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STEPHEN BAR SUDAILI

THE SYRIAN MYSTIC

AND

THE BOOK OF HIEROTHEOS.

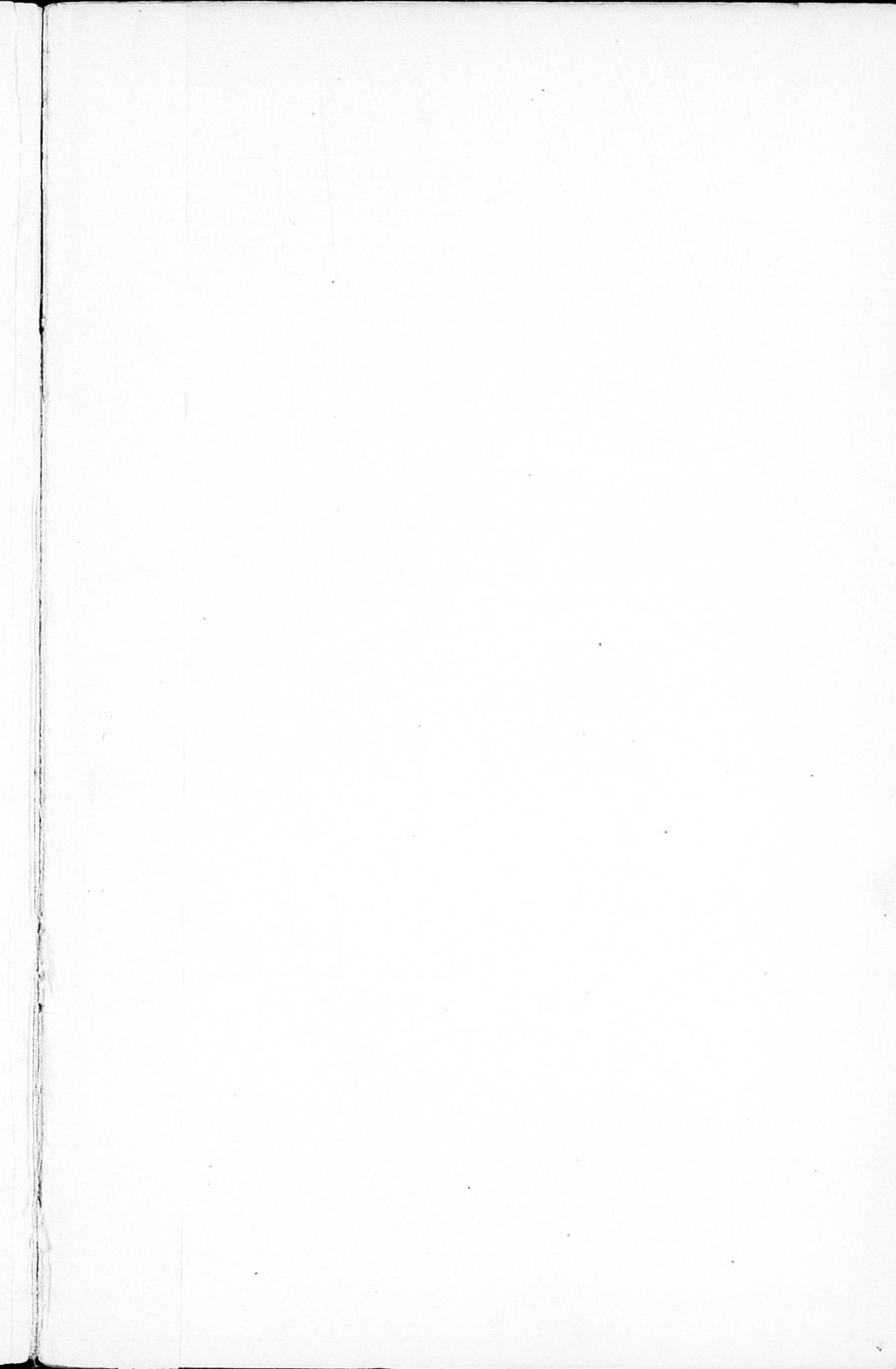
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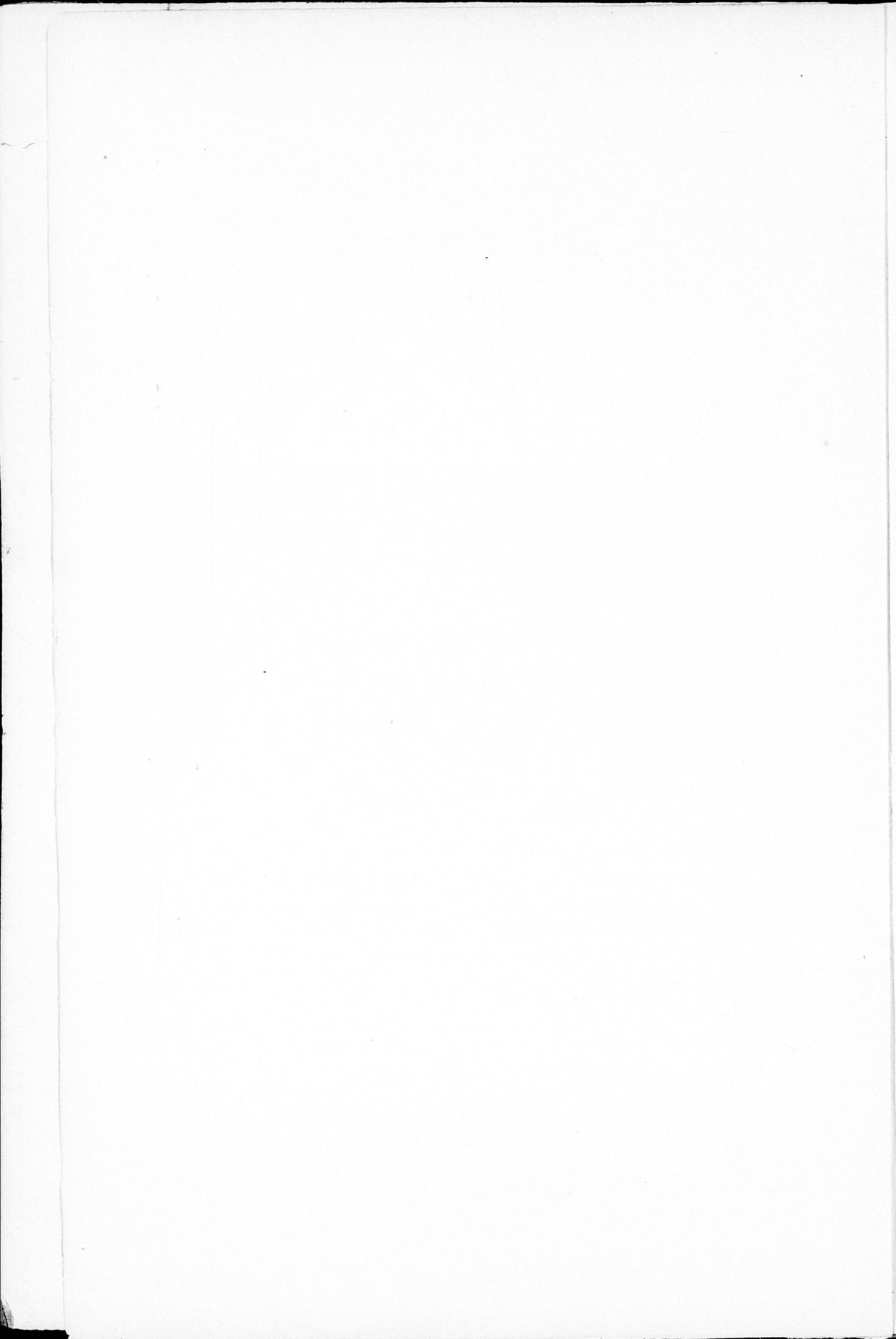
A. L. ROTHINGHAM. JR.

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LEYDEN. — E. J. BRILL.  
1886.

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BY

A. L. FROTHINGHAM, JR.



LEYDEN. — E. J. BRILL.  
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Printed by E. J. BRILL, Leiden.

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During the first centuries of Christianity, East Syria and Egypt were the two great centres of false mysticism and pantheism, and between them there ever existed the closest relations. Although Egyptian thought and the Valentinian system exercised a great influence over Syrian thought, yet the latter possessed certain special characteristics; for while the Alexandrian schools threw their universal eclecticism into the mould of Greek thought, and gave a philosophical character to their speculations, the Syrian schools were distinguished by a vivid fancy and a bold speculation, to which they did not seek to give a philosophical or a logical form. On the other hand, if we try to connect by analogy the Syrian Gnostics and mystics with preceding systems of thought, we easily perceive the close relation in which they stood to the later Persian system, to the debased Chaldaean worship, and to the Jewish Kabbala, which probably flourished in their very midst among the Jewish settlements of Babylonia.

The doctrines of Bardesanes and of Manes preserved great force and influence in the East Syrian Church, even until the middle of the fourth century, when S. Ephraem wrote and labored against them with all the influence he could wield, as heresies which had deep root among all classes. From this time forward Syrian mysticism took a more ecclesiastical form, and pantheistic doctrine became subtly infused into the orthodox forms of belief, producing a steadily progressive inversion of the Christian faith.

## I. THE WRITINGS OF PSEUDO-DIONYSIOS.

After the epoch of S. Ephraem († 373) we do not hear of any prominent movement in the mystical school of Syria until the last years of the fifth century or the first of the succeeding, when there suddenly appeared a body of writings purporting to be by Dionysios the Areopagite, the convert of Saint Paul <sup>1</sup>). It has been for some time generally recognized that they were the work of this period <sup>2</sup>), and, in all probability, written by some follower of Proclus <sup>3</sup>), who may have been a Syrian monk <sup>4</sup>); a theory supported by the fact that, although eagerly received and studied by the whole East, these writings were brought forward and most powerfully supported by the Syrians. All mystics recognized these works to be the production of a master-mind, worthy of becoming their guide in pantheistic speculation. The extent to which they were used can be appreciated on consulting Syriac mss., where Dionysios is adduced as authority in most controversial writings, especially by the Monophysites.

But it was not only the mystical schools and the Eastern

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1) S. Dionysii Areopagitae Opera omnia stud. et op. Balth. Corderii: Migne, Patr. Graecae T. III and IV. Darboy (l'abbé), Œuvres de Saint Denis l'Aréopagite. Paris 1845.

Cf. J. Dulac, Œuvres de Saint Denis l'Aréopagite. Paris 1865.

2) Gieseler, A text-book of Church history, New-York 1857, vol. I, p. 468. Schaff, History of the Christian Church, vol. III, p. 604. Baur, Geschichte der Kirche, T. II, p. 59—65. Gfrörer, Allgemeine Kirchengeschichte, 1840. II Buch. p. 902. Dorner, Doctrine of the person of Christ: Div. II, vol. I, p. 157 and 422. etc. etc.

3) Engelhardt, Baur, Gfrörer, Schaff, etc. Dorner connects him with the Monophysites.

4) Gfrörer, *ibid.* p. 912. Gieseler, *ibid.* considers him to have flourished in Egypt and to coincide with Cyrill in the doctrine of the person of Christ!! Westcott (Contemp. Review, May 1867) thinks that the Pseudo-Dionysian writings «were composed A.D. 480—520, either at Edessa or under the influence of the Edessa School”. This judgment is founded on the relation to Bar Sudaili.

heretics that supported the Pseudo-Dionysian writings. The orthodox at first protested against them at the Council of Constantinople in 533, and denied their genuineness, by the mouth of Hypatius, who attributed them to the Apollinarists; but it was not long before they accepted them as genuine, for, besides an affinity for such speculation being wide-spread at this time, they could find in these works many arguments and proofs in favor of Church institutions and ecclesiastical authority; and from these two causes the Pseudo-Dionysian writings were accepted even by the Popes, as by Gregory the Great <sup>1)</sup>, Martin I <sup>2)</sup>, and Agatho <sup>3)</sup>.

Almost contemporaneously with the appearance of the Dionysian writings there appeared also a Syriac version of them, rendered necessary by the favor they were obtaining throughout Syria. The author of this version was Sergius the archiater or physician of Ras'ain († 536), the famous Aristotelian and writer on medicine <sup>4)</sup>. It is a characteristic phenomenon that a follower of Aristotle should find the greatest of false mystics a congenial spirit, and should become thoroughly impregnated with his doctrines: that it was so with Sergius is shown even more clearly by the long introduction which he prefixed to his version of the Pseudo-Dionysios <sup>5)</sup>, where he shows himself to be not a simple translator but an original thinker in mysticism. Of course the Alexandrian school was the link between the two. In this connection it is interesting to note a passage in a contemporary work, the ecclesiastical history attributed to Zacharias Rhetor, in which Sergius is characterized as an eloquent man and learned "in

1) In his 34<sup>th</sup> homily, on the Gospel of S. Luke, ch. 15.

2) Acta Synodi Lateran. a. 660.

3) Letter to the Emp. Constantine for the Council of Constantinople, a. 680.

4) This version is contained in Brit. Mus. Add. 12.151 and 12.152, etc.

5) Brit. Mus. Add. 22.370.

Greek literature and in the *doctrine of Origen*'<sup>1)</sup>. The Origenistic revival of the beginning of the sixth century was in perfect accord with the theories of the Pseudo-Dionysios; still it is interesting to note this further connection.

The writers who have undertaken to trace the development of the influence of the Pseudo-Areopagite have confined themselves to Greek and Latin literature, and have neglected the very important part taken by Syrian writers in this movement. It was in reality as important as either of the former, and can boast nearly as many noteworthy representatives. Contemporary with the scholia of John of Scythopolis, for example, who was the first Greek commentator of Dionysios, we find the version and scholia of Sergius of Ras'ain, already mentioned; and while the next Greek commentator is the noted Maximus, who flourished in the seventh century, Syria is represented again in the sixth century itself by the monk Joseph Huzaja, who wrote a **ܘܥܡܘܢܐ ܕܕܝܘܢܝܫܝܘܫ** „Commentary on Dionysios”<sup>2)</sup>. Afterwards, and not quite a century later than Maximus, appear the commentaries of Phocas bar Sergius of Edessa<sup>3)</sup> and John bishop of Dara<sup>4)</sup>. This latter treats only of the Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchies and does not confine itself to the office of a commentary, but holds forth original views in various chapters. During the latest period of Syriac literature we find the commentary of Theodore bar Zarudi of Edessa<sup>5)</sup>. It would not be possible in the present incomplete state of our acquaintance with Syrian literature to give a satisfactory account

1) Land, *Anecdota Syriaca* T. III, p. 289.

2) 'Ebed Yeshu, *Catal. of Syrian writers*, in *Assem. Bib. Or. T. III*, P. I, p. 103.

3) W. Wright, *Catal. of the Syriac mss. of the Brit. Mus. T. II*, p. 493. The MS. is dated A.D. 804.

4) *Assemani Catal. Codd. Syr. T. II*, p. 530: cf. *Bib. Or. T. II*, p. 120.

5) W. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 500. MS. Add 22,370, of the XIV or XV century.



mer is of course a fiction, the latter may have more reality. Hierotheos is praised by him in the most glowing terms, as divine, as an inspired mystic, whose writings are a second Bible, *δεύτερα λόγια* <sup>1)</sup>, and whose knowledge of divine things was far above his own. The fragments of his writings given by Pseudo-Dionysios are interesting: they are taken from his *Ἔρωτικοὶ ὕμνοι*, *Erotic Hymns* <sup>2)</sup>, and from a work entitled *Θεολογικαὶ στοιχειώσεις*, *The Elements of Theology* <sup>3)</sup>. If, as is well known, the whole of scholastic theology and of mediaeval mysticism is founded on the doctrines of the Pseudo-Dionysios, of what extraordinary interest would it not be to discover the very source of these doctrines, their origin in a form more abstract than that given by the Pseudo-Areopagite! Hence it was often asked by the followers of the latter: who was this Hierotheos? what were his writings? what is known of him? These questions remained unanswered, for nothing could be gleaned concerning such a man except from the Dionysian writings themselves. Then the question naturally followed: did such a person ever exist? was he not a mere Dionysian figment? <sup>4)</sup>.

We hope to give in the following pages an answer to some of these questions, and will present in outline an unpublished work, hitherto unknown to students of this subject, claiming to be written by Hierotheos, and which may or may not be really by the master of the Pseudo-Dionysios.

## II. STEPHEN BAR SUDAILI.

To the very period now almost unanimously assigned to

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1) Div. Names, ch. III, § II.

2) Div. Names, ch. IV, § XV, XVI, and XVII.

3) Div. Names, ch. II, § X, and probably Eccl. Hier. ch. II, p. 1.

4) Dallaeus, *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita*.

the production of the Pseudo-Dionysiana belongs a prominent and interesting figure in the Syrian Church, that of the mystic Stephen Bar Sudaili. The connection of these two phenomena is not by any means fortuitous, but the materials available up to the present have been so few that his position and individuality have never been clearly defined <sup>1)</sup>.

Among the letters of Philoxenos of Mabûg is one written to Abraham and Orestes, priests of Edessa, concerning Bar Sudaili <sup>2)</sup>: this document is the principal source from which we derive our information regarding him, for the letter of Jacob of Sarug addressed to Bar Sudaili himself adds but little <sup>3)</sup>, and the few other notices we have been able to collect referring to the latter do so in but few words.

Bar Sudaili is important, not only as a prominent representative of the mystical school of East Syria, but as being connected with an interesting literary and religious question, the solution of which has never been attempted: that is, whether or no he is the author of the Book of Hierotheos, and in what relation this work stands to the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysios, who asserts Hierotheos to have been his master <sup>4)</sup>. To collect and present all the available material relating to this subject is what I will attempt to accomplish in a short while, so that competent judges may have the opportunity of forming their opinion on the question. In order to do this I hope to publish before long the complete

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1) Asseman being the common source of all that has been said on Bar Sudaili, the only difference is in the variety of construction placed upon his words.

2) See page 28.

3) See page 10.

4) The probable identity of Bar Sudaili and Pseudo-Hierotheos has been assumed, on the sole authority of Bar 'Ebraia, e. g. by Zöckler in his article on B. S. in Herzog's Real Encyk. (T. XV. p. 203—5), who is followed in the Cyclop. of Messrs Clintoek and Strong (vol. X, p. 8—9).

text of the Book of Hierotheos in the so-called Syriac version of a supposed Greek original now lost. The unique copy of this version has long lain unnoticed among the treasures of the British Museum. For the present I will limit myself to giving, in this essay, the letters of Philoxenos and Jacob of Sarug with a translation, and an abstract of the Book of Hierotheos, together with a few extracts which will illustrate its principles and the form of its thought and language. As a necessary introduction to this analysis will be given, as far as is possible, the chain of judgments on and references to the Book of Hierotheos which are found among Syrian writers.

The conditions necessary to the formation of a judgment, from the intrinsic evidence, on the probability of Bar Sudaili being the author are, after examining the analysis and refutation of the doctrines of Bar Sudaili in the letters of Philoxenos and Jacob of Sarug, in the first place, to compare these doctrines with those of the Book of Hierotheos, and, in the second place, to decide whether there is a perfect correspondence between the latter and the fragments of the "Elements of Theology" and the "Erotic Hymns" of Hierotheos quoted by the Pseudo-Dionysios in his book on the "Divine Names" and in his "Eccles. Hierarchy". Finally we must see whether there are any other documents which connect Bar Sudaili with the supposed Hierotheos.

The two letters concerning Bar Sudaili have been known principally through the full analysis of that of Philoxenos given by Asseman in his "Bibliotheca Orientalis" <sup>1)</sup>; and many church

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1) T. II, p. 30 sqq.; cf. T. I, p. 303.

historians, such as Neander <sup>1)</sup>, Gfrörer <sup>2)</sup>, Dorner <sup>3)</sup>, etc., have, on the strength of this, assigned to Bar Sudaili an important position, as illustrating the mystical side of Monophysitism and the influence of the Origenistic revival. His pantheism, which is fully recognized by them, can now be made to appear in a still clearer light by the publication of the texts themselves. The letter of Philoxenos bishop of Hierapolis is written in an exquisitely pure Syriac, and will be all the more welcome that the writings of this purest of Syriac writers, though very extensive, have been entirely neglected and remain inedited. The letter of Jacob of Sarug, though it does not furnish many additional data, and does not show much theological acuteness, is a good specimen of his flowery diction and persuasive language.

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1) General History of the Christian Religion and Church, v. II, p. 555—557.

2) Allgemeine Kirchengeschichte, 1840, T. II, p. 902.

3) Doctrine of the Person of Christ, div. II, vol. I, p. 132.

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## III.

## LETTER OF MAR YA'QÛB TO STEPHEN BAR SUDAILL.

It is well for thee that thou walkest in glorious works, O friend of God, and it is honorable for thy intelligent soul that in the love of God thou sowest daily excellent things unto the hope of God, for the time will come that thou shalt reap: and be not anxious regarding the fruits of thy good sowing, for when the laborer sows he considers, in his mind's eye, not the seed but the furrows full of fruits; and for this does he sow, that he may gather the fruits. For, when the soul comprehends the new world, it despises the possessions of the old world and hastens to divide them among the needy, that they may be for it as a treasure in the abode of light, where good things are given to the workers of good. But this troubled world is as grass, hay, or flowers: it is a shadow which recedes and hastens to pass and remove the day-light (?); a lovely flower, whose beauty soon withers and perishes. Its riches are a dream and its possessions a deceptive vision. Error attaches to its posses-



sions, as to the treasure-trove of a dream, which in sleep enriches him who is asleep, so that he rejoices in a discovery which does not exist. When he awakes, he is ashamed and repents for making the mistake of rejoicing in unreal possessions. Awake! Awake! O prudent soul! put on the strength of the arm of the Lord: flee from the vain visions of the night, and come, rejoice in the beautiful light of day. Cast away from thee the possessions which dreams give unto thee, and despise error, the corrupter of minds, which in vain visions bestows wealth upon lovers of a sleep full of every harm. Night vanishes, dreams are exposed; the world passes away, and its riches are made vile; and error, which the serpent introduced, is exposed by the light of the Cross. The desire of wealth and power, which reigned from the tree of knowledge, has been destroyed by the fruit which dawned from the tree of life. The guardian of Paradise has been removed, that the keys of the Garden might be given to the thief who was deemed worthy of the right hand. The lance of the Cherub has been taken away and the way to Paradise is open. The planter of Paradise has been wounded by the lance in the place of the thieving gardener, and he has opened the garden that those who were expelled might return to their place. The great law-giver descended from heaven, became the teacher of the world, and the creation was illuminated with his doctrine, (which is) that no man covet riches which he has not: „provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, neither two coats, nor



stave, nor scrip; and salute no man by the way" <sup>1)</sup>. The way is fearful, for its pathways are full of snares. Pass on! leave the world and be not taken up with its affairs. The Lord says: „Take therefore no thought for the morrow; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" <sup>2)</sup>. Remember Lot's wife <sup>3)</sup> and hasten your course lest the world ensnare you with its evils. If beauty comes to thee, despise it: if thou findest riches, tread them under foot: cast possessions behind thee: look not after power: let thy country, thy house and thy family be strangers to thee. The Garden is open and awaits thee: advance in haste to the beautiful bride-chamber. Lay not up unto thyself a treasure upon earth<sup>4)</sup>, for the earth is destined to destruction. Thou art called to heaven; give not thyself over to earthly things: paradise awaits thee; what wilt thou among thorns? God begot thee of water and spirit, and brought thee up by the blood of His Son, and called thee to be His heir. Let thy nature move thee to love the Father who numbered thee among His sons. Oh! work like a laborer, and receive as thy wages the kingdom of Heaven. Oh! fear as a servant, and flee from the fire which threatens sinners. Minister unto the Father with a child's love. Do good, that thou mayest inherit the Kingdom: hate evil, that thou mayest be delivered from the fire. For on the fiery passage alms become a bridge to the givers of them, and he who has divided his possessions among the poor easily passes the gulf that is placed between the two sides.

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1) Matthew X, 9: Luke x, 4: note transpositions and omissions.

2) From Matthew VI, 34.

3) Luke XVII, 32.

4) Matt. VI, 19.



„For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was sick and ye visited me: naked and ye clothed me. I was in prison and ye came unto me. Therefore come in peace, ye blessed of my Father”<sup>1)</sup>. Who would not long for this word so full of every consolation, and hasten to disperse and distribute among the needy all his possessions, that he may hear God saying unto him, “Come in peace”? And who is there that would not fear and be filled with terror and trembling and hasten to do good works, lest he be joined unto those to whom the terrible Judge says: „Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting hell”. Life everlasting, and hell everlasting: there is no end to life, and no termination to hell. To the day-light which is on the right hand there is no evening, and to the outer night-darkness on the left there is no morning.

The bridegroom enters and the door of the bride-chamber is closed, and is not opened unto those who knock, lest the bride be covered with shame at the time when the honor of the bride-chamber should be guarded<sup>2)</sup>. Noah closed the door of the ark and opened it not unto fornicators that they might be protected with him from the great deluge. When judgment has been rendered, supplication is of no avail. When the door of the bride-chamber has been closed, the bride<sup>3)</sup> will not open unto the invited guests who entreat, saying: „Lord, Lord, open unto us”. But He answers and says unto them: „I know you not at all”<sup>2)</sup>. He did not

1) From Matthew XXV, 34-35.

2) From Matthew XXV, 10-12.

3) Here ~~reals~~ seems to be a mistake of the copyist for ~~reals~~ „the bridegroom”.

אל לא <sup>a</sup> פהו אר לחמ כלמא ארבי <sup>b</sup>. ארל דארל  
 נרביא <sup>c</sup> לחמ: פנ שרנא לעקלר. דדחא כרבימ  
 דרמא דלחפיתמ <sup>d</sup>. לר לר נר לחמ. דארל  
 לר דלרית כפמא דרל כרמב. לר דלחפית  
 מרפא דרמא: כרנא דרמא כר ארבי <sup>f</sup> לרל <sup>g</sup>.  
 רבי <sup>h</sup> דרמא דלחפיתמ <sup>d</sup> דרמא: כר ריח דרמא  
 ארמא: דרמא דרמא כר ארבי <sup>i</sup> מרמא כר  
 דרמא כרמא <sup>k</sup>. אר דלחפיתמ, דרמא. אר דלחפיתמ  
 חר, דרמא. אר דלחפיתמ <sup>l</sup> לרמא. אר דלחפיתמ  
 אר דלחפיתמ <sup>m</sup>. אר דלחפיתמ <sup>n</sup> אר דלחפיתמ  
 אר דלחפיתמ <sup>o</sup>. אר דלחפיתמ <sup>p</sup> אר דלחפיתמ  
 אר דלחפיתמ <sup>q</sup>. אר דלחפיתמ <sup>r</sup> אר דלחפיתמ  
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 אר דלחפיתמ <sup>w</sup> אר דלחפיתמ <sup>x</sup> אר דלחפיתמ  
 אר דלחפיתמ <sup>y</sup> אר דלחפיתמ <sup>z</sup> אר דלחפיתמ  
 אר דלחפיתמ <sup>aa</sup> אר דלחפיתמ

a) B ארל אל. b) B ארבי. c) B ארמא. d) C ארמא.  
 e) B ארמא. f) C ארמא. g) C inserts ארמא.  
 h) B ארמא. i) C ארמא. k) C inserts ארמא. l) C  
 ארמא. m) C inserts .. ארמא. n) C ארמא.  
 o) C inserts ארמא. p) C inserts ארמא. q) C  
 ארמא. r) Here begins the extract in Add. 17,193. s) D  
 ארמא. t) CD ארמא. u) C ארמא. v) C erron. ארמא.  
 w) C omits. x) C ארמא. y) C correctly ארמא. z) C  
 ארמא. aa) C ארמא.

say, I will not open unto you, but „I know you not”. The bridegroom answered the foolish virgins, who had willingly allowed the light of their lamps to go out, „I know you not”; that is: „Raise not your supplications, for they will not be accepted; defile not the chamber of the bridegroom when the honor of the bride should be guarded therein; remove the smoke of your extinguished lamps from the door of the bride-chamber, for behold the guests who are with the bridegroom in the guest-chamber are illuminated with the lights of the wise virgins. Come in peace, ye blessed of my Father; come in peace, ye givers of alms; come in peace, ye feeders of the poor; come in peace, ye sowers of good works; come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you on account of the excellence of your good deeds. Depart, ye cursed, into the fire prepared for the devil and all his ministers” <sup>1)</sup>. „It is a most terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God” <sup>2)</sup>. It is an offence full of foolishness that, for the enjoyments of a short while, a man should be led into entering hell, to which there is no end. They work iniquities during a certain small number of days, but their torments have no limit of days or years, for *there* are no days or nights. Perhaps thou wilt say: How can a just judge, for

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1) A paraphrase of Matthew XXV, 34—41.

2) Hebrews X, 31.



sins committed during ten, twenty or a like number of years, condemn the sinner to fall forever into hell? But the judge is just and his judgments righteous, thou lover of rectitude; for if it be not just that He should cast into everlasting fire him who has sinned during a short time, as is written; then also is it not just that He should cause him who has been righteous during a short time to inherit the everlasting kingdom. And if it seems to thee that the sinner should be judged according to the number of years during which he has sinned, it would then follow that the righteous should enjoy happiness also according to the number of years during which he practised righteousness. So that he who sinned during ten years would remain in the fire for only ten, and he who practised righteousness for ten years would also remain in the kingdom for only ten years and would then leave it.

If the first (proposition) be just, and the second also right (in consequence), then the thief who was on the right hand could have been but a single hour in the Garden of Eden, for he burned with faith but for an hour when he besought Christ to remember him in his kingdom.

It is not so, friend, it is not so; not according to thine opinion is the righteous judgment of the just God governed, (which is) that these should go into eternal fire, and the righteous into eternal life. The sinner who repents not, if he had lived forever, would have sinned forever, and

: כתיבא דא אדכתיבא <sup>b</sup> מנייה קארי דאעלן : <sup>a</sup> קאמ  
 רבא\* כידיה יל און . אלך קאמץ <sup>c</sup> דורא דא <sup>\*</sup>  
 . <sup>f</sup> מנייה יזא <sup>e</sup> קאמ . כתיבא רבלי , מאמא <sup>d</sup> קאמ  
 » . כתיבא רבלי דא דא . מנייה יזא יזא  
 : מנייה אדא <sup>g</sup> קאמ קאמ\* : » כתיבא קאמ קאמ  
 קאמ , מאמ <sup>i</sup> אדכתיבא <sup>h</sup> מנייה קאמ כתיבא <sup>\*</sup>  
 אלך : מנייה אדא <sup>m</sup> קאמ <sup>l</sup> דא . מנייה <sup>k</sup> אדכתיבא  
 אלך קאמ\* קאמ , <sup>o</sup> קאמ קאמ . <sup>n</sup> קאמ מנייה  
 . קאמ קאמ <sup>q</sup> אדכתיבא אלך מנייה דא . <sup>p</sup> קאמ  
 קאמ קאמ מנייה <sup>\*</sup> קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ  
 קאמ <sup>i</sup> מנייה קאמ\* , מאמ <sup>s</sup> קאמ\* . <sup>r</sup> מנייה  
 » יזא און , דא דא . כתיבא קאמ קאמ קאמ  
 אדכתיבא : קאמ , מאמ קאמ יזא יזא . קאמ קאמ  
 קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ : קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ  
 : קאמ קאמ קאמ , מאמ <sup>v</sup> אדכתיבא : קאמ  
 » אדכתיבא קאמ קאמ . קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ <sup>w</sup> קאמ  
 » קאמ קאמ , דא קאמ . קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ

a) C און קאמ . b) C inserts קאמ . c) B דא דא ,  
 C דא דא . d) C דא קאמ . e) C קאמ . f) C  
 inserts . . . . g) C קאמ . h) B כתיבא קאמ  
 . קאמ , C קאמ . i) BD אדכתיבא . k) BD אדכתיבא :  
 B adds , קאמ . l) C דא . m) C קאמ . n) D קאמ .  
 o) B קאמ , C קאמ . p) C אלך קאמ קאמ קאמ .  
 q) C קאמ . r) C . אלך קאמ דא דא קאמ קאמ  
 . קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ קאמ . s) BC קאמ .  
 t) C omits but inserts after קאמ . u) C יזא . v) C אדכתיבא .  
 w) BC קאמ .

according to the inclination of his mind to continue in sin he justly falls into everlasting hell. For the rich man who filled his barns with many fruits said thus unto his soul: „Eat, drink, and be merry; thou hast much goods laid up for many years” <sup>1)</sup>. And thus his mind was bent on making merry for many years; his life therefore is cut off, but not his sin, for his mind was bent upon giving itself up to enjoyments forever. It is therefore justice which condemns this man to eternal fire, for, as far as his will was concerned, he would have lived forever in gluttony. Thus also the righteous man justly inherits eternal life, because, as far as his will was concerned, he contemplated serving God forever, although his life was, beyond his control, cut off by death from the course of righteousness. Job also, so admirable in the midst of temptations, is my witness; for, while he was attacked with ulcers and his body was corrupted with sore boils, the ulcers of his body mingled together, and his members made putrid by the discharge from his sores, he spoke thus in the intensity of his anguish: „Until I die mine integrity shall not depart from me. My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go” <sup>2)</sup>, and

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1) Luke XII, 19.

2) Job XXVII, 5-6: „and mine integrity etc.”, an erroneous repetition



mine integrity shall never depart from me. What judge would not award the everlasting kingdom to this steadfast mind, thus bent on the course of righteousness that he might live forever!

Therefore it is meet for us to say, „Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments<sup>1)</sup>, and thy righteousness is above all blame. Thy ways are upright<sup>2)</sup> and in them are no stumbling-blocks”. Justly does the sinner fall into fire everlasting, because his thoughts were bent on sinning for ever, neither did he turn unto repentance. The righteous also are worthy of eternal life, because they devoted their souls and minds to walk forever in the way of righteousness.

We ought, however, while we yet have time, to sow good works, that we may receive a great recompense for but little labor; for an excellent life of but few days, the kingdom of heaven which has no end. (We ought) to flee from pleasures of short duration, lest through them we bring upon ourselves eternal torments. But thou, O pious man, hasten thy course after excellent things: „forget what is behind thee, and strive after what is before thee”<sup>3)</sup>. Let not the good thou hast done dwell upon thy mind, lest it prevent thee from doing what thou hast still to do. But every day that the sun rises upon thee make a beginning of goods works to do them, and every day complete them,

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1) Psalm CXIX, 137.

2) Cf. Psalm CXLV, 17. Revel. XV, 3.

3) Philip. III, 13.



neither cease forever. Direct the faculties of thy mind so that without ceasing they do good works. As thou desirest to enter into the eternal kingdom which has no end, reflect, tremble, and fear the everlasting fire prepared for the wicked, who will be condemned by a judgment which has no end. Let this word of the terrible judge be present in thy mind which saith: „These shall go into fire everlasting, and the righteous unto life everlasting” <sup>1)</sup>. May He by His goodness and love make thee worthy to be numbered among those to whom it is said, „I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink”, and with them mayest thou be a guest in the abode of light in life everlasting. Amen.

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1) Matthew XXV, 46.



## IV.

## LETTER OF MAR XENAIAS OF MABÛG

to Abraham and Orestes, presbyters of Edessa, concerning  
Stephen Bar Sudaili the Edessene.

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I have learned that Stephen the scribe, who departed from among us some time since, and now resides in the country of Jerusalem, sent to you, some time ago, followers of his with letters and books composed by him; taking care at the same time that the arrival of those whom he had sent, as well as what he was astutely desirous of accomplishing, should be concealed from us. For he thought that, were I to learn that he had sent to you men and also writings, his hopes might be disappointed. He has insanely imagined — whence I know not, but certainly from Satan, for he is the Father and cause of every heresy — to put forth in a book an impious and foolish doctrine, which is worthy of being reputed not only a heresy, but worse than Heathenism and Judaism, because it openly assimilates the creation to God, and teaches that it is necessary for everything to become like him. It also falsifies the Holy Scriptures, and even destroys faith in Christianity, teaching that every man may sin as he pleases, and dissuading Heathen, Jews, and here-



tics from Christian instruction and from being converted to God. It makes of no effect holy Baptism, and the giving of the Divine mysteries, and labors and struggles for righteousness. For if, according to his impious words, not only will there be no Judgment, but all will receive the same measure of retribution, then the same honor will be accorded to the apostle Peter and to Simon Magus, to the preacher Paul and to the traitor Judas, to the Apostles and Evangelists 1). And, what is especially full of an impiety akin to insanity is, that he says, that everything is of one nature with God. What has just been detailed is most important and most completely reprehensible; for then the Apostles have in vain worked, and converted all nations from Heathenism to Christianity, if even without instruction in the faith and baptism they are to be equals of the Apostles, and are to become consubstantial with God, the Lord of the Universe. Hence there is no difference between those who died for Christ and those who killed them, for they who were confessors of the faith will receive nothing more, and they who killed them nothing less, because all together, as he says, will arrive at one perfection; and as the members of the body are of the same nature as each other and as the body itself, so, as he means and even says, are we in God and with Him in unity the one with the other. These things may be known, he says, by the mystery of the first day of the week, when, as he says, God will be all in all: one nature, one substance, one divinity. If then it is possible that men should become consubstantial with the Divinity, then the dispensation of the flesh and the Incarnation were superfluous. From misunderstanding, therefore,

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1) The antithesis which must have followed seems to have been omitted in our copy.



this saying of the apostle, „that God may be all in all” 1), he has foolishly imagined and produced this impious and foolish doctrine, which perhaps would not even be accepted among demons; for I think they would tremble simply to hear that they were to become consubstantial with God; for also concerning them, as well as all the angelic host which did not fall, does he assert, that they will become consubstantial with the Divinity and Godhead. And as he did not know how to understand this saying or to perceive what preceded it, neither was he able to consider all the things which are said in the Holy Scriptures on the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked. Neither did he know how to distinguish between the Divinity and the creation, and that it is not possible for the Divinity through change to become the creation, or creation the Divinity. Furthermore he does not accord with the doctors who have interpreted this saying in an orthodox manner. He desired, being puffed up like a vain and proud man, to originate heresies himself also, like John the Egyptian, whom for a short time he even followed.

I have also found in his writings that he has imagined another false doctrine, founded on what it is written in the Gospel that Our Lord said: „Today and tomorrow I work miracles, and on the third day I shall be perfected” 2). He fancies that, speaking in a parable, this world was established on the sixth day of the week, and he calls it evil; and the Sabbath (he calls) the rest which comes after the completion; and the first day of the week, he says, is the consummation, because then God will become all in all; that is, everything will be in God, one nature and one substance; so

1) 1 Corinth. XV, 28.

2) Luke XIII, 32. It is differently quoted later: see p. 37.



that there will no longer be, He who creates and those who receive his creative action; He who shows benevolence to those whom He loves; and there will no longer be Father, Son and Spirit; for, if he raves that the Creator and all his creatures who are distinct from each other will become one nature and person, how must not consubstantial persons of necessity also become one person? Thus there would be a confusion, not only of the creation with the Divine Substance, but also of the Persons one with another.

But in that he says that these three days alone, the sixth, seventh and first days of the week are mysteries, types and parables, he has posited this alternative: it is necessary either to believe that all (the days) are to receive this manner of interpretation, or else not to believe that those are as he says.

Following the Jewish doctrine, he appoints after the resurrection two retributions, one of which he calls *rest* <sup>1)</sup> and the other *perfection*, one *liberty* and the other *divinity*, together with other names which he has contrived and applied to them. For to the Jews alone had this theory occurred, who say that after the resurrection there will be a rest of a thousand years, during which the righteous will eat and drink, and sinners will hunger and thirst; the just will give themselves up to every bodily delight, and the wicked will suffer every torment. Concerning which belief it is written that Our Lord said: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God: for in the resurrection of the dead they do not eat nor drink, neither marry, but are as the angels of God" <sup>2)</sup>. But regarding his belief, that *rest* is one thing and the *kingdom* another; and the glory

1) Cf. Hebrews III and IV.

2) Matth. XXII, 29—30 and Mark XII, 24—25; the eating and drinking is an interpolation.



*before* the consummation one thing, and the *consummation* itself another; we would ask, from what Holy Book, or prophet, or apostle, or teacher, has he received this doctrine of a division into three orders? For he understands, as he says, by the sixth day *motion*, having taken the term *motion* from the monk Evagrius<sup>1)</sup>; by the Sabbath, that Christ will be all and in all men; and by the first day, that God will be all in all. He furthermore shows that it is less for man to be united to Christ than to be in God. He imagined, then, that he could confirm these three (stages) by the words which Our Lord spoke to the Pharisees, which it is certain were not a figure, an allegory, a parable, or a mystery, but the narration of an action imagined by the Pharisees, as is shown by reading them. "The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out and depart hence, for Herod desireth to kill thee. And He said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils and I perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must *work*<sup>2)</sup> today and tomorrow, and on the day following I will go (hence)<sup>3)</sup>, for it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem"<sup>4)</sup>. Now if, according to his researches, today, the sixth day, be an allegory of this world, and tomorrow, the Sabbath, a type of rest, and the third day, the first of the week, a symbol of the consummation; what then comes after the consummation? Is Our Lord again to be crucified? but by whom? for according to his doctrine even the Jews will have become of one nature with God.

Now it is thus written, that Our Lord said, after "today

1) Κίνησις. Evagrius Ponticus was a disciple of Gregory Nazianzen.

2) The expression *work* instead of *walk* is in the Peshitta, but not in the Curetonian Gospels.

3) The Curetonian version reads **סבולו כעני אורא**.

4) Luke XIII, 31—33.



and tomorrow and the third day I shall be perfected", "because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem": it is therefore evident that He means, by the consummation, that He should be crucified, and that this should take place in Jerusalem, where also all the prophets had been killed, and likewise He also was to be crucified there. He said that He would be perfected through the cross, in order to fulfil what is said: "By the cross which consummates" <sup>1)</sup>; and this other: "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified" <sup>2)</sup>, and also: „When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I do nothing of myself" <sup>3)</sup>. Now the Pharisees, burning with envy because they saw that Our Lord taught and performed miracles and was glorified of all men, wished to expel him from among them unto some other place, that they should not be thus vexed. But, as praise from all men was given to him, they thought to intimidate and terrify him, and said: "Get thee out and depart hence, for Herod desireth to kill thee". But He said unto them that except He were willing He would not die, and that neither Herod nor they would be able to kill him except at the time He chose. Therefore, when He derides Herod and calls him fox, He indicates that he is but contemptible and despicable, and unable to kill Him before the time at which He has determined to die: "Go ye and tell that fox, Behold I cast out devils and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected". He hereby indicates the three years which He passed among the Jews, from His baptism to His crucifixion, in which He also teaches that He worked miracles; for in the thirty years which preceded

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1) There seems to be no such expression in Scripture.

2) John XII, 23.

3) From John VIII, 28.



His baptism it is not written that He gave any instruction or manifested any miracle. But He says that after three years, which are today, tomorrow and the third day, at the time that He chooses He will go up to Jerusalem, and there will be crucified by the Jews, "for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem". And to this He adds: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until the day come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" <sup>1</sup>).

Therefore, whether or no there be in these words a symbol or type or anything which allegorically and mystically teaches the things which appear unto this man, read ye and consider and decide among yourselves: for by these three words he sustains, as he imagines, his vain opinion, and the change of the three dispensations of the sixth, the seventh and the first days of the week. For he calls today and tomorrow (respectively) the evil world and liberty, and the being perfected on the third day is, that God will be all in all. All being in Christ on the seventh day (Sabbath) — as if they were not so already by baptism — he believes to indicate that Christ *is* all and *in* all men. If this be on the seventh day then nothing took place on the sixth, and Christ was not made flesh and born, and did not suffer and die, neither was the power of death and the reign of corruption destroyed.

1) Matthew XXIII, 37—39; Luke XIII, 34—35.  $\text{הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְיָמָּוָה וְהַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי}$ , »the day come'', is not found in the Peshitta, but in the Curetonian version: otherwise the Peshitta for Luke XIII is followed except  $\text{אֲבֹנָה הַזֶּה}$  =  $\text{אֲבֹנָה}$  and  $\text{בֹּנָה}$  for  $\text{בֹּנָה}$ ;  $\text{אֲבֹנָה} = \text{אֲבֹנָה}$ ;  $\text{הַיּוֹם} = \text{הַיּוֹם}$ .



For these and like things were accomplished by the crucifixion and death of Christ, which took place on the sixth day; who also cried out and said: "All is finished". This is what this man calls the evil world. Furthermore, as Our Lord taught that the consummation was on the sixth day, because He then fulfilled all things, this man by defining it to be on the first day of the week openly teaches contrary to the word of Our Lord. Our Lord therefore on the sixth day suffered and died and destroyed the dominion of suffering and of death; on the seventh day He was in the grave, and put an end also to the power of corruption, and visited the souls held captive in Sheol. And on the first day of the week He rose from the dead, and proved by His own resurrection that of all mankind, and the beginning of a new world in which there is no seventh and first day of the week, as this man says, but it is all first day. But he (Bar Sudaili) not being able to see these things himself, nor willing to learn them from those who were able, wrote this book in which he consulted his own vain thoughts and not the Holy Scriptures, and constructed a new doctrine full of wickedness and impiety, in an insipid and foolish language. For although he is not even able to command a language worthy of writing, still, being desirous of making a display, he came forward as an inventor of heresies. I will not, furthermore, omit the following fact, although it is apparent from his writings. There came unto me trustworthy men who said that on entering his cell they found written by him on the wall: "All nature is consubstantial with the Divine Essence"; and on account of their strongly accusing him of blasphemy, and it becoming known to many monks who murmured at it, he was afraid and removed it from the wall; but secretly put it into his writings.



They related before me that to a certain Jew, who was by the sepulchre of the Patriarchs of the house of Abraham, he said this word, coming up and sitting by him: "Fear not, neither be concerned that thou art called crucifier, for thy lot is with Abraham:" instead of saying "thy portion". Concerning various other blasphemies which he raved and uttered, other men, who disputed with him on this subject and were with him for a long time, but are now in the province of Antioch, have spoken to us, but on account of the extreme shamefulness of these blasphemies it has seemed to me not suitable that they should be stated in this letter.

If therefore he has either written unto you, as I have learned, or has sent unto you his blasphemous books, be careful lest they fall into any person's hands and especially into those of nuns dwelling within church-precincts, lest they be led astray through the simplicity and weakness natural to women. For the wise must all, as is written, "take up the stumbling-block out of the way"<sup>1)</sup>, lest he receive many wounds and become the companion of many others who stumble and fall<sup>2)</sup>.

Write also to him, if it seem proper to you, that he cease from his blasphemies on an ineffable, pure, incomprehensible and holy doctrine. Concerning which I do not know that he has yet a single disciple, for, of the many arguments which he has collected from the Scriptures, when he applies them, he does not discover the (real) force, but he imagines that they support his view.

I remember that I once wrote to him a letter by means of one of his disciples, Abraham by name; a copy of which also I now send unto you. At that time I did not well know

1) Isaiah LVII, 14.

2) Cf. Isaiah VIII, 15.



that he had dared to imagine such blasphemies, for I had only met with his commentaries on a few of the Psalms, in which he also glorifies himself and ascribes to himself revelations and visions, and (says) that to him alone is it given to understand the Scriptures correctly. In them he also calls the Scriptures dreams, and his commentaries the interpretation of dreams.

Afterwards he craftily devised to send his books to you and to write to you, in order to deceive the simple people there (at Jerusalem); for I have heard that he says to them, that even in Edessa is his heresy received, and is furthermore much praised by us, — until some of the monks there happened upon the letter which I had written, of which I now send you a copy, and found that (on the contrary) he was strongly censured by me. When therefore you shall have received these letters of mine, that which you know to be just write unto him, and reprove him, and that not feebly but forcibly. I myself would write to the bishop of Jerusalem <sup>1)</sup> respecting him, were it not for differences concerning the faith, and that the fact of our not being of the same communion is a middle wall (of partition) between us <sup>2)</sup>. For this man has sinned not a little, and the offences which he has committed are not small; for he says that dogs, pigs, serpents, scorpions, mice, and other reptiles of the earth, are consubstantial with God: that is will become so. He also strives to persuade others to believe likewise, and says thus: „As the Father and the Son and the Spirit are of one nature, and as the body of the Word is consubstantial with his divinity”, through ignorance he also blasphemes concerning this part (of Church doctrine), adding, „all creation also will

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1) Elias, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

2) Ephesians II, 14.



## V.

## THE PHILOSOPHIC SYSTEM OF BAR SUDAILI.

The letter of Jacob of Sarug was evidently written at a period when Bar Sudaili had not yet thrown off the mask entirely: it makes no mention of pantheistic doctrines, but simply upholds the church doctrine of the eternity of punishment against Bar Sudaili's theory of its temporal duration. In doing so he falls, Jacob of Takrit (XIII century) remarks <sup>1)</sup>, into the error of the Semi-Pelagians, that the just received eternal bliss because God foreknew that they would always have continued in righteousness. This view cannot be correctly said to be that of the Semi-Pelagians, although it resembles it in the coöperation of the two elements of grace and good works.

Philoxenos has confined himself, in his letter, to treating in general terms of one part only of Bar Sudaili's system, that which seemed to him most pernicious, his pantheism and his doctrine of salvation. His system was openly pantheistic, or, to speak more philosophically, *Pan-nihilistic*; for, according to him, all nature even to the lowest forms of animal

1) The passage is in his *ܟܬܒܐ ܕܟܘܢܝܢܐ* »Book of Treasures'' (written in 1231), part III, ch. 39: cf. Assem. B. O., T. II, p. 240; and Abbeloos, S. Jacques de Sarug, p. 125.

creation, being simply an emanation from the Divinity-Chaos <sup>1)</sup>, finally returns to it; and, when the consummation has taken place, God himself passes away and everything is swallowed up in the indefinite chaos which he conceives to be the first principle and the end of being, and which admits of no distinction. Let us examine the salient features to be noticed in Philoxenos' letter, and compare them with the doctrines of the Book of Hierotheos as they are disclosed in the summary given further on. In the first place, we read that Bar Sudaili "openly assimilates the creation to God and teaches that it is necessary for everything to become like him" <sup>2)</sup>: his formula was, »All nature is consubstantial with the Divinity" <sup>3)</sup>. Secondly, there are three periods of existence: 1. the present world, which is evil, and to which belongs motion: 2. during this period all existence is brought into complete union with Christ who »is all and in all men"; this is the period of rest and liberty: 3. finally, all nature becomes of the same nature with the universal essence <sup>4)</sup>. This is the consummation or the confusion of all things, when distinction disappears, not only between God and Nature, but between the persons of the Godhead itself <sup>5)</sup>: God, as personality, passes away, and there is no longer Father, Son, and Spirit. Even the devils are finally redeemed, and included in the general indistinction and confusion <sup>6)</sup>. This doctrine of universal redemption and return into the divine nature — the ἀποκατάστασις — was, as is well known, the common doctrine of the great Alexandrian and Antiochene schools. Both Origen and Theodore of Mopsuestia, like

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1) His first principle is identical with the *Θεαρχία* or source of divinity of Pseudo-Dionysios.

2) P. 28.

3) P. 42.

4) P. 32 seq.

5) P. 34.

6) P. 32.



enos, a dangerous point, for Theodosios vainly endeavors to clear Hierotheos from the charge. This fact itself is of importance from its connection with the criticisms of Philoxenos on Bar Sudaili.

The three periods which Philoxenos finds in Bar Sudaili clearly appear in Hierotheos, not only as world-periods but as phases of the development of individual souls. The first or natural condition is that during which the mind aspires with motion towards the first principle, but still possesses evil in itself. The second takes place when the mind or rational nature, through its rise, becomes identified with Christ and goes through its long experience and purification before reaching the final consummation, experience during which it performs all the acts of Christ and is Christ himself; for Christ is nothing but the Universal Mind. The third state is when all nature is completely absorbed into the original chaos from which all originally sprang, even God himself: in this absorption, Father, Son, and Spirit disappear, and all distinction vanishes<sup>1</sup>).

Any further details at this point seem unnecessary; a reading of the summary of the Book will show even more clearly the complete identity of Bar Sudaili's doctrine, so far as it is stated by Philoxenos, with that of the Book of Hierotheos. If the analogy went only so far as to cover what is, so to speak, the common ground of pantheistic mysticism, there would be nothing remarkable or conclusive in such a coincidence. What would seem, however, to be a strong argument for the identity of the two writers, —

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ance of demons. But our teacher did not say these things of the repentance of demons, nor had he any such thing in mind: on the contrary it was of those men whose evil had led them into the abode of demons. This fact is clear and evident, that he spoke of the repentance of men, from his saying," etc. 1) See summary of Book of Hierotheos.

besides the three world-periods, — is the form of doctrine found in both on the "consummation": what other mystic writer had ever dared to reach such a depth of logical blasphemy as to assert in so many words that "the Father, Son, and Spirit", that God, will cease to exist? This is, of course, but the logical consequence of the Pseudo-Dionysian doctrine of an emanated Trinity, for, as Origen says, "as the beginning is, so must the end be"; but nowhere in these writings, any more than in those of the Alexandrian and Antiochene doctors who teach the ἀποκατάστασις, is such a consequence expressed. Many striking personal similarities between Bar Sudaili and Pseudo-Hierotheos are evident at first sight: both lay claim to direct divine revelations; both make extensive use of Scripture for the support of their theories. It remains for us to see whether the Dionysian fragments of Hierotheos are in accord with what has been deduced. As it would be out of place to give here their full text, which would have to be compared with passages of the Book of Hierotheos, a few words of description will be sufficient. The extract from the *Elements of Theology* <sup>1)</sup> is a definition of the nature of Christ. The divinity of Jesus (τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Θεότης) is the all-including cause, above intelligence, life, and substance. It maintains the harmony of the parts and the whole, being above both the parts and the whole. Between this conception and that of Christ as the *universal essence* and the *union* of all things, the harmony is evident. The extract given in *Eccles. Hier.* (ch. II, 1) shows that "the first motion of the mind towards the divine is the love of God"; and the fragments from the *Erotic hymns* <sup>2)</sup> treat of love as a unitive force moving all beings "from the Good

1) Divine Names, ch. II, 10.

2) Divine Names, ch. IV, 15—17.

*down to the last of beings and from the last of beings up to the Good*». There are many corresponding passages in Hierotheos: he describes the motion of glorifying and loving, as that which belongs to distinct and separate existence, as the supplication of those who have fallen. «All rational essences glorify and love the essence from which they were separated».

It seems at first difficult to explain why Philoxenos pours such fierce invectives on Bar Sudaili, and stigmatizes his doctrines as unheard of, and worse than Judaism or Hea-thenism. Although they were expressed in bold language by Bar Sudaili, yet, besides being in accord with the prevailing spirit of East-Syrian and Egyptian monasticism, how many famous teachers and doctors of the church had supported the same doctrine! While it is presented in different forms by Sabellios <sup>1)</sup>, Marcellus of Ankyra <sup>2)</sup>, etc., it is upheld by the whole Alexandrian School, by Clement, Origen, and Didymos, by Gregory Nazianzen <sup>3)</sup> and Gregory of Nyssa, by Nemesios, Synesios, and others, and later by the School of Antioch, headed by Diodoros of Tarsos and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Among the East-Syrians even S. Ephraem can hardly be cleared from the stain of a moderate mystical pantheism. If none of these theologians used the same freedom of language as Bar Sudaili, on approaching the most sacred precincts of the Christian faith, Philoxenos must have been too subtle a theologian not to have seen beyond their reticences. The severity shown to Stephen cannot then be explained from the principles of his thought, but from the freedom of his language, which was such as to throw oblo-

1) See Neander, I, pp. 598 and 600.

2) *Adversus Marc.*: see Dorner, I. 2, p. 282.

3) E. g. his hymn published in notes to Dionysios (Op. om. ed. Migne, I. p. 696).

quy on the whole mystical school and to draw upon it the reprobation of ecclesiastical authority. Another explanation, the plausibility of which may appear further on, would be Bar Sudaili's connection with the beginning of the well-known Origenistic revival in the first part of the VI century.

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## VI.

## BIOGRAPHY OF BAR SUDAILI.

The biographical information concerning Bar Sudaili at our disposal is very meagre. Philoxenos tells us that he was a native of Edessa and a *κισσ* or scribe, and Jacob of Sarug shows him to have been a monk of considerable repute for sanctity and good works; in fact, the terms of praise which he bestows on Bar Sudaili indicate that, until then, the latter enjoyed the favor of the Monophysite party, though already he had not only begun to show his anti-christian sentiments more openly, but was also cherishing ambitious aims. In all probability Bar Sudaili passed a portion of his early career in Egypt, for Philoxenos mentions his having followed for some time the leadership of John the Egyptian. If his identity with Pseudo-Hierotheos be granted, there would be some interesting traces of this early part of his life. Three dogmatic extracts passing under the name of Hierotheos are preserved, in either Arabic or Ethiopic versions; the originals seem to have been in Coptic. Two of these appear in the well-known *Fides Patrum*<sup>1)</sup>, a work compiled probably in

1) The Arabic version is found in the Vatican (Arabic Cod. 101 ff. 11 and 12), in Florence (Medic. Palat. Library C.LXIX) and in the Vict. Emanuel Lib. at Rome. The Ethiopic text is preserved in the Brit. Mus. Ethiopic Cod. 14 Add. 16,219 f. 7-8, and in the Library of the Univ. of Tübingen.

the XI cent.: a Latin version of them was given by Mai in tome III of his *Spicilegium Romanum* (p. 704<sup>1</sup>), but both the Arabic and Ethiopic texts have remained inedited. These fragments, which contain declarations concerning the nature of Christ, are somewhat colorless, although perceptibly Monophysite<sup>2</sup>). Of more interest is a confession of faith, contained in an Arabic MS. of the councils (Arab. Vatic. 409 f. 397), which seems not to have been noticed by Mai. Here a strong pantheistic and mystical tinge is added to its Monophysitism, and many expressions remind us of Bar Sudaili, especially those in which the all-containing nature of the *thearchy* is taught<sup>3</sup>).

It appears clearly from the language of these fragments that they were written at a time when the Monophysite controversy was at its height; and the probabilities are in favor of their having been written by Bar Sudaili. The first two show him to have been at first a prudent but evident Monophysite, and the last must have been produced somewhat later, when his creed had become more mystical. There are no traces of them in Syriac, and they must without any doubt be referred to a residence in Egypt. It was in Edessa however that he began to show his personal views: it is probable that he was still in that city when Jacob of Sarug addressed to him the present letter. Then also Philoxenos may have written to him the previous letter which he refers to, and the copy of which he enclosed<sup>4</sup>). Soon after, in all probability from the opposition he met with in his native city,

1) Mai published it without pledging himself in any way, »nullum interponens de iis iudicium».

2) Compare their phraseology with that of Jacob of Sarug, e. g. in his letter to the monks of Bassus.

3) I intend to publish the text of these documents with that of the Book of Hierotheos.

4) See pp. 44—47.

Bar Sudaili was obliged to leave Edessa and betake himself to Palestine, where the greater freedom of thought allowed was abundantly used by the Origenistic monks, who were growing numerous and bold. At or near Jerusalem he entered a monastery, as we see from the letter of Philoxenos: that he was ever an abbot seems to be a gratuitous assumption on the part of Neander, Gfrörer, and those who have copied the assertion from them. We have no record of his being expelled from this monastery, as some were, in consequence of his scandalously pantheistic views, but there can be no doubt that they became well-known, not only from his writings, but also from the words he wrote on the wall of his cell, „All nature is consubstantial with the Divinity”. About the same time we hear of the expulsion, for Origenistic views, of four monks from the new Laura of S. Saba, with the consent of the archbishop Elias <sup>1)</sup>, to whom also Philoxenos, in his letter, speaks of appealing: it would not therefore have been surprising if Bar Sudaili had been treated in the same manner. The period of his residence in Jerusalem is the only part of his career which may be dated with approximate certainty, between the years 494 and 512, from the concordance of dates between Jacob of Sarug (b. 454, d. 522), Philoxenos (485—518), and Elias of Jerusalem (494—513). As Philoxenos refers to the impossibility of his communicating with the Patriarch of Jerusalem on account of their division in faith, we are inclined to narrow the period at which his letter was written to between 509 and 512, when the contest between the two parties was at its height. Another chronological indication might be found in the *ⲕⲃⲁⲗⲁⲛⲟⲩ*,

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1) Cyrillus Scythopolita, Vita S. Sabae.

„Confession of faith”, of Philoxenos <sup>1)</sup>, if the period at which it was written could be exactly determined; for in the anathema at the close he enumerates כּוּ גְּדַלְיָא וְזַבְדָּא „the impious Bar Sudaili”. This confession may have been drawn up at the synod of Sidon, held in 512—513, of which Philoxenos was the prime mover. In the profession of faith <sup>2)</sup> demanded, among the Jacobites, of priests and deacons on their receiving orders, we also read the anathematism of Bar Sudaili and his followers. Stephen had evidently become a man of importance and influence.

Bar Ebraia, in his Ecclesiastical History <sup>3)</sup>, makes Bar Sudaili flourish at Edessa under the Antiochene patriarch Sergios, the successor of Severos, about 542. This is at variance with all our other evidence, and is certainly an error; for Stephen had already left Edessa, as we have seen, during the first years of the century, and his career could hardly have lasted until the middle of it.

It would be of great interest to know from what source

1) Brit. Mus. Add. 17216: cf. Wright's Cat., II, 533. Cod. Syr. Vat. CLIX, f. 83, v.   
 בְּרֵאשִׁית לְאֵלֹהִים כְּתוּבָה כְּחֻמְרָא דְּכּוּבָה  
 וְכִּי כְּעֻמְרָא דְּזַבְדָּא וְזַבְדָּא דְּכּוּבָה לְאֵלֹהִים  
 דְּהוּוּוּ, זַבְדָּא. דְּאֵלֹהִים . . . . . מְבַרַּךְ : אֱמִינֵן :  
 אֱמִינֵן דְּאֵלֹהִים כּוּ גְּדַלְיָא וְזַבְדָּא : אֱמִינֵן :  
 אֱמִינֵן :

2) Cod. Syr. Vat. XLIX, f. 58. It anathematizes   
 לְאֵלֹהִים כּוּ גְּדַלְיָא . לְאֵלֹהִים דְּאֵלֹהִים דְּכּוּבָה לְאֵלֹהִים  
 אֱמִינֵן . אֱמִינֵן אֱמִינֵן . אֱמִינֵן אֱמִינֵן אֱמִינֵן  
 דְּאֵלֹהִים לְאֵלֹהִים כּוּ גְּדַלְיָא וְזַבְדָּא :

3) Ed. Abbeloos and Lamy, p. 215. Cf. Assem. B. O., T. II, p. 327.

Bar Sudaili derived a part at least of his doctrines. On this point we find an interesting fact noted by Philoxenos in these words: „*He desired . . . to originate heresies himself also, like John the Egyptian, whom for a short time he even followed*”<sup>1)</sup>. His master then, before he came forward as an original thinker, was a John of Egypt. At this period the monophysite monk John II (509—517) was Patriarch of Alexandria; but as his relations with Severos of Antioch and the Syrian Monophysites were intimate, it is hardly possible that Philoxenos should have referred to him. Bar ‘Ebraia includes a John of Egypt in his enumeration of the Monophysites who flourished under Sergios of Antioch<sup>2)</sup>; but I have not met with any other notice which could with safety be referred to him. The John of Alexandria spoken of in Zacharias Rhetor as a heretic and falsifier of writings is, in all probability, another and an earlier writer<sup>3)</sup>. In no case could we identify this John with the Syrian John of Egypt, bishop of *ⲁⲃⲉⲁⲣ*, whose life is given by John of Asia<sup>4)</sup>; for, besides the fact that he flourished at a slightly later period, had he held the opinions which a master of Bar Sudaili must have had and which Philoxenos indicates, John of Asia, belonging to the same party as Philoxenos, would never have enumerated him among his saintly personages. It is hardly necessary, however, to question the opinions of this master of Bar Sudaili: the mystical pantheism of the monks of Egypt and Syria from the IV to the VI century, as well as the intimate relations between the two countries, are facts too well-known to require proof. In both there flourished every degree of pantheism and pan-nihilism, from the gross and

1) See pp. 32—3.

2) Assemani B. O., T. II, p. 327.

3) Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, T. II, p. 177.

4) Land, *op. cit.* T. III, p. 130.

material form of the Euchites to the spiritualized forms of the kabbalistic, Neo-platonic and Origenistic sects. Late researches tend to show that much of this was engrafted from the old Egyptian sects, with slight transformations required by the new dispensation. How much of this earlier form was embodied in the so-called Hermetic books it is difficult to determine, as they seem to be the work of such different periods.

Stephen bar Sudaili was undoubtedly in many points a follower of Origen and the Alexandrian school, but his thought was dominated by gnostic-kabbalistic elements. Having boldly proclaimed his doctrines, he sought to propagate them by numerous writings. Philoxenos shows him to have been a learned man, much devoted to the study of Scripture, which he interpreted in a kabbalistic manner, carrying probably to excess the mania for this kind of exegesis, which was in vogue among the followers and imitators of Origen; although it did not originate with the latter, but is found even more elaborated in the writings of Philo.

Although Philoxenos speaks of letters, commentaries, books, and other writings of Bar Sudaili, he gives details only regarding an early one, the first which came into his hands, a commentary on the Psalms. In it Stephen claimed to have direct revelations and to be an inspired man, to whom *alone* was revealed the true sense of Scripture: he called them dreams and his commentaries on them the interpretations of dreams. Philoxenos indicates that in this work Bar Sudaili had not yet developed his pantheism. The question naturally arises, was he acquainted with the Book of Hierotheos and did he make use of it in his criticisms? It seems as if this were not the case: otherwise the language of Philoxenos would have been entirely different. As it is, the phraseology

shows that he had other sources of information. He refers in particular to a book in which Stephen sets forth his doctrines (pp. 42—43) in a language which, he says, is entirely inadequate to the subject, *insipid and foolish*". From this book he extracts most of the statements which he condemns. What other works of Bar Sudaili he may have seen, it does not appear. Had he known of the imposture perpetrated by Stephen, he would not have failed to publicly accuse him of it: the secret character of the Book of Hierotheos must for some time have prevented its existence being generally known, even if it had been already written at that time.

From several passages in Philoxenos it appears that Bar Sudaili must have made numerous and active disciples (though he seeks to deny it), and have kept up continuous relations with Edessa, where he boasted of having adherents. We find that Philoxenos himself, before becoming acquainted with Stephen's most reprehensible doctrines, wrote to him a letter — now lost — which he sent by one of Stephen's disciples named Abraham: and the reason which induced Philoxenos to write to Abraham and Orestes at Edessa was, that they had received from Bar Sudaili letters and other works, sent to them through some of his followers; by which he wished to seduce them, and probably others, to adopt his pernicious doctrines.

Thus much have we been able to collect respecting Bar Sudaili: now it will be necessary, in order to complete his biography, to pass to the question of his identity with Pseudo-Hierotheos.

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bar Sudaili He affirmed that there will be an end to the torments (of hell), and that the wicked will not suffer forever, but will be purified by fire. Thus will mercy be shewn even to demons, and everything will return into the Divine nature, as Paul says, „God will be all in all”. He also wrote a book in support of this opinion, and called it by the name of Hierotheos, the master of the holy Dionysios, as if it were by the holy Hierotheos himself; which many also think”.

In a second passage, in the first section of his *Ecclesiastical History* <sup>1)</sup>, Bar Ebraia speaks of Stephen, but adds nothing new, except that he mentions his Scripture-commentaries. His words are: <sup>2)</sup> „At this time Stephen bar Sudaili became notorious as a monk in Edessa. He interpreted the Scriptures according to his own ideas, and affirmed that there will be an end to the torments of hell, and that sinners and even demons will be justified; laying down as the foundation of his teaching that, as Paul says, „God will be all in all”.

These few words represent in an absolutely exact manner the teachings of Bar Sudaili as related by Philoxenos, but the most important point is the categorical assertion, that Bar Sudaili attempted to palm off his principal work as that of Hierotheos, the supposed master of Dionysios the Areopagite. Were this statement only the expression of Bar Ebraia's

1) Ed. Abbeloos and Lamy, p. 222. 2) כח כוכב אב אשפוא  
 כו גומל נב כחום, כור באר. אפם לחת  
 כ נפם. אלא אבו לעמא. סוכוהום תלב  
 כור דאב זאור. כו כל מ, דמא אלא כל כל  
 אף דאבו אלא. אב זאור דאלאום.







by Pseudo-Dionysios: the other references were valueless as independent testimony, for they were all derived from the Pseudo-Dionysian writings. Halloix had no knowledge whatever of any Book of Hierotheos, or of a possible connection between Pseudo-Hierotheos and Bar Sudaili, but believed implicitly in the existence of a first century writer. Researches among Greek and Latin MSS. were also of no avail. I found, however, that there still existed at the British Museum a unique MS. of the book of Hierotheos in Syriac. It was described, but erroneously, in Rosen and Forshall's catalogue as translated and commentated by Theodosios Patriarch of Antioch, the second alone being the case. This work I was enabled to copy.

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## VIII.

## THE BOOK OF HIROTHEOS.

As already remarked, this Book pretends to have been written by a certain holy man of the first century, Hierotheos, a disciple of S. Paul and teacher of Dionysios the Areopagite, to whom also the work is supposed to be addressed. Legend tells us that he was the first bishop of Athens, before Dionysios, and that he afterwards went to Spain, where he remained as bishop. Dionysios says that he was present with the apostles at the death of the Virgin, and became noted for his beautiful hymns.

To return to our subject: this work is extant only in Syriac, in connection with an extensive commentary by Theodosios, patriarch of Antioch at the close of the IX century (887—896), in a unique MS. of the British Museum belonging, in great part, to the XIII century<sup>1</sup>). This is the very copy which, after great labor, Bar 'Ebraia succeeded in procuring, and from which he composed a compendium of the work, of which we will soon have occasion to speak<sup>2</sup>).

In the MS., after a letter and an introduction by Theo-

1) Add. (Rich) 7,189. Cf. the Cat. of Rosen and Forshall, p. 74.

2) Cf. Wright's remarks, supplementary to the Cat. of R. and F., at the close of vol. III of his Catalogue.

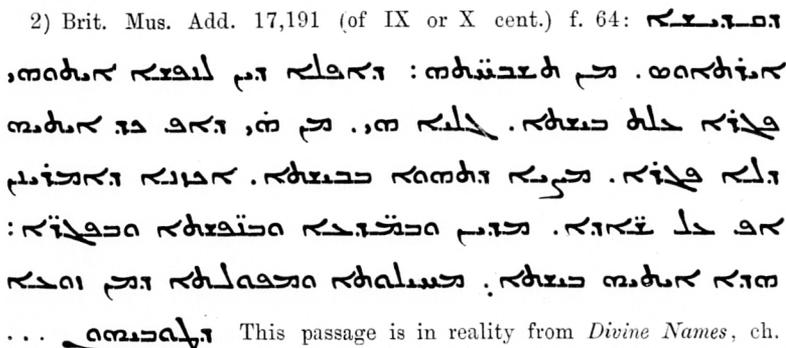
dosios, and immediately preceding the introductory chapter of the text, is a short preface or rather dedication by the person, real or supposititious, who translated the work from Greek into Syriac: it is addressed to his Maecenas, a certain **ܩܪܠܝܐ** "Philius", at whose request he undertook the work. Theodosios appends a commentary to this dedication in the same manner as he does to the text of the work itself: in no case could he have been the author of the translation. The same anonymous translator also adds a postscript at the end of the volume, addressed to the same Philios, in which he speaks of completing and sending him his translation, with an accompanying letter.

The Syriac itself is remarkably idiomatic, pure and easy, and shows no trace of being fettered by the necessities of a translation: this is very evident in comparison with the Syriac translation of Dionysios, in which the strained and unidiomatic character of the language is apparent at every point, though it is the work of such an able man as Sergios of Ras'ain.

If the Book of Hierotheos be considered the work of Bar Sudaili, two hypotheses naturally present themselves for the explanation of the linguistic purity we have mentioned. 1) We may allow that Bar Sudaili wrote the work in Greek, but that, in order to foster his propaganda in the region of Edessa, he translated it himself into Syriac: or 2) we may suppose that the existence of a Greek original is purely fictitious, and that the Syriac text we possess is the real original. This fiction of a Greek text was necessary to render the imposture credible, because, if genuine, the Book of Hierotheos must have been written in Greek. In this case the pretended translator's introduction and note were a fiction of Bar Sudaili along with the text, and we

would not need to be surprised at the non-appearance of the supposed Greek original. This latter supposition seems the most plausible, after a careful study of the text: the only valid objection would be the existence of any traces of a Greek text. I have found an apparent one, but its value is so questionable that it can hardly weigh in the balance. In a Latin catalogue of Greek MSS. existing at Constantinople towards 1600 we find the following title <sup>1)</sup>: „Explicatio S. Cyrilli Arciepiscopi Alexandriae in S. Hierotheum Areopagitam.” There are two objections to this being a reliable proof. 1) This work of Cyril is necessarily an imposture, as he lived more than a half-century before Bar Sudaili and Pseudo-Dionysios, and consequently it may have been written by some monk, a follower of Bar Sudaili's doctrine, as an additional prop to the stage-work of his fiction. 2) There seems to have existed some confusion between the persons of Hierotheos and Dionysios; in evidence of which we will give a passage from Pseudo-Dionysios quoted in an early Syriac MS. (IX century) as by Hierotheos <sup>2)</sup>, and furthermore in this

1) Antonii Possevini, Apparatus Sacer. Coloniae Agrippinae 1608. T. II; in fine, p. 46, under the heading: »Ex catalogo Librorum variis in locis Constantinopoli extantium, qui sunt graece MS. quique a Grammatico fuere exhibiti.

2) Brit. Mus. Add. 17,191 (of IX or X cent.) f. 64:  This passage is in reality from *Divine Names*, ch. ...

same catalogue of Constantinople MSS. we read the title: „Liber sancti Hierothei, sive Dionysii Areopagitae, Episcopi Atheniensis Theologicus, Hierarchia, et Mystica Theologia”<sup>1)</sup>. Here the confusion is evident, and the reason for it is patent: both were legendary personages, both supposed to have been members of the Areopagos, disciples of S. Paul, bishops of Athens, and to have lived in Spain. It is then quite natural to suppose that this Pseudo-Cyrrillian commentary may after all have treated of the Pseudo-Dionysian writings. In confirmation of this we may refer to the fact that at the council of Constantinople in 532, when the Dionysian writings were first brought forward, their supporters alleged that S. Cyril had quoted them: this fact was disputed by the orthodox, and the quarrel became quite warm.

We have already noticed the great difficulty experienced by Bar Ebraia in procuring a copy of the Book of Hierotheos; but it is at first surprising to find that the patriarch Theodosios and his friend Lazaros, bishop of Kyros, experienced the same difficulty nearly four centuries before him: both of them were most desirous of becoming acquainted with the work, of taking it as their guide, and of unfolding its mysteries; and, as Theodosios informs us in his letter to his friend Lazaros, they finally succeeded. Our surprise, however, ceases when we read the opening chapters of the book itself, and perceive the frank and bold clearness with which the author develops his anti-christian and ultra-panththeistic system. That he is conscious, all the time, of the

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IV, § 27. Ὅτι δὲ οὐδὲ κακίας αἴτιον τῆ ψυχῆ τὸ σῶμα, δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ δυνατὸν εἶναι καὶ ἄνευ σώματος παρυφίστασθαι κακίαν, ὡσπερ ἐν δαίμοσι· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι καὶ νοῖς, καὶ ψυχαῖς, καὶ σώμασι κακὸν, ἢ τῆς ἕξεως τῶν οἰκείων ἀγαθῶν ἀσθένεια καὶ ἀπόπτωσις.

1) Ant. Possevini, *ibid.*

peril he runs, is evident from the oft-repeated injunction, under the severest penalties, not to disclose the mysteries of the book before "impure minds" (i. e. orthodox). Both the pretended Syrian translator in his introduction, and Theodosios in his commentary, reiterate this caution most emphatically. This secrecy is the keynote to the method of teaching of the Book of Hierotheos, and the assurance that the doctrines would not pass beyond the circle of the initiated explains the boldness of the language. We now see not only the reason for the scarcity of copies and for the difficulty in obtaining one, but also why the book occupied so exceptional a position.

We could hardly expect to find any general acquaintance with a work the knowledge and use of which was kept confined as much as possible to the narrow circle of esoteric mystics: even if inimical hands, attracted by vague reports, sought to obtain possession of it, they must have been generally baffled by the discretion and secrecy of the initiated, who were familiar with the anathemas launched against all disclosers of its mystical doctrines. Theodosios himself, however, leads us to conclude that before his time a number of theologians had commentated the work, but he omits to mention any of them by name. It is possible that he refers, among others, to Kyriakos and John of Dara, whom we have already quoted. This is all the more probable, because he speaks of these theologians as objecting to Hierotheos' doctrine of the redemption of the hell-sphere, which is precisely what Kyriakos and John of Dara do.

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## IX.

## THE POSITION GIVEN TO HIEROTHEOS BY PSEUDO-DIONYSIOS.

Turning to other writings which relate to our book, we must pause to consider the position given by Pseudo-Dionysios to his master Hierotheos: we have already alluded to the terms of great reverence and admiration which he uses with regard to him. The portrait he gives of Hierotheos tallies completely with what we know of Bar Sudaili: the mysticism, the celestial visions, the abstruse and condensed thought, the study of Scripture. I will here translate the chapter in which Pseudo-Dionysios explains his relations to his master <sup>1</sup>). „And here it is suitable to explain wherefore, inasmuch as our illustrious master Hierotheos has made an admirable collection of ‘Theological Elements’, we have, as if these were not sufficient, written others beside the present theological treatise. Certainly, had he claimed to write, systematically, treatises on all theological questions, and had in special expositions developed the sum of all theology, we would never have had the folly or the stupidity to consider ourselves better able than he to treat of theological matters in a clear and divine manner; or to talk at random, by repeating the same things super-

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1) Divine Names, ch. III, 2—3.

fluously; and moreover show ourselves unjust towards a teacher and friend by whom, after S. Paul, we were instructed, by plagiarizing his most excellent doctrine and expositions. But since he, in reality explaining divine things in a way suited to mature minds, enounced unto us certain synoptic statements, which in one included many, he as it were encouraged me and others, who like myself are teachers of newly-initiated souls, to unfold and interpret, in a language suited to us, the synoptic and universal meditations of the spiritual power of so great a man. Thou <sup>1)</sup> hast often thyself urged me to do so, and didst return to me his book as being too sublime. Therefore do we assign this teacher of perfect and mature intelligences unto those who are above the crowd, as second Scriptures, analogous to those divinely inspired. We however will transmit divine things to those like us in a manner suited to us. For, if solid food is for the perfect, what supreme perfection must it be to furnish such to others? Therefore have we truly said that the direct vision of spiritual truths and their synoptic teaching require a mature power, but that the acquaintance with and understanding of the truths leading up to them is suited to the inferior consecrators and priests. However, this has been most carefully observed by us, never to take in hand the things which this divine teacher has explained with sufficient clearness, lest we fall into tautology by giving the same explanation of a passage which he has already cited. For among our divinely-inspired hierarchs (when we, as thou knowest, together with him and many of our holy brothers had come together for the contemplation of the life-giving and God-receiving body, when James the brother of God, and Peter the supreme and

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1) Timothy, to whom the *Divine Names* is addressed.

venerable chief of theologians were present, it was decided, after the contemplation, that all the hierarchs should sing hymns, as each one was able, to the all powerful goodness of the thearchic infirmity) as you know, he excelled, after the theologians, all other initiated, being entirely beside himself, all in an ecstasy, and feeling communion with that which he was praising in hymns. He was considered by all those who heard and saw him, whether they knew him or not, to be divinely inspired and a divine psalmist. But wherefore should I speak to you of the divine things which were there said: for, unless my memory betrays me, I feel certain that I have often heard from you fragments of these divinely enthusiastic psalmodies, such zeal did you feel in searching diligently after divine things.

„But, passing over these mysteries, both because they are not be mentioned to the common crowd and because they are well-known to you, when it was necessary to confer with the multitude and to draw as many as possible to our own holy doctrine, how he surpassed the greater part of sacred teachers, in the use of time, in purity of mind, in acuteness of demonstration, and the rest of sacred discourses, so that we did not attempt even to look such a great light (lit. sun) in the face! For we are conscious and aware of not being sufficiently able either to comprehend those divine things which are intelligible, or to express and explain those divines doctrines which are expressible; being left so far behind by the knowledge of these divine men in theological truth, that through excessive timidity we would have even concluded not to hear or say anything on divine philosophy, had we not perceived that it was not right to neglect what it is possible for us to know of divine things. We were persuaded of this not only by the natural aspira-

tions of intelligences always filled with the desire for the contemplation, in so far as is allowed, of supernatural things, but also by the very excellent disposition of the divine ordinances, which while it forbids to meddle with what is above us, both as being superior to our worth and as unattainable, yet bids us to learn with zeal whatever is allowed and given to us, urging us to communicate generously to others. Persuaded then by this, and not desisting or shrinking from that search after divine things which is within our reach, and not bearing patiently that those who are not able to contemplate the things above us should remain without help, we have undertaken to write, not pretending to teach anything new, but interpreting and showing forth, by investigations more minute and applied to distinct parts, what had been said synoptically by Hierotheos". In another place (Div. Names II, 9) Dionysios says, as a preface to his quotation from Hierotheos' Elements of Theology: "this has been unfolded in a supernatural manner by our illustrious teacher in his Elements of Theology, which he in part received from pious theologians, in part conceived by a scientific investigation of Scripture through his frequent exercise and practice therein, and in part was taught by some more divine inspiration, by not only learning but experiencing divine things (*οὐ μόνον μαθῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ παθῶν τὰ θεῖα*) and by his sympathy (*συμπαθείας*) with them, if we may so express ourselves, made perfect in the unteachable and mystical union with and faith in them".

The text of the quotations from Hierotheos will be given with the text of the Book of Hierotheos for the sake of comparison. They have already been referred to on p. 6.

In regard to these fragments it will not be out of place

to refer to an error committed by Dorner <sup>1)</sup>. He makes an elaborate statement of the Christology of Pseudo-Dionysios, and founds it entirely on the quotations from Hierotheos' "Elements of Theology" in the Divine Names. All his conclusions must simply be transferred to Hierotheos. This is important, because the language of Dionysios himself concerning Christ is in quite a different form and in thought more theological, while that of his master is ontological and mystical. We seek in vain in the Book of Hierotheos for any of the quotations given in the "Divine Names"; but, as we have remarked, this could be no argument against the identification of Hierotheos with Bar Sudaili, for in no case would it have been prudent for Stephen's disciple to give passages from a work which the sect desired to keep as secret as possible.

We find perhaps the earliest mention of Hierotheos, after the appearance of the Dionysian writings, in the almost contemporary history of Zacharias Rhetor. This historian, in giving a portrait of the famous Severos of Antioch, describes him as "learned in the Holy Scriptures, and in the commentaries on them by ancient writers, by *Hierotheos* and Dionysios, Titus and Timothy, disciples of the apostles; and after them by Ignatios, Clement, and Irenaios, etc." <sup>2)</sup>. It would seem probable that Zacharias, who, it must be added, was himself quite a religious philosopher, points to something more being known, of the writings which passed under the name of Hierotheos, than the few fragments given by Pseudo-Dionysios. This passage would then be interesting, as it would show that Severos, who was a supporter of

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1) History of the doctrine of the Person of Christ, D. II, v. I. p. 157 sqq.

2) Land, *Anecdota Syriaca* T. III, p. 228.

Dionysian doctrines, favored also those of Pseudo-Hierotheos. Were the writings of Severos better known, more light might be thrown on the subject of his relation to the mystical school.

We have already mentioned the spurious "Explicatio S. Cyrilli" on Hierotheos, and the probable confusion between Dionysios and his master: in this connection it may be remarked that it has been already suggested by the learned Dailly <sup>1)</sup> that the Hierotheos spoken of by Pseudo-Dionysios is none but the latter himself, for in his opinion Hierotheos was an invented name. It is likely that this explanation may have suggested itself from the entire lack of information at that time regarding any person of this name or any works written by or attributed to him, with the single exception of what we read in Pseudo-Dionysios.

It would seem impossible for any one, after reading even an outline of the Book of Hierotheos, to accept for a moment this theory of identification. The intellectual position of the two minds is entirely different: Pseudo-Hierotheos is a simple monk, whose thought is entirely distinct from any philosophic system, claiming direct vision, drawing his theories from his own consciousness, and expressing them with great naïveté and freshness; it is the divine seer, and not the philosophic genius, who speaks. On reading his book one feels it to be the genuine out-pouring of a strongly-excited religious imagination, and the work of an original mind, but of no eclectic or imitator. It is true we find in his system ideas from both the Christian and pagan schools of Alexandria — especially from Origen — as well as traces

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1) Joannes Dallæus, De scriptis quae Dionysii Areopagitæ et Ignatii Antiocheni nominibus circumferuntur. Geneva 1666.

of the kabbalistic and gnostic systems and perhaps even of the early Chaldaean cosmogony: but they are marshalled into a perfectly symmetrical and harmonious whole, in subordination to the ideal peculiar to Hierotheos himself. With him there is never any attempt at discussion. His theories are successively unfolded as absolute and undeniable certainties, as revelations, as things which he has known and seen.

On the other hand, although Pseudo-Dionysios shows much of the same spirit in his *Mystical Theology* and *Divine Names*, yet even here there appears the logical element so conspicuous in his writings, which classifies him in a different branch of the mystical school from that of Pseudo-Hierotheos, as well as in far closer connection with the Neo-Platonists. We might say, that the one has a considerable affinity with the West-Syrian school of Antioch, and that the other belongs to the East-Syrian school of Edessa: for these represented, the former, the intellectual and logical side of the Syrian development, and the latter, its sentimental, symbolical and analogical side.

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## X.

THE QUESTION OF THE PRIORITY OF HIEROTHEOS  
TO DIONYSIOS.

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This leads to the discussion of another question, which may already have occurred to the reader. Is it not natural to suppose that the Book of Hierotheos was produced precisely in view of the references to Hierotheos in Pseudo-Dionysios, and is dependent on the latter, and consequently of no independent value? Would it not have been quite possible that a follower of Dionysios should have fancied to sustain his master's position by bringing out a work which should bear out his relation to Hierotheos? Were this the case, the author of a work of this kind would naturally have made it to correspond with the indications in Dionysios: would in all likelihood have entitled his work the *Θεολογικαὶ Στοιχειώσεις* or Principles of Theology, and with it would have incorporated, as a proof of authenticity, the passages quoted from that book in the Divine Names. He would also have referred more than once by name to his beloved disciple Dionysios. Supposing it to be an artificial production of this kind, would it not also be natural to find it a work entirely imitative, in the same style of thought as the Dionysian writings, but lacking their power and originality?

Now we find nothing of all this in the Book of Hierotheos: not only is the title different, and does it treat necessarily of a different order of ideas — the ontological and cosmological — but there is no sign of the passages quoted by Dionysios. Even the name of Dionysios is not mentioned, though the work seems to be dedicated to him: he is only referred to as "my son" or "my friend" <sup>1)</sup>. There is throughout no trace of any attempt to connect itself with the Pseudo-Dionysian writings. Besides this, what has already been noted regarding the difference in intellectual standpoint, style and form of thought is sufficient, I think, to preclude the idea of imitation: for it is clear that the relation in which the two stand to each other as presenting, the one, sentimental and analogical forms, and the other, intellectual and logical forms of the same ideas, gives, according to the natural development of schools, the priority to Hierotheos.

In this relation, reference must be made to a very sagacious conjecture made by Dorner, which is all the more remarkable because he had such meagre materials at hand on which to base it. He says: "Hierotheus was professedly the teacher of Dionysius; and under the name of Hierotheus Barsudaili wrote the work in which he taught the transition of all things into the divine nature. Such is the account given by Barhebraeus. Among the Monophysites the writings of the Areopagite were much used, translated and commented. It is possible that Barsudaili's fiction, — a fiction to which he may have been led by the Origenism which prevailed in many of the monasteries, and which formed a bridge to Neo-Platonism, — *may have given rise to the spread of Neo-Platonism in a Church form, under the name*

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1) S. Paul is spoken of by name as his master.

of the holy disciple of Hierotheus" 1). In this passage Dorner recognizes the true relation between the two writers, and this position of his is now amply confirmed. Gfrörer also in his Church History draws similar conclusions in his remarks on the Pseudo-Dionysian writings. Who was Pseudo-Dionysios? In his opinion a follower of Proklos, and by birth a Syrian. This latter position he attempts to prove by the relations between Dionysios and Hierotheos.

Taking then for granted the priority of Hierotheos, is it not singular that Dionysios should not have mentioned this most important work of his master? As we have already explained, this silence was necessary to the preservation of the secret character of the book.

A comparison of dates does not throw any difficulties in the way of the priority of Hierotheos. Bar Sudaili we know to have flourished during the last decade of the fifth century and the beginning of the sixth, while the first signs of the appearance of the Pseudo-Dionysian writings occur probably during the second decade of the sixth century at the earliest, the first certain date being that of the Council of 532—33. That they were already known before this date of 532 seems certain, and Sergios' Syriac version was probably slightly anterior.

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1) Dorner, J. A., History of development of the doctrine of the Person of Christ. Edinb. 1861. D. II. v. I. p. 422—23.

## XI.

## COMMENTARIES ON THE BOOK OF HIROTHEOS.

To return to the Syrian writers who have treated this book in extenso, we find still remaining to us two works of importance: the first is the commentary of Theodosios of Antioch, and the second is an abridgment of the work by Gregory Bar ʿEbraia. These two are of very unequal value, for the latter is more an imitation than a work of any original merit.

The physician Romanos, on becoming Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch in 887, took the name of Theodosios: his two great works seem to have been his commentary on Hierotheos and a treatise on medicine<sup>1</sup>). He must have been an enthusiastic follower of the mystico-pantheistic school, as also his friend Lazaros of Kyros at whose request he undertook and to whom he dedicated his work. The letter which he addresses to Lazaros at the beginning of his commentary would be of great interest: unfortunately the first sheets of the MS. are so defaced that but a small portion of it can be satisfactorily deciphered. In it he recounts how both he

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1) H. Zotenberg, *Les sentences symboliques de Théodose, patriarche d'Antioche*. Paris 1877, p. 8—9.



Immediately following the letter is a long introduction by Theodosios, in which he summarizes the book, explains his view of it, and enters into an elaborate and interesting interpretation of all the mystical and philosophical terms used in the text — interpretations which are valuable not only for the understanding of the work, but often also philologically.

The commentary of Theodosios is very detailed, and occupies about three-quarters of the 4<sup>th</sup> volume of 134 pages. He is very careful to define and explain all the expressions used, and often does so in a very mystical and fanciful manner. In his opinion, the most abstruse doctrines in the book are veiled under words which would suffice to hide them from the uninitiated, but to "pure minds" "be easy of interpretation."

לך ידע כי כל דבר אשר נאמר בו שם אלהים  
 הוא סודי ונעלם ונכסוף ונחבא ונמסך  
 ונעלם ונחבא ונמסך ונעלם ונחבא ונמסך

«the holy and mystical doctrine, hidden in allegories, of the blessed Hierotheos. I will endeavor to interpret to you, as you in the goodness of your heart have asked, this holy and divine teaching. For the labors and fatigue in searching after this book never discouraged you, neither were you stopped by the lack of it, nor by the pains you were obliged to take to remove the veil from off the words of the Teacher. I do not therefore wish to defraud you of this profit. Even if it is a laborious work, yet will we derive from it a most glorious illumination.» etc. etc.

Besides the general introduction, each one of the five books is preceded by a particular one. To the text of the chapters the commentary is attached in two different ways in different parts of the MS.: either the whole chapter of the text is first given, and then repeated in short sections, each with a separate commentary; or else, in order to avoid repetition, the latter system alone is used without first giving the whole text. As a scientific, thorough and systematic work, this commentary is remarkable, and gives a favorable idea of the possibilities of Syrian learning.

There is nothing in any part of Theodosios' writings to indicate that he did not believe implicitly in the authorship of a genuine first-century Hierotheos: we will soon have to refer to the probable sincerity of this belief.

Bar ʿEbraia also interested himself in the Book of Hierotheos, and sent emissaries throughout the East to procure a copy: he finally obtained one, which, strange to say, is the identical copy now preserved in the British Museum<sup>1</sup>), and that to which we are indebted for our knowledge of the work. From this MS. he drew up a compendium, to which he added a running commentary, derived principally from that of Theodosios. He took however great liberties with the text, and showed the true unscrupulousness of an Eastern in distorting it for the purpose of softening its anti-christian tone and hiding its real character<sup>2</sup>). The worst part of the process to which he submitted the book was the entire change he made in the order of the chapters, placing near

1) See the note on the last page of the MS., where the fact is noticed and an account of the search is given. Cf. Wright's Cat. vol. III, supplem.

2) Ms. copies of this work exist in Paris (Bib. Nat. Fonds Syr. 227), in Oxford, and in the British Museum (Syr. MS. 850; Wright, Cat. p. 893 and Add. 1017).





We have seen it to be a fact well known in the Syrian literary and religious world of that period, that the Book was attributed to Stephen. Now of this fact such a man as Theodosios could not have been ignorant when it was well known to Kyriakos and John of Dara. But it would have been quite natural for him to repudiate and conceal such knowledge; for even at that time it would have been regarded as a very questionable step for the leaders of the Church to take, as their spiritual guide, an openly-reprobated pantheist.

## XII.

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF HIEROTHEOS ON THE  
HIDDEN MYSTERIES OF THE DIVINITY.

It would not be possible within the limits of a few pages to give a satisfactory summary of a work written in such a condensed style, and full of so many unusual, and to us strange, ideas: still we will endeavor to give, as far as possible, a correct idea of the work, using, if not the exact wording of the author, a very similar language. We have purposely avoided attempting a critical analysis, or a comparison with earlier writings which contain similar doctrines; all this can be done only when we publish the text itself.

The full title of the work is not given on the first sheet of the MS., but appears from the introductory commentary to be **הבשר והנפש והרוח : ספר הקדוש : ספר המסתרים**. *The Book of the holy Hierotheos on the hidden mysteries of the Divinity* (lit. of the house of God). It is divided into five books, each of which contains a number of chapters. It is a real theological epic, in which the mystical scenes through which the soul passes in its ascent towards the One are developed in a vivid manner, as if the writer saw heaven open and the angels of God ascending

and descending upon the Son of man". The writer himself professes to have more than once attained to the highest point of mystic union with the Arch-Good.

To describe the contents in a few words: at the beginning we find the statement regarding absolute existence, and the emanation from primordial essence of the spiritual and material universes: then comes, what occupies almost the entire work, the experience of the mind in search of perfection during this life. Finally comes the description of the various phases of existence as the mind rises into complete union with and ultimate absorption into the primitive essence. The key-note to the experience of the mind is its absolute identification with Christ; but the Son finally resigns the kingdom unto the Father, and all distinct existence comes to an end, being lost in the chaos of the Good.

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BOOK FIRST.

*Every intelligent nature is determined, known and comprehended by the essence which is above it; and determines, knows and comprehends the essence which is below it; but to the pure mind alone belongs the vision above and below<sup>1</sup>). Not even to the intelligence of angels are the wonderful mysteries of pure and holy minds revealed.*

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1) In Hierotheos the Arch-Good (Ἄρχηγος Ἄγαθός, Ἄγαθός Θεός) is the first, indefinite and all-embracing principle. The Universal Essence (Καθ' ἑαυτὸν Ἄγαθόν), the Unity, or the Neo-Platonic One, is second in order of emanation: it contains within itself the principles of distinction (see p. 95), and does not appear to be different from what is termed the first fall out of the Good.



a confused sense of their place (?). And I openly say, with entire frankness, that they were Tohu and Bohu <sup>1</sup>).

After innumerable ages had passed, the Good was moved to pour forth its love, and to brood over these unconscious minds, in order that they should acquire the motion of life and consciousness; then there was born in them a new heart and a new spirit to know good and evil <sup>2</sup>): that is, it (the Good) endowed them with free-will, and then established the position of each essence according to the measure of its love. It also made Christ head and ruler over them, and this took place when the mind received reason <sup>3</sup>). To some

Kabbalism in Hierotheos. According to the Zohar, the *En-Soph* or ancient of ancients, before it had put on a form, — before the manifestation of the Sephiroth, — produced formless worlds which were emitted from it like sparks. These could not subsist but fell, because the Adam Kadmon (as individualizing the 10 Sephiroth), which was to mediate between the creation and the *En-Soph*, had not yet been created. These worlds fell and were *little above nothing*, representing passive existence and the feminine principle, where all is resistance and inertia, as in matter (Tohu and Bohu). When the universal form of man (Adam Kadmon the mediator) was established, these ancient fallen worlds furnished the material element in the existing created universe (see Franck, *La Kabbale*, pp. 206, 207 and passim). This resistant passive principle is individualized in Hierotheos by the unredeemable and irrational *insensible essence* (see page 104).

1) בן לין לאלים אמתא דעלמא דהוה אמתא דהוה  
 אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה

2) אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה  
 אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה

3) אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה  
 אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה אמתא דהוה





Motion and purification are the acts by which we glorify the Arch-Good. The first motion, as has been said, was a descendent one, out of Nature <sup>1)</sup>: but there are many motions, some ascendent, and others descendent.

*Natural motion* belongs to the fully developed condition of those who have not yet received the meat of knowledge but are still fed on milk. *Post-natural motion* is found in those who (while in a natural condition) *desire to live in an ordered manner*, and comprises *many divisions, like the angelic and super-angelic*. *Extra-natural motion* appertains to those who have a tendency towards evil in the natural sphere, and are then called sinners, and afterwards beasts and animals. *Super-natural motion* is that which is above the post-natural: instead of having many divisions and degrees and being governed by forms (as the latter is), it is *a still and silent perturbation, a proceeding without a way, and a knowledge raised above forms*; still it desires because it is not confusedly mingled. *Ultra-natural motion* is beyond the extra-natural, for it belongs to demons and to those minds which have completely left the whole nature of the Good and acquired a certain union with the Prince (of Darkness) <sup>2)</sup>.

There exist in the space between earth and heaven three

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1) For the explanation of this we must call attention to the absolute identification in Hierotheos of *nature* (κω), i. e. universal nature, with the arch-good (κθααβ θααβ) or agatharchy (ἀγαθαρχία), the first principle, which in the beginning contained all things undistinguished within itself.

2) Of these six motions, three are vital and three destructive: the former are, in order of progression, the *natural*, *post-natural*, and *super-natural* (compare with the κόσμος, περικόσμος and ὑπερκόσμος of Dionysios); the latter are, the original motion out of the Good, the *extra-natural* and the *ultra-natural*.

essences of demons, each of which has received its place according to the measure of its departure from the Good. The lower is darker than the upper, and wages a fiercer war against minds during their ascendent motion. While the mind possesses natural motion, it is combated by the first of these essences; when post-natural, by the two lower: and when it ascends (supernaturally), it is overwhelmed by all of them, for they desire to make it like unto themselves.

*Ascent of the mind.*

Now the end of the labor of minds is this glorious ascent, for God does not desire that minds should fall, and wishes to bring them back unto himself. Those who desire to rise (unto the Father) must unite the Good-Nature which is in them with its essence, and remove from themselves all traces of the opposing principle. To do this, they must purify their soul and body, that their garments may be clean; otherwise they will fall in the ascent. When the mind ascends, the body is as if dead, and the soul is absorbed in the mind, which is carried up and becomes oblivious of everything on earth. All the essences of demons gather together to oppose it; but it vanquishes them, and the Lord raises it with the hand of his goodness up to the firmament, and the angelic hosts cry out: *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the king of glory shall enter*<sup>1</sup>).

When the mind is made worthy to ascend above the firmament, which is the middle wall of separation, *it is like*

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1) Psalm XXIV, 7.

*a new-born child which passes from darkness unto light.* During the labor of its ascent the mind is strengthened by its own natural desire for absorption, and by the aid it receives from the various essences through which it passes, and which communicate successively unto it the mysteries of their knowledge. As the mind rises, it becomes the purifier and sanctifier of the essences below it, and partakes, with those through which it passes, of the sacrament of the Eucharist, by which it communicates unto them the perfection of its intelligence and receives from them the mysteries of their order. These essences, recognizing in it the supreme nature of the Good, assemble also to offer it adoration. Having passed the multitude of heavens, the mind arrives in the place called *distinction*, which is the boundary separating the upper world from our own: here does it rest from its labors. Then proceeding on its way, it reaches the holy place of the Cross: here it understands that it is to endure its passion and suffer crucifixion, in the same manner that Christ suffered; for unless the mind undergoes all that Christ suffered, it cannot be perfected. Then is the mind crucified in the centre by the angels, who, from being its worshippers, are turned into its haters: while the soul and body, being separated from it, are crucified, the former on its right and the latter on its left. Then is sin vanquished and destroyed. This is to be understood figuratively and symbolically.

The sufferings of the cross may have to be endured more than once, nay ten or even twenty times; as many as there are grades separating the mind from the primary essence. *For all minds do not descend into bodies from one essence alone, but from many*<sup>1)</sup>: these essences are more or less

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1) This is strongly Origenistic.

perfect according to their descent from the Good. Thus those minds which descended from the essence of the Father need but one purification by the cross; those which descended from that of the Son need two, and from the Holy Spirit three; and thus through the entire legion of essences. *Minds come into the body also from the essence of demons.*

When all is consummated, the mind is laid in the sepulchre to rest there for three days.

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BOOK THIRD.

On the third day the mind rises and reunites unto itself its purified soul and body, which in this new, unchangeable, and immortal life are subjected unto it, having been in the former life its subjectors. Although by this experience the mind has become greatly purified, yet, as its sins have been many, it must undergo many purifications. The Good-principle in it has a still greater desire to unite itself unto its essence, and by it becomes transfigured before the eyes of the angels. Now does it acquire the motion of union<sup>1</sup>). Nevertheless the root of evil and opposition has not yet been eradicated from it, but, gathering its forces, begins to re-appear, and grows up into an immense tree, whose wide-spreading branches cast darkness over divine minds and shade them from the perfect light of the Good. In the long and terrible combat which follows, the mind many times cuts down and destroys the branches of the tree, but it ever shoots anew with equal strength from the undestroyed root. Finally by

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1) That is of identification with Christ.

divine illumination the mind sees that it must descend to the lowest regions, where the roots of the tree of evil are planted, and eradicate them. Then begins for the mind a sorrowful return, through the regions by which it had ascended, down below the earth. There it combats with the fierce demons of the North, South, East and West, and, finally, is vanquished and slain by them. Immediately however Christ, the great mind, is revealed, opens the gates of Sche'ol, and descending brings to life and raises up the mind from the infernal regions. It again swiftly and peacefully makes its second ascent through the regions which it formerly traversed. It is then made worthy of the spiritual baptism of the Spirit and of fire, without which there is no life. After this there is no obstacle to the mind being in everything not merely like unto but identical with Christ, and it receives the adoration of all the heavenly hosts, for it now obtains the power of divine high-priesthood, and is made worthy of union with the Good. The mind is now no longer mind, but is the Son, who doeth all according to his will, is judge of all, creates and makes alive, orders and constitutes. Christ is no longer adored, but minds, *for Christ is nothing but the mind purified, which can say: all power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth*<sup>1)</sup>, and, *there is no God beside me*<sup>2)</sup>. *For Christ is the Lord of those who are asleep, and not of those who are awakened*<sup>3)</sup>.

1) Matthew XXVIII, 18.

2) Isaiah XLV, 5 etc.

3) *לך נהג אדם, נשמה. אלה סגור הנשמה*  
*אם לך נהג אדם לנשמה: האדם לך לך*  
*הנשמה נשמה... הנשמה אדם לך לך*  
*... אדם הנשמה נשמה. הנשמה לך לך*  
*נשמה. אדם הנשמה הנשמה, נשמה.*

Then the mind, which is now Christ, communicates unto the angelic hosts, in the holy of holies, the spiritual Eucharist, of which the terrestrial is but the type and faint shadow. After this it rises again unto the place where there is no longer vision, to be united unto the tree of life, unto the Universal Essence.

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BOOK FOURTH.

The Universal Essence has been previously defined, but only partially; in its essence, not in its operations. It is contemplated by the mind in mystery and silence, and the latter receives from it complete *love* and *union*. It also imparts unto the mind three mysterious and unspeakable doctrines:

that of the distinction of minds;

that of the coming of the mind into the body; and

what becomes of the nature of all things.

In all this is the mind instructed by the High-Priest of the Universal Essence, who lays upon it the solemn injunction of silence. Leaving him, the mind continues its ascent accompanied by all the essences perfected and sanctified by it. For all minds which are perfected must pass through all the stations and receive all the forms which are below the Good, and through which they had fallen. The mind has now reached Paradise, where *Adam by the first distinction suffered the fall*, and it is shown by the watch the way to the Tree of Life, unto which it desires to unite itself, for this would be *the consummation of visions and the perfection of mysteries*. But now the Adversary, Satan, knowing



together to combat against it; but they are overthrown and destroyed, and the minds suffering torments are delivered, enlightened and forgiven. The infernal regions also are illuminated and purified, so that they are no whit less bright than the celestial regions. Now has the mind cast out from itself the whole of the adversative nature: it wishes also to destroy the head of opposition, and sees that it is what had appeared to it as the Tree of Life, and so cuts it down. All the minds which had been slaves to perdition now desire to be united to the Divine Mind and saved; but, as is meet for the Son, it orders judgment and adjudges torments to sinners and demons, and descends further to the place of the Prince of darkness, and finally to the Sun and the Moon: this infernal sun is a gift of the Good, in order that the rational beings in this place should not perish. When the mind has passed She'ol and the lowest abyss, it reaches the place where there is no longer vision. Still lower, in the place below all places, are the roots of evil, which it is moved to destroy. Now when it is said that the mind destroys demons, it is meant that *it destroys them in itself and not in their essence*; and when it destroys these roots, it means that *it will be united unto the Good alone*.

After the mind has thus decreed judgment in Gehenna, it desires to see the *Insensible Essence*, which is the rebellious essence. This does not possess any name that is named on the earth or under the earth, neither does it possess anything of nature <sup>1)</sup>: those who are imprisoned in it cannot obtain resurrection or life. It is irrational, unconscious, lifeless, and insensible, and has received the name of *Not-being*. In the beginning it bore no fruits, and, after being proved,

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1) i. e. of the Good: cf. p. 97 n. 1.

it was condemned and fell from being mind, first to being man, then animal, beast, demon, devil, and finally became insensible and contumacious, having entirely left its Good and its Nature. Although the mind stretches out its hand unto it, yet does it not submit.

All is now fulfilled in the places under the earth: the mind, as it begins its ascent, sees all those whom it has slain lying before it, and is moved with great desire to become the Father, to raise them all from the dead, and to have mercy upon them. Then will it extend its goodness unto all, both good and evil, *and make them all like itself*. Then there comes a wonderful voice before the resurrection crying: *Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live*<sup>1</sup>). All the minds which descended from Essence are raised and approach the Divine Mind, which says unto them: *Ye are my brethren: for truly are ye bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*<sup>2</sup>); and they are united unto it in order that they may ascend with it.

When the Divine Mind has passed all this, it descends below all essences and sees a luminous essence whose divine light is *formless*: it marvels greatly that this is the same essence which it had seen on high. Now does it comprehend the true theory of Essence, — that it fills the whole universe, — and cries: *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there, and if I descend to hell, there also art thou. And if I raise the wings of my understanding like those of the eagle, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me*<sup>3</sup>).

1) Ezechiel XXXVII, 9.

2) Genesis II, 23.

3) Psalm CXXXIX, 8—10.









This is but a small part of the glories of the Mind when it accomplishes all and is confusedly mingled with the Good, the universal Creator.

We must now point out the distinction between union <sup>1)</sup> and absorption <sup>2)</sup>, and show whether Christ be united or absorbed. In *Union* that which is distinguished does not appear very distinct: but those things which are united cannot throw off all distinction, for in them exists the principle which distinguishes. On the contrary, in those things which are *absorbed* nothing appears which distinguishes or makes other. Therefore to Christ we give the name of *our union*. To absorption can no name be given.

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BOOK FIFTH.

All these doctrines, which are unknown even to angels, have I disclosed unto thee, my son, even though I be, on this account, despised of men. Know then, that *all nature will be confused* with the Father: that nothing will perish or be destroyed, but all will return, be sanctified, united and confused. Thus God will be all in all. Even hell will pass away and the damned return. All orders and distinctions will cease. God will pass away, and Christ will cease to

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1) אֲחֻזָּה.

2) אֲבֻסָּה: the only definition in Payne-Smith is *commixtio*, but the cognates אֲבֻסָּה and אֲבֻסָּה are rendered by *confusio*. The two meanings seem inseparable from the root: therefore I have rendered the verb always by *confusedly mingled*: in the noun it seemed more expressive, as well as rendering more completely the author's meaning, to use the term *absorption*.

be, and the Spirit will no longer be called spirit. Essence alone will remain.

In the same way that all rational nature is governed by its laws, so also all irrational nature obeys its special laws.

»My son, preserve my words, place them around thy neck, and let them be a sign on thy forehead”, for the time has come that I should pass away: unto thee do I bequeath the sceptre of my right hand.

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