

NOTES

THE COMMENTARY OF THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA ON JOHN 1:46-51

Three years ago the editors of this journal gave me the opportunity to introduce to its readers the work of Msgr. Robert Devreesse on Theodore of Mopsuestia.¹ At the same time reviews appeared in other journals. All the reviewers, including the present writer, united in presenting their judgments with caution and reserve, whatever may have been the divergence in the judgments themselves. And well they might; Msgr. Devreesse has devoted many years to the study of Theodore, and the conclusions which he suggests are revolutionary. One hesitates to accept, one fears to deny. Now that the opinions of the reviewers can be surveyed, one can but marvel; the Bishop of Mopsuestia, even fifteen hundred years after his death, still possesses his gift of dividing theologians into opposing parties.

This note should have been written a year ago; fortunately, the pace of scholarship is leisurely. In this journal Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., of Weston College, summarized the opinions which had been expressed, and pursued some details beyond the point which had been reached in the reviews.² Fr. Sullivan's name had not yet appeared in the theological journals; but if this article is a sample, we may expect it to appear frequently in the future, for it shows a very good grasp of the question, control of the material, and clarity of exposition. Fr. Sullivan, with all the reviewers of the book and its author as well, points out that the *Essai* does not definitively settle the status of Theodore; the *Essai* must be supplemented by a number of detailed investigations. Fr. Sullivan himself has begun this work by an examination of some of the extracts from the works of Theodore which were condemned in the Fifth Ecumenical Council (II Constantinople) and in the *Constitutum Vigilii*.³ The purpose of this note is to examine more closely the text and context of three of the *capitula* of the *Constitutum*, 27, 33, 34. These passages are all taken from Theodore's commentary on John 1:46-51.

The Syriac translation of the commentary on St. John, published with a Latin version of the Syriac by the late Père Vosté, gives us the complete context of these passages.⁴ The context is confirmed in part by Devreesse,

¹ *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste* (Vatican City, 1949); cf. THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, X, (1949), 394-408.

² THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, XII, (1951), 179-209.

³ Günther, CSEL, XXXV (Vienna, 1895), 230 ff.; cf. especially pp. 261, 266-67.

⁴ CSCO, *Scriptiores Syri*, ser. III, tom. IV (Louvain, 1940).

who has recovered much of the Greek text.⁵ The context is so important for the understanding of the extracts that I reproduce here both Vosté's Latin version and the Greek text, where it is parallel, together with the text of the *Constitutum*. The fullness of the quotation also permits the reader to compare for himself the Syriac (in Vosté's translation) with the Greek, so that there may be no doubt of the relations of the two texts.

Syriac (Latin translation
of Vosté, p. 36 ff.)

Greek (Devreesse, *Essai*,
p. 318 f.)

Constitutum Vigili

Dicit ei Nathanael: A Nazareth potest aliquid boni esse? Ita revera non est, sed intellegendum est sensu contrario et dubitanter, i.e., "Quomodo possibile est ut aliquid boni veniat a Nazareth?"

Valde enim contemnebatur inter Iudaeos nomen huius pagi, quia nimirum eius incolae pagani erant, et tamquam impossibile erat ut aliquid boni exinde proveniret. Propterea etiam Pharisei dicebant Nicodemus: *Scrutare et vide, quia a Galilaea propheta non surgit*. Recte igitur Philippus Nathanaeli ait: *Veni et vide*. "Cum enim, inquit, opinio illa antiqua obiciatur, ego facta ipsa tibi ostendere promitto."

Hoc autem superfluum esset ei, qui semel veritati crediderit.

Vidit Iesus Nathanael venientem ad se, et dixit de eo: Ecce vere Israelita, in quo dolus non est. Dicit ei Nathanael: Unde me nostis? Dicit ei Iesus: Priusquam te Philippus vocaret, cum esses sub ficu, vidi te.

Dominus noster primo

Ἡ Ναζαρέτ πάνυ διαβέβηται παρὰ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἄνωθεν, δηλονότι ὡς ὑπ' ἔθνικῶν μᾶλλον οἰκοῦμενον τὸ χωρίον, καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐνεγκεῖν οὐδέποτε τι δυνάμενον. Ὅθεν καὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἔλεγον πρὸς τὸν Νικόδημον Ἐρευνήσον καὶ ἴδε ὅτι προφήτης ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας οὐκ ἐγήγερται. Καλῶς οὖν καὶ ὁ Φίλιππος πρὸς τὸν Ναθαναὴλ ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε. Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ μοι, φησι, τὴν παλαιὰν προβάλλῃ δόξαν, ἐγὼ σοὶ τὰ πράγματα δεκνύμαι ἐπαγγέλλομαι.

Εἶτα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ πόρρωθεν θεασαμένου τὸν Ναθαναὴλ καὶ εἰπόντος Ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν, καὶ τοῦ Ναθαναὴλ εἰπόντος Πόθεν με γινώσκεις; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Πρὸ τοῦ σε Φίλιππον φωνῆσαι καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς,

⁵ *Essai*, pp. 289-419; cf., for the passage under discussion, pp. 318-19. The passage also appears in *PG*, LXVI, 737.

ad se venientibus, utpote omnino confirmandis, apte incipiebat dicere res ipsis evidentes, ut secretam suam omniscientiam panderet. Ita revera Simoni ad se venienti statim dixit, quo nomine vocaretur et cuiusnam esset filius. Philippo autem, quippe qui sequi eum desideraret, sed pudore cohiberetur, dixit: *Sequere me*, ut manifestaret quid in intimo corde suo optaret. Nathanaelem demum, anticipem haerentem, a principio allocutus est cum laude dicens: *Ecce vere Israelita, in quo dolus non est*, testimonium circa hoc secundum veritatem proferendo; non enim laudabat quod in eo non erat. His verbis autem: *in quo dolus non est*, significat illum absque personarum acceptione cum recta intentione dicere quod putat. Itaque circa ea, quae a Philippo dicta fuerant, dubius haesit, atque ingenue absque pudore mentem suam pandit. Ecce nequidem modo ac laudatus est, encomio cessit; at statim rogavit undenam Iesus eum cognosceret. Dominus vero, etsi praesens non fuisset, clare indicavit ei et locum et arborem sub qua erat, priusquam a Philippo vocaretur,

ut hoc modo excellentiam virtutis suae manifestaret.

Unde et Nathanael, ipsis operibus convictus, dixit ei: *Rabbi, tu es Filius Dei, tu es rex Israel;*

αὐτάρκως ἐμφαίνων αὐτῷ
τῆς οὐκείας δυνάμεως τὴν
περιοσίαν. Ὅθεν καὶ ὁ
Ναθαναὴλ ἐργοῦς αὐτοῖς τὴν
ἀπόδειξιν λαβῶν φησι Ῥαββί,
σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, σὺ
εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ.

Cap. 33
(Günther, p. 266)

Rabbi, tu es filius dei,
tu es rex Israel: hoc est
'tu es ille, qui de longe
praedicatus es Christus';

id est, tu es Messias, qui iam dudum est nuntiat.

Messias profecto ab illis exspectabatur tamquam Dei prae omnibus familiaris, tamquam rex Israel, quamvis obscurius et carnaliter de eo cogitarent. Nec enim quomodo esset Filius Dei Iudaeos tunc erat possibile scire, nec quomodo rex Israel.

Manifeste vero etiam Nathanael non dicebat eum *Filium Dei* generatione divina, sed familiaritate; quatenus homines, virtute sua accedentes ad Deum, filii Dei vocabantur.

Nec enim possibile erat Nathanael statim hoc scire, quod post longum tempus ipsos apostolos tandem cognovisse videmus;

quae autem ad ipsum fuerant a Domino dicta, sufficere non poterant ad demonstrandam alteram naturam. Namque de prophetis talia narrantur; v. gr. Elisaeus discipulum suum reprehendit quod a Naaman aurum accepisset; quamvis longe abesset, opus tamen quomodo actum sit, manifestavit.

Talis fuit ergo modus agendi prophetarum, qui revelatione Spiritus haec cognoscebant.

Quod ex sequentibus melius apparebit.

Ταῦτα δηλονότι περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ προσεδόκων ὡς οἰκειωμένου παρὰ πάντας Θεῶν, ὡς βασιλέως τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, εἰ καὶ ἀμυδρότερον αὐτὰ καὶ σωματικώτερον τέως προσεδόκων. Οὐτε γὰρ ὅπως ἦν υἱὸς Θεοῦ Ἰουδαίους τότε εἰδέναι δυνατὸν ἦν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὅπως βασιλεὺς·

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἦν τοῦ Ναθαναὴλ εἶθις ἐκεῖνο ἐπιγινώσκειν, ὃ μακρῷ χρόνῳ καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους ὕστερον ἐγνωκότας ἐστὶν εἰδέναι,
ἐπεὶ περὶ θεώρει μὲν ἄνωγων.

Τὰ δὲ παρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου λεχθέντα πρὸς αὐτόν, ὅπως τοιαῦτα ἦν ὥστε τὴν φύσιν ἐκείνην ἐμφαίνειν. Ἐπεὶ καὶ προφητῶν ἔργον τοῦτο ἦν, ἀμέλει καὶ Ἐλισσαῖος ἐλέγχει τὸν οἰκεῖον μαθητὴν τὸν χρυσίον λαβόντα παρὰ τοῦ Νεεμάν, καίτοι γε πλείστω τῷ διαστήματι πόρρωθεν, ἀλλ' ὁμως καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ὅπως ἐγένετο διηγείται καὶ παρῆναι τοῖς γεγενομένοις ἔφη.

haec enim scilicet de Christo sperabant sicut domestico constituto praeter omnes deo.

Cap. 34
(Günther, p. 267)

Certus quidem et ipse erat filium dei non secundum deitatis dicens naturam sed secundum quod domesticus deo erat, per quod filii dei per virtutem domestici deo constituti homines interim uocabantur.

Συνίσταται δὲ τοῦτο μάλλον ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξῆς.

Quid ergo respondit ei Dominus? *Quia dixi tibi: Vidi te sub ficu, credis? maius his videbis.* Sic ostendit nihil esse magnum quod a se dictum fuerat, nec ad plane patefaciendum qualis erat sufficiens.

Τί γὰρ πρὸς ταῦτα ὁ Χριστός; Ὅτι εἶδόν σε ὑποκάτω τῆς συκῆς, πιστέυεις; μείζονα τούτων ὄψη. Καί οὕτως ἔδειξεν ὅτι οὐδὲν μέγα τὸ παρ' αὐτοῦ λεχθέν, μηδὲ οὕτως ἱκανὸν ὥστε ἀκριβῶς αὐτὸν ὁστίς εἶη παραστήσαι.

Et quaenam sint maiora, quae visurus est, declarat: *Amen, amen dico vobis: ab hoc tempore videbitis caelum apertum et angelos Dei ascendentes et descendentes super Filium hominis.* Ecce si vocasset eum "filium" secundum divinam generationem, quid maius visurus esset? Aut quomodo maius illo foret: angelos videre ascendentes et descendentes super eum? E contra illud est multo maius et mirabilius; quia confessae divinae naturae, quae est omnium principium, non tantum congruit, ut sciat Nathanael angelos ascendere et descendere super eum, quod semper fit in utilitatem totius generis humani, sed insuper ut intellegat eum angelorum esse conditorem. Nunc autem post confessionem illam dicit aliquid maius, quo apparet titulum "Filii Dei" sensu, quo diximus, a Nathanaele esse prolatum.

Angelos ergo ascendentes et descendentes super se dixit, quippe qui ministrent in iis quae ab ipso fiunt.

Matthaeus enim evangelista post tentationes dixit: *accesserunt angeli et ministrabant ei*; manifeste cum

Cap. 27

(Günther, p. 261)

Matthaeus quidem evangelista post temptationes dicit quod accedentes angeli ministrabant ei, scilicet cum eo constituti et

eo erant servientes ei in omnibus quae a Deo erga eum fiebant, ita ut in certamine cum diabolo victor evaderet. Sed et quod passuro ei aderant angeli, ex evangelio discimus; et postquam resurrexit, prope monumentum visi sunt; similiter cum ascendisset in caelum, adstiterunt iuxta apostolos. Per quae omnia Christi dignitas monstrabatur, quod sine intermissione ei angeli aderant, in omnibus, quae circa eum contingebant, ministrantes.

Quapropter recte dicit, maiora istis illos esse viuros; angeli nempe semper ei praesto forent ascendentes et descendentes, seu diligentissime ministrantes in iis quae apud eum contingunt.

Hoc revera supradicto maius est; quoad divinam naturam autem valde exiguum foret, decebat enim eum ceu angelorum conditorem agnosci. E regione, naturae humanae haud parva erant, quae propter divinam naturam inhabitantem contingebant; et quia universo generi humano fiebat gratia per ea quae apud eum eveniebant.

cooperantes et omnibus circa eum deo ministrantes, quod iam per certamina ad diabolum ostensus est clarior. sed et quod passuro ei aderant angeli, ex evangeliiis discimus et, cum resurrexit, in monumento visi sunt.

per omnia enim ista monstrabatur dignitas Christi, quod inseparate ei angeli aderant et omnibus circa eum ministrabant: sicut enim a peccantibus separantur, sic et per meritum honoratis subveniunt.

propter quod bene dominus ait, quod 'maius videbitis, quod et caelum aperietur omnibus per me et omnes angeli semper mecum erunt, nunc quidem ascendentes, nunc uero descendentes

sicut ad domesticum dei et amicum'.

We may first notice the differences between the Syriac and the Greek. There are a few differences which do not affect the sense: "Pharisees" (Syriac) and "Jews" (Greek); the merely grammatical difference in the

phrase, "opinio illa antiqua obiciatur"; the additional phrases in the Greek, "since he saw (only) a man," and, "he said he was present when it happened." Beyond these, the identity of the two texts admits no question. The major difference lies in the brevity of the Greek as compared to the Syriac. Devreesse suggests the hypothesis of two editions of the work, but he can do no more than suggest; a complete comparative study of the two texts would be required.⁶ Concerning the passage under discussion—if I may, like Devreesse, venture a hypothesis—the difference in quantity seems better explained by reducing the Greek text not to the original commentary but to a florilegium; it is pretty well proved that Theodore's works were preserved in a number of such anthologies. The Syriac text does not give the impression of interpolation or expansion, but the Greek text does give the impression of an abbreviation. This judgment is a judgment of taste which I cannot urge.⁷ One of the three passages condemned in the *capitula* appears in the Greek; it would be difficult to conclude that the abbreviation—assuming the hypothesis—is tendentious. We may recall that the authenticity of the commentary on St. John as it is preserved in the Syriac version is seriously contested by no one.

The relations between the text of the *Constitutum* and the original work have been discussed by Devreesse, very briefly by I. Ortiz de Urbina, S.J.,⁸ more fully by Sullivan, who has followed the lead of Ortiz de Urbina. Concerning cap. 27, Devreesse says that it has a final interpolation not found in the Syriac, the force of which is immediately apparent.⁹ Ortiz de Urbina agrees simply that it has apparently been tendentiously manipulated. Sullivan, however, raises some questions. First, he questions Devreesse's assumption that the Syriac is a "scrupulously faithful translation" of the original Greek; secondly, the assumption that the Latin text of cap. 27 and the Syriac were made from the same edition of the commentary; thirdly, the assertion that the phrase "domesticum Dei et amicum" is "a sinister phrase foreign to Theodore's thought."¹⁰

Of cap. 33-34, Devreesse notes that *domesticus* adds a note of servility which is not present in the Greek *οικειώμενος*; and that Theodore has been made to say that Christ is the son of God not by nativity, but by a relation of "domesticity" with God, like that of the saints, although in a

⁶ *Essai*, pp. 302-3.

⁷ For what they are worth, here are some comparative statistics. The Greek: on v. 46, 6 lines; on vv. 47-48, 4 lines; on v. 49, 10 lines; on v. 50, 7 lines. The Syriac (in Latin translation): on v. 46, 11 lines; on vv. 47-48, 23 lines; on v. 49, 18 lines; on vv. 50-51, 37 lines. Those who have looked at Theodore's exegetical works will agree that the fuller text of the Syriac is more in his style.

⁸ *OCP*, XV (1949), 442. ⁹ *Essai*, p. 248. ¹⁰ Sullivan, p. 195.

different degree.¹¹ Ortiz de Urbina questions the confidence of Devreesse in the Syriac version. He sees no difficulty in the translation of *οικειώμενος* by *domesticus*, and remarks that the Greek text of 33 and the Syriac of 34 are faithfully cited otherwise. Sullivan accepts the remarks of Ortiz de Urbina, adding a few of his own on the legitimacy of *domesticus*; this is a worthy contribution to the discussion which we accept, while wishing that the author had cited a few of his sources.¹²

The condemnation of the *Constitutum* should not be ignored in the study of these texts, as it has been ignored by the authors cited, even by Devreesse. Of cap. 27 we read: "dicitur, quia, sicut et aliis, per meritum honorato Christo subuenerint angeli et quia sic ad Christum in caelos ascenderint et descenderint angeli, tamquam ad amicum et domesticum dei."¹³ It cannot escape notice that not only the disputed phrase, "amicum et domesticum dei," but also the phrase, "per meritum honorato Christo subuenerint," based on "per meritum honoratis subueniunt," has no basis in the Syriac text. There is a question not of one interpolation but of two; and the operative words on which the condemnation is based do not appear in the only other witness. I shall return to this point.

Cap. 33-34 are treated *per modum unius* in the *Constitutum*: "... de interpretatione euangelii secundum Iohannem adhibentur uerba Nathanahel dicentis domino: tu es filius dei, tu es rex Israel et infertur dictum esse Christo tamquam domestico dei, ut non ipse Christus sit deus sed plus quam alii homines sit domesticus deo, et adicitur, quia sicut alii sancti homines filii dei dicuntur, homines tamen sunt, sic et Christus per familiaritatem, quam ad deum habet, a Nathanahel, cum quo loquebatur, deus sit nominatus."¹⁴ The explanation of this passage leads me to the principal point of this note.

It is astounding that none of the authors cited have attempted to place this passage against its larger context. Devreesse alludes to the context briefly;¹⁵ I am almost inclined to think that he himself has become so familiar with the context of these passages that he attributes the same familiarity to his readers, or at least trusts that they will follow up the references he gives to the context.

Let us examine this context. If the reader will go through the Syriac even cursorily, he will see that the pericope deals with the meaning of the title "son of God" in the mind of Nathanael when he uttered it. There is no discussion here of the meaning of the phrase absolutely as a title of Christ but simply of the meaning of the title to Nathanael. Theodore judges (and,

¹¹ *Essai*, pp. 250-51.

¹² Sullivan, pp. 199-200.

¹³ Günther, p. 261.

¹⁴ Günther, p. 267.

¹⁵ *Essai*, p. 250.

without consulting, I dare say not a single modern Catholic exegete would fail to share the same opinion) that the title was not, to Nathanael, a confession of divinity.

What, then, did it mean? To answer this question Theodore goes back to "the display of the excellence of His power" which Jesus manifested by showing His "secret omniscience." To Nathanael, "son of God" meant "Messias"; but, Theodore goes on to say, to Nathanael and to the Jews of his time the Messiah was one who was close to God (*οἰκειώμενος*). This is what Nathanael meant; he could not have referred to the divine generation, for the other apostles were slow to recognize this, even after a long time. Nor was the knowledge which Jesus displayed of such a character as to evince His divinity; for similar powers are related of the prophets. So this display was "not great, not sufficient to demonstrate *who He was*."

Thus far Theodore; now let us see what the compilers of the extracts presented to the Fifth Council did to this pericope. That which Theodore explained as the mind of Nathanael has become, in the extracts, the mind of Theodore himself; and from the text of the *Constitutum* it is clear that the passage is condemned because its author defends, or implies, a concept of the divinity of Christ which Theodore here attributes to the mind of Nathanael when he employed the title "son of God." Those who accept the extract as expressing the mind of Theodore condemn him for an opinion which he attributes to Nathanael! Yet the context makes it perfectly clear that Theodore treats Nathanael's concept as inadequate. The compilers omitted the sentence which falls between the two extracts: "it was impossible for the Jews of that time to know how (in what manner, in what sense) He was the son of God." They have also omitted Theodore's description of the Jewish (and Nathanael's) opinion as "obscure and carnal." Hence the text of cap. 34 is not faithfully quoted (as Ortiz de Urbina and Sullivan say it is); for the words, "secundum quod domesticus erat, per quod filii dei per uirtutem domestici dei constituti homines interim vocabantur," have become a categorical affirmation instead of an explanation of the mind of Nathanael. The text of the *capitulum* cannot be combined with the omitted intermediate sentences, nor with the following sentences: "the words of the Lord to him were not sufficient to demonstrate the *other nature*," and below: "He showed that there was nothing great in what He uttered, nor was it sufficient to demonstrate clearly *who He was*."

Ortiz de Urbina and Sullivan have questioned the fidelity of the Syriac text. They give no basis in textual examination by which their doubt is justified. For this reason, I have imposed upon the editors of this journal the task of printing the texts synoptically. There is no question that, where

the Greek and the Syriac can be compared, they exhibit a remarkable identity. The Greek therefore confirms the Syriac as a witness of the original. Against this witness there is a fragmentary, sharply divergent witness which—its defenders admit—has been tendentiously manipulated. Elementary principles of textual criticism, other things being equal, would permit no discussion of which text is a more faithful witness of the original.

Are other things equal? We are not dealing here with variations in detail between the Syriac and the Greek and the Latin; we have a whole context, and the words of Theodore cannot have the sense attributed to them in the extracts of the *Constitutum* unless this context is annihilated. If anyone wishes to take this step, he adopts—against all modern students of Theodore—a position of critical despair of the text of Theodore's commentary on St. John; and he can neither affirm nor deny the "Nestorianism" of Theodore in this work.

Theodore's argument in the rest of the passage confirms the interpretation of the title "son of God" as employed by Nathanael. The argument is somewhat involved. Jesus had promised that Nathanael would see greater things, i.e., angels ascending and descending upon Him, which Theodore interprets as ministering to Him. Theodore argues that this would be nothing greater, if Nathanael had called Him son of God according to divine generation; for as such He is the creator of the angels. But it is more marvelous that it should happen to a man. It ought to be self-evident that "domesticum dei et amicum" is an intrusion here, and it is so conceded by Ortiz de Urbina and Sullivan. But it is no harmless intrusion, no innocent paraphrase; it gives the passage a turn which it could not have in the Syriac context, and it is quoted as a basis of the condemnation.

The phrase, "sicut a peccantibus separantur, sic et per meritum honoratis subueniunt," is not so obviously an interpolation. Yet Theodore, even if his words are viewed with a jaundiced eye, is speaking about the singular dignity of Christ; this is not the place to introduce a generalization about the ministry of the angels to "per meritum honorati." In the whole context, the ministry of the angels to Jesus is the "greater thing" which Jesus has promised, something which Theodore sees as unparalleled; the interpolated words of cap. 27 throw the emphasis in the opposite direction. Again, one must annihilate the context in order to preserve the text of the *Constitutum*. It is a fair question whether the compilers of the extracts did not annihilate the context in both instances.

The concluding words of the pericope deserve some attention; here, if anywhere, Christology is involved. The ministry of the angels, Theodore says, is small "quoad divinam naturam"; but those things which happened

to the human nature (*naturae humanae*) “propter divinam naturam inhabitantem” are great. There is no Greek text for this passage. *Natura* here translates the Syriac *kyōnō*. Unfortunately, I have not at hand Bethune-Baker’s study of Nestorianism, to which I am referred for a study of the technical use of this word. But a quick check on the usage of Theodore’s Syriac translators permits the affirmation that *kyōnō* regularly renders *φύσις*; the regular rendition of *ὑπόστασις* is *qnōmō*. I think we may safely conclude that the Greek here read *φύσις*; if it had read *ὑπόστασις*, it is difficult to see how the compilers of the extracts could have overlooked it. In any case, *kyōnō* does not render *πρόσωπον*. Should one find *inhabitantem* offensive, one may pardon Theodore for taking the word from St. Paul: “in Him dwells all the fullness of divinity corporally” (Col. 2:9). But Theodore cannot even quote St. Paul without risking a charge of heresy from some theologians. This, at least, is clear; the only part of the whole pericope which touches upon Christology proper is beyond reproach in conception and terminology.

I present no conclusions; the reader can go through the passages and ask himself whether the good faith of those who compiled the extracts presented to the Fifth Ecumenical Council is still in question, as far as these three *capitula* are concerned. But a few other thoughts suggest themselves.

Some theologians seem alarmed at the thought that Msgr. Devreesse is attempting to reverse a general council. If they had read his book carefully, or had gone through the *Constitutum Vigilii*, they would know that no such danger is imminent. Vigilius carefully and explicitly abstains from condemnation of the person of Theodore; and he abstains, with equal caution, from accepting the attribution of the extracts to Theodore.¹⁶ The extracts are condemned in the form in which they were presented.

The approach adopted by Ortiz de Urbina and Sullivan, with others, strikes this writer as merely literary to an excessive degree. By this I mean that they do not seem to attend sufficiently to the background of the extracts presented to the Fifth Council. After all, it is an axiom of literary criticism that any composition should be studied in the light of the personality and circumstances of its author. Devreesse has devoted the major portion of the *Essai* to the background of these extracts. Unless his work has been found to be essentially vitiated, we should reckon with the facts which he recounts. And it is a fact, well known before Devreesse wrote, that the political and ecclesiastical *Sitz im Leben* of the Fifth Ecumenical Council emits a bad odor which can still be perceived after fourteen centuries. It will not go away if we pretend it is not there.

¹⁶ Günther, pp. 286-92.

One may see, I think, the scope and methods of the work which must be done if the true mind of Theodore of Mopsuestia is ever to be known. It will not do to take detached sentences, in themselves open to some objection, and discuss them in atomic isolation. Still less will it do to heap up citations culled from many works and weave them into a continuous context, with no discussion and analysis of connected passages in the works of Theodore.¹⁷ This note deals with only three of the *capitula* of the *Constitutum Vigilii*, and only one continuous passage of about three printed pages of Theodore's commentary on St. John. I believe it presents solid reasons why this passage should be removed from further discussion. Whether it succeeds or not, there is no doubt in my mind that nothing but close work on the existing writings of Theodore, with attention to the proximate and remote context, will disclose his thinking.

West Baden College

JOHN L. MCKENZIE, S. J.

¹⁷ Cf. Wilhelm de Vries, S.J., *OCP*, VII (1941), 91-148; cf. especially pp. 92-98.