

Lucian of Antioch

A priest of the Church of Antioch who suffered martyrdom (7 January, 312), during the reign of Maximinus Daza. According to a tradition preserved, Lucian was born at Samosata, of pious parents, following the death of his wealthy parents, he gave away his possessions, and studied rhetoric, philosophy, and Scripture in the neighbouring city of Edessa at the school of a certain Macarius .

Early in life Lucian took up his residence at Antioch, where he was ordained presbyter, and where he soon attained a commanding position as head of the theological school in that city, one of his students was Arius, founder of Arianism. Though he cannot be accused of having shared the theological views of Paul of Samosata, he fell under suspicion at the time of Paul's condemnation, and was compelled to sever his communion with the Church. This breach with the orthodox party lasted during the episcopates of three bishops, Domnus, Timaeus, and Cyril, whose administration extended from 268 to 303. It seems more likely that Lucian was reconciled with the Church early in the episcopate of Cyril (perhaps about 285) than in that of his successor; otherwise it is hard to understand how bishops in the Orient could have received his pupils.

The opposition to the allegorizing tendencies of the Alexandrines centered in him. He rejected this system entirely and propounded a system of literal interpretation which dominated the Eastern Church for a long period. Noted Scripture scholar, working to insure that copyists made the most exact copies possible, correcting copyist errors by comparing against older texts in the original languages. In the field of theology, in the minds of practically all writers (the most notable modern exception being Gwatkin, in his "Studies of Arianism", London, 1900), he has the unenviable reputation of being the real author of the opinions which afterwards found expression in the heresy of Arius.

In his Christological system — a compromise between Modalism and Subordinationism — the Word, though Himself the Creator of all subsequent beings was a creature, though superior to all other created things by the wide gulf between Creator and creature. The great leaders in the Arian movement (Arius himself, Eusebius, the court bishop of Nicomedia, Maris, and Theognis) received their training under him and always venerated him as their master and the founder of their system.

Despite his heterodoxy, Lucian was a man of the most unexceptionable virtue; at the height of the Arian controversy his fame for sanctity was not less than his reputation as a scholar.

During the persecution of Maximinus Daza he was arrested at Antioch and sent to Nicomedia, and spent nine years in prison. Dragged before the emperor as an example, he struggled to his feet and gave a great defense of the faith. He thrown back in the cells, given no food or water for 14 days, then hauled before the tribunal and interrogated; he answered all questions with "I am a Christian." Martyr. He was tortured, starved, and run through with a sword in 312 at Nicomedia, Bithynia; buried at Drepanum (later renamed Helenopolis).

The most enduring memorial of the life of Lucian, next to the Christological controversy which his teachings aroused was his influence on Biblical study. Receiving the literal sense alone he laid stress on the need of textual accuracy and himself undertook to revise the Septuagint on

the original Hebrew. His edition of the complete Bible, known as the Lucian Recension was used by many churches, and by Saint Jerome during his work on the Vulgate.