

**Where'd You Go, Theodore?:
The Legacy of the Works of Theodore of Cyrus**

Benjamin Chidester

CH610: Patristic and Medieval Church History

October 30, 2024

As the fires of the Protestant Reformation were raging in England, a heated dispute broke out over the doctrine of the eucharist. In the hallowed halls of Oxford, before an esteemed audience of the chancellor and royal legates, Peter Martyr Vermigli, the new regius professor of divinity, defended the Reformed view of the eucharist against several ardent Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholics claimed that the Reformed view was a modern innovation, but Vermigli was certain he had the support of the early church on his side. Vermigli came out strong, with a lineup of the usual patristic authorities, but among them was an intriguing church father: Theodoret, considered the last great expositor of the Antiochene school of theology, but also a figure whose legacy was shrouded by controversy. His opponent, William Tresham, seemingly unfamiliar with this church father, was dismissive of his testimony. “The testimony of a heretic,” he replied “deserves no authority in such a great matter. ... I repeat, he is an obscure author and no one has him but you.”¹

Thus, the debate of the orthodoxy and legitimacy of this 5th century church father, which had started during his own lifetime, continued to ripple through the great controversies of the church, down to the Reformation and beyond. How was it that a bishop who labored so zealously to defend the Christian faith against the pernicious heresies of his day fell himself under the charges of heresy and even the anathemas of a church council? It is beyond the scope of this work to attempt to settle the matter on his Christological orthodoxy, a matter deeply entangled in controversy and already exhaustively studied by all the invested parties. Indeed, the fundamentally distinguishing doctrines of entire Eastern churches, and the validity of an ecumenical council, to a large degree hang upon the orthodoxy of this lesser-known bishop.

¹ Peter Martyr Vermigli, *The Oxford Treatise and Disputation on the Eucharist*, ed. Joseph C. McLelland, vol. 7, *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* (Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press : Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 2000), 146-147.

Instead, this work seeks to shed further light on the reception of his works and thought, with the aim of moving closer to an understanding of the role his works ought to play in the church today. In a time when the Evangelical church broadly, and even the Reformed church specifically, is expressing a renewed interest in retrieving the thought and writings of the early church, what recognition does this 5th century bishop deserve?

Biographical Details of Theodoret and Involvement in the Nestorian Controversy

To understand the reception of Theodoret's writings in church history, it is necessary to understand his involvement in the 5th century Christological controversies.² Theodoret was born in Antioch and would have been raised in the Antiochene approach to theology and hermeneutics, which stressed the literal interpretation of scripture, in contrast to the more allegorical approach of Alexandria. The differences of these two theological schools would play into the Christological debates he found himself embroiled in later in life. In 423, he became bishop of Cyrus (or Cyrrhus), a town in norther Syria. As bishop, he strove to root out the several heresies that had taken hold in this town on the fringe of the empire. It is during his first seven or so years as bishop that he wrote several works against these threats to the true faith, including *A Cure for Greek Maladies*, *Exposition of the Right Faith (Expositio rectae fidei)*, *Questions and Responses for the Orthodox*, and writings against the Arians, Marcionites, Macedonians, and Eunomians.³ His love for his flock was evident from his zeal for winning them back over to the

² The following biography is reliant largely upon: István Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, The Early Church Fathers (London: Routledge, 2006); John N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, Revised ed (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990); and Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius, Rufinus: Historical Writings, Etc*, vol. 3, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

³ Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, 6.

orthodox faith. Though, at this point, his own Christological orthodoxy had not yet been tested in the wider church. His love for his flock also manifested in material provision; he labored to provide for the material needs of his people through the power of his office, securing for them the construction of an aqueduct and many other civil improvements.

Unfortunately, the peace Theodoret experienced at his bishopric did not last long. Theodoret was friends with another Antiochene, Nestorius, and that association would soon entangle him in a heated Christological controversy that spread across the empire. In 428, Nestorius was promoted to the prestigious office of bishop of Constantinople and soon after, his preaching on the two natures of Christ came under the scrutiny of the zealous Cyril, bishop of Alexandria.⁴ Stressing the distinction of the human and divine natures, Nestorius seemed to Cyril to present two separate Sons, one Son of God and one Son of Man. Cyril passionately argued for the oneness of Christ's person, even if his views tended to slide to the opposite extreme of mixing and confusing Christ's two natures.

The dispute between Cyril and Nestorius grew in intensity over the course of two or three years, culminating in a letter sent by Cyril to Nestorius, to which was appended a list of twelve anathemas (also known as the Twelve Chapters). Cyril demanded Nestorius affirm them. As many scholars have expressed, this was a tactless and highly inflammatory move by Cyril. The anathemas represented the most extreme Alexandrian position. John of Antioch, the bishop of that city, tasked Theodoret with formulating a refutation. It was the publication of this refutation that tested Theodoret's Christology on the larger stage for the first time, and the response from the Alexandrian school was scathing. Although some have considered that the back-and-forth

⁴ John Anthony McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology*, 1st ed, The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 237.

that followed led Cyril to better understanding of the Antiochene position, the stage was set for climactic clash between these two sides.⁵

That clash came soon enough, in 431, at the Council of Ephesus, known as the third ecumenical council of the church. As much as the aim of this council was theological, it seems to have been also or more so political. The Antiochene party was delayed, and after several weeks of waiting, the Alexandrian party moved ahead with the proceedings without them. Nestorius was deposed and Cyril's interpretation of the Nicene Creed was declared authoritative. Once the Antiochene party finally arrived, they formed their own council, declaring it to be the authoritative meeting, and they in kind deposed Cyril. A back and forth conflict ensued, with the emperor Theodosius trying to reconcile the parties, but eventually he yielded to the fierce resolve of the Alexandrian party. Nestorius' deposition was upheld and he retreated to a monastery, though he was later exiled.⁶

As Nestorius faded from the picture, Theodoret became the leading articulator of the Antiochene position. Efforts were made by a new pope, Xystus III, and the emperor to reconcile. This was a crucial moment in Theodoret's ecclesiastical career. Would he would alter his theological position to foster unity, and did he? In 433 AD, a statement of faith was created, called the *Symbol of Union* (or *Formula of Reunion*), and was signed by both parties. It consisted of a statement of faith written by Theodoret, yet it was the same statement of Theodoret that the Oriental (or Antiochene) bishops had approved at Ephesus in 431.⁷ Did his views truly change?

⁵ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 328.

⁶ For a description of the proceedings of the council as seen from the Alexandrian side, see: Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, trans. John Anthony McGuckin, Popular Patristics Series 13 (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 23-27. For a description from the Antiochene side, see: Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, 11-12.

⁷ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 328.

In 444 AD, the zealous Cyril died. Cyril's letters from the time before his death suggest that some doctrinal reconciliation had been achieved.⁸ With his death and the prior agreement to the *Symbol of Union*, it might have seemed that the conflict would have subsided. However, in the place of Cyril arose an even more extreme Christological expression of Monophysitism in the person of Eutyches, an archimandrite from Constantinople, who was supported by Cyril's successor, Dioscorus of Alexandria. The ascendant Alexandrian party attacked the teaching of Theodoret. In the years after the Council of Ephesus, Theodoret had written an important theological work, *On Divine Providence*, along with commentaries on Paul's epistles, Song of Songs, Psalms, and various prophetic books.⁹ It is not clear which, if any, of these were the targets of the Alexandrian attacks, though among them must have been Theodoret's refutation of Cyril's twelve anathemas. Theodoret soon became embroiled again in debate, but this time, was it because he had never truly reconciled his view with that of Cyril or because the Alexandrian position had moved and become more extreme?

During this time, in the year 446 or 447, Theodoret wrote his most mature Christological treatise, the *Eranistes*. It is unclear if this work is responsible for the increased tensions between the Alexandrian and Antiochene parties or if it was in response to them, as Theodoret does not address the work to a particular person or heresy.¹⁰ There is no doubt, however, that Theodoret was appalled by what he perceived to be an extreme Monophysitism of Eutychus, and some have indeed suggested that he is the primary target.¹¹ Either way, the work was surely fuel to the fire.

⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, 31.

⁹ Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*. 18.

¹⁰ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, trans. Gerard H. Ettlinger, *Fathers of the Church* 106 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 4-5.

¹¹ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 332.

Several opposing councils ensued. Eutychus was deposed in 448, but then later that year, seemingly at the instigation of Discoruous, the emperor Theodosius II ordered Theodoret to remain under house arrest, restricting his movements to Cyrus. This kept Theodoret from attending a council in 449 in Ephesus, which reinstated Eutychus and condemned Theodoret. Pope Leo the Great was also left out of the council (and even condemned as well), earning it the name “robber synod” or *Latrocinium*. Toward the end of that year, Theodoret wrote to Leo, pleading for his help in having the decision against him overturned. From his letter, we see that he was still willing at that point to defend his earlier works, even back to before the Council of Ephesus. He asks Leo to look at his works to determine his orthodoxy, and says, “I have in my possession what I wrote twenty years ago; what I wrote eighteen, fifteen, twelve, years ago; against Arians and Eunomians, against Jews and pagans; against the magi in Persia; on divine Providence; on theology; and on the divine incarnation.”¹²

Two years later, Theodoret’s plea was finally taken up. In 451, the Council of Chalcedon, the fourth ecumenical council, met and overturned the council of 449. Discorus was deposed, Monophysitism was condemned, and Theodoret was reinstated, though on the costly condition that he anathematize his fellow Antiochene, Nestorius. The council created a Christological statement of faith on the two natures of Christ. The statement, known as the *Chalcedonian Definition*, was based upon the prior *Formula of Union*, which, as has been noted, was composed by Theodoret.¹³

¹² Letter CXII in Schaff and Wace, *NPNF 2-03*, 294.

¹³ Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, 22-23.

Not much is known about Theodoret's life after Chalcedon, though it is believed that he lived until 460 and possibly until 466.¹⁴ The only work that may be attributed to that time is his *Compendium of Heretical Mythification*; otherwise, we have only letters from that time.

The Value of the *Eranistes*

As mentioned, the *Eranistes* represents Theodoret's most mature, refined Christological work, written three years after the death of Cyril. Given the degree of agreement that was reached by the time of Cyril's death, with the signing of the *Formula of Union* and the greater mutual understanding expressed in Cyril's letters, if any Christological work of Theodoret is to be commended, the *Eranistes* would be it. Although, as was noted above, there is reason to believe that Theodoret's Christology never substantially changed over his career, or at least in his mind. Many modern commentators have taken up the task of arguing for or against this possibility.¹⁵ Some argue it never changed.¹⁶ However, given that making such a determination is beyond the scope of this work, focus will be given to the *Eranistes*, which, being his most mature work, is of the most value besides.

Eranistes is written in the form of a series of three dialogues between two parties, Orthodoxos, who represents Theodoret, and Eranistes, who represents an amalgamation of Christological heresies (the Greek word *eranistes* means one who picks up scraps). Each dialogue centers on a different aspect of Christology: divine immutability, the unmixed natures

¹⁴ Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, 26.

¹⁵ For a recent comprehensive taxonomy of the diversity of views on Theodoret's Christological developments, see: Donald Fairbairn, "The Puzzle of Theodoret's Christology: A Modest Suggestion," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 58, no. 1 (April 2007): 100–133.

¹⁶ Frances Margaret Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983), 283–284.

of Christ, and divine impassibility. At the end of each dialogue, Theodoret provides an impressive array of quotes from the fathers who proceeded him in defense of his position, which alone makes the work valuable.

Perhaps what is most significant about the *Eranistes* is the focus on interpretation of scripture, especially the difficult Christological passages. Although Orthodoxos is debating about metaphysical claims, he always brings the conversation back to interpreting these difficult passages. Theodoret is able to anticipate many objections to his teaching and meet them with scripture evidence.

Later Reception of Theodoret's Works

Sadly, Theodoret's death was not to be the end of the controversy that surrounded him, despite being exonerated by Chalcedon. The Monophysite controversy roiled the church for subsequent decades, and the Monophysites still saw Theodoret as a top target. In 553, the church held the fifth ecumenical council at Constantinople, and Theodoret was again brought up for trial, posthumously this time. The council was constrained by the prior ecumenical council of Chalcedon of 451, which had exonerated Theodoret's person, but his works were still subject to charges. The Monophysite party scored a victory by having the works that Theodoret wrote "against the first holy synod of Ephesus and against the holy Cyril and his twelve chapters; all that he wrote in defence of the impious Theodorus and Nestorius, and others who held the same opinions as the aforesaid Theodorus and Nestorius"¹⁷ anathematized, along with anyone who would defend them.

¹⁷ Schaff and Wace, *NPNF 2-03*, 13.

Theodoret's reputation and writings had again come under suspicion, but which writings specifically? Was his *Eranistes* also intended by the council's declaration? Schaff gives the following list:

In this condemnation the works certainly included are Theodoret's "Objections to Cyril's Chapters," some of his letters, and, among his lost works, the "Pentalogium," namely five books on the Incarnation written against Cyril and his supporters at Ephesus, of which fragments are preserved, and two allocutions against Cyril delivered at Chalcedon in 431, of which portions exist in the acts of the fifth Council, and do not exhibit Theodoret at his best.¹⁸

Pasztori-Kupan also notes that the *Pentalogos* was among the banned books,¹⁹ though since this work is no longer extant, its orthodoxy is of little value to us anyway.

What then are we to make of the remainder of Theodoret's corpus? If we cannot determine definitively which works were scrutinized by the council, are any worth studying? Though we may not be able to make a definitive inference, we know that at least some of Theodoret's works were still held in high esteem following the council. Gregory the Great, who lived in the aftermath of the fifth ecumenical council and sought to uphold its legitimacy, wrote a letter (so it is supposed) to the Illyrians that acknowledged the fifth ecumenical council's verdict against him, but simultaneously honored Theodoret and commended his polemical writings.

Gregory wrote:

It is the part of unwarrantable rashness to defend those writings of Theodoret which it is notorious that Theodoret himself condemned in his subsequent profession of the right faith. So long as we at once accept himself and repudiate the erroneous writings which have long remained unknown we do not depart in any way from the decision of the sacred synod, because so long as we only reject his heretical writings, we, with the synod, attack Nestorius, and with the synod express our veneration for Theodoret in his right confession. His other writings we not only accept, but use against our foes.²⁰

¹⁸ Schaff and Wace, *NPNF 2-03*, 13.

¹⁹ Pásztori-Kupán, *Theodoret of Cyrus*, 13.

²⁰ Schaff and Wace, *NPNF 2-03*, 13-14.

The last line of the quotation above is highly intriguing. How helpful it would be to know which works Gregory had in mind. Since the *Eranistes* reflected Theodoret's thought after his reconciliation with Cyril through the *Formula of Union*, it is plausible that Gregory is not speaking of it when he writes of "those writings of Theodoret which it is notorious that Theodoret himself condemned." On the other hand, Theodoret's ultimate anathematizing of Nestorius did not come until the Council of Chalcedon (451), four years after the writing of the *Eranistes*, so Gregory's statement is inconclusive for this most important work.

As noted above, Theodoret also wrote many exegetical works, most if not all of which are attributed to the time between Ephesus and Chalcedon. It is unclear if Gregory would commend or condemn these works, but for their commendation we have the testimony of another significant leader in the church of a later period – Photius, the ninth-century bishop of Constantinople, the primary patriarchal see of the Eastern church. He wrote of Theodoret: "On the whole, he reached the top level of exegetes, and it would not be easy to find anyone better at elucidating the obscure points."²¹ [Song of Songs, Hill, pp. 3] A fruitful area of further research would be to trace Theodoret's legacy in more detail through the medieval age, but for now, we will pass on to consider to his mark on the Reformation.

Theodoret and Reformation Christological Debates

Whether commended or anathematized, Theodoret's *Eranistes* earned a reputation among the Reformed on its own merits, as a clear articulation of scriptural Christology. Neither this work nor his others seem to have been widely known at the time of the Reformation, as evidenced by the reaction of William Tresham in the eucharistic debates at Oxford, but somehow

²¹ Quoted in Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, trans. Robert Charles Hill, Early Christian Studies 2 (Everton Park, Queensland: Centre for Early Christian Studies, 2001), 3.

Vermigli had discovered them, and he appealed to the *Eranistes* in particular to defend the Reformed view of the Lord's Supper.

Theodoret did not write a theological work specifically about the eucharist, but his Christological debates with Cyril of Alexandria had significant implications for such doctrine. These fathers pointed to the mystery of the eucharist as a parallel to the mystical union of the two natures in Christ to defend their Christology. Two sections from the *Eranistes* in particular offer intriguing insights into Theodoret's eucharistic theology:

Those who have been initiated into the sacred [mysteries] see the point clearly. For he wanted those who share in the sacred mysteries not to give attention to the nature of the offerings, but to believe, because of the exchange of names, in the transformation brought about by grace. For by calling what was a body by nature wheat and bread and by naming [himself] a vine, he has honored the visible symbols with the name of "body" and "blood," not by changing the nature, but by adding grace to the nature.²²

And another:

For the sacramental symbols do not lose their own nature after the consecration, because they remain in their former substance, shape, form, and are visible and tangible, just as they were before. But they are understood to be what they became, and they are the object of faith and worship, because they are what they are believed to be.²³

One thousand years later, this same Christological-eucharistic parallel arose in the eucharistic debates of the Reformation. The Reformed were accused of being Nestorian for their insistence upon the separation of the two natures in the personal union of Christ. For the Reformed, this separation implied that Christ's body could not be physically located at multiple places at once, since it must have retained its proper human properties. This also implied, therefore, that Christ could not be physically present in the Lord's Supper in any sense, against the Roman Catholics and Lutherans, since Christ resides locally in heaven. The Reformed

²² Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, 47.

²³ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, 133.

accused the Lutherans of Eutychianism for their belief in the communication of divine properties to Christ's human nature, such as omnipresence, which was logically necessary from their belief in Christ's local presence in the elements of the eucharist.

In this battle, Theodoret loomed large for Vermigli, who was well acquainted with the church fathers from his prior monastic life. Vermigli's most prominent Lutheran opponent, Johannes Brenz, noted Vermigli's affinity for Theodoret in an attempt to pin him with the same suspicion of heterodoxy. "The Zwinglians keep quoting Theodoret," he said mockingly. "Martyr is absolutely delighted with this statement of Theodoret."²⁴ Vermigli wrote a refutation of Brenz's influential work, which he called the *Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ*. So influenced was Vermigli by Theodoret that it seems that his *Dialogue* is styled after the *Eranistes*. It consists of a dialogue between two characters, Orothetes, whose name means 'boundary setter' and who represents Vermigli, and Pantachus, whose name means 'everywhere' and who represents the Lutheran position. The similarity to Theodoret's *Eranistes* is not hard to see. The dialogue is partitioned into several sections, each of which relates to the main point of discussion: whether the human nature of Christ is everywhere. The work appeals repeatedly to the authority of church fathers, just as Theodoret had done in *Eranistes* at the end of each dialogue. One such quote from the *Eranistes* that Vermigli probably delighted in was this line from Orthodoxos: "And so the Lord's body rose incorruptible, incapable of suffering, immortal, glorified with the divine glory, and is adored by the heavenly powers; but it is still a body as finite as it was before."²⁵

²⁴ Quoted in Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ*, ed. John Patrick Donnelly, vol. 7, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies (Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press : Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), xxiii.

²⁵ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, 129.

The Relevance of Theodoret's Works for the Church Today

If we move forward to the present, what should be Theodoret's legacy? To most evangelicals, the Christological debates of the first few centuries of the church seem like ivory tower academic disputes, far removed from any meaningful relevance to their daily Christian walk. They likely see no important difference between the Christological beliefs of traditional Protestant branches, Roman Catholicism, or Eastern traditions such as Coptic or Eastern Orthodox, and would openly support ecumenical fellowship between these faiths without any doctrinal reconciliation. Obviously, Theodoret and his opponents thought differently. If we are to truly honor our Christian forebears, we ought to consider seriously the doctrines they fought for so passionately. Whether one sides with the Alexandrians or the Antiochenes, if one wants to study the issue earnestly, they ought to read Theodoret's writings and understand his perspective.

More than that, however, Theodoret's writings ought to be commended for their theological insight and eloquence. Despite the suspicion that has hung over Theodoret since the Council of Constantinople (553), other church fathers since have esteemed his works highly, as has been noted. As Photius expressed, Theodoret's ability to interpret obscure passages made him a top exegete, and this ought to make him an attractive church father for evangelicals who long to better understand scripture. He should be valued by them as a kindred spirit for his adamance in grounding any doctrine in the biblical text. Surely, evangelicals would be roused by Orthodoxos' commendation to Eranistes, that he "accept no argument that is not fully supported by Scriptural testimony,"²⁶ or when he declares that he "would not be persuaded to say this by

²⁶ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, 41.

human arguments, for I am not so bold as to say something that divine scripture did not mention.”²⁷

Evangelicals may be averse to Theodoret’s dogmatism on theology proper, particularly his adamant affirmation of characteristics like impassibility and immutability in the *Eranistes*, which to them may smack of Greek philosophy. If, however, they are willing to give the *Eranistes* a read, they may become convinced by Theodoret’s barrage of Scriptural arguments. If evangelicals would take scripture seriously, they must wrestle with difficult Christological texts, the same ones that sparked these controversies. Let them consider the challenge that Orthodoxos gave to Eranistes:

Suppose that a follower of Arius and Eunomius was in a discussion with you and attempted to devalue the Son and to show that the Son was less than, and inferior to the Father, by saying those words they always use and by offering this text from divine Scripture: “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me,” and “Now my soul is distressed,” and other passages like these. How would you resolve his problems? How would you show that the Son is not inferior because of these texts, and that the Son is not of a different substance, but was begotten from substance of the Father?²⁸

For Reformed Christians, whose Christological beliefs and hermeneutics share such affinity with the Antiochenes, who are looking for historical precedent for those beliefs, Theodoret is a top choice. There has been a growing interest, in evangelicalism broadly and the Reformed faith specifically, in retrieving the writings and thought of the early church, but inherent to that pursuit is the question of which church fathers should be considered canonical. Likely, most evangelicals would defer to the precedent of the ecumenical councils, but if we are interested in Reformed catholicity, we must be careful to determine how we will define “catholic.” Anyone so interested in this pursuit ought to be willing to take up the arguments,

²⁷ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, 129.

²⁸ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Eranistes*, 119.

weight them against scripture, and decide for themselves. If they will consider the arguments of Theodoret, they might find a great deal of biblical insight into their own faith's Christological beliefs.

Conclusion

The legacy of Theodoret – a man who strove zealously to defend the faith against the heresies of his day – is regrettably one of controversy. Sifting through the history of interpretation of his works may never get one to a clear, unbiased answer. This paper has aimed to shed more light upon the history surrounding his works and their relation to his controversies with Cyril of Alexandria and Eutyches. From the various evidence, it seems that the orthodoxy of the *Eranistes*, his most mature and refined work, was not in question, and may have been commended by later church figures, such as Gregory the Great, but the evidence is admittedly not conclusive.

For evangelicals and Reformed Christians, the ultimate standard of orthodoxy is not the declaration of a council, but the Bible itself. They are able to read Theodoret and determine for themselves if his doctrine stands the test of scripture. For Reformed Christians especially, whose Christological views align closely with the Antiochene tradition, Theodoret's writings will likely help them to better articulate those views they share. Reading Theodoret may be the only way to make a determination of his orthodoxy, and for Protestants, if there are places in his Christology where he has erred, they have the ability to identify them and correct them. Still, there is much that is commendable in his writings and his penetrating understanding of scripture is sure to be a fruitful challenge for any evangelical who is serious about a deeper knowledge of Christ, the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Honor Code

I, Benjamin Chidester have written this paper exclusively for CH610. If this paper, in part or full, was submitted previously in another context, I have received permission from the course professor to use it for this assignment. While I may have received editing or proofreading advice, I made all corrections myself. I have cited each paraphrase, quotation, and borrowed idea that I included in this paper.

Bibliography

- Cyril of Alexandria. *On the Unity of Christ*. Translated by John Anthony McGuckin. Popular Patristics Series 13. Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995.
- Fairbairn, Donald. "The Puzzle of Theodoret's Christology: A Modest Suggestion." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 58, no. 1 (April 2007): 100–133.
- Kelly, John N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Revised ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
- McGuckin, John Anthony. *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology*. 1st ed. The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
- Pásztori-Kupán, István. *Theodoret of Cyrus*. The Early Church Fathers. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Schaff, Philip, and Henry Wace, eds. *Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius, Rufinus: Historical Writings, Etc.* Vol. 3. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- Theodoret of Cyrus. *Commentary on the Song of Songs*. Translated by Robert Charles Hill. Early Christian Studies 2. Everton Park, Queensland: Centre for Early Christian Studies, 2001.
- . *Eranistes*. Translated by Gerard H. Ettlinger. Fathers of the Church 106. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003.
- Vermigli, Peter Martyr. *Dialogue on the Two Natures in Christ*. Edited by John Patrick Donnelly. Vol. 7. Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies. Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press : Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994.
- . *The Oxford Treatise and Disputation on the Eucharist*. Edited by Joseph C. McLelland. Vol. 7. Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies. Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press : Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 2000.
- Young, Frances Margaret. *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983.