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CYRIL AND THEODORET ON THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST: AN IMAGINARY DIALOGUE BETWEEN ALEXANDRIAN AND ANTIOCHENE CHRISTOLOGICAL POSITIONS

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ABSTRACT. In this paper some parallelisms and differences are presented between two ancient theological traditions concerning their model of Christ by comparing two representative figures of both schools, namely Theodoret of Cyrus and Cyril of Alexandria. Since the Christology of the two authors could not be compared in detail within such a paper, the investigation resumes itself to the mode how they interpret the Lord's Temptation by the devil in the wilderness. The works involved in the analysis include Theodoret's treatise *On the incarnation* written in 431 before the Council of Ephesus, the fragments of Cyril's *Commentary on Matthew* as well as his *Commentary on Luke*. The doctrinal conclusion of this comparison is that the two traditions represented by these illustrious theologians—despite their conspicuous and undeniable differences—signify rather complementary than flatly opposing views and that the two ancient traditions have found their revival even in the sixteenth century, and continue to influence the theologians of our time. This is why the author considers Chalcedon as being a corridor (in which both traditions can walk side by side whilst respecting the limits set by 'the columns', i.e. the four famous expressions) rather than a narrow path or a tightrope-walking, where only one is able to go through.

KEYWORDS: Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyrus, Temptation-story, Christology, theodicy

This paper presents some parallelisms and differences between two ancient theological traditions concerning their model of Christ by comparing two representative figures of both schools, namely Theodoret of Cyrus and Cyril of Alexandria. Since the Christology of the two authors could not be compared in detail within such limits, we shall investigate their interpretations of the Lord's Temptation in the wilderness. We do not claim that either of the two theologians was responding to the other whilst writing his own interpretation on the Temptation-story: this episode was chosen simply because it

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brings out the largest number of parallelisms and complementary differences between the two traditions. We shall begin with Theodoret's treatise *On the incarnation* (from now on: *De incarnatione*) written in 431 before the Council of Ephesus as the second half of his two-part treatise *On the Trinity and on the Incarnation*. This work, which has survived in its entirety in a single manuscript (Vaticanus gr. 841, reprinted in PG 75) under the name of Cyril of Alexandria, is one of the most provocative and widely disputed treatises of the Bishop of Cyrus. Then we shall move onto Cyril's *Commentary on Luke* to draw some further lines forward in the history of doctrine with a brief reference to the time of Reformation. The modern critical edition of Theodoret's work was produced by Jean-Noël Guinot (Theodoret 2015, volume 2: 10—162), with a complete English translation being also available (Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 138-171). Cyril's *Commentary on Luke* survived in a Syriac version, having been translated and published by Payne R. Smith (Smith 1859).

The Temptation-story as the Soteriological Heartland of Theodoret's Early Christology

As already attested by the relevant scholarship, the story of the Temptation is certainly one of the Antiochenes' preferred soteriological passages. [Among the more recent works concerning the issue we could mention Anastos 1951: 126; Diepen 1956: 243-247, followed by the answer of Jean Daniélou on 247-248; Abramowski 1963*:* 224-225; Abramowski 1992: 31-34; Clayton 1985: 219-224; Guinot 2001: 58; Kesich 1966: 496-502. The list is far from being exhaustive, whilst the quoted page numbers refer to the passage connected with the Temptation within each work.]

It is nonetheless interesting that the story appears only in the synoptic Gospels. The biblical narrative was preserved only in the synoptic tradition, although Mark merely summarises it without details (Mark 1: 12-13), whilst Matthew and Luke give us a fuller account of the event. Luke presents the last two attempts of the devil in inverted sequence (Matthew 4: 1-11; Luke 4: 1-13), and his version does not exclude a continuous forty-day temptation, whereas Matthew explicitly says that the tempter approached Christ after he had fasted for forty days. Theodoret follows Matthew's narrative in his analysis.

Without drawing sharp lines between the two traditions, it would appear that the Antiochenes relied perhaps with a little more emphasis on the synoptic tradition, whilst the Alexandrians followed John's gospel. V. Kesich gives a good summary of these differences:

> The Antiocheans, like the Alexandrians, explained the temptations of Christ by contrasting them with the temptations of Adam and relating them to those of Israel in the wilderness. Nevertheless, the analogies are more stressed in the Antiochean school than in the Alexandrian (Kesich 1966: 497).

This affirmation, especially concerning the analogy between Adam and Christ is certainly valid for Theodoret's *De incarnatione*. The parallel of the first and second Adam dominates not only the Temptation-story, but most of the young Theodoret's soteriological thinking, exercising a major influence upon his anti-Arian and anti-Apollinarian Christology.

In Chapter 25 of *De incarnatione* our author summarised very epigrammatically that the Master Christ 'defeats him [i.e. the tempter] with human temperance and not with divine power [ἀνθρωπίνῃ φιλοσοφίᾳ, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξουσίᾳ θεότητος]' (Theodoret 2015: 124), showing that for him the assumed rational human soul plays a crucial role in the Atonement. In this context, the human 'philosophy' also means the life of temperance and perhaps ascetism, pursued e.g. by the Desert Fathers, including those whom Theodoret presents in his *History of Monks*. He provides a juridical foundation for the Pauline analogy:

> The benefaction of our Saviour extends to the whole nature of humankind: as with our forefather Adam, we both share the curse and have all arrived under the [power] of death like him; in the same way we also appropriate the victory of the Saviour Christ, will partake of his glory and share the joy of [his] kingdom (*De incarnatione* 11 in Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 147).

By making use of Romans 5: 15, Theodoret connects the forensic issue (i.e. that by Adam's transgression we have all fallen under condemnation) with God's merciful act, i.e. that the salvation is effected through the victory of Christ. Nonetheless, he does not make the law our judge, since that would mean our eternal condemnation, but rather being in possession of our nature, fulfils the law and makes us partakers in his victory. Therefore, the common link between Christ and us is his human nature. It is interesting to observe what Leporius, a priest in Massilia and then (425-426) in Hippo, one of Theodoret's contemporaries, wrote in his *Confession*:

> Within the very human condition, having been made obedient in the man, through humility and obedience he restored that which had been lost by Adam's disobedience [In vero humanitatis habitu factus obediens in homine, illud in se per humilitatem et obedientiam naturae nostrae restituit, quod per inobedientiam perierat in Adam] (Hahn 1897: 301).

God's intention to crown the victor as well as 'to declare the other one [i.e. Satan] defeated, to encourage and strengthen everybody against him' (Theodoret *De incarnatione* 12 in Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 148). It is interesting to note that the role of the Spirit—just like in the gospel according to Matthew—seems to cease once having taken Christ into the wilderness, since Theodoret continues:

> Yet not the God-Word, but the temple taken on by the God-Word from the seed of David, was taken [ἀνήχθη] there. The Holy Spirit did not bring [ἀπήγαγε] the God-Word to battle against the devil, but the temple [ναός] formed in the Virgin for the God-Word (*De incarnatione* 13 in Theodoret 2015: 58; Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 149).

Here we encounter a typically Antiochene technical term deriving from John 2: 19-21, namely ναός (temple), which came to be used to describe the manhood of Christ in a similar manner like μορφὴ δούλου, i.e. 'the form of the servant', originating from Philippians 2: 7. The role of the Spirit is to take and lead this temple of the Word to battle. This would already raise the eyebrows of Theodoret's Alexandrian contemporaries, yet the 'why' here determines the 'how' and not vice versa: i.e. *why* he was tempted determines *how* he was tempted.

The text seems to imply a separation of subjects, i.e. of the Word from his temple formed in the Virgin. Theodoret uses this kind of language when he argues from a primarily soteriological and forensic point of view. Nevertheless, the Word controls the battle: the Temptation happens according to his will. Although the Spirit is the one leading Jesus Christ into the wilderness, this is neither against his human will, since he accepted to save humankind voluntarily [see e.g. the title of Chapter 27 of *De incarnatione*: 'That he voluntarily accepted the sufferings of salvation' (Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 164)], nor against his divine will (i.e. of the Word), because if it were so, that would flatly contradict Theodoret's affirmation in Ch. 26 of his *De Trinitate*:

> The Son and the Spirit participate in the things effected by God the Father, whereas God the Father simultaneously gives His consent to those accomplished by the Son and the Spirit (Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 136).

The stage is set: Theodoret will now present the story with all the analogic references possible. The picture of the first and the second Adam dominates the scene, and the author is eager to show how Christ respected the rules of the contest, fulfilling all the requirements of the law, including fasting:

> [Jesus] spent forty days and the same number of nights without eating. He did not want to exceed the ancient measure of fasting, so that the opponent would not run away from the struggle against Him, lest recognising the one who was hidden [τὸν κρυπτόμενον] he should flee the battle against the visible thing [τὸ φαινόμενον] (*De incarnatione* 13 in Theodoret 2015: 58; Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 149).

As we can see, the Word is rendered in personal and the humanity in neuter terms. Jesus respecting the ancient measure of fasting suggests that He could have resisted more with the aid of his divinity, but this is exactly what he

wanted to avoid: the Word, who is obviously present, must remain, at least for now, hidden. This serves a double purpose, which we could summarise as being a tactical and a forensic concern:

- That by recognising him, the tempter does not flee from the battle;
- To allow the same human nature to finally resist Satan, since otherwise the divine *oikonomia* cannot be 'a common benefit for all mankind', as declared in the title of the same chapter. Despite all this, the Word is in control of the human experiences, being the one who shows the suffering of the human nature and permits it to feel hunger after the expiration of forty days:

> That is why after the aforementioned number of days passed, he shows the suffering of the human nature [τῆς ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως τὸ πάθος ὑποφαίνει], and allows hunger to occur [συγχωρεῖ τῇ πείνῃ χώραν λαβεῖν], thus giving the grip for [the tempter] by hunger (*De incarnatione* 13 in Theodoret 2015: 58-60; Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 149).

Satan, therefore, had to be convinced that despite all the miraculous things around Him, his opponent is truly man, and he [Satan] is not fighting against God, because in that case he would have known that there was no chance for him to win the battle. The Word does not abandon the human nature, but makes Satan believe that he is fighting against a mere man. If this were a deception, the battle was not fought fairly.

It is interesting that the idea of the Word 'deceiving' Satan by being tempted himself instead of the human nature seems to represent an issue of theodicy for Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret and Pseudo-Nestorius, yet it is not a problem for Cyril and Nestorius, who both argue that the Word helped the human nature he assumed (Nestorius), or the Word was himself tempted according to the dispensation (Cyril), yet the devil did not see this in his folly and in his totally darkened mind. We shall return to this point in the section concerning Cyril's commentary.

Turning our attention to Theodoret's account, we may observe that the entire struggle between Christ and the devil is presented as a dramatic sporting contest in a great arena. The devil behaves like a patient and sharp opponent: he 'examines [Christ] from a distance, trying to find the uncovered part to fling the dart there and wound the adversary'. He sees Christ 'fully armoured with complete righteousness', and 'seeks for an ideal spot to dart his spear at'. This spot is exactly the 'by the Word permitted' weakness of the human nature:

> As soon as Satan noticed the appearance of hunger, he daringly approached Christ, like having found what he was looking for, observing in him the weakness

> of the forefather. He [Satan] had also deprived him [Adam] of his untroubled life by food and harnessed him into the yoke of swelter, humiliation, and death (*De incarnatione* 14 in Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 149-150).

The analogy of gluttony as humankind's first step towards the fall is not Theodoret's invention. It appears e.g. in John Chrysostom's *Homily* 13 *in Matthew* (*PG* 57, 209), and also by Cyril in his Twelfth Sermon of his *Commentary on Luke*. Here the patriarch of Alexandria says:

> And observe, I pray, how the nature of man in Christ casts off the faults of Adam's gluttony: by eating we were conquered in Adam, by abstinence we conquered in Christ (Smith 1859: II, 54).

Satan provokes Christ to reveal his divinity by urging him to transform the stones into bread by His word. Theodoret is certain that Satan 'would not have done that if the Saviour did not accept the suffering of hunger'. He had to learn by his own experience that Christ was 'the One foretold by all the prophets', and therefore later he could not bear even his close look, but ran away and said: 'What do you want with us, [oh] Son of God? Why did you come before time to torture us?' The attitude of Satan before and after the Temptation is what Theodoret intends to contrast here, for he writes: 'before the temptation, however, he did not speak in this manner [i.e. like in Luke 8: 28], but he drew near [to Jesus] confidently, saying: ‹If you are the Son of God, say that these stones should become bread›' (*De incarnatione* 14 in Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 150). This radical change in Satan's attitude towards Christ in Theodoret's view was caused by his defeat in the wilderness. That is another reason why the Temptation-story is so important, since it brought about a profound change in human history. The language of the passage is dramatically tense, the author putting these words into the tempter's mouth:

> I heard the voice coming from above, he says, which called you like this [i.e. Son of God], but I do not believe it until I taught by experience. Convince me by facts that you are indeed what you are called! For if I learn this, I shall run away and flee. I shall withdraw myself from battle against you, because I know what a difference there is between me and you. Show then the miracle, and by the wonder teach [me] who is the author of the miracle: say that these stones should become bread (Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 149-150).

Jesus replies to the challenge humanly: 'upon hearing *these words of the Evil One*, *the Lord* [fragment preserved only by Nicetas of Heracleia in his *Catena on the Gospel of Luke*: ἀκούσας γοῦν τῶν τοῦ Πονηροῦ ῥημάτων ὁ Κύριος (Nicetas 1864: PG 84, 80B)] conceals his Godhead [κρύπτει μὲν τὴν θεότητα] and speaks from his human nature [ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἀνθρωπείας διαλέγεται φύσεως]' (*De*

incarnatione 14 in Theodoret 2015: 64 and Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 150). The answer, therefore, is of the humanity relying on God's providence.

The 'hiding' of the Godhead shows the presence of the Word. If he were not present, he ought not to be hidden. Nevertheless, his concealment is the only way Theodoret can conceive that indeed a fair contest was fought and a true victory was accomplished over the devil by the Saviour. Certainly, as he argues further, the devil 'felt pain at being *once* [ἅπαξ] defeated, but he did not abandon victory, because he heard that [his opponent] was man. *For, as he says, ‹man does not live on bread alone›*'. [Text in italics only by Nicetas: Οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτῳ γὰρ, φησὶ, μόνῳ ζήσεται ἄνθρωπος - Nicetas 1864: PG 84, 81A; Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 150]. This sentence has two implications: from Satan's viewpoint all human beings are corruptible. Hence, Christ himself said that 'man' does not live on bread alone. Consequently, if this present opponent is truly human, he shall certainly lose the fight sooner or later. But if it comes out that he is not, then he did not fight according to the rules. This is why Christ has to answer and resist within his humanity for the second and third time also. In the end, Satan is defeated:

> [Satan] ran away, being unable to bear the shame of defeat, being afraid, trembling and waiting for the abolishing of his tyranny. After having emptied all his darts and having brought forth all tricks of his deceit, he found the athlete unwounded and invincible. He went to him as he had to Adam [before], but he did not find whom he expected (*De incarnatione* 14 in Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 151).

In his *Tenth discourse on Divine Providence* Theodoret came to say that Satan 'went up to Christ as to Adam but found the Creator of Adam in Adam's nature' (Theodoret 1988: 142). The language and the dramatic mode of expression of our author has clearly changed after the Nestorian controversy, but the traditionally fundamental principles he had defended were noteworthy even if they were not always presented with unambiguous consistency.

Who Is Being Tempted?

We have reached the point in our analysis where the author of *De incarnatione* assigns crucial actions within the history of atonement to the human nature of Christ [for a detailed presentation of this question, see Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 45-50]. We need to admit that we have some standards to assess Christological orthodoxy, but there are none concerning soteriological orthodoxy. A different soteriological starting point, however, unavoidably poses different problems, shaping one's concept of Christ accordingly. A remarkable summary of this dilemma was formulated by D. F. Winslow:

> There is the need further to determine both *why* the Fathers said what they did as well as to assess what they said with critical attention to its implications vis-à-vis the

> Christian faith. […] Why are we more comfortably disposed to the language of personal relationship than to the language of satisfaction and propitiation? What leads some of us to react negatively to dramatic interpretations of Christ's victory over the demons and to react more positively toward His victory over sin and death? There is no soteriological 'orthodoxy' to guide us, no credal assertions, no uniform tradition (Winslow 1984: 394).

Let us then return to the apex of the Temptation-story as it appears in Theodoret's *De incarnatione*. Apart from the analogy of the first and the second Adam, God's justice must also be served: the human race, or its representative, must have an identical opportunity to refuse the tempter. This subtle and markedly Antiochene point emerges from the synoptic tradition. We find it in Theodore of Mopsuestia also (see Anastos 1951: 126). God must remain completely just, which means that every single action of Christ cannot remotely resemble any 'divina commedia': his will, his decision should not be exclusively divine, but also human. He has to feel all the sufferings and temptations attached to the human condition, lest he intends to endanger his very act of redemption. The main argument for this resounds fully within the astoundingly theatrical speech of the Evil One:

> Because if the God-Word replaced the mind in that which was assumed [ἦν ἀντὶ νοῦ ἐν τῷ ληφθέντι], even the devil could find some justified excuses, and might reasonably say: 'Ruler and Creator of the universe, I did not begin the fight against you, because I know your dignity, I am aware of your might, and recognise your dominion. I acknowledge my servitude even suffering from apostasy. I yield victory even to the angels and to all the heavenly hosts, [although] I, the miserable one, was once also one of them. Nevertheless, I started the fight against this one, whom [Vat. gr. 841: ὅν = 'whom', Nicetas: ἥν = 'what'] you formed out of clay, created after Your image, honoured with reason [ἐτίμησας τῷ λόγῳ], made the citizen [πολίτης] of paradise and presented [as] the ruler of both earth and sea. *This one I have defeated by using deceit, not force* [τοῦτον, ἀπάτῃ χρησάμενος, οὐκ ἀνάγκῃ, νενίκηκα]. Until today I am still the one who defeats him, prostrates him and sends him to death. Bring this one to the arena [εἰς τὸ στάδιον] and command him to fight with me, be the spectator [θεατής] and judge [ἀγωνοθέτης] of the combat yourself! Even be his coach if you want [παιδοτρίβου ποιεῖν], teach him to fight, show him the holds of success, anoint him as you wish, just do not fight with the wrestler [i.e. on his side] [μόνον μὴ συμμαχήσῃς παλαίοντι]. I am not so audacious and mindless as to attempt fighting against you, the Creator.' The devil could have justly said this to the Saviour Christ, if he were not man [indeed], but [only] God, fighting in place of man [εἴπερ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος ἦν, ἀλλὰ Θεὸς, ὁ ἀντὶ ἀνθρώπου παλαίων]. (*De incarnatione* 16 in Theodoret 2015: 70-72 and Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 151-152).

This is the most debated paragraph from *De incarnatione*, based on which some analysts contested the orthodoxy of its author whilst others defended it

from his own time until the present day. It was quoted in greater part and criticised by Marius Mercator, the spy of the Roman curia in Constantinople (Mercator 1673). Jean Garnier included it in his *Auctarium* (Garnier 1685: reprinted in PG 84, 81C-84B), damning Theodoret for being a Nestorian. Two famous scholars of our time, H. M. Diepen and Jean Daniélou, have also argued ferociously about it (Diepen 1956: 243—247). Paul Parvis and Paul B. Clayton elaborated on it in their respective dissertations (Parvis 1975: 305, Clayton 1985: 219-226). Marcel Richard (Richard 1936), Jean Daniélou (Diepen 1956), Marijan Mandac (Mandac 1971) and Günter Koch (Koch 19740 consider that Theodoret's interpretation is orthodox despite its dramatism.

The passage targets the arguably Arian-Apollinarian Christological concept (i.e. the Word-flesh or *Logos-sarx* model lacking a true human rational soul) with the emphasis that the very same, once fallen human nature must show obedience. According to Satan's words, he had subdued the creature and not God, so in the arena he expects to meet the human being unaided by divine intervention. Whilst for some it may not be an issue of theodicy for God to swindle Satan—but it definitely is for Theodoret, who was eager to show that God dealt fairly even with sin, throwing it 'out of power' only after having proved its injustice. In his own words,

> If death is the punishment for those who came under sin, it was obviously right for this one [i.e. Jesus], being totally free from it, to have the benefit of life and not [receive] death. Therefore, the injustice of sin was proven, which being conquered, sentenced to death its conqueror, and brought for him the same judgement which it usually applied to the defeated. While sin sent to death [only] its subordinates, it could do so justly; but after casting under the same condemnation the innocent and blameless one, the one deserving a crown and acclamation, it is necessarily deprived of power as being unjust [ἀναγκαίως λοιπὸν ὡς ἄδικος τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐκβάλλεται] (De incarnatione in Theodoret 2015: 50 and Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 146).

The text ἀναγκαίως λοιπὸν ὡς ἄδικος τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐκβάλλεται literally means that sin 'as being unjust, is by necessity thrown out of power'. This reveals that in Theodoret's view there is only one power, one ἐξουσία, which derives directly from God's own being (literally: ἐξ-ουσία), and any other creature, including the fallen ones, may take part in it only until they behave justly. No creature, including Satan has any ἐξουσία of its own. Once the creature becomes unjust, its partaking in the one and only ἐξουσία of God ceases, the creature being 'thrown out' of it. This involves the idea of God being the only existent One and the creatures being 'non-existent' as well as the notion of 'participation' or 'partaking' which we shall discuss below. In Theodoret's view, the fundamental problem of the Temptation-story for any Christian is

the level of human participation, or better said, 'my own partaking' in the triumph of Jesus over Satan. If the common link between Christ and us is his human nature, then we can be credited with his success only on account of his human obedience.

Once having brought Jesus into the wilderness, the Spirit does not seem to participate in the Temptation. Nevertheless, His role is quite important in the case of our temptations. Apart from saying that 'inasmuch as he himself suffered being tempted, he is able to help those in temptation' (*De incarnatione* 22 in Pásztori-Kupán 2005: 160), Theodoret consecrates an entire chapter (35) to present the Spirit as the coach [παιδοτρίβης], trainer [γυμναστής] and champion [ἀγωνιστής] in our life-struggles:

> [The Spirit is] like a vigilant protector of believers […] a leader who teaches [how] to fight courageously against the devil. He gives wings to those falling to the ground, educates the earthly for the life in heaven, to disdain flesh and take care of the soul, to despise the present and long after the things to come, to behold those [things] they are waiting for in faith, […] and simply to follow close after wisdom (*De incarnatione* 35 in Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 170).

Thus, as opposed to the temptation of Christ, the Spirit has a prominent role in our temptations and challenges, helping us 'to follow close after wisdom', which has a wider meaning here than just 'monastic ideal', since the text above as well as the whole tract targets a Christian congregation and not merely a community of monks. Theodoret obviously preserves the Eastern Christian ideal of personal holiness—a specific type of *imitatio Christi* aided by the Holy Spirit—which he himself followed during his life. His personal life shows that the above sentences have nothing to do with either a so-called 'Gnostic' view of the body and soul or with an unnatural rejection of everything that belongs to this world. Theodoret remains a shepherd of his earthly flock with the eager wish to help it prepare for 'the coming things'. The practical guidelines to a decent Christian behaviour are intended for the believers who at present are the citizens of earthly kingdoms, yet they should behave themselves as the citizens of the heavenly society in this world already. The longing for the 'coming world' promised by the resurrected Lord for which the Holy Spirit prepares his people is a further sign of this pastoral concern, which seems to govern most of his soteriology.

Cyril on the Temptation

We move onto Cyril's understanding of the Temptation-story. Since the two theologians do not ask the same questions, they do not necessarily give answers to all the issues involved. In the surviving fragments of Cyril's *Commentary on Matthew* the main goal of temptation for the devil is 'to drag Christ into an empty glory' (Reuss 1957: 162). In his *Commentary on Luke* Cyril affirms:

> The Only-Begotten Word of God […] was manifested as a Saviour and Deliverer for those upon earth […] He arose therefore and helped, having taken the form of a slave, and being made in the likeness of men […] against that murderous and rebellious serpent, who had brought sin upon us […] that we by His means and in Him might gain the victory, whereas of old we were vanquished and fallen in Adam (Smith 1859: 49).

Here we have the familiar analogy of the first and the second Adam. And it is, in fact, the last time we hear about it, because it does not play a central role in Cyril's soteriology. Nevertheless, he admits that it was the human nature of the Son, who won the battle against Satan and won the crown:

> And in very truth there was no one of those upon earth who could rise up against his [i.e. Satan's] power; but the Son rose up against him, and contended with him, having been made like unto us. And therefore, as I said, human nature, as victorious in Him, wins the crown (Smith 1859: 50).

Up until this point Theodoret and Cyril are in a substantial agreement concerning the battle and the winner. The difference occurs in the mode how they attribute Christ's victory to us, and that, significantly, determines their mode of ascription of this achievement to Christ. Theodoret follows a forensic direction to achieve his pastoral goal, and says that the *common human nature* is the key to our partaking in the victory:

> Our victory is the victory of our Saviour, since the fall of our forefather also became our common fall. As we are partakers of his common defeat, in the same way should we enjoy the benefits with the one who was taken from and crowned for us. (Theodoret, *De incarnatione* 12 in Pásztori-Kupán 2006: 148).

Cyril, however, applies to the communicative power of the Holy Spirit present in the wilderness with Christ and with us, who by adoption makes us partakers of the *divine nature*:

> Here, behold, I pray, man's nature anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit in Christ as the first-fruits, and crowned with the highest honours […] possessing the glorious privilege of adoption, we have been made partakers of the divine nature by the communication of the Holy Spirit (Smith 1859: 50).

I am indebted to Dr. Parvis concerning the observation that Cyril's Christological thought runs both in baptismal and eucharistic directions. The above passage seems to belong to the former group, where the emphasis lies upon the Spirit, whereas in his eucharistic formulae the flesh of Christ is being

brought to the foreground. The tendency in both cases is to make humankind a partaker of the divine nature.

It might therefore be said that for Theodoret the link between Christ and us is the common human nature, whereas for Cyril it is mainly the divine nature (shared to us by the Spirit through baptism or by Christ's flesh in the eucharist). Theodoret conceives salvation as Christ humbling himself down to humanly bear our suffering and gift us with a true human victory: Cyril sees him as leaning down and taking us up into his divine nature. Both ideas are perceptible within each author's own theological system. Nevertheless, the fact that Christ defeats the devil as the divine Word of God made man with his divine power, does not create a problem of theodicy for Cyril, for he writes in his *Commentary on Luke*:

> Satan made use of these verses [Psalm 91: 11-12: 'He will give his angels charge of you…'] as if the Saviour were a common man [ὡς ἐπ' ἀνθρώπου κοινοῦ]. Since for being in complete darkness and having his mind totally darkened […] he did not recognise [ἠγνόησέ] that it was the God-Word made man, and it was him who was tempted according to the dispensation [ὅτι Θεὸς ὢν ὁ Λόγος γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος, καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ οἰκονομικῶς πειραζόμενος] (Smith 1859: 57).

Paradoxically enough, Cyril's explanation above is in full accordance with that of his rival Nestorius. Luise Abramowski summarises the position of the former bishop of Contantinople in the following manner:

> From the Nestoriana (Nestorius 1905) we can also see how Nestorius conceives the function of the God Logos in Christ's struggle with the devil. In Pseudo-Nestorius, the Godhead is the judge of the battle between Jesus and Satan, attributing the victory to humanity, which this one has achieved alone, through obedience and submission to God's will. Nestorius, on the contrary, says that the God Logos helped the human nature he had assumed, yet the devil did not see it in his stupidity [Aus den Nestoriana kann man auch entnehmen, wie sich Nestorius die Funktion des Gott Logos beim Kampf Christi mit dem Teufel denkt. Bei Ps. Nestorius ist die Gottheit der Richter über den Kampf zwischen Jesus und Satan, sie spricht den Sieg der Menschheit zu, den diese allein, durch ihren Gehorsam und die Unterwerfung unter Gottes Willen errungen hat. Nestorius sagt dagegen, der Gott Logos habe der von ihm angenommenen menschlichen Natur geholfen, der Teufel in seiner Dummheit habe das nicht gesehen] (Abramowski 1963: 224-225).

Further, since the rational soul belongs to the human nature, which in Cyril's view is not the common link between Christ's victory and ours (the common link of our union with God being the divine nature), Cyril has indeed no interest in presenting the possible role or place of Christ's rational soul within the story of the Temptation. This would be—at least within his own system—

entirely pointless. The only thing he mentions after the first temptation is a parallel between the body's earthly food and the Word of God, the spiritual nourishment of the rational soul. This would be then the eucharistic line of Cyril's thought, however, it seems to have no relevance for the theological weight of the rational soul within Christ's humanity:

> By the [food] from the grains of the earth our earthly body is nourished [τὸ γήϊνον ἡμῶν τρέφεται σῶμα], […] the rational soul, however, is ripened unto spiritual healthiness by the divine Word [ψυχὴ δὲ ἡ λογικὴ λόγῳ τῷ θείῳ πρὸς εὐεξίαν ἀδρύνεται τὴν πνευματικήν] (Smith 1859: 54-55 and PG 72, 529C).

One may observe the parallel between λογική and λόγος, yet the passage still does not reveal anything about Cyril's opinion concerning the role or place of Christ's human soul within the story, as indeed, it did not occur to him at all. His merit is to have safeguarded the unity of subject, since he admits together with Theodoret that the Word permitted the hunger, yet whilst describing this, he uses a specifically *Logos-sarx* (Word-flesh) language, which in its turn removes the entire drama and internal tension of a true human suffering under the assaults of the devil:

> [The God-Word] consented for the nature of the flesh to seek for its own [supplies] [συγκεχώρηκε τῇ τῆς σαρκὸς φύσει ζητῆσαι τὰ ἑαυτῆς]. In this way we say that He hungered. […] Preserving the flesh uncorrupted, he hardly permitted it to suffer its own [τὴν σάρκα τηρήσας ἀδιάφθορον, ἐφίησι μόλις τὰ οἰκεῖα παθεῖν αὐτήν], for, he says, that he hungered. And for what reason? So that he, being both God and man, would skilfully be recognised through both as clearly One and the same [εἷς καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς δηλονότι], both superior to us divinely and equal to us humanly (Smith 1859: 53 and PG 72, 528D).

This passage is perfect Christologically. Nevertheless, apart from the meaning of μόλις (= 'hardly') within the text (which can be interpreted even as the Word being almost reluctant to permit the flesh to suffer), the maximum its language can allow, is an acceptance of the rational human soul as simply being there but doing absolutely nothing. At this point Cyril proves to be a rather close follower of Athanasius, about whom Grillmeier observed:

> It is correct to see a recognition of the soul of Christ in the christological expressions of the Tomus [ad Antiochenos] of 362 as Athanasius or an orthodox theologian would understand them. The reality of this soul is not, however, stressed as it would have been by later adversaries of Apollinarius. This is confirmed by the Letter to Epictetus. […] From all this, then, we see the significance of the Tomus of 362 and of the Letter to Epictetus for the Athanasian christology and its interpretation. […] |The human soul of Christ has not yet become a theological principle. […] It can be assumed with some certainty that we have a statement on the soul of Christ as a physical factor. […] In the Tomus, two features stand side by

> side: the soul of Christ is a physical, but not a theological factor. Athanasius recognizes its reality and even here, as in the Letter to Epictetus, cannot make it a principle of theological interpretation (Grillmeier 1975: 324-325).

The human soul of Christ is by no means a 'theological factor' for Cyril either, who in fact does not mention it at all during his *Commentary*. It is understandable, therefore, that whilst Cyril cannot be judged in Antiochene terms for leaving Christ's full humanity out of discussion, thus changing the dramatic setting of the biblical narrative into one shout of divine victory, in the same manner Theodoret cannot be blamed from a Cyrilline position for preserving the strain and drama of the biblical narrative, which led him to focus on entirely different questions within a truly separate framework.

Theodoret and Cyril: Insoluble Contradiction or Complementary Emphases?

Before drawing any conclusions, perhaps it is appropriate to investigate whether both ways of argumentation are reconcilable with orthodox thinking. The method I have chosen for doing this may seem a little unorthodox, even reminiscent of certain Platonic dialogues, since I attempted to imagine a discussion between the two theologians over the question of this 'diabolic theology', i.e. the devil's attitude towards the divine participation in the battle.

It is evident from the very beginning of this imaginary dialogue that the starting points are different: Theodoret emphasises the *why*, Cyril is mostly concerned with the *how*, of course neither of them exclusively. Should one disregard this fundamental difference between the two approaches, the dialogue unavoidably turns into two interwoven monologues: it is very important for us not to do the same today.

We begin with Theodoret. As the Bishop of Cyrus has put it into the tempter's mouth, the devil asks God 'not to fight together with the wrestler'. Cyril's obvious question is bound to follow: 'How do you dare to utter such a thing? Do you mean that Christ, the Son is not God, or that God is not there when the Son is tempted? Or perhaps that the One who is wrestling is not the Son of God?'

Theodoret's answer: 'No, I do not mean any of that. What I mean is that God did not fight on the side of the first Adam. He prepared him, gave the order concerning the tree in the middle of the garden, i.e. he taught him the rules of the contest, he was Adam's Creator and trainer, as it were, but he did not intervene during the fight on either side. Why should he intervene on the side of the second Adam? Would that be justifiable from the viewpoint of his righteousness? Or could it suggest that the second Adam had incomparably greater chances for winning, since God (i.e. the Word of God) fought on his side?'

As a reply to this forensic approach, Cyril could immediately ask: 'but is he not the Word of God himself? How can he possibly be divided within his own self, when Christ is the Word incarnate? How would it be possible for the Word to be absent from the battle, when the Word himself is the very Person being tempted?'

Theodoret's turn: 'Yes, he is undoubtedly and indisputably the Word of God, and is the second Person of the Trinity made human. There is no division, since he does not abandon the humanity, but rather is the one who 'permits the appearance of hunger', who 'hides his divinity' to challenge Satan. Nevertheless, he still ought to be tempted as a human being, not for the sake of dividing the one person, but to preserve God's righteousness unblemished. For this is not only a question of the indubitable personal unity of Christ, but also a matter of principle regarding the impartial justice of God, who treats all his creatures in fairness, and considers all humankind as being equal. Furthermore, as a human being—since God cannot be tempted—Christ is, or better said: was made equal to us, sin excepted. Therefore, he ought to be tempted by Satan as a human being, since the same nature must undergo temptation and refuse Satan freely, as Adam could have done in Eden, but failed. Since then, everybody is under Satan's rule, because of Adam's sin within the corrupted human nature. The second Adam has again the same chance as the first one, having the same sinless nature, possessing a complete free will, unaltered by sin. This does not mean that he is abandoned by God for the time of the fight, since God cannot abandon himself, nevertheless he has to face the challenge with the very same chances as the first Adam, to become the second Adam indeed.'

To which Cyril would in all probability say: 'You are obviously dividing the one Christ in two, speaking of man separated from God, which is a heresy.'

Perhaps there is no need to lengthen this dialogue any further. We have seen the main reason why Theodoret insists upon Christ defeating the devil with 'human wisdom' or 'endurance' (*anthrōpinē philosophia*) and not with divine power. The aspect of God's impartial justice and fair treatment even of Satan and sin as well as the claim for a personal holiness of every believer—the tempted Lord being a true human example and stronghold of obedience—are the main concerns underlying his dramatic interpretation of the Temptation-story. Christ's voluntary acceptance of the sufferings, a point to which Theodoret will come later in this treatise, again shows the existence of both wills in Christ, which is, in fact, an idea well ahead of Theodoret's own time, used efficiently almost two centuries later by Maximus the Confessor in the Monothelite controversy. As R. V. Sellers observed,

> These [Antiochene] teachers are supremely interested in man the moral being […] they may be called anthropologists, but their anthropology is intimately associated with their ethical and soteriological ideas (Sellers 1961: 164).

The question of Cyril's and Theodoret's simultaneous reconcilability with orthodox thought is similarly answerable. It is a peculiarly interesting feature of the history of doctrine that both traditions lived further on, having had their revival even in the sixteenth century. If Luther and the Lutheran orthodoxy can clearly be said to have followed the Alexandrian tradition, then the Helvetic line of the Reformation—including Calvin, Bullinger, Bucer, Ursinus, Olevianus and others—clearly inherited some of the Antiochene thinking. Since we cannot even attempt to enlist, even less to review all the major relevant passages of the works of these theologians, a short summary of Reformed theological argumentation by quoting at some length the *Catechism of Heidelberg* (composed by Ursinus and Olevianus in 1563) should suffice. It presents us with much the same picture of salvation history as Theodoret's *De incarnatione*. In some cases the English translation of Philip Schaff has been modified to render the meaning of the German original. The emphases are mine (PKI):

> Q.5: Can you keep all this [the law of God] perfectly? A: No, for I am *by nature* prone to hate God and my neighbour.
> Q.6: Did then God create man wicked and perverse? A: No; but God rather created man good and after His own image—that is in righteousness and true holiness; that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love Him and live with Him in eternal blessedness, to praise and glorify Him.
> Q.7: Whence, then comes this depraved nature of man? A: From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, whereby our nature became so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin.
> Q.9: Does not God, then, wrong man by requiring of him in His law that which he cannot perform? A: No; for God made man so that he *could* perform it; but man, through the instigation of the devil, *by wilful disobedience* deprived himself and all his posterity of the same gifts.
> Q.12: Since, then, by the righteous judgement of God we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, what is required that we may escape this punishment and be again received into favour? A: God wills that His justice be satisfied; therefore we have to achieve a full satisfaction [Ger. *Bezahlung* = payback, ransom] either by ourselves or by another [Observe here the influence of Anselm of Canterbury's doctrine of 'satisfactio'.]
> Q.13: Can we ourselves achieve this satisfaction? A: By no means; on the contrary, we daily increase our debt.
> Q.14: Can any mere creature pay on our behalf? A: None; for, first, God will not punish, in any other creature, that of which man has made himself guilty; and further, no mere creature can bear the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin and redeem others therefrom.
> Q.15: What kind of mediator and redeemer must then we seek? A: One who is a *true and righteous man* and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is *true God at the same time*.

> Q. 16: Why does He have to be a true and righteous [i.e. sinless] man? A: Because the justice of God requires that *the same human nature* which has sinned *should pay* for the sins, but no one, being a sinner himself, could pay on behalf of others.
> Q. 17: Why does He have to be true God at the same time? A: That by the power of *His Godhead* He might bear the burden of God's wrath *in His manhood*, and so to obtain and restore for us the righteousness and life. (Schaff 1878: 309-312).

The line of argumentation follows exactly the pattern we have seen in Theodoret: God had created man good and in his own image, who could perform his law, yet by wilful disobedience man deprived himself of this gift. God's justice demands satisfaction, but he cannot punish any other creature for the sin of man, since the same human nature has to pay its debt to the Creator. Christ is the only One, being God and man at the same time, who by his divine power is able to bear the burden of God's wrath in his manhood (German: *an seiner Menschheit*) and make all humankind partaker of the restored divine gifts.

Without spending more time on this interesting, but quite late parallel, I reckon that it would be a mistake to assert that either of the two illustrious theologians, i.e. Cyril and Theodoret was utterly right and the other utterly wrong. Both brought a major contribution towards the development of the theological picture of our Saviour, and both systems had their imperfections which needed further refining and rethinking.

The conclusion of this investigation therefore is that between the parallel Christologies of the orthodox Alexandria and of the orthodox Antioch—together with their late appearances in the Middle Ages, in the sixteenth century or even in our era—there are undeniable differences, nevertheless, these are at variance rather in emphasis than in substance. This is why I consider the Chalcedonian Definition of 451 as being a colonnaded porch, in which both traditions can walk side by side whilst avoiding the outer limits set by 'the columns', i.e. the famous four expressions, which say on the one hand that the two natures of Christ are united 'unconfusedly and unchangeably' (beware, Alexandria!) as well as 'indivisibly and inseparably' (beware, Antioch!), rather than a narrow path or a tightrope-walking, where only one is able to go through.

One of the many lessons of recent history is that the applicability of either Christological model may easily depend on the historical or even social circumstances of a person or a given community. On the one hand, for many Western-European and North-American evangelical and biblical theologians living at the end of the nineteenth century permeated by theological liberalism or in the over-secularised twentieth century—with some exceptions—Alexandrian Christology almost naturally became more attractive, since it emphasised the divinity of Christ, thus being more successful in making the communities living under the influence of rationalism aware of their Christian

identity. In this sense the following remark of Rowan Williams concerning John Henry Newman's work on the Arians has a much wider validity:

> The 'Arians of the fourth century' are, in a significant measure, those members of the nineteenth-century Church of England beyond the confines of primitive Tractarianism, those whose essential worldliness (even in the guise of devout biblicism) has left the Church a helpless prey to secular domination (Williams 2001: 6).

We may add here a rather paradoxical statement by J. J. O'Keefe, a staunch defender of what he considered as being Cyril's exclusively correct theological position as opposed to that of Theodoret: 'It seems to me that despite our best efforts we always find in ancient texts something that reminds us of ourselves' (O'Keefe 1997: 364).

On the other hand, e.g. for the minority Protestant churches living under communist oppression in Eastern Europe during the second half of the twentieth century as well as for some of the African and Asian Christian churches living under colonial domination the Antiochene approach could be similarly attractive (if not occasionally preferable), since in these areas the main challenge was not to demonstrate the divinity of Christ (for this was mostly self-evident in these communities), but one had rather the task to show that the One who had said, 'Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God', he himself also lived through and suffered as a true human being all the hardships and persecutions to which these people living under various forms of dictatorship were exposed to. Even from the viewpoint of preaching, there is no universally valid 'best method', since the applicability and functionality of either approach is usually determined by the specific situation, needs, joys or sorrows of the community. Unity in this sense does not necessarily mean uniformity, although most of the fathers gathered in Constantinople in 553 under the iron fist of Emperor Justinian probably held the contrary opinion, when upon failing to find a common goal, they sought and found a common enemy in the earlier representatives of the equally ancient parallel Antiochene tradition. This choice did not bring about the desired union: on the contrary, it continued the division. Consequently, one may consider it unfortunate not only from a doctrinal but from a practical theological and ecumenical perspective also that because of the decision of the fifth ecumenical council one ancient method of Christian teaching about Jesus Christ is still surrounded by suspicion, and that this attitude clearly impairs our commonly assumed and accepted Chalcedonian heritage.

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