C.Frend. The Donatist Church. op. cit.119,86.

J.Fontaine. The Birth of the Laity. in B.McGinn/ J.Meyendorff/ J.Leclercq. (eds.) op.cit. 456; fn. 2.485,6.

[Tertullian permits laymen to baptise and preside at the eucharist; a Montanist remnant ?]

W.H.C. Frend. Saints and Sinners in the Early Church. op.cit. 97

31. R.M.Grant. The Letter and The Spirit. op.cit.75.

W.Bousset. op.cit. 283.

C.S.C.Williams. The Descent of the Dove. London. (1963) 35-38.

H.Crouzel. Origen. ET. A.S.Worrall. Edinburgh. (1989) 133.

H.von Campenhausen. Tradition and Life in the Church. ET. London (1968) 16.

[Montanism 'appealed to a new outpouring of the Spirit and the ecstatic enthusiasm ...exercised a fascination upon men's minds, producing a feeling of joy and liberation. But when these psychological phenomena faded...all that was left of the new freedom was a collection of new and highly ascetic demands, held to be promulgated by the Spirit, and under the oppressive weight of this doubled tradition, the sect gradually crumbled..']

- R.Williams. Arius: Heresy and Tradition. London. (1987) 14,15.
- H.von Campenhausen. Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries. London. (1965) 182, 187,188.
- J.L.Ash. Jnr. op.cit. 227.
32. F.C.Conybeare. The Key of Truth. A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia. (ed. & trans.) Oxford. (1898) clxxxv.
- R.M.Grant. Augustus to Constantine. op.cit. 145.
- G.W.H.Lampe. The Holy Spirit and the Person of Christ in: Christ, Faith and History. S.W.Sykes & J.P.Clayton. (eds.) Cambridge. (1972) 121, 125,6.
- [reasons for the rejection of Adoptionist Christologies; regards the appropriate analogy for Adoptionist Christology the experience of grace (1 Cor 15:10) (this seems to undermine the uniqueness of the Incarnation as Montanism does). ]
33. H.Koester. Gnomai Diaphoroi: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in Early Christianity. In J.M.Robinson & H.Koester. (eds.) Trajectories Through Early Christianity. Philadelphia. (1971) 155.

Appended Note:

Mani and Manichaeism.

Manichaeism was the final development of dualism, incorporating Iranian elements in a syncretistic blend, Mani's heavenly messenger previously incarnate in the Buddha and Zoroaster.(1)

The Roman state legislated against and persecuted them from the fourth to the sixth centuries (c.297 AD. and the Theodosian Code 398 AD.), regarding them as non-Christians rather than Christian heretics.(2)

There was cross-conversion in Africa between Catholics and Manichaeans, especially among those seeking answers to questions not dealt with by the church, and among ascetics and those emphasising 'authentic' Christianity. The 'true' understanding of scripture was to be found in Mani alone.(3)

Mani was regarded as the true apostle of Christ or the Paraclete, or more prominently, Christ himself.

He modelled himself on St. Paul after whose time he believed mankind degenerated. In his revelation the true prophet who was in Adam was reincarnated in the prophets and in Christ, the Elkesaites, and last of all in Mani himself.(4)

Manichaeans had a hierarchy of believers, with a parodic trinity.(5)

Whilst Manichaeism regarded Christianity as only a relative



truth, Hellenistic and heretical trends in the early church assisted its spread, re-interpreting dogma in an allegorical sense. It penetrated Egyptian monasticism, and as the church became established it selected between rival sects, infiltrating them with its similarities to Montanism and monasticism.(6)

Claudius of Turin regards them as Docetic, for lacking the Catholic historical emphasis, Mani's suffering was regarded as no more real than that of Jesus the Messiah.(7) The Jesus of darkness was distinguished from the Jesus of light, and the only authentic Christianity Mani recognised was that of Basilides and Marcion.

In the Acta Archeli Jesus is not real flesh and blood, Christ is a phantom in this world, for paradoxically, incarnation is regarded as implying docetism.(8)

Manichees could dissimulate among Catholic communities. According to Leo they had no redeeming features as other heretics might have. Eusebius says Mani collected heresies together and distilled a poison from them.(9)

Footnotes.

1. G.Windengren. Mani and Manichaeism. ET. London. (1965). 72,76.  
D.Obolensky. The Bogomils. Twickenham. (1972) 10,16.
2. S.N.C.Lieu. Manichaeism. Manchester.(1985) 11, 112,160.  
A.Grillmeier. Christ in Christian Tradition II. ET. London. (1987) 174,5.
3. W.H.C.Frend. The Donatist Church. Oxford. (1952).36  
S.N.C.Lieu. op.cit. 41,87,120,126,144.  
[Augustine had viewed Manichaeism as a purified form of Christianity]  
W.H.C.Frend. 'And I Have Other Sheep' John 10:16. in :  
The Making of Orthodoxy. R.Williams. (ed.) Cambridge.  
(1989). 32,33.
4. G.Widengren. op.cit. 32,36,59,65.  
R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. London. (1958) 66.  
A.D.Nock. Gnosticism. Harvard Theological Review. Vol.57.  
(1964) 278,9.  
S.N.C.Lieu. op.cit. 33-7.  
H.Jonas. The Gnostic Religion. Boston. (1963) 93,94.  
A.Bohlig. The New Testament and the Concept of the Manichaeon  
Myth in The New Testament and Gnosis. (ed.)A.H. Logan  
& A.J.M. Wedderburn. Edinburgh. (1983) 91,93.
5. S.N.C.Lieu op.cit. 20.  
V.N.Sharenkoff. A Study of Manichaeism in Bulgaria with Special  
Reference to the Bogomils. New York. (1927). 13.  
J.Ries. Un Double Symbole de Foi Gnostique Dans Le Kephallon  
Un de Medinet Madi. In Nag Hammadi and Gnosis. (ed.)  
R.McL.Wilson. Leiden (1978) 8,9,147.
6. D.Obolensky op.cit. 24-27.  
S.N.C.Lieu op.cit. 163.  
A.Harnack. History of Dogma. III. ET. J.Millar. London. (1897)  
317, 331.  
A.Grillmeier. Christ in Christian Tradition. II. op.cit. 187.
7. Claudius of Turin. Commentary on Galatians. in:  
Early Medieval Theology. LCC. IX London. (1953) 231.  
S.N.C.Lieu. op.cit. 136.  
A.Harnack. History of Dogma. III op.cit. 331.  
[Catholicism was superior to Manichaeism, since its founder was not  
the bearer of a revelation, but the Redeemer, Son of God. Manichees  
found the historic Jesus objectionable, and Catholicism diabolical.]  
J.Ries. op.cit. 145.

8. V.N.Sharenkoff. op.cit. 11

F.C.Conybeare. The Key of Truth. A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia. Oxford. (1898) xcvi, c.

R.W.Thomson. An Armenian List of Heresies. JTS. ns. Vol. XVI. part 2. October (1965) 362.

A.Grillmeier. Christ in Christian Tradition II. op.cit. 181-3,185,194.

[183. fn.207 : according to Rose:  
Manes.. 'did not accept a positive determination of the earthly appearance of Jesus Christ, but he did not deny it a real substance. It is a question of a 'reception of the Church's understanding of Jesus' for 'missionary purposes'. ']

9.                               ibid. 172,3,186.

S.N.C.Lieu.                   op.cit. 18,22.

Eusebius.                   The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine.  
ET. G.Williamson. London. (1965) 319.

J.Ries.                       op.cit. 146.

CHAPTER 2.

DISCERNING THE BODY.

THE ORTHODOX APOLOGIA:  
IRENÆUS.

Irenaeus prominently opposed Gnosticism, pointing out that if there were a secret apostolic tradition this would have been part of the common deposit of faith. In his view orthodox Christians were led astray by encouragement to seek new knowledge beyond the Church's teaching and preaching.(1) Against this he affirmed a positive ecclesiastical tradition in the context of salvation history, Christ's continuing humanity united with ours for our salvation in the one Body of Christ, over against the bewildering variety of Gnostic pluralism which distorts scripture and the nature of God.

Valentinus and Marcion are held responsible for such innovation on the Faith, distorting the public catholic ecclesiastical tradition in a kind of perverse mirror image originating from Simon Magus, exalting interior Gnosis.(2) This he outlines as a selective attempt to exalt one aspect of the apostolic tradition over all else,(3) and gives six points of variance with the Gnostics:

1. Rejection of the Old Testament God.
2. The supposition that evil angels or an inferior power created the world.
3. False teaching about Jesus, especially docetic Christology.
4. Magical practices.
5. Idolatry and other forms of immorality practised by adherents.
6. Claims made by adherents to be liberated from obedience to evil angels of the creation.(4)

Gnostic mythological teaching regards theology as a product of the Demi-Urge, whilst itself masquerading as authentic

apostolic tradition as in Ptolemaeus' Letter to Flora.(5) Some like Marcionites and Montanists claim to reform the church,(6) separating believers into psychic, spiritual, and animal categories.

Against them Irenaeus emphasises that there is no division between the creator and creation. At the heart of the struggle with Gnosticism lay the question of the historicity of the Christian faith, especially the person of Jesus.(7) Irenaeus makes it clear that Jesus took real flesh, as that common to all men, not in appearance but in reality, refuting docetism(8). The Word comes to recover all things in the Incarnation. Irenaeus refutes the Adoptionist idea that Christ descended on the human Jesus at his baptism.

The Gnostic Christ had no birth, no earthly ministry, he was not incarnate and did not suffer, the Carpocratians comparing themselves to Jesus, even improving upon him.(9). Against them Irenaeus emphasises the visible reality of the Lord as the guarantee of the Church's life,(10) although he also depicts Jesus as teaching until forty or fifty years old, possibly to refute Gnostic post-Resurrection teaching.(11)

Christology is at the heart of the heretics' error, they confess Christ but divide him.

In the context of biblical heilsgeschichte Irenaeus regards Christ as truly endangered in the passion, for if Christ's suffering is not real, we are capable of being superior to

him - the authenticity of his suffering is linked to believers' martyrdom.(12).

The Docetic Christ is no saviour and participates in nothing of our nature, nor we of his.

His emphasis on authentic apostolic tradition emphasises the historical succession of bishops in each place, though not succession in ordination.(13)

For Irenaeus an error in Christology is linked to error in ecclesiology. The unity of Christ's person is the unity of the Church, over against the Gnostic ecclesia above, the incorruptible aeon.(14)

Scripture and the life of the Church are bound together, whereas Gnostic esoteric exegesis is ambiguous.(15)

Scripture, Irenaeus pictures as similar to a mosaic fragmented and distorted by heretics, prefiguring later iconoclastic elements.(16)

Irenaeus' concern is a practical one for believers lost in Gnostic esotericism.(17) Against this he affirms our salvation as set up upon earth in the Incarnation and saving events.(18)



Footnotes:

1. Irenaeus. Against Heresies: ET. The Apostolic Fathers. (reprint.) Grand Rapids. 1981. 417
- H.J.Carpenter. Popular Christianity and The Theologians in the Early Centuries. JTS. ns. 14 (1963). 302
- A.Harnack. History of Dogma II. ET. London. (1910) 27, 273,5; 277,8; 293.
- [Harnack sees Irenaeus justifying the church's historical tradition]
- M.Wiles. Working Papers in Doctrine. London. (1976). 72
- Irenaeus. Against Heresies. op.cit. XXVIII:6. 401.
2. F.Legge. Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity. II. Cambridge. (1915). 93,5. 126.132.
- [when imperial legislation began to change the church, Valentinus found himself forced to create alternative societies rather than scholae.]
- J.Danielou. Danielou I. op.cit. 73
- R.M.Grant. Gnosticism: An Anthology. op.cit. Introduction.13.
- Irenaeus. op.cit. XX:1. 547.
- [heresy is always considered as of later date than orthodoxy].
- G.Vallee A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics. Ontario.(1981) 32.
- R.A.Greer. The Dog and the Mushrooms: Irenaeus' View of the Valentinians Reassessed.REG op.cit.148, 167.
- R.M.Grant. Gnosticism and Early Christianity. op.cit. 71,76, 77.
3. P.Perkins. Irenaeus and the Gnostics: Rhetoric and Composition In Adversus Haereses Book One. Vigiliae Christianae Vol. 30. (1976) 196,197.
- J.Pelikan Pelikan I. op.cit. 112.
- J.Pelikan The Two Sees of Peter. JCSD. op.cit.66.
4. P.Perkins. op.cit. 198.
5. J.Danielou. Danielou II op.cit. 397.
- R.M.Grant. Gnosticism: An Anthology. op.cit. 176
- [Ptolemaeus says that members of the church receive grace as a loan, and will be deprived of it, but Gnostics receive it as a possession.]
6. Irenaeus. op.cit. XXVI:2. 492.
- J.Pelikan. The Two Sees of Peter. JCSD. op. cit. 70.
- Irenaeus. op.cit. XI:9, 429, XXIII:7. 508, XXV:3, 459,
- W.H.C. Frend. Saints and Sinners in the Early Church. London. (1985). 67,8.
7. Irenaeus. op.cit. X:4. 370

7. contd/.

R.Greer. op. cit.170

G.Macrae. Why the Church Rejected Gnosticism. JCSD. op.cit. 131.

[Gnostics created 'a radical rupture of the salvation-historical process, which Christian theologians could not tolerate.']

8. Irenaeus. op.cit. I:2. 527; XXII:4. 391, XIV:11,2; 541.

T.E.Pollard. Johannine Christology and the Early Church. Cambridge. (1970) 43,47.

[Against Gnostic Docetism Irenaeus affirms the reality of salvation in Christ. His God/man Christology emphasises the visible become visible, the fullness of humanity and divinity both being necessary.]

R.M.Grant. Jesus After the Gospel. London. (1990) 104, 106.

J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 168. (cf. Tertullian in Danielou III. op.cit. 351,384.)

M.Wiles. Working Papers in Doctrine. op.cit. 52.

9. J.Danielou. Danielou I op.cit. 84,85.

Irenaeus. op.cit. V:1. 324, XXX:13, 357, IX:2,329.

['according to their hypothesis, the Word did not become flesh at all, inasmuch as he never went outside of the Pleroma, but that Saviour (became flesh) who was formed by a special dispensation..']

ibid. VII:2, 325, IX:3, 423, X:3, 425, XI:3, 427, XVI:1, 440, XXI:2, 345, XXV:1. 350,

10. ibid. XI:3, 427, XXI : 4. 346, XXII:1. 454, XXIV:1, 458,

['if he did not receive the substance of flesh from a human being, he neither was made man, nor the Son of Man, and if he was not made what we were, he did no great thing in what he suffered and endured.']

E.Pagels. The Gnostic Gospels. op.cit. 68,80.

Irenaeus. op.cit. IV:2, 417, V:6, 323,; XXX:2, 354, XXXIII:5,8, 508.

J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 151.

11. J.Danielou. ibid. 173,5

Irenaeus. op.cit. XXI:10,454. XXII:4, 391.

cf. S.Tugwell. O.P. Irenaeus and the Gnostic Challenge. The Clergy Review. Vol.66 (1981) 136.

12. Irenaeus op.cit. XXVI : 352, XVIII : 5,6. 447

['if he did not suffer ...why did he exhort his disciples to take up the cross and follow him ?'....'..we shall even be above our Master, because we suffer and sustain what our Master never bore or endured.']

E.Pagels. Views of Christ's Passion. REG. op.cit. 265,6.

['Irenaeus' defence of martyrdom is precisely the context of his attack on the Gnostic views of Christ's passion. Every one of the

anti-Gnostic writers, Ignatius, Justin, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Irenaeus..embraces martyrdom as a 'sacrifice acceptable to God..']

13. R.P.C. Hanson. Tradition in the Early Church. London. (1962) 94,95,116,145,146,158.

Irenaeus. op.cit. XXVI : 2. 497.

P.Perkins. Ordering the Cosmos: Irenaeus and the Gnostics. in Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity. C.W.Hedricks and R.Hodgson jnr. (eds.) Massachusetts. (1986) 223,226.

[ Irenaeus v Valentinus is parallel to Philo v Platonists.]

14. Irenaeus. op.cit. I: 2,; II: 2,3. 528,9.

[in the eucharist, in the commixture of wine and water Irenaeus sees the divine and human natures of Christ.]

ibid. XII: 5, 431, XIV: 4, 542, XX:1, 548, XXIII : 551.

E.Flesseman van Leer. Tradition and Scripture on The Early Church. Assen. (1954) 100, 108.

R.P.C.Hanson. op.cit. 145.

G.Vallee. op.cit.27.

J.Pelikan. Pelikan I . op.cit. 118

15. Irenaeus op.cit. VIII: 3, 327, IX:4. 330, XV:2, 439, XXXII :4. 409.; II:1,2, 415, II:3, 464.

R.P.C. Hanson. op.cit. 22, 108, 145.

['what the church teaches is the genuine content of scripture...']

J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 143.

[the scriptures constitute a book with a double meaning which the Gnostics claim to know how to interpret correctly.]

E.Flesseman van Leer. op.cit. 102.

[the Gnostic claim..'compels Irenaeus to fight the Gnostics on their own ground. It is quite true that there is an oral tradition, but this tradition is by no means secret..']

R.M.Grant. The Letter and The Spirit. London. (1957) 82.

['with the Valentinians Irenaeus felt the need of an authoritative exegetical tradition. Unlike them he finds in the common apostolic tradition a succession not secret, but open and known to all.']

M.Wiles. The Spiritual Gospel. Cambridge. (1960) 96.

[the question of the right exegesis of the Gospel (John) an essential element in the struggle with Gnosticism.]

H.Chadwick. Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition. Oxford. (1966) 81.

J.M.Robinson. Logoi Sophon: On the Gattung of Q. in J.M.Robinson & H.Koester. Trajectories Through Early Christianity. Philadelphia. (1971) 84.

16. P.Perkins. Irenaeus and the Gnostics. op.cit. 196.

16. contd/.

R.Greer. op.cit. 166,

cf. Irenaeus. op. cit. VIII:1, 326.; IX:2, 329.

M.Wiles. The Christian Fathers. London. (1966) 111.

[!the physical nature of the sacraments was a matter of special importance to early writers, like Irenaeus, whose primary concern was the refutation of Gnosticism.!] ]

E.F.Osborn. Reason and the Rule of Faith : in The Making of Orthodoxy. R.Williams.(ed.) Cambridge. (1989). 45,49.

17. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. op.cit. 12.

M.Wiles. op.cit. 99.

18. R.Greer. op.cit. 168,173.

Irenaeus, op. cit. XXIV:1 . 458.

THE ALEXANDRIAN ETHOS:

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

Within Alexandrian Christianity, influenced by Platonism, Gnosticism was a live threat to 'orthodoxy'. The bishop Demetrius and his successor Clement used Gnostic philosophical concepts in a working agreement to interpret orthodox theology, emphasising Heilsgeschichte. (1) The true Christian was regarded as the 'true Gnostic', and Gnosticism as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ.(2)

Clement emphasised historicity, the historical reality of Jesus Christ the guarantee of our redemption, though his emphasis on the consequent catholicity of the church does not escape elitism.(3)

Affirming the goodness of creation, he includes it in Christ's saving work.

At times his orthodoxy appears suspect(4), and his view of the nature of God and places of worship is typically Hellenistic, though this latter may relate more to pagan temples than Christian churches. A similar influence is found in his biblical exegesis, although this is anchored in history.(5) Clement uses allegory extensively, interpreting the Old and New Testaments with the help of Philo, and implying esoteric doctrine similar to Gnosticism, though Christianising Gnostic traits.(6)

If his language is unfamiliar, the biblical testimony to which it points is one with an inherent spiritual meaning opposing heresy.(7) Heretics do violence to scripture whereas the true Gnostic opens his soul to what lies beneath scripture. In places Clement refers to unwritten tradition

though not as a supplementary revelation.(8)

Clement is concerned to keep within the scope of heilsgeschichte, linking the biblical revelation firmly to the Incarnation, without scriptural doctesis divorcing the meaning from the text, even where a deeper allegorical meaning is emphasised.(9)

Clement's orthodoxy is often questioned in relation to Gnostic speculation. He appears to hold to a post-Resurrection tradition rivalling the spurious Gnostic one, he certainly holds to deeper hidden 'true knowledge' which penetrates to the depths of the Godhead.(10)

Such a concept of secret teaching was prominent where the prestige of baptism declined and ecstatic guidance was regarded as outmoded. Orthodox Christians too could point to Jesus teaching publicly in parables but privately to his disciples.(11) With Basil of Caesarea, he points to a secret tradition of dogmata which is more practical and ethical and passed on orally, rather than ecclesial public teaching, and he is anxious that this information should not fall into the wrong hands. Clement says that since this is liable to be misunderstood, Christians may lie and dissimulate to protect it.(12).

He has no clear understanding of apostolic succession, but emphasises a succession of teachers rather than episcopal transmission. He tries to balance the public apostolic tradition of the Church with a parallel secret one, and in this concept of the 'secret Gospel' ran the danger of

allowing orthodoxy to be overcome,(13) for if Gnostic esotericism had triumphed the church would have split into innumerable sects, distorting the visible Body which the church derived from the Incarnation.

Alexandrian Christianity thus risked exalting faith over order. In such subjectivism Photius suggests Clement endangered the truth of the Incarnation.(14).

History ultimately separates Clement from the Gnostics.

The orthodox true Gnostic has an ascetic trait, whilst fulfilling his duty to his neighbour.(15) This man of faith with deeper insight does not despise the ordinary believer.(16)

As for Origen, such a believer is a combination of teacher, theologian, and mystic possessing the Gnostic faculty of:

1. knowledge of the Christian religion,
2. accomplishment of what the word enjoins,
3. a capacity to impart the hidden things of truth.

This true Gnostic receives God's creation with thankfulness, and enjoys communion with God in Christ, with insight which makes faith perfect, transcending mediation and ritual.(17)

Such care for creation and his neighbour sets him apart from heretics.(18)

It is suggested by Clement in places that the true Gnostic is sinless, though this is found too in orthodox mystics.

With his insistence on holiness and a good life, Clement seeks to erect an inner cloister in the great congregation, though trying not to let this ideal get out of hand.(19)



Orthodoxy he regards as ancient and venerable whereas heresies are later deviations.

The true Gnostic does not disdain the church, maintaining catholic unity, as against the various sects named after their founders or place of origin, and practising either libertine or world denigrating perversions.(20)

Carpocratians are regarded as a distorted version of ecclesiolae within Clement's own church.

If one leaves the church for such sects,

'..he has lost the character of a man of God..' (21)

Clement is concerned to emphasise authentic Christian experience which transcends spurious Gnosticism, with a sharing in the divine nature which ascends to the vision of the pure in heart.(22)

In common with heretical Gnostics, Clement's Christology tends towards Docetism. The places where he seems to echo Valentinian views are balanced by other places where his Christology appears quite orthodox. There is no doubt he regarded Christ as sharing in our flesh and blood, and was committed to the full reality of his humanity, though there are again instances where he speaks of Christ's flesh unlike ours since he had no carnal desire.(23)

Clement was aware of the dangers of Docetism - he refers to Julius Africanus as its originator and to its influence on Marcion and Valentinus.(24) Clement's perfectionist ecclesiology is close to the Valentinian ideal - the church

as a 'conspiration', a school for the imperfect, a congregation of saints,

... 'a shrine which is best fitted for the reception of the greatness of the dignity of God, a holy temple..' (25)

with an emphasis on illumination and elitism. His church may have practised a second baptism for enlightenment. (26)

Clement links creation, the Incarnation and the life of the church in one whole, his Platonic idea of the church on high held beside an emphasis on its historicity. (27)

This spiritual ecclesiola ideal points to the later distinction between nominal and real Christianity, the visible and the invisible church, (28) although he does insist on the reality and unity of the local congregation. (29)

Clement's ecclesiology is bound up with his Christology, and where the one is endangered the other too is at risk. There is no doubt of his emphasis on history:

..'without the body, how could the divine plan for us in the church achieve its end ?...  
Surely the Lord himself, the head of the Church, came in the flesh, though without form and beauty..'

Where his Platonism led him close to docetism, it reflects his dissatisfaction with the co-identity between the true spiritual church and the institution, and this is seen too in his understanding of the eucharist. (30)

Footnotes:

1. L.P.Sheldon Williams. The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Erigena. In The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy. A.H.Armstrong.(ed.) Cambridge. (1970) 425.  
  
W.H.C.Frend. The Rise of Christianity. London. (1984) 369.  
  
O.Chadwick. John Cassian. Cambridge (1968) 82,83.  
  
[Clement as a deeply Christian thinker who had 'not fully digested his Platonist language into his Christian mind', but 'was readier to accept the world than to spurn it.']  
  
W.H.C.Frend op.cit. 371.  
  
['salvation history was implicit in all Alexandrian Gnosticism, though the boundaries of what was orthodox and what was heretical in Egyptian Christianity by the end of the second century were still very fluid']  
  
S.R.C.Lilla. Clement of Alexandria:A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism. Oxford. (1971) 3-9, 162,3.  
  
R. McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. London. (1958) 67.  
  
R.M.Grant. Early Alexandrian Christianity. 142. in Christian Beginnings: Apocalypse to History. London. (1983)
2. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. ET. in Alexandrian Christianity. LCC. vol. II. J.E.L.Oulton/H.Chadwick. London. (1954.) II:9. 98.  
  
W.H.C.Frend. op.cit. 371.
3. J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit. 96  
  
['above all the historical reality of the birth, death and resurrection of Christ stood firm against any Gnostic docetism. This reality was the guarantee of redemption and the foundation of the church which was catholic and included all sorts and conditions of men, not merely the spiritual elite.']
4. F.Legge. Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity. Vol.II. Cambridge. (1915) 122.
5. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit.V:28 109.  
  
['we refuse to circumscribe in a given place him who is incomprehensible, and to confine in temples made with hands that which contains all things']  
  
R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. London. (1959) 98.  
  
[Alexandrian Epistle of Barnabas has connections with Stephen's speech in Acts 7; people put their hope in a building instead of in God.]  
  
E.G.Jay. Origen on Prayer. ET. London. (1954) 9.  
  
R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. London. (1954), 68,9.  
  
R.Mortley. The Past in Clement of Alexandria.in JCS.D. op.cit. 194,5 ; 200.

6. R.M.Grant. The Letter and the Spirit. op.cit. 88,89.  
The Earliest Lives of Jesus. op.cit. 36.  
J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 122  
S.R.C.Lilla. op. cit. 142,3,233.  
R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 45,117. (cf.12,13,17,19, 72,3.)

[Jewish Rabbinic allegory and typology influenced the Fathers.]

7. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit. I:1. 93.  
Clement of Alexandria. On Marriage. in Alexandrian Christianity. op.cit. X : 70,72;71,73. XII:83,79.  
R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 225.  
8. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op. cit. XVI:96, 97, 156.  
G.L.Prestige. Fathers and Heretics. London. (1940) 17  
J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit. 94.

[Pelikan sees a continuum between the writings of Paul and John, and those of Clement and Origen.]

- S.R.C.Lilla. op.cit. 118,9  
9. R.P.C.Hanson. Tradition in The Early Church. London. (1962). 111.  
C.Biggs. The Christian Platonists of Alexandria. Oxford. (1886). 92.  
cf. F.F.Bruce. Tradition Old and New. London. (1970) 119.  
J.W.Trigg. Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church. London. (1983) 51.  
S.R.C.Lilla. op.cit. 141,154,161,228.  
10. R.M.Grant. The Letter and the Spirit. op.cit. 89  
R.P.C.Hanson. op.cit. 47.  
J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit. 96.

[no one can fail to be reminded of Gnosticism when he reads Clement's claim to possess a secret tradition neither published in the New Testament nor known to the common people.']

- D.M.Parrott. Gnostic and Orthodox Disciples in the Second and Third Centuries. in: Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity. C.W.Hedrick & R.Hodgson Jr. (eds.) Massachusetts. (1986) 214-7.  
R.M.Grant. The Earliest Lives of Jesus. op.cit.36,37.  
M.Smith. Clement of Alexandria and the Secret Gospel of Mark. Cambridge. Mass. (1973) 29,32, 47,48,199,200.  
R.P.C.Hanson. op.cit.97,104,126.  
H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 401.  
S.R.C.Lilla. op.cit.56,145,6. 154-9,233,4.

10. contd/.

E.F.Osborn. Reason and the Rule of Faith: in  
The Making of Orthodoxy. R.Williams.(ed.).  
Cambridge. (1989.) 44.

11. M.Smith. op.cit.183, 253.

R.P.C.Hanson. op.cit. 77,127.

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 53-8,67,71.

[Clement's secret tradition intuitive, completing ordinary faith,  
unwritten, independent of the Bible, from before the Incarnation.  
Clement confused three things in his secret tradition: i). his own  
private speculation; ii) doctrinal speculation from previous  
teachers; iii)the church's interpretation of tradition in teaching  
and preaching.]

T.E.Pollard. Johannine Christology and the Early Church.  
Cambridge. (1970). 76,77.

12. ibid. 158.

G.L.Prestige. Fathers and Heretics. op.cit. 18.

M.Smith. op.cit. 31.

J.Danielou. Danielou I . op.cit. 51

M.Smith. op.cit. 11,14,31,43,54,60,81.

R.M.Grant. The Letter and the Spirit. op.cit. 89.

13. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit.315.

[esoteric tradition a secret Dominical tradition given orthodox  
ethos, not intended to supersede scripture or the life of the  
church.]

14. F.Legge. Forerunners and Rivals. op.cit. 14.

Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit. VII:40. 118.

15. R.Mortley. op.cit. 195.

[Clement's genealogies are historical in character, whereas Gnostic  
genealogy tends to return to extra-terrestrial principles.]

J.E.L.Oulton. Alexandrian Christianity. op.cit. Introduction. 21.

Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit. XII:79, 143;  
III :16, 102.

M.Wiles. The Christian Fathers. op.cit. 169,170.

H.Chadwick. Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition  
Oxford. (1966) 50.

[Clement has no real theology of history as Irenaeus has.]

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 283.

16. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection.op.cit. XIV:84, 147.

S.R.C.Lilla. op.cit. 12.118,151-5,164,180.

16. contd/.

E.G.Jay. Origen On Prayer. op.cit. 29,31,32.

[the true Gnostic prays throughout his life rather than just at the hours of prayer. Rather arrogantly, Clement recommends Gnostics in their superiority to condescend to pray with other Christians.]

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 33,42.

['Clement seeks to mark the line between orthodoxy and heresy without surrendering to the anti-intellectual reaction']

17. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit. I:2,4;94,5. III:13,17,18;100,103,104. V:29;110. VII:35,47; 115, 123. XI:55,56;128,9. XI:62;132. XII:70;138.138.

18. ibid. XVI:104,5;160-2. VII:41;118.

Clement of Alexandria. On Marriage. op.cit. X:69 ; 72.

J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit. 109.

19. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit.390,395,398.

[Clement's Christian Gnosticism Turner sees as a 'tempting mirage', a Christian intellectualism which raises the danger of a double standard within the church.]

W.H.C.Frend. op.cit. 283.

R.Williams. Arius: Heresy and Tradition. London. (1987) 21,156.

[Arius' affinity to Clement's Alexandrian Gnosis]

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 53.

[Clement does not disparage ordinary Church members, denying the Gnostic distinction between faith and knowledge without suggesting there is no place for advance in spiritual understanding.]

20. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit. XVI:99; 157, 158; XVII:107,108 ; 162,3.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 138.

E.F.Osborn. op.cit. 45-53.

Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit.XVI: 96.;156.

Clement of Alexandria. On Marriage. op.cit. V:40; 58.

21. M.Smith. op.cit. 19.

Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection.op.cit. XVI:95 ; 154.

22. R.Bultmann. Gnosis. ET. London. (1952) 53.

cf. J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit. 84.

Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit.III:13;100. X:56; 128.

23. K.Rudolph. Gnosis. ET. Edinburgh. (1983) 159.

[Clement 'still cherished docetic conceptions which at his time were by no means reckoned to be expressly heretical.']

23. contd/.

W.Schmitals. The Office of Apostle in the Early Church. ET. J.Steely. London. (1971) 133.

[Christian Gnosticism dehistoricises Christ via Docetism.]

W.H.C.Frend. op.cit.372.

['emotionally he recoiled from docetism, but he like the Christian philosophers of the second century, whether Valentinus or Justin, failed to harmonise the Jesus of the gospels with the Word Incarnate.....Clement committed the Word-flesh Christology to a permanent tendency to undervalue Christ's humanity.']

Clement of Alexandria. On Marriage. op.cit. VII : 59; 67.

Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit. II :8. 97.

R.McL.Wilson. The Gnostic Problem. op.cit.134,5.

W.H.C.Frend. Saints and Sinners in the Early Church. London. (1981) 143-5.

R.Williams. op.cit. 126,7.

F.Young. The God of the Greeks. in Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition. Theologie Historique 53. W.R.Schoedel & R.L.Wilken. op.cit. 64.

['Clement's Christ is a virtually docetic revelation of this static God and his ideal Christian (Gnostic) an ascetic trying to emulate such a being.']

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 49-51.

[Clement sees the incarnation in the context of the divine purposes in human history. The true being of the incarnate Lord is not manifest to all but only to those with the capacity to receive the revelation. Strom.VI:132. ]

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 120,225.

[Clement stronger on the Incarnation than Origen.]

cf. C.Cummings. The Motherhood of God : Julian of Norwich. In Peaceweavers. (ed.) L.T.Shank & J.A.Nichols. Oxford. (1987) 310,311.

[Clement of Alexandria regarded as the source of idea of the motherhood of God.]

24. Clement of Alexandria. On Marriage. op.cit. XII:91,83. XVII:102;88.

[ the evil of birth is the ground on which docetism is held by Cassian and by Marcion.]

25. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit. VI:32;112. V:29;110.

26. H.E.W. Turner. op.cit. 395.

[believes that Bardy is right in aligning Clement with other proponents of a 'spiritual' church, because of his emphasis on divine illumination, and the tendency to create a spiritual corps d'elite.]

M.Smith. op.cit. 168.

27. E.Jay. The Church Its Changing Image Through Twenty Centuries. I. London. (1977) 59.
- A.Grillmeier. Christ in Christian Tradition. vol I. ET. J.Bowden. London. ( 1965) 160.
- A.Harnack. History of Dogma II. ET. N.Buchanan. London. (1910) 80.
- M.Simon. From Greek Hairesis to Christian Heresy. in W.R.Schoedel & R.L.Wilken. op.cit. 108,9, 111,2.
- [The Logos, which is one, prepared the way for the one Church. Clement presents the Church as the best school. (Strom.VII:15,92.)]
28. J.Bigg. op.cit.. 85,100,101.
- [a 'life within a life, a church within a church, a quiet haven for the spiritually free..']
29. Clement of Alexandria. On Spiritual Perfection. op.cit.VI : 31; 112.
30. Clement of Alexandria. On Marriage. op.cit. XVII:103 ; 89.
- J.Bigg. op.cit. 71,72,107.
- T.E.Pollard. op.cit. 82,84,85.
- [Clement weakens the distinction between Incarnation and inspiration by applying John 1:4 to the activity of the Logos in the prophets. The flesh the Logos assumes is stripped of what makes it specifically human. Clement is close to Docetism, regarding the manhood of Christ as a mask. All earthly realities are shadows of eternal truths.]
- R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 161.



ORIGEN.

Origen's thinking and place within the church are epitomised by the church's reluctance to canonise him since it was unsure of his orthodoxy, though he appears orthodox when he speaks of the apostolic succession.(1) What made the church uncertain was Origen's desire to go beneath and beyond orthodoxy, and the way he viewed history as almost relative, although affirming the reality of the saving events and their historicity, against Gnosticism. Much of the difficulty related to this derives from his Platonism.(2)

In his attention to the mystical journey of the soul Origen did not intend setting a heretical Platonist view against the church, but to meet a contemporary exegetical need.(3) With almost an obsession for 'threes', Origen's concern is beyond history; while recognising the historical significance of the event, he transposes it to the plane of cosmic history. In particular this is the case with the Plotinian interpretation of the actions of Christ in the Gospel. Whilst some see Origen's purpose as authentic Christian intellectualism, it is notable that Origen omits any extensive explanation of the church or sacraments.

The difficulty the church found with Origen's Platonist speculation was similar to the reservations it found with Gnosticism, Jewish apocalyptic and Clement of Alexandria. Origen held a doctrine of reserve, in regard to some specialist teachings. He believes scripture should not be opened to the uninitiated. God has so arranged scripture that man must seek him beyond the letter, and according to Origen this must involve some kind of divine deception.(4)

Whilst he concentrates on what has been revealed by 'a living voice' and maintains biblical exegesis, he focusses on advanced doctrines not generally suited to the ordinary believer.(5)

We then arrive at the interpretation ~~of meanings~~ of meanings, since Origen is concerned with doctrines not all of which are related to the Bible. This leads to difficulty with Origen's understanding of scripture, setting meaning above the outward letter. The saving truths - the dogmata - are in the scriptures but need to be read out of them. Historical events are figures and types of eternal realities.(6) Could Origen be regarded as a faithful son of the church whilst denying the literal truth of some Old Testament narratives and Gospel stories, in which allegorisation leads him to spiritualise some of the characters and incidents, a form of Apollinarian exegesis, keeping a divine kernel to scripture whilst relegating the outer husk?(7)

Seeking the meaning hidden from the majority, he explains

..'the contents of scripture are the outward form of certain mysteries, and the images of divine things..' (8)

Biblical history is the outer covering. Historicity in scripture is not important, and the letter is sterile. He suggests that if there were no incongruities in scripture then the outer meaning would be the only one, and no one would be led further to search for its inner core.(9) The outer bodily part of scripture is for the multitude, and the historical references a stumbling block. Since our

understanding is weak we cannot discover the deep hidden thoughts contained within it, for

'..that there are certain mystical revelations made known through the holy scriptures, is admitted I think by all, even by the simpler kinds of believers,..but what these revelations are, and of what nature they are...he does not know....'

for they are deeply concealed.(10)

As the soul and the spirit of scripture are to be sought beyond the letter, and what is concealed is discovered by the revelation and illumination of the Holy Spirit, Origen and Gnostics share a similar emphasis and exegesis. It is because Origen believes scripture to be inspired by the Spirit that it is inerrant, and because of this inspirational view that he finds the historical circumstances of it so relative.(11)

Origen's search for the deeper meaning to scripture leads him into subjectivism. Since the Holy Spirit had inspired the text there was truth to be found undiscovered, without this all that remained was a literalist biblicism.

These mysteries revealed by study and grace are the truth of the pneumatic eternal gospel beneath the letter. His threefold sense of scripture sees it as Pneumatic, Psychic or Somatic, like man composed of body, soul and spirit.(12) This insight into the deeper truths and interwoven mystical events is comparable to the understanding of the apostles, giving spiritual discretion to the few.

The Word of God takes flesh in scripture before dwelling in Christ. History is symbolic rather than the sphere of divine

action.(13) His idea of three progressive revelations of God, in natural law, the law of Moses and in the Gospel, with a fourth yet to appear, prefigures the theme of the 'eternal Gospel' which appears in some medieval heresies. This 'eternal Gospel' belongs to the spiritual church.(14)

Those who hold errors concerning scripture pay attention to the literal rather than that spiritual sense which is the right interpretation according to the rule of faith. Origen believes the tradition of the church points to his interpretation.(15) He does not claim a secret tradition from the apostles in exactly the same way as Clement of Alexandria though he does believe the Lord gave secret teaching to the disciples.

In common with Gnostics he views the whole Gospel as esoteric teaching, using similar methods to them, but for orthodoxy, and rejecting heretical and Montanist views. This esoteric teaching is similar to the unwritten teaching of St. Basil and includes the kerygma as well as other doctrines concerning the secret names of God and 'the beginning and end of all things'.(16)

The inner and outer meanings of scripture are closely related to the Incarnation. If Origen pays least attention to historical circumstances and the letter of scripture, which some see as 'loss of hermeneutic control', might this not be reflected in a docetic view of Christ?(17)

Emphasising inner reality could be to the detriment of outward form, even if the latter is not totally denied. This

can be seen in Origen's perspective on the Incarnation as a period of shadow, a stage. (18)

If the visible letter of scripture is of less value than its authentic deeper spiritual meaning, is this reflected in Christology ? Does Origen bypass or seem to ignore the historical person of Jesus, for an invisible or docetic Christ ? Whilst he does come close to the edge of Gnostic Christology, attribution of docetism to Origen's Christology is disputed. Whilst his Jesus is a human being with body and soul, but divine nature, his resurrection body was only human in appearance to convince doubters - not flesh like ours; yet it was precisely these passages in the Gospel which reflect the effort to refute Docetism. In places his fully human Christ seems subordinate to the Father and to hint at Arianism.(19)

Origen does say of Christ:

...'the whole man would not have been saved unless he had taken upon him the whole man. They do away with the salvation of the human body when they say the body of the Saviour is spiritual..'

though this should perhaps be read in the light of Origen's intention to dwell upon the 'internal' Jesus. It may be that Origen knew the tradition of Christ in many forms though in him it often appears refracted through a kind of subjective spirituality as a symbolic relativism, as with the letter of scripture.

This is Harnack's position, Origen seeing the whole man Jesus transformed into a spirit, received into the Godhead to become identical with the Logos, an Adoptionist Ebionite

Christology united to Gnostic docetism, and modified by both. (20)

Origen does seem to have a sense in which the body of Christ is corporate as all mankind, or the body of the saints, the mystical body as a prolongation of the spiritual one, Christ linked with his people. He sees the Lord as the 'clothing of the saints', or 'the clothing of the soul', and in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer 'in heaven' refers to Christ, and 'on earth' refers to the church. The church is a Body animated by the Spirit as its soul, in which all Christians are included in Christ. Such corporateness is more vivid in the suffering of Christ and Christians, for in them the sufferings of Christ overflows. Though all souls are united to the Logos, that of Christ is qualitatively different. (21)

Ecclesiology consequent upon Christology was not however a major factor for Origen. The church is more a spiritual fellowship than an institution, as we might expect, leading to a spiritual invisible concept(22) of the perfect church, since the empirical church is defective in its members. In the heavenly church - a double church of men and angels - he often speaks of the 'rule of Jesus Christ's heavenly church', angels leading the heavenly church as apostles lead the earthly, each sphere having its own episcopate.

Bigg comments:

'This is not the church of the Athanasian creed...'(23)

Like Christ, the church is pre-existent.

As his scriptural exegesis where the spirit is above the letter is reflected in his Christology, it is seen also in his ecclesiology. As the Logos expressed all that was possible of the divine nature within the limits of space and time, so the members of the church are spiritual or fleshly - outward membership does not indicate true Christians. There is something more and deeper, the perfect Christian who rises to wisdom and gnosis. This is true also in relation to the old carnal Israel, the Jews, superseded by the new spiritual one. It may be that as Origen knew of secret Gnostic ecclesiolae and attended them, he envisages something like them as a nucleus at the heart of the church.

His <sup>anticipation of</sup> Donatism extends to the idea of office in the church - only the spiritual elite should officiate, bishops having no power of forgiveness by virtue of office, but this belongs to the genuine priest inspired by the Spirit - something with which Simeon the New Theologian would have firmly concurred. Charismatic office denied authority to unworthy priests (23a).

In spite of the historical appeal to apostolic succession Origen suggests that spiritual qualities are the essence of apostolic authority. Divine inspiration and insight supersede ordination and succession, the inward prevailing over the outward. Those who seem to be members of the church, those who seem to hold apostolic authority, have only the exoteric form of Christian life, following the outward form of the church, and not the interior illumination from the Logos, the indwelling Jesus, or the



Spirit.(24)

Consistent with his Christology, Origen rejects the corporeal presence of Christ in the eucharist, though seeing a special presence of Christ there. (25)

Whilst seeing a diversity of opinions within the church, and pleading for perfect and imperfect to live in harmony within it, he categorises different grades of hearers on different spiritual levels,

..'the most believing and perfect man being able to partake of all things ...the weaker and less perfect being content with simpler teachings....'(26)

In the different classes of believers the greater truths are kept for the more advanced Christians, and these spiritual categories are represented in the biblical narrative.(27) Origen's emphasis on the perfect Christian had a marked influence upon monasticism, especially in the ideas of the purification of the soul and release from the body.(28)

In common with other Fathers he sees heresy as a later aberration from the Gospel - a corruption of it.

Heretics ransack scripture to confirm their own idiosyncrasies, rather than affirming the church's received Faith. This is linked to Christology as heretics 'worship Christ outside the house', whilst the authentic Christ is found only 'inside the house', the church.(29) Marcion he sees as teaching foreign doctrine and spiritualising eschatology, a beam which Origen doesn't notice in his own eye.(30) Many see Origen as responsible for, or contributing to the rise of Arianism - Turner sees Arians as left wing

Origenists.(31) Heretics for Origen are traitors, like Judas, lacking consistency and misunderstanding scripture, like Celsus.(32)

Whilst Clement of Alexandria and Origen both oppose heretical Gnosticism, they approach this differently.(33)

Origen quotes from secret heretical Gnostic material,(34) indicative of the fact that Egypt, with its close associations with monasticism, was also a Gnostic centre rivalling orthodoxy. Whilst Origen shares a Gnostic outlook, he opposes heretical Gnosticism, which he regards as a philosophy of nature carried to extremes, rejecting its radical dualism whilst holding that the world was created because of sin.(35) He tried to interpret Christianity to those attracted to the Faith but waylaid by Gnosticism, and in doing so helped towards the later's demise. (36)

Whilst walking the uncomfortable edge between orthodoxy and heresy in his speculative adventure in exegesis, Origen's was primarily a pastoral ideal, and even though believing in a higher gnosis for the able, he did not totally despise the ordinary believer, and maintains a marked respect and admiration for martyrdom as the ultimate discipleship.(37) Though with none of the anti-learning prejudice of some spiritualists, he inherited the Hellenistic anti-building tradition in suggesting that the Saviour contradicts the Jews as

'the man who desires to seek for God must abandon all idea of material places...'

a sentiment which in  
relegating the usefulness of the material mirrors very well  
his exegetical stance.(38)

At this point we might be able to make some parallels between Christology and ecclesiology, which indicate the formation of an orthodox/heretical divide:

Christ / Logos divinity	-----	Jesus of Nazareth humanity
spiritual		historical
inward		outward
<u>dokesis</u>		incarnation
secret tradition		public tradition
transmitted esoterically		apostolic succession
inner meaning of scripture		letter of scripture/ rule of faith
invisible/spiritual church		visible/institutional church
reject <u>Heilsgeschichte</u>		<u>Heilsgeschichte</u>
----- 'pagan' philosophy -----		
free society of adepts/ gnostic/psychic distinction charismatic		'Body of Christ' ordered hierarchy
supersessionist		sacramental
world denigrating		world affirming
----- world denying (monasticism) -----		
perfectionism/donatism		'knowing Christ after the flesh'
cultural rejection		cultural adoption/ established order
a-historical self-propagation		historical(continuity) mission
heresy		orthodoxy

Footnotes:

1. Origen. On First Principles. ET. G.Butterworth. Gloucester. Massachusetts. (1973) Introduction. xxii, liii  
The Apostolic Doctrine. ibid 1:2. 2.  
R.M.Grant. Early Alexandrian Christianity 134. in Christian Beginnings: Apocalypse to History. London. (1983)  
H.Crouzel. Origen. ET. A.S.Worrall. Edinburgh. (1989) 172,177.  
J.W.Trigg. The Charismatic Intellectual: Origen's Understanding of Religious Leadership. Church History. 50. (1981) 6.

[emphasises that Origen wished his teaching to be kept secret and objected to its publication. cf. fn. 5 Jerome:Epistle 84:10.]

- H.Chadwick. Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition. Oxford. (1966) 122.  
J.Danielou. Origen. ET. W.Mitchell. London. (1955). 4.  
2. J.Pelikan. Pelikan I .96.  
J.Meyendorff. Catholicity and the Church . New York. (1983): Greek Philosophy and Christian Universality. 35,41.

[for Origen..'history did not matter by itself, but only as a pointer toward the eternal world of the spirit.' Origen's difficulty comes from squaring the biblical given in time, with Platonic speculation.]

- J.W.Trigg. The Charismatic Intellectual. op.cit. 5.

[Origen's language and ideas abstract rather than that of concrete realities: trouble with his ecclesiastical superiors.] cf. fn. 5. and S. Nautin. Origène: Sa Vie et Son Oeuvre. Paris. (1977) 44.  
M.Harl. Origène et la Fonction Revelatrice de Verbe Incarne. Paris. (1958). 366.]

- H.Von Campenhausen. Tradition and Life in the Church. ET. London. (1968) 166.  
R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. London. (1959) 355,368.  
H.Chadwick. op.cit. 96,7, 100.1.  
3. A.Louth. The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition. Oxford. (1981) 58,59.  
Origen. On Prayer. in Alexandrian Christianity. LCC. vol. III J.E.L.Oulton & H.Chadwick.(eds.) London. (1954) 190.  
J.W.Trigg. Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church. London. (1983) 74.

[For Origen true doctrine meant good philosophy, which meant Platonism. This left him unsatisfied with current interpretations of the faith and biblical exposition. He seeks to synthesise Christianity and Hellenism.]

- cf.A.Harnack History of Dogma. II. ET. N.Buchanan. London. (1910) 335.  
P.M.O'Cleirigh. The Meaning of Dogma in Origen. JCS. op.cit. 212.

3. contd/.

W.H.C.Frend. Saints and Sinners in the Early Church. London. (1981) 79,80.

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 111.

[the inward spirit is veiled - a principle exemplified in the Incarnation.]

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 135,6.

J. Danielou. Origen. op.cit. viii.

4. J.Danielou. Danielou II. op. cit. 497,499,424,425.

H.E.W.Turner. The Pattern of Christian Truth.op.cit. 356, 425.

cf. R.Williams. Arius: Heresy and Tradition. London. (1987) 148.

R.P.C.Hanson. Tradition in the Early Church. London. (1962). 33.

[Origen held a doctrine of reserve for some teachings]

Origen. Threefold Meaning: On First Principles. op.cit. 276.

[Origen quotes from the Shepherd of Hermas, and is concerned with what he has learned 'from the Holy Spirit, not through letters, nor through a book but by the living voice to the presbyters of the church of Christ.']

C.J.Scalise. Origen and the Sensus Literalis. In C.Kannengiesser. & W.L.Petersen. (eds.) Origen of Alexandria. Indiana. (1988) 125

J.W.Trigg. Divine Deception and the Truthfulness of Scripture. In Kannengiesser and Petersen. Ibid. 163.

M.Wiles. The Spiritual Gospel. Cambridge. (1960). 22,24,42.

[De Lubac's claim that Origen never denies the literal historical meaning does not stand up to the evidence. Origen's deeper meaning is in the words of scripture - the same word can be used twice in the same context with different meaning. The ultimate significance for Origen is always beyond history. (Origen. ed. A.E.Brooke. Cambridge. (1896) 10,18.). ]

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. London. (1954) 48,78, 143,5,186,191.

[Origen dependent on Clement for his understanding of tradition.]

5. P.M.O'Cleirigh. op.cit. 212.

['his search for esoteric dogma separated him from the simplicity of the Christian Faith...it is true that he says that the wise man must go beyond the canon, but he must also go beyond the esoteric meaning of the scriptures.' Origen sets meaning above outward letter. The saving truths - the dogmata are to be read out of the scriptures.]

Origen. On First Principles.op.cit. 286.

['the aim of the Holy Spirit was chiefly to preserve the connexion of the spiritual meaning, both in the things that are yet to be done, and in those which have already been accomplished, whenever he found those things which had been done in history could be harmonised with the spiritual meaning, he composed in a single narrative a texture comprising both kinds of meaning, always however concealing the secret sense more deeply.']

5. contd/.

E.G.Weltin. Origen's Church. in Studies presented to David Moore Robinson on his Seventieth Birthday. Vol. II. (eds.). G.E.Mylonas & D.Raymond. S.Louis. (1953) 1015.

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 80-5,88,89, 193,4, 99, 111-113, 43.

[secret esoteric tradition in Origen for higher class of Christians, extracted by allegory. Difference between Clement and Origen on secret tradition: Origen has no line of teachers and does not use the Epistle of Barnabas, or the language of mystery religions. Origen is less secretive and guarded against upsetting the orthodox. Unlike Clement he does not identify secret tradition with the faith of the Church. He regarded the canon as more finally closed than Clement. Origen can go beyond the canon (the church's interpretation of scripture), and in places encourages his followers to ignore or supersede the rule of faith. Hanson distinguishes Origen's advanced doctrines from the *Disciplina Arcani* of the other Fathers.]

J. Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 103.

6. R.M.Grant. The Letter and the Spirit.op.cit. 93.

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 73,4.

[the purpose of the evangelists is to give the truth where possible at once spiritually and corporeally (or outwardly) but where this was impossible, to prefer the spirit to the body.....the true spiritual meaning is often preserved in corporeal falsehood.]

H.Crouzel. op.cit. 65, 71,72,109,110.

H.de Lubac. Histoire et Esprit. Paris. (1950). 93,139ff.

7. R.M.Grant. The Earliest Lives of Jesus. op.cit. 85.

H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 285.

cf. J.Zizioulas. The Early Christian Community. In Christian Spirituality vol.I. B.McGinn/J.Meyendorff/J.Leclercq. London. (1985). 38.

8. Origen. On First Principles. op.cit. 5.

9. ibid. 285.

C.Scalise. op.cit. 122.

J.W.Trigg. Divine Deception and the Truthfulness of Scripture. op.cit. 156.

10. ibid. 272.

K.J.Torjesen. Origen's Interpretation of the Psalms. Studia Patristica. XVII Part II Oxford. (1982) 945.

cf. H. de Lubac. Exegese Medievale. Paris. (1964) 203.

11. ibid. 276,278. 284.

R.M.Grant. The Earliest Lives of Jesus.op.cit.54.

A.Louth. op.cit. 64.

J.Dechow. Origen and Early Christian Pluralism. in C.Kannengiesser & W.L.Petersen. op.cit. 345.

11. contd/.

J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 24, 160.

[The only one who can interpret scripture is the one who inspired it. Christ is the inner principle dispensing the spiritual understanding of scripture.]

H.Crouzel. op.cit. 73.

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 36,37.

12. B.Smalley. The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages. Oxford. 1983. 7,8.

J.W.Trigg. Origen. op.cit.86,88,126.

cf. A.Harnack. History of Dogma II. op.cit. 266,342.  
Origen: Comm . In Johann. I:9; PG. 14:36,37.

[instances how Origen saw the Gospel as teaching a shadow of the secrets of Christ, beneath which was a pneumatic 'eternal gospel' ]

C.Scalise. op.cit. 123,128.

J.Dechow. op.cit. 340.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 236,245.

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 92,3.

[the 'everlasting gospel' - c.f. fn. 72,73 : 153. (Comm In Rom.i:4 / De Princ. ii:8:7. iii:6:8./De Orat. 5.). ]

J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 194.

[Origen's transposition of temporal events. His Gnostic method of exegesis leads to subjectivism.]

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 105.

13. J.W.Trigg. Origen. op.cit. 143.

A.Harnack. History of Dogma. II. op.cit. 346.

Origen. Against Celsus. VI : 6; PG.11:1298.  
Comm. In Johann. XIII:59; PG.14:513,4.  
cf. In Johann. VI:4; PG.14:213.

H.J.Carpenter. Popular Christianity and the Theologians in the Early Centuries. JTS. n.s. 14. (1962). 309.

[Origen treated history as symbolic rather than seeing it as the sphere of divine action.]

Vincent of Lerins. The Commonitory. XVII:23. in Early Medieval Theology. LCC. IX London (1953) 60-63.

cf. J.Biggs. The Christian Platonists of Alexandria. Oxford. (1886) 136, 145, 153.

H.E.W.Turner. op.cit.287,289, quoting Danielou.

J.Danielou. Danielou II .op.cit. 283, 465, 498.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 260,2, 276,7, 283, 364.

[abandoning the historical sense of scripture leads to the charge of abandoning historical truth. Origen is not interested in history (Hom. Lev.1:2). Not that he has no interest in the historicity of the



Old and New Testament. Hanson suggests he does not reject history but underestimates the importance of the Incarnation. Origen is blind to the insight that history is an essential ingredient of the Incarnation. History is no more than an acted parable, the Incarnation not a final unique event.]

14. J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 207,223,274.  
H.Crouzel. op.cit. 68  
J.Pelikan. Pelikan. 1:96.  
R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 351,2.  
R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 188.  
J. Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 171.  
H. de Lubac. op.cit. 217ff.
15. R.P.C.Hanson. Tradition in the Early Church. op. cit. 107.  
P.M.O'Cleirigh. (Origen: On First Principles). JCSD. op.cit. 213.  
['neither is the divine character of scripture which extends through all of it abolished because our weakness cannot discern in every sentence the hidden splendour of its dogmata, concealed under a poor, humble style.']  
R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 149,150,152-4,159.  
[Origen against Judaizing literalism]
16. J.Danielou. Danielou II op.cit. 498.  
H.Crouzel. op.cit. 7.  
J.W.Trigg. The Charismatic Intellectual. op.cit. 19.  
R.M.Grant. The Earliest Lives of Jesus. op.cit. 105.  
Origen. On Prayer.11:4 in Alexandrian Christianity. op.cit. 243.  
J.Zizioulas. The Early Christian Community. op.cit. 39.  
R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 74.
17. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 284,285.  
['Origen recognised the existence of a literal or historical sense which he normally takes as his starting point. He was sufficiently alive to the dangers of Docetism in theology not to fall willingly into a similar error in the field of exegesis. As in the Incarnation the divine Logos was born of Mary and proceeded into the world veiled in the flesh, so that whilst the flesh was perceived by all, the revelation of the Godhead was vouchsafed only to a few, so in the Old Testament the same Logos came to mankind... through the veil of the letter which both shrouds and contains the spiritual sense.'....'The veil of the flesh in the Incarnation corresponds exactly to the veil of the letter in scriptural exegesis.'...'] It is arguable that in both fields Origen displays a defective sense of history, and that despite his disclaimer of Docetism, he cannot easily be acquitted in either field of a strong tendency towards Apollinarianism.'])  
C.J.Scalise. op.cit. 117,118,121,129.

17. contd/.

R.J.Daly, S.J. Sacrificial Soteriology in Origen's Homilies on Leviticus. Studia Patristica. XVII. Part II. Oxford. (1982) 873.

['just as 'in the last days' the Word of God clothed in flesh from Mary came into this world, and there was the one thing which was seen in him but another that was understood - for the appearance of flesh in him was visible to all but only to a few chosen ones was given a recognition of his divinity - so too when the Word of God is presented to man by the prophets or the lawgiver, it is not presented without suitable garments. For just as he is covered by the veil of the flesh, so it is covered by the veil of the letter - considering the letter and the flesh to be alike - but deep within is found the spiritual sense hidden like the divinity.' Hom. Lev. 1:1. (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte. 29:280, 5-13.)]

K.Torjesen. The Logos Incarnate and Origen's Exegesis of the Gospel. In Origenia Tertia. R.Hanson & H.Crouzel. (eds.) Rome . 1985. 38-41.

['The literal sense of the Gospel has the humanity of Christ for its subject matter.']

H. de Lubac. op.cit. 93.

H. von Balthasar Le Mystere D'Origene. Recherches de Science Religieuse. (1936) Vol. 26. 560.

E.G.Jay. Origen On Prayer. ET. London. (1954) 169.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 193,4, 201.

[the incarnation parallel to God's word in scripture.(Philoc.XV:19)]

18. A.Louth. op.cit. 65.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 212, 280,284,5,287,329.

[The incarnation is only a necessary device for God's self-revelation.]

E.G.Jay. Origen On Prayer. op.cit. 61.

J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 123, 262,264,5.

[according to Molland, Origen's attitude implies a concept of history difficult to reconcile with the Incarnation as a unique event. We must go beyond Christ's humanity to get at his hidden divinity.]

19. J.W.Trigg. Origen. op.cit.100,114,160.

[disclaims any attribution of docetism to Origen:(Bigg suggests that in Origen we see 'the last faint trace' of it.). Origen speaks of Jesus' body and soul, a human being with a human soul, but a divine nature. The resurrected body of Christ was different from anything we know, not flesh at all like ours. Trigg points out that though Origen's Christ is fully God and fully human, he subordinates the Son to the Father - the beginnings of Arianism.]

H.Crouzel. op.cit. 186,187.

R.M.Grant. The Earliest Lives of Jesus. op.cit. 4,78,81,95.

P.J.Gorday. Moses and Jesus in Contra Celsum 7:1-25: Ethics, History and Jewish-Christian Eirenicism In Origen's Theology. In C.Kannengiesser and W.L.Petersen. (eds.) op.cit. 315,332.

19. contd/.

M.Wiles. Working Papers in Doctrine. London. (1976) 31,41-5, 55,117.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 275-77, 371.

[The Jesus of history could occasionally during his life dissolve into the Jesus of religious experience leaving no historical sediment. Hanson maintains that Origen could not have been docetic.]

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 76,77,91,92.

[Origen rejects docetism. The principle of the Incarnation in Origen re-inforced by the Transfiguration where the inner glory is disclosed; to those on the plain his appearance betrays nothing of the mystery of his being. Origen follows the Apochryphon of John - the physical appearance of Jesus differed in accordance with the spiritual insight of the beholder. (C.Celsus.ii:64/iv:16/vi:68.)

Humanity of Christ ascribed to the divine Logos: (C.Celsus.xx:ii:86/xxxii:18:218ff). The Incarnate Lord the pattern and model for the salvation of humanity (C.Celsus:111:28).

'Even at the very highest moment of contemplation we do not for a moment forget the Incarnation.'(Comm. Johann.ii:8). The Incarnation a ladder, a veil. In Matt.Serm. 7./Homm in Exod.xii:4/Hom Lev.1:1.) ]

E.G.Jay. Origen On Prayer. op.cit. 93.

J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 259,260.

H. de Lubac. op.cit. 17.

20. A.Grillmeier. Christ in Christian Tradition I. op.cit.164,168

A.Harnack. History of Dogma. op.cit.11:371,372.

J.Danielou. Danielou I. op.cit. 136.

Origen. Dialogue with Heraclides. 24. in Alexandrian Christianity. op.cit. 442.

[the whole man would not have been saved unless he had taken upon him the whole man. They do away with the salvation of the human body when they say the body of the Saviour is spiritual.]

R.M.Grant. The Earliest Lives of Jesus. op.cit. 111

W.H.C.Frend. Saints and Sinners in the Early Church. op.cit. 89, 143.

T.E.Pollard. Johannine Christology and the Early Church. Cambridge. (1970). 104,105.

J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 153,4.

[Origen regards the Passion as the transition from the physical Israel to the spiritual Church.]

21. V.D.Verbrugge. Origen's Ecclesiology and the Biblical Metaphor of the Church as the Body of Christ. In C.Kannenglesser and W.L.Petersen. (eds.) op.cit. 280, 282, 292,293.

[that which describes Christ can be said to be descriptive of his body, the Church: for example, Christ's visible body nailed to the cross is the whole body of Christ's saints nailed to the cross.]

Origen. On First Principles. III:2. op.cit. 85.

Origen. On Prayer. XXVI:3 in Alexandrian Christianity. op.cit. 292.

21. contd/.

Origen. Exhortation to Martyrdom. 24. *ibid.* 423.

E.Jay. *op.cit.* 1:64.

Origen. In Johann. 10:25; PG. 14:588.

M.J.Le Guillou. *Christ and Church.* Paris. (1966.) 100.

C.Bigg. *op.cit.* 195.

M.Wiles. *Working Papers in Doctrine.* *op.cit.* 57.

[Origen speaks of Christ's soul as the apostles - the best part of his Body, the Church.]

R.P.C.Hanson. *Allegory and Event.* *op.cit.* 283,6, 328,9.

[Christ's death and resurrection a type of his Body the Church (Comm. Johann. X:35.). The essential reality is not the historical life of Christ but the life of the Church in the world, (though history is abstract). De Lubac - what happened in Christ must also happen to us in him. Christ's flesh and blood are a symbol for the Church: Origen makes, according to Hanson, the questionable assumption that Christ is the Church without qualification.]

J.Danielou. Origen. *op.cit.* 161.

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. *op.cit.* 186.

C.P.Bammel. Adam in Origen. in: The Making of Orthodoxy. R.Williams.(ed.) Cambridge. (1989) 64,78,79.

H. de Lubac. *op.cit.* 360,361.

[the Pauline Body of Christ in Origen.]

H. von Balthasar. Le Mysterion D'Origene. *op.cit.* Vol.26 (1936) 541ff. Vol.27. (1937) 44, 45, 48.

P.Nautin. Origene: sa vie et son oeuvre. Paris. (1977). 126.

[Eve as the Church.]

22. J.W.Trigg. Origen. *op.cit.*199,200.

[Ecclesiology was not a major doctrine, least of all for Origen. Origen's church is a spiritual fellowship not identical with the institution.]

C.Bigg. *op.cit.*222,223.

[Origen looks 'with constant hope and longing from the church on earth where tares grow side by side with the wheat, to the spiritual invisible church, the church of the faithful and true, which has neither spot, nor blemish nor wrinkle..'...'these two form the Body, the Temple of the Lord, older in the counsels of God than creation itself.']

E.Jay. *op.cit.* 61-3

E.G.Weltin. *op.cit.* 1016,7.

Origen. Hom. Jeremiah. XX:3; PG. 13:530.1.

[distinction in Origen between the 'true spiritual' church and the empirical institution. The church like Christ is pre-existent.]

22. contd/.

H.Crouzel. op.cit 192.

J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 40, 62,3, 67,8. 213, 243.

[Institutions of the Old Testament prefigure invisible things of the New. Origen's two-fold church when the saints are gathered, one of men and the other of angels. Every church has a visible bishop and an invisible angel, two bishops, one visible, another invisible. (an influence on the filius major and filius minor in Catharism ?) Christ's whole life is a great sacrament continuing to operate invisibly in the Church in which the mysteries of his life are enacted (Comm. Matt. xiv:22). Worship in spirit and truth has a visible side to it about which Origen is rather vague. His Platonism regards the visible elements of worship as signs of the spiritual, and he minimises the eucharist, stressing the disposition of the recipient.]

F.Ledegang. Images of the Church in Origen. Studia Patristica XVII. Part II. Oxford. (1982) 907,910.

F.Ledegang. Image and Church in Origen. in Origenia Tertia. r. Hanson & H.Crouzel. (eds.) op.cit. 187.

['The mystery of the Church is most closely connected with the mystery of Christ. He is the mystery of the Church (Hom. Jer. XVIII:5,74-95.

Nowhere does Origen give a systematic<sup>a</sup> exposition about the Church.']

J.W.Trigg. The Charismatic Intellectual. op.cit. 15,19.  
cf. fn. 55.

cf. Hans Urs von Balthasar. Le Mysterion Origene: Recherches de Science Religieuse. 26. (1936) 513-62  
27. (1937) 38-64. p.45.

[charismatic hierarchy = invisible church,  
institutional hierarchy = visible church. The former guarantees the latter. Origen's understanding of authority close to the Valentinian and the Gnostic conception of a two-tiered church]

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. .op.cit. 176,77.

23. C.Bigg. op.cit. 280.

23a. See also p 230.

24. J.W.Trigg. Origen. op.cit. 144-6.

H.Von Campenhausen. Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries. ET. London (1965) 254,256,259.

Origen. Comm. Matt. Sermon 12; PG. 13:973.

['he stands spiritually among the laity whom he ought to lead; often a layman is a bishop in the eyes of God, even though he has never been made bishop by human consecration.']

Origen. Comm. Matt. 12:14; PG. 13:1011.

[only if the bishop is like Peter in his life can he pass judgement with the same degree of authority.]

A.Harnack. History of Dogma. II op. cit. 191.

E.G.Weltin. op.cit. 1020,1.

[all the faithful are successors to the Apostles: Origen holds a Donatist ideal of church authority.]

24. contd/.

J.W.Trigg. The Charismatic Intellectual. op.cit. 7, 12-17.

[Origen was critical of institutional development preferring a tradition of charismatic authority. Origen's hidden elite priests/apostles are the inner leaders of the church, there is a.. 'clear implication that the bishop at the front of the church may well be bogus, while the real bishop is lost in his congregation..... By later standards this understanding of Christian ministry is heresy. He speaks complacently of 'those who seem in pre-eminence to be bishops and presbyters..' ' (Comm. Johan. 32:12 (14.444.31-32.) cf. fn. 19 p 70. This view appears to embrace both docetism and donatism.)]

J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 44,5, 48, 50,51.

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 93,113.

[only true apostolic succession is the lives of the saints. Platonism and Paulinism convinced Origen that spiritual power is superior to ecclesiastical office. (De Orat. xxviii:9ff.)]

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 108.

25. C.Bigg. op.cit. 221.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 323,7.

H.Crouzel. op. cit. 221,227.

W.H.C.Frend. Saints and Sinners in the Early Church. op.cit. 83

R.P.C.Hanson. Origen's Doctrine of Tradition. op.cit. 177,8.

26. V.D.Verbrugge. op.cit. 286.

J.H.Oulton. Alexandrian Christianity. op.cit. 199,200.

Origen. On Prayer. XXVII:5, op.cit. 297.

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 76.

27. J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 499.

Origen. On Prayer XXI:5. op.cit. 325.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 214.

28. R.Greer. Discussion: The Dog and the Mushrooms. REG. op.cit.171,2.

J.Meyendorff. Christ in Eastern Christian Thought. New York. (1975) 50.

29. Origen On First Principles. op.cit. Butterworth. xiv.

30. On Prayer. op.cit. XXVII:6, 298.

31. H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 14,144.

R.Williams. Arius: Heresy and Tradition. London. (1987) 2,83, 116, 143.

32. R.M.Grant. The Letter and the Spirit. op.cit. 28.

H.Chadwick. op.cit. 112,3.

32. contd/.

M.Simon. From Greek Hairesis to Christian Heresy. In Early Christian Literature and the Classical Tradition. W.R.Schoedel & R.L.Wilken (eds.) Theologie Historique. 53. Paris. (1979). 107.

H.Crouzel. op.cit. 11,13,153,155,160.

33. J.Pelikan. Pelikan I. op.cit. 96.

34. Origen. On First Principles. op.cit. 19.

35. J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 273,420,423.

H.E.W.Turner. op.cit. 48.

36. ibid. 425.

E.G.Jay. Origen On Prayer. op.cit. 48.

37. J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 6.

38. M.Wiles. The Spiritual Gospel. op.cit. 28,9, 37.

R.P.C.Hanson. Allegory and Event. op.cit. 145,6.

E.G.Jay. Origen On Prayer. op.cit. 141, 213.

[Prayer in Church, not synagogue required of the Christian. The place of prayer possesses something of the joy in addition to the benefit it bestows.]

J.Danielou. Origen. op.cit. 36, 115,6, 149, 154, 265.

[In the Old Covenant the presence of God was in the temple at Jerusalem, but from the Incarnation in the human nature of Christ and his members, in the Christian community not the stone bound church. Against Celsus' charge that the Christians form a secret society which is a danger to civilisation, Origen points to the visible presence of the Church as a city within a city. In the presence of truth, type and shadow cease and when the temple was built in the Virgin's womb by the Holy Spirit, the stone built temple was destroyed. The temple of lifeless stones gives way to that of living stones (1 Peter 2:5.), the earthly altar giving place to the heavenly altar at which Christ celebrates the true liturgy. The position is the same whether the issue is the material side of worship, the literal meaning of scripture or the visible humanity of Christ. It affects the reality of all three, for Origen regards them only as starting points.]

cf. J.Danielou. Danielou II. op.cit. 281.

CHAPTER 3.

THE IDENTITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

'...for Christ plays in ten thousand places,  
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his,  
To the Father through the features of men's  
faces...'

G. Manley Hopkins.



WHO MEN SAY THAT I AM.

Matthew 8:27.

The Christian festival of Corpus Christi, celebrating the institution of the eucharist, was a comparatively late innovation, inaugurated in the fourteenth century. Yet what kind of festival is it? Is its focus Christological or ecclesiological ?

The early Christian community believed it had the authority and commission of the Lord, but how was this transmitted to them in the power of the Spirit?

Later Christians would trace it back to the Petrine keys, yet the nature of the transmitted authority was not just linear.(1)

In Matthew Jesus speaks of his close identity and authority with those he sends. The person of Christ and the needy and poor, and the disciples, are linked, combining Christology with the community he forms. For Matthew it is clear that:

..'to receive a Christian is to receive Christ, and to receive Christ is to receive the Father...'(2)

The power of the earthly Jesus is effective in the community, and response to him is in the response to his words, his messengers, and the needy. Matthew's ecclesiology is rooted in Christology, and together with the text of the Pauline conversion in Acts forms,

'..an inclusive interpretation of Jesus belonging to the early historical traditions about the ministry of Jesus..'(3)

Matthew is not alone in this. In the New Testament among the images of the church, we can see the development of the consequences of Paul's encounter in Acts in the 'Body of

Christ.' In some passages the church is explicitly identified with Christ, in others the identification is less distinct. Paul's encounter on the Damascus road however, remains paradigmatic for the close identification of Jesus with the church.(4) The church has historical continuity in the person of Jesus; Christ is revealed in his brethren.(5)

In the New Testament and the traditions of the early church, it is an accepted understanding that to act 'in the Name' of Jesus is to act with his authority and in his personality and power, with all that this implies from the same sense in Hebrew thought.(Acts 3:6, 4:10,12,18.)

Paul's encounter and the reflection that flows from it treats the church not simply as Christ's derivative envoy, but acting as a community by, and as Him. The difference is that between relationship and communion, being 'of Christ' and 'in Christ'.

Does this identity between the church and Christ point to an interpenetration of Christology and ecclesiology ? Though it is difficult to see the matter free from all ecclesial bias, the exegesis of 'soma tou Christou' leads some to posit a spiritual interpretation, others to affirm the visible co-identity. There is a marked preference for the language of co-identity to do the Pauline theme justice.(6)

If this is affirmed, then Christology passes into ecclesiology, and this reflected in the New Testament as the experience of Paul and the early Christian communities describes a corporeal rather than simply corporate body, in

other words as something decidedly more than a metaphor.(7) This Body, according to one view, Christ's resurrected humanity, is a mystical identity, focussed in the eucharistic presence as one reality, not denying the uniqueness of the Incarnation, but in which Christ=Christ's Body=Christians=the church.(8)

This identity is not undisputed, though the central axiom that 'Christ is the Body that we form'...is consistent, even in those places where the church is seen as Christ's 'second' Body.(9)

Christology and ecclesiology are inseparable, and interpenetrate and interact, the term 'mystical' Body being used to express differentiation in identity, though this may basically reflect the antinomy of the Christ event.

In the Johannine writings the bond between Christ and the church is emphasised. For John the creative word and operation of Christ continue directly in his disciples; John's Hebrew and Greek synthesis in the prologue shared in his ecclesial view.(10) There is no break from the events and acts of Christ which are continued in our faith and attain their fulness in us, and this includes the derivation of the eucharist from the Incarnation.(11)

This is continued in the close integration in the Johannine epistles between an anti-docetic polemic and emphasis on love for the brethren. Christ's visibility is bound up with practical visible unity and concern, as in Matthew. Similarly in the Gospel the proof given to Thomas of the

Resurrection is visible confirmation of the testimony of the apostles. Christ lives as the church in the one 'mystical Body' growing and developing from the Incarnation. The church is not simply testimonia to the Christ event, it is its living embodiment.(12)

If in the first century there was a Christological shift which initiated interest in Christ's pre-existence, this is continued in the Christ who as a corporate figure includes within him the pre-existent church as well - a favourite theme of Gnosticism.(13) The church's existence in Christ includes within his persona the salvation of past, present and future. This is followed in the writings of the Fathers, especially where the righteous of the Old Covenant are included in the benefits of the New, a concept intimately related to the Old Testament idea of the remnant.(14) This suggestion that the church as the People of God has always existed in Christ, and is included proleptically in the Incarnation and the Atonement, gives the church an extensive genealogy in Christ. It extends salvation history backwards, which Gnostics attempt on a different plane.(15)

This unites not only the life of Christ in the Gospel and the church as one visible mystery, but recapitulates in Christ all that precedes and prepares for the Incarnation in Israel's history. To sever this, as in Marcionite perspective, is to diminish Christ himself, not just to truncate the canon. Had the church only derived from Pentecost it would be an Adoptionist community. It was

becoming and actualised in the whole life and work of Jesus, the Incarnation, and this gives meaning to all that preceded it.(16)

This real identity of Christ and the church raises the question of the uniqueness of the period of the Incarnation, but affirming the church and Christ as one divine-human reality deriving from it.(17) All men are included in the saving work of the new Adam, but with a closer union with Christ for Christians. The church in its liturgical year traces the formation of heilsgeschichte within it, the life of Christ in the life of the worshipping community. The church is 'led by the Spirit' as Jesus was after his baptism, and as Mary was overshadowed by the Spirit at the Annunciation, so she is present for the overshadowing of the church on the day of Pentecost;

..'born as Christ was born, the church lives as he lived..' (18)

What Luke describes in the further volume of Acts has its Johannine parallel in John chapter four, where the life of Jesus Christ is the life of the church.

The visible sacramental guarantee of the one Body of Christ is found in the eucharist and the one baptism.

Supported by the seminal work of Aubrey Johnson, it has long been seen as axiomatic that the church forms a corporate personality, in which the one is many and the many one, a conclusion which underlies early Christian conceptions of

Christ, the second Adam.(19) The early Christian traditions used titles representative of Israel as Christological ascriptions, and Jesus' choice of twelve to be with him reconstitutes the true Israel. This implicit Christology related to the corporate Israel is one of the theological roots of the Body of Christ concept, supported by other New Testament images.(20) Christ is an inclusive corporate personality- the church, and in other places this perspective is widened as in the Adam/Christ typology seeing Christ as the head of humanity, though those who are ingrafted into Christ by baptism and the eucharist also take on a universal significance.(21)

Not only the Pauline passages which deal explicitly with the church as Christ's Body. but all those related to it such as 'with Christ', 'in Christ', support the concept of the church as Christ's corporate persona.(22)

In the Son of Man imagery we have a collective persona which goes back to the book of Daniel and the 'saints of the most high', which with its background from the Qumran community combines the servant of Yahweh and Israel in a corporate figure. The Qumran background also seems to lie behind the idea of the glorified Christ as the New Temple, and the Pauline parallel between the Christian's body, Christ's Body and the church. Using this image Jesus

'transforms the religion of Israel into the religion of his person...'(23)

When the church is seen as a reflection of the Trinity an image of its unity and diversity, it stands as the icon of eternity in time, the fulness of humanity united to the Godhead.(24) The church is the embodiment of Christ as Christ is the embodiment of God, and the divine/human koinonia of the Father and the Son, lives in the divine/human koinonia of the church, in the Spirit.

In the early historical traditions about Jesus behind the New Testament there is unity and continuity between the man Jesus and the exalted Christ, proclaimed as one in the church's kerygma. While the exalted Christ is unseen, (and present with him the unseen company of the church triumphant), he is visible in the new earthly existence he bears with his people, for the visibility of the church and the visibility of the continuing Lord are bound together.(25)

It was important for the emerging 'orthodoxy' faced by the a-historicism of Gnosticism, to emphasise the earthly humanity of Jesus in the reality of the church.

This is the crux of the church's historical principle.

Cullmann supported by Kasemann interprets 'soma tou Christou' as the mystical Body of Christ, seeing it linked to our redemption ,

..'achieved by the vision of the world embracing Christ who is identical with the church...',

but sees at the same time the danger of this being evaporated into <sup>only</sup> 'the possibility of our ascent', (26) In



this he seems to mirror not only the difference between orthodox and Gnostic understanding, but the later distinction between the medieval and Reformation concepts of the church and Christ.

The relationship between ecclesiology and Christology must reflect the central paradox or antinomy of the Gospel, the Incarnation.

Elsewhere Cullmann argues that the New Testament gives such a closeness of identity between Christ and the church that they are nothing less than one entity. The church is the earthly Body of the risen Christ who sits at the right hand of God in the fulness of his glory. The continuity and identity of the church as the continuing humanity of the Lord summed up by Mersch as 'Christ passing into the church.' Whatever authority is given by the Petrine texts is also bound up with the persona of Christ in the church as a whole.(27)

The theme of the church and Christ as 'one flesh' also emphasises the connection with our salvation, in that all that happened to the incarnate Lord happened, and happens to the church included in him, for as Best says,

'..the Body of Christ is in some way Christ himself, and the members of his Body are in some way his members..' (28)

A similar cohesion is found in John's Gospel, where Christ and his church are a somatic unity reflected in the images such as that of the vine and branches.(29)

The Body of Christ is identical with the new humanity he

takes upon him, for Christ is at once himself and the church which is his real presence in its humanity.(30)

Thornton finds a similar emphasis in Romans 6 and 1 Corinthians. In the earlier epistles he sees no attempt made to differentiate between the various aspects of this one organism, which is Jesus Christ. The Body of which we are members is the One man in whom we are all included. The koinonia of the church means that the Messiah and his people are necessary to one another. This is the main conception of the earlier and later epistles, that

'Christ and his people share a single life together'(31),

Christ in both his humanity and his divinity, according to Mersch, includes a prolongation of the Incarnation in the church, without which in some sense Christ is incomplete, as this is his pleroma.(32)

The church reveals the whole meaning of Christ as historical, and Christology and ecclesiology are facets of the same objective economy. Christ includes the church,(33) a factor which is emphasised in Acts where the sufferings of the church are the sufferings of Christ.

In the Son of Man sayings in the Gospel, with their corporate personality background, one group speaks of his suffering. Christ's sufferings continue in the sufferings of Christians. This not only echoes the Pauline idea of making up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, but also that Christ suffers in his people, and they bear his

reproach, as the Body of the crucified.(34)

While the church has a duality which Gnostics could explain behind the idea of the One and the many, the earthly and the heavenly, and a tension between what it is now, and shall be in its pleroma, it is at present the humanity of Christ, having no independent existence from him, for whatever happens corporeally to its members, happens to the Lord. Christology and ecclesiology are inseparable, statements about the life of the church are also statements about the person of Christ. In this context De Lubac distinguishes two related errors in ecclesiology and Christology, Monophysite and Nestorian, the first concerned with our union with Christ in the heart of the church, and the second attacking the very idea of the church itself.(35)

However a less identical view is taken by Schweitzer who sees no extension of Christ himself as the church, since the church lives by all that has been done by Jesus Christ for its sake. The roots for understanding the church as the Body of Christ he finds in the crucified Body of Jesus still present, and the pattern of the patriarch who contains his people within himself, on the basis of the Greek perspective on 'one body' meaning a unity of members.(36)

When the church faced the Gnostic threat it did so conscious of the Gnostic rejection of the Incarnation in favour of the heavenly Christ who could not take human flesh, and was thus a-historical. This is one apologetic reason why the church in the Pastorals is anchored in

history as a visible Body.(37) In a dualistic group the earthly Jesus was of little importance, the heavenly Christ mattered most, there is never any question of a continuing Incarnation. Gnosticism is held responsible for the gradual separation of the correlative Christ and church, which was favoured by Clement of Alexandria and other Greek writers.(38)

The relationship between the Gospel source Q and the Gospel of Thomas is questioned by Dunn, since there is no indication of the suffering of Jesus. This is to be expected from a Gnostic source. The Gnostics could only maintain their stance if they severed the earthly Jesus from the Risen Christ. Once the two were coincident, they would have to face questions of ecclesiology. Docesis prejudiced the oikonomia of salvation.(39) The Gnostic interpretation was however consistent, in that its Christology and ecclesiology are both related to the heavenly places.

The historical emphasis of the 'orthodox' view seeks to safeguard against docesis both in Christology and in the sacramental life of the church. For John the material reality of the sacraments points towards the incarnational reality of the church. Disregard of them is correlated with the docetic disregard of the human lineage of Jesus.(40) The church is the consequence of the real fleshly Body of Jesus.(41)

The New Testament and many early Christian traditions represent a new understanding of soma, an understanding of

the Body which intertwines the corporate and the personal in the persona of the one Man, Jesus Christ.

It reconciles, as Paul tries to show, the distinction, and sometimes conflict between individualism and the corporate, and presents the church as more than a body which is an aggregate of its members, but a corporeal unity in diversity, which reflects the unseen reality of the life of the Trinity. This new understanding, is for the church a kind of self-consciousness, as Jesus' Messiahship was his self-consciousness e.g. in the all-inclusive Son of Man figure.(42)

It gathers into a synthesis Hebrew and Greek thought and points forward to a new development in, and from Christ in the church in the unfolding of the Incarnation, as similarly, the person and work of Jesus relates to his proclamation of the Kingdom of God. The ecclesia is not simply constituted on the authority of Christ in some linear form, such as the Petrine office or episcopal succession, for these gain their authority as the visible sign of the continuity of the life of the visible Christ in the church, much in the same way the New Testament writings gain their place in the Christian community.

Jesus in his one persona continues to be God and man in his glorified and earthly humanity. This continuing persona in the apostles is inseparable from him, and as the Johannine and Pauline writings indicate, has a reference beyond time to the heart of the universe and the eternal purpose.

The church as the pleroma, in the life of humanity, is Christ extending in his fulness, with an individual corporateness and corporate individuality, the mysterious explanation and the explained mystery which is the Incarnate God, the antinomy or great paradox.

Christ extended in his Body was the concept Gnostics sought to describe in their own terms, but could not maintain the unity of the person as an earthly continuum, only as a heavenly pleroma.

The incorporation of the Old Covenant, its people, assemblies, personalities and testimony, in the New, relates to the development of disciples into apostles, the church included 'in the womb of Mary', and reborn at Pentecost in the new humanity of Christ.

This somatic concept develops in a distorted direction in millenarians, perfecti and spiritualists, to the mind of the Great Church, much as Dunn describes early Christianity having the potential for development towards Judaism or Hellenism.

In seeking a definition for the correlative for Christology and ecclesiology it is necessary to try to safeguard the uniqueness of the former whilst maintaining in it the the inclusion of the latter.(44)

In attempting this Sherrard finds the only adequate description of the church is a Christocentric reality, and ecclesiology an aspect of Christology, having at its heart

the person of Christ. The Body of Christ in the Incarnation, the eucharist and the church are one and the same reality, membership of the church as incorporation into the Body of Christ being identical in character and substance with the historical Jesus, the cosmic Christ.

Corpus Christi he derives from the two-nature theology.

The Roman view of church government during the medieval period is rooted in Christology, as this is the pattern of ecclesiology even in schism.

The concept of the 'mystical Body' which in origin sought to differentiate between the eucharist, the body born of the Virgin, and the church, he sees transferred to the church by the twelfth century.(45)

Troeltsch points to Platonist and Aristotelian influences determining the idea of the church as Christ's Body.

This Body of Christ, the Christological dependence of the church some of the Fathers trace back through creation and predestination, since they are inseparable.(46)

New Testament theology thus gives us grounds for emphasising that dokesis is capable of an ecclesiological dimension, consequent with the Christological one.

A fracture in the one Body, schism and heresy, constitutes a serious dismemberment of Christ. Failure to attend to mission and care for the visible life of the church constitutes inattention to Christ himself, and disregard for the church as immaterial, seeming indifference to its life,

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CHRIST AS CORPORATE.



In orthodox Christian thought the person of Christ passes into the corporate persona of the church. We only have access to the historical Jesus through the writings of the church, which itself insisted on the congruence of the written tradition as part of its own visible existence.

For Paul the person of Christ is important even if he refers more frequently to the exalted Lord rather than <sup>to</sup> the historic Jesus, it is the historical Jesus who is continued in the group of historical disciples.(1)

Paul prefers to speak of tradition 'received from the Lord' rather than from or through the church. This chain of tradition begins with the Lord, an intimate continuity reflecting that between the person of Jesus and the Kingdom of God in the Gospel.(2) One interpretation of baptism in the thought of Paul sees the body of the possessed Christian as the body of the Messiah.

Such intimacy uniting Christ in one entity with his disciples is found too in other early writings such as Hermas, where the church is the church of the saints; and also in Origen, where Jesus Christ is the clothing of the saints, a similar emphasis to that of the Son of Man image representing the people of God, deriving from which Jesus and the church are the one and the many, a perspective which Leontius of Jerusalem applies to all mankind in Christ.(3)

A similar emphasis is found in some writings ostensibly heretical, though some relate more closely to canonical ideas. In the Excerpta Theodotou, believers are saved through the Lord's Incarnation, taking them up into

himself.(4) This is a strange statement for a Gnostically inclined writing, though it probably refers to the spiritual man. This is continued in Sethian Ophite thinking of Christ as the right side and the church as the imperishable aeon, Christ or Jesus enriching himself with holy souls.(5) This is contrasted with Irenaeus' comment that the 'animal' or 'psychic' church as Gnostics refer to it, is not to be despised as it is part of the lump which the leaven, Christ, has blended with himself.(6)

In the Nag Hammadi writings, Christ appears as a corporate persona. The Tripartite Tractate describes how in Christ believers have escaped from the multiplicity of forms to receive a unitary existence. In the Gospel of Philip, possibly closer to canonical writings, Christian people are

'the chosen people of the living God..'..the 'true man'..,'the Son of Man' and 'the seed of the Son of Man.' (7)

Gnostic statements about Man and the Son of Man, although early, derive from Jewish Christian sectarianism and do not have the same significance as those in canonical writings.(8) Gnostics often took over Christian terms which were made redundant by the church. In growing and diverging from synoptic Son of Man sources, Borsch describes them developing in a different direction, though retaining its corporate reference.(9) Some Gnostics describe the church as pre-existently bound to Christ, a discarded Christian concept, depicted for example, in Sethian Ophite doctrine as Christ giving birth to the church during his sojourn in hell. Such an emphasis appears in the Nag Hammadi writings

though in orthodox terms linked with Adam and Eve.(10)  
Gnostics bind together the two aeons Christ and the church.

Mark the Magician speaks of Wisdom and the church as the visible part of Jesus and Ophites too speak of the Mother of Christ as the aeon - the church. The Nag Hammadi Treatise On the Three Natures, links the church with the Trinity, illustrative of Valentinians' closeness to orthodoxy and lack of aspersions on orthodox Christians.(11) The same connection is made in Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian and Gregory of Nyssa.(11)

In Gnosticism, Jesus takes upon himself the elect church or the 'called'. Some aeons become church, others churches in different systems. In Theodotus the spiritual church is a chosen race, and the spiritual body of Christ is consubstantial with the church.(12)

Orthodoxy however insisted upon the reality of Jesus as

'both human and divine, of man both body and soul or spirit, of human existence lived in past, present and future..'(13)

His humanity and divinity are continued in the church; this is important for the author of the fourth gospel and his community - the reality of the incarnate life of Jesus is continued in Christ present in his church, for the incarnate Jesus is present there, there is identity between him and the community of the faithful. Cullmann describes the gospel writer as pursuing the Incarnation forward into the church, seeking to show that the form of Christianity he knows goes back to the incarnate Jesus, continuing the historical event of Jesus, his incarnate life in the

historical existence of the church - or in particular the Johannine community or ecclesiola. This co-identity and coexistence is in his view the aim of the gospel, the Johannine emphasis on the presence of God in the person of Jesus now in the Body of Christ, the church. (14)

This primitive Christian thought Cullmann identifies as the Body of Christ, the church, the resurrection Body but also the earthly Body, prolonging the incarnate Christ, but not the actual Incarnation itself. The church continues Heilsgeschichte in the earthly Body of the heavenly Christ, the reality of Christ himself. (15)

As we have seen Clement of Alexandria thinks in similar vein, when asking

..'without the body how could the divine plan for us in the church achieve its end..?'

referring to the unity of the church in terms of hypostasis;(16) a similar continuity being found in Origen for whom 'heaven' in the Lord's Prayer refers to Christ, and 'earth', to the church.(17) Such a parallel between the divine and human operations of Christ and the church is found also in Cyril of Alexandria. Though dismembered in its humanity, in its divinity the church is united to its Lord. (18)

John of Damascus too takes up this theme. Christ is one Body with us, his Body deified, but historical in the faithful. This concept is found also in Theodore the Studite, and Gregory of Palamas who speaks of the manhood of Jesus as the place of participation in the divine life, the

church.(19)

Questions about the nature of Christ thus relate to questions about the nature of the church. Butler describes this perspective of the church as the historical existence of the human nature of Christ, as making the equation Christ and the church= Christ. This divine/human existence of a visible historical Body follows in Leo where Christ is identified with an historical society, the existence of Jesus in the church consistent and continuous with the flesh of Christ. (20)

This is found in many of the Fathers, particularly Chrysostom, for whom dividing the church is equal to dismembering Christ himself.

Lossky explores this relationship in describing the church and humanity as consubstantial with the deified humanity of Christ, one nature with Christ in the Body of the church, a nature recapitulated by Christ and contained in his hypostasis, the church in its Christological aspect with two natures, two wills, and two operations.

All Christological heresies are thus reflected in ecclesiology. Since the church is a theandric organism united to God in the Son's hypostasis, whatever is affirmed or denied of the church is bound to statements about Christ. This continuity Lossky sees as historical but also deeper than historical fact. This enables him to show Christological/ecclesiological parallels:

Nestorian Ecclesiology: Divides the church into distinct beings, the heavenly invisible, versus the imperfect earthly and relative.

Monophysite Ecclesiology: The church is a divine being, nothing is to be modified.

Monothelite Ecclesiology: Negation of the economy of the church in the world, the opposite of which is ecclesiological relativism.

Apollinarian Ecclesiology: Denied human understanding in the manhood of Christ; refusal to acknowledge full human consciousness. (Truth revealed to Councils, deus ex machina, regardless of those present)(21)

Correspondingly in Gnosticism, Christological dualism which separated Christ from Jesus is matched by ecclesiological dualism which separates pneumatics from ordinary believers, spirituals from psychics, often with a consequent Adoptionist form of the church. As we have seen, some Gnostics do think of the church as the Body of Christ, and possibly the actual body of Jesus as consubstantial, in some way, with the church, though there is disagreement as to who makes up the community, though this insight is rare because of the prevailing dualism. Western Gnostics are happier to include psychics in the church than the Eastern who preferred the elect.(22)

The orthodox II Clement and the Didache follow the Paulines in describing the church and Christ as a marriage. Similarly the Epistle of Barnabas unites the coming of Christ and the founding of the church together, as true Gnosis.(23)

Such a continuation of Christology and ecclesiology appears too in a kind of negative mirror image in Manichaeism and

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SUFFERING IN CHRIST.

Many of the Fathers emphasise our redemption as integrally bound up with the flesh of Christ. This is clear in the eucharistic context where for Irenaeus, as others, Christians are seen as flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone.(1) This is particularly prominent in II Clement which speaks of the church as an incarnation.(2). The church as a spiritual Body is made manifest in the flesh of Jesus Christ,(3) and for the author of II Clement, the church is the flesh of Christ until the Parousia.(4)

A similar emphasis is found in Clement of Alexandria who particularly says that because the Saviour shared our flesh he could never hate mankind, and in Augustine whose concept of the flesh of Christ as bound to the church is echoed by Cyril of Alexandria who sees Christ cherishing the church as his own flesh. It is with this flesh of Christ that Christians have communion.(5) Other writers speak of Christ sanctifying himself in our human nature, Origen maintaining correspondence between the flesh of Christ and the church, which may also be linked to Mary as an ecclesiological type, elaborating the concept which some see in the New Testament of the flesh and blood of Jesus extended in the flesh and blood of Christians.(6)

This understanding of the flesh of Christ is also related to scripture, patristic writers often describing the text as the flesh of Christians, or the clothing of Christ. The Johannine context in which Christ himself gives teaching on the Incarnation<sup>is</sup> followed by Justin who sees the one who listens to the church listening to Christ himself in a similar way to

Ignatius' view of the Gospels as the flesh of Christ.(7) This intimate statement of the identity of Christ with the church and its tradition is also shown in the way in which the Fathers, in their exegesis often use a single passage or reference to mean both Christ and the church.(8) It was important for them to emphasise that Christians possessed in the church and sacraments the very life of Christ, the nature of the eucharist and ecclesiology coinciding with Christological interpretation.(9)

For Irenaeus in particular, this continuation of the Incarnation was found in the visible apostolic succession. This is as explicit a sharing in Christ's life as we find in the perspective of Christ in the needs of others, and<sup>as</sup> a more than individual figure. It was against Gnostic indifference to Christ's humanity and the church that Clement of Alexandria urges the true Gnostic, i.e. Christians, to give to all in need.(10)

We have seen that Gnostic Christology was largely docetic, emphatically so in relation to the sufferings of Christ. Only the psychic Christ suffered in their view, if at all, Christ himself being alien to suffering and death.(11) Again, Valentinians whose Christology reflected more of the two natures emphasis rather than naive docetism may be an exception to the general Gnostic view, as the Valentinian view seems to have been that only the human nature of Christ suffered.(12)

One question which distinguishes Gnostics from Christians is

whether Christ is really endangered in the passion, according to their Christologies, though the Secret Book of James appears an exception in this respect.(13)

In general Christians found great difficulty with the idea of suffering in the Godhead. It may be that Valentinians implied that Christ suffered, but not as we do, to both identify with, and distinguish from Christ at the same time.(14)

Orthodox Christology held that Christ must be genuinely at risk in the passion. Ignatius underlines this when he instances an appeal to Christ's passion as the crux which separates heretic from orthodox.(15)

Since, as we have seen Christ was a corporate figure, we might expect this to find further emphasis in the identity of the sufferings of Christians with Christ's own. In the New Testament corpus Christ stands with the afflicted saints in his suffering and glory, especially in the Son of Man image.(16) This aspect is again found in Ignatius for whom the reality of Christ's suffering confirms the reality of Christians' suffering - we might expect this to appear in reverse order. The understanding of the Incarnation guarantees the value of what Christians do in the flesh.(17) Christians' suffering is underwritten by the Lord's.

A similar emphasis is found in the Valentinian Acts of Peter where the suffering of Man is seen as the sufferings of Christ, and the apostle sees in his own tribulation, the sufferings of Christ.(18) This is again very different from the usual Gnostic viewpoint which distinguishes between the

psychic Christ who suffers for the human church, and the spiritual Christ who is uninvolved.

This theme of the sufferings of believers and its validity linked to the flesh and passion of Christ is elaborated by Elaine Pagels who says,

..'only if Christ suffered and died in the same way as we do ourselves can our suffering and death imitate his....'(19)

She underlines the fact that for the Valentinians the suffering of Christ and that of believers does not entirely coalesce, believers' sufferings only being analogous to the suffering of the psychic Christ. This is so in the Letter of Peter to Philip which questions why believers suffer at all.(20)

Christian and Gnostic views of suffering in the flesh of Christ, and whether believers share with him in this way is revealed in the prospect of martyrdom, which was a contentious issue.

Gnostics see Christian martyrs as inauthentic imitators of Christ and of his passion, only imitating the psychic Christ in their understanding as psychic Christians, and not members of the true elect, the community of pneumatics.(21) Only the Christian interpretation integrally uniting the suffering of Christ himself with the reality of martyrdom and present suffering of the church, gave assurance of salvation and enabled believers to endure trial steadfastly. It was on the martyrs that the church relied in its engagement with the world or the state, as it would be their merits on which men later pinned many of their hopes and prayers. It was vital

that suffering for the faith should be theologically, or Christologically authentic.

Gnostic believers undergo trials, saying that they are persecuted and hated by those who as the 'unseeing ones' thinking they advance the name of Christ, when they do not rightly understand the mystery.(22) In spite of their sufferings, for the most part martyrdom appears to have meant little to Gnostics, the Apocalypse of James being an exception.

During persecution Valentinians may gain adherents - those seeking a middle way, or philosophical compromise between faith and witness to death, for martyrdom in Gnostic terms was a second-best witness. In this connection Tertullian suggests a connection between persecution and the rise of heresy, and thinks of it as theological compromise by those who will not face losing their life for Christ, seeking justification.(24)

Following its Christology, Gnosticism regarded martyrdom as unnecessary, although in the light of Augustine's <sup>later</sup> theological support for the persecution of heretics this view may be intelligible.

In this context Quispel draws attention to the passage in Acts where the persecutor Saul encounters Christ, suggesting that in the light of this Valentinus and his followers were more faithful than other Gnostics in their understanding of primitive Christianity.(25)

This question of persecution, suffering and martyrdom and its value and worth, hinges on the Incarnation, and the

continuity and identity of the church with the incarnate nature of Christ. Attitudes to the Incarnation and passion of Christ determine whether or not martyrdom is a worthwhile option, for,

..'it was impossible for one who did not accept the reality of the Incarnation to die as a blood witness for Christ. Neither docetist nor Gnostic could be a man of martyrdom..' (26).

This emphasis is found too in H<sup>i</sup>ppolytus for whom only an orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation could enable the believer to endure persecution. (27)

Thus the visible historical life of Christ - his humanity is bound to the visible existence of the church and the lives of believers, seen especially in suffering. Docesis occurs not just in Christological dogma but also in its consequences - the continuance of the life of Christ in the church. Philosophical interpretation, a speculative theology or Christology, often implied ecclesiological docesis. Was it reflected too in the orthodox believer who shirked the call to martyrdom and evaded death or sought intellectual compromise ? What kind of Christology might such a commitment, or lack of it, imply ? (28).



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THE PEOPLE OF GOD :  
THE BODY OF THE LORD.

The People of God in the Old Testament continue through the matrix of the Christ event as the Body of Christ in the New, Christ's presence, incarnate in his very members.(1) The bond between Christology and ecclesiology arises from the New Testament witness to the Incarnation, and continues in the church to the Parousia. In this De Lubac sees the dogmas of Christ and the church joined, errors in one entailing errors in the other, but he safeguards the uniqueness of both by suggesting that the Fathers talk of something which is for adoration, not explanation.(2). Yet the Fathers do try to speak of the mystery of the church, Christ with the entire people he has gained, as one entity, drawing on the New Testament sources.

Christ and the church, that is the communion of the Holy Spirit, are inseparable, and even where the church is envisaged as a heavenly community, it is bound together with the heavenly Christ. God, Christ and the church are a dynamic unity, the church raised up in the likeness of Christ, the perfect image of God, including the mystical Body within himself, a single church gathered into a single Son, the former not a separate entity but one single flesh with Christ, the historical life of Christ and the church one single life in two aspects. All human nature is assumed in the Incarnation.(3) This is particularly true in the Eastern mystical emphasis, the church as a single theandric reality, the image of the cosmos, visible and invisible, sinners together becoming something different from what they are, i.e. the Body of Christ.(4)

Christ's Poor.

Continuing the emphasis of Matthew 25, Cyprian speaks of prisoners, possibly Christians captured by Barbarians, as Christ in the guise of others, Christ himself who must be bought with a price in his people.(5)

Ambrose sees Christ as the least, <sup>i.e. the most unimportant and humble individual</sup> in the church.(6)

John Chrysostom preaches on the theme of Christ redeemed in the poor, seeing him as the poor wanderer..'going about a stranger and naked and hungry..' hinting at a relationship between this and the eucharistic Body, and implying to his hearers that those who are so ready to receive the eucharist ought to be equally ready to receive Christ in need.(7)

Likewise Augustine in referring to Christian mutual support as meeting the needs of others, reinforces the co-identity with Christ. Preaching to his fellow bishops he seeks to make sense of Christ ruling from heaven whilst also present in the needy on earth. He supports Chrysostom's view that a proper eucharistic celebration has its corollary in eucharistic living and pastoral care.(8) Both Valerian and Caesarius of Arles develop the idea of Christ in the poor, as do many of the Fathers, though some restrict this solely to Christians, rather than Christ universally present in the needy.(9)

Christ in Danger.

More pointed are the passages which link the identification in Matthew with the words of Christ to Saul on the road to Damascus in Acts 9:26, emphasising Christ as a corporate person in the church. So Chrysostom says,

'....thus also Paul persecuted him, persecuting them that are his, wherefore too he said, "Why persecutest thou me ?"....(10)

Augustine similarly not only links the Matthean passage with the church as the Body of Christ, but further says,

'..Christ...assumes the role of his members transferring to himself what actually applies to them, because the Body and the Head together make the one Christ..'

giving Matthew 25 as the grounds for this again, uniting this with the Acts passage in a unique explanation in which he tries to disentangle Cenetius' confusion:

...'If he transforms his members, that is his faithful into himself, instead of saying, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat", he should rather have said, "I wish to be released, and I do not wish to be bound..", or if he himself releases and<sup>is</sup> himself released, because if the head releases the members are released, those members which were being persecuted by him to whom he cried out from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me ?"..' (11)

Clearly there was some Gnostic or possibly Manichaeian interpretation of this passage which needed refutation.

A similar link between the Matthew and Acts passages appears in Caesarius, following Augustine, reconciling the views of Christ in heaven and Christ on earth, emphasising the identity of Christ with his church. What is done to Christ here is done to Christ in heaven also since he is

one.(12)

Notably it is Augustine and Chrysostom who develop the Damascus road passages more fully in an ecclesiological context, again for Augustine with Matthean overtones, Christ suffering in his church.(13) For him there is co-identity here in which each is inseparably present in the other. What can be said of Christ here of his physical Body on the cross can also be said of the church with little qualification, the voice of the Body of Christ is that of the members of Christ.(14) The Christological setting of the church and the ecclesiological consequence of Christology are evident. In suggesting at one point that Christ in heaven cannot suffer but his Body of earth does, <sup>though remaining</sup> the one Christ, he seeks to safeguard his Christology while firmly retaining the identity and union.(15) Caesarius follows him in making the point more explicit, in that Christ did not ask,

..'."Why dost thou persecute my members ?", but he said, "Why dost thou persecute me ?" '(16)

From these Matthean and Acts contexts and supporting New Testament passages there is derived an understanding of the unity of the Lord with those who are his. As II Clement says,

'..the living church is the Body of Christ..'

For Clement both Christ and the church are pre-existent, the church created before the sun and moon, as also for Hermas where the church is older than the world which was created for its sake, and also a corporate persona.(17)

Interpreting the Acts passage, Cyril of Alexandria



describes the union of Christ and the church as so close that it makes us Christ himself, the 'mystical Christ', as truly within us as when he walked the roads of Judaea, for if the church and Christ are not one man, the Saviour could not have said, "Saul, Saul..."(18)

### Discerning the Body.

The union of the church and Christ is more marked in the Fathers' exegesis of the Pauline 'Body of Christ' theme. Ignatius of Antioch commonly uses corporeal language to speak of the church and especially of its identity with Christ. Notably he can speak uniquely of scriptures <sup>identity with Him</sup> in this way.(19) Some see no far-reaching realism in this, suggesting that consubstantiality between Christ and his people need not be presupposed. Schoedel finds in Ignatius the local 'corporate Body' to be the concretion of the universal 'Body of Christ'(Sm.2), and thinks it is doubtful that Ignatius would make the link between σῶμα and σῶμα καὶ τῆς that we are inclined to find, though he does speak of the crucified body of Jesus as the standard that rallies the faithful in the one Body of the church.(20)

If this link is found hesitantly in Ignatius, it is more prominent in others. Cyprian refers to the indivisible union in a eucharistic context, the mixture of water and wine in the chalice as the union of the people with Christ.(21) A similar understanding is found in Jacob of Sarug in the fifth century who uses 'mix' to describe the relationship of

Christ to the eucharistic bread and wine, but also uses 'mix' to describe the union of divine and human natures in Christ, saying Christ came to

'..take the church and mix it with his Body and make it from him and the two of them would be one...'

His Adoptionist Christology in this case does not seem to have prominently affected his ecclesiology.(22)

A closer identification is found in Gregory of Nazianzus who believes that,

..'..we are all made one in Christ who becomes completely all that he is in us..'

and similarly in Gregory of Nyssa.(23)

Similar thinking is found in the other Cappadocian father, Basil of Caesarea, when he speaks of bringing back to the church those who have been led away by heresy.(24) He uses more corporeal language in another of his letters when he says,

'..our Lord Jesus Christ who deigned to call the whole church of God his Body and declared each one of us members of one another..'

Similar phraseology is found in his dedication of a church, and in his Long Rule where it means that all in the community must live together for the common good.(25) Most telling for the identity of Christ and the church is his homiletic passage in which he infers that praise given to the church and to Christ is one.(26)

The Donatist theologian Tyconius speaks of the

'whole church as the Son of Man, since the church, that is the children of God assembled in one Body is said to be the Son of God..'

This may be linked with the scriptures, suggesting that there is no distinction between the Saviour and ourselves - the text passing from one to the other without indicating any change of person. Christ after speaking of his Body suddenly begins without warning to speak of himself. Tyconius was however noticeably nearer Catholic doctrine and suffered expulsion from the Donatist church for his views.(27)

Augustine as we might expect speaks extensively of the Body of Christ. For him there is a mystical wedding of the Word and humanity in the womb of Mary, though Grillmeier points out that he does not always distinguish between the historical and the mystical person, which he feels makes Augustine's statements about the historical Christ inconsistent, though a feature of his 'totus Christus'.(28) In one of his sermons he seems to indicate a distinction when speaking of the church as the 'mystical Body', but it is a passage in which the bond between Christ and the church is emphatic. As the apostles saw Christ who is the Head, and not his Body, the church, so we see his Body the church, and not the Head. (29)

In his sermon on the Ascension he speaks of our participation in both the earthly and heavenly Christ as members of his Body.(30) In expounding the meaning of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness he explains,

'..the rod was turned into a serpent, and the whole Christ together with his Body which is the church into the Resurrection that will take place at the end of time..' (31)

In union with the Lord, the church is a sacrifice.(32)

Like Christ, the chrismated are the Lord's anointed and one with him, the Christian community is effectively part of Christ himself.(33) Where Christ is, seated at the right hand of the Father, there the church is too for it is part of him, his Body, so that where Augustine gives a Christological explanation it includes an ecclesiological one also.(34) As the spirit or soul are part of a human being, so the Holy Spirit is the soul of the church, Christ's Body.(35)

Kelly indicates an exception Augustine makes in ecclesiology when he tries <sup>with all necessary qualifications</sup> to include the Donatists, by saying

'..the good alone..are in a proper sense Christ's Body..' (36)

so preserving its perfection.

In Chrysostom the understanding of the Body of Christ is realistic, for in describing the work of the priesthood as caring for the church's health he explains,

'..our present enquiry concerns the very Body of Jesus..' (37)

Participation in the Body of Christ, Cyril of Alexandria explains as separate human existences making up one Body.(38) Union with Christ through his holy Body makes us one with each other in the bond of unity. For him the Incarnation is the ultimate principle of our incorporation into Christ. Christ and the church are one thing, one Man, one Christ, the whole Christ head and members, united with

the church for,

'..all men are one Man in Christ - the unity of Christians constitutes that one Man and this Man is all men, and all men are this Man, for all are one since Christ is one..' (39)

Against Adoptionism he affirms that Christ was united with the flesh in the womb thus safeguarding our salvation.

In Maximus the Confessor this identification with Christ can even consider him as imperfect since Maximus sees himself an imperfect member of his Body, the two being correlated, though this may be only in a mystical sense. (40)

Co-identity language is clear in Irenaeus. In speaking of

'the great and glorious Body of Christ...' who...'rose up anew the flesh of the whole human race...'

and the life of the church, as the Body of Christ, combatting the Gnostics' secret rule. Irenaeus' interpretation according to Harnack, envisages all humanity united and renewed in Christ, since it is already summarised in Adam, Irenaeus' concept of representative humanity corresponding to his doctrine of the God/Man, -

...'the reality of the Body of Christ, i.e. the essential identity of the humanity of Christ with our own was continually emphasised by Irenaeus, and he views the whole work of salvation as dependent upon this identity..' (41)

Cyprian so binds Christ to the church that for the lapsed returning to the church is a return to Christ. To abandon the catholic church is to be cut off from the Body of the Lord.

This is so for Tertullian in that the sinner who casts himself upon the prayers of the church is in fact entreating Christ, since the church is Christ and God will not fail to

hear his Son. This, Evans thinks is a perfectionist view of the church as found in both Pelagius and Tertullian, in which Tertullian conceives the church as Christ himself.(43)

In keeping with his sacramental emphasis, Cyril of Jerusalem speaks of the 'mystical Body', though this means the church as a visible Body of congregations with an empirical existence, but also a spiritual communion, differentiated from the heretics who are communities of the godless.(44)

In Augustine, Christ and the church are one persona, Christ having a

.....'. triple mode of existence as the eternal Word, the God Man or Mediator, as the church of which he is the Head and the faithful members..'

The whole constitutes a single spiritual entity or person, Christians themselves with their Head forming the one Christ, Christ and his members as 'one person', (una quandem persona) an organic unity.(45)

Many Christians forming one Christ is underlined by Chrysostom in his commentary on 1 Corinthians.(46) The church is the complement of Christ, who is in no way alone, but has prepared an entire race to follow him, to adhere to him. Christ the plenitude and extension of the Incarnation is continued and fulfilled in the church, the church is him.(47)

The identity of Christ and the church also appears in places where the Fathers speak of 'one flesh'.

In Ignatius the church is dependent upon the Incarnation;

Christ as a new existence for the faithful, as they are his members.(48)

For the writer of II Clement, the living church, the Body of Christ has pre-existed before all ages but,

'..has now  
been manifested in these later days in His flesh for our  
salvation'.(49)

The flesh of Christ for Clement of Alexandria, is the way he shows himself, this flesh which for Origen is as his own.(50)

This is clearer in Hilary of Poitiers. Christ is himself the church comprehending all in himself through the mystery of his Body, and this is 'guaranteed' in the eucharist.(51)

Ambrose is even more realistic, especially in his exegesis of Genesis, in his clarification of the possibility of the individual following the Lord in his Ascension.(52)

Similarly Tertullian speaks of Christ as the church as 'bone of my bones'..., an interpretation of Genesis given by many Fathers to indicate the closest union.(53)

This is followed by Methodius who speaks of the church as the flesh and bones of Christ, as in baptism Christians are born again as flesh of his flesh, though this symbolises for him wisdom and virtue, a symbolic interpretation which Harnack describes as a descent into subjectivity.(54)

Augustine comes close to the 'one flesh' concept but here it is closely related to the Acts 9 Damascus road passage. Although the church may be an imperfect empirical imitation of Christ,

.....'to speak of the church's participation in Christ is immediately to speak of its conformity to the principle of manhood fully lived out in the life and death of Jesus..'

Evans suggests that with qualification, the church can be said to be Christ himself. (55)

In an Ascension sermon, Augustine links the 'one flesh' idea from Genesis with St. Paul's interpretation, a theme which appears too in his teaching on continence.(56)

Christians are described as the flesh of Christ even more prominently in Chrysostom. He explains how the church derives from Christ as Eve was made from the rib of Adam, connecting this with the blood and water issuing from the side of the crucified Christ, constituting the church. He too uses the texts which speak of 'bone of my bones' and 'flesh of my flesh' to describe the church and Christ.(57) He is more explicit in his commentary on Colossians when he interprets marriage as a mystery of the church.(58)

For Cyril of Alexandria the Body of Christ and its unity is perceived in a more explicit eucharistic context in which we are incorporated,

... 'within him who comes within us by means of his own flesh..' (59)

When Leo approaches the same theme, while according to De Lubac he tries to distinguish between head and members, saying that Christians are not the physical nor the eucharistic Body of Christ,

..'all the distinctions are there, but they do not add up to discontinuity, the church is not just a body but the Body of Christ, man must not separate what God has united.'



De Lubac quotes Origen,

..'let him not separate the church from the Lord..' (60)

Maximus too uses the 'one flesh' concept of the church and of the union of the soul with God. He speaks of Christians shaking off the corruptions of sin in likeness to the Lord's flesh, establishing a bond between our humanity and Christ's. (61)

The Fathers then, often use Christological language of the church. Maximus uses the Chalcedonian description of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ to describe the union of Christians with God. According to Pelikan his point is that,

..'..the Incarnation of God in Christ is the principle and medium of sacramental incorporation into the church, his Body..' (62).

De Lubac and Lossky both indicate how Monophysite and Nestorian errors are distinguishable in ecclesiology as well as Christology. The church is divine and human without confusion, like Christ himself whose Body she mystically is. Jacob of Sarug uses Christological language too in this double way. (63)

Using such realistic terms, Ignatius greets his fellow Christians in the flesh and blood of Christ, 'ἐν ὀστέατι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ', which is repeated less emphatically in Augustine. (64)

Consequent upon the theme of 'one flesh' and the references from Genesis and Paul, marriage is a convenient description

for the church bound to Christ, one which Gnostics would not easily use. It is prominent in Tertullian, and Leander of Seville in the sixth century.(65)

The strands of the New Testament which refer to Christ as a corporate person continue in the Fathers.

Origen describes all humanity as Christ's Body (66), and this is also true for Cyril of Alexandria for whom

'the common person of humanity comes again to life in him..'(67)

Others speak of the corporate persona of the church.

In the biblical context Justin Martyr describes the corporate personality of Jacob=Israel=Christ.(68) Lactantius too speaks of Christ 'extending through his whole Body', (quoting Seneca),(69) and a similar theme is found in Hilary of Poitiers, Christ as 'the Body of all.'(70)

Augustine takes the idea of corporate personality from its origins in Daniel.(71) He develops the understanding of Christ as corporate from St. Paul, from whom he understands Christ as properly spoken of as universal, as the head with the Body which is the church.(72)

In his homily on the same passage Chrysostom also speaks of this corporateness.(73) A similar footnote appears in his Baptismal Instructions referring back to his homily on 1 Corinthians.(74)

Realistic language about the eucharist refers to the church either created as the Body of the Lord through the eucharistic species, or as a mystery set forth in them, the

two bound together in one mystery. In Justin such eucharistic reference is linked firmly to the Incarnation.(75).

The link between the eucharist and Christians is found clearly in Cyprian,(76) and in Augustine with particular reference to the nature of sacrifice, and to the Incarnation.(77) The integral identity between Christ, the church and the eucharist is clear too in the well known passage from Augustine on the eucharist.(78)

Chrysostom is even more plainly Christological, and says of one incident from the Gospel:

'..perchance some of you would wish to be like them, to hold the feet of Jesus. You can even now, and not his feet and hands only, but even lay hold on that sacred head, receiving the awful mysteries with a pure conscience..' (79)

For him the eucharist is the means by which we share in the flesh of Christ and become joined to him.(80) His realism includes Christians sharing in the total Christ, his Body on earth and in heaven. Chrysostom sees the sacraments flowing from the side of Christ to form the church, linking this with the formation of Eve from Adam.(81)

Theodoret implies that when the church offers the eucharist it is united with Christ's offering.(82)

As we have seen Christ is bound to the church too in suffering. This is so for Hilary (83), and for Augustine who says that Christians wound Christ's Body. In writing against the Donatists he castigates the division they bring into the church.(84) Chrysostom again follows this idea.(85). As they see Christ and the church as one entity, the Fathers can

speak of division in the church in terms of laceration of his Body, and this is found in a speculative context in Lactantius.(86) With his prime concern for the unity of the church, this emphasis is clear in Cyprian, affirming the unity of the church so strongly because of the Christological tie which binds the church. He uses similar language concerning the Novatianist schism. (87)

Ambrose uses less symbolic language but with no less serious intent. Heretics become schismatics, in his view, divide and tear the church(88), as they do in Augustine (89), while Chrysostom is even more stern at this prospect(90), and Peter Chrysologos castigates those who in subterfuge pretend to have spent their time in prayer in the church assembly when they have spent it in secular activity. He links the division of the Lord's Body with the idea of the 'mystical' church found in Augustine.(91)

The term 'mystical Body' the Fathers use to describe a manifold reality beyond comprehension, how the Body of the crucified and risen Jesus is also present in the eucharist, as the church. As Augustine shows, they do not doubt any of these aspects, but at the same time struggle to find adequate language to explain how all these are corporeally one. This is so for Athanasius combatting Arianism, and in Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, and Theodore, the 'mystical Body' is described in Christological rather than just ecclesiological terms.(92)

Augustine speaks of it too in an ascetic context.(93)

More mystical, Maximus sees us incorporate in Christ, and

when speaking of the Incarnation projects our future into all Christ was, similar to Irenaeus' idea of Christ passing through every age of man.(94)

Christ's indwelling in believers, Origen speaks of as his dying in us(95), and Gregory of Nyssa sees him sharing the distinctive features of our nature.(96)

In his mystical contemplation we might expect Maximus to develop this more fully. In his understanding of deification he foreshadows 17th and 18th century Pietism, even to the use of their favourite text, 2 Peter 1:4.

Christ has in the Incarnation passed through

'.all things  
on our account', and 'if we follow him we also pass  
through all things with him', and share his glory.(97)

Augustine and Chrysostom envisage some kind of gradual growth of Christ in the church towards a pleroma or completeness, possibly at the end of time.(98)

In his description of the 'Virgin church' Augustine links the Incarnation with the present life of Christians. In this he meditates too on how Mary and the church are united in the Incarnation.(99)

In an equally exalted view Ambrose reflects Tertullian's view of the church as the dwelling place of the Trinity.(100)

Since the church is the very Body of the Lord, schism and heresy, as we have seen, are a serious matter. For Ignatius the failure of the heterodox to participate in the life of

the church evidences an unwillingness to regard it as the true Body of Christ, denying the reality of the eucharist and the necessity for visible agape.(101)

As Frennd comments,

'If they do not accept the humanity of Christ and the reality of his ministry, they could not be expected to follow his example..'(102)

Clement of Alexandria for all his emphasis on Christian Gnosticism can advise that we should be protected from the winds of heresy that we may become the church.(103)

Cyprian with his emphasis on unity finds it impossible to view those 'gathered together outside the church of Christ' as belonging to him in any way - they are not of the Body.(104) Cyril of Jerusalem even speaks of 'the church of the malignant' when he goes to some length to warn his hearers to shun heretical meetings and keep to the catholic church in which they were reborn.(105) Basil is equally eloquent against Marcionites and Montanists, and concerned to lead those in error back to 'the Body of the church of Christ'.(106)

Augustine distinguishes between heretics in theological error and schismatics who separate from the church, those in heretical error being expelled from the church, but having in fact excluded themselves. However, he believes that even heretics can be used for God's purposes and that their

'evil doing profits the loyal catholic members of Christ's Body'...(107)

We have seen then how closely the Fathers bind the church to Christ. In places they speak the language of co-identity,

and of the Body of Christ as one; even where this cannot be explained it remains evident in the *Mystica Corporis*. For them this means a visible community. Montanists and Gnostics prefer to speak of an invisible spiritual church.(108)

This is evident in the constant fight against Docetism, Christology and ecclesiology bound together as one, error in one leading to error in the other.

Failure to accept the Incarnation and its full consequences results in a church sometimes spiritualist, often, as the Fathers suggest unconcerned for charity, for the true church is engaged in empirical visible agape in a visible Body. Ignatius emphasises repeatedly the reality of Christ together with the church and its ministry.(109)

What is at stake is not only the visibility of Christ and his continuance in the church, but the whole economy of salvation.

Novatian for all his schismatic rigorism is no heretic in this respect, for he does acknowledge,

'the Christ of the heretics who existed (as they say) in appearance and not in reality. If he were a phantom and not reality then he did not really perform any of these actions, nor do we acknowledge him to be Christ who in no way took upon himself our human body, inasmuch as he took nothing from Mary, and consequently never came to us.'(110).

This anti-docetic emphasis appears too in Augustine's combatting of Manichaeism.(111)

For the whole economy of salvation; creation, redemption, the reality of Christ in the church, the Incarnation is paramount. A docetic Christ results in an a-historical and

docetic church, unconcerned often about visible agape, Christology and ecclesiology being inseparable.

Against such evaporation of life and meaning the Fathers seek to anchor the life of the church as the continuing Body of Christ, a visible community in each place.



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Note:

AUGUSTINE:

THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

Like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, Augustine was influenced by Platonism, in placing the spiritual sense of scripture above the letter, and Plotinus lies beneath his understanding of the church. Platonism for him is a prefiguring of the Gospel in describing the relationship of God with the soul and its journey to him. Within the life of the Christian the eternal Word leads to truth giving him knowledge of divine ideas mediated by Christ.(1)

Scripture and Tradition have the same catholic sense, so that his valuation of the spiritual meaning of scripture does not lead him into dokesis in <sup>his</sup> exegesis or his ecclesiology, which is largely revealed in his fight against Donatism and his attempt to mediate in this fourth-century dispute. (2) In his anti-Donatist treatises and letters he views Donatism as as much a heresy as Pelagianism and Manichaeism, though Frend believes he was limited in understanding his opponents by his own environment and class, coloured by his preoccupation with Manichaeism.(3). Against Donatist subjectivity, he emphasises the objective holiness of the church. The Donatist schism rends the seamless robe of Christ, tears Christ's Body.

Christ, according to Augustine, bears all humanity in himself, the Donatist schism therefore results in dividing Christ and reducing him to a sect.(4)

The same grace that makes Christ son of God makes Christians children of God - a mystical Body whose life is grace - a prolongation of the Incarnation, extending the hypostatic union to all the faithful so that, for example,

Christ's words upon the cross are ours.

Christ bears within himself the whole church, saying of believers,

'they too are myself'.

Christians are not intruders into the personal life of Jesus - they are 'He',

'We are He, since we are his Body and since he was made man in order to be our head.'(7)

As we have seen, for Augustine, if this were not so, Matthew 25 (v40) would be meaningless, and so would the encounter with Saul on the Damascus road.

The only Son of God, the whole Christ is the Word incarnate and Christians; the Son of Mary, in his entirety, is Jesus of Nazareth and themselves.(8) In the church the whole human race is assumed in Christ; this is especially true of those suffering who are his Body.

'Nowhere is Christ complete without the church, just as the church can nowhere be whole and entire without Christ; the whole Christ, the complete Christ, head and Body.'(9)

Christ's pardon is the church's pardon.

Augustine says that what can be attributed to the Virgin Mary can be said of the church, a passage which Mersch indicates as uniting Mariology, Christology ecclesiology, and the doctrine of grace. He describes Paul as as 'living the humanity of Christ.'(10)

Christ is One, with three facets: the eternal Word, The Mediator, and the church. As the human body is indwelt by the soul, so the whole Christ includes the church indwelt

by the Holy Spirit.(11)

Frances Oakley points out that Augustine's predestination if taken to its logical conclusion would de-historicise the church. Significantly he does not use this aspect of his teaching in debate with Donatists. She suggests he acts differently when speaking of grace and salvation - the church then appears as the invisible Body of the elect, whereas in his anti-Donatist writings he emphasises the visible catholic church, a dichotomy the medieval church did not attempt to reconcile.(12) Against the Donatists, the Body of the faithful Augustine emphasises as a visible, institutional persona, the One Body of Christ.(13) Augustine's marks of the church include : unity, miracles, charity, continuity, purity in teaching, consensus, apostolicity and catholicity.

Ozment describes his ecclesiology as the power of the Incarnation residing now in the church, emphasising against the Donatists the inability of human weakness to impede the work of God.(14)

The church is 'the world reconciled to God'. This may have met with approval from Donatists, but Augustine did not mean simply those who are worthy or known only to God, which reduced and ultimately destroyed the church's visibility.

The sacraments are administered in the church, the sacramental Body and the ecclesial Body being co-terminous and inclusive of each other.

Ozment describes Augustine's influence on medieval

theology as equal to that of Plato and Aristotle in medieval philosophy. He presides over the doctrine of the church in the middle ages, as for example at Chartres where Augustine's teaching that the Psalter speaks of Christ as united with his Body the church, was influential. (15)

It would be wrong to see Augustine as having only a doctrinaire concern in relation to Donatists, Manichaeans or other heretics. His understanding of the whole Body of Christ issued from a pastoral concern which can only be seen in context when viewed as care for the Body of the Lord himself.

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3. W.H.C.Frend. op.cit. 233,236-8.
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CHRIST AS CHURCH:  
A CONTINUING PERSPECTIVE.

For the Fathers, the church's existence was the historical continuity and visible guarantee of the Gospel, the living Tradition of faith. It was not a subjective group, but an objective continuity as the continuance of Christ from the Incarnation.(1) Because Christ was visible, so the church must be, with the same principle at work in its existence which was in Christ, with his two natures in one persona, and the many included in the one.(2)

Difference in Christology resulted in different ecclesiologies. The church as the extension of the Incarnation <sup>was</sup> not displacing the tradition in the New Testament, but the same tradition developing and growing and enlarging it, as the church believed, being led into fulness of Truth, under the guidance of the Spirit.(3)

The church could not repudiate history, since it was the sphere of redemption. It could not exist as simply a spiritual entity, since its foundation is the divinity and humanity of Christ, mirrored in the nature of the eucharist.(4)

This understanding, identity and continuity of Christ and the church continued from the patristic period into the Middle Ages, especially influenced by Augustine.

This underwent wider development in the East than the West for,

'the thought that Christ assumed human nature and all that was experienced in him benefited mankind was not in the East applied to the church but to mankind..'



though the concept of the Body of Christ was carried through into dogma by the East.(5) Eastern ecclesiology derived its stance from the two natures of Christ, in a theandric mystery.(6) It could not separate, nor wish to, the life of mankind from the church, following the Fathers and the Matthean emphasis of Christ in all men.

The progressive catholic development with diminishing legalistic Judaism and Montanist enthusiasm gave way to dogmatic Christological form.(7)

Gregory the Great in the sixth century suggests an intimate union in the Body of Christ - Christ and the church. Christ is the gateway into the presence of God, and the church his Body mystically, visibly and physically, the life of men living in the world.(8)

Since Christ and the church are one, the head and body one person, the church is one substance with him. Christ suffers in the church as he formerly did in Job, since he is present in every member of the church. Christ may be contemplated in others, Gregory, like the Eastern tradition, making little distinction between the church, the just man and the Christian. The church is God's action in each of its members, with an outward and inward expression, inwardly man's soul, and outwardly the church, these corresponding to the divinity and humanity of Christ in the church.(9)

This theme is continued in Anastasius of Antioch, Christ acting in all of his members, dwelling and diffused in each and every one.(10)

For John of Damascus, following Dionysian influence, our human experience is an inadequate vehicle to represent God, though all the experiences of Christ are ours. The church as the Body of Christ is inseparable from the tradition of faith transmitted in it, in which Christians participate in the fulness of Christ.(11)

The two natures of Christ and the church, Germanus of Constantinople describes as following the Incarnation, as the invisible descends into the visible there, so in the church the heavenly descends into the earthly. Following this the church building is the place where the visible and invisible of the cosmos is united, a concept closely related to the Body of Christ image, the church as heaven on earth representing the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ.(12)

Bede echoes the Fathers when he takes up the theme of the church coming from the side of Christ as Eve came from Adam. Christ and the church share the same nature.(13) As this finds eucharistic emphasis in early writers, so it does in Amalar of Metz, for whom the Body and Blood of Christ constitute the church. He divides the host into three, signifying the body of Christ risen from the dead, the body lying in the grave, and the Body walking on earth.(14).

Christ and the church are coterminous in the thought of Elipandus in the eighth century, almost to the point of nullifying the uniqueness of Christ, but this is a danger common to many who reflected on the mystery, especially those who were overtaken by excessive individualism.

It was important that the relationship between the historic, ecclesial and eucharistic Body of Christ was one of identity, not simply continuity. This is emphasised in Paschasius Radbertus who understood the Body of Christ as the church, the eucharist and the body born of Mary. Baptism, for him, made men members of Christ's Body, which is animated by the Holy Spirit.(15)

The birth of Christ and all the dispensation of his humanity is a great sacrament because of the divine majesty which dwells in Christ. His view of Christ and the church is aligned with his defence of transubstantiation.

Claudius of Turin points out the docetic tendency of the Manichees, which prevents them giving praise to Christ. Commenting on Galatians 3:16 he explains,

'This shows that the one seed of Christ is to be understood not only as the Mediator, but also as the church of which Body he is the head, so that all may be one in Christ'(16)

A similar emphasis appears in Ratramnus. who, following Augustine, interprets the eucharist as a mystery not only of Christ's own body, but of his people redeemed through him, and his by baptism.(17)

In Constantinian ethos, Louis the Pious considers the catholic church as Christ's Body, but in the context of the unity of society as inseparable from the church, the empire coterminous with the Corpus Christi, to dissent from the one is to dismantle the other. This political ecclesiology reflects the priest/kingship ideal of Charlemagne, and the comment of the Anonymous Chronicler of York who speaks of

king and bishop in terms of Christ and God.(18)

A clearer theological emphasis is found in Ivo of Chartres in his concern for the life of the primitive church, the Body of Christ of which Christ himself is the soul. This Body is conceived without carnal admixture, and born of a Virgin, says Otto of Friesing, and reborn of water and the Spirit, the work of God. This church given life by the Holy Spirit is according to Anselm of Havelburg a Body which reaches back to Abel the just man, and is consummated in the elect. From the coming of Christ to the Day of Judgement there is one church, renewed by Christ's presence.(21)

Lombard, Master of the Sentences, describes Christ's human nature as the principle of sanctification of all Christians.(22).

This emphasis on the humanity of Christ as the church is found too in one thirteenth-century Carthusian who speaks of Christ and the saints re-forming us, and in the mystic Mechtild of Magdeburg who speaks of us being saved because our humanity is incorporated into Christ whose humanity redeems all creation, so that in him the divine nature now has bone and flesh, body and soul. (23) Isaac of Stella describes our salvation as necessary for the 'completion of Christ'.(24)

Although his Christological ideas are significantly different from those of the patristic period, Boniface VIII in his *Unam Sanctam* speaks of the Lord's Body as one church-the one Body of the one and only Lord.(25) Influenced by Aristotle, and NeoPlatonism through Dionysius, the church

and the Incarnation are linked too in the thought of Albert the Great for whom the heart of Christ is the church. His eucharistic ecclesiology sees men united to God in the Incarnation, though his emphasis leads more to a church of saints in his insistence on charity.

This coincidence of Christ and the church, and the emphasis on Christ's humanity in his church is found then, in the medieval period and beyond. Cajetan speaks of the Incarnation as the assumption of the whole universe to a divine person - Christ as the very person- hypostasis of his mystical Body the church.

Troeltsch describes the medieval Christian perspective of the church as the reflection of the God/Man in the episcopate, the sacraments, the extension of the Incarnation; the Pauline corpus transposed into a doctrine of society, Christology determining the form, life and liturgy of the church (27)

As in Dante and Aquinas, the church is the life of Christ, his presence in the world. Those who dissent in criticism or through failure of reform all have to come to terms with the consequences of Christology in ecclesiology.

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CHAPTER 4.

THE DUALIST INHERITANCE.



PAULICIANS.

From the seventh century onwards, the Paulicians are a consistent example of how Christology influences the nature of the community in an heretical context.

In Byzantium they appear as an underground movement in relation to the orthodox church, critical of its faults and failings. For this reason they organised themselves as a separate community and even founded their own state when exiled and persecuted under Theodosius.(1) Byzantium regarded them as a threat in that they were likely to cooperate with its enemies. They are part of a left wing movement in the eighth century which includes Messalians, Euchites and Gnostics in an iconoclastic front against excessive church ritualism and worldliness, though there appears some confusion between them and another group called 'Paulians.'(2) After dispersion they exist solely in the Balkans and Armenia where they were settled under Constantine, John I, and Basil II, with colonies in Thrace and Asia, entering Bulgaria at the same time as orthodox Christianity which represented Byzantium; though Paulicians were favoured by the khans, and prepare the way for Bogomilism during the period of schism between east and west in the ninth century, hindering the orthodox mission, particularly infecting Bulgarian monastic life. The first mention of them may be at a church council in 447. Anna Comnena devotes considerable space to them, regarding them as the epitome of blasphemy and sedition.(3) Garsoian sees Manichaeism, dualism and docetism as influences among them only in Byzantium.(4)

Paulicianism thus appears as a possible survival of early Syrian Armenian orthodox Christianity driven underground by Hellenisation of the Armenian Church in the fourth and fifth century, a kind of reactionary heresy when the Church had developed leaving Armenian old believers behind, some Armenian bishops remaining in the sect. John of Ojun is the last Armenian writer to speak of Paulicians who are henceforth referred to as Thondraki.(5)

Some regard Paul of Samosata as their founder, reviving Artemon's heresy that the Saviour was merely human, the Son of God coming down from heaven and the man Jesus from below. Paulicians have commonly been regarded as dogmatic descendants of Nestorians,(6) and John of Ojun and Gregory of Narek connect them with Messalians(7), though it is not unusual for contemporary heresies to be accorded an ancient derivation.

Some interpretations of the sect's title regard them as called after their leader Paul the Armenian in the seventh century, others from the Armenian Polik or St.Paul.(8) Paul of Samosata is attested in eastern and western sources, though this may be from a legendary re-invention of the ninth century. Nersoyan favours St. Paul as many of the sect's leaders were named after Paul's followers, and adhere to Paul whilst objecting to Peter.(9) It is uncertain how far Paulicians influenced later heresies; the idea of the transformation of the celebrant rather than the elements at the eucharist shows continuity from Paulicians to Cathars as evidenced by the Provence

Albigensian ritual, and thirteenth century authors suggest western Manichaean sects such as the heretics of Orleans and the Waldenses, derive from them, though even where a direct continuity is disputed, the connection between Paulician itinerants and Cathar perfecti is marked, as are the doctrinal similarities as well as other elements.(10)

Paulicians are conspicuous in what they affirm and deny. They oppose the church of the faithful to the church built of stone, and since Christ did not ask for the building of churches they will not consecrate them, since the gathering of Christians together is the only legitimate form of church, the communion of the faithful. This also entails for them the destruction of crosses erected by the orthodox, preferring living crosses of their own. They would rather gather in houses than pray in a church.

John of Ojun says they also rejected stone altars and fonts.(11) They were subsequently accused of turning churches into wildernesses and grinding the cross to dust with a hammer. Any suggestion of the idea of consecration of the material was dismissed, according to Paul of Taron in the fifth century, and for the early Armenian Fathers the church was built on Peter, that is on faith, not with lifeless stone.(12)

Paulicians rejected the Real Presence in the eucharist, regarding it only as figurative, though Photius believes they received it to dissimulate as orthodox. They appear to have celebrated a primitive church agape since they reject the orthodox sacraments as unnecessary and defiled,

together with the clergy, disdaining established religion in their anti-ritualism. The seven ecumenical councils and their dogmas were to them insignificant, merely synods of men, which is not surprising when two church councils anathematised them.(13)

Despite their puritanical disposition they object to orthodox monastic and ascetic life, regarding monks as a disguise of Satan, rejecting with this the distinction between priest and layman.(14) According to Photius they spurned the Old Testament and the letters of St. Paul, though the latter would seem to discount any Pauline derivation. They appear Origenist in their sacramental regard for the text of scripture.(15) Infant baptism they despise, though the story of Constantine Copronymos, an emperor who favoured the Paulician view fouling the font at his baptism seems more symbolic than historical.(16) Infant baptism was a deceit of the Devil which lowered the importance and status of church membership.

The place of Mary in the church is rejected inasmuch as for them she represents not the church but the heavenly Jerusalem. In true iconoclastic spirit they reject images and the sanctification of matter in relics. Gregory Magistros represents the Thondraki;

'we are not worshippers of matter but of God, we reckon the cross, and the church and the priestly robes and the sacrifice of the mass, all for nothing.'(17)

Paulicianism was conspicuous for this iconoclasm, though Barnard indicates their inability to ally themselves with

an iconoclast state since they rejected any such establishment.(18) The Armenian Apostolic Church, meaning the Paulicians, are accused by Isaac Catholicos of iconoclasm and during the second Iconoclasm Nicephorus I is considered by Theophanes to have Paulician leanings and thus threatening the empire. Nicephorus regards Paulicianism as synonymous with iconoclasm and therefore Manichaeism.(19) Theodore of Studium links Paulicians with docetism since they reject matter and deny the Incarnation. On the restoration of icons in Byzantium a campaign was raised against Paulicians who eventually merge with an iconoclast remnant.(20)

Paulicians appealed to the primitive church, rejecting institutional structure for charismatic inspiration, and denouncing ritualism and later accretions, emphasising simplicity and poverty.(21) In line with this they regard their mother church as Corinth, and such primitivism is reflected in their attitude to baptism, and the author of the Key of Truth believes he is handing on authentic apostolic tradition. Consequently some regard Paulicianism as deriving from Marcionism. This may be seen in their Christological perspective, though with a shift from Marcionite modalism to Adoptionism, and in their biblicism, though with a modified regard for matter as evil.(22) It may be that Paulicians had close contact with Marcionites during the second century, though Obolensky sees no trace of a Marcionite dualist asceticism in them, whilst regarding Marcionite teaching as assimilated to

Paulician, with a consequent closer development towards orthodoxy with a possible common ancestry, though this may only be similarities. At the Council of 787 Paulicians are accused of being Marcionites long after true Marcionites have disappeared. Nersoyan also finds Montanist elements in them.(23) Such an identification is made by the eastern patriarchs of the ninth century. The Letter of Sergius Tychicus to Leo the Montanist at the beginning of the century suggests such a relationship.(24)

Significantly the Paulicians call themselves Christians, implying that they alone are authentic believers and the true church, rejecting orthodox Christian as 'Romans' and regarding themselves as Catholics even when labelled as heretics, which Peter Higuemus regards as hypocrisy.(25) Rejecting the orthodox idea of apostolic tradition, Paulicians regard themselves as the sole bearers of true tradition. Gregory of Narek says that the heretics regard themselves as not having swerved from the true faith, and according to Sergius Tychicus the Paulician leader,

'we are the Body of Christ, and he who departs from the tradition of the Body of Christ departs from us; he sins for he goes to those who teach different things and does not believe in the true doctrine..'(26)

John of Damascus speaks of them as regarding themselves alone as holy in Donatist vein, for authentic Christianity is equated with a kind of Marcionite spiritual church. Peter of Sicily comments on how they regard themselves alone as the Body of Christ(27), and Harnack highlights this attitude in the Paulician Key of Truth as a more

primitive form than Catholicism. According to the Key, Paulicians are to believe in all who are the universal catholic church and not Latins, Greeks or Armenians(i.e. orthodox).(28)

The Paulician believer is considered as the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. In imitation of Christ's passion the believer takes his suffering upon himself. Believers are separated into two grades, those who receive baptism by the Spirit and the ordinary believer, those baptised regarded as Christ's equals, each man being accepted as a son of God. The followers of the Paulician leader Sergius regard themselves as equal to the Holy Spirit, preferring living images to stone ones, and there are instances of Paulicians regarding their elect as the flesh of Christ, becoming Christ, reflecting the idea of the celebrant being transformed into His Body at the eucharist.(29) Conybeare believes this reflects a primitive Christian view of the baptised and anointed as 'Christs' which is found in Methodius in the early fourth century, in particular with reference to leaders like Sergius. Paulicians believe that since Christ received baptism at thirty when he received authority, high priesthood, a kingdom, and became chief shepherd, so thirty must be the the age for baptism of believers.(30) At his baptism Christ put on the raiment of light lost by Adam in the garden, and such Adoptionist Christology is paralleled in every believer who is adopted as Christ at his baptism, becoming Paracletes with the Paraclete and Christs with



Christ. In this the life and work of Christ are completely transposed to the life of the believer just as the outward form of the church is transposed from consecrated places and a doctrine of the sanctification of matter to the individual and the gathering of believers, the objective and material displaced by the subjective and spiritual.

Since the Paulician elect received the Spirit as Christ did at the Jordan, baptism was considered the real nativity. Conybeare relates this to the primitive idea of baptism as the spiritual birth of Christ; bearing in mind how the theme of Christ's baptism was marked in the Orthodox church at Epiphany, there is a clear link between both baptism and nativity in the life of Christ which may have undergone development in Paulicianism.(31) Paulicians however appear to have used a trinitarian formula at baptism yet with significant omissions, while including the traditional eastern effusion as preparation.(32) Since infant baptism was rejected and the baptism of catechumens was regarded as fraudulent, converts from orthodoxy (to them, 'heresy,') were received by a ceremony which seems to have consisted in the laying on of hands without the use of water. John of Ojun rejected Paulicians baptism as done without preparation, and Gregory Magistros says,

'When we (the orthodox) ask 'Why do you not allow yourselves to be baptised as Christ and the apostles enjoined ?' they answer, 'You do not know the mysteries of baptism, we are in no hurry to be baptised, for baptism is death..'

Ⓐ Paulician view with characteristic undertones, providing a foundation for the postponement of baptism until death.

One orthodox anathema of the Thondraki states,

'If anyone pretend that only after his baptism or his resurrection from the dead he (Jesus) became worthy of adoption as Son of God, may he be anathematised.'(33)

Paulician Adoptionism may again reflect an earlier Nestorian belief. Conybeare points out how the writings of Paul of Samosata a supposed leader of the Paulicians pursue the line of the Shepherd of Hermas which equates the Word becoming flesh with Jesus receiving the Spirit at his baptism, another indication of the double character of Epiphany. Paulician Adoptionism is similar to both Ebionitism and Spanish Adoptionism of the eighth century, a possible survival of an early Christian concept of Christ becoming Son of God by grace, possibly an undeveloped early Syriac Christian view.(34)

Paulician Adoptionism seems to have developed into dualism in the ninth century, and Conybeare sees such survivals of a primitive Adoptionism elsewhere, including within the British Church.(35)

The heart of Paulician doctrine stems from its Christology which, in the light of its other emphases we might expect to find markedly docetic. For Paulicians, Jesus Christ is not God incarnate but a new spiritual Adam beginning a new race. His body comes from heaven not from the Virgin Mary, for he did not take flesh as an ordinary man, nor did he suffer. As in Marcion, the childhood of Christ is rejected. There are more similarities to Gnostic views of Christ as an angel adopted by God, his celestial flesh anointed with the Holy Spirit.(36) This may relate to the

Paulician transposition of the place of the Virgin Mary as there can be no role for her in the Incarnation.

Paulicians still accept that the teaching of Christ is in the Gospels.

Their docetic view fully accords with Adoptionism. Christ remains, as in Arianism, a creature, though any passion or redemption he accomplishes is not achieved in any nature consubstantial with ours for it was illusory, with the implication that matter is evil. Christ as a creature was Paulician doctrine in Constantinople in the eighth century, a view which Garsoian finds inconsistent with docetism, yet as we have seen Paulician doctrine does not seem to have described Christ's creatureliness as like that of the rest of mankind, and there is no hint of him assuming our human nature to heal us.(37) She posits the existence of two Paulician groups in Byzantium, one with dualist docetic views, the other rejecting the divinity of Christ; one regarding Jesus as only seemingly human, the other believing him raised by grace to be Son of God.(38) yet these views could be the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

In the Key of Truth there is no denial of the reality of the Passion but it is not irretrievably linked with our humanity and there is no real room for the Incarnation.(39) Conybeare sees in Paulician Adoptionist Christology an intimate parallel with all the faithful and Christ which might at face value appear to reflect an equality between his experience and ours, but in the end

diminishes his uniqueness. Basil of Caesarea remarks on the heresy of those who hold that Christ came with a heavenly body, and so deny the Incarnation.(40) In the Acts of Philip, Jesus appears to the faithful in the form of Philip, illustrating the Paulician relationship of Christ and the faithful.(41) In the Key, Jesus is led to his temptation by the Spirit from his baptism, admitting him into the mystery of holy Godship.(42) In describing Christ as sole mediator between God and man who passes through the Virgin to make himself visible, Nersoyan regards Paulician anti-ritualism as consequent upon denial of the Incarnation.(43)

Against Paulician denial of the reality of Christ and the church, the orthodox firmly maintained the role of Mary in the Incarnation and the spotless Mary who represents the church. Rejection of the visible church is equated with rejection of authentic tradition. Paul of Taron in the twelfth century underlines the orthodox theology of consecration when he emphasises the Godhead as inseparable from the flesh of Christ so that the power of Christ is inseparable from the holy cross. Interestingly the passage on Paul's conversion at Damascus in Acts used by orthodox writers to equate Christ with the church, is used by Paulicians to refer to the church as Paul, the vessel of election.(44)

Were the Paulicians Manichees ?

Certainly 'Manichaeans' was used as an epithet for them,

more often in abuse than understanding. Peter of Sicily so refers to them, suggesting that Paulician leaders added to other heresies, though others regard them as unrelated to Manichaeism since their dualism and docetism was part of their tradition before leaving Asia Minor.(45)

Obolensky distinguishes Manichaeism as a non-Christian religion adapting itself to Christianity from Paulicianism as an attempt to reform Christianity on a dualistic basis.(46) Though official documents in Byzantium may not equate Paulicians with Manichees, according to Gregory Magistros at this time 'Manichaeon' appears as a synonym for iconoclasm, though Garsoian regards any direct identification as no longer possible.(47) Since Paulicians regarded their faithful as 'Theotokoi' and Nestorius regarded those who called Mary 'Theotokos' as Manichaeans, a possible connection could be made. Conybeare sees differences in the idea of the elect in Manichaeism from Paulicianism, though not in the principle itself. In spite of their repudiation of the title, Paulician dualism is similar to the Manichaeon.(48) Loos regards Paulician dualism as a metaphysical explanation of the rift between Paulicians and the established church rather than pure theological speculation, and sees in their dualism the mental world of the Gnostics and late antiquity contrasting God and the material world.(49)

Paulicians could exist within the framework of the orthodox church by dissimulation, as the Key indicates

from the history of Aristarces, in that as men are caught by a deadly drug in food or fish secretly baited so Paulicians disguise themselves under cover of a godly religion.(50) The Thondraki survived by interpreting orthodox dogma symbolically whilst pretending to be orthodox. Paulicians outwardly conform whilst indifferent to the sacraments; in the inquisition of Paulicians in the nineteenth century they were found to attend orthodox worship keeping concealed until they could find opportunity to proselytise. Runciman regards them as halfway between Christianity and Zoroastrianism.(51)

Along with other heretics they were included in the standard charges of holding orgies and cannibalism. They reflected the militant spirit of those living in mountain regions, breeding the kind of dissent found in similar heresies from such geographical backgrounds.

Paulician dualism and appeal to antiquity was focussed in their Christology.

Christ who was not incarnate could never be the basis for the imperial theology of Byzantium or its appeal to the sanctification of matter in the Christ event.

Adoptionism and Docetism are key elements which divorce Christ's divinity and humanity, and in the case of the Paulicians rejected the idea of the corporate Body of Christ for a kind of charismatic individualism and alternative ecclesiology which regarded believers as receiving spiritual baptism and becoming equal to

Christ, and the church as simply a gathering of believers without any objective corporate persona deriving from the God/Man, the continuum in which the orthodox lived and believed.

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4. N.Garsoian. The Paulician Heresy. The Hague. (1967) 83, 167, 206.
5.                   ibid. 95,140,230,7.  
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6. Eusebius. The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine. ET. London. (1965) 30:13. 317.  
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[At the Council of Ephesus Nestorius was accused of being descended from Paul of Samosata and Ephraem, and other writers associated Paulicians with Nestorianism, and Paulicians in Armenia are compared to Nestorians by the hierarchy as they were at the Council of Dvin.]
7. D.Obolensky. op.cit. 49,151.
8. M.Erbstosser. op.cit. 18.
9. T.Nersoyan. op.cit. 403.
10. F.C.Conybeare. op.cit. cxxxvi,cxci,cxcii.  
                  ibid. ET. 160.  
                  N.Garsoian. op.cit. 17,233.  
                  T.Nersoyan. op.cit. 407.
11. F.C.Conybeare. op.cit. lxxx, lxxxvi, cxxvii, cxxix, xvii.
12.                   ibid. ET. 137,174.
13.                   ibid. cxlv, lxxiv.  
                  ibid. ET. 134.



14. T.Nersoyan. op.cit. 49.  
F.C.Conybeare. op.cit. xliii.
15. D.Obolensky. op.cit. 40.
16. F.C.Conybeare. op.cit. cxvi.
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21. D.Obolensky. op.cit.41.
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28. ibid. ET. 94.
29. ibid. liii, lv, lvi, vii, clxxv.
30. ibid. ET. 74, 132.
31. ibid. lxxxi, c, liii,clv.
32. ibid. 32. ET. 98.
33. ibid. 165.  
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37. *ibid.* 179,180.
38. *ibid.* 163.
39. F.C.Conybeare. *op.cit.* xxxix.
40. *ibid.* xc, cxi.
41. *ibid.* clxxxiv.
42. *ibid.* ET. 180.
43. T.Nersoyan. *op.cit.* 409.
44. F.C.Conybeare. *op.cit.* ET. 104.  
*Acts of the Apostles.* ch. 9.
45. R.I.Moore. *The Origins of European Dissent.* London. (1977) 51.  
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46. D.Obolensky. *op.cit.* 58.
47. N.Garsoian. *op.cit.* 27fn., 99,189.
48. F.C.Conybeare. *op.cit.* xx.  
T.Nersoyan. *op.cit.* 409.
49. M.Loos. *op.cit.* 36, 252.  
N.Garsoian. *op.cit.* 182.  
F.C.Conybeare. *op.cit.* clxiv.
50. *ibid.* ET. 132.
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THE BOGOMILS.

Bogomils derive Paulician influence and teaching from the priest Bogomil in tenth century Bulgaria, emphasising the purity and simplicity of the early church. During that century they flourished in Macedonia and Bulgaria where Theophylact of Constantinople regards them as Manichaeans mixed with Paulicianism. The Byzantine monk Euthymius mentions them in the eleventh century, and the Byzantine state legislated against them, Manuel the Patriarch asking the help of the Latin church to counteract them, though as the Byzantine state lessened in power such heretics became more difficult to suppress.(1) Towards the end of the twelfth century Bogomilism was closely linked to the educated society of Byzantium and its philosophical interests.(2) In Constantinople it spread not only among monks and these educated groups, but also the middle classes.

Bogomils rejected both church and state authority as they were indifferent to both, although Obolensky regards them as compliant to the state in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Constantinople. In Bulgaria the populace turned to Bogomils and Paulicians for support when church and government were found wanting. Anna Comnena regards them as a mixture of Manichaean and Messalian ideas, and dissimulating in their wickedness.(3) Bogomils appear as a popular movement meeting a need where the orthodox church failed, opposing the Latin and Greek church with their own allegiance to the church of God, providing an alternative spirituality for a peasant following, though after its

early enthusiastic days giving way to stable churches supporting peasant revolt against feudalism and Byzantine influence in Bulgaria,<sup>and so</sup> forming a popular counter-church.

Because of their high moral tone, Bogomils became a reproach to orthodox clergy, abusing them as blind pharisees, heresy growing in the face of the church's decadence. Bogomils regard the church as forfeiting its life to mammon, leaving them as the only repository of Christianity, claiming the exclusive right to the title Christians who live according to the Spirit.(4)

Anna Comnena describes them as saintly in appearance, preaching the Gospel which the clergy fail to do. In the same kind of transformation we find in Paulicianism they refer to themselves as Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ and to the Orthodox church as Herod who slays the Word. (5) Whilst they do not use the term church, they certainly regard themselves as true Christians, though in its early stages the movement sheltered under orthodoxy whilst coming to regard it as guilty and decaying. Their elect are regarded as vessels of the Holy Spirit, 'Theotokoi' in place of Mary, and they 're-Judaised' orthodox teachers as scribes and pharisees.(6) In Bosnia they use the title 'apostles' as a pointer to their claim to authentic Christian ancestry. Believers were separated from the perfecti, although an equal place was given to men and women. Baptism, as with Paulicians, was a ceremony of teleiosis conferring elect status. In their baptismal ceremony they regarded Christ's baptism as the pattern for

baptism in the Spirit, regarding the use of water as inferior baptism following that of John the baptist, for only baptism with the Spirit initiated into the true church. Orthodox use of water was only temporary and symbolic (7), their baptism in Spirit and fire superseding orthodoxy as did their eucharist which they believed symbolic of the scriptures.(8) The ninth century chronicle of Theophanes speaks of a similar sect, the Athinganoi, linking them with the Paulicians and describing them as keeping the laws of Moses, and replacing circumcision with baptism, reJudaising orthodoxy by keeping the Sabbath.

Storr sees a precedent to Bogomils in the Ebionites.(9) Cosmas the priest upbraids Bogomils in the tenth century for rejecting the liturgy which they say was not established by the apostles but by John Chrysostom, questioning whether they believe churches were without liturgy before his time.(10) He suggests that although orthodox clergy may be lazy they are not blasphemous.

The dualism Cosmas describes comes near to Paulicianism, and he sees Gnosticism in it, emphasising puritanism, a teaching with no focal point, and promoting anarchism since Cosmas says that the church sanctifies the secular power.(11) According to Cosmas, Bogomils reject orthodox reverence paid to the cross, the relics of saints and icons, and ecclesiastical orders, regarding material objects of devotion as of the Devil.(12) They practice a mutual absolution and their prayers consist of repetitions

of the Lord's Prayer, whilst the late medieval use of the rosary is thought to derive from their practices. Since fasts and hymns and holy days and church ordinances are man made, real Christians may disregard them.(13) In the tenth century letter of Patriarch Theophylact to Tsar Boris he anathematizes the heretics for their rejection of the reality of the eucharist and the role of the Virgin Mary.(14) The Synodicon of Tsar Boris (1211) denounces those who have an aversion to crosses and churches etc.(15) Since Bogomils reject the church as a human/divine institution, they deny the concept of the mystical Body and avoid the term church altogether, and because of this total rejection Obolensky queries whether they are heretics at all,(16) even though they reject the dogmas and practices of the church.

Bogomils totally rejected church buildings which they considered inhabited by demons and the work of Satan, whose headquarters was the Jerusalem temple and later St. Sophia in Constantinople. Since God is spirit (Jn.4:24) he could have no temples, and prayer at street corners was preferable.

Some regard Bogomilism as transmitting Manichaeian ideas from east to west in the eleventh century, superseding Manichaeism in the fifth and sixth centuries, though retaining the dualism between flesh and spirit.

In their development Bogomils like later Cathars divided into two churches reflecting moderate and radical dualism, the church of Dragovitsa and the church of Bulgaria. (17)

Obolensky regards Paulicians as promoting the the absolute dualist ideal whilst Bogomils are moderate. Others hold them responsible for the third wave of heresy spreading West in the Cathars in the mid-twelfth century.(18) The heretics noted by Robert of Chalons in 1048 seem close to Bogomilism.(19) Whilst this mid-twelfth century external influence is regarded as common, others suggest the possibility of solutions to religious problems being re-invented. Peuch regards Bogomilism as responsible for giving organisation to heresy. Most scholars agree that the influence of Papa Nicetas (Niquinta) of Constantinople who arrived in the West in 1167 and reconsoled the Cathars, marks a watershed connecting eastern and western dualism.(20) Byzantine legislation against Bogomils coincides with the period of papal legislation against Catharism at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the movement creating a stronghold and following in monasticism.(21). It may be that as with the church at large, Bogomilism infected monasticism at a critical period, though the heretics tend to follow ascetic ideals as they could not conceive of salvation within this world, and react against orthodox excess and luxury.

Euthymius of Acmona knew of the Bogomils as the Phundagiagitae, and sees them penetrating a monastery, appearing as monks. Byzantine monachism seems to have been prone to heretical dualism, and heretical secret rites bore similarity to monastic vows.(22) Nicephoros Gregoras lists several heresies appearing on Mount Athos which were



condemned by the Synod of Constantinople, regarding Byzantine monasticism as <sup>under</sup> strong Bogomil influence. This was the case in the fourteenth century when Bogomilism became a kind of monastic church with a Hesychast interest, and in the fifteenth a kind of monastic federation.(23) Bogomilism could appeal to unstable monks (24), for Anna Comnena describes them as dressed as monks, as does Euthymius Zigabenus, and it may be that Basil the leader of Byzantine Bogomils was a former orthodox monk.(25)

Bogomils possessed a secret book of theology, possibly the Interrogatio Johannis. They recognised only the New Testament as scripture, claiming to understand gnostically, its real depths. In common with Paulicians they regard the body of Christ as the Gospel and the blood of Christ as the Acts of the Apostles, interpreting the scriptures in an innovative way, as Cosmas says,

'The wretched ones think that they know the depths of the scriptures and being willing to comment upon them they give a wrong meaning to them.'(26)

Whilst they do not appear to have inherited the Paulician preference for St. Paul, they reject the Old Testament, the law and the prophets, and also the miracle stories in the Gospels, but reverence the Gospel of John. Cosmas anathematises those who put a wrong construction upon the words of the apostles, failing to read them as holy men have done.(27)

Together with the preference for John's Gospel associated with Gnosticism, other Gnostic elements are found in them.

Runciman believes that by the end of the eleventh century Bogomils were plainly acquainted with Gnostic ideas, possibly lending coherence to its Western influence.(28) They held similar Gnostic beliefs about creation and though divergent in their view about the liberation of the soul as freeing God himself, certainly regarded the Devil as creator of the visible world.

In Byzantium some regard them as retaining a Messalian and Hesychast influence especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.(29) In Philotheos' biography of Gregory Palamas he records Gregory entering a village of heretical Messalians, meaning Bogomils, and Theophylact in the eleventh century sees them as related, Anna Comnena describing their teaching as Messalian. In the Slavic Nomocanon of 1262 Messalians are described as Bogomili.(30) Later Bogomilism betrays a syncretistic tendency. Paulicians differed from them, being warlike whilst Bogomils tended simply to condemn the world, Paulicians openly proselytise, whereas Bogomils tend to be secretive and hypocritical, Paulicians more active<sup>as</sup> against the Bogomil contemplative nature.(31)

With their iconoclastic rejection of the material world it is not surprising to find church order regarded as invalid and a prominent role given to the charismatic individual, their leader being equated with Christ. They also appear to have subscribed to the Gnostic double trinity.

Given the kind of movement they were, how did they view

the person of Christ ?

Runciman says they have a monarchian outlook, holding the familiar Paulician doctrine that God sent the Son into the world as Jesus who entered the Virgin by her right ear, taking flesh from her, an outdated orthodox view.(32)

The Virgin, unaware, found Jesus as a child in Bethlehem.

In true Gnostic fashion they see God sending the younger son Christ <sup>rather than Jesus</sup> to redeem men's souls.(33) In their version of

the Vision of Isaiah however, Bogomils omit Christological passages. Loos describes their Christological view as God appearing in three persons for only thirty-three years when Christ then merged with the Father, linked with the idea of the Logos emanating from and returning to God and related to the concept of Christ as the archangel Michael.(34) The Patriarch Theophylact says in his anathema,

'cursed be those who blaspheme and say that the member of the Holy Trinity, the Son and Word of the same substance with God the Father was man without sin in imagination and appearance but not in fact.'

Moore regards their docetism as consistent with repudiation of the cult of the Virgin.(35) Bogomil Christology - if we may call it that, devalued and rejected the Incarnation, though it seems in places to accept the suffering and death of Christ as real - but not in an authentically human body. The Bulgarian text of Bogomil's teaching stresses Christological docetism. As a consequence of this we would expect Bogomils to deny as they do, the real presence in the eucharist. The Council

of Trnovo in the Synodicon of 1211 describes their view as,

'Christ our Lord seemingly born of the holy Mother of God and very Virgin Mary, was seemingly crucified and ascended....his body he left in the air'(36)

Although Anna Comnena suggests Bogomilism has penetrated even the greatest houses in Constantinople, it did so furtively as was Bogomil practice, just as the perfecti dissimulated in a monk's habit, for they hold the faith secretly as Cosmas says,

'outwardly they do everything so as not to be distinguished from the orthodox Christians but inwardly they are ravening wolves. The people on seeing their great humility think they are orthodox and able to show them the path of salvation.'(37).

Bogomils attend church simulating orthodoxy, and in this respect their practice matched their Christology or lack of it. In dissimulation and rejection of any consecration of the material or the secular, their attitude to the church tends to reject it in a kind of puritanism which reduces orthodoxy to a form of redundant Judaism. Bogomil influence continued in its docetic Christology and ecclesiology in Catharism and the Patarenses in the West. How difficult it was to separate Bogomilism from some orthodox views can be seen in the eleventh century. Whereas Bogomils rejected the priestly office and said that baptism was with the Spirit and regarded absolution as received from anyone in a state of grace, baptism given with the Spirit not with water, Simeon the new Theologian could equally question the validity of absolution from an

unspiritual priest, in speaking of the need for spirituality which, if absent, could mean the baptised putting off the Christ they had put on in the sacrament. Such mysticism itself came dangerously near heretical views.

Footnotes.

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, CATHARISM



In the Exposure of Cathar and Waldensian heretics at the beginning of the twelfth century, Ermengaud, companion of Durand of Huescia describes them as calling everything that is ritually observed in the universal church, vain and absurd. He describes their secret meetings as does Peter of Vaux de Cernay.(1) Meeting in secrecy, both Cathars and Waldensians held in common an appeal to the early church to justify their views. Matthias Flacius Illyricus in the sixteenth century supposed that Cathars derived from Waldensians who were a part of the church of God.(2) Their simple austere life style which highlighted Catholic luxury and wealth could provoke hostility between the civic community and the church as at Milan where both heresies found popular support.(3) Later Protestant writers were able to class both heresies under the aegis of a simple scriptural refusal of church dogmatism, and think of themselves in hagiographic perspective as inheritors of an underground stream of tradition from them. Whilst under common anathema from Lucius III and Innocent III, it is unlikely however that the two heresies have a common philosophical basis, one arising from extra-mural sources as far as the church is concerned, the other from a more orthodox Christian development, though both had to make a common effort to survive, and it is possible that at the beginning of the fifteenth century Catharism influenced Waldensians in the Savoy Valleys,(4) and anti-heretical writings often connect both groups. In his decree Ad Abolendam (1184) Lucius III

distinguishes between them, and the question of the worthiness of Catholic priests was a live issue between them.(5)

Waldensians, in their appeal to the primitive church used it as an ideal for reform of the existing one whereas Cathars sought to replace it by its own forms and teaching and in this and other early and later variations the former are regarded as heterodox whilst the latter are rejected as heretical.(6) Other main themes on which they were opposed included the unity of God, the nature of creation, the fall of angels, the law of Moses and the final resurrection. Both sects however could be labelled 'rustici' in that illiterate members learned scriptures through hearing them read, but Waldensian animosity towards Catharism remained, especially after some of their own followers were reconciled to Catholicism as the 'Catholic Poor'!(7) Yet as their peculiar tenets emerged, Waldensians and Cathars shared a similar ecclesiology though from different sources.

Cathars, as an elitist ascetic Gnostic group were perhaps the greatest threat to the medieval church, in asserting their superiority. The term Cathar could be used to loosely define a large number of heretics including Bogomils and Patarenses, for it describes a number of allied groups who shared dualistic doctrines, which in the eleventh and twelfth centuries found receptive fertile ground for heretical development in popular belief, absorbing other

ideas and movements in the process. The term which originally described the Christian Novatian heresy was used more precisely for medieval dualism which evolved in the West from early heresies by way of Eastern influences around 1140AD. after which time the Cathar epithet becomes more common.(9)

Those who became Cathar adherents did so not through any common creedal affirmation, but more <sup>by</sup> an intuitive journey made under a variety of names and forms, though Cathars did develop their own body of dogma and liturgy with their own church organisation and rule, using Christian terms in a non-traditional way. In this respect one view describes their ethos as di-theistic rather than dualistic, over against Christian monotheism.(10)

Can Cathars be considered as belonging to the church in any such sense as Illyricus suggests they do ? They may if heresy is considered as arising only within the church, though development from non-Christian influences generally risks expulsion from it. Troeltsch regards the influence of the Gregorian Reform as a point of departure for separation,(11) and those with a restless dissatisfaction with the existing order and who longed for radical change would provide Catharism with a ready following, as abuses in the church provided encouragement for heresy, and Cathars appeared to develop more radically the principles of the Gregorian programme. In Languedoc where noble families resisted the return of lands under the Gregorian demands, Catharism

became reinforcement of their resistance, and the very uncertainty of how to react on the part of ecclesiastical authorities provided a vacuum in which heresy could take hold.(12)

The church's possession of lands and wealth Cathars considered compromise with the devil, and the Roman Church alternatively the mother of fornication,

Babylon the Great  
the sanctuary of the devil,  
the synagogue of Satan,

was seen as the persecutor of the true church, the worldly hierarchy as the instrument of the evil God. Moneta of Cremona describes this as divergence between the Catholic Church and the church of the malignant. According to Cathars a tree is known by its fruits.(13) In 're-Judaistic' terms the Roman Church consists of scribes and pharisees who continue to persecute Jesus and the apostles, so treating the contemporary church as sub-Christian whilst appealing at the same time to some alternative authentic co-identity.(14) Since according to St. Paul the faithful church is weak, scorned and blasphemed etc., but the Roman Church is honoured and wealthy, they cannot be synonymous, neither does the latter accord with primitive baptismal practice.

Whereas the true church is few in number, the Roman Church is worldwide and multiplies offices and orders which supplant the one simple way of salvation, the church of the evil God frustrating the true work of Christ on earth. Since

Catholicism had departed from the standards of the primitive church in Acts, Cathars approved of its spoliation.(15) The Roman clergy as a body constitute a signal failure in evangelical living and sound doctrine, serving the church of Satan, and their pastoral neglect, itself providing an opening for Cathar influence, is criticised by them.

The combatting of Catharism occupied the church for a good part of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In particular St. Bernard in his crusade against Toulousian Cathars whilst not viewing them as Manichaeans, notes their opposition to infant baptism, and remarks on the way they simulate a devout Christian appearance.(16) Innocent III after authorising preaching missions against them initiated an anti-Cathar crusade, which was succeeded in the thirteenth century by Gregory IX's inquisition.

It was not difficult for those opposing Catharism to see in it the marks of ancient heresy. For some it resembled a severe ethical paganism whilst Moneta (supported contemporarily by Congar) sees Arianism at its root since the Cathars speak of the Son and the Holy Spirit as creatures. The title of 'Ariani' was used for a time to refer to Cathars in Languedoc, and also by prelates for Cathars in 1178, as well as by St. Bernard for those he preached against. Such a view does coincide with the Cathar view of Christ who is seen as inferior to the Creator.(17) One anti-Cathar writer describes Cathars as Marcionites.

Cathars certainly resemble Gnostics in attitude and

language, sharing *their* dualism in their secret teaching, though some think their ideas too sacramental for salvation by gnosis. Yet did Cathars have a sacramental view of matter and creation ?(18) If they opposed one church against another might this not be a logical outcome of their dualism in a continuing dualist tradition fundamentally opposing good to evil, spirit and matter as in the Cathar Book of Two Principles? Can any group which speaks of an evil creator God have an adequate sacramentalism ?(19)

In scriptural exegesis they follow Bogomils in transposing earthly events to heaven reflecting their Manichaeian attitude to matter. One medieval poem links them to these heretics combatted by Augustine, but although they shared this world view, the title Manichee may have simply been applied to them to make clear the scale of the threat they posed.(20) Wazo of Liege describes heretics in the twelfth century as Manichaeians who follow Mani and hold secret meetings, as does Eckbert of Schonau who portrays the heretics in Cologne as followers of the heresiarch Mani who on his death split into Mattharians, Catharists and Manichaeians,(21) and Cathar views of the last things follow Manichaeian teaching. Yet although Peter Garcias when accused of Catharism can repeat the view that 'visible things are nothing' conclusive evidence of dependence is sketchy apart from a Bogomil connection.(22)

The inclusion in Cathar writings of a Byzantine doxology and the close resemblance of Cathar answers in their secret

teaching indicates Bogomil influence as does the use of the Interrogatio Johannis from the Bulgarian Bogomils via Bishop Nazarius, Cathar radicals rewriting Bogomilism to explain good and evil.(23) Moore suggests Bogomils influenced the West as a result of their persecution in Byzantium c1143, and via commercial and military contacts. Certainly the Cathar church of Concorrezo was Bogomil influenced.(24) In the latter half of the twelfth century the inquisitor Anselm of Alessandria describes merchants from France and Bosnia deriving heresy from Mani via Constantinople, and of the sixteen Cathar churches found by the inquisitor Sacchoni, at least six appear to have professed Bogomil-related ideas.(25) The Bogomil writing 'Secret Supper' in its dualistic doctrine of creation describes the creation of Adam as the fall of spirits, rejecting the evil world for the good God's invisible one.

Thus the strong relationship between Bogomils and Cathars in the twelfth century indicates a transference of doctrines circulating in areas like Languedoc and which are often regarded as scripture or its correct exegesis, and a Bogomil-derived liturgy which may have affinities with pre-Nicene liturgy, claiming to antedate that of the orthodox Chrysostom.(26)

Bishop Nicetas who presided at the Cathar Council of St. Felix (1167) probably represents a take-over of the Western Bogomil mission by the church of Dragovitsa to ensure its radical dualist view prevailed. Whilst all heretical

movements suffer division, Nicetas' re-heretication of the Cathars marks a fundamental division between two kinds of dualism, Nicetas replacing Bishop Mark of Concorrezo, and with a preference for Byzantine place-names.(27) Such re-consoling of Cathars points to an Achilles heel in Catharism which hinges on the purity of its church order - Petrasius of the Bulgarian church doubts the purity of Nicetas' consolamentum.(28)

Under this influence Catharism is divided into extreme and moderate parties derived from their understanding of evil. The moderate dualists describe evil as attributed to a rebellious archangel whereas the radical extremists believe that evil is an eternal independent entity, though this careful division is a matter of some dispute. Dondaine finds this division supported by separate legitimating hierarchies in the *De Heresi Catharorum Lombardia*.(29) According to him the absolute Drunguthian church believed in two gods and groups of angels, good and bad, the omnipotent God in heaven and the evil god as Lord of this world. Human beings derive from evil spirits created by the Devil and other fallen spirits. Moderate dualists think of Lucifer as the creator God of Genesis who created Adam who murdered the good angel. Old Testament events such as the flood are the work of the Devil. The Cathar Book of Two Principles appears to uphold a radical view against the moderates, the Garatenses, yet this complete division in Catharism is not entirely supported and Loos disputes its appearance in Lombard Catharism,(30)



although the inquisitor Sacchoni relates that whilst Cathars could tolerate minor theological differences there was no possible accommodation between moderate and absolute dualism.(31) It is possible that Bogomil dualism arrived in the West in two forms importing beliefs from Byzantium including free speculation, folk imagination and apocalyptic writings, emphasising esoteric knowledge, and an alternative tradition and succession.(32)

There was however a thin line separating orthodoxy and heresy for Catholic and Cathar spirituality were close in some respects, Cathars who returned to the fold attending mass daily, with the possibility that the rosary was a development deriving from Bogomil influence.(33) External pressures such as Aristotelian philosophy influencing orthodoxy could pressurise Cathars to rethink their teaching. Where a moderate versus dualist emphasis is not so prominent Cathar and Catholic thinking may be close, as in John of Lugio and Desiderius.(34) Cathars could dissimulate under Catholicism since the eucharist could be received hypocritically and Eckbert of Schonau and Caesar of Heisterbach suggest that such dissimulation prompted the introduction of the elevation of the host in the mass affirming the real presence. Gui sees such dissimulation as characteristic of heretics.(35) Durand of Huescia distinguishes Cathars from Jews and Saracens as the latter have not first believed and apostasised whereas the Cathars pretend to belong to the Christian community whilst

distorting the truth.(36) Innocent II relates how the Ban Kulin protects heretics regarding them as orthodox and calling them Christians, reminiscent of an earlier Christian attitude, and St. Bernard describes how when interrogated such heretics seem emphatically Christian, yet if Cathars as part of their profession were unable to lie in any circumstances, allowance must be made for dissimulation.(37) Heresy could demarcate political influences and cultural frontiers, for Cathars outnumbered the orthodox in Milan and Florence, spreading in those areas where courtly love proliferated, affecting troubadours and wandering poets.(38)

By the end of the eleventh century Catharism was found in Upper and Central Italy, France, Flanders, Holland and the Rhineland. Its success may relate to the crisis between town and country in which the orthodox opposition fought for unity and against the dissolution of the church. Catharism, since it was international, had the power to endure independent of personalities, and Cathars were involved in the lives, and related to the fortunes of their local communities, whilst seeking to 'win them for the church'.(39) Cathars were closer to the peasant life than Catholics, the same geographic areas proving receptive to the Reformation, and active in particular occupational categories, for weaving workshops, 'opera textoria' were regular cells of underground heresy.(40)

Who then became a Cathar believer or perfecti ?

In many places Cathars were protected by nobles and the upper classes as in the Provençal, but seem to have had no affinity with any one class. Cathars in Italy declined in prestige towards the end of the thirteenth century.(41) Indifferent to the world, Catharism was indifferent to the state and the ruling classes, but often self-interestedly supported by aristocrats such as Raymond of Toulouse who hindered Innocent III's pursuit of them.

Why so many aristocrats were drawn to Catharism is not easy to explain, though antagonism to Catholicism for varied reasons is one explanation. It may be that the moral and austere life of the Cathars had some appeal, even of a vicarious kind, just as Catholics sometimes viewed monasticism. Certainly aristocratic support made heresy more difficult to eradicate as the Dominican Guillaume Pelhission found with the patrician class of Toulouse.(42)

Catharism was predominantly the faith of an aspiring middle class, finding support among merchants since it tolerated usury. Where there was powerful secular support, inquisitors proved astutely more respectful to Cathars, the question of orthodoxy taking a secondary importance. There were adherents in the family of Raymond Roger, Count of Foix who, as his namesake of Toulouse, was raised in heretical family circles. Tradition, pride, grievances against the clergy, were factors which could further the progress of heresy among local families for generations, and by the mid

thirteenth century there were instances of Cathars and Waldenses within the same family, rooted through three generations.(43) Abels and Harrison indicate how proselytising heresy was rampant among noble families in the Lauragais.(44) By the end of the fourteenth century, Catharism had largely lost its aristocratic support and was left as a residue among the humbler classes.

If such Catharism, especially in pre-crusade Languedoc, provided an alternative church, what kind of church was it?

Cathars regarded their church as the holy Church of Christ.(45) According to one Cathar document found among Waldensian writings, the church is not made by man, or of stone and wood but is a fellowship of devoted saints who have received the consolamentum. Cathars had their own hierarchy, but neither their ecclesiology nor their episcopate are parallels to the orthodox counterparts. In France and Italy with some differences, there was a filius major and filius minor as bishops, with deacons in charge of hospices for the perfecti, and both used the ordination ceremony of the melioramentum.<sup>(a form of laying on of hands)</sup>(46) Their church was a gathering of Christians, a chamber of the Holy Spirit.

In a mid-thirteenth century writing Cathars describe the church as an assembly of the faithful and holy men in which Jesus Christ is and will be until the end of the world, and by its prayer sins are pardoned.(47) This Holy Church of God, the Body of Christ, is composed of righteous

Christians, members of Christ, and it suffers persecution as Christ suffered to redeem the church. The Roman Church persecutes and kills this holy church for

'the Roman Church feels no shame in saying that they are <sup>(themselves)</sup> the sheep and lambs of Christ, and they declare that the wolves are the church of Christ which is persecuted by them..'

These 'sheep' <sup>(the Roman Church)</sup> are so enraged that they beat and kill the 'wolves' <sup>(i.e. the heretics)</sup>,

The church of the good men with its esoteric organisation counters the Roman Church. Each member singly may be called a 'church'.(48)

Western Cathars keep a strong ecclesial structure, though after 1244 this is less clear as their tenets become increasingly confused. Although they dispensed with the Catholic priesthood, they retained the concept of binding and loosing without the penitential system, providing for a more personal piety as an alternative to the institutional church.(49) The Cathar community grouped around the select perfecti who were the real members, distinct from the credentes, but forming an outward and visible church, a body of which the soul was the inward and invisible church.(50) Yet if the perfecti alone are authentic members such a comprehensive visibility is scarcely credible, and the constitution of their 'church' hardly as clear cut. Rainier Sacchoni, an inquisitor formerly a perfecti, was also an ordained minister in the sect which appears to introduce another category.(51)

They regard themselves as the authentic Christian succession, and there seems to be a kind of apostolic succession in the mind of the Cathar Belibasta who believes the twelve apostles descended from heaven with Christ, each giving twelve baskets left over from the feeding of the five thousand to twelve 'carnal' apostles who succeed the twelve spiritual ones.(52) Moneta of Cremona says Cathars regard the people of God as ancient (antiquus), for they do not believe that the holy God creates new spirits and new souls, an appeal to the past linked to their understanding of metempsychosis. One Franciscan polemicist can <sup>even</sup> profess they are successors of the apostles.(53) This belief in apostolic descent may be a Byzantine influence, the Cathar descent of the Ecclesia Benigna divorced from the Ecclesia Maligna of Rome. The true apostolic succession, broken at Rome, continues undisturbed in the Cathar community and is the impetus for its desire for reform, since the perfecti held the place of the apostles as the true successors of Peter whose place Rome had forfeited.(54) There is some authenticity in their claim to underground continuity though the purity of this underground stream is a matter for conjecture.

The heretics of Cologne described by Everwin certainly believed they were of ancient descent, and Gregoire thought it possible that Catharism was a continuing tradition from the fourth century through to the twelfth.(55)

As the 'true' Christians' who hold the faith unadulterated,

whilst like Catholics claiming that there is no salvation outside the church, Cathars reproach them for admitting sinners into their church and reject the Catholic Fathers whilst maintaining their own exclusive genuineness.

Such exclusivity had its own dangers, and was attacked by Eckbert of Schonau in the late 1160's.(56) In the Cathar Book of Two Principles true Christians are enjoined to endure persecution as Christ and the apostles suffered, in true imitation of his passion, enduring with forgiveness the tribulation of the saints for, in the last days true Christians must bear many scandals and trials, twisting St.Paul's words in suggesting that true Christians are like St.Paul who

'according to the way they call heresy..served God my Father..'

and like him are called to endurance.

Yet since according to the Interrogatio Johannis true Christians are needed to do penance to redeem the tragic error in the super-terrestrial sphere, such encouragement is far from orthodox Christian support.(57)

Cathars regard themselves as the true church ever persecuted, a remnant driven from place to place, small groups of true believers. Invited by the Lords of Albi and Lombers to debate with Catholics as to who were the true Christians, Cathars appear to refuse dogmatic argument, preferring to cast stones at Catholic bishops, but then the

ideal of <sup>the</sup> true Christian according to Cathar thought was not ultimately provable from dogma.

In imitating the primitive church, Caesar of Heisterbach comments on how Cathars are accused of outrage as were the first Christians.(58) All is to be tested against this early church ideal, which seems also to inform their idea of sin after the consolamentum being unforgiveable. In this there are similarities in practice to the early Christian catechuminate to which ancient practice Cathars claim they remain faithful, insisting upon instruction before baptism, unlike the Roman Church which has deviated from primitive usages.(59)

The similarity of the Cathar ethos to orthodox monasticism is unmistakable, and their affinity to the Eastern desert fathers has been noted, for to be a good Christian meant to live in compulsory asceticism. Such an ascetic emphasis some regard as the primary Cathar emphasis rather than dualism, and around the time of the Council of Toulouse Cathars adopted the black robe and tonsure of Basilian monks.(60) The differences between Cathars and Catholics were not always apparent, as it was not long since that Catholics regarded monks alone as truly saved, and entered a monastery at death to be buried in monastic habit as perfect Christians, and Cathars were often indistinguishable from Catholic monks and nuns.(61) In this Cathars sought to meet fervent Catholicism with its own ideal of prayer and



asceticism, and at face value perfecti living together could appear as an orthodox Catholic ordo, whilst this world-renouncing element in Catholicism could reversely be viewed as a Cathar trait. Yet such Cathar advantage was countered to some extent with the inception of the mendicant orders.(62) As in orthodox monasticism, Cathar perfecti rejected marriage, additionally refusing to eat meat and other foods.

Ladurie believes Catharism flourished in Southern France in a vacuum left by the lack of monastic reform, Innocent III regarding monks as 'dogs incapable of barking'.(63) In its spiritual heroism Catharism was,

'too negative, too philosophical, too divorced from the peasant's everyday worries to satisfy him in the long run', and 'too ascetic to last long',

and in this

sense its perfectionist ethos may have contributed towards its demise.(64)

As with Novatianists, Cathars emphasise Donatism, possibly derived via Manichaeism. This is particularly clear in the purity they demanded of the ministrant of the consolamentum, but also in their refusal to include both wheat and tares within the church. Although accusing Catholics of impurity, there was also always some slight uncertainty and unease within the outward transmission of Cathar rites themselves for unlike Catholicism there was no objective efficacy in the sacraments.(65) Moneta says that Cathars rejected the sacraments, denying all religious institutions and the whole

order of grace. Whereas Catholics may abstain from marriage for a spiritual end, Cathars reject procreation altogether, being free from the flesh. Their rejection of Catholic ordination and of the hierarchy and the priesthood as pseudo-apostles may derive from Donatist rejection of unworthy priests. Cathars refuse to receive the Fathers and doctors of the Church.(66) All forms of Catholic worship are decried, and pilgrimages and the cult of the saints are rejected, together with tithes and all such responsibilities, undermining the whole religious basis of medieval Catholic society, especially infant baptism which is regarded by them as valueless since water is corrupt and impotent, as is all matter.(67) True baptism is given by the Holy Spirit and fire, Cathars apparently making a distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete.(68) Cathars reject the Old Testament, and regard the eucharist as an illusion, for Cathars do not believe that any substance can be changed into Christ's body and blood.(69) Together with the sacrament, Cathars disapprove of church buildings, preferring the invisible church manifest in an intimate communal gathering, for wherever the church is, God is. All crosses and images are despised in an emphasis drawn from Stephen's speech in Acts. This Holy Catholic Church the assembly of the faithful, links early Christian Hellenism to anti-sacramental dualism. Testimony against one Cathar in 1247 reveals his belief that a church is not a church but, 'a building in which falsity and nonsense are uttered.'(70)

Cathars have ceremonies of their own, in particular the consolamentum, the 'holy baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ', a spiritual baptism of laying on of hands received from the time of the apostles, which was more of an escape mechanism, though similar to Christian baptism in that it was postponed until the candidate approached death, because of its forgiveness of sins. Sacchoni describes the consolamentum as being performed by at least two people, and completing Cathar confession, its effectiveness accomplished by use of the Lord's Prayer.(71) The ritual of the Latin text of the consolamentum states;

'true Christians ..taught by the primitive church actually perform the ministry of the imposition of hands without which we believe no one can be saved..'

true Christians having received power to perform the rite. This Cathar 'baptism' which enables the soul to ascend to heaven, they claim to have kept incorrupt in authentic tradition from Christ and the apostles. Cathars make a pact, 'convenensa', to receive the consolamentum at death. (72)

In place of the Catholic eucharist, Cathars share in a ceremony of blessed bread at which any good man could preside, but as with the Catholic eucharist, this brought damnation if administered unworthily. Sacchoni says that this Cathar 'eucharist' is performed daily, morning and evening. Cathars from Descenzano however believe that material bread cannot receive any blessing since it is matter.(73) *Eberwin relates how Cathars receive the laying on of hands*

to move from auditores to credentes.(74) Cathar practice also rejected Easter in favour of the Manichaeian festival of the Bema.(75)

The Cathar ethos and its rejection of the material was closely related to the doctrine of metempsychosis, that if the soul did not find release through the consolamentum it would be reincarnated in an endless cycle until it eventually found salvation through the Cathar rite.

Their prohibition of certain foods was part of this.

At death the soul descended into hell which was equated with this earthly world from which the Cathar perfect was set free, and from such a point of freedom he felt able to oppose the Catholic hierarchy.

Like other movements Cathars emphasise poverty, related to the demands for a poor church which reflected the needs of the urban poor rather than the wealthy hierarchy's feudal church, an influence they have bequeathed to the Franciscans.

Not all Cathars were anti-intellectual, although many rejected learning in a mystical intuitive spirituality rather than dogmatic teaching - Cohn sees them forming an alliance with magicians and turning to devil-worship, but in this he stands alone.(76) Certainly there are influences in them from the Cabbala, which may have come from Jewish communities in Narbonne, and Cabbalism was popular in Languedoc.(77)

Cathars use scripture in the vernacular, though interpreted

in their own favour to the detriment of the Roman Church. As with the Gnostics and Bogomils, they claim to possess the 'true' meaning or inner illumination of scripture hidden from Catholics, which gives another interpretation behind every text of scripture.

This reading of the Bible is of course independent of the Fathers and tradition, and takes place in intimate lay groups.(78)

Like Origen and other predecessors, they interpret scripture allegorically, and even in the sixteenth century there are still Cathar influences which reject all Christian scripture, including the Old Testament regarded as the work of an inferior God. According to one thirteenth century source, Cathars of the previous century believed that

'all the things recounted in Genesis - namely about the flood, the deliverance of Noah, God's speaking to Abraham, the destruction of Sodom and Gommorah, were done by the Devil who is there called God,'

and is responsible for leading the people of Israel out of Egypt, giving the law, and sending the prophets.(79)

Moneta describes how Cathars interpret the parable of the unforgiving servant allegorically, an interpretation also accorded the Lord's Prayer in which 'supersubstantial bread' is equated with the law, and the words of eucharistic institution 'this is my Body' refers to the spiritual commands of the Old Testament.(80) There is some indication that Cathars used a heterodox Gospel which antedated

Marcion, as such an ancient Egyptian Gospel emphasising the rejection of matter, was found among the Cathars of Albi, a possibly direct link with early Gnosticism.(81) Cathar reinterpretations here included the role of John the Baptist who is portrayed as a false prophet who came baptising with water instead of the Holy Spirit, a malevolent angel whose baptism hindered the mission of Christ. This is how the *De Heresi Catharorum* depicts him in shades of Montanism.(82)

In Sacchoni's thirteenth century *Summa*, Nazarius ascribes to Christ an angelic rather than human nature.(83) Mary too is regarded as an angel, and in one Cathar document preserved by Durand of Huescia she is a corporate figure allied with 'the people of God'. Gui believes some Cathars reject the role of Mary, regarding their own virginal sect as Mary. Moneta's *Summa* confirms her ethereal existence.(84)

Bonacursus describes how Cathars believed Mary to have been born of woman alone without man, and most Cathars deny her role of motherhood, though the *De Heresi Catharorum* recounts that some believed Mary was a true woman and that the Son of God took flesh from her and was crucified in the flesh, but this is not the most prominent Cathar view.(85) Most Cathars look upon Christ as an angelic being like John and Mary, who if he took flesh at all abandoned it on his ascension (as in the *De Heresi Catharorum*). The Concorrezan Cathar Desiderius comes very close to Catholic orthodoxy when he suggests that Christ really took human form like Adam and performed miracles, but here again he discarded his body in the

'terrestrial paradise', where he also places the Virgin, in whose assumption he believes, (as we have seen, itself a doctrine which may originate from Gnostic influence).(86) Orthodox emphasis on the humanity of Christ and its relation to the eucharist during the thirteenth century may have been an intentional corrective to the Cathar emptying of the Incarnation, emphatically uniting creation and redemption and affirming the value and worth of this world and God's act within it. The Crux of the Cathar denial of Catholicism was its Christology, or transposition of it. Christ was considered by many heretics as simply the emissary of the good God, not the unique Son of God of Catholic teaching. Human in appearance, he was not genuinely man, moderate dualists preferring to describe him as an angel.(87) The 'great secret' of the Albigenses is that Christ at his 'birth' brought his flesh down from heaven, not a man, but an angel incarnate. According to Peter of Vaux de Cernay, they believed in two Christs, one who lived in the invisible world, and another who appeared in this.(88) Bossuet regarded this as in line with the idea of the 'invisible Jerusalem'.(89) Mary Magdalene was considered as the concubine of Christ who appearing on this earth belonged to the evil god. Cathar Christology was intimately linked with their ecclesiology.(90)

Christ comes only to save souls seized by Lucifer, freeing imprisoned souls from bodies, neither true God nor true man, inferior to the Father, though there appears to have been

disagreement over whether he had a human soul.(91)

Moneta says that most Cathars did not believe that Christ put on the true flesh of Adam, many denying that he ate or drank. Anselm gives this as the understanding of Bishop Nazarius who believes Christ entered the Virgin by her right ear, a idea clearly derived from the Bogomil Secret Supper (Interrogatio Johannis) which Sacchoni also mentions. Some Cathars regard Jesus as the son of Joseph but not of Mary, even though according her a special place.(92) In the Book of Two Principles Christ is said, in an unorthodox sense, to be 'uncreated' together with the rest of the good angels, and the Interrogatio Johannis suggests that he was pre-existent.(93) The prevailing Cathar view is that Christ is not consubstantial with us, and Moneta describes the difference between some Cathars who believe Christ brought his angelic nature from above, and others who accept he was physically born from the Virgin, which appears to mark their different approximations to Catholic orthodoxy.(94) Since he was not incarnate neither his death nor his resurrection were real or of any soteriological significance, as in the Catholic sense, as all this was appearance and simulation. Sacchoni reports that they celebrate Easter carelessly or not at all, as we have seen, and Nazarius explicitly denied the Resurrection.(95) Bagnolian Cathars describe Christ as only the chief of the aeons whose humanity was an illusion. However close some like Desiderius appear to be to describing an authentic Incarnation, for the majority this



was unnecessary, and related to the divide between creation and the good God. Everything which Catholics see as dependent upon and flowing from the Incarnation Cathars consider illusory. What seems an orthodox interpretation in the Cathar gloss on the Lord's Prayer which ostensibly portrays Christ as a corporate persona, 'a kingdom', is but a minor influence if it relates to the orthodox understanding at all. Some believed that Christ came spiritually existing in the bodies of others, e.g. Paul, possibly an interpretation of the Pauline 'Christ in us', for there are many Pauline passages from which such an understanding could be drawn. Languedoc Cathars can speak of 'Christ with his people already reconciled to God', but again, how Catholic this is, is disputable.(96)

Cathar Christology with a consist<sup>ent</sup> rejection of the unity of the Son of God and the Son of Man could range across a spectrum from Christ as an angel to that of simply a pious preacher. Cathar docetism is confirmed in the rejection of the Roman Church by Peter Garcias in the thirteenth century.(97)

Rejection of creation, and salvation as only applicable to the soul and not the body is clearly reflected in Cathar docetism. Even Desiderius, who at times comes close to orthodoxy, shies from giving eternal significance to the Incarnation thus robbing baptism and eucharist of any significance.(98) Consistent with this, the Cathar 'church'

is a gathering of adepts, not the sacrament of a redeemed world, since any redemption received by them removes the believer from this world into the superterrestrial sphere.

Such an ethos could not survive long, and Cathars decrease and disappear towards the end of the thirteenth century, fading in the fourteenth and fifteenth altogether, although some emphasise an underground continuity towards the Reformation. Stark suggests that the mythological gloom which Cathars inherited from Gnosticism produced in them an existential anxiety which could not meet or fulfil rational aspirations, Manichaeism undermining rational existence and weakening the conviction that life is worth carrying on. Developments within Catholicism both to counter Catharism and to provide an orthodox alternative to them contributed to its downfall, for the Catholic Church had material superiority and affirmed life, however compromised, and Catharism could not equal its intellectual stature nor the way the feudal church had become incarnate in medieval life. The relentless pressure of the Inquisition played its own part in the Cathar decline and fall, though some regard this as necessary pressure extracting an unnecessary sacrifice.(99)

Cathars could only adequately reflect the ecclesiological consequences of their Christology (or anti-Christology) as a secret society, not an open community mediating universal redemption. Ultimately free enquiry was fatal to them and

led to a return to the Catholic Church. Lea sees the secret of their obliteration in the hopelessness and pessimism they engendered, in a faith unlike the simplicity of the Waldenses.(100) Ultimately the Church of the Perfect must be docetic, too good for this world. With the loss of powerful patronage hastening Cathar decline, they existed secretly elsewhere among the poorer classes with what we might described as an over-realised eschatology.

Both ecclesiologically and Christologically, in true docetic fashion, in the Catholic view Cathars are not what they seem to be.

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CHAPTER 5.

MYSTERIUM CHRISTI.

PETER DAMIAN.

In the eleventh century Peter Damian epitomises the pressure towards apostolic poverty, for he regards only those men are fit to preach who lack riches.(1)

He criticises the withdrawal of monasticism from the world, especially Romuald, founder of the Camaldolese who seeks to make the whole world a hermitage, but rather points to every faithful Christian as a microcosm, a 'little church' within the greater.(2)

His growing disdain for luxury is matched by his antipathy to learning within the cloister, as Knowles regards him,

'the first professed enemy of learning in Western Europe.'(3)

Yet although <sup>Damien</sup> could exaggerate in this direction, Leclercq underlines his emphasis on the opposition between school and cloister.(4) Damian assumes this negative viewpoint with regard to the education of the monk who is called to be simply the servant or slave of theology.(5) He takes a low view of those who regard ecclesiastical office as a reward for their ambition, whilst rejecting what he regards as Humbert's Donatism which suggests that bishops who are guilty of simony cannot really receive the episcopate. For Damian, a bishop is still a bishop.(6) In line with this, he responds to popular devotional emphases in believing that Christ looks on the faith and devotion of the laity rather than the sins of the priest.

There are however elements of dualism in Damian since he regards matter as foul in a similar way to the Cathars, and seems only marginally different from them in places, though

not following their view in total rejection of the world and the hierarchy of the church.(7) He looks to the primitive church, suggesting that although martyrdom is now over, attitudes should remain constant, together with Hildebrand urging the clergy to apostolic perfection and imitation of the early church.(8) In his teaching on scripture he exhibits a naive dualism;

'Away with the letter that kills, let the life giving Spirit come to our aid. for the wisdom of the flesh brings death, but that of the Spirit brings life and peace.'(9)

In his contraposition of the letter to the Spirit he is not alone.

He does not however view the Incarnation in the same way, for he revives the devotion to the human Jesus with a particular desire to safeguard the places related to his earthly life.(10) In spite of his Spirit versus flesh antithesis in scripture he still regards the church as a divine/human reality including its aspect of the one and the many, for

'if we look carefully through.....the holy scriptures we will find that one man or woman often represents the church.'

and he can speak of

'holy church in all her members and complete in each of them..' and..'Christ's Body which is the church..'(11)

This is especially so when he speaks of prayers designed for corporate use being used privately. Since the church is the one Body of Christ he regards it as quite consistent to use as the church does, words which apply to the whole church to refer to a single saint, especially with regard to the

Virgin and other saints.

In this he holds a sense of the church's corporate identity, with a realism which his emphasis elsewhere on the spiritual above the visible does little to diminish, whilst sharing many reformist ideals, especially <sup>the</sup> appeal to the primitive church.(12)



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GREGORY VII.

Like Damian, Gregory shows a preference for an a-literalist interpretation of scripture in which he favours allegory, yet it would be a mistake to see this as an implied denial of the earthly reality of the church in his reform, for he authorised the Inquisition which marked the distinction between the eastern and western methods of handling heresy. Together with other proponents of reform he regards the church as under attack from Anti-Christ, and wishes, together with his curial supporters, to renew the ancient church laws, and though with a light regard for ecclesiastical property, seeks to find new sources of income for papal support. The Gregorian reform had much in common with those who found themselves on the opposite side of the orthodox/heretical divide.(1) Gregory's high ideals may have been impossible to realise, giving an unrealistic vision to both clergy and laity and even giving rise to heresy since he thus provided a platform for criticism within the church.(2)

Such great fervour for reform with increased devotion to the saints and the Virgin and in pilgrimages could be carried into excess in the Crusades and in the persecution of heretics.(3)

Contemporaries saw Donatism in the reformed papacy which defined schism, simony, lay investiture and Nicolaitism as heresies for the first time.(4) Gregory's attempt to rid the church of abuses was equally as unsuccessful as Cluny and Citeaux, as in the compromised state of Christendom they were insufficient, for the Reform could not adequately

express the anti-corruption impetus inherited from the peace movement.(5) Interior spirituality became part of the community in the communes, and the laity denounced sharply the shortcomings and failings of the clergy, and in such an anti-clerical milieu,

'in place of an ineffective clergy and invalid sacraments, heretical leaders offered their example and precepts, and the evidence they gave in deed as well as word of their devotion to the apostolic ideal had potent attraction,'

representing a gradual shift from formal clerical office to charismatic leadership.(6) This considerable lay movement held lightly to institutional religion preferring a non-scholastic pure Christianity. In this Troeltsch perceives Donatism going underground in African Christianity to re-emerge in the Gregorian church reform and as the point of departure for medieval sects and revolution in the church, the excited laity being ripe for the influence of an ancient sect.(7)

While Gregory regarded the church as a divine institution, Donatism with regard to the ministry of unworthy priests, an emphasis underlined in separation from secular power, was no longer a tenable position except for heretics.(8)

Gregory's ideal for monastic and canonical life was inspired by the disparity between the humanity and spontaneity of the church in the Acts compared to the elaborate hierarchy of the papacy. In restoring the church to its primitive likeness, particular attention was paid to the monastic ideal in the Cistercian and Carthusian desire for a new austerity. Gregory's regard for the papacy as the

head of the church lent impetus to a later concept of an 'angelic pope' and other mystical elements.(9) The idea of the church as the Body of Christ is quite evident in Gregory's distinction between good and evil powers, and on such an independent identity of Christ with the church Gregory rested his authority in wresting the church from secular power and control.(10)

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Note:

The Patarenses :

From the eleventh century into the twelfth the Patarene movement in Milan sought to break the hold of feudal bishops on the church and set it free for spiritual purposes. Led by Ariald the deacon and the knight Erlembald they sought to restore the primitive church from the worldliness of the present one.(1) Ariald (martyred c.1066) seems to have been a puritan or Judaistic influence, separating men and women in church services. The term Patarini is mentioned for the first time in an interdict on Florence in 1173.(2) Arnolfo says they overthrew the name of truth and the whole ecclesiastical order, allowing themselves to judge other men, though Andrea de Strumi regards Ariald's following as 'fideles' rather than subversives.(3) Landolfo says they killed truth and authority, regarding themselves as the only church.(4) Their rejection of church buildings reflects Paulician and Bogomil ideas, though they appear to have had churches of their own.

Whilst Patarenses flourished mainly among the poor, poverty was also a spiritual ideal and in this Landulf links them

with the Cathars and other movements of lay piety.(5) In their pressure for reform they proved useful to the reform papacy, Erlembald supported by Gregory VII in enforcing clerical celibacy and morality, and Urban II seeking to use Patarene support in a similar way.(6) They held a strong Donatist ethos, regarding only poor and humble clergy as true ministers, and suggesting that Christians shun the deceits which are the sacraments of the majority.(7) In Ariald's teaching, Christ who brings light is contrasted with the pre-Christian blindness into which the Milanese have lapsed, 're-Judaising' the church or treating it as if it is no authentic church at all. Only the true teacher follows Christ in poverty.

Having used the Patarenes for their purposes the papacy evinced little interest in the movement although Alexander III legitimised it.(8) In one thirteenth century debate between a Catholic and a Patarene, the latter denies Christ's humanity in docetic terms and they are accused of Manichaeism, believing all <sup>visible</sup> things to have been created by another God.(9)

Patarenes are an example of how close orthodox and heretical reform movements were. In aiming for a pure church and opposing simony and clerical laxity, they question the



efficacy of the sacraments.(10) They turn theological idealism into political pressure. If they held docetism in any real sense it appears to derive from their high doctrine of the church's spiritual and divine role amid the realities of civic life and political influence.

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ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

At first sight St. Bernard's views on church property seem strangely similar to those of Peter of Bruis and Henry of Lausanne, for he was quite emphatic, especially within his own order, that ornate buildings were a distraction from true worship, in sharp disagreement with Peter of Cluny who regarded such costly ornament as reflecting Christ's glory.(1) This arose largely out of Bernard's concern that religion and ritual should coincide since he believed that heresy arose from its divorce.(2) His denunciation of aspects of the twelfth century church, including his idea that the papacy was meant to succeed Peter, not the power and wealth of Constantine, was more than negative criticism. This dislike of wealthy churches and a wish for Eugenius III's papacy to be more a spiritual than temporal power, reflects his desire for the spiritual and visible aspects of the church to be adequately balanced. He regarded the lax attitude to their duties by some catholic clergy as in a large measure contributory to the success of Catharism. His concern is that since the Christianisation of the empire the world appears to have entered the church, and the Devil frustrated by the failure of open persecution has raised up heretics to attack it from within,

'certain little foxes of urgent necessities cease not to lay it waste, anxieties, suspicions, cares, burst in on it from every quarter',

and these 'little foxes' spoil the vines or vine of Christ. (3) He believes that contemporary heretics are descended from ancient heresies, attracting Christians of

good faith but little knowledge to refuse the ordinances of the church. The common element in these is a Manichaeian denial of creation and <sup>their doctrine of</sup> limited redemption, and the perpetrators of heresy include renegade clerics sitting untensured and bearded among heretic weavers.(4) Bernard regards heresy as innovative doctrine, and believes heretics are to be won back to the church by reason rather than coercion, and are to be judged by the life of love within the church, though they seek to undermine its life by meeting in secrecy as ancient heretics did.(5)

The heretic harms the church as a social entity, damaging the vine, the Body of the church. Bernard opposes heretics so vehemently because he maintains the catholic synthesis between Christ and the church for they deny the corporate persona of the Body of Christ, especially in denying the baptism of infants and the intercession of the saints. Heretics live simply to their own praise, dissimulating under cover of the church's life. Their Gospel is hidden, a secret to be kept from public knowledge whilst they despise the church as dogs and swine.(6) Bernard's view is that the pretended catholic does more damage than a manifest heretic, for they give moral scandal to the church and destroy the soul.(7) Heresies he regards as man-made, <sup>eg. as was</sup> indicated by the manner in which they are named after their different leaders. He reproves their removal of marriage from the church and their revelations ostensibly received from the Holy Spirit.(8)

The church as Christ's Body rejects them as impure, though

they boast that they alone are his Body and apostolic successors, for none can be in the church whilst hiding their light in secrecy.(9) Their condemnation of the hierarchy as sinners rather than successors to the apostles, Bernard regards as foolish opinions of the undiscerning which refuse to be corrected by church authority.(10)

While prepared for martyrdom for their beliefs the heretics lack the constancy of Christian martyrs. Eberwin of Steinfeld in describing the heretics of Cologne to Bernard says they believe themselves to be followers of Christ, true descendants of the apostles living in apostolic poverty, accepting ordinary food and drink as eucharist, baptism by the Spirit alone, and regarding the church as corrupt.(11) Bernard's response is that heretics 'proscribe Christ in people' and take no account of the greatness of the church's faith.

Bernard's view of heretics is to be seen in the light of his understanding of the church. In his sermons on the Song of Songs he speaks of,

'anointing the Lord's whole  
Body which is the church',

and says of our Lord that

'He would not let those spices be used on his dead Body. Was that perhaps because he willed that they should be reserved for use upon the church which is his living Body, fed by the living bread? That is the Body that the Lord wants cherished and anointed and its weak members carefully restored to health..'(12)

He can further speak of Jesus as the one in whom the church is contained.(13) This is also a feature of his

Mariology for he speaks of Mary as,

'living in the shadow of the Body of Christ' for 'the power which overshadowed the Virgin was surely in the flesh of Christ, it was the sheltering shadow of that life-giving Body.'(14)

He regards the temptations Christ suffered as suffered in his Body the church, and heresy poisoning this Body with hypocrisy.(15) He reflects Dionysian 'ladder-theology' in typical Cistercian emphasis in regarding Mary as 'the staircase of Christ', and the church in her being handed to John by Christ from the cross.(16)

For him the church of the elect has always existed in God, and he speaks of it united and incorporated in Christ crucified for

'when ....the church at last appeared and could be seen, she was not found immediately either by men or angels for she was hard to recognise so shadowed was she by the earthly form of man and by the gloom of death...'(17)

This society of the church is divided into distinct orders.(18)

When the King attacks the Bishop of Paris, Bernard likens him to the new Herod who,

'envies Christ reigning in his churches'.(19)

and when the church is hard pressed, it is for Bernard,

'Christ now suffering...who cries to you with the voice of the church'

In this respect Christ suffers and is persecuted in his members because of an improper bishop in the church.(20)

In rejecting the teaching of Abelard he regards him as Nestorius, dividing Christ and excluding his human nature from the Trinity.(21) Other descriptions he uses of the

church include the bride of Christ or the coat of Christ, yet the most consistent description by far is his emphasis on the Body of the Lord as one with his people. In speaking of the wounds of the church he describes Christ being nailed again to the cross, piercing again his side, suggesting that the nails that pierce Christ's hands and feet must also pass through the church's.(22) When Christ learns obedience in his Body it is the church learning obedience, for there is only one Body, head and members, and what the head accomplished is passed on to his members.(23) Bernard follows the early fathers in seeing Christians as 'bone of his bone' with Christ, flesh of his flesh and spirit of his spirit.(24) He interprets Matthew ch. 25 as receiving the Lord of angels in the poor and clothing him in the naked.(25) Pain and injury done to the church are the injuries of Christ, and injuries inflicted upon the apostles afflict every Christian.(26) Christ, being our brother and our flesh, his whole Body is not simply that which was crucified but that which was obtained by his suffering.(27) He says,

'if I speak of Christ and the church, the sense is the same except under the name of the church is specified not one soul only, but many.'(28)

Evans comments;

'Bernard believes that behind every act of the church there is Christ, it is Christ who baptises and consecrates, Christ the bridegroom always present with his church'(29)

This Body of Christ, one flesh with him, is his heritage or the church incarnate, the church in men able to suffer



and perish, and the garments of Christ are the sacraments. In his homilies on the Canticles Bernard speaks of the church as,

'Christ's Body, more dear than the Body he gave to death..' (30)

It is with the visible corporate Body of the church that Bernard is concerned, not just with abstract doctrine. In rejecting Aristotle's and Abelard's approach to theology, he has pastoral needs in view, concerned that men are to live the saving truths. He does not hesitate to suggest that the Pope can exercise physical coercion as well as spiritual censure through the two swords which are his, although only one can be drawn by his hand, the other on his authority.(31)

Reflecting upon the primitive church as being more spiritual before coolness overtook it, just as he looks at Cluny in its former days when the apostles let down their nets for souls and not gold,(32) he expresses a contemporary concern that the monk should not imitate secular clergy or laymen but retain his proper vocation to save his own soul.(33)

There is in Bernard a balanced concern both for the outward welfare of the Body of the Lord and also its inner health and the spiritual union of souls with Christ in love, of which the monastery is to be a microcosm.(34) In opposing with Peter Damian the growing luxury of monastic houses and churches, one is left to wonder what he might have written in later years against some thirteenth

century Cistercians.

In Origenist ethos he speaks of hidden meaning in scripture revealed more perfectly in the soul, but not in the destructive kind of inner versus outer form which it took in some heretical groups.(35) He does see a positive role for reason and learning in theology (36)

Since for Bernard love unites all the faithful in the church, heresy is primarily a failure in love. As Merton summarises it:

'Mystical union with God is arrived at through union with the church, considered not as a juridical Body but above all as a mystical person, the pleroma of the incarnate Word, living by his divine Spirit.'(37)

In the face of the evaporation of both Christology and ecclesiology by groups like the Petrobrusians and Henricians, Bernard maintains a close union between the actual physical life of Christ on earth and in heaven, and the church now, almost a coincidence between the two. Whilst this appears to prevent any ecclesiological docesis, this has to be balanced by his distinction between the union of the natures of God and man in the Incarnation, and the corresponding union in us by love. This could lead ultimately towards a spiritual invisibilist perspective determined by mystical influences,(37) were it not for his other clear emphases on the visible reality of the church's life.

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THE VICTORINES.

The School of St. Victor made an impressive contribution to the life of the twelfth century church. Hugh of St. Victor developed an understanding of scripture according to the three senses, literal historical, allegorical, and tropological. This is not far distant from Origen.(1) Since he was influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius, we might expect to find in Hugh an interest in the deeper meaning behind the letter of scripture, though he criticises the Gregorian tradition for ignoring the letter.(2) The letter of scripture is regarded as sacramental, what mattered was the mystical contemplative sense. For Hugh, the canon may be closed but the limits are still fluid for some writings outside the canon may share in scripture's inspiration, the whole being 'scripture' to his mind.(3)

The church he regards as the Body of Christ into which all are incorporated by baptism as the creation of the Holy Spirit. He shares in the growing tendency towards a Christological definition of the church. This holy catholic church is the Body of Christ vivified by one Spirit, united in faith and sanctified, the number of the faithful, the totality of all Christians. The nature of Christ is found in the Incarnation and the church which is as old as the world, the tree of life from Paradise planted in the church by the Incarnation.(4)

In writing on the matter of the investiture controversy the same inward versus outward aspect from scriptural exegesis appears in the church, for there are two lives, the

corporeal and the heavenly spiritual one which far excels it. In their mysticism Victorines subordinated intellectual activity to mysticism, but this does not lead them to disparage the visible church, though the visible tradition of the church conveys beneath it the true meaning.(5) This is so for Richard of St. Victor, who sees a spiritual meaning beneath the absurdities of the letter.(6) Richard believed that learning could take one so far, but was of limited use, and self-knowledge was for him the key to knowledge of God, and contemplation rises above reason, as does the doctrine of the Trinity.(7)

Such contemplation does not mean the Victorines have no reverence or place for the visible hierarchical church, rather a concentration on the reality that lies within it, and this emphasis is found in Richard's preference for the soul rather than the Body of Christ.(8) Quoting St.Paul's reference to being caught up into the third heaven (2 Cor.12:2) he illustrates that there are things above reason to be held on apostolic authority.

The relationship between the inner and outer was particularly marked in the twelfth century, especially with regard to the nature of man, and a preference for mystical inwardness could not always be held within orthodox bounds as in the Victorines, but served as an encouragement to others to spiritual exploration.(9)



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CHAPTER 6.

IMITATIO CHRISTI

INSPIRATION VERSUS INSTITUTION

In the early medieval period heresy develops in scattered episodes incorporating a spectrum of docetism from naive emphasis on the divinity of Christ which marginalises his humanity to a thoroughgoing rejection of the Incarnation and the value of material forms.

Such rejection appears in Leutard of Cremona influenced by Bogomilism(1) in reactionary heresy which goes hand in hand with developments within the church, seeking to be faithful to the primitive church. With a Catharist puritanical zeal fired by the Holy Spirit, Leutard renounces his wife, and as a result of a miraculous revelation, rejects the Old Testament and demolishes crucifixes, denouncing church buildings and baptism. His local Bishop, Ralph the Bald regards him as a lunatic become heretic.(2) This same Bogomil disregard appears among the heretics led by Gandolfo in Arras and Liege who reject the same ecclesiastical institutions regarding baptism as inferior to a kind of vita apostolica of those living according to the New Testament.(3) Instances of a 'dark penumbra' of dissent are evidence of a minority claiming divine authority in rejecting the church for a more simple and authentic Christian life more austere and faithful to scripture, in their own groups, often supported by clergy. In resolving to restore the primitive church as it was before <sup>becoming</sup> corrupted by feudal patronage scripture is opposed to tradition; this reflective view is often combined with the eager prospect of the coming kingdom of God. This search for individual and corporate

perfection is found in both orthodox and heretic reformists following the Gregorian impetus, with cognate transition from one to the other, especially in relation to orthodox redefinition.(4) In a spirituality which assumed direct contact with God, leaders such as Ramihrdus criticised clergy and in true Donatist spirit boycotted masses celebrated by unworthy priests.(5) Under<sup>ke</sup> leadership of Peter of Bruis, Arnold of Brescia and Hugo Speroni, followers disregarded the established church seeking the same kind of poverty and purity in secular life as that which inspired monastic reform, resulting in ecclesiolae which rejected ordination for the priesthood of all believers, and distorted sacramental teaching as in the sect at Trier who demanded a second baptism, or denigrating all churches and visible means of grace as in the mystic Manichaeian pantheism such as that found among the 'men of intelligence' led by Giles Cantor. Others like Thomas of Apuleia move from such rejection to a form of apotheosis and illumination beyond that of scripture and the Fathers.(6)

Among one such group Paul of Chartres tells of the noble Arefast who acting as an ecclesiastical agent discovered a charismatic heresy in Orleans practising the laying on of hands and rejecting the priesthood and the role of the Virgin Mary. Under protection of the Holy Spirit they expect to survive the stake. As Paul reports, they reject orthodox Christology for a type of docetism for

'they said that Christ was not born of the Virgin, nor

did he suffer for men, nor was he truly laid in the tomb, nor did he rise from the dead.'

denying the events of Christ's <sup>life</sup> before the Bishop of Beauvais since,

'we were not there and we cannot believe this to be true'.(8)

Scripture they regard as fictional, and their concluding speech is remarkably similar to Stephen's speech in Acts, their docetic Christology the foundation for the rejection of all outward tradition, preferring the inward book written in the heart.(9)

During the twelfth century unauthorised preachers considered as heretics, together with teachers of heterodox doctrine who Gratian describes as understanding scripture in a different sense to that of the Holy Spirit by whom it was written, seek to replace the corrupt church by a more authentic one, considering every heresy as derived from more ancient precursors.

In this he follows Rupert of Deutz who thought heresy invaded the church in the second century and describes John writing his Gospel to counteract docetism in Marcion, Cerinthus and 'Ebion' who stained the simplicity of the faith, <sup>Rupert</sup> no doubt supporting contemporary apologetic.

Excess of belief as well as deviation could lead into heresy, the orthodox/heretical demarcation sharpened by Grosseteste's definition;

'an opinion by human faculties contrary to sacred scripture openly held and pertinaciously defended,'

as orthodox dogma became systematised. Janet Nelson points out how obedience related to the vision of God was crucial in the monastic influence upon heresy.(11) The stimulus of the twelfth century Reform encouraged increased estimation of the early church and apostolic life, and where this marked a glaring disparity with the contemporary institution, attention turned to a true poor church of the poor, such idealism rejecting ecclesiasticism for pious innovation. Such dissatisfaction could also provide substitution in dogma, often a docetic Christology.(12) Yet those who formed alternative groups did not regard themselves as having left the church (a very contemporary 'Lefevbrian' echo) but rather the church as having seceded from its vocation, and from them, appealing beyond the present to an authentic church of Christ, and to a deeper and more spiritual life than the compromised catholic church could offer.

Such reformism in Arnold of Brescia pressurises the clergy to be more aware of their spiritual role. One twelfth century poet speaks of him attacking priests, regarding himself alone as righteous, and others as errant in not following him. He,

'mingled true with false and was  
pleasing to many',

using scripture as a weapon against the  
church, and was associated with the intellectual 'heretic'  
Abelard.(13) In Arnold's development towards mystical  
dualism the independent power which Gregory VII sought for



the church he regards as corrupt, although within this tension Russell sees Christology seeking perfect replication in ecclesiology.(14)

Arnold's emphasis on asceticism and rejection of church ordinances, and clergy as scribes and pharisees, resembles Catharism, and a demand for 'reJudaising' the church, together with the Donatism found in earlier sects and later Waldenses.

Autotheism again appears in Eudo of Brittany who regards himself as a new Christ, and through a misconceived translation of the Lord's Prayer regards all prayer to God as made through him, and in forming a new church he attacks church buildings. His thinking seems to derive from Gnostic dualist sources and in puritan iconoclastic Donatism regards the ministrations of catholic clergy as lacking, and in rejecting apostolic succession regards himself as inspired, demanding that all monks should imitate him as Christ.(15) His charismatic idiosyncrasy not only rejects all material aids, but emphasises the believer becoming Christ's equal as the Spirit descends upon him as upon Christ at his baptism.(16)

Such possession of, or by, the Spirit is marked in Tanchelm who dominated the religious life of Antwerp, driving orthodox clergy from their churches in rejection of them and all church buildings as brothels, with an indulgent Gnostic libertinism. In this he may be an example of disappointed reformism slipping into Donatism in shades of Valentinus.(17) The threat of his preaching

and his cult forced orthodox inhabitants to hide the eucharist. A contemporary accusation says,

'he opened his mouth against heaven and the sacraments of the church and dared to revive a heresy once silenced by the decrees of the holy Fathers', for he holds that, 'the church consisted only of himself and his followers like the Donatist heretics who argued that the church only existed in Africa, he sought to limit the church to the Tanchelmites alone..' (18)

What is clear from the canons' criticism is that his ecclesiological error derives from his Christology, for

'he declared that if Christ is God because he has received the Holy Spirit, he himself was no less God in exactly the same way inasmuch as he had received the fullness of the Holy Spirit.' (19)

He may have some idea of the Virgin Mary as representing the church.

As an example of the heresiarch venerated as a saint or as Christ himself, his Christological heresy became socially divisive as well as ecclesiastically destructive.

Peter of Bruis similarly denounces churches as useless and an abomination, the visible church being only a docetic distraction. Peter the Venerable reports him teaching,

'that construction of temples or churches ought not to be undertaken, moreover if built they should be torn down; nor are holy places necessary to Christians for prayer, since God hears as well when invoked in a tavern as a church, in a market place as a temple or before an altar, or in a stable, and he hearkens to those who are worthy..' (20)

In such Donatism emphasising a true spiritual church Petrobrusians forced monks to marry and to eat meat on Good Friday, whilst rejecting the Old Testament, the Fathers and infant baptism, and in their view of the eucharist insisted that transubstantiation took place only

once at the Last Supper. They argued that since God is everywhere, the true church is where two or three are gathered, promoting iconoclasm and anti-clericalism in the name of true spiritual fellowship, which interpreted the Gospel more faithfully than others.(21) His Christology inclined to docetism, consistent with his attitude towards the material,(22) and he was followed in this by Henry who calls the people of Le Mans to boycott churches. Emphasising the right of the individual to interpret scripture irrespective of the Fathers his excessive reformism leads him to regard the apostles as erroneous since the riches of God's grace and mercy are only available to his followers. His debate with the monk William(1133-5) reveals his Donatist emphases with its associated rejection of Roman ordinances and institutions in favour of his own God-given mission of apostolic simplicity and scriptural obedience.(23) As a neo-Christ he is preceded by two disciples to announce his arrival at Bethphage.(24)

It was reported to the Council of Pisa in 1135 that Henry emptied churches of the faithful to create his own sect.(25), and St. Bernard of Clairvaux heavily castigated his heretical idealism as responsible for,

'churches without congregations, congregations without priests, priests without due reverence, and worst of all Christians without Christ'(26)

He holds Henry responsible for churches being regarded as synagogues, without sanctity, and sacraments and feast days despised and neglected, the voice of the heretic

silencing the prophets and apostles, and suspecting him of Arian denial of the Trinity.

Desire for holiness under the impulse for reform taken to excess could in its rejection of material form lose the church in a morass of prophetic individualism, either with docetism as its basis or its Christological consequence.

The consistent re-Judaizing element betraying Ebionite interest is found also in the Passagians who teach an Adoptionist Christology which regards Christ as inferior to the Father and resembles Arianism, and seeks a return to the Mosaic law, criticising the Roman Church and Fathers from the New Testament and the prophets. In their Old Testament interpretation of the 'strange fire' offered by Nadab and Abihu they suggest that

'they offer a strange fire....who spurn the traditions of God, yearn for strange doctrines and introduce the rule of human institution.'(27)

Ecclesiastical rules are to be destroyed as the 'precepts and doctrines of men' of Isaiah. Ecclesiastical institutions do not all derive from Christ, for as they aver in interpreting the story of Jonah,

'by the same token men of our day while observing the institutions of the church which are traditions of men, put aside the commandments of God'(28)

Since Christ came to complete the law, nothing is to be added to it, so that all ecclesiastical institutions are unnecessary for these are not the works of Christ. Obsession with the Jewish law seems to have led them to

disparage any development within the Christian tradition in a fundamentalism which returned the church from grace to law, and which regarded the New Testament as supplemental to the Old rather than its fulfilment. Their literalism left both any ecclesiology and Christology of the movement sterile.

In his letter to St. Bernard of 1143 Eberwin (Evervinus) describes heretics of Cologne who believe they alone are the church, the true poor followers of Christ, over against Catholic false apostles. They consider ordinary food and drink as eucharist, rejecting marriage and infant baptism for baptism of the Spirit which creates the elect. Eckbert of Schonau describes them as considering themselves as baptised by Christ himself. They despise the mass and regard the priesthood as now invalid, rejecting the sacraments and traditions of men.(29) They regard their own flesh as the Body of the Lord but this is rather eucharistic antagonism than somatic ecclesiology, <sup>their being</sup> a view Eckbert <sup>opposes</sup> by linking the eucharist closely to Christology. They celebrate an annual Manichaean festival, though they may communicate at Easter to dissimulate, <sup>creating a false impression of orthodoxy,</sup> One witness affirms their docetic Christology, an error Eckbert attributes to Mani.(30) This Cathar type heresy reflects a similar negative docetic ecclesiology, maintaining a 're-Judaising' ideal which wants to be authentically apostolic but denies the direction in which this has taken form within history.

Similar attitudes are found in Hugo Speroni, disciple of Arnold of Brescia, in whom the emphasis on poverty became heretical. Since he regarded the church as rich and idolatrous he believed the disciples of Christ to be justified by desire alone and interiorised all dogma, emphasising interior baptism and spiritual communion, rejecting the establishment and priesthood as an obstacle to true religion, since the true faith derived from God and the apostles exists solely in the Speronists who are Donatist towards both dogma and priests.(31) Such lay piety undertook individualistic exegesis of the Gospel, sharing a common pantheism, regarding the body of the faithful as those who simply imitated Jesus, <sup>rather</sup> than those in communion with Rome. Salvation was viewed as a psychological experience, and the labourer who knew the truth intuitively could often be equated with Christ.

Those who pressed for a higher standard of Christian life could still enter the monastic life, though as this was increasingly no longer regarded as the perfect way, lay people demanded a greater independence, and whether their fraternities remained within the bounds of orthodoxy depended on a shifting divide.(32)

Almaricians and Ortliebians also held pantheistic views in their teaching derived from Joachim of Fiore. As part of the Free Spirit movement they regarded God as being incarnate in Abraham, and the Son incarnate in Christ and the Spirit incarnate in them giving them perfect freedom to discard dogma and ecclesiastical orders, following a

NeoPlatonist view as found in John Scotus, in which only those joined in living membership to Christ were saved. Following Beghard manners and ideals, Ortliebian spirituals held that those filled with the Holy Spirit were sinless and could disregard the church and sacraments, since the Body of the Lord was everywhere and could be venerated in everyday bread.(33) In denying Christ's Incarnation they speak of their members as each an incarnation surpassing his, Christology lost in a mystical pantheism with an appeal beyond the church and the Christian economy altogether.(34).

Donatism is also alive and well in Ramihrdus and Lambert le Begue during the twelfth century in a radical anti-clerical reformism.(35)

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DEVOTION AND DISCIPLESHIP.

Both papal reformers and orthodox movements as well as heterodox communities in the middle ages sought historical continuity and the recovery of primitive ideals in the present, and in regarding the contemporary church as in decline largely due to the Donation of Constantine, caused a break with the apostolic archetype and with the Augustinian conception of it as the visible expression of God's saving will on earth.(1) This new historical critical attitude presupposed a break with the past which since the time of Charlemagne, or before in the East, regarded church and state as a single entity, one society. Yet this did not account for the more spiritually adventurous who joined sectarian movements disregarding the church for their own more authentic life, and contrasting the present hierarchy with the early church, <sup>and</sup> highlighting <sup>this hierarchy's</sup> failings with a sense of betrayal, <sup>Such sectarians were</sup> resentful of the extremes which the medieval church could embrace. The one society of the church fragmented, and under divisions furthered by clerical celibacy and aristocratic domination <sup>lost</sup> its spiritual vitality, <sup>these divisions</sup> leaving <sup>the church</sup> concerned with forms and structures.(2)

The Cistercian emphasis brought a new sense of service to the twelfth century church faced with problems of schism and heresy, emphasising a Pauline ideal and Augustinian influence which continued into the next century.

Matthew sees the twelfth and thirteenth century church repudiating its immediate past to build anew. There was no one single doctrine of the church and the religion of

clergy and laity developed on their own levels, often in separation.(3) Despite the ideal of one society, real 'spiritual' religion often set 'true' Christianity as a higher claim above that of the state, in both orthodoxy and heterodoxy.(4)

Pressure for reform emerged strongly from groups of Humiliati appealing to apostolic simplicity, poverty and evangelism. Such groups reflected economic changes in society attracting aristocratic patronage often of ulterior motivation, and suspect in that Humiliati were accused of subverting church order. Aspects of this urban lay piety were often coincident with elements of Catharism.

Drawn primarily from industrial workers they sought independent ecclesiastical recognition similar to Waldenses, and although Alexander III forbade their secret meetings, and anathematised by successive popes, they gained the status of an order under Innocent III in 1202 with cloistered, lay and tertiary elements. In the Catholic inclusivism in which Innocent tried to retain them they sought to live like the heretics but preach orthodox doctrine.(5) Such a defence against the Cathars provoked clerical hostility, and Innocent warns of the precipitate danger of devotion becoming heresy, and it was largely through the efforts of Dominic that Durand of Huescia and the Poor Catholics remained in the fold, although heretical Waldenses appear to have infiltrated them. In his Confession Durand avows an orthodox Christology and ecclesiology, repudiating Donatism in following the poor Christ.(6)

Humiliati and Poor Catholic ideals straddle the orthodox/heretical divide, their preoccupations often shared by papal reformers.(7)

Orthodox defence against heretics by copying their asceticism was one purpose of the mendicant orders, especially in Languedoc. With the Gospel as their sole rule, they could appropriate lay enthusiasm within tertiary provision in <sup>'kind orders' in</sup> which Beguines and Beghards were absorbed after the Council of Vienne, although there was the danger that all lay people would seem to be made monastics by this process. Within this there was a new emphasis on literal imitation of Christ which had its corollary in emphasising visible devotions.(8)

Franciscans form a blend of dissent and conformity, often mistaken for heretics although Francis was canonised as the church's obedient son. Franciscanism was to become the source of new heresies especially in the thirteenth century dispute between spirituals and conventuals.(9)

Francis' imitation of Christ who is poor, Christ the Beggar in his life and suffering, including an emphasis on the sanctity of creation, provided an antidote to Cathar docetism and Gnosticism for Christ received

'the flesh of our humanity and frailty'..(10)

Francis' ideal is the church before Constantine and Sylvester, yet he can still adhere to the ecclesiastical order of his day and also reflects the medieval definition of the church in terms of Mary, 'the Virgin made

church.'(11) Ozment however regards his emphasis as ultimately destructive of the church as an institution, even though his ideal of the pure church prevents the church becoming indistinguishable from the world around it. The perfect norm of Christ's poverty which Clare regards as almost sacramental develops into a specific Franciscan problem, and Francis does have an anti-learning idealism which regards learning as detracting from God.(12)

The *Imitatio Christi* which was epitomised in Francis' stigmata was emphasised among Dominicans in their apostolic preaching and life style, imitating the apostles in everything.(13) Humbert of Romans underlines the necessity for charitable work which must outdo the Cathar perfecti in zeal, and their responsibility for preaching in which they are the Lord's mouth and feet. Increasing recognition brought Dominicans their inquisitorial duty which invented new heresies as a by-product.

Dominic is regarded as having acquired the fullness of sacred scripture and the very heart of the understanding of God 's words in a 'hidden intimacy with the Holy Spirit to understand hidden things'.(14)

Yet both Franciscans and Dominicans operated within the Catholic framework, an indication that a return to primitive times beyond all subsequent development was not possible. Unlike the heretical movements of their time (until Franciscanism developed in an heretical direction), they did not regard their task as making the whole Christian world Franciscan or Dominican.



Neo-monastic piety from the twelfth century found an expression in the Beghards and Beguines in reaction to simony and clerical marriage, straddling the orthodox/heretical divide with a sacramental emphasis in simple flexible communities loosely affiliated to the church, a kind of lay order with no uniform organisation.(15) The Beguinage provided a religious outlet for women which had hitherto been more feasible in Catharism or Waldensianism. In textile communities in the Rhine valley and the low countries they opened poor houses and schools. Similar to the Fraticelli in background and tendencies, Gerson regards them as deceived through too great a desire for the sweetness of God, mistaking the delirium of their hearts for divine promptings which could lead them to disdain church services in professing a piety superior to monks. In this they distinctively murmur their prayers, the most perfect not praying orally at all.(16) The Beguinage offered a simple prayerful way of life which had an affinity with Cistercians, and probably was absorbed under the aegis of the third orders by which they avoided inquisitorial suspicion, often appearing as orthodox communities of nuns.(17) Towards the end of the thirteenth century Beguines were even permitted their own church, cemetery, and pastor and a Dominican prioress as patron. According to Gui they opposed the virginal spiritual church to the carnal, and he regards them as reducing the church to a remnant, the twelve apostles upon whom the Spirit is outpoured, and suggests they use the word 'church'

misleadingly. In thus rejecting the Roman Church he sees them rejecting the church in much the same way as the synagogue rejected Christ (or as Christ superseded the synagogue).(18) This re-Judaizing continues in their perspective in which just as the Jews persecuted Christ so the carnal church now persecutes the life of Christ in Franciscans and Spirituans. Gui regards them as Donatist in believing that the hierarchy have lost sacramental power and the pope <sup>has lost</sup> authority, the carnal church being stained with martyrs' blood. One Beghard at least suspects he has been baptised by Pharisees. Such negation of the visible economy of the church regards poverty as in the Spirituans as the determining mark of the true church of the poor, transferring authority from the visible church and its imperial theology in the papacy to the spiritual inner church which rejects the outer carnal one.(19) Such a shift involves a move in Christological perspective too. This is evident in the appeal not only to a poor Christ, but in the Beguine view that Olivi is the new Christ almost as a focal substitute for the visible ecclesiology they disregard as compromised. Gui says they treated Olivi's writings as a revelation from God, regarding him as true and catholic, and his teaching, as the greatest doctor of the church since St. Paul, derived directly from Christ, in which the Rule of St. Francis is the new Gospel. Beguines could dissimulate within Catholicism by taking oaths and sacraments which could be expiated afterwards.(20) They retained a eucharistic ethos reflecting an emphasis on Christ's

humanity although Free Spirit influences prevented any close correlation of this to the corporate nature of the church.(21)

Some see no heresy in them but rather <sup>accuse them of</sup> making church life difficult in upsetting established order in so closely following the orthodox/heretical borderline. Lea poses the Inquisition's dilemma - how to distinguish pious Beguines from heretics with the mixed views which they held.(22)

Experience exalted over order enabled them to believe themselves to be the apostles and so reject learning, for

'on the day of judgement...a simple Beguine may be able to show more assurance than learned theologians or magistrates.'

and

'a layman unlettered but illumined...was more capable of attaining perfection and causing others to advance in this direction than the priest who was most learned and best versed in scripture..' (23)

Grosseteste regarded their form of life <sup>as</sup> most holy and religious.(24)

The Beguine idolisation of the Franciscan ideal regarding this as the most perfect Christian state, set up the Rule of St. Francis as the measure by which to judge the Gospel and true poverty. Yet the most simplistic heresy (like orthodoxy) must develop and in the Beguine movement this moved in a direction from simple poverty to Free Spirit speculation, looking for new ideas and spiritual experiences. Vandenbroucke sees latent pantheism in them.(25) This shift in emphasis from following Christ who is poor to Christ in us in spiritual self-identification,

Christ incarnate in us rather than the orthodox corporate Body of Christ, marks the discrepancy in Christology found in Beghard beliefs, which may show influences of Catharism. Reaching a state of perfection on earth dispensed with any kind of ecclesiology or mediation. Bynum gives an example of how even eucharistic devotion could turn to personal incarnationalism.(26)

According to Gui, persecution of Beguines is regarded by them as another crucifixion of the life of Christ, and such identification is carried further in Hadewijch who regards the soul as sharing in the annunciation, nativity and flight to Egypt since it lives in Christ's humanity.

Such self-identification could lead to the belief that the believing Beguine was even more perfect than Christ, becoming more than his equal in piety.(27) This kind of Dionysian desire to leave all forms and ascend with, even beyond Christ to heights of devotion, entailed not only Christological supersession but ecclesiological dissolution. This is the case in the Beguine Marguerite Poirette whose speculations remained just within the bounds of orthodoxy from Gnostic temptation. Her subjective religiosity tended toward autotheism influenced by Dionysian elements and also William of St. Thierry and St. Bernard.(28) In her esoteric teaching reason is rejected, for understanding is

'a gift from the Almighty in whom all knowing leads to loss of understanding.'

She regards as heretics those who seek to reach God by natural intelligence, since God enlightens those who forsake

reason, and she has nothing to say to those who live rationally in 'holy church the little'. She contrasts two churches, the lesser holy church the little which depends on the voice of reason and book learning and holy church the great, which is ruled by love in a higher form of life. The members of the latter need no intermediaries such as masses, sermons, fasts or works, being a community of liberated souls. Holy church the little cannot survive long, and it is debatable how far Marguerite tolerated any institutional church at all.(29) Under Free Spirit influences she regards the deified soul as beyond ordinances, yet far from any deprecation of the eucharist she emphasises Beguine devotion to it with Christological emphasis, for God's

'divine nature sets him above everything but he has glorified our humanity uniting it to the person of the Son who is in heaven glorified, and apart from there only in the Blessed Sacrament. So when Christians receive the sacrament they receive the humanity and divinity of Christ. We know through faith how truly we receive the humanity.'(30)

She believes that the host becomes Christ himself. Yet God is not bound by his sacraments for he is everywhere.

Marguerite's two churches can be seen as two stages of belief contrasting theology with experiential spirituality, although if it were not for the Beguine devotion to the eucharist we might not find the Incarnation at all in her teaching; ecclesiology appears to be reduced to a form of sacramental piety.

A similar emphasis from Franciscan spiritual influences is found in Prous Boneta who believed herself to be the spiritual Mary, the abode of the Trinity and giver of the

Holy Spirit to the world. Chosen to redeem mankind, she ascended to heaven for an interview with Christ. On Holy Thursday 1321 he communicated the Spirit to her as completely as it had been given to the Virgin. Her Confession, the result of a revelation in 1325 is a strange mixture of Catharism and Joachimism, the Holy Spirit becoming incarnate and undergoing passion and death to inaugurate a new era.(31) This second crucifixion would be the condemnation of Olivi's works and the persecution of Prou's herself. No more souls would be saved until the Holy Spirit (Olivi), had undergone his passion and death. Her Christology appears orthodox when she speaks of Christ's suffering, passion and death in the flesh to redeem man, were it not for the role she insists on giving Olivi and St. Francis by placing them as close to the heart of redemptive activity as she can.

She holds a clear perfectionist Donatist stance believing that the sacraments have been lost under John XXII.(32)

Many Beguines were influenced by Free Spirit ideas, and it was not difficult for orthodox commentators to see in them a revival of ancient heresies. Such ideas seem to exhibit a temperament rather than any set doctrines, some like the Amalricians dependent upon the vision of Joachim of Fiore and rejecting all ordinances and means of grace, together with the priesthood, in their perfectionist ideal of a true apostolic life, the Holy Spirit giving an intimate inner identity between God and the soul. Claiming greater illumination than the apostles they reject any idea of

*in favour of*  
ecclesial life ... a deification of the believer upon earth. They hold many ideas found in earlier Gnostics including a division similar to that of elect and believers.(33) Poverty is regarded as holy, and the holy ones as perfecti, sinless, mystical union producing an antinomian ethos in which all things were permissible to them. Rejecting all visible continuity with the church they prefigure Lollards in their disdain for church buildings.

Their anti-intellectual attitude echoes a NeoPlatonic emphasis and the Plotinian teaching of the soul absorbed into the One, in which every creature becomes God.(34)

In this state the Free Spirit adept can freely interpret scripture, the Spirit's illumination replacing the teaching of the saints and Fathers. Since scripture contains only poetic passages, if it were destroyed adepts could produce better <sup>and more authentic</sup> scripture in its place, since the letter only kills. Such inspiration enables adherents to understand scripture as even the apostles were unable to do.(35) Similarly with regard to the eucharist, any layman could consecrate and any bread would suffice, although reverence for the sacrament or the passion of Christ was regarded by them as a sign of heretical imperfection, since they had direct access to God. Leff regards them as not claiming to be the church but its most perfect member, with the idea of the two contrasted churches. Subjective experiential appeal superseded the visible church as an outmoded institution, and with its evaporation, Christology faded too, since the free spirit equated himself with the Church and was superior to Christ,

the Virgin and the saints. In such pantheism all significance of Christ's person was lost.(36) Self deification rejected historicity for immediacy. Although Christology and ecclesiology seem to have been united in negative way, *they were* lifted out of ~~the~~ corporate and orthodox Christological context into the light of imagination and eccentricity.(37)



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CHRIST IN US.



Imitation of Christ was the predominant motive of the Apostolic Brethren in the thirteenth century in their devotion to poverty and claim to immediate divine inspiration. Their leader Gerard of Segarelli wore a version of the Franciscan habit, and dramatically passed through all the ages of Christ (echoing Irenaeus), and was succeeded in this left wing movement by Fra Dolcino, possibly a disciple of Almaric, proclaiming a church of the Holy Spirit in which the power of Christ is his and the present dispensation superseded in his anti-clerical prophecies. A similar group are found in Modena and Reggio led by Salimbene.(1)

The Brethren regard the perfection and poverty of the primitive church as theirs in their present spiritual congregation. They attracted dissident peasantry, and regard all opposition as of the devil who persecuted the true church. Expecting the destruction of the hierarchy in 1305, the faithful will hide escaping persecution, emerging to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit together with other spirituals, but meanwhile they dissimulate keeping outward forms of devotion with an antinomian element. All external obedience is disregarded for that of the Spirit, ignoring papal condemnation and ban.(2)

For all their rejection of the institutional church they retain their own historicism, believing that from Christ to the end of the world the church will undergo four changes; the first up until Constantine, at which time Peter Lucensus, an apostle, believes sanctity disappeared with the Donation, leaving the double church of the spiritual and

carnal. Eventually the Roman Church's evil power will yield to a new spiritual church, all power from Christ given through Peter now devolving upon the sect, and the church led back to perfection as it was when originally entrusted to him. In their esoteric teaching they reject churches, dogmas and oaths.(3)

Their biblical selectivity read history through apocalyptic in a mixture of Catharism, and Franciscan Joachimism.

A similar emphasis occurred in Guglielma of Milan in the mid thirteenth century who regarded herself as the female incarnation of the Holy Spirit, as Christ was the incarnate second person of the Trinity. As such she suffered with him in the Passion, bearing the same flesh.(4)

Her devotees thought that if she had been incarnate as a man she would have been crucified as Christ and the world have perished. In a kind of Montanism redivivus the third age had arrived in her, with a new scripture and a female Pope and Cardinals. Drawing on the Joachimite Eternal Gospel, a cult centred on her tomb at Chiaravalle, from which she prophesied, and her followers expected, she would rise as neo-Christ and send the Spirit upon them in tongues of flame. Indulgences, ostensibly given for visiting her tomb, were regarded as equivalent to those available from the Holy Sepulchre. One woman follower, Manfrede, celebrated mass at the shrine, and hosts were consecrated by contact with the tomb. Her followers regarded all true authority as having deserted the papacy.(5)

Mystical union in Montanist form replaced the Christian

economy altogether in a union of Christ or the Spirit with the prophetess, dispensing with the visible church.

Mysticism was a source of mainstream dissent which straddled the orthodox/heretical divide in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with a tendency to diminish the importance of the visible institution of the church and its ordinances. Whilst Franciscan concepts could remain emphatically Christocentric, many strained the relationship with theology, the mind antithetical to the heart. Mysticism appeared to the poverty movement what monasticism had been to martyrdom in the early centuries.(6) Whilst orthodox mysticism retained the humanity of the mystic, others regarded humanity as deified and lost in God, and anti-intellectualist elements under Dionysian and Hesychast influence rejected learning for intuition.(7) This could lead to rejection of scripture as mere ink on parchment and the bypassing of church and sacraments, immediate communion with God subverting tradition.

Such inward versus outward conflict contrasted the outward visible form of Christ with the inward soul which revealed the invisible Truth that letters words and forms could not convey, and this often led to claims of direct ordination or authorisation of the mystic by God.(8)

Such an emphasis is found markedly in Joachim of Fiore whose writings were later used by Protestant polemicists.

His millenarian church of three ages corresponding to the

Trinity ends its first stage with Constantine and counts fourteen generations in the second, followed by the age of the Spirit in which he regards all institutions as superseded with a new generation of spiritual friars.(9)

Transposing the things of earth to heaven, Joachim propagates an Eternal Gospel to replace scripture, superseding the letter of the second age in an inner meaning linked to his Trinitarian understanding of history, illuminism replacing exegesis. His new church of spiritual men displaced the establishment, subverting faith in the visible order, regarding this as a temporary phase to be prophetically replaced in a greater spiritual fulfilment, until when the true church ever suffers persecution.(10)

There is evidence in Joachim of some connection between Christ and the church, for the work of Christ in his mystical Body is to be completed in the third age.

His Christology in a Modalist Monarchian perspective within a Sabellian view of the Trinity, finds the qualitative difference between Christ and his predecessors reflected in the superiority of the new monks over the clergy.

Although elements of his teaching could be interpreted as all things fulfilled in Christ this is more likely to be prophetic supersession of the Incarnation, since his understanding of this is relative.(11)

His ecclesiology emphasises the place of Anti-Christ, and the church as a remnant of the faithful, with a consequent 're-Judaising' of the present church and a kind of Gnostic mirror image. Joachim's attempt to empty eternity into time

in his pursuit of the angelic life now, in a spiritual elect, finds its lasting influence among the Spiritual Franciscans.(12)

As the Franciscan movement expanded so the Rule of St. Francis became subject to interpretation, as with every developing tradition. Protest by the Spirituels against the parallel growth in luxury and wealth of the Conventuals inspired persecution, evangelical poverty marking two divergent temperaments.(13) The Papacy dealt with the doctrine of 'Usus Pauper' by declaring the Spirituels heretical, which they regarded as the condemnation of the life of Christ and his apostles. John XXII regarded the claim to apostolic life as a sham, and condemned Peter Olivi who was revered by the Spirituels. The Spirituels were accused of heresy in the bull Gloriosam Ecclesiam, and of confusing superior sanctity with spiritual power, and the bull Cum Inter Non<sup>n</sup>ullos (1323) pronounced heretical the idea that Christ and the apostles owned nothing, and the Fraticelli were accused of subverting society.(14)

The Spirituels regarded the Roman Church as fallen and carnal, and Olivi writes of two kinds of churches or two factions within one, and the struggle between the two is regarded as that of the fifth and sixth age of Joachite prophecy, the Church of Rome opposed to the true church of believers. Since the Spirituels as authentic descendants of Francis have full spiritual understanding they will finally triumph over the church of Babylon. The aura of sanctity

which grew around Olivi and the emphasis on poverty as perfection, Leff regards as an example of heterodoxy in him becoming heresy in others, certainly Beguines regard him as the greatest doctor of the church since the apostles, and Angelo of Clareno, attempting to keep the movement within the church against accusations of schism, defends them against the charge of Manichaeism, although inevitably Spirituals set up communities of their own.(15)

Clareno, whilst believing the sacraments are a means of union with Christ, can foresee a time when they will become a hindrance, and church services a distraction from mental prayer, since medieval church structures will no longer correspond to God's action in history. As Judaism was superseded by Christ, so the carnal church is replaced by the true Franciscans. Whilst Spirituals may seek reform of the present church, this becomes polarised in other Fraticelli and Beguines into Christ and the true church versus the Papacy and Anti-Christ.

This emphasis on the new age when the Gospel of Christ long extinguished is revived in the Fraticelli, Knox regards as neo-Montanist rejection of the church 're-Judaising' it as a synagogue.(16)

In this conflict with the establishment part of the difficulty is the ideal of the early church to which both appeal. Michael of Cesna regards it as a state of innocence to which the church must return, whereas John XXII understands primitive poverty as lack of moral covetousness rather than absolute demand. Spirituals share a common view

of the elect as the suffering of Christ in this world, seeing the conflict over absolute poverty in terms of Heilsgeschichte, with a consequent re-orientation of Christology, and in neo-Donatist stance regard the church as now existing in them alone, regarding their work as the apostolate. They regard their new understanding of the Rule of St. Francis re-historicised via Joachim's revelations, as the church of the perfect seeking an intervention in history to re-establish the church.(17)

Allied to an appeal to poverty is the rejection of learning, in a preference for mystical Dionysian tendencies.

Mundy regards the ultimate failure of the Fraticelli absolute poverty as advancing the secularisation of the church, all true Christians considered equal to the religious, and this was underlined in their rejection of the Donation of Constantine.

Their teaching inspired the ideal of the remnant as the 'true church' which Dorne believes survived as an alternative tradition to influence the Bohemian Brethren.(18)

In their projected redrawing of Heilsgeschichte which forced a separation of the spiritual and carnal churches before the last judgement, there was a limit to how Spirituals could respect Olivi's reported advice to respect the office of the clergy, especially under persecution. The boundary of heresy and orthodoxy is Christ in the church, opposing 're-Judaising' and supersession, and the primitive church transposed into the present without development, which is

regarded as spoliation of its virgin innocence. As the circumference of the church is reshaped its centre undergoes a similar change, sacred history and tradition, even by its rejection undergoing redevelopment and reinterpretation.

Pride of place among mystical teachers in the fourteenth century must be given to Meister Eckhart although his orthodoxy is constantly questioned. Summoned in 1384 before an episcopal inquisition for heresy, thirty eight of his articles were condemned by John XXII as heretical and infected by Free Spirit heresy. Eckhart defends himself by defining heresy as an act of will, not error.(19) Influenced by Neo-Platonism and Aquinas there are resemblances in his thought to early Alexandrian deification theology. God is pure act, though man is able to seize him by his image within. In this Eckhart is not careful to distinguish between the soul and God, insisting that no mediation need come between them, a principle which failed to endear him to Rome.(20) He advocated a via negativa transcending nature, the light of God always present in the soul. meaning that when the believer attains detachment (reflecting Augustine's and Boethius' teaching), nothing further is needed, for

'when a person has true spiritual experience, he may boldly drop existing disciplines, even those to which he is bound by vows.'

This obviously concerned the church, that large numbers would disregard the visible church for mystical illumination.(21).



In his understanding of scripture he exhibits a marked Origenist view, for

'all we read and hear has a second hidden meaning, for the (literal) reading of the scriptures differs from what they really intend and from what they mean to God, as if they did not exist at all..'

Eckhart's language of co-identity in relation to his Christology causes concern, though some regard this as fundamentally orthodox. In using the eucharist as an analogy he speaks of the believer converted into God as the bread is transubstantiated into the Body of Christ.(22) In terms reminiscent of Gregory of Nyssa and Aquinas he says that God begets his Son in the innermost core of the soul for 'Christ took all human nature upon himself..', though he also regards Christ's humanity as an obstruction in Jesus' pleading his expediency of 'going away' to his disciples. Within Christ there exists a central core, a disinterested soul, for

'in Christ and our Lady there was an outward man and an inner person, and while they taught about external matters, they were outwardly active but inwardly moved and disinterested.'

His understanding of Christ as corporate moves into mystical identity;

'Thus we are all in the Son, and are the Son..'

In the mystical Body of Christ we are converted into him, the acts of the just person being the acts of the Son, and there are places where he speaks of all human beings as Son of God.(23) He can speak of each believer becoming

'Emmanuel, for each son of man becomes a Son of God when he dwells in us..',

Christ formed in us,(23) when we are wholly united to him,

'for we shall be changed into him, and wholly united so that what is his becomes ours and all that is ours becomes his, our heart and his one heart, our body and his one Body..'

though emphasising that we become by adoption what the Son is by nature.(24)

It is questionable whether there can be any corporate visible Body of the church in such mystical union. Eckhart's ideal seems to create a kind of inner monastic piety, a desire to

'invest ordinary secular life with the same value as a religious order.'(25)

This ideal was found in many movements of lay piety especially among the Friends of God inspired by Eckhart, Tauler and Suso, a society of adepts which sought adventurous heights of illuminism.(26)

A similar emphasis is found among the Brethren of the Common Life who live like the clergy, setting up conventicles, as Southern says, under pretence of higher devotion, and interpreting scripture idiosyncratically.

In their ecclesiola within Catholicism, distinct from monastics (27), the Brethren seek to separate spirituality from academic theology in an anti-intellectual emphasis. Ozment describes them as holding a narrow subjective piety undermining the institution of the church (28).

Related to this Devotio Moderna is the thought of Ruysbroeck, who whilst rejecting Free Spirit heresy

emphasised perfect love and detachment from the world. Cohn regards his followers as making high claims to become one flesh and blood with Christ, wholly transformed into God. Ruysbroeck was aware that extreme mysticism could lead away from the church and its objectivity to an inner invisible church within, denying the Incarnation.(29) However he considered dogma of secondary importance in comparison with attaining the life of the primitive church. Whilst the sacraments were firmly maintained there was little likelihood of a rejection of the material or a docetic view of the Incarnation. Pietist movements rather focussed upon a microcosmic union of Christ and the believer, the institution but an outward husk serving the gathering of those with deeper and experiential communion with God. Such union is found in the *Theologia Germanica*, from the same milieu, and as in Eckhart its emphasis is on mystical union, for

'he who shall and will lie still under  
God's hand must lie still in all things as One in One,  
such an one were Christ..' (30)

The church might be necessary for outward order, but the inner spiritual core is divorced from this in a kind of ecclesiological adoptionism in which the humanity of Christ is subservient to the divinity.

Some like the Brethren of the Cross reject the church altogether, since they regarded themselves as recipients of the true revelation lost at the Donation of Constantine. Others like the flagellant groups regard churches as but stone buildings, the public places of sinners and thieves,

and exalting their own practice above the church, regard their own baptism of blood as Christian initiation.(31)

Emphasis on the primitive church which deplored all development, divided pietist and mystical groups from those who recognised more realistically that there was a distinction between that time and the present, although not all mysticism was divorced from, or sought to supersede the church. Catherine of Siena speaks of the Body of Holy Church, and the papacy as Christ on earth, alert like others to the danger of heresy from the papal schism.(32)

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TOWARDS REFORM.

THE WALDENSIANS.

The Waldensian movement originating with Peter Valdes in the twelfth century was an ecclesiola acting as a kind of Trojan horse within the Roman Church. Though initially differing only in subsidiary matters, they were eventually ousted from the parent body after developing their own divergent ethos, disillusioned with Catholicism whilst wishing to remain within it to live the apostolic life.(1)

Alexander III restricted them to simple moral preaching, and as self-convinced orthodox they held all the major Catholic doctrines, initially countering Catharism, though <sup>they</sup> increasingly rejecting the Roman hierarchy. They held to Roman teaching on the Real Presence and confession, though rejected the full Roman doctrine of transubstantiation and teaching on the saints which included prayer to them, together with with miracles and feast days. To secure a place within Catholicism they held to Roman usages developed in their own way. By the fourteenth century they had developed from an informal society of preachers into an ecclesiastical organisation, keeping the orthodox practice of ordination and their ties with Rome until the fifteenth century.(2) The Papacy sought to regularise similar groups existing near or on the margins of orthodoxy/heterodoxy, which often slipped into heresy without being conscious of it. In many ways they resemble the friars, though developing away from Rome into gathered churches. Gui describes their conventicles as imparting a secret teaching and expounding the scriptures in a corrupt way. He also says they feign

familiarity with members of religious orders and clergy to acquire a cover under which they can freely perpetuate their heresy.(3)

Ermengaud describes their attitude as professing Catholic conformity whilst dissimulating, inquisitors accusing them of subtlety and deceit.(4) Whilst in their early period Waldenses met quite openly in churches, they consider themselves the 'true' church, a theme consistent with other reformists. Waldes' Confession appears quite orthodox affirming the true flesh of Christ and the church, though its initial care to respect the priesthood belies echoes of Donatism which develops in the Waldensian poverty ideal.(5) They seek to make this Franciscan concept of the true apostolic church a reality, though differing in their claim to be the only true church from the Cathar claim to be the one church, Waldes repudiating exclusivism and separatism.(6)

Their experience as the true remnant ever persecuted was not lost on later Protestant historicism.(7)

The Roman Church assumes the face of an abomination, leading gradually to rejection of its orders, and an ethos in which they came to regard themselves alone as saved was bound to provoke hostility and challenge the Catholic establishment. The Waldensian 'barbes' or 'perfecti' claimed to use all the means of salvation but to be superior to Catholics, and their initiation as holier than Catholic baptism.(8) Intimate contact with God displaced the role of

the priesthood and orders, for according to a Waldensian catechism, the church consists only of those known to God alone (9). Inquisitors assume that Waldensians are a rival church with a parallel government and clergy, though Leff describes this alternative as the development of a recalcitrant sect from pious unlettered laymen, rejecting the Roman Church as the Body of Christ (10). Waldensians are divided over their relationship to Rome, some remaining obedient whilst Lyonists reject it. Waldes' confession appears as a interlude between opposing views, although some followers clearly rejected institutionalism, seeing the visible church as corrupt, and raising a barrier of misunderstanding between the two communities, the church of the wicked (Rome) versus the church of Christ (11). David of Augsburg describes the first heresy of the Bavarian Waldenses in the later thirteenth century as contempt of the power of the church whilst simultaneously claiming to be true imitators of Christ. This Waldenses see as emancipation from the negligence of the Roman Church, exclusion from its malignant influence incurring no penalty (12). Again 'reJudaistic' terms are used for Catholicism in contempt for ecclesiastical tradition (13). Since Roman orders derive from human institution and not from God, Waldenses claim that they alone have the power of the keys, on moral grounds (14), thus rejecting the church's mediation for their own experiential ethos in which they sought to restore the simple Christianity of the primitive church which the

medieval church obscured, a return to pure Christianity.(15) By the end of the eleventh century, they established this principle of the apostolic ideal beyond the mediation of tradition, Valdes opposing scripture to church decrees, and they refute all suggestions that they are heretics.(16)

They emphasise that the apostles were preaching laymen, and that the doctrine of Christ and the apostles is sufficient for them, believing that what was said to the apostles is spoken directly to them. Stephen of Bourbon highlights Waldes' arrogation of the office of an apostle as the heart of his error.(17)

The power which the Roman Church possessed Waldensians now believe is forfeited to them as the true successors of the apostles, a spiritual simplicity found in later Lollards. Yet was this appeal, transhistorical, moral and spiritual in opposition to Roman historicity, or did it have some historical transmission in Waldensian eyes?

Leff regards them as rejecting all outward form for direct spiritual authority from God in the experience of 'barbes' and believer.(18) Gui suggests their apostolic claim is based on a false profession of poverty and feigns an image of sanctity, scorning wealthy prelates and pastors as ravening and devouring wolves, because of their pastoral and spiritual neglect. In their antagonism some Waldensians reject any distinction between clergy and laity which may account for the absence of clergy and nobility among their later adherents.(19) Since the heart of anti-Roman feeling



was related to the Donation of Constantine by which they believed authentic apostolic succession had been lost, and the church had ceased to exist except in their own movement of recovery, it would appear Waldensians do have some kind of historicism. Spiritual efficacy was transmitted to them whereas the Roman Church had degenerated, for Sylvester and Constantine undermined the church's authority, destroying its purity and betraying the Gospel and Christ, who now supported their community of the faithful remnant. In this true inner church rather than the outward Roman Church the power has been retained to transmit the Gospel, and understand its truth.(20)

Under their devoted attendance at mass and other Roman observances, this inner truth has always existed, awaiting its true revelation. Waldensians have survived, working quietly in secrecy in dissimulation and unobtrusiveness.(21)

For them the life of the church must be a direct imitation of the life of Christ in form and purity of membership. In this they reflect the spirit of the Gregorian Reform.(22) Their appeal to the early church is similar to the Franciscan spirit in the friars who set out to make the Acts of the Apostles a continuing reality, naked following the naked Christ, emphasising spiritual power related to sanctity deriving from performance rather than ordination, as in the Fraticelli.(23)

Some Waldenses moved towards Cathar dualist teaching,

especially around Turin, though the majority initially vehemently rejected such influence, Catholic writers attributing Cathar errors to them. Cathar and Waldensian ideas did become inextricably mingled with a similar view of baptism as admission to the saved rather than an antidote to sin. Some adopted the Cathar consolamentum together with a docetic Christology, although Waldensians consistently preached against Cathars even when they were excluded from the Roman Church themselves. There was a fear of Waldensians becoming completely infiltrated by Cathar teaching, and the true extent of its advance into the community is difficult to gauge. We have already seen that there were sharp distinctions between the two groups.(24) Since there are points of similarity in practice between the two in Languedoc, Provence and Lombardy, some Waldensian structure may have derived from Catharism.(25) Wakefield suggests that Waldes' Confession appears to be a point by point refutation of Cathar teaching, with more ancient affinities. Garsoian even finds claims among Waldensians of descent from Paulicians via Catharism, and some Waldensians did translate Cathar tracts, whilst remnants of Cathars can be found among Savoy Waldensians. Waldensians also have affinities with other movements of their time like the Humiliati who were prepared to wait to fulfil their ideal within the Roman obedience. They have similar origins and emphases as well as parallel excommunication, and a section of Humiliati merged with Waldensians in Northern Italy.(26) Troeltsch believes

there was a common fund, a mingling of ideas from Ortliebians, Joachimites, and the Brethren of the Free Spirit, common trends and aspirations in spirituality and ecclesiology. Stephen of Bourbon suggests that Waldensians mingle with other heretics in Provence and Lombardy.(27)

Although some nobility embraced Waldensianism, it did not attract the great aristocratic support of Catharism, remaining to a large extent an artisan religion. Among the lesser classes it reaches into Hussitism with the same anti-clerical attitude and desire for simplicity, though whilst many Waldenses denied Roman authority, Hussites accepted it in principle. Proposals were made for a Hussite/Waldensian union in the early fifteenth century and later with the Unitas Fratrum by the Taborites in Strasburg.(28) Hussites regard them as venerable and of ancient descent as did later Moravians who sought orders from them via the Unitas Fratrum, indicating a regard and interest in apostolic succession as not solely a moral and spiritual one. In the early sixteenth century, Waldensianism passes over into the Reform, some reformers regarding them as survivals of a long resistance to Rome descending from Constantine's time as a small persecuted group who had endured secretly until the appointed Day.(29)

Poverty was a Waldensian preoccupation as an 'imitatio Christi' over against Roman materialism. It was after all Waldes' vow of poverty which Alexander III sanctioned and which became the basis of Waldensian views of the

priesthood, making them attractive to poorer sections of society. Voluntary poverty measured their own standing and that of the Catholic clergy, those who live by it possessing true power to administer the sacraments, and being persecuted for it.(30) Like Cathars, Waldensians gave a greater place than Catholicism to women in their communities, and Gui describes them as responsible for heretical claims to women priests, and they have a similar Cathar devotion to the Lord's Prayer.(31)

Scripture is regarded as the sole possession of the true church, but whereas Cathars translate a life struggle into a cosmogony, Waldensians see it from a more biblical viewpoint. David of Augsburg says that Waldensians interpret the Gospel in a sense of their own, opposing their interpretation to Catholic tradition, regarding the Gospel precepts as commands, though Walter Map criticises them as unlettered laymen, ignorant of the scriptures and their true meaning. All Waldensian church customs must be justified from scripture.(32) Since some Waldensians believed mystical experience had taken them to Paradise and back, Alan of Lille's criticism of them may have been quite justified.(33)

Yet in view of these beliefs Waldensians held to an illogical attachment to our Lady, whilst rejecting other Catholic teachings and practices.(34) Such rejections included church buildings which are regarded as mere stone constructions - a typical Cathar trait, though possibly with a different justification, closely linked with rejection of

the clergy, places of worship replaced by the living sanctuary of the perfecti. Leff regards their repudiation of church ritual and teaching as reaching the point where belief is virtually invisible with no consecrated buildings or grounds - desiring spiritual rather than visible signs, seeing Cathar influences in this.(35) In their defence, Catholics affirm the validity of churches and of prayer made in them, arguing from Stephen's speech in Acts which Waldensians and other heretics themselves use. Stephen of Bourbon says that Waldensian teaching stems not from lack of veneration, but because,

'they say that all ground is equally consecrated and blessed by God. They hold Christian churches and cemeteries in contempt.'(36)

Anselm says that they believe a man gains nothing,

'by visiting the sepulchres of the saints, by adoring the cross, by building churches..' (37)

Prayer could be said anywhere, it needed neither special times and places, nor buildings or days.

Perfecti were to be chaste and to reject all personal property.

With this rejection of any theology of consecration apart from that of the committed believer, we might expect Waldensians to hold a related eucharistic view. Bernard of Clairvaux describes them as claiming the right to consecrate the eucharist at their own tables, though this may reflect the attitude that sacraments are not essential. Since

Waldes abrogated the right to administer the sacraments without ordination his followers appear to have improved on their founder's teaching in this respect. Some appear to have emphasised the retention of the three-fold order presumably for sacramental reasons.(38)

Within its own milieu Waldensianism exhibits a spectrum of belief, including an earlier more Catholic tone and a later more sectarian one, both of which reflect alternatively historical and moral appeals to apostolic succession.

The Waldenses of Lyon appear to have permitted any Christian to celebrate the eucharist probably as an informal meal, and their Lombard counterparts insist on the celebrant being in a state of grace.(39) In some places there appears to be acceptance of the Catholic mass, Waldensians only celebrating the eucharist themselves when deprived of Catholic ministrations for whatever reason, though still permitting any 'good man' to preside. The change in their communities from celebration solely by priests appears to have taken place around 1218. Anselm describes the distinction between Ultramontane and Lombard Waldenses as the former believing any good man is a priest and permitted to say mass, and the latter that only a good man in a state of grace can do so, the church being present where two or three are gathered. He says that Lombards prevent an evil priest from presiding, and that Lyonists have only one annual mass on Maundy Thursday and this is Gui's understanding too, although there seems to be a peculiar

Waldensian manner of celebration.(40) Any attribution of the idea of the priesthood of all believers to them would need to be qualified by their selective insistence on the threefold order.

Waldenses show a concern for purity which may stem from a Jewish influence, since the Passagians, a sect related to them kept the Sabbath and the Mosaic law. This may be an example of the implicit tendency among them to 're-Judaise' the established church as other groups did, treating clergy as 'pharisees', persecutors, etc. In their attempt to pursue a superior thoroughgoing Christianity within the established order, it is difficult not to see Donatism in them.(41)

In their claim to be sent by the Holy Spirit as against the secular clergy, Stephen of Bourbon reports the suggestion of every good man being a priest, confusing personal inspiration with church order.(42) Sin against the Holy Spirit is interpreted by them as sin against Waldensians, the validity of the sacrament depending upon the subjective holiness of the minister, although where this is at issue there usually appears some commitment to transubstantiation.

Like the first Donatists they oppose the secularisation of the church. Leff regards Cathar abomination of the material as re-enforcing Waldensian denial of visible forms, an influence carried through into Christology, especially in Alexander of Lausanne who,

'abjured the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection and

Ascension, because God would not, nor could so humiliate himself to assume a carnal nature.'(43)

Some see any good man as a son of God, meaning rather more than a simple affirmation of the life of Christ in the life of the believer. Gui says that they refer to the mystical Body as the church or the body of any good man.(44) Interestingly, in Waldes' Confession, the affirmation of the reality of Christ's flesh is linked with a statement on the reality of the eucharist.(45)

John of Drassic, Bishop of Prague who is summoned for heresy professes that Jesus only had a phantasmic body, which is regarded as Waldensian and Luciferian doctrine.(46)

Whilst Waldes, then, can offer a relatively orthodox confession, the further his followers moved away from the Roman Church, the more other influences produced changes in ecclesiology and Christology. This includes an almost obsessive pre-occupation with purity which taken to extremes removed not only imperfections from the church and the believer, but created an heroic faith at the risk of substituting a subjective spirituality for objective dogmas, developing their own rationale in their separation from Catholicism, like many other sects.

In their understanding of tradition, especially with regard to succession there appears to be an oscillation between desire for authentic historical and visible continuity, but not at the expense of a sullied purity and spiritual veracity, <sup>This understanding is</sup> inspired by a primitive church ideal which is



ultimately only reconcilable in a trans-historical perspective - the apostles' time now.

As with other dissidents, Waldensians continue through many generations of families, even whole heretical villages.

Leff regards it as a classical case of piety turned heresy as it develops from movement to schism, to reformist heresy, although illegitimate pressure from the church some see as a formative factor.(47) Duvernoy says that for all his knowledge of them, Alan of Lille does not regard them as heretics.(48) There is an extremely fine line, often of time and circumstance not to mention chance, between orthodox and heretic, depending a great deal on social and political mores and individual clerical or papal reaction. Piety could often lead beyond reason and faith by imagination and the Spirit. Gui says that Waldensians were guilty of heresy by contempt for ecclesiastical authority, not necessarily any dogmatic aberration, although Walter Map indicates Nestorian heresy in them, though as we have seen their devotion to Mary would seem to qualify this.

Condemned at the Council of Verona in 1184 in Lucius III's Ad Abolendam, and at Lateran IV in 1215 for what Bernard of Fontcaude called their 'darkness of error', antagonists tend to see their claim to greater knowledge and inspiration as presumption. Those who survived the papal inquisition needed to look to the Reformation for a more congenial time.

Lea instances Waldensians being called Wycliffites. Is this

justified ? Was there an underground stream, and Valdes a cloth merchant who repented of his trade as well as his sins, becoming as Harnack says, a heretic and not a saint by chance, and condemned for being led by his emotions rather than by God? (49)

Initially embraced by the Papacy, but eventually denying its authority over his preaching, in the final analysis perhaps it was his vision of the simple dogmatically undeveloped Christ which placed Waldes on the wrong side of the medieval tracks.

Footnotes.

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3. B.Gui. On Heresies. 11:5 ET. Wakefield/Evans. op.cit. 392, 393.
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JOHN WYCLIFFE.

Wycliffe was led by scholastic theology into unorthodoxy. Among those to whom his thought is indebted are Claudius of Turin, Arnold of Brescia, Berengar, Marsilius (probably through Ockham), Bradwardine, especially in his predestinarianism), and FitzRalph;(1) and he was drawn from Nominalism to Christian Aristotelianism by Augustine especially in his view of scripture, and the NeoPlatonists and Aquinas,(2) whilst drawing on Duns Scotus' Realism, and Grosseteste's concept of scriptural authority. (3)

Wycliffe quotes comprehensively from Augustine, Gregory the Great, John of Damascus, Anselm, Bonaventure, and the Sentences.(4) His theory of lordship and right use develops from FitzRalph, Marsilius, Ockham and the Spiritual Franciscans,(5) and he appeals from the law of nature to the Gospel with the support of Bernard of Clairvaux.

According to Thomas of Winterton of the Austin Friars of Stamford however, Wycliffe only accepted as authoritative Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, Gregory, and the ancient authors of the primitive church, with the text of the Bible and the determinations of the church,(6) though accepting the Thomist principle that reason should be the basis for Christian theology. This commitment to scholasticism is also viewed as the element which kept him from heretical deviation.

He derives from Joachim of Fiore the idea of the three ages of the church, apostolic innocence followed by establishment between the Pope and emperor, and a third age of papal power under Innocent III.(9)



Wycliffe concluded that the Roman Church, although one of the five great patriarchates, was the 'synagogue of Satan', for increasing wealth had influenced the 'Caesarian' clergy to depart from the life of Christ and the apostles, Christ now contesting the Pope. Any reform of the Papacy is simply tinkering with evil.

Despising monasticism, Wycliffe sought to create an 'ordo Christi', to end all orders. Religious should leave their orders or sects to join the true sect of Jesus Christ, though he distinguishes between friars and other monastics, as the friars adhere to the poverty of Christ and the apostles. Yet he is averse to leaving preaching in their hands, and refutes the idea of monasticism as the perfect Christian way.(12) Monasticism in his view is but a return to a private religion of law as opposed to the public religion and unity of the church.(13) Such private religion is

' a spring bitter and putrid...their prayer and contemplation is of little or no benefit to the church.'(14)

He castigates their pretentious habit of burying lay people in monastic garb and their superficial poverty.(15)

For all his scholastic influences, Wycliffe has an anti-learning streak. In places he appears to repudiate all learning except scripture, and though drawing on Aquinas and Bonaventure in exegesis, has a tendency to exclude other influences from them which encourages Leff to find him intellectually unbalanced.(16)

Wycliffe appealed to the simple and poor primitive church for his authority, with the supposition that it is possible to return to the beginning and start anew. For him the early church continued unbroken the life of the apostles, a life of poverty and humility and an absence of images, from which the 'Caesarian' clergy had departed.(17)

There is no place for development or the complex growth of the church from its primitive forms.(18) The Pope and clergy must return to the imitation of Christ in apostolic purity and poverty, <sup>Wycliffe</sup> appealing in this to Augustine, Ambrose, Anselm and others against Innocent III, Aquinas and Scotus, who have forsaken the ancient apostolic church, which grew mightily when the Gospel was preached.(19)

Whilst what Wycliffe propounded was nothing new it led him gradually towards a radical unorthodox development.(20) The life and teaching of Christ divided true believers from heretics whom the state could remove on theologians' recommendation,(21) though such state co-operation cannot amount to establishment, as Wycliffe like others before him regards Constantine and the Donation to Sylvester as the source of the church's ills, for this poisoned the church with simony. The ideal poor church existed before imperial recognition, poor and incorrupt, and in harmony with the Gospel and in opposition rather than accommodation to the world.(22) With such establishment and the elevation of the Roman bishop and consequent riches, the church declined, and for Wycliffe this cleft in the church over the Donation provides a basis on which to set his following of poor

preachers over against the contemporary established clergy.(23)

He believes the Pope should renounce the Donation to follow the naked Christ in poverty, for this would save the church from impending ruin and be of greater worth than all Constantinian privileges, since the papacy is only a human contrivance, and it is impossible for the bishop who 'bears Christ's manhood' to be employed by the state.(24)

In places Wycliffe rejects the corruption of the priesthood, emphasising that in the authentic primitive church there was only one order of ministry, but he also, in Waldensian terms, denies the priesthood as a order, since the elect who is ordained of God (in the kind of auto-ordination that occurs in <sup>the case of</sup> spirituali), is more of a priest than a layman. He casts doubt on the value of ordination since visible signs and ceremonies are unnecessary, for God gives his power irrespective of them. The proper criterion for identifying a legitimate clergy and hierarchy is the moral and ethical one of whether they live like Christ and the apostles, which reflect Origen's ideal.(26)

Yet Wycliffe's disparate ecclesiology can also accept that 'the church of prelates and priests' constitutes part of the mystical Body, and appeal to the church of previous centuries.(27) There is a clear Donatist element in his view which advises parishioners to withhold tithes from any priest in deadly sin who can thus no longer consecrate.(28)

Although Wycliffe displays a sense of a shared humanity between Christ and the Christian, there are shades of

ecclesiological docetism in him.(29) All organised bodies and sects appear superfluous, especially when he appeals in Pauline fashion from the four sects, the Pope and Cardinals, prelates, monastic orders and regular canons and friars, to the one true sect of Christ.(30)

This mystical Body of Christ, divided into the militant, triumphant and dormient (purgatory), is hidden from us and closed to the damned, a universal Body of the predestined outside which there is no salvation, rather than a congregatio fidelium.(31) Only those who will ultimately constitute the true church in heaven are members of the church now, and must live in holiness and a state of grace.(32)

The church of the just is set in opposition to the ecclesia malignatum until a new age dawns when the true apostolic church will be reborn.(33)

In Wycliffe's understanding there exists a dichotomy in which he leans towards the sect type exemplified in Waldensians and Franciscans, but also in his ideas on dominion thinks of the commonwealth as one society under the monarch, secular and sacred.(34)

In denying the authority of the church in the name of the Bible and the 'true church', and thus using tradition against itself, Leff regards Wycliffe as rejecting the existing church for an archetypal reality and so inclining towards heresy.(35) This chasm he thinks unbridgeable, an appeal to a timeless church outside space and to the elect wherever and whoever they are. The church ceases as a

visible entity since those chosen and saved by God cannot be known, and there is no place for visible ecclesiastical authority.(36) For Wycliffe the church did not derive from the Incarnation, but predates it as a universal invisible idea looking

'beyond the hierarchy to the true source of authority which led him to disregard everything and everyone'(37)

demanding a new church totally unrelated to the visible community. In Beguine and Waldensian terms, this forsakes the church altogether for a dialogue between the individual and tradition, consequently replacing the hierarchy with God's word fittingly interpreted.(38)

Yet who will decide its fittingness ?

Wycliffe's belief in the true church as the sacred layman alone, found in earlier dissenters, produces insoluble antinomies. He attacks the very existence of the church in the world. Ultimately his idea of the visible church as Anti-Christ entails the dissolution of any visible ecclesiastical economy, preferring those eternally chosen by God, indiscernible on earth. In divesting the visible church of identity and authority, Wycliffe moves from heterodoxy to heresy, detaching the church from the Incarnation to a Gnostic aeonic existence.(39) With such a view Wycliffe encouraged the king to secularise church property, the church having no right to temporal rule since the true church of believers was not the existing established church, although Lea believes he accepts the power of the keys if wielded by the right hands, although he seeks the removal of

the temporal power of the church.(40)

Wycliffe regards as Nominalist heresy the idea that there was no church until the death of Christ, since it is the whole body of the predestined in every time and place, grounded in the election of God's eternal decree rather than any earthly sphere. This being so the Papacy cannot be its head. In discounting the visible church and priesthood for the company of the predestined, Wycliffe, like many of his predecessors betrays a Platonist influence. In line with this, since Wycliffe believes the truest saints always hesitate to think of themselves as members of the true church, he also dismisses the cult of the saints.(42)

There is no place here for an organic development, it is the individual left solus cum solo with God.

Spinka points to the Great Schism 1378 as making Wycliffe more determinedly anti-papal and antagonistic to church and tradition. The timeless company of those predestined in Christ the head, as against the corpus diaboli, has no origin in the Incarnation, so that earthly church tradition and form was a matter of some indifference, to be reformed and governed by the state.(43)

This predestinarian and invisibilist ideal is largely Augustinian, though uncharacteristically making the mystical Body of Christ and the elect co-terminous. In Wycliffe and Huss, Augustine's predestination is used to call the present church to account in the name of the 'true' church. With Augustine's help Wycliffe distances his church from the materialistic taint of the sin-stained church on earth, and

in an 'extreme and deformed Augustinianism' turns Augustine's two cities into an exclusive conception of the church against the hierarchy.(44) In using Augustine in this way to remove their authority, Workman suggests Wycliffe is incapable of grasping Augustine's doctrine of grace, and trying to overcome this by a doctrine of Anti-Christ who embodies the Pope and the friars and their followers.(45)

We might expect with this appeal to a invisible church we would find that Wycliffe has a docetic Christology, or a least some diminution of Christ's humanity rather than a kind of deformed Christology developing into the body of Anti-Christ. Yet it is precisely the obscuring of Christ's humanity which Wycliffe sees as a defect in Abelard, Aquinas and Scotus. Wycliffe looks upon the human nature of Christ as a 'communio humanitas' of all men, although what appears as a corporate character is more the 'exemplary form' of the divine idea.(46) Christ's manhood appears as the basis for the manhood of every individual and the unity of mankind in the church, but this does not appear to relate closely to any ecclesiology of the soma tou Christou and any development from the Incarnation is still obscured. He rejects the idea of Christ as the head of all men found in Aquinas.

Jay describes Wycliffe's view as Christ having a double headship, <sup>of the Church</sup> an extrinsic headship of the mystical Body founded in his humanity, but still the invisible Body of the elect.(47) This idea flows from Wycliffe's doctrine of double substances each retaining its own identity, which is also reflected in his eucharistic understanding.(48) This

means that the church has its own species and principles apart from the Incarnation which has no relation to the present hierarchy. In dealing with the friars' idea that the Pope has the same power as Christ in his humanity, Wycliffe replies that the Pope is superior in humanity since he lives in luxury, but the idea of any kind of power flowing into the church from the Incarnation or any authority following organically from it into the church is discounted.(49)

Opinion is divided as to how Wycliffe's ecclesiology and Christology was integral to his eucharistic doctrine, and what his real views were in relation to this.

Leff suggests that there is no disavowal of the sacraments but that all he says points to their depreciation, with as little faith in them as in the visible church. Whilst he may not be heretical in rejecting the medieval view of transubstantiation, Leff indicates his idea of the eucharist as the 'garment of Christ' in which there occurs a miracle at least comparable to the Incarnation.

He describes Wycliffe's view as Christ being present figuratively but not essentially, which corresponds to some degree with his ecclesiology. Yet the eucharist is not Wycliffe's main concern so much as a pastoral relationship between the church's wealth and the salvation of the faithful. Though rejecting the Nominalist eucharistic heresy which sees the eucharist as a phantasm, he never relates a Realist doctrine of the eucharist to his ecclesiology, for salvation is no longer mediated through the visible church and priesthood.(52) In place of Aquinas' change in the



eucharistic species Wycliffe accords with Duns Scotus' doctrine of remanence, in which the bread becomes the Body of Christ whilst the accident of bread remains, the host being simultaneously Christ's Body and Blood reflecting the one person and two natures of Christ, using his own simile to describe the sacrament.(53) He advises the faithful to beware of heresy in the use of eucharistic terms, and to hold the Catholic sense of scripture and the doctors on this matter.(54)

If however what is seen is only figurative of the reality, we might suggest that his eucharistic teaching does match his ecclesiology in that the gathering of the perfect church here is only figurative, not the reality of the predestined as it is in heaven, which here is but an unknown soul.

Whilst ostensibly accepting the doctors of the church, Wycliffe replaced the visible hierarchy with the authority of scripture in a fundamentalism which expected every Christian to be his own theologian, a view which some of his followers narrowed considerably. He thus uses the church's own tradition and canon against the visible community and in exegesis substituted his ideal of poverty and humility in intuitional imagination for an intellectual and spiritual task. Exalting scripture above the church's decrees he refuses biblical interpretation to the church's hierarchy on apparently moral grounds, since he believed the church condemned those who were true to the Bible and apostolic tradition.(55) He replaces the visible church with scripture as mediator between man and God in an ultra-Realist

infallible view of scripture, for even when the church lost its authority, God's word remained sure.(56) Influenced by Grosseteste in his scriptural view Wycliffe distinguishes between inerrant scripture, tradition and interpretation.

Any 'catholic' sense of scripture he finds refers more to an inner cohesion within it rather than to its place in any continuing life of the visible apostolic community.

However, like others before him he can go beyond the letter of scripture, believing that Christ did not write his law on tables or on skins of animals, but in the heart of man, and that the Holy Ghost teaches the meaning of scripture in the same way that Christ opened its sense to the apostles. With this we are back into subjective sectarianism which managed to reduce tradition to imagination and the church with it to a shadow. This is clearly seen in Wycliffe's rejection of offices, for whoever is closest to God is considered to be real Pope.(58)

His rejection of the visible church for the elect rejected all objectivity - Troeltsch sees in him a coherent theory of rejection of the institutional church and its ecclesiastical organic social doctrine and its compromise.(59) Sanctity becomes the sign of authority, and this is linked to his poverty ideal derived from the Spiritual Franciscans. Poverty is the mark of the true church, poor priests a reproach to Caesarian tradition, yet in rejecting tradition he also seems to have fossilised tradition in scripture making any development in faith impossible.

Wycliffe's disciple Peter Payne denies that Wycliffe was a Donatist, since he suggests that Wycliffe always added 'worthily' or 'meritoriously' to any statements about bishops or priests administering invalid sacraments.(60) However there is a clear element of this in him, especially with regard to the papacy. Workman describes his view as the priest belonging to the foreknown but not the elect and ministering damnation to himself if he is not worthy, but that this is modified by Wycliffe's followers into the idea of the sacrament being dependent upon the worthiness of the priest. It is difficult to discharge Wycliffe of holding Donatist views. Certainly we find this 'Puritan' ethos in his rejection of church buildings for the true house of God - the spirits called by him, though what may appear as iconoclasm may be the reverse side to emphasis on holiness of life.(61) Wycliffe's emphasis however stands in the tradition of Peter Damian and St. Bernard in condemning costly buildings and attributing no holiness or intrinsic virtue to them. For him the soul raised to God makes a place holy and he cites Jerome for the view that God dwells in the holy man rather than in ornate churches, and Chrysostom in questioning the value of churches in the face of fraudulence towards God's honour.(62)

Is all this in Wycliffe purely protest at the suffocation of the church by grandeur and wealth ?

Wycliffe's ideas always lead back to his ecclesiology in his preference for the predestinate and his extreme extension of Augustine and Aquinas which places the church

in another realm divorced from the Incarnation, though spiritually signified in the eucharist. We might expect the hierarchical church to protect itself by condemnation as in 1377 under Gregory XI and in 1382 at the Council in London, followed by condemnation at Constance 1415.

From this time on his church of the predestined joined other tributaries leading underground to the Reformation via the Lollard movement in unexpectedly visible form. A later generation intent on exhuming and desecrating his heretical corpse he might have seen as exercising an apt task for those so concerned with material things, for after all in his view the essential and true Wycliffe was no longer there.

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THE LOLLARDS.



That the Lollards were simply Wycliffe's followers is a view which allows for no development or social distinctions among aristocratic and half-instructed adherents, who might not attain Wycliffe's intellectualism in the progress from academic to popular heresy. Lollards in this respect developed marginal elements in Wycliffe's teaching, possibly influenced by Free Spirit and Waldensian doctrines in its predominantly lay movement.(1)

Lollards were a disparate group, including a lunatic wing, and generally have no feeling for the public religion of the church, but a preference for private religion based on an intimate view of the early church, a contributory element to English Protestantism.(2)

Whilst not seeking an alternative church but reform of the existing one, they retained Wycliffe's emphasis on the elect constituting the church, the congregation of true believers. Some later Lollards with a biblical fundamentalism, regard the visible church as Anti-Christ, since the congregation of the faithful are not the visible institution but an invisible communion of the saved, though on this Lollard views range from the church as the soul of every good Christian to heaven alone.(3) In writing against them Thomas Netter Waldensis rejects their limited view of church membership yet holds the predestined in the church to be like a wheel within a wheel.(4)

Like Wycliffe, Lollards hold the Donation of Constantine responsible for the demise of the church. Any evolutionary

element in Christianity is disregarded, anticipating the later Protestant rejection of tradition.(5) Paradoxically, whilst opposing bad priests, or possibly rejecting the priesthood and confession altogether, Leff sees among Lollards a large number of unbeneficed priests as the mainspring of the movement.(6)

However some Lollards appear to have practised a form of ordination, as one William Ramsbury who held heretical Free Spirit rather than Wycliffite ideas, was tonsured and ordained by them. Yet what intrinsic value ordination could have within the sect is questionable, especially in the view of William Whyte of East Anglia who though ordained permitted a layman to celebrate mass, since every faithful Christian was a priest, and Thomas Widerley who thinks a priest is only a priest at the time of mass, not outside it.(7) It would appear that the rejection of ordination by some Lollards and the claim by others to ordain may be reverse sides of the same dissident coin, for some seem more simply to have demanded a more strict spiritual fitness for ordination.(8) The overall impression of Lollardy however is that Catharist 'good men' are preferred to priests, a Donatism which was the religion of lower class laymen.(9) In 1488 Steeple Aston Lollards believe that a priest in a state of sin cannot celebrate mass, and others follow Wycliffe is regarding the holiest man living as true Pope.(10) In seeking a return to the primitive church Lollards believed that bishops and priests ought to go about on foot as the

apostles did, and saw a dichotomy between the possessions of contemporary clergy and the poverty of the apostles.(11)

In their Christological view they saw

'.Christ's humanity  
as not an object of reverence for those emancipated from  
the laws of the church..'

an implicit though

negative connection between Christology and ecclesiology. Those in a state of perfection do not venerate Christ since they are united to God and are more perfect than Christ in his humanity.(12) John, a Lollard, thinks of himself as God by nature in contrast to Christ who is God by grace, and consequently lower than the Father, and <sup>of</sup>a corresponding higher and more spiritual church of Lollards in contrast to the lower church.(13) Their Christology seems to dispense with Christ's humanity, their view of him refracted through their emphasis on apostolic poverty. Some deny the conception <sup>and birth from a</sup> virgin, one Richard Crowther removing any references to these from the creed, followed by Margaret Goyte who describes Joseph as the father of Jesus.(14) Others believe Christ was incarnate from the beginning of the world before the virgin birth, echoing Gnostic pre-existence, though clear denial of the Incarnation and the suffering of Christ are found in the view of Lollard John Buckherst.(15)

Margaret Aston believes that in Lollardy speculative criticism met a confused boundary between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.(16) She emphasises that Lollardy was the first

really large scale English heresy emerging

worried about the externals of the church, with uncertainty where orthodox criticism and unorthodox dissent begins..' 'in a society

though possession of heretical books became a distinguishing criterion of guilt.(17)

Lollard eucharistic views develop from Wycliffe's teaching on remanence to complete rejection of the sacrament together with baptism. One of the sixteen points raised against the Lollards by the Bishops reveals one belief that although the sacrament is holy the host is not Christ's Body, though Lollard John Becker rejects reservation of the eucharist, and approves of the muttering of silent abuse during the consecration at mass.(18)

The prevailing view is that at best the eucharist is figurative and generally dispensable. Baptism is rejected for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and those the church labels heretics disclaim the attribution, for all those the church accuses of this are really baptised by the Holy Spirit which alone is necessary for salvation. Confirmation is rejected also, since some believe that a child is automatically confirmed by the Holy Spirit on reaching the age of discretion.(19) Others believe baptism is already accomplished through the death of Christ.

Together with their rejection of sacraments, preferring the word and commandment of Christ, Lollards dismiss all church ordinances and rites of passage, with a specific aversion to

pilgrimages, tithes, and everything that marks the church as part of the established order.

They held to the Bible as a 'transmissable symbol of superior sanctity', though some distinguish the use of it by learned exegetes from the untrained. Scripture replaces clerical authority, and as a substitute for the church has a sacramental quality, the Lollard Conclusions of 1394 rejecting the Bishop's ordinal as incompatible with the New Testament.(20) Everyman could be his own theologian since Lollards claimed direct contact with God through scripture without intermediaries, for the Gospel was hidden only *from* the lost, and anyone in a true state of salvation could comprehend it. According to Pecock any man or woman willing to understand scripture could arrive infallibly at its true meaning and the Lollard John Whitehorne says that whoever receives God's word devoutly receives the Body of Christ. The idea of the layman interpreting scripture for himself and bypassing tradition and ecclesiastical interpretation was clearly anathema to the church.(21) Some Lollards used books such as the Gospel of Nicodemus to supplement scripture whilst many deprecated learning. Meeting in their own 'schools' some like Alice Colyns memorised and recited texts of scripture.(22) Together with an anti-learning tendency, despite the fact that many Lollard writings came from its period of influence in the universities, some Lollards superseded scripture in a prophetic role.(23) Such prophetism was close to illuminism, especially where a

direct relationship with the Holy Spirit was assumed. Where intellectual influences declined Donatism and anti-clericalism flourished, and <sup>together with</sup> a kind of gnostic insight into divine mysteries assumed by the initiates, and orthodox attacks upon mystics were redrafted to include Lollards.(24)

Most prominently Lollards rejected church buildings and the concept of consecration. Among twenty five points of Lollard teaching in 1388, prayer in a church is held to be no more efficacious than elsewhere, reflecting Wycliffe's idea that the place is hallowed by the man, not vice-versa. Churches are regarded as places of sinning, and Lollards in East Anglia reject material churches and destroy crucifixes in an attitude reminiscent of Bogmilism. Some suggest that Lollard iconoclasm betrays Eastern heretical influences. Lollards like William Wakeham describe the soul of man as the church of God.(25) Rejection of the Constantinian establishment is linked with their rejection of images. Popular belief supposes that Pope Sylvester had images made of Constantine at the time of the Christianisation of the empire.(26) The Lollard writing 'Lanterne of Light' shows how orthodox criticism of church splendour could eventually become unorthodox opposition to images linking orthodox reformers and Lollard iconoclasm.(27)

The Lollard argument against church buildings is derived from Stephen's speech in Acts (Acts 7.) and the first apostles, who it is believed managed without sensible signs. Anne Palmer a Lollard of Northampton prefers to worship God

secretly rather than in buildings, for churches are irrelevant when God is everywhere. Likewise Hawisia Moone would rather frequent Lollard schools of heresy in "privy chambers." (28)

Lollards tend to develop reformist ideas to heretical extremes and Nuttall questions whether they could ever believe in the church in any sense when they saw the body of man as the temple of God. By the same token he indicates how some went further and preferred the inward book in the soul of man to the outward book of scripture. (29)

As with preceding heretics, in giving priority to laymen over priests Lollards distinguish between those faithful souls who will be saved and others. Berthold of Ruhrbach believed that any intellectual layman was more learned than the educated priest. The response of the church was to accuse Lollards of meddling in things too high for them. This lay emphasis Gairdner sees providing Lollardy with a new career under Henry VIII's supremacy. Lollardy went much further than Wycliffe especially in its rejection of the priesthood. (30)

Lollardy thrived through its connection in families which kept the movement alive through household ecclesiolae. This family circle became the focal point of learning, disseminating alternative doctrine to that of the church, and surviving as a living legacy to Protestantism. To survive within the church Lollards needed to dissimulate. They could do this by attending the liturgy or mass 'for the

dreade of the people'(31), yet such dissembling could suffer reversal when the orthodox condemn the outwardly holy Lollard as concealing a sword beneath his cloak.(32) Aston describes Lollards as meeting secretly against church tradition, and sharing in a secret rite in an underground society in which scripture and other works were read.(33)

Like Catharism, Lollardy gave a more prominent place to women, and in one instance a woman priest in London celebrates the mass in neo-Gugliemite fashion though significantly omitting the words of consecration.(34)

For all Wycliffe's invective against the mendicants his disciples take on to all appearances the character of a religious order, though naturally against the friars' forceful opposition. However there are indications that some friars supported Lollards until their eucharistic aberrations became evident.(35) Lollardy is more a spiritual outlook than just an organised movement, what Knowles describes as 'an ill defined body of sentiment', developing from Wycliffe's circle, but drawing upon a considerable current of native evangelical dissent.(36)

In the failed revolt led by Oldcastle in 1414, attempting reform by force, Lollardy took on an identifiable group character, but in its failure condemned itself thereafter to an underground existence.(37)

Textile producing areas and pastoral communities were breeding grounds for Lollardy, especially in the home counties and Midlands with offshoots in Lincolnshire,



Yorkshire and the Scottish borders. As the movement merges into the stream of the Reformation it becomes more difficult to delineate distinctly, and most scholars subscribe to the idea of a continuing underground tradition of heresy contributing towards Protestantism.(38) Aston sees Lollards flourishing like Cathars along main arterial routes.

There does appear to have been an inner organised group of Lollards described as the 'Christian Brethren' but these appear to have had no clear intrinsic widespread influence.(39)

Lollard life and teaching was countered in England through the normal ecclesiastical courts without the necessity of a separate inquisition, yearly inquiries being made in parishes and deaneries where they were thought to be present, combined with regular preaching against them.(40)

Note: Margery Kempe:

Accused of Lollardy, it is possible that Margery Kempe derived her views from their influence. She illustrates how close some medieval mystics were to Lollard teachings, especially in bypassing ecclesiastical institutions.

Her teaching assumes a communion with God which she describes as suffering with the suffering Jesus.(41)

Those who worship her she describes as worshipping God. The Lollard Philip Repingdon thought her to be in direct

communication with the Holy Spirit.(42)

Dressed in white as a kind of religious habit, Margery believed that Christ himself was the co-author of her writings,(43) and as the perfect fool in imitation of him, claimed to understand secret revelations and visions from the Holy Spirit, the product of her imaginative deep communion.(44) She appears to have followed the ideal of the vita apostolica, in simplicity, and emphasises the manhood of Christ whom she sees in contemporary children.

She seems to have been one of those lone excessive eccentrics who latched onto current trends both outside and inside the church, a kind of charismatic mystic passing into illuminism, a trait which could be found in her Lollard contemporaries.(45).

What place for Christ and the church could Lollardy possibly have ?

Lollards appear to have attempted to live out Wycliffe's antinomy and its various disparate and sometimes negative ideals, reflecting the lack of integration others see in his teaching, and developing in an heretical direction.

Both Wycliffe and they are at one in rejecting tradition and any continuity between Christ and the present visible church, except that of external imitatio of his life in the Gospel, set apart from, and primarily over against, any

institutional form.

Within Lollardy the divide between the mystical Body and the visible church in Wycliffe is completed and carried beyond even the gathering of the elect, into illuminism, and rejection of all visible means and religion whatsoever.

Without an adequate Christology there can be no ecclesiology. Without a visible form or institution as its continuity there can be no present understanding of Christology. In traditio, Christology unfolds in the life of the Christian community and internal inspiration is joined to external continuity - the early Christian creed of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Catholic Church, the two natures of Christ continued within it. This can be seen in both orthodox and heterodox aspects not just in the idea of the church itself but in the other elements of traditio such as scripture.

Lollardy tends to reject all such tradition for a church of <sup>person or group</sup> one, a remnant looking beyond the visible for authenticity and developing new ecclesiological criteria.

This in itself is an issue to be found in the thought of other mystics and reformers, and some suggest may be found within the Protestant/Catholic divergence in Christology and ecclesiology.

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JOHN HUSS AND THE CHURCH INVISIBLE.

Waldensians and Hussites survived as medieval movements which contributed to the Reformation, Hussites proving too powerful for the Inquisition, though more schismatic than heretical.(1) Huss depends upon the Gospel as an infallible rule of faith, with the church as the community predestined to salvation.(2) Whilst Huss regarded the Roman Church as one among the churches militant and could accede to the primacy of Rome, he saw the power given to Peter as no different from that granted to every presbyter, since the papacy was a human Constantinian institution, and not necessary to the church, and in this he followed Wycliffe.(3) Leff describes his view as recognising the power of the keys but removing them from human hands.(4) Huss distinguishes the Roman Church from the true church, yet claims never to have rejected his Roman obedience, although he agrees with Wycliffe that only by breaking with Rome can there be reform, whilst not following him in repudiating Aquinas and Bonaventure, nor following Wycliffe's teaching wholesale as the foundation of his own thought, even if drawing on his philosophical Realism.(5) Wycliffe's teaching had been carried to Bohemia by Czech students at Oxford where it had coalesced with indigenous pressure for reform, yet Huss is no Wycliffite nor does he share his extremism, even though Wycliffe's writings may have given Hussitism an international ethos. At the Council of Constance it was Wycliffe's view that Huss was charged with.(6)

Huss looked to the reform of the existing church to deliver

it from error. In accepting the hierarchical church, he escapes the excessive individualism of Lollardy in seeking the salvation of the Czech people as a whole, although he suggests the hierarchy act like pharisees in prohibiting preaching (a factor ineffective with regard to the independent status of Bethlehem chapel<sup>in Prague</sup>). (7)

Huss's ambiguous ecclesiology does not appear to regard the church as a visible community though he emphasises the predestinate as the essence of the mystical Body.

He attempts to have the best of both worlds in locating the universal and true church among the elect, whilst retaining some semblance of a visible institution and hierarchy, depending upon Augustine, Gregory, Chrysostom and other fathers for his view. (8) Whilst the church militant is a congregatio fidelium, only the elect within it are true members of the mystical Body. Like Wycliffe, the church he regards as existing from the beginning before the Incarnation, the elect as the invisible true church within the visible Body. Spinka thinks he acknowledges the mixed character of the visible church but rejects the idea of a juridical corporation, Huss's ideal being that of a spiritual fellowship, a communion of saints living in holiness, bound to Christ by predestination. (9)

The Council of Constance took this idea of the 'true' church' as denying the validity and reality of the church militant. In this De Vooght regards Huss as setting the individual against the church in the name of authentic tradition. (10) The damned may exist within the church but

they are not of its esse, though since one cannot be sure who is of the elect in the present church it can have no authority. In this Leff believes Huss looks to a communion of 'true' Christians which transcends present failure, Huss holding two standards rather than positing two churches.(11) That no outward state or act matters for the member of the true church of the predestined, Huss illustrates from the case of Judas who was numbered among the apostles.(12) This emphasis on the predestinate tends to invalidate the empirical church, whereas he was tried at Constance on the basis of the church being a legal corporate institution, supported by canon law and Nominalism.(13) Huss' separation of the visible church from the spiritual is reflected too in his three kinds of obedience; -ecclesiastical, which is the invention of priests; civil, to the secular authority; spiritual, to the law of God alone.

The whole of Huss' ecclesiology hinges on predestination, a view which its precursors Augustine and Aquinas regard as quite orthodox. The predestinate alone as distinct from the foreknown constitute the church, the Body of Christ, the elect descended from Adam, and the foreknown from Cain, in a parallel similar to Augustine's two cities. The foreknown will be separated from the predestined as the Day of Judgement and will not share in the inheritance of those who have received grace.(15) This division extends throughout the church militant in which both predestinate and foreknown share. The word 'church' can refer to the building, priests,

or the congregation of all men under Christ, but the spiritual 'true' church of the predestinate is still its unknown core.(16) His most preferred use of the term is for the elect rather than a universal communion of all the baptised, for he looks to an invisible church whose members are within all churches, making a federation of the visible Body. While he rejects the legal institution and a universal primacy, his opponents, Stanislas and Palec, hold firmly to the visible and spiritual union of the one universal Church of Rome as a corporeal and juridical Body, invisibility undivided from visible membership or spiritual power. Although the church lives and subsists in this Body which is made visible in the congregation of the faithful, the appeal is to succession in office, Christ is the church as a present reality, not present invisibility with future definition.(17) How then does Huss regard the church as deriving from, or bound to the nature of Christ ?

Huss suggests that from the beginning of his Incarnation Christ is head of the church according to his human nature, and this would seem to root the church firmly within the Christ-event. This he develops to describe Christ as the outward head of every particular church, universal head by his divinity and inward head by his humanity.(18) We might expect the reverse to be true, but for Huss the predestined as the saved are the outcome of Christ's saving work. He describes the Body of the church as the body of a young man, and Christ as the outward head of the whole human race'.(19) The apostles are the foundation of the church, but not in

the same way as Christ who is inseparable from the 'mystical' church his bride, since some of the Popes have been separated by heresy.(20) Christ is one person with his holy church his Body - for Christ and the church is the mystery of all Christians, and he can speak of the communion of the saints as the mystical Body of Christ, but not in the sense of a corporation as seen by the canonists.(21)

The contention between Christ and his adversaries is based on the distinction between the Roman Church as the predestinate and foreknown and the mystical Body of the church as the church universal, the latter being invisible, for Huss, with visible communities. Spinka regards Huss as defining the view of earlier conciliarists on the church as a mystical spiritual entity dependent upon the will of God alone.(22) To be a member of the church demands perseverance.

Whilst seeing the necessity for visible fellowship and the individual being supported by the whole church, Huss also regards the universal church as needing to conform to the law of Christ as a priority.(23)

This relationship of the visible institution as at one remove from union with Christ and left to an imitatio Christi, enables him to separate the institution from the reality. In common with Lollardy Huss denies the hierarchy in the name of the visible church of the elect alone, a view similar to Stanislas' idea of Christ as the mystical soul of the Body, yet it is not just with the invisible church of Christ that Huss links the predestinate, but with his

humanity - his visibility. For him the Body of Christ exists in different forms, in heaven, in the sacraments, and in every place, but substantially still the one Christ, but this is not intimately or consistently related to the church. Before the Incarnation Christ was outward head of the church by his divinity, after it, inward head by his humanity, which does suggest some sharing consubstantial with us.(25)

Huss' church is a church of saints in opposition to the Devil's body of the wicked which forms a complete anti-church. The true church must be pure without spot or stain, a pattern he derives from the early church in looking for a return to the primitive state in which there was no Pope or cardinals, when the church was better ruled than now. In this he upholds what he considers to be the authentic Gospel of Christ continued in the Fathers from the practice of the early church. He is followed in this by Rockyana and Payne who judged decrees and councils according to the practice of Christ, the apostles and the primitive church.(26)

Constantine plays a considerable role in Huss' thinking, for the church declined from his time, poison entering the church with his Donation. Constantine and Sylvester erred, although Huss refuses to commit himself to the article of Constance which blames Constantine and Sylvester for the church's endowment, as this would deny the present church's responsibility.(27) Macek also regards the poor church ideal as playing a considerable role in the Czech church reform. In the conflict he sees priests suffering with the poor, and

poor preachers stirring up anti-feudal ideas among the masses, especially among the Prague Hussites, Huss' emphasis on poverty for priests following the Spiritual Franciscans. With his emphasis on purity it is difficult to acquit Huss of the charge of Donatism; Macek believes that it was Wycliffe's idea that sinful authority ceases to be authority which aroused Huss's enthusiasm, though Spinka denies any Donatism in him for <sup>Spinka believes Huss</sup> regarded the sacraments received from clergy were valid even if the priest was not in a state of grace. <sup>To qualify this</sup> Huss added Wycliffe's rider of 'unworthily', <sup>despite this</sup> although Donatism was held against <sup>Huss</sup>.

In his article against Palec he regards the early fathers as supporting his view that a pope or bishop in mortal sin forfeits his office. Huss says of the Pope;

if he does not follow Christ and Peter in his manner of life he should be called the apostolic adversary rather than the apostolic successor.'(30)

He makes the Pope's office dependent upon his membership of the predestinate, for he is the vicar of Judas if he lives contrary to Peter. In this Stanislas accuses Huss of failing to distinguish person from office, and in this Palec is closer to church tradition than Huss.(31) Huss does skate on thin ice towards Donatism, though with the saving clause of 'valid but unworthy' he places spirituality and devotion above duty and office, drawing a distinction between the technically valid and the true, specifically in his emphasis that office alone does not make a priest or prelate.(32) This coincides with his idea of predestination which separates spiritual worth and standing from visible



membership and community.

A priest is owed respect for his office, but many priests abandon the imitation of Christ, whereas true priests conform to his commands, true and false priests being found within the same order.(33) The charge of Donatism is difficult to dismiss from those who follow Huss, particularly priests who baptise in ponds and celebrate mass in stables rather than in churches which they regard as unclean.(34)

In the eucharist, Huss rejects Wycliffe's view of remanence whilst holding to transubstantiation, yet as in Wycliffe his eucharistic doctrine does not relate very closely to his ecclesiology.(35)

In his view of scripture he identifies three senses as identical in the Word of God, Christ himself, the scriptures given by him, and our knowledge of him. The law of Christ he regards as more than the letter of scripture which needs both reason and the Holy Spirit for its authentic interpretation. When Palec accuses him of expounding scripture erroneously Huss replies that he expounds scripture according to the doctors and the Holy Spirit.(36) The papacy and the cardinals have no right to declare anything contrary to scripture, and the church has no exclusive right to scriptural interpretation, but Huss upholds the right to individual private exposition, though Tavard regards Huss as including both fathers and councils as part of the church's tradition and as scripture.

Spinka however regards Huss as following Wycliffe's realism

in not allowing ecclesiastical tradition any role, Huss only accepting tradition provided it was consonant with scripture, a distinction reflecting his moral and spiritual criteria.(38)

In rejecting the Roman Church's abuses Huss hits out at indulgences which he regards as trafficking in faith and piety whereas God's forgiveness is freely available, an opinion in which he follows Augustine, Peter Lombard and William of Paris.(39) While he can view the pope as Anti-Christ this did not refer to every pope, for it excluded good popes like Gregory the Great but only referred to those not virtuously among the predestined.

Matthew of Janov follows Huss in his ideal in emphasising a poor church, and regarding Anti-Christ as the visible church or all Christians who put self love before Christ. He too regards the predestined as the church of Christ, distinguishing the Body of Christ from the communion of saints, though Leff says that unlike Huss he does not divide the two to distinguish the true church from the visible church. He appeals also to the primitive church from the present one.(40) The Body of Christ is only the elect. In this he regards the church as having remained pure until it degenerated at the beginning of the thirteenth century culminating in the Great Schism.(41)

The radical wing of Hussitism, the Taborites attempted to form a classless society in line with primitive apostolic communism whilst appealing to the kingdom within them which set them free from civil obedience. Lambert says they saw

themselves as the primitive church incarnate with an ability to interpret scripture which superseded the Fathers.(42)

While <sup>he was</sup> not seeking separation from the universal church, Huss could not hold his invisibilist ideal within Roman orthodoxy which regarded itself as an organic development from the apostles and Christ himself. In his arraignment at Constance, Spinka regards Huss's distinction of being in the church but not of it as a theological commonplace that the Council could not condemn, and <sup>that the Council was</sup> therefore seeking to subvert his ideal by formulating it as if he denied the church's existence at all.(43)

Where does spiritual authority lie ? How is it communicated by Christ to the church ?

Huss could not deny any visible form to the church, but it is not clear that it derives from any inner identity or traditio, and this consequently made its outward form

<sup>of dubious authenticity</sup> In the end it could simply claim moral authority and thus lapse into pietism. If there is any continuity between the Incarnation and Christ, outward form cannot be denied, though we can see Huss fighting a battle between this and the unworthiness of the church of his day.

Huss appeals to inner invisible coherence with Christ. Any authority from the Incarnation was transposed to another sphere, and the earthly continuity <sup>of the Church</sup> from the apostles capable of being left as an empty shell by a defecting and defective church; there seems no attempt to link the church directly

to the Incarnation at all, in denying the juridical institution for the church of the Spirit. It is difficult to see how he could have any concern for the form of Christ in the world, for the gathering of the church together seems in most respects incidental.

In his nearness to Donatism we glimpse the ethos which depends on morality as evidence of grace to define the church, leading to a subjectivity which seems to discount altogether the public church.

Who then, on his terms, can be saved ?

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CONCLUSION.



As outlined in the Introduction, whilst there have been many studies of Christology/ecclesiology, this thesis illustrates the aspects and consequences which arise in this context when considering a docetic Christology and its implications.

It could be argued that such a docetic view is, by its very nature, not consistently apparent.

This study has maintained that there is a 'givenness' in the nature of the Christian tradition which is more than the common consent of the faithful, a visible element of continuity not determined by contemporary preference or circumstances, or by any one spirituality, although forms may vary from age to age.

Docetism as one of the earliest Christian heresies struck at the heart of the Church's developing Christology and simultaneously at the heart of the Church's life, and was a live issue in apologetic.

Whilst in the early period orthodoxy and heresy is fluid, they often appear as mirror images, although there were different factors which created hairesis within doctrinal development.(1)

With the Gnostic enquiry as to who understood and interpreted Jesus of Nazareth correctly we find a growing tendency to separate spiritual authenticity from canonicity. Time and development could made orthodoxy heretical, the 'catholic' consensus of orthodoxy maintaining its priority and public nature against the novelty and private channels

of heresy,(2) Correspondingly the public Christ of the Church, available to all as in his ministry, was paralleled by a secret Christ revealed only to those possessing gnosis. The sacred past in 'heilsgeschichte' acquired new importance, as the central figure of Jesus Christ was regarded as the crucial point of 'interchange' in the economy of salvation, for what was effected in Christ affected mankind as a whole.

From the historic person of Jesus, the Church was committed to historical existence, particularly after the first flush of eschatological expectation declined.

The New Testament points to an understanding of Jesus Christ as more than individual, continuing within the life of the Church, in the emphases from Matthew, the Pauline soma tou Christou, the Son of Man sayings, and the background to the remnant concept.

Under pressure from heresy to define its faith, the Church claimed history as the sphere of God's mighty acts culminating in Christ, in which it had its own crucial role as the New Israel.

In this Christology and ecclesiology are bound together. Jesus Christ in his humanity/divinity inseparably continued in the life of the Church.

In this context the question arises as to what is a true development from this, what elements are to change and what remains unchangeable. This is still a live contemporary

issue, particularly where issues facing the Church find no allusion within the New Testament. How they are resolved depends largely on where they are placed on the Christological/ecclesiological trajectory, without falling into supersessionism which returns to gnostic subjectivity, or into docetic rejection. What are given elements, and what are adiaphora is still a relevant issue.

How does Christ's coming in the flesh relate to the visible and material order in which men live ? This is a question the Greek Fathers answered in their divinisation theology in which all creation is redeemed and renewed in Christ.

In this new order, claiming history as the sphere of God's action gives strength to antiquity, and the archaic can be considered heretical.

It is questionable whether, in the light of this, Christian heilsgeschichte can have any separate meaning from 'secular' history, as such a separation too could be regarded as a form of docesis.

As the focal point of Christ's recapitulation, the Church holds to the new sanctified meaning of the visible and material, emphasised in its visible tradition and the loci of worship, sacraments and community. The forms developed in liturgy and the sacraments and iconography are shaped by Christology.

From the example of Stephen in Acts we can see how uneasily such a development was for Hellenism. Where the visible was undervalued or destroyed, (i.e. the temple), new theological

interpretations arose, an opening not lost on the Lollards who turn it to reinterpetive iconoclasm.

Orthodoxy held a positive view of creation, continued in redemption, rather than dualistic pessimism, believing that the divine and human nature of Christ continued in its own life, the invisible made visible.

This view underlined the Church's emphasis on order rather than freedom, and salvation for all rather than the elite, though this did not prevent some attempts to maintain an church within a church of the saved which ultimately cut at the roots of the Church's sacramentalism, and the sanctification of time and matter in the Incarnation.

The Gnostic attempt to free Christianity from history diminished heilsgeschichte, with a consequent diminution of particularity into syncretism. Under Platonist influence, the world was regarded as a place of abandonment, re-enforcing a world-denigrating view as against world-affirming orthodoxy.

In consequence common public theology is rejected in favour of the private truth and deeper understanding of the elect, preferring the inner divinity of Christ over the historical person. This inward mystical element finds its parallel in the self-divinity of Gnostic leaders.(3)

Rejecting ecclesiastical order, Gnostics opposed their castes of 'spiritual men' to the Church's ordained ministry, followed in this by Montanists, Catharism and Lollardy in their ecclesiolae and scholae rather than the life of the

great Church. These attitudes are reflected in their 'Geist-Christologie', rejecting the visible order in philosophising the Faith, or claiming philosophy for Christ.

In their cosmic mythology meaning and value are transposed beyond this world, and the believer alienated, with an ascetic or libertine morality, depending at which end of the Gnostic spectrum he lived.

Coincidentally we find that the trajectory of Christology and the docetic element finds its correlation in related areas such as morality often with a negative world-view.

Dualism on the spectrum from Gnostics to Cathars, continually questions the true nature of Christ, posing an implicit threat to orthodoxy with an invitation to understand the 'mind of Christ' whilst rejecting any suggestion that he shares our humanity in the Incarnation. Yet this does raise the issue of what kind of humanity this was. 'What kind of flesh Christ took' is a typical Gnostic enquiry, for if the Gnostic Redeemed Redeemer himself needed redemption it may be because he shares our fallen humanity. If Christ has a humanity like that of Adam before the Fall, this is not ours, for it is a kind of humanity, according to tradition, of which we have no knowledge, and he then bears an unlikeness to us.

Does he share our humanity in all its disorderedness and circumstances? Are we but proleptically made new in Christ, or recreated as part of all creation ?

The Gnostic understanding gives no grounds for the orthodox

idea of objective holiness deriving from the objective work of Christ rather than subjective appropriation of it.

It is often pointed out that within Christianity there is an inherent dualism, exacerbated by Platonism, and it may therefore follow that we must expect in any authentic Christian community an integral outward and inward element. Yet preference for inward spirituality can lead to outward disparagement.

Gnosticism created a gulf at the point where Christians regard the world and God as bridged in Christ.

A threat to historicity is a threat to Christ.

Gnostic Christology emphasised the inner Christ, its Docetism lacking any suggestion of a communicatio idiomatum, and this was underlined in their omission of birth narratives from the Gospel, and in an Adoptionist preference for the baptismal accounts. Similarly the real suffering of Jesus is rejected, for he is simply Enlightener. This led to disinterest in the role of Christ in the world, whereas the Incarnation provided a positive role for man and society.

Characteristically, Marcion's reductionism held little interest in external guarantees, removing heilsgeschichte from its setting. His Christ neither claims continuity with the old Israel nor provides any roots for a continuing community.

Montanus' role for the Spirit developed as "supersessionism", exalting experience over dogma and reason, questioning whether the time of revelation had

ended, bypassing tradition in illuminist prophetism. He has no room for continuity of the divinity and humanity of Christ in the Church in his Adoptionism.

The dissimulative existence of these groups within orthodox communities provides a corporate image of their docetic Christology.

In the context of the Church's self understanding of its tradition as the very life of Christ 'passed on', Irenaeus emphasises its public nature.(4) The true nature of tradition is not inner identity alone but also outward form. There is no suggestion that Christians are a later development, superior to Christ himself. Christ is truly endangered in the passion, the authenticity of his suffering vitally linked to that of Christians.(5) The unity of his person is the unity of the Church.

In apologetics, Clement and Origen illustrate the care needed by those preferring Platonism. They leave the impression of an elitist Christianity, diminishing any corporate visible idea of the Church. Unsurprisingly, both fall under the suspicion of Docetism in seeking a secret meaning beneath the words of scripture which baffles the ordinary believer, and with a secret oral tradition which the "true Gnostic" may dissimulate within the church, to protect.

Their high spirituality gives low value to the visible Church. Clement's saving grace is a positive view of

creation and Heilsgeschichte, but still with a noticeable docetic tendency, with an implied distinction between 'nominal' and 'real' Christianity, the hallmark of a later Pietism.

For Origen, history appears relative, types of Platonic realities. Though he equates scripture with the flesh of Christ, in docetic terms he moves beyond the letter, preferring an esoteric eternal gospel with a consequent spiritual church, a fellowship in which outward membership does not necessarily indicate true Christians, a view found later in Huss.

Origen understands the Incarnation as a period of shadow. Although his corporate Christ is present in the Church's sufferings, this does not seem to be directly related to a clear Christological perception.

Docetism, Christ as only seemingly human, has then correlatives in other areas of the Church's life, e.g. scripture, tradition, sacraments.

In places, New Testament exegesis identifies Christ with the Christian community. This is the case in Matthew with the disciples and the poor and Christ in need, in Paul's 'Damascus Road' encounter in Acts, and the development of the soma tou Christou theme, which are interpreted in this sense by the Fathers.

Similarly in the idea of 'the Name' and the background and sayings of the Son of Man theme.

These elements of tradition gives grounds for the co-



identity of Christ with the Church, the events and acts of Christ continued in the faithful. This being so, dokesis is also capable of an ecclesiological dimension, illustrated by the Johannine writings which have a clear anti-docetic element, emphasising love for the brethren and visible unity. From the background of corporate personality the Fathers confirm Heilsgeschichte as recapitulated in Christ.

(6)

Christ is more than an individual figure. In him the New Israel is established, and he is never without the community which receives its embryonic growth from the Incarnation, and the subsequent saving events. Christ and his people share a single life together.

Debate continues over the Pauline soma tou Christou, as to whether it is a metaphor or a reality. The Fathers for the most part take it to refer to the visible Christian community, using the Acts 'Damascus Road' passage in support, regarding Christ as the life of the Church, the very person of the Lord, Christ existing as treditio.

In this context, Basil of Caesarea's and Origen's preference for secret oral tradition is gradually relegated in orthodox circles to the lower realm of form and ritual as in the suggested 'Disciplina Arcani'.

In the Greek Fathers we have noted how God descends to share our humanity in the Incarnation, firmly anchoring salvation in this world, setting new value upon humanity and sanctifying history.

The Fathers continue the New Testament correlative between the visibility of the Lord and the Church. In his exegesis, Cullman describes Christ as identical with the Church - all that happened to the incarnate Lord, happening to the Church, for it shares in the saving events and Christ's sufferings continue in the lives of Christians.

Dokesis in ecclesiology thus prejudices the life of the visible Christian community. This is recognised in the fourth gospel where disregard for the sacraments is equated with docetic disregard of Jesus Christ.

Christ extends his fullness in humanity.

From the New Testament we gain a new understanding of soma, integrating the personal and corporate in the person of Jesus.

The Church has a Christological aspect, and Christ has an ecclesiological dimension.

Whatever is affirmed or denied of Christ is affirmed or denied of the Church, though some safeguarding of the uniqueness of the Incarnation is intended where what Christ is said to be by nature, we are by grace.

Consequently the traditio of the Church committed to writing some regard as the flesh of Christ, and to leave scripture is equated with leaving the humanity of Christ, for the paradosis is the living transmission of the Lord.(7)

In the setting of the Church, the authenticity of Christ's humanity is especially important in relation to martyrdom. If Christ's suffering is docetic and unreal, then we have no salvation, and our suffering for his sake has no value.

In connection with this we note the category of Son of Man sayings which relate to Christ's suffering, with their background of the afflicted saints. Christians' suffering is underwritten by the Lord's.

Philosophical compromise in the face of persecution, or shirking of martyrdom is a correlative of a docetic Christology.

The Fathers underline the New Testament emphasis of Christ assuming all humanity in the Incarnation, and the Matthean theme of Christ in the poor. This is a prominent theme in Augustine and Chrysostom. Where Christ is pre-existent in Augustine, the Church is pre-existent too. Since all are one man in Christ, division in the body of Christ refers not primarily to the humanity of the Redeemer but to the visible community of the Church, its disunity and suffering.

This language of co-identity is developed to include the three aspects of the Corpus Mysticum, the physical body of Jesus, the bread of the eucharist, and the corporate body of the Church, as one reality. Augustine guards against a 'spiritual' understanding of scripture leading to docesis. He upholds the visible Church against Donatist subjectivity,

though in other Platonic contexts appears to support an a-historical invisible church of the elect. Yet he underlines the hypostatic union in Christology as extending to all the faithful, for the whole Christ is the Word Incarnate + Christians, - a visible sacramental organism.

Augustine's ecclesiology is the framework of the medieval Church, leading to a theology of consecration, and a sacramental and iconographic theology, especially with regard to sacred buildings.

Early medieval writers like Bede think of Christ continued in the Church, an emphasis in Claudius of Turin which is related to the rejection of Docetism.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with its emphasis on the humanity of Jesus there is perhaps a case for distinguishing the Jesus of popular piety from the Christ of the Church's dogma, even where a 'lex orandi, lex credendi' view is prevalent. This raises the whole question of the relation of spirituality and devotion to the formation of doctrine.

Christians are regarded as the 'completion of Christ', and the Pauline soma tou Christou extended to a doctrine of society determined by Christology and ecclesiology, in a transition from Christ's Corpus, to "corporate", and

corporeal to "corporation", though the latter should not be understood as any one particular political form.

The consideration arises that not only may Christology influence the formation of ecclesiology, but that the reverse may also be true, just as later appeals to a primitive church are also appeals to an underdeveloped Christology.

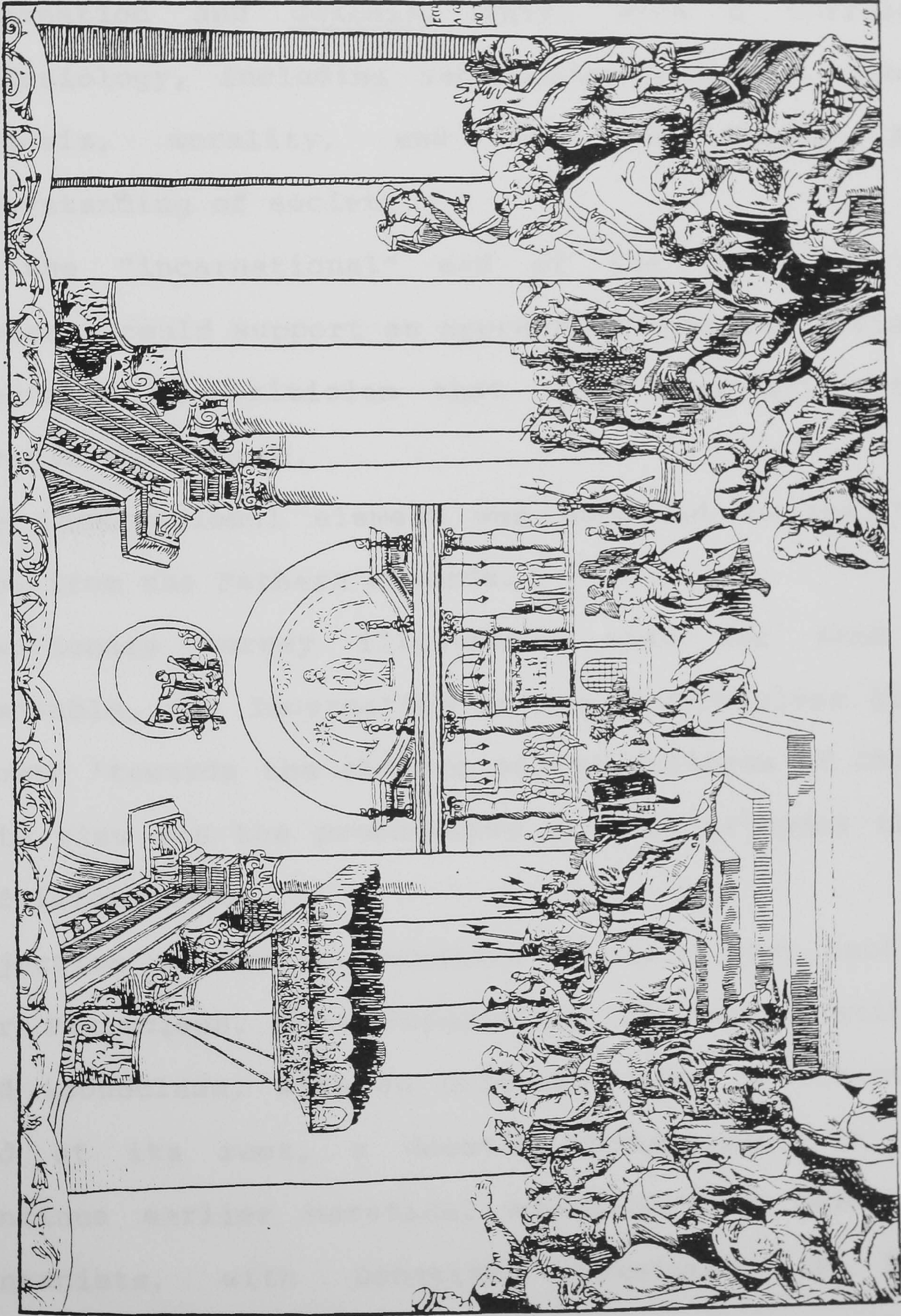
Socio-political influences contribute to Christological perspectives, e.g. the Pantocrator image, including puritan reaction to establishment. It could be argued that both are variations of a 'human' element, though a puritan 'high' Christology tends to result in docesis.

Although culture is a contributive element to theology, it is important to distinguish between what is baptised in Christ, and what the elements of cultural conditioning are which form a particular view of him.

The incarnational principle is the foundation of the state church in which heilsgeschichte supports the empire.(8)

The Constantinian establishment focussed such a 'legitimate' development of Christology in socio-political terms, or consequent puritan rejection by some in the name of spiritual authenticity.(9)

In the rejection of dokesis, the emergence of Christian iconography (10) emphasised the sanctification of matter, undergirding the the cult of the saints. The Constantinian establishment raised the whole question of the relation of



THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE.  
(Fresco by Raphael in the Vatican, showing Altar of Old St. Peter's.)

divine grace to the visible order; (we may compare Kee's view that with Constantinian establishment dokesis is made possible).(11)

Incarnation and dokesis, then, have a correlation in ecclesiology, including sacramental theology, iconography, exegesis, morality, and for the Middle Ages, an understanding of society.

At the "incarnational" end of the spectrum, excessive emphasis could support an oppressive theocratic view, giving substance to criticism that with Constantine the world invaded the Church.

The incarnational element was embedded in the 'catholic' view from the Fathers onwards.

Reactionary heresy illustrates that far from standing immovable, the Incarnation in the Church gives grounds for growth 'towards the stature of the fullness of Christ'. Yet this view was the prerogative of both orthodox theologians and illuminists.

Rejection of any consecration theology went hand in hand, for Paulicians, with repudiation of ecclesiastical office and iconoclasm, with an Origenist view of scripture. This had at its root, a docetic Christology. In this they continue earlier heretical emphases from Marcionites and Montanists, with Donatist insistence on their own authenticity.

In this context the life and work of Christ are transposed from the corporate community to the believer as equal to Christ who fulfils his promise that those who believe will do greater things than He. Christ is surpassed, and the objective tradition replaced by subjective spirituality, fragmenting the bond between his humanity and our salvation. Ecclesiologically, outward conformism and dissimulation have an inner proselytism.

Treating the Church as redundant Judaism, and claiming sole right to the title Christians, puritan gnostics reject the outward and visible, since the Incarnation is only a temporary phase. In this context there was a rediscovery of themes and ideals, some archaic according to orthodoxy, or only barely grasped by inventive imaginations.(12)

Whilst for the orthodox the more primitive continued to be regarded as the more authentic, some like Alexander III regarded proper development as in order (13), whilst others regard Christ as a pattern owing more in their understanding, to moral integrity than to historical veracity.(14)

Dualist heretics were not slow to suggest their legitimate succession from the primitive church, as the genuine article inspired by the Holy Spirit now.



A poverty ideal, even inspired by Matthean texts is quickly inverted into a Donatist view that only the poor and humble after the example of Christ, are authentic disciples.

In medieval heretical movements there is a continuing intuitive spirituality, rejecting the material and characteristically opposing Church order and establishment.

Any 'interchange' in Christ is rejected for a simple 'imitatio', with a naive undeveloped Christology, often giving little weight to the Incarnation, or at the other extreme emphasising divinity to the exclusion of our humanity.

Consistent 're-Judaising' of the Church is marked in the Cathar true remnant, whose similarity to earlier Christian heresies and dualist puritanism noticeably emphasises the Holy Spirit rather than Christology.

They give an impression of a secretive familial tradition of superior holiness, bearing some resemblance to monasticism, but with a particular emphasis on worthiness and its Donatist connotations. Their Christ, as a visiting angel, is not consubstantial with us, and in his hidden descent, is the heart of a secret society. In this there may be some truth in the Cathar's claims to primitivism, since this is what the church may have itself been, before establishment,

In the light of the suggestion that such dualists were but philosophical theologians, we can distinguish between gnosis as inspired intuitive wisdom and what the Church regarded as theology in terms of Anselm's 'fides quaerens intellectum'.

Orthodox Christianity regarded learning and reason as an ally, not as the Cathars and others did, as an enemy.

Rejection of learning and the Fathers made Christian humanism impossible, and takes us back to the early Christian debates over the rejection of a human mind in Christ, equating reason and learning with the 'world' to be rejected, rather than baptised and transfigured in Christ.

In this there is a consistent docetic rejection at work, which in the twentieth century context of the Church's humanity is alive and well, often with a corresponding Donatism.

In the rejection of a consecration theology, the Donatist concern for purity has an integral link with iconoclasm, and Origen suggests a link between these two.(15) This link between the visible and spirituality is important. In the original controversy Augustine refuted those who believed the Church's <sup>existence</sup> to be contingent upon its holiness, whilst the catholic Church understood holiness to be an objective element derived from Christ, irrespective of individual merit, sinners within the Church becoming more than they are by themselves, or the sum total of moral acts, i.e. the Body of Christ.(16)

The Church is thus not constituted by morality (Pietism), although Christians are expected to 'walk worthily'.

The pure spiritual church is illusory. (17)

In the contemporary context of the moral issues facing the

Church and with the recrudescence of fundamentalism, this needs to be clear.

Interestingly, Donatists were not free from formative cultural factors, and in the Patarenses such a puritan element is coincident with a docetic Christology.(18)

Donatist rejection of the world and the establishment, denying the universal salvation of the visible Church is paralleled by an iconoclast rejection of images.(19) Both Donatism and Iconoclasm reject incarnational continuity.  
(20)

Whilst Donatists may have had a 'high' Christology', perfectly reflecting Christ's perfect divine nature, this too results in dokesis.

Among orthodox writers in the Middle Ages, Peter Damian has an implicit dualist element, even though he maintains the humanity of Jesus. He contrasts the letter and spirit of scripture, playing down the role of human reason. There is a similar Donatist element in Gregory VII, though in the context of protest against wealth and privilege of the Roman Church compared ~~with~~ that in Acts, yet he maintains the Augustinian Body of Christ.

Similarly St. Bernard regards the Church as contained in Jesus, though whilst rejecting the heretics he remains consistently anti-Constantinian, influenced by Origen in his

desire for a spiritual Church, although he still anchors the physical life of Christ in the Church.

In such orthodox writers a perfectionist spirituality exists alongside the corporate ecclesiology.

Both within and without the Church the growth of power and wealth, and the disparity between Roman practice and early Christian ideals, created new expectations.

The external imitation of Christ took on new importance, though it is suggested this was allied to an internal 'imitatio'.

In some medieval movements the desire for a more perfect spirituality and the journey inwards takes the illumined beyond scripture to the book written upon the heart. In individuals such as Arnold of Brescia, emphasis on the true spiritual church is expressed in iconoclasm.

Such believers dissimulate at the eucharist, some regarding themselves as neo-Christ, or his most perfect believer.

This raised the question of the boundaries of Christian mysticism. Could personal experience be a valid expression of Christ's humanity ?

The influence of Platonism and Pseudo-Dionysius encouraged an anti-rationalist via negativa theology, (21) promoting a return to gnosis, with a preference for the mystical Christ beyond the Church's traditio.

The spectrum from reason in theology to gnostic unknowing marks a similar trajectory from incarnational Christology to docesis.

Often the guide as to whether individuals or groups are within the Church related to their Christological /ecclesiological stance. Mystical truth and subjective experience often made hairesis, choice, inevitable. Within such groups new rationales develop, along with self-justification for their own beliefs and practices. Simplicity and poverty could ultimately undermine any theology of the Church as institution, and perfectionism and supersessionism exalt experience over order. Anti-nomian disregard could leave the letter that kills in anti-intellectual disgust in favour of the Spirit which gives life.

This is the perpetual problem of the relationship of the charismatic to the institutional, and the rejection of traditio for immediacy and personal revelation.

Reform movements infer that it is possible to reject the past to begin anew. Yet how could this relate to Christ as traditio bound to history and transmitted in the Church's life?

Some reject ecclesial tradition altogether, but where scripture is retained, so also in a measure is tradition.

In the consistent rejection of the Constantinian establishment as in Joachim of Fiore and Olivi and the

Franciscan Spirituals, heilsgeschichte is redrawn.(22)

Eckhart believes that true spiritual experience enables the believer to disregard disciplines. With a disregard for reason and preference for for mystical inwardness we see the gradual displacement of the outward and visible church by the 'true' church invisible, and any continuity between the humanity of Christ and the visible church becomes immaterial.

In the light of this, although further revelation is regarded as permissible within the church, we can understand why it is treated very cautiously by catholic writers.(23)

Among the influences gathering in the pressure towards reform, the Waldenses appeal to the primitive church, with a continuing dissimulation, concealing their true convictions, within Catholicism. In their view, Rome, having forfeited its spiritual title deeds, gives place to the Waldenses as moral successors to the apostles. The true inner church consists of the apostles' time relived in their present experience, in iconoclastic rejection of church buildings, supported by Stephen's speech in Acts.

These themes are found with a clear predestinarian emphasis in Wycliffe with a Platonic emphasis on the invisible church. Since he regards the church as having its own principles and species apart from the Incarnation, it does not derive from it.

Rejecting the present church in the name of a future pure church, he replaces the visible church with scripture,

whilst appealing to the authentic meaning beyond the letter. In Donatist pattern, sanctity, for him, is the hallmark of authenticity.

Whilst insisting that the inward life of the Church should be reflected in the outward, the question arises as to what the role of Christology in ecclesiology should be when one element is distorted, (e.g. the human, by power and wealth).

In the Lollards' invisible communion of the saved, with its own rationale and criteria, this question continues, with elements of Donatism, illuminism and iconoclasm, within a secretive familial tradition. Personal interpretation of one element of the Church's traditio, i.e. scripture, is used as a weapon against the Church's tradition itself.

Huss ultimately arrives at the true church of saints living in holiness, with his distinction of being 'in the Church but not of it'. Any idea of a continuance of the Incarnation has evaporated. He separated the reality from the institution in ecclesiological dokesis. Whilst he can maintain heilsgeschichte in some sense since he keeps the Old Covenant, he does not see this developed specifically in Christology to justify the Church's existence. For him it is simply a renewal of the ancient people of God.

What should determine the form of the Church, and what is the nature of Christ who is traditio? From the New Testament and the Fathers, the answer is Christology developing into ecclesiology, the form of Christ in the world. This being so, how is his humanity to be related to outward juridical form? How does the Church maintain an outwardness and inwardness which reflects an authentic Christology?

Extreme emphasis on the former creates, as we have seen, a theocratic intolerance and sometimes lack of development, or rejection of any dialectic. The other extreme removes the Church from history, erasing heilsgeschichte in a kind of spiritual gnosis without doing justice to the nature of continuing tradition, Christ often regarded as the beginning of that which has superseded him. (24)

A docetic ecclesiology cannot ultimately be identified, as may be suggested, by a Catholic as against a Protestant ethos. (25)

Contemporary Catholicism includes elements which Wycliffe and Huss would find congenial, whilst maintaining Christological/ecclesiological inseparability, (26) as does a contemporary Orthodox view. (27)

From this perspective, denominationalism can be regarded as failure to reflect an adequate Christological/ecclesiological continuity, especially when we recall the Fathers' suggestion of 'laceration of the body'. Present day ecumenism still finds Constantinianism a live issue.



In this context Wainwright suggests that,

'....an ecclesiology which denies the gravity of disunity is docetist..(maintaining that).. "institutional unity is not important because true Christians are known to the Lord and inwardly in him"..' (28)

The need for a strong Christology which stresses the historical and institutional aspects of Christianity is emphasised in a recent study of Trinitarian theology, (29) and Ducquoc in his study of ecclesiology suggests that where there is preference for an invisibilist ecclesiology the return to origins appears illusory, although he affirms the Church's inseparability from history. (30)

The role and nature of history in theology, and the issues of event and meaning raised in the contemporary study of Christology are consequently important for ecclesiology.

Is the Church a purely human society for a spiritual purpose, or is its very form determined by more than sociological or political determinants ?

The ideas and choices involved in ecclesiological Docetism continue to recur in current debate, those, that is, between faith and order, the institutional and charismatic, visible and invisible, inward versus outward, the relationship of the spiritual to the material.

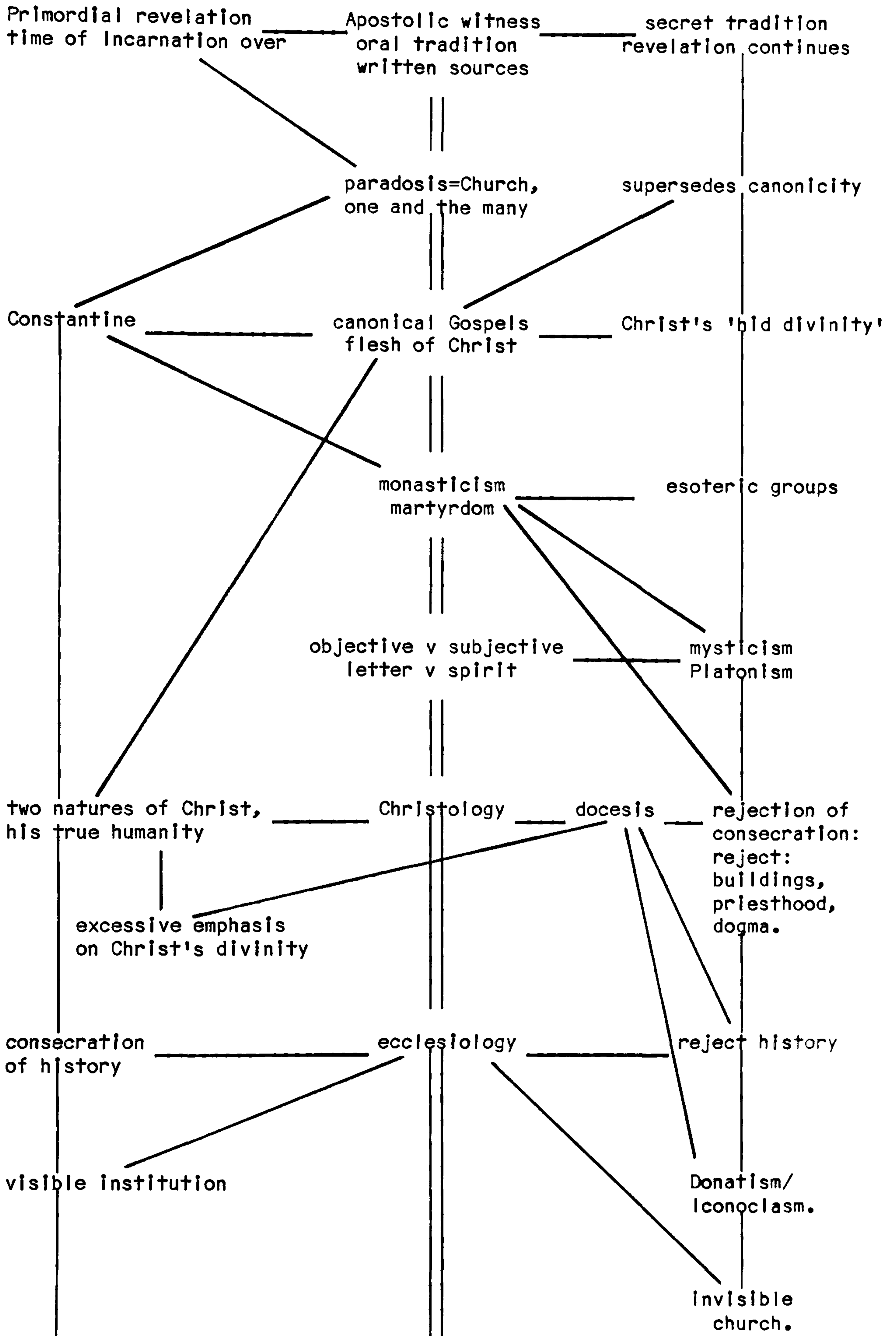
Unless Christology and ecclesiology are to be completely docetic, cultural and non-theological factors will have their place in its formation. The Church cannot, any more than Christ, be removed from the reality of this world and

the life of unity and diakonia within it, nor evade the harsh choices this entails by taking refuge in a kind of spiritualism.(31)

Donatist reductionism is always inviting, but an appeal to a church of the saved alone ultimately cuts at the roots of sacramental ministry and pastoral concern.

Christianity's uniqueness is prominent in the union of the universal and particular and the divine and human in Christ, coincident in ecclesiological perspective, and this is the context in which to view the consistent docetic alternative.

Christ -'handed over'  
(Incarnation and Passion)



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[Choices between orthodoxy and heresy:  
Membership: limitation or universality.  
Discipline: rigorism of 'indulgence'.  
Authority: scripture/tradition or spirit,  
hierarchy/college or people.  
Doctrine: positivism or free speculation,  
esoteric or exoteric,  
elitist or popular.  
Adaptation: partial or total,  
rejection of zeitgeist or coming to  
terms with it.]
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## ABBREVIATIONS

- C.W.S.        Classics of Western Spirituality.
- J.C.S.D.      Jewish and Christian Self-Definition.  
              (see bibliography. E.P.Sanders.)
- J.T.S.        Journal of Theological Studies.
- L.C.C.        Library of Christian Classics.
- P.G.         Patrologia Graeca... series. J.P.Migne.
- P.L.         Patrologia Latina. series. J.P.Migne.
- R.E.G.        The Rediscovery of Gnosticism.  
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- S.C.H.        Studies in Church History.

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