

# *Confessions of Cyprianus, the Penitent Sorcerer of Antioch*



## The Pagan Sorcerer of Antioch is the antipode of Manes, the Persian prophet and founder of Manichaeism.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ST. CYPRIAN OF ANTIOCH) XIV pp. 162-67. Excerpts from the confessions of the pagan magician of Antioch were translated into English by H.P. Blavatsky from the French of Jules de Mirville. Frontispiece by Ilene Meyer.

The Aiōns (Stellar Spirits) — emanated from the Unknown of the Gnostics, and identical with the Dhyāni-Chohans of the Esoteric Doctrine — and their Plērōma, having been transformed into Archangels and the “Spirits of the Presence” by the Greek and Latin Churches, the prototypes have lost caste. The Plērōma<sup>1</sup> was now called the “Heavenly Host,” and therefore the old name had to become identified with Satan and his “Host.” Might is right in every age, and History is full of [163] contrasts. Manes had been called the “Paraclete”<sup>2</sup> by his followers. He was an Occultist, but passed to posterity, owing to the kind exertions of the Church, as a Sorcerer, so a match had to be found for him by way of contrast. We recognize this match in St. Cyprianus of Antioch, a self-confessed if not a real “Black Magician,” it seems, whom the Church — as a reward for his contrition and humility — subsequently raised to the high rank of Saint and Bishop.

What history knows of him is not much, and it is mostly based on his own confession, the truthfulness of which is warranted, we are told, by St. Gregory, the Empress Eudocia, Photius and the Holy Church. This curious document was ferreted out by the Marquis de Mirville,<sup>3</sup> in the Vatican, and by him translated into French for the first time, as he assures the reader. We beg his permission to re-translate a few pages, not for the sake of the penitent Sorcerer, but for that of some students of Occultism, who will thus have an opportunity of comparing the methods of ancient Magic (or as the Church calls it, Demonism) with those of modern Theurgy and Occultism.

The scenes described took place at Antioch about the middle of the third century, 252 A.D., says the translator. This Confession was written by the penitent Sorcerer after his conversion; therefore, we are not surprised to find how much room he gives in his lamentations to reviling his Initiator “Satan,” or the “Serpent Dragon,” as he calls him. There are other and more modern instances of the same trait in human nature. Converted Hindus, Pārsīs and other “heathen” of India are apt to denounce their forefathers’ religions at every opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup> The Plērōma constituted the synthesis or entirety of all the spiritual entities. St. Paul still used the name in his *Epistles*.

<sup>2</sup> [From the Greek *παρακλητος*.] The “Comforter,” second Messiah, intercessor. “A term applied to the Holy Ghost.” “Manes was the disciple of Terebinthus, an Egyptian Philosopher, who, according to the Christian Socrates [Scholasticus], while invoking one day the demons of the air, fell from the roof of his house and was killed.” (*Ecclesiastical History*, lib. I, ch. i, cited by Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont, tome IV, p. 584)

<sup>3</sup> Charles, Jules Eudes de Catteville de Mirville, *Pneumatologie: Des esprits et de leurs manifestations fluidiques*, 1854, Vol. VI, pp. 169-83

## Thus runs the Confession:

[Annotated by H.P. Blavatsky for the benefit of the Students of Occultism]

O all of you who reject the mysteries of Christ, see my tears! . . . You who wallow in your demoniacal practices, learn by my sad example all the vanity of their [the demons'] baits . . . I am that Cyprianus, who, [164] vowed to Apollo from his infancy, was early initiated into all the arts of the *dragon*.<sup>1</sup> Even before the age of seven I had already been introduced into the temple of Mithra: three years later, my parents taking me to Athens to be received as citizen, I was permitted likewise to penetrate the mysteries of *Ceres lamenting her daughter*,<sup>2</sup> and I also became the guardian of the *Dragon* in the Temple of Pallas.

Ascending after that to the summit of Mount Olympus, *the Seat of the Gods*, as it is called, there too I was initiated into the *real* meaning of their [the Gods'] speeches and their clamorous manifestations (*strepituum*). It is there that I was made to see in imagination (*phantasia*) [or *māyā*] those trees and all those herbs that operate such prodigies with the help of demons; . . . and I saw their dances, their warfares, their snares, illusions and promiscuities. I heard their singing.<sup>3</sup> I saw finally, for forty consecutive days, the phalanx of the Gods and Goddesses, sending from Olympus, as though they were Kings, spirits to represent them on earth and act in their name among all the nations.<sup>4</sup>

At that time I lived entirely on fruit, eaten only after sunset, the virtues of which were explained to me by the seven priests of the sacrifices.<sup>5</sup>

When I was fifteen, my parents desired that I should be made acquainted, not only with all the natural laws in connection with the generation and corruption of bodies on earth, in the air and in the seas, but also with all the other forces *grafted*<sup>6</sup> (*insitas*) on these by the *Prince of the World*, in order to counteract their primal and divine constitution.<sup>7</sup> At twenty, [165] I went to Memphis, where, penetrating into the Sanctuaries, I was taught to discern all that pertains to the communications of demons [Daimōnes or Spirits] with terrestrial matters, their aversion for certain places, their sympathy and attraction for others, their expulsion from certain planets, certain objects and laws, their persistence in pre-

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<sup>1</sup> "The *great serpent* placed to *watch the temple*," comments de Mirville. "How often have we repeated that it was no *symbol*, no *personification* but really a *serpent occupied by a god!*" — he exclaims; and we answer that at Cairo in a Mussulman, not a *heathen* temple, we have seen, as thousands of other visitors have also seen, a huge serpent that lived there for centuries, we were told, and was held in great respect. Was it also "occupied by a God," or possessed, in other words?

<sup>2</sup> The Mysteries of Demeter, or the "afflicted mother."

<sup>3</sup> By the satyrs.

<sup>4</sup> This looks rather suspicious and seems interpolated. De Mirville tries to have what he says of Satan and his Court sending their imps on earth to tempt humanity and masquerade at *séances* corroborated by the ex-sorcereer.

<sup>5</sup> This does not look like sinful food. It is the diet of Chelas to this day.

<sup>6</sup> "Grafted" is the correct expression. "The seven Builders graft the divine and the beneficent forces on to the gross material nature of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms every Second Round" — says the *Catechism of Lanoos*.

<sup>7</sup> Only the Prince of the World is not Satan, as the translator would make us believe, but the collective Host of the Planetary. This is a little theological back-biting.



ferring darkness and their resistance to light.<sup>1</sup> There I learned the number of the fallen *Princes*,<sup>2</sup> and that which takes place in human souls and bodies they enter into communication with . . . .

I learnt the analogy that exists between earthquakes and rains, between the *motion of the earth*<sup>3</sup> and the motion of the seas; I saw the spirits of the *Giants* plunged in subterranean darkness and *seemingly* supporting the earth like a man carrying a burden on his shoulders.<sup>4</sup>

When thirty, I travelled to Chaldæa to study there the true power of the air, placed by some in the fire and by the more learned in light [Ākāśa]. I was taught to see that the planets were in their variety as dissimilar as the plants on earth, and the stars were like armies ranged in battle order. I knew the Chaldæan division of Ether into 365 parts,<sup>5</sup> and I perceived that every one of the demons who divide it among themselves<sup>6</sup> was endowed with that material force that permitted him to execute the orders of the Prince and guide all the movements therein [in the Ether].<sup>7</sup> They [the Chaldees] explained to me how those Princes had become participants *in the Council of Darkness*, ever in opposition to the *Council of Light*.

I got acquainted with the *Mediatores* [surely not mediums as de Mirville explains!],<sup>8</sup> and upon seeing the covenants they were mutually bound [166] by, I was struck with wonder upon learning the nature of their oaths to observe, them.<sup>9</sup>

Believe me, I saw the Devil; believe me I have embraced him<sup>10</sup> [like the witches at the Sabbath (?)] and have conversed with him; when I was yet quite young, he saluted me by the title of the new Jambres, declaring me worthy of my ministry [initiation] . . . . He promised me continual help during life and a princi-

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<sup>1</sup> Here the Elemental and Elementary Spirits are evidently meant.

<sup>2</sup> The reader has already learned the truth about them in the course of the present work.

<sup>3</sup> Pity the penitent *Saint* had not imparted his knowledge of the rotation of the earth and heliocentric system earlier to his Church. That might have saved more than one human life — that of Bruno for one.

<sup>4</sup> Chelas in their trials of initiation, also see *in trances artificially generated for them*, the vision of the Earth supported by an elephant on the top of a tortoise standing on nothing — and this, to teach them to discern the true from the false.

<sup>5</sup> Relating to the days of the year, also to 7 x 7 divisions of the earth's sublunary sphere, divided into seven upper and seven lower spheres with their respective Planetary Hosts or "armies."

<sup>6</sup> Daimōn is not "demon," as translated by de Mirville, but Spirit.

<sup>7</sup> All this is to corroborate his dogmatic assertions that Pater Aether or Jupiter is Satan! and that pestilential diseases, cataclysms, and even thunderstorms that prove disastrous, come from the Satanic Host dwelling in Ether — a good warning to the men of Science!

<sup>8</sup> The translator replaces the word Mediators by mediums, excusing himself in a footnote by saying that Cyprian must have meant modern mediums!

<sup>9</sup> Cyprianus simply meant to hint at the rites and mysteries of Initiation, and the pledge of secrecy and oaths that bound the Initiates together. His translator, however, has made a Witches' Sabbath of it instead.

<sup>10</sup> "Twelve centuries later, in full renaissance and reform, the world saw Luther do the same [embrace the Devil he means?] — according to his own confession and in the same conditions," explains de Mirville in a footnote, showing thereby the brotherly love that binds Christians. Now Cyprianus meant by the Devil (if the word is really in the original text) his Initiator and Hierophant. No Saint — even a penitent Sorcerer — would be so silly as to speak of his (the Devil's) rising from his seat to see him to the door, were it otherwise.

pality after death.<sup>1</sup> Having become in great honour [an Adept] under his tuition, he placed under my orders a phalanx of demons, and when I bid him good-bye, “Courage, good success, excellent Cyprian,” he exclaimed, rising up from his seat to see me to the door, plunging thereby those present into a profound admiration.<sup>2</sup>



Having bidden farewell to his Chaldæan Initiator, the future Sorcerer and Saint went to Antioch. His tale of “iniquity” and subsequent repentance is long but we will make it short. He became “an accomplished Magician,” surrounded by a host of disciples and “candidates to the perilous and sacrilegious art.” He shows himself distributing love-philtres and dealing in deathly charms,

. . . to rid young wives of old husbands, and to ruin Christian virgins.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately Cyprianus was not above love himself. He fell in love with the beautiful Justine, a converted maiden, after having vainly tried to make her share the passion one named Aglaides, a profligate, had for her. His “demons failed” he tells us, and he got disgusted with them. This disgust brings on a quarrel between him and his Hierophant, whom he insists on identifying with the Demon; and the dispute is followed by a tournament between the latter and [167] some Christian converts, in which the “Evil One” is, of course, worsted. The Sorcerer is finally baptized and gets rid of his enemy. Having laid at the feet of Anthimes, Bishop of Antioch, all his books on Magic, he became a Saint in company with the beautiful Justine, who had converted him; both suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Diocletian; and both are buried side by side in Rome, in the Basilica of St. John Lateran, near the Baptistery.



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<sup>1</sup> Every Adept has a “principality after his death.”

<sup>2</sup> Which shows that it was the Hierophant and his disciples. Cyprianus shows himself as grateful as most of the other converts (the modern included) to his Teachers and Instructors.

<sup>3</sup> [Elsewhere, the “saint” is credited with saying that “woman is the instrument which the devil uses to get possession of our souls.” — *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PROGRESS AND CULTURE) XII, p. 269]