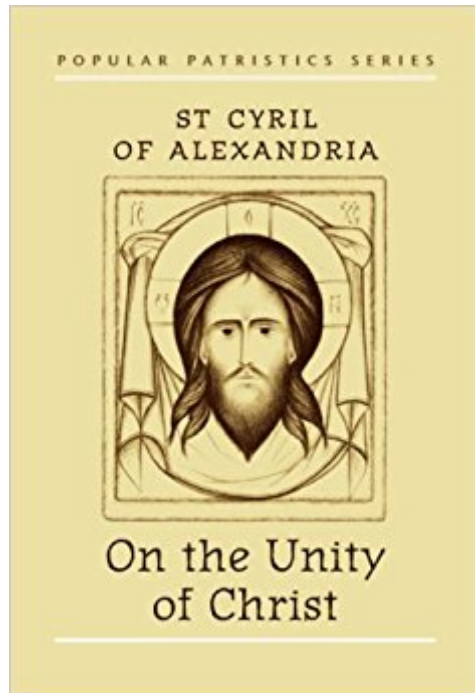


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On The Unity Of Christ



Synopsis

In the early fifth century the Christian world was racked by one of the fiercest theological disputes it had known since the Arian crisis of the previous century. The center of debate turned on the nature of the personhood of Christ, and how divine and human characteristics could combine in Jesus without rendering his subjectivity hopelessly divided, or without reducing his authentic humanness to an insubstantiality. These arguments soon polarized into the conflict between two great churches, Alexandria and Constantinople, and their powerful archbishops, St Cyril (d. 444) and Nestorius (d. ca. 452) respectively. Cyril is, arguable, the most important patristic theologian ever to deal with the issues of Christology. The text here translated is one of his most important and approachable writings, composed in the aftermath of the Council of Ephesus (431) to explain his doctrine to an international audience. He argues here for the single divine presence but fostered and enhanced by it. Accordingly, for St Cyril, Christology becomes a paradigm for the transfigured and redeemed life of the Christian. This book is essential reading for all those interested in the theology and spirituality of the fathers, in the ancient church's use of scripture, and the way in which the church once creatively expressed its thinking through the media of philosophy and the natural sciences. John Anthony McGuckin, an Orthodox theologian, is Reader in Patristic and Byzantine Theology at the University of Leeds, England, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, London. His previous books include: *St Symeon the New Theologian: Chapters and Discourses*; *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition*; *Selected Poems of St Gregory Nazianzen*; *St Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy*; and *Byzantium and Other Poems*.

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Customer Reviews

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I can't say enough about this book. It was the inspiration behind my book! It showed me that the West has settled for a static dualistic interpretation of the person of Christ. Cyril of Alexandria opened the mystical door to a wholly other approach. Cyril of Alexandria's mystical understanding of Christ was holistic and non-dual. For Cyril Jesus is undivided: "at once God and human." Jesus, according to Cyril, is about creative tension, paradox, and complex dynamism. It is the dynamic unity of Christ espoused in this book that gave me the hope of a holistic vision taking hold of the Church once again. It gave me the hope for a core mystical theology that has the power to unite a divided Church. Cyril's holistic Christology is preserved today in the Oriental Orthodox Church's Miaphysite theology, which I attempted to make vital and contemporary in my book.-Amos Smith (author of Healing The Divide: Recovering Christianity's Mystic Roots)

This book was invaluable and should be read with On the Holy Spirit - St Basil. Comforting to hear the voices of those much closer to the time of Christ

I loved reading what the early church fathers had to say.

Thanks!

"Only if it is one and the same Christ who is consubstantial with the Father and with men can He save us, for the meeting ground between God and man is Flesh and Christ. ... Because the Son is God from God, in some mysterious way he passes this honor on to us." St Cyril of Alexandria, Pillar of Faith
Alexandrian versus Antiochene Theology :The Alexandrines based their Christology on John 1:14 amending it mystically with 1 Tim 3:16. They explained the Logos-sarx union with the soul-body analogy to illustrate the substantial union, an ontological oneness, between divinity and humanity in Christ. The rival theology of the Antiochenes employed the soul-body analogy to explain how the Divinity and humanity united in Christ without losing their full integrity.
Cyril of Alexandria:Cyril of Alexandria, the Christological champion for Orthodoxy, developed and exalted the theology of the famous school of Alexandria (Catechetical Didaskalia) He was trained by his uncle Theophilus of Alexandria, followed faithfully the Tradition of Alexandria from Clement, and Origen to Athanasius and Didymus, the blind. He was a great biblical expositor, and his christology

is Bible based. Thomas Weinandy, debates that Cyril is the first, if not the only patristic theologian to employ the soul-body analogy properly, for different Church fathers conceive the union in Christ depending on their carrier philosophy, Aristotelian or neo-platonic. Every party, after Chalcedon, claimed to express what Cyril expounded and defended, one nature of the incarnate Logos, fully divine and genuinely human, which expressed the dual aspects in a harmonious and coordinated way. He builds on Athanasius theological defence of the divinity of the Son, and accordingly perfected the orthodox doctrine of theosis, salvation by participation in the divine nature. On The unity of Christ: Fr. John McGukin, a patristic scholar, who teaches Early Church History, has revisited the controversial debate on one of the turning doctrines of the early Church. The translation is in a lucid language, with an elaborate introduction on Cyril's life and Christology. An in depth treatment of Cyril dogmatic theology, which has been revived in the last decades. Fr. McGukin made a great job in reintroducing the historical and theological debate. "This book is the last of Cyril's theological essays discrediting Nestorius and his Antiochene christology, and contains his most mature teaching on the mystery of union that baffled the theologians since the fourth century. It was written in the form of a dialogue, to explain the Hypostatic Union in Christ." (R. Yanney: Coptic Church review) Translator/Editor: Fr. John McGukin, is professor of Early Church History, Union Theological Seminary, NY. He is a patristic scholar, and theologian. He wrote seven books and numerous articles, and is an expert on Cyril's soteriology and Alexandrine theology.

St. Cyril is one of the main pillars of faith in the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches and one of the Popes (Patriarchs) of Alexandria. After successfully defending the Faith against Nestorius at Ephesus in 431, he spent much of his time combating what was left of Nestorianism inside of his jurisdiction which was Egypt and did so until his repose in 444. He wrote "On the Unity of Christ" long after Nestorius was deposed and exiled as a way of combating the Nestorianism within the monastic ranks who seemed to be the most heavily effected by it in Egypt. He is definitely verbose in areas, some much more so than others, which makes this work difficult to read at times and rather trying on the patience. When one can penetrate through that, though, then they see the full value of the work and the theology expressed in it. He explains why Mary can be called the "Mother of God" or "God Bearer" ("Theotokos" in Greek) while illuminating, as many authors before him had, on how Christ prayed in the Garden while not compromising His unity of divine and human in one being (OUSIA), how Christ can be called a prophet in His humanity while that not compromising His divinity, and many more topics. It is important when reading St. Cyril to take into account the letter of reunion between John of Antioch and himself in 433 in which Cyril validates and counts as equal to

his "One Nature in the Incarnate Logos" The Antiochian and Greek "In Two Natures." This is precisely needed since in the Alexandrian school of theology PHYSIS (nature) is associated with OUSIA (substance) whereas in the Eastern Orthodox, particularly Antiochian and Greek at the time (Russia and the other Slaves hadn't been converted yet) HYPOSTASIS (person) is associated with OUSIA (substance). Both schools are saying and were saying the same thing just in different words. In the latter it is considered that action is needed to define true personhood and in the other (the Coptic/Oriental Orthodox) it is considered simply being a person (Hypostasis) is enough with one composite physis out of two with Christ being in two Hypostasis in the Incarnate Logos (Christ). Whereas the Eastern Orthodox say in two physis and out of two Hypostasis both recognize the difference and terminology now. This MUST be taken into account when reading St. Cyril's works. I would also recommend reading the Tome of Pope St. Leo the Great which was written not even two decades after Ephesus in 431, it gives an excellent view using the Greek and Antiochian terminology on who Christ is in regards to His divinity and humanity and the letter from St. Cyril to St. John of Antioch (it's only about five pages long if even that). You might also want to read Fr. John Romanides papers on St. Cyril and the Tome of Pope St. Leo the Great (another five or six page one, very short but informative) in addition, they are very well rounded and informative, they even include conversations he has with Oriental Orthodox bishops concerning his paper(s). All four go together VERY nicely and each serves to express the other three more clearly.

The ancients are rich sources, and with that expectation, this is a strong and deeper meditation on the topic than expected.

Don't be fooled. He took his ideas from the Library of Alexandria which housed all the great works of Antiquity and then he burned them so that his ideas would flourish in Christ's name. The work is Pythagorus' folks. Sorry to disappoint you, he stole the "copyrights". And Cyril twisted it into Christian theology.

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