Ecclesiastical History (Syriac), book 4 (extract)

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. AD 260–339)

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FROM THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH: CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH, CONCERNING THEOPHILUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, AND PHILIP, AND MODESTUS, AND MELITON, AND THOSE WHOM HE HAS MENTIONED, AND CONCERNING APOLLINARIS AND MUSANUS. BUT as to Theophilus, concerning whom we have said that he was Bishop of Antioch, there are three treatises by him against Antolycus, and another which is inscribed "Against the heresy of Hermogenes," in which he uses testimonies from the Revelation of John; and there are other books by him which are suitable for teaching. But those, who pertained to heretical doctrine, even at that time like tares were corrupting the pure seed of the doctrine of the Apostles; but the Pastors which were in the churches in every country, were driving them like beasts of the wilderness away from the flock of Christ; at one time by teaching and exhortation to the Brethren, but at another time openly before their faces they contended with them in discussion, and put them to shame; and again, also, by writing treatises they diligently refuted and exposed their opinions. But Theophilus, together with others, contended against them; and he is celebrated for one treatise, which was ably composed by him against Marcion, which, together with the others that I have |57 already mentioned, is still preserved. And after him Maximinus received the Bishoprick of the Church of Antioch, who was the seventh after the Apostles.

But Philip, respecting whom we have learned from the words of Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, that he was Bishop of the church of the city of Gortyna, he also composed with accuracy a treatise against Marcion; Irenaeus too, and Modestus, who, more than the others, openly exposed the error of this man; and many others whose treatises are preserved in the possession of many Brethren up to this day.

At this time, also, Meliton, Bishop of the church of Sardis, and Apollinaris, Bishop of the church of Hierapolis, flourished with praise; who made, each one of them for himself, a separate apology for the Faith, and presented it to the Emperor of the Romans, who lived at that time. But the treatises by these, with which we have become acquainted, are the following:----by Meliton, On Easter two, and On Polity, and On the Prophets; and another

On the Church, and another On the First Day of the Week; and again another On the Faith of Man, and another On his Formation; and again another On the Hearing of the Ear of Faith: and besides these, On the Soul and Body; and again On Baptism, and On the Truth, and On the Faith; and On the Birth of Christ, and On the word of his Prophecy; and again On the Soul and on the Body; and another On the Love of Strangers, and On Satan, and On the Revelation of John; and again another On God who put on the body; and again another which he wrote to the Emperor Antoninus. But when he wrote respecting the time of Easter, at the commencement he gave this information, "In the time of Servilius. Paulus, proconsul of Asia, Agaris (Sagaris) suffered martyrdom; and there was much questioning in Laodicea touching Easter, which varied as to the time in those days, and these things were written.

But this same tract Clement of Alexandria mentions in a treatise of his own which he wrote on Easter, and says that it was on the occasion of this treatise of Meliton that he himself also wrote. But in that apology, which he presented to the Emperor, he relates that such things were done by him to our people: "That |58 which never before took place;----the race of those who fear God is now persecuted by new decrees in Asia; for calumniators and such as covet the possessions of others, who have no shame, under the pretence of their having a decree, openly plunder and rob by night and by day men who have done no wrong. And after other things he proceeds to say, "If thou hast ordered this to be done, well; it is also done; for a righteous sovereign never purposeth any thing unrighteously. We even gladly endure the honour of this death; but we present to thee this supplication only, that thou wouldest first inquire respecting those who are the actors in this contest, and judge righteously, whether they be deserving of death and punishment, or of life and quietness. But if this will, and this new decree, be not from thee, which is not meet to be executed in this manner, not even towards barbarians and enemies,----the more especially do we entreat of thee not to be unmindful of us in this persecution by the world. But after this he proceeds----"Because our philosophy first flourished among the Barbarians;

but it also sprung up among thine own people in the days of Augustus, and it became for the empire of the Romans a great power, and for thine own empire especially a good education; for from that time the dominion of the Romans increased and enlarged itself, which thou hast received and augmented, and thou wilt still strengthen it together with thy son, so long as thou protectest this philosophy which groweth up together with thy empire, that commenced with Augustus; which thy fathers also honoured together with the other religions: and this is a great proof, that for the good of the empire our preaching also sprang up together with its auspicious commencement, because since the days of Augustus no evil has befallen your empire, but rather in every thing it has acquired glory and power through the prayers of us all. And of all who have been Emperors, Nero and Domitian only gave heed to envious men, and received the accusation against our doctrine; and from these same, as by some unreasonable custom, it was brought to pass that the violence of falsehood should be directed against us.But thine own ancestors corrected the error of these; for oftentimes |59 they rebuked by letters many who were desirous of attempting to cause troubles on

this account; and thy grandfather Hadrian wrote to many touching this; and to Fundius (Fundanus) the proconsul of Asia.

But thy father wrote respecting us to different cities, that no man should injure us, during the time that thou also together with him wast governing every thing; even to the Pharisaeans (Larissaeans) and to the Thessalonians, and to Athens, and to all nations. But respecting thyself, we are persuaded that thou, still more than they, hast a good will concerning these things; and we are persuaded that thou wilt the rather order with wisdom whatsoever we entreat of thee. But so far were these things set down.

But in the Extracts which were written by Meliton, at the beginning of them, he has noted down the number of the books of the Old Testament and shewn which are received: and it is right we should enumerate them here. But he wrote after this manner: "Meliton to Onesimus my brother, greeting: Because oftentimes with that earnestness which thou hast touching the Word, thou hast exhorted me to make for thee Extracts from the Law and from the Prophets relating to our Saviour and to the whole of our faith, and moreover hast been desirous to learn accurately respecting the Antient Books, how many they are in number and what they are consecutively, I have given diligence to do this, because I am persuaded through, thy earnestness touching the faith and touching the doctrine of the Word, that thou esteemest the love of God above every thing, and art striving for eternal life. When, therefore, I went up to the East, and proceeded even to that country in which they were preached and practised, and had learned accurately respecting the books of the Old Testament, I wrote them down and have sent them to thee. Their names are these-----Of Moses five books, Genesis,and Exodus,and Numbers,and Of the Priests (Leviticus), and Deuteronomy; and again of Jesus, the Son of Nun; and the Book of Judges, and Ruth, and four Books of Kings, and two Books of Chronicles, and the Psalms of David ; and of Solomon, the Proverbs, which is Wisdom, and Koheleth, and the Song of Songs; and Job;

and of the Prophets, Isaiah and |60 Jeremiah, and the twelve Prophets together; and Daniel, and Ezekiel, and Ezra: from which same I have made Extracts, and arranged them in six discourses. All these of Meliton. And again there are also many treatises by Apollinaris which are still preserved in the possession of many; but those which have been seen by us are the following----One, which is the Apology, that was made to the same Emperor of whom we have spoken above; and Against the Heathen five books; and Against the Jews two books; and those which he composed afterwards against the heresy of the Phrygians, which had recently sprung up a little time before, because then Montanus, together with the false prophetesses which were attached to him, had begun to turn aside from the truth.

[Selected endnotes moved here and numbered] 1. History of the Church. This chapter of the fourth book of Eusebius is taken from the antient Syriac version, of which I have inserted an account in the Corpus Ignatianum, p. 350, which see. I have given the entire chapter as it stands. It comprises the 24,25,26, and 27th of the Greek editions. It may be considered a fair specimen of the Syriac version, which future editors of Eusebius should not neglect to consult. 2. P. 57, L. 5. Bishop of Corinth, omitted in the Greek. Ruffinus omits here also

all mention of Dionysius. 3. L. 18. On the faith of Man. So Ruffinus, De fide hominis; and also several Greek manuscripts. The editions have ... 4. L. 20. On the hearing of the ear of faith. Gr. .... Ruffinus, De obedientia fide. De sensibus. 5. L. 22. On the faith; with several manuscripts. Ruffirius, De fide. Some editions have „,. See Dr. Routh's note on this place, vol. i. p. 139.

6. L. 23. And again on the Soul and on the Body. With several Greek manuscripts, and Ruffinus, Item de anima et corpore. 7. L. 24. The Greek editions add ...; and Ruffinus, Item liber qui dicitur Clavis. 8. L. 25. On God who put on the body. Gr. ... Ruffinus, De Deo corpore induto. See Dr. Routh's note, p. 143. 9. P. 59, L. 3. Fundius, and below, Pharisaeans: doubtless errors of the scribe.

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