A Treatise against the Melchites (Mingana translation)

Dionysius bar Salibi (d. AD 1171)

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Prefatory Note

(i) A Treatise of Bar alībi against the Melchites. I GIVE in the following pages the translation, accompanied by a critical apparatus, of a very rare treatise of Dionysius Bar alībi, the well-known West Syrian or Jacobite writer who died in A.D. 1171. The treatise is indeed so rare that not even a reference to it is found in Baumstark, and no acquaintance with its existence is shown by the early Syrian bibliographer who wrote a complete list of Bar alībi's works. The treatise is in the form of a discussion with, or rather a long address to, a certain Rabban 'Ishō', a West Syrian monk of some importance, who had evidently shown some leniency towards the Melchites, and was about to leave, or had already left, his own community to join them. He had written a long letter to Bar alībi on this subject, and it is this lost letter that has given birth to the present treatise. Bar alībi analyses verbatim his opponent's missive, and refutes it. As the author does not give any clear indication where his own sentence ends and that of his adversary begins, I have experienced some difficulty in following his argumentation; but I believe that I have succeeded in overcoming the obstacles thrown in our way in this matter, but not without sacrificing to the altar of clearness my predilection for literal translations.

I have, therefore, been compelled to mark in the translation Rabban 'Ishō's text by the words: "You write" which are not in the text, and here and there I have added words and even complete phrases in order to make it easier for the English reader to follow the author's too concise, too disconnected, and sometimes obscure reasoning. The "Greeks" assailed by Bar alibi are better known to us under the name of Melchites, who in the West Syrian Orthodox Church are generally styled "Chalcedonians," although the appellation "Melchites" is also very often ascribed to them. The Syriac MS. in which the treatise is found constitutes an integral part of my own collection of Syriac MSS., in the custody of the Rendel Harris Library, Birmingham, where it has the class-mark Syriac MS. Mingana 4. It was copied in A.D. 1895 by Deacon Matthew, from a very ancient MS. preserved in ūr 'Abdīn, near the monastery of Dair uz-za'farān, the residence of the monophysite Patriarchs of Antioch. Because of the rarity of the MS. I have deemed it advisable to give a complete facsimile of its text, and refer in the footnotes of the translation to some lexicographical and grammatical errors made either by the first or by the second copyist. An index of proper names will be found at the end of the work.

We will further write the ten chapters composed by Dionysius, metropolitan of Amed, who is the illustrious Jacob Bar alibi, against Rabban 'Ishō'. The humble Dionysius, the servant of God, offers you his greetings and his prayers, O Rabban 'Ishō'; may you be in the keeping of Providence! Any work from which spring good and gain for the souls of both the speaker and the attentive hearer, is not to be hindered or silenced. These words we write at the beginning of our discourse to you, as we have read your conciliatory treatise which stands between truth and falsehood in order not to hurt anybody's feelings. In another place we will deal with the worldly questions that it raises. So far as the spiritual questions which give life to the souls are concerned, it is more advantageous to strive after undiluted truth and avoid ambiguity, especially in our dealings with those people who twist the facts and mix straw with corn, water with wine, and all kinds of impure alloys with gold. The Apostle of the Gentiles has said: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good, and abstain from any form of evil." See how Paul teaches us to prove and examine everything, and hold fast that which is good before God, and flee from all bad things and false teaching, as from nests of snakes.

We are also shown how a man can learn with certitude where truth lies : he must either follow one who is universally acknowledged to be wise and learn little by little from him, as Philip taught the eunuch of the Queen of Sheba, or he must read studiously the Books of the Spirit and acquire from them the knowledge of truth. He who believes that he has attained truth from hearsay, or from the ravings of a seducer, or from the sight of an occurrence that happens to be in harmony with his beliefs, does not lean on truth but on a broken reed, on a shadow only. But it is time now to embark on our subject.

Chapter 1. On the Sign of the Cross

You wrote to us that neither from nature nor from any book did you learn to cross yourself with two fingers, but that you are following in this the habit of the Greeks, of the Franks, and of twenty-four other peoples such as the Iberians, Alans, Russians, Hungarians and others who cross themselves with two fingers. This, O Rabban 'Ishō', we will answer in the following manner :

An intelligent man like you should weigh his words in the balance of justice before uttering them. If you have not acquired a subject from a book, nor learned it from nature, the two sources which embrace all the universe, how then can you neglect the truth of both book and nature, and follow something that is not based on any real foundation ? The Book says : " Remove not the eternal landmark ; " now if the landmark is nature and book, in rejecting them both we naturally trespass on the boundaries of truth. Christ did not destroy the law but fulfilled it, and we contend that we are not to follow nature and the law, but to step in strange paths ! Do we not fear then a rebuke from David who says : " When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers." Among the peoples whom you have mentioned there is injustice, murder, immorality and many other abominations; should we follow them in these? Sound judgement forbids it. Even those people whom you have mentioned, if they do not prove the truth they hold from nature and book, no one will ever induce himself to listen to them, and their own followers will forsake them. But we who are right and possessors of the truth, will demonstrate to you that we are walking in the path of nature and book, and that is why we make the sign of the cross with one finger only.

First, nature teaches us that the cross to which Christ was attached was not composed of double pieces of wood stretched in its perpendicular and horizontal side, as a symbol to the two fingers used by the Greeks in crossing themselves, but had only one piece of wood on each side. Further, the rod of Moses which was a symbol of the cross, was one and not two like that symbolized by two fingers. Finally, the crosses made of silver, brass and wood, and those found on the walls are not fashioned by the peoples you mentioned in double perpendicular and horizontal lines, but in one line only as the symbol of one finger. These arguments from nature will suffice, and we will now enumerate the arguments from book.

That universal Doctor, John Chrysostom, clearly shows this in saying thus in the fifty-third discourse of his commentary on Matthew: "(Paul's saying) 'Ye are bought with a price,'" signifies the price paid on your behalf, and it does not fit you to be the servants of any man. (Paul) alludes by the word "Price" to the cross; you should not make the sign of the cross with the finger in a simple way, but you should first make it with will and with great faith; and then if you print it in this way on your forehead, no vile demon will be able to prevail against you." See how the Doctor speaks of one finger only and not of two or three. If we were to cross ourselves with two fingers he would have said "with the fingers" or "with two fingers." Further, when the Apostle Thomas wished to test the resurrection of the One who was crucified, he only desired to put his finger into the print of the nails, because he said : " Except I put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe." And when our Lord revealed Himself to him, He said, " Reach hither thy finger." See how the Book mentioned one finger only in the first and the second instances, and not two or several.

From these we may learn that the act of making the sign of the cross upon oneself or upon the holy elements is not done with two fingers but with one only. The Greeks, however, who believe in two natures in Christ say : " We make the sign of the cross with two fingers because there are two natures in Christ." Against this we wrote at length in our controversial treatise against them ; here it will suffice us to say : If the natures in Christ are as separate from each other as two fingers are, they have no unity, and the Doctors of the Church who say that the Word was united to His flesh as fire is to iron, are in error. Further, two fingers, although separate from each other, are really one in substance (ο σία), and thus, in the contention of the Greeks, the eternal Son of the Father would be one in substance with the flesh which is created and subject to time ; and this is blasphemy.

We will further rebut the Greeks as follows : the cross teaches us that Christ, the Son, was attached to it in the flesh, while in His divinity He was neither extended nor attached ; but with two fingers you show that He was extended on the cross and crucified in His two natures. You are thus Theopaschites, because with the human nature you crucify God also. As to us, we believe that as Christ is one, and the cross is one, the sign also of the cross is to be made with one finger only ; and this we have learned from both nature and book. You write : " The sacrament of the sign of the cross consists in the Word of God who became flesh and came down from heaven to earth, and removed mankind from the left hand and darkness to the right hand and light."

We do not drive away darkness with light, as you write, because we make the sign of the cross from right to left ; everyone knows that darkness is the very antithesis of light, and that if the latter is mixed up in the former it becomes swallowed up in it in the same way as the bitterness of a little brackish water in a jug of sweet water, or that of a little myrrh or wormwood in a considerable quantity of honey. Let us admit that light drives away darkness, how can the left hand drive away the right? Our Lord has said that He will set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left; in this our Saviour demonstrated that the right cannot expel the left, but those who make the sign of the cross from right to left, move, out

of their own free will, from the right hand to the left which is that of the goats, and are counted with the robber who was on our Lord's left. But see how in the consecration of the elements and in the final prayers of the service the Greeks make the sign of the cross like us, from left to right, and in this way they contradict themselves.

You wrote: "twenty-four peoples use two fingers," but your number did not reach even ten. Do not listen, therefore, to some deceivers who say that we have with us twenty-four peoples. Further, truth is not always with the majority. Consider that there are seventy different peoples, and that those who follow the gospel are less numerous than those who are still pagan; and no one pretends that because of their higher number, the pagans have greater right than we have. In the time of Abraham and Moses there was only one people, that of the Hebrews, who worshipped God, and the rest worshipped idols, and no one says that because of that the worshippers of idols had greater right than the single people of the Hebrews. This suffices for this chapter.

Chapter 2. Also on the Sign of the Cross

You wrote: ”What is the meaning of our making the sign of the cross with one finger? Could we possibly have greater right than all others? Christ ordered that every word should be established at the mouth of two or three witnesses, and in our case there are more than three.” If your words are true, it follows than wherever there are several people holding an opinion, they have more truth than one people; and this leads us, as we wrote in the first chapter, to the assumption that the Gentiles had more truth than the Jews, and that Abraham was in error because he was the only one who worshipped God, and the numerous men, his contemporaries, who worshipped idols, were right. Our Lord’s sentence: ”At the mouth of two witnesses or three every word is established,” has not the meaning that you attribute to it; it bears exclusively on the fact that the testimony of a single witness should not be accepted against a culprit, lest he should be testifying falsely against him out of spite; when, however, there are two or three witnesses, they could not testify against him in a biased way, but only truly and rightly.

You write: ”Is it not more advantageous that a man should cross himself in beginning with the right side, which is the side of light, and then pass this light over his face and with it drive away darkness, than to cross himself from the side of darkness and pass it over his face?” If darkness and light are defined by the right hand moving horizontally, tell me what is meant by the first act we do in crossing ourselves, which consists in moving our hand in a perpendicular way from our head downwards? You might say that the top movement means light and the bottom one darkness, and that a man first takes light and comes down to darkness, and then takes light again to another darkness. The Greeks would have thus two lights and two darknesses, and would begin with light and end with darkness. This theory of yours is not a happy one, and the single cross is not light in one of its horizontal sides and darkness in the other, but it is light in both of its sides. It is also advantageous that the end of all our works should be on the right hand, that is to say, good, and it is thus better to end the sign of the cross with the side of the right hand, and not with the side of the left which is, according to the words of our Lord, that of the goats.

Further, we maintain that the cross of the Greeks has not only two lines in its horizontal side, but four lines. In the first act of crossing themselves they form their cross from top to bottom with two fingers, and then in making the horizontal part of the cross, they form it, also with two fingers, from right to left, and finally they return backwards to the right. The horizontal part of their cross has then two lines, nay, even four lines, in counting the two fingers. Those who, as you put it, had driven away the darkness of the left by the light of the right, return now from the light right to the dark left, and take over its darkness which they carry to the right, so that they become involved in thick darkness in both their right and left. If they were consistent with themselves, since they form their cross from right to left, they should have crossed themselves with the left hand, because in this way their cross would have been more natural and it would not have been necessary for them to move their hand twice over.

Our ecclesiastical historians are in accord with their ecclesiastical historians in what they wrote concerning the Emperor Constantine, that at the hour of the day in which the sun was hottest, he saw in heaven a column of light in the shape of a cross, on which there were the words ”By this sign thou shalt conquer,” and after the pattern which he saw he fashioned the cross. Now what do the Greeks say about that column? Was it in the shape of double columns, like the two fingers, or in the shape of one column? If in the shape of double columns, two of which stretched perpendicularly and two horizontally, why is not the fact mentioned in any ecclesiastical history? If the column of light was in the shape of one column only, corresponding with one finger, why should we not have greater right than the Greeks? And why should we not make the sign of the cross on ourselves with one finger only, and from left to right as we, and not as they, do?

In administering the baptism even the Greeks make the sign of the cross on the child with a collyrium-pencil which has one point only and not two points, which would correspond with the two fingers, and move also the instrument from left to right as we do, and not from right to left. Had they not done so in this case even their cross would not have been straight but twisted. You write: ”As we heard and saw, all the Fathers and Doctors whose names I mentioned, whether they be Frankish, or Egyptian, or Greek, make the sign of the cross with two fingers; and we have never heard that any of them has made it with one finger.” You have not attained yet the age of seventy years, and consequently you could not have seen Athanasius the Great, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, and others. We might believe you when you say that you heard, but who can believe you that you saw? You should not, therefore, have written that you saw. If you mean that you saw their books, how did you then write previously that you had not learned this either from book or from nature? Is it because you forgot what you wrote previously that you assert now that all of them made the sign of the cross with two fingers? If you have heard and seen, tell us in which book and in which treatise? So far as we are concerned we have already quoted you John Chrysostom, the glory of the Greeks, who refutes them and corroborates us.

You write: ”Since the Armenians profess one nature in Christ, why are they not ordered to make the sign of the cross with one finger only?” Some of the Armenians make the sign of the cross with two fingers, some of them with three fingers, and some of them with all their hand, like the Franks. It is only those among them who are ignorant and mixed with the Greeks, who make the sign of the cross with two fingers; but who can hold a discussion with illiterate and insensible people, except those who wish to throw their pearls into the depth of the sea? Further, the Armenians did not remain united with us long enough to learn all the Christian sacramental customs; after having accepted the dogma of one nature in the Word that became flesh, they left us and went after their own. They are somewhat inconsistent with their belief; on the one hand they believe in one Lord, and in one nature in the Word who became flesh, and on the other they believe in two natures in Him, a proposition which they would readily reject, were they but told that it is implied in the act of making the sign of the cross with two fingers.

You write: ”We who make the sign of the cross with two fingers, do we believe in two natures in Christ? God forbid that this should ever happen.” If you do not believe in two natures after the union, how then do you make the sign of the cross with two fingers? In your mouth you believe something, and with your hand which makes the sign of the cross you believe something else. The Greeks at any rate assert that the two fingers symbolize the two natures in Christ. If this is not so, show us then the sacrament of the two fingers. How can you mix up two incompatible propositions in saying ”We believe like the orthodox Syrians, and we make the sign of the cross like the Greeks?” This amounts to saying, ”We accept truth and untruth.” No man can serve two masters; if we have the truth with us, you cannot follow the others, and if the others have the truth, we are liars; and if you pretend that both of us are right, who will believe you? How can that section of Christians who believes in one nature that became flesh, and the other in two natures, and how can that section of them who makes the sign of the cross with one finger and the other who makes it with two fingers, be in harmony with each other and be equally right?

You write: ”We should not reject the Greeks because they believe in two natures, since apart from us and the Armenians, and a few Franks, all Christians believe in two natures in Christ.” It is narrated that a philosopher used to change his faith with every rising king. When eventually he repented and realized that it was not good to forsake truth and change with the times, he wrote: ”Pity the salt which has lost its savour.” O brother, no one in your position should say that he does not reject the Greeks; if they are right and should not be rejected, your own people are, therefore, wrong and should be rejected; and if the Syrians are rejected, no one will believe you also, because you are a Syrian from us and not from our enemies; but tell us now, if you know, which are the two natures in which the Greeks believe? The Franks and some others call natures the Word God and the body with a soul which He united to Himself, but the Greeks think otherwise, and their story on this subject is a long one, and not even yet quite clear; if it ever becomes clear, I know and I am convinced that you will never accept any Melchite. Further, how did you assert that all Christians believe in two natures except us and the Armenians, while the Egyptians, Nubians, Abyssinians,

the majority of the Indians, and the country of Libya which in the time of Dioscorus was composed of one thousand and five hundred parishes, accept the faith of St. Cyril and St. Dioscorus, and of the great Severus.

Even the Greeks when brought face to face with the words of Athanasius the Great and Cyril the Wise are put to shame and believe like them in one nature of the Word who became flesh; this is written in their books and they believe in it like ourselves, but they explain away the expression ”one nature” and say afterwards ”two natures” contrary to the teaching of the Doctors, and give a meaning of their own to the words used by Cyril the Great, and pretend that he really meant two natures, and this in spite of the fact that those Arabs and Persians of the East and the South who are Christians understand like us the doctrine of one nature in the Word who became flesh, and they are known to be Arabs or Persians by the fact that they are not versed in any other language but Arabic and Persian. Let now the subject end here.

Chapter 3. On his hidden Falsehood that has been Exposed and on how he is a Protagonist of the Believers in two Natures

You write: "Why should we have greater truth than all? We do not agree with them in the matter of two natures, but we should not reject them and consider them as heretics." See how this discloses your intention to favour those who differ from us in their faith. I will now ask you a question: Are the Syrians right or are they wrong? If they are wrong, why do you not reject them completely? And if they are right, why do you not reject the Chalcedonians? If you refuse to believe in two natures, you should reject also the truth of the orthodox Syrians. As light is opposed to darkness, and good health to illness, so that they are mutually repellent and cannot remain concomitantly in one place, so also the one who believes in two natures in Christ after the union is opposed to the one who believes in one nature in the Word who became flesh. You will not contradict that the two are opposed to each other, how then do you pretend that you do not believe in two natures like them, and at the same time not reject them? You are like the one who holds the two ends of a rope and is unable to climb up with any of them.

You write: "Why should we not accept them? The Apostle said: 'Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own lord he standeth or falleth.' He also said: 'Pray for one another,' and he did not say 'anathematize.'" Your words would have been very true, if only the Chalcedonians would listen to you. For your sake we shall compromise and accept them: but come now to Melitene which is not under their power and see how they tear at our people like wolves. Anyone who through his unstability and weakness falls (and joins them), they baptize again, and they openly call us heretics and untruthful, and out of their own free will they do not allow anyone to enter their churches. I remonstrated several times with them, but because of their arrogance they did not desist. Were it not for a reason that I will not disclose, and for the fact that they would have been sneered at by outsiders, I would have

revealed their falsehood, and they would have been despised by all; but mendacity often succeeds.

Now repair in your imagination to the city of their pride. You will see that it contains a mosque for the Mohammedans, but it has no church for the Syrians and the Armenians. Do they do this out of their good nature or out of their wickedness? By their actions they show that the faith of the Mohammedans is better than the orthodox faith of ours. About a hundred years ago, in the time of Ignatius of Melitene, we had a church in Constantinople, but impelled by Satan they took possession of it, and their Patriarch of that time ordered our books that were in it and the church vestry, and the holy chrism, to be burnt in the middle of the bazaars. In that very night that Patriarch was struck by a sudden illness and lost his life. What do you say about these? Glory be to the one who deprived them of their power! If they had the power they would not have left a single Christian alive, as their fathers did in the times of yore.

As to the quotation that you brought forth to the effect "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another," it has not the significance that you attribute to it, and it has not been said of the heretics. If it were, we should not be allowed to bring an accusation against the Jews and the pagans, or to reprove the immoral people and the adulterers, or to punish the criminals, the sedition-mongers, the robbers, and the murderers. Will the Apostle come in these cases and tell us: "Who are you that judge these who are the servants of another?" but for the tranquillity of your conscience I am going to disclose for you the mind of the Apostle.

The Jews who had believed in Christ used to keep also the law of Moses, and not to eat the food that that law considered to be unclean; but the Gentiles who had believed in Christ used to eat everything. A disturbance arose on this account between Jewish Christians and Christians. Paul then rose, strong in truth, against the Jews who had believed, and he maintained that food does not bring men nearer to God nor farther from Him; why do you force, therefore, the Gentiles to observe the old law? and he further added: "He that is weak eateth herbs.' He meant by these words that as you Jews are weak in faith you distinguish between this and that food (as a weak stomach does) with regard to herbs, but he who is strong in faith eats everything and despises distinctions between foods; let not him which eateth not judge the Christian that eateth, for God hath received him;" that is to say, He has made him to be related to Him and not to the law; you, therefore, O Jew, why do you judge him? He is the servant of God, how dare you then judge him? If he standeth, that is to say by faith, he is to his Lord and not to you; and if he falleth, as you believe, because he does not observe the legal distinction between the foods, he is also to his own Lord. This is in short terms the meaning of the sentence of the Apostle.

As to your other point, that we are commanded to pray for one another, it does not mean that we are commanded to pray for a man to go astray from the truth of the faith and walk in error; nor are we commanded to pray for this particular person in relation with that particular person, but only to pray in such general terms as: O God, call all men and bring them to Thyself. As to your saying "Paul did not say : anathematize ;" but Paul

did say : "If somebody should preach unto you other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." What answer do you want us now to give to Paul? He said : "Let him be anathema," and you say that we should not anathematize. Three hundred and eighteen bishops assembled once and defined the Catholic faith in the Father and the Son, and reached in the Credo as far as the passage "And in the Holy Ghost," and they anathematized Arius and Sabellius. Then one hundred and fifty others gathered together in Constantinople, completed the Credo, and said, "And in one Holy Ghost the Lord and vivifier of all, who proceeds from the Father," etc., till the end of the Credo; and they anathematized the Macedonians. Then again two hundred and fifty bishops assembled at Ephesus in the time of the Emperor Theodosius and of the Patriarch Cyril, but they did not write a new profession of faith nor did they add anything to the Credo in unum Deum, but they said that the faith of the two previous Councils was sufficient; and they enacted in the Synod a Canon of anathemas and curses against anyone who would introduce a new faith, or would add anything to it, or diminish anything from it; and after anathematizing Nestorius and his teachers, they went back.

Then after a time the Emperor Marcian assembled that unholy Council of Chalcedon. The Fathers of it, however, did not follow in the steps of the Fathers who had preceded them, but through the pressure brought upon them by the wicked Emperor, and by his accursed wife, Pulcheria, and by other heretics who were present there, such as Theodoret, they trespassed against the anathema of the Council of Ephesus, and wrote a new Credo which begins : "We believe in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, and in the incarnation of the Son." They thus made the Trinity a quaternity; and then they defined the two natures. Now if the Greeks are anathematized, it is the Fathers of the first Council who anathematize them; what blame then attaches to us from it? Where did you hear in the faith of the ancients the mention of the two natures, which the Greeks have added? Et Cetera.

Chapter 4. On the wicked Rites and Habits of the Greeks

Let us see what Rabban Isho' writes on this subject: "We (Syrians) constitute ourselves the judges of Christians; some of them we make pagans and some others heretics. What would be better for us to do would be to live in peace with everybody." Peace is a very beautiful and praiseworthy thing, O honourable one, but not all peace; this is known from the sentence uttered by our Saviour; "I am come not to cast peace on the earth but sword; for I am come to set a father at variance against his son, and a daughter against her mother." Learn, therefore, that peace with immoral passions and with the enemies of truth drives us away from God. The theologian says: "A just war is better than a peace which separates from God." Examine well the saying of this Doctor who teaches us that peace with everybody is not advantageous.

Now who makes the Christians pagan except themselves? A pagan is much better than a Christian who forsakes the true faith and follows strange religions, and is unjust, immoral, adulterous, a murderer, a liar, or a breaker of the law. Go now to the Capital of which you are so proud and see how much immorality prevails in it, and what is still more terrible, how they call immorality "father." Bring also to it with you foodstuffs of any kind and see how they will steal them from you and swear that they have not done so.

Let it be also known to you that the word "Greek" is expressed in their language by "Hellenios," which further means "pagan." What blame attaches to us from a fact to which they themselves bear witness that their true names are "Hellenes" and "Hellenism," which mean "pagan" and "paganism" respectively? The name "Romans" does not belong to them but to the Franks, and it is derived from the name of "Rome" their town, and Romulus, their ancient king; and the Greeks unjustly stole it from them. What does the word "heresy" mean except "heterodoxy," or holding of another theological opinion? He, therefore, who adds to, or subtracts from, the theological opinion of the ancients is an heretic. So far as we are concerned we love so dearly our ancient Fathers because of the good habits and good laws which they have; now what good habits do the Greeks possess? Is it the habit of eating fish and drinking wine in Lent? Or is it that other habit of theirs by which they rebel against God, and make men like women, in emasculating them, and defile themselves with many

abominations? What is still more terrible is that they ordain such men priests and bishops. Paul has said: "I permit not a woman to teach," and what is the difference between a woman and a neutered man? on the whole the difference is not very great. They have other perverse habits about which we wrote at length elsewhere.

Which is the law that is observed to-day in their Capital? Not one. There is in it nothing but iniquity, injustice and theft; the strong in it beat the weak, and the rich plunder the poor; their soldiers enter anywhere they fancy, plunder and rob and misconduct themselves with the wives of other men, who fear even to speak to them. You wrote: "They have arranged rites of prayers, canons and Gospel lessons for every festival, and have given eleven lessons to Easter; and what they read here is read in every other Church of theirs. They have also composed Canons and Cathismata and stichera, and have written a book which turns on eight echadia. If one is obliged to follow them for the sake of these rites which you have mentioned, the Hebrew people had also similar rites; indeed the Torah was not read by everybody, but only by the elders and the priests, and the prophetical Books were only read on some special days, and what was read in Jerusalem was also read in every country in which Jews were found, and their sacrifices were offered in one place. David in his days set up twenty-four singers, every two of whom used to sing two hours and were followed by a relay of two others. Coclions (= Cyclii) and various kinds of tones never ceased to be in use in the Temple; and the Jews possessed other enactments and rites of a similar kind. Why then we Christians do not follow the Jews? For crucifying the Son they were humbled in spite of their tunes and rites. It is not through catechismata and stichera that one will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but by means of good works and pious deeds: "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom."

If the Gospel of the Syrians was different from that of the Greeks, the former might have been blamed. But when the Gospel is one, no harm and wrong can possibly attach to anyone who reads this or that lesson from it on a special occasion. Look at the community of Mu ammad, their munādis or mu'adhdhins, when they cry, have the same words here and anywhere else, and none of them adds anything to them or subtracts anything from them, but no Christian praises them for this rite. Lo the Syrians also have arranged their prayers in eight tones, and they perform two echadia every week. Sundays are consecrated to the festival of the Resurrection; Mondays and Tuesdays are devoted to prayers for repentance; Wednesdays are to the Mother of God, to the martyrs and the dead; Thursdays to the Apostles and Doctors, to the Mother of God, to the martyrs, and to the dead; Fridays to the Cross; and Saturdays to the Mother of God, to the martyrs and the dead.

The Syrians perform also every month the eight echadia like the Greeks; and they have further abbelai Mār with the rest of the āle, while the M'irāne with the rest of the itdakhraith are even supererogatory, and it was only the wealth of the devotions of the Syrian Fathers that induced them to arrange them as a rite in this way. See now how the Greeks have no special prayers for the night, apart from what they regularly recite in the morning and in the evening, at night, and in the day-time; but the Syrians who are endowed with great

wealth of devotions have also the Shu lāph— āla which was recited by the ancients, the Madhrāshé, the Ma'nyātha, the takhshpātha, the ba'wātha, with the rest of the āle of it-dakhraith, the Greek and Syriac Canons, and the 'Inyānē. The fact that people of every country pray differently, and have something which singles them out from the rest, goes to their credit, first because it indicates the wealth of their devotions and spiritual vigour, and secondly because it is a sign of the incomprehensibility of God who wishes to be glorified in different ways in different countries and towns.

Now you examine our Service Books and our penkyātha: if you find in them mistakes or heresies, blame and rebuke us; but if they tell the undiluted truth, why should they be blasphemous in their different bātē and Kīnātha? The Greeks also have different Canons, Stichera, and Cathismata in different countries, and I myself saw in the books of the Melchites Canons which were at Antioch recited for the saints, but which were not so used in Melitene, and some others were substituted in their place; and the same thing happens with them in other countries, as it happens also with the Franks, the Armenians and other Christians. Tones and words vary with countries and persons. What harm is there in the simple service of Maksa? It contains "multum in parvo," and has been arranged for the sick, and at one time, for the nuns. Now that it has been established everywhere you see that it possesses driving force, and fulfils all the requirements of the prayers directed to the Mother of God, to the Apostles, to the Fathers, to the Prophets, to the Martyrs, to repentance, and to the dead. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Let it also be known to you that the Canons, the Cathismata and the rest have entered into the Church as something supererogatory. This is known from the fact that in the days of the Doctors, there was only reading and interpretation of the scripture in the Churches, and there were not found in it melodies and harmonious modulations which create lust in the hearers. When Bardai ān became insane and composed the Kī ta, St. Ephrem was obliged to multiply the madhrāsha through which he destroyed Bardaişān's lustful Kīnātha. And Mar Severus recited ma'nyātha against the poets and against the 'onyātha' of the Greek Sustius. And John Chrysostom arranged the stichera against the Arians who had composed 'onyātha' through which they used to deceive the simple folk. The same may also be said of the Canons, etc., which really did harm to the Church, since they have been in it the cause of the cessation of the reading and interpretation of scripture and the art of preaching. Show me if in the time of the Apostles there were musical tones and 'onyātha, apart from the reading and interpretation of scripture and the art of teaching and preaching.

You write: In the penkiyātha of the office of Lent it is said: "Moses, Elijah and Daniel fasted;" and in the office of Palm Sunday it is written: "The children glorified Him," etc.; and in the office of the Passion Week there is: "Blessed is Thy passion, O Lord."

Let it be known to you that the Syrian writers showed the mystery of every festival in the words of the office which they wrote for it, and they wove all its history in the Kīnātha, in order to teach the hearers the mystery of the festival. It was quite legitimate for them to

have written the office of the festivals and commemorations in a way that its prayers were directed only to penitence, but they wished to put variety in the ritual. If, for instance, the Fathers had not said in the breviary of the time of Lent that so-and-so had fasted, others would not have imitated the ancients and fasted; if they had not explained how the wound of the sinners was healed, those who had the wound of sin would not have had recourse to any medical treatment and to penitence; if they had not told how our Lord entered Jerusalem and was praised by children, the children would not have striven to emulate their praise; if they had not concerned themselves with Zechariah, David, Ezechiel and the Prophets, one would not have known who prophesied about the Christ that he would ride on a she-ass and enter the Holy City; if they had not written about Abraham, and his son, no one would ever have known that Abraham was the figure of the Father, and Isaac that of the Son, who was offered as a sacrifice for us; that Cain was the figure of the Jews, and Abel the figure of Christ who was murdered; and that the vineyard was the symbol of the synagogue of the Jews.

Now knowledge and not ignorance is necessary for the understanding of all these. The Hdhau 'Amme has been said by St. Ephrem, and he derived it from the prophet who said "Rejoice and be glad because your Saviour is mighty." The Train Talmidhe is derived from the Gospel. You say that these two prayers have no driving power and no savour. If there is no driving power in the prophets and in the Apostles whose very words have been borrowed by the Fathers in the composition of these prayers, we will admit that the former have not got them either; but if the prophets and the Apostles are believed in and accepted by all Christians, we must also accept the Fathers and not rebel against the truth. Et cetera.

Chapter 5. On how tones and melodies do not bring any profit to those who sing them and those who hear them

Now let us come to the remaining part of what you wrote on this subject: ”To-day that you are the Father of the Syrians and the son of . . . the rest of your encomium it is not necessary to quote—collect all the service books of the Church and write from them all one good book of Octoechus. What you have mentioned has been arranged by the ancient Fathers in the matter of Ma’niyātha and the service of nocturns, as we have stated above. The Church, however, is in no need of them, and I would suggest to you and to every God-fearing man that instead of canticles and prayers containing musical melodies which bring no profit to the singer nor to the hearer, to make use of the Books of the Old and New Testaments and the writings of the Fathers, and to read a chapter from each one of them at every festival. Both the reader and the hearer will derive profit from these lessons. Be concerned with this good work rather than Canons. The Apostle Peter said: ”Be ready to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope of your faith;” and the Apostle Paul said: ”In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand words.” And: ”Cry with thy throat, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgression, and the children of Israel their sins.” It is not good to forsake the words of God and do good worldly service at the altar.

You see how the Prophets and the Apostles exhort us to read, interpret, preach and teach the mysteries of the faith, and convert any one who is against us, and not to sing and to contrive musical melodies like sirens, nor to bray like asses, nor to utter sweet sounds like nightingales, nor to sing like swans, nor to coo like doves, nor should we institute to-day a feast for so-and-so, and to-morrow another feast for so-and-so, and in this open our stomachs to excessive food, and broaden our gullets to drink, and thus pander to the proclivities of our alimentary desires and minister to occasions of sin and say: ”To-day is a feast, we must therefore eat and drink.” To pagans belong festivities, songs, dances, banquets and drink,

and to Christians fasting, prayer, and reading of scripture. In their festivities the Greeks resemble, therefore, those who are outside our sheepfold.

Let it be also known to you that musical tunes and melodies with Canons, stichera and the rest of them have come down to the Greeks from outsiders, that is to say from the pagan Odysseus who having experienced the sweetness of the song of sirens which dwelt in the sea of Scylla, perceived a desire to learn it; and because these sirens sang men used frequently to throw themselves into the sea, bewitched as they were by their song, and were eaten by them. Odysseus, however, resorted to a stratagem: he plugged with wax the ears of the sailors, and some men tied him and his companions with chains of iron, and they floated on the sea. When the sirens saw them they began to sing songs of various melodies, but those men whose ears were plugged did not hear the sweetness of the song, and those who were attached with chains of iron could not throw themselves into the sea because of their being strongly tied, and so they little by little learned the melodies and introduced them to mankind. Examine, then, the origin of the melodies. It is really the sirens which have to take pride rather than the Greeks.

You say: ”It is not fair to make other Christians heretics, and to call ourselves orthodox people.” If Christians were such as they, what would you be yourself? If you answer that you are a Christian, rise up and go to them and see what they will call you. If they are not heretics, then the Syrians are. If you pretend that both sides are right, no one from either side will believe you, neither from our side nor from the side of the adversaries. They call us heretical Jacobites, and we call them Chalcedonians, Nestorians, and heretics. If you have enough power in you like your namesake Joshua, son of Nun, to reconcile them with one another, we ourselves will help you in everything. But what union is there between light and darkness? Many believed that it would be good to join the adversaries, but this has proved a stumbling block to them and finally their downfall. When Ahab had pity on Benhadad and saved his life, God got angry with him and with his people, and he was rejected from power, and Hazael killed him.

You write: ”My heart does not allow me to anathematize anyone, not even Nestorius and his companions. If I do not accept them it is solely because they are alien to, and rejected from, the Church of God.” I am tempted to be amazed at your simplicity, O brother, how it easily contradicts itself. You contended that your heart does not allow you to anathematize Nestorius and his companions, and you have at the same time unknowingly anathematized him. Anathema is a separation from God, and when you have separated them from the Church and rejected and denounced them, you have anathematized them. Do you then believe that anathema means anything else? The word ”anathema” is used in two meanings. The first meaning is found in the sentence of Moses: ”every ’anathema’ which is anathematized’ by a man.” Here ”anathema” means ”vow” : i.e. every vow vowed by a man. The second kind of anathema is that spoken of by Paul : ”He who does not love our Lord Jesus Christ let him be anathema.” The first ”anathema” means ”vow” and ”sacrifice,” and the second anathema

means ”separation from God” and ”rejection from the Church of God.” This last kind of anathema is the one used by the Doctors against the heretics.

You write : ”The Greeks have a heavenly King, and God gave them also an earthly king, how can they not be proud ?” It is written that we cannot serve two masters, O brother. If they call God their King, they are deprived of an earthly king ; and if they seek the earthly one, they forsake the heavenly one. This is also known by what God said to Samuel : In asking for an earthly king, the Jews ”have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me,” Creator and God, ”that I should not reign over them.” You see how God Himself decreed by His words that any one who has an earthly king is deprived of the heavenly one. We follow the words of God, and do not contend that a man has two kings ; if it was so he would be bound to ”love the one and hate the other, and hold to one and despise the other.”

Every pride in an earthly kingdom is from the evil one ; it is he who overcomes the passions and lays the body under the power of the soul who is a king. Further, other Christian peoples have also kings, and they do not for that take pride in their souls, and the Persians and the Arabs have all kings, and we could not say that they have greater right than we have. The true kingdom is that which is established in orderliness and virtue, as in the times of Constantine, Theodosius and the rest of the Roman kings, that is to say the kings of the Franks. Now look back at the kings of the Greeks of our days, how they commit adultery and fornication more than the pagan kings. When they are ordered not to take two wives, they take them. And enter their Metropolis, and you will see in a love of money, which is the root of all evil, and coveteousness which is idolatry, and unbounded adultery, not only among laymen and laywomen, but also among the clergy. No king, no head, and no superior can stop them. Their bishops are likewise covetous, and they pile up gold like stones, and they enjoy material things, and wear fine linen and purple instead of wool. They ride also on powerful mules and bathe in the public baths like women, and relish different kinds of food. Faith without works and good conduct is dead. Et cetera.

Chapter 6. Against the Pride of the Chalcedonians, and on the Building of their Capital

Let us proceed now with haste and examine the fallacy of the Greeks on this subject. You write: "The beautiful Metropolis which Jeremiah has foreseen when lamenting over Jerusalem is our Metropolis. God showed him her towers, her beauty, her ramparts, and her buildings and said to him: 'Do not weep over Jerusalem, lo I have found a house better than Jerusalem, and I will bring all people and all tongues to its glory;' and it happened as he said." To whom shall we now speak, and on whom shall we pour our wrath? On those who foolishly utter fallacies like these, or on people who listen to them? In what passage did Jeremiah prophesy about Constantinople, and who is the commentator who understood it in that sense? Jeremiah was taken to Egypt; and according to some people, he even composed his Lamentations over Jerusalem in Egypt. It is not written in the Lamentations that he prophesied about the Metropolis, nor about a town that would stand on its site. If they are so untruthful in palpable subjects like this, how much more will they be so on the subject of faith which is thinner that a hair?

They raved also another falsehood to the effect that it was Euphemia the martyr who gave them the articles of faith of the Council of Chalcedon. In this they show that they have received their faith from a dead woman ; and to this effect they even hang in their Churches the picture of something which is unreal. The fact is that the Council assembled in the temple of Euphemia, and the Tomos of the unholy Leo and the other book containing the articles of faith were laid in the font of the saint ; but it is nowhere written that the saint rose from the dead and confirmed them ; what they are uttering is pure lie, and their powerful pillars, and the enemies of the truth, such as Joannes Damascenus, Theophilus, and Theodore of Harrân did not write these lies, I mean the untruth concerning Jeremiah and Euphemia, because they knew that they were lies. Damascenus, however, indulged in another falsehood in writing that a child rose up to heaven and heard the angels say : "Sanctus es Deus, Sanctus es Omnipotens, Sanctus es Immortalis," without the addition : Qui crucifixus es pro nobis. Against this we wrote at length (in another book) and we reproved him

and showed that "no man hath ascended into heaven but he that descended out of heaven." We rebuked them that their faith has come down to them from a woman, and that their trisagion has emanated from a child not yet in his full senses, and not from an angel or a man in his full senses. You, however, believe not the untruth that they have uttered against the Armenians.

Constantinople was built in the time of Manasseh by the brothers Byzantion, and it was a pagan town, which had no fame till the days of Constantine who repaired to it and enlarged it. You say that it is written : "I will bring to it all peoples and tongues for worship," to which we will answer : not the Christian, but the pagan, peoples. We have heard that peoples and tongues went to Jerusalem for worship ; and to the town you are mentioning no one ever went for worship, but only on business. Further, when did Christians ever repair to it for the sake of honour ? They went to it only to grub, and to buy and sell. It is frequented mostly by Persians, Arabs, and barbarous and godless peoples, such as Kumanians and Hungarians, who have enriched it with gold, silver and precious stones. Lo, Bagdad, Cairo, and other towns of the kingdom of the Arabs are richer in gold, silver and precious stones, and we do not say that they have more truth than we have.

Listen now to Gregory, how he rebukes those who are rich in gold: "Against those who have gold and silver, we have a pure speech; against those who have churches, we possess the One who dwells in them; against those who have temples, we possess God and we are His living temples; and against those who have multitudes, we have angels." You write: "God has gathered together and brought to it prophets, apostles, and martyrs, so that none of them is outside it." This also is untrue. James, the brother of our Lord, is buried in Jerusalem, and James, son of Zebedee, is in the west, south of the city of Rome; Peter and Paul are in Rome, and John, son of Zebedee is buried in Ephesus, where also is the mother of God. The Apostle Thomas was buried in India, and his bones were transferred to Edessa. Ezechiel and the three children are in Babylonia with Daniel, and the prophet Isaiah is in Jerusalem. The rest of the prophets and apostles are likewise in all directions, and all are not in the Metropolis. As to St. Basil, all the Emperors strove to transfer his bones from Cæsarea to the Metropolis, but they did not succeed. The great Meletius was transferred from the Metropolis to Antioch. As to the wood of the Holy Cross, it was in Jerusalem, and in the time of Shahrbaraz and Chosrau it was carried to Persia, and in their time also it was brought back and sawn in the middle, and half of it reached the Metropolis.

You write: "And also the rod of Moses and the staff of Aaron, and the ark." O deceivers and liars! How they deceive the simple folk to make them accept their teaching! In the ark were the rod, the staff, and the golden pot holding the manna. This ark and all the sacraments that it contained Jeremiah took out and hid in a cave: and from that day up to now no one has ever known their exact place. We know this from the Book of Maccabees and from other Doctors. You write: "And also the twelve baskets, and the veronica, and the robe of the mother of God." From the time of the Economy of Christ to that of Constantine, there are more than three hundred years, and in that time kings were pagan, and Christianity was

not yet in plain light; who, therefore, collected the above sacred objects for the Greeks? So they are also liars in this matter; they have neither the baskets, nor the crown of thorns—for which they have fabricated one of nails—nor the swaddling clothes of Christ, as they rave. It is possible that the existence there of the veronica is true, but who stole the robe of the mother of God and brought it to them, and left the Virgin naked? Fie, the madness! All the sacred objects were in Jerusalem, but when the Jews transgressed the commandments and the law, they were taken in captivity, and Jerusalem was destroyed; the ark also and the tables of the Covenant were carried away by the Philistines: their pride, therefore, in these things is that of ignorant and not of intelligent men.

As to the right hand of John the Baptist by which they sanctify the holy chrism, do not follow blindly after children, O brother! Tell me this: when Herodias took the head of John the Baptist in a charger, what profit did she get out of this gift? Was it not a loss that she sustained? It is the good actions of a man that give him the right to be worthy of John's fellowship, and not the fact that he possesses great things for which he does not care. To a pig pearls and muck are on the same level. Many asses of merchants carry precious things from which they derive no profit whatever. Concerning John the Baptist, Theodoret, the helper of the Greeks, wrote that in the days of Julian the Apostate, pagans took his bones from the urn and burned them. John of Asia also wrote that in the time of Justinian one of the prefects of Palestine who was like a pagan in his conduct, sent a right hand to the Metropolis and said that it was John the Baptist's. Many were suspicious about it and said that it could not be true. It was, however, accepted by the Emperor and the people as true. Where is it written that the holy chrism should be sanctified by the right hand of John? The Greeks that are amongst us rave that they mix the blood of Christ with the holy chrism. The Apostles and the Doctors have ordered that the holy chrism should be composed of different elements and be sanctified by the prayers of the bishops and the people, and these pretend that it contains the blood of Christ; which is untrue. This would make them resemble the Jews who said: "His blood be on us and on our children." And they are being baptized by this same blood!

If the holy chrism is sanctified by a dead right hand, they are, therefore, being baptized by a dead man; because although St. John be living to God, he is so in his soul, while in his body he is so far dead, and he has not yet resuscitated. How can the right hand of a dead man sanctify the holy chrism? Why! this is not a great affair, since their ordination also emanates from a dead man! Indeed they used to receive for some time their bishops from Rome, but when trouble arose between them and the Franks, Rome did not give them any bishop; and it was after many frays and bickerings that they gave them a bishop, but when the messengers who were bringing him reached the city of Heraclea in Thrace, he fell ill and died. They were then in great pain and sorrow, and fearing lest the Romans should require the ordination of another bishop from them, they resorted to a stratagem and brought a man and laid the hand of the dead bishop on his head and ordained him. They decreed also that in future it is the bishop of Thrace that shall lay the right hand on the head of all the

bishops of the Capital. This custom they observe down to our own days, and on it we have written elsewhere in several places.

You write: ”So far as we are concerned whom have we but SS. Bar auma and Aaron?” What shall we say to a mind glued to earthly things? As to us we have our beloved, the Lord of heaven and earth; it is He, the Lord of heaven and earth and holy sacraments who said: ”Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;” and who spoke through the prophet: I do not count heaven and earth, ”where is the house ye build unto me?” and who proclaimed in the mouth of Isaiah: ”To whom shall we look and in whom shall I dwell except him who is peaceful and humble,” and fears my word. You will see, if you reflect, whom we have! He is indeed St. Bar auma! Listen also to St. John Chrysostom how he rises against those who take pride in such things; he said in the eighty-second chapter of his commentary on Matthew: ”How many men there are now who say ’We wish to see the face of Christ, His image, His dresses, and His shoes;’ but lo you are seeing Him, and you are holding Him; you are eating Him, and you are wishing to see His dresses! He did not give Himself to you in order that you may only see Him, but that you may also touch Him, eat Him, and receive Him in yourself.”

What would you say about this quotation? Did it not confute and destroy all that you wrote? Did it not put an end to all the pride of the Greeks? Do not err, therefore, after them, but follow in the steps of your fathers. Et cetera.

Chapter 7. On the fact that he made the Greeks the head of all Christians

Let us go on with our investigation of the words of this writer and see how he inclines to all winds, and how he possesses zeal and kindness, but not in the sense in which the Apostle intended these to be. You write: ”Why should we blame them? If they blame us it is because we did not obey them when they were right. It is written: The superiors of the peoples are their superiors.” How well has Esau been tested and his hidden mind disclosed! In everything that you have propounded you have shown that you are not holding your faith from conviction but out of hypocrisy. On the one hand you persuade us not to blame those who out of their own free will have trampled on the anathemas of the Synod of Ephesus and decreed another canon. On the other hand you gave them authority to blame us on the score that they are our superiors and directors. Show us where you get the information that they have that precedence of us which would entitle them to blame us, and be our superiors. If you say that it is because they were evangelized before us, we demonstrated in our previous letter to you that their evangelization did not precede ours. If you pretend that they are our superiors because some of their books have been translated by us, we have proved decisively that all the Doctors of the Church are not Greek.

As the Jews do not scorn the Christians because it is from their people that the Books of the Prophets and Apostles have emanated, so also the Greeks should not blame us on this score. If as you say they are our superiors, and they have consequently right to blame us because we did not listen to them, the Jews will hold them by their throats and say: ”We are older than you, and we are your superiors and directors; you took the Books from us; come and become like us; if we blame you, it is our duty to do so; you Greeks should never rebuke us for the fact that we crucified the Christ.” What are these old women’s tales, and what is this useless discussion! You write: ”That Council (of Chalcedon) which had six hundred and thirty-six Fathers, and from which two were driven out.” I am amazed at the way you have accepted as true the falsehood of liars. Who saw (the Fathers of that Council) and counted them as amounting to such a number? Who read their unofficial proceedings

and deliberations? As for us we read everything in books and we know what was done and spoken there, and how long the Council lasted; we have also written with us the names of all the bishops who assembled in it, and those who subscribed to it by proxy, and the number of all them amounts only to three hundred and sixty-three. To what extent can the deceivers lie! They believe that it is by the magnitude of the number of the Fathers that truth is made manifest. Three hundred and seventy bishops assembled in the town of Madecolinus subscribed to the wickedness of Arius, and wished to throw away Athanasius the Great, because he did not agree with them.

Now what do you say? Had the high number of men in this case greater right than one man, or had this one man, Athanasius, greater right than all of them? Learned men even among the Greeks testify that Athanasius was right. Picture, therefore, in your mind and know that Dioscorus and the bishops who were with him had likewise greater right than the other three hundred who out of their fear of the king and for the love of their sees put their signatures to the Tomos of Leo. Abraham was in his days the only one who served God, the rest being idol-worshippers. But listen to what the holy Theologian says: "Three men who gather together in the name of God, are more numerous before His eyes than several myriads who deny His Godhead. Would you honour all the Canaanites more than one Abraham, or the Sodomites more than one Lot, or the Midianites more than one Moses?" And he added afterwards:

"No; this could not be, could not be. God was not pleased with a great number of people. You count the myriads, but God counts those who are saved; you (count) the earth that cannot be measured, but I will (count) the vessels of election." You further write: "Those Kānōnē which are called Koklia are invented by the Jews." Show us the Canon which was invented by the Jews. It is said that the Jews invented not the Kānōnē but the tishbhātha to the tunes of which the Kānōnē have been invented, and which serve as the foundations of their intonations. As to whether the Koklia are from the Hebrews, I heard that it is the tishbhātha, that is to say the mazmōre, that they sing with different melodies. Ponder well over what you write, and then begin to discuss. You condescended also to say that the Greeks took the kingdom of the Romans by stratagem.

When did it happen that a kingdom has been stolen? It is God who removes kings and raises up kings. He removed the kingdom from the Franks and bestowed it on the Greeks. That a kingdom, however, is stolen without the wish of God is known from the fact that Absalom stole the kingdom from his father David, and the people leaned towards him. That a king does rise without the order of God is also borne out by the prophet who testifies and says: "He reigned but not by me, and he governed but not by my will." Wicked kings reign by the tacit permission of God; this occurs especially when iniquity is on the increase among the people. If God gave the kingdom to the Greeks, it follows that it is He who also gave it to the Arabs and the Turks for such a long time. The fact, however, is not so, and the subject is different from the one that concerns us.

You write: "The foreign merchants who go in and out of the Metropolis testify that there is no kingdom, no government, no wealth, and no charity similar to that of the Greeks ; and we Syrians consider them as nothing." Your saying that the Greeks are praised by outsiders and not by Christians is prophetical ; we mean by outsiders Persians, Arabs, and Turks. Earthly people think of earthly things. The Greeks are not praised by just, pious, and orthodox people, but by grubbing and robbing merchants. And in what do these praise them ? In the fact that there is no kingdom, no government, and no wealth like theirs. Alexander has not been praised in any (sacred or ecclesiastical) book because his government embraced three ends of the inhabited globe, and his kingdom extended to nearly all the earth, and his wealth increased like stones. The kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar and that of Sennacherib, Pharaoh, and others was also very great, but in what did these pagans excel in their kingdom and government ? Is it in their piety and holiness ? There is no man of sound judgment who thinks so. Do not praise, therefore, the Greeks for something that is shameful before the eyes of God. The ancients, prophets and Apostles, have not been praised for their government, kingdom and wealth, but for their trials, privations, poverty and wants.

You say : " There is no charity like theirs." This is also untrue. Where is the one who has been fed in the bazaars of their Capital ? Indeed how many needy and destitute people walk in its bazaars ? Some Christians who had gone there because of their poverty told us that they have no mercy at all, and that when they wish to eat bread they close their doors and bolt them, and the poor man hoarsens his voice in crying and sighing from hunger, and no man gives him bread. Here we will end this subject.

Chapter 8. On how He Blames His Co-religionists and is Proud of the Greeks

You write : ” We (Syrians) were the first in our evangelization and the Greeks the last, and God gave us kingdom, power, ecclesiastical see, and honour, because we were the first to believe in Him, but now He has greatly humbled us.” O brother, open your eyes and see, incline your ear and listen, and you will not cling much to earthly things. Christ did not promise the Christians earthly things sticking with mud, but He promised them heavenly things. ”Seek the things that are above, and set your mind on the things that are above where Christ is.” It is the pagans who glory in an earthly kingdom and have earthly possessions; if we Christians wish to fix our minds on the latter, by what would we be distinguished from pagans? Have you not heard your Lord say: ”My kingdom is not of this world; if it were then would my servants fight for me.” And: ”Where I am, there shall also my servant be.” If we are, therefore, the servants of Christ, we should prepare ourselves for our journey to His heavenly kingdom, and not seek to reign here like other people who have no hope.

To which of the Apostles, who were the first to be evangelized, did God give in this world, kingdom, government and wealth? On the contrary, they toured the world in want, privation, poverty, and need. Has not the Son of God Himself plainly declared that He ”hath not where to lay His head.” Peter and John said to the man that was lame: ”Silver and gold have we none, but in the name of Jesus rise and walk.” The Lord of all did not bestow any worldly honours, nor any earthly kingdom, which in reality is nothing, on all these saints who forsook everything and followed him. If every poor man were despised before God and wrong in his faith, and if the man who has wealth and kingdom were right in his faith, it would have been high time for you to despise Lazarus, the poor, full of sores, and to extol the rich man who was ”clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously;” it would have also been good opportunity for you to praise the faith of the sons of Hagar who reigned in the earth from end to end, and are prosperous in the world, while the Christians are lowly, wretched, under subjection, and poor.

Listen to your Lord who says: ”If the world hateth you, know ye that it hath hated me before you.” And : ”If ye were of the world, the world would love its own.” And : ”If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” And : ”Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.” And : ”Love of this world is enmity against God.” What do you say against all these? Your Lord has shown that it is the one who possesses neither kingdom nor government who is accepted by Him. He who is here in subjection and strong in faith is going to rejoice in the kingdom of heaven which will never perish. You write : ”There are no Syrians except with you in Melitene and in Edessa. There are very few of them with us.” Now Rabban ’Isho’ comes back to us like a mighty teacher, and believing that the Syrians are uprooted more than any other people, he asks us why.

If you say that that is their condition because of their sins, we will retort that there are to-day many pagans and Jews who have kindled and kindle the wrath of God more than the Syrians, yet they are strong in power and prosperous in wealth, and their number is so high that it cannot be reckoned. Tell me also why are the prophets that rose in this world now uprooted, while the Jewish people who crucified the Son is still prosperous everywhere. Where are the Fathers, the just men, and the pontiffs? Where are the Apostles, the evangelists, the solitaries, the martyrs, and the confessors? If all these are uprooted because of their sins or for a similar reason, so also consider the Syrians; but if it is because God loved them that He took them to Him, you should also assert the same in the case of the Syrians.

Now listen to what Jeremiah says : ”Now that the just have gone to their rest, and the prophets have died, and we have left the land, we have nothing but the mighty one and His law.” That just king Josiah also did not last long in power, and it has been said about him : ”The just man goes to his rest before the wrath.” You see that the wheat is always gathered in the barns while the chaff is abandoned. You write: ”Why should we (Syrians) be proud because we were evangelized first? The Christ has said: ’Many shall be last that are first, and first that are last.’” We did not take pride because we were evangelized first; but we simply asked you the reason why the Greeks scorn us after you had made them our superiors and directors! We have not received our faith from them; the Books have not come down from them to us, and their language is not more ancient than ours. Further, in Lord Jesus ”there is no Greek, no barbarian, no bondman, and no freeman, but Christ is all and in all.” He who works with Him is accepted by Him. The proof which you put forward runs counter to what you intended: you say that we who are first became the last, but see how in the same sequence you added: ”and the last shall be first;” the Syrians who in your sentence were the last became the first in relation to the Greeks.

You write: ”A prickly shrub that gives a beautiful rose, how can its master uproot it?” It is sufficient for it that its name is a ”prickly shrub.” There are many prickly shrubs which have no roses but are full of thorns, and their end is fire. Before the Council of Chalcedon the Greeks were not prickly shrubs, but a tree that bore fruits. After they tore the robe of Christ and divided it into duality of natures, the rose of the ”first” was taken away from them, in a way similar to that of the Jews from whom priesthood and Books have been taken and

given to a people that would yield fruits. The Jews were like the fig tree of tender branches; as long as they kept the commandments and discarded sin, they were planted in the angle of the heavenly abode, but when they sinned and transgressed the commandments, the vineyard, that is to say, the people, was uprooted, and the vine and its branches were burnt, and the fig tree was cut to pieces from its roots by the axe of Vespasian and cast into the fire of dispersion.

Why did you not say to the master of the vineyard, as you would have doubtless wished to have done: let the "prickly shrub" be watered, in order that it may bring forth a rose? But which is the rose of the Greeks? Please tell me. If you say that the rose is the Canons, the cathismata, and the stichera, intelligent people do not consider these as a rose, because both our Church and theirs have been meditating for a long time over these hymns, and have been unable to convert through them a single man to the right path. The true rose is scriptural meditation, interpretation, teaching, wisdom and good advices; it is through these that the Apostles and Doctors converted all the ends of the earth to the truth. A second rose consists in fast, prayer, charity, holiness, chastity, and acts of perfection. It is through the scent of this rose that one can convert his own soul and convert others also.

Listen now to what the Doctors say concerning Canons and Kīnātha, of which you are proud. The poets and the composers of Kīnātha, call sometimes a Kīnta angelic, and some other times they compare the singers to Moses and to the three children. They confined their Biblical references concerning those who fasted in repentance to the Ninevites, and to the publican. Through high-toned Zummāre you may forget or completely lose the power of penitence. We are commanded to "pray with the spirit and to sing with the understanding." This is something difficult for a Greek to do, since his mind is concentrated on music. God permitted sacrifices because He knew that the Israelites could not be convinced otherwise; and He also permitted the use by them of cymbals and other musical instruments, in order that they may not indulge in profane glees and in banquets. At the end, however, he put an end to sacrifices in saying: "I have no pleasure in whole burnt offerings, and the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." He also put an end to songs and melodies by saying through the prophet: "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." How is it that you who have been ordered to sing spiritual songs endeavour to mix with the Church songs those relaxing Kīnātha and loose tones, and thus weaken with these same Kīnātha the vigour of the souls which have hardened themselves against the passions, and mortified their bodies by ascetic works, and begun to sing with angels?

If somebody says that these Kīnātha are spiritual, let him show me their fruits, and I will agree: "By their fruits ye shall know them." You do not see any poet making repentance from the depth of his heart, nor striking on his breast to thwart unclean movements. On the contrary he stands erect, shakes his head, moves his neck hither and thither, gesticulates with his hands and his fingers and claps them together with noise; he often also strikes with his foot against the ground, but he does not exhibit a single fruit of penitence to the hearers who are bewitched by the sweetness of his Kīntā (= melody). Church music is not

like this, but it is quiet, lugubrious, and inducing to sighing and weeping. Kīnātha did not penetrate into the Churches except when these were deprived of the gifts of teaching. When there was nobody to impart sound teaching, chanted hymns invaded the Churches. Look, therefore, at this Doctor, how he disliked the Canons, and the Zummāré, and magnified and praised the interpretations of doctrine. Do not despise, therefore, the Kabbelai Māran, and the 'al itra d'bismé, and the Dukhrānāh d'Maryam. Very often one gets greater spiritual gains from these simple Kālè than from the elaborate tones, in which the words are lost or not caught by the ears of the listeners through the twistings, falls, elevations, and cadences of the voice. Let this subject end here.

Chapter 9. On the Sign of the Cross

Let us examine now your other points. You write: ”Show me a Christian who believes in Christ who crosses himself with one finger that we also should do the same. What is there that matters in the act itself; if you wish, cross yourself with one finger, and if you wish, do it with two fingers.” Lo the Syrians, the Egyptians, the Nubians, that is to say the Indians, and the peoples of their neighbourhood, such as the Kushites (= Abyssinians) cross themselves with one finger. We have shown you above that the Book and nature agree with us on this point; but now that you have become the advocate of the Chalcedonians, show us either from yourself or from them the Doctor from whom they have received the meaning of the habit of which the two fingers are the emblem, and where it is written.

If the habit of crossing oneself with two fingers symbolizes the two natures, as the babbling nonsense of the Greeks has it, they crucify, therefore, both these natures as we have already written in the previous chapters. How could it be good to make the divine nature suffer and be crucified? If, however, there is nothing in the fact of crossing ourselves with one finger or with two, why do you then forsake the habit of crossing yourself with one finger, practised by your fathers, and make use of the practice of two fingers against your fathers? If, as you say, you are not a stumbling block to your children and to the children of your people—and it is more advantageous that one should not be a stumbling block and a boulder—when your people, with the presbyters, elders, dead and living bishops warn you that the practice is a stumbling block and a scandal, how is it that you do not heed them? Did you not see what Paul wrote: ”If meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore.”

You write: ”We believe in one nature in Christ, we add to the trisagion: Qui crucifixus es pro nobis, and we follow all the ecclesiastical canons of the Syrians; we do not reject those of the Romans but we respect them, as a son respects his father, but in the matter of the two natures we do not agree with them.” The Book says: ”How long will you limp on your two hams?” Now in which camp shall we see and count you? In that of the Syrians with whose faith you agree, according to your own words, or in that of the Greeks whom you do not reject, and what is more difficult, whom you have made your fathers? Our first father is God, from whom we are born in the spirit; our second father, and that in the flesh, is Adam; each one of us also has a carnal father of whom he is born; the name of ”father” extends also to the holy Fathers, who, as we have previously shown, were not all Greek.

The great Alexander, the promoter of the Council of three hundred and eighteen Fathers, and Athanasius, his disciple, were Egyptian; and so also were the rest of the bishops who accompanied them from Egypt and Alexandria; Viton with Vincentius, the priests of Rome, and Hosius of the town of Cordova, and the rest of the Western bishops were Franks; Jacob of Nisibin, and Ephrem, his disciple, and Ith-Alaha of Edessa, and Mara of Macedonopolis, and John of Persia, were Syrian.

Show us how are the Greeks your Fathers. The kind of pride you are taking belonged to the Jews who used to have pride in Abraham and say: "We have Abraham to our father," but Christ answered them: "God is able from these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Listen also to John Chrysostom how he rebukes those who take pride in carnal fathers, in origin, in earthly possessions, and in country, in all of which the Greeks your fathers and friends take pride: "Why are you proud that you are from a great country, while I would command you to be a stranger to all the earth? And why do you take pride in earthly possessions, you man, who, if you wish, can easily render all the world unworthy of you?" Christ was brought up in Nazareth, was born in Bethlehem, and laid in a manger. What profit had the children of Samuel in not imitating their father's conduct? And likewise the children of Moses? What harm came to Timothy from the fact that he was the child of pagan parents? In what was Canaan helped by Noah, his father? Children do not always help their parents, nor parents their children; indeed no help came to Esau from Isaac, nor to the Jews from Abraham. From these you will learn that neither parents help their children, nor the children their parents, but each one is justified by his works and his deeds.

Neither the Greeks are our fathers nor the Romans, nor are the Jews the fathers of Christians : all these are loose expressions and old women's tales. If Yawan, the father of the Greeks, was born before Aram, our father, there might have been occasion for discussion, but when this is not the case, how did you then glory in the not very weighty words of those haughty and arrogant people. It is written in the prophets : "A son honours his father, and a servant his master ; if I am a father, how is it that you do not honour me, and if I am a master, how is it that you do not fear me, saith the Lord Sabaoth." What do you say about this ? God says that He is the Father and the Lord of us and them and of all peoples, and you establish them as our fathers, our lords, and our superiors because of some of their Canons that happened to be translated in our Service-books ! This is not the saying of a wise man.

If it is because of these Canons and because of four or five books of theirs that we have translated that they are so arrogant, our Lord was a Syrian, and they have translated all His teaching into their language ; and in case we pretended to be their fathers, we might say that lo all the Melchites who resemble them take great pleasure in the teaching of St. Jacob. The Greeks take also great pleasure in the teaching of the great Athanasius and Cyril, both of whom Egyptians, while the Franks take great pleasure in the teaching of Xystus, and the Franks, we and they in that of Hippolytus, Julius and others. Let them, therefore, not show arrogance against truth. These will suffice for this point.

Chapter 10. On the Trisagion

You also discuss with us the trisagion in which you have written that the Greeks say : Sanctus es Deus, Sanctus es Pater omnipotens. Let it be known to you that the Chalcedonians do not refer all the trisagion to the Father, as you write, but to the Trinity, because they say: ”Sanctus es Deus Pater, Sanctus es omnipotens Filius, Sanctus es immortalis Spiritus Sancte, miserere nobis.” We Syrians, with the Armenians, the Egyptians, the Abyssinians, the Nubians, and the Indians, refer the trisagion to the Son. There are some who say that when Joseph brought down the body of our Lord from the Cross, people saw that angels had set up three choirs, the first of which saying: ”Sanctus es Deus,” and the second: ”Sanctus es omnipotens,” and the third: ”Sanctus es Immortalis:” then Joseph and Nicodemus were moved by the Spirit and said: ”Qui crucifixus es pro nobis—i.e. for mankind—miserere nobis.” This was immediately received in the Churches, and Ignatius the fiery, the disciple of John, established it in the Churches. Some others, however, say that it has been established after Nestorius had been rejected from the Church, but they are wrong. The Fathers said that it was that fourth Person, with the human nature which was crucified, who, although God, omnipotent and immortal, wished to become flesh for us, and not another kind of nature.

The Chalcedonians say that the trisagion is derived from the Sanctus found in Isaiah. As the Seraphim glorify the three persons of the Trinity with the thrice repeated Sanctus, so we also should refer the trisagion to the Trinity. Against them we will write as follows:—The One whom Isaiah saw on a high throne and the seraphim round him is the Son. This we know from John the Evangelist who says: ”These things said Isaiah about Him when he saw His glory.” Cyril, John Chrysostom, and other Doctors teach us that it was the Son, the Word, that Isaiah saw on the throne and not the Father. We also believe that it is He who is the door and that it is through Him that we go to the Father. He says: ”I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall find life.” In the fact that we refer the trisagion to the Son we may go up to the Father and say: ”Our Father who art in heaven.” And in referring the glory to the Son we speak in the Holy Spirit: ”No man can say: ’Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.’”

We say further that the Seraphim said: ”Holy, Holy, Holy, heaven and earth are full of His glory,” and they did not say: ”Thou art holy O God, Thou art holy O Omnipotent, Thou art

holy O Immortal." If the Doctors have explained the thrice repeated "holy" as referring to the three persons (of the Trinity), and if the Sanctus of the liturgy also: "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Omnipotens, pleni sunt," etc., refers to the three persons, although addressed to one of them only, let them show us from where they learned that the trisagion of "Sanctus es Deus" refers to the Trinity. The prophet says only: "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus," and the words "Deus, Omnipotens, Immortalis" have been added afterwards. That this trisagion refers to the Son to whom it is appropriate is known by the following: we say "Holy art Thou O God the Son," because He became flesh although remaining God; and we say: "Holy art Thou O Omnipotent," because He put on our weak body although remaining omnipotent in His divinity; and we say: "Holy art Thou O Immortal," because He died in the flesh although remaining immortal like God. What passage is it of the heretic Macedonius or of any other who attributed mortality to the Holy Spirit that the Chalcedonians want to refute when they say: "Holy Thou art O immortal Holy Spirit?" They have really no apology to offer. The words of the trisagion have been attributed by the Doctors to the Son because He became flesh, put on the weak and mortal human body, and was addressed by them as "God," "omnipotent," "immortal," and "who hast been crucified for us" in the flesh.

If they refuse this and say that the trisagion refers to the Trinity, let them only say: "Holy, holy, holy," and not: "Holy art Thou O God," and the remaining "Omnipotent" and "Immortal." The Nestorians and the Chalcedonians, in order to take from the middle the question of the crucifixion, and to introduce the division of nature and natures, and count in Christ two attributes, powers, and wills, and in order not to admit that we crucify the Son in the flesh, avoided the reference of the trisagion to the Son and attributed it to the Trinity, not paying sufficient attention to what Paul said: "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." John the evangelist also said: "glory to the cross." The theologian said in his discourse on the passover: "We had need of a God becoming flesh and dying in order that we may live with Him. We died that we may be purified, and we rose with Him. Many miracles occurred at that time: God was crucified, the sun suffered eclipse and then shone again. It was necessary that the creatures should suffer with the Creator." Now where does this Doctor put division in Christ? Where does he say that man died or that human nature was crucified? He openly declared that God became flesh, died and was crucified.

Let it be also known to you that if, as the Greeks believe, the trisagion refers to the Trinity, and the sentence Qui crucifixus es pro nobis is taken away from it, it would not only refer to the Trinity, as they say, but also to angels and demons; which is blasphemy. The angel or the demon might indeed say: "I am a God," because they are Spirits; and Satan said about himself: "I will ascend above the stars of heaven, and I will be like God," and Paul also said: "Whose minds the god of this world hath blinded." Satan calls also himself "omnipotent," because he is constantly watchful in his war against the saints, and he even made bold and fought the Christ. He is also "immortal" because he does not die. Consider well, therefore, where the trisagion might lead, if we did not add to it Qui crucifixus es pro nobis; indeed the trisagion of the Greek may reach Satan! When, however, the words Qui crucifixus es

pro nobis are added to it, no one can refer ”crucifixion” to an angel or a demon, because this would be impossible; nor could then the trisagion be referred to a mere man, because ”immortality”

which is expressed in it is not referred to a man. The trisagion is, therefore, to be truly referred to the Son, and Word—God who became man, and who is both mortal and immortal : mortal in the flesh, and immortal in His Godhead, and He was crucified on our behalf. You mentioned that the Armenians at the Nativity say one thing and at the Epiphany say another thing, and on some other occasion some other thing. This, however, does not matter, since they refer the trisagion to Christ. As we say in the Passion week : ”O Christ, who by His passion delivered us from error,” and as at the beginning of the Gospel we say : ”At the time of the Nativity of our Lord,” or ”at the time of His Baptism, at the time of His Economy, at the time of His resurrection” as the case may be, so also the Armenians do with the trisagion, and use it according to circumstances.

We gave ourselves all this trouble for your salvation, not yours alone, but that of many others who will listen to us. The prophet said : ”He who taketh forth the precious from the vile shall be as my mouth.” Do not throw, therefore, truth behind you, and abandon an old habit. Who is the man who can be so forgetful of his own self as to hate a human being ? We do not hate the Greeks, but the schisms which they brought into the midst and the divisions which they introduced into the Church. For a certain number of years I only disclosed the trouble caused by five of their innovations in five points of faith ; had I disclosed at length all the disturbances they had caused, they would have been ashamed of themselves, because not all of them are aware of what happened to them. I warned them several times to let everyone go his own way without recrimination against his neighbour of another creed, but they showed no desire to heed our advice. I wrote chapters concerning their habits, and also on the fact that we should be permitted to enter their churches, and be allowed to pray for them and they for us ; I also wrote many other chapters to rebuke them and point to the disturbance that they would be causing in the Church if they did not desire to live in peace and concord. For several reasons, however, among which is the fact that they have no responsible director and head, I kept my tongue and did not disclose what we are now aiming at.

Because, if God gives me life, I have the intention of exposing little by little all their teaching and comparing it with the interpretation of the holy Doctors, and of outlining afterwards our own teaching and interpretation and those of the Doctors. We have written the present pages in haste, but we have confidence that we shall not find ourselves in need to write to you again on the same subject, and that you will rather constitute yourself a preacher of truth, and thus possess your own soul and that of the many who fell like you. In case you remain stubborn in your old ideas, and in case light and darkness are on the same footing with you, it is your own business, but there is a great day which will make manifest all the hidden secrets of mankind. Let it be also known to you that it is very pleasing and agreeable to God that there should be no divisions in the Churches of Christians; it would have been

also more just that the Greeks should have torn and pulled at their own flesh, but they are so steeped in iniquity as to say that there are no other Christians but themselves, and they inflict more harm on our community and on that of the Armenians than the Turks. As I said above, I warned several times the Greeks of Melitene that they and the Syrians and Armenians should love one another and not to growl at one another like wolves and lions, but their madness reached such a pitch as to say like their fathers: "You are not Christians" and other similar ugly offensive words which are in keeping with their iniquity.

I wished to sow peace in the camp of the hostile parties, and to convince them from the books of the Apostles and Doctors that it is not good that they should contend with one another, but that they should enter one another's Churches, and pray with love, and if necessary to come nearer to one another and remember one another in prayers, with the understanding that each one may follow his own theological convictions, but they did not condescend to reconciliation. When I examined their madness and noticed that it was that of insolent people, I retorted and said to them: since you are so incurable, and believe that truth, which you do not know, is with you, bring first the testimony and the signature of your bishop, priests and notables, and I on my part shall also bring those of our Patriarch, our bishops, priests, and notables, to the effect that (in a public discussion which we will hold on religious questions) either party shall be pleased with the truth which shall there be revealed, and that either of them shall embrace it when revealed ; that in the discussion no party shall abuse the other, or rebuke him and refer to extraneous subjects. By the help of God I shall on that day disclose everything to the sun with justice and equity, in spite of the fact that the affair requires labour, time, helpers and promoters.

Here end the ten chapters.

Source. English translation by Alphonse Mingana, from ***Woodbrooke Studies: Christian documents in Syriac, Arabic and Garshūni***, edited and translated by A. Mingana, with introductions by Rendel Harris, volume 1 (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1927); public domain. The text was read by machine (Mistral OCR) from a scan of the 1927 volume at the Internet Archive and has not been proofread against the printed book. SermonIndex has removed running heads and page numbers, joined words split across lines, and divided the text into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Footnotes and the editor's introduction are left out. Rendel Harris's introduction, the index of names and the Syriac text in facsimile are also left out. No original-language text is shown beside it, and no modern English version has been made.

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