

ON DIVINE PHILANTHROPY*
FROM PLATO TO JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

BY
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Third Century

*Epistle to Diognetus,
Clement of Alexandria, Origen*

Roger Rémondon argues that during the reign of the Severian dynasty (198-235) it was religious syncretism which was used as the means of unifying the Empire.¹ He says explicitly that Elagabalus wanted to impose «un syncrétisme... sous la suprématie du dieu soleil Baal d' Emèse... pour que le sacerdoce d' Elagabal possède le secret de toutes les religions.»² Toleration is offered to the Jews and the Christians only at the price of stopping any attempt of proselytism.³ But that was unacceptable, at least for the Christians, who were rapidly gaining converts not only among the masses, but among the elite also, even among the Emperors themselves.⁴ The relative freedom that the Christians have enjoyed since the reign of Septimius Severus was disrupted by the persecution intermittently launched first under Maximinus the Thracian and Decius, then under Valerian, Aurelian, Tacitus and Probus.⁵

According to J. Tondriau, some leaders imagined they could solve the terrible crisis of the third century by the desperate means of persecutions.⁶ Philosophy having abjured her secular task, the duty of leadership was left to the rough men of the camp.⁷ The Emperor is not satisfied with absolute, political power; he even has the presumption to subordinate all cults to his own person as well.⁸ In such a situa-

* Συνέχεια ἐκ τῆς σελ. 475 τοῦ προηγουμένου τεύχους.

1. Roger Rémondon, *La Crise de l'Empire Romain de Marc-Aurèle à Anastase* (Paris, 1964), p. 96.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. H. Grégoire, *op. cit.*, p. 13. The same writer asserts, pp. 9 and 28, that the Emperor Philip the Arabian (244-249) was Christian, as well as Marcia, the mistress of Commodus.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

6. L. Cerfaux et J. Tondriau, *Le Culte des souverains dans la civilisation Gréco-Romaine* (Tournai, 1957), p. 407.

7. Cochrane, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

8. Grégoire, *op. cit.*, p. 61, writes apropos: «Aurélien permit même qu' on

tion a clash, according to Rémondon, was inevitable, since «le prosélytisme des chrétiens transforme leur rejet des dieux établis en profession d'athéisme asocial et rend inacceptable leur Dieu, à la fois exclusif et universel.»⁹

Pierre de Labriolle, however, has perceived that the pagans not only had brute force to oppose against rising Christianity, but that their philosophers could counterbalance Christian «charity» with their own «philanthropy», the principles of which they taught in their schools.¹⁰ Few of them did so, as we shall see after a survey of the Christian camp.

The Epistle to Diognetus was written, according to Marrou, around the year 200¹¹ by Pantaenus.¹²

The epithet φιλόθρωπος (VIII, 7)¹³ underlines the well-intentioned character of the Creator. The second appearance of the concept, in its substantive solemnity, is found in a context echoing the pericope of Titus 3:4-5.¹⁴ The apophatic character of the divine *philanthropia* is made more explicit by the adjective «ὄπερβάλλουσα» attached to it.¹⁵

How overzealous Clement of Alexandria was in appropriating Hellenic philosophy for Christianity can be gathered, according to W. Richardson, from the fact that his basic concept is that of the «Νόμος ἔμφυτος» which he inherited from the Neo-Pythagorean and Stoic-Chryseippian tradition through Philo of Alexandria.¹⁶ After Justin, Clement is the second explicitly to quote Titus 3:3-5.¹⁷ But he was acquainted also with Aeschylus' «Prometheus,» wherein the word φιλόθρωπος first appeared.¹⁸

identifiât)... avec son dieu et il est le premier empereur romain qui, de son vivant ait été qualifié de *Deus* et de *Dominus*.

9. R. Rémondon, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

10. Pierre de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne: étude sur la polémique antichrétienne du I au VI siècle* (Paris, 1934), p. 60.

11. *A Diognète*, introduction, édition critique, traduction et commentaire de Henri Irénée Marrou (Paris, 1951), p. 263.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

14. *Ibid.*, IX, 2, p. 74.

15. The same adjective is attached to *philanthropia* by Clement of Alexandria in *Protrept* IX, 82, 2 GCS Clemens Alexandrinus, ed. Otto Stählin, I (Leipzig 1905), 62.

16. W. Richardson, «Νόμος ἔμφυτος: Marcion, Clement of Alexandria, Luke» *Studia Patristica*, VI (Berlin, 1962), 188-196, especially p. 191.

17. *Protrept.* I, 2, 4 GCS Stählin (Leipzig, 1936), I, 5.

18. *Ibid.*, IV 30.

Next to Plato, as far as the number of quotations is concerned,¹⁹ come Chrysippus²⁰ and Plutarch,²¹ both of whom have been, on the side of pagan philosophers, the greatest propagators of the concept of philanthropy. But Philo seems even more influential in this matter, since the unmistakable acquaintance with his treatise *On the Virtues* by Clement is extensively attested by Otto Stählin.²²

Philanthropia for Clement has both ethical²³ and theological connotations. The latter is seen in that the Old Testament is qualified as «philanthropic»²⁴ and that God is eminently φιλόανθρωπος and just by offering to all the possibility of salvation through faith.²⁵ Clement entitled a whole chapter of his *Paedagogue* «ἔτι φιλόανθρωπος ὁ παιδαγωγός»²⁶ in which he offers a somewhat one-sided explanation, according to which φιλόανθρωπος would mean «φίλος ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ Θεῷ.»²⁷ But his distasteful metaphorical expressions wherein the «paternal nipples of philanthropy» are spoken of²⁸ or that the Father became mother in order to bear the Logos,²⁹ are, fortunately, rare unpalatable pearls of rhetoric. Otherwise, we find again the apophatic nature of the divine philanthropy properly emphasized, now with the epithet ἄρρητος,³⁰ and that the Logos shows His philanthropy especially through His paedagogy.³¹ Clement is capable, also, of producing a terse definition like that in which he stated that we have received adoptive sonship to God through our «holy God Jesus», who is «our Paedagogue» and the «Philanthropic God»

19. *Ibid.*, 50-53.

20. *Ibid.*, 34-36.

21. *Ibid.*, 53-54.

22. *Ibid.*, 49. Claude Mondésert, in *Essai sur Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1944), p. 166, however, points out the difficulty in drawing limits between the influence of Philo and that of Chrysippus.

23. His «gnostic» is naturally «*philanthropos*» and generous, GCS Stählin III, 14; or *philanthropia* may be equated with *philadelphia*, GCS Stählin, II, 135. *Philanthropia* goes together with the continence of the gnostic, II, 160, with almsgiving, I, 259, and social relief, II, 151.

24. *Ibid.*, 156.

25. *Ibid.*, I, 108.

26. Chap. III, *Ibid.*, pp. 94-96.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 94.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 117; «αἱ πατερικαὶ τῆς φιλανθρωπίας θηλαί».

29. *Ibid.*, III, 184.

30. *Protrept.* X, 104, 3, *ibid.*, I, 75.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

in person.³² His best use of the term is found in expressing the whole economy of Incarnation as the «overpowering philanthropy» of the Logos, «ὅς γε διὰ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν φιλανθρωπίαν σαρκὸς ἀνθρωπίνης εὐπάθειαν οὐχ ὑπεριδὼν» (*Strom.* VII, 8.1).³³ Claude Mondésert appropriately concluded that Clement wanted to show how «toute l' action du Logos est inspirée par l' amour des hommes, par cette philanthropie, que les Pères grecs ont ... revendiquée comme une prérogative divine.»³⁴

This bold advance into the foreign land of Hellenism was, however, paid for by Clement too dearly.

It was, according to Henri de Lubac, the dangerous definiteness of Origen's system that Rufinus endeavoured to obscure in his translation.³⁵ Otherwise, excerpts from his colossal work were used with enthusiasm by many generations of theologians.³⁶

In one of his happier moments of saintly elation Origen sharply opposed the Hellenic rationalism³⁷ of Celsus, by positing divine philanthropy and divine grace as the only God-given cognitive bridges leading to knowledge of God.³⁸ For P. de Labriolle, Origen is «presque obsédé par cette idée de 'philanthropie.'»³⁹ One thing is beyond any doubt, that Origen, assiduous exegete⁴⁰ of the Holy Writ as he was, could not have failed to notice, independently of secular literature,⁴¹ the evocative term.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 123: «ὁ... ἡμέτερος παιδαγωγὸς ἄγιος Θεὸς Ἰησοῦς... αὐτὸς ὁ φιλόανθρωπος Θεὸς ἐστίν.»

33. *Ibid.*, III, 7.

34. Mondésert, *op. cit.*, p. 196. Cf. H. I. Marrou's edition of *Le Pédagogue Livre I*, pp. 35-36. According to the same writer, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48, Clement uses the optimistic notion of *philanthropia* against the pessimism of the Gnostics.

35. See de Lubac's introduction to G. W. Butterworth's *Origen On First Principles* (New York, 1966), pp. i-lxiv, esp. p. li.

36. The most famous compilation being that of St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzen, entitled «Philocalia.»

37. Useful clarification is offered by Henri Crouzel in *Origène et la «Connaissance Mystique»* (Toulouse, 1961), p. 553, n. 2: «La notion de raison pure au sens kantien est étrangère à la pensée antique. ...Le voûs origénien est plus proche de l' intuition bergsonienne ou du cœur pascalien.»

38. *C. Celsum* VII, 44, GCS (Koetschau) II (Leipzig, 1899), 195.

39. «Les Humanités» (1932), pp. 483-484, cited by Hélène Pétré, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

40. J. Daniélou, *Le IIIème siècle; Origène*, notes prises au cours par les élèves (Institut Catholique de Paris, 1963), pp. 100-117.

41. He quoted Plutarch, for example, the eminent «philanthropologist» on the pagan side. Cf. *C. Celsum*, V, 57, GCS (Koetschau), II, 60.

of *philanthropia* in the Scriptures themselves. One can see that on two occasions he made masterly use of the verse of Titus 3:4.⁴²

Any study of Origen poses inevitably the problem of the reliability of his text, handed down in a Latin translation.⁴³ *Philanthropia* is currently translated by *misericordia*:⁴⁴ the heavy Latin circumlocution «*misericordia circa genus humanum*» is unmistakably trying to convey the Greek *philanthropia*.⁴⁵ Therefore, whenever we find in the extant translations one of these terms, namely, *misericordia* or *benignitas*, and more specifically when they appear together,⁴⁶ one may surmise with great probability that they stand at least for the content of Titus 3:4, if not always for the term of *philanthropia*.

The extant Greek original, however, offers by itself a sufficient amount of evidence that Origen had his own strongly developed philanthropology.

A tireless teacher himself, Origen adorned the Christian teachers, in the first instance, with the title of philanthropy,⁴⁷ but in reality, God is the only *Philanthropos*, since His *philanthropia* is the cause of the sacrifice of His own Son for the purification of the world.⁴⁸

One could indeed make out of Origen's many quotations containing the term *philanthropia* a golden chain of patristically sound apophthegms. Yet we cannot minimize the overwhelming confusion that his system has caused, since «Platonism was inside him, *malgré-lui*», according to H. Chadwick.⁴⁹

42. *Jerem. Hom.* I, 1,1, GCS (Klostermann) III (1901), 2 and *Matthäuserklärung*, Comm. ser. 8, GCS (Klostermann) XI (1933), 13.

43. Henri de Lubac in his introduction of Origen's *On First Principles*, p. 1.

44. E. g. *Matthäuserklärung* XIII, 8, GCS (Klostermann) X (1935) 202; cf. GCS (Klostermann and L. Früchtel) XII, 2 (Berlin, 1935), 372.

45. *Matthäuserklärung* Comm. ser. 75, GCS (Klostermann), XI (1933), 176. The twin-term of *philanthropia χρηστότης* might also, sometimes, be translated with the same word *misericordia*, as in GCS (Klostermann) X, 262, 265. Still, it is usually rendered by «Benignitas»: GCS (Klostermann) XI, 13; *Origenes in Lucam Hom.* XVI, GCS (M. Rauer) IX (Berlin, 1959), 97; Ludwig. Früchtel's index in GCS XII, 2 (Berlin, 1955), 379.

46. E. g. «Vide quam multa misericordia et benignitas Dei est.» *In Leviticum Hom.* V, 2, GCS (Baehrens) VI (Leipzig, 1920), 337.

47. *C. Celsum* III, 54, GCS (Koetschau) I (Leipzig, 1899), 250: «φιλανθρωπως... πράττομεν.»

48. *Johanneskommentar* VI, 53, GCS (Preuschen) IV, 162.

49. Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 122. Jean Daniélou argued, rather persuasively, in *Le IIIème siècle: Origène*, p. 119, for the perennial value of Origen's typological exe-

The first range of Origen's uses of *philanthropia* falls into the category of its Classical meaning of social virtues.⁵⁰ The second range has a higher, theological significance. Developing the traditional Ireanean vision of the unity of the two Testaments,⁵¹ Origen was able to discern as one and the same the providential stream of divine philanthropy throughout both dispensations.⁵² God is acknowledged as the *Philanthropos* toward all, «outsiders» included.⁵³ His Only-Begotten has the same character.⁵⁴ Even His kenotic humility is an aspect of the same power.⁵⁵ *Philanthropia* is given as the ultimate reason of His death: «διὰ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν αὐτὸν ἐχρῆν ἀποθανεῖν.»⁵⁶

The only limitation to Origen's philanthropic universalism seems to be his aristocratic insolation,⁵⁷ which, indeed, could be merely an echo of the ancient *disciplins arcani*. In fighting Celeus, Origen showed how skillful he could be, when necessary, in ringing the bells of Christian equality and universality.⁵⁸

More disturbing is his theodicy, which is, according to Daniélou, purely philosophical.⁵⁹ But his eschatology is the weakest point in his system.⁶⁰ Even if we are willing to accept the thesis of Myra Lot-Boro-

genesis. But he is less convincing when trying to whitewash Origen's doctrine on the Eucharist (p. 54).

50. As justice: *C. Celsum* IV, 26, GCS (Koetschau) I, 295, 209; as virtue of the king: *Matthäuserkl.* XIV, 13, GCS (Klostermann) (1935), 312; as medical art: *C. Celsum* III, 73 (Koetschau) I (1899) 265, 285, 209; as care for the poor: *In Lucam Hom.* XXIII, GCS (Rauer) IX (Berlin, 1959), 143; as concern for the neighbor: *Matthäuserkl.* XV, 18, GCS (Klostermann) X, 400.

51. Daniélou, *Le IIIème siècle: Origène*, p. 122.

52. *In Jerem. Hom.* I, GCS (Klostermann) III, 2, 3; *De Princ.* V, I, GCS (Koetschau), V, 133.

53. *C. Celsum* VII, 46, GCS (Koetschau), II, 198.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 34; cf. *Matthäuserkl.* XVI, 15, GCS (Klostermann) X, 524; *Johanneskomm.* II, 31, GCS (Preuschen) IV, 88.

55. *Johanneskomm.* VI, 57, GCS (Preuschen), IV, 165; cf. (Koetschau) II, 163.

56. *Johanneskomm.* I, 20, GCS (Preuschen) X, 25; cf. *ibid.*, p. 83. Also: «crucifixus propter misericordiam» GCS (Klostermann) XI, 170. It is noteworthy that, according to Origen, the sole name of Jesus is endowed with the power to effect the ecstasis in the minds of men, as well as to create within their souls the disposition of humbleness and philanthropy. *C. Celsum* I, 67, GCS (Koetschau) I, 121.

57. *In Jesu Nave Hom.* III, 5, GCS (Baehrens), VII, 306: «Videtur quae multa benignitatis Domini, quam abscondit et occultat ab auribus vulgi.»

58. *C. Celsum* I, 27, GCS (Koetschau) I, 79, and *ibid.* VII, 41, GCS II, 192.

59. *Le IIIème siècle: Origène*, p. 183.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

dine⁶¹ according to which Origen's gnosticism would be rather of Pauline than heterodox inspiration, nonetheless the reckless orientation of Origen's disembodied *apocatastasis*⁶² is anything but Pauline.

Thus, even with the acceptable idea of divine wrath and chastisement as being only the enactment of divine philanthropy,⁶³ as well as the emphatically protected mystery of free will,⁶⁴ all is ultimately dissolved in Origen's perspective of an innumerable succession of worlds until the much desired primordial standstill of pure spirits is reached.⁶⁵ Even though Origen may sometimes masterfully hit rare strings, as, for example, when speaking about the two kinds of *philanthropia-misericordia*, namely, that of Christ and the other of the Antichrist,⁶⁶ nevertheless, his philanthropy is weakened by his inconsistent eschatology and «archaeology.»⁶⁷

It remains to be seen where Clement and Origen stand in the larger scene of the confrontation between Christian cult and Hellenic culture.

Theophilus' mockery of the pointless oaths of the dying Socrates,⁶⁸ or any other standard critique of Greek philosophy, would not by itself be sufficient to stamp all who used it as anti-intellectual. In my opinion — contrary to that of H. E. W. Turner⁶⁹ — even Tatian himself was not basically an anti-intellectual, but an «enfant terrible» of Helleno-Roman

61. «L' Aridité dans l' antiquité chrétienne,» *Etudes Carmélitaines* (October, 1937), p. 196, cited by Henri Crouzel, *op. cit.*, p. 535, n. 4.

62. *De Princ.* II, 10, 8, GCS (Koetschau) V (Leipzig, 1913), 183. Franz Heinrich Kettler writes, in *Der ursprüngliche Sinn der Dogmatik des Origenes* (Berlin, 1966), pp. 48-51, that: «etwa der Körperlosigkeit der λογικά nach der Apokatastasis und vor dem Fall, von der (Origenes) sicher felsenfest überzeugt gewesen ist.»

63. *Johanneskomm.* VI, 58, GCS (Preuschen) VI, 167; cf. GCS (Baehrens) VII, 482; GCS (M. Rauer) IX, 216.

64. Daniélou, *Le IIIème siècle: Origène*, p. 183.

65. *De Princ.* III, 5, 3, GCS (Koetschau) V, 273. Crouzel, *op. cit.*, p. 259, writes: «Certains textes ... semblent bien évacuer le mystère: la colère de Dieu est assimilée aux feintes du pédagogue.»

66. *Matthäuserkl.* Comm. ser. 33, GCS (Klostermann) (Leipzig, 1933), 33.

67. Daniélou, *Le IIIème siècle: Origène*, p. 182. A. Harnack wrote, in *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (New York, 1961), p. 351, that in Origen's eyes «goodness and justice are not two opposite attributes, which can and must exist in God side by side; but as virtues they are to him identical.» Here there is one more proof of Origen's philosophical approach to God's simplicity by which the apophatic tension between the different energies of God is ignored or denied.

68. H. E. W. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 405.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 407.

culture, who, out of national pride, confused the Judæo-Christian cult with Near-Eastern Semitic culture. In this proud fusion of the revelation with his own native culture, in which this revelation appeared, I see the reason for Tatian's discarding so cavalierly the whole of Hellenic culture. That Tatian otherwise was intellectually daring,⁷⁰ his «digest» of the four gospels will abundantly prove the point.⁷¹

On the other hand, Tatian, in his exclusive passion for barbaric «philosophy,»⁷² overlooked the fact that Christianity irrevocably entered Hellenistic world culture ever since it had adapted its language as the main vehicle of the Church's cultural expression.⁷³

No one would accuse St. Irenæus, either, of being an anti-intellectual for his unfavorable attitude in regard to the cosmological speculations of the Apologists.⁷⁴ On the contrary, he was probably more aware of the apophatic «seal» set upon each and every mind admitted into the conscious adoration of the Trinity, than were Clement and Origen.⁷⁵

The internal tension in expanding Christianity from the second century on was not, primarily, that of a fideistic orthodoxy versus Hellenic reason, as Turner contends⁷⁶ since he himself admits that the New Testament already makes a few rudimentary and tentative efforts to apply Greek thought for the defence of the revelation.⁷⁷ The problem was that of finding a criterion for thinking theologians by which they could be sure, in their missionary work, of gradually «baptizing» the ancient values of pagan culture without ever losing from their sight the cult pointing to the apophatic maximum, and meanwhile constantly developing and up-dating the doctrinal aspect of the cataphatic minimum of the Rule of faith.⁷⁸ Irenæus cautiously recommended one

70. Regardless whether his daring was rationally praiseworthy or incongruous.

71. J. Quasten, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225. It seems, however, that even his concoction of the «Diatessaron» was made first in Greek, and then translated into Syrian.

72. *Discourse to the Greeks*, chap. 42 ANF 2, 81/2. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 223.

73. Therefore, even Eusebius of Caesarea was scandalized by Tatian's pretention to «paraphrase some words of the Apostle (Paul), as though correcting their style» (*Hist. Eccl.* 4, 29, 6, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 225).

74. H. E. W. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

75. Irénée de Lyon *Démonstration de la prédication apostolique*, ed. L. M. Froidevaux, p. 170; cf. pp. 169, 107.

76. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 414.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 475.

not to venture into speculations on matters which lie outside the Rule of faith⁷⁹ but, obviously, he was not much heeded.

Clement was soberer than Origen when he maintained that simple faith and rational faith are both alike roads to salvation.⁸⁰ Origen, however, following his rationalizing impulses, argued that to believe through knowledge is superior to a simple faith.⁸¹ This difference between them is, finally, of secondary importance, since both are in danger of paying more attention to the surrounding culture than to the Church's cult of the Trinity. Only a man fascinated by Greek «a-historical» culture⁸² would put the Greeks on the same level of the economy of salvation as the Hebrews and the Christians.⁸³

Origen, even more, was prone to rationalize the impenetrable mystery, as when, occasionally, he opines that evils also come from God in the way that: «builders may seem to cause the mess that lies beside buildings, such as the dirt that falls off the stones and the plaster.»⁸⁴ A. Harnack concluded in this regard: «Celsus also might have written in this strain.»⁸⁵ Thus, Origen found himself, though unadmittedly, in a difficult predicament when Celsus attacked the new Christian doctrine as one that exclusively insisted on a faith which not only had not succeeded in justifying itself before reason, but even pretended insolently to do without this justification.⁸⁶ Not sobered by the apophatic humility of mind, almost «blinded by Greek *paideia*,»⁸⁷ Origen indulged in a much too conciliatory attitude toward the rationalist inclination of Hellenism⁸⁸ when imagining that: «Platonic ways of thinking about God and soul are necessary to him if he is to give an intelligible account of his Christian beliefs.»⁸⁹

79. *Ibid.*, p. 411.

80. H. Wolfson, *The Philosophy*, p. 126.

81. *In Ioan.* XIX, 1, PG 14, 529C, quoted by Wolfson, *The Philosophy*, p. 106.

82. Pierre Thévenaz, «Événement et Historicité,» *L'Homme et l'histoire*, Actes du VI^e Congrès des sociétés de philosophie de langue française (Paris, 1952), pp. 217-225: «Quoi d'étonnant... si la philosophie grecque, soucieuse de découvrir raison, nécessité et ordre, soit venue se heurter au scandale de l'événement... La philosophie grecque restera an-historique par essence.»

83. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 418.

84. *Contra Celsum* VI 55, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge, 1965), p. 372. The same writer points out the Stoic origin of this argument (*op. cit.*, p. 372, n. 1).

85. Harnack, *op. cit.*, p. 343, n. 2.

86. Shestov, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

87. H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, p. 100.

88. Harnack, *op. cit.*, II, 344-345.

89. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, p. 122.

The subordinationist misconception of the trinitarian mystery, it seems to me,⁹⁰ incited Origen even to attack frontally the cultural tradition of praying directly to Christ.⁹¹ On the other hand, he did not think it was necessary to reject the basic pagan tradition of reincarnation.⁹² Thus, even the very many good points of Origen,⁹³ of which the most inspiring was his invention of a «new form of Christian self-expression, Systematic Theology,»⁹⁴ are undermined, according to Georges Florovsky, by Origen's subservience to a cosmologically oriented Hellenism.⁹⁵ The latter determined also his doctrine of God as the παντοκράτωρ, who, ultimately, is considered responsible for the unproductivity of time and history.⁹⁶

H. Kraft has noticed the fact that despite all the enthusiastic epithets attributed to the Church by Clement of Alexandria, his true «gnostic» is an individualist.⁹⁷ And even so sympathetic a reader of Origen as St. Basil the Great was sufficiently moved by Epiphanius' verdict to declare that Origen's basic opinions were heretical.⁹⁸ What A. Harnack wrote concerning Origen's notion of the eschatological judgment I would only extend to the term of divine *philanthropia*, also: «the name is not wanting in Origen's system, but the thing had disappeared. In spite of all the emphasis laid on freedom, nothing exists but a cosmic process.» So heavily burdened with the old philosophical presuppositions as he was, Origen could not have had any feeling for the Church on earth as being the veiled cult of the transcendent glory already here in the flux of time.⁹⁹ Therefore, as far as cultural recogni-

90. *Johanneskomm.*, GCS (Preuschen) IV, 54: God the Father is the «αὐτόθεος» while that Logos is only a «θεός».

91. R. P. C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 140.

92. H. Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 116. Cf. A. des Georges *La Réincarnation des âmes selon les traditions orientales et occidentales* (Paris, 1966), p. 181.

93. Against Celsus Origen stoutly defended the anthropocentric view of the cosmos. *C. Celsus* IV, 23, GCS (Koetschau) 292-293.

94. H. E. W. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

95. *Diskussions-Beiträge zum XI Byzantinisten-Kongress*, ed. Franz. Dölger and Hans-Georg Beck (Munich, 1958), pp. 38-40, esp. p. 39.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-40.

97. Kraft, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

98. Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 122, The same author argues further (*op. cit.*, p. 121), that «Origen is not vindicated by arguments which only go to show that Koetschau's Berlin Corpus edition of the *De Principiis* is open to serious criticism.»

99. F. H. Kettler, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-51. stated that Origen «lebte für die himmli-

tion goes, both Clement¹⁰⁰ and Origen¹⁰¹ finally failed.¹⁰² On the level of the cultural apologetics of the Church, however, they are the unforgettable pioneers and victims.

Richard A. Norris concluded with perspicacity that: «the early Church in fact failed — or refused — to make a perfect adjustment to the thought forms of the culture in which it existed; and the intellectual imbalance... was salutary... as the seed of future creative development.»¹⁰³

Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus

It seems that Philostratus started, in the beginning of the third century, the literary fashion of imitating the Christian Scriptures¹⁰⁴ with the undeclared desire to produce some sort of «Life» of a pagan saint or even god, from the legendary life of Apollonius of Tyana, by so aggrandizing him as to be, if possible, equal in stature with Christ.¹⁰⁵ Philostratus never explicitly mentioned Christianity, but Apollonius was depicted as one who had been battling for a purified paganism which would accept a philosophical monotheism and still tolerate the cult of many gods.¹⁰⁶ Later on Porphyry and Iamblichus will try to produce similar propaganda writings with the life of Pythagoras.¹⁰⁷

We have to deal, however shortly, with Plotinus (floruit 250-270), although he did not use the term of *philanthropia* in this *Enneads* even once.¹⁰⁸ By himself alone, he represents, indeed, the glorious sunset of Hellenic philosophy¹⁰⁹ which was, according to Émile Bréhier:

sche, in der Apokatastasis gipfelnde Kirche, während er in der irdischen Kirche... eine Elementarschule sah... ohne sich allerdings von ihr zu trennen.»

100. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 402: «Despite his services to Christian spirituality Clement is rightly not included among the doctors of the Church.»

101. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, p. 120; cf. J. Daniélou, *IIIème siècle: Origène*, p. 183.

102. Harnack, *op. cit.*, II, 336, said: «As an idealistic philosopher, Origen transformed the whole content of ecclesiastical faith into ideas.»

103. Norris, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

104. P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne*, p. 185.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 189, n. 2.

108. *Enneades* VI 2, texte établi et traduit par Émile Bréhier (Paris, 1953), p. 240.

109. E. R. Dodds, *op. cit.*, p. 252, argues that the downfall of Classical Hellenism was caused by both intellectual and economic factors, but the most destruc-

«à la fois religieuse et rationaliste... profondément rebelle à la pensée chrétienne.»¹¹⁰

This great thinker, who led the ascetic life of a saint,¹¹¹ taught to his pupils, according to Maurice de Gandillac, «une sorte de 'salut', mais par des voies purement philosophiques.»¹¹² Even his much-desired and rarely attained ecstasis, which would interrupt all the diacritical functions of the soul, paradoxically should never abolish the highest life of the spirit, wherein the vigorous discipline of apophaticism reaches the coincidence of the opposites: perfection of the intelligible and pure mystery.¹¹³

Nonetheless, the greater the success of Plotinus' ecstatic union with the One, all the more is his metaphysically concocted escapism into the timeless impersonalness uncovered, since, in his system, time is a pure dispersion which is allegedly transcended by philosophical concentration, as well as through reincarnational «ascensions.»¹¹⁴

That it actually means a sinking into the impersonal «translucidity beyond any awareness of the self»¹¹⁵ one can deduce from Plotinus' conception of the First Principle, which is very similar to the self-sufficient pure act of Aristotle which has no need either of obedience or of the freedom of creatures.¹¹⁶

tive, since unconscious, was the «fear of freedom,» the acceptance of astral determinism.»

110. Maurice de Gandillac, *La Sagesse de Plotin* (Paris, 1966). p. 17. Ninian Smart, in *World Religions: A Dialogue* (New York, 1966), p. 135, noticed that we have to face the «old collision between monotheism and monism, as well as the scandalous particularity of Christianity.»

111. M. de Gandillac, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 59; cf. pp. 264-65.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

114. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

115. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 266. I cannot agree with E. R. Dodds' argument in Proclus *The Elements of Theology*, with translation and commentary by Dodds (Oxford, 1963), p. xix, that Plotinus left to his successors «a vivid tradition of personal mysticism» if the First Principle is impersonal. The neuter «ὄν» designating the One, in Plotin *Enneades*, ed. Bréhier, XI2, 187, 188, indicates rather conclusively the impersonal character of the Plotinian One.

Émile Bréhier summarized Plotinus' system in three points. First: that he conceived of the relation between the soul and God as of an immediate relation without the intermediary of a saviour or a physical community. Second: the One has no will to save souls, because, in the third place, there is the fundamental identity between the self and the One. In Bréhier, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* (Chicago, 1958), p. 195.

How far Plotinus may have been influenced by Origen¹¹⁷ or how deeply indebted to Plotinus Christian thinkers may be,¹¹⁸ is not to be examined here, but I have at least to state the fact that the evaluation of the neoplatonic epigoni is possible only through comparing them with their master, who summed up himself in his last words: «I am striving to give back the divine which is in me to the divine in the universe.»¹¹⁹

Porphyry of Tyre (ca. 233-304) was, according to E. R. Dodds, a learned and lovable man, but no consistent or creative thinker.¹²⁰ Religious by temperament, he had «an incurable weakness for oracles.»¹²¹ His greatest contribution to philosophy was the redaction and publication of his master's *Enneads*,¹²² but he had won a considerable fame on the purely religious level by his polemical work against Christianity¹²³ which was grounded upon «a thorough historical and literary acquaintance with his subject and... a fanatical religious conviction of his own.»¹²⁴ He demanded conformity to the religion of the State and obedience to the Emperor.¹²⁵

Porphyry upheld, in general, the same Plotinian monism¹²⁶ in which the self-knowledge of the soul is posited as being identical with the knowledge of God,¹²⁷ thus, according to Heinrich Dörrie, for Porphyry, also, «die Seele... ist Funcktion des Einen.»¹²⁸ In his *Sententiae* XXXII, especially, he developed the doctrine of the virtues which by ascending degrees culminate in self-deification.¹²⁹

117. H. Wolfson, *The Philosophy*, p. 203.

118. M. de Gandillac, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

119. Porphyry *Life of Plotinus* 2, cited by E. Bréhier, in *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, p. 197.

120. E. R. Dodds, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-287.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

122. M. de Gandillac, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

123. P. de Labriolle, *La Réaction paienne*, p. 279.

124. A. Hulen, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 38. P. de Labriolle, in *La Réaction*, p. 240, wrote that «Plotin et Porphyre purent croire qu'une attaque savamment conduite sur le terrain intellectuel paracheverait les résultats obtenus par les rigueurs de la politique.»

126. Although a dualist tendency, also, is noticed by G. Mau, «Iamblichos,» *Pauly-Wissowa Realencyclopaedie* (Stuttgart, 1914), cols. 645-651, esp. col. 649.

127. R. Beutler, «Porphyrios,» *Pauly-Wissowa Realencycl.*, cols. 275-313, esp. col. 307: «Diese γνῶσις zu lieben und sich selbst zu lieben ist eins: ἐαυτῶν φίλα.»

128. *Porphyrios' «Symmikta Zetemata»* (München, 1959), p. 177.

129. *Porphyrii Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*, ed. B. Mommert (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 18-22.

G. Faggini, in *Porfiorio: Lettera ad Anebo—Lettera a Marcella*, p. 26, stresses

As far as *philanthropia* is concerned, it is not to be found in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*,¹³⁰ or any other extant work, but only once in the *Letter to Marcella* which was captioned, not without some exaggeration, «il testamento morale dell' antichità.»¹³¹ In this moving letter where we find, almost inevitably, the venerable theme of *δμοίωσις Θεῶν*¹³² together with Porphyry's theodicy,¹³³ the very last word is *philanthropia*.¹³⁴ One should not exaggerate in the hypercritical pedestrian direction, as to completely discard the possibility that the staunch adversary of Christianity may have insinuated by his last word the war-cry his followers should use when facing the evangel of *agape*.

With *Iamblichus of Chalkis* (died ca. 330), the dualist accents are even more pronounced than in Porphyry's thought¹³⁵ and the neoplatonism in his hands became an outright «Counter-religion against Christianity.»¹³⁶

His responsiveness to the appeal of the notion of *philanthropia*, in comparison with Porphyry, was much greater. Thus, in his *Life of Pythagoras* Iamblichus qualified the old mystagogue—even in his supreme «daemoniac apotheosis—as being «the most philanthropic.»¹³⁷ According to Iamblichus, Pythagoras, already, has preached about love towards one's own enemies (πρὸς ἄλλους φιλανθρωπία).¹³⁸ In the context of such classical notions as *καλοκάγαθία* and *ἐπιείκεια*, Iamblichus, very much in the line of the Hellenic tradition, glorifies the gods Apollo and Eros as the «most philanthropic among the gods» (φιλανθρωποτάτους

the individualistic character of neoplatonic mysticism: «L' individualismo etico maturato nelle dottrine stoiche ed epicuree dopo la morte della πόλις, si risolveva, in soliloquio mistico... neoplatonico.»

130. *Vita di Plotino*, ed. Gaetano Macchiaroli (Naples, 1946), φίλος occurs on pp. 19, 20, 21, 29; «ἔρωσ ἀθάνατος» with the lofty leaning of «eternal life» on p. 48.

131. G. Faggin, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

132. *Ibid.*, *Ad Marcellam* XIII, p. 100.

133. *Ibid.*, XXIV, p. 114: «κακῶν ἀνθρώπων οὐδεὶς θεὸς αἷτιος, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸς ἕκαστῶ ὁ ἐλόμενος.»

134. *Ibid.*, XXXV, p. 130.

135. G. Mau, *loc. cit.*, col. 649.

136. *Ibid.*

137. «Καὶ μετὰ τῶν θεῶν τὸν Πυθαγόραν... κατηριθμουν ὡς ἀγαθὸν τινα δαίμονα καὶ φιλανθρωπέτατον.» Iamblichi *De vita Pythagorica*, 6, 30, ed. Ludovicus Deubner (Leipzig, 1937), p. 18. In this «Life» *philia* is found many times (pp. 23, 29, 55, 124, 128 *et passim*). On p. 39, *philia* towards all men. Even kindness towards animals is upheld (p. 33).

138. *Ibid.*, 8, 40, p. 23.

τῶν θεῶν).¹³⁹ For a man who, deadly serious about his deities, wrote *De Mysteriis* this title claimed for the Olympians could have meant in the context only a conscious commitment to the pagan cult.

The most influential polytheistic apologetics in the fourth century, and beyond it, was produced by Iamblichos, who developed the theory that the key to salvation is «not in the Plotinian θεωρία, but in θεωργία, a form of ritualistic magic.»¹⁴⁰

Later on, when about to evaluate Iamblichus' influence on the Emperor Julian, I will be in a better position to describe the importance of this most militant representative not only of the cultural, but even more of cultural self-consciousness of late Hellenism.

(To be continued)

139. *Ibid.*, 10, p. 28.

140. E. R. Dodds, *Proclus: The Elements of Theology*, pp. XX-XXI. «Theurgy is, doubtless, the same as the 'Magic of Zoraster,' which was no 'black art,' but a peculiar mode of worship.» Cf. *Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries by Iamblichos*, trans. Alexander Wilder (London, 1911), p. 49, n. 2.