Writings and fragments

Alexander of Cappadocia (d. AD 251)

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Translator's Biographical Notice

Alexander of Cappadocia. Translator's Biographical Notice. [a.d. 170–233–251.] Alexander was at first bishop of a church in Cappadocia, but on his visiting Jerusalem he was appointed to the bishopric of the church there, while the previous bishop Narcissus was alive, in consequence of a vision which was believed to be divine. During the Decian persecution he was thrown into prison at Cæsarea, and died there, a.d. 251. The only writings of his which we know are those from which the extracts are made.

From the Epistles of Alexander

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I. An Epistle to the People of Antioch. Alexander, a servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ, sends greeting in the Lord to the blessed church of Antioch. Easy and light has the Lord made my bonds to me during the time of my imprisonment since I have learned that in the providence of God, Asclepiades—who, in regard to the right faith, is most eminently qualified for the office—has undertaken the episcopate of your holy church of Antioch. And this epistle, my brethren and masters, I have sent by the hand of the blessed presbyter Clement, a man virtuous and well tried, whom ye know already, and will know yet better; who also, coming here by the providence and supervision of the Master, has strengthened and increased the Church of the Lord.

II. From an Epistle to the Antinoites. Narcissus salutes you, who held the episcopate in this district before me, who is now also my colleague and competitor in prayer for you, and who, having now attained to his hundred and tenth year, unites with me in exhorting you to be of one mind. III. From an Epistle to Origen. For this, as thou knowest, was the will of God, that the friendship subsisting between us from our forefathers should be maintained unbroken, yea rather, that it should increase in fervency and strength. For we are well acquainted with those blessed fathers who have trodden the course before us, and to whom we too shall soon go: Pantænus, namely, that man verily blessed, my master; and also the holy Clement, who was once my master and my benefactor; and all the rest who may be like them, by whose means also I have come to know thee, my lord and brother, who excellest all.

IV. From an Epistle to Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria. And he—i.e., Demetrius—has added to his letter that this is a matter that was never heard of before, and has never been done now,—namely, that laymen should take part in public speaking, when there are bishops present. But in this assertion he has departed evidently far from the truth by some means. For, indeed, wherever there are found persons capable of profiting the brethren, such persons are exhorted by the holy bishops to address the people. Such was the case at Laranda, where Evelpis was thus exhorted by Neon; and at Iconium, Paulinus was thus

exhorted by Celsus; and at Synada, Theodorus also by Atticus, our blessed brethren. And it is probable that this is done in other places also, although we know not the fact.

Note by the American Editor

Note by the American Editor. If Alexander died in the Decian persecution, it is noteworthy how far the sub-apostolic age extended. This contemporary of Cyprian was coadjutor to Narcissus, who may have seen those who knew St. John. See vol. i. p. 416, note 1, this series; also vol. i. p. 568, Fragment ii.

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