

Against Beron and Helix.

Fragments of a discourse, alphabetically divided,¹⁷¹¹ on the Divine Nature¹⁷¹² and the Incarnation, against the heretics Beron and Helix,¹⁷¹³ the beginning of which was in these words, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, with voice never silent the seraphim exclaim and glorify God.”

Fragment I.

By the omnipotent will of God all things are made, and the things that are made are also preserved, being maintained according to their several principles in perfect harmony by Him who is in His nature the omnipotent God and maker of all things,¹⁷¹⁴ His divine will remaining unalterable by which He has made and moves all things, sustained as they severally are by their own natural laws.¹⁷¹⁵ For the infinite cannot in any manner or by any account be susceptible of movement, inasmuch as it has nothing towards which and nothing around which it shall be moved. For in the case of that which is in its nature infinite, and so incapable of being moved, movement would be conversion.¹⁷¹⁶ Wherefore also the Word of God being made truly man in our manner, yet without sin, and acting and enduring in man’s way such sinless things as are proper to our nature, and assuming the circumscription of the flesh of our nature on our behalf, sustained no conversion in that aspect in which He is one with the Father, being made in no respect one with the flesh through the exinaniation.¹⁷¹⁷ But as He was without flesh,¹⁷¹⁸ He remained without any circumscription. And

1711 κατὰ στοιχεῖον. The Latin title in the version of Anastasius renders it “ex sermone qui est per elementum.”

1712 περὶ θεολογίας.

1713 For Ἡλικός the *Codex Regius et Colbertinus* of Nicephorus prefers “Ἡλικίωνος. Fabricius conjectures that we should read ἡλικιωτῶ ἀίρετικῶν, so that the title would be, Against Beron and his fellow-heretics. [N.B. Beron = “Vero”.]

1714 αὐτῷ τῷ...Θεῷ.

1715 τοῖς ἕκαστα φυσικοῖς διεξαγόμενα νόμοις. Anastasius makes it *naturalibus producta legibus*; Capperonnier, *suis quæque legibus temperata vel ordinata*.

1716 τροπή γὰρ τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ἀπέιρου, κινεῖσθαι μὴ πεφυκός, ἢ κίνησις; or may the sense be, “for a change in that which is in its nature infinite would just be the moving of that which is incapable of movement?”

1717 μηδ’ ἐνὶ παντελῶς ὁ ταυτὸν ἐστὶ τῷ Πατρὶ γενόμενος ταυτὸν τῆ σαρκὶ διὰ τὴν κένωσιν. Thus in effect Combesius, correcting the Latin version of Anastasius. Baunius adopts the reading in the Greek Codex Nicephori, viz., ἔνωσιν for κένωσιν, and renders it, “In nothing was the Word, who is the same with the Father, made the same with the flesh through the union:” *nulla re Verbum quod idem est cum Patre factum est idem cum carne propter unionem*.

1718 δίχα σαρκός, i.e., what He was before assuming the flesh, that He continued to be in Himself, viz., independent of limitation.

through the flesh He wrought divinely¹⁷¹⁹ those things which are proper to divinity, showing Himself to have both those natures in both of which He wrought, I mean the divine and the human, according to that veritable and real and natural subsistence,¹⁷²⁰ (showing Himself thus) as both being in reality and as being understood to be at one and the same time infinite God and finite man, having the nature¹⁷²¹ of each in perfection, with the same activity,¹⁷²² that is to say, the same natural properties;¹⁷²³ whence we know that their distinction abides always according to the nature of each, and without conversion. But it is not (i.e., the distinction between deity and humanity), as some say, a merely comparative (or relative) matter,¹⁷²⁴ that we may not speak in an unwarrantable manner of a greater and a less in one who is ever the same in Himself.¹⁷²⁵ For comparisons can be instituted only between objects of like nature, and not between objects of unlike nature. But between God the Maker of all things and that which is made, between the infinite and the finite, between infinitude and finitude, there can be no kind of comparison, since these differ from each other not in mere comparison (or relatively), but absolutely in essence. And yet at the same time there has been effected a certain inexpressible and irrefragable union of the two into one substance,¹⁷²⁶ which entirely passes the understanding of anything that is made. For the divine is just the same after the incarnation that it was before the incarnation; in its essence infinite, illimitable, impassible, incomparable, unchangeable, inconvertible, self-potent,¹⁷²⁷ and, in short, subsisting in essence alone the infinitely worthy good.



1719 θεϊκῶς.

1720 Or existence, ὕπαρξις. Anastasius makes it *substantia*.

1721 οὐσίαν.

1722 ἐνεργείας.

1723 φυσικῆς ιδιότητος.

1724 κατὰ σύγκρισιν. Migne follows Capperonnier in taking σύγκρισις in this passage to mean not “comparison” or “relation,” but “commixture,” the “concretion and commixture” of the divine and human, which was the error of Apollinaris and Eutyches in their doctrine of the incarnation, and which had been already refuted by Tertullian, *Contra Praxeam*, c. xxvii.

1725 Or, “for that would be to speak of the same being as greater and less than Himself.”

1726 υποστασιν.

1727 αὐτοσθενές.

Fragment II.

The God of all things therefore became truly, according to the Scriptures, without conversion, sinless man, and that in a manner known to Himself alone, as He is the natural Artificer of things which are above our comprehension. And by that same saving act of the incarnation¹⁷²⁸ He introduced into the flesh the activity of His proper divinity, yet without having it (that activity) either circumscribed by the flesh through the exinanition, or growing naturally out of the flesh as it grew out of His divinity,¹⁷²⁹ but manifested through it in the things which He wrought in a divine manner in His incarnate state. For the flesh did not become divinity in nature by a transmutation of nature, as though it became essentially flesh of divinity. But what it was before, that also it continued to be in nature and activity when united with divinity, even as the Saviour said, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”¹⁷³⁰ And working and enduring in the flesh things which were proper to sinless flesh, He proved the evacuation of divinity (to be) for our sakes, confirmed as it was by wonders and by sufferings of the flesh naturally. For with this purpose did the God of all things become man, viz., in order that by suffering in the flesh, which is susceptible of suffering, He might redeem our whole race, which was sold to death; and that by working wondrous things by His divinity, which is unsusceptible of suffering, through the medium of the flesh He might restore it to that incorruptible and blessed life from which it fell away by yielding to the devil; and that He might establish the holy orders of intelligent existences in the heavens in immutability by the mystery of His incarnation,¹⁷³¹ the doing of which is the recapitulation of all things in himself.¹⁷³² He remained therefore, also, after His incarnation, according to nature, God infinite, and more,¹⁷³³ having the activity proper and suitable to Himself,—an activity growing out of His divinity essentially, and manifested through His perfectly holy flesh by wondrous acts economically, to the intent that He might be believed in as God, while working out of Himself¹⁷³⁴ by the flesh, which by nature is weak, the salvation of the universe.

1728 σωτήριοιον σάρκωσιν.

1729 οὐδ' ὡς περ τῆς αὐτοῦ θεότητος οὕτω καὶ αὐτῆς φυσικῶς ἐκφυομένην.

1730 [Matt. xxvi. 41.](#)

1731 σωματώσεως.

1732 Referring probably to [Eph. i. 10.](#)

1733 ὑπεράπειρος.

1734 αὐτουργῶν.

Fragment III.

Now, with the view of explaining, by means of an illustration, what has been said concerning the Saviour, (I may say that) the power of thought¹⁷³⁵ which I have by nature is proper and suitable to me, as being possessed of a rational and intelligent soul; and to this soul there pertains, according to nature, a self-moved energy and first power, ever-moving, to wit, the thought that streams from it naturally. This thought I utter, when there is occasion, by fitting it to words, and expressing it rightly in signs, using the tongue as an organ, or artificial characters, showing that it is heard, though it comes into actuality by means of objects foreign to itself, and yet is not changed itself by those foreign objects.¹⁷³⁶ For my natural thought does not belong to the tongue or the letters, although I effect its utterance by means of these; but it belongs to me, who speak according to my nature, and by means of both these express it as my own, streaming as it does always from my intelligent soul according to its nature, and uttered by means of my bodily tongue organically, as I have said, when there is occasion. Now, to institute a comparison with that which is utterly beyond comparison, just as in us the power of thought that belongs by nature to the soul is brought to utterance by means of our bodily tongue without any change in itself, so, too, in the wondrous incarnation¹⁷³⁷ of God is the omnipotent and all-creating energy of the entire deity¹⁷³⁸ manifested without mutation in itself, by means of His perfectly holy flesh, and in the works which He wrought after a divine manner, (that energy of the deity) remaining in its essence free from all circumscription, although it shone through the flesh, which is itself essentially limited. For that which is in its nature unoriginated cannot be circumscribed by an originated nature, although this latter may have grown into one with it¹⁷³⁹ by a conception which circumscribes all understanding:¹⁷⁴⁰ nor can this be ever brought into the same nature and natural activity with that, so long as they remain each within its own proper and inconvertible nature.¹⁷⁴¹ For it is only in objects of the same nature that there is the motion that works

1735 λόγος.

1736 The text is, διὰ τῶν ἀνομοίων μὲν ὑπάρχοντα. Anastasius reads μή for μέν.

1737 σωματώσεως.

1738 τῆς ὅλης θεότητος.

1739 συνέφυ.

1740 Κατὰ σύλληψιν πάντα περιγράφουσιν νοῦν.

1741 οὔτε μὴν εἰς τ' αὐτὸν αὐτῷ φέρεσθαι φύσεώς ποτε καὶ φυσικῆς ἐνεργείας, ἕως ἂν ἐκάτερον τῆς ἰδίας ἐντὸς μένει φυσικῆς ἀτρεψίας. Το φέρεσθαι we supply again πέφυκε.

the same works, showing that the being¹⁷⁴² whose power is natural is incapable in any manner of being or becoming the possession of a being of a different nature without mutation.¹⁷⁴³



1742 οὐσίαν.

1743 The sense is extremely doubtful here. The text runs thus: ὁμοφυῶν γὰρ μόνων ἢ ταυτουργός ἐστι κίνησις σημαίνουσα τὴν οὐσίαν, ἧς φυσικὴ καθέστηκε δύναμις, ἑτεροφυοῦς ἰδιότητος οὐσίας εἶναι κατ' οὐδένα λόγον, ἢ γενέσθαι δίχα τροπιῆς δυναμένην. Anastasius renders it: Connaturalium enim tantum per se operans est motus, manifestans substantiam, cujus naturalem constat esse virtutem: diversæ naturæ proprietatis substantia nulla naturæ esse vel fieri sine convertibilitate valente.

Fragment IV.

For, in the view of apostles and prophets and teachers, the mystery of the divine incarnation has been distinguished as having two points of contemplation natural to it,¹⁷⁴⁴ distinct in all things, inasmuch as on the one hand it is the subsistence of perfect deity, and on the other is demonstrative of full humanity. As long, therefore,¹⁷⁴⁵ as the Word is acknowledged to be in substance one, of one energy, there shall never in any way be known a movement¹⁷⁴⁶ in the two. For while God, who is essentially ever-existent, became by His infinite power, according to His will, sinless man, He is what He was, in all wherein God is known; and what He became, He is in all wherein man is known and can be recognised. In both aspects of Himself He never falls out of Himself,¹⁷⁴⁷ in His divine activities and in His human alike, preserving in both relations His own essentially unchangeable perfection.

1744 διττήν καὶ διαφορὰν ἔχον διέγνωσται τὴν ἐν πᾶσι φυσικὴν θεωρίαν.

1745 The text goes, ἕως ἂν οὐχ, which is adopted by Combesius. But Capperonnier and Migne read οὖν for οὐχ, as we have rendered it.

1746 Change, κίνησις.

1747 μένει ἀνέκπτωτος.

Fragment V.

For lately a certain person, Beron, along with some others, forsook the delusion of Valentinus, only to involve themselves in deeper error, affirming that the flesh assumed to Himself by the Word became capable of working like works with the deity¹⁷⁴⁸ by virtue of its assumption, and that the deity became susceptible of suffering in the same way with the flesh¹⁷⁴⁹ by virtue of the exinanition;¹⁷⁵⁰ and thus they assert the doctrine that there was at the same time a conversion and a mixing and a fusing¹⁷⁵¹ of the two aspects one with the other. For if the flesh that was assumed became capable of working like works with the deity, it is evident that it also became God in essence in all wherein God is essentially known. And if the deity by the exinanition became susceptible of the same sufferings with the flesh, it is evident that it also became in essence flesh in all wherein flesh essentially can be known. For objects that act in like manner,¹⁷⁵² and work like works, and are altogether of like kind, and are susceptible of like suffering with each other, admit of no difference of nature; and if the natures are fused together,¹⁷⁵³ Christ will be a duality;¹⁷⁵⁴ and if the persons¹⁷⁵⁵ are separated, there will be a quaternity,¹⁷⁵⁶—a thing which is altogether to be avoided. And how will they conceive of the one and the same Christ, who is at once God and man by nature? And what manner of existence will He have according to them, if He has become man by a conversion of the deity, and if he has become God by a change of the flesh? For the mutation¹⁷⁵⁷ of these, the one into the other, is a complete subversion of both. Let the discussion, then, be considered by us again in a different way.

1748 γενέσθαι ταυτουργόν τῇ θεότητι.

1749 ταυτοπαθῆ τῇ σαρκί.

1750 κένωσιν.

1751 σύγχυσιν.

1752 ὁμοεργῆ.

1753 συγκεχυμένων. [Vol. iii. p. 623].

1754 δυάς.

1755 προσώπων.

1756 τετράς, i.e., instead of Trinity [the Τριάς].

1757 μετάπτωσις. [Compare the Athanasian Confession].

Fragment VI.

Among Christians it is settled as the doctrine of piety, that, according to nature itself, and to the activity and to whatever else pertains thereunto, God is equal and the same with Himself,¹⁷⁵⁸ having nothing that is His unequal to Himself at all and heterogeneous.¹⁷⁵⁹ If, then, according to Beron, the flesh that He assumed to Himself became possessed of the like natural energy with them, it is evident that it also became possessed of the like nature with Him in all wherein that nature consists,—to wit, non-origination, non-generation, infinitude, eternity, incomprehensibility, and whatever else in the way of the transcendent the theological mind discerns in deity; and thus they both underwent conversion, neither the one nor the other preserving any more the substantial relation of its own proper nature.¹⁷⁶⁰ For he who recognises an identical operation¹⁷⁶¹ in things of unlike nature, introduces at the same time a fusion of natures and a separation of persons,¹⁷⁶² their natural existence¹⁷⁶³ being made entirely undistinguishable by the transference of properties.¹⁷⁶⁴

1758 ἴσον ἑαυτῷ καὶ ταυτόν.

1759 ἀκατάλληλον.

1760 τῆς ἰδίας φύσεως οὐσιώδη λόγον.

1761 τατουργίαν.

1762 διαίρεσιν προσωπικῆν.

1763 ὑπάρξεως.

1764 ἰδιωμάτων.

Fragment VII.

But if it (the flesh) did not become of like nature with that (the deity), neither shall it ever become of like natural energy with that; that He may not be shown to have His energy unequal with His nature, and heterogeneous, and, through all that pertains to Himself, to have entered on an existence outside of His natural equality and identity,¹⁷⁶⁵ which is an impious supposition.



1765 φυσικῆς ἕξω γεγονῶς ἰσότητος καὶ ταυτότητος.

Fragment VIII.

Into this error, then, have they been carried, by believing, unhappily, that that divine energy was made the property of the flesh which was only manifested through the flesh in His miraculous actions; by which energy Christ, in so far as He is apprehended as God, gave existence to the universe, and now maintains and governs it. For they did not perceive that it is impossible for the energy of the divine nature to become the property¹⁷⁶⁶ of a being of a different nature¹⁷⁶⁷ apart from conversion; nor did they understand that that is not by any means the property of the flesh which is only manifested through it, and does not spring out of it according to nature; and yet the proof thereof was clear and evident to them. For I, by speaking with the tongue and writing with the hand, reveal through both these one and the same thought of my intelligent soul, its energy (or operation) being natural; in no way showing it as springing naturally out of tongue or hand; nor yet (showing) even the spoken thought as made to belong to them in virtue of its revelation by their means. For no intelligent person ever recognised tongue or hand as capable of thought, just as also no one ever recognised the perfectly holy flesh of God, in virtue of its assumption, and in virtue of the revelation of the divine energy through its medium, as becoming in nature creative.¹⁷⁶⁸ But the pious confession of the believer is that, with a view to our salvation, and in order to connect the universe with unchangeableness, the Creator of all things incorporated with Himself¹⁷⁶⁹ a rational soul and a sensible¹⁷⁷⁰ body from the all-holy Mary, ever-virgin, by an undefiled conception, without conversion, and was made man in nature, but separate from wickedness: the same was perfect God, and the same was perfect man; the same was in nature at once perfect God and man. In His deity He wrought divine things through His all-holy flesh,—such things, namely, as did not pertain to the flesh by nature; and in His humanity He suffered human things,—such things, namely, as did not pertain to deity by nature, by the upbearing of the deity.¹⁷⁷¹ He wrought nothing divine without the body;¹⁷⁷² nor did the same do anything human without the participation of deity.¹⁷⁷³ Thus He preserved for Himself a new and fitting method¹⁷⁷⁴ by which He wrought (according to the

1766 ἰδίωμα.

1767 ἕτεροφανοῦς οὐσίας.

1768 δημιουργόν.

1769 ἐνουσιώσας.

1770 Or sensitive, αἰσθητικοῦ.

1771 ἀνοχή πάσχων θεότητος.

1772 γυμνὸν σώματος.

1773 ἄμοιρον δράσας θεότητος.

1774 καινοπρεπῆ τρόπον.

manner of) both, while that which was natural to both remained unchanged;¹⁷⁷⁵ to the accrediting¹⁷⁷⁶ of His perfect incarnation,¹⁷⁷⁷ which is really genuine, and has nothing lacking in it.¹⁷⁷⁸ Beron, therefore, since the case stands with him as I have already stated, confounding together in nature the deity and the humanity of Christ in a single energy,¹⁷⁷⁹ and again separating them in person, subverts the life, not knowing that identical operation¹⁷⁸⁰ is indicative of the connatural identity only of connatural persons.¹⁷⁸¹

1775 τὸ κατ' ἄμφω φυσικῶς ἀναλλοίωτον.

1776 εἰς πίστωσιν.

1777 ἐνανθρωπήσεως. [See Athanasian Creed, in Dutch Hymnal.]

1778 μηδὲν ἐχούσης φαυλότητος.

1779 ἐνεργείας μονάδι.

1780 ταυτουργίαν.

1781 μόνης τῆς τῶν ὁμοφυῶν προσώπων ὁμοφυοῦς ταυτότητος.