

35. Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon

The decades following the Council of Ephesus witnessed increased hostility between different parties in the christological controversies. Hoping that religious unity would bring political unity to the Roman Empire, Emperor Marcian called the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Though participants were hesitant to draw up another creed, imperial commissioners insisted that the council produce a statement that would resolve the bitter disputes over the nature of Christ. Affirming the full humanity and full divinity of Christ, the Chalcedonian formula attempted to take a middle road between more extreme christological positions.

But, forasmuch as persons undertaking to make void the preaching of the truth have through their individual heresies given rise to empty babblings; some of them daring to corrupt the mystery of the Lord's incarnation for us and refusing [to use] the name Mother of God (θεοτοκος) in reference to the Virgin, while others, bringing in a confusion and mixture, and idly conceiving that the nature of the flesh and of the Godhead is all one, maintaining that the divine Nature of the Only Begotten is, by mixture, capable of suffering; therefore this present holy, great, and ecumenical synod, desiring to exclude every device against the Truth, and teaching that which is unchanged from the beginning, has at the very outset decreed that the faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Fathers shall be preserved inviolate. And on account of them that contend against the Holy Ghost, it confirms the doctrine afterwards delivered concerning the substance of the Spirit by the One Hundred and Fifty holy Fathers who assembled in the imperial City; which doctrine they declared unto all men, not as though they were introducing anything that had been lacking in their predecessors, but in order to explain through written documents their faith concerning the Holy Ghost against those who were seeking to destroy his sovereignty. And, on account of those who have taken in hand to corrupt the mystery of

the dispensation [i.e., the Incarnation] and who shamelessly pretend that he who was born of the holy Virgin Mary was a mere man, it receives the synodical letters of the Blessed Cyril, Pastor of the Church of Alexandria, addressed to Nestorius and the Easterns, judging them suitable, for the refutation of the frenzied folly of Nestorius, and for the instruction of those who long with holy ardor for a knowledge of the saving symbol. And, for the confirmation of the orthodox doctrines, it has rightly added to these the letter of the President of the great and old Rome, the most blessed and holy Archbishop Leo, which was addressed to Archbishop Flavian of blessed memory, for the removal of the false doctrines of Eutyches, judging them to be agreeable to the confession of the great Peter, and as it were a common pillar against misbelievers. For it opposes those who would rend the mystery of the dispensation into a Duad of Sons; it repels from the sacred assembly those who dare to say that the Godhead of the Only Begotten is capable of suffering; it resists those who imagine a mixture or confusion of the two natures of Christ; it drives away those who fancy his form of a servant is of an heavenly or some substance other than that which was taken of us, and it anathematizes those who foolishly talk of two natures of our Lord before the union, conceiving that after the union there was only one.

SOURCE: *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, second series, vol. 14, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; Oxford and London: Parker & Company, 1900), 263-64.

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Following the holy Fathers we teach with one voice that the Son [of God] and our Lord Jesus Christ is to be confessed as one and the same [person], that he is perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man, of a reasonable soul and [human] body consisting, consubstantial with the Father as touching his Godhead, and consubstantial with us as touching his manhood; made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; begotten of his Father before the worlds according to his Godhead; but in these last days for us men and for our salvation born [into the world] of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to his manhood. This one and the same Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son [of God] must be confessed to be in two natures, unconfusedly, immutably, indivisibly, inseparably [united], and that without the distinction of natures being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and being united in one Person and subsistence, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and

only-begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Prophets of old time have spoken concerning him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ hath taught us, and as the Creed of the Fathers hath delivered to us.

These things, therefore, having been expressed by us with the greatest accuracy and attention, the holy Ecumenical Synod defines that no one shall be suffered to bring forward a different faith (*ἑτέραν πίστιν*), nor to write, nor to put together, nor to excogitate, nor to teach it to others. But such as dare either to put together another faith, or to bring forward or to teach or to deliver a different Creed (*ἑτέρον σύμβολον*) to such as wish to be converted to the knowledge of the truth from the Gentiles, or Jews or any heresy whatever, if they be Bishops or clerics let them be deposed, the Bishops from the Episcopate, and the clerics from the clergy; but if they be monks or laics: let them be anathematized.

36. Zacharias the Scholastic, *Life of Severus of Antioch*

Perhaps the most famous of the non-Chalcedonian theologians (known in older scholarship as "monophysites," a term now generally avoided) was Severus of Antioch (ca. 465-538). Severus studied rhetoric in Alexandria, then law in Beirut, where he was involved in an avid group of Christian students who met together to study the Church Fathers and to pray. He became a monk in Palestine, was ordained bishop of Antioch in 512, but was deposed upon the accession of the Chalcedonian emperor, Justin I, in 518. The following excerpts from his Life (itself a Syriac translation of a Greek original, now lost) include an episode from his student days and a description of ongoing dissension among Eastern Christians in the wake of Chalcedon.

Let no one suppose that this history has gone outside its purpose.¹ My intention is to show that the great Severus, so far from the accusation made against him, was always among these who showed

such zeal against the pagans, and was praising what had been done by them. Far from ever being subject to the blame and fault of pagan error, he was a Christian in his faith, although then only a cate-

chumen; but he not have the opportunity that in the way that in

Even in Alexandria the cion of paganism time after the d loving Menas- Severus would human life and whom he had virtues: virginity, exalted love, and that time I myself and the pagan requited for wh for religion, and burned them. T would certainly quently by the g wonderfully del eulogy that I sub illustrious Menas the idols of the p burning in front fitting that I rec pened, there ne been, before the them, so much a of his sweetness Severus took del these, and he gl the gods of the p him himself, so t one. The pagans and came, not k weeping on their in anger, "If you why did you bring

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It happened studying law in B sorcery. They w which is the first rius, from Tralle

SOURCE: Tr. James F. Coakley. Syriac text: *Patrologia Orientalis* 2:44-46, 58-63, 100-115.

1. The previous section related how Christian zealots destroyed ancient "idols" from a village outside Alexandria.

2. Another incident

3. Lit. "that city."

4. The exact sense

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chumen; but being engaged in secular study he did not have the opportunity to show himself as one in the way that in Phoenicia he appeared to everyone.

Even in Alexandria he rose above any suspicion of paganism, as the following indicates. Some time after the destruction of the idols the Christ-loving Menas—he who had prophesied that Severus would become patriarch²—departed this human life and went on straightaway to Him whom he had loved, taking with him many virtues: virginity of soul and body, love for others, exalted love, and great calmness and humility. At that time I myself was seized with a bodily illness, and the pagans supposed that we were being requited for what we did to their gods out of zeal for religion, and the flames by which we had burned them. They were proclaiming that I too would certainly die at the same time. Subsequently by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ I was wonderfully delivered from the illness, and in the eulogy that I subsequently gave at the grave of the illustrious Menas I mentioned the overthrow of the idols of the pagans, and I told the story of their burning in front of all the people of the city. It was fitting that I recounted everything that had happened, there next to the grave of him who had been, before the act of zeal that was shown against them, so much admired by the pagans on account of his sweetness and love of others. And the great Severus took delight and rejoiced in relations like these, and he gloried in the things I said against the gods of the pagans, as if they had come from him himself, so that he applauded more than anyone. The pagans, however, who had been invited and came, not knowing what would be said, were weeping on their own account. One of them said in anger, "If you wanted to speak against the gods, why did you bring us to the tomb of your friend?"

...
It happened that certain people who were studying law in Beirut³ had acquired notoriety for sorcery. They were George from Thessalonica, which is the first city of Illyricum, and Chrysaiorius, from Tralles, a city of Asia, and Asklepi-

odotus from Heliopolis, along with an Armenian and others like themselves; and they were abetted by John, known as the Fuller, who was from Thebes in Egypt.

They did not refrain from being involved in such atheistic practices as these.⁴ They collected books of sorcery from everywhere, and showed them to people who took delight in disturbances. They were all supposed to be planning something murderous and full of wickedness. According to a report that got about concerning them, they were going to the Hippodrome at night to sacrifice to the demons an Ethiopian slave who belonged to the man from Thebes. By this God-offending act they would acquire a demon to be theirs, as they said, and, as they supposed, it would carry out the things that they wanted. What they wanted was, in general, everything illicit; but in particular, that they should bring by force to the master of that slave a woman with whom he had fallen in love, a woman who was then living in chastity, by the passion of love and the compulsion of the demons.

So they brought this slave on some pretext at an untimely hour of the night to the Hippodrome. But just when the murder was about to be committed, God, who concerns Himself in the affairs of men, took pity on the unhappy slave, and provided that some people should be passing that way. The men, being afraid on account of their assault and this happening that they had not expected, fled, and in this way the Ethiopian was given the opportunity to escape from their murderous hands that had been so ready for his killing.

This man told one of his master's fellow countrymen, a fervent Christian who feared the judgment of God, what had been devised against him. He, being both solicitous for the master of the slave and pitiful toward the slave himself, told us about the assault of these men and their intention of murder. He asked for some kind of Christian help for the soul of his fellow countryman that had been attacked by demons, for he was solicitous for him, he said, as a compatriot. When we

2. Another incident related earlier.

3. Lit. "that city." At this point in the text Severus has gone from Alexandria to Beirut to study law.

4. The exact sense of the following paragraph is not clear.

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heard these things, we asked him if the other man had books of sorcery—for everyone who studied law in the city knew more or less that he was a sorcerer. He said, "The Ethiopian said so." I and Evagrius with Isidore and Athanasius who were from Alexandria and brothers and fervent in religion, and with our informant, decided to take Constantine and Polycarp who were from Beirut into our counsel to consider what to do. The former had for a long time had the profession of lawyer in that city, and the latter was a soldier in the cohort of the prefect. They were both experienced men of affairs, and were attenders with us of holy churches. Also, the accused man was thought to be a friend of Constantine.

So having told those men the relevant facts, and having considered at length how with God's help we could free the man from the error of demons and from the danger in which he stood, we all of us decided that we should go to his house and speak words of friendship to him. We would tell him that we had come to him as to a brother and that we were anxious about his reputation, and we would ask to examine his books on account of the report that had taken hold concerning him, so that we would be able with God's help to put a stop to the report that was diffused in the whole city concerning him, if indeed we found that in fact he was free of blame.

Since this seemed good to us, we went to his house. He received us for the sake of his fellow countryman and his friend Constantine, and also because all of us appeared pleasant and unassuming. The things that we together had agreed to say, we said to him in all courtesy, so that he would receive them in a brotherly way and not consider the mention of them as an offense. Now because he had hidden his books of sorcery under the seat of his chair, which he had made into a sort of box for them that would be concealed from those who were with him, he said confidently, "Since this is what you want, friends, examine my books just as you like." Having said this, he brought all the books that were in view in his house. But when we had examined these and found nothing of what we sought, the man's slave—the one against whom, as he said, they had plotted the slaying and foul murder—secretly indicated to us his chair,

and motioned as if to say, "If you just remove one board, you will see at once the books that you are seeking." When we did this, he knew that his practice had become clear to all, and he fell on his face and entreated us with tears that we, being Christians and religious in our ways, should not take him to law. We told him that, as God witnessed, we had not come to do him ill but were desirous of the salvation and health of his soul; but it was right that he should burn those books of sorcery with his own hands. The books had various pictures of evil demons in them and barbarous names, vain and wicked oracles, full of arrogance and becoming only to the evil demons. Some of them were ascribed to Zoroaster the Magian, others to Ostanès the sorcerer, others to Manetho.

The man promised to do this, and ordered fire to be brought. He recounted to us how he had fallen in love with a woman and supposed that, when she would have nothing to do with him, he would gain power over her by these books; and so he came to this wicked practice. He added that the practice of sorcerers was so impotent and its promises so vain that the woman for whom he had taken up magic and sorcery now hated him even more. Not only had he done so, but others too, and he counted off their names, saying that they too possessed similar books. When the fire was brought to him, he put the sorcery books into it with his own hands, thanking God that he had made him worthy of his visitation and freed him from the slavery and error of demons. He said he was a Christian, the son of Christian parents, but that he had gone astray at the aforementioned time, and had worshipped idols for the favor of evil demons, and that he would rightly offer the penitence and tears that befitted his sin.

After the burning of these books abhorrent to God, we all of us ate together, first praying and glorifying God and giving thanks for what had happened. For it was already the time of the midday meal. We ate what each of us brought from his own house which had been prepared for his dinner. Among this food was meat, and we took care that the man should partake with us because it is said that those who are under the influence of sorcery and consort with evil demons abstain from meat and consider this food as impure.

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...
[Later, Severus has become a monk and priest, and is living in a monastery near Gaza in Palestine.]

So, while the way of life of these men [i.e., Severus and his associates in the monastery] was such that all the bishops in Egypt and in Palestine were boasting of their virtue, suddenly envy was awakened against all those in Palestine who were in communion with the bishops of Egypt and Alexandria. Nephalius, an Alexandrian monk, having quite forgotten practical virtue, sharpened his tongue to speak and, assuming a kind of sophistry, set himself up against all those who had grown old in the labors of asceticism. He stirred up the people of his land on account of the union that Peter, the metropolitan of Alexandria, had reached with Acacius the archbishop of Constantinople,⁵ acting, he said, out of zeal against the synod that had been convened in Chalcedon. And he became the cause of a myriad of uprisings and killings in his land, all because of his enmity toward Peter, who was much loved by the people of the city and especially by those who made up the circus-factions in the city. He went so far as to arouse Zeno, of pious memory, against Peter, saying that Peter had evicted from their monasteries those people who had separated themselves from his communion on account of his union with Acacius; and to stir up thirty thousand monks from Egypt and to prepare to enter Alexandria by force to secure the overthrow of that union. At length Cosmas the Emperor's eunuch was sent to give aid to those who were said to have been evicted.

When Peter departed this life, Nephalius made a pretense of having repented and being sorry for the things he had so many times stirred up against him on account of the union with Acacius. He was careful to appear orthodox in the synodical letter that he sent to Fravitus the heir of Acacius. Later he wished to receive ordination to the priesthood and be entrusted with the management of a church. He got many people at court to press for this in a letter to Athanasius, who had succeeded

to the metropolitanate after Peter. But people of good will who held Peter in remembrance rightly hated him as one who was responsible for a myriad of troubles. And in their grief they said that he was a demoniac who needed to be tied up, and they affirmed that it was an impossibility that he should get what he was trying to lay hands on.

Finally, he had the audacity to turn around and accept the synod that he had previously denounced. He joined the clergy of Jerusalem, returning again to the zeal by which he had been the cause of so many upheavals, going many times to the Emperor and back. Stirring up opposition in every way to the union of the churches, he destroyed the peace and order of his land. Later, by way of a proof of his conversion, he planned an attack against the heirs of the great Peter and those of their persuasion, and against all those whom he had formerly admired. When he came to the region along the coast around the city of Gaza where their monasteries were, even though he knew that the God-loving Severus was invincible in his teaching of religion, and resolute against all heresies, in particular those of the enemies of God Apollinaris and Nestorius and Eutyches, he planned to engage him in battle. But because he could not withstand his invincible tongue or the depth of his arguments or the purity of his doctrines, he made a speech in front of the church against him and against the other monks whom he had defended before the Emperor. In it he divided our one Lord Jesus Christ into two natures. Finally with the aid of those from the churches he evicted them from their monasteries—the aid, that is, of those who had always been quietly disposed to them and had considered the difference between them to be a family quarrel. They had previously called them “orthodox” until the agitation against them took place in the way I have described.

This was the reason why Severus, that lover of divine contemplation [lit., “philosophy”] and of silence, should have come to Constantinople. When our Christ-loving Emperor learned what had happened—the governor of the place had

5. Lit. “this imperial city,” here and always in this text.

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informed him, and he himself already knew the troublesomeness of Nephalius and the virtues of those who had been evicted by him—he stood up against him with righteous anger so that all would know the religious will of the Emperor. As a result, those who had been evicted sent the great Severus as an emissary to address the injustice that had been done to them.

When he arrived, he sought me out and also John the soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when he had learned from us concerning those who were diligent in orthodoxy, he went before the Emperor. Clementinus, who had then the title of consul and patrician, and the Christ-loving Eupraxius of victorious memory who was one of the eunuchs of the imperial chambers, supported him. And he recounted everything exactly that had befallen them, how they, being blameless of any heresies but conforming to the doctrines of the church in everything and being in communion with the bishops of Egypt, had been evicted from their monasteries where they had been living in peace. It aroused the pity of the Emperor and those who were in positions of power, when he informed them, he and the monks who were with him, of what had happened, and he won their admiration for his wise and spiritual conduct. The Emperor at once commanded that on the initiative of the magistrate then in office, those who had been wrongfully deprived of their monasteries should immediately have them given back. He also wrote a doctrinal letter to those who were in charge of these monasteries, in which he confessed our Lord Jesus Christ as “from two natures” and exhorted them to consider the unity of the holy catholic church of God.

The opponents, having thus taken a beating, then claimed that the admirable Severus and those of his party had formerly been in the grip of the heresy of the impious Eutyches. Severus, in order to refute such a slander, wrote a treatise to Apion and Paul, of illustrious memory, who were patricians, which he dedicated to them, against the heresy of Eutyches; and he wrote similar letters to other people against Eutyches and Apollinaris and Nestorius.

He learned that those who favored Nestorius had taken the God-inspired writings of Cyril the patriarch of Alexandria, and had attempted, by means of words construed in a forced sense and severed from their context and reference, to show that he favored the impious Nestorius. When a book like this came into his hands, he refuted the error that was fabricated against the simple folk: by citing the words that preceded and followed the quotations, he exposed the slander that had been insolently made against that godly man. From this he took his cue to name the work *Philalethes* [“Lover of Truth”].

I will here pass tacitly over the writings that he composed for many people who were in the imperial palace, especially Eupraxius, the lover of doctrine and lover of Christ whom I have mentioned, one of the imperial eunuchs, who asked him about some ecclesiastical matters and points of doctrine and contention which seemed utterly perplexing. He likewise refuted the testament of Lampetius that gave birth to the heresy of the Adelphians. And when he came to Nicomedia, he exposed Isidore, that is, John, who had left the monastic life, by which action and by the opinions of Origen he went astray and led many others astray. Likewise, he spoke⁶ to those with Rabban Theodore, one of the heirs of the famous Peter the Iberian [the late bishop of Maiuma near Gaza], when they later came to Constantinople on account of the very same cause, that is, the cause of unity for which they were eagerly working. Having begun with this, he spoke then to the holy Sergius, bishop of Philadelphia in the province of Seleucia, and he spoke in the same way with Asterius of Kelendres—for it happened that they too had come there; and to Mama the abbot of the monastery of St. Romanos, and to the venerable Eunomius, abbot of the monastery of the blessed Acacius.

By means of these men he obtained unity with all the Isaurian bishops, while putting to shame by means of the same actions those who were saying of them that they were fleeing from communion with every bishop in the catholic church of God. (For this reason they wrongfully gave them the

6. Supplying a verb in this obscure passage.

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name of *Akephaloi* [lit., "Headless Ones"]. Likewise, when the monks of the great city of Antioch came on account of the same affair, happily pronouncing [lit., "taking delight in"] fearful anathemas and becoming a hindrance to the unity of the church, he and those from Palestine, considering what was possible, did not extenuate the correctness of their own doctrines, and gave no pretext to the bishops who did not want to gather to themselves the disjoined members of the holy catholic church of God.

He brought the debasement of the *Plerophoria*⁷ of Flavian, who was bishop of Antioch, up to the high level of doctrine, and as far as possible he tempered the obstinacy of those who had been divided by it. He persuaded the Emperor to order that there should be unity, on the basis of the *Type*.⁸ Flavian of Antioch and Elia of Jerusalem, who would not be persuaded, and some from those who opposed these things, brought confusion on themselves and on the people generally.

What should we say? How he attracted to himself some of the more reasonable bishops, some by what he wrote and some by what he spoke, so that they became his supporters in the contest with the doctrines of Nestorius? Let me pass over that, and say just this: in three years of his living here on account of the cause of unity, he did not relax in any way his monastic way of life or the rule and rigor of ascetics, or live a life without witness (for this was the command of the great Peter the Iberian). He lived all this time, first with the monks who had come with him on account of the cause, and later with holy men who had come up from Palestine in the same way as himself—with Theodore, that is, whom I mentioned, who was called "the Righteous" in Beirut, and those with him. Everyone who knew the man testified that he was the complete image of virtue and virginity. Even councilors and people of seniority studied with him. As I said before, he was one of those who along with the holy John were heirs of Peter, that chosen vessel, and they had bestowed the

habit of monasticism on the admirable Severus and anointed him for virtue and elevated him to the high position of divine contemplation.

After these things Severus's disciple Peter, whom I mentioned above,⁹ came and reminded him about returning to his monastery. To all of us who saw him and tested him at that time he was seen to be adorned with all the different virtues, and perfect in the ascetic life of monasticism and in the practice of suffering. And he was admired too by those in the company of the great Theodore on account of his chastity and these other virtues.

People were moved by all these things and by the incident with Macedonius [Patriarch of Constantinople]—after a contest and debate with him concerning doctrine that Severus arranged before judges appointed by the emperor—to confer on him election to the patriarchate.¹⁰ Many more agreed with them, and it lacked only a little for the Emperor to be of this mind, if only the envy and jealousy of certain people had not put an end to any such idea. Even so, the Emperor urged him repeatedly to live with Timotheus, Macedonius's successor and a man admirable in virtue and rich in his charity to the needy, and to take care of matters pertaining to the unity of the church and with him to lead the affairs of the church. He declined such urgings, recalling his love of quietness and the life of monasticism and contemplation. Now, having urged others to such a life, and having now completed as far as possible the mission on account of which he had come to Constantinople, he returned with them to his own monastery. For himself and for all the inhabitants of Palestine he had obtained quietness, but more than all these other things he honored the life of monasticism.

But after these things, God wished to show this man as patriarch of the great city of Antioch, and He made ready that the mandate should come to him by the choice of all the monks of the East. Many of them had proved his faith and the orthodoxy of his doctrine and had seen the other contemplative qualities of his life, when they had gone

7. Lit., "assurance," but here the name of a christological declaration. The sense of this paragraph is not completely clear.

8. Another christological formula, probably composed by Severus himself.

9. Not in the present extract.

10. Lit., "chief priesthood," here and always in this text.

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up to Constantinople for the same reason as him. Even before these events he was known to the monks of the monastery of Turgis. They were evicted from one of the villages near Apamea by the order of Flavian on account of the zeal that they showed against the doctrines of Nestorius, and reached Palestine—nearly a hundred men, all having taken their cross on their shoulders and come. They were received by Severus and by the heirs of the illustrious Peter: Isaiah, Romanos, Solomon and Acacius. Severus was chosen too by the whole people, who were already marvelling at the excellent reports of him, that he was contending for orthodoxy here and that in the synod that took place later in Phoenicia he appeared to the orthodox bishops, bringing his own pains to bear along with those of the great Theodore, so that they would be victorious in the wider conflict.¹¹

Our Christ-loving Emperor approved the choice of patriarch. Flavian having already fallen, by the common decision of the bishops of the East on account of his innovation in matters of faith, the Emperor ordered that for the sake of concord and unity among the bishops and the monks, Severus should leave his monastery and go to Antioch and take up the patriarchate, and obtain the unity for all that Flavian had destroyed by giving offices to Macedonius and others who had Nestorian views and wanted to introduce the teachings of Diodore and Theodore into the church.

Similar to those were certain others in Persia, who were once again stirring up controversies, on which account, those who were holding onto orthodoxy in that place sent repeated missions to our Emperor asking our bishops to state what they wanted to do about them. Most of all they asked about Barsauma [Bishop of Nisibis], who was said to be not only trying to make them embrace heretical doctrines but also perverting the canons of the church. To please the Emperor of the Persians, who had been angered by the large number of Christians abstaining from marriage, he had enacted laws to the contrary: that by compulsion

each bishop, clergyman, monk, and in general all Christian men should be joined to a wife in marriage, and live with her. Then Acacius who was patriarch of Constantinople, rebuked him—the snake having shed the doctrines of Nestorius and Theodore, was still hissing¹²—and rejected the canons of Barsauma as entirely out of agreement with the apostolic tradition.

Our Christ-loving Emperor wished to remove all such innovations as these that the Nestorians were making up contrary to the *Henotikon* of Zeno of pious memory. Sometime later Macedonius too began to be thus tempted. At his consecration he promised to accept the *Henotikon* and to be in communion with all the bishops, but later he betrayed the sense of his statement and renounced union with the Egyptians. After a certain time Flavian adhered to this mind in what he did. He filled all the monks of the East with confusion when he persecuted many there who were devoted to divine contemplation, who were radiant with the labor and sweat of asceticism, and who anathematized equally the heresies of Nestorius, Eutyches, and of the enemy of God Apollinaris and all false teaching that stood against the holy catholic church of God. The Emperor did not want to turn aside from the sense of the *Henotikon*, but he wanted to restrain innovations and persecutions like these. He accepted the nomination of the great Severus, as I said, and he reckoned him the right person to receive the patriarchate.

As soon as I knew this, I recalled to Severus, in a letter, the prophecy that had been made about him by the blessed Menas, and I said that the call was a divine one and it would not be right to refuse it. Thus God himself, having brought to pass the promise concerning him, made him accept the patriarchate, while the whole city saw him as a second Peter. So he accepted the patriarchate, and the union of the bishops of the east and clergy and monks and the different peoples, and he at once restored the union with the Egyptians that his predecessor had broken to the destruction of ecclesiastical concord. Only Epiphanius bishop

11. An obscure sentence. This synod seems to have been a defeat for Severus's party.

12. An incoherent sentence. It might mean "deprived him of office on account of the doctrines of Nestorius and Theodore, the snake still hissing."

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of Tyre, because of his affection for Flavian, who was his brother, would not come near the union at all; and likewise Julian bishop of Bostra. These men subsequently left the cities where they were bishops, though no one compelled them to do so.

But the man of God effected union with all the others, and he would have sent synodical letters to them if he had not been prevented by the envy of demons and the jealousy of men who did not at all rejoice in the peace of the churches. There was also a disturbance that took place in Constantinople by reason of the *Trisagion* hymn used in the East in which the phrase "who was crucified for us, have mercy on us" was added. It seemed good to some that here also it should be said thus. But great dangers resulted, in the disturbances that were then brought about among the simple folk by those who sympathized with Nestorius and reported this hymn to Rome.¹³ By these things was the union frustrated.

13. Emending a word. The text has "prepared this hymn for Rome."

Severus, at the time when he accepted the patriarchate, spoke his first discourse in the church of God. In it he mocked all heresies, so that everyone marveled at the soundness of his doctrines, and the scriptural proof-texts, and the clarity of the speech—reckoning him a second John.

My friend, I have recounted the life of the great Severus up until the time of his patriarchate. An account of the other part I leave to the city that received him and to all those who were governed by him and enjoyed his apostolic teaching, for they have already made a proof of his way of life and his ascetic labors. I will bring to an end the treatise that I have written, at your urging, for the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, who is the substance, the beginning and the end of all religion and of every true account.

End of the account of the life of the holy Severus before his episcopate, by Zechariah the Scholasticus.

37. John of Ephesus, *Life of Susan*

Christians who opposed the creedal definition of Chalcedon—primarily in Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Armenia—gradually formed separate non-Chalcedonian churches. Though deemed heretical and even persecuted by the officially Chalcedonian regime in the sixth century, non-Chalcedonian Christians persevered in their faith. In the 560s, John of Ephesus (ca. 507-586), a non-Chalcedonian monk, bishop, and missionary, wrote the Lives of the Eastern Saints, a collection of inspiring accounts of the careers of fifty-eight of these holy ascetic men and women. The Life of Susan was one of them.

And now the twenty-seventh story, about the blessed virgin of Christ whose name was Susan.

The mighty strength of Christ God is wont to be celebrated and manifested in human weakness so that no flesh may glorify itself before him, the

strengtheners of the weak. However, it is apt to show its activity not only in men who are powerful in appearance and mighty and forceful, but also in weak, feeble, frail women. Thus it fortifies and gives them courage until they too bear the struggle

SOURCE: *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient*, ed. and tr. Sebastian P. Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 133-41. Copyright © 1987 by The Regents of the University of California. Used by permission.

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with undaunted strength—not simply with flesh and blood, enticing passions, the yearnings of fleshly lusts, and so on; but even against principalities, powers, and those ruling the world of this darkness, and against evil spirits under heaven. Against these are they mightily given courage, and they mock them as a powerful man mocks a band of children or infants preparing to come and fight against him. This was also revealed to us through Paul, wise in all things, when he said, "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, nor slave nor free" (Gal. 3:28). This woman, then, holy and manly in Christ, so astonished me by her appearance, words, and strength in God that she seemed to me not at all out of place in this series of stories of holy men, with whom she strains to enter the same narrow gate as indeed she already has done.

Now this blessed woman (as we discovered when we managed to learn the details from her) belonged to a family from Persian Arzanene. It was a noble family; but from the beginning, since the age of eight, the light of her life shone out in her mind until people marveled at her sensibility, modesty, and devotion. For as if through prophecy her parents had named her "Blessing," she who truly received a heavenly blessing.

This virtuous girl decided that she should go and worship in the holy places, where the salvation of our lives took place, and she implored her parents. But they laughed at her, a mere child, and said, "You haven't even learned to understand the Scriptures, and yet you want to go to Jerusalem!" So she was silent, keeping watch in her heart; and during that time she prayed and said, "Lord if you wish for the salvation of my miserable soul, 'Make straight your way for me,' and present me with an escort. Save my soul from the defilement of this world's filthy mire!" Then the child (as she related to us when I pressed her greatly) placed her soul in the hands of God and ran away.

After crossing three or four miles, she chanced upon a large caravan of women and men traveling toward Jerusalem. And when she had mixed with them, inquiring and learning their purpose, she jumped and danced for joy, praising God, saying, "Blessed am I that the Lord wishes for my salvation, and as I asked He answered me! God forbid that I should return to the world and family and

parents, and so die; I go to Him who leads me and is my father, brother, and kinsman in both worlds." Thus she reached Jerusalem joyously. But when she had worshipped there, her companions wished to return and begged her to go back with them to her own country, saying, "We can't leave you here." So she parted from them, and they did not see her again.

Now she searched around to find a convent where she could live, and learning that there was a large community of women between Ascalon and Gaza, she set her course there. She revealed her desire to the woman at the gate, but because of that convent's strictness, the old woman said to her, "My daughter, you can't live here because you are a child. You couldn't bear the hardship and labor. Besides, your genteel upbringing doesn't make you suited for a convent."

The devout girl, because she was a stranger and in a foreign country, was very upset, and sat at the gate weeping for seven days. The women tried to drive her away, but she would not leave. Then, learning that she was a foreigner, they took her in; and she entered, though they looked down on her because she was so young. But when they learned where she had come from and where she had gone, they said to her as if concerned, "What good is it, child, for you to go out and ruin your soul this way in the mire of sin? For seeing you so young, and what's more alone, who—even if he were unwilling—would Satan not bring against you in order to destroy you prematurely?" Then (as the blessed women with her used to relate to me, and as they themselves had learned at the outset from her), she said, "For our Lord's sake pray for me, since I trust in Him to whom I have committed my soul, that He did not desert me to be destroyed, and He does not desert me now." And so they praised God.

From that time forward she took up great ascetic practices and virtuous feats of labor, abstinence, and devotion, while they hindered her and would slap her because she was a child, so that she would not apply herself to these things more than the other sisters. But she would strive even more and would keep vigil all night, standing in a corner. Not a single word would leave her mouth for anyone all day unless begged for; nor, from her

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arrival at the convent, did any of her companions ever see her face uncovered or all of her eye exposed; and no laughter came from her mouth.

Now when they saw the blessed girl's way of life—that however much they might strive to hinder her because she was a child, she would simply spend an extra year or two in this burdensome practice—those who had treated her disdainfully because of her youth saw her as one who was excellent. Then she changed the name that was hers before entering the convent, lest someone from her family come making inquiries, and find her; and she called herself Susan.

After she had been laboring ten years in these practices, persecution fell upon their convent, forcing them either to submit to Chalcedonian faith or to leave. Since theirs was a great and well-known community of women, the majority of them were seized and these then submitted to their persecutors; but some scattered here and there. Thus two choices were facing the blessed woman: either to leave the convent, or to risk falling into evil faith; so she decided to go out, and entering the desert beyond Alexandria, live there. Immediately she left. But there was great division even among those sisters who had surrendered themselves, and some women were saying, "Since Susan has gone we won't stay." Then five of the more prominent women from those who had not surrendered joined themselves to her, although she had intended to go alone, saying, "There is no way that we will be parted from you."

So Susan revealed her intentions to them, since they compelled her, and said, "Do not come with me. For to be brief, if the Lord profits me as is His wont, I am going to the desert." They also declared their decision: "We, too, will come with you to the desert." Then, as they would not be dissuaded, they boarded a ship together and crossed over to Alexandria.

There the blessed woman heard rumor of a place in the desert outside the monastery of Mar Menas, and she directed her course there—about two miles from a village called Mendis. This place eventually belonged to the blessed Syrians, but its beginning lay with Susan's arrival. Now there was a tower there that had been built as a watchtower against barbarians; and entering it enthusiastically,

she and the five others dwelt there. Then one of them went and brought them work from the village. Thus they labored with their hands for their needs, and they sustained themselves. And God took care of them, seeing their zeal and trust in him.

Away from the tower was a cave underground, where once a holy man had lived. Susan used to leave human habitation to go out wandering and praying in the desert; on one occasion as she was going along she came across that cave and immediately jumped in. None of her companions or anyone else was aware of it, nor had she taken food or anything with her. Then, just as it is written about Ishmael the son of Abraham, "he sat in the desert of Paran and was instructed in the bow" (Gen. 21:20, 21), so also is it fitting to say about her that she was sitting in a desert cave, being instructed in struggle and manliness against hideous demons that especially show the fervor of their wickedness in the desert.

But when a day or two had passed without her coming, her companions sat day and night in bitter distress and tears, saying, "She in whose trust we came here has left us and gone." After about ten days, some people from the village learned of it and went to the blessed women to find out what had happened. When they saw their grief and weeping, they wondered whether she might have gone to that cave in the desert. Since they knew the place, they went out, and reaching the cave, they peered down and saw the blessed woman thrown on her face, groaning. They spoke to her, but she mistook them for the demons who were showing her fearful and hideous shapes there, and so did not stop the crying out of her prayer. Seeing that she would not answer them, they left and went to report to her companions.

Then all of them hastened to the cave and found the blessed woman in the same state, weeping and praying. With difficulty, and only after they had spoken many things to her, at last she believed who they were; for on the previous day demons had come to her in their guise, so as to drive her out from there. Tearfully the women begged her, "Don't you know that we came out to the desert trusting in you after our Lord? And now why do you seek to destroy all our souls, and that

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you alone should be delivered? Don't you know that without you we can't exist?" But that mighty woman, weeping with her head bent down, said to them, "My sisters, leave me alone. I am with you for all time; but because the Lord prepared this place for me, so that I might easily live in quietude here, go and stay in peace. And on Sundays let one of you come and see if I am alive or dead." Then the women stood over her to lift her up, trying to get her to go with them; but they could not do it.

Finally they exacted a promise from her, lest she also depart from there without letting them know; and she promised them. They begged her to let them make a small dish of lentils and bring it to her, since she had tasted nothing in ten days; but she did not even want to hear it, saying, "You want to take care of my food when I am lying flat on my face, and make me eat the sweat of your faces; God forbid! For the sustenance of my body it is enough if you bring me a pitcher of water on Sundays, and a small hunk of dried bread for each day."

This they did for three years. But after the report of the blessed women and where they lived was heard abroad, many people came to them from Alexandria and the villages of Libya. Now there was a certain great old man who had about ten disciples with him, and they had been neighbors of the women's convent in Palestine. He and his disciples had also been persecuted greatly and driven from place to place, but then had learned of the blessed women and where they were, and about the quietude and sweetness of that desert. So he made straight for that place, arriving there with his disciples—one of whom was the brother of the woman who had been made superior of the blessed women. He, too, was admirable in his way of life, and was named Samuel. The old man was named Maro and by birth was from Amida, while his disciple Samuel, with his sister, was from the environs of Edessa.

When these men came, the blessed women were comforted by them; and the men, too, were glad and gave thanks to the Lord that they had been refreshed with the quiet of the desert. Then they began to found a cell in that desert, and others, as well, were brought together there—some of whom we wrote about in an earlier chapter. So that place was settled, with the blessed women among

them. But they determined to prepare a separate place for the women, so as not to give room for abuse by outsiders, and also because it was hard for them to speak without offending Susan. Indeed she was concerned over that very thought, "For God has provided his servants with this place, but it is not possible for our female sex to live among men—since the attack of the evil one against holy men is mostly made through women, even when they are far away, how much more so when they are near?—even if we should happen to continue warily pursuing spiritual things. Now then, let us depart for the desert beyond this."

Because those blessed men were ashamed by the sobriety of the holy woman, she herself said these things to them. But when they heard, they praised God and took upon themselves to build and make ready for the women a place at the boundary of that village, while she prepared again to penetrate further into the desert. Then they rose up, resisting her, and said, "For you, mother, a city would be a desert if you dwelt in it. But look at these souls that depend on you." Thus she was convinced by them. And they built for the women an enclosed convent with a tower inside it, and they dwelt in it.

Now the blessed woman gained valiance against demons through the strength that comes from grace, as night and day they arrayed themselves in successive ranks for battle against her in the form of men, and attacked her with every kind of weapon. But she mocked them, as a mighty man would despise sickly men who were threatening him. Report of her strength was heard everywhere; and after she had been in that desert for fifteen years, the news of her perfection incited us, as well, to desire the sight of her and of the holy men who were also there. Still, when we were deemed worthy of seeing her whom I can hardly call a woman, I was astonished at the words of suffering and wisdom of God that issued from her mouth—and I was with those holy men twenty days or more, going and coming in order to hear her gentle conversation.

Nor could I see her head held erect or any sign of her face except the tip of her nose, so sorrowful and weepy was she. She undertook to speak to us about this world, held fast by erring: how men see

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their companions rotting and corrupted and putrefying in their graves, while creepy things crawl and mingle in their putrefaction—yet those who see these things go astray through the empty vanities of this deceptive world. She spoke, too, of how it does not occur to the hearts of men that the dreadful hour of this world's destruction hastily approaches, when they will stand before the dreadful judgment seat of God. For, she said, "It is ridiculous that we hear about the chasm of fire, the flaming depths, the darkness, the rest of the tortures, but we do not take it to heart and beg for mercy while we have the opportunity, so that we might be delivered from these things." Again, the divine woman related to us many things more frightening than these; and we were left in great wonder at her words.

She also received the gift of healing, so that she could cure every sickness or disease she stretched her hand against. Now while we were there, a certain blessed man, great and God-loving, dwelt in a place in the desert not far away. Against him the demons would openly prepare for combat, and he would see their battle with the blessed woman, and she his. But because she was stronger than he, she both conquered the demons and had no fear at all of them. She became firm like adamant and unmoveable—so much so that the demons would cry out at her, "This is a woman, but she is stone, and instead of flesh she is iron!" Such were the things the demons said to her.

To such an extent was she thus steadfast that when visions prevailed against the blessed man, he would go to her as if to a mighty woman. While I was there, he came, pale, smitten in his mind, and disturbed. When she saw him, she understood, and asked, "Why are you worn out, father?" He told her, "The demons have waxed strong and taken away my senses. All week we have been engaged in an ever increasing battle, then last night and today they showed me fearful, terrible forms. My heart was shaken, my wits were seized, and I was confounded. I fled from fright. I am terrified to enter my cell because of the apparitions I saw. I'm not going back to that place anymore."

But when she heard, she shook her head, saying, "Come and have a look at some people who are called men—and not only men but servants of

Christ. Do you deserve to be called servants of Christ? Do you thus think Christ your Lord to be feeble? Are you showing your own weakness that the mighty and invincible power of Him who has cast down and overthrown and annihilated all the power of Satan is actually weaker than that of demons? Does Christ thus now appear as one who flees and is conquered by devils? Do they turn out to be powerful and victorious over the power of God? How can you be a disciple of Him who said, 'You will trample all the power of the enemy'? (Luke 10:19). Forgive me, father, you have grieved me because you have gladdened the hearts of demons. Last night I only heard the shapes and voices resembling the battles of demons, and I wondered. But I am aware that the strength of the Lord surrounds my weakness like a wall of bronze, and there is no other power that can rise against it."

While the weak woman courageously said these things in front of us, we looked at each other, although she did not look at either of us. Then she spoke confidently to the blessed man, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, stand up; go back to your cell. As He is accustomed, He will make humble all the power of the evil one." The blessed man was abashed at what the woman said, and quaking in his shame he agreed to go.

Then we rose from beside her and spoke amongst ourselves, marveling at her spiritual strength and courage, and I said to him, "Why can one not see the face of this woman?" He told me, "One day while we were speaking, I said to her, 'Why do you conceal your face from us?' And she swore an oath to me, saying, 'He who placed His yoke upon me by His grace knows, our brother, that ever since I accepted His yoke twenty-five years ago I have not seen a man's face. And do you want me to look at yours now?' So I said to her, 'For our Lord's sake, tell me the truth. Are you afraid that you will suffer harm at the sight of a man, or that he would at the sight of you?' She answered, 'Because of both these things.'"

So marveling at the practice of the holy woman and the constancy of Susan, Christ's virgin, we departed from there praising God.

The story of the blessed virgin of Christ whose name was Susan is ended.

38. The Evangelization of Nubia: John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*

Archaeologists have traced Africa's ancient black culture of Nubia back to 3100 B.C.E. Located in modern southern Egypt and northern Sudan, Nubia comprised three kingdoms (Nobatia, Makouria, and Alwa) that converted to Christianity in the sixth century. The following account of the non-Chalcedonian bishop, John of Ephesus (ca. 507-586; see also Text 37), describes the rivalry between the Chalcedonian emperor, Justinian, and his non-Chalcedonian wife, Theodora, who both sent missionaries to evangelize the Nobatai. Though neighboring Egypt fell to the Arabs in the seventh century, strong Christian kingdoms in Nubia resisted conquest and conversion to Islam until the fourteenth century.

Among the clergy in attendance upon pope Theodosius was a presbyter named Julian, an old man of great worth, who conceived an earnest spiritual desire to christianize the wandering people who dwell on the eastern borders of the Thebais [a region of upper Egypt], beyond Egypt, and who are not only not subject to the authority of the Roman empire, but even receive a subsidy on condition that they do not enter nor pillage Egypt. The blessed Julian, therefore, being full of anxiety for this people, went and spoke about them to the late queen Theodora, in the hope of awakening in her a similar desire for their conversion; and as the queen was fervent in zeal for God, she received the proposal with joy, and promised to do everything in her power for the conversion of these tribes from the errors of idolatry. In her joy, therefore, she informed the victorious king Justinian of the purposed undertaking, and promised and anxiously desired to send the blessed Julian thither. But when the king heard that the person she intended to send was opposed to the council of Chalcedon, he was not pleased, and determined to write to the bishops of his own side in the Thebais, with orders for them to proceed thither and instruct them, and plant among them the name of the synod. And as he entered upon the matter with great zeal, he sent thither, without a moment's delay, ambassadors with gold and baptismal

robes, and gifts of honor for the king of that people, and letters for the duke of the Thebais, enjoining him to take every care of the embassy, and escort them to the territories of the Nobadae [i.e., the people of Nobatia, one of the Nubian kingdoms]. When, however, the queen learnt these things, she quickly, with much cunning, wrote letters to the duke of the Thebais, and sent a mandatory of her court to carry them to him; and which were as follows: "Inasmuch as both his majesty and myself have purposed to send an embassy to the people of the Nobadae, and I am now despatching a blessed man named Julian; and further my will is, that my ambassador should arrive at the aforesaid people before his majesty's; be warned, that if you permit his ambassador to arrive there before mine, and do not hinder him by various pretexts until mine shall have reached you, and have passed through your province, and arrived at his destination, your life shall answer for it; for I will immediately send and take off your head." Soon after the receipt of this letter the king's ambassador also came, and the duke said to him, "You must wait a little, while we look out and procure beasts of burden, and men who know the deserts; and then you will be able to proceed." And thus he delayed him until the arrival of the merciful queen's embassy, who found horses and guides in waiting, and the same day, without loss

SOURCE: *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus*, tr. R. Payne Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1860), 251-57, 315-16, 319-24.

of time, under a show of doing it by violence, they laid hands upon them, and were the first to proceed. As for the duke, he made his excuses to the king's ambassador, saying, "Lo! when I had made my preparations, and was desirous of sending you onward, ambassadors from the queen arrived, and fell upon me with violence, and took away the beasts of burden I had got ready, and have passed onward. And I am too well acquainted with the fear in which the queen is held, to venture to oppose them. But abide still with me, until I can make fresh preparations for you, and then you also shall go in peace." And when he heard these things, he rent his garments, and threatened him terribly, and reviled him; and after some time he also was able to proceed, and followed the other's track, without being aware of the fraud which had been practiced upon him.

The blessed Julian, meanwhile, and the ambassadors who accompanied him, had arrived at the confines of the Nobadæ, whence they sent to the king and his princes, informing him of their coming: upon which an armed escort set out, who received them joyfully, and brought them into their land unto the king. And he too received them with pleasure, and her majesty's letter was presented, and read to him, and the purport of it explained. They accepted also the magnificent honors sent them, and the numerous baptismal robes, and everything else richly provided for their use. And immediately with joy they yielded themselves up, and utterly abjured the error of their forefathers and confessed the God of the Christians, saying "that He is the one true God, and there is no other beside Him." And after Julian had given them much instruction, and taught them, he further told them about the council of Chalcedon, saying, that "inasmuch as certain disputes have sprung up among Christians touching the faith; and the blessed Theodosius being required to receive the council, and having refused, was ejected by the king from his throne, whereas the queen received him and rejoiced in him, because he stood firm in the right faith, and left his throne for its sake: on this account her majesty has sent us to you, that you also may walk in the ways of pope Theodosius, and stand in his faith, and imitate his constancy. And moreover the

king has sent unto you ambassadors, who already are on their way in our footsteps." They then instructed them how they should receive them, and what answer they should give: and when everything was fully settled, the king's ambassador also arrived. And when he had obtained an audience, he also gave the king the letters and presents, and began to inform and tell him, according to his instructions, as follows: "The king of the Romans has sent us to you, that in case of your becoming Christians, you may cleave to the church and those who govern it, and not be led astray after those who have been expelled from it." And when the king of the Nobadæ and his princes heard these things, they answered them, saying, "The honorable present which the king of the Romans has sent us we accept, and will also ourselves send him a present. But his faith we will not accept: for if we consent to become Christians, we shall walk after the example of pope Theodosius, who, because he was not willing to accept the wicked faith of the king, was driven away by him and expelled from his church. If, therefore, we abandon our heathenism and errors, we cannot consent to fall into the wicked faith professed by the king." In this manner then they sent the king's messengers away, with a written answer to the same effect. As for the blessed Julian, he remained with them for two years, though suffering greatly from the extreme heat. For he used to say that from nine o'clock until four in the afternoon he was obliged to take refuge in caverns, full of water, where he sat undressed and girt with a linen garment, such as the people of the country wear. And if he left the water his skin, he said, was blistered by the heat. Nevertheless, he endured it patiently, and taught them, and baptized both the king and his nobles, and many of the people also. He had with him also a bishop from the Thebais, an old man, named Theodore, and after giving them instruction and setting things in order, he delivered them over to his charge, and himself departed, and arrived in safety at Constantinople, where he was most honorably received by the queen. And to her he related many wonderful particulars concerning that numerous people, but they are too long for us to write, nor can we spare space for more than we have already inserted.

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The chief charge of the new converts was vested in Theodosius, as being patriarch of Alexandria; nor were they forgotten by him: for on the very day of his departure from this world he had them in his memory, and especially because the blessed Julian their teacher had died but a very short time before, and also because her late majesty, the queen Theodora, had given orders that the excellent Longinus should be made bishop there, as being an earnest man admirably adapted to convert and establish them in the doctrines of Christianity. Immediately therefore after the pope's decease, Longinus was consecrated bishop of those parts, and made ready to proceed thither. But scarcely had he embarked his goods on board ship, when men were found, such as those of whom it is written, that "their teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword" (Ps. 57:4), who went and told the king that "Longinus, the enemy of our palace, has been made bishop, and has embarked his goods on board ship, ready to start. And should he go, for he is a passionate man, and arrive among that people in safety, he will immediately stir them up to make war upon and pillage the territory of the Romans. Give orders therefore for his immediate arrest." When the king heard these things, he was stirred up to anger, and gave orders for his arrest, and had his baggage removed from the vessel. Thus then he was not permitted to depart, and three years passed by, during which he was waiting for an opportunity; and finally, as he was aware that he was watched, and would not be permitted to leave, he disguised himself, and put a wig on his head—for he was very bald—and taking with him two servants, he fled, and God delivered him, and caused him to arrive in safety at that land. And there he was magnificently received, and great joy testified at his coming: and immediately he began to instruct them afresh, and enlighten them, and teach them. And next he built them a church, and ordained clergy, and taught them the order of divine service, and all the ordinances of Christianity.

...

For far more pleasing is the subject to which we alluded above, namely, the conversion of the peo-

ple whom the Greeks call Alodæi [i.e., the people of Alodia (or Alwa), another of the Nubian kingdoms] . . . to the Christian faith. For to repeat some part of our previous narrative, it was by the zeal of the late queen Theodora that the blessed Julian was originally sent to the powerful people called Nobadæ, and taught both the king and his princes, and most of the tribes in his dominions, for a period of two years. And on his departure thence, he intrusted all that people to a certain Theodore, a very old man, and bishop of the city called Philæ, situated in the further part of the Thebais, on their borders, who went to them, and visited them, and gave them counsel, and returned to his own city; and so they continued for a period of eighteen years, more or less. And then it was that Longinus escaped in disguise, and went to them, and taught and instructed them afresh, and baptized such of them as had never partaken of this rite, and continued with them six years and ambassadors moreover were sent by them to the king, and arrived at the capital, and we were repeatedly in their company, and heard them praising and extolling Longinus in the highest terms. And when the people of the Alodæi heard of the conversion of the Nobadæ, their king sent to the king of the Nobadæ, requesting him to permit the bishop who had taught and baptized them, to come and instruct them in like manner.

...

Meanwhile the king of the Alodæi had, as we have mentioned, sent a second embassy to the king of the Nobadæ, requesting that the bishop Longinus might be sent to teach and baptize both him and his people: and it was plainly visible that the conversion of that kingdom was the good purpose of the grace of God. The Lord therefore stirred up the spirit of Longinus to go to them; and though the Nubians were grieved at being separated from him, they nevertheless sent with him nobles and princes and men well acquainted with the desert. Upon the journey, however, he became ill, as also did his companions: and so great were their privations, and the intensity of the heat, that, as he mentions in a letter, he lost in the desert no less than seventeen camels out of the baggage animals which accompanied him. Nor

was this their only or chief danger; for between the Nobadae and the Alodae is a country inhabited by another people, called the Makoritae; and when their king heard that Longinus had started on his journey, Satan in his envy stirred him up to set watchers in all the passes of his kingdom on all the roads, both in the mountains and in the plains, as far as the sea of weeds, in hopes of arresting Longinus, and so hindering the salvation of the powerful people of the Alodae. But God preserved him, and blinded the eyes of those who wanted to seize him; and he passed through them, and went on his way, and they saw him not. And on his arrival at the borders of the kingdom to which he was travelling, the king, as he tells us in his letters, on hearing of it, sent one of his nobles to meet him, named Aitekia, who received him honorably, and made him pass over into their land with great pomp: and on approaching nearer, the king went out in person to meet him, and received him with great joy. And immediately upon his arrival, he spake unto the king and to all his nobles the word of God, and they opened their understandings, and listened with joy to what he said; and after a few days' instruction, both the king himself was baptized and all his nobles; and subsequently, in process of time, his people also. And so the king, being glad and joyful, wrote a letter of thanks to the king of the Nobadae, as follows:

Letter of the King of Alodia to the King of the Nubians.

"Your love is remembered by us, my lord, our brother Orfiulo, because you have now shown yourself my true kinsman, and that not only in the body, but also in the spirit, in having sent me hither our common spiritual father, who has shown me the way of truth, and of the true light of Christ our God, and has baptized me, and my nobles, and all my family. And in everything the work of Christ is multiplied, and I have hope in the holy God, and am desirous moreover of doing your pleasure, and driving your enemies from your land. For he is not your enemy alone, but also mine: for your land is my land, and your people my people. Let not your courage therefore fail, but be manful and take courage: for it is impossible for me to be careless of you and your land,

especially now that I have become a Christian, by the help of my father, the holy father Longinus. As we have need, however, of church furniture, get some ready for us: for I feel certain that you will send me these things with carefulness, and I will make you an answer: but on the day on which I was keeping festival, I did not wish to write, lest my letters should fail. Be not anxious then, but encourage yourself, and play the man: for Christ is with us." Such then was the letter which this new confessor, the king of the Alodae, wrote to the king of the Nobadae. And next we will also give a short extract from a letter of the blessed Longinus, which he wrote from that land, and sent to the king of the Nobadae, with a request that he would forward it to Alexandria: which also he did; and it is as follows:

"... Not then to trouble you with our annoyances, and make the letter tedious, I have omitted all such matters, and will tell you, secondly, that which will rejoice all who are real Christians, and strict members of the orthodox communion: and I do rejoice with you all, and will rejoice, and you in like manner must rejoice with me. And, moreover, rejoice with me in this, that He Who wills that everyone should be saved, and does not desire the death of a sinner, such as I am, but forgets all my sins, has remembered His mercy and grace towards me, and opened for me the door of His mercy, and delivered me from those who were hunting after my life, and led me safely through them, and blinded their eyes so that they did not see me. Nor were we unvisited by His loving kindness in chastening us, in that all of us, with my unworthy self, fell ill, from the greatest even to the least; and I was the first to suffer: for it was but right that I should be chastened first, because I am guilty of many sins, and many are the offenses into which I have fallen. And not only did we become ill ourselves, and despaired of our safety, but also the animals that were with us died, not being able to bear the heat, and the thirst in the mountains, and the unwholesomeness of the water, so that we lost no less than seventeen camels. And when the king of the Alodae heard that I had determined to come to him, he sent one of his princes, named Itika, who led me with great pomp into their land. And on our arrival at the river's bank, we went on

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board a vessel; and the king hearing of our coming rejoiced, and came out in person to meet us, and received us with great joy. And by the grace of God we taught him, and have baptized him and his nobles and all his family; and the work of God grows daily. But inasmuch as there are certain Abyssinians, who have fallen into the malady of the fancy of [the theologian] Julian [of Halicarnassus] and say, that Christ suffered in a body not capable of pain, or of death, we have told them what is the correct belief, and have required them to anathematize this heresy in writing, and have received these persons upon their presenting their recantation." . . . And again, after some things which we have omitted, he thus proceeds; ". . . And let all your rulers and people, on learning these things, offer up with spiritual joy their praises and thanksgivings to our merciful God, for all these His innumerable gifts; and let the fathers take care that there be sent down hither bishops, who will be able to labor and minister in this divine work, which is pleasing both to God and humans, and in the reality of which they may feel confident, and that it is going on prosperously. For there are a thousand thousand here who are

hastening to salvation, to the glory of Him Who is the Savior of us all, even Christ. And believe what I say, that a short time ago a sort of purpose suggested by the weakness of human nature came to me, not to write to any one: but when I considered the danger which those incur who are negligent in their use of spiritual gifts, I have addressed this short letter to your spiritual love. For I desire neither silver, nor gold, nor dresses, as God is my witness, Who tries the hearts of people, and Who knows all I do, and that I have not bread for my daily use, and am even glad to see with my eyes food of vegetables only. And thus far then let it suffice me to have told you." This then was written by the holy Longinus himself, being extracts from the letter he sent from the land of the Alodæi to the king of the Nobadæ, with a request that he would forward it to Alexandria, which he accordingly did, to Theodore, whom Longinus had himself appointed as patriarch: and at the same time the king himself sent him a letter to inform him of Longinus' arrival among them, and his subsequent departure, and the trials and difficulties which stood in his way, and the gracious aid which God in His goodness gave him.

39. Christians in India: Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography*

Cosmas Indicopleustes, "*The Indian Navigator*," was a sixth-century native of Alexandria who traveled extensively in his early life as a seafaring merchant. After retiring from commercial enterprises, Cosmas became a monk and devoted himself to writing treatises on geography, cosmography, and scriptural exegesis. The only text to survive is his *Christian Topography*, in which, in his description of the island of Scelediba—the present-day Sri Lanka—he provides the earliest surviving testimony to the presence of Christians in the area of the Indian subcontinent.

SOURCE: *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk*, tr. J. W. McCrindle (London: Hakluyt Society, 1897), 363-68.

Concerning the Island of Taprobanê

This is a large oceanic island lying in the Indian sea. By the Indians it is called Sielediba, but by the Greeks Taprobanê, and therein is found the hyacinth stone. It lies on the other side of the pepper country. Around it are numerous small islands all having fresh water and cocoanut trees. They nearly all have deep water close up to their shores. The great island, as the natives report, has a length of three hundred *gaudia*, that is, of nine hundred miles, and it is of the like extent in breadth. There are two kings in the island, and they are at feud the one with the other. The one has the hyacinth country, and the other the rest of the country where the harbor is, and the centre of trade. It is a great mart for the people in those parts. The island has also a church of Persian Christians who have settled there, and a Presbyter who is appointed from Persia, and a Deacon and a complete ecclesiastical ritual. But the natives and their kings are heathens. In this island they have many temples, and on one, which stands on an eminence, there is a hyacinth as large as a great pine-cone, fiery red, and when seen flashing from a distance, especially if the sun's rays are playing round it, a matchless sight. The island being, as it is, in a central position, is much frequented by ships from all parts of India and from Persia and Ethiopia, and it likewise sends out many of its own. And from the remotest countries, I mean Tzinista and other trading places, it receives silk, aloes, cloves, sandalwood and other products and

these again are passed on to marts on this side, such as Male, where pepper grows, and to Calliana which exports copper and sesame-logs, and cloth for making dresses, for it also is a great place of business. And to Sindu also where musk and castor is procured and androstachys, and to Persia and the Homerite country, and to Adulê. And the island receives imports from all these marts which we have mentioned and passes them on to the remoter ports, while, at the same time, exporting its own produce in both directions. Sindu is on the frontier of India, for the river Indus, that is, the Phison, which discharges into the Persian Gulf, forms the boundary between Persia and India. The most notable places of trade in India are these: Sindu, Orrhotha, Calliana, Sibor, and then the five marts of Male which export pepper: Parti, Mangarouth, Salopatana, Nalopatana, Poudopatana. Then out in the ocean, at the distance of about five days and nights from the continent lies Sielediba, that is Taprobanê. And then again on the continent is Marallo, a mart exporting chank shells, then Caber which exports alabandenum, and then farther away is the clove country, then Tzinista which produces the silk. Beyond this there is no other country, for the ocean surrounds it on the east. This same Sielediba then, placed as one may say, in the centre of the Indies and possessing the hyacinth receives imports from all the seats of commerce and in turn exports to them, and is thus itself a great seat of commerce.