

TR 88-44 ✓

T I T L E - P A G E

T H E D O C T R I N E O F H E A V E N
I N T H E W R I T I N G S O F S T . J O H N O F D A M A S C U S
A N D E A R L I E R G R E E K T R A D I T I O N

T H E S I S

Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

M A S T E R O F T H E O L O G Y

of Rhodes University

by

C H R I S T O P H E R J O H N P A R R I S H

January 1988

T H E S I S A B S T R A C T

THE DOCTRINE OF HEAVEN IN THE WRITINGS

OF

ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS AND EARLIER GREEK TRADITION

by C.J. PARRISH

This thesis investigates the subject of Heaven or Paradise in the De Fide Orthodoxa of St. John of Damascus (c.675 - c.749), a Greek Father and theologian who gave the Church a definitive heritage of the Greek Fathers' teaching. After a preliminary consideration of the meanings of "Heaven" and Paradise as a state or a place, a substantial part of this thesis is then given to a detailed treatment of the Greek Fathers' teaching on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life in Paradise. The questions of the indispensability of the tree of life to the final bliss of the saints, and the doubtful place of the tree of knowledge also receive attention. The meaning of the trees for St. John of Damascus is expounded in order to show his use of the ideas of Greek Fathers prior to him, for example, Gregory Nazianzenus and Maximus the Confessor.

After this, the questions of entry into Paradise and the Greek teaching of the intermediate state of the departed are raised.

The descent of Christ to Hades precedes discussion of whether St. John of Damascus taught a doctrine of Purgatory or not. The practice of prayer for the departed is examined with respect to its effect on the intermediate state of the faithful departed.

Lastly, this thesis explores the necessity of the resurrection for the final bliss of the faithful, and establishes the relevance of this teaching for modern thought on the preservation of integral personality. In conclusion, the writer suggests that St. John of Damascus bequeathed to the Church rich insights into the Greek Fathers' doctrine of Heaven.

C O N T E N T S

1. INTRODUCTION:

2. "HEAVEN" AND "HEAVENS" IN ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS" DE FIDE
ORTHODOXA.

3. THE DOCTRINE OF "PARADISE" IN ST JOHN OF DAMASCUS" WRITINGS,
AND EARLIER GREEK TRADITION.
 - 3.1. The difference between "Heaven" and "Paradise";
 - 3.2.1. The localization of Paradise: Basil and Origen;
 - 3.2.2. Conclusion on Paradise as localized or spiritual;
 - 3.3. Some aspects of the Paradise planted in Eden.
 - 3.3.1. The Tree of Knowledge.
 - 3.3.2. The Tree of Life.

4. ENTRY INTO PARADISE
 - 4.1. The descent of Christ to Hades;.
 - 4.2. What is the intermediate state of the faithful departed,
according to St. John of Damascus and Greek tradition?

5. THE NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION FOR THE FINAL STATE OF
BLESSEDNESS.
 - 5.1. The resurrection of Christ;
 - 5.2. The resurrection on the Last Day.

6. CONCLUSION.

THESIS: THE DOCTRINE OF HEAVEN
IN ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS' WRITINGS
AND EARLIER GREEK TRADITION.

1. INTRODUCTION.

St. John of Damascus (c. 645 - c. 750)¹ was a Greek monk, famous as the last of the Greek Fathers, who wrote extensively in support of icons in the Iconoclastic controversy of the eighth century. He also gave to the world his De Fide Orthodoxa, a comprehensive exposition of the Orthodox Faith as taught by the Greek Fathers before him.

This thesis examines St. John of Damascus' teaching on Heaven in order to arrive at some conclusions on the elements which constitute the happiness of the saints in their final state.

In order to understand the whole approach of St. John of Damascus, let us consider some words from his Oratio II, De Imaginibus:²

Νυν δὲ, ἀφ' οὗ ἡ Θεότης τῆ ἡμετέρα φύσει
συνανεκράθη, οἷόν τι ζωοποιὸν καὶ σωτήριον
φάρμακον, ἔδοξάσθη ἡ φύσις ἡμῶν, καὶ πρὸς
ἀφ' ὅρασίαν μετεστοιχειώθη. Διὸ καὶ ὁ τῶν
ἁγίων θάνατος ἐορτάζεται καὶ ναοὶ αὐτοῖς
ἐγγείρονται, καὶ εἰκόνες ἀναγράφονται.

1. P.1047, Vol. 7, New Catholic Encyclopaedia Washington, D.C.

The Catholic University of America, 1967. Reprinted, 1981.

2. PG XCIV. Col. 1296, A10.

(Translation³: 'But now since the time that the Divinity was united with our nature, as a kind of life-giving and salvific medicine, our nature has been glorified and transformed into incorruptibility. Therefore also the death of the saints is celebrated, temples are raised to them and icons are painted.')

The Incarnation in its life-giving wonder is the centre of St. John of Damascus' teaching on icons: the icon represents the Incarnation and celebrates the glorification of Christ and the saints. Because of, and from the time of the Incarnation, human nature has been 'transformed into immortality.' Now the fully human can be a means to reveal God. Therefore icons are viable representations of Christ-with-us in His saints.

Does this mean that God is fully known through Christ? No, for right at the beginning⁴ of De Fide Orthodoxa, St. John quotes John 1:18 and Matthew 11:17 to show that God has never been known in "His first and blessed nature" except by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The distinction between God "in His pristine being" and God in the energies of His being in which He chooses to reveal Himself,

3. Writer's own translation.

4. Migne (ed.): PG XCIV, Col. 789 A.

is a distinction that came to St. John of Damascus through Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, a Christian thinker using neo-Platonic language and thought forms, who in his Divine Names spoke of God as "the Being beyond all being, life beyond all life".⁵ Pseudo-Dionysius' stress on the via negativa became an important element in Byzantine theology. The contradiction between God's unknowability in essence and His knowability led to the doctrine of God's revelation of Himself through His energies or emanating energies.

St. John of Damascus believed that man comes to know God progressively as God reveals to him as much as he can bear. Man's knowledge of God increases throughout life, if he trains himself in prayer, until finally, after death and on the Last Day the saints fully share in God's life, knowing Him fully.

St. John's idea of Heaven is found to some extent in his picture of Paradise, an earthly and heavenly kingdom combined, which was "a very storehouse of joy and gladness of heart"⁶. He pictures Paradise in very sensuous terms: evergreen plants, sweet fragrances, plenty of light, freshness and beauty (II.11), in short a home suitable for a creature having the faculty of reason. One must ask whether such a picture is not too physical, or materialistic in its delights. In answer, it needs to be said

5. Par. III, Ch. II. De Divinis Nominibus, P.G. III Col. 640.

Writer's translation.

6. Migne (ed.): P.G. XCIV. Col. 912 A7

that Paradise as St. John describes it, is the Garden of Eden, the place where Adam and Eve were, before they sinned. Secondly, St. John's idea of heaven never excludes the human and the physical. Physical pleasures of sensation find their deification by being in contact with spiritual joys and always subjected to them. Redemption is redemption of the human, because God became a true Man in Jesus Christ so that Christ hungered, thirsted, wept and grew tired.

A very fascinating interpretation of the Tree of knowledge is given by St. John: this tree gave the power to Adam and Eve to know their own nature. Such knowledge would be good for mature people, but harmful to those whose appetites were too strong. For them to receive such knowledge would be like babes receiving solid food for which they weren't ready, by any means. This kind of knowledge is the kind God didn't want us to have, for he didn't intend us to be burdened with care and troubled about many things. God intended us to be devoid of passion, as He is. This view of the knowledge of that tree is a much more mystical view of God and the way to him, than for example, St. Augustine's view, which holds this kind of knowledge as the false knowledge of pride. In St. John's view, this knowledge of the tree is a misdirected knowledge rather than an evil knowledge in itself. Very significantly, St. John continues this discussion by affirming God's desire for man "to be free from care

(ἀμεριμνοῦς). having one work, that of the angels, to hymn unceasingly and uninterruptedly the Creator and to be nourished

by beholding him, and to cast their cares on him."

Further, Paradise is not either a physical realm or a realm of the spirit, because man is a blend of both spirit and body. Therefore Paradise is such a blend, too. The idea of this blend is that by enjoying all creation, many may enjoy one fruit: that of knowing God. (II.xi.)

Before passing from this Introduction to a discussion of Paradise, let us consider St. John's views of the cosmos and the heavens, as a preparation for our treatment of the localization of Paradise.

2. "HEAVEN" AND "HEAVENS" IN ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS' DE FIDE
ORTHODOXA.

In twentieth century theological discourse we have difficulty describing Heaven in spatial terms as the abode of God, his angels and the saints, because the skies above us have lost their inaccessibility and transcendence through the effect of space travel. It is easy to think of the limitless universe as containing planets, solar systems and galaxies, but hard to locate Heaven in this kind of universe.

Now, for St. John of Damascus, Heaven can be defined in various ways, but always so that we can conceive of Heaven as a spatially defined entity. At the beginning of Ch. 6, Bk. II of De Fide Orthodoxa St. John Damascene writes these words:

Οὐρανός ἐστιν περιχώρη ὁρατῶν τε καὶ
ἀοράτων κτίσματος. Ἐντὸς γὰρ αὐτοῦ αἱ
τε νοεραὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων δυνάμεις, καὶ
πάντα τὰ αἰσθητὰ περικλείονται καὶ περιόρι-
ζοῦται.

Translation⁷: "Heaven is the circumference of things created, both visible and invisible. For within its boundaries are included and marked off both the mental faculties of the angels and all the world of sense."

St. John of Damascus, in the tradition of Greek theologians like Basil, Theodoret and Chrysostom, cannot conceive of heaven unless located above the earth, in one or more of the Ptolemaic spheres of heaven. Though St. John speaks of heaven as the ".περιχώρη.." (circumference or compass) of created things, both visible and invisible; he immediately perceives the problem of locating God, the indescribable, within the enclosure of heaven. Even

Ecclesiastes⁸ speaks of God being "in heaven". Since Copernicus and Galileo, the geocentric view of the universe has lost ground, although in art and poetry⁹ it has continued as a myth. Modern theology, taking full cognizance of scientifically verified facts solves the problem by accepting a spiritual, delocalized heaven.

-

7. Salmond S.D.F. (transl.): John of Damascus. Exposition of the Orthodox Faith. Oxford: Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers Vol. IX, p 21.

8. Ch. 5, v. 2.

9. John Milton's "Paradise Lost", for example.

Today, in fact, St. John's definition of heaven, as quoted above, would do well as a definition of the universe. Naturally, the problem of locating God within this universe still arises, but only if heaven is equated with the universe or any part of it. Instead of changing his view of heaven to solve the problem, St. John of Damascus recalls our attention to the view of God that one finds earlier in his own writings, but derived¹⁰ also from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite:

Μόνον δὲ τὸ Θεῖον ἀπεριγραπτὸν ἔστω
πάντα πληρῶν, καὶ πάντα περιέχον καὶ
πάντα περιοριζόν, ἄς ὑπὲρ πάντα ὄν, καὶ
πάντα δημιουργήσαν. "

(Transl.: "But the Deity alone is uncircumscribed, filling all things, and surrounding all things, and bounding all things, for He is above all things, and has created all things."¹²

With this may be compared St. John Damascene's Ch.8 , Book I, De Fide Orth.(pars):

Πιστεύομεν τοιγαροῦν εἰς ἓνα Θεόν,
μίαν ἀρχὴν, ἀναρχόν, ἀκτιστόν, ἀγέννητον,
ἀνόλεθρόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατον, αἰώνιον, ἄπειρον,

10. Cf. Rolt, C.E. (transl.): The Divine Names, London: SPCK, 1940; 10th Impression, 1983, p 52.

11. De Fide Orthodoxa, II. 6.: PG XCIV. Col 880. B 2 - 5.

12. Salmond, S.D.F. op. cit., p 21

ἀπερίγραπτον, ἀπερίοριστον.....

(PG XCIV. Col. 808. B13 - C2)

(Transl.¹³: 'We believe, then, in One God, one beginning, having no beginning, uncreate, unbegotten, imperishable and immortal everlasting, infinite, uncircumscribed, boundless')

Greek theology developed this apophatic way of speaking of God under the influence of Neoplatism¹⁴ and the necessity to counter Gnosticism and Arianism by formulae that stressed the inaccessibility of God to human knowledge, and the uncreated nature of God.

Particularly in Pseudo-Dionysius, the apophatic way, or via negativa was instituted as a characteristic of the mystical approach to God, an approach taught by the Orthodox tradition. St. John of Damascus confirms Pseudo-Dionysius' teaching through such passages as we have quoted. In doing so, he bequeaths to later generations the kind of God beloved to Greek philosophy - Causing, but Uncaused, Knowing, but Unknowable. In making this sharp distinction between the "circumference" that Heaven is, and the limitlessness that God is, St. John runs the risk of separating Heaven from God too much, a danger accompanying the classification of Heaven's heavens and possibly leading to an uncertainty about

13. Salmond S.D.F. op. cit., p 6

14. Tinsley E.J. "Via Negativa" in new Dict. of Christian Theology p 596.

about the final destination of the faithful.

The enumeration of different senses of the word "heaven", or of different views of what Heaven is, follows the statement that God alone is unlimited and fills all things. Here, St. John of Damascus first lists the Scriptural senses of heaven:

1. οὐρανός
2. οὐρανὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (Ps 113 v 24 LXX)
3. οὐρανοὶ οὐρανῶν (Ps 148 v 4, LXX)

To these he adds St. Paul's mention of the third heaven (2 Cor. 12 v 2) into which a man was caught up.

To modern scholarship, a distinction between three different uses of "Heaven" must be treated carefully. For example, the third use οὐρανοὶ. οὐρανῶν..... is probably an imitation of the plural "shamayim" which came into Greek through the Septuagint in which οὐρανοὶ..... occurs 51 times¹⁵. Though the idea of a plurality of heavens came in from the Near East, the use of the plural in Ps 148 v 4 need not refer to anything more than the fullness and completeness of the universe. Nevertheless in the Midrash¹⁶ on Pss. 114 Enoch 71 vv 5-10, we encounter the phrase "heaven of heavens"¹⁷, which might be the third

15. Kittel, Friedrich (ed.), Bromiley G.W. (transl.) Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1967; Vol. V, p 510

16. Kittel, Friedrich. op. cit., Vol V, p 511.

17. p 512. op. cit.

heaven or Paradise. Whatever ideas St. John of Damascus may have had about distinctions, or reasons for distinctions between the use of οὐρανὸς..... and that of οὐρανὸς... τοῦ οὐρανοῦ..... and that of οὐρανοῦ... οὐρανοῦ..... he puts uses 2) and 3) together as meaning the same for the Hebrew, so that when the Hebrew wishes to say, "heaven of heaven" he actually says, "heavens of heavens".¹⁸

St. John of Damascus, though, clearly teaches 3 main senses of "heaven":

- a) the "heaven of heaven" or "starless sphere" of "foreign philosophers";
- b) "the firmament in the midst of the waters" (Genesis 1 vv 7-8) and
- c) the air, as one of the elements.¹⁹ The three-fold division naturally derives from St. Paul's reference to the third heaven, a reference taken up by St. Basil:

"As for myself, far from not believing in a second (heaven), I seek for the third whereon the blessed Paul was found worthy to gaze. And does not the Psalmist in saying 'heaven of heavens' give us an idea of their plurality?"²⁰

18. De Fide Orth. II 6

19. as in the phrase "birds of the air", meaning "birds flying in the element of air"

20 Basil: Homily III: "The Firmament" in The Hexaemeron St. Basil. Jackson B. (transl.): A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian church Oxford: Parker: 1894.; Vol VIII p 66.

Clearly, St. Basil regarded St. Paul's reference to the third heaven as denoting the highest possible heaven, although St. Paul himself seems to imply that Paradise is yet higher than the third heaven (2 Cor. 12 vv 3-4). The commentator Michael Lequien adds this commentary on St. John's teaching of three heavens:

Tres tantum coelos esse, aerem scilicet, firmamentum, & sphaeram in qua nulla sunt astra, hic inculcat Damascenus. Nam cavebant Patres ne coelorum numerum augendo, quoque modo Gnosticis faverent, quorum alii septem coelos a totidem virtutibus conditos, alii plures, alii 365 numerabant. Quamobrem Chrysostomus hom. 4 in Genesim, unum tantum coelum ponit; duos Theodoretus, quorum alterum ab terra productum fuerit, alterum post divisionem aquarum ab aquis, quod firmamentum appellatur. Basilius vero tres esse probat hom. 3 in Hexae. ob raptum Pauli in tertium coelum.²¹

His opinion is thus that the Fathers were wary of increasing the number of heavens because of the danger of favouring Gnostic beliefs in seven or more heavens. In fact, Valentinian Gnostics believed in seven heavens and Basilides was the Gnostic who held that there are three hundred and sixty-five heavens.²² To speak of the Greeks' wariness of Gnostic numbers of heavens may be a generalization. Early Alexandrian Greek theologians,

21. Lequien Michael (ed. & transl.): Opera Omnia S. Joanni D Damasceni. Vol. I, p 160.

22. Ulrich Simon: Heaven in the Christian Tradition. London., Rockliff, 1958, p 12.

like Clement of Alexandria²³ believed there were seven heavens, and Origen rejected the number seven as the number of the heavens because Scripture does not teach the existence of seven heavens²⁴, but agreed that more than one heaven does exist.

We also need to ask why the Greek theologians did not opt for only one heaven. Probably the use of plurals like "heavens" and St. Paul's reference to the third heaven were instrumental in their belief in more than one heaven; secondly Ptolemaic cosmology influenced their theology and thirdly, Platonic philosophy insisted there could be no more than one perfect heaven which contained the idea of every created thing:²⁵

Πότερον οὖν ὀρθῶς ἓνα οὐρανὸν προσειρη-
καμεν, ἢ πολλοὺς καὶ ἀπείρους λέγειν ἢν
ὀρθότερον; ἓνα, εἴπερ κατὰ τὸ παράδειγμα
δεδημιουργημένος ἔσται. τὸ γὰρ περιέχον
πάντα ὅποσα νοητὰ βῶα μεθ' ἑτέρου
δευτεροῦ οὐκ ἂν ποτ' εἴη. πάλιν γὰρ
ἂν ἕτερον εἶναι τὸ περιέχον ἐκείνω δέου
βῶον, οὐ μέρος ἂν εἴη ἐκείνω, καὶ οὐκ ἂν
ἔτι ἐκείνον, ἀλλ' ἐκείνω τῷ περιέχοντι
τόδ' ἂν ἀνωμοιωμένον λέγοιτο ὀρθότερον

(Plato: Timaeus, 31 AB)

23. Strom. IV 5; V 11.

24. Contra Cels. VI.21

25. Basil, op. cit.

Transl.²⁶: 'Are we right, then, in describing the Heaven as one, or would it be more correct to speak of heavens as many or infinite in number? One it must be termed, if it is to be framed after its Pattern. For that which embraces all intelligible living creatures could never be second, with another beside it; for if so, there must needs exist yet another living creature, which should embrace them both, and of which they two would each be a part; in which case this Universe could no longer be rightly described as modelled on these two, but rather on that third Creature which contains them both.'

In Basil's argument²⁷, however, the disagreement amongst Greek philosophers as to how many heavens there are (not all agreed with Plato) means that Greek philosophy cannot pronounce authoritatively on the matter.

Nor does St. John of Damascus authoritatively condemn any view of the number of heavens. He allows for various possibilities, there being no clear Scriptural teaching on the cosmology of heaven. Firstly, he accepts the creation of a heaven that is "a starless sphere". Secondly he concedes the firmament to be heaven. (Genesis 1 v 8). About the nature of this firmament of heaven, whether it be smoke²⁸ or water, or the 4 elements

26. Bury R.G. (transl.) Plato: Timaeus, Critias, etc. Loeb Class. Library, Vol. IX, p 57.

27.. Jackson B. (transl.) op. cit., p 66.

28. Jackson B. op. cit, p. 56; cf. Isaiah 51 v 6.

in composition, or a fifth body,²⁹ he allows diversity of opinion. St. John, in his cosmology, closely follows St. Basil of Caesarea in The Hexaemeron, Hom. III, but without Basil's hearty contempt for the opinions of philosophers.

In describing the idea of heaven as a sphere encircling the universe, St. John is describing the Ptolimaic system as given us by Aristotle in De Caelo. The relative height of anything in the universe is determined by what element its principal constituent is, so that after the heaven comes fire, called ether, then lower air, then water and the earth in the centre of the sphere of heaven. The heaven rotates in a circle carrying the stars, while the 7 planets of Sol, Luna, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Venus and Saturn move in a contrary direction.

St. John also concedes the idea of heaven as a hemisphere,³⁰ an idea found in Chrysostom and suggested by Ps. 104 v 2 Isaiah 40 v 22 where the heavens are compared to a tent and a vault respectively. St. John of Damascus does not pronounce dogmatically on whether the heaven is spherical or a hemisphere, for his purpose is not cosmological geometry but theology and philosophy. The presence of so much speculation on the shape and number of the heavens probably also induced him to refrain from

29. Lequien: 'Hi sunt Peripatetici, qui coelestes orbes a corruptione immunes censuerunt, nihilque adeo commune habere cum quatuor elementis' op. cit., p 160.

30. De Fide Orth., II. 6.; Salmond, S.D.F. op. cit. p 22.

adding more to the bewildering confusion. Instead, he concludes: 'Still, whether it is this way or that, all things have been made and established by the divine command, and have the divine will and counsel for a foundation that cannot be moved. "For He Himself spoke and they were made: He Himself commanded and they were created "' (Ps. 148 vv 5-6)

The third use of "heaven" in St. John, as we have seen is that of "air", although the air is below the heaven that bounds the universe. If we are to speak of 7 heavens, then the only sense in which this can be true, is that the 7 heavens are the seven zones containing the seven planets,³¹ and these seven zones are zones of the firmament. The real essence of heaven, though, St. John regards as "quite beyond our knowledge"³².

Lastly, in his chapter on heaven, St. John refutes an idea already opposed by St. Basil in Homily 3 of his In Hexaemeron where he says:

'Although, however, waters above the heaven are invited to give glory to the Lord of the Universe, do not let us think of them as intelligent beings; the heavens are not alive because they "declare the glory of God," nor the firmament a sensible being because it "sheweth His handwork." (Ps 19 v 1). And if they tell you that the heavens mean contemplative powers, and the

31. De Fide Orth. II. 6, Salmond, op. cit., p 22

32. ibidem.

firmament active powers which produce good, we admire the theory as ingenious without being able to acknowledge the truth of it.³³

St. John of Damascus, thinking more systematically than St. Basil, classifies the utterance "Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad" (Ps 96 v 11) as an example of personification.

The praise of the heavens is the response in us, evoked by their beauty. In this way, St. John links the view of heaven as the praise of God to the view of heavens as a part of the universe, or bounding it. Further, there is a very important reason why the heavens must be seen to be inanimate: Platonic philosophy had given an ingenious but incredible picture of the music of the spheres made by the siren of each sphere³⁴. Not only was this the cause of a jesting attitude to the transcendence of the heavens, an attitude which St. Basil could foresee might arise,³⁵ but it could also perpetuate³⁶ the idea of a gnostic salvation by stages, each heaven being controlled by a god. The idea of animism is well and truly put to death by St. John, in his insistence on the truth that:³⁶

καὶ οἱ οὐρανοὶ διηγοῦνται δόξαν Θεοῦ
οὐ φωνὴν ὡσὺν αἰσθητοῖς ἀκουαμένην
ἀφιέντες. ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ οὐκείου μεγέθους τῆν

33. Jackson B. (transl.): op. cit., p 71

34. Plato, Republic x. 14; Loeb Classical Library, Vol. VI.
pp 502-3.

35. Jackson B. op. cit., p 67.

36. Lequien (ed.) Opera Omnia Joannis S .

τοῦ δημιουργοῦ δύναμιν ἡμῶν παριστάνοντες.
ὡν τὸ κάλλος κατανοοῦντες τὸν ποιητὴν,
ὡς ἀριστοτέχνην δοξάζομεν

Transl.³⁷ 'again, "the heavens declare the glory of God", does not mean that they send forth a voice that can be heard by bodily ears, but that from their own greatness they bring before our minds the power of the Creator: and when we contemplate their beauty we praise the Maker as the Master-Craftsman.'

Only in the last section of the chapter on heaven, do we receive some inkling of how St. John of Damascus links Heaven as a spatial entity to Heaven as a spiritual state of worshipping God. For the rest, there is a satisfaction of the reader's curiosity about different views of the Heavens, as writers prior to St. John had viewed them. We find a reduction in the number of heavens from the time of Hebrew Christianity in the first century. St. Paul's reference in 2 Cor. 12 v 2 is taken to show the existence of no more than 3 heavens. Yet this is by no means clear from the text of 2 Corinthians 12 vv 1-5. Unlike St. Basil of Caesarea, who displays an impatient intolerance of philosophical views of heaven, St. John briefly describes different views, but refrains from making cosmological judgements.

We can ascribe this to the increasing tendency in Orthodoxy to avoid fanciful speculation, such as was engaged in by Origen-

37. Salmond S.D.F. (transl.): op. cit., p 22.

ists and to cleave more tenaciously to the apophatic way, the via negativa, and to depend more fully on the mystical knowing of God.

For St. John of Damascus there was still an interrelation between the skies and Heaven, between the bliss of the faithful and the structure of the universe. For the modern theologian, this link has to be forged, for the vast expanse of the universe as known today seems to speak more of emptiness than of God.

3. THE DOCTRINE OF PAADISE IN ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS' WRITINGS.

3.1. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "HEAVEN" AND "PARADISE".

Having considered the views of heaven, which we find in St. John of Damascus' De Fide Orthodoxa, we now treat of his view of Paradise. We noted that Heaven is a spatially defined entity in at least two senses: as the "heaven of heaven"³⁸, the sphere without stars, and as the "firmament in the midst of the waters" (Genesis 1 v 8) - the third sense, that of air, not being so capable of spatial definition, but defined as one of the four elements constituting matter.

Paradise is described more carefully than heaven in St. John of Damascus' writings. It has a narrower, more exact meaning than "heaven". We have seen how "heaven" can describe skies,

38. De Fide Orthodoxa., Bk. II, Ch. 6.

air, the spheres of heaven or be the "circumference of things created, both visible and invisible" (S.D.F. Salmond's transl. of De Fide Orth. Oxford Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers: Vol. IX, p 21.) Paradise can be located as one of the heavens, the third one, according to St. John of Damascus. But St. John begins by identifying Paradise with the Garden of Eden:

Καὶ οὗτος ὁ Θεῖος Παράδεισος, Θεοῦ χειρὶν
ἐν Ἐδέμ πεφυτευμένος, εὐφροσύνης καὶ
θυμῆδος ἀπάσης ταμείου.
(Migne P.G. XCIV Col. 912A5-A7)

(Transl. (writer's own): 'And this is the divine paradise, planted in Eden by the hands of God, a treasury of all joy and delight!')

3.2.1. THE LOCALIZATION OF PARADISE: BASIL AND ORIGEN.

It is clear from this, that, in passing from a consideration of heaven to one of paradise in S. John, we are passing from a concept of a localized entity in cosmology (heaven could be located in the universe) to a more specific concept with a history of spiritual and idealistic interpretation. Indeed, Lequien, the commentator on the Migne text, adds that authors such as Justin Martyr, Philo, Papias the Great, Irenaeus and the Cappadocians, all speak of a πνευματικός. τόπος. παράδεισος.....

(Note 71, Col. 91 PG XCIV.)

Indeed, St. Basil the Great (330 - 379) in his Oratio III: "De Paradiso" writes this:³⁹

Οὔτε οὖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐκβάλλομεν, καὶ
τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐπιζητοῦμεν Ὡς γὰρ ἐπὶ
τοῦ νόμου ἦν μὲν καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν, ἀλλὰ
καὶ τύπον ἐποιεῖ τοῦ νοητοῦ. οὕτω καὶ
τὸν παράδεισον νοοῦμεν μὲν καὶ
σωματικῶς ἀλληγοροῦμεν δὲ καὶ
πνευματικῶς.

(Transl.: 'Neither therefore do we reject the literal things and seek out the spiritual things. For as even the sensible was in the law but also acted as a figure of the intellectual, so also we perceive Paradise indeed in a bodily sense, but we also speak allegorically (of Paradise) in a spiritual sense.'
(Writer's own transl.)

St. Basil could and did understand that there was a literal, bodily Paradise on earth, but he also understood Paradise as a spiritual state of blessing and delight. St. John of Damascus, in using the word Eden and describing Paradise as

εὐφροσύνης καὶ θυμηδίας ἀπάσης
τάμενον.

39. PG XXX. Col. 68. C9 - C14.

(Migne, PG. XCIV Col. 912 A5), drew on this picture that Basil had, a picture which he received from Scripture itself; but probably of all the Greek fathers, Basil was the one who elaborated most on what the literal Paradise must have been like, and at the same time spoke most specifically of the kind of spiritual delight that Paradise afforded. The Hebrew 'eden' means "delight",⁴⁰ a fact referred to by St. Basil when he writes

Ἐφύτευσεν οὖν ὁ Θεὸς παράδεισον ἐν
Ἐδέμ κατὰ ἀνατολάς. Τὰ μὲν ὀνόματα
τῶν φυτῶν σεσωώπηται. ὁ δὲ τόπος,
ἐν ᾧ ἐφύτευσε, δεδήλωται. τούτέστιν,
ἐν τῇ τρυφῇ. Ἐδέμ γὰρ τρυφή ἑρμηνεύ-
εται (PG. XXX Col. 68 C14 - D2)

(Transl.: 'God, then, planted Paradise in Eden in the East. The names of the things planted are kept silent, but the place, in which He planted, has been made clear: that is, in delight For "Eden" is translated as "delight"')⁴¹

This spiritual interpretation of Paradise as a spiritual destination is a tradition going right back to Scripture itself (cf. the words of our Lord to the penitent thief: "Today you will be with me in Paradise"⁴²), although it was Origen who first most clearly taught that Paradise is not merely literal:

40. Article on "Paradise." New Catholic Encyclopaedia. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1967,, Vol 10, p 991.

41. Transl.: writer's own; source of quote: Basil: De Paradiso, Orat. III, PG. XXX. Col. 68. C

42. Luke 23 v 43.

After quoting Genesis 2 v8 and 9 he comments: " ^εΌταν.....

ἀναγινώσκοντες ἀναβαίνουμεν ἀπο τῶν
μύθων καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὸ γράμμα ἐκδοχῆς
ζητῶμεν τίνα τὰ ξύλα ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνα ἃ ὁ
Θεὸς γενῶργει· λέγομεν ὅτι οὐκ ἔνι
αἰσθητὰ ξύλα ἐν τῷ τόπῳ· τοῦ αὐτοῦ.
Τέθειται ἐν τῇ ἐρμηνείᾳ « κῆπον ἐν Ἐδέμ »
αὐτῇ χρησαμένῳ τῇ Ἑβραϊκῇ λέξει. Ἔστι
μὲν οὖν ἐρμηνεία τοῦ Ἐδέμ κυρίως « ἡδύ »·
οὐκοῦν παραδεδώκασιν Ἑβραῖοι, ὅτι ὁ
τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἐφύτευσεν τὸν παράδεισον ἢ τὸν
κῆπον Κύριος ὁ Θεός, Ἐδέμ καλεῖται· καὶ
φασὶν αὐτὸν μέσον εἶναι τοῦ κόσμου ὡς
κόρην ὀφθαλμοῦ· διὸ καὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν
Φείσων, ἐρμηνεύεσθαι « στόμα κόρης » ὡς
ἐκ τοῦ Ἐδέμ ἐκπορευομένου τοῦ ποταμοῦ τοῦ
πρώτου. Ὁ δὲ παραδιδόασιν, τοιοῦτόν
ἐστίν· Ἐδέμ, ὅς ἐρμηνεύεται « ἡδύ » ἦν
πρὶν τὸν κῆπον γενέσθαι· ἐν αὐτῷ
γὰρ καὶ ὁ κῆπος ἐφύτεύθη.

(Origen: in Genesim. PG XII. Col. 100. A1 - B1)

A little further on, Origen adds:

Οἱ ἀναγενώμενοι διὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ
βαπτίσματος ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ
τίθενται, τουτέστιν ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ,
ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔνδοξ' ὄντα ἔργα
πνευματικά· (Col. 100 B12 - C1, ibidem).

(Translations:⁴³ 'When we as readers progress from the stories and the interpretation according to the letter, we enquire what trees those are which God tills. We conclude that there are no physical trees in the place.

Of the same. The interpretation of "Garden in Eden." as one calls it in the Hebrew language. The interpretation, then, of "Eden" is properly "sweet". Therefore the Hebrews have handed it down in tradition that the place in which the Lord God planted the paradise or the garden is called Eden. And they say that it is in the middle of the world, like the pupil of an eye. For this reason too, the river Phison is interpreted "mouth of the eye" as it is the first river flowing out of Eden. What they hold as tradition is of this kind: Eden, which is interpreted "sweet" was in existence before the garden, for in it the garden was planted' (Col. 100 A1 - B1)

Further on:

'Those who have been born again through divine baptism are

43. Writer's own translations

placed in Paradise, that is, in the Church to perform the spiritual works that exist within (it).' (Col. 100 B12 - C1)

Origen's teaching on Paradise reveals that he viewed Paradise as a garden planted by God in a physical place called Eden, but also he viewed it allegorically as the Church into which people are baptized. But Origen in other writings poked fun at the literal understanding of paradise:

Τίς δ' οὕτως ἡλίθιος ὡς οἰηθῆναι
τρόπον ἀνθρώπου γεωργοῦ τὸν Θεὸν
πεφυτευκένας παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδέμ
κατὰ ἀνατολὰς, καὶ ξύλον ζωῆς ἐν
αὐτῷ πεποιηκένας ὄρατὸν καὶ αἰσθητὸν,
ὥστε διὰ τῶν σαματικῶν ὀδόντων
γευσάμενον τοῦ καρποῦ τὸ ζῆν ἀναλαυ-
βάνειν ;

(Origen: Περὶ... Ἀρχῶν..... Bk IV: PG XI. Col. 377 A2-
A7) (Transl.:⁴⁴ 'But who is so foolish as to suppose that God
like a human farmer planted Paradise in Eden in the East and
made a visible and perceptible tree of life in it, so that one,
having tasted of the fruit by chewing with human teeth, might
receive life again ?')

44. Writer's own.

Origen also believed Paradise to be, not the final abode of the saints, but the intermediate abode of the saints, if we are to accept that Rufinus' Latin version of *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν...* reflects Origen's views truthfully or not, at this point:⁴⁵

Puto enim quod sancti quique discedentes de hac vita permanebunt in loco aliquo in terra posito, quem paradisum dicit Scriptura divina, velut in quodam eruditionis loco, et, ut ita dixerim, auditorio vel schola animarum in quo de omnibus his quae in terris viderant, doceantur, indicia quoque quaedam accipiant etiam de consequentibus et futuris, sicut in hac quoque vita positi indicia quaedam futurorum licet per speculum et aenigmata, tamen ex aliqua parte conceperant, quae manifestus et lucidus sanctis in suis et locis et temporibus revelantur. Si quis sane mundus corde, et purior mente et exercitior sensu fuerit, velocius proficiens, cito ad aeris locum ascendet, et ad coelorum regna perveniet per locorum singulorum, ut ita dixerim, mansiones, quas Graeci quidem sphaeras, id est globos appellaverunt, Scriptura vero divina coelos nominat, in quibus singulis primo quidem perspiciet ea quae ibi geruntur, secundo vero etiam rationem quare gerantur agnoscet; (PG XI. Col. 245 D2 - 246 B5)

(Translation:⁴⁶ 'For I think that all the saints who depart this life will remain in some place located on earth, (a place) which divine Scripture calls "Paradise", as if in a certain place

45. *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν.....* Bk. II. 6

46. Writer's own translation.

of instruction, and, as I have so said, a place of audience, or school of souls, in which they may be taught about all those things which they had seen on earth, and may also accept them as certain signs of future things just as when placed in this life they saw certain signs of future things, and riddles - nevertheless they had conceived (them) in some measure, (things) which are revealed manifestly and clearly to the saints in both their own places and their own times. If anyone is altogether pure in heart and has become purer in mind and more practised in sense, he advances more rapidly and ascends speedily to the place of air and arrives at the kingdom of the heavens through, as I have said, the stages of the separate places, which places the Greeks have called spheres, that is, globes, but divine Scripture names heavens, in which separate places he firstly indeed perceives those things which are done there, but secondly also finds out the reason why they are done.')

This view of Paradise was rather speculative, and it came to be rejected by the Greek and Latin traditions, although what is here described as Paradise came to be Purgatory in mediaeval thought. Origen's view of Paradise as the intermediate state of the blessed, a "school" for the faithful, gave way to the doctrine of Purgatory. In the Greek tradition there was a return to the primal Paradise: In other words, the theology of Paradise became more firmly based on Genesis 2 with its description of the Garden of Eden. The Church itself rejected Origen's

rejection of a literal view of Paradise as well as his view that Paradise is the intermediate abode of the faithful. Instead, all thinking on Paradise, at least in the Orthodox tradition, was based on the literal story of the Garden of Eden as described in Genesis 2, although the literal understanding of Paradise as man's home is used to point towards Paradise as the final home of the faithful.

Let us reconsider St. John's description of Paradise as

εὐφροσύνης καὶ θυμηδίας ἀπάσης
ΤΑΜΕΪΟΥ (PG XCIV Col. 912 A7)

The most well known use of the word ..ΤΑΜΕΪΟΥ..... in the N.T. is found in Matt. 6 v 6, where Jesus exhorts the disciple to 'enter his chamber (.ΤΑΜΕΪΟΥ....), shut the door behind him and pray to the Father in secret.' The ΤΑΜΕΪΟΥ. then, is a place for prayer and quietness. This meaning is the fundamental root of its use here. for St. John of Damascus, Paradise is a supremely joyful place, because it is like a chamber for prayer. Nevertheless the sense of "treasury" for ΤΑΜΕΪΟΥ. must be taken primarily as the meaning in this context. This is because there are instances of the association of ΤΑΜΕΪΟΥ. with the joys of heaven. In the Apocalypse of Enoch, 11.1. we find these words:⁴⁷

τὰ ταμεῖα τῆς εὐλογίας τὰ ὄντα ἐν
τῷ οὐρανῷ

47. Quoted on p 1371, Lampe G.W.H. (ed.): A Patristic Greek Lexicon. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1961 p 1371.

(Translation⁴⁸: 'The treasuries of blessing that are in heaven'

Also in the Eucharistic rite of Serapion (30.2)⁴⁹ we find the words used in prayer for the faithful departed:

τὴν ψυχὴν, τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸ ἀνάπαυσον
ἐν τόποις χλόης, ἐν ταμείοις
ἀναπαύσεως

(Transl.: 'Give his soul, his spirit rest in places that are verdant, in chambers of rest.')

To think of Paradise, then, as a "treasury of all joy and gladness" is a rich thought, a summary of the theology of Paradise in Greek tradition, a summary particularly of the kind of superlatives St. Basil used in describing the Paradise:

Ἐκεῖ οὖν ἐφύτευσεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν
παράδεισον ὅπου οὐκ ἀνέμων βία,
οὐκ ἀμετρία ὥρων οὐ χάλαζα, οὐ
πρηστῆρες, οὐ λαΐδαψ, οὐ σκηπτοῖ, οὐ
χειμερινὴ πῆξις οὐχ ὑγρότης ἡριανή, οὐ
θερινὴ πύρωσις, οὐ φθινοπωρινὴ ξηρότης·
ἀλλ' εὐκρατος καὶ εἰρηνικὴ συμφωνία
τῶν ὥρων, ἑκάστης τῷ ἴδιῳ κάλλει
κεκοσμένης, καὶ μὴ ἐπιβουλευομένης

48. Writer's own.

49. Lampe, G.W.H. (ed.): op. cit., p 1372.

παρὰ τῆς γέιτονος....., πάσαι δὲ τὸν
τόπον ἐκεῖνον εὐτάκτως αἰ ὥραι περί-
εχόρευον, ἀλλήλαις ὁμαλῶς καὶ ἀλύτως
συμπεριπλεκόμεναι καὶ συνδούμεναι, καὶ
τὰ παρ' ἑαυτῆς ἑκάστη, κατὰ τὸν ἕδρον
καρρὸν, δωροφοροῦσα ἐξαιρέτα καὶ
ἀνεπιβούλευα. Καὶ ἡ γῆ δὲ ἐκεῖνη πίον
καὶ μαλακὴ καὶ ὄλως ῥέουσα μέλι
καὶ γάλα, καὶ πρὸς πάσαν καρπογονίαν
ἐπιτηδεΐα.

(St. Basil: De Paradiso: Migne: PG XXX Col. 64. B1 - C2, C6 -
C13)

(Translation (writer's own):

'There, then, God planted Paradise, where there is no force of winds, no intemperance in seasons, no hail, no hurricanes with lightning, no tempest, no thunderbolts, no wintry freezing, no spring humidity, no summer scorching, no autumn withering. But there is a well-tempered and peaceful harmony of the seasons, each adorned by its own beauty and not plotting against its neighbour But all the seasons danced round that place in an orderly manner, embracing and joining one another equally and without causing grief, and each contributing as gifts, in its own time, the choicest things of its own without fear of attack. And that ground was fertile and soft, and altogether

flowing with milk and honey and suitable for all fruit-bearing.'

St. Basil could not conceive of Paradise without beginning to conceive of the first Paradise in terms contrasting to earthly conditions. All the harshnesses of the earthly seasons must have been absent in Paradise, for things like the torrid heat of summer or the ice of winter are to his mind unpleasant signs of disorder among the seasons. St. Basil's description of the harmony of the four seasons involves personification, the picturing of the four seasons as people embracing in one orderly dance. This orderliness lies behind the idea of happiness in heaven. The dance of the seasons is very old idea dating back to pre-Christian Greece. Here the picture of an orderly but harmonious dance of the closely-knit seasons is a representation of the joy, unity and love that must have prevailed in the first Paradise and that will prevail in the Paradise to be enjoyed by the faithful departed.

The dichotomy between the first Paradise and the Paradise of the saints to be enjoyed after death is a feature that remains constant in Christian tradition. St. John of Damascus allows a contrast between a "sensible Paradise" and a "spiritual paradise":

Οὕτω διπλοῦν οἶμαι τὸν Θεῖον
παράδεισον καὶ ἀληθῶς οἱ Θεοφόροι
Πατέρες παρέδωκαν, οἳ τε οὕτως

οὐ τε ἐκείνως διδάξαντες: Δυνατὸν δὲ
νοῆσαι πᾶν ξύλον τὴν ἐκ τῶν κτισμάτων
τῆς Θείας δυνάμεως γυνομένην
ἐπίγνωσιν, ὡς φήσιν ὁ Θεῖος Απόστολος.
[Romans 1²⁰] < Ἴα γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ
κτίσεως κόσμου, ταῖς ποιήμασι
νοούμενα καθορᾶται >

PG XCIV. Col. 917 A7 - B1.)

(Transl.: 'Twofold in this way, I suppose the divine Paradise is, and the God-bearing Fathers truly handed down the tradition who taught (it), some in this way, others in that way. But it is possible to perceive every tree as (representing) the knowledge of the divine power that arises from created things, as the divine Apostle says (Romans 1 v 20, N.I.V.):

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.")

3.2.2. CONCLUSION ON PARADISE AS LOCALIZED OR SPIRITUAL.

Clearly, then, St. John of Damascus regards those Fathers true to tradition who have taught the existence of a "sensible" or physical Paradise as well as the existence of a spiritual, invisible Paradise. From the quotation above it is clear that

the spiritual Paradise can be thought of as "the knowledge of the divine power" or of God. Therefore it is true to say that St. John of Damascus thought of Paradise

- a) as the first home of Adam and Eve, planted on earth:
- b) as a spiritual state of the knowledge of God, arrived at through the contemplation of creation, a spiritual state really only fully reached after death and purgatory, and spoken of sometimes in spatial terms.

3.3. SOME ASPECTS OF THE PARADISE PLANTED IN EDEN.

3.3.1. THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

St. John of Damascus commented in detail on the meaning of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge (Migne. PG. XCIV Col 913. A10 - Col. 917 D3) because these two trees signified for him the contemplation of God by those mature in contemplation (the meaning of the tree of knowledge) and the joys of life with God and sharing in his nature (the meaning of the tree of life).

On the meaning of the tree of life, Lequien, the commentator in Migne's Patrologia Graeca, writes this:⁵¹

Qui litteram Scripturae sequuntur, agnoscunt ligno vitae insitum fuisse vim humores moderandi, et conciliandae immortalitatis. Ita Chrysostomus, Severianus, Theodoretus, Procopius et alii,

51. PG XCIV Col. 913 - 4. Note (73).

qui addunt lignum hoc concessum homini fuisse, ut obedientiae illus praemium foret. Ex quo confutatur vetustus auctor, qui asseruit primos parentes solis auris ante peccatum victitasse: futuros enim fuisse interitui obnoxios, si sensibilem cibum edissent. Quocirca Nemesius ex Hebraeorum, ut ait, sententia docet, hominem ita conditum esse a Deo, "ut nec plane mortalis, nec etiam immortalis esset, **οὔτε..Θνητὸν.ὁμολογουμένως, οὔτε.ἀθάνατον** sed in utriusque naturae confinio, ut si affectionibus corporis et vitio se dedisset, corporum mutationes experiretur; sin autem animi bona coleret, traduceretur ad immortalitatem;" per lignum vitae scilicet, in quo hic auctor eximiam ejusmodi virtutem exstitisse agnoscit. Haec aliaque affert Nemesius, quae cum expositione Chrysostomi satis cohaerent. Insuper et ligno scientiae congenitam ejusmodi fuisse proprietatem boni malique perfectionem obtinerent: eam vero Adamo non obvenisse, qui contra praeceptum Dei ante statum tempus cibum hunc comederat. Hanc tamen conjectationem Methodius improbaverat in libris adversus Origenem, ut videre est apud Epiphanium, haeres. 64; Chrysostomus itaque, hom., . 16 in Gen; Theodoretus, quaest. 27, et alii vulgo docent hoc nomen inditum esse arbori, non quod boni et mali scientiam posset ingenerare, sed quia futurum erat, ut qui fructu illius vesceretur, cognosceret tandem, quam distaret felix innocentiae status a miseriis naturae in peccatum lapsae. Disputarunt olim cujus generis esset illa arbor, Theodoretus, Theodorus Antiochenus, seu Mopsuestius, et auctor quaestionum ad Antiochum quaest. 49, ficum fuisse defin-

iunt. Opinionem hanc sic explodit Nyssenus in Praefatione in Cant. cantic. ut sensum allegoricum obtrudat, ac si verisimile non sit hominem propter illius esum fuisse adjudicatum morti, cum Dominus dicat, "omne quod intrat in os, non coinquinat hominem," atque universa quae Deus fecit, fuisse valde bona: Maximus utrumque lignum figurato sensu intelligit, propter difficultates quae ex Scripturae littera consequi videntur. Noster vero, ut diversas Patrum sententias conciliet, tam paradisum quam ligna paradisi, secundum litteram, et secundum allegoriam interpretatur.

(Translation (writer's own): 'Those who follow the letter of Scripture acknowledge the tree of life to have been the power of moderating the humours and of gaining immortality. In this way, Chrysostom, Severianus, Theodoret, Procopius and others (understand it), who add that this tree has been granted to man, so that it might be the reward of his obedience. From this the ancient author is proved wrong who asserted that the first parents subsisted, before the sin, by hearing alone: for they would have been liable to destruction, if they had eaten food that can be perceived by the senses. For which reason Nemesius of the Hebrews, as he says, teaches the opinion that man has so been fashioned by God "that he might be neither wholly mortal nor even immortal (οὐτε..θνητὸν..ὁμολογουμένως, οὐτε..ἀθάνατον.....) but within the common boundary of either, so that if he gave himself to the affections and the vice of the body, he might experience the mutations of the body but if he cultivated the good things of the soul, he might be

brought across to immortality" - namely through the tree of life, in which this author perceives such excellent virtue to have existed. Nemesius asserts these and other things, which sufficiently agree with the exposition of Chrysostom. Besides this, he grants an innate property of some kind to have been in the tree of knowledge, so that the one who ate its fruit might obtain perfect perfection of good and evil: this truly did not happen to Adam who against the precept of God consumed this food before the appointed time. Nevertheless Methodius had condemned this conjecture in his books against Origen, as may be seen in Epiphanius, Heresies 64; Chrysostom, Hom. 16 on Genesis; Theodoret, Question 27; and others commonly teach that this name was given to the tree, not because it would be able to engender the knowledge of good and evil, but because it was (a name for) the future, that the one who ate of its fruit, might find out at last how far distant the happy state of innocence is from the miseries of a nature fallen into sin. At one time (authors) disputed what kind of tree that might be: Theodoret, Theodore of Antioch or of Mopsuestia, and the author of the Questions to Antiochus, in question 49, (all) define it as a fig tree. Gregory of Nyssa rejects this opinion in such a way in his Preface to Canticles that he urges the allegorical sense and if this sense is not true, man would have been condemned to death on account of eating of that (tree), since the Lord says, "Nothing which enters into the mouth causes a man to be sinful," and all that God has made was exceedingly good: Maximus understands

each tree in a figurative sense, on account of the difficulties which seem to follow from the letter of Scripture. But our opinion, in order to reconcile diverse opinions of the Fathers, interprets both paradise and the trees of paradise according to the letter and according to allegory.'

Lequien himself holds that Paradise and its trees should be interpreted allegorically as well as literally. Nemesius taught that the tree of knowledge had some innate property so that the one who ate of its fruit might obtain perfect knowledge of good and evil. However, Chrysostom, Methodius, and Theodoret took the view that the eating of the fruit of the tree was an act of disobedience leading to a state of misery from which one would eventually find out how far one had fallen from the happiness he had before he sinned.

What view did St. John of Damascus take? Of the tree of knowledge he writes:⁵²

Τὸ μὲν ξύλον τῆς γνώσεως, ἀπόπειράν τινα,
καὶ δοκιμὴν, καὶ γυμνάσιον τῆς τοῦ
ἀνθρώπου ὕπακοῆς καὶ παρακοῆς. Διὸ
καὶ ξύλον τοῦ γινώσκειν καλὸν καὶ
πονηρὸν κέκληται, ἢ ὅτι δύναμις ἐδίδου
γνωστικὴν τοῖς μεταλαμβάνουσι, τῆς οἰκείας
φύσεως. Ὅπερ καλὸν μὲν τοῖς τελείοις, κακὸν
δὲ τοῖς ἀτελεστέροις, καὶ τὴν ἔφεσιν

52. De Fide Orth., Lib. II. Cap XI; PG XCIV. 913 A11 - 916 A4

λιγνοτέροις, ὡς περ ὀστερεὰ τροφή τοῖς
ἁπαλοῖς ἔτι καὶ δεομένοις γάλακτος.
Οὐκ ἐβούλετο γὰρ ὁ κτίσας ἡμᾶς Θεὸς
μερμυᾶν, καὶ περὶ πολλὰ τυρβάζεσθαι
οὐδὲ φροντιστὰς, καὶ προνοητὰς τῆς
ἰδίας ζωῆς γενέσθαι· ὅπερ δὴ καὶ πέ-
πονθεν ὁ Ἀδὰμ. Γευσάμενος γὰρ, ἔγνω ὅτι
γυμνὸς ἦν, καὶ περίζωμα ἑαυτῷ περιποιεῖτο.
Φύλλα γὰρ συκῆς λαβὼν περιεζώσατο. Πρὸ δὲ
τῆς γεύσεως «γυμνοὶ ἦσαν ἀμφοτεροί», ὅτε
Ἀδὰμ καὶ ἡ Εὐὰ, «καὶ οὐκ ἠσχύνοντο». Τοιούτους
δὲ ἀπαθείς ἐβούλετο εἶναι ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεός· ἀπαθ-
είας γὰρ ἄκρας τοῦτό ἐστιν· ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἀμερίμνους,
ἐν ἔργον ἔχοντας, τὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ὕμνεον ἀλήκτως
καὶ ἀδιαλείπτως τὸν κτίσαντα, καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ κατα-
τροφῆς Θεωρίας καὶ αὐτῷ ἐπιρρίπτειν τῆν ἑαυτῶν
μερμυᾶν.

(Translation: 'The tree of knowledge was for trial, and proof,

and exercise of man's obedience and disobedience: and hence
it was named the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or
else it was because to those who partook of it was given power
to know their own nature. Now this is a good thing for those
who are mature, but an evil thing for the immature and those
whose appetites are too strong, being like solid food to tender
babes still in need of milk. For our Creator, God, did not intend
us to be burdened with care and troubled about many things, nor
to take thought about, or make provision for our own life. But
this at length was Adam's fate: for he tasted and knew that he

was naked and made a girdle round about him: for he took fig-leaves and girded himself about. But before they took of the fruit, "they were both naked," Adam and Eve, "and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2 v 25). For God meant that we should be thus free from passion, and this is indeed the mark of a mind absolutely void of passion. Yea, He meant us further to be free from care and to have but one work to perform, to sing as do the angels, without ceasing or intermission, the praises of the Creator, and to delight in contemplation of Him and to cast all our care on Him.' (Salmond (transl.) John of Damascus: Exp. of the Orth. Faith. A Select Library of Necene & Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series Vol. IX., p 29)

St. John of Damascus took the view that the tree of knowledge was there as " ἀπόπειράν... τινά. καὶ δοκιμήν. καὶ γυμνάσιον τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπακοῆς καὶ παρακοῆς (PG XCIV Col. 913 A12 - A13). Though he allows the view that the tree of knowledge had some sort of power that would give the eater of its fruit knowledge of his own nature, his view is really that the tree was there to test man's obedience and disobedience. The word ἀπόπειράν is used by the historians Herodotus and Thucydides⁵³ in the sense of trial by battle;

53. ἀ. ποιεῖσθαι τῆς μάχης Herodotus 8 . 9

ναυμαχίας α. λαμβάνειν Thucydides 7²¹. Quoted in Jones

H.S. (Revised): Liddell & Scott: A Greek-English Lexicon Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925; Vol I, p 212.

δοκιμή..... also was used in the sense of "testing or "trial" especially of men's righteousness. For example, Origen⁵⁴ wrote of Job:

Ἰὼβ οὐ μισηθεὶς ὑπὸ κυρίου ἀλλὰ
δοκιμῆς χάριν εἰς τὸ τοῦ παρανόμου πέπτωκε
στόμα (Exp. In Prov. 22 v 14)

(Translation. "Job was not hated by the Lord but for the sake of testing, fell into the mouth of the lawless one") Similarly, the word γυμνάσιον... was used for the spiritual training of the soul through external events, for example, Dionysius of Alexandria wrote of ἡ νόστος γυμνάσιον δὲ καὶ.....
δοκίμιον....⁵⁵. Origen, too, wrote of human wisdom as schooling: γυμνάσιον μὲν φάμεν εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς
τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας τέλος δὲ τῆς Θείας..⁵⁶.

What, then, does St. John of Damascus imply? Surely that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was put there to make trial of and prove and exercise man's obedience or disobedience. But we know Adam was disobedient; in what sense, then, was Adam's ὑπακοή..... made trial of? It was tried in the sense of being shown not to exist in Adam's case. When St. John writes

54. Quoted by Lampe, G.W.H. (ed): op. cit p 379; PG 17. Col. 220B.

55. Dionysius Alexandrinus opud Eusebius: Hist. Eccles. 7.22.6
Lampe G.W. (ed.): op. cit., p 324, under γυμνάσιον..

56. Origen: Cel. 6.13 (p 83.16. M.11. 1309B): quoted Lampe G.W.: op. cit., p 324, under γυμνάσιον..

τῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπακοῆς καὶ παρακοῆς

(Col. 913 A13) he obviously means the trial of whether man would be obedient or disobedient. But the training or schooling,

γυμνάσιον.. must be taken to apply particularly to obedience rather than disobedience. Because of the tree's purpose

for "trial, proof and training in obedience and disobedience", it could be argued that St. John of Damascus thought of the tree of knowledge as always present in the life of men as the knowledge that tests or proves a man's faith, and his obediences.

If γυμνάσιον applies rather to disobedience than obedience, then the tree of knowledge is there, so that a man may

taste the fruit of disobedience and so be trained in and shown the results of disobedience. This argument is difficult to sustain, since it could be asked how God, who is good, could plant

in a garden a tree that leads men to disobedience. It therefore makes more sense of the passage to take St. John's phrase ἀπό...

πειράν...τινα...καὶ δοκιμῆν...καὶ γυμνάσιον...τῆς... τοῦ ἀνθρώπου...ὑπακοῆς καὶ παρακοῆς.....

(PG XCIV Col. 913 A12 - 13) together, so that the obedience and disobedience of man is to be tested and tried, but man trained in obedience, by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

However, the sentence following the above quotation sheds further

light on how St. John understood this tree's role:

Δὲ καὶ ξύλον τοῦ γινώσκου καλοῦ καὶ πονηρὸν κέκληται, ἢ ὅτι δύναμις ἐδίδου γινώστικὴν τοῖς μεταλαμβάνουσι τῆς οἰκείας φροσεως

(PG XCIV. Col. 913 A13-B3)

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil has been called by this name, because it trains man to know, or come to know (a meaning which is definitely possible for γινώσκειν.....⁵⁷) the nature of good and evil, and the difference between the two. It may well be argued that the Tree was then itself a good tree of which God should have commanded man to eat the fruit. St. John counters this argument by going on to say that the kind of knowledge man gained from this tree was not beneficial to him, and God knew this and did not intend man to be burdened with the knowledge of evil.

Before we examine the last point made, let us briefly consider the alternative reason St. John of Damascus gives for the name "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil": ἡ δὲ τι δύναμις ἐξίδου γγνωστικὴν τοῖς μεταλαμβάνουσι... τῆς οἰκείας φύσεως (PG XCIV. Col. 913 B2 - 3) (Transl: 'or because it gave to its partakers the power of knowing their own nature'⁵⁸.) If this was so, then the eating of the fruit gave to Adam and Eve not so much an insight into the difference between good and evil, as an insight into themselves and their own nature. Such an insight would reveal their evil tendency to sin as well as the capacity to do good, which God had given, but was not used. We have seen from Lequien's commentary that

57. γιγνωσκω..... (γιγνωσκω.....) - "come to know, perceive", p 350, Vol. I. Liddell & Scott: A Greek-English Lexicon. 1925 ed.

58. Writer's own translation.

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil probably did not derive its name from its ability by its fruit to engender a perfect knowledge of self or of good and evil. Though Nemesius taught this doctrine of the fruit's having a power of its own to produce knowledge of evil and good, Epiphanius, Chrysostom and Theodoret contradict this doctrine by maintaining it was the disobedient act of eating the fruit, that caused man to know his sin. Therefore, it is clear that St. John of Damascus, in putting Nemesius' teaching as an alternative did allow it some credence, even though Epiphanius, Chrysostom and Theodoret pronounced against it. Here, for example, is Chrysostom's teaching on the Tree of Knowledge:⁵⁹

ς'. Τίς ἂν οὖν ἀνάσχοιτο τῶν λέγειν βουλο-
μένω, ὅτι μετὰ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου βρώσιν
ἔσχε τὴν γνῶσιν τοῦ τε καλοῦ καὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ
ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅποτε καὶ πρὸ μετὰ τῆς σοφίας
καὶ προφητικοῦ χαρίσματος ἤξιωμένος; Καὶ πᾶς
ἂν ἔχοι ταῦτα λόγον, αἴγας μὲν καὶ πρόβατα, καὶ
πᾶσαν τὴν τῶν ἀλόγων φύσιν εἶδέναι, ποία μὲν
βοτάνη πρὸς τροφήν ἐπιτηδεΐα, ποία δὲ ὀλεθρία,
καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀπέχεσθαι μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς σπουδῆς,
ταῖς δὲ ἐπιτρέχειν· τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον, τὸ λογικὸν

59. In Cap. II Genes. Homil. xvi. σ'; PG LIII. Col. 132-133.

ζῶον ἀγνοεῖν τί μὲν καλόν, τί δὲ πονηρόν;
Ἄλλ' ἰδοὺ, φησὶ, ξύλον γνωστόν καλοῦ καὶ
πονηροῦ αὐτὸ ἐκάλεσεν ἡ Γραφή. Οἶδα
κάγω· ἀλλ' ἐὰν τὰ ἰδιώματα τῆς Θείας
Γραφῆς μαθεῖν βουληθῆς, εἴση τίως
ἐνεκεν τὴν ὀνομασίαν ταύτην ἐπέθηκε
τῷ ξύλῳ. Οὐ γὰρ ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸ τὴν γνώσιν
παρεῖχεν, οὕτως ἐκαλεῖτο· ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ
περὶ αὐτὸ γέγονεν ἡ παράβασις τῆς ἐντολῆς,
καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου λοιπὸν τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἐπει-
ῆλθεν ἡ γνώσις, καὶ ἡ αἰσχύνῃ. διὰ τοῦτο
ἐκέκλητο. "Ἔθος γὰρ τῇ Θεῇ Γραφῇ ἀπὸ
τῶν συμβαινόντων πραγμάτων τὴν ὀνομα-
σίαν τοῖς τόποις ἐπιτιθέσθαι, ἔνθα ἂν
συμβαίῃ τὰ πράγματα. Διὰ τοῦτο οὖν
καὶ τὸ ξύλον γνωστόν καλοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ
ὠνόμασεν ἡ Θεία Γραφή, ἐπειδὴ περὶ
αὐτὸ ἦν ἡ παράβασις καὶ ἡ φυλακὴ τῆς
ἐντολῆς

(Translation:⁶⁰ 'Therefore, who might endure those who wish
to say that after eating from the tree, man had the knowledge
of good and evil when even before such a kind of eating he was
filled with wisdom and deemed worthy of wisdom and prophetic

60. Writer's own translation.

grace? And how (otherwise) would he have the reason for these things: to know goats and sheep and every nature of beings having no reason? (to know) what kind of plants are suitable for food, and what kind are deadly, and those things from which to keep away, and those things after which to run? Was man, the being (endowed) with reason, ignorant of what is good, and what is evil? But, behold, he says, Scripture has called it the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I know (that) too; but if you wish to learn the characteristic modes of expression of divine Scripture, know why it laid this name on the tree. For (it was) not since it provided knowledge, that it was thus called. But since in respect of it the transgression of the commandment happened, and from that at length the knowledge of sin came in, and the shame. For it is the custom of divine Scripture to give names to places from the things that happen there; therefore the deeds happen. On account of this, then, divine Scripture named it the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, since in respect of it was the transgression and the keeping of the commandment.')

Chrysostom clearly refutes the idea that the tree was named such because it provided knowledge. (Οὐ γὰρ.. ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸ τὴν γνῶσιν παρέχεν οὕτως ἐκαλεῖτο)

Rather, because the tree was the focus of man's transgression and led to the knowledge of sin and to shame, it was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The same point is made by Epiphanius in writing against the

heresies of Origen⁶¹:

Ἀυτεξούσιος γὰρ ὢν καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ
ἔ' ἄνθρωπος, καὶ αὐτοδέσποτον βούλησιν
καὶ αὐτοπροαίρετον πρὸς τὴν αἵρεσιν,
ὡς ἔφη, τοῦ καλοῦ λαβὼν, ἀκούσας
τε· Ἀπὸ παντὸς ξύλου τοῦ ἐν τῷ παρα-
δείσῳ φάγεσθε· ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ
γινώσκειν καλὸν καὶ πονηρὸν οὐ φάγεσθε
ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. Ἡ δ' ἂν ἡμέρα φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ
Θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖσθε· ἀπ' αὐτοῦ εἰς
τὸ φαγεῖν, τῷ διαβόλῳ δὲ δελεασαμένη
ἢ σοφία ποικίλως πρὸς παρακοὴν πείθονται,
ἠθέτησε τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ· καὶ ἐγένετο
τοῦτο αὐτῷ εἰς σκάνδαλον καὶ εἰς παγίδα,
καὶ εἰς σκῶλον. Οὐ γὰρ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς
κακὸν οὐδέ ἐστι τὸ σύνολον ὅλως ἐκ
παντὸς τὸ παράπαν αἴτιος κακοῦ. Ἀλλὰ
πάν ὅπερ ἂν αὐτεξούσιον οὕτως ὑπ' αὐτοῦ
γεγονὸς ἢ πρὸς τὸ φυλάσσειν καὶ τηρῆσαι νόμον,
ὃν αὐτὸς δικαίως διεστείλατο, μὴ τηρῆσαι
λέγεται κακόν.

(Translation⁶²: 'For man, being free and his own master and
having received free will and freely-acting will to choose the

61. Adv. Haereses Lilo II Tom I Haeres LXIV 45.

62. Writer's own translation.

good, heard this: "From every tree in Paradise you shall eat. But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. On the day on which you eat of it, you shall surely die". Manifold cunning in the devil who persuaded him to disobey, caught man as by a bait and he disregarded the commandment of God. And this happened to him as a stumbling block, as a snare and a hindrance. For God did not create evil, nor is there at all wholly, in everything absolutely, a cause of evil. But whatever was so with free-will created by him, or he whom he rightly commands to guard and keep the law, if he has not kept it, is called evil.")

This explanation by Epiphanius makes it clear that the temptation was the stumbling block to man. Neither the tree nor its fruit caused man to become evil, but man by misusing his free-will became evil, though the devil was the tempter. It is thus clear that Greek theologians did not opt for the view that there was a power in the tree or its fruit that caused man to know his own nature. Now the two possible reasons that St. John of Damascus gave for the naming of the tree may be considered as both true, or one true and one false. As reasons for the name "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" they are advanced as alternatives, but as statements of the truth, they were probably considered by St. John of Damascus to be both true. Now this, in spite of the Greek Fathers generally not believing that the tree or its fruit gave any particular power to man to know his own nature. The fact that St. John still regarded the fruit or the tree to give the power of knowledge to its partakers, may be seen by his assumption of this as truth in his next sentence

following ὅτι δύναμις ἐδίδου γνωστικὴν
τοῖς μεταλαμβάνουσι τῆς οἰκείας φύσεως (Β1-α):
ὅπερ καλὸν μὲν τοῖς τέλειοις, κακὸν δὲ τοῖς
ἄτελεστοτέροις, καὶ τὴν ἔφεσιν λιγνοτέροις,
ὥσπερ στερεὰ τροφή τοῖς ἀπαλοῖς ἔτι
καὶ δεομένοις γάλακτος

(Col. 913 B2 - 5)

(Transl.⁶³ 'Now this is a good thing for those who are mature, but an evil thing for the immature and those whose appetites are too strong, being like solid food to tender babes still in need of milk.')

St. John implies by this that he does believe the Tree of Knowledge imparted knowledge of man's nature to Adam. But it was a bad thing for man because in the words of Hebrews 5 vv 13-14:

πᾶς γὰρ ὁ μετέχων γάλακτος ἄπειρος
λόγου δικαιοσύνης, γήπιος γὰρ ἔστιν·
τελείων δὲ ἔστιν ἢ στερεὰ τροφή, τῶν
διὰ τὴν ἔξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα
ἐχόντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ
κακοῦ

(Nestle-Aland (ed.)): Novum Test.

Graece, p. 569

(Transl. (RSV): "For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child. But solid food

63. supra: Salmond S.D.F.: op. cit., p 29.

is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.")

Now John of Damascus followed Gregory of Nazianzenus in alluding to this passage from Hebrews, but he uses it to describe Adam's situation. Adam ate the solid food, the fruit of the tree, when he was not yet ready for it because he was not yet mature and skilled in distinguishing good from evil.

St. John, however, goes on to imply that God never intended man to know his own nature by partaking of the fruit, since he says that God did not intend man to be "burdened with care and troubled about many things". This seems to conflict with his argument that had Adam been mature he would have been allowed to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.

This raises the very interesting question of whether the Tree of Knowledge will be part of that Paradise which is the final destination of the saints.

In order to understand St. John of Damascus' view of the role of the Tree of Knowledge more deeply, let us consider the rest of his words on the subject. After discussing the Tree of Life (to which we shall turn our attention later) he adds these words:⁶⁴

64. "De Paradiso", Ch. XI. Lib. II. De Fide Orthodoxa. PG XCIV.
Col 916 D1 - 917 A6.

Τὸ δὲ τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ γνώσεως
ξύλον ἢ τῆς παλαιοχρῆστου θεωρίας διάγνωσις,
αὕτη δὲ ἔστιν ἢ τῆς οἰκειᾶς ἐπίγνωσις φύσεως
ἣτις καλὴ μὲν τοῖς τελείοις καὶ ἐν τῇ Θεῷ
θεωρία βεβηκόσιν, ἐξ ἑαυτῆς τὴν τοῦ
Δημιουργοῦ μεγαλοουργίαν δημοσιεύουσα,
τοῖς μὴ δεδιόσι μετάπτωσιν διὰ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ
χρόνου εἰς ἕξιν τινὰ τῆς τοιαύτης ἐληλακέσαι
θεωρίας· οὐ καλὴ δὲ τοῖς νέοις ἔτι καὶ τὴν
ἔφεσιν λιγνοτέροις, οὓς διὰ τὸ ἀβέβαιον
τῆς ἐν τῷ κρείττονι διαμονῆς, καὶ μήπω
παγίως ἐνεδρασθῆναι τῇ τοῦ μένου καλοῦ
προσεδρία ἢ τοῦ οἰκειοῦ κηδεμονία σώματος
πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἀνθέλκει, καὶ περισπᾶν
πέφυκεν.

(Translation:⁶⁵ 'But the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was for the distinguishing between the many divisions of contemplation, and this is just the knowledge of one's own nature, which, indeed, is a good thing for those who are mature and advanced in divine contemplation (being of itself a proclamation of the magnificence of God), and have no fear of falling, because they have through time come to have the habit of such contemplation, but it is an evil thing to those still young and with stronger appetites, who by reason of their insecure hold on the better

65. Salmond, S.D.F.: op. cit., p 30.

part, and because as yet they are not firmly established in the seat of the one and only good, are apt to be torn and dragged away from this to the care of their own body')

What does St. John mean by ἡ τῆς πολυσχιδοῦς.....
θεωρίας...διάγνωσις....., which is ἡ τῆς.....
οἰκειᾶς ἐπίγνωσις φύσεως? Literally, the former
phrase can be rendered "the discernment of contemplation in its
many parts" (writer's translation) and the latter phrase "the
knowledge of one's own nature" (S.D.F. Salmond). It seems at
once that, for St. John of Damascus, the tree of the knowledge
of good and evil was placed in Paradise so that man might have
"discernment" of the stages or forms of his own nature. These
two types of knowledge seem at first sight cognitive and intellect-
ual rather than intuitive and mystical. However, Vladimir Lossky
has pointed out the danger of regarding the Greek tradition as
intellectualistic in its view of divine knowledge.⁶⁶

Lossky carefully traces the history of views of Θεωρία..
and γγνώσις... in the Greek tradition from Irenaeus to
the Byzantine fathers in his Vision of God. The results of his
study show that whereas it may be right to apply a judgement
like Festugiere's (that all Greek mysticism subsequent to Origen's
and Clement's was "superintellectualistic"⁶⁷) to Clement and

66. Lossky, V.: The Vision of God. transl. Asheleigh Moorhouse,
Clayton, Wisconsin: The Faith Press. American Orthodox Press,
1963.

67. Lossky, op. cit., p 39.

Origen, it is wrong to ignore the development in the Fathers after Origen and Clement. For example, the Cappadocian fathers go beyond the idea of the intellectual comprehension of God. In this comment on "Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom"⁶⁸, Gregory Nazianzenus certainly does not reveal an intellectualistic view of contemplation:⁶⁹

τί τοῦτο λέγων ἀρχὴν σοφίας; τὸν φόβον
οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ θεωρίας ἀρχαμένους εἰς
φόβον γρη καταλήγειν (θεωρία γὰρ
ἀγαλλίωτος τάχα ἂν καὶ κατὰ κρημνῶν
ῥέσειεν); ἀλλὰ φόβω στοιχειουμένων,
καὶ καθαιρουμένων, καὶ ἔν' οὕτως εὔπω
λεπτυνουμένων, εἰς ὕψος ἀίρεσθαι. οὐ
γὰρ φόβος, ἐντολῶν τήρησις· οὐ δὲ ἐντολῶν
τήρησις σαρκὸς καθαρσις τοῦ ἐπιπροσ-
θοῦντος τῇ ψυχῇ νέφους, καὶ οὐκ ἐῶντος
καθαρσῶς ἰδεῖν τὴν θεϊκὴν ἀκτῶνα· οὐ δὲ
κάθαρσις, ἔλλαμψις· ἔλλαμψις δὲ, πύθου
πλήρωσις, τοῖς τῶν μεγίστων, ἢ τοῦ
μεγίστου, ἢ ὑπὲρ τὸ μέγα ἐφλεμένους.

(Transl. (writer's own): 'What is this that he calls the beginning of wisdom? Fear. For we ought not, beginning with

68. Proverbs 4 v 7.

69. Orat. XXXIX. In Sancta Lumina PG XXXVI Col. 344 A.

contemplation, to cease fearing (for unbridled contemplation might perhaps even drive us into dangers). Rather, instructed in the basic principles of fear, and purged, and, so to speak, rarefied, we are lifted to the height. For where there is fear, there is keeping of the commandments; there is purification of the flesh and clearing of the cloud obscuring the soul and not permitting us to purely see the uncreated divinity. And where there is illumination there is fulfilment of longing for those who long for the greatest things or the greatest thing or what is beyond magnitude.'

Gregory Nazianzenus clearly warns his readers or hearers of "unbridled contemplation". Unbridled speculative and rational knowledge can lead to danger. The errors of Origenism, though not yet formally condemned in the time of Gregory, are seen by him. *θεωρία*.... has to be grounded in basic observance of God's commands. A moral and spiritual purging has to take place before the soul can really contemplate God. We notice, too, how the feelings of man are fully part of his illumination and happiness: "where there is illumination, there is fulfilment of longing."

Not only do we find in Gregory Nazianzenus a holistic view of contemplation (*θεωρία*). we also find the idea of stages in contemplation, which is seen as a way of life rather than a mental exercise. In this passage we read of being "instructed

in the basic principles of religious fear" (στοιχειωμένους) (A7) and of being "purified" (καθαριζόμενους)... and "rarefied" (λεπτυνόμενους). and of "illumination" and finally "fulfilment: (πλήρωσις) These stages of contemplation were probably the reason for St. John of Damascus' writing the words ἡ τῆς πολυσχιδοῦς θεωρίας διάγνωσις..... (PG XCIV Col. 916 D2) ("the discernment of the many divisions of contemplation")

Gregory Nazianzenus' view of the Tree of Knowledge and its purpose is clearly a source of St. John's view. In his Oratio XXXVIII, Gregory comments thus:⁷⁰

Τὸ δὲ ἦν τὸ ξύλον τῆς γνώσεως, οὔτε
φυτευθὲν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κακῶς, οὔτε ἀπ-
αγορευθὲν φθορῶς (μὴ πεμπέτωσαν
ἐκεῖ τὰς γλώσσας οὐ θεομάχοι.
μηδὲ τὸν ὄφιν μὲμείσθωσαν). ἀλλὰ
καλὸν μὲν εὐκαίρως μεταλαμβανόμενον
(θεωρία γὰρ ἦν τὸ φυτόν ὡς ἡ ἐμὲ
θεωρία, ἧς μόνους ἐπιβαίνεον ἀσφαλῆς
τοῖς τὴν ἕξιν τελωτέροις), οὐ καλὸν
δὲ τοῖς ἀπλουτέροις ἔτι, καὶ τὴν
ἔφεσιν λιγνοτέροις, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ
τροφὴν τελείαν λυσυτελής τοῖς
ἀπαλοῦς ἔτι καὶ δεομένου γάλακτος.

70. Cap. XII; PG XXXVI Col. 324 B13 - C6.

(Translation - (writer's own): 'But there was also the Tree of Knowledge which was neither planted in an evil way in the beginning nor rejected through envy (let the enemies of God not direct their speech in that direction, nor let them imitate the serpent). But it was well and opportunely partaken of (for the tree planted was contemplation, as contemplation seems to me, which it is safe only for the more perfect in capacity to enter), but it was not good for those still uninstructed and greedier in appetite, just as wholesome, solid food is not advantageous for those still of tender age and needing milk.')

Gregory clearly rejected the view that the Tree of Knowledge was an evil thing which God planted in Paradise. Nor did God forbid man to eat of its fruit because He was envious of man. The first possibility is excluded by Gregory's phrase *οὔτε φυτευθὲν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κακῶς*. and the second possibility by his words *οὔτε ἀπαγορευθὲν φθοχερῶς*..... (Col. 324 B13 - 14). Gregory maintains that the food of this tree is wholesome and rightly eaten, but only by those who are skilled in contemplation. For those, like Adam and Eve, who were not skilled in contemplation and not self-controlled, it was wrong, in the same way that it is wrong for infants to have anything more than milk. The implication is clearly that Adam and Eve's sin consisted in eating food which they weren't yet ready for. Of course, this view of Adam and Eve's sin strikes the modern Protestant reader as strange. For the modern reader, the sin of Adam & Eve would consist entirely in the act of dis-

obedience and it might be argued that the Tree represented, not by nature, but because of God's decree, a kind of knowledge which man should never, in all his life, have. As an example of this kind of view, we cite Martin Luther:⁷¹

'But even more remarkable is what is stated about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Here it is asked "What sort of a tree was it? Why does it have this name, and what would have happened if this tree had not been in Paradise?" Augustine and those who follow him state correctly that it was so named from the event which lay in the future. Adam was so created that if anything troublesome to his nature had happened, he would have had a protection against it in the tree of life, which preserved his powers and perfect health at all times
p 94: And so when Adam had been created in such a way that he was, as it were, intoxicated with rejoicing toward God and was delighted also with all the other creatures, there is now created a new tree for the distinguishing of good and evil, so that Adam might have a definite way to express his worship and reverence toward God. After everything had been entrusted to him to make use of it according to his will, God finally demands from Adam that at this tree of knowledge of good and evil he demonstrate his reverence and obedience toward God and that he maintain this practice, as it were of worshiping God by not eating anything from it.'

71. Pelikan, Jaroslav (ed.): Luther's Works. Saint Louis, Missouri; Concordia Publishing House, 1958. Vol. I Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1 - 5., pp 93 - 94.

For the Greek Fathers, however, the Tree is primarily the Tree of Knowledge, and this knowledge is the contemplation of God, which is the goal of man's life. Far from being an anomaly in the garden of Eden, the Tree is the key to Heaven, and therefore an essential element of man's salvation. The fault of the first man was to disobey God by eating the fruit of the Tree, fruit which is good in itself, just as the Tree was good, but harmful to one who is not yet ready for it. In Gregory's view there are two signs of unsuitability in Adam & Eve: first, they were uninstructed/unqualified (*ἀπλοῦστέροις*) secondly, they were "greedier in appetite" (*τὴν ἔφεσιν λιχνοτέροις*) They needed a grounding in religious fear (*φόβος*) before they could learn self-control and begin the stages of contemplation.

St. John of Damascus spelt out Gregory's interpretation of the Tree of Knowledge as good for "the mature" (*τελειώσις*) and "those who have advanced in the divine contemplation" (*ἐν τῇ θεῖα θεωρίᾳ βεβηκόσιν* Col. 916 D4) and have no fear of falling, because they through time have obtained a habit of such contemplation". What Gregory wrote as an explanatory note, John of Damascus expounds in detail, using two words that Gregory used: "the mature" (*τελειώσις*) and "habit" or "capacity" (*ἔξιν*).. John wished to make it quite clear that perfection did not consist in just instruction and control of appetite or desire, but also in advancement in the contemplation of God. We quote a part of the passage quoted in full at the beginning

of this sub-section on the Tree of Knowledge, St. John's view of those for whom the Tree is not good:⁷²

οὐ καλὴ δὲ τοῖς νεοῖς ἔτι, καὶ τὴν ἔφεσεν
λιγνοτέρους, οὓς διὰ τὸ ἀβέβαιον τῆς ἐν
τῷ κρείττονι διαμονῆς, καὶ μήπω παγίως
ἐνεδρασθῆναι τῇ τοῦ μόνου καλοῦ προσ-
εδρίας, ἢ τοῦ οὐκείου κηδεμονία σώματος
πρὸς ἑαυτὴν ἀνθέλκεν καὶ περιστῶν
πέφυκεν

(Translation⁷³ " ... but it is an evil thing to those still young and with stronger appetites, who by reason of their insecure hold on the better part, and because as yet they are not firmly established in the seat of the one and only good, are apt to be torn and dragged away from this to the care of their own body.")

Those for whom the Tree is not good are not primarily in Gregory's phrase, the ἀπλοιστέρους.. (Oratio XXXVIII PG. XXXVI Col. 324 C3) or "those with stronger appetites", a phrase to which John gives a precise interpretation. We have noted Gregory's stress on the necessity of moral self-control in the progress of contemplation. Here we see St. John taking up this emphasis

72. PG XCIV. Col, 917 A 1 - 6.

73. Salmond S.D.F. op. cit., p 30.

and adding to it a new interpretation gained from other sources:

οὐς..διὰ τὸ ἀβέβαιον τῆς ἐν τῷ κρείττονι.....
διαμονῆς, καὶ μήπω παγίως ἐνεδρασθῆναι...
τῆ τοῦ καλοῦ προσεδρία.....

(vide supra, p 10) Salmond's translation "in the seat of the

one and only good" is a little inaccurate here for τῆ τοῦ

μόνου καλοῦ προσεδρία, ...for.... προσεδρία....

really means "devotion" or "attention", and is a word used for

long and sustained periods of prayer. What St. John is really

trying to do is to put Gregory's categories in terms of a person's

devotion to God and perseverance in contemplation. In other

words, for John, the uncontrolled desires of the young are better

described in terms of their unstable endurance (a better term

than Salmond's "hold") "in the better thing" (lit. for ἐν τῷ

κρείττονι or "the better activity", viz. "contemplation".

Thus, the unsuitability of the Tree of Knowledge for the young

is expressed in terms of lack of endurance in prayer. Now this

emphasis on prayer is typically Byzantine and St. John derives

it not only from Gregory Nazianzenus, but also from Pseudo-

Dionysius the Areopagite.

It is not that we have here a return to the ἐν... of

Plotinus, but rather an integration of Platonic contemplative

method into the Greek Christian system. For example, the phrase

καὶ μήπω παγίως... προσεδρία (PG XCIV Col. 917 A4 - 5)

("and not yet firmly established in devotion to the only Good/

Beauty") reminds us of Plotinus' argument in Ennead I.6.

Περὶ τοῦ Καλοῦ....., where, although beauty is not a being but a quality, the reader is encouraged to learn to see by purifying his soul to see the beauty first of objects, and then of progressively higher things until he reaches God:⁷⁴

Ἀναβατέον οὖν πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν οὐ
ὀρέγεται πᾶσα ψυχή. Εἴ τις οὖν εἶδεν
αὐτὸ οἶδεν ὃ λέγω, ὅπως καλόν. Ἐφετὸν
μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἀγαθόν, καὶ ἡ ἔφεσις πρὸς
τοῦτο, τεύξις δὲ αὐτοῦ αναβαίνουσι πρὸς
τὸ ἄνω καὶ ἐπιστραφεῖσι καὶ ἀποδυομέ-
νους ἢ καταβαίνοντες ἠμφιέσμεθα
ἕως ἄν τις παρελθῶν ἐν τῇ ἀναβάσει
πᾶν ὅσον ἀλλότριον τοῦ Θεοῦ αὐτῷ
μόνῳ αὐτὸ μόνον ἴδῃ εὐδικρινές, ἀπλοῦν,
καθαρόν, ἀφ' οὗ πάντα ἐξήρτηται καὶ
πρὸς αὐτὸ βλέπει καὶ ἔστι καὶ βῆ
καὶ νοεῖ.

(Translation⁷⁵ 'So we must ascend again to the good, which every soul desires. Anyone who has seen it knows what I mean when I say that it is beautiful. It is desired as good, and the desire for it is directed to the good, and the attainment of it is for those who go up to the higher world and are converted

74. Armstrong A.H. (transl.) Plotinus. Enneads. I.6.7. London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1966, Vol. I, p 252.

75. Armstrong, A.H. (transl.): op. cit., p 253.

and strip off what we put on in our descent; until, passing in the ascent of all that is alien to the God, one sees with one's self alone, that alone, simple, single and pure, from which all depends and to which all look and are and live and think.')

This passage speaks of a journey in perception of beauty until one reaches God, the most beautiful and the spring and origin of beauty. Now John of Damascus reminds us of Plotinus and Plato but his use of *μόνου. καλοῦ*..... contains a significant difference to that of Plotinus. In the passage above Plotinus links *μόνον...* to *αὐτὸ*..... which denotes the One or God, but *μόνον..* is not adjectivally linked to *καλόν.* or even to Plotinus' *καθαρόν.* In other words, for Plotinus, many things may be beautiful and good, but God is the cause of all their goodness. For John of Damascus *μόνου. καλοῦ.* cannot mean anything other than God's goodness or beauty, which only He has. In other words, the Christian skilled in contemplation does not simply ascend in thought from earthly beauty to God's beauty. There is a point at which one has to say "only God is beautiful" or "only God is good". It is precisely here that one can discern St. John's apophaticism, an apophaticism which he gained from the tradition before him, from the Cappadocian Fathers, but particularly from the 6th century Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. In "De Mystica Theologia", Chap. II, Pseudo-Dionysius wrote this on the knowledge of God:⁷⁶

76. PG III Col. 1025

Κατὰ τοῦτον ἡμεῖς γενέσθαι τὸν ὑπερφῶτον
εὐχόμεθα γνόφον, καὶ δι' ἀβλεψίας καὶ
ἀγνοσίας ἰδεῖν, καὶ γινῶναι τὸ ὑπὲρ θεῶν
καὶ γινῶσθαι αὐτὸ τὸ μὴ ἰδεῖν, μηδὲ γινῶσθαι.
τοῦτο γὰρ ἔστι τὸ ὄντως ἰδεῖν καὶ γινῶσθαι.
καὶ τὸν ὑπερούσιον ὑπερουσίως ἡμνήσαι
διὰ τῆς πάντων τῶν ὄντων ἀφαίρέσεως,
ὡσπερ οἱ αὐτοφυεῖς ἀγάλμα ποιῶντες,
ἐξαίρουσιν πάντα τὰ ἐπιπροσθούνητα τῇ
καθαρᾷ τοῦ κρυφίου θεῶ κωλύματα, καὶ
αὐτὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ τῇ ἀφαίρεισει μόνῃ τὸ
ἀποκερυμμένον ἀναφαίνοντες κάλλος
χρῆ δέ, ὡς οἶμαι, τὰς ἐξαίρέσεις
ἐναντίως ταῖς θέσεσιν ἡμνήσαι. καὶ
γὰρ ἐκεῖνας μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν πρωτίστων
ἀρχόμενοι, καὶ διὰ μέσων ἐπὶ τὰ
ἔσχατα κατιόντες, ἐτίθεμεν ἐνταῦθα
δὲ, ἀπὸ τῶν ἐσχάτων ἐπὶ τὰ
ἀρχικώτατα τὰς ἐπαναβάσεις ποιούμενοι,
τὰ πάντα ἀφαίρουμεν, ἵνα ἀπερκεκαλύπ-
τως γινῶμεν ἐκεῖνην τὴν ἀγνοσίαν.
τὴν ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν γνωστῶν ἐν
πᾶσι τοῖς οὔσι περικεκαλυμμένην
καὶ τὸν ὑπερούσιον ἐκεῖνον ἰδῶμεν γνόφον,
τὸν ὑπὸ παντός τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὔσι φωτὸς
ἀποκρυπτόμενον.

(Translation (writer's own): 'In this way we must pray to become the cloud of darkness that is beyond light, and through blindness and ignorance to see and to know that which is beyond sight and knowledge, which very thing one does not see or know. For this is: really to see and to know; and to praise supernaturally Him who is above being, through the abstractions of all things that exist, just as those who make a natural image, take out all the hindrances in the way of a clear vision of the concealed form, and only by removal do they display the hidden beauty in itself. As I think, one ought to praise the abstractions rather than the affirmations. For indeed the latter we laid down, having begun with the first things and come down through the middle things to the last things, but from here making our ascent from the last to the most primal things, we subtract all things, in order that we may without veil know that unknowing which is hidden from all things that are knowable in all things that exist, and may see that supernatural darkness that is hidden from all the light, in things that exist.'

Perhaps in this chapter we find the most explicit state of Pseudo-Dionysius' apophaticism. Even more strongly than John of Damascus, Pseudo-Dionysius states the pivotal principle of contemplation. John, as we have seen, wrote about "devotion to the only good". *τῆς τοῦ μόνου καλοῦ προσεφρέα.....* PG XCIV. Col. 917 A4 - 5). His use of *προσεφρέα* suggests an importunity in contemplation. The root meaning of the word

is to "besiege a fortress". Now this kind of importunity is more vividly described in the chapter from Pseudo-Dionysius quoted above, where he writes of how we must "pray to become the darkness that is beyond light" and "through blindness and unknowing to see and to know what is beyond sight or knowledge". What Pseudo-Dionysius does is to maintain the doctrine of God's unknowable being, together with the contradiction of the possibility of attaining to a knowledge of God through created things. How does Pseudo-Dionysius explain this?

He uses the example of a relief image or statue carved from the landscape. By cutting away portions of rock, sculptors are simply removing the obstacles that obscure the hidden but beautiful image from being seen. He applies this to the knowledge of God, saying that one ought to praise the subtractions or denials rather than the positive affirmations that can be made about God. For this reason, we must add, as an aside, that the *via negativa* or apophatic way is, for Pseudo-Dionysius, the best way of coming to know God. Affirmations, Pseudo-Dionysius explains, we make as a result of descending in thought from the primal realities to our own immediate realities, or "the last things". This is really the order of God's revelation in his energies which extend to every order of creation. But in ascending from "the last things" to the primal things and to God, we have to make progressive subtractions or denials, so that eventually we arrive at the unknowing in which we can know God, who is beyond description and knowledge. This process is what Pseudo-Dionysius sums up

in the chapter heading as "How to be even united with and give praises to the cause of all things, who is also above all things". We may see, then, how Pseudo-Dionysius' *via negativa* is visible in John of Damascus' writings, even in a phrase such as *τῆ*.... *τοῦ μόνου καλοῦ προσεδρία*..... PG XCIV Col. 917 A45, but stated more fully at the beginning of De Fide Orthodoxa, Chs. I & II, where he spells out what may be known of God and what can't be known or understood.

It appears from this discussion that, in the end, the Tree of Knowledge is a necessary part of man's salvation, since in the original Paradise man had to be tested, and in our present state, the Tree of Knowledge represents the "knowledge of the many divisions of contemplation" - the kind of contemplation shown in the *via negativa* taught by Pseudo-Dionysius and assimilated by John of Damascus, and Maximus (before him) into the Greek tradition. As a general symbol, every tree, concludes John of Damascus, can be understood as the knowledge of God which comes from His creatures. This idea he supports using Romans 1 v 20. The Tree of Knowledge, therefore, is a crucial symbol in the Paradise of St. John of Damascus, a symbol of testing, a stumbling block for Adam and Eve because they were newly created and unskilled in the contemplation of God, yet a good thing for the mature who are trained in self-control and advanced in contemplation. Because contemplation has many stages which man progressively advances through to arrive at union with God, the

the Tree of Knowledge has to remain an integral part of the original, earthly Paradise, and of the present order of salvation, and of the final state of the blessed. Looking back, one can see that Gregory of Nazianzenus' interpretation of the Tree as contemplation ensured for the Tree a lasting place in the Greek Fathers' view of Paradise. Our next item in St. John's view of Paradise is the tree of Life.

3.3.2. THE TREE OF LIFE:

The doctrine of man's relation to the tree of life is closely linked to the doctrine of his relation to the tree of knowledge. Both trees are planted by God in Eden (Genesis 2 v 9) and man's disobedience in eating of the tree of knowledge led to his being forbidden the Tree of Life (Genesis 3 vv 22-24). Significantly, Adam and Eve were not told initially not to eat of the tree of life. The tree of life, in the view of the writer of Revelation, is a necessary good in Heaven, since it grows on either side of the river of life and its leaves are "for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22 v 2, NIV).

The Tree of Life has a very comprehensive range of reference in the De Fide Orthodoxa of St. John of Damascus, but he remains faithful to the Scriptures and to the Fathers before him in interpreting the tree of life. Firstly he states:⁷⁷

77. PG XCIV, Col. 916 B3 - B7

Το δὲ τῆς ζωῆς ξύλον, ἢν ξύλον ἔχον ἐνέργειαν
ζωῆς παρεκτικῆν, ἢ τοὺς τῆς ζωῆς ἀξίους καὶ
τῷ Θανάτῳ οὐχ ὑποκειμένους μόλις ἐδώκεμον
Τινὲς μὲν οὖν αἰσθητὸν τὸν παράδεισον
εἰκασάσθησαν, ἕτεροι δὲ, νοητὸν

(De Fide Orth., Bk. II, ch XI)

(Translation⁷⁸. "The tree of life, on the other hand was a tree having the energy that is the cause of life, or to be eaten only by those who deserve to live and are not subject to death. Some, indeed, have pictured Paradise as a realm of sense,⁷⁹ and others as a realm of mind")

If this refers to a literal Paradise, then who were "those who deserve to live", since Adam and Eve had become subject to death through eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge? This problem of interpretation is quickly recognized by John of Damascus, who adds the insight that some Fathers have seen Paradise as αἰσθητὸν.... (a realm of sense) and others as a realm of mind (νοητὸν)..... St. John proceeds then to reveal that he is one of those Fathers who allow it to be interpreted in either way but prefer to regard Paradise as a realm of the mind. In this, he follows Origen and the Cappadocian Fathers. Although we have already taken note of the materialistic side of Basil's view of Paradise, we also find him writing thus in De Paradiso:⁸⁰

78. Salmond S.D.F. op. cit., p 29.

79. (Salmond's note) Cf. Nemesius, De natura hominis, ch. 1.

80. De Paradiso, Or. III PG XXX, Col. 72 A7 - A16.

Πειράθητι τοίνυν διὰ τῶν τοιούτων διδασμάτων
ἐν περιουσίᾳ γενέσθαι τοῦ παραδείσου ἐκεῖνου,
καὶ φθάσαι καὶ αὐτὸς εἰς τὰς αὐγὰς τοῦ
Θείου φωτός· ἔνθα τὸ φῶς τῆς γνώσεως
κυματέλλει, ἔνθα ὁ παράδεισος τῆς τρυφῆς
πιεφύτευται· Κἀν χωρίου δέ τι νοῆς σωματικοῦ,
δεκτικόν τῶν ἁγίων, ἐν ᾧ πάντες οἱ ἐπὶ γῆς
διαλάμπαντες ἐν ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς διαλιπῶνται,
τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπολαύοντες χάριτος, κατ' ἀξίαν
ἀμοιβῆν, καὶ τῆς ἀληθινῆς καὶ μακαρίας
τερπνότητος, οὐκ αποπλιπτεῖς τάχα οὐδ' οὕτω
τῆς πρεπούσης περὶ αὐτοῦ εὐκασίας

(Translation:⁸¹ 'Try therefore through such teachings to come to a consideration of that paradise and yourself even to reach towards the rays of the divine light. There the light of knowledge rises, there the paradise of delight has been planted. And if there is any corporeal place which you may have in mind, that is fit for receiving the saints, and in which all who on earth shone brightly in good works, are living while enjoying the grace of God, according to their worthy recompense, and delighting in the true and blessed pleasantness, in this way you probably do not miss the right conception of it'.)

This quotation taken with the rest of Basil's De Paradiso shows

81. Writer's own.

how Basil regarded Paradise as both a corporeal and a spiritual realm. Just as the "light of knowledge" in the passage above is not literally light, so the tree of life is not literally planted. The use of the tree of life as a symbol is clear also in the writings of Gregory Nazianzenus. In Oratio II Apologetica Gregory is writing about the contrast between the salvation events of Christ and man's fate. He then shows how these events, the death and resurrection of Christ are a kind of "medicine for our sickness":⁸²

Διὰ τοῦτο ὕψος κατὰ τοῦ πνύματος καὶ χελεῖ
κατὰ τῆς γεύσεως, καὶ στεφανος ἀκάνθινος
κατὰ τοῦ πονηροῦ κράτους, καὶ θανάτου κατὰ
τοῦ θανάτου, σκότος ὑπὲρ τοῦ φωτός,
καὶ ταφή κατὰ τῆς εἰς γῆν ἀποστρέφῆς, καὶ
ἀνάστασις ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀναστάσεως. Ταῦτα
πάντα παιδαγωγία τῆς ἦν περὶ ἡμᾶς τοῦ
Θεοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀσθενείας ἰατροεία τῆς ἡμετέρας
τὸν παλαιὸν Ἀδὰμ ὅθεν ἐξέπεσεν ἐπαράγουσα,
καὶ τῷ ξυλῶ τῆς ζωῆς προσάγουσα, οὐ τὸ
ξύλον ἡμᾶς τῆς γνώσεως, οὐ κατὰ κενρὸν,
οὐδ' ἐπιτηδεύως μεταληφθέν, ἠλλοτρίωσε

(Translation:⁸³ 'For this reason there was an exaltation against the fall (of Adam): and lips against tasting, and a crown of thorns against the power of evil and death against death, and

82. Oratio II Apologetica. PG XXXV. Col. 433 C6 - 436 A7.

83. Writer's own. () indicate supplied elucidatory phrases.

darkness in place of light, and burial instead of turning back to earth and resurrection beyond resurrection. All these things were a kind of instruction concerning us from God and a healing of our sickness, leading the old Adam back to where he fell from and leading him to the tree of life from which the tree of knowledge estranged us as it was untimely and unfittingly partaken of.')

Clearly the tree of life is a symbol for the life of God to which man, through Christ, returns. In his Oratio XXXIII Contra Arianos et de seipso, Ch. IX,⁸⁴ Gregory Naziazenus speaks of the "heavenly Adam" through whom we have been saved and led to the *ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς*..... through the *ξύλον τῆς ἀγνίας*... (the Cross).

Now the idea of the tree of life as a symbol for the life of God is reached differently by St. John of Damascus. In his view, the reason why Paradise must be interpreted both as a corporeal and a spiritual place, and hence the tree of life in either sense, is man's dual composition as a corporeal and intellectual being:⁸⁵

Πλὴν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὅτι ὡς περ ὁ ἄνθρωπος
αἰσθητὸς ἅμα καὶ νοητὸς δεδημιούργητα, οὕτω
καὶ τὸ ταύτου ἱερώτατον τέμενος, αἰσθητὸν

84. PG XXXVI Col. 225 C1 - 3.

85. De Fide Orth., II Ch. XI. PG XCIV. Col. 916 B7 - C13.

ἄμα καὶ νοητὸν, καὶ διπλῆν ἔχον τὴν ἔμφασιν
τῷ γὰρ σώματι ἐν τῷ Θειοτάτῳ χώρῳ, καὶ
ὑπερκαλλεῖ, καθὼς ἱστορήσαμεν, αὐλιζόμενος.
τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ ἐν ὑπεριτέρῳ καὶ περικαλλεστέρῳ
τόπῳ διέτριβε, Θεὸν ἔχων οἶκον τὸν ἑνοικον
καὶ αὐτὸν ἔχων εὐκλεῆς περιβόλαιον, καὶ τὴν
αὐτοῦ περιβεβλημένος χάριν καὶ τοῦ μοῦτου
γλυκυτάτου καρποῦ τῆς αὐτοῦ Θεωρίας κατα-
τροφῶν, οἷά τις ἄγγελος ἄλλος, καὶ ταύτη
τρέφόμενος· ὅπερ δὴ καὶ ξύλον ζωῆς ἀξίως
ωνόμασται· ζωῆς γὰρ θανάτου μὴ διακοπτομένης,
ἢ γλυκύτης τῆς Θείας μεθέξεως τοῖς
μεταλαμβάνουσιν μεταδίδωσιν· ὃ δὴ καὶ
πάν ξύλον ὃ Θεὸς ἐκάλεσεν, «Ἐκ τῶν πάντων
ξύλων, φήσας, τοῦ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ βρώσει
φάγεσθε»· Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ πᾶν, ἐν ᾧ
καὶ δι' οὗ τὸ πᾶν συνέστηκε

(Translation:⁸⁶ "But it seems to me, that, just as man is a creature, in whom we find both sense and mind blended together, in like manner also man's most holy temple combines the properties of sense and mind, and has this twofold expression: for, as we said, the life in the body is spent in the most divine and lovely region, while the life in the soul is passed in a

86. Salmond S.D.F. op. cit. pp 29 - 30.

place far more sublime and of more surpassing beauty, where God makes His home, and where He wraps man about as with a glorious garment, and robes him in His grace, and delights and sustains him like an angel with the sweetest of all fruits, the contemplation of Himself. Verily it has been fitly named the tree of life. For since the life is not cut short by death, the sweetness of the divine participation is imparted to those who share it. And this is, in truth, what God meant by every tree, saying, 'Of every tree in Paradise thou mayest freely eat'. For the 'every' is just Himself in Whom and through Whom the universe is maintained.'

In John's view then, the composition of man as a being who perceives through his senses and as a being who apprehends spiritual realities, is the most necessary reason why Paradise, man's "most holy temple" *τὸ τούτου ἱερώτατον*..... is two-fold: a literal place, "the most divine and lovely region" *θεϊότατος χώρος καὶ ὑπερκαλλῆς*..... and the spiritual dwelling - God Himself. In this way, St. John of Damascus enriches the theological tradition before him. Unlike Origen who discarded a merely literal Paradise on earth, or Basil who encouraged Christians to use their concept of a corporeal Paradise to gain a right idea of the spiritual Paradise of God, St. John shows how these two conceptions of Paradise meet in man's composition as a being of sense and of intellect or mind.

In this context the tree of life grows richer in meaning. Con-

trary to the modern trend in which attempts are made to demythologize myths to arrive at their inner truths, St. John and his predecessors in the Greek tradition, extend and enrich the symbolic value of such "myths". As an example of a modern view of the tree of life let us consider a short quotation from Karl Barth:⁸⁷

'The place in which God gives rest to man when He creates him, and which even when it becomes totally unknown and inaccessible will still be the original starting point toward which, when he has left it, his history must genuinely strive under the government of the same God, is the Garden in the centre of which the tree of life is planted. It is the genuine tree of Paradise, whereas the tree of knowledge, as the second tree alongside the first, and on account of the problems indicated by it even in Paradise, points to the fact that the covenant between God and man will be realized on the road which is to run from the Paradise at the beginning to that at the end. The road outside it will come under its sign. But the act of creation, the divine establishment of human existence as such - in contrast to its own beginning - stands under the sign of the tree of life. Hence it is the latter which returns triumphantly in the picture of the last Kingdom (Rev. 2 v 7) ... p 28. The fact that it stands in the midst of God's Garden surely indicates that it stands in a special relation to the Lord of this Garden, and that man as its creaturely occupant cannot overlook it as such. The tree in the midst of the Garden indicates that the Garden is

87. Edwards, J.W., Bussey O. & Knight, Harold (transl.): Barth Karl: Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation, Vol. III.1
Edinburgh: T & T Clark: 1958; p 28.

God's sanctuary. Here, in what the tree both represents and offers, the Creator is present with the creature which He has placed in it. God wills to be recognized, honoured and loved by man in what this tree represents and offers. While He gives man the enjoyment of the whole Garden and all its trees by the planting of the tree of life in its midst, God declares that His primary, central and decisive will is to give him Himself'

Interestingly, though Barth interprets the tree of life as a symbolic statement of God's love for man, His will to give man Himself, and His will that man should worship and love Him, his view of the tree of life as representing God's love and presence with man, corresponds in this respect to that of St. John of Damascus. Barth is able, from the vantage point of the twentieth century to examine the richness of the tree of life's symbolism and to show its contrast with the tree of knowledge. The contrast between the tree of life and the tree of knowledge is clearly pictured in St. John's description of paradise, too, but for St. John the tree of life is primarily the life with which God sustains man's spirit, when He has begun the journey of prayer.

Through the daily progress in contemplation, the Christian learns the meaning of the tree of life, which is the life of God Himself
Θεὸν ἔχων οἰκοντὸν ἔνοικον..... ("having God as a home dwelt in").

In contrast to the tree of knowledge, the tree of life is seen existentially as always necessary for the Christian: not only

is God his home, but he wears God like "a glorious garment" and he is "sustained like an angel with the sweetest of all fruits, the contemplation . θεωρία . of Himself". The tree of life is for John participation in God mystically: in other words it is more than a symbol - it is the reality of divine life. The theme of the fruit of the tree of life is an essential theme, contrasting to the sweet but evil fruit of the tree of knowledge.

Previously we have noted the complexity of St. John's view of the tree of knowledge: how on the one hand it seemed to be good for those skilled in contemplation: on the other hand, evil for the unskilled and immature. We saw how this view was derived from Gregory the Theologian. However, near the end of his chapter on Paradise, St. John of Damascus draws a sharp distinction between the two trees, implying that the tree of life is good, but the tree of knowledge brings evil to all who eat its fruit (a contrast which Barth, as we have seen, draws out in different terms):

Ἡ ξύλον μὲν ζωῆς, τὴν ἐκ πάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν
ἐγγλωσσομένην θελοτέραν ἔννοιαν, καὶ τὴν δι'
αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸν ἀπάντων γενεσιουργόν τε, καὶ
δημιουργόν αἴτιον ἀναγωγῆν· ὅπερ καὶ πᾶν
ξύλον ὠνόμασε τὸ πλήρες καὶ ἀδιαίρετον
μονὴν τε τοῦ καλοῦ φέρων τὴν μέθεξιν, ξύλου
δὲ γνώσεως καλοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ, τὴν αἰσθητῆν

καὶ ἐνήδονον βρώσων, τὴν, τῷ δοκεῖν μὲν
γλυκαίνουσαν, τῷ ὄντι δὲ ἐν μετουσίᾳ
κακῶν τὸν μετέχοντα καθιστάσαν.

(De Fide Orth. II. XI. PG XCIV 917 B8 - C4)

(Translation⁸⁸: 'The tree of life too may be understood as that more divine thought that has its origin in the world of sense, and the ascent through that to the originating and constructive cause of all. And this was the name He gave to every tree, implying fullness and indivisibility, and conveying only participation in what is good. But by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, we are to understand that sensible and pleasurable food, which, sweet though it seems, in reality brings him who partakes of it into communion with evil.')

Particularly the last sentence clashes with his idea previously expressed, that "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was for distinguishing between the many divisions of contemplation, and this is just the knowledge of one's nature, which, indeed, is a good thing for those who are mature "⁸⁹ This inner contradiction in St. John probably reflects his use of different sources. The idea that the tree of knowledge is unconditionally evil is found in St. Gregory of Nyssa's writings:

88. Salmond S.D.F. op. cit., p 30

89. ibidem; p 30

Ἦν δὲ καὶ αὐτῷ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς παράδεισος διὰ
τῆς εὐκαρπίας τῶν δένδρων βρύων ζωῆν, καὶ
ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐντολὴ ζωῆς ἦν νόμος, τὸ μὴ
ἀποθανεῖν παραγγέλλουσα "Ὅντος δὲ κατὰ
τὸ μέσον τῆς τοῦ παραδείσου φυτείας τοῦ τὴν
ζωῆν βρύοντος ξύλου ὅτε ποτε χρὴ τὸ
ξύλον νοεῖν ἐκεῖνο οὐ ὁ καρπὸς ζωῆ· καὶ
τοῦ θανατηφόρου δὲ ξύλου, οὐ καλοῦ ἔμα
καὶ κακὸν εἶναι τὸν καρπὸν ἀποφαίνεται,
καὶ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὸ μέσον ὄντος τοῦ παραδείσου.

(In Cantica Canticum. Homilia XII: PG XLIV. Col. 1020 C12-D7)

(Translation⁹⁰: 'In addition there was for him even the divine Paradise, through the fruitfulness of the trees filled with life, and the commandment of God was the principle of life, promising that there would be no death. But in the midst of the plantation of Paradise was the tree that was fertile with life, whatever at length one ought to think that tree was, whose fruit was life: and the tree that bore death, whose fruit is proclaimed to be both good and evil, and it, too, was in the midst of Paradise.'

One tree is identified as the tree of life while the other causes death. Gregory of Nyssa is thus one source of St. John of Damascus' view of the harmfulness of the tree of knowledge. We have

90. Writer's own.

seen how Gregory of Nazianzenus' view that the tree of knowledge was contemplation also influenced John's view. But there was yet a later source which was more outspoken about the harmfulness of the tree of knowledge. This source was St. Maximus the Confessor⁹¹:

Τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τὸ μὴ τοιοῦτον, ἐξ
αὐτοῦ μόνου τοῦ, τὸ μὲν ζωῆς ξύλον
ὀνομασθήσεται, τὸ δὲ οὐ ζωῆς ἀλλὰ μόνον
ἐγνωστὸν καλοῦ καὶ πονηροῦ ἐξ, πολλὴν καὶ
ἄφατον ἔχουσι τὴν διαφοράν. Τὸ γὰρ τῆς
ζωῆς ξύλον, πάντως καὶ ζωῆς ἐστὶ ποιητικόν.
Τὸ δὲ μὴ ζωῆς ξύλον, δηλονότι θανάτου
ποιητικόν. Τὸ γὰρ μὴ ποιητικὸν ζωῆς, ἐκ
τοῦ μὴ προσαγορευθήσεται ζωῆς ξύλον
θανάτου σαφῶς ἂν εἴη ποιητικόν. Ἄλλο
γὰρ οὐδὲν τῇ ζωῇ κατ' ἐναντίωσιν
ἀντιδιακρίεται

(Translation⁹²: 'The tree of life and that which is not so, are named from the same root: the tree of life and that which is not of life but only the knowledge of good and evil, and they have a great and unspeakable difference. For the tree

91. Quaestiones ad Thalassium, Q XLIII, Responsio; PG XC Col. 412 B3 - B11.

92. Writer's own.

of life is productive wholly of life. But the tree that is not of life, clearly produces death. For the tree that is not productive of life, from the fact of its not being called the tree of life, clearly causes death. For nothing else is distinguished in opposition to life.')

Implied in St. Maximus' description of the two trees is his preference for the contrast between the tree of life and tree of death. So far from regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as having any worth for man's salvation at all, he sees it as opposed to the tree of life, and the cause of death. A little later he distinguishes the two trees on the basis of wisdom, saying that the tree of life is the *ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς... γαῖς....* and therefore wisdom resides in it (Question XLIII. PG. Col. 412) while the tree of knowledge is *ἡ τοῦ σώματος αἰσθησις* (the sense perception of the body), which is not governed by reason but leads to unbridled passion. It is this categorization of the trees which leads to St. John's conclusion that man's partaking of the physical food *τῆς αἰσθητῆς βρώσεως.....* leads him to lose his immortality. In other words, the tree of knowledge has no positive value for man in Paradise. The tree of life, being more for John than Maximus' *ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς... γαῖς.....* is the participation in God's life and therefore excludes participation in the tree of knowledge. Contrary to St. John's earlier implication, there can never be a time when man is mature enough to partake of the tree of knowledge, for to partake of this tree is to become liable to death.

We can ascribe St. John's ambivalence to the tree of life to his desire to represent the diversity of opinion found in the Greek Fathers before him. This is an expression of St. John's theological breadth, although the apparent difference in his own viewpoint appears puzzling to the modern reader. We cannot, nevertheless, conclude otherwise than that St. John of Damascus regarded the tree of life as an important symbol of man's communion with God, a communion to be fully realized at the Parousia.

At this point, we turn our attention to thoughts on the Greek doctrine of the intermediate state of the faithful departed, prior to the Resurrection on the Last Day. Before we do this, let us look first to the example of Christ given to us in His descent to Hades.

4. ENTRY INTO PARADISE.

4.1. THE DESCENT OF CHRIST TO HADES.

Underlying the doctrine of Heaven is the teaching of the intermediate state of the faithful departed, and the possibility of salvation coming to the faithful departed only after this earthly life has been made real through the salvific descent of our Lord Jesus Christ into Hades, a fact based on 1 Peter 3 vv 18

- 20:

ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπασι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἕπαθεν
δικαίως ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς

προσαγάγη τῷ Θεῷ θανάτωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ
ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι - ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν
φυλακῇ πνεύμασιν πορευθεὶς ἐκήρυξεν,
ἀπελθῆσασίω ποτε ὅτε ἀπεξεδέχετο ἡ τοῦ
Θεοῦ μακροθυμία ἐν ἡμέραις Νῶε κατασκευαζ-
ομένης κιβωτοῦ, εἰς ἣν ὀλίγοι, τουτ' ἔστιν
ὄκτω ψυχὰς, διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος. 93

(Translation⁹⁴: 'For Christ also died [suffered]⁹⁵ for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit; in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water')

It has been pointed out by J.N.D. Kelly⁹⁶ and other scholars that there are various problems connected with the interpreta-

93. Aland, Kurt; Black, Matthew et al. post Nestle (ed.): Novum Testamentum Graece. Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1898 und 1979, 26 neu bearbeitete Auflage; pp 604 - 605.

94. May, Herbert G. and Metzger Bruce M. (ed.): The Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised Standard Version (1952): New York Oxford University Press, 1962; p 1475.

95. "died" translates a variant reading in Π...Α... and other manuscripts.

96. The Epistles of Peter and Jude London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969. Reprinted 1976; pp 153 - 157.

tion of these verses, the first of which is the question of who these spirits were. Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130 - c.200) according to R.T.A. Murphy, O.P.⁹⁷, was the first to explain Christ's preaching in Hades as the proclamation of the Gospel to those of the departed who could profit from it. It will be useful to begin with Irenaeus in order later to evaluate St. John of Damascus' teaching on the faithful departed: so we quote here from Irenaeus' Contra Haereses, Bk. IV, Chapter 27 Par. 2 (P.G. VII, Col. 1058):

Et propter hoc Dominum in ea, quae sunt sub terra, descendisse, evangelizantem et illis adventum suum, remissione peccatorum existente, his qui credunt in eum. Crediderunt autem in eum omnes qui sperabant in eum, id est qui adventum ejus praenuntiaverunt, et dispositionibus ejus servierunt, justi, et prophetae, et patriarchae: quibus similiter ut nobis remisit peccata, quae non oportet nos imputare his, si quominus contemnimus gratiam Dei.

[Translation (writer's): 'And on account of this, the Lord descended to those regions under the earth, preaching the good news of His coming also to those there, there being

97. (ed.) St. Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theol, London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1965. Blackfriars Ed., Vol LIV., p 213.

remission of sins for those who believe in Him. But all did believe in Him who hoped in Him, that is, those who proclaimed beforehand His coming and kept His ordinances, the righteous, the prophets and the patriarchs whose sins He remitted as He remitted ours, sins which it is not right for us to hold against them, unless we despise the grace of God.]

Even in so early an author, we can notice an interpretation of 1 Peter 3 v 19 which today would be questioned. For Irenaeus, "the spirits in prison" are definitely human souls and their prison is the nether regions, the Hades thought to be situated under the earth. One of the problems with this view of 1 Peter 3 v 19 is that the verb *τροπευθεῖς*... in that verse is used nowhere in the New Testament to refer to a descent to Hades⁹⁸: Secondly, the context of 1 Peter 3 v 19 seems to imply that only those who were disobedient before and up to the time of the Flood were "in prison". However, Irenaeus takes the view that these spirits were those of the patriarchs, prophets and righteous men who proclaimed Christ's coming. Irenaeus seems therefore to take a view that conflicts with the view of Peter that the spirits were the sinful who remained obdurate in the time of Noah. However, Irenaeus' view prevailed, influenced as it was by an allegorical interpretation of the Flood as the baptism instituted by Christ.⁹⁹

98. Kelly, J.N.D.: op. cit., pp 155 - 6.

99. Though Peter first suggested Baptism to be the antitype of the Flood.

It is obvious, though, that Irenaeus believed it was the Jews who lived before Christ's coming who were "in prison" or in Hades. The implication is further that not everybody in Hades benefitted by our Lord's preaching and was freed by our Lord who were saved from that prison. But who were those who believed? Irenaeus answers:¹⁰⁰

Crediderunt autem in eum omnes qui sperabant in eum, id est, qui adventum eius praenuntiaverunt, et dispositionibus ejus servierunt, justi et prophetae, et patriarchae.

[Translation (vide supra): 'But all did believe in Him who hoped in Him, that is, who proclaimed beforehand His coming and kept His ordinances the righteous, the prophets and the patriarchs].

This rules out of court a universalist doctrine of salvation by clearly stating a continuity of belief, hope and obedience from this life to the next, even if the belief and prophecy of the Old Testament saints were partial and limited, and their obedience not perfect. What is important from Irenaeus is the possibility of belief leading to the forgiveness of sins for the imperfect after this earthly life.

100. PG VII Col. 1058 [Part of quotation above]

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 - c. 215) extended the descent of Christ to the Apostles as His imitators:¹⁰¹

Αὐτίκα ἀποκαλυφθείσης τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς προτεπραγμένοις μεταμέλονται. Διόπερ ὁ Κύριος εὐηγγελίσαστο καὶ τοὺς ἐν ἁδου. Φησὶ γ' οὖν ἡ Γραφή. « Λέγει ὁ ἁδης τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ. Εἶδος μὲν αὐτοῦ οὐκ εἶδομεν, φωνὴν δὲ αὐτοῦ ἠκούσαμεν » Οὐχ ὁ τόπος δῆπου φωνὴν λαβῶν, εἶπεν τὰ προεληρημένα, ἀλλ' οὐ ἐν ἁδου καταγέντες, καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδεδωκότες, καθάπερ ἐκ τινος νεῦς εἰς Θάλασσαν ἔκοντες ἀπορρίψαντες. Αὐτοὶ τούτων εἰσὶν οὐ ἑπακούσαντες τῆς Θείας δυναμείως τε καὶ φωνῆς. εἴτε τίς ἂν εὐφρονῶν ἐν μιᾷ καταδίκη καὶ τοῖς τῶν δικαίων καὶ τὰς τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν ὑπολαβοῦ εὐχὰς φευχὰς, ἀδικίαν τῆς προνοίας καταγέων; τί δέ; ἀχι δηλοῦσιν εὐηγγελίσθαι τὸν Κύριον τοῖς τε ἀπολωλόσιν ἐν τῷ κατακλισμῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ πεπδημένοις καὶ τοῖς ἐν « φυλακῇ » τε καὶ « φρουρᾷ » συνεχόμενοις; Δέδεικται δὲ καὶ τῷ δευτέρῳ Στρωματεῖ, τοῖς ἀποστάλοις, ἀκολουθῶς τῷ Κυρίῳ, καὶ τοῖς ἐν ἁδου εὐηγγελισμένοις. ἐχρῆν γὰρ, οὐκ αἶ, ὡς περ καταύθα, οὕτω δὲ κακέῖσε τοὺς ἀρίστους τῶν μαθητῶν μεμητὰς γενέσθαι τοῦ διδασκάλου,

101. Stromatum, Lib. VI; PG IX. Col. 265 B5 - Col. 268 B6.

ἵν' ὁ μὲν τοὺς ἐξ Ἑβραίων, οἱ δὲ τὰ ἔθνη εἰς
ἐπιστροφὴν ἀγάγῃ, ταυτέστι τοὺς ἐν
δικαιοσύνῃ τῇ κατὰ νόμον καὶ κατὰ
φιλοσοφίαν βεβιωκότας μὲν, οὐ τελείως δὲ,
ἀλλ' ἁμαρτητικῶς διαπεραναμένους τὸν
βίον. (Col. 2:6)

(Translation¹⁰²: 'Therefore, when the truth had been revealed, they themselves repented of the things they did in the past. For this reason the Lord preached the Gospel also to those in Hades. Therefore Scripture says, "The Hades of destruction says, 'His appearance we have not seen, but His voice we have heard.'" It is not the place, I presume, which heard His voice and said the words spoken above, but those who have been placed in Hades, and have given themselves to destruction, just as from a ship they willingly cast themselves into the sea. These therefore are those who heard the divine power and voice. Since who of sane mind would assume that the souls of both the righteous and the sinful are under a single condemnation, and so pour out wickedness on divine providence? What then? Do [the Scriptures] not make it clear that the Lord preached the gospel to those who perished and to those hemmed in in a "garrison"? But it has been show in the second Stromate, that the Apostles, following the Lord, preached also to those in Hades; for I suppose, just

102. Writer's own.

as here, so also there, the best of the disciples had to be imitators of the Teacher, so that just as He led some of the Hebrews so they might lead the Gentiles to conversion, that is, those people who lived indeed in righteousness according to the Law and according to philosophy, but on the other hand, not perfectly but sinfully continuing their lives.')

Clement of Alexandria thus included both Jews and Gentiles who lived before Christ in the embrace of salvation after life on earth, but only if they had tried to live righteously and not sinned wilfully, but in ignorance. The Gentiles, Clement believed, were saved by the Apostles' also descending to Hades when they had died, in the same way that Christ descended. But this belief that the righteous Gentiles before Christ were saved by Christ's preaching in Hades, or Christ's preaching through the Apostles, was discarded by the Greek Fathers after Clement of Alexandria. In other words, there was a reaction in eschatology both against syncretistic religion and universalism. Instead we find Cyril of Jerusalem (315 - 386 A.D.) defining those liberated by Christ's preaching in Hades, as all the Old Testament saints:¹⁰³

*Ἐν μνήματι πέτρας ἔτεθῃ ἀληθῶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος·
ἀλλὰ πέτραι διερρέαγσαν τῷ φόβῳ δι' αὐτόν·
κατήλθεν εἰς τὰ καταχθόνια, ἵνα κακεῖθεν
λυτρώσῃται τοὺς δίκαιους. Ἐβούλου γὰρ εἶπε*

103. Catechesis IV. De Decem Dogmatibus. De Cruce.. XI De Sepultura. Migne (ed.): PG XXXIII, Col. 469 A9 - B8.

μοι, τοὺς μὲν ζῶντας ἀπολαύσαι τῆς χάριτος,
καὶ ταῦτα τῶν πλείστων οὐχ ὁσίων ὄντων τοὺς
δὲ ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ πολυχρονίως ἀποκεκλεισμένους,
μὴ τυχέειν τῆς ἐλευθερίας λοιπόν; Ἡσαίας ὁ
προφήτης ταυταῦτα περὶ αὐτοῦ μεγαλοφώνως
ἐκήρυξεν· οὐκ ἤθελες ἵνα βασιλεὺς κατελθῶν
λυτρώσῃται τὸν κήρυκα; Δαβὶδ ἦν ἐκεῖ καὶ
Σαμουὴλ, καὶ πάντος οἱ προφῆται, καὶ αὐτὸς
Ἰωάννης ὁ λέγων διὰ τῶν ἀποσταλέντων·
Σὺ εἶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν;¹⁰⁴
οὐκ ἤθελες ἵνα καταβὰς λυτρώσῃται τοὺς
τοιοῦτους;

104. Matthew 11 v 3

(Translation¹⁰⁵: '11. He was truly laid as Man in a tomb of rock; but rocks were rent asunder by terror because of Him. He went down into the regions beneath the earth, that thence also He might redeem the righteous. For tell me, couldst thou wish the living only to enjoy His grace, and that, though most of them are unholy; and not wish those who from Adam had for a long while been imprisoned to have how gained their liberty? Esaias the Prophet proclaimed with loud voice so many things concerning Him; wouldst thou not wish that the King should go down and redeem His herald? David was there, and Samuel and all the prophets, John himself

105. Gifford E.H. (transl.): St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series. Oxford: James Parker and Company, 1894. Vol VII, p 22.

also, who by his messengers said, "Art thou He that should come or look we for another?" Wouldst thou not wish that He should descend and redeem such as these?')

Elsewhere¹⁰⁶ Cyril states more generally who were liberated by Christ's preaching in Hades:

Ἐλυτροῦντο πάντες οἱ δίκαιοι, οὓς κατέπιεν
ὁ Θάνατος· ἔδει γὰρ τὸν κηρυχθέντα βασιλέα
τῶν καλῶν κηρύκων γενέσθαι λυτρωτήν·
εἶτα ἕκαστος τῶν δικαίων ἔλεγε· Ποῦ σου,
Θάνατε, τὸ νίκος; ποῦ σοῦ, ἄδη, τὸ κέντρον;
ἔλυτρώσατο γὰρ ἡμᾶς ὁ νικοποιός.

(Translation¹⁰⁷: 'All the righteous ones, whom death had devoured were redeemed. For it was fitting that the King who had been preached should become the Redeemer of the noble heralds. Then each of the righteous said, "'Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Hades, is your sting?'¹⁰⁸ For the author of victory has redeemed us.'')

Taking these two passages together we discern that Cyril of Jerusalem understood that all the Old Testament saints, whether patriarchs, prophets, kings or holy men, were redeemed

106. Catech. xiv. De Christi Resurrectione etc.XIX; PG XXXIII.

Col. 849 A1 - 6.

107. Writer's own.

108. 1 Corinthians 15 v 55

by Christ when He descended to Hades. Redemption from Hades implies that they then entered Paradise. This last implication is found in another passage from Cyril of Jerusalem, where he writes an elaboration of the words spoken by Christ to the penitent thief (Luke 23 v 43)¹⁰⁹

Ἐκεῖνος διὰ τοῦ ξύλου ἀπέπεσε καὶ σὺ διὰ τοῦ
ξύλου εἰσάγη εἰς τὸν παράδεισον. Μὴ φοβηθῆς
τὸν ὄφιν· οὐκ ἐκβαλεῖ σε· πέπτωκε γὰρ ἐξ
οὐρανῶν. Καὶ οὐ λέγω σοι, Σήμερον ἀπέρρη
ἀλλὰ, σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ· θάρσησον, οὐκ
ἐκβληθήσῃ. Μὴ φοβηθῆς τὴν φλογίνην ῥομφαίαν.
δυσωπεῖται τὸν Δεσπότην. Ὡς μεγάλης καὶ
ἀνεκδιηγήτου χάριτος! οὕτως Ἀβραὰμ ὁ
πίστὸς εἰσῆλθε, καὶ ὁ ληστὴς εἰσερχεται.
οὕτως Μωσῆς καὶ οἱ προφῆται, καὶ ὁ ληστὴς
παράνομος εἰσερχεται. (B1-10)

(Translation¹¹⁰: 'Adam by the Tree fell away; thou by the
Tree art bought into Paradise. Fear not the serpent; he
shall not cast thee out; for he is "fallen from heaven".¹¹¹

109. Catech.XIII De Christo Crucifixo et Sepulto. PG XXXIII.

Col. 809 B1 - 10

110. Gifford, E.H. (transl.): op. cit., p 90

111. Luke 10 v 18.

And I say not unto thee, This day shalt thou depart, but "This day shalt thou be with me."¹¹² Be of good courage: thou shalt not be cast out. Fear not the flaming sword; it shrinks from its Lord.¹¹³ O mighty and ineffable grace! Moses and the Prophets had not yet entered and the robber enters, though a breaker of the law.')

Unless the robber was an exception for all time, Moses, the Prophets, Abraham and the Saints of Old Testament Israel must have entered Paradise soon after the robber did, that is after Christ's death. Our Lord could not have meant that the robber would enter Paradise, having risen from the dead. So he entered Paradise as a spirit just as, though Abraham, the Patriarchs and Prophets had not risen from the dead, they were brought into Paradise in the spirit. The importance of Christ's words to the robber as the sign of man's liberation from Hades can be seen from a short quotation from Athanasius' (296 - 373) Expositio Fidei, par. 1.¹¹⁴:

Ἐν ᾧ ἀνθρώπῳ σταυρωθεὶς, καὶ ἀποθανὼν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ἀνεδήμθη εἰς οὐρανοὺς. Ἀρχὴ ὁδῶν κτισθεὶς ἡμῶν, ἐν τῇ γῆ ὡν ἡμῶν ἔδειξεν ἐκ σκότους φῶς, σωτηρίαν ἐκ πλάνης, ζωὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν, εἰσοδὸν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ, ἐξ οὗ

112. Luke 23 v 43

113. Gen. 3 v 24.

114. PG XXV. Col. 201. B8 - 15.

ἔκβεβλήθη Ἀδάμ, εἰς ὃν πάλιν εἰσῆλθε διὰ
τοῦ ληστού, ὡς εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος. Σήμερον μετ'
ἐμοῦ ἔσθε ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ.

(Translation¹¹⁵: 'In this manhood He was crucified and He died for us, rose again from the dead and was taken into heaven. "Created the beginning of our ways"¹¹⁶, and being on earth, He showed us light from darkness, salvation from error, life from the dead, entry into Paradise, from which Adam had been cast out, into which he again entered through the robber, as the Lord said, "Today you will be with me in Paradise"¹¹⁷)

The words to the robber, then, were a sign of the new possibility, not only of salvation on this earth, but of entry into Paradise from Hades after this life. Just after this quotation, Athanasius calls Christ the *πρόδρομος...*¹¹⁸ who enters Paradise ahead of us. Through the Greek Fathers' interpretation of Luke 23 v 43, the liberation of the Old Testament saints from Hades (which is itself an idea interpreting 1 Peter 3 vv 18 - 20) is connected with Christ's liberation of men and His opening to all, the way to Paradise. This point is brought out differently by Gregory Nazianzenus

115. Writer's own.

116. Proverbs 8 v 22.

117. Luke 23 v 43

118. "forerunner"

who bids his Christian readers to identify themselves with the Christ who descended to Hades¹¹⁹:

Ἄν εἰς ᾄδου κατή, συγκάτελθε. Βῶθε καὶ τὰ
ἐκεῖσε τοῦ Χριστοῦ μυστήρια, τίς ἡ οἰκονομία
τῆς διπλῆς καταβάσεως, τίς ὁ λόγος. ἁπλῶς
σῶσει πάντας ἐπιφανεῖς ἢ κακεῖτους
πλοτεύοντας

(Translation¹²⁰: 'If He descends into Hades, descend with Him. Find out also the mysteries of Christ there, what the plan of His twofold descent was, what the reason was, and whether He simply appeared to all there and saved them, or saved those there who believed.')

Gregory Naziazenus was uncertain whether all in Hades were saved by Christ, or only those who believed in Him.

We have seen that it was really only those who believed in Christ while in Hades who were saved, according to Cyril of Jerusalem, but in his thought all the Old Testament saints must have believed in Christ. However, the point of the readers' descent in mind to Hades is to emphasize that where Christ is, there his servants must be, and therefore Christ leads the faithful departed from Hades, whither they go after death, into Paradise.

119. Oratio XLV In Sanctum Pascha, Ch. XXIV; PG XXXVI.

Col. 657 A14 - B1

120. Writer's own.

Having considered the thoughts of various Greek Fathers prior to St. John of Damascus, let us return to St. John of Damascus' short chapter on Christ's Descent to Hades¹²¹:

Κάτελσεν εἰς ἄδην ψυχὴν τεθωμένην, ἵνα ὡσπερ
τοῖς ἐν γῆ ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἀνέτελεεν ἥλιος¹²²
οὕτω καὶ τοῖς ὑπὸ γῆν ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιά
θανάτου καθημένοις ἐπιλάμψῃ τὸ φῶς.¹²³ Ἔν'
ὡσπερ τοῖς ἐν γῆ εὐηγγελίσαστο εἰρήνην,
αἰχμαλώτους ἄφεσεν, καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψεν,¹²⁴
καὶ τοῖς μὲν πιστεύουσι γεγονός αὐτός
σωτηρίας αἰωνίου, τοῖς δὲ ἀπειθήσασιν
ἀπιστίας ἔλεγχος, οὕτω καὶ τοῖς ἐν ἄδου.¹²⁵ ἵνα
αὐτῶ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων
καὶ καταχθονίων,¹²⁶ καὶ οὕτω τοῖς ἀπ' αἰώνων
λύσας πεπεδημένους, αὐθις ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνεφοίτη-
σεν, ὁδοποιήσας ἡμῖν τὴν ἀνάστασιν

(Translation¹²⁷: 'The soul when it was deified descended into Hades, in order that just as the Sun of Righteousness rose for those upon the earth, so likewise He might bring

121. De Fide Orthodoxa, Book III Ch. XXIX; PG XCIV. Col. 1101.

122. Malachi 4 v 2.

123. Isaiah 9 v 2

124. Isaiah 61 v 1, Luke 4 v 18

125. 1 Peter 3 v 19

126. Philippians 2 v 10

127. Salmond S.D.F. (transl.): John of Damascus: Exposition of the Orth. Faith Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers Vol.

light to those who sit under the earth in darkness and shadow of death: in order that just as He brought the message of peace to those upon earth, and of release to the prisoners, and of sight to the blind, and became to those who believed the Author of everlasting salvation and those who did not believe a reproach of their unbelief, so He might become the same to those in Hades: "That every knee should bow to Him, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth."¹²⁶ And thus after He had freed those who had been bound for ages, straightway He rose again from the dead, shewing us the way of resurrection.')

It is interesting to note, first of all, how much Scripture St. John of Damascus uses in describing the descent of Christ to Hades: there are four or five allusions to scriptural texts and one quotation. The first allusion is to Malachi 4 v 2:

'But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings'. (R.S.V.)

This verse is really a prophecy of a new dawn for a nation of Jews who fear God. St. John applies this insight to the advent of Jesus Christ, comparing Him by implication with the "sun of righteousness" . This sun rose on *τοῦς 2 π. κγ.* (those on earth) (col. 1101 A2), in other words, not just on

126. Philippians 2 v 10

Jews and Gentiles. In the same way as Christ's earthly epiphany was for all on earth, so He descended to Hades "in order that the light might shine also on those sitting under the earth, in darkness and shadow of death." (writer's translation of Col. 1101, A2 - 4). Just as Christ's earthly visitation led to the evangelization of the whole world, so His descent to Hades brought light to all who were there, and all were affected.

In describing the occupants of Hades as *ἐν σκοτέλει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου.....* (Col. 1101 A3), St. John is alluding to Isaiah 9 v 2 which is prophesying an end to foreign invasions even through the coastal lands which have not known God. It is interesting how St. John applies a text which refers to Gentiles, to describe the occupants of Hades who were thought previously to consist mainly of Jews - certainly those whom Christ released were so thought of by previous Greek Fathers.

St. John of Damascus, in alluding to Isaiah 9 v 2, brings universality to Hades and implies that as it was not only Jews who were in Hades, not only Jews were released from there and brought into Paradise. The rest of St. John's exposition further illustrates this point. His third allusion - to Isaiah 61 v 1 and hence to Luke 4 v 18, where our Lord quoted Isaiah 61 v 1 with reference to Himself - shows how St. John applies to all in Hades a text which is the Servant's commission to prophesy to Israel, God's comfort. Christ's use of this text showed His understanding of His mission as not being confined to Israel but extended to the Gentiles. Now St John of Damascus

would hardly narrow down the application of this text to Jews in the underworld; he would rather retain its universal application. St. John of Damascus was probably the first theologian to apply Isaiah 61 v 1 and Luke 4 v 18 to Hades as well as to the world. In doing so He clearly shows that it was not only for the sake of Jews before Christ that our Lord descended to Hades, but for the sake of Gentiles as well.

The application of Isaiah 61 v 1 to those in Hades also stresses the end, for some of them, of blindness and imprisonment there, so that it becomes clear that some of the souls in Hades were released from Hades and entered Paradise. To think of a mere spiritual opening of the eyes or spiritual release from fear while a soul remains in Hades would be a violation of the intention in applying Isaiah 61 v 1 to the souls in Hades. St. John of Damascus clears up the uncertainty of Gregory of Nazianzenus concerning which souls in Hades were released, or whether they were all released; he does this by his extended comparison of Christ's earthly ministry with His ministry in Hades. Although there is no definite allusion, it is fascinating to see how Scripture texts like 1 Corinthians 1 v 18, 1 vv 23 - 24 and John 3 v 36 illuminate the contrast St. John of Damascus draws between those who have believed and those who have not believed. Christ is to the former the *αἴτιος σωτηρίας... ἀλώμενον...* (A7, Col. 1101) ("the cause of eternal salvation") whereas to the latter He is the *ἀπιστίας ἔλεγχος..* (A8, Col. 1101) ("the reproof of unbelief"). This double effect of Christ is the key to the problem of who was liberated from

Hades. St. John of Damascus sees no mitigation in Hades of the conditions for salvation. Belief in Christ is absolutely necessary. Exactly the same conditions applied in Hades when Christ descended there as when Christ preached on earth.

For what cosmic purpose did Christ descend to Hades? He certainly descended to bring the Gospel of life to all in Hades: but whether they believed or disbelieved, our Lord's purpose of bringing all things in the universe in submission to Himself was completed. This purpose of universal submission effected by Christ's preaching in Hades is revealed through St. John's addition of the quotation from Philippians 2 v 10. Interestingly to us, Philippians 2 v 10 reveals cosmic worship of Christ as the purpose for which God exalted Christ, whereas St. John of Damascus understands Philippians 2 v 10 as revealing a cosmic worship of Christ made possible only by Christ's preaching to the whole cosmos - heavens, earth and regions under the earth. Because Christ has been in all parts of the universe, He can be worshipped by all beings in the universe. This seems to be the implication of St. John's alteration of the original context of Philippians 2 v 10.

Finally, the participle *ὁδοποιήσας*..... ("having prepared a road") reminding us of Jesus' words in John 14 v 2, *Πορεύομαι ἑτοίμασαι τόπον ὑμῶν*..... ("I go to prepare a place for you") and of John the Baptist's work as forerunner of the Messiah, explains how Christ, principally by His own resurrection, but also by His descent to Hades, made the road for us to our own resurrection. The use of this verb could be inter-

preted to imply that Christians' road to the resurrection must also take them through Hades, just as Christ went to Hades first, before His resurrection. This is most probably what St. John of Damascus means. But another possible interpretation is to take *ἄδοκλήσας*..... as referring only to the work and example of Christ's resurrection.

This hermeneutic point is very significant for St. John's doctrine of the intermediate state. If the former interpretation applies, then it seems that this is the only place in all John of Damascus' undisputed writings where a doctrine of purgatory is implied. Although De his qui in fide dormierunt claims to be written by John of Damascus, and does teach a doctrine of purgatory, it is doubtful whether St. John of Damascus wrote it. Nevertheless, because De his qui in fide dormierunt represents an important eschatological tradition in the Greek Orthodox Church, the tradition of prayers for the faithful departed, we shall proceed to a brief examination of this work's principal teachings.

4.2. WHAT IS THE INTERMEDIATE STATE OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS AND GREEK TRADITION?

In order to determine the effect of St. John of Damascus' doctrine of the Intermediate state on modern Greek Orthodox eschatology, let us consider Question 67 of Ch. XVI of Con-

stantine Callinicos's The Greek Orthodox Catechism:¹²⁸

'The soul's intermediate state can be defined as a foretaste and pledge of its final condition after its resurrection and judgement. If, that is to say, the souls of the departed have lived according to the will of God, and their final lot is to be Paradise, then and henceforth they foretaste the joys of Paradise, being nearer to God, and rejoicing in His light. If they ended their lives in sin and unrepentance, then and henceforth shall they spend it in misery, and, so to speak, at the gate of Hell. The intermediate state of the soul is not, then, a sleep and unconsciousness; it is a move towards its final goal, without breaking with the bonds of earth altogether. The dead have not forgotten us, nor are they indifferent to us. Hence we are in full communion with them. To those departed ones, who pleased the Heavenly Father with their holy life, we pray that they mediate on our behalf with Him to Whom they are now nearer. To those departed ones who erred, we ask the All-Merciful to show mercy, and, if it is His will, to forgive them. Death does not separate those who have gone before from those who remain. The Judge has not come yet, in order to assign to each person a future of eternal happiness or torment. And the mercies of God are as an unfathomable abyss.'

128. Callinicos C.N. : The Greek Orthodox Catechism. New York: The Greek Archdiocese of North & South America, 1953., p 48.

From this quotation it is quite obvious that Greek Orthodoxy doesn't hold a clear doctrine of Purgatory. That this is so, is even clearer from the previous question in Callinicos's The Greek Orthodox Catechism:¹²⁹

'These are the two future states [Paradise and Hell],¹³⁰ depicted in Holy Scripture; which has never expressed anything whatever concerning a third state, such as a temporary Purgatory in which the souls are supposed to undergo, as through a fire, their purification from the stains of certain sins, before ultimately reaching Paradise.'

This Greek unwillingness to define a doctrine of Purgatory beyond the idea of souls enjoying a foretaste of their final state, was apparent in the ecumenical discussions at the Council of Florence (1438)¹³¹ where the Greeks emphasized that the soul awaits the Final Judgement but is not purified by fire, as the Catholic West taught.

What evidence is there in St. John's writings for a Purgatory after this life?

Apart from the inference from his chapter on the Descent of

129. op. cit. p 48, Q 66.

130. The writer of this thesis has supplied the words in brackets.

131. For a brief outline, cf. New Cath. Encyclopaedia, Vol. 5, pp 972 - 973.

Christ to Hades, an inference which was explained in the previous section, there is no explicit reference to Purgatory as the intermediate state of the faithful departed before they enter Paradise. The whole De Fide Orthodoxa has nothing explicit to say about Purgatory. The only help we obtain is from dubious works of St. John of Damascus, such as De his qui in fide dormierunt, of which the commentator on De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. IV, c. XXIX writes, referring to the author as "quem a Joanne nostro diversum esse ostendemus"¹³²

From the genuine writings of St. John of Damascus we can glean no doctrine of Purgatory other than that found in the Catechism quoted above or put forward by the Greek delegates to the Council of Florence in 1438. We can assume that Greek Orthodoxy has remained faithful firstly to the Biblical silence on Purgatory as an intermediate state and secondly to the Greek Fathers' hesitance to define closely a matter inaccessible to knowledge. The last of the Greek Fathers, St. John of Damascus, appears silent on the intermediate state as purgatory, not because all the Greek Fathers before him were silent on the matter, but perhaps because of the excesses of some purgatorial teaching and the danger of universalism, an error of Origen already condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 543 A.D.¹³³.

132. Notae, Col. 1102, PG XCIV.

133. J. Neuner S.J., J. Dupius S.J.(revised ed.): The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church. London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1983; p 682.

The intermediate state of the departed has been approached in Greek thought mainly through the doctrine of the communion of saints and prayer for the faithful departed. This is illustrated by treatises of a selection of Greek Fathers: Gregory of Nyssa: De Mortuis; John Chrysostom: De Anima, De Morte, Quod mortui non ita vehementer plangendi sint and a spurious work of John of Damascus: De his qui in fide dormierunt.

It is important that we do not pass over in silence the last named work, even though it is uncertain whether St. John of Damascus wrote it, since the work embodies many insights of previous Greek Fathers. De his qui in fide dormierunt teaches that the prayers, alms and offerings of the faithful are able to prevail on God to save from hell Christians who died without proper preparation and who had lived carelessly, and to translate them to Paradise. The author of this work quotes Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in Par. 4 of his treatise with reference to a priest's prayer for one who has died:¹³⁴

*Ἡ μὲν οὖν εὐχή τῆς Θεαρχικῆς ἀγαθότητος
δεῖται, πάντα μὲν ἀφείναι τὰ δι' ἀνθρωπίνην
ἀσθένειαν ἡμαρτημένα τῷ κεκοιμημένῳ,*

134. De Eccles. Hier. Cap. VII. iv.; PG III Col. 560 A9 -
B3.

κατάξει δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν φωτὶ καὶ γῶρα ζώντων, εἰς
κόλπους Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ, ἐν
τόπῳ οὗ ἀπέδρα ὀδύνη καὶ λύπη καὶ στεναγμός.

(Translation¹³⁵: "So then the prayer begs the divine Goodness first to forgive the departed one all the sins committed on account of human weakness and then to allot him to the light, and to the land of the living, to the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the place from which travail, grief and groaning have fled.")

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 500 A.D.) here teaches that priestly prayer can bring a departed Christian who has committed minor sins διὰ τῶν ὀφειλῶν ἀσθενείων..... (A10) into Paradise. It is not clear merely from this quotation whether it is a purgatory from which God brings the Christian or from Hell. However, the thought is not that God, as a result of prayer, will only on Judgement Day allot the Christian to Paradise, but that He does so now. The κόλποι..... Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ... (B1 - 2) ("the bosom of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob") is not a purgatory but Paradise itself, a view which we find as early in Christian history as Luke 16 vv 19-31, where Hades is seen to be Hell, in contrast to the peace and rest of Abraham's bosom (Luke 16 v 23). Just as in Luke, so in Pseudo-Dionysius, the souls of the faithful

135. Writer's own translation.

departed may enter Paradise before the Day of Judgement; but in Pseudo-Dionysius, a soul that has been faithful but had sins of weakness from which it has not repented, can be saved by God through priestly prayer.

In other words, it seems that there is in Greek thought some sort of Purgatory, but this Purgatory becomes eternal Hell if a saint has committed venial sins and is not prayed for after his death. Further, for some people, the prayers of the saints will not have any use. Pseudo-Dionysius makes this point very clearly, lest prayer for the departed be seen to interfere with God's justice:¹³⁶

Εἰ γὰρ ἀμοιβὰς ἀπολήφεται πᾶς ὑπο τῆς Θείας
δικαιοσύνης, ὡν ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ ζωῆ χρηστῶν ἢ
ἑτέρων ἔδρασαν, ἔτέλεσε δὲ τὰς κατὰ τὸν τῆδε
βίον οὐκείας ἐνεργείας ὁ κεκοιμημένος, πρὸς
τίνος ἱεραρχικῆς εὐχῆς, ἐφ' ἑτέραν λήξων
μεταταχθήσεται, πρὸς τὴν ἀξίαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τῆς
ἐνθάδε ζωῆς ἀμοιβαίαν; Ἐγὼ δὲ, ὅτι μὲν
ἀμοιβαίαν ἔχει τὴν ἀποκλήρωσιν ἕκαστος, εὖ
οἶδα, τοῖς λογίοις ἀκολουθῶν. ἀπέκλεισε γὰρ,
φησὶν, ὁ Κύριος κατ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ κομίσεται
ἕκαστος, τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος πρὸς ἃ ἐπραξεν
εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε κακόν. Ὅτι δὲ καὶ τῶ δικαίῳ
αἰ προσευχαῖ κατὰ τὸν τῆδε βίον, μήτε γε μετὰ

136. De Eccles. Hier. Cap. VII. VI.: Migne (ed.) PG III. Cols.

θάνατον, εἰς τοὺς ἀξίους ἱερῶν εὐχῶν ενεργούσει
μόνον, αἷ τῶν λογίων ἡμᾶς ἐκδιδάσκουσιν ἀληθεῖς
παραδόσεις." Ἡ τε πρὸς τοῦ Σαμουὴλ ὁ Σαοὺλ
ἀπώνατο, τὸ δὲ τὸν τῶν Ἑβραίων λαὸν ὤνησεν
ἡ προφητικὴ προσευχή;

(Translation¹³⁷: 'For if everyone receives from the divine justice a reward for those things which he has done in the present life, whether good or evil things, and the departed one has completed his actions in this life, by what priestly prayer will he be allotted to another destiny against the retribution he and his present life deserve? I well know that each will have his lot according to merit in accordance with the Scriptures. For, it says, the Lord has decided, "Each will receive a recompense for the things he has done in the body, whether good or evil."¹³⁸ But the true traditions of the Scriptures teach us that the prayers of the righteous, indeed in this life but much more after death, benefit only those worthy of sacred prayers. Or how was Saul helped by Samuel? Or how did the prophetic prayer help the Hebrew people?')

The author of De his qui in Fide dormierunt assimilated this thinking from the Fathers before him by maintaining that those who led evil lives would not be rescued from Hell by the prayers of the saints. He relates the following anecdote about Gregory Dialogus (Gregory 1 c540 - 604)

137. Writer's own.

138. 2 Cor. 5 v 10.

Γρηγόριος οὖν ὁ Διάλογος, ὁ τῆς πρεσβυτερας
Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπος, ἀνὴρ, ὡς ἴσασι πάντες, ἐν
ἁγιασύνῃ καὶ γνώσει ἐξάκουστος, ᾧ φασὶ, λειτουργ-
κοῦντι οὐράνιος συνελεταύργει, καὶ θεῶς ἄγγελος.
Οὗτός ποτε ἀπὸ τὴν λίθινον πορείαν ποιούμενος,
καὶ στὰς ἐξεπίτηδες, εὐχὴν κραταίαν πρὸς τὸν
φιλόψυχον Κύριον ὑπὲρ συγχωρήσεως ἁμαρτιῶν
Τραϊανοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως πεποιήκεν. ὅς παραυτίκα
φωνῆς Θεοθεν ἐνεχθείσης, αὐτῷ ἐπακήκοε
ταῦτα φησάσης. « Τῆς εὐχῆς σου, φησὶν,
ἐπήκουσα, καὶ συγγνώμην Τραϊανῷ δίδωμι.
σὺ δὲ μηκέτι προσθῆς ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν εὐχὰς
προσενέγκαι μοι. » Καὶ ὅτι τοῦτο γνήσιον
πέλει καὶ ἀδιάβλητον, μάρτυς ἡ Ἐὐαπάσα
καὶ Ἐσπέριος.¹³⁹

139

(Translation¹⁴⁰: 'Then Gregory [who wrote]¹⁴¹ the Dialogues
the Bishop of Rome, the antecedent [see], [was] a man, as all
know, who was renowned in holiness and knowledge, with whom
a divine and heavenly angel celebrated divine service [when
he did]. He was once walking up a stone street, and stopping
on purpose, made earnest prayer to the Lord who loves souls,
on behalf of the forgiveness of King Trajan's sins. [Then]

139. De his ..., cap. 16; PG XCV, Col. 261 D2 - 264 A6.

140. Writer's own.

141. Brackets supplied by translator, throughout the quoted
passage.

he suddenly heard a voice coming from God and saying these things to him: "Your prayer I have heard and I grant pardon to Trajan. But you must no longer offer prayers to me on behalf of the ungodly." That this is true and unexceptionable, all the East and West is witness')

It is significant that this author refers to a Western bishop to prove the point that the Catholic, or whole Church throughout the world, believes in praying for the departed but not for the impious who have departed this life.

The primary reason for praying for the faithful departed is that this action pleases God who loves people and intends us to pray for them. A little earlier in the same De his qui in Fide dormierunt, we find this explanation of the need to pray for the departed before the Parousia of the Lord comes and no time is left to pray for them:

Τὸ γὰρ εἰπεῖν, ὅτι «Σὺ ἀποδώσεις ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ.» ¹⁴² καὶ «Θερίσει πᾶς τις ὃ ἔσπευρε.» ¹⁴³
καὶ τὰ τούτων ἀκόλουθα, περὶ τῆς παρουσίας, πάντως τοῦ Κρίστου, καὶ τῆς τότε φρικτῆς αποφάσεως εἴρηται, καὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου τοῦδε συμπερατώσεως. Τότε γὰρ ὅπως βοήθειας οὐκ ἔσται καιρὸς,

142. Ps. 62 v 12.

143. Gal. 6 v 7.

ἀλλὰ πάντα παράκλησις ἀπρακτος. τῆς
παρηγύρεως γὰρ διαλυθείσης, οὐκ ἔστι
πραγματείας ἐμπόρευμα. Πού γὰρ οὐ πένητες τότε;
πού λειτουργοί; πού ψαλμωδία; πού εὐποία; πού
ἀγαθοεργία; Διὸ πρὸ τῆς ἄρας ἐκείνης ἀλλήλους
ἐπικουρήσωμεν, καὶ τῷ φιλαδέλφῳ καὶ φιλόφρονι
καὶ φιλοψύχῳ Θεῷ τὰ τῆς φιλαδελφίας προσοίσω-
μεν. βέβηται γὰρ ἐν μάλα, καὶ τοῖς ἀσυμφάστως,
καὶ οἷον ἐλπεῖν, ἀνετόμως ἐκδημήσασιν, τὰς ὑπὸ
τῶν τούτοις προσφερομένας τῶν ὑστερημάτων
ἀναπληρώσεις εἰς ἔργον τούτοις καὶ τεράξιν
λογίζεται. Ἡέλει γὰρ οὕτως ὁ φιλόφρονος
κύριος αὐτεῖσθαι, καὶ νέμεν τὰ τῶν ἰδίων
κτισμάτων πρὸς σωτηρίαν αὐτούμενα καὶ τότε
μᾶλλον ὀλικῶς ἐπικάμπτεται. οὐχ ὅταν τις
μόνον ὑπὸ ἰδίας ψυχῆς ἀγωνίζεται ἀλλ'
ὅταν ὑπὲρ τοῦ πέλας τοῦτο ἐργάζεται. Ἐντεῦθεν
γὰρ ἐπὶ τὸ θεομίμητον ἐκτυπῶνται, καὶ τὰς
ἐτέρων δωρεὰς, ὡς, οὐκείας ἐξαιτεῖ χάριτας,
καὶ τῆς τελείας ἀγάπης τὸν ὄρον ἐμπερικλείει,
καὶ τὸν μακαρισμὸν ἐκ τούτου πορίζειται, καὶ
τὴν ἰδίαν σὺν τῇ τοῦ πέλας εὐεργετῇ
ψυχῇν ὅτι μάλιστα. 144

(Translation¹⁴⁵: 'For the sayings, "you shall repay each according to his works"¹⁴⁶ and "Everyone shall reap what he has sown,"¹⁴⁷ and things similar to these, have been said without doubt about the Parousia of the Creator and about the terrible judgement then, and the end of this world. For then will certainly not be a time for help, but all exhortation will be futile. For since all celebration will have been ended, there will be no business and trade. For where will the poor be then? Where will the divine services be? Where the singing of psalms? Where the charitable deeds? Where the good works? Therefore before that hour, let us come to one another's aid, and let us offer the gifts of brotherly love to God who loves men as brothers and cares for people and for souls. For He welcomes especially well the things offered by their relatives and neighbours to make good the shortcomings of those who departed this life prematurely, and so to speak, without preparation, and He considers them as meritorious work and deeds for the departed. For the Lord who loves men so wishes to be begged and to fulfil His own creatures' requests for salvation, and then He is all the more wholly moved, not only when a man struggles for his own soul, but also when he does this for the soul of his neighbour. For in this he is representing in himself the express image of God, and in gifts for others, as if seeking graces for himself, he embraces the limit of perfect love and obtains

145. Writer's own.

146. Ps. 62 v 12.

147. Gal. 6 v 7.

blessing from this and specially benefits his own soul along with that of his neighbour.')

We see here how much the author emphasizes the doctrine of the communion of saints, not in terms of seeking to give messages to the departed, as in spiritualism today, but in terms of the bond linking all the saints in love for one another. Instead of saying that nothing can be done for the departed in Christ, because Christ has done it all, the author urges Christians to benefit the souls of the departed by praying for them and giving gifts on their behalf. He supports this doctrine by showing God's love to be the incentive for prayers for the departed. For God wishes His people to care for the souls of their number, who have departed this life. Because God wants Christians to love and care for their faithful departed, the action of doing so is imitating God's love.

John Calvin, in condemning the purgatorial doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, showed how little he understood of the motivation adduced by the Greek tradition of prayer for the dead, when he wrote thus:¹⁴⁸

'When our adversaries, therefore, object to me, that to offer prayers for the dead has been the practice of more than thirteen

148. John Allen (transl.): John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education 1813. Westminster Press 7th American Edition. Vol. I, Bk. III, Ch. V, pp 741 - 742

hundred years I inquire of them, on the contrary, by what word of God, by what revelation, by what example, it is sanctioned. For they are not only destitute of any testimonies of Scripture in favour of it, but none of the examples of the saints there recorded exhibit any thing like it. Respecting mourning and funeral offices it contains many and sometimes long accounts; but of prayers for persons deceased, you cannot discover the smallest hint. But the greater the importance of the subject so much the rather ought it to have been particularly mentioned. Even the fathers themselves, who offered up prayers for the dead, saw that they had neither a Divine command, nor a legitimate example, to justify the practice. Why, then, did they presume to adopt it? In this, I say, they discovered themselves to be but men; and therefore I contend, that what they did ought not to be enforced for the imitation of others. For since believers ought not to undertake any thing without an assurance of conscience, according to the direction of Paul (Romans 14 v 23), this assurance is chiefly requisite in prayer. Yet it will be urged, it is probable that they were impelled to it by some reason. I reply, Perhaps they sought some consolation to alleviate their sorrow, and it might appear inhuman not to give some testimony of their love towards the dead in the presence of God. The propensity of the human mind to this affection, all men know by experience. The custom, also, when received was like a flame, kindling ardour in the minds of multitudes. We know that funeral rites have been performed to the dead among all nations, and in every age, and that lustra-

tions have been annually made for their departed spirits. For though Satan has deluded foolish mortals with these fallacies, yet he has borrowed the occasion of the deception from a true principle - that death is not an annihilation but a transition from this life into another. Nor can it be doubted, but that even superstition itself convicts the heathen before the tribunal of God, for neglecting all the concerns of a future life, which they professed to believe. Now, Christians, because they would not be inferior to the heathen, were ashamed to perform no services for the dead, as though they had wholly ceased to exist.'

To answer Calvin's arguments, we shall use the treatise De his qui in Fide dormierunt, which was probably written in the eighth century, even if not by St. John of Damascus.

Calvin's first argument is that even a practice 1300 years old can't be justified apart from scripture: if it cannot be justified from Scripture, it cannot be justified at all. Now this premise would not have been shared by the Greek Fathers. For them, the unbroken tradition of prayer for the departed and the examples of saints living after Scriptures were recorded, are sufficient justifications for the practice. However, they used Judas Maccabeus' prayer for his slain soldiers¹⁴⁹ as the

149. 2 Macc. 12 vv 38 - 45

first Scriptural example of prayer for the departed.¹⁵⁰ For Calvin, of course, the Apocrypha was not Scripture.

According to De his qui in Fide dormierunt., the fact that the Apostles instituted prayer for the departed in the Holy Eucharist, and because the whole church has kept the practice ever since the Apostles' time, there must be some good reason for it:¹⁵¹ In other words the author of this work regarded the tradition of the Fathers as stretching right back to the Apostles and thus having divine sanction. Furthermore, this tradition was seen as justifying the imitation of the practice of prayer for the departed throughout the Church's history.

As to the Christians' fear of disgrace among the heathen who burnt the possessions of the dead one along with him, only John Chrysostom (quoted by the author of De his qui in Fide dormierunt) seems to have urged the practice of prayer for the departed by comparing heathen practice to Christian practice¹⁵² Calvin's assertion that this motivation was probably what led the Fathers to adopt the practice of prayer and offerings for the departed, is untrue. We have seen how in In de his qui in Fide dormierunt the author shows his belief that the best motive for praying for the departed is in order to imitate the love of God who wants all to pray for and help one another not only in this life, but also after death.

150. cf. De His qui in fide dormierunt, Cap.3; PG XCV.Col. 249 B

151. PG XCV. Col. 249 B.C.

152. PG XCV. Col. 252 [c.6] C4 - D6.

The final point of difference from Calvin, is that prayers of saints for departed Christians do actually benefit them by turning God's will to deliver Christians from purgatorial fire, or from Hell itself, if those Christians had not repented from less serious sins before they died. It was not a question of prayers doing what Christ's death could not do, but of prayers releasing the love and grace of God so as to save those He wishes to save. However, it is true to say that the Greek church did not confidently pronounce on a doctrine of Purgatory, as the Roman Church did. The cautious hesitation of the Fathers on this topic is maintained.

In concluding this section, we must repeat the conclusion that if St. John of Damascus did not write the treatise De his qui in Fide dormierunt then Callinicos' position in the Greek Orthodox Catechism,¹⁵³ that there is no evidence for a doctrine of Purgatory, was supported by St. John of Damascus, the last and definitive Greek Father. For throughout the De Fide Orthodoxa there is no explicit teaching of a doctrine of Purgatory. Was St. John's silence on this topic merely a tacit approval of the previous Fathers' views, or was it a return to the silence of the New Testament on this subject, an expression of the Church's necessary silence¹⁵⁴ on those matters too mysterious to inquire into?

153. Callinicos C.N.: op. cit., p 48.

154. De Fide Orth. Lib. I, Cap. I.

5. THE NECESSITY OF THE RESURRECTION FOR THE FINAL STATE OF BLESSEDNESS.

Although St. John of Damascus has little to say of Christ's Descent to Hades, and less of the intermediate state of the faithful departed, his teaching on the resurrection is more explicit, albeit not original. Let us consider first his teaching on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

5.1. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

St. John's interest in our Lord's resurrection is mainly speculative, as may be deduced from this passage:¹⁵⁵

Μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν, πάντα μὲν τὰ πάθη ἀπέθετο. φθορὰν λέγω, πέναν τε καὶ δόξαν, ὕπνον καὶ κάματον, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἐγεύσατο βρώσεως μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν, ἀλλ' οὐ νόμου φύσεως. οὐ γὰρ ἐπέευσεν οἰκονομίας δὲ τρόπῳ, τὸ ἀληθὲς πιστούμενος τῆς ἀναστάσεως, ὡς αὐτὴ ἐστίν, ἡ σὰρξ ἡ παθούσα, καὶ ἀναστᾶσα. οὐδὲν δὲ τῶν τῆς φύσεως μερῶν ἀπέθετο, οὐ σῶμα, οὐ ψυχὴν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σῶμα, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν λογικὴν τε καὶ νοερὰν, θελητικὴν τε καὶ ἐνεργητικὴν κέκτηται, καὶ οὕτως ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Πατρὸς καθέβηται, θεῶν θεϊκῶς τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνως τὴν ἡμῶν

155. De Fide Orthodoxa, Lib. IV, cap I. PG XCIV. Col 1101

σωτηρίαν, καὶ ἐνεργῶν, θεϊκῶς, μὲν, τὴν τῶν ὅλων
πρόνοιάν τε καὶ συντήρησιν, καὶ κυβέρνησιν,
ἀνθρωπίνως δὲ, μεμνημένος τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς αὐτοῦ
δυστριβῶν, ὄρων τε καὶ μενώσκων, ὡς ὑπὸ πάσης
προσκυεῖται τῆς λογικῆς κτίσεως. Γίνωσκει
γὰρ ἡ ἀγία αὐτοῦ ψυχὴ, ὅτι τε καθ' ὑπόστασιν τῷ
θεῷ Λόγῳ ἦν ὡς, καὶ συμπροσκυεῖται, ὡς
θεοῦ ψυχὴ, καὶ οὐχ ὡς ἀπείλωσ ψυχὴ. Καὶ τὸ βῆναι
δὲ ἐκ γῆς εἰς οὐρανόν, καὶ τὸ καταβῆναι δὲ
πάλιν ἐνέργειά ἐστὶ περιγραφόμενου σώματος.
Οὕτως γὰρ πάλιν ἐλεύσεται, φησὶ, πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ
τρόπον ἐθεάσασθε αὐτὸν πορευόμενον εἰς τὸν
οὐρανόν.¹⁵⁶

(Translation¹⁵⁷: 'After Christ was risen from the dead He laid aside all His passion, I mean His corruption or hunger or thirst or sleep or weariness or such like. For, although He did taste food after the resurrection, yet He did not do so because it was a law of His nature (for He felt no hunger), but in the way of economy, in order that He might convince us of the reality of the resurrection, and that it was one and the same flesh which suffered and rose again. But He laid aside none of the divisions of His nature, neither body nor

156. Acts 1 v 11

157. Salmond, S.D.F. op. cit., p 74.

spirit, but possesses both the body and the soul intelligent and reasonable, volitional and energetic, and in this wise He sits at the right hand of the father, using His will both as God and as man in behalf of our salvation, energising in His divine capacity to provide for and maintain and govern all things, and remembering in His human capacity the time He spent on earth, while all the time He both sees and knows that He is one in substance with God the Word, and shares as Spirit of God and not simply as Spirit the worship accorded to Him. Moreover, His ascent from earth to heaven, and again, His descent from heaven to earth are manifestations of the energies of His circumscribed body. "For He shall so come again to you," saith he, "in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven."')¹⁵⁸

The meaning of Christians' resurrection stems from the meaning of our Lord's resurrection (a fact on which St. Paul's exposition in 1 Corinthians 15 is based). In terms of our investigation, all the aspects of our Lord's resurrection which were conducive to His bliss will be conducive to ours. How then did our Lord's resurrection increase His happiness? We have already seen in St. John of Damascus' thought that our Lord's resurrection showed us the future resurrection we as Christians will experience. Now the first significant, noteworthy advantage of our Lord's resurrection was that He "laid aside all the passions" (*πάντα μὲν τὰ πάθη ἀπέθετο* PG XCIV Col. 1101, D1 - 2).

158. Acts 1 v 11.

Why was this such an advantage, according to St. John of Damascus?

First, St. John of Damascus does not by *πάθη*..... mean "passions" in the sense of "emotions". He really means "bodily needs" like the needs for water, food, sleep and rest, or the feelings which reveal such needs. Together with this he groups the corruptibility (...*φθαρὰ*.....) of the body.

The fact that our Lord after His resurrection "laid aside" or "put off" corruptibility means that our Lord could never die again: His body was so transformed that it would never again die or become subject to suffering. We do not have to do here with an emphasis on the bliss of our Lord's spirit because it had discarded the body. Against Apollinarius and Origenists, Gregory Nazianzenus had already condemned such teachings:¹⁵⁹

*Εἰ τις ἀποτεθεῖσθαι νῦν τὴν ἁγίαν σάρκα λέγει,
καὶ γυμνὴν εἶναι τὴν Θεότητα τοῦ σώματος,
ἀλλὰ μὴ μετὰ τοῦ προσλήμματος καὶ εἶναι, καὶ
ἦξει, μὴ ἴδου τὴν δόξαν τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ.
Ποῦ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα νῦν, εἰ μὴ μετὰ τοῦ προσλαβόντος,
οὐ γὰρ δὴ κατὰ τοὺς Μανιχαίων λήρους τῶ ἡλίω*

159. Epistola I ad Cleonem; PG XXXVII.Col. 181 A3 - B4.

ἐγκαποτέθειται, ἕνα τμηθῆ διὰ τῆς ἀτεμίας ἢ εἰς
τὸν ἀέρα ἐχέθη καὶ διελύθη, ὡς φωνῆς φύσις,
καὶ ὀσμῆς ρύσις, καὶ ἀστραπῆς δρόμος οὐχ
ἴσταμένης. Ποῦ δὲ καὶ τὸ ψηλαφηθῆναι αὐτὸν
μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν, ἢ ὀφθῆσεσθαί ποτε ὑπὸ
τῶν ἐκκευτησάντων; Θεότης γὰρ καθ' ἑαυτὴν
ἀόρατος. Ἀλλ' ἦξει μὲν μετὰ τοῦ σώματος ὡς
ἐμὸς λόγος, τοιοῦτος δὲ ὅσος τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἐν
τῷ ὄρει, ἢ παρεδείχθη, ὑπερνικώσης τὸ σαρκίον
τῆς Θεότητος. Ὡς περ δὲ ταῦτα λέγομεν
ἀποσκευαζόμενοι τὴν ὑπόνοιαν, οὕτως κἀκεῖνα
γράφομεν διορθούμενοι τὴν καλνοτομίαν.

(Translation¹⁶⁰: 'If anyone should say that He has now laid
aside the holy flesh and that the divinity is without the body,
and that He both exists and will come without the assumed flesh,
he does not see the glory of His parousia. For where is the
body now, unless with what it has assumed? For indeed it has
not been stored in the sun, according to the trash of the Mani-
chees, in order to be honoured through disgrace; or poured
into the air and dissolved, like the nature of sound and the
flow of an odour and the current of lightning not stopping.
Where also is the fact of His being touched after the resurrec-
tion or His being seen some time by those who crucified Him?

160. Writer's own.

For the Godhead by itself is invisible. But He shall indeed come in the body, as is my belief, and He will be such as appeared to the disciples on the mountain, or was shown to them, with the divinity overcoming the flesh. And just as we say some things to remove suspicion, so we write other things to correct new errors.')

In other words, our Lord was raised as a whole person¹⁶¹ without there being any longer the inevitability of a termination to His life. This is how our Lord's discarding of *φθώραν.....* needs to be interpreted. For St. John this is the most important characteristic of our Lord's resurrection: the incorruptible life of Jesus Christ as man and God.

Following on this, St. John adds that our Lord discarded "hunger and thirst, sleep and weariness, and other such things" (*ΠΕΙΝᾶν τε καὶ δίψαν, ὕπνον καὶ κῆματον, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα.....*) (PG XCIV Col. 1101, D2 - 3). These feelings and needs are very much a part of our present human nature, and at first it seems hard to imagine a human life without hunger and thirst and the need for sleep and rest. Why did St. John assert this of Christ? St. John would not have asserted that Christ discarded these human needs unless he had believed that Christ was supremely happy and blessed without them. It seems that the only real yearning of Christ, the yearning for full communion

161. In modern terms, since Hans Kung and others have pointed out the meaninglessness of body - soul dualism: Edward Quinn (transl.): Hans Kung: Eternal Life? London: Collins, 1984; p 137

with the Father unhampered by the restrictions of the body, but rather "with the divinity overcoming the flesh" (to use Gregory Naziazenus' beautiful phrase), was fulfilled when Christ rose from the dead. The beatific vision swallowed up all other yearnings and longings in such a way that if the latter were to continue existing, they would strive in opposition to the beatific vision of Christ. For St. John of Damascus, the Greek idea of the body as a prison for the soul, at least as far as the *πάθη*... were concerned, must still have been a part of his thought, since our Lord's happiness lay partly in discarding the *πάθη*.... For the modern Christian, the discarding of the *πάθη*.... or at least the discarding of feelings of hunger, thirst and weariness is more difficult to conceive. Further, if our Lord intended the words at the Last Supper, "For I tell you, I shall never, from now on, drink from the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes"¹⁶² (*λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν [ὅτι] οὐ μὴ πίω ἀπο τοῦ γυν. ἀπὸ τοῦ γεγῆματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως οὗ ἢ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔλθῃ*).¹⁶³ in a literal sense, it implies that our Lord himself even after the resurrection, still yearns for the coming of God's Kingdom and the wine of that banquet ...

It was not, nonetheless, a wholly intellectual vision of God for which Christ discarded the *πάθη*..., but one in which

162. Luke 22 v 18, writer's translation.

163. Nestle-Aland (ed.): Novum Testamentum Graece Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft. 1898, 26th Edition, p 233.

the humanity's yearnings became the fulfilled yearning for God's full communion, and in this vision of God, our Lord still looks forward to the day on which He shall come again to judge the living and dead. Human feelings are there in Christ still but they are concentrated in His will for our salvation.

St. John explains our Lord's eating the piece of dried fish (Luke 24 vv 42-43) in terms of *ἀλκοχαμία*. - God's plan of salvation - whereby Christ wished to show His disciples that the same human body which died, also rose again. St. John of Damascus clearly states *οὐ γὰρ ἐπέλασεν*..... (PG XCIV, Col. 1104 A1). The modern reader would seriously question whether St. John of Damascus hasn't denuded the humanity of Christ as it was after the resurrection. If Christ was not at all hungry but ate the fish to convince His disciples of the truth of His resurrection, will we, when we rise, be able to eat without feeling hungry beforehand? If we do not feel hungry and yet eat, for what purpose shall we eat? Such questions St. John leaves unanswered, because they were not important.

Nevertheless, he adds the fact that our Lord laid aside *αὐδέν*. *δὲ τῶν τῆς φύσεως μερῶν*... ("none of the parts of His nature") (PG XCIV. Col. 1104 A4) but retained body and soul with all their powers and as such sits at God's right hand. All the divinity and humanity of Christ are used in His reign. His divine and human powers are used for our salva-

tion, as He both wills it and works for it (PG XCIV. Col. 1104 A8 - 9), while particularly His divine power is at work in His providence (πρόνοιά.ν.), His maintenance (συντήρησιω) and governance (κυβέρνησιω....) of all all things.

This share in the divine rule, following His ascension, is to be shared by all the resurrected saints, as their humanity and their whole life will be united to the life of God the World Ruler. Particularly in His human capacity our Lord "remembers the time He spent on earth, while all the time He both sees and knows that He is adored by all rational creation"¹⁶⁴

μ.ε.μ.ν.η.μ.έ.ν.ο.ς. τῶ.ν. ἐ.π.ί. τῆ.ς. γῆ.ς. αὐ.τ.οῦ. δια.τ.ρ.ι.βῶ.ν.,
ἑ.ρ.ῶ.ν. τε. καὶ. γ.ε.γ.ώ.σ.κ.ῶ.ν., ὡ.ς. ὑ.π.ὸ. π.ά.σ.η.ς. π.ρ.ο.σ.κ.υ.χ.ε.ί.
τ.α.ι. τῆ.ς. λο.γ.ι.κῆ.ς. κ.ι.έ.σ.ε.ω.ς..... PG XCIV. Col. 1104, A11-13)

In this teaching, St. John maintains the relevance of our Lord's earthly life for the next life as well as the continuity between this life and the next. The implication is that Christians, too, will remember this life, with its trials and its relationships, in the next life. Memory, therefore, will be a characteristic of human life after the resurrection, just as it is now a part of this life. In addition, our Lord sees and knows that He is worshipped by all rational creatures. Christ's relationship to all creatures is enhanced after the resurrection: therefore His followers' relationship to all creation will also be enhanced after their resurrection.

164. Salmond, S.D.F. op. cit., p 74.

Finally, St. John of Damascus elaborates on Christ's relationship to the Word: His soul knows He is united in hypostasis to the Word of God and is given the same worship as the Word, as "the soul of God" (...*Θεοῦ ψυχὴ*.....) (PG XCIV. Col. 1104 A15). Christology was, for St. John, the main concern of theological writing - hence here the detail about the relationship of Jesus Christ the man to God the Word. We might feel something too Nestorian in this mind of separation, or today we might feel that if the Word was united to a man, Jesus Christ, then the union was so complete that we cannot any longer speak of a relationship between God the Word and Jesus Christ without running the risk of thinking of our Lord as schizophrenic.

The point of St. John's detail on this relationship between the Word and the soul of Christ, for our discussion, is to show the unity of God in Christ receiving all the worship due to Him, and taking up into Himself the assumed human life of Christ. This latter insight, the glorification of a human life, is profoundly important, for the Greek doctrine of deification was based on it. We, like Christ, as Christ's followers will be deified by sharing fully in communion with our Lord and thus sharing in His reign.

5.2. THE RESURRECTION ON THE LAST DAY.

The last chapter of St. John of Damascus' De Fide Orthodoxa deals in great detail with the future resurrection; he also

wrote of the resurrection in his Commentary on 1 Corinthians. Our concern is to demonstrate the necessity of his doctrine of the resurrection for the final bliss of the faithful.

How central is the doctrine of the future resurrection in St. John of Damascus' eschatology? Let us consider the first paragraph of Περὶ ἁναστάσεως..... (Book IV ch. XXVII):

Πιστεύομεν δὲ καὶ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν. Ἔσται γὰρ ὄντως, ἔσται νεκρῶν ἀνάστασις. Ἀνάστασιν δὲ λέγοντες, σωμάτων φάμεν ἀνάστασιν.
Ἀνάστασις γὰρ ἐστὶ δευτέρα τοῦ πεπτωκότος στάσις αἵ γὰρ ψυχὰὶ ἀθάνατοι οὖσαι, πῶς ἀναστήσουσι; Εἰ γὰρ θάνατον ὀρίζονται χωρισμὸν ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, ἀνάστασις ἐστὶ πάντως συνάφεια πάλιν ψυχῆς τε καὶ σώματος, καὶ δευτέρα τοῦ διαλυθέντος καὶ πεσόντος βίου στάσις. Αὐτὸ οὖν τὸ σῶμα τὸ φθειρόμενον καὶ διαλυόμενον αὐτὸ ἀναστήσεται ἄφθαρτον. Οὐκ ἀδυνατεῖ γὰρ ὁ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐκ τοῦ χοῦ τῆς γῆς αὐτὰ συστησάμενος, πάλιν ἀναλυθὲν καὶ ἀποστραφὲν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐξ ἧς ἐλήφθη, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Ἀγιοουργοῦ ἀπόφασιν, πάλιν ἀναστήσει αὐτό.

(PG XCIV. Col. 1220 A - B1)

(Translation¹⁶⁵: 'We believe also in the resurrection of the dead. For there will be in truth, there will be, a resurrection

165. Salmond, S.D.F.: op. cit., p 99

of the dead, and by resurrection we mean resurrection of bodies. For the souls are immortal, and hence how can they rise again? For if they define death as the separation of soul and body, resurrection surely is the re-union of soul and body, and the second state of the living creature that has suffered dissolution and downfall. It is, then, this very body, which is corruptible and liable to dissolution, that will rise again incorruptible. For He, who made it in the beginning of the sand of the earth does not lack the power to raise it up again after it has been dissolved again and returned to the earth from which it was taken, in accordance with the reversal of the Creator's judgement.')

The first point that St. John makes is that we believe in a resurrection of bodies. In his commentary on 1 Cor. 15 v 1,¹⁶⁶ St. John of Damascus quotes St. Paul's words to Timothy about Hymenaeus and Philetus who maintained that the resurrection has already happened.¹⁶⁷ St. John explained how St. Paul in 1 Cor. 15 is writing against this erroneous belief, a belief which St. John sees as the body not being raised, and the resurrection consisting of the purification of the soul

*τῆς ψυχῆς ὁ καθαρμός ἐστίν ἢ ἀνάστασις.....*¹⁶⁸

166. 1 Corinthians 15 vv 35 - 44.

167. 2 Timothy 2 vv 17 - 18

168. PG XCV. Col. 688 C12

This was the false heresy of Hellenism, which could not conceive of man's final blessedness in terms of a soul happily united to a body.

St. John Chrysostom in his De Resurrectione Mortuorum writes of how the bodies of the departed are called σκηναματα...¹⁶⁹ ('tents' or 'temples') and applying 2 Cor. 5 v 1 to this, he notes the use of καταλυθη..... in 2 Cor. 5 v 1 to show that the human body is not obliterated and destroyed altogether so as never to be raised. Rather the body suffers dissolution in order to rise more radiant and brilliant.

St. John Chrysostom further refutes the Gnostic idea of an evil body, evil because it is material, when in the same homily he distinguishes between corruptibility and the body and shows that death and corruptibility entered the world through sin whereas the body was God's work. This leads to the conclusion that St. Paul in writing "we do not wish to put off [the body]"¹⁷⁰ did not mean "we do not wish to lay aside corruption of the body" but "we wish to put on the body the clothing of immortality, having taken off the clothing of corruptibility"¹⁷¹

With this background in mind, that the Christian yearns not to be a soul without a body, but rather to remain a complete person but with an immortal body, St. John of Damascus wrote

169. PG L: Col. 427

170. 2 Cor. 5 v 4

171. PG L: Col. 428

clearly that the Resurrection is a resurrection of bodies (PG XCIV Col. 1220 A3). Souls cannot rise because they are immortal: this is not preaching the immortality of the soul rather than the resurrection. St. John is instead affirming the incompleteness of the soul without the body. The resurrection joins together body and soul so that the creature which once lived, lives again - it has a "second state, or rising to life" *.Δευτέρα.στάσις.*¹⁷². It is therefore apparent why St. John of Damascus writes so little of the intermediate state of the departed. The creature, man, only really lives again when he rises on the Last Day as a new human being, and yet his soul survives death. His resurrection as complete human being body and soul, is necessary to his life and his final blessedness.

But what happens if there is no resurrection? St. John of Damascus St. Paul's expanded quotation of Isaiah 22 v 13 in 1 Cor. 15 v 32:¹⁷³

*Εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν,
αἴψιον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν.*

St. John argues that if there is no resurrection, then we all might as well live lives of pleasure. In essence, we might as well try to enjoy Paradise here and now, knowing that another

172. PG XCIV. Col. 1220 A4.

173. Nestle-Aland (ed.): Novum Testamentum Graece, 1979 ed.,
p 468.

will never come. Secondly, if there is no resurrection, we don't differ from the animals whose only life is lived once, on this earth. These animals are then happier than we are, since in this life on earth, they have no sorrow. What St. John is really saying, from our point of view, is that there can be no Paradise without resurrection after this life. Even though the faithful departed have a foretaste of Paradise, this will be meaningless if the foretaste is not followed by the whole banquet, the Paradise enjoyed by resurrected Christians.

The second argument for the resurrection is also a moral one. If there is no resurrection, there is no God or Providence and no justice by which the wicked in this life will be punished hereafter or the righteous given rest and joy:

Εἰ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνάστασις, οὐδὲ Θεὸς ἐστίν, οὐδὲ
πρόνοια, αὐτομάτως δὲ πάντα ἄγονταί τε καὶ
φέρονται. Ἴδού γὰρ ὁρῶμεν πλείστους δικαίους
μὲν πεινομένους καὶ ἀδικουμένους, καὶ μηδεμίαν
ἐν τῷ παρόντι βίῳ τυγχάνοντας ἀντιλήψεως,
ἁμαρτωλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀδίκους ἐν πλούτῳ καὶ πάσῃ
τρυφῇ εὐθηνούντας. Καὶ τίς ἂν τοῦτο δικαιοκρίσιαν
ἢ σαφῆς προνοίας ἔργον εὖ φρονῶν ὑπολάβῃ; Ἔσται
οὖν ἔσται ἀνάστασις. Δίκαιος γὰρ ὁ Θεός, καὶ
τοῖς ὑπομένουσιν αὐτὸν μισθαποδοτῆς γίνεσθαι.

(Translation¹⁷⁴: 'If there is no resurrection, neither is there any God nor Providence, but all things are driven and borne along of themselves. For observe how we see most righteous men suffering hunger and injustice and receiving no help in the present life, while sinners and unrighteous men abound in riches and every delight. And who in his senses would take this for the work of a righteous judgement or a wise providence? There must be, therefore, there must be, a resurrection. For God is just and is the rewarder of those who submit patiently to Him.')

In modern terms, if there is no resurrection, the doctrine of evolution is plausible, for then there is no God nor Providence. If wickedness will not be punished nor kindness rewarded, no God exists, and everything happens by chance and by itself. The resurrection is therefore the means of revealing God's justice and His providence for those who love Him.

But why can't the disembodied soul be the one that receives God's rewards, rather than the soul and body? St. John's answer is that just as in this life it is not the soul that alone does evil or good but man as a complete unit does good and evil, so both soul and body must be rewarded, and not the soul alone. St. Augustine in De Civitate Dei, Book XXII, Ch.

174. Salmond, S.D.F. (transl.): op. cit., p 99.

XXVII sums up the Christian teaching which could result if Plato (who said holy souls would return to bodies) and Porphyry (who said that souls will not return to evils) agreed:¹⁷⁵

'Haec itaque non erunt nisi illa quae promittit Deus beatas animas in aeternum cum sua aeterna carne victuras. Hoc enim, quantum existimo, iam facile nobis concederent ambo, ut qui faterentur ad immortalia corpora redituras animas esse sanctorum ad sua illas redire permetterent in quibus mala huius saeculi pertulerunt, in quibus Deum, ut his malis carerent, pie fideliterque coluerunt.'

(Translation¹⁷⁶: 'So these bodies will be none other than those which God promises, when he says that blessed souls will live for ever with their own eternal flesh. For I think that both would readily grant that those who agreed that the souls of holy men would return to immortal bodies, would permit them to return to their own, in which they endured the evils of this world, and in which they piously and faithfully served God in order to escape these evils.')

St. John of Damascus writes more firmly than Augustine about the active role of the body and soul together, in good and evil actions, that St. Augustine does here, but both theologians

175. Green, William (transl. & ed.): St. Augustine: City of God. Loeb Class. Library, Vol. VII, p 350.

176. Green, William (transl.): op. cit., p 351.

recognized the necessary unity of body and soul for a complete and happy life, a unity recognized much more fully by modern theologians.

After quoting many passages of Scripture to motivate and prove the resurrection from the dead, St. John of Damascus closes his mighty exposition of faith with these expressions of hope:

Ἀναστήσομεθα τοιγαροῦν, τῶν ψυχῶν πάλιν
ἐνούμενων τοῖς σώμασιν, ἀφθαρτιζόμενοι,
καὶ ἀποδυόμενοι τὴν φθορὰν, καὶ παραστήσο-
μενθα τῷ φοβερῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ βήματι· καὶ
παραδοθήσεται ὁ διάβολος καὶ οἱ δαίμονες
αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος αὐτοῦ, ἦγουν ὁ
Ἀντίχριστος, καὶ οἱ ἄσεβεῖς, καὶ οἱ αμαρτωλοὶ
εἰς τὸ πῦρ αἰώνιον· οὐχ ὑλικόν, οἷον το παρ'
ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' οἷον ἃν εἶδεῖν ὁ Θεός. Οὐ δὲ τὰ
ἀγαθὰ πράξαντες ἐκλάμπουσιν, ὡς ὁ ἥλιος
σὺν ἀγγέλοις εἰς βίην αἰώνιον, σὺν τῷ Κυρίῳ
ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ; ὁρῶντες αὐτὸν ἄει, καὶ
ὀρώμενοι, καὶ ἀληκτοὶ τὴν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ εὐφρο-
σύνην καρποῦμενοι, αἰνοῦντες αὐτὸν σὺν Πατρὶ
καὶ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, εἰς τοὺς ἀπείρους αἰῶνας
αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

(Translation¹⁷⁷: 'We shall therefore rise again, our souls being once more united with our bodies, now made incorruptible and having put off corruption, and we shall stand beside the awful judgement-seat of Christ: and the devil and his demons and the man that is his, that is the Antichrist and the impious and the sinful, will be given over to everlasting fire: not material fire like our fire, but such fire as God would know. But those who have done good will shine forth as the sun with the angels into life eternal, with our Lord Jesus Christ, ever seeing Him and being in His sight and deriving unceasing joy from Him, praising Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit throughout the limitless ages of ages. Amen.')

The Christian hope is not merely for immortality of the soul, but for the eternal blessedness of a complete human life, as St. John declares: τῶν ψυχῶν πάλιν ἐνουμένων.. τοῖς σώμασιν. ("our souls being once more united with our bodies"). The word ..πάλιν..... is very important - it shows that St. John envisaged the soul's union with essentially the same body, so that there is fullness of continuity between the first state of life on this earth and the second in a new universe. The word πάλιν. also shows the soul's need to be united with the body. In this way, it is obvious that the resurrection is indispensable for the final state of the blessed, because of the way in which God has created

177. Salmond, S.D.F.: (transl.): op. cit., p 101.

man. But, as we saw from St. John Chrysostom, it is not a corruptible body that the soul longs to be one with, but rather one that is immortal. Therefore St. John of Damascus adds the participle *ἀφθαρτισθένους*..... ("made incorruptible"). This is the human longing - not only for immortality of soul, but also for immortality of body.

Finally, we shall have to stand before the tribunal of Christ to hear our judgements confirmed. There is no thought here of having been purified after death, but only of having the judgment confirmed which all people begin to experience after death. And after the condemnation of Satan, demons, Antichrist, the impious and the sinful, all hindrance to the bliss of the blessed is removed. Then at last "those who have done good" will receive their reward, but this is expressed in a way characteristic of the whole Greek tradition: *οἱ δὲ..... τὰ ἀγαθὰ πράξαντες ἐκλάμπουσιν.....* (Col. 1228 A9) ("Those who have done good will shine forth ...") Here we see how he uses the image of light to express the final state of the blessed: in this way St. John bypasses the question of whether the final state of the blessed is a reward or a gift of grace. He seems to imply that only at the end of time will the righteousness of the righteous really flower, since all evil hindrances will have been removed. Their light in this life may have been weak, because of the abundance of darkness, but then they will shine like the sun, with full brilliance.

The use of the sun as an image of brightness to show the glory of the glory of the blessed, also expresses the Greek idea of the deification of the elect. Athanasius used the images of sun and light to apply to God the Trinity, particularly the relation of the Word to the Father as the rays of the sun to their source.¹⁷⁸ Byzantine theology applied the sun and its rays to express God's revelatory energies by which God is known but remains unknowable in His being. So St. John of Damascus uses this image to express the glory of the elect, which is the glory of God, and the communion of the saints and the angels with God, a communion which is deification and eternal life.

Finally, the vision of God, the presence of God and the praise of God are the elements constituting the eternal bliss of the saints. Being with the Lord Jesus Christ and in Him, Christians become part of the tree of life: therefore John of Damascus appropriately uses the phrase: *καὶ ἀληκτοῦ τῆν ἀντ' αὐτοῦ.. εὐφροσύνην.. καρπούμενοι.* (PG. XCIV..Col..1228.A12)... ("and bearing the unceasing fruit of gladness from Him")¹⁷⁹

So the Tree of Life, Jesus Christ, is indispensably the cause of the faithful's bliss and life. But it is not only the Lord Jesus Christ who is the bliss of the faithful. They praise

178. Cf. for example, Athanasius: De Sententia Dionysii, 24; PG XXV B.C.

179. Writer's translation.

Him together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and so the fruit produced and enjoyed by the faithful will be to praise the Blessed Trinity forever.

5. CONCLUSION: This thesis has surveyed various aspects of St. John's doctrine of heaven in the light of Greek tradition previous to him. It has been found that the doctrine of the intermediate state of the departed plays a far smaller role in St. John of Damascus' writings than even in some Greek Fathers before him. Unlike the Western doctrinal developments, in the East St. John of Damascus was silent on matters of faith not deducible from Scripture as well as handed down in the tradition of the Fathers: while in the West, purgatory was developing as a fixed doctrine and its links with the doctrine of penance were being made firmer, in the East the doctrine of heaven as the final state of the blessed overshadowed any doctrine of purgatory, so that holiness in this life was given incentive by the picture of the final glory of the saints. This final glory St. John presents as the fulfilment of the saints' righteous in this life, and of their contemplation of God, begun in this life. We have investigated various aspects of the Paradise of Adam and Eve and have noted the importance of the tree of life as a symbol of converse with God, while the tree of knowledge was viewed with doubt by St. John, as being in any way suitable for Adam and Eve in their newness of life and faith.

Lastly, we have seen the indispensability of the doctrine of the resurrection to St. John of Damascus' eschatology. We conclude that St. John of Damascus, though mainly a Christological theologian and writer on icons, albeit not an original theologian, has bequeathed to the whole Church a surprisingly relevant eschatology of heaven, particularly for the twentieth century, because of his silence on so much that in the West caused dogmatic dispute,¹⁸⁰ and because of his expression of the final state of the blessed in such rich imagery.

180. Even St. Augustine had many matters concerning heaven which required much discussion, even in a work like De Civitate Dei.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Migne, J.P. (ed.): Patrologia Graeca (accurante et denuo recognoscente): Patrologia Graeca. Petit - Montrouge, Paris, 1857 - 1866.

John of Damascus: De Fide Orthodoxa; PG XCIV

Oratio II: De Imaginibus; PG XCIV.

In Epistolam ad Corinthios I; PG XCV.

Laquien, Michael (ed. & transl.): Opera Omnia S. Joanni Damasceni. Venetiis: Apud Jo. Baptistam Albrizzi Hieron. Fil., 1748.

John of Damascus: De His qui in fide dormierunt; PG XCV

(or author unknown)

Salmond, S.D.F. (transl.): John of Damascus' Exposition of the Orthodox Faith. A Select Library of Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian church. Second Series. Oxford: James Parker & Company, 1899: Vol IX.

Athanasius of Alexandria: Expositio Fidei; PG XXV

De Sententia Dionysii; PG XXV.

Basil the Great: De Paradiso, Oratio III; PG XXX.

Chrysostom, John: De Resurrectione Mortuorum; PG L

In Genesim Homilia XVI: PG LIII.

Clement of Alexandria: Stromateis; PG IX.

- Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechesis IV: De Decem Dogmatibus; PG XXXIII
Catechesis XIII: De Christo Crucifixo et Sepulto; PG XXXIII
Catechesis XIV: De Christi Resurrectione etc.; PG XXXIII.
- Gregory Naziazenus: Oratio XXXIII; PG XXXVI.
Oratio II. Apologetica; PG XXXV.
Oratio XXXVIII: PG XXXVI.
Oratio XXXIX: PG XXXVI.
Oratio XLV: PG XXXVI.
Epistola ad Cleonem; PG XXXVII.
- Gregory of Nyssa: In Cantica Canticum. Homilia XII; PG XLIV.
- Irenaeus: Contra Haereses; PG VII
- Maximus the Confessor: Quaestiones ad Thalassium PG XC.
- Nemesius: De Natura Hominis: PG XL
- Origen: Contra Celsum: PG XI
De Principiis; PG XI
In Genesim; PG XII.
- Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite:
De Divinis Nominibus PG III
Mystica Theologia PG III
De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia PG III.

Jackson, B. (transl.): Basil: Homily III. "The Firmament" in The Hexaemeron. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Oxford: Parker & Company, 1894: Vol. VIII.

Gifford, E.H. (transl.): St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures. A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series Oxford: James Parker & Company, 1894. Vol. VII.

Rolt, C.E. (transl.): The Divine Names. London. S.P.C.K.: 1940; 10th Impression, 1983.

Translations of works other than the Greek Fathers.

Allen, John (transl.): John Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion. Philadelphia. Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1813. Westminster Press, 7th American Edition, Vol. I.

Armstrong, A.H. (transl.): Plotinus: Enneads I.6.7. London William Heinemann Ltd. 1966., Vol. I.

Bury, R.G. (transl.): Plato: Timaeus, Critias. Cleitophon, Menexemus, Epistles. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London William Heinemann Ltd. PLATO, Vol. IX. 1929. Reprinted 1981.

Edwards, J.W., Bussey O. & Knight, Harold (transl.):

Barth, Karl: Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Creation,

Vol. III. 1 Edinburgh: T & T. Clark: 1958.

Green, William (transl. & ed.): St. Augustine: City of God.

Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press. London:

William Heinemann Ltd.: Loeb Classical Library, 1972.

Moorhouse, Asheleigh (transl.): Lossky, Vladimir. The Vision
of God. Clayton, Wisconsin: The Faith Press, 1963.

R.T.A. Murphy, O.P. (transl. & ed.): St. Thomas Aquinas:

Summa Theologiae. London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1965. Black-
friars Edition, Vol. LIV.

Pelikan, Jaroslav (transl. & ed.): Luther's Works. Saint

Louis, Missouri; Concordia Publishing House, 1958, Vol. I

Lecture on Genesis.

Quinn, Edward (transl.): Hans K^ung: Eternal Life? London:
Collins, 1984.

Shorey, Paul (transl.): Plato: The Republic. Loeb Classical
Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1935. Reprinted 1980.

Other Authors (not reference works)

Callinicos, C.N.: The Greek Orthodox Catechism. New York:
The Greek Archdiocese of North & South America, 1953.

Kelly, J.N.D.: The Epistles of Peter and Jude. London: Adam
& Charles Black, 1969. Reprinted 1976.

Simon, Ulrich: Heaven in the Christian Tradition. London:
Rockliff, 1958.

Reference Works.

Aland, Kurt; black, Matthew et alii post Nestle (ed.): Novum
Testamentum Graece. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.
1898 und 1979. 26 neu bearbeitete Auflage.

May, Herbert G. and Metzger, Bruce M. (ed.): The Oxford Annotated
Bible. Revised Standard Version (1952): New York, Oxford
University Press, 1962.

Bromily, G.W. (transl.): Kittel, Friedrich (ed.): A Theological
Dictionary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan:
Eerdmans, 1967; Vol. V.

Jones, H.S. (revised): Liddell & Scott: A Greek-English Lexicon.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925.

Lampe, G.W.H. (ed.): A Patristic Greek Lexicon. Oxford:
Clarendon Press, 1961.

J. Neuner, S.J. & J. Dupius, S.J. (revised ed.): The Christian
Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church. London:
Collins Liturgical Publications, 1983.

Richardson, Alan & Bowden, John (ed.): A New Dictionary of
Christian theology. London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1983. Second
Impression. 1984.

The New Catholic Encyclopaedia. Washington, D.C. The Catholic
University of America, 1967. Reprinted 1981. Vols. 5 & 7.
