

SERMON DELIVERED BY HIS HOLINESS, MAR ESHAI SHIMUN, XXIII,
CATHOLICOS PATRIARCH OF THE EAST, ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 1954
IN THE CATHEDRAL OF MAR SARGIS, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

INTRODUCTION

This is indeed an historical occasion. For it not only marks the first meeting of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in the United States of America, and the second in its history, but it is especially significant in that it is the first time in the recorded history of the past sixteen centuries that so many representatives of the churches who believe in Apostolic Succession of the church, along with the representatives of the various Protestant Evangelical denominations have attended a liturgical service of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East.

We feel especially honored to have with us this morning The Right Reverend, Thomas Laski, Bishop of Gibraltar, who is representing His Grace, The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England, and Metropolitan. The history of the warm friendship which has existed between the See of Canterbury and that of Babylon dates back to the days of the late Archbishop Benson, and the late Patriarch Mar Ruwil, our great-uncle.

The mission of help sent by Archbishop Benson to assist the Church of the East, and the splendid work it did, has become a matter of history. It was the only mission that did not proselytize, and was sent directly from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Patriarch of the East.

The interest shown by the respective archbishops of Canterbury in the many vicissitudes of the Assyrian nation following the First World War, are remembered with appreciation by ourselves and by the Assyrian people.

We also wish to welcome most warmly the prelates, priests and other members of the great Greek Orthodox Church, and to assure them of the desire of the Church of the East for the friendliest relations with that ancient church.

This welcome is also extended to the representatives of all the churches who have come to witness this most holy celebration of the Body and Blood of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Because of the nature of the ecumenicity of the occasion, it is our desire this morning to speak to you on the history and doctrine of this most ancient Church of Christ.

Our text for the occasion is taken from St. Mathew, 10:6; "But above all, go to the sheep which are lost from the House of Israel."

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

"But above all, go to the sheep which are lost from the House of Israel." These "lost sheep from the House of Israel" are the ten tribes that were led into exile by Sargon, King of Assyria, in the year 722, B.C., and the second by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, in the year 597, B.C. In the time of Christ, these Jews of the diasporos had grown into oppulent and influential communities in Babylon and Assyria.

St. Luke, 10:17; "So the seventy whom He had sent returned with great joy, and they said to Him, 'Our Lord, even the demons have submitted to us in Your name'."

It is recorded that soon after the resurrection, the Jewish church in Jerusalem sent one Ananias to counteract the spread of the gospel of Christ within the great Jewish community of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the capital of the Persian Empire.

St. Peter in his epistle from Babylon concludes, saying: "The chosen church which is in Babylon and Mark, my son, salutes you."

Prior to this event, the conversion of Ogar, King of Urhai, had taken place, Urhai, later called by the Greeks Edessa, is a city in northwest Mesopotamia, and which stands to this day. This little kingdom of Urhai was tolerated as a buffer state by both the Roman and Persian Empires, and remained the centre of Aramian culture after the fall of the Assyrian Empire.

The story of the conversion of Ogar begins with the famous letter of Ogar, King of Urhai, to Christ. The historical event is recorded in the book called the Doctrine of Adai, and also by Eusebius of Caesaria, a fourth century historian who says that he saw the original correspondence with his own eyes in the Church of Urhai and made a copy of it and recorded it in his ecclesiastical history. Ogar, who died in the year 50 A.D., sent an embassy to Sabinus, the Deputy of the Emperor Tiberius in Palestine. The embassy consisted of the nobles Mar-Yabil and Shamshagram, with a scribe called Khannan. On the way home they stayed in Jerusalem ten days, where they saw and heard Jesus. When Ogar heard, he wished to go himself to Palestine, but was afraid to pass through the Roman domains. He, therefore, sent a letter to Jesus by Khannan, the scribe, which read:

"Ogar Ukama, ruler of the country, to Jesus, the good deliverer, who has appeared in Jerusalem, peace. I have heard of thee and the cures wrought by thy hands, without any medicine or herbs. For it is reported that thou makest the blind see, the lame walk, thou healest those who are tormented with chronic diseases, and raisest the dead. And when I heard of thee, I settled in my mind of two things; either thou art God come down

from heaven, or the son of God. I request of thee that thou wouldst trouble yourself to come to me, and cure the disease which I have. I have also heard that the Jews murmur against thee, and wish to do thee harm. But I have a city, small but beautiful, which is enough for both of us." When Jesus received the letter, he replied to Khannan the scribe: "Go and say to thy Lord that sent thee unto me, blessed art thou, that believest in me, though thou hast not seen me, for it is written of me that they which see me will not believe in me, and they which see me not, they will believe and be saved. Now touching what thou has written to me that I shall come unto thee, it is meet that I should fulfill that for which I was sent hither, and I shall go up unto my Father that sent me; and when I shall have gone up to Him, I will send thee one of my disciples, that whatever disease thou has he may heal. And all that are with thee he shall bring to life eternal, and thy town shall be blessed."

This promise was fulfilled soon after the resurrection by the visit of Mar Adai, and thus Urhai became the starting point of the Church of the East and the centre of early Christian life and literature. Perhaps even more than Jerusalem, Antioch and Seleucia-Cteseiphon, in Babylon, for while in the former three Christianity was persecuted, in Urhai it was tolerated, and encouraged by the example set by the king, himself.

Among the apostles that worked and established churches in Assyria and Babylon, Mar Toma (St. Thomas) sped on his way to India, and Mar Adai went to Phars in the heart of Persia. M'Shikha Skha, an Assyrian historian of the sixth century, quoting previous authorities, says: "Mar Adai went so far into Phars till he smelt the scent of St. Thomas in India."

Among the first Patriarchs of Seleucia-Cteseiphon listed, are Abris, a relative of the Virgin Mary, and Jacob, related to Joseph, her spouse. The Patriarchal See was therefore established in Seleucia-Cteseiphon and there it stayed until the rise of Islam, when it was moved to Baghdad and through the vicissitudes of history now moved to the United States of America.

GROWTH AND EXPANSION

The missionary enterprise of this major branch of the one Apostolic and Catholic Church, which for centuries far surpassed in numbers and territorial expansion the combined Christianity of the Roman Empire, will always remain the most remarkable achievement in the annals of Christian history.

Among the chief factors which made the Christian gospel more easily understood and accepted by the Assyrians than by other races, is the fact that the Christian faith is of semitic origin and revealed through prophecies in that language; namely, the

Aramaic, a language common to both the Assyrians and the Jews in the time of Christ, and indeed to this day spoken also by the Jews in the Middle East. The scriptures which were written in that same language by the apostles themselves are to this day preserved in the Church of the East in the original, without the change of one iota, nor has any revision ever been contemplated, as has been the case in the west; for the simple reason there are no passages of obscure meaning, as are to be found in other versions which are translations of translations.

By the year 90 A.D., this ancient church already had nineteen episcopal sees, all the way from Mesopotamia to the Caspian Sea and India. About this same time, that is towards the end of the first and the middle of the Second Century A.D., the influence of the Catholic Church of the East extended all the way to Rome. All the fathers of the early Christian Church in Rome, later known as the Latin Church, such as the controversial figure of Tatian, the Assyrian, Yostinos (Justin Martyr) Organon (origin) Melito, Irneaeus, and others that followed St. Paul to that great capital of the west, were all Assyrians or Syrians, Aramaic speaking peoples, missionaries of the Church of the East.

PERSECUTIONS

The adoption of the Christian faith by Constantine brought about the antipathy of Zoroaster, priesthood, against the Christians within the Persian Empire, and finally succeeded in rousing the suspicion of the emperor against the Christians within his domain. The final test of the inspiring faith of these Christians came in the year 339 A.D. The Catholicos Patriarch of the day, Mar Shimun Bar Sabai, was ordered by the emperor to collect the doubtful tax imposed upon the Christians to pay for the costs of war with the Roman Empire. This the Patriarch refused to do on the grounds that he was no tax collector and that his flock had already been heavily taxed. His immediate arrest followed and the persecution was set in motion. He was offered by the emperor not only freedom for himself but for his people, if he would worship the sun only once. "The sun went into mourning when its Lord ~~and Creator~~ died," said Mar Shimun. Then he begged him in the name of their personal friendship to yield, but the Catholicos remained firm, and on the morning of the first day of the feast of leavened bread, along with five bishops and a hundred clergy and other faithful, he sealed his testimony with his blood.

This persecution lasted forty years and was followed by others though of shorter duration, but of greater intensity. During this period, the greatest hymns written on martyrs were composed and they are in use in the church to this day.

One of the events which most befits to be recalled on this sacred occasion is the persecution which took place under Emperor

Yezd'gard, known as the wicked, in the year 448 A.D. This persecution was general and of great intensity. We have a detailed account of the martyrdoms which took place in Karkha Dbeth Slukh, now known as Kerkuk, in Iraq. On a mound outside the city, ten bishops and 153,000 others suffered martyrdom for their faith in Christ. The redness of the gravel of the hillock, in contrast to the surrounding soil, is said to have been caused by the blood of the martyrs. Among the many stirring accounts of the bravery and joy of these martyrs is the one related to the martyrdom of Yokhanan (John) the Metropolitan of Karkha. When he was being led to his death, a youth, by the name of Dadwi, urged him to be of good cheer. "Shut your eyes and you will soon be with Christ," said the youth. John, turning to him, declared that he was fit to be a bishop in his stead, and there on the site of martyrdom he laid his hands on him and consecrated him a bishop. The youth, however, exercised the office for one or two days when he also received the crown of martyrdom. This is only one of the many instances where bishops, aware of their impending martyrdom, consecrated others to carry on the apostolic succession and thus administer to the flock of Jesus; truly faithful to their Master's command to take their cross and follow Him.

The number of the members of this Apostolic church who suffered martyrdom during centuries of Christian history can literally be counted in millions. I often think, how many Christians would there be in the west today had they passed through the same experience? How would the American people today react in similar circumstances?

John Stewart, author of "Nestorian Missionary Enterprise" speaking of these martyrs, says: "No where in the history of Christian Church is there any body of men and women to whom may be more fittingly applied the words of Hebrews 12:33-38: 'Who through faith conquered kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong; restored to women their sons, raised from the dead; while others died through tortures, not hoping for deliverance; that they might have a better resurrection. Others endured mockings and scourgings, still others were delivered to bonds and imprisonment. Others were stoned, others were sawn apart, others died by the edge of the sword; others wandered about, wearing sheep skins and goat skins; destitute, afflicted and tormented; of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered as though lost in the desert and in mountains, and in dens and in caves of the earth'."

It has been said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. These persecutions, instead of quenching the zeal of the faithful, rather intensified it.

Converts by thousands were being secretly baptised, and yet others, both of low and high estate, often the perpetrators of the persecution themselves, believed and confessed in Christ and were then and there baptised in their own blood through martyrdom.

This period marks the greatest surge in missionary enterprise of the church. These persecuted men and women took refuge in countries beyond the borders of the Persian empire, and wherever they went they were one and all the missionaries of the cross.

Speaking about the missionary enterprise of this ancient church, John Stuart says, "The amazing thing is not where they went, but rather where did they not go?"

The Encyclopaedia Britannica, speaking about the expansion of the Church of the East, says: "Their campaign was one of deliberate conquest, and one of the greatest ever planned by Christian missionaries. Their activity may well be said to have covered the continent of Asia."

These activities extended all the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, and church, monastic institutions and colleges were to be found all the way from Baghdad to Peking. The famous so-called "Nestorian Monument in China" of Sianfu, was erected by the end of the 7th Century A.D. during the Patriarchate of Mar Khnanishoo, to commemorate the Fifth Centenary of the establishment of the Church in China. This monument is inscribed in both Aramaic and Chinese languages.

CULTURAL ENTERPRISE

The part played by the Church of the East in the cultural field is no less remarkable than that of its missionaries enterprise. The famous college of Edessa which became the centre of diffusing knowledge and learning both east and west, was founded in the early part of the Third Century A.D. as a monastic institution. By the end of the Fourth Century, its fame had traveled throughout the Christian world. Great saints and scholars, such as Mar Aprim and Mar Narsay, known as the harp of the spirit, were the product of this college and later became its principals.

The names and the fame of a host of other saints and scholars, trained in all the knowledge and sciences of the day, product of the college of Edessa, and that of Nisibin, and other equally famous colleges and monastic institutions of later date, have passed into history.

While Christianity in the West had immersed into the ignorance and superstitions of the Dark Ages, the Eastern Christianity had reached its cultural peak. Great philosophers and physicians,

such as Mar Eyob of Urhai (Edessa), Khunain Bar Iskhaq, Sahda of Karkh, Abu Yahya Al-Batriq, Bohktisho, Gabriel, and many others renowned men of learning, were making their influence felt in the seventh, eighth and to the succeeding centuries upon the Kahlifate of Islam, and through its agency diffusing knowledge to the West. The famous university established by the Arab conquerors in Cordova, Spain, became the gateway of this learning in the West, during the centuries-long Arab rule in that country.

Eyob of Urhai, Dean of the Medical School in Baghdad, who died in the year 830 A.D., was a man of profound learning, a theologian, scientist, and physician all combined. He was the first to develop in detail, through a deductive method of reasoning based on natural phenomena, the idea of the elemental origin of the universe and of the different bodies comprising it. He was the author of many works now extinct, except for one work dealing with all these sciences; a kind of encyclopaedia of knowledge, and the only existing copy of which was discovered only a few years ago. As a philosopher, he often criticizes Aristotle, rejects his thesis and corrects him where he considers him to be in error.

DOCTRINE

Doctrinally, it is Apostolic and Catholic and holds firmly to the Apostolic Succession. Its priesthood is based upon the petrine promise. "To thee I will give the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you release on earth shall be released in heaven." Its completion and perfection in the commission given by our Lord to His Apostles; "He breathed upon them and said, receive ye the Holy Spirit, if you forgive a man his sins they shall be forgiven and if you hold a man his sins they shall be held." Its attribute is therefore intermediary between God and man with authority to forgive and hold sins.

Upon this foundation the Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East has based its nine orders of the church, as it received them from the hands of the Holy Apostolic themselves; namely, Mar Patros (St. Peter), who wrote his epistle from Babylon, Mar ܬܘܡܐ (St. Thomas), Mar Adai (St. Thaddeus), Mar Bar-Tulmai (St. Bartholmew) and Mar Mari of the seventy.

It holds that, without the Apostolic Succession, there are no sacraments of the church and without the sacraments there is no church, and therefore, no operation of the Holy Spirit. To quote Chapter 8, Verses 14-17 of the Acts of the Apostles:

"Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the Samaritan people had accepted the word of God, they sent to them Simon Peter

and John. Who, when they went down, prayed over them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet it had not come on any one of them. They had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. When they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit."

The Church of the East faithful to the command of our Lord, and the teaching and practice of the early church, has maintained this Apostolic Succession throughout the trials and tribulations of its nearly twenty centuries-long history.

Its theology is Apostolic and Catholic, and has remained unchanged throughout its history. Its doctrine of the Holy Trinity is in conformity with that of the Council of Nicea, at which it was represented.

As regards the mystery of the dispensation of Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, it professes Him in two natures; namely, divine and human in two qnumy; namely, hypostasis, or underlying substances, in one person of the Son of God. One will, one authority. These two natures are united eternally and inseparably. It rejects the term "theotokos" or "Mother of God" used for the Blessed Virgin. It holds that the term has no Scriptural authority, is liable to misunderstanding, and therefore can lead to error. It maintains that while the One Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church is the guardian of the Faith, and has full authority granted it by its Lord and Master through the power of the Holy Spirit, to preach the gospel to all mankind and to interpret the meaning of the Scriptures to the faithful; yet has no right to teach any doctrine that has no Scriptural authority.

In the words of St. Paul the Apostle, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any gospel to you than that which we have preached to you, let him be 'khrim'"--(anathema).

The theology of the Church of the East has been stated briefly and clearly in the following hymn of praise, written by Mar-Bawai the great, a noted theologian of the Church, and which is:

"One is Christ, the Son of God,
Worshipped by all in two natures;
177 And His Godhead begotten of the Father,
Without beginning, before all time;
In his Humanity born of Mary
In the fullness of time, in a body united
Neither His Godhead, is of the nature of the Mother,
Nor His Humanity of the nature of the Father;
The natures are preserved in their qnumas
In one person of one Sonship.
And as the Godhead is three substances in one nature,
Likewise the Sonship of the Son is in two natures, one person.
So the Holy Church has taught."

The Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East, however, to this day, is commonly known to our Western Christian brethren as the "Nestorian" Church. This misnomer has led them generally to think that this Church was established by Saint Nestorius, and that it received its teaching from his followers. The so-called Nestorian doctrine has been erroneously, or deliberately interpreted by its opponents to mean the belief of two persons in Christ. This allegation ridicules itself, by virtue of the fact that it is philosophically impossible. These allegations, of course, have their origin in the Council of Ephesus. This issue, however, has since been much clarified by various Protestant and also some Roman Catholic scholars.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica says: "So far as Nestorius himself is concerned, however, it is certain that he never formulated such doctrine, nor does any recorded utterance of his however casual, come so near the heresy called by his name."

It must be remembered that Nestorius was an Orthodox, at all events, as Athanasius on the subject of the Incarnation, and sincerely, even fanatically, held every article of the Nicene Creed.

"In reality the question raised by Nestorius was not one of communicatio idiomatum, but simply of the properties of language.."

"He did not refuse to speak of Mary as Mother of Christ, or even as being the Mother of Emmanuel, but he thought it improper to speak of her as Mother of God, and Leo, in the letter to Flavian, which was endorsed at Chalcedon, uses the term "Mother of the Lord", which was exactly what Nestorius wished.

"Referring to Saint Nestorius' own defense, written during his exile, known as the Tighurta (or Bazar of Heraclides, J. F. Bethune Baker, a priest of the Church of England, says:

"The book reveals a strong personality, and helps us to know the man and his teaching, even though we have to gather his own views largely from the criticism of his antagonists. He is throughout more concerned for the wrong done to the Faith at Ephesus, than to himself, saying that if he held the view attributed to him by Cyril, he would be the first to condemn himself without mercy. All through the years of conflict he had but one end in view, that no one should call the Word of God a creature, or the manhood which he assumed incomplete."

Quoting Pere J. Mahe, a Roman Catholic theologian, it says: "In spite of the notable difference in terminology and form, the chronology of Antioch and Alexandria were in essence the same. Personal rather than doctrinal reasons had by far the larger part in determining the fate of Nestorius who was sacrificed to the agreement between the two great schools."

"This view is confirmed by evidence of Synodicum Orientale (the collection of the canons of Nestorian Councils and Synods) which shows that the great Syriac Church built by the adherents of Nestorius, ever memorable for its zeal in carrying the Gospel into Central Asia, China and India, cannot, from its inception, be rightfully described as other than orthodox."

End of Quote from Encyclopaedia Britannica.

As to the position of the Orthodox Church of the East towards the Council of Ephesus and to Nestorius himself, it has been well stated by Mar Odishoo, Metropolitan of Suwa and Armenia, another distinguished scholar and theologian of the Church, in his book of Marganitha.

"But the Easterners," he says, "would not divert from the truth 'true Faith' but as they had received it from the apostles, they guarded and maintained without change, and they were, therefore, unjustly nicknamed Nestorians." For Nestorius was not their Patriarch, nor were they acquainted with his language, but when they heard that he professed in two natures, two substances, one will, one Son of God, one Christ," they recognized his teaching as being orthodox, and they supported his position. For they had held this faith all along, it was therefore he, Nestorius, that followed them, and not they him, and especially in that he used the term "Mother of Christ". And when they (the Easterners), refused their demand to excommunicate him, saying, "To excommunicate Nestorius is equal to anathematizing the Holy Scriptures and the Apostles themselves. For from them we received that which (faith) we hold, and for which you are blaming us and Nestorius."

Patriarch Nestorius himself in his letter to Pope Celestine, laid the stress on the point that the teaching he attached was derogatory to the Godhead; and so he called its champions Arians.

"If the Godhead of the Son," he says, "had its origin in the womb of the virgin, it was not Godhead as the Father's; and he who was born could not be 'homoousios' (same essence) as God, and that is what the Arians themselves denied him to be," concludes Nestorius.

It is therefore evident that the term "Mother of God" applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary, was metaphysically the starting point and the core of the whole controversy.

The apprehension thus expressed, some sixteen centuries ago, has been well substantiated by the successive protests which since have emanated from the various Christian churches themselves adherents to the Council of Ephesus of the ever-growing magnitude of the doctrine of Mariolatry and the fear that the road is leading back straight to the Temple of Diana of Ephesus.

The fact that the Monophysite faith which at the Council of Ephesus, held in 428 A.D., and subscribed to by the Sees of Alexandria, Rome and the reluctant John, Patriarch of Antioch, had already been condemned by the whole Christian Church, both East and West, at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., under the title of "Apollinarian heresy" made it even more difficult for the Church of the East to understand this reversal of position on the part of their Western brethren. The fact that personal jealousy and imperial politics dominated the issue is most vividly illustrated throughout the pages of the history of this period.

Successive Patriarchs of the See of Constantinople were sent to their exile and death. Patriarch Chrysostom, who shared the same fate as his successor in office, Nestorius, and belonged to the same school of theology; namely, Antioch, is canonized; and Nestorius is anathematized. Diodoros, bishop of Tarsus, and Theodoros, bishop of Mopsuestia, the most famous teachers of the school of Antioch, who preceded Nestorius by well over a century, are both held guilty of the same heresy, more than a century after their death and yet the same teaching is labelled "Nestorian" and its origin attributed to Nestorius himself.

The former two in their lifetime, moreover, had been considered pillars of orthodoxy. Their writings were used throughout the whole church, and they enjoyed the love and personal friendship of the emperors, the prelates, of their day, and that of Cyril himself, the author of the Council of Ephesus. And yet, after their death, they were condemned for heresy, and their writings given to the flames.

Patriarch Chrysostom, a scholar and saint of Christian-wide renown, a childhood friend of Mar Theodoros, and a fellow-student of the school of Antioch, writing to his friend from exile in the Causasus, concludes his letter saying:

"Exile as I am, I reap no ordinary consolation from having such a treasure, such a mine of wealth within my heart, as the love of so vigilant and noble a soul."

Could there be a greater testimony from more competent a judge?

However, some twenty years after the Council of Ephesus, following the death of Emperor Theodosius, the great champion of Monophysitism, a council was called in Chalcedon by his successor, Marcion, in 451 A.D. And the Greek and Latin churches were at last able to repudiate the Monophysite doctrine, and to adhere once again to the Apostolic and Catholic faith of two natures in Christ. This brought considerable satisfaction to the Church of the East, and to Sain Nestorius himself, who was then still alive. But from the Monophysite side, anathemas were pronounced upon both

the Greeks and the Latins, and they were accused of having adhered to Nestorianism.

Summing up the Council of Chalcedon, the Encyclopaedia Britannica says:

"It may be said that the ideas for which Nestorius and the Antiochean school strove, won the day as regards the doctrinal definitions of the Church. The manhood of Christ was safeguarded as distinct from his Godhead. The union was left an ineffable mystery."

But, in spite of all these facts, erroneous statements regarding this ancient Church of Christ continue to emanate even from authorities of churches known to be most friendly to the Church of the East. In a book by Bishop Neill, of the Church of England, titled "The Christian Society", the author says:

"The Nestorians escaping from the coercion of the Roman arms, found a home in Persia, and established a Catholicate in Cteseiphon." In the booklet titled "The Church" issued by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, on the occasion of the Lund Conference, on Page 26, it asserts:

"The Assyrian Church of the East (meaning the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East) doubtless split from the Eastern Orthodox Church for theological reasons in part; but the fact that its main strength lay outside the Roman Empire altogether, in Oriental lands, whose whole history and culture have followed a different course, surely contributed to the schism."

Both of these statements, though undoubtedly well-meant, are equally unfounded for the following reasons:

(1) Since the apostolic foundation of the Church of the East is an indisputable fact, it could not therefore be subservient to another church which also claims apostolic foundation.

(2) It is an historical fact that the Church within the Persian Empire enjoyed a great measure of freedom under the Persian emperors until the days of Constantine. Therefore, it had made great headway within that empire, whether culturally or in missionary expansion.

(3) It was the Church of a Semitic people, who with a Semitic culture and speaking a Semitic language; namely, the Aramaic or Syriac. People are often apt to forget that Jesus was a Semite; and so were His disciples.

As for the statement about the Catholicate of the East, being established by so-called "Nestorian refugees", the facts already given amply dispose of that theory. Should the author avail

himself of the study of the Synodicon Orientale he will find the Eastern synods presided over by a Catholicos, some 250 years prior to the closing of the famous College of Edessa by the Emperor Zeno in 489 A.D., which is the date of the persecution referred to against the so-called adherents of Nestorius.

Not even the Roman Church, which also makes a similar claim, can historically deny these facts. One of the most erudite of the Uniate bishops, known as Chaldeans; namely, Mar Yacob Manna, in his book MARGY PEGHYANY (Pleasant Meadows) says:

"Places where Patriarchates were organized by the holy apostles are the following mothers of all cities:

The first, Babylon. It is the Metropolis, yea, the mother of all cities, and therefore was the head of the Assyrian kingdom. Then Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, and Constantinople."

LOOKING FORWARD

But while such erroneous statements continue to be made from time to time, yet on the horizon of sound scholarship a promising gleam of light is discernible in a sphere darkened by so many centuries of passionate claims and counter-claims. By this we refer to the great stress placed on the study of the Scriptures in their original. The present Pope, in his 1943 encyclical, warmly recommends a scientific study of the Bible, and gives complete and positive direction for such study. Says the report "The Church":

"The original text and not a translation, however authoritative, must be taken as the basis...It is of great importance," says the Pope, "to study the literary forms of the ancient East, because Biblical writers did not always use the same forms as we use today."

The same report says:

"This relegates many former differences to a secondary status, especially those which were based on Hellenic compromise, or upon scholastic, legalistic interpretations of the Scriptures."

These and many other like statements made by eminent Biblical scholars clearly point out the necessity of studying the Bible in the original Aramaic. The New Testament was undoubtedly originally written for an Aramaic-speaking Church, by Aramaic-speaking authors. For that reason, this Aramaic-speaking Church, throughout the twenty centuries of its Christian history, has never found it necessary to make a single change in its Peshitta text of the New Testament, or to revise the Old Testament.

Eusebius of Caesaria (260-340) quoting Hegasipos, a Hebrew convert to Christianity, and one of the earliest authorities, says: "And he has written much else which we have related in their order in this history and from Hebrew and Syriac Gospel." It is, therefore, evident that the Hebrew and Syriac text to which he refers, must have existed long before Hegasipos himself was born. If a Greek version were in existence during this period, the author would have undoubtedly referred to it...Hegasipos speaking of a visit he paid to the churches in Corinth and Rome says: "And such is the succession (Apostolic) in all the churches, as is proclaimed by the law, the prophets and Our Lord." (The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, Wright and McLean IV.XXIII. 2-8. P. 230.) This further proves that the early church within the Roman Empire consisted primarily of Jews and Aramians. The theory that these epistles were written to a Greek or Latin speaking people because of the gentile sounding names that appear in them, is further nullified by the following statement made by Eusebius....Speaking about the heresy of Theodotium of Ephesus and Acilus of Pontus, he says: "Both of these were Jews of dispersion." (V. VIII. 6-15. P. 278.)

Also in Romans, 7:1, Paul says: "Do you not know, my brethren, I speak to them who know the law, that the law has authority over a person as long as he lives." Furthermore, with a few exceptions wherever in the Greek version of the New Testament or other versions derived from the same speak of "Jew and Greek" in the Peshitta text it reads: "Jew and Aramian".

Here are a few examples: Romans 10:12. King James: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek." Peshitta text reads: "And in this it does not discriminate between the Jew and the Aramian." Likewise, Romans, 1:16; 2:9, and Galatians, 3:28.

Professor Raymond A. Bowman, in an article titled, "Aramaic and the Bible", which appeared in the Journal, Near Eastern Studies, Vol. VII. No. 2, April 1948, says: "But biblical Aramaic is only part of the mass of Aramaic material, for the language shares a place with the Assyrian, Greek, Latin and French, as an important international language of diplomacy and commerce...He expresses doubt as to whether the Jews in Egypt during the Persian period used the Hebrew language at all. For he says, there is scarcely a shred of evidence that the Jewish writers of the Papyri were by bilingual or that Hebrew was in use there at all. (P. 81.)...The swing from Hebrew to the Aramaic language continued, says Bowman, but so gradually did the transition take place that the designation "Hebrew" long continued to be applied to the vulgar tongue, even when it had become Aramaic. This explains perhaps why the term "Hebrew" is later used in the Fourth Gospel to designate definitely Aramaic words (5:2; 19:13; 17:20; of Rev. 16:16). He further refers to Josephus (c37-c 95, A.D.), History of the Jewish Wars, which he undoubtedly wrote in the Aramaic, and which he calls the language of our country, says Bowman.