

NOTES

A NEW STUDY OF THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA

M. Robert Devreesse has devoted himself for many years to the study of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and his devotion has borne fruit in a number of published texts and periodical articles. The bishop of Mopsuestia is a mysterious and intriguing figure. Highly esteemed by his contemporaries, he was condemned as a heretic 125 years after his death. His works, as those of a heretic, have mostly perished; and he has borne the reputation, for 1400 years, of the father of Nestorianism, the patron of Pelagianism, and the first rationalist interpreter of the Bible. Must we conclude, Devreesse asks, that his contemporaries had lost all Christian sense? To solve the problem, there has been nothing but fragments of his works, the Acts of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, and the judgments, intensely partisan one way or the other, of his defenders and attackers.

Devreesse does not offer the present work as a definitive study,¹ but rather as a recapitulation of the work done by himself and others in recent years. The question he asks here is: Did Theodore sustain the errors attributed to him? And how did the balance of opinion finally turn and remain fixed against him? Recent discoveries of the works of Theodore, in the study of which Devreesse has been prominent, have cast new light on the problem; of special importance are Theodore's commentary on the Gospel of St. John, his catechetical homilies, and extensive fragments of his commentaries on the Psalms and on Genesis. This book was preceded in 1946 by the article of E. Amann, who is a student of Theodore in his own right, in the *Dictionnaire de la théologie catholique*.² These two works contain more information, based on a more objective and searching study of the text of Theodore, including the most recently discovered works and fragments, than has been available since the sixth century.

Both as a theologian and as an exegete Theodore is worthy of interest. His life (350-428) is almost coincident with the golden age of patristic literature; he was the fellow-student and friend of John Chrysostom, the master of Nestorius, the contemporary of Cyril of Alexandria, the Cappadocians, Augustine, and Jerome. He is the most typical representative of the Antiochene school of exegesis, and the most ruthless of all the members of that school in applying the principles of literary, grammatical, and historical interpretation. To the modern exegete he speaks in intelligible language; for

¹ *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*, Robert Devreesse (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1948).

² Tome 15, cc. 235-279.

if modern exegesis is to be classified in one of the patristic schools, it is certainly Antiochene rather than Alexandrine.

The work of Devreesse is divided into the following chapters: life and work of Theodore; method of exegesis; doctrinal system; the letter of Ibas and the tome of Proclus; Cyril of Alexandria, Marius Mercator, and Eutyches; the Monophysites and the Scythian monks; Justinian; Vigilius and Justinian; the extracts of Theodore condemned in 553; the reception of the condemnation in the West and in Persia. There follows an appendix of over 100 pages containing a critical text of all the existing Greek fragments of Theodore's commentary on the Gospel of St. John, with an introduction describing the MS sources. The major part of the work deals with the history of the events which led to the condemnation of Theodore in the Fifth Ecumenical Council (II Constantinople). This is the most complete and best documented treatment of this complicated story which the reviewer has been able to find, and cannot be ignored by students of patristic literature and the history of dogma.

Devreesse sketches the life of Theodore very briefly; this has been done often enough before. In the catalogue of Theodore's works he gives special attention to those which are not found in Migne's *Patrology*.³ His extensive summary of Theodore's commentary on Gen. 1-3 is valuable; this is now known not only from the Acts of the Fifth Council and the *Catena Nicephori*, published in the *Patrology*, but also from MS *catenae* published by Devreesse, citations of John Philoponus and Procopius of Gaza, and a Syriac fragment which contains a general consideration of the Hexaemeron. Of the fragments of the commentary on the Psalms printed in the *Patrology*, Devreesse rejects about one half as spurious. Almost the whole of Theodore's commentary on Pss. 50-80 has been recovered by him from MS *catenae*.⁴ Some old Irish glosses (published by Ascoli, Stokes, and Strachan, and most recently and completely by Best), compared with existing fragments of Theodore, show identity; they contain almost the whole of his commentary from Ps. 1:1 to 17:12, and fragments up to 40:13. Of Theodore's work on the New Testament the most notable discovery is that of his commentary on the Gospel of St. John. Devreesse rejects on internal grounds the prologue to the Acts which Dobschütz attributed to Theodore.

The most important theological work of Theodore which has been recovered in recent years is his catechetical homilies on the symbol, published by Mingana in 1932. A few fragments of a Syriac version of the *De Incar-*

³ PG 66, cc. 123-1020.

⁴ *Le commentaire de Théodore de Mopsueste sur les Psaumes L-LXX* (Vatican City, 1939).

natione, so important in determining Theodore's Christology, have been recovered. The studies of Devreesse show that this work has received extensive interpolations; a critical study of the fragments contained in the *Patrology* remains to be done. In a later chapter Devreesse has made a beginning of this study.

The chapter on Theodore's method of exegesis is too brief to be satisfactory. Something is needed to replace the book of M. Pirot, which did for Theodore's exegesis what Marius Mercator and Leontius of Byzantium did for his theology.⁵ In particular, there is room for a fuller discussion of Theodore's concept of biblical inspiration. Pirot charged that Theodore taught different degrees of inspiration.⁶ This charge is scarcely documented at all; it rests almost entirely on a single passage, in which Theodore applied to inspiration the text of St. Paul which speaks of different gifts proceeding from the same Spirit.⁷ Thus Theodore distinguishes the gift of prophecy from the gift of wisdom; prophecy foresees the future, wisdom does not. Devreesse does not treat this charge directly; but his discussion of Theodore's theory of inspiration is quite different in its conclusions. Amann rejects it explicitly; Theodore meant to distinguish modes of inspiration, not degrees.⁸ With the evidence that is available, it seems beyond dispute that Theodore distinguished literary species, and not degrees of inspiration. For Pirot, the distinction of literary species led to an error concerning inspiration; this judgment, which was according to the mode in 1913, would scarcely be accepted by modern exegetes.

It is acknowledged that Theodore was a pioneer in textual criticism; Pirot gives considerable space to the study of his methods.⁹ The principles and methods of Theodore were not inferior to those of Origen, who was content with collating variant readings, and Jerome, who enjoyed the advantage of a knowledge of Hebrew. Devreesse (pp. 55 ff.) shows that Theodore was also the first to apply literary criticism to the solution of textual problems. He sought light on the obscurities of the Greek text in the peculiarities of Hebrew idiom, which he collected and classified, and in the literary form of the books. It is remarkable how far he was able to push his investigations with the resources that he possessed.

Theodore was a defender of the primacy of the literal sense, and he is taxed by Pirot with an exaggerated reverence for it, and a corresponding depreciation of the typical sense. Theodore was stoutly opposed to the Alexandrine school and its methods, and he did not spare his pen in controversy;

⁵ Louis Pirot, *L'oeuvre exégétique de Théodore de Mopsueste* (Rome, 1913).

⁶ Pirot, pp. 159-163.

⁷ Mansi 9, 223; PG 66, 697.

⁸ DTC 15, 247.

⁹ Pirot, pp. 105 ff.

this was to cost his posthumous reputation dearly. Judgments upon Theodore's devotion to the literal sense have varied according to the prevailing spirit of exegesis. In 1913, Theodore's strictly literal methods smacked of modernism; today, we are in a position to judge his work more calmly; for there is practically no difference in the material from which Pirot and Devreesse have drawn their conclusions. Theodore did not deny the existence of typology in the Scriptures, but he admitted relatively few examples. He did not accept the principle that a quotation or a citation of the Old Testament in the New establishes the existence of a type; for this he was chastised by the allegorists, both of the fourth and of the nineteenth century. His canons of typology were resemblance between the type and the antitype, utility for the persons to whom the type was known, excellence of the antitype over the type. Modern manuals generally give divine revelation as the only adequate canon of typology. This, as the history of exegesis shows, itself needs further determination; and the canons of Theodore are in themselves quite valid. Where the question is still open, as far as the application of the principles is concerned, it seems altogether unfair to charge Theodore with a taint of rationalism.¹⁰

It is in Theodore's commentaries on the Psalms that most of these questions become acute. He was the first interpreter to insist that the Psalms must be read against a historical background. But he never dreamed of attributing the Psalms to any author except David; at the same time, it was obvious to him—as it was not to many patristic interpreters and to not a few moderns—that the context and background of many of the Psalms is altogether unsuitable to David. With a knowledge of Hebrew history drawn from all available sources he classified the Psalms according to their background, which extended from David to the Maccabees; and he supposed that those Psalms which reflect another period than that of David were written by David under prophetic inspiration which revealed the future history of his people. But he also insisted that the prophetic horizon of David did not extend beyond the Maccabees, and that there is consequently no directly messianic passage in the Psalms. The messianic use of the Psalms in the New Testament he considered an accommodation; and he appealed to the common use of the Scriptures by accommodation to justify this position. There are only four exceptions to this: Pss. 2, 8, 44, 109. These Theodore interprets not as properly messianic (in the sense of referring to the future prepared for the chosen people), but as referring to the Incarnation and the Church; the distinction is that of Devreesse. Theodore's arguments for the predictive sense of these passages are based entirely on the text itself, and not on the

¹⁰ Pirot, p. 213.

use of these texts elsewhere; as he interprets them, the words will bear no other sense.

This extremely severe restriction of the messianic content of the Psalms is based on the Davidic authorship of the Psalms, and on Theodore's principle, in itself, quite valid, that each Psalm must be treated as a literary whole. He refuses to admit any "change of person" (*enallage prosopou*), which was presupposed by the allegorists. Many messianic interpretations proposed by the allegorical school demand that a verse be divorced from its context, or that there be a change—sometimes a violent change—in the speaker, or in the situation. Theodore will have none of this. If a Psalm refers to the future, it refers entirely to the future. To be perfectly fair to Theodore, it must be admitted that he stands on a much firmer ground of principle than the allegorists; but it also seems true that, in rejecting the principles of the allegorists, he was prevented from giving his own principles their full application. Theodore was of a highly controversial temperament; he preferred to attack an adversary on all fronts. Thus he was not so much concerned with discovering the messianic sense, as he was with demonstrating that the basis of the allegorical school was unsound.

The true prophetic vision, as possessed by the prophets strictly so called, had a wider scope than that of David; and thus Theodore more easily admits directly messianic passages in the prophets. But here also he applies his critical principles. The prophet was presumed to refer to the nearer rather than the more distant future event; for this would have more significance for his immediate audience. Thus many passages generally regarded, even now, as messianic, are referred by Theodore to the restoration of the Jewish state or to the victories of the Maccabees.

The question of the canon of Theodore, extensively treated by Pirot, has been re-examined by Devreesse and Amann; and the harsh judgment of Pirot is no longer tenable.¹¹ Pirot based his opinion entirely on the testimony of Leontius of Byzantium and Junilus Africanus.¹² Yet Pirot knew as well as later writers that the canon of Theodore was that of the school of Antioch and of John Chrysostom. Leontius is convicted of being a prejudiced witness; Junilus represents the school of Nisibis. To identify Junilus with Theodore one must pass through the school of Nisibis to the school of Edessa, which was strongly influenced by Theodore. This identification was made easily by Pirot; both Devreesse and Amann reject it as unfounded. Pirot's conclusion was that Theodore rejected Chronicles, Esdras, Job, the Canticle, Tobias, Esther (classified, oddly, by M. Pirot as deuterocanonical), Judith,

¹¹ Pirot, pp. 121-156; Devreesse, pp. 33-36, 41-42; Amann, *DTC* 15, 245-247.

¹² M. Devreesse notes that Junilus, rather than Junilius, is the correct spelling.

Wisdom, and Maccabees from the Old Testament; James, II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and Apocalypse from the New Testament. Such a radical excision of the canon, especially in a writer who was the object of thorough-going hostile examination, would have left more evidence both in his own writings and in those of others. The conclusion of Devreesse is much more moderate and better documented: Theodore rejected the titles of the Psalms (quite correctly), some portions of Job, and probably of Ecclesiastes; and he discussed the literary species of the Canticle. Of the New Testament, he does not cite James, I Peter, or I John, but this does not prove that he rejected them; the other Catholic Epistles he omitted from the canon, as did the Church of Antioch and John Chrysostom. The Acts of the Fifth Council cite, not verbally, words of Theodore on Job and the Canticle which, taken by themselves, can be construed as a rejection of these two books.¹³ But that is just the point; they should not be taken by themselves, nor can they be regarded as entirely representative of Theodore's interpretation of these books. Such a divergence from even the Palestinian canon must rest on sounder evidence than the word of a single hostile writer. By themselves, these passages can equally well be understood as an inquisition into the literary form and species of these books, an attempt to classify them; without the complete expression of Theodore's mind, it is unfair to base such a conclusion on such slender evidence.

The reviewer, however, feels that the chapter on the canon of Theodore is not closed. Both Devreesse and Amann are qualified experts on Theodore, and their opinion of the canon of Theodore must be respected; since we lack any statement of Theodore himself, perhaps it is unfair to ask for more. A more searching study of all the passages of Theodore's work which bear on the canon, and a more elaborate effort to read them against the background of Theodore's exegetical principles and practice, are needed.

Devreesse treats Theodore's theology more extensively. Here we are in a better position than ever before. The relatively extensive fragments of Theodore's work which have been recovered in recent years make it possible to pass a more certain, if not a definitive, judgment. The errors with which Theodore has been charged touch principally the doctrines of original sin and the Incarnation; his teaching on these doctrines can now be largely reconstructed from his catechetical homilies.

The ancient charges against Theodore on original sin are thus summed up by Devreesse (p. 102): Man was not created immortal, but mortal; Adam and Eve harmed only themselves by their sin; universal mortality is not a chastisement of Adam's sin; the effects of the sin of Adam—the present con-

¹³ Mansi 9, 224-227.

dition of man—are not penalties, but a test, an experiment instituted by God; the tortures of the damned will come to an end. The judgment of Devreesse, supported by ample quotations, is that absolutely nothing like this appears in the authentic work of Theodore which we possess. How, then, did the fragments arise on which the condemnation was based? Are we to accept the explanation of Marius Mercator: “aliud clausum in pectore, aliud promptum in lingua”? Devreesse sees no explanation except interpolation.

Amann also has discussed this question quite thoroughly; his solution, while more complicated than that of Devreesse, is equally benignant to Theodore.¹⁴ Theodore's views on original sin were affected by two related factors: his theory of the two *catastases*, and the Pelagian controversy in Palestine in which Jerome was involved. The theory of Jerome on original justice and original sin, as Msgr. Amann notices, was not sound in all details; it probably reached Theodore, who was unsympathetic to Jerome on other grounds, in a distorted form. Amann believes that the fragments of Theodore's *Adversus Defensores Peccati Originalis* and the citations of the Fifth Council do represent to some extent the views of Theodore at this time. The two *catastases* represent two stages of humanity as a whole, and of the life of the individual. The first *catastasis* is a state of instability and mutability; the second, a state of fixity. For humanity at large, the first *catastasis* ends with the redemption; for the individual, it ends with the resurrection. Thus, Amann points out, in 418 Theodore was teaching the proposition on human mortality which was condemned in that year at Carthage.

But Amann accords with Devreesse that from the authentic works of Theodore it is possible to erect a doctrinal synthesis on original sin which is in every detail orthodox. Amann also adduces ample quotations to show this. How is this contradiction to be explained? Amann remarks, somewhat slyly, that Theodore would not be the only theologian who has impugned his own opinions when he heard them voiced by a favorite adversary. Nor is a change of mind likely in Theodore, who is generally regarded as a man of firm convictions. Amann suggests that the contradiction is more apparent than real. Theodore saw, or thought he saw, in the writings of Jerome a declaration of the inevitability of sin; in his vigorous controversial style he went too far in the opposite direction. Hence we may say that Theodore had not yet perfectly synthesized in his own mind the elements of the doctrine of original sin, which it is clear from his works that he possessed. But this is much less than a charge of Pelagianism, first made in the fifth century by Marius Mercator, and repeated by Pirot in the twentieth.

Amann's explanation recommends itself both by its complexity and by

¹⁴ DTC 15, 270-276.

its inclusion of all the evidence. Devreesse here, as occasionally elsewhere, shows himself too ready to base his conclusions on recent discoveries alone, and to omit much ancient evidence simply because it is unfriendly. In any case, both Amann and Devreesse have cast much light on a hitherto obscure chapter of the fascinating story of the Pelagian controversy. Historians can no longer dismiss it with a brief mention.¹⁵

More serious and, to all appearances, better founded, is the charge that Theodore was the father of Nestorianism. Pirot quotes Jugie, Tixeront, and Harnack in favor of this opinion, and is not content with the cautious judgment of Harnack that the Christology of Theodore was related to that of Nestorius: "La christologie de Théodore est identique à celle de Nestorius; Nestorius fut le porte-voix de Théodore. . . ." ¹⁶ This charge is founded principally on the lengthy extracts from the *De Incarnatione* which were collected by Leontius of Byzantium and presented to the Fifth Council, and the less extensive fragments of the *Contra Apollinarem*.¹⁷ This judgment must be modified in the light of the eighth catechetical homily, analyzed and liberally quoted by both Devreesse and Amann.¹⁸ This homily teaches beyond all cavil the unity of two natures in one person; indeed, its clarity is extraordinary in a document which precedes the writings of Cyril and the definition of Ephesus. Should we not suppose, Amann asks, that the texts of the *De Incarnatione* were originally part of a synthesis as powerful as that of the eighth homily?¹⁹

How, then, did the writings of Theodore come to bear the stamp of Nestorianism? Like Devreesse, Amann accepts the hypothesis of interpolation in the extracts of Theodore. But, as in the question of original sin, there are other factors responsible for this apparent contradiction. The adversary against whom Theodore directed his Christological treatises was Apollinaris. Hence his emphasis is placed on the humanity of Christ and on the peculiarly human elements in the ordinary sense of the word—what the theologians call passibility. Amann is willing to concede that Theodore's understanding of the impeccability of Christ is theologically unacceptable; it is *impeccantia*, rather than radical impeccability. It is not altogether impertinent to recall that one modern manual lists twenty-five theories which have been proposed to explain the impeccability of Christ. But this is a detail. Theodore's emphasis on the true humanity leads him to expressions which suggest the independence of the humanity. His terminology, *homo assumptus*, and his insistence on the antithesis *Filius Dei-Filius David*, are certainly unaccept-

¹⁵ Cf. Plinval, *Histoire de l'Eglise*, IV (1945), 101. ¹⁶ Pirot, p. 68.

¹⁷ Mansi 9, 203-229; *PG* 66, 969-1002.

¹⁸ Devreesse, pp. 112-118; *DTC* 15, 263-266. ¹⁹ *DTC* 15, 266.

able. His discussion of divine and human filiation gave occasion to his adversaries to charge him with the very error of Nestorius. This charge can no longer be laid, in the light of the writings recently discovered, although it follows easily enough from the extracts preserved by the Fifth Council. There seems to be no excuse for quoting the anecdote found in Pirot that Theodore once in a sermon denied the title of *theotokos* to Mary, and that he retracted his error at the insistence of his friends, including Nestorius!²⁰

The fact remains, however, that the Christological doctrine and terminology of Theodore were conducive to the error of Nestorius. If this makes him the father of Nestorianism, then Cyril of Alexandria may just as well be called the father of Monophysitism. Had Theodore not been the object of the censure of an ecumenical council, it would be said of him, as it was said of his friend and fellow-student Chrysostom, "*securius loquebatur in ecclesia catholica.*" No small service has been done the memory of Theodore if the studies of Devreesse and Amann have shown that the question is still open.

After the positive exposition of the writings and the doctrine of Theodore, Devreesse enters upon the principal part of his book—the history of the events which led to the condemnation of Theodore in 553. This history has never been so thoroughly investigated before; and Devreesse has given us a study which is essential to the understanding of the Fifth Ecumenical Council—a Council which presents many problems for the historian. It is impossible even to sketch in this review the complicated developments which Devreesse has traced; most of the prominent figures of the fifth and sixth centuries play a part in it, and many others who have escaped oblivion only because of their rôle in the story of the *Three Chapters*. As Devreesse reconstructs the history, it is a sordid story; political and ecclesiastical intrigue, jealousy between East and West, personal enmities, and heretical sympathies wearing the mask of orthodoxy run all the way through it. In simple fact, if the analysis of Devreesse is correct, there is scarcely a single one of Theodore's opponents whose motives are above suspicion.

The opposition to Theodore was initiated by Rabbula of Edessa shortly

²⁰ Devreesse (pp. 128–191) has checked this anecdote and found it less than well authenticated. Apparently it was first related by John of Antioch in 430 in a synodal letter to Nestorius. It was intended as an edifying example to induce Nestorius to follow the humility of Theodore. But Devreesse denies that the name of Theodore in this story is assured. In the hands of Innocent of Maronius, one of Theodore's implacable enemies before the Fifth Council, the anecdote was distorted to show that Theodore not only invented the Nestorian error, but that he taught it secretly, while remaining orthodox in public; and that Nestorius merely brought the error into the light. This is the kind of witness in whom Pirot placed his confidence.

after the Council of Ephesus, and not, as M. Pirot says, by Cyril of Alexandria.²¹ Rabbula had at first been associated with John of Antioch in opposition to Cyril of Alexandria in the quarrel which followed the Fourth Council; but he changed sides, and in the manner of those who adopt a new allegiance outdid himself in zeal against his former colleagues. Rabbula's hostility to Theodore led to the first collection of extracts from Theodore, the *capitula* presented to Proclus of Constantinople by the Armenian monks. After some debate these were condemned by Proclus; but the Eastern bishops opposed the condemnation, and this induced Cyril of Alexandria to express an unfavorable opinion of Theodore. The attitude of Cyril towards Theodore wavered; at first, he seems to have had no liking for Theodore, but at the same time he did not regard him as the father of the Nestorian heresy; and it was Cyril who put himself on record as opposed to any condemnation of those whose case was before the tribunal of God, the supreme judge. Yet letters 67, 69, 71, 73, and 74 of Cyril contain very harsh condemnations of Theodore and of his master, Diodore of Tarsus. Devreesse is disinclined to accept these letters in their entirety; and he altogether rejects 73 and 74, the most virulent. This is not a gratuitous hypothesis; Devreesse has pointed out some inconcinnities in these letters, apart from the acerbity of the style, which cast suspicion upon them. One wishes that the question of these letters could be investigated more thoroughly; the supposed hostility of Cyril to Theodore was a weapon in the hands of the enemies of Theodore. There is no doubt that Cyril did alter his earlier attitude of silence; M. Devreesse finds the reason for this in his feeling that the Oriental bishops who insisted on the innocence of Theodore were not so much defending one of the great lights of the school of Antioch as their own Nestorian sympathies, which they cloaked under the formulae of Theodore. There is no way to tell whether this was really his motive. In any case, the conclusion of the affair was that Theodore was tarred with the Nestorian brush; but no definite condemnation was passed upon him. And there doubtless the question would have died, if the Monophysite heresy had not arisen to tear the Eastern Church to pieces.

It was at this time—439, Devreesse thinks (p. 164)—that the writings of Marius Mercator appeared. The *Commonitorium* was directed not at Theodore but at Julian of Eclanum, who was attempting to return to the Roman communion. Marius Mercator had no influence at the time, and his work was almost ignored; but it was very important a hundred years later; for it was

²¹ Pirot, p. 305. Ibas testified that the resentment of Rabbula came from a public reprehension given him by Theodore, which he never forgave. It is not necessary to accept this.

Marius who made the connection between Theodore and the famous disciple of Pelagius, and who attributed to Theodore the symbol which was condemned in the Fifth Ecumenical Council. Devreesse is very short with him; the Pelagianism of Theodore is a myth, and the symbol which Marius attributes to him is not the symbol which Theodore himself gives in his catechetical homilies.

The Monophysite faction, both before and after Chalcedon, masked itself as the defender of the orthodox faith of Cyril of Alexandria, and attempted to tax the orthodox with Nestorianism. There may be one of the ironies of history in the treatment accorded the writings of Cyril of Alexandria; for the formula, "una natura Verbi Dei incarnata," seized by the Monophysites as a touchstone of orthodoxy, was taken by Cyril from Apollinaris, the adversary of Theodore. In the century after Chalcedon theological confusion was profound.

Theodore was condemned at the *Latrocinium Ephesi* in 449; but his case was brought before the Council of Chalcedon, and he was acquitted—in the sense, at least, that no censure was passed upon his Christological doctrine. This was what furnished the Monophysites an occasion; for the Council, in condemning Eutyches—and, according to them, Cyril as well—had, while condemning Nestorius, failed to condemn Theodore, the father of Nestorianism. It cannot be considered unfavorable to Theodore that the Monophysite synod of Constantinople in 499 included him in the same condemnation with Leo, the *Tomus Dogmaticus*, and the Council of Chalcedon. As long as the schism of Rome and Constantinople endured (it had begun with the deposition of Acacius in 484), the Monophysites were able to anathematize all their adversaries with one blow. Severus, who became bishop of Antioch in 512, is cited by Devreesse as an example of the tactics of the Monophysite leaders. Severus attacked Theodore, giving several extracts from his works; his principle was to take the orthodoxy of Cyril, understood in the Monophysite sense, as the only standard, and to accept no other rule, whether of pope or council.

These tactics were changed after the accession of Justin in 518, at whose insistence the schism was healed in 519.²² It was no longer possible to attack Leo and Chalcedon openly; but Theodore was available as a whipping-boy. By attacking the weaknesses in his doctrine or terminology, Monophysite Christology could be defended against the "heresy" of dyophysism; for Theodore had not been condemned by Chalcedon. The Monophysites now aimed at a revision of Chalcedon. This was to be accomplished by identifying the doctrine of Chalcedon with the formula of Cyril, originally that of

²² By a typographical error the accession of Justin appears as dated in 515.

Apollinaris, "una natura Dei Verbi incarnata." (Surely one of the most unfortunate theological phrases ever coined.) The adversary of this formula was Theodore; for its defense, the Monophysites appealed to the tome of Proclus of Constantinople. Rome wished none of this; unfortunately, the Monophysites gained the patronage of Justinian, who not only wished ecclesiastical peace, but fancied himself enough of a theologian to fix its terms. The Monophysite campaign for a revision was carried on by a group of Scythian monks, headed by John Maxentius. During their visit to Rome, they gained the valuable assistance of Dionysius Exiguus, who translated a number of Monophysite tracts from Greek to Latin; this was in no small way responsible for the diffusion of Monophysite propaganda. It was from these circles that the *Tria Capilula* arose.

At the same time, the situation was complicated by another factor. A quarrel had arisen among the Palestinian monks between the defenders of Origen and his opponents. The defenders of Origen knew quite well that the allegorical principles of their hero had been most vigorously and ruthlessly opposed by Theodore; and, since it was impossible for them to resist the prevailing hostility to Origenism, they, like the Monophysites, turned their attack upon the ancient adversary of their doctrines. The monk of Palestine who drew up the charges against Theodore was Leontius of Byzantium; the extracts of the works of Theodore contained in the *Constitutum* of Vigilius and the Acts of the Fifth Ecumenical Council are his work. Devreesse affirms that the last phases of the process against Theodore are incomprehensible to the historian who does not know Leontius and his companions, Theodore Askidas and Domitian of Ancyra.²³ These men were forced by Justinian to sign a condemnation of Origen. They offered no open opposition. The question of Origenism and that of Christology were really unconnected; but it meant that the Origenists—and they were numerous—added their strength to those who sought the condemnation of Theodore.

The last phase, the visit of Pope Vigilius to Constantinople and the proceedings of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, is better known, and is treated in all the standard histories. Read in the light of the preceding events, the history of which Devreesse has assembled from widely scattered materials, it is seen more clearly. The strength of the Monophysite party in the Council, the Monophysite sympathies of Justinian, and the pressure which the Emperor put upon the Bishop of Rome for the condemnation of the *Three Chapters*, are all facts of history, unpleasant as they may be. The Council condemned the extracts from the works of Theodore as heretical, and the

²³ This is not so easy. Devreesse himself points out that there were two, if not three, who bore the name Leontius and who were concerned in this story.

case of Theodore was closed. Devreesse does not intend to reopen it; but the question is, to what extent were the extracts actually taken from the works of Theodore? And do they, taken as they are out of their context, represent his mind? In the form in which they appear in the Acts of the Council, they merit the censure passed upon them; but are they, in that form, truly the work of Theodore? The *Constitutum* of Vigilius, written before the Council, condemned the writings of Theodore in the form in which they were presented to the Pope; Vigilius expressly refused to anathematize the person of Theodore.

Devreesse analyzes the provenance of the extracts from the works of Theodore, and, where possible, compares them with the fragments recently discovered. This is the first time such an analysis in detail has been made; and it is only during recent years that it has become possible. Of the 71 extracts cited in the Acts of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, 54 deal with Christology.²⁴ These have been submitted by Devreesse to a very thorough check. The number of extracts which can be checked from independent sources is small, but the results are revealing. There is no parallel for 21 of these extracts. Those which can be compared with recently discovered texts are: 13-16, 19 (from another passage of Theodore's works, but not the identical passage), 21-24, 26, 31, 33-36, 41, 42. Fr. 13, found in the Syriac version of the commentary on the Gospel of St. John, Devreesse judges innocent in its context. The work from which fr. 19 is taken has not been found; but the thought is paralleled in Theodore's commentary on Ps. 8:5. Where fr. 19 speaks of two persons in Christ, the commentary speaks of two natures. Devreesse suspects that the same change has been made in other passages. In fr. 20 the existence of any messianic prophecy is denied. This passage is not found in the commentary on the prophets, the work to which it is assigned; it is an inaccurate summary of Theodore's doctrine on messianic prophecy. Fr. 21, from the commentary on the Psalms, is unfaithfully reproduced. Fr. 26, compared with the Syriac version of the commentary on St. John, has been interpolated by the application of the words "domesticum Dei et amicum" to Christ; such an interpolation is not insignificant. The same phrase has been interpolated in fr. 33 and 34. Fr. 29 has been deliberately corrupted; Devreesse refers to a study of M. Richard in *La Tradition*. Fr. 31, as compared with the sixth homily, shows an interpolation and an omission of no small importance. The interpolation applies the Nestorian phrase, "secundum coniunctionem," to the hypostatic union. In the abbreviated passage, Theodore denies that *homo secundum carnem* is *naturaliter Deus*, and that *Deus* is *naturaliter ex Iudaeis*. This sentence is capable of an

²⁴ Mansi 9, 203 ff.

orthodox interpretation; but in fr. 31 the word "naturaliter" is twice omitted. Fr. 35 denies that *Filius David* is *Filius Dei, Verbum*. The text of the eighth homily is substantially the same; it is an instance of Theodore's failure to observe the communication of idioms when predicating *in concreto*. But Devreesse has found a passage in the commentary on Rom. 1:3, preserved by Theodore's defender, Facundus of Hermianum, which he calls luminously clear: "Duæ enim naturæ, unum autem quiddam connexionem intelligunt. Altera quidem est assumpti hominis, altera vero Dei Verbi. Concurrent autem in unum ambæ propter assumptionem, et propter adunationem, quæ ex assumptione facta est, quæ ad Deum habet servi formam." The passage is not perhaps "luminous"; but it is irreproachable, and Devreesse is not unjustified in saying that the reason why it was not quoted in the extracts proposed to Vigilius and the Council was that the collectors knew what they were doing. Fr. 36 has been taken from its context and altered so that a *male sonans* phrase has become indefensible. The beginning of fr. 41 has been omitted; this, Devreesse says, makes it incomprehensible, but he does not quote. Fr. 42, from the fifth homily, is unfaithfully reproduced. Fr. 51 has been preserved by Facundus in a form quite different, and the original Greek is now available; it shows the fidelity of the version of Facundus. Theodore here paraphrases the words of the centurion, "Homo sum et ego." In fr. 51, there appears the interpolation, "Cum sis homo accipiens a Deo," which makes even the centurion talk like a Nestorian. Theodore's point was that the centurion did not approach Christ as the Son of God and the creator of the universe. The interpolation has twisted the sense to imply that in Theodore's opinion the centurion was right.

The conclusion of Devreesse is moderate; it is edifying to compare it with the conclusion of Pirot, who wrote with the greatest assurance from incomplete evidence. Devreesse concedes that lacunæ and exaggerations are found in the system of Theodore; is this, he asks, a valid reason to continue to impute to him errors which he never maintained, or to blame him for being born when he was? To this reviewer, the question is legitimate. While much remains to be done in the study of the exegesis of Theodore and of his doctrinal system, the investigation which Devreesse has made of the Acts of the Fifth Ecumenical Council and of the events which preceded the Council have destroyed forever any presumption of the good faith of those who assembled the extracts which were condemned. Where the extracts can be tested, they show omission, interpolation, truncation, alteration in almost every instance; and this is more than enough to cast doubt on the reliability of the other extracts. The same conclusion has been reached by Amann. Yet it is on these collectors, who are proved to have used their hostility to

Theodore as a cover for their own heterodox sympathies, that the traditional idea of Theodore depends.

- An appendix contains the Greek fragments of Theodore's commentaries on the Gospel of St. John. Up to now, the only fragments of this work have been those collected in the *Patrology*. These were collected from the *catenae* of Cordier, Cramer, and Mai. In 1927, Devreesse, writing in the *Revue Biblique* (pp. 203 ff.) attacked the authenticity of one-third of the citations in the *Patrology*, and maintained that genuine citations of Theodore could be found in the *catenae* under a false attribution, or as anonymous. But the recovery of Theodore's commentary was rendered much easier by the publication of Vosté's edition of the Syriac version of this commentary.²⁵ Devreesse accepts Vosté's demonstration of the authenticity of this work. On the basis of this text, Devreesse has recovered, from five families of MS *catenae*, the existing fragments of Theodore's commentary. His original estimate that one-third of the fragments printed in the *Patrology* must be rejected has been justified. The fragments which were falsely attributed to other writers do not equal in extent the fragments rejected; but the Greek text runs to 114 rather closely printed pages in Devreesse's book. The text is critically edited, with a very full apparatus. In the words of Devreesse, the Greek text generally corresponds with the Syriac, but the adaptation is not perfect. In several passages, the texts of the MSS and of the Syriac cannot be explained except on the hypothesis of two editions; where this is the case, Devreesse has printed the variant texts in parallel columns. The harmony
- between his critical text and those fragments of the *Patrology* which he accepts is very close; of the sources of the *Patrology*, Cordier is the least reliable, and it is no longer possible to check his MS sources.

This, Devreesse confesses, is much less than the publication which he planned originally; and it is to be regretted that he could not carry out his project of publishing the Syriac version and the Greek fragments in a single volume. But this publication is one more notable contribution to the restoration of the works of Theodore; and there is no longer any excuse for quoting Theodore's commentary on St. John from the *Patrology*.

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²⁵ *Corp. Scr. Or.*, ser. 4, tom. 3 (Louvain, 1940).