

DIONYSIUS, BISHOP OF CORINTH

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[A.D. 170.] Eusebius is almost diffuse in what he tells us of this Dionysius,[1] "who was appointed over the church at Corinth, and imparted freely, not only to his own people, but to others, and those abroad also, the blessings of his divine labours." He wrote "Catholic Epistles;" he addressed an epistle to the Spartans and the Athenians; and, as Eusebius says, Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of St. Paul, was the first bishop of Athens.[2] He wrote to the Nicomedians, refuting Marcion, and closely adhering to "the rule of faith." In an epistle to the Gortynians and others in Crete, he praises Philip for his courageous ministry, and warns them against the heretics. He seems to recognise Palmas as bishop of Amastris and Pontus, and adds expositions of Scripture, and rules regarding marriage, its purity and sanctity. He also inculcates tenderness to penitent lapsers and backsliders. With Pinytus, bishop of the Gnossians, he corresponds on similar subjects; but Pinytus, while he thanks him and commends his clemency, evidently regards him as too much inclined to furnish "food for babes," and counsels him to add "strong meat for those of full age." He also writes to Chrysophora, his most faithful sister, imparting spiritual instruction.

FRAGMENTS FROM A LETTER TO THE ROMAN CHURCH.

I.

FOR this has been your custom from the beginning, to do good to all the brethren in various ways, and to send resources to many churches which are in every city, thus refreshing the poverty of the needy, and granting subsidies to the brethren who are in the mines.[3] Through the resources which ye have sent from the beginning, ye Romans, keep up the custom of the Romans handed down by the fathers, which your blessed Bishop Sorer has not only preserved, but added to, sending a splendid gift to the saints, and exhorting with blessed words those brethren who go up to Rome, as an affectionate father his children.

II.

FROM THE SAME EPISTLE.[4]

We passed this holy Lord's day, in which we read your letter, from the constant reading of which we shall be able to draw admonition, even as from the reading of the former one you sent us written through Clement.

III.

FROM THE SAME.

Therefore you also have by such admonition joined in close union the churches that were planted by Peter and Paul, that of the Romans and that of the Corinthians: for both of them went[5] to our Corinth, and taught us in the same way as they taught you when they went to Italy; and having taught you, they suffered martyrdom at the same time.[6]

IV.

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FROM THE SAME..[7]

For I wrote letters when the brethren requested me to write. And these letters the apostles of the devil have filled with tares, taking away some things and adding others, for whom a woe is in store. It is not wonderful, then, if some have attempted to adulterate the Lord's writings, when they have formed designs against those which are not such.[8] RHODON.[1]

[A.D. 180.] This Rhodon[2] was supposed by St. Jerome to have been the author of the work against the Cataphrygians, ascribed to Asterius Urbanus more probably.[3] Eusebius[4] gives us the fragment from his work against Marcion, addressed to Callistion, which is here translated. He tells us that he was a pupil of Tatian, and expresses an intention of furnishing original solutions of Scriptural problems sated by Tatian,[5] and by that author explained in a manner apparently unsatisfactory. He also appears to have written against the blasphemous Apelles,[6] whose Hexaameron was an attempt to refute Moses; but whether he also fulfilled his promise concerning an E pilusid of Tatian's Problems (or Questions), seems doubtful. Routh has devoted to the fragment here translated six pages of notes,[7] which he subjoins to the Greek text (of Eusebius) and a Latin version of the same.

WHEREFORE also they[8] disagree among themselves, maintaining as they do an opinion which has no consistency with itself. For one of their herd, Apelles, who prides himself on the strictness of his life,[9] and on his age, admits that there is only one first principle,[10] yet says that the prophecies have come from an opposing spirit, in which opinion he is influenced by the responses of a soothsaying[11] maid named Philumene. But others, among whom are Potitus and Basilicus, like Marcion[12] himself, introduce two first principles. These men, following the Pontic wolf, and not being able to discover any more than he the division of things, have had to recourse to rash assertion, and declared the existence of two first principles simply and without proof. Others of them, again, drifting from bad to worse, assume not two only, but even three natures. Of these men the leader and champion is Syneros, as those who adopt his teaching say....

For the old man Apelles entered into conversation with us, and was convicted of uttering many false opinions. For example, he asserted that men should on no account examine into their creed,[13] but that every one ought to continue to the last in the belief he has once adopted. For he declared that those who had rested their hope on the Crucified One would be saved, provided only they were found living in the practice, of good works. But the most perplexing of all the doctrines laid down by him was, as we have remarked before, what he said concerning God: for he affirmed that there was only one first principle, precisely as our own faith teaches

On asking him, "Where do you get proof of this? or how are you able to assert that there is only one first principle? tell us," he said that the prophecies refuted themselves, because they had uttered nothing at all that was true: for that they were discordant and false, and self-contradictory. As to the question, "How does it appear that there is only one first principle?" he said he could not tell, only he was impelled to that belief. On my thereupon conjuring him to speak the truth, he solemnly declared that he was expressing his real sentiments; and that he did not know" how" there could be one uncreated God, but that he believed the fact. Here I burst into laughter and rebuked him, because he professed to be a teacher, and yet was unable to confirm by arguments what he taught.