

COELESTIUS

Written Statement Of Belief

Reconstructed By Rev. Daniel R. Jennings, MA

Synopsis: *In 417AD Coelestius appeared before Pope Zosimus and handed him a written statement of faith, fragments of which are below. These fragments were collected in Augustine of Hippo's two part work entitled "On the Grace of Christ, and on Original Sin". After examining Coelestius and reading his statement of belief Zosimus could find nothing heretical about his beliefs and pronounced him to be orthodox in his faith.*

1. "If, indeed, any questions have arisen beyond the compass of the faith, on which there might be perhaps dissension on the part of a great many persons, in no case have I pretended to pronounce a decision on any dogma, as if I possessed a definitive authority in the matter myself; but whatever I have derived from the fountain of the prophets and the apostles, I have presented for approbation to the judgment of your apostolic office; so that if any error has crept in among us, human as we are, through our ignorance, it may be corrected by your sentence."
2. "[I maintain] that original sin binds no single infant."
3. "That infants, however, ought to be baptized for the remission of sins, according to the rule of the Church universal, and according to the meaning of the Gospel, we confess. For the Lord has determined that the kingdom of heaven should only be conferred on baptized persons; and since the resources of nature do not possess it, it must necessarily be conferred by the gift of grace."
4. "That infants, however, must be baptized for the remission of sins, was not admitted by us with the view of our seeming to affirm sin by transmission. This is very alien from the catholic meaning, because sin is not born with a man,-- it is subsequently committed by the man for it is shown to be a fault, not of nature, but of the will. It is fitting, therefore, to confess this, lest we should seem to make different kinds of baptism; it is, moreover, necessary to lay down this preliminary safeguard, lest by the occasion of this mystery evil should, to the disparagement of the Creator, be said to be conveyed to man by nature, before that it has been committed by man."