

0373-0380 – Petrus Alexandrinus Archiepiscopus – Fragments

Fragments

this file has been downloaded from <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf06.html>

Hypatia a high-wrought testimony of an antagonistic character. Bingham,²³⁴⁷ avoiding the entanglements of primitive with mediæval history, affords a just view of what may be said of the rise of this mighty institution, based upon two texts²³⁴⁸ of Holy Scripture, proceeding from the Incarnate Word Himself, which impressed themselves on the fervid spirit of Antony. Who can wonder that fire and sword and ravening wolves predisposed men and women to avoid the domestic life, and the bringing of hapless families into existence as a prey to the remorseless cruelty of the empire? Far be it from me to forget what the world owes, directly and indirectly, to the nobler and purer orders,— what learning must ever acknowledge as its debt to the Benedictines of the West.²³⁴⁹ But, on the other hand, after the melancholy episcopate of Cyril, we cannot but trace, in the history of Oriental monasticism, not only the causes of the decay of Alexandrian scholarship and influence, but of the ignominious fate of the Byzantine Empire, and of that paltry devotion to images which seemed to invoke the retributions of a “jealous god,” and which favoured the rise of an impostor who found in his “abhorrence of idols” an excuse for making himself the “Scourge of God.”



Fragments from the Writings of Peter.

I.—Letter to the Church at Alexandria.²³⁵⁰

PETER, to the brethren beloved and established in the faith of God, peace in the Lord. Since I have found out that Meletius acts in no way for the common good,—for neither is he contented with the letter of the most holy bishops and martyrs,—but, invading my parish,²³⁵¹ hath assumed so much to himself as to endeavour to separate from my authority the priests,²³⁵² and those who had been entrusted with visiting the needy;²³⁵³ and, giving proof of his desire for pre-eminence, has ordained in the prison several unto himself; now, take ye heed to this, and hold no communion with

²³⁴⁷ *Antiqu.*, book vii. cap. i.

²³⁴⁸ Matt. xix. 21 and Matt. vi. 34.

²³⁴⁹ Montalembert's *Monks of the West* is but a fascinating romance, but is well worthy of attention.

²³⁵⁰ From Gallandius.

²³⁵¹ [See p. 240, *supra*. But note, the *parish* was greater than the *diocese* in ancient terminology.]

²³⁵² [Presbyters.]

²³⁵³ [Deacons.]

him, until I meet him in company with some wise and discreet men, and see what the designs are which he has thought upon. Fare ye well.

II.—On the Godhead.²³⁵⁴

Since certainly “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,”²³⁵⁵ whence also by grace we are saved, according to that word of the apostle, “and that not of yourselves, nor of works, lest any man should boast;”²³⁵⁶ by the will of God, “the Word was made flesh,”²³⁵⁷ and “was found in fashion as a man.”²³⁵⁸ But yet He was not left without His divinity. For neither “though He was rich did He become poor”²³⁵⁹ that He might absolutely be separated from His power and glory, but that He might Himself endure death for us sinners, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, “being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit;” and afterwards other things. Whence the evangelist also asserts the truth when he says, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;” then indeed, from the time when the angel had saluted the virgin, saying, “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee.” Now when Gabriel said, “The Lord is with thee,” he meant God the Word is with thee. For he shows that He was conceived in the womb, and was to become flesh; as it is written, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;”²³⁶⁰ and afterwards other things. Now God the Word, in the absence of a man, by the will of God, who easily effects everything, was made flesh in the womb of the virgin, not requiring the operation of the presence of a man. For more efficacious than a man was the power of God overshadowing the virgin, together with the Holy Ghost also who came upon her.

III.—On the Advent of Our Saviour.²³⁶¹

²³⁵⁴ A fragment from his book, from the Acts of the Council of Ephesus, i. and vii. 2.—GALLAND.

²³⁵⁵ John i. 17.

²³⁵⁶ Eph. ii. 8, 9.

²³⁵⁷ John i. 14.

²³⁵⁸ Phil. ii. 7.

²³⁵⁹ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

²³⁶⁰ Luke i. 35.

²³⁶¹ A fragment from the homily. Apud Leontium Byzant., lib. i., contra Nestor. et Eutyech., tom. i. Thes. Canis., p. 550.

And He said unto Judas, "Betrayest thou the Son of God with a kiss?"²³⁶² These things and the like, and all the signs which He showed, and His miracles, prove that He is God made man. Both things therefore are demonstrated, that He was God by nature, and that He was man by nature.

IV.—On the Sojourning of Christ with Us.²³⁶³

Both therefore is proved, that he was God by nature, and was made man by nature.

V.—That Up to the Time of the Destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews Rightly Appointed the Fourteenth Day of the First Lunar Month.

I.²³⁶⁴

1. Since the mercy of God is everywhere great, let us bless Him, and also because He has sent unto us the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth. For for this cause the month Abib was appointed by the law to be the beginning of months, and was made known unto us as the first among the months of the year; both by the ancient writers who lived before, and by the later who lived after the destruction of Jerusalem, it was shown to possess a most clear and evidently definite period, especially because in some places the reaping is early, and sometimes it is late, so as to be sometimes before the time and sometimes after it, as it happened in the very beginning of the giving of the law, before the Passover, according as it is written, "But the wheat and the rye were not smitten, for they were not grown up."²³⁶⁵ Whence it is rightly prescribed by the law, that from the vernal equinox, in whatsoever week the fourteenth day of the first month shall fall, in it the Passover is to be celebrated, becoming and conformable songs of praise having been first taken up for its celebration. For this first month, says he, "shall be unto you the beginning of months,"²³⁶⁶ when the sun in the summer-time sends forth a far stronger and clearer light, and the days are lengthened and become longer, whilst the nights are contracted and shortened. Moreover, when the new seeds have sprung up, they are thoroughly purged, and borne into the threshing floor; nor only this, but also all the shrubs blossom, and burst forth into flower. Immediately therefore they are discovered to send forth in alternation various and diverse fruits, so that the grape-clusters are found at that

281

²³⁶² Luke xxii. 48.

²³⁶³ A fragment from the homily. Ex Leontio Hierosolymitano, contra Monophysitas, *Ap. Mai. Script. Vet.*, tom. vii. p. 134.

²³⁶⁴ Apud Galland, *Ex Chronico Paschal.*, p. 1, *seqq.*, edit. Venet., 1729.

²³⁶⁵ Exod. ix. 32.

²³⁶⁶ Exod. xii. 2.

time; as says the lawgiver, “Now, it was the time of spring, of the first ripe grapes;”²³⁶⁷ and when he sent the men to spy out the land, they brought, on bearers, a large cluster of grapes, and pomegranates also, and figs. For then, as they say, our eternal God also, the Maker and Creator of all things, framed all things, and said to them, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth.” Then he adds, “And it was so; and God saw that it was good.”²³⁶⁸ Moreover, he makes quite clear that the first month amongst the Hebrews was appointed by law, which we know to have been observed by the Jews up to the destruction of Jerusalem, because this has been so handed down by the Hebrew tradition. But after the destruction of the city it was mocked at by some hardening of heart, which we observing, according to the law, with sincerity have received; and in this, according to the Word, when he speaks of the day of our holy festivity, which the election hath attained: but the rest have become hardened,²³⁶⁹ as said the Scripture; and after other things.

2. And He says as follows: “All these things will they do unto you for My name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent Me.”²³⁷⁰ But if they knew not Him who sent, and Him who was sent, there is no reason to doubt but that they have been ignorant of the Passover as prescribed by the law, so as not merely to err in their choice of the place, but also in reckoning the beginning of the month, which is the first amongst the months of the year, on the fourteenth day of which, being accurately observed, after the equinox, the ancients celebrated the Passover according to the divine command; whereas the men of the present day now celebrate it before the equinox, and that altogether through negligence and error, being ignorant how they celebrated it in its season, as He confesses who in these things was described.

3. Whether therefore the Jews erroneously sometimes celebrate their Passover according to the course of the moon in the month Phamenoth, or according to the intercalary month, every third year in the month Pharmuthi²³⁷¹ matters not to us. For we have no other object than to keep the remembrance of His Passion, and that at this very time; as those who were eye-witnesses of it have from the beginning handed down, before the Egyptians believed. For neither by observing the course of the moon do they necessarily celebrate it on the sixteenth day of Phamenoth, but once every three years in the month Pharmuthi; for from the beginning, and before the advent of Christ, they seem to have so done. Hence, when the Lord reproves them by the prophet, He says, “They do always err in their heart; and I have sworn in My wrath that they shall not enter into My rest.”²³⁷²

²³⁶⁷ Num. xii. 24.

²³⁶⁸ Gen. i. 11, 12. [As “in summer-time,” probably.]

²³⁶⁹ Rom. xi. 7. [“Our holy festivity” = Easter.]

²³⁷⁰ John xv. 21.

²³⁷¹ [Vol. ii. p. 333, note 4. Clement is always worth noting, for his influence is thus traceable very widely in the early literature.]

²³⁷² Ps. xcv. 10, 11.

4. Wherefore, as thou seest, even in this thou appearest to be lying greatly, not only against men, but also against God. First, indeed, since in this matter the Jews never erred, as consorting with those who were eye-witnesses and ministers, much less from the beginning before the advent of Christ. For God does not say that they did always err in their heart as regards the precept of the law concerning the Passover, as thou hast written, but on account of all their other disobedience, and on account of their evil and unseemly deeds, when, indeed, He perceived them turning to idolatry and to fornication.

5. And after a few things. So that also in this respect, since thou hast slumbered, rouse thyself much, and very much, with the scourge of the Preacher, being mindful especially of that passage where he speaks of "slipping on the pavement, and with the tongue."²³⁷³ For, as thou seest again, the charge cast by thee upon their leaders is reflected back; nay, and one may suspect a great subsequent danger, inasmuch as we hear that the stone which a man casts up on high falls back upon his head. Much more reckless is he who, in this respect, ventures to bring a charge against Moses, that mighty servant of God, or Joshua, the son of Nun, who succeeded him, or those who in succession rightly followed them and ruled; the judges, I mean, and the kings who appeared, or the prophets whom the Holy Spirit inspired, and those who amongst the high-priests were blameless, and those who, in following the traditions, changed nothing, but agreed as to the observance of the Passover in its season, as also of the rest of their feasts.

6. And after other things. But thou oughtest rather to have pursued a safer and more auspicious course, and not to have written rashly and slanderously, that they seem from the beginning, and always, to have been in error about the Passover, which you cannot prove, whatever charge you may wish to bring against those who, at the present time, have erred with a grievous wandering, having fallen away from the commandment of the law concerning the Passover and other things. For the ancients seem to have kept it after the vernal equinox, which you can discover if you read ancient books, and those especially which were written by the learned Hebrews.

7. That therefore up to the period of the Lord's Passion, and at the time of the last destruction of Jerusalem, which happened under Vespasian, the Roman emperor, the people of Israel, rightly observing the fourteenth day of the first lunar month, celebrated on it the Passover of the law, has been briefly demonstrated. Therefore, when the holy prophets, and all, as I have said, who righteously and justly walked in the law of the Lord, together with the entire people, celebrated a typical and shadowy Passover, the Creator and Lord of every visible and invisible creature, the only-begotten Son, and the Word co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and of the same substance with them, according to His divine nature, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, being in the end of the world born according to the flesh of our holy and glorious lady, Mother of God, and Ever-Virgin, and, of a truth, of Mary the Mother of God; and being seen upon earth, and having true and real converse as man with men, who were of the same substance with Him, according to His human nature, Himself also, with the people, in the years before His public ministry and during His public ministry,



²³⁷³ Ecclus. xx. 18.

did celebrate the legal and shadowy Passover, eating the typical lamb. For “I came not to destroy the law, or the prophets, but to fulfil them,” the Saviour Himself said in the Gospel.

But after His public ministry He did not eat of the lamb,²³⁷⁴ but Himself suffered as the true Lamb in the Paschal feast, as John, the divine and evangelist, teaches us in the Gospel written by him, where he thus speaks: “Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover.”²³⁷⁵ And after a few things more. “When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the third hour,”²³⁷⁶ as the correct books render it, and the copy itself that was written by the hand of the evangelist, which, by the divine grace, has been preserved in the most holy church of Ephesus, and is there adored by the faithful. And again the same evangelist says: “The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day (for that Sabbath-day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”²³⁷⁷ On that day, therefore, on which the Jews were about to eat the Passover in the evening, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was crucified, being made the victim to those who were about to partake by faith of the mystery concerning Him, according to what is written by the blessed Paul: “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;”²³⁷⁸ and not as some who, carried along by ignorance, confidently affirm that after He had eaten the Passover, He was betrayed; which we neither learn from the holy evangelists, nor has any of the blessed apostles handed it down to us. At the time, therefore, in which our Lord and God Jesus Christ suffered for us, according to the flesh, He did not eat of the legal Passover; but, as I have said, He Himself, as the true Lamb, was sacrificed for us in the feast of the typical Passover, on the day of the preparation, the fourteenth of the first lunar month. The typical Passover, therefore, then ceased, the true Passover being present: “For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us,” as has been before said, and as that chosen vessel, the apostle Paul, teaches.²³⁷⁹



II.²³⁸⁰

²³⁷⁴ [But compare Browne, *On the Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 717, note 3, American edition, 1874.]

²³⁷⁵ John xviii. 28.

²³⁷⁶ John xix. 13, 14. And about the sixth hour is the reading of our English version. According to St. Mark, the crucifixion took place at the third hour (chap. xxv. 25). Eusebius, Theophylact, and Severus (in the *Catena*, ed. Lücke, ii.) suppose that there has been some very early erratum in our copies. See Alford's note on the passage.

²³⁷⁷ John xix. 31.

²³⁷⁸ 1 Cor. v. 7.

²³⁷⁹ [Compare Anatolius, p. 151, *supra*.]

²³⁸⁰ Apud Galland, *Ex Chronico Paschal.*, p. 175, D.

Now it was the preparation, about the third hour, as the accurate books have it, and the autograph copy itself of the Evangelist John, which up to this day has by divine grace been preserved in the most holy church of Ephesus, and is there adored²³⁸¹ by the faithful.

VI.—Of the Soul and Body.²³⁸²

The things which pertain to the divinity and humanity of the Second Man from heaven, in what has been written above, according to the blessed apostle, we have explained; and now we have thought it necessary to explain the things which pertain to the first man, who is of earth and earthy, being about, namely, to demonstrate this, that he was created at the same time one and the same, although sometimes he is separately designated as the man external and internal. For if, according to the Word of salvation, He who made what is without, made also that which is within, He certainly, by one operation, and at the same time, made both, on that day, indeed, on which God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;"²³⁸³ whence it is manifest that man was not formed by a conjunction of the body with a certain pre-existent type. For if the earth, at the bidding of the Creator, brought forth the other animals endowed with life, much rather did the dust which God took from the earth receive a vital energy from the will and operation of God.

VII.—Fragment.²³⁸⁴

Wretch that I am! I have not remembered that God observes the mind, and hears the voice of the soul. I turned consciously to sin, saying to myself, God is merciful, and will bear with me; and when I was not instantly smitten, I ceased not, but rather despised His forbearance, and exhausted the long-suffering of God.

VIII.—On St. Matthew.²³⁸⁵

²³⁸¹ [Adored, i.e., *etymologically*, = kissed.]

²³⁸² Ex Leontii et Joannis *Rer. Sacr.*, lib. ii. Apud Mai, *Script. Vet.*, tom. vii. p. 85. From his demonstration that the soul was not pre-existent to the body.

²³⁸³ Gen. i. 26.

²³⁸⁴ Ex Leontio et Joanne *Rer. Sacr.*, lib. ii. Apud Mai, *Script. Vet.*, tom. vii. p. 96.

²³⁸⁵ From the Treatise of the Emperor Justinian against the Monophysites. Apud Mai, *Script. Vet.*, vii. 306, 307.

And in the Gospel according to Matthew, the Lord said to him who betrayed Him: "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" which Peter the Martyr and Archbishop of Alexandria expounding, says, this and other things like, "All the signs which He showed, and the miracles that He did, testify of Him that He is God incarnate; both things therefore are together proved, that He was God by nature, and was made man by nature."

IX.—From a Sermon.²³⁸⁶

In the meanwhile the evangelist says with firmness, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."²³⁸⁷ From this we learn that the angel, when he saluted the Virgin with the words, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee,"²³⁸⁸ intended to signify God the Word is with thee, and also to show that He would arise from her bosom, and would be made flesh, even as it is written, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."²³⁸⁹

Elucidations.

I.

(Meletian schism, p. 259.)

THE date of the Meletian schism is very much in need of elucidation. I follow Neale, however, as follows: Athanasius places its origin A.D. 306 (according to Tillemont and Baronius) or A.D. 301; the latter more probable, as demonstrated by the Benedictine editors. But the dates are, perhaps, the least of the difficulties which encumber the whole matter. Somewhat distrustfully I have, after several efforts to construct an original elucidation, adopted the theory of Neale, as a diligent and

²³⁸⁶ Or, from a treatise on theology.

²³⁸⁷ John i. 14.

²³⁸⁸ Luke i. 28.

²³⁸⁹ Luke i. 35.



conscientious inquirer whose Oriental studies qualify him to utter almost a decisive voice, albeit he never forgets his Occidentalism, and hence fails to speak with absolute fidelity to the spirit of Catholic antiquity.

We know something of Lycopolis from the blessed Alexander; it seems to have been a sort of centre to the bishoprics of the Thebais. It was just the sort of centre, in a region sufficient for a separate patriarchate, to suggest to an ambitious and unscrupulous prelate an effort at independency. Meletius, who succeeded the good Alexander, was just the man to set up for himself; a man not unlikely to be stimulated by the bad example of Paul of Samosata, and by the ingenuity that triumphed over the first council that called Paul to account. Bearing all this in mind, we may accept Neale's conviction that Meletius had long been a scandal to the churches, and in the time of persecution had lapsed, and sacrificed to idols. Peter summoned him to a council, by which he was convicted and degraded; whereupon he not only refused to submit, but arrogated to himself the *cathedra* of Alexandria, and began to ordain other bishops, and, in short, to reorganize its jurisdiction.²³⁹⁰ Owing, I think probable, to the exceptional and overgrown extent of this enormous "patriarchate," as it was called a little later, the schism gained a considerable following. The distance of Lycopolis from Lower Egypt must have favoured the attempt, and Peter's recent accession made it easy for Meletius to circulate evil stories against him. The schism, as usual, soon developed into heresy, which even the Nicene Synod failed to extinguish. Arius had joined the first outbreak, but conformed for a time, and was ordained a deacon by Achillas. His troublesome spirit, however, soon showed itself again after his ordination to the priesthood; and the remnant of the Meletians made common cause with him after his condemnation at Nicæa. Of Peter's legitimate exercise of authority, and of the impurity and wickedness of Meletius before his invasion of Alexandria, there is no reason to doubt; but for the details, recourse must be had to Neale.²³⁹¹ The famous Sixth Canon of Nice finds its explanation in this rebellion; but, incidentally, it defines the position of other great centres, which now began to be known as patriarchates. Neale's remarks²³⁹² on the excessive leniency of the council in settling the case of Meletius, are specially to be noted.

II.

(Canonical Epistle, p. 279.)

The judgment of Dupin is so exceptionally eulogistic touching these canons, that I quote it, as follows:²³⁹³ —

²³⁹⁰ He reported to the Nicene Council that he had ordained twenty-eight bishops and eight priests or deacons.

²³⁹¹ *Patriarchate of Alexandria*, vol. i. pp. 91, 146.

²³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 146.

²³⁹³ *Eccl. Hist. Cent. IV.*, sub tit. "Peter of Alexandria."

“Of all the canons of antiquity concerning the discipline of the lapsed, there are none more judicious or more equitable than those we have now described. There appear in them a wisdom and prudence altogether singular in tempering the rigours of punishment by a reasonable moderation, without which justice would be weakened. He examines carefully all the circumstances which might augment or diminish the quality of the crime; and as he does not lengthen out penance by methods too severe, so neither does he deceive the sinner by a facility too remiss.”

Like the famous Canonical Epistles of St. Basil, however, these are compilations of canons accepted by the churches of his jurisdiction. Dupin says of those of Basil²³⁹⁴ (*To Amphilochius*), “They are not to be considered as the particular opinions of St. Basil, but as *the laws of the Church in his time*; and therefore they are not written in the form of personal letters, but after the manner of synodical decisions.”



The Roman Emperors.

IN the study of these volumes a table is useful, such as I find it convenient to place here, showing the Ante-Nicene succession of Cæsars.

A.D.

1. AUGUSTUS—1
2. TIBERIUS—14
3. CALIGULA—37
4. CLAUDIUS—41
5. NERO—54
6. GALBA—68
7. OTHO—69
8. VITELLIUS—69
9. VESPASIAN—69
10. TITUS—79
11. DOMITIAN—81
12. NERVA—96
13. TRAJAN—98
14. HADRIAN—117
15. ANTONINUS PIUS—138
16. MARCUS AURELIUS—161
17. COMMODUS—180
18. PERTINAX—192
19. DIDIUS JULIANUS (NIGER)—193

²³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, sub tit. “Basil.”

20. SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS—193
21. CARACALLA (GETA)—211
22. MACRINUS—217
23. HELIOGABALUS—218
24. ALEXANDER SEVERUS—222
25. MAXIMINUS—235
26. GORDIAN—235
27. PUPIENUS (BALBINUS)—235
28. GORDIAN THE YOUNGER—238
29. PHILIP—244
30. DECUIS—249
31. GALLUS (VOLUSIANUS)—251
32. VALERIAN—254
33. GALLIENUS—260
34. CLAUDIUS II—268
35. AURELIAN—270
36. TACITUS (PROBUS)—275
37. FLORIAN—276
38. CARUS (CARINUS, NUMERIAN)—282
39. DIOCLETIAN—284
40. MAXIMIAN (GALERIUS)—286
41. CONSTANTIUS CHLORUS—292
42. MAXIMIN—306
43. CONSTANTINE THE GREAT (LICINIUS, ETC.)—307

Suetonius includes Julius, and therefore his *Twelve Cæsars* end with Domitian, the last of the Flavian family. With Nerva the “five good emperors” (so called) begin, but the “good Aurelius” was a persecutor. St. John, surviving the cruelty of Domitian, lived and died under Trajan.

The “vision of Constantine” is dated, at Treves, A.D. 312.

The *Labarum* became the Roman standard thenceforth.

The Dominical ordinance dates from Milan, June 2, A.D. 321.

He founds the city of Constantinople A.D. 324, convokes the Council of Nicæa A.D. 325.