

Is There Salvation Outside The Church?

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A recent study by Gustave Thils, "Pour une theologie de structure planetaire," {Towards a theology of Planetary Dimensions} has pointed out some new possibilities for the solution of the vexing and long-standing problem, the salvation of those who are or seem to be outside the Church.

[Footnote: Gustave Thils, "Pour une Theologie de Structure Planetaire," in "Cahiers De la Revue Theologique de Louvain," 6, 1983.]

The question is difficult, because salvation requires not only a supernatural faith in God who requites justly, and adherence to the moral code, so far as the person knows it, but even membership in the Church.

Not a few Fathers of the Church, and even Popes and Councils, have insisted on this requirement of membership.

From merely popular level mission magazines to more scholarly works, one so often finds mere despair about this requirement of membership. For example, a seminar on Christology at the 1984 convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America shows not a few participants not only thought the Church could be dispensed with, but even Christ Himself. Doubt was even raised over the "non-contradictory notion of truth" with a tendency to think that "truth is always perspectival."

[Footnote: Cf. E. A. Johnson, "Seminar on Christology" in "Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America," 39 (1984) pp. 153- 55.

Cf. also J. Peter Schneller, in a review of J. P. Theisen, "The Ultimate Church and the Promise of Salvation" in "Theological Studies" 38 (1977) p. 777.]

At the other end of the spectrum, one finds the pessimistic notion of St. Augustine that most persons are lost without really a chance and – though Augustine did not seem to share this second facet - the fundamentalistic understanding of the membership requirement, leading to heroic missionary zeal on the part of not a few Saints, anxious to rescue pagans from otherwise certain eternal ruin.

Yet, the Fathers of the first centuries, on closer study, reveal the start of a way out of this impasse. They did not, it seems, reach the complete solution, but they pointed in the right direction.

To understand their thought we need to notice that so many of them were remarkably faithful to an essential facet of theological method. They knew that in divine revelation it is not strange if one meets two conclusions which, even on rechecking, turn out to be both true, so that we must hold on in the dark, as it were, until somehow the day may dawn that will show the way to reconciliation. A striking example of this appears in the way the Fathers wrestled with two most difficult Scriptural texts: Lk 2:52, which asserts that Jesus grew even in wisdom as well as in age, and Mk 13:32, in which Jesus Himself is quoted as saying He did not know the day of the end.

[Footnote: See W. G. Most, "The Consciousness of Christ," Christendom College Press, Front Royal, 1980, pp. 93-133.]

The result was that in a very large number of major Fathers, we find two groups of statements on the question of the human knowledge of Jesus. One group seems to admit ignorance in Him, so He could literally grow in wisdom, and have a lack of knowledge of the day of the end. The other group of texts firmly asserts there was no ignorance in Him on either of these points.

With remarkable fidelity, the Fathers went on for a long time in making both kinds of assertions. On the one hand, they did not wish to flatly contradict what Scripture seemed to say; on the other hand, they knew that there could not be ignorance in His human intellect. This situation went on until finally a way was found to reconcile the seeming contradiction.

St. Athanasius first discovered that we could distinguish between actual growth in knowledge, and growth in the manifestation of what was always there - showing it "before God and men." Much more time had to pass before Eulogius and St. Gregory the Great found the solution to the knowledge of the last day, in saying that He knew it in His humanity but not from His humanity.

A diligent search in the Fathers shows a similar situation in regard to "no salvation outside the Church." We find again two sets of assertions, very often by the same writers. One group of statements speaks very strongly, and almost stringently, about the need of membership; the other group softens this position by taking a remarkably broad view of what membership consists in.

As we said, in the problems of the human knowledge of Jesus, the Fathers eventually did find out how to reconcile the two kinds of assertions. On our present question of membership in the Church, they seem to have found only part of the answer. But, with their help, we will, at the end of this appendix, propose a new Scripturally-based solution.

Before going ahead we need to notice one more principle of interpretation.

It is this: the only things guaranteed in statements of the Magisterium, and protected in lesser ways in the works of the Fathers, are the things explicitly set down on paper. We may indeed know historically that certain thoughts, more extensive, were in the minds of the writers. Yet Divine Providence has committed itself to protect only the explicitly written texts, not what is merely in the mind and unexpressed.

We might say that God practices a sort of brinkmanship. He has made two commitments that go in opposite directions. First, He has made humans free; second, He has guaranteed this protection of teaching. Therefore He often, as it were, draws a very tight line, protecting only what is explicit on paper, not what is implicit, or only in the minds of the writers. For example, some statements made near the time of St. Augustine and even later were written by those who may have believed at least part of his "massa damnata" ['the masses are damned'] theory. The fact that we know they had these things in mind does not commit the Church to that theory. Again, the writers of some teachings on the Eucharist had in mind an Aristotelian framework of substance and accident. But these words can be understood in a non-technical, everyday sense. So the Church did not guarantee Aristotelianism. Further, Pius IX and Gregory XVI (and perhaps Leo XIII also) may well have had more extensive ideas in mind on religious liberty/indifferentism than what they set down in writing. But the Church is committed only to what they actually wrote.

We need to keep this principle firmly in mind in reading conciliar statements on our question.

For the sake of clarity, we will go through each of the two sets of statements separately, beginning with the seemingly rigid texts.

[Footnote: see P. Damboriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, esp. pp. 19-54;]

RESTRICTIVE TEXTS OF THE FATHERS

Perhaps the earliest of these comes from the "Shepherd" of Hermas:

"These apostles and the teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, when they fell asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached also to those who had fallen asleep earlier, and they gave them the seal of the preaching. They therefore went down into the water with them, and came up again." [Hermas, "Shepherd, Similitudes" 9.16. From Greek text in D. Ruiz Bueno, "Padres Apostolicos," {Apostolic Fathers} BAC, 2d ed. 1967. pp. 1071-72.]

Hermas clearly takes the requirement of physical Baptism so rigidly that it had to be given even after death, or there could be no salvation. Yet, we shall meet Hermas again in our second series, with a very broad text.

About the same time as Hermas, we meet a statement from St. Justin the Martyr, from the middle of the second century, "Then they (converts) are led by us where there is water, and are regenerated... For Christ said: Unless you are born again, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven." [Justin, "First Apology" 46. From Greek text in D. Ruiz Bueno, "Padres Apologistas Griegos" {Greek Apologetic Fathers} BAC, 1964. pp. 250.] In context, of course, Justin is speaking of converts. Yet the insistence on Baptism is strong. On the other hand, as we shall see, Justin has some of the most important texts of a broader type.

St. Irenaeus, who also has many broad passages, has one which might be considered restrictive: "God places in the Church apostles, prophets, doctors... those who are not partakers of these, who do not run to the Church, deprive themselves of life through evil opinions and wicked working." [Irenaeus, "Against Heresies" 3.24.1. SC 1952 ed. (no number given) p.400. Cf. also Against Heresies 3.19.1.] Yet he seems to have in mind those who culpably reject the Church.

Clement of Alexandria, who has many texts in our second series, quotes verbatim the text we saw from Hermas, [see four paragraphs above here] and seems to agree, in "Stromata" 2. 9. Clement also wrote: "He who does not enter through the door... is a thief and a robber... Therefore it is necessary for them to learn the truth through Christ and to be saved, even if they happen on philosophy." [Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata" 5. 12. PG 9. 128.] Here however, we might wonder if Clement means that only those are lost who by their own fault reject the faith.

Clement's great pupil, Origen, also gives us both kinds of statements.

Strongest is that from his Homily on Jesu Nave:

"If anyone of that people wishes to be saved, let him come to this house, so that he can attain salvation, to this house in which the blood of Christ is a sign of redemption... Therefore let no one persuade himself, let no one deceive himself: outside this house, that is, outside the Church, no one is saved: for if anyone goes outside, he becomes guilty of his own death." [Origen, Homily on Jesu Nave 3. 5. PG 12. 841. Cf. also Origen in Rom 2. 9-10.]

Origen is allegorizing the house of Rahab in Jericho. But it seems that those who went outside did so by their own fault.

Most stringent of all is St. Cyprian:

"Whoever separates himself from the Church... is separated from the promises of the Church... He cannot have God as his Father who does not have the Church as his mother. If anyone was able to escape outside the ark of Noah, he too who is outside the Church escapes." [Cyprian, Epist. to Iubianus (#73) 21, in J. Campos, "Obras de San Cipriano," {The Works of Saint Cyprian} BAC, 1964, pp. 688-89.]

Even more sternly:

"The power of baptism cannot be greater or more powerful, can it, than confession, than suffering, such that someone who confesses Christ before men, is baptized with his own blood. And yet, neither does this baptism profit a heretic, even though after confessing Christ, he is killed outside the Church." [See J. Patout Burns, "The Economy of Salvation: Two Patristic Traditions," in "Theological Studies" 37 (1976) pp. 598-619. 11; and J. Campos, "Obras de San Cipriano," {The Works of Saint Cyprian} BAC, 1964.]

However, the testimony of St. Cyprian is quite marred because he himself broke with the unity of the Church in contradicting Pope St. Stephen on the validity of baptism given by heretics, the very point underlying these statements. Really, if God had taken Cyprian at his word, Cyprian should have been lost, even though a martyr. {Most scholars agree that St Cyprian came around to Pope St Stephen's viewpoint before his death.}

Lactantius has a similar, though less sweeping text: "Whoever does not enter there (the Church), or whoever goes out from there, is foreign to the hope of life and salvation." [Lactantius, "Institutiones" 4. 30. 11. PL 6. 542. Cf. also P. Damboriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, esp. pp. 19-54; at p. 30.] It is just possible that this could be taken to refer to those who are culpably outside.

In view of his pessimistic belief in his "massa damnata" ['the masses are damned'] theory, we might expect St. Augustine to give us many stringent statements. Actually, he does the opposite, as we shall see presently. His restrictive texts are fewer and less clear. In "De natura et gratia" {On Nature and Grace} he wrote: "If Christ did not die for no purpose, therefore all human nature can in no way be justified and redeemed from the most just anger of God... except by faith and the sacrament of the blood of Christ." [Augustine, "De natura et gratia" 2. 2. PL 44. 248-49.] Yet even this statement is softened by his words a few lines earlier: "God is not unjust, so as to deprive the just of the reward of justice, if the sacrament of the divinity and humanity of Christ was not announced to them." [See J. Patout Burns, "The Economy of Salvation: Two Patristic Traditions," in "Theological Studies" 37 (1976) pp. 608-614.] He thought only a few places by his day had not heard the preaching - not dreaming of a whole added hemisphere, and of so many other places in his own hemisphere.

Again, in his "Contra Julianum," Augustine comments on Romans 2:14-16, which seems to speak of the salvation of pagans without the law. He takes the gentiles mentioned to be converted gentiles, and adds: "Nor can you prove by them that which you want, that even infidels can have true virtues." [Augustine, "Contra Iulianum," 4. 3. 25. PL 44. 750.] Similarly, in commenting in Epistle

164. 4. 10 on the mysterious words of 1 Peter 3: 18-20, he thinks that Christ preached to perhaps all the dead, and so gave them a chance for salvation.

St. Cyril of Alexandria, says J. N. D. Kelly, "was voicing universally held assumptions when he wrote (in Ps 30:22) that 'mercy is not obtainable outside the holy city'." [J. N. D. Kelly, "Early Christian Doctrines," Adam & Charles Black, London, 1968, P. 403.]

St. Fulgentius of Ruspe clearly follows in the train of St. Cyprian:

"Not only all pagans, but also all Jews and all heretics and schismatics, who finish their lives outside the Catholic Church, will go into eternal fire... No one, howsoever much he may have given alms, even if he sheds his blood for the name of Christ, can be saved, unless he remains in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church." [Fulgentius, "De fide ad Petrum" 38. 81. CC 91A, p. 757.]

Fulgentius also is at least close to the error of Cyprian on invalidity of baptism given by heretics: "Baptism can exist... even among heretics... but it cannot be beneficial (prodesse) outside the Catholic Church." [Fulgentius, "De fide ad Petrum" 36. 79. CC 91A, p. 756.] He likewise believes, with Augustine, in the damnation of unbaptized infants. [Fulgentius, "De fide ad Petrum" 27. 68. CC 91A.]

RESTRICTIVE MAGISTERIUM TEXTS

There are several Magisterium texts that seem quite stringent. The Profession of Faith prescribed by Pope Innocent III in 1208 A.D. for the Waldensians says: "We believe in our heart and confess in our mouth that there is one Church, not of heretics, but the holy Roman Catholic apostolic Church, outside of which we believe no one is saved." [DS 792.]

Similarly, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 A.D. defined, against the Albigensians and Cathari: "There is one universal Church of the faithful, outside of which no one at all is saved." [DS 802.]

Pope Boniface VIII in his famous "Unam sanctam" {One and Holy} of Nov. 18, 1302 spoke strongly: "Outside of which (the Church) there is neither salvation nor remission of sins... But we declare, state, and define that to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is altogether necessary for salvation." [DS 870.]

The texts of Innocent III and IV Lateran do not go farther than the patristic texts we have seen. But the second sentence from Boniface VIII does raise a further question. However, the difficulty is easily handled; for the critical line is quoted from St. Thomas, "Contra Errores Graecorum" {Against the Errors of the Greeks}: "Ostenditur etiam quod subesse Romano Pontifici sit de necessitate salutis" ("It is also shown that to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is necessary for salvation.") [Thomas Aquinas, "Contra Errores Graecorum" 36. #1125.] But in the context, shown by the two quotes St. Thomas gives at this point, it means merely that there is no salvation outside the Church. In that sense one must come under the jurisdiction of the Pope.

[Footnote: The text in the Papal Bull "Unam Sanctam" on the two swords seems stronger than it is. It was explained by Boniface VIII himself (DS 870): "For 40 years now we have been a legal expert, and we know that there are two powers ordained by God... We say that in nothing have we wanted to usurp the jurisdiction of the king..."]

An Epistle of Clement VI, of Sept. 29, 1351, makes just a simple statement: "No man... outside the faith of the Church and obedience to the Roman Pontiff can finally be saved." [DS 1051.] The sense is as above.

Finally, the Decree for the Jacobites from the Council of Florence in 1442 seems specially vehement:

It firmly believes, professes and preaches, that none who are outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics, can partake of eternal life, but they will go into eternal fire... unless before the end of life they will have been joined to it (the Church); and that the unity of the ecclesiastical body has such force that only for those who remain in it are the sacraments of the Church profitable for salvation, and fastings, alms and other works of piety and exercises of the Christian soldiery bring forth eternal rewards (only) for them. "No one, howsoever much almsgiving he has done, even if he sheds his blood for Christ, can be saved, unless he remains in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church." [DS 1351.]

The internal quote at the end is one we saw above from Fulgentius. Does the Council endorse all the implications of Fulgentius? Hardly. As we saw, Fulgentius also teaches the damnation of unbaptized infants, and seems to contradict the teaching of Pope St. Stephen on baptism given by heretics.

But, more importantly, we can see from the vehemence of Patristic attacks on heretics, e.g., St. Cyprian "Ad Demetrianum," that the Fathers have in mind those who are in bad faith, who culpably reject the Church. They do not seem to think of those who in-culpably fail to find the Church. [See: Augustine, "De natura et gratia" 2. 2. PL 44. 248-49. Also see J. Patout Burns, "The Economy of Salvation: Two Patristic Traditions," in "Theological Studies" 37 (1976) pp. 608-614.]

So from this point on, it becomes largely a question not of doctrine but of objective fact: how many are culpable? Further, this statement was made in 1442, before the 1492 discovery that there was a whole other world. The writers thought that the Gospel had actually reached every creature – it had not - and supposed, as we said, bad faith on the part of those who rejected it.

So we need to think again of the remarks on brinkmanship in the introduction to this appendix.

BROAD TEXTS OF THE MAGISTERIUM

That our interpretation of the Councils is not forced is guaranteed for us by the fact that the same Magisterium, equally guided by the same Holy Spirit, who does not contradict Himself, also made statements which require this interpretation. As we shall see, these Magisterium texts, by their repetition even on the Ordinary Magisterium level, can be considered infallible, in line with the general teaching of theologians about such repetitions.

Thus Pius IX, in "Quanto conficiamur moerore" of August 10, 1863, taught:

"God... in His supreme goodness and clemency, by no means allows anyone to be punished with eternal punishments who does not have the guilt of voluntary fault. But it is also a Catholic dogma, that no one outside the Catholic Church can be saved, and that those who are contumacious against the authority of the same Church (and) definitions and who are obstinately (pertinaciter) separated from the unity of this Church and from the Roman Pontiff, successor of Peter, to whom the custody of the vineyard was entrusted by the Savior, cannot obtain eternal salvation."

[Footnote: DS 2866.

See also

W. G. Most, "Religious Liberty: What the Texts Demand" in "Faith & Reason" 9 (1983) pp. 196-209. Further clarification of the fact that Vatican II does not clash with Pius IX (see p. 206 in that article) is this:

Vatican II, in On Religious Liberty # 7 did make provision for more than just public order when it said that the state must exercise "due custody for public morality," and in #4 it said that the churches must abstain from any action that would involve "improper persuasion aimed at the less intelligent or the poor." Pius IX had said (see p. 201) that the state must do more than merely defend public order in regard to excesses in religious liberty.]

This is a most significant text. For in it Pius IX stressed both the broad view, and the need of membership. Further, Pius IX is noted for his insistent condemnation of indifferentism, as we see in this passage just quoted, and in his strong-sounding "Quanta cura." So Pius IX does not deny the obligation to formally enter the Church if one knows the truth – that would be indifferentism - but he still could give a very broad statement which means that if one keeps the moral law as he knows it, somehow the other requirements will be met - though the Pope does not explain how. (At the end of this appendix we will try to explain how.) Yet he does help us by the words "contumacious... obstinately" which clearly show he has in mind those who culpably reject the Church.

On August 9, 1949, the Holy Office, by order of Pope Pius XII, and basing itself on the teaching of Pius XII in his Mystical Body Encyclical (we shall cite the text presently), condemned the error of Leonard Feeney who held that those who failed to enter the Church formally, even with no fault of their own, could not reach salvation. The decree says:

"It is not always required that one be actually incorporated as a member of the Church, but this at least is required: that one adhere to it in wish and desire. It is not always necessary that this be explicit... but when a man labors under invincible ignorance, God accepts even an implicit will, called by that name because it is contained in the good disposition of soul in which a man wills to conform his will to the will of God."

Pius XII had said that a man can be "ordered to the Church by a certain desire and wish of which he is not aware (*inscio quodam desiderio ac voto*)," that is, the one contained in the good dispositions mentioned by the Holy Office.

[Footnote: DS 3870 and 3821.

Some followers of Feeney insist that the fact that he was finally reconciled to the Church without retracting indicates the Church admitted Feeney had been right all along.

This is not true:

(1) The broad Magisterium texts (with repetition, so that we can claim infallibility for them) are incompatible with Feeney;

(2) He was reconciled when quite old. The fact that he was not pushed to do more is an example of the widespread permissiveness that has done so much harm to the Church in our times.]

Vatican II taught the same in "Lumen gentium:"

"For they who without their own fault do not know of the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but yet seek God with sincere heart, and try, under the influence of grace, to carry out His will in practice, known to them through the dictate of conscience, can attain eternal salvation."

[Vatican II, "Lumen gentium" #16. See also "Unitatis redintegratio" #3.]

We note that Vatican II said they need to act under the impulse of actual grace. This grace is always provided for those who do what they can.

Further, we notice that Vatican II says they can attain eternal salvation - it does not say they would reach just a sort of limbo of adults, which some who wish to follow Feeney propose, though the Church knows nothing of such an intermediate state for adults.

BROAD TEXTS OF THE FATHERS

Many of the broad texts of the Fathers were given in response to a charge by the pagans: If the Church and Christ are necessary, why did He come so late, and neglect countless millions born before His time? The first attested instance of this claim comes from the pagan Celsus, in his "True Discourse," [or Doctrine of Truth] probably to be dated 178 A.D. Origen quotes Celsus: "Did God then after so great an age think of making the life of man just, but before He did not care?"

[Footnote: Origen, "Against Celsus" 4. 7. PG 11. 1037.

For a general view of Celsus, remarkably sympathetic, consult. W. den Boer, "La Polemique anti-chretienne du II Siècle: 'La Doctrine de Verite' de Celse" {The Anti-Christian Polemic of the Second Century – 'The Doctrine of Truth' of Celsus} in "Athenaeum" NS 54 (1976) pp. 309-18.

See also P. de Labriolle, "La Reaction Paienne," {The Pagan Reaction} L'Artisan du Livre, Paris, 1942.]

We cannot help thinking of St. Paul himself, who in Rom 3:29-30 asks:

"Is He the God of the Jews alone? Is He not also (the God) of the gentiles?

Yes, also of the gentiles. For it is one (and the same) God who makes righteous the circumcision (Jews) on the basis of faith, and uncircumcision (non-Jews) through faith."

In other words: If God had not provided for those who did not come to know His old revelation, He would seem not to act as their God. The same, of course, applies to the period after Christ, for St. Paul insists with repeated vehemence in Rom 5:15-19 that the redemption is much more abundant than the fall. If God had made provision before Christ, and then left men worse off after Christ, the redemption would be, for such men, not superabundant, but a harsh disaster.

Long before Celsus and before any known literary pagan attacks on Christ, Pope St. Clement had written to Corinth c. 94 A.D.

"Let us go through all generations, and learn that in generation and generation the Master has given a place of repentance to those willing to turn to Him. Noah preached repentance, and those who heard him were saved.

Jonah preached repentance to the Ninivites; those who repented for their sins appeased God in praying, and received salvation, even though they were aliens (allotrioi) of God."

[First Clement 7. 5-7. Greek text in Ruiz Bueno, "Padres Apostolicos," {Apostolic Fathers} BAC, 2d ed. 1967. pp.183-84.]

"They were aliens". That is, they did not formally belong to His People of God.

The most suggestive texts come from St. Justin the Martyr, who also wrote before Celsus, but anticipated the objection of Celsus. In his "First Apology" he says he will answer in advance the claim that those who lived before Christ were not answerable: "Christ is the Logos (Divine Word) of whom the whole race of men partake. Those who lived according to Logos are Christians, even if they were considered atheists, such as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus."

[Footnote: Justin, "First Apology" 46. Ruiz Bueno ed. BAC pp. 232-33.]

See also J. Danielou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, tr. J. A. Baker, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1973, p. 41. On p. 44 Danielou says he thinks Socrates and others knew the Person of the Logos.]

Light on what Justin means by this comes in his "Second Apology" 10:8:

"Christ... was and is the Logos who is in everyone, and foretold through the prophets the things that were to come, and taught these things in person after becoming like to us in feeling." Similarly in "Second Apology" 13.3, after speaking of Plato, the Stoics and others: "For each of them, through part of the Divine Logos, seeing what was cognate to it (syngenes) to it, spoke well."

[Footnote: See also N. Pycke, "Connaissance rationelle et connaissance de grace chez Saint Justin" {Rational Understanding and the Understanding of Grace According to Saint Justin} in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 37 (1961) pp.52-85. See also Justin 2. 10. 1-3.]

Danielou gives a helpful interpretation. He holds that Justin borrows Stoic terminology, so as to say that in each man there is a "seed of the Logos" (sperma tou logou), resulting from the action of the Logos which gives the seed (spermatikos logos). For the Stoics, the Logos is the immanent principle of all reason, of which the rational faculty in each man is a manifestation: "It is the action of this Logos which gives to each man the capacity to form certain moral and religious conceptions... That which Socrates and Heraclitus knew is in fact the Word." [J. Danielou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, tr. J. A. Baker, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1973, p. 42.] They knew it partially and obscurely. But yet, Justin does not mean a difference in the content of the truth they saw and the truth that came through revelation. Danielou adds: "The difference is solely one of fullness, certainty, clarity."

We can certainly agree with Danielou that Justin the philosopher utilized the language and even to some extent the framework of ideas borrowed from Stoicism. But we believe, as we shall say later on, that there is still greater depth to Justin's thought. He had seen many philosophies, and now wants to use them in the service of Christ, but without being a merely natural philosopher.

[Footnote: A. Luneau, "Les Peres et les Religions non-chretiennes," {The Fathers and Non-Christian Religions} in "Nouvelle Revue Theologique" {New Theology Review} 89 (1967) p. 837 cites "First Apology" 22. 2 where Justin goes so far in using pagan resources as to compare the Logos to Hermes.]

The real basis of Justin's thought is probably Romans 2:14-16, in which Paul tells us that God, or the Spirit of God, or of Christ, writes the law on hearts, even the hearts of pagans, i.e., makes known to each one what he should do. (Anthropology today agrees: pagans do know the moral law surprisingly well.) Those who follow the law written on hearts by the Spirit, do follow the Logos, and so can be saved, as Rom 2:16 says. Hence Hacker is not right in saying: "Justin is silent on the possibility for pious gentiles to reach final consummation in eternity." [Paul Hacker, "The Religions of the Gentiles as viewed by the Fathers of the Church" in "Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft

und Religionswissenschaft" {The Magazine of Missiology and Religious Studies} 54 (1970) p. 258;] If Justin says Socrates was Christian, and lived by the Logos, how can such a Christian fail to reach the goal? Again, Rom 2:16 speaks of this final consummation at the judgment.

We saw above that Hermas gives us the odd view of baptism after death. Yet in "Vision" 2.4.1 he shows a much broader view. The angel asks Hermas who he thinks the old woman is from whom he received the little book. Hermas opines it is the Sibyl. The angel corrects him: "You are wrong... It is the Church. I said to him: Why then an old woman? He said: Because she was created first of all; for this reason she is an old woman, and because of her the world was established." So the Church has always existed.

Creation itself was carried out, it seems, in anticipation of her coming to be.

[Footnote: Cf. Patrick V. Dias, "Kirche in der Schrift und im 2" {Church in the Scriptures and in the Second Century.} "Jahrhundert," {Century} in "Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte," {Handbook of Dogmatic Theology} Herder, Freiburg, 1974, III. 3a, pp.118-19; and J. N. D. Kelly, "Early Christian Doctrines," Adam & Charles Black, London, 1968; p. 191.]

The so-called Second Epistle of Clement - regardless of its authorship (it seems to have been written about 150 A.D.) - agrees: "The books of the prophets and the apostles (say) that the Church is not (only) now, but from the beginning. She was spiritual, like also our Jesus. She was manifested in the last days to save us." [Second Clement 14. 2. Ruiz Bueno ed. BAC, pp. 366-67.]

St. Irenaeus, as we saw, has one passage which might be considered restrictive. But in many other places he takes a very broad view: "There is one and the same God the Father and His Logos, always assisting the human race, with varied arrangements, to be sure, and doing many things, and saving from the beginning those who are saved, for they are those who love God, and, according to their age (genean) follow His Logos."

[Footnote: Irenaeus, "Against Heresies" 4. 28. 2. SC 100, p. 759.]

See also Ignacio Escribano-Alberca, "Die Heilsökonomische Enthaltung des Glaubens bei Irenaeus und Tertullian" in "Das Dasein im Glauben Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte," Herder, Freiburg, 1974, I, 2a, pp. 32-38, esp. p. 33.]

We note Irenaeus speaks of the human race, of the various time periods, of various arrangements, not just of the Hebrews and the arrangement God made with them. Further, although Irenaeus was not fond of speculation, yet he wrote that those who follow the Logos are saved. This of course sounds like Justin's "First Apology,"⁴⁶ cited above. Grillmeier observes: "In his view, the incarnation is merely the conclusion in an immense series of manifestations of the Logos, which had their beginning in the creation of the world."

[Footnote: Aloys Grillmeier, "Christ in Christian Tradition" (tr. J. Bowden) John Knox, Atlanta, 2d ed. 1975. I. p. 103.]

See. A. Luneau, "Les Peres et les Religions non-chretiennes," {The Fathers and Non-Christian Religions} in "Nouvelle Revue Theologique" {New Theology Review} 89 (1967) p. 832:

"Faut-il rapeller comment, pour Irene, la connaissance de Dieu demeure inscrite au fond du coeur humain et prepare sa venue." ("We should recall how, for Irenaeus, the knowledge of God remains inscribed in the depth of the human heart and prepares for His coming.")

Strangely, A. Orbe, in an otherwise excellent study, "Antropologia de San Ireneo," {The Anthropology of Saint Irenaeus} BAC, 1969, although he devotes pp. 502-15 to answering the objection of Celsus, does not seem to notice this point.

See also J. Danielou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, tr. J. A. Baker, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1973, pp. 361-64; and Patrick V. Dias, "Kirche in der Schrift und im 2" {Church in the Scriptures and in the Second Century.} "Jahrhundert," {Century} in "Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte," {Handbook of Dogmatic Theology} Herder, Freiburg, 1974, III. 3a, p. 161.]

In the same vein, we also read in Irenaeus: "For the Son, administering all things for the Father, completes (His work) from the beginning to the end... For the Son, assisting to His own creation from the beginning, reveals the Father to all to whom He wills." ["Against Heresies" 4. 6. 7. SC 100, p. 453. See also "Against Heresies" 5. 18. 2.]

And similarly, as if answering Celsus:

"Christ came not only for those who believed from the time of Tiberius Caesar, nor did the Father provide only for those who are now, but for absolutely all men from the beginning, who according to their ability, feared and loved God and lived justly... and desired to see Christ and to hear His voice."["Against Heresies" 4. 22. 2. SC 100, p. 689.]

Clement of Alexandria has many statements of a broad nature: "From what has been said, I think it is clear that there is one true Church, which is really ancient, into which those who are just according to design are enrolled." [Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata" 7. 17. PG 9. 552.] Similarly: "Before the coming of the Lord, philosophy was necessary for justification to the Greeks; now it is useful for piety... for it brought the Greeks to Christ as the law did the Hebrews."["Stromata" 1. 5. SC 1965 ed. (no number given) p. 65. See also "Stromata" 1. 20.]

Danielou makes incisive comments. First he observes that while Justin spoke of a common action of the Logos before Christ, Clement distinguishes two patterns: "Clement presents philosophy as representing for the Greeks a counterpart to the Law." So that some Greeks received only a common knowledge derived from reason, while others received the action of the Logos proper. So Danielou cites "Stromata" 7.2: "To the one he gave the commandments, to the others, philosophy... with the result that everyone who did not believe was without excuse." [J. Danielou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, tr. J. A. Baker, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1973, p. 52.]

Hacker, however, says: "To attain final salvation it is indispensable that the souls of the righteous gentiles in Hades should do penance and accept faith in Christ." [Paul Hacker, "The Religions of the Gentiles as viewed by the Fathers of the Church" in "Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft" {The Magazine of Missiology and Religious Studies} 54 (1970) p. 261.] To be consistent, he should have added a requirement of baptism, thinking of "Stromata" 2.9, where Clement quotes at length the passage we saw above from Hermas. But it seems that Hacker here has made a methodological slip, in trying to force disparate statements in Clement into a synthesis. As we have been seeing, two kinds of texts are found in many writers, Clement included. Clement, like the others, did not really make a synthesis of the two series; he just stated each separately.

Clement, however, does seem to mean final salvation for gentiles, for he also says in "Stromata" 1.20.99:

"Philosophy of itself made the Greeks just, though not to total justice (ouk eis ten katholou de dikaiosynen); it is found to be a helper to this (perfect justice), like the first and second steps for one

ascending to the upper part of the house, and like the elementary teacher for the (future) philosopher."

We notice two things here:

- (1) Philosophy once did make the Greeks just;
- (2) it was not total justice.

What this means is made clear by the comparison of the steps for one ascending to the upper part of the house.

Philosophy really did make just, but it did not lead the Greeks to the highest levels, that to which Clement's "gnostics" (perfect Christians) attain.

Hacker later [at p. 264] helps our interpretation by saying that Clement is bringing out the implications of what St. John means in the opening of his Gospel, "when speaking of the light of the Logos that illuminates every man." We think again of Romans 2:15. Escribano-Alberca adds that for Clement, "Eternal life is reached through an obedience according to the Logos."

[Footnote: Ignacio Escribano-Alberca, "Die Heilsökonomische Enthaltung des Glaubens bei Irenaeus und Tertullian" in "Das Dasein im Glauben Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte," Herder, Freiburg, 1974, I, 2a, p. 50. See also his p. 51: "Gott wird durch keinerlei apodiktisch-beweisende Wissenschaft sonder nur durch die Gnade seines offenbarenden Logos erkannt." ("God becomes known not by any kind of apodictically proved knowledge, but only through the grace of His revealing Logos.")]

See also A. Brontese, "La Soteria in Clemente Alessandrino," {The Theology of Grace in Clement of Alexandria} Universita Gregoriana, Roma, 1972, p. 283; and see also p. 278.]

Origen, Clement's great pupil, goes farther in the same direction. J. N. D. Kelly observes that at Alexandria interest tended to focus on the invisible Church of the perfect Christian, whom Clement would call the true gnostic, and to identify this spiritual Church with Christ's mystical body. [J. N. D. Kelly, "Early Christian Doctrines," Adam & Charles Black, London, 1968 P.201]

Kelly adds that in Origen: "In this mystical sense, Christ's body comprises the whole of humanity, indeed the whole of creation." [Page 202] Origen even becomes so bold as to assert that the heavenly Church existed since and even before creation: "Do not think I speak of the spouse or the Church (only) from the coming of the Savior in the flesh, but from the beginning of the human race, in fact, to seek out the origin of this mystery more deeply with Paul as leader, even before the foundation of the world." [Origen, "In Cant." 2. 11-12. PG 13. 134. See also 870. PG 13. 1679.]

Origen has in mind Ephesians 1:4, in which he interprets the Greek "katabole" as meaning a fall from a better state. He thinks we were all in a world of spirits before this life.

[Footnote: This accords with the belief of Origen that eventually all will be saved - for which membership in the Church is required.]

According to diverse merits, some became men, angels, devils, or stars in the sky. Origen feels he needs to suppose a sin on our part even before this life to account for human afflictions.

[Footnote: Cf. Hermann Josef Vogt, "Das Kirchenverständnis des Origenes," The Theology and Understanding of Church in Origen} in "Bonner Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte" {The Bonn

Contributions to the History of the Church} 4, Bohlau Verlag, Koln, Wien, 1974, pp. 205-10, and P. Damboriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, pp. 33- 37. See also Origen, "In Matt."]

It is Origen who gives us the objection of Celsus: "Did God then after so great an age think of making just the life of man, but before He did not care?"[Origen, "Against Celsus" 4. 7. PG 11. 1037.]

To which Origen replies:

"To this we will say that there never was a time when God did not will to make just the life of men. But He always cared, and gave occasions of virtue to make the reasonable one right. For generation by generation this wisdom of God came to souls it found holy and made them friends of God and prophets."

Similarly, in his commentary on Romans 2:14-16 Origen said that the law written on hearts was not the law about sabbaths and new moons, but:

"that they must not commit murder or adultery, not steal, not speak false testimony, that they honor father and mother, and similar things... and it is shown that each one is to be judged not according to a privilege of nature, but by his own thoughts he is accused or excused, by the testimony of his conscience."[Origen, "On Romans II." 9-10. PG 14. 892-93.]

The remark about the "privilege of nature" means that it does not matter whether they be Jews or not. There is no respecting of persons with God.

Origen also has a remarkable line on pagan sacrifices: "Since God wants grace to abound, He sees fit to be present... He is present not to the (pagan) sacrifices, but to the one who comes to meet Him, and there He gives His word." We have only the Latin text of Origen here; the Greek presumably would have read "Logos," a thought reminiscent of his teacher Clement, and, more remotely, of Justin.

[Footnote: Origen, "Homily on Numbers" 16. 1. PG 12. 691. See also A. Luneau, "Les Peres et les Religions non-chretiennes," {The Fathers and Non-Christian Religions} in "Nouvelle Revue Theologique" {New Theology Review} 89 (1967) p. 835.]

The objection voiced by Celsus is faced most explicitly in the so-called "Acts of Archelaus with Manes," which Quasten thinks really did not take place, but were composed by Hegemonius of Chalcedon, of whom we know nothing further. [J. Quasten, "Patrology," Spectrum, Utrecht/Antwerp, 1966. III. pp. 357-58.]

The date is the first half of the 4th century, probably after the Council of Nicea. Archelaus argued with Manes {the 'founder' of Manichaeism} about the fate of those who lived in ancient times. As to these Archelaus asserts:

"From the creation of the world He has always been with just men...Were they not made just from the fact that they kept the law, `Each one of them showing the work of the law on their hearts... ? For when someone who does not have the law does by nature the things of the law, this one, not having the law, is a law for himself... For if we judge that a man is made just without the works of the law... how much more will they attain justice who fulfilled the law containing those things which are expedient for men?"

As we shall see later, it is especially significant that Hegemonius ties his belief to Romans 2:15, "They show the work of the law written on their hearts" - written, really, even though the pagans did not know it, by the Logos, of whom Justin spoke.

The same objection about God's care in former times is answered also by Arnobius:

"But, they say: If Christ was sent by God for this purpose, to deliver unhappy souls from the destruction of ruin - what did former ages deserve, which before His coming were consumed in the condition of mortality?..."

Put aside these cares, and leave the questions you do not understand; for royal mercy was imparted to them, and the divine benefits ran equally through all. They were conserved, they were liberated, and they put aside the sort and condition of mortality." [Arnobius, "Against the Nations" 2. 63. PL 5. 909-10. See also P. Damboriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, p. 29.]

The first Church historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, takes a similar stand:

"But even if we (Christians) are certainly new, and this really new name of Christians is just recently known among the nations, yet our life and mode of conduct, in accord with the precepts of religion, has not been recently invented by us; but from the first creation of man, so to speak, it is upheld by natural inborn concepts of the ancient men who loved God, as we will here show... But if someone would describe as Christians those who are testified to as having been righteous (going back) from Abraham to the first man, he would not hit wide of the truth". [Eusebius, "Church History" 1. 1. 4. PG 20. 77. See also Orbe, "Antropologia de San Ireneo," {The Anthropology of Saint Irenaeus} BAC, 1969 p. 507.]

Christian concepts, then, according to Eusebius, are, as it were, inborn, and so one could even say there were Christians from the beginning. This is possible, we may infer, since these early people, without recognizing the fact, were following the Logos - we think again of Justin's First "Apology" 46. The large, even cosmic role Eusebius assigns to the Logos, as shown by Munoz Palacios seems presupposed. [R. Muñoz Palacios, "La Mediación del Logos preexistente a la encarnacion en Eusebio de Cesárea" {The Mediation of the Pre-existing Word down to the Incarnation in Eusebius of Caesarea} in "Estudios Eclesiásticos" {Ecclesiastical Studies} 43 (1968) pp. 381-414.]

In his oration at the funeral of his father, a convert who became a bishop, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, said:

"He was ours even before he was of our fold. His way of living made him such. For just as many of ours are not with us, whose life makes them other from our body (the Church), so many of those outside belong to us, who by their way of life anticipate the faith, and need (only) the name, having the reality (ergon)." [Gregory of Nazianzus, "Oration 18." 6. PG 35. 992; and "Oration 8." 20. PG 35. 812. See also A. Luneau, "Les Peres et les Religions non-chretiennes," {The Fathers and Non-Christian Religions} in "Nouvelle Revue Theologique" {New Theology Review} 89 (1967) pp. 831-32.

In a similar vein, in his oration in praise of his sister Gorgonia, he said: "Her whole life was a purification for her, and a perfecting. She had indeed the regeneration of the Spirit, and the assurance of this from her previous life. And, to speak boldly, the mystery (baptism) was for her practically only the seal, not the grace."

St. John Chrysostom, in commenting on Romans 2:14-16, explains that the words "by nature" mean "according to natural reasoning":

"For this reason they are wonderful, he says, because they did not need the law, and they show all the works of the law... Do you not see how again he makes present that day and brings it near... and showing that they should rather be honored who without the law hastened to carry out the things of the law? ... Conscience and reasoning suffice in place of the law. Through these things he showed again that God made man self sufficient (autarke) in regard to the choice of virtue and fleeing evil... He shows that even in these early times and before the giving of the law, men enjoyed complete providence (pronoia).

For "what is knowable of God" was clear to them, and what was good and what was evil they knew." [John Chrysostom, "On Romans II." 5. PG 60. 428-29. See also P. Dambroriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, esp. pp. 52-53.]

In his Homilies on John, Chrysostom takes up the recurring objection of Celsus: "When, then, the gentiles accuse us saying: What was Christ doing in former times, not taking care... ? We will reply: Even before He was in the world, He took thought for His works, and was known to all who were worthy." [John Chrysostom "Homilies on John" 8. 1. PG 59. 67.]

Here Chrysostom does better than in the previous passage, where he seemed to say men knew moral requirements through reason. For now he seems to mean that as Logos He made Himself known interiorly. Really, the knowledge pagans have of the moral code can be called a knowledge of the natural law, but they do not really reach it by explicit reasoning, but by a mysterious inner knowledge, which is the effect of the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ. Further, that natural law does coincide with the will of God.

In his comment on Romans 2:29 Chrysostom adds: "He means clearly not an idolatrous Greek, but a God-fearing one." He seems to think all idolators are culpable; a factual, not a doctrinal conclusion. He is perhaps influenced by the words of Rom 1:20-22.

The thought of St. Ambrose is less sharply focused: "Our price is the blood of Christ... Therefore He brought the means of health to all so that whoever perishes, must ascribe the cause of his death to himself, for he was unwilling to be cured when he had a remedy... For the mercy of Christ is clearly proclaimed on all." [Ambrose, "On Cain and Abel" 2. 3. 11. PL 14. 364-65.] Ambrose hardly means that in general God has set up as it were a reservoir of salvation: if someone without personal fault should not reach it, he would be lost. That was the view of some Thomists many centuries later. Instead, Ambrose says that the one lost "must ascribe the cause of his death to himself, for he was unwilling."

St. Augustine shows remarkable fidelity to the point of method we stressed at the start of this study, in that he has clear examples of texts of both kinds, as we shall see presently.

[Footnote: See J. N. D. Kelly, "Early Christian Doctrines," Adam & Charles Black, London, 1968 pp. 411-12, 416; P. Dambroriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, esp. pp. 41- 48; J. Patout Burns, "The Economy of Salvation: Two Patristic Traditions," in "Theological Studies" 37 (1976) pp. 608-10.]

But it is helpful to notice what he does similarly, on a closely related question, that of predestination. His "massa damnata" ['the masses are damned'] theory is well known, in connection with which he writes that most humans are lost: "In it (punishment) there are many more than in (grace) so that in this way it may be shown what was due to all." [Augustine, "De civitate Dei" "About the City of God" 21. 12, ed. B. Dombart, Lipsiae, Teubner, 1877, II. p. 514.]

Further, he insists that which side a person will be on does not at all depend on prevision of merits. [Augustine, "De praedestinatione sanctorum" "About the Pre-Destination of the Saints" 17. 34. PL 44. 985-86.]

Yet at other times, he teaches that the negative decision, reprobation, depends first of all on personal demerits, not just on original sin. (He nowhere, however, makes the positive decision, predestination, depend on merits.)

Thus in "De diversis quaestionibus" "About Various Questions" he says that those who came to the Gospel dinner could not have come without being called, but yet, "those who were unwilling to come should attribute it to no one but themselves" [Augustine "De diversis quaestionibus" LXXXIII 68. 5. PL 40. 73.] - therefore, not to God's prior desertion.

Again, in his debate with Felix the Manichean, Felix asked why the lost sinners were not cleansed.

Augustine replied: "Because they did not will it." Felix, surprised, asks:

"'Because they did not will it' - did you say this?"

Augustine replied: "I said this: Because they did not will it." [Augustine "De actis cum Felice Manichaeo" "About the Debate with Felix the Manichean" 2. 8. PL 42. 540.]

In the "massa damnata" context the basic reason would have been desertion by God, followed by their deserting Him. So in "De correptione et gratia" "About Rebuke and Grace" he speaks of sinners who do not persevere: "They desert (God) and are deserted." [Augustine "De correptione et gratia" 13. 42. PL 44. 942.]

In "massa damnata," he would have said: God deserted them, then they deserted Him.

Thus Augustine implies a theory quite different from "massa damnata," one in which predestination is without merits, but reprobation depends on demerits.

[Footnote: For analysis of all texts of Augustine, see W. G. Most, "Religious Liberty: What the Texts Demand" in "Faith & Reason" 9 (1983) and W. G. Most, "The Consciousness of Christ," Christendom College Press, Front Royal, 1980, pp. 234-42.]

In his "De civitate Dei," Augustine also shows two different images of that city, which, as J. N. D. Kelly points out, he never reconciled.

[Footnote: See J. N. D. Kelly, "Early Christian Doctrines," Adam & Charles Black, London, 1968 p. 416; R. F. Evans, "One and Holy. The Church in Latin Patristic Thought," S. P. C. K. London, 1972, pp. 100-01; and J. O. Meara, "Charter of Christendom. The Significance of the City of God," Macmillan, N. Y. 1961, pp. 52- 53.]

On the one hand, in the final book 22, especially in chapter 30, he speaks of heaven as the final end of the City of God. Yet in 16.2 he identifies the Church and the City of God, though he knows that not all in the Church will be saved (18.28; 20, 5, 9). Further, in 18.47 he insists:

"Nor do I think the Jews would dare to argue that no one pertained to God except the Israelites, from the time that Israel came to be ... they cannot deny that there were certain men even in other nations who pertained to the true Israelites, the citizens of the fatherland above, not by earthly but by heavenly association." [Augustine, "De civitate Dei" 18. 47. Dombart II pp. 330-31.]

He cites the case of Job, and earlier, in 18.23, the Sibyl of Cumae.

In "Retractations", "Retractions", Augustine explains this, following the tradition begun in First Clement: [Augustine "Retractations" 1. 13. 3. CC 57. p. 37.]

"This very thing which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, nor was it lacking from the beginning of the human race, until Christ Himself came in the flesh, when the true religion, that already existed, began to be called Christian." [Footnote: See Paul Hacker, "The Religions of the Gentiles as viewed by the Fathers of the Church" in "Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft" {The Magazine of Missiology and Religious Studies} 54 (1970) p. 272.]

Earlier, in his Epistle 102, Augustine takes up the objection of Celsus, repeated by Porphyry:

"Wherefore since we call Christ the Word (Logos) of God, through whom all things were made... under whose rule (was/is) every creature, spiritual and corporal... so those from the beginning of the human race, who believed in Him and understood Him somewhat (utcumque) and lived according to His precepts devoutly and justly, whenever and wherever they were, beyond doubt they were saved through Him." [Augustine, "Epist." "Letters" 102. 11-12. PL 33. 374. See also #15; and P. de Labriolle, "La Reaction Païenne," {The Pagan Reaction} L'Artisan du Livre, Paris, 1942, p. 274.]

And further on in Epistle 102.15:

"And yet from the beginning of the human race there were not lacking persons who believed in Him, from Adam up to Moses, both in the very people of Israel... and in other nations before He came in the flesh." [See also: Augustine, "Enarrationes" "Explanations of the Psalms" Ps 57. 1, CC 39. 708-09; "De peccatorum meritis et remissione" {About the Merits of Sinners and Forgiveness} 1. 10-11; "Enarrationes. in Ps." 118. 25. 4. CC 40. 1750.]

We notice how Augustine, in line with so many earlier writers, ties his answer to the Logos who administered all things even before the incarnation, so that those who followed Him, the Logos, were saved – we think again of the words of St. Justin on Socrates and Heraclitus, whom he even called Christians.

As Jurgens says, the "De vocatione omnium gentium" {The Call of All Nations} is now widely admitted to be by St. Prosper, secretary to Pope Leo I, and an ardent disciple of St. Augustine. It is debated whether and to what extent Prosper modified Augustine's ideas on predestination. De Letter [St Prosper's translator] thinks Prosper did not clearly break [from St Augustine]: "St. Prosper... is struggling to break away from the influence of the Augustinian predestination... (O)wing to his inability to free himself fully from it, his idea of the general grace, universally given to all, fails to solve the problem." [St. Prosper of Aquitaine, "The Call of All Nations," translated & annotated by P. De Letter, Newman, Westminster, 1952, p. 17.] De Letter adds that if Prosper had said that the sole reason why the special graces were not given to some would be because they refused them, Prosper would have made a great step forward. [See W. A. Jurgens, "The Faith of the Early Fathers," Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1979, III, pp. 194-95.]

Jurgens on the other hand holds Prosper did break with Augustine: "For Prosper, election is the result of God's foreknowledge of the elect, and is the only answer to the mysterious question of why God chooses, elects or predestines..." [See Jurgens' work in III. p. 195.]

Let us see the texts of St. Prosper himself: "...according to it (Scripture)... we believe and devoutly confess that never was the care of divine providence lacking to the totality of men." [St. Prosper of Aquitaine, "The Call of All Nations," 2. 5. PL 51. 652; and "St. Prosper of Aquitaine, "The Call of All Nations," 2. 17. PL 51. 704.]

And also: "To these however (who have not yet heard of Christ) that general measure of help, which is always given from above to all men, is not denied." We confess these texts are not fully clear, for De Letter can claim that Prosper means merely that general grace is offered to all, but that without cause, the added help needed for salvation is denied to some.

But Prosper does become clear elsewhere: "For this reason they were not predestined (namely) because they were foreseen as going to be such as a result of voluntary transgression... For they were not deserted by God so as to desert God; but they deserted and were deserted."

[St Prosper, "Responsiones ad capitula obiectionum Gallorum" {Responses to the Books of Objections of the Gallic Christians} 3. PL 51. 158-59. See also Paul Hacker, "The Religions of the Gentiles as viewed by the Fathers of the Church" in "Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft" {The Magazine of Missiology and Religious Studies} 54 (1970) pp. 277-78.]

Within Augustine's classic "massa damnata" ['the masses are damned'] theory the first step is God's desertion of a man - then man's desertion of God comes second. But Prosper inverts that order. [Footnote: More texts and analysis in W. G. Most, "Religious Liberty: What the Texts Demand" in "Faith & Reason" 9 (1983) and in W. G. Most, "The Consciousness of Christ," Christendom College Press, Front Royal, 1980, pp. 242-43.]

Really, as we saw above, Augustine has two theories - the one, the "massa damnata," which is often stated explicitly; the other, never stated explicitly, but only implied, in several texts, ranging in date from 388 to 426, and at many points in between. [Footnote: On the two theories of Augustine, consult again the two works of W. G. Most especially pp. 225-43.]

St. Prosper is really breaking with the "massa damnata," but is being entirely faithful to the implicit theory of Augustine, who also wrote, in "De correptione et gratia" 13.42: "About Rebuke and Grace" "Either they lie under the sin which they contracted originally by generation... or they receive the grace of God, but are temporary, and do not persevere. They desert and are deserted." Prosper too said, as we saw: "They desert and are deserted."

Again, Augustine wrote, in "De diversis quaestionibus" LXXXIII.68.5: "Nor should they who were unwilling to come (to the banquet in the Gospel) attribute it to anyone but themselves." But in "massa damnata," the ultimate reason would be God's decision to desert. Similarly, Augustine wrote, in "De peccatorum meritis et remissione" {About the Merits of Sinners and Forgiveness} 2.17.26: "It is from the grace of God which helps the wills of men that what was hidden becomes known, and that which did not please becomes sweet. The reason why they were not helped is likewise in themselves, not in God."

Hence it is proper to take the first text we saw of St. Prosper ("...according to it (Scripture) ...we believe and devoutly confess that never was the care of divine providence lacking to the totality of

men." [St. Prosper of Aquitaine, "The Call of All Nations," 2. 5. PL 51. 652; and "St. Prosper of Aquitaine, "The Call of All Nations," 2. 17. PL 51. 704.]) as opening salvation in some way to all, so that, by implication, the requirement of membership in the Church will be provided for.

We do not know whether St. Nilus was a former officer of the court of Theodosius who later withdrew to a monastery on Sinai, or whether he was superior of a monastery at Ancyra and a disciple of St. John Chrysostom.

However, the following passage from St. Nilus is at least partly in accord with the thought of St. John Chrysostom which we saw above:

"In every nation, the one who fears God and does justice is acceptable to Him. For it is clear that such a one is acceptable to God and is not to be cast aside, who at his own right time flees to the worship of the blessed knowledge of God. God will not allow him to die in ignorance, but will lead him to the truth, and will enlighten him with the light of knowledge, like Cornelius." [Nilus, "Epistle." 1. 154, to Maximian. PG 79. 145.

St. Nilus does, it seems, think salvation in each case is to be accomplished by being brought to the visible Church.

St. Cyril of Alexandria has a very significant passage:

"For if there is one over all, and there is no other besides Him, He would be master of all, because He was Maker of all. For He is also the God of the gentiles, and has fully satisfied by laws implanted in their hearts, which the Maker has engraved in the hearts of all. For when the gentiles, (Paul) says, not having the law, do by nature the things of the law, they show the work of the law written on their hearts. But since He is not only the Maker and God of the Jews, but also of the gentiles... He sees fit by His providence to care not only for those who are of the blood of Israel, but also for all those upon the earth." [Cyril of Alexandria, "Against Julian" 3. 107. PG 76. 665. See also J. N. D. Kelly, "Early Christian Doctrines," Adam & Charles Black, London, 1968 p. 403.]

St. Cyril bases his thought on Romans 3:29, where Paul argues that God, since He is God of the gentiles too, must have made provision for them.

Cyril suggests that it seems that He did this by way of engraving the law on their hearts (Rom 2:15).

Theodoret of Cyrus, in commenting on Rom 2:14-16, makes clear that he holds, with St. Paul, that some gentiles, even though not members visibly of the People of God, are saved:

"For they who, before the Mosaic law, adorned their life with devout reasonings and good actions, testify that the divine law called for action, and they became lawgivers for themselves.

... He (St. Paul) shows that the law of nature was written on hearts... According to this image, let us describe the future judgment and the conscience of those accepting the charge and proclaiming the justice of the decision." [Theodoret of Cyrus, "Interpretatio Epist. Ad Rom." {Interpretation of the Epistle To the Romans} 2. 14-16. PG 82. 70-72.]

Theodoret also takes up the classic objection of Celsus. In his "Remedy for Greek Diseases," he writes:

"But if you say: Why then did not the Maker of all fulfill this long ago?

You are blaming even the physicians, since they keep the stronger medicines for last; having used the milder things first, they bring out the stronger things last. The all-wise Healer of our souls did this too.

After employing various medicines... finally He brought forth this all-powerful and saving medicine." [Theodoret of Cyrus "Remedy for Greek Diseases" 6. 85-86. SC 57, pp. 284- 85. See also Paul Hacker, "The Religions of the Gentiles as viewed by the Fathers of the Church" in "Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft" {The Magazine of Missiology and Religious Studies} 54 (1970) pp. 268-70.]

While he holds that God did not give such great helps before Christ, Theodoret yet holds God did take care of humans, by way of "different medicines."

Pope St. Leo the Great is a bit less clear than some, yet, when we consider his words in the context of the tradition we have seen developing, they seem to mean that there always was a Church:

"So God did not take care of human affairs by a new plan, or by late mercy, but from the foundation of the world He established one and the same cause of salvation for all. For the grace of God by which the totality of the saints always has been justified was increased when Christ was born, but did not begin (then)." [Leo the Great, "Sermon" 23. 4. PL 54. 202. See also "Sermon" 31. 7 and 76. 3. See also P. Damboriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, esp. pp. 48-49.]

Pope St. Gregory the Great, a strong admirer of St. Augustine, also speaks of Christ preaching to the dead: "When He descended to the underworld, the Lord delivered from the prison only those who while they lived in the flesh He had kept through His grace in faith and good works." [Gregory the Great, "Epistle." VII. 15. To George and Theodore CC 140, p. 465. See P. Damboriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, esp. pp 49-50.]

But Gregory does not mention a baptism in the underworld, nor does Augustine. Yet his conviction is clear that God somehow made provision for those who did not formally enter the People of God.

But Pope Gregory also follows the tradition we saw in Augustine and earlier, of making the Church exist from the beginning:

"The passion of the Church began already with Abel, and there is one Church of the elect, of those who precede, and of those who follow...

They were, then, outside, but yet not divided from the holy Church, because in mind, in work, in preaching, they already held the sacraments of faith, and saw that loftiness of Holy Church..." [Gregory the Great "Homilies on Ezechiel" 2. 3. 16. CC 142. p. 248.]

Primasius, Bishop of Hadrumetum, writing about 560 A.D., in his commentary on Romans, does not explicitly mention the Church, yet he makes clear, with Paul, that some who were not visibly members of the first people of God were just, and will be saved at the judgment:

"By nature they do the things of the law..." He (Paul) speaks either of those who keep the law of nature, who do not do to others what they do not want to be done to themselves; or, that even the gentiles naturally praise the good and condemn the wicked, which is the work of the law; or, of those who even now, when they do anything good, profess that they have received from God the

means of pleasing God... 'And their thoughts in turn accusing or even defending, on the day when God will judge the hidden things of men.' He speaks of altercations of thought... and according to this we are to be judged on the day of the Lord." [Primasius, "On Romans" 2. 14-16. PL 68. 423-24.]

St. John Damascene, often considered the last of the Fathers, gives us a possibly helpful text:

"The creed teaches us to believe also in one holy Catholic and Apostolic church of God. The Catholic Church cannot be only apostolic, for the all-powerful might of her Head, which is Christ, is able through the Apostles to save the whole world. So there is a Holy Catholic Church of God, the assembly of the Holy Fathers who are from the ages, of the patriarchs, of prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, to which are added all the gentiles who believe the same way (homothymadon)" [John Damascene, "Against Iconoclasts" 11. PG 96. 1357.]

We note St. John says that the power of Christ can save the whole world, and that it extends even to "the Holy Fathers who are from the ages" before Christ. He may mean the power of Christ even before the incarnation worked inasmuch as the Logos was present to all. [See P. Damboriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, esp. p. 85.]

Without pretending to give at all a complete survey, yet it may be worthwhile to give two samples from the post-patristic age.

Haymo, Bishop of Halberstadt (died 853), in his commentary on Romans 2:14-16, says that the words of Paul that the gentiles show the work of the law written on hearts can be understood in two ways. First:

"They show surely that they have the natural law written on their hearts, and they are the law for themselves: because they do the things that the law teaches, even though it was not given to them. For example, the Saracens who have neither the law of Moses nor of the Gospel, while by nature they keep the law, do not commit murder, or commit adultery, or other things, which the law written within them contains; they are a law to themselves...

In the second way: When the gentiles... naturally do the things... because they have the same law of Moses written on their hearts by the inspiration of Almighty God... 'their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts in turn accusing or even defending.' And when will this be? 'On the day when the Lord will judge the hidden things of men' according to my Gospel." [Haymo, "Exposition on Romans" 2. 14-16. PL 117. 381.]

So, Haymo thinks even some Saracens of his day are being saved!

Similarly, Oecumenius, commenting on the same passage of Romans, around 990 AD, gave the same explanation:

"They do the things of the law" using the reasonings of nature for just actions. These are wonderful, not needing a teacher, being their own lawgivers and fulfillers of the legislation... 'Their conscience bearing witness to them,' for it is enough in place of the law to have their own conscience testifying for them... At that judgment we do not need external accusers or witnesses... but each one's own reasonings and conscience either accuses or defends." [Oecumenius, "On Romans" 2. 14-16. PG 118. 356-60.]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We found restrictive texts in Hermas, St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Cyprian, Lactantius, St. Augustine, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Fulgentius. There are also five Magisterium texts that seem restrictive.

We found broad texts much more widely. Only three of the above ten Fathers who have restrictive texts lack broad texts: St. Cyprian, Lactantius, and St. Fulgentius. All others, plus many more, do have them.

Broad texts are found in: First Clement, St. Justin, Hermas, Second Clement, St. Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hegemonius, Arnobius, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Prosper, St. Nilus, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, St. Leo the Great, St. Gregory the Great, Primasius, and St. John Damascene. We added two samples of later writers with broad texts: Haymo and Oecumenius.

We find many of the Fathers specifically answering the charge of Celsus (why did Christ come so late) - St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, Origen, Hegemonius, Arnobius, St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine (though not all explicitly mention Celsus).

Very many speak of the Church as always existing: Hermas, Second Clement, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, St. Augustine, St. Leo, St. Gregory, and St. John Damascene.

The idea that theophanies in the Old Testament times were really by the Logos is very common among the Fathers. So it is not strange that we find many of the Fathers speak of the Logos as present to men to save them: St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Augustine.

Closely related is the idea that pagans can be saved if they follow the law written on hearts by the Spirit of Christ, or the Logos, as in Romans 2:15: Origen, Hegemonius, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Primasius.

[Footnote: On the general problems of the exegesis of Romans 2. 14-16 cf. W. Most, "Focusing in St. Paul. A Resolution of Difficulties," in "Faith & Reason" II. 1976, pp. 47-70, esp. pp. 57-61.

What is the common denominator? Though not all mention Celsus specifically, it seems that underlying all broad texts is the conviction that somehow in the past, God did provide for all men - this is something sometimes explicitly tied to Romans 3:29-30 (He is not the God only of the Jews). This is the fact of which all seem convinced. But just how that provision is worked out is less clear, and often the writers do not attempt to explain.

Yet we can build on these data to reconcile the two kinds of texts, so as to solve the problem of "Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus." {"Outside the Church there is no salvation"} St. Justin gives the best starting point. He says that those who followed the Logos, who is in each person, were Christians, even though they were considered atheists, such as Socrates and Heraclitus. As we said above, Justin was using the language of Stoicism - part of the usual tactics of apologists, who were eager to show the similarity of Christian thought to that of the best philosophers. But does Justin really mean to give us just Stoicism or to play on the vagueness of the word Logos (Word/reason)? Of course not.

So if we ask in precisely what way the Logos was present to Socrates and others, we could utilize the insights of many other Fathers: The Logos was there to write the law on hearts (cf. Rom 2:15). Modern experimental anthropology concurs; pagans do know the moral law surprisingly well. How do they know it? It seems to become known in some interior way, though not by mere reasoning.

That interior way, even though the pagans did not recognize what it was, is God, or the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Christ, or the Logos - all mean the same. St. Paul clearly has this thought, for in Rom 2:15 he obviously echoes Jeremiah 31:33 (prophecy of new covenant): "I will write my law on their hearts."

So God did and does indeed write His law on the hearts of men.

Objectively, this is done by the Spirit of God, the divine Logos, as we said. As Justin says, those who follow the Logos were and are Christians.

Now if we add still other words of St. Paul in Romans we can go further.

In Rom 8:9 Paul says: "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ, does not belong to Him." So, those who do have the Spirit of Christ, and follow the Logos as He writes the law on their hearts, do indeed belong to Christ.

But still further, according to the same Paul, to belong to Christ means to be a member of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:27). Again further, to be a member of Christ, is also to be a member of His Church for the Church is the Body of Christ.

So we seem to have found the much needed solution: Those who follow the Spirit of Christ, the Logos who writes the law on their hearts, are Christians, are members of Christ, are members of His Church. They may lack indeed external adherence; they may never have heard of the Church.

But yet, in the substantial sense, without formal adherence, they do belong to Christ, to His Church.

They can also be called sons of God, for Romans 8:14 adds: "All who are led by the Spirit are sons of God." As sons, of course, they are coheirs with Christ (Rom 8:17), and so will inherit the kingdom with Him.

We can even add that objectively - though probably those who drafted the text or voted for it did not realize it - Vatican II taught the same thing:

"For all who belong to Christ, having His Spirit, coalesce into one Church."

[Vatican II, "Lumen gentium" #49. See also "Unitatis redintegratio" #3.]

In saying this, we are not contradicting the teaching of Pius XII (Mystical Body Encyclical). He spoke of some as being ordered to the Church by a certain desire which they did not recognize. We admit that. To add to truth is not to deny truth.

Three possible objections remain.

First: is our solution indifferentist?

Not at all. For we insist that even these people who belong without formal adherence have the objective obligation to formally enter the Church. It is only their ignorance that excuses them. As we saw, Pius IX, so strong against indifferentism, concurs in our conclusion that somehow these people can be saved.

Second: are we proposing mere naturalism, i.e., if one is naturally good, that is enough?

Not at all. First the natural law is God's law too;

second, these people objectively follow the Spirit of God, and so are on the supernatural plane;

finally, they also have available actual graces, and use them, as the Vatican II's broad text said. God always offers actual graces to those who do what they can.

Thirdly and finally: some would say that the Fathers and the Magisterium speak only of people before Christ - after He came, formal entrance into the Church is necessary.

We reply:

First, the Magisterium texts speak in the present tense, not the past. Thus, Pius IX: "God by no means allows anyone to be punished with eternal punishments..." And the Holy Office said: "It is not always required..." Vatican II similarly: "They who without their own fault... can attain eternal salvation."

Second, the statements of the Fathers show a basic conviction that God must have made provision for men before Christ: the same thinking applies to those after Christ.

Further, St. Paul in Romans 5:15-19 insists strongly and over and over again that the redemption is more abundant than the fall. But if the coming of Christ caused countless millions to lose in practice all chance of salvation, then the redemption would not be superabundant - it would be a tragedy, a harsh tragedy for these persons. And God would not act as if He were their God - as St. Paul asserts in Romans 3:29-30.

[Footnote: The literature on the general problem of the salvation of pagans is immense.

Especially significant also are:

P. Damboriena, "La Salvacion en la Religiones No Cristianas," {Salvation in the Non-Christian Religions} Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, [Library of Christian Authors] Madrid (hereinafter BAC), 1973, esp. pp. 19-54;

Paul Hacker, "The Religions of the Gentiles as viewed by the Fathers of the Church" in "Zeitschrift fur Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft" {The Magazine of Missiology and Religious Studies} 54 (1970) pp. 253-78;

Paul Hacker, "The Religions of the Nations in the Light of Holy Scripture," in the same publication 54 (1970) pp. 161-85;

A. Luneau, "Les Peres et les Religions non-chretiennes," {The Fathers and Non-Christian Religions} in "Nouvelle Revue Theologique" {New Theology Review} 89 (1967) pp. 821- 41; 914-39;

J. N. D. Kelly, "Early Christian Doctrines," Adam & Charles Black, London, 1968;

L. Caperan, "Le probleme du salut des infideles," {The problem of the Salvation of Infidels} 2d ed. 2 vols, Paris, 1934;

R. Lombardi, "The Salvation of the Unbeliever," tr. D. M. White, Newman, Westminster, 1956;

K. Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," in "Theological Investigations" 5, pp. 115-34, Helicon, Baltimore, 1966;

J. Patout Burns, "The Economy of Salvation: Two Patristic Traditions," in "Theological Studies" 37 (1976) pp. 598-619.

On Patristic exegesis of Romans 2:14-16, especially important are:

Max Lachmann, "Vom Geheimnis der Schöpfung," {The Mystery of Creation} Evangelisches Verlagswerk GMBH, Stuttgart, 1952, esp. pp. 95-135; 285-305;

Karl Hermann Schelkle, "Paulus, Lehrer der Vater," {Paul, Teacher and Father} in Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer 1-11 {The Ancient Church's Interpretation of Romans 1 to 11} 2d ed. 1959, Patmos-Verlag, Düsseldorf.]

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