

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

He does not say that there are no writers in our own day who cling to Substitution as the Reformers held it. Dr. DENNEY still courageously does, for one. What he says is that this is the main characteristic of the theology of our time. And in enumerating the leading writers on the Atonement, from WILBERFORCE to LOFTHOUSE, he does not step aside even to name Dr. DENNEY.

If it is true, then, that human thought is moving aright on the doctrine of the Atonement, our hope is in the direction, not of simple substitution, but of some kind of identification. Such identification may undoubtedly—perhaps we can say, will certainly—involve some form or degree of substitution. But the essential thing, that which makes the reconciliation, so far as we are

being led at present to understand it, will be, not the substitution of one individual for other individuals or for a race, but the acceptance of the race in one who is already identified with it.

This is the position of men like MOBERLY and LOFTHOUSE; and according to Mr. MCDOWALL, 'the best approach to understanding the Atonement which man has yet reached is to be found in such works as those of Moberly and Lofthouse.' Of LOFTHOUSE he says: 'He utterly denies all forms of the doctrine of substitution. Christ suffered on our behalf. He did not exempt us from suffering, but He took away the sting of death and pain when He made re-union with God possible to us by changing our whole attitude towards sin.'

## Apollinaris of Laodicea.

BY THE REV. DAWSON WALKER, M.A., D.D., PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL EXEGESIS IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM.

### I.

To every thoughtful Christian man, for whom his religious experience has any real significance, the fact of Christ, the meaning of Christ, is a question of permanent and fundamental importance. At the present time it has a peculiar degree of interest. Our own age is very much devoted to the investigation of origins. We cannot now be satisfied with the consideration of a person or a thing. We must go behind them to the sources from which they spring. Christianity has been approached and scrutinized in this way. Some searchers seem to have found it hard to decide whether Christ or St. Paul was really the founder of the Faith. Some have reached the sapient conclusion that there was no such person as Jesus Christ. More reasonable inquirers have agreed to find in Jesus Christ the author of our Faith, and are devoting themselves to a close, critical, sometimes reverent, consideration of His personality as revealed in the pages of the New Testament. The question, 'What think ye of Christ?' is a perpetual challenge

to our intellect and to our faith. It is for us no mere speculative problem of abstract interest. It is the question of questions, the mystery of mysteries.

It is perhaps well, as we concentrate our attention for a few moments on the problem of Christ, to remind ourselves of two things. In the first place, we should recollect how vast it is and how manifold are the issues of it. There are, of course, the two familiar divisions, the Person of Christ and the Work of Christ. And it is well known that while the more speculative and metaphysical East has always been attracted to consideration of the mystery of Christ's Person, the more active and practical West has been more interested in His work for mankind. At the very same time that the Fathers of the Eastern Church were straining all their intellectual powers to express the mode in which the divine and the human co-exist in our Lord,—in other words, how God can exist in the likeness of men,—the Western Church,

in the strife between Augustine and Pelagius, was occupied with the question how Man is to be restored to the likeness of God. Each of the great divisions of the Church had enough to occupy it in discussing one particular aspect of the manifold problem.

The other thing to remember is that the interpretation of Christ to which any individual or school of thinkers may give expression is largely coloured by the character, temper, and training of the interpreters themselves. We see this in the fact just mentioned, that the more practical West preferred to consider Christ's work, whereas the more speculative East preferred to meditate on His Person. But if we confine our view for a moment to Eastern Christendom, we see the truth strikingly illustrated by the contrast between the Schools of Alexandria and of Antioch.

The School of Alexandria was devout and mystical. Its teachers were chiefly interested in the doctrine of the Logos. The pre-existence of the Logos may be said to be the central point in their theology. 'They fixed their attention almost entirely on the divine element in the Person of Christ, and so asserted in the strongest terms, the unity of the divine and the human in Him. While confessing the duality, they emphasized the unity.'<sup>1</sup> The *mode* of union was regarded as an incomprehensible mystery.

The spirit of Antioch, on the other hand, was critical and historical. The chief interest of its teachers was in anthropology, and they bent all their efforts to emphasizing the human element in our Lord. They preferred to form their idea of Christ from the simple narratives of the Gospel, interpreted in a strictly literal and matter-of-fact way. The critical, literal exegesis of Antioch presented a sharp contrast with the allegorizing methods of Alexandria. To the Antiochenes the completeness of our Lord's human nature was certain; it was so certain that many of them were prepared to say that it had the completeness of a distinct and separate personality. The general tendency of Antioch was to 'confess the unity but emphasize the duality.'<sup>2</sup>

It is worth remembering that the contrasted types of mind presented by Alexandria and Antioch have persisted throughout the centuries, and are

<sup>1</sup> Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 255.

in fullest evidence to-day. There are those whose chief joy it is to brood over the mystery of the Incarnate Logos as it is set forth in the Johannine writings; to trace their Lord, with reverent persistence, far back into the æons of a measureless eternity; to whom the written word, and the events of the Incarnate life which it portrays, are simply the earthly vehicle of eternal issues and eternal verities. And there are others who find a greater joy in dwelling upon the earthly life, the loving words, the gracious deeds of Jesus the prophet of Nazareth; to whom the great High Priest, 'tempted like as we are,' 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' 'able to succour them that are tempted,' made 'perfect through sufferings,'<sup>3</sup> is the most precious object of worship and of love.

In view, then, of the fact that many thinking men of our own age are profoundly interested in the problem presented by Christ's Person; in view, too, of the fact that the present development of the science of psychology cannot fail to include a consideration of our Lord within the scope of its activities, it may be both useful and interesting to retrace our steps to the beginning and recall the circumstances under which the Church was first brought face to face with the Christological problem, and was forced to define in the best way possible the view she wished her children to accept and to maintain.

The two names which stand forth with especial prominence in this matter are those of the Bishop Apollinaris and the Patriarch Nestorius. A consideration of the Christology of Apollinaris will furnish us with ample matter for reflexion in the present essay.

Let us, in the first place, recall, as far as the available materials permit us to do so, the picture of the man himself. We are sometimes inclined, I think, when we are studying the first five centuries of Church History, to regard the theologians with whom some particular development of dogmatic theology is associated as so many incarnate systems and their names as convenient labels, to the exclusion of their personal history with all its human interest.

Apollinaris was Bishop of Laodicea in the latter half of the fourth century. His literary activity lies mainly between the years 350 and 390 A.D. He was a son of the Christian schoolmaster, also

<sup>3</sup> He 4<sup>14</sup>. 15 2<sup>10</sup>.

named Apollinaris, who undertook the composition of Christian works, in the style and manner of the older classics, in order that Christian students should not be unduly penalized by the educational edicts of the Emperor Julian, who had precluded them from reading the ancient literature of Greece and Rome. In this work the younger Apollinaris aided his father. He was, however, not merely a brilliant scholar, conversant with the thought of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, but he was a theologian of outstanding eminence and ability. He was, throughout the earlier part of his life, on terms of the warmest friendship with Athanasius and Basil. Philostorgius says, indeed, that Athanasius seemed a child alongside of Apollinaris, Basil, and Gregory of Nazianzen. Throughout the Arian controversy Apollinaris employed every resource of his learning and ability in the defence of the Nicene Faith. He was held in the highest regard both for his piety and his orthodoxy. He was respected both for the width of his culture and the power of his intellect. Some have not hesitated to term him the most important theologian of his age. He has, at any rate, this distinction. He was 'the turning point at which the Church ceased to devote that exclusive attention to the doctrine of the Trinity which it had for a considerable time devoted, and began those Christological investigations which engaged its powers unremittedly, especially in the East, during centuries to come.'<sup>1</sup> As Loofs points out, the matter was raised by Apollinaris in a manner so exhaustive and so comprehensive, that the whole discussion, lasting for some 300 years, till 680 A.D., hardly produced any points of view which had not already been suggested.<sup>2</sup> And the terms, in which the points at issue find expression, are for the most part to be found in his writings.

It would take too long to tell in detail the story of the attempted rediscovery of many of the writings of Apollinaris. The process began at a very early period. The unknown author of the little tractate *Adversus Fraudes Apollinaristarum*, published possibly about 500 A.D., undertook to prove that an exposition of the Faith, ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus, some letters ascribed to Julius of Rome,

<sup>1</sup> Dorner, *Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Div. i. vol. ii. p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 266.

and a creed on the Incarnation, usually taken as Athanasian, were all in reality the work of Apollinaris. In the opinion of those qualified to judge, the author of this early essay in criticism has made out a strong case. But the process of rediscovery did not end with him. A modern scholar, Von Dräseke, has cast his net more widely with still more comprehensive results. He has tried to show reason for maintaining that a work on the Trinity attributed to Justin Martyr, Three Dialogues on the Holy Trinity assigned to Athanasius, the last two books of the Treatise against Eunomius published as the work of Basil, and five letters included in the correspondence of Basil, are also the work of Apollinaris.

How, it may be asked, was such a wholesale process of publishing one man's work under other people's names ever conceivable? The suggested answer is that it was the work of ardent disciples of Apollinaris, who wished to secure the widest currency for the doctrines of their master, and hoped, by issuing them as works bearing the names of teachers acceptable to the orthodox, to secure for them a popularity greater than would have been known to be the works of a heresiarch.

It should, however, carefully be borne in mind that these processes of attempted 'rediscovery,' depending so largely on the 'internal evidence' of subject matter, are highly precarious and require prolonged scrutiny before final acceptance. In this particular instance it is not without significance that in the most recent collection of the works of Apollinaris made by Lietzmann, all these rediscovered additions of Von Dräseke are again excluded.

To whatever conclusion in this matter research may ultimately lead, one consideration should always be present to our minds, namely, the necessity of doing justice to the teaching of Apollinaris as distinguished from the speculations of his followers. In sundry important instances they went beyond his teaching, and their unauthorized additions may prove to have been fathered upon him. It may possibly be true that just as in the case of Nestorius, who, as it would now seem, was not, in the understood sense of the term, a 'Nestorian,' so in certain important particulars Apollinaris was not an 'Apollinarian.'