

0190-0211 – Serapion Antiochaenus Episcopus – Fragmenta

Remains of the Second and Third Centuries

Serapion, Bishop of Antioch

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I am,³⁷⁸³ signified their united approval of the letter, knowing that I wore *these* grey hairs not in vain, but have always regulated my conduct in *obedience* to the Lord Jesus.

Theophilus, Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine.

[a.d. 180.] When Eusebius says that the churches of “all Asia” concurred in the Ephesine use concerning the Paschal, he evidently means Asia Minor, as in the Scriptures and elsewhere.³⁷⁸⁴ Throughout “the rest of the world,” he testifies, however, that such was not the use. The Palestinian bishops, after the Jewish downfall, seem to have been the first to comprehend the propriety of adopting the more Catholic usage; and our author presided over a council in Cæsarea, of which he was bishop, assisted by Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, with Cassius of Tyre and Clarus of Ptolemais, which confirmed it. It is to be noted, that Alexandria is cited by Theophilus as authority for this custom; and it is not quite correct to say that the *Western* usage prevailed at Nicæa, for it was the general use, save only in Asia Minor and churches which were colonies of the same. This fact has been overlooked, and is very important, in history.

From His Epistle on the Question of the Passover, Written in the Name of the Synod of Cæsarea.³⁷⁸⁵

Endeavour also to send abroad copies of our epistle among all the churches, so that those who easily deceive their own souls may not be able to lay the blame on us. We would have you know, too, that in Alexandria³⁷⁸⁶ also they observe *the festival* on the same day as ourselves. For the *Paschal* letters are sent from us to them, and from them to us: so that we observe the holy day in unison and together.

Serapion,³⁷⁸⁷ Bishop of Antioch.

³⁷⁸³ Τον μικρόν.

³⁷⁸⁴ See (Polycrates) p. 773, *supra*, and Eusebius, *H. E.*, book v. cap. xxiii., etc., pp. 222–226.

³⁷⁸⁵ In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 25.

³⁷⁸⁶ [Note, the authority of Alexandria is quoted, not that of Rome.]

³⁷⁸⁷ Westcott, *Canon*, p. 444. Lardner, *Credib.*, ii. 264, 417.



[a.d. *circa* 190–200–211.] He was the eighth bishop of Antioch, a diligent writer and exemplary pastor. Little as we have of his remains, Lardner shows how very useful is that little. (1) He testifies to the Apostles as delivering the words of Christ Himself; (2) to the jealousy of the early Christians in sifting inspired writings from those of no authority as Scriptures; (3) to their methods, as in the case of the pseudo-gospel of Peter; and (4) to the utterly apocryphal character of that book, which Grabe and others suppose to be the work of Leucius, a noted forger and falsifier. It had never been heard of in the great See of Antioch, and this famous bishop could only get sight of it by fishing it out of the dirty pool of the Docetæ.

I.

From the Epistle to Caricus and Ponticus.³⁷⁸⁸

That ye may see also that the proceedings of this lying confederacy,³⁷⁸⁹ to which is given the name of New Prophecy, is abominated among the whole brotherhood throughout the world, I have sent you letters of the most blessed Claudius Apollinarius, who was made bishop of Hierapolis in Asia.

II.

From the Book Concerning the Gospel of Peter.³⁷⁹⁰

For we, brethren, receive both Peter and the rest of the apostles as Christ *Himself*. But those writings which are falsely inscribed with their name,³⁷⁹¹ we as experienced persons reject, knowing that no such writings have been handed down to us.³⁷⁹² When, indeed, I came to see you, I supposed that all were in accord with the orthodox faith; and, although I had not read through the Gospel inscribed with the name of Peter which was brought forward by them, I said: If this is the only thing which threatens³⁷⁹³ to produce ill-feeling among you, let it be read. But, now that I have learnt from what has been told me that their mind was secretly cherishing some heresy,³⁷⁹⁴ I will make all haste to come to you again. Expect me therefore, brethren, shortly. Moreover, brethren, we, having discovered to what kind of heresy Marcion adhered, and seen how he contradicted himself, not

³⁷⁸⁸ In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 19.

³⁷⁸⁹ Ψευδοῦς τάξεως.

³⁷⁹⁰ In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 12.

³⁷⁹¹ The reading of Migne, ὀνόματι, is adopted instead of ὀνόματα.

³⁷⁹² Τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐ παρελάβομεν.

³⁷⁹³ Δοκοῦν.

³⁷⁹⁴ Αἰρέσει τινὶ ὁ νοῦς αὐτῶν ἐνεφώλευεν.

understanding of what he was speaking, as you will gather from what has been written to you³⁷⁹⁵ — for, having borrowed this said Gospel from those who were familiar with it from constant perusal, namely from the successors of those who were his leaders *in the heresy*, whom we call Docetæ (for most of the opinions held by him are derived from their teaching), we were able to read it through; and while we found most of its contents to agree with the orthodox account of the Saviour, we found some things inconsistent with that, and these we have set down below for your inspection.

Apollonius.³⁷⁹⁶

[a.d. 211.] He was a most eloquent man, according to St. Jerome; and his writings against Montanism were so forcible as to call forth Tertullian himself, to confute him, if possible. He flourished under Commodus and Severus, and probably until the times of Caracalla. He bears testimony to the existence of a canon of Scripture,³⁷⁹⁷ and to its inspired authority as the rule of faith and practice; and he witnesses, by citation, to the Gospel of St. Matthew. The Revelation of St. John also, according to Eusebius, was employed by him in his works; and he preserves a tradition that our Lord bade the Apostles continue in Jerusalem for the space of twelve years. We cannot affirm that he was invested with any office in the Church.

Concerning Montanism.³⁷⁹⁸

I.

But who is this new teacher? His works and teaching inform *us*. This is he who taught the dissolution of marriage; who inculcated fasting; who called Peruga and Tymius, small towns of Phrygia, Jerusalem, because he wished to collect thither people from all parts; who set up exactors of money; who craftily contrives the taking of gifts under the name of voluntary offerings; who grants stipends to those who publish abroad his doctrine, that by means of gluttony the teaching of the doctrine may prevail.

II.

³⁷⁹⁵ The construction is not again resumed.

³⁷⁹⁶ Routh, *Rel. Sac.*, vol. i. pp. 465–485.

³⁷⁹⁷ Westcott, *Canon*, p. 433.

³⁷⁹⁸ In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 18.