

Are the Writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite
Authentic? Yes! Yes! Yes!



St. Dionysius the Areopagite, Bishop of Athens, contemporary of the Apostles St. Paul & St. John, and of St. Ignatius

Are the Writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite Authentic?

October 09, 2014

Source: Notes from the Underground: <http://nftu.net/?s=Dionysius&x=5&y=11>

NFTU Editor's Note: The valuable work below by the late 19th century Anglican scholar, John Parker, proves to be an edifying find. Not because Park was Orthodox, because, sadly he was not,

as noted; he belonged, most unfortunately, to the government religious society of the British State (commonly called the “Anglican Church”). However, despite this serious spiritual and theological handicap, which I’m certain our readers can take into account, his essay below provides a convincing case for the traditional attitude of the Orthodox Church, i.e. that the works of St. Dionysius the Areopagite are indeed genuine. At the very least, we should prefer giving the benefit of the doubt to the traditional view, instead of going after every new fad of the modernist false scholars, and, as the Inspired Apostle says, being “tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:14).

Despite this, Parker displays a spirit in his bending toward traditional accounts that we will find familiar (especially his jabs at the “Historical Society”, and his treatment of the traditions surrounding Glastonbury and St. Joseph); in this it is to be pitied that Orthodoxy did not perhaps have a greater missionary work in Britain in the 19th century. Dr. Overbeck and a few learned others were to be the great exceptions that proved a sad rule (and even Dr. Overbeck, though master of languages ancient and modern, and champion of Orthodoxy, though residing the last 40 years of his life in England, was himself a German).

While perhaps some arguments may reasonably be considered weak (the controversy surrounding the authenticity of the Chronicle of Dexter, which defended by some, has generally be rejected by most today it seems; though, that Dexter wrote such a work, which St. Jerome calls the “Universal History”, is undoubted from ch. 132 of “[De Viris Illustribus](#)”), this should not fundamentally detract from the main import of the work and his other arguments (such the testimony of St. Dionysius of Alexandria, St. Maximus, and St. Photius).

The works of St. Dionysius were indeed held to be genuine by the Orthodox for a long time. As Parker note, though, this does not mean there were not objections here and there raised (often by those outside of Orthodoxy); instead of the Church ignoring such attacks and objections, it responded in calm, reasoned, charitable and traditional methods. St. Photius notes and agrees with the ancient Presbyter, the Holy Theodore, who is variously ascribed as being a certain Presbyter of Antioch in the late 4th century, or perhaps the early 5th century. Nevertheless, many Church writers were not men who were so stupid as to be easily deceived; nor was the Church Tradition to be so easily cast aside because of ‘modern findings’. Indeed, St. Photius gives his complete agreement to the authenticity of the writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite; in his “Bibliotheca”, St. Photius did not just ‘invent the book review’ in the sense of only recording ideas, St. Photius actively critiques ideas contained in these works, expressing whether he thinks an author is right, wrong, Orthodox or heretical. (For online translations of portions of the Bibliotheca, go [here](#) and [here](#); to skip directly to St. Photius’ thought on this matter, [go here](#).) Hopefully, as time continues, Orthodox authors will be more forthcoming with such works. Indeed, it is very possible, nay, probable and very likely, that Orthodox authors have perhaps composed such treatises, as yet untranslated from Russian and Greek sources. In this case, we can pray and work toward the day when such are provided in English translation for the wider English-speaking Orthodox world.

I have not sought to reproduce the footnotes and such. If one is interested in this you can go to the image version on google book [found here](#).

Therefore, taking the above into account, I have provided below, the full text of Parker’s work. As Orthodox we should learn to follow the advice of St. Basil the Great with non-Orthodox writers. St. Basil gave the definitive attitude, when he said in his address “[To Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature](#)“:

“For just as bees know how to extract honey from flowers, which to men are agreeable only for their fragrance and color, even so here also those who look for something more than pleasure and enjoyment in such writings may derive profit for their souls. Now, then, altogether after the manner of bees must we use these writings, for the bees do not visit all the flowers without discrimination, nor indeed do they seek to carry away entire those upon which they light, but rather, having taken so much as is adapted to their needs, they let the rest go.”

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ARE THE WRITINGS OF DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE GENUINE?

by John Parker

INTRODUCTION

From a Christian and theological point of view momentous issues depend upon the answer to this question. The author of these writings quotes Holy Scripture about five hundred times—always as the supreme authority—most frequently as the oracles of God. (*Logia*.) Except the two small letters of John Presbyter, the author quotes from every book of the New Testament, as known and existing before A.D. 98. If then these writings are the genuine works of Dionysius the Areopagite—the convert of S. Paul—we have historic proof that the books of the New Testament were quoted and known in the first century. If these writings are genuine, we have historic proof that in the first century there was 1st, episcopal consecration of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon; 2nd, that Baptism was administered by trine immersion,—and to children—and that it was accompanied with unction of Holy Oil; 3rd, that Holy Communion was administered with Liturgical prayers and formula, as well as with personal prayers and exhortations; and 4th, that “Incense was offered to God’s Holy Name, and a pure offering.” Malachi i. 11.

These writings abound in surprises. Greeks will be content—Latins will exult—Anglicans will rejoice—Agnostics will smile—Baptists will triumph—Plymouth Brethren will know “the reason why”—Theosophists will be delighted. We may all be put *right*, because we shall all be proved *wrong* in some particular. After five years’ continuous research, I have a strong conviction of their genuineness. I stake my judgment upon the fact, and am rather glad to stand alone—for a time. My appeal is to historical criticism, and to common sense. But I wish *to state the case*, not to decide the question, and with such restrained impartiality that the case shall not be weakened

by an apparent bias in favour of what I deem the truth.

Personal Affirmations Of The Author

The author of these writings expressly affirms that he was brought from paganism to the Christian Faith by the divine Paul. He speaks of Timothy as his friend, and declares that they were both disciples of Paul. He incidentally reminds Timothy that they both were once present with James the Lord's brother, and Peter, the foremost and most honoured pinnacle of the Theologians. He writes to John, "Theologus, Apostle, Evangelist, imprisoned in the isle of Patmos," and expresses a confident hope that they will soon meet, to speak face to face. In a letter to Polycarp, he describes a sudden unexpected darkness, which Apollophanes and he had witnessed in Egypt. He declares that Paul had taught him that that darkness was contemporaneous with the Crucifixion. He writes to Titus as mutual friends of Timothy. He describes Himself as friend and relative of Apollophanes, who was tutor of Polemon, whose pupil Aristides presented the "Apology" to the Emperor Hadrian.

Are these allusions natural and true, or feigned and cunningly devised?

The Treatise on the Divine Names explains the various epithets applied in Holy Scripture to the whole Godhead alike, — Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the ever-Being — the good — the beautiful — the powerful — the wise — the great — the small. The author discusses the nature and origin of evil, — the difficulties attendant upon its existence under the Omnipotent Providence of God. In the "Celestial Hierarchy," the author claims to give instruction on the holy Angels, derived from Paul. In the "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy," he describes the administration of "Holy Communion," "Baptism," "Chrism," and the spiritual instruction taught and implied in the various ceremonial acts performed. He also discusses the reason for prayers in the funeral rites of the departed, and the conditions under which such prayers may be used. He argues the question of the Baptism of Infants, and describes the conditions under which it may be done. In the "Mystic Theology," he describes how we may best attain the knowledge of God, and gives a list of the works written by himself. In the "Letters," he answers enquiries addressed to him by Gaius, Dorotheus and Titus respecting certain deep questions discussed in his writings. The purpose of the whole is the elevation of man to God. Union with God is the vestibule of truth, and the unique way to attain the highest truth.

Have we here a genuine truthful book written by Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of Paul, the personal friend of Timothy and John the Evangelist?

The question is to be answered from the testimony of history, and upon the principles of true historic criticism. Having translated the whole collected works of Dionysius the Areopagite, and read and studied a literature upon the subject, I affirm that we have here writings penned by Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of S. Paul, in which there is not a personal or local allusion which was intended to mislead or deceive, and that the author lived and moved amongst Apostles and Apostolic men, even as the writings imply and affirm. To prove this I- call four witnesses —

Lucius Flavius Dexter, the Statesman; Dionysius the Great, Bishop of Alexandria; Maximus, the Confessor; and Photius, the Patriarch. I shall first show their qualifications as witnesses, then produce their testimony, then appeal to the reader.

Lucius Flavius Dexter was a friend of Jerome— Jerome even addresses him as “filius” “amicus,” and describes him as “clarus apud seculum et Christi fidei deditus” [trans- “renown with the world and dedicated to the Faith of Christ”--NFTU]. Dexter became Prefect of the oriental Praetorians, and was one of the most distinguished statesmen of his time. He visited the East, and there met Jerome. Like Lord Dufferin, he was chosen to arrange the most difficult negotiations. He undertook to appease the jealousy between the provinces of Barcelona and Toledo. Political affairs compelled him to reside two years in Toledo. Like Mr. Speaker Denison, he combined a love of truth with ability in affairs of state. Whilst residing at Toledo, he examined the “Tabularia,” or ancient records of that Apostolic See, in which he says, “I confess to have found many things worthy to be known.” In the cathedral of Toledo there is a tablet giving the succession of Bishops from S. Paul, A.D.. 62, to the present day. From the records of Toledo and other churches in Spain, Dexter compiled a chronicle from A.D. 1 to 430, containing a brief summary of events, chiefly in reference to the Church of Spain. That chronicle he dedicated to Jerome, who enrolled both author and chronicle in his book of “Illustrious Men.” It was at the request of Dexter that Jerome wrote his book of “Illustrious Men,” which he dedicated to Dexter, and which was deemed so valuable by antiquity that Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, translated it into Greek.

Amongst the earliest Bishops of Toledo, Dexter describes a remarkable man, named Marcellus, surnamed Eugenius, on account of his noble birth. Bivarius says, “he was of the family, and house of Caesar, being uncle to the Emperor Hadrian.” This Marcellus was consecrated Bishop by Dionysius the Areopagite, at Arles, and sent to Toledo.

Respecting him, Dexter records that Dionysius the Areopagite dedicates to him, u.c. 851 (A.D. 98), the “books of the Divine Names,” as wishing to have still a Timothy on earth—” in vivis.” Dexter further records that Dionysius surnamed Marcellus, Timothy, on account of his excellent disposition.

Now Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, an author in the 2nd century, relates that Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, was martyred during the reign of Nerva (96-97). Upon the return of Dionysius to Gaul, after his visit to S. John liberated from Patmos, we find him surnaming his friend Marcellus, Timothy, and presenting to him a copy of the “Divine Names,” A.d. 98, in order that he might still have a Timothy on earth, although his first Timothy, to whom his works were originally written, “migravit ad Christum” [trans.- “departed to Christ”--NFTU] A.D. 97.

This touch of nature, recorded to have taken place nearly 1,800 years ago, and whose record is preserved in a chronicle written more than 1,400 years ago, by an illustrious statesman, who was also son of a Bishop, celebrated for learning and sanctity, may perhaps be deemed, by some minds, reasonable proof that the Treatise of the “Divine Names” was written by Dionysius the

Areopagite previous to A.D. 98.

Dionysius, Bishop Of Alexandria, A.d. 250.

Dionysius gained the title of “Great,” even amongst the teachers of the Didaskaleion, which was a rival of the Serapeum of Alexandria. He was successor of Clement and Origen.

About ten years ago, L’Abbe Martin discovered in the British Museum (Nos. 12151-2) a letter written by Dionysius of Alexandria to Pope Sixtus the 2nd, in which he affirms positively that none can doubt that Dionysius the Areopagite is the author of the writings which are circulated in his name.

In the first Codex we find portions of that Epistle in the conclusion of the work written by John Scholasticus (605), entitled “A New Apology,” written by George, Priest of the great Church of Constantinople, and native of the City of Bozra, with reference to the ” Divine Writings,” which are rejected by some ignorant persons, as though they were not the production of that great doctor, but only writings of some heretic, such as Appollinaris or some recent and unknown heretic. Now, that Priest George of Constantinople, after recounting that these Books of the Areopagite had several times been rejected by foolish people, affirms that he is going to produce an argument that will close the mouth of all gainsayers; and that argument is the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, from which the following is an extract:—

“The God Unknown, Jesus, the Word, whom the Greeks worthily honour, although they do not know Him, was crucified by the Jews, when they ought to have adored Him. But they did not know Him (I say that it was the Word that they ought to have adored, the Word of the Father—because I do not wish any one to believe that I am the advocate of idolators; and I speak only of those Greeks who recognize the God Unknown as the Author of the Universe). Now, having known Him according to the Scriptures, the great Dionysius wished to be baptized by the Apostle, with all his house. He was an eloquent and illustrious man, who became afterwards Bishop of Athens, and made himself celebrated by the Works which he composed on the Divine Theology. He was disciple of S. Paul, by whom the Messiah made known the Gospel to the Gentiles, by speaking Himself through his mouth. Now the Book of that distinguished man shows clearly the brilliancy of his talent, for he is the author of the theological work of which we are now speaking. Further, no one disputes his paternity of it, for, when some people of the contrary opinion have read, with attention and intelligence, that work, at once philosophic and divine, and have been enlightened by the very testimony of the holy Doctor that we have under our eyes, they will easily comprehend that these ‘Divine Writings’ could only be the work of the great Dionysius, who, with the Divine help and inspiration, piously governed the Church of Athens.

“Now, after Hierotheus, who was his master, what other doctor was there more powerful in word than he who has written, in a manner so sublime, upon Theology and Sciences?

“No one penetrated more profoundly than Dionysius into the mysterious depths of the Holy Scriptures. This is easily proved by reading attentively, and with love of the truth, the works that

we have from him. For he is worthy of credit even when he testifies of himself, as he does in his letter to the holy Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp—that valiant defender of the Faith,—that disciple of John the Evangelist, the Beloved Apostle of our Lord.”

That reference is to Section I. of the Letter to Polycarp, which concludes with these beautiful words:

“Having then, as I think, well understood this, I have not been over zealous to speak in reply to Greeks, or to others; but it is sufficient for me (and may God grant this) first, to know about truth, then having known, to speak as it is fitting to speak.”

Bear in mind that since the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria was disintombed by L’Abbe Martin, Professor Frothingham, an American scholar, has found the ” Book of Hierotheus” in the British Museum. The Archbishop of Athens gave me, some time ago, this catalogue of the first five Bishops of Athens: 1st, Hierotheus, A.D. 52; 2nd, Dionysius; 3rd, Narcissus; 4th, Publius, 118— 124; 5th, Quadratus, who presented the “Apology” to the Emperor Hadrian. Yet, twenty-five years ago, Hierotheus was thought to be a *mythical* personage,—just as King Lucius of Britain is now, by some, deemed to be a myth—by those who presumably have never read Archbishop Parker’s magnificent book, “De antiquitate Britannicae Ecclesiae,” nor Alford’s two volumes of the “Fides Regia Anglicana.” Would some learned foreigner disintomb those two works in the British Museum, for the instruction of our “Historical Society,” which knows more of the See of Rome than of its own ancient Metropolitan See of London.

Glastonbury is the Cradle of the Christian Church in Great Britain—not the modern graft of Canterbury. It is a curious method of historical criticism to prove the continuity of the Church in Britain from A.D. 33 to 1897, by dating its episcopal succession from S. Augustine, A.D. 597, when that succession died out A.D. 669. Some members of our “Historical Society” wish to impose upon us the “being English” as a third Sacrament, which they seem to regard “as generally necessary to salvation.” Joseph of Arimathea, invited to Britain, by a Druid Priest, for greater security from the Jews, says of himself, “After I had buried Christ, I came to the Britons, I taught, I fell asleep.”

Some of our “English” Divines disdain to believe that testimony, apparently because they were not there to see him buried. Even Latin Councils are disregarded, when their testimony is in favour of our own Church and Nation.

We affirm, then, that the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria is proof that the Writings of Dionysius were known and regarded as genuine previous to A.D. 250.

Maximus The Confessor

Maximus the Confessor was a learned and luminous writer, A.D. 630. His writings have come down to us in two volumes. They discuss the most difficult passages of Holy Writ, and contain

treatises upon the soul, the blessed Trinity, and the Hypostatic Union. He was a towering figure in the Monophysite Controversy. His famous discussion with Pyrrhus, Patriarch of Constantinople, is contained in his works. He suffered banishment, persecution and ignominy rather than betray his convictions; and his death was probably hastened by his sufferings. Neither fear nor favour could make him swerve from his convictions. Amongst other writings, with which his learning and piety have enriched the Church, are *Scholia* upon the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite. When commenting upon the fifth chapter of the "Celestial Hierarchy," he alludes to the expression, "ousias," applied by Dionysius the Areopagite to the holy angels, and writes thus, "the great Dionysius," the Bishop of Alexandria ;—he, who had been an orator,—in the *Scholia* which he made upon the blessed Dionysius his namesake, speaks thus: "The external philosophy (pagan Greek) was accustomed to call all invisible nature, ungenerated and likewise personalities 'beings' (*ousias*), and from this he says, such phrases are used by the holy Dionysius, after the manner of the external philosophers." Maximus is commenting upon a word which is used by Dionysius the Areopagite. To explain its use and presence in the text, he quotes verbatim from the *Scholia* written by the Bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 250. How then can we escape the conclusion that the works of the Areopagite were known, A.D. 250, when Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote his *Scholia* explaining the unusual use of that word by the Areopagite. Be it remembered that Maximus was a determined opponent of the, so-called, Monophysites, who claimed the writings of Dionysius as their chief authority. They produced them at Constantinople, A.D. 532, and they were regarded as their great champions. Are we then to believe that Maximus did not scan, with a critical eye, the writings which were the alleged stronghold of his opponents, as well as the *Scholia* of the great Bishop of Alexandria, which treated those writings as genuine, A.D. 250.

We affirm then that the *Scholia* of Maximus, written upon the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite, are a reasonable historic proof that those writings are genuine, and that Dionysius of Alexandria wrote his *Scholia* upon the same writings previous to A.D. 250.

Photius, Patriarch Of Constantinople.

Photius was a Prince of Patriarchs and a landmark in history. His letter to Michael, Prince of Bulgaria, marks the cleavage between Greeks and Latins, which subsequent events widened into a great gulf, which will not be closed until Christian learning and good sense are in the ascendant. Mr. Gladstone would have found Photius a glad competitor in working, in reading, in writing, whether in "felling" I don't know!

"He was accounted," says Nicetas David—the panegyrist of his great rival Ignatius—"to be of all men the most eminent for his secular acquirements, and his understanding of political affairs. For so superior were his attainments in grammar and poetry, in rhetoric and philosophy, yea even in medicine, and almost all branches of knowledge beyond the limits of theology, that he not only excelled all the men of his own day, but seemed even to bear comparison with the Ancients. For all things combined in his favour—natural aptitude, diligence, wealth—which enabled him to form an all comprehensive library, and more than all these, the lust of glory, which induced him to pass whole nights without sleep, that he might have time for reading." Photius was sent

on an embassy to the Assyrians. During that embassy he read the works described in his “Bibliotheca” and wrote the critical notes, on the books read, contained in that book. He thus continued the work of Jerome and Eusebius as historian of Church literature.

Now, it is a proof of the importance of our theme, that the very first book described by Photius, in his “Bibliotheca,” is one which treats of the genuineness of the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite. We gladly concede that the genuineness of those writings had to be maintained, A.D. 420. The primitive Church was not so uncritical as some affirm. The first book which Photius describes was written by Theodore, a presbyter of the Church of Antioch. What was the date of Theodore? Gennadius, in his book of “Illustrious Men,” describes Theodore as “presbyter of the Church of Antioch, a man distinguished by the caution of science, and brilliancy of expression, who wrote against the Apollinarians, and whose books Photius says he had read.” Sixtus Fenensis affirms that Theodore lived under Honorius Augustus (420). Photius not only read Theodore’s book, but records his opinion that Theodore establishes the genuineness of the Areopagite’s writings.

Happily Photius gives the four objections alleged against the writings of Dionysius. Bishop Westcott, as happily, describes the objections recorded, as a summary of all that has since been written on the controversy. The general argument against the genuineness is composed of three principal ingredients—“If,” “therefore,” and “spurious.” “If” Dionysius was martyred under Domitian, how could he have quoted a letter written by Ignatius under Trajan? But Dionysius was *not* martyred under Domitian, but under Hadrian. Dionysius does *not* quote the letter of Ignatius immediately before his martyrdom. Again, the works of Dionysius were undoubtedly produced at Constantinople, A.D. 532—“*therefore*” they were never known before. Bar Sudaili, a Syrian Monk, says he had found the “*Erotic hymns*” of Hierotheus—extracts from which are given by Dionysius—“*therefore*” Bar Sudaili, a Syrian monk in the 5th century, wrote the works attributed to Dionysius, which are written in Greek. Professor Stiglmayr has filled ninety-six pages with passages occurring between the 2nd and 7th century referring to Dionysius and his own notes thereon. By the omnipotent “*spurious*” it is *proved* that the writings were unknown till 532.

The first objection given by Photius from Theodore’s book is this: “If the Book is genuine, why have none of the Fathers who succeeded him copied his sentences and proofs?” But they have so copied—Clement and Origen of Alexandria teem with parallel sentences and illustrations. Another objection—“Why when Eusebius is enumerating the writings of the holy Fathers does he not enumerate the writings of Dionysius?” Read Photius, “Bibliotheca,” Codex 127, to learn how Eusebius concealed everything prejudicial to Arius. Eusebius would have convicted himself by making known Dionysius. Jerome followed Dionysius on the Holy Angels. Objection three. “How does this book weave a minute narrative of those traditions which grew up in the Church by growth and long intervals of time? For the great Dionysius, as is evident from the Acts of the Apostles, was a contemporary of the Apostles. This book, then, contains chiefly a description of those traditions which afterwards by degrees established themselves in the Church.”

The objector then says, “that it does not seem like the truth, yea that it is falsely feigned, that Dionysius should have had those ceremonies to describe which sprung up in the Church and prevailed, long after the death of the great Dionysius.” Certainly Dionysius never wrote a statement more involved than that, yet the objector would have alleged that the writings could not belong to the Apostolic age, because they are not written with the simplicity of S. Paul, who, although S. Peter says, “there are some things in his Epistles hard to be understood,” yet we all know that “S. Paul at any rate wrote plain English!” The objection is not true. There is no mere ritual in the “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.” Dionysius explains that in the administration of the Holy Communion, the Bishop comes forth from the Sanctuary, and makes a circuit of the whole enclosure, in order to signify that Almighty God, in His Word and in the Incarnation of the Word, came forth from the Hidden, and that He distributes His gifts to all His faithful people. He further explains that the trine immersion for Baptism, in which we are buried with Christ, symbolises the *trihemeria*, three days and nights, during which Christ remained in the tomb. The placing of the Christian dead amongst those of the same rank signifies that according to our rank and holiness so will be the place prepared for us in the ” many mansions.”

Fourth objection. Why does this book quote from the Epistle of Ignatius? For as we have said, Dionysius flourished in the time of the Apostles, but Ignatius suffered martyrdom under Trajan, and a little before his death wrote that Epistle which this book “quotes.” The objection has no logical meaning. Ignatius also lived in the time of the Apostles, and in fact was martyred eleven years before the martyrdom of Dionysius. The word “Love,” in that letter of Ignatius, signifies human passion or fire. In the passage quoted from Ignatius by Dionysius, “Love” is used as signifying our blessed Lord, and is quoted to show the exalted use of the word “Love” by Christian theologians. Well might Photius remark, that “Theodore zealously answers the objection in these four arguments,” and that “he establishes, to the best of his ability,” that the book is the legitimate offspring of the great Dionysius.

In Codex 194, writing on Maximus the Confessor, who wrote *Scholia* on Dionysius, Photius says that Maximus explains that phrase of the divine Dionysius, “In what way you say is Jesus, who is beyond all, ranked essentially with all men.” The sentence is found in the 4th letter to Gaius. The question was evidently asked by Gaius in reference to the “Divine Names,” Caput II., Section vi., page 20.

I will add, that in Codex 231, “Bibliotheca,” Photius in speaking of the synodical letter of Sophronius describes it as “containing the testimony of those who lived before and after the 4th Synod (Council), the chief of whom were Leo Pontiff of old Rome; Peter, the most holy Bishop of Myra—Gennadius of Constantinople—Diadochus of Photica—and Euphramius of Antioch, and *Dionysius, abounding in words, no doubt, but more abounding in speculation*—disciple of S. Paul, Martyr of Christ, Bishop of Athens; and Justin, who consecrated his philosophy by the blood of martyrdom.”

We affirm then that the testimony of Theodore and Photius is reasonable evidence that the

writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite are genuine.

Further, Germany has spoken. Within the last decade Dr. Schneider has written a Treatise, in which he refutes objections and produces positive evidence in favour of their genuineness. He tells me that scarcely a month passes without his receiving the name of some scholar who wishes to be considered an adherent to their genuineness. The celebrated Professor Schwarz of Liege writes in the "Revue Hollandaise," "that after a profound study of the reasons which Dr. Schneider has produced in his 'Areopagatica,' the genuineness of the works of S. Denis cannot be doubted." The Professor Schmid affirms in the "Linger quartal Schreift," "that the historic proof is complete." Dexter, Dionysius, Maximus, Photius, amongst the Ancients, Schneider, Schwarz and Schmid amongst the Moderns, maintain the genuineness of these writings.

We have produced the evidence and leave the reader to adopt that conclusion which appears to him most agreeable to historical criticism and common sense.

We claim to have verified that famous dictum of the profound Pearson, who, speaking of the writings of Dionysius, wrote: "No one is so ignorant as not to know that these writings were regarded as genuine by the best judges in the 6th, the 5th, the 4th, and the 3rd centuries."

JOHN PARKER.

St. Denys Areop. B. and M., 1897.

Latins, in particular, should con-

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surrounding Glastonbury and St. Joseph); in this it is to be pitied that Orthodoxy did not perhaps have a greater missionary work in Britain in the 19th century. Dr. Overbeck and a few learned others were to be the great exceptions that proved a sad rule (and even Dr. Overbeck, though master of languages ancient and modern, and champion of Orthodoxy, though residing the last 40 years of his life in England, was himself a German).

While perhaps some arguments may reasonably be considered weak (the controversy surrounding the authenticity of the Chronicle of Dexter, which defended by some, has generally be rejected by most today it seems; though, that Dexter wrote such a work, which St. Jerome calls the “Universal History”, is undoubted from ch. 132 of [“De Viris Illustribus”](#)), this should not fundamentally detract from the main import of the work and his other arguments (such the testimony of St. Dionysius of Alexandria, St. Maximus, and St. Photius).

The works of St. Dionysius were indeed held to be genuine by the Orthodox for a long time. As Parker note, though, this does not mean there were not objections here and there raised (often by those outside of Orthodoxy); instead of the Church ignoring such attacks and objections, it responded in calm, reasoned, charitable and traditional methods. St. Photius notes and agrees with the ancient Presbyter, the Holy Theodore, who is variously ascribed as being a certain Presbyter of Antioch in the late 4th century, or perhaps the early 5th century. Nevertheless, many Church writers were not men who were so stupid as to be easily deceived; nor was the Church Tradition to be so easily cast aside because of ‘modern findings’. Indeed, St. Photius gives his complete agreement to the authenticity of the writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite; in his “Bibliotheca”, St. Photius did not just ‘invent the book review’ in the sense of only recording ideas, St. Photius actively critiques ideas contained in these works, expressing whether he thinks an author is right, wrong, Orthodox or heretical. (For online translations of portions of the Bibliotheca, go [here](#) and [here](#); to skip directly to St. Photius’ thought on this matter, [go here](#).) Hopefully, as time continues, Orthodox authors will be more forthcoming with such works. Indeed, it is very possible, nay, probable and very likely, that Orthodox authors have perhaps composed such treatises, as yet untranslated from Russian and Greek sources. In this case, we can pray and work toward the day when such are provided in English translation for the wider English-speaking Orthodox world.

I have not sought to reproduce the footnotes and such. If one is interested in this you can go to the image version on google book [found here](#).

Therefore, taking the above into account, I have provided below, the full text of Parker’s work. As Orthodox we should learn to follow the advice of St. Basil the Great with non-Orthodox writers. St. Basil gave the definitive attitude, when he said in his address [“To Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature”](#):

“For just as bees know how to extract honey from flowers, which to men are agreeable only for their fragrance and color, even so here also those who look for something more than pleasure and enjoyment in such writers may derive profit for their souls. Now, then, altogether after the

manner of bees must we use these writings, for the bees do not visit all the flowers without discrimination, nor indeed do they seek to carry away entire those upon which they light, but rather, having taken so much as is adapted to their needs, they let the rest go.”

.....

ARE THE WRITINGS OF DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE GENUINE?

by John Parker

INTRODUCTION

From a Christian and theological point of view momentous issues depend upon the answer to this question. The author of these writings quotes Holy Scripture about five hundred times—always as the supreme authority—most frequently as the oracles of God. (*Logia.*) Except the two small letters of John Presbyter, the author quotes from every book of the New Testament, as known and existing before A.D. 98. If then these writings are the genuine works of Dionysius the Areopagite—the convert of S. Paul—we have historic proof that the books of the New Testament were quoted and known in the first century. If these writings are genuine, we have historic proof that in the first century there was 1st, episcopal consecration of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon; 2nd, that Baptism was administered by trine immersion,—and to children—and that it was accompanied with unction of Holy Oil; 3rd, that Holy Communion was administered with Liturgical prayers and formula, as well as with personal prayers and exhortations; and 4th, that “Incense was offered to God’s Holy Name, and a pure offering.” Malachi i. 11.

These writings abound in surprises. Greeks will be content—Latins will exult—Anglicans will rejoice—Agnostics will smile—Baptists will triumph—Plymouth Brethren will know “the reason why”—Theosophists will be delighted. We may all be put *right*, because we shall all be proved *wrong* in some particular. After five years’ continuous research, I have a strong conviction of their genuineness. I stake my judgment upon the fact, and am rather glad to stand alone—for a time. My appeal is to historical criticism, and to common sense. But I wish *to state the case*, not to decide the question, and with such restrained impartiality that the case shall not be weakened by an apparent bias in favour of what I deem the truth.

Personal Affirmations Of The Author

The author of these writings expressly affirms that he was brought from paganism to the Christian Faith by the divine Paul. He speaks of Timothy as his friend, and declares that they were both disciples of Paul. He incidentally reminds Timothy that they both were once present with James the Lord’s brother, and Peter, the foremost and most honoured pinnacle of the Theologians. He writes to John, “Theologus, Apostle, Evangelist, imprisoned in the isle of Patmos,” and expresses a confident hope that they will soon meet, to speak face to face. In a letter to Polycarp, he describes a sudden unexpected darkness, which Apolophanes and he had witnessed in Egypt. He declares that Paul had taught him that that darkness was

contemporaneous with the Crucifixion. He writes to Titus as mutual friends of Timothy. He describes Himself as friend and relative of Apollophanes, who was tutor of Polemon, whose pupil Aristides presented the “Apology” to the Emperor Hadrian.

Are these allusions natural and true, or feigned and cunningly devised?

The Treatise on the Divine Names explains the various epithets applied in Holy Scripture to the whole Godhead alike,—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the ever-Being—the good—the beautiful—the powerful—the wise—the great—the small. The author discusses the nature and origin of evil,—the difficulties attendant upon its existence under the Omnipotent Providence of God. In the “Celestial Hierarchy,” the author claims to give instruction on the holy Angels, derived from Paul. In the “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy,” he describes the administration of “Holy Communion,” “Baptism,” “Chrism,” and the spiritual instruction taught and implied in the various ceremonial acts performed. He also discusses the reason for prayers in the funeral rites of the departed, and the conditions under which such prayers may be used. He argues the question of the Baptism of Infants, and describes the conditions under which it may be done. In the “Mystic Theology,” he describes how we may best attain the knowledge of God, and gives a list of the works written by himself. In the “Letters,” he answers enquiries addressed to him by Gaius, Dorotheus and Titus respecting certain deep questions discussed in his writings. The purpose of the whole is the elevation of man to God. Union with God is the vestibule of truth, and the unique way to attain the highest truth.

Have we here a genuine truthful book written by Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of Paul, the personal friend of Timothy and John the Evangelist?

The question is to be answered from the testimony of history, and upon the principles of true historic criticism. Having translated the whole collected works of Dionysius the Areopagite, and read and studied a literature upon the subject, I affirm that we have here writings penned by Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of S. Paul, in which there is not a personal or local allusion which was intended to mislead or deceive, and that the author lived and moved amongst Apostles and Apostolic men, even as the writings imply and affirm. To prove this I call four witnesses—Lucius Flavius Dexter, the Statesman; Dionysius the Great, Bishop of Alexandria; Maximus, the Confessor; and Photius, the Patriarch. I shall first show their qualifications as witnesses, then produce their testimony, then appeal to the reader.

Lucius Flavius Dexter was a friend of Jerome— Jerome even addresses him as “filius” “amicus,” and describes him as “clarus apud seculum et Christi fidei deditus” [trans- “renown with the world and dedicated to the Faith of Christ”--NFTU]. Dexter became Prefect of the oriental Praetorians, and was one of the most distinguished statesmen of his time. He visited the East, and there met Jerome. Like Lord Dufferin, he was chosen to arrange the most difficult negotiations. He undertook to appease the jealousy between the provinces of Barcelona and Toledo. Political affairs compelled him to reside two years in Toledo. Like Mr. Speaker Denison, he combined a love of truth with ability in affairs of state. Whilst residing at Toledo, he examined the

“Tabularia,” or ancient records of that Apostolic See, in which he says, “I confess to have found many things worthy to be known.” In the cathedral of Toledo there is a tablet giving the succession of Bishops from S. Paul, A.D.. 62, to the present day. From the records of Toledo and other churches in Spain, Dexter compiled a chronicle from A.D. 1 to 430, containing a brief summary of events, chiefly in reference to the Church of Spain. That chronicle he dedicated to Jerome, who enrolled both author and chronicle in his book of “Illustrious Men.” It was at the request of Dexter that Jerome wrote his book of “Illustrious Men,” which he dedicated to Dexter, and which was deemed so valuable by antiquity that Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, translated it into Greek.

Amongst the earliest Bishops of Toledo, Dexter describes a remarkable man, named Marcellus, surnamed Eugenius, on account of his noble birth. Bivarius says, “he was of the family, and house of Caesar, being uncle to the Emperor Hadrian.” This Marcellus was consecrated Bishop by Dionysius the Areopagite, at Arles, and sent to Toledo.

Respecting him, Dexter records that Dionysius the Areopagite dedicates to him, u.c. 851 (A.D. 98), the “books of the Divine Names,” as wishing to have still a Timothy on earth—” in vivis.” Dexter further records that Dionysius surnamed Marcellus, Timothy, on account of his excellent disposition.

Now Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, an author in the 2nd century, relates that Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, was martyred during the reign of Nerva (96-97). Upon the return of Dionysius to Gaul, after his visit to S. John liberated from Patmos, we find him surnaming his friend Marcellus, Timothy, and presenting to him a copy of the “Divine Names,” A.d. 98, in order that he might still have a Timothy on earth, although his first Timothy, to whom his works were originally written, “migravit ad Christum” [trans.- “departed to Christ”--NFTU] A.D. 97.

This touch of nature, recorded to have taken place nearly 1,800 years ago, and whose record is preserved in a chronicle written more than 1,400 years ago, by an illustrious statesman, who was also son of a Bishop, celebrated for learning and sanctity, may perhaps be deemed, by some minds, reasonable proof that the Treatise of the “Divine Names” was written by Dionysius the Areopagite previous to A.D. 98.

Dionysius, Bishop Of Alexandria, A.d. 250.

Dionysius gained the title of “Great,” even amongst the teachers of the Didaskaleion, which was a rival of the Serapeum of Alexandria. He was successor of Clement and Origen.

About ten years ago, L’Abbe Martin discovered in the British Museum (Nos. 12151-2) a letter written by Dionysius of Alexandria to Pope Sixtus the 2nd, in which he affirms positively that none can doubt that Dionysius the Areopagite is the author of the writings which are circulated in his name.

In the first Codex we find portions of that Epistle in the conclusion of the work written by John

Scholasticus (605), entitled “A New Apology,” written by George, Priest of the great Church of Constantinople, and native of the City of Bozra, with reference to the ” Divine Writings,” which are rejected by some ignorant persons, as though they were not the production of that great doctor, but only writings of some heretic, such as Appollinaris or some recent and unknown heretic. Now, that Priest George of Constantinople, after recounting that these Books of the Areopagite had several times been rejected by foolish people, affirms that he is going to produce an argument that will close the mouth of all gainsayers; and that argument is the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, from which the following is an extract:—

“The God Unknown, Jesus, the Word, whom the Greeks worthily honour, although they do not know Him, was crucified by the Jews, when they ought to have adored Him. But they did not know Him (I say that it was the Word that they ought to have adored, the Word of the Father—because I do not wish any one to believe that I am the advocate of idolators; and I speak only of those Greeks who recognize the God Unknown as the Author of the Universe). Now, having known Him according to the Scriptures, the great Dionysius wished to be baptized by the Apostle, with all his house. He was an eloquent and illustrious man, who became afterwards Bishop of Athens, and made himself celebrated by the Works which he composed on the Divine Theology. He was disciple of S. Paul, by whom the Messiah made known the Gospel to the Gentiles, by speaking Himself through his mouth. Now the Book of that distinguished man shows clearly the brilliancy of his talent, for he is the author of the theological work of which we are now speaking. Further, no one disputes his paternity of it, for, when some people of the contrary opinion have read, with attention and intelligence, that work, at once philosophic and divine, and have been enlightened by the very testimony of the holy Doctor that we have under our eyes, they will easily comprehend that these ‘Divine Writings’ could only be the work of the great Dionysius, who, with the Divine help and inspiration, piously governed the Church of Athens.

“Now, after Hierotheus, who was his master, what other doctor was there more powerful in word than he who has written, in a manner so sublime, upon Theology and Sciences?

“No one penetrated more profoundly than Dionysius into the mysterious depths of the Holy Scriptures. This is easily proved by reading attentively, and with love of the truth, the works that we have from him. For he is worthy of credit even when he testifies of himself, as he does in his letter to the holy Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp—that valiant defender of the Faith,—that disciple of John the Evangelist, the Beloved Apostle of our Lord.”

That reference is to Section I. of the Letter to Polycarp, which concludes with these beautiful words:

“Having then, as I think, well understood this, I have not been over zealous to speak in reply to Greeks, or to others; but it is sufficient for me (and may God grant this) first, to know about truth, then having known, to speak as it is fitting to speak.”

Bear in mind that since the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria was disintombed by L’Abbe

Martin, Professor Frothingham, an American scholar, has found the "Book of Hierotheus" in the British Museum. The Archbishop of Athens gave me, some time ago, this catalogue of the first five Bishops of Athens: 1st, Hierotheus, A.D. 52; 2nd, Dionysius; 3rd, Narcissus; 4th, Publius, 118—124; 5th, Quadratus, who presented the "Apology" to the Emperor Hadrian. Yet, twenty-five years ago, Hierotheus was thought to be a *mythical* personage,—just as King Lucius of Britain is now, by some, deemed to be a myth—by those who presumably have never read Archbishop Parker's magnificent book, "De antiquitate Britannicae Ecclesiae," nor Alford's two volumes of the "Fides Regia Anglicana." Would some learned foreigner disentomb those two works in the British Museum, for the instruction of our "Historical Society," which knows more of the See of Rome than of its own ancient Metropolitan See of London.

Glastonbury is the Cradle of the Christian Church in Great Britain—not the modern graft of Canterbury. It is a curious method of historical criticism to prove the continuity of the Church in Britain from A.D. 33 to 1897, by dating its episcopal succession from S. Augustine, A.D. 597, when that succession died out A.D. 669. Some members of our "Historical Society" wish to impose upon us the "being English" as a third Sacrament, which they seem to regard "as generally necessary to salvation." Joseph of Arimathea, invited to Britain, by a Druid Priest, for greater security from the Jews, says of himself, "After I had buried Christ, I came to the Britons, I taught, I fell asleep."

Some of our "English" Divines disdain to believe that testimony, apparently because they were not there to see him buried. Even Latin Councils are disregarded, when their testimony is in favour of our own Church and Nation.

We affirm, then, that the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria is proof that the Writings of Dionysius were known and regarded as genuine previous to A.D. 250.

Maximus The Confessor

Maximus the Confessor was a learned and luminous writer, A.D. 630. His writings have come down to us in two volumes. They discuss the most difficult passages of Holy Writ, and contain treatises upon the soul, the blessed Trinity, and the Hypostatic Union. He was a towering figure in the Monophysite Controversy. His famous discussion with Pyrrhus, Patriarch of Constantinople, is contained in his works. He suffered banishment, persecution and ignominy rather than betray his convictions; and his death was probably hastened by his sufferings. Neither fear nor favour could make him swerve from his convictions. Amongst other writings, with which his learning and piety have enriched the Church, are *Scholia* upon the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite. When commenting upon the fifth chapter of the "Celestial Hierarchy," he alludes to the expression, "ousias," applied by Dionysius the Areopagite to the holy angels, and writes thus, "the great Dionysius," the Bishop of Alexandria;—he, who had been an orator,—in the *Scholia* which he made upon the blessed Dionysius his namesake, speaks thus: "The external philosophy (pagan Greek) was accustomed to call all invisible nature, ungenerated and likewise personalities 'beings' (*ousias*), and from this he says, such phrases are used by the

holy Dionysius, after the manner of the external philosophers.” Maximus is commenting upon a word which is used by Dionysius the Areopagite. To explain its use and presence in the text, he quotes verbatim from the *Scholia* written by the Bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 250. How then can we escape the conclusion that the works of the Areopagite were known, A.D. 250, when Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote his *Scholia* explaining the unusual use of that word by the Areopagite. Be it remembered that Maximus was a determined opponent of the, so-called, Monophysites, who claimed the writings of Dionysius as their chief authority. They produced them at Constantinople, A.D. 532, and they were regarded as their great champions. Are we then to believe that Maximus did not scan, with a critical eye, the writings which were the alleged stronghold of his opponents, as well as the *Scholia* of the great Bishop of Alexandria, which treated those writings as genuine, A.D. 250.

We affirm then that the *Scholia* of Maximus, written upon the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite, are a reasonable historic proof that those writings are genuine, and that Dionysius of Alexandria wrote his *Scholia* upon the same writings previous to A.D. 250.

Photius, Patriarch Of Constantinople.

Photius was a Prince of Patriarchs and a landmark in history. His letter to Michael, Prince of Bulgaria, marks the cleavage between Greeks and Latins, which subsequent events widened into a great gulf, which will not be closed until Christian learning and good sense are in the ascendant. Mr. Gladstone would have found Photius a glad competitor in working, in reading, in writing, whether in “felling” I don’t know!

“He was accounted,” says Nicetas David—the panegyrist of his great rival Ignatius—”to be of all men the most eminent for his secular acquirements, and his understanding of political affairs. For so superior were his attainments in grammar and poetry, in rhetoric and philosophy, yea even in medicine, and almost all branches of knowledge beyond the limits of theology, that he not only excelled all the men of his own day, but seemed even to bear comparison with the Ancients. For all things combined in his favour—natural aptitude, diligence, wealth—which enabled him to form an all comprehensive library, and more than all these, the lust of glory, which induced him to pass whole nights without sleep, that he might have time for reading.” Photius was sent on an embassy to the Assyrians. During that embassy he read the works described in his “Bibliotheca” and wrote the critical notes, on the books read, contained in that book. He thus continued the work of Jerome and Eusebius as historian of Church literature.

Now, it is a proof of the importance of our theme, that the very first book described by Photius, in his “Bibliotheca,” is one which treats of the genuineness of the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite. We gladly concede that the genuineness of those writings had to be maintained, A.D. 420. The primitive Church was not so uncritical as some affirm. The first book which Photius describes was written by Theodore, a presbyter of the Church of Antioch. What was the date of Theodore? Gennadius, in his book of “Illustrious Men,” describes Theodore as “presbyter of the Church of Antioch, a man distinguished by the caution of science, and brilliancy of expression, who wrote against the Apollinarians, and whose books Photius says he had read.” Sixtus

Fenensis affirms that Theodore lived under Honorius Augustus (420). Photius not only read Theodore's book, but records his opinion that Theodore establishes the genuineness of the Areopagite's writings.

Happily Photius gives the four objections alleged against the writings of Dionysius. Bishop Westcott, as happily, describes the objections recorded, as a summary of all that has since been written on the controversy. The general argument against the genuineness is composed of three principal ingredients—"If," "therefore," and "spurious." "If" Dionysius was martyred under Domitian, how could he have quoted a letter written by Ignatius under Trajan? But Dionysius was *not* martyred under Domitian, but under Hadrian. Dionysius does *not* quote the letter of Ignatius immediately before his martyrdom. Again, the works of Dionysius were undoubtedly produced at Constantinople, A.D. 532—"therefore" they were never known before. Bar Sudaili, a Syrian Monk, says he had found the "*Erotic hymns*" of Hierotheus—extracts from which are given by Dionysius—"therefore" Bar Sudaili, a Syrian monk in the 5th century, wrote the works attributed to Dionysius, which are written in Greek. Professor Stiglmayr has filled ninety-six pages with passages occurring between the 2nd and 7th century referring to Dionysius and his own notes thereon. By the omnipotent "*spurious*" it is *proved* that the writings were unknown till 532.

The first objection given by Photius from Theodore's book is this: "If the Book is genuine, why have none of the Fathers who succeeded him copied his sentences and proofs?" But they have so copied—Clement and Origen of Alexandria teem with parallel sentences and illustrations. Another objection—"Why when Eusebius is enumerating the writings of the holy Fathers does he not enumerate the writings of Dionysius?" Read Photius, "Bibliotheca," Codex 127, to learn how Eusebius concealed everything prejudicial to Arius. Eusebius would have convicted himself by making known Dionysius. Jerome followed Dionysius on the Holy Angels. Objection three. "How does this book weave a minute narrative of those traditions which grew up in the Church by growth and long intervals of time? For the great Dionysius, as is evident from the Acts of the Apostles, was a contemporary of the Apostles. This book, then, contains chiefly a description of those traditions which afterwards by degrees established themselves in the Church."

The objector then says, "that it does not seem like the truth, yea that it is falsely feigned, that Dionysius should have had those ceremonies to describe which sprung up in the Church and prevailed, long after the death of the great Dionysius." Certainly Dionysius never wrote a statement more involved than that, yet the objector would have alleged that the writings could not belong to the Apostolic age, because they are not written with the simplicity of S. Paul, who, although S. Peter says, "there are some things in his Epistles hard to be understood," yet we all know that "S. Paul at any rate wrote plain English!" The objection is not true. There is no mere ritual in the "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy." Dionysius explains that in the administration of the Holy Communion, the Bishop comes forth from the Sanctuary, and makes a circuit of the whole enclosure, in order to signify that Almighty God, in His Word and in the Incarnation of the Word, came forth from the Hidden, and that He distributes His gifts to all His faithful people. He

further explains that the trine immersion for Baptism, in which we are buried with Christ, symbolises the *trihemeria*, three days and nights, during which Christ remained in the tomb. The placing of the Christian dead amongst those of the same rank signifies that according to our rank and holiness so will be the place prepared for us in the "many mansions."

Fourth objection. Why does this book quote from the Epistle of Ignatius? For as we have said, Dionysius flourished in the time of the Apostles, but Ignatius suffered martyrdom under Trajan, and a little before his death wrote that Epistle which this book "quotes." The objection has no logical meaning. Ignatius also lived in the time of the Apostles, and in fact was martyred eleven years before the martyrdom of Dionysius. The word "Love," in that letter of Ignatius, signifies human passion or fire. In the passage quoted from Ignatius by Dionysius, "Love" is used as signifying our blessed Lord, and is quoted to show the exalted use of the word "Love" by Christian theologians. Well might Photius remark, that "Theodore zealously answers the objection in these four arguments," and that "he establishes, to the best of his ability," that the book is the legitimate offspring of the great Dionysius.

In Codex 194, writing on Maximus the Confessor, who wrote *Scholia* on Dionysius, Photius says that Maximus explains that phrase of the divine Dionysius, "In what way you say is Jesus, who is beyond all, ranked essentially with all men." The sentence is found in the 4th letter to Gaius. The question was evidently asked by Gaius in reference to the "Divine Names," Caput II., Section vi., page 20.

I will add, that in Codex 231, "Bibliotheca," Photius in speaking of the synodical letter of Sophronius describes it as "containing the testimony of those who lived before and after the 4th Synod (Council), the chief of whom were Leo Pontiff of old Rome; Peter, the most holy Bishop of Myra—Gennadius of Constantinople—Diadochus of Photica—and Euphramius of Antioch, and *Dionysius, abounding in words, no doubt, but more abounding in speculation*—disciple of S. Paul, Martyr of Christ, Bishop of Athens; and Justin, who consecrated his philosophy by the blood of martyrdom."

We affirm then that the testimony of Theodore and Photius is reasonable evidence that the writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite are genuine.

Further, Germany has spoken. Within the last decade Dr. Schneider has written a Treatise, in which he refutes objections and produces positive evidence in favour of their genuineness. He tells me that scarcely a month passes without his receiving the name of some scholar who wishes to be considered an adherent to their genuineness. The celebrated Professor Schwarz of Liege writes in the "Revue Hollandaise," "that after a profound study of the reasons which Dr. Schneider has produced in his 'Areopagatica,' the genuineness of the works of S. Denis cannot be doubted." The Professor Schmid affirms in the "Linger quartal Schreift," "that the historic proof is complete." Dexter, Dionysius, Maximus, Photius, amongst the Ancients, Schneider, Schwarz and Schmid amongst the Moderns, maintain the genuineness of these writings.

We have produced the evidence and leave the reader to adopt that conclusion which appears to him most agreeable to historical criticism and common sense.

We claim to have verified that famous dictum of the profound Pearson, who, speaking of the writings of Dionysius, wrote: “No one is so ignorant as not to know that these writings were regarded as genuine by the best judges in the 6th, the 5th, the 4th, and the 3rd centuries.”

JOHN PARKER.

St. Denys Areop. B. and M., 1897.

Latins, in particular, should con-

sult their Breviary, October the **Are the Writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite Authentic?**

October 09, 2014

Source: Notes from the Underground: <http://nftu.net/?s=Dionysius&x=5&y=11>

NFTU Editor’s Note: The valuable work below by the late 19th century Anglican scholar, John Parker, proves to be an edifying find. Not because Park was Orthodox, because, sadly he was not, as noted; he belonged, most unfortunately, to the government religious society of the British State (commonly called the “Anglican Church”). However, despite this serious spiritual and theological handicap, which I’m certain our readers can take into account, his essay below provides a convincing case for the traditional attitude of the Orthodox Church, i.e. that the works of St. Dionysius the Areopagite are indeed genuine. At the very least, we should prefer giving the benefit of the doubt to the traditional view, instead of going after every new fad of the modernist false scholars, and, as the Inspired Apostle says, being “tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:14).

Despite this, Parker displays a spirit in his bending toward traditional accounts that we will find familiar (especially his jabs at the “Historical Society”, and his treatment of the traditions surrounding Glastonbury and St. Joseph); in this it is to be pitied that Orthodoxy did not perhaps have a greater missionary work in Britain in the 19th century. Dr. Overbeck and a few learned others were to be the great exceptions that proved a sad rule (and even Dr. Overbeck, though master of languages ancient and modern, and champion of Orthodoxy, though residing the last 40 years of his life in England, was himself a German).

While perhaps some arguments may reasonably be considered weak (the controversy surrounding the authenticity of the Chronicle of Dexter, which defended by some, has generally be rejected by most today it seems; though, that Dexter wrote such a work, which St. Jerome calls the “Universal History”, is undoubted from ch. 132 of [“De Viris Illustribus”](#)), this should not fundamentally detract from the main import of the work and his other arguments (such the testimony of St. Dionysius of Alexandria, St. Maximus, and St. Photius).

The works of St. Dionysius were indeed held to be genuine by the Orthodox for a long time. As Parker note, though, this does not mean there were not objections here and there raised (often by those outside of Orthodoxy); instead of the Church ignoring such attacks and objections, it responded in calm, reasoned, charitable and traditional methods. St. Photius notes and agrees with the ancient Presbyter, the Holy Theodore, who is variously ascribed as being a certain Presbyter of Antioch in the late 4th century, or perhaps the early 5th century. Nevertheless, many Church writers were not men who were so stupid as to be easily deceived; nor was the Church Tradition to be so easily cast aside because of ‘modern findings’. Indeed, St. Photius gives his complete agreement to the authenticity of the writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite; in his “Bibliotheca”, St. Photius did not just ‘invent the book review’ in the sense of only recording ideas, St. Photius actively critiques ideas contained in these works, expressing whether he thinks an author is right, wrong, Orthodox or heretical. (For online translations of portions of the Bibliotheca, go [here](#) and [here](#); to skip directly to St. Photius’ thought on this matter, [go here](#).) Hopefully, as time continues, Orthodox authors will be more forthcoming with such works. Indeed, it is very possible, nay, probable and very likely, that Orthodox authors have perhaps composed such treatises, as yet untranslated from Russian and Greek sources. In this case, we can pray and work toward the day when such are provided in English translation for the wider English-speaking Orthodox world.

I have not sought to reproduce the footnotes and such. If one is interested in this you can go to the image version on google book [found here](#).

Therefore, taking the above into account, I have provided below, the full text of Parker’s work. As Orthodox we should learn to follow the advice of St. Basil the Great with non-Orthodox writers. St. Basil gave the definitive attitude, when he said in his address “[To Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature](#)“:

“For just as bees know how to extract honey from flowers, which to men are agreeable only for their fragrance and color, even so here also those who look for something more than pleasure and enjoyment in such writers may derive profit for their souls. Now, then, altogether after the manner of bees must we use these writings, for the bees do not visit all the flowers without discrimination, nor indeed do they seek to carry away entire those upon which they light, but rather, having taken so much as is adapted to their needs, they let the rest go.”

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ARE THE WRITINGS OF DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE GENUINE?

by John Parker

INTRODUCTION

From a Christian and theological point of view momentous issues depend upon the answer to this

question. The author of these writings quotes Holy Scripture about five hundred times—always as the supreme authority—most frequently as the oracles of God. (*Logia.*) Except the two small letters of John Presbyter, the author quotes from every book of the New Testament, as known and existing before A.D. 98. If then these writings are the genuine works of Dionysius the Areopagite—the convert of S. Paul—we have historic proof that the books of the New Testament were quoted and known in the first century. If these writings are genuine, we have historic proof that in the first century there was 1st, episcopal consecration of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon; 2nd, that Baptism was administered by trine immersion,—and to children—and that it was accompanied with unction of Holy Oil; 3rd, that Holy Communion was administered with Liturgical prayers and formula, as well as with personal prayers and exhortations; and 4th, that “Incense was offered to God’s Holy Name, and a pure offering.” Malachi i. 11.

These writings abound in surprises. Greeks will be content—Latins will exult—Anglicans will rejoice—Agnostics will smile—Baptists will triumph—Plymouth Brethren will know “the reason why”—Theosophists will be delighted. We may all be put *right*, because we shall all be proved *wrong* in some particular. After five years’ continuous research, I have a strong conviction of their genuineness. I stake my judgment upon the fact, and am rather glad to stand alone—for a time. My appeal is to historical criticism, and to common sense. But I wish *to state the case*, not to decide the question, and with such restrained impartiality that the case shall not be weakened by an apparent bias in favour of what I deem the truth.

Personal Affirmations Of The Author

The author of these writings expressly affirms that he was brought from paganism to the Christian Faith by the divine Paul. He speaks of Timothy as his friend, and declares that they were both disciples of Paul. He incidentally reminds Timothy that they both were once present with James the Lord’s brother, and Peter, the foremost and most honoured pinnacle of the Theologians. He writes to John, “Theologus, Apostle, Evangelist, imprisoned in the isle of Patmos,” and expresses a confident hope that they will soon meet, to speak face to face. In a letter to Polycarp, he describes a sudden unexpected darkness, which Apollophanes and he had witnessed in Egypt. He declares that Paul had taught him that that darkness was contemporaneous with the Crucifixion. He writes to Titus as mutual friends of Timothy. He describes Himself as friend and relative of Apollophanes, who was tutor of Polemon, whose pupil Aristides presented the “Apology” to the Emperor Hadrian.

Are these allusions natural and true, or feigned and cunningly devised?

The Treatise on the Divine Names explains the various epithets applied in Holy Scripture to the whole Godhead alike,—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the ever-Being—the good—the beautiful—the powerful—the wise—the great—the small. The author discusses the nature and origin of evil,—the difficulties attendant upon its existence under the Omnipotent Providence of God. In the “Celestial Hierarchy,” the author claims to give instruction on the holy Angels, derived from Paul. In the “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy,” he describes the administration of “Holy Communion,”

“Baptism,” “Chrism,” and the spiritual instruction taught and implied in the various ceremonial acts performed. He also discusses the reason for prayers in the funeral rites of the departed, and the conditions under which such prayers may be used. He argues the question of the Baptism of Infants, and describes the conditions under which it may be done. In the “Mystic Theology,” he describes how we may best attain the knowledge of God, and gives a list of the works written by himself. In the “Letters,” he answers enquiries addressed to him by Gaius, Dorotheus and Titus respecting certain deep questions discussed in his writings. The purpose of the whole is the elevation of man to God. Union with God is the vestibule of truth, and the unique way to attain the highest truth.

Have we here a genuine truthful book written by Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of Paul, the personal friend of Timothy and John the Evangelist?

The question is to be answered from the testimony of history, and upon the principles of true historic criticism. Having translated the whole collected works of Dionysius the Areopagite, and read and studied a literature upon the subject, I affirm that we have here writings penned by Dionysius the Areopagite, the convert of S. Paul, in which there is not a personal or local allusion which was intended to mislead or deceive, and that the author lived and moved amongst Apostles and Apostolic men, even as the writings imply and affirm. To prove this I call four witnesses—Lucius Flavius Dexter, the Statesman; Dionysius the Great, Bishop of Alexandria; Maximus, the Confessor; and Photius, the Patriarch. I shall first show their qualifications as witnesses, then produce their testimony, then appeal to the reader.

Lucius Flavius Dexter was a friend of Jerome— Jerome even addresses him as “filius” “amicus,” and describes him as “clarus apud seculum et Christi fidei deditus” [trans- “renown with the world and dedicated to the Faith of Christ”--NFTU]. Dexter became Prefect of the oriental Praetorians, and was one of the most distinguished statesmen of his time. He visited the East, and there met Jerome. Like Lord Dufferin, he was chosen to arrange the most difficult negotiations. He undertook to appease the jealousy between the provinces of Barcelona and Toledo. Political affairs compelled him to reside two years in Toledo. Like Mr. Speaker Denison, he combined a love of truth with ability in affairs of state. Whilst residing at Toledo, he examined the “Tabularia,” or ancient records of that Apostolic See, in which he says, “I confess to have found many things worthy to be known.” In the cathedral of Toledo there is a tablet giving the succession of Bishops from S. Paul, A.D. 62, to the present day. From the records of Toledo and other churches in Spain, Dexter compiled a chronicle from A.D. 1 to 430, containing a brief summary of events, chiefly in reference to the Church of Spain. That chronicle he dedicated to Jerome, who enrolled both author and chronicle in his book of “Illustrious Men.” It was at the request of Dexter that Jerome wrote his book of “Illustrious Men,” which he dedicated to Dexter, and which was deemed so valuable by antiquity that Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, translated it into Greek.

Amongst the earliest Bishops of Toledo, Dexter describes a remarkable man, named Marcellus, surnamed Eugenius, on account of his noble birth. Bivarius says, “he was of the family, and

house of Caesar, being uncle to the Emperor Hadrian.” This Marcellus was consecrated Bishop by Dionysius the Areopagite, at Arles, and sent to Toledo.

Respecting him, Dexter records that Dionysius the Areopagite dedicates to him, u.c. 851 (A.D. 98), the “books of the Divine Names,” as wishing to have still a Timothy on earth—” in vivis.” Dexter further records that Dionysius surnamed Marcellus, Timothy, on account of his excellent disposition.

Now Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, an author in the 2nd century, relates that Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, was martyred during the reign of Nerva (96-97). Upon the return of Dionysius to Gaul, after his visit to S. John liberated from Patmos, we find him surnaming his friend Marcellus, Timothy, and presenting to him a copy of the “Divine Names,” A.d. 98, in order that he might still have a Timothy on earth, although his first Timothy, to whom his works were originally written, “migravit ad Christum” [trans.- “departed to Christ”--NFTU] A.D. 97.

This touch of nature, recorded to have taken place nearly 1,800 years ago, and whose record is preserved in a chronicle written more than 1,400 years ago, by an illustrious statesman, who was also son of a Bishop, celebrated for learning and sanctity, may perhaps be deemed, by some minds, reasonable proof that the Treatise of the “Divine Names” was written by Dionysius the Areopagite previous to A.D. 98.

Dionysius, Bishop Of Alexandria, A.d. 250.

Dionysius gained the title of “Great,” even amongst the teachers of the Didaskaleion, which was a rival of the Serapeum of Alexandria. He was successor of Clement and Origen.

About ten years ago, L’Abbe Martin discovered in the British Museum (Nos. 12151-2) a letter written by Dionysius of Alexandria to Pope Sixtus the 2nd, in which he affirms positively that none can doubt that Dionysius the Areopagite is the author of the writings which are circulated in his name.

In the first Codex we find portions of that Epistle in the conclusion of the work written by John Scholasticus (605), entitled “A New Apology,” written by George, Priest of the great Church of Constantinople, and native of the City of Bozra, with reference to the ” Divine Writings,” which are rejected by some ignorant persons, as though they were not the production of that great doctor, but only writings of some heretic, such as Appollinaris or some recent and unknown heretic. Now, that Priest George of Constantinople, after recounting that these Books of the Areopagite had several times been rejected by foolish people, affirms that he is going to produce an argument that will close the mouth of all gainsayers; and that argument is the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria, from which the following is an extract:—

“The God Unknown, Jesus, the Word, whom the Greeks worthily honour, although they do not know Him, was crucified by the Jews, when they ought to have adored Him. But they did not know Him (I say that it was the Word that they ought to have adored, the Word of the Father—

because I do not wish any one to believe that I am the advocate of idolators; and I speak only of those Greeks who recognize the God Unknown as the Author of the Universe). Now, having known Him according to the Scriptures, the great Dionysius wished to be baptized by the Apostle, with all his house. He was an eloquent and illustrious man, who became afterwards Bishop of Athens, and made himself celebrated by the Works which he composed on the Divine Theology. He was disciple of S. Paul, by whom the Messiah made known the Gospel to the Gentiles, by speaking Himself through his mouth. Now the Book of that distinguished man shows clearly the brilliancy of his talent, for he is the author of the theological work of which we are now speaking. Further, no one disputes his paternity of it, for, when some people of the contrary opinion have read, with attention and intelligence, that work, at once philosophic and divine, and have been enlightened by the very testimony of the holy Doctor that we have under our eyes, they will easily comprehend that these ‘Divine Writings’ could only be the work of the great Dionysius, who, with the Divine help and inspiration, piously governed the Church of Athens.

“Now, after Hierotheus, who was his master, what other doctor was there more powerful in word than he who has written, in a manner so sublime, upon Theology and Sciences?”

“No one penetrated more profoundly than Dionysius into the mysterious depths of the Holy Scriptures. This is easily proved by reading attentively, and with love of the truth, the works that we have from him. For he is worthy of credit even when he testifies of himself, as he does in his letter to the holy Bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp—that valiant defender of the Faith,—that disciple of John the Evangelist, the Beloved Apostle of our Lord.”

That reference is to Section I. of the Letter to Polycarp, which concludes with these beautiful words:

“Having then, as I think, well understood this, I have not been over zealous to speak in reply to Greeks, or to others; but it is sufficient for me (and may God grant this) first, to know about truth, then having known, to speak as it is fitting to speak.”

Bear in mind that since the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria was disintombed by L’Abbe Martin, Professor Frothingham, an American scholar, has found the ” Book of Hierotheus” in the British Museum. The Archbishop of Athens gave me, some time ago, this catalogue of the first five Bishops of Athens: 1st, Hierotheus, A.D. 52; 2nd, Dionysius; 3rd, Narcissus; 4th, Publius, 118— 124; 5th, Quadratus, who presented the “Apology” to the Emperor Hadrian. Yet, twenty-five years ago, Hierotheus was thought to be a *mythical* personage,—just as King Lucius of Britain is now, by some, deemed to be a myth—by those who presumably have never read Archbishop Parker’s magnificent book, “De antiquitate Britannicae Ecclesiae,” nor Alford’s two volumes of the “Fides Regia Anglicana.” Would some learned foreigner disintomb those two works in the British Museum, for the instruction of our “Historical Society,” which knows more of the See of Rome than of its own ancient Metropolitan See of London.

Glastonbury is the Cradle of the Christian Church in Great Britain—not the modern graft of

Canterbury. It is a curious method of historical criticism to prove the continuity of the Church in Britain from A.D. 33 to 1897, by dating its episcopal succession from S. Augustine, A.D. 597, when that succession died out A.D. 669. Some members of our "Historical Society" wish to impose upon us the "being English" as a third Sacrament, which they seem to regard "as generally necessary to salvation." Joseph of Arimathea, invited to Britain, by a Druid Priest, for greater security from the Jews, says of himself, "After I had buried Christ, I came to the Britons, I taught, I fell asleep."

Some of our "English" Divines disdain to believe that testimony, apparently because they were not there to see him buried. Even Latin Councils are disregarded, when their testimony is in favour of our own Church and Nation.

We affirm, then, that the letter of Dionysius of Alexandria is proof that the Writings of Dionysius were known and regarded as genuine previous to A.D. 250.

Maximus The Confessor

Maximus the Confessor was a learned and luminous writer, A.D. 630. His writings have come down to us in two volumes. They discuss the most difficult passages of Holy Writ, and contain treatises upon the soul, the blessed Trinity, and the Hypostatic Union. He was a towering figure in the Monophysite Controversy. His famous discussion with Pyrrhus, Patriarch of Constantinople, is contained in his works. He suffered banishment, persecution and ignominy rather than betray his convictions; and his death was probably hastened by his sufferings. Neither fear nor favour could make him swerve from his convictions. Amongst other writings, with which his learning and piety have enriched the Church, are *Scholia* upon the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite. When commenting upon the fifth chapter of the "Celestial Hierarchy," he alludes to the expression, "ousias," applied by Dionysius the Areopagite to the holy angels, and writes thus, "the great Dionysius," the Bishop of Alexandria;—he, who had been an orator,—in the *Scholia* which he made upon the blessed Dionysius his namesake, speaks thus: "The external philosophy (pagan Greek) was accustomed to call all invisible nature, ungenerated and likewise personalities 'beings' (*ousias*), and from this he says, such phrases are used by the holy Dionysius, after the manner of the external philosophers." Maximus is commenting upon a word which is used by Dionysius the Areopagite. To explain its use and presence in the text, he quotes verbatim from the *Scholia* written by the Bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 250. How then can we escape the conclusion that the works of the Areopagite were known, A.D. 250, when Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote his *Scholia* explaining the unusual use of that word by the Areopagite. Be it remembered that Maximus was a determined opponent of the, so-called, Monophysites, who claimed the writings of Dionysius as their chief authority. They produced them at Constantinople, A.D. 532, and they were regarded as their great champions. Are we then to believe that Maximus did not scan, with a critical eye, the writings which were the alleged stronghold of his opponents, as well as the *Scholia* of the great Bishop of Alexandria, which treated those writings as genuine, A.D. 250.

We affirm then that the *Scholia* of Maximus, written upon the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite, are a reasonable historic proof that those writings are genuine, and that Dionysius of Alexandria wrote his *Scholia* upon the same writings previous to A.D. 250.

Photius, Patriarch Of Constantinople.

Photius was a Prince of Patriarchs and a landmark in history. His letter to Michael, Prince of Bulgaria, marks the cleavage between Greeks and Latins, which subsequent events widened into a great gulf, which will not be closed until Christian learning and good sense are in the ascendant. Mr. Gladstone would have found Photius a glad competitor in working, in reading, in writing, whether in “felling” I don’t know!

“He was accounted,” says Nicetas David—the panegyrist of his great rival Ignatius—“to be of all men the most eminent for his secular acquirements, and his understanding of political affairs. For so superior were his attainments in grammar and poetry, in rhetoric and philosophy, yea even in medicine, and almost all branches of knowledge beyond the limits of theology, that he not only excelled all the men of his own day, but seemed even to bear comparison with the Ancients. For all things combined in his favour—natural aptitude, diligence, wealth—which enabled him to form an all comprehensive library, and more than all these, the lust of glory, which induced him to pass whole nights without sleep, that he might have time for reading.” Photius was sent on an embassy to the Assyrians. During that embassy he read the works described in his “Bibliotheca” and wrote the critical notes, on the books read, contained in that book. He thus continued the work of Jerome and Eusebius as historian of Church literature.

Now, it is a proof of the importance of our theme, that the very first book described by Photius, in his “Bibliotheca,” is one which treats of the genuineness of the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite. We gladly concede that the genuineness of those writings had to be maintained, A.D. 420. The primitive Church was not so uncritical as some affirm. The first book which Photius describes was written by Theodore, a presbyter of the Church of Antioch. What was the date of Theodore? Gennadius, in his book of “Illustrious Men,” describes Theodore as “presbyter of the Church of Antioch, a man distinguished by the caution of science, and brilliancy of expression, who wrote against the Apollinarians, and whose books Photius says he had read.” Sixtus Fenensis affirms that Theodore lived under Honorius Augustus (420). Photius not only read Theodore’s book, but records his opinion that Theodore establishes the genuineness of the Areopagite’s writings.

Happily Photius gives the four objections alleged against the writings of Dionysius. Bishop Westcott, as happily, describes the objections recorded, as a summary of all that has since been written on the controversy. The general argument against the genuineness is composed of three principal ingredients—“If,” “therefore,” and “spurious.” “If” Dionysius was martyred under Domitian, how could he have quoted a letter written by Ignatius under Trajan? But Dionysius was *not* martyred under Domitian, but under Hadrian. Dionysius does *not* quote the letter of Ignatius immediately before his martyrdom. Again, the works of Dionysius were undoubtedly produced at Constantinople, A.D. 532—“*therefore*” they were never known before. Bar Sudaili,

a Syrian Monk, says he had found the “*Erotic hymns*” of Hierotheus—extracts from which are given by Dionysius—“*therefore*” Bar Sudaili, a Syrian monk in the 5th century, wrote the works attributed to Dionysius, which are written in Greek. Professor Stiglmayr has filled ninety-six pages with passages occurring between the 2nd and 7th century referring to Dionysius and his own notes thereon. By the omnipotent “*spurious*” it is *proved* that the writings were unknown till 532.

The first objection given by Photius from Theodore’s book is this: “If the Book is genuine, why have none of the Fathers who succeeded him copied his sentences and proofs?” But they have so copied—Clement and Origen of Alexandria teem with parallel sentences and illustrations. Another objection—” Why when Eusebius is enumerating the writings of the holy Fathers does he not enumerate the writings of Dionysius?” Read Photius, “Bibliotheca,” Codex 127, to learn how Eusebius concealed everything prejudicial to Arius. Eusebius would have convicted himself by making known Dionysius. Jerome followed Dionysius on the Holy Angels. Objection three. “How does this book weave a minute narrative of those traditions which grew up in the Church by growth and long intervals of time? For the great Dionysius, as is evident from the Acts of the Apostles, was a contemporary of the Apostles. This book, then, contains chiefly a description of those traditions which afterwards by degrees established themselves in the Church.”

The objector then says, “that it does not seem like the truth, yea that it is falsely feigned, that Dionysius should have had those ceremonies to describe which sprung up in the Church and prevailed, long after the death of the great Dionysius.” Certainly Dionysius never wrote a statement more involved than that, yet the objector would have alleged that the writings could not belong to the Apostolic age, because they are not written with the simplicity of S. Paul, who, although S. Peter says, “there are some things in his Epistles hard to be understood,” yet we all know that “S. Paul at any rate wrote plain English!” The objection is not true. There is no mere ritual in the “Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.” Dionysius explains that in the administration of the Holy Communion, the Bishop comes forth from the Sanctuary, and makes a circuit of the whole enclosure, in order to signify that Almighty God, in His Word and in the Incarnation of the Word, came forth from the Hidden, and that He distributes His gifts to all His faithful people. He further explains that the trine immersion for Baptism, in which we are buried with Christ, symbolises the *trihemeria*, three days and nights, during which Christ remained in the tomb. The placing of the Christian dead amongst those of the same rank signifies that according to our rank and holiness so will be the place prepared for us in the ” many mansions.”

Fourth objection. Why does this book quote from the Epistle of Ignatius? For as we have said, Dionysius flourished in the time of the Apostles, but Ignatius suffered martyrdom under Trajan, and a little before his death wrote that Epistle which this book “quotes.” The objection has no logical meaning. Ignatius also lived in the time of the Apostles, and in fact was martyred eleven years before the martyrdom of Dionysius. The word “Love,” in that letter of Ignatius, signifies human passion or fire. In the passage quoted from Ignatius by Dionysius, “Love” is used as signifying our blessed Lord, and is quoted to show the exalted use of the word “Love” by

Christian theologians. Well might Photius remark, that “Theodore zealously answers the objection in these four arguments,” and that “he establishes, to the best of his ability,” that the book is the legitimate offspring of the great Dionysius.

In Codex 194, writing on Maximus the Confessor, who wrote *Scholia* on Dionysius, Photius says that Maximus explains that phrase of the divine Dionysius, “In what way you say is Jesus, who is beyond all, ranked essentially with all men.” The sentence is found in the 4th letter to Gaius. The question was evidently asked by Gaius in reference to the “Divine Names,” Caput II., Section vi., page 20.

I will add, that in Codex 231, “Bibliotheca,” Photius in speaking of the synodical letter of Sophronius describes it as “containing the testimony of those who lived before and after the 4th Synod (Council), the chief of whom were Leo Pontiff of old Rome; Peter, the most holy Bishop of Myra—Gennadius of Constantinople—Diadochus of Photica—and Euphramius of Antioch, and *Dionysius, abounding in words, no doubt, but more abounding in speculation*—disciple of S. Paul, Martyr of Christ, Bishop of Athens; and Justin, who consecrated his philosophy by the blood of martyrdom.”

We affirm then that the testimony of Theodore and Photius is reasonable evidence that the writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite are genuine.

Further, Germany has spoken. Within the last decade Dr. Schneider has written a Treatise, in which he refutes objections and produces positive evidence in favour of their genuineness. He tells me that scarcely a month passes without his receiving the name of some scholar who wishes to be considered an adherent to their genuineness. The celebrated Professor Schwarz of Liege writes in the “Revue Hollandaise,” “that after a profound study of the reasons which Dr. Schneider has produced in his ‘Areopagatica,’ the genuineness of the works of S. Denis cannot be doubted.” The Professor Schmid affirms in the “Linger quartal Schreift,” “that the historic proof is complete.” Dexter, Dionysius, Maximus, Photius, amongst the Ancients, Schneider, Schwarz and Schmid amongst the Moderns, maintain the genuineness of these writings.

We have produced the evidence and leave the reader to adopt that conclusion which appears to him most agreeable to historical criticism and common sense.

We claim to have verified that famous dictum of the profound Pearson, who, speaking of the writings of Dionysius, wrote: “No one is so ignorant as not to know that these writings were regarded as genuine by the best judges in the 6th, the 5th, the 4th, and the 3rd centuries.”

JOHN PARKER.

St. Denys Areop. B. and M., 1897.

Latins, in particular, should consult their Breviary, October the

