Fragments of Book 2 - Against Theodore

Cyril of Alexandria (c. AD 376–444)

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CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA — FROM HIS SECOND BOOK AGAINST THE WORDS OF THEODORE
[Translated by P. E. Pusey]

of which the beginning is
They who with clear eye of the understanding view closely the holy and God-inspired Scripture . He said to His disciples, Call not any teacher on the earth, for one is your Leader, Christ. For He did not, when |338 He was commanding the Apostles this, distinguish His proper Godhead from His visible body, nor when He affirmed that He was Christ did He distinguish Himself from soul and flesh, being thus both God and man, bondman visible and Lord acknowledged, veiling the height of His Godhead with the low estate of the Incarnation, lifting up the low estate of the visible body by the operation of His Godhead. Let not men deceive nor be deceived admitting as ”man of the Lord,” as they call Him, a man without a mind, but rather our Lord and God: for neither do we sunder the man from the Godhead but we declare Him One and the Same, erst not man but God and Son only and before the ages, unmingled with body and what belong to body; at the end Man too assumed for our salvation, suffering in flesh, Impassible in Godhead, circumscribed in body, uncircumscribed in Godhead, the Same earthly and Heavenly, seen and conceived of, contained in space and boundless, in order that the whole man which fell under sin might be re-formed by the Same, Whole Man and God.

For since the Only-Begotten Word of God being Life by Nature was made flesh, the nature of man re-bloomed unto life: for He has become first among all. And for this reason the Life-giving Word of God made His own flesh which was subject to death, in order that manifesting it superior to both death and decay, He might transmit the grace to us too. For as in Adam we were brought down unto death, so in Christ thrusting aside the tyranny of death, are we re-formed unto immortality. |339 The same from the first book against Theodore . For as out of soul and body are one

man, albeit the properties pertaining to each have the vastest possible difference one to another in respect (I mean) of their being such (for the soul is other than the body): thus will it be conceived of also as to Christ the Saviour of us all.

S. Cyril from his first book against Theodore from the last quire , GOD was He Who suffered in the flesh (wise sir), the Lord of Glory, Who by the grace of God tasted death for every man, not in the Nature of His Godhead but in His Proper Body. for this in that too against Theodore of Mopsuestia in the first book wrote S. Cyril, CYRIL. But we make use of necessary examples, everywhere keeping undivided the Union and repelling thy severance. The example of the sun however, none of them who think aright brings to the establishment of union, knowing that we follow the Divine Scriptures, which haveit that the Word of God (as we have said) should partake in like wise as we in blood and flesh ensouled with a reasonable soul, and not on the contrary that it is man who by participation and mere affection, is illuminated by the Divine Economy as if from a ray of the sun.

and in the first book of those which he wrote against Theodore of Mopsuestia on this wise, CYRIL. But Jesus Christ is not conceived of alone and by Himself; or again as without flesh and bare of the |340 likeness usward, but rather as the Word of God, incarnate and made man. Cyril therefore treating of the 318 holy Fathers in his first book wrote these things too against Theodore, Lo with all clearness do the initiators of all under heaven and the champions of the truth, men elect and spirit-clad, tracking the Divine Words and the Tradition of the Saints and Apostles and Evangelists, who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word, bid us believe, not in Two sons, but in One Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, Begotten from forth the Father. The name Christ is indicative of anointing, and that of Jesus was conferred, not on the bare Word, conceived of apart from flesh, but rather when He was born of a woman in the flesh: yet even so do they say that One is the Only-Begotten, Who was begotten by Nature of the Father, and they affirm that He is God and Consubstantial with the Father; saying that through Him were made all things which are in Heaven and upon earth, and in plain terms they confess, that ”for us men and for our salvation He came down, and was both made flesh and made man, and suffered and died and rose the third day and ascended into heaven.”

[It is not said to which book the following belong.] and see the all-wise Cyril, justly objecting this to Theodore and writing thus, Chicanery then is the Mystery of Christ and there is nought true therein; but thus he says, that the glory of God was spread upon him, i.e. the appellation of God, as some tint, was anointed on a man like us; we refuse to be man-worshippers, who worship the creature rather than the Creator. |341 S. Cyril from his Book against Theodore of Mopsuestia . For being God by Nature and truly Son of God the Father, He was made in likeness of men and made His own the flesh which is of the holy Virgin and it is the flesh of God and full of God-befitting might: wherefore it is also life-giving and repels infirmities

and works the undoing of death. S. Athanasius from his work upon the Incarnation of the Word: Cyril cited it in his books against Theodore .

We confess that He is Son of God and God according to the Spirit, Son of Man according to the flesh, not Two Natures to that One Son, One [Nature] worshipped the other unworshipped, but One Nature of God the Word Incarnate , worshipped with His flesh with One worship : nor Two Sons, One, Very Son of God and worshipped, the other the man out of Mary not worshipped, made by grace son of God just as men too are. and reiterating these matters of faith, ... he defines thus , Him anathematizes the holy Catholic Church, obeying the Divine Apostle who says, If any one preach to you beside that ye received let him be accursed. for S. Cyril cites Theodore who was Archbishop of Mopsuestia, in what he wrote against him who wickedly cried out thus , Theodore. "But yea (he says), for as albeit He was of |342 Bethlehem, He was called a Nazarene because of His abidance and growing up there: so [is He called] man too, because He sojourned in man."

and S. Cyril against these things says thus Silly and childish and old womanish is the speech, for not as from a city one is called citizen or countryman, so by reason of dwelling in a man, is the Word being God called man. as also Theodore Archbishop of Mopsuestia who in his craft had done this, the wise Cyril blaming, in his book against him thus wrote, CYRIL. But he thinks that he has said something clever, for he affirms that it is right that the body should be honoured, i. e. the man, for he (I suppose) blushes to call it by the appellation of Son, and to call the Word by that of Body. The Union therefore consists in titles, and an assemblage of mere names: but in truth the Mystery is utterly repudiated. The same Cyril against Theodore. But he with mouth wide open and reins of blasphemy let loose says that Christ's holiness was imperfect, and did not reach its height ere the Spirit in the form of a dove had come down upon Him. Why was He not Perfect? full surely one who is imperfect cannot be without sin, yea |343 one who is believed to be in part holy is thought to be in another part infirm. Besides what is that defect which (as the opponent asserts) the Holy Ghost supplied, that the other part too might be perfect and might break the devil's onset? Yea and not only is He Holy and verily most perfect but also endued with full power who used to heal sorrows and every sort of infirmity.

Cyril of holy memory from the first book of what he wrote against Theodore . THEODORE. "If any like to call both God the Word Son of God son of David in an improper sense on account of God the Word's temple which is forth of David, let him name him too which is of the seed of David, Son of God; let him so style him by grace not by nature, not ignorant of his natural ancestors, nor perverting order and calling Him Who is Unembodied a body also; and Him that is before the ages forth of God forth of David too, and that He suffered and is Impassible . A body is not incorporeal, what is from below is not from above, what is before the ages is

not out of the seed of David, what suffered is not Impassible, nor are those things directed to the same understanding: what belong to the Body are |344 not God's the Word, and what are God's the "Word have not the body as their seat. Let us confess the natures and not deny the economies."

S. CYRIL. He who says that the economies must not be denied, utterly uproots the mystery of the human nature: for he dares to say that neither was the Only-Begotten Word of God made man, nor did He appear from forth the seed of holy David, but openly introduces to us a pair of sons, a nature uneven and false in its name. For that it is said to be in an improper sense, wholly shews that it is not truly what it is said to be, for it borrows the other's name. Hence if the Word of God be called man in an improper sense, He clearly was not made man. If he who is out of the seed of David is in an improper sense Son and God, he is by nature and in truth neither God nor Son. False then is the name in either case and the fact is really understood to be that each is called what it is not.

From the same book. THEODORE. "And it is convenient that they who view aright, should, when we are looking for natural forefathers, call neither God the Word son of David or Abraham but their Maker: nor the body before the ages out of the Father but the seed of Abraham and David born from Mary. And when the consideration is of natural births, neither is God the Word deemed to be Mary's son: for mortal bears what is mortal by nature and a body like itself. God the Word underwent not two births, one before the ages, the other in the last times, but out of the Father was He begotten by Nature, and the temple which was born of Mary He fashioned to Himself out of the very womb." |345 Then going on a little and something intervening, he said again, "But when the consideration is of the saving economy, let both God be called man (not because He became so, but because He assumed it), and man God, not as though he had become uncircumscribed nor every where existent, for the body was subject to touch even after the resurrection, and so was taken up into Heaven and so will come as it was taken up."

CYRIL. Lo plainly and manifestly is he borne against the Divine Scripture, he repudiates the mystery of Christ and as it were chides God the Word Who for us was pleased to suffer emptiness, and seems to grieve that He was made man. For he utterly takes away the Incarnation and lifts himself against the Unspeakable Wisdom, all-but saying in Jewish mode to Christ the Saviour of us all, For a good work we stone Thee not but for blasphemy, that THOU, a man, makest Thyself God. Let him hear Him then saying openly, If therefore I do not the works of My Father believe Me not, if I do though ye believe not Me believe My Works. For while he knows that the Word of God used Divine Might and Power even when He appeared as man, he denies that He is God and says that He rather dwelt in a man, in order that the Word of God might set forth to us a man to be worshipped and who is honoured

with the mere name of Godhead; he is convicted therefore of being utterly ignorant of the might of Christ's Mystery.

Theodore from the same book. " ' But if (he says) it were flesh which was crucified, how does the sun turn away his rays, and darkness and |346 earthquakes overpower the whole earth and were the rocks rent and the dead arose?' What then do they say of the darkness that happened in Egypt in the time of Moses, not for three hours but for three days? what of the other miracles which were wrought through Moses and through Jesus the son of Nave who made the sun stand, which sun under king Ezechias even went back against nature? and of the remains of Eliseus which raised a dead man? For if what things befell in the time of the Cross shew that God the Word suffered, and they allow not that the things were wrought for the sake of a man: the things too which happened in the time of Moses for the sake of Abraham's race and those in the time of Jesus son of Nave and of king Ezechias will not be. But if those miracles were wrought for the sake of the people of the Jews, much more those on the cross for the sake of God the Word's temple."

CYRIL. The heaven is astonished for this and has quaked exceeding vehemently, saith the Lord. O wickedness past endurance! o tongue that speaks iniquity against God and mind that lifteth up its horn on high! seems it little to thee that the Lord of glory is fixed to the wood? Whom THOU sayest is neither true Son nor God, but WE believe that He is truly Son and G od, Creator and Maker of all things. For neither was God the Word Which is out of God the Father man simply but in human form, not suffering translation or change into flesh, but rather united thereto according to the faith of the holy Scriptures. He it is Who suffered in the flesh and hung on the wood, wrought miracles in Egypt, manifesting His glory through the all-wise Moses. |347 Theodore from the same book. "Son by grace he who is man out of Mary, by Nature God the Word. But what is by grace is not by nature and what is by nature is not by grace. There are not two sons. Be these enough for the body which is of us, sonship by grace, glory, immortality, whereby it is made the Temple of God the Word; be it not raised above its nature and let not God the Word in place of the thanksgiving due from us be wronged. And what is the wrong? to combine Him with a body and to suppose that He needed a body for perfect sonship. Nor does God the Word Himself please that He should be David's son, but lord; but that the body should be called son of David, He not only does not grudge but even came for this very end."

CYRIL. Hence since what is by grace is not by nature and what is by nature is not by grace, there are not two sons, according to thy mode of reasoning. He indeed who is son by grace and not by nature is not truly son, it remains that the glory of true Sonship exist in Him Who is so by Nature not by grace, that is, in God the Word Who is forth of God the Father. Driven out therefore (as I said) from being and being called Son of God is Christ Jesus through Whom too we have been saved,

declaring His Death and confessing His Resurrection. For the Word of faith which we preach, brings us to that confession. Hence our faith is in a man and not in Him Who is both by Nature and truly Son of God. For if he is true who says that he obtained the sonship by grace, he will be counted among |348 the multitude of sons, i. e., ourselves, to whom the grace that is from above gives the sonship whereto we were called through Jesus Christ Who is forth of the seed of David according to the flesh. And the Divine Evangelist will assure thee, saying, But they who received Him He gave them authority to become the sons of God, to them that believe on His Name. Then how does he who has obtained the rank of sonship given him by another, avail to give us too a grace not his but acquired and from without?

And after a little. The SON gave Himself unto emptying and, Perfect in all things, was pleased to suffer abasement and to undergo birth according to the flesh of a woman, and was called Son of Abraham and David. Thou marvellest not at so comely a plan of the Economy, yea rather thou findest fault with the Mystery: saying that the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten was a wrong, thou chidest the counsel of God the Father, thou criest out too against the Son Himself Who was pleased to suffer emptying for thy sake. When therefore thou hearest Him saying to God the Father in Heaven, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, whole burnt sacrifices and for sin Thou requiredst not but a Body Thou completedst for Me; then I said, Lo I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, o God: I delight to do it; you will say that the Son haply thought not aright of His glory. For He chose completion of the Body and that made not for other but for Himself, according to His own words, for He says, A Body Thou completedst for Me. Albeit thou hear Paul saying of God the Word, Therefore because the sons partook of blood and flesh, He too likewise was made partaker of the same;

and thus the wise John writes, And the Word was made flesh and tabernacled in us, rise thou up against them crying out, ”Be He not, in place of the thanksgiving due from from us, wronged. God the Word was not made flesh, God the Word was not truly partaker of blood and flesh; He was not born as we of a woman after the flesh, He was not called son of David. For this which is both too petty for Him to be called and not according to His Will, |349 how would He have suffered? But WE, wise sir, are wont to glorify God the Father because He completed a Body for the Son: and we say that the Son Himself truly made flesh, i.e. man, suffered indeed emptying for our sakes, and underwent the low estate of our poverty, yet remained even thus God and Very Son of God the Father. How then did He not please to be called son of David if He were made man and that not against His will?

From the first Book of Cyril of holy memory that Christ is One against Theodore. For there are, there are who deny their Redeemer and Lord and say that He is not true Son of God the Father Who in the last times of the age endured for our sakes birth of a woman after the flesh; but rather that a new and late god appeared to the

earth, having the glory of sonship acquired from without just like us and boasting as it were in honours not his own, so that it is just man-worship and nothing else, and some man is worshipped together with the Holy TRINITY by us and by the holy angels. These things indeed they, exceeding haughty and much-wise in the knowledge of the Divine Scriptures have inserted in their writings, and as the Lord of all says through one of the holy Prophets, He set a snare to corrupt men. For what else than a snare and a stumbling-block, is a tongue uttering perverse things and counter to the sacred Scriptures and shamelessly resisting the Tradition of the Holy Apostles and Evangelists? We must therefore repudiate them who are obnoxious to such evil charges whether they are among the living or not: for from that which injures it is necessary to withdraw, and not to look to person but to what pleases God.

[Page running titles] Theodore. 337 338 CHRIST erst GOD only, now, GOD and Man: hath renewed us. One, suffered in the Body, Union undivided. 339 340 Nicene Fathers, following Bible tell of Christ, Man yet GOD. His flesh the flesh of God. One Son, one Nature, one worship. 341 342 The WORD GOD and man: Holy and healeth. 343 344 In an improper sense, denies Incarnation. The Son emptied though some chide. Indwelling. 345 346 The Son united to flesh as the Bible says. Christ Son, Who saved us, or our faith in a man. 347 348 God the Son chose to have a Body, some chide. Scripture says so: Angels and we worship. 349 [Selected footnotes]

1. Theodore, the contemporary and, in early days, comrade of S. Chrysostom, brother of Polychronius, Bishop of Apamea, was for about 36 years Bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia: he died in 428. John Archbishop of Antioch and Theodoret were therefore at the opening of their Episcopate when Theodore was now in old age. He seems to have been of a gifted family, for Theodoret closes his history (lib. v. 39) with the praise of Polychronius for grace in speech as well as in nobility of life. And Theodore too was a Preacher and writer, of great repute in the Province of Antioch. But he seems to have lacked stability and a well-balanced mind, and thus his controversy in earlier life against the Arians and Apollinarians led him, as well as Diodore whose pupil he was, to speak of the Incarnation as though it were only a condescension of God the Son in connecting with Himself in some way a man who had an already distinct Being. In the next Century, Facundus Bishop of Hermaeum near Carthage who endeavours most strenuously to defend Theodore, has preserved a long extract of Theodore's from a work called, 'Of Apollinarius and his heresy,' in which Theodore says, "Thirty years ago I wrote a book of 15000 lines on the Incarnation of our Lord in which I examined the faults of Arius and Eunomius hereon and also the empty presumption of Apollinarius, through my whole work;

so as to pass over (I believe) nothing pertaining either to the stability of Ecclesiastical orthodoxy or to the proof of their impiety. But they . .. especially instructed

by Apollinarius the head of this heresy shewed my work to all who thought as they did, if any how they might find valid answers against it. But since no one ventured to take up the gauntlet against the book . . . they wrote certain silly things which I never said and foisted them into my book and shewed them to their friends, sometimes too to our people who of their over-easiness listened eagerly to it all, and offered it as a proof as they imagined of my wickedness. And one of these writings was to say two sons„ (Theodore in Facundus, Def. iii. Capp. x. 1, Gallandi Bibl. Vett. Patr. xi. 770, 771). Nevertheless however much Theodore attempts to shield himself undercover of interpolations, his assertion (see below pp. 347, 355) of One Son and explanation of how he means One convict him of that heresy which John of Antioch, Theodoret and others, though they valued and admired Theodore, escaped.

2. This is the title with which the Venice manuscript of John of Caesarea's compilation introduces these extracts; he calls it second book because that against Diodore was considered the first. Severus however, the fifth Council and others cite this as Book 1. 3. This first extract belongs to Theophilus Archbishop of Alexandria and is taken from the first of those of his Paschal homilies which S. Jerome translated into Latin and thus preserved to us; John of Caesarea says, 'This testimony Cyril took to himself against what was said by Theodore: it belongs to Theophilus bishop of Alexandria.' It is his Homily for the year 401, when Theophilus was more than half through his 27 years' Episcopate. It is entitled, "To the Bishops of all Egypt." It is chiefly against Origen but the earlier part contains a clear statement of the Incarnation. S. Cyril quotes a little more of it in his de recta fide to the Princesses, p. 52 a b c.

4. From S. Gregory Naz. Ep. 1 to Cledonius against Apollinarius, as John of Caesarea notes: ' Another testimony of the same Cyril in the same book brought forward by him against what is said by Theodore. It is in the first Letter written to Cledonius by the most holy and blessed Gregory bishop of Nazianzum.' 5. The three first of these extracts are taken from the collection of John, Bishop of Caesarea; this one has been preserved to us by a Manuscript in the Library of S. Mark at Venice. 6. from a collection later than Severus; the next four are from Severus. 7. from the same collection as the passage given above, p. 320, see p. 326 note e: Card. Mai also gives it from Severus against Julian of Halicarnassus. 8. These words of preface are taken from a Compilation mentioned in note g: they are in the British Museum MSS., Add. 14532, 14533,12155.

9. The Greek is μίαν φύσιν Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένην, "One Incarnate Nature of the Word," not 'One Nature of the Incarnate Word' which would be the Monophysite heresy, and this expression S. Cyril carefully states and explains in his second letter to Succensus, Epp. pp. 142, 143. Almost the whole passage is given above, the beginning at p. 265 note e, the sequel at p. 41 note e. 10. On this passage, see

Preface. 11. The author of the Collection thus introduces the final words of S. Athanasius, see de recta fide to Arcadia and Marina 40 b. 12. This and the next are from Severus against the Catholic John, Bishop of Caesarea.

13. The following passage from S. Athanasius against Apollinarius will illustrate what suggested to Theodore, in opposing Apollinarians, to err thus sorrowfully. S. Athanasius says, "Tell me therefore how ye say that God was made of Nazareth? is it as declaring a beginning of generation of the Godhead, like Paul of Samosata, or denying the generation in the flesh, like Marcion and the rest of the heretics? not walking after the Gospel standard but chusing to speak out of your own? for therefore do ye say that God has been born of a Virgin and not God and man after the Gospel standard: lest, confessing the birth of the flesh ye should say it was a natural birth, speaking truth, but ye say that God was born, and that He exhibited His own flesh in semblance. For God does not shew forth the beginning of His Generation from Nazareth; but God the Word Who existed before the ages, appeared man out of Nazareth, born of Mary the Virgin and of the Holy Ghost [compare 'Man of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin,' in S. Augustine on S. John hom. 111 fin. p. 998 O.T.], in Bethlehem of Judaea of the seed of David and Abraham and Adam, as it is written; taking all from a Virgin whatever from the beginning God moulded and made without sin unto the subsistence of man." S. Ath. against Apoll. ii. 5. t. i. 943 c d.

14. This piece is supplied in a latin translation by Card. Mai: see Migne ix. 1451. n. 24. 15. See below pp. 358, 359. 16. This and the following extracts are from the collection prepared for the fifth General Council, and read in its fifth collation. It was in preparation for this Council that Facundus Bishop of Hermaeum (quoted above p. 337) had written his work, and no doubt John of Caesarea's vast array of extracts were prepared for the same purpose.

17. Thus far is given by Leontius of Byzantium as Diodore's. After a number of extracts of Theodore, Leontius gives five, which he attributes to Diodore with the title, The same Diodore out of Book 1 against the Synousiasts. This is the fourth of them. (Against Nestorians and Eutychians Book 3 in Gallandi, xii. G97.) Leontius' translation is a different one from that cited before the fifth Council. Gallandi assigns to Leontius the date about A.D. 610, nearly 60 years later than the Council. The fifth Council and Leontius agree in citing the work on (or as Leontius calls it, against) the Incarnation, in fifteen books, & the four books against Apollinarius (Leontius, book 3 ubi supra pp. 695, 696: Conc. vi. 43 &c). The Council further cites yet another treatise: The same from the book against the Synousiasts or Apollinarists, which blessed Cyril put forth and answered (ib. 54, see below p. 345 and note s: so Pope Pelagius II in his Letter to Elias of Aquileia and other bishops in Istria. Conc. vi. 269). Leontius does not (as far as I see) cite this last, but is it a part of the treatise whence Leontius does cite five pieces as Diodore out of book

1 against the Synousiasts? of these five, the first is by Mercator too (p. 350 Bal.) attributed to Diodore (Mercator does not mention what book he extracted it from), the second is at p. 347, the third at p. 344, the fourth here, a piece of the fifth is by S. Cyril (p. 333) attributed to Diodore, while he attributes 2, 3, 4 to Theodore.

18. cited in part by Leontius under the name of Diodore against the Synousiasts (see last note), but in the fourth collation of the Council it stands as, The same Theodore from the passages which S. Cyril answered. t. vi. 57. 19. In these first words Theodore is citing an Apollinarian objection: compare with the passage S. Cyril's words against Nestorins, above pp. 175, 176. This whole passage is cited in the fourth collation of the Council amid other extracts of Theodore with an allusion to this work of S. Cyril in its title, The same from his book against the Synousiasts or Apollinarians which the blessed Cyril both put forward and answered, t. vi. p. 54. ed. Col. S. Cyril's citation of it and reply comes further on in the fifth collation p. 69 Col. and being a startling passage, part of it is cited (as n. 29) in Pope Vigilius' constitutum, Conc. v. 1334.

20. This piece is also preserved in Syriac by Severus, in his treatise against John the Grammarian in the British Museum MS. 12157 fol. 215 with the title, The same from the first Book of what he wrote against Theodore of Mopsuestia fighting against God. 21. This is also extant, in a different translation, in Leontius Byzant. against Nestorius and Eutyches Book 3, with the title, The same [Dioodore] from the same book [1 against the Synousiasts]. Gallandi, Bibl. Vet. Patrum, xii. 696. see above p. 343 note q. In the fourth collation of the Council it is cited with the title, The same Theodore, what S. Cyril put forth and answered, t. vi. 57 Col. Pope Vigilius likewise has it as n. 45 in his Constitutum, t. v. 1340. For quo, whereby it is made &c, the fourth collation gives quia, for that, Leontius, et quod, and that. The words, 'to suppose that He needs a body for perfect sonship,' belong to the Apollinarian error which Theodore is opposing: the next words are those of Theodore's own error.

22. See statement of Apollinarian errors, below p. 363 note b.

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