The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St Matthew

Volume I

TRANSLATED WITH INTRODUCTION
AND BRIEF ANNOTATIONS BY
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Preface

Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* was, so far as we know, the first commentary ever written on the Gospel of Matthew. It was also one of the last works that Origen produced, along with the *Contra Celsum*, a set of commentaries on the Twelve Prophets, which have perished, and now, it seems, the twenty-nine *Psalm Homilies* discovered in Munich in 2012. The *Commentary on Matthew* is a work written in the last years of Origen's life, and as such it provides important insights into his most mature thought. Moreover, when the Latin translation of the *Commentary on Matthew* 22–27 is combined with the Greek books preserved on chapters 13–22, it is the largest of any of Origen's surviving works.

The question naturally arises about how to read this ancient exposition of Matthew's Gospel. The *Commentary* can be, has been, and will be read in many different ways. No one should read it expecting it to be written like a modern commentary on a Biblical book. Most of the concerns of modern commentators have arisen since the Enlightenment. Some will read the *Commentary* searching for points of Origen's theology or hermeneutics; others will look for information about the church in the third century, its hierarchy or liturgy, or any number of other subjects relating to the church. These are all legitimate readings for there is information on such subjects in the *Commentary*. To read the *Commentary* searching for such information, however, while legitimate from a historical standpoint, misses, I think, the way Origen would want the *Commentary* read. Origen wrote his treatises on Scripture to help people experience and know Jesus Christ, the Logos (Word) of God. The greatest benefit that can come from reading this *Commentary* is to experience this mysterious Logos made flesh through the mind of one of his most devoted and brilliant disciples.

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Eugene, Oregon
July 2017

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Abbreviations

ANF	Ante Nicene Fathers
CCels	Origen, *Contra Celsum*
ComEph	Origen, *Commentary on Ephesians*
ComJn	Origen, *Commentary on John*
ComMt	Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*
ComRom	Origen, *Commentary on Romans*
De Ebr	Philo, *De Ebrietate*
Det	Philo, *Quod Deterius Potiori insidiari solet*
DialHer	Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides*
EpistGreg	Origen, *Epistle to Gregory*
FragLc	Origen, *Fragments on Luke*
FragMt	Origen, *Fragments on Matthew*
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
H. E.	Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*
HomCant	Origen, *Homilies on the Canticle of Canticles*
HomEx	Origen, *Homilies on Exodus*
HomGn	Origen, *Homilies on Genesis*
HomLev	Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus*
HomJer	Origen, *Homilies on Jeremiah*
In Ps	Eusebius, *In Psalmos*
Leg	Philo, *Legum Allegoriae*
LXX	Septuagint
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Paed	Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*
PArch	Origen, *Peri Archon*
Phil	*The Philocalia*
PG	J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Graecae*
PL	J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae*
SerMt	Origen, *Series Commentariorum*
SVF	Joannes ab Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae

Introduction

The *Commentary on Matthew* is the work of unquestionably the greatest mind in the third-century church, and perhaps in the third century in general. Jean Daniélou referred to Origen (third century) and Augustine (fourth century) as 'the two greatest geniuses of the early Church'.[1] The *Commentary on Matthew* is one of three commentaries Origen wrote on the Gospels. He did not write a commentary on the Gospel of Mark; his commentary on the Gospel of Luke is lost in its entirety; and only nine of thirty-two books of the commentary on the Gospel of John have survived. He appears to have written on the entirety of Matthew's Gospel and, while a significant amount of the work has been lost, it is still the largest of all his preserved works.

The *Commentary on Matthew* is also an important document because it is Origen's last preserved exegetical work. He was working on a commentary on the twelve prophets as well near the end of his life, but this is lost. The *Commentary on Matthew* provides us with his mature thought, parallel to the *Contra Celsum* and the *New Psalm Homilies*, both of which were written in the same period of Origen's life as the *Commentary on Matthew*.[2] Origen gives us his final word on many topics in this *Commentary*. I have argued in another work that there are several places in the *Commentary* where he seems either to have changed his mind or to be in the process of rethinking some of the views he had previously held.[3] This *Commentary* invites us into the mind of one of the most brilliant and creative Christian thinkers of all time.

[1] Daniélou (2016/1955) vii.

[2] These writings and their relationship to the *Commentary on Matthew* will be discussed below in the section on the composition of the *Commentary on Matthew* in relation to the *Contra Celsum* and the *New Psalm Homilies*.

[3] See Heine (2010) 219–56.

THE SETTING OF THE *COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW* IN THE LIFE OF ORIGEN

Origen's Early Life in Alexandria

Origen was born in Alexandria, the child of Christian parents.[4] His early education was guided by his father who was a *grammaticos*, a first teacher of children, who seems also to have instructed him in the Scriptures at the same time. We do not know the details of Origen's more advanced education, except that he mentions studying with an unnamed philosopher in Alexandria, and refers a few times to having learned certain things about Scripture from a person he refers to simply as 'the Hebrew'. The latter may have been a Jewish Christian teacher in Alexandria.

Origen's father was martyred when Origen was a teenager. This occurred in AD 203, the tenth year of the reign of the emperor Severus. While Origen alludes to the event only once in his writings, it made a deep impression on him as indicated in his devoted faithfulness to the church and in the manner of his life. The family was left destitute as their property was confiscated. Eusebius suggests that Origen was providentially guided to the home of a very wealthy and distinguished Alexandrian Christian lady, who had an adopted son named Paul. He asserts that the latter was a heretic but recognizes that he was a skilful preacher. Numerous people, both Christians Eusebius labels heretics and those he calls 'ours', gathered regularly at the lady's house to listen to Paul speak.[5] This distinguished, anonymous lady looked after and provided for Origen at a crucial point in his life and made it possible for him to complete the formal education that was to provide the foundation of his life's work; Eusebius says that after his father's death Origen devoted himself completely to the study of literature and became quite proficient as a literary scholar.[6]

Origen began his life as a scholar-teacher in the church in Alexandria in his late teens—according to Eusebius, at least—and continued in this role until his departure from Alexandria in approximately AD 232. His teaching responsibility, conferred on him by Demetrius the bishop of Alexandria when Origen was quite young, was to prepare catechumens for baptism. Sometime in this period Origen became friends with a wealthy Alexandrian Christian named Ambrose. Ambrose became the patron for Origen's later scholarly work. He provided

[4] Information about Origen's biography is dependent on Eusebius, *H. E.* 6, and the paucity of references he makes to himself in his writings. For a detailed account of Origen's life in Alexandria, see Heine (2010) 1–144. See also Urbano (forthcoming).

[5] See Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.2.12–14. [6] See Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.2.15.

Origen with a group of short-hand writers and copyists who took down his spoken words and turned them into works for publication.[7]

Origen produced a number of works at Alexandria, most of which are lost. The two most important for the purposes of our study, and which we have access to either in part or in a later Latin translation, are the *Commentary on John* and *On First Principles*. Only the first five books of the *Commentary on John* were completed in Alexandria, and only the first two have been preserved in their entirety, along with a short portion from the prologues of books four and five. The first two books of the *Commentary* cover only John 1:1–7. When Origen began book six in Caesarea, he began with John 1:19, which indicates that the first five books had only reached this point. We have access to the entirety of *On First Principles*, but, for the most part, only in a Latin translation produced in the fourth century. This important document is a presentation of what Origen considered to be the faith of the late second and early third-century church ordered and argued through his highly perceptive and creative mind.

It was shortly after, and perhaps partly because of, the writing of *On First Principles* that Origen's already tense relationship with the Alexandrian bishop Demetrius broke down completely and Origen left Alexandria. Demetrius had, several years earlier, appointed Origen, then in his late teens, as the catechist of the church in Alexandria, and Origen had proven a very capable and successful catechist, bringing multitudes to the faith, according to Eusebius, and ministering boldly to those on their way to martyrdom.[8] The first overt signs of tension between the two appear during a visit of Origen to Palestine. Demetrius had not ordained Origen, a fact that in his eyes at least meant that he was not allowed to address the assembly of the church. In spite of this, the bishops of Caesarea and Jerusalem, Theoctistus and Alexander, each invited him to preach to their congregations. Demetrius was outraged and immediately recalled Origen to Alexandria; Origen dutifully obeyed.[9] Sometime after this, Eusebius reports that Origen was ordained to the priesthood in Caesarea.[10] This stirred Demetrius' ire even further and, to discredit the act, he circulated a letter announcing that Origen had made himself a eunuch as a boy, and was therefore unqualified to be ordained.[11] We do not know exactly how long Origen continued in Alexandria after this controversy with his bishop erupted, but later he refers to his last times there as 'the storm at Alexandria' that opposed him, and says, in the imagery of the exodus, that he was 'rescued from the land of Egypt, when the God who delivered his people from Egypt delivered us'. He refers to the 'enemy' overrunning him with 'writings which were truly hostile to the gospel', and stirring up 'all the perverse winds in Egypt against' him.[12]

[7] See Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.23 and Origen, *ComJn* 6.9. [8] See Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.1–8.
[9] See Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.19.16–19. [10] See Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.23.4.
[11] See Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.8.5; but cf. 6.8.3. On the question of whether Origen had actually castrated himself, see Heine (2013).
[12] *ComJn* 6.8, 9. Translation by Heine (1989) 170.

Origen's haven from the Alexandrian storm and new home and base of operation from AD 232 until his death in approximately AD 254 or 255 was the church in Caesarea where bishop Theoctistus welcomed this talented, productive, and devoted Christian servant into his flock. Origen was in his mid-forties when this wrenching transition took place. He was also on the threshold of his most productive and influential years.

Origen in Caesarea

Origen entered a somewhat different culture when he moved from Alexandria to Caesarea, and some of the features of this new culture influenced him significantly. The most crucial element in this new cultural situation was the strong Jewish presence in Caesarea. Alexandria had once had a very large Jewish population, but that population had dwindled significantly prior to the third century AD as a result of two Jewish revolts put down by the Romans in the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian. The Jewish population in the earlier pagan Caesarea, however, had grown significantly in the early third century.[13] In addition to the presence of a strong synagogue, there was also a thriving rabbinical academy in Caesarea under the direction of R. Hoshaya.[14] There is evidence of discussions and arguments with some of the rabbis in Origen's Caesarean writings, including the *Commentary on Matthew*, and also of the involvement of some in the Christian congregation in practices of the synagogue.[15]

Some of Origen's conversations with the Jewish population at Caesarea appear to have been friendly and others more confrontational. When he discusses Matthew 15:1–2 which begins with the Pharisees accusing Jesus' disciples of not keeping the tradition of the elders, and moves to Jesus' shifting of the discussion to the issue of how the Pharisees violated the law of God about honouring father and mother by the crafty application of one of the traditions of the elders, Origen says he would not have understood the issue 'had not one of the Hebrews called our attention to what is in the passage'.[16] More of an argumentative tone is evident in Origen's treatment of Matthew's passage about divorce in Matthew 19. The discussion is cast as an imaginary argument, but it must represent actual conversations Origen had been involved in with Jewish scholars. 'But perhaps some Jewish man', he says, 'will dare to oppose our Saviour's teaching and say that Jesus... permitted divorcing a wife like Moses did'. He goes on to say that the Jewish man will claim that Moses' words about the discovery of 'a shameful deed in her' are the same as Jesus' words about 'sexual immorality'. Origen counters with the argument that the law

[13] See McGuckin (1999) 24; Levine (1975) 45–6, 62–3; Bietenhard (1974) 10.
[14] Niehoff (forthcoming); Heine (2010) 147–51.
[15] See De Lange (1976) 36; Heine (2010) 175–6.
[16] *ComMt* 11.8.

demanded that a wife involved in adultery be stoned, which eliminated the point of writing a bill of divorce and cancelled out the identification of Moses' reference to a 'shameful deed' with Jesus' words about 'sexual immorality'.[17] In a reference to Matthew 11:12–13 about clean and unclean foods, he alludes to accusations from Jews and Ebionites that the Christians do not obey the food laws in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which prompts his response that Jesus is teaching through the words in Matthew 11 that 'we are not to think that the goal in Scripture lies in the common understanding of these words'.[18] On the other hand, he also knows that there are Christians who follow Jewish customs. He applies Jesus' warning about the 'leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees' in Matthew 16:6 'to those who choose to live physically as the Jews do along with living as Christians'.[19] Finally, in a discussion of the parable of the two sons asked to work in the vineyard in Matthew 21, Origen expresses his belief in the ultimate salvation of Israel. He notes that Jesus' words to the unbelieving Jews, that 'the tax-collectors and prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you', 'do not exclude Israel from ever entering the kingdom of God. For no one', Origen continues, 'precedes someone who will never be in that place where he went first. See, therefore', he says, 'if it is not revealed that whenever "the fullness of the Gentiles shall enter", then "all Israel will be saved"'. The Pauline statement that he cites, however, is then qualified by his assertion that 'Israel... is not to be understood "in the fleshly sense", but as Israel characterized by nobility of soul, possessing a genius and clarity in understanding'.[20] Origen's interactions with the Jewish community in Caesarea were various, but they were all influential on his thinking about Scripture and theological issues.[21]

Origen's work in Caesarea fell into three overlapping categories: writing, teaching, and preaching. We know that his first project, once he had regained some serenity of mind after the problems in Alexandria, was to undertake the completion of his work on the *Commentary on John*, as he had reached only book five in Alexandria.[22] Most of Origen's commentaries were written during the time he resided at Caesarea. Eusebius mentions commentaries on Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Song of Songs and then stops his list, saying he had already provided a complete list in his account of the life of Pamphilus, which, unfortunately, is lost. He adds, however, that when Origen was more than sixty years of age he wrote the *Contra Celsum* containing eight books, the *Commentary on Matthew* containing twenty-five books, and commentaries on the twelve prophets, 'of which', Eusebius says, 'we found only twenty-five'.[23] Eusebius, it must be remembered, was bishop of Caesarea in the early fourth century and had been a pupil of Pamphilus, a devotee of Origen. Jerome says that Pamphilus had transcribed most of Origen's works himself and that they were still

[17] *ComMt* 14.24. [18] *ComMt* 11.12. [19] *ComMt* 12.5. [20] *ComMt* 17.5.
[21] See Heine (2010) 147–51, 173–9, 190–218. [22] See *ComJn* 6.7–12.
[23] *H. E.* 6.32.1; 36.1–2.

preserved in the library at Caesarea. Eusebius would have had easy access to this library of Origen in Caesarea.[24]

Jerome provides his own listing of Origen's works in *Epistle 33 To Paula*, perhaps dependent on the list that Eusebius says he had provided in his account of the life of Pamphilus. He does not separate them in relation to the place they were composed, but simply follows canonical order. I mention here only the works that fall under the category of commentaries on Scripture, and only those that were composed in Caesarea. The final five books of the *Commentary on Genesis* were completed at Caesarea.[25] He also produced excerpts on Exodus and Leviticus possibly at Caesarea. Then Jerome's list covers books definitely produced at Caesarea: thirty-six books on Isaiah, one on Hosea, two on Joel, six on Amos, one on Jonah, three on Micah, two on Nahum, three on Habakkuk, two on Zephaniah, one on Haggai, two on the beginning of Zachariah, two on Malachi. These must be the twenty-five books on the twelve prophets that Eusebius says he had found. Only Obadiah is missing from this list.[26] Finally, on the Old Testament Jerome mentions twenty-nine books on Ezekiel. He also lists numerous books of commentaries on various Psalms, three books on Proverbs, excerpts on Ecclesiastes, and ten books of commentary on the Song of Songs. All of Origen's commentaries on books of the New Testament were composed at Caesarea with the exception of the first five books of the *Commentary on John*. Jerome refers to commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, and commentaries on all the Pauline epistles except 1 and 2 Corinthians[27] and 1 and 2 Timothy.

The commentaries were not the only writings Origen produced at Caesarea, but they alone constitute a huge amount of literature. This raises the question of how one person could produce so much. Part of the answer to that question, I think, lies in the overlap between Origen's writing and teaching activities. Some, at least, of what became his commentaries on Scripture must have been lectures he delivered to students.

Eusebius dates the beginning of Origen's advanced teaching activity in Caesarea in the reign of Gordian (CE 238–44) and says that in addition to many of the locals who came to Origen for teaching, there were also students from other provinces, among whom were Theodore, also known as Gregory, and his brother, Athenodore, who came to him from other places. Eusebius mentions these two by name, perhaps because, as he says, each went on to become a bishop and while quite young.[28] Gregory, later known as Thaumaturgus, wrote

[24] Jerome, *Lives of Illustrius Men* 75. Jerome adds that he possesses twenty-five volumes of Origen's commentaries on the twelve prophets written in Pamphilus' hand.

[25] See Heine (2005) 122–3.

[26] Perhaps Origen never wrote on this short book. *Biblia Patristica* 3 gives only one reference to Obadiah in all of Origen's writings.

[27] Pieri (2009) 17–19 (see also Pieri [forthcoming]) has argued that the fragments on 1 Corinthians come from a commentary rather than homilies.

[28] *H. E.* 6.30.

the panegyric on Origen in which he described his educational experience with Origen and what impressed him about Origen. Origen also wrote a letter to Gregory which is one of his few letters that have survived. I argued a number of years ago that there are some allusions to a few discussions in book 20 of Origen's *Commentary on John* in Gregory's panegyric. I suggested in that essay that the stenographers whom Ambrose provided for Origen may have sat among the students in Origen's lectures and taken down his remarks to be edited later by Origen for publication. If this were the case, it helps us understand how such a vast corpus of writings could be produced by such a busy person.[29]

Preaching was something that Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, had never allowed Origen to do. This was, therefore, a new activity that Origen undertook at Caesarea. A homily was delivered in the church every day following a course of Scripture reading, it seems, that would cover the Bible in approximately three years.[30] Bishop Theoctistus put Origen in charge of delivering these homilies after he had been in Caesarea a short while. All of Origen's homilies, except for the one on 1 Kings (=1 Samuel) 28, were delivered at Caesarea. In all three of the activities mentioned above, Origen's chief task was the interpretation of Scripture. This was the work of his life, whether in writing, teaching, or preaching.

THE CHURCH AND SCRIPTURE IN ORIGEN'S INTERPRETATION OF MATTHEW

The 'Disciples' and the 'Crowds'

Matthew 13:36–43 is the first passage Origen discusses in the preserved portion of his *Commentary on Matthew*. There Matthew says that Jesus 'left the crowds and entered his house. And his disciples came to him and said, Tell us the meaning of the parable of the weeds in the field'. Origen perceives that statement to be pregnant with symbolism. This symbolism is important to his understanding of both the church and Scripture. It provides two major categories of people Jesus addressed: the crowds, and the disciples. It further distinguishes these two groups by identifying the space they occupy in relation to Jesus. The crowds are addressed by Jesus outside; after Jesus dismissed the

[29] Heine (1993b). See also Heine (2010) 188–90.

[30] This is similar to the triennial cycle followed in the synagogue (see Heine [2016] 408). See Nautin (1977) 405–12 for an attempted reconstruction of the order of Origen's homilies in this cycle, and Heine (1982) 19–24 for a summary of this reconstruction in English.

crowd, he entered his house and his disciples came to him. This more intimate space could be entered only by disciples.[31] Origen describes it as follows:

> When Jesus is with the crowds, he is not in his house, for the crowds are outside the house. It is an act of kindness that he left the house and went out to those not able to come to him. But after he has spent enough time addressing the crowds in parables, he dismisses them and enters his own house where his disciples approach him.... And all who are very sincere in listening to Jesus first follow him, then, when they ask about his dwelling place, they are permitted to see it. When they go and see it, they all remain 'with him that day', and some may stay even longer.[32]

In the final statement in this quotation Origen alludes to the first chapter of John's Gospel where Jesus invites two potential disciples to his residence.[33] Then Origen pushes the Johannine connection further to show how it applies to and defines disciples in every age, including those hearing or reading his own words:

> Therefore, if we wish to hear Jesus differently than the crowds which he sent away when he entered the house, let us understand something more distinctive than the crowds do that we may be made friends of Jesus and may approach him as his disciples when he enters the house. Then, when we have approached him, we too may be thought worthy of an explanation of a parable, whether that of the weeds of the field or any other parable.[34]

The important distinction between these two groups in their respective places is that disciples can learn the meaning of Jesus' teachings; the crowds can hear only the story conveying the teaching. The separating factor between the disciples and the crowds lies in the intensity of the desire to press for meaning, for 'something more distinctive' as Origen put it, rather than being satisfied with the simple story. It is a matter of choice and desire on the part of those in each group, not a matter of an unalterable predisposition.[35] The disciples, moved by intellectual curiosity, approach Jesus and ask what the story means.

Origen continues this distinction between the crowds and the disciples in his discussion of Jesus' comparison of the kingdom to a treasure hidden in a field.[36] He notes that while the previous parables had been addressed to the crowds, this and the immediately following ones are addressed to the disciples in the house. He maintains his distinction between the two groups of people by arguing that the stories addressed to the disciples in the house are not parables, but similes. 'For if he spoke to the crowds "in parables"', Origen says, 'and "he spoke all these things in parables, and did not speak to them except in parables", but when he enters "the house" he does not address the crowds, but the disciples who approach him in the house, it is clear that what he has spoken in the house are not parables, for he speaks in parables to those who are

[31] See also *FragMt* 283. [32] *ComMt* 10.1. [33] Jn 1:35–9. [34] *ComMt* 10.1.
[35] See *FragMt* 286 commenting on Mt 13:13–15. [36] Mt 13:44; *ComMt* 10.4.

"outside" and "have not been granted knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven".'[37] Later, the text of Matthew 13:53 forces Origen to rethink this assertion about the addressees of parables and similes, for Matthew closes the account covered in chapter 13 by referring to all the stories Jesus has just told as 'parables'. Origen does not provide his own solution, clearly at least, but provides four options: (1) The word parable in Matthew 13:53 'refers to the parables delivered above', (2) 'or the word parable is a homonym', (3) 'or there are two kinds of parables', (4) 'or what we called similes are not parables at all'. He remains convinced, however, that 'because the Saviour has said to the disciples, "It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to the rest they are in parables",[38] Jesus cannot speak to the disciples in parables (because they are not outsiders)'.[39]

The Disciples and the Crowds as Symbolic of the Church

I will first discuss Origen's application of this symbolism to the church, and then turn to its implications in relation to Scripture and its interpretation. The symbolism of the disciples and the crowds, along with being 'in the house' and 'outside', is found in numerous works of Origen, but always in connection with the Gospels' account of Jesus' speaking in parables and then explaining them to the disciples, whether as found in Matthew 13 or the parallels in Mark and Luke.[40] Origen gives the account a distinctive church application in the *Dialogue with Heraclides* when he says, 'This being *outside* or *coming into the house* has a mystical meaning. Whoever enters Jesus' house is his true disciple. He comes in by thinking with the Church, by living according to the Church. Being *within* and *without* are spiritual... realities'.[41] In the *Contra Celsum* he refers to those to whom Jesus explained the parables as people 'who had advanced beyond exoteric understanding and who came to him privately "in the house"'. Then he remarks that 'Celsus would be amazed if he understood what meaning there is in the fact that some are said to be outside and others "in the house"'.[42]

The distinction in Origen's mind between disciples and crowds in relation to the church is not so simple as an identification of the crowds with people who have no relationship with the church and disciples with everyone who does have such a relationship. The crowds, as well as the disciples, are seen as people who come to Jesus.[43] His application of the parable of the drag net to the church shows his awareness that many regularly present in the gatherings of the church were not disciples. He does not use the term crowd in this discussion,

[37] Mt 13:11; *ComMt* 10.4. [38] Lk 8:10; cf. Mt 13:11. [39] *ComMt* 10.16.
[40] Mk 4 and Lk 8. See, for example, *HomJer* 12.13 (GCS 6 100.23–6).
[41] *DialHer* 15. Translation by Daly (1992) 69.
[42] *CCels* 3.21. Translation by Chadwick (1965) 140. [43] *ComMt* 11.4.

but it is clear that he is speaking of the church and that the gathering is not exclusively 'disciples'.

> Now since these things have been written about the net and those in the net, the person who wants there to be no wicked people 'of any kind' in the net before the end of the age and before the angels go out to separate the wicked from the midst of the just appears not to have understood the Scripture and to want things that are impossible. This is why we should not be surprised if we see our gatherings filled also with wicked people before 'the wicked have been separated from the midst of the just' by the angels who have been sent out for this purpose.[44]

The people described in this passage are not hostile to Jesus or they would not be gathered with the church, but, as he implies, they are far from being saints. The mixed nature of the congregation at Caesarea Origen addressed in his preaching is obvious in some of his remarks in a homily on Genesis. He admonishes those who are always present for the preaching to be patient, while he addresses those not so faithful who attend only on festal days. He refers to the latter as being sick and needing Jesus as a physician in contrast to those in his audience who are healthy and do not need a physician.[45] He makes the same kind of comparison when he says that it can often be noticed in Matthew 'that the disciples of Christ are better than the rest of the crowds (*turbis*)'. Then he makes a contemporary application: 'And you will find in churches that some hear the divine teachings with delight, and affectionately approach the word. People of this kind are justly said to be disciples of Christ, and many others who are not such are said to be his people (*populum*)'.[46] These two groups within the church are further defined a little later in the same discussion:

> And see if you are able to hear and learn from the Gospel of John that the people of Christ are those who only believe and do not aspire to grow up in the word, and those are his disciples who are zealous for the better gifts, and receiving what is the first of all graces, 'the word of wisdom',[47] apply themselves diligently. John speaks as follows: 'Jesus said to those Jews who believed, "If you remain in my word, you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free"'.[48]

Origen spells out what he means by this reference to John in his *Commentary on John*, where he distinguishes between believing and knowing. Many believed in Jesus, he says, but not many knew him. It is only the latter who 'truly become his disciples'. 'The majority of those who have believed in him', he adds, 'do not remain in his word, nor do the majority truly become his disciples'.[49] Origen continues to pursue this theme in the *Commentary on Matthew* when he discusses the feeding of the five thousand. After the feeding Jesus compelled the disciples to get in a boat and set out for the other side while he dismissed the crowd. Origen understands this crossing to the other side to

[44] *ComMt* 10.13. [45] *HomGn* 10.3; cf. *ComMt* 11.4. [46] *SerMt* 9.
[47] See 1 Cor 12:31, 8. [48] Jn 8:31, 32; *SerMt* 9.
[49] *ComJn* 19.66; see also 19.18–20. Translation by Heine (1993a) 183, 171.

mean going 'beyond "the things that are seen and... are temporary"' to '"the things that are not seen and are eternal"'. The crowd was incapable of this. 'The kindness shown to the crowds by Jesus in being dismissed by him', Origen says, 'was sufficient for them'.[50]

This distinction between the disciples and the crowds in those making up the church may sound elitist, but Origen does not seem to have considered it that way. In a sense, he was recognizing the status quo in the church and acknowledging, on the one hand, that not all would advance to the level of 'true disciple', and on the other, the responsibility of people such as himself to help those labelled the 'crowd' to progress to the extent that they were capable. This latter responsibility is made quite explicit in his discussion of Jesus blessing the children in Matthew 19:13–15.[51] There, Origen says, Jesus rebukes 'those who are thought to be teachers with more understanding than those who are simple and are, therefore, called disciples of Jesus'[52] because they were forbidding the 'infants in faith' from being brought to him. 'We must listen attentively to these words', Origen adds, 'so that we not despise the little ones and the children in the church in the illusion of wisdom and of having progressed as adults. Knowing that Jesus said, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven", let us become the kind of people that the children may be saved through us also'.[53] In discussing the story of the transfiguration, Origen understands Peter's suggestion to build three tabernacles to express his desire to stay on the mountain top with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah and not descend to the crowds below. Jesus, however, Origen says, 'did not do what Peter considered good', but 'descended "the mountain" to those incapable of ascending it and seeing his transformation, so that they might behold him in whatever way they were capable of seeing'.[54] Origen appears to have had a genuine concern for the 'crowds' or 'people' who make up the church, as well as a concern for the 'disciples'.

The Disciples and the Crowds in Relation to Scripture and Its Interpretation

This twofold division of the church into disciples and crowds also controlled Origen's understanding of Scripture and how to interpret it.[55] Scripture itself, he argues, has been structured to meet the needs of these two classes of people in the church. In his argument with the philosopher Celsus about the Greek poets in relation to the writings of Moses, Origen condemns the poets for writing only for the elite who could interpret their poems allegorically, with no thought for those who would understand them literally and how this understanding might affect them. He argues that Moses wrote for both groups of people so

[50] *ComMt* 11.5. [51] See *ComMt* 15.6–9. [52] *ComMt* 15.7. [53] *ComMt* 15.8.
[54] *ComMt* 12.41. [55] See De Lubac (2007) 51–2; Vogt (1999a) 137–8.

that his writings might be helpful for those who read them literally as well as for those more advanced who would search for deeper meanings.[56] This, of course, is a mirror image of what he had said much earlier in his *De Principiis* when he asserted that the Spirit had two priorities in composing the Scriptures. One was to hide the mysteries of God and salvation behind the stories in Scripture for those capable of searching out hidden meanings, and the other was to make the stories such that those incapable of probing behind texts for meaning might, nevertheless, be benefited by reading the literal stories.[57]

The importance to Origen of Matthew's imagery of the disciples approaching Jesus 'in the house' and asking for an explanation of the parable is apparent in a comment he makes on the parable of the sower in Luke 8:4: 'And, therefore, it is said significantly: "When large crowds came together", for they are not many, but "few" who enter through the narrow way "which leads to life"'. Luke's account, however, does not have the detail that it was inside the house that the disciples approached Jesus and asked for an explanation. Therefore, Origen turns to the Gospel of Matthew and adds, 'For this reason Matthew says that outside the house he was teaching by parables, but inside the house he explained the parable to the disciples'.[58] I said above that the factor separating the disciples from the crowds was the intensity of their desire to press for the meaning in Jesus' stories. The disciples approach Jesus and ask what the story means. Christ is at the centre of Origen's hermeneutic. To know the meaning of Scripture, one has to turn to Jesus, like the disciples in the house, and ask for his help.

This asking does not, however, eliminate human effort in the understanding process, but centres it and gives it perspective. Matthew 7:7–8 is central to Origen's understanding of the interpretative process.[59] There Jesus says, 'Ask, and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened'. The interpreter must, in addition to asking, also seek and knock. The latter two terms imply both effort and persistence, as Origen suggests when he says in his application of these words to his own interpretative effort to harmonize some incongruities in the texts of the Gospels: 'Now we shall set forth... the things which move us to the harmony of these texts, as we have asked him who gives to everyone who asks *and struggles intensely to seek*, and we are knocking, that the hidden things of Scripture may be opened to us by the keys of knowledge'.[60]

The importance of Christ to Origen's understanding of Scripture interpretation is made clear, again in relation to Matthew 7:7–8, as he contemplates the various things said about creation in Scripture. 'How then this great variety and diversity of things can be understood to be most righteous and equitable

[56] See *CCels* 4.50; 1.18; 4.49; 6.1–2; 7.10 and Heine (forthcoming a).
[57] *PArch* 4.2.7–9.
[58] *FragLc* 114; Rauer (1959) 274.
[59] See Vogt (1983) 36–7.
[60] *ComJn* 10.131. Translation by Heine (1989) 285, emphasis mine.

it is, I am sure, impossible for human thought or speech to explain, unless *as prostrate suppliants we beseech the Word himself*... who is the only-begotten Son of God, that he, pouring himself by his grace into our minds, may deign to enlighten what is dark, to open what is shut, to reveal what is secret, which he will do if only we are found seeking, or asking, or knocking so worthily as to deserve to receive when we seek, to find when we ask and to have the door opened in response to our knock'.[61] In his *Letter to Gregory* Origen urges his former student to give priority to the reading of Scripture over all his other intellectual work. Then he reminds Gregory that prayer is the most necessary activity in the understanding of divine matters, for the Saviour not only said, 'Knock and it will be opened to you and seek and you will find, but also, ask and it will be given to you'.[62]

Scripture was the church's book for Origen, and only the devout could understand it. What he says of the parable of the workers in the vineyard could be said of all Scripture. 'Because... this parable holds these... mysteries which one might investigate in it, I strongly affirm that no one can speak worthily about it except one who has said truthfully, "But we have the mind of Christ"' (1 Cor 2:16).[63] He makes a similar statement regarding the parable of the unforgiving servant. 'No one', Origen says, 'can explain it unless Jesus, who explained "everything for his own disciples privately" (Mk 4:34), resides in one's mind and opens all the dark, hidden, invisible treasures in the parable, and grants confidence through clear demonstrations to the one whom he intends to enlighten with the light of knowledge concerning the contents of this parable'.[64] And again, discussing the parable of the king reckoning accounts with his servants, Origen says:

> For just as no 'human being knows the inner thoughts of a human being except the spirit which dwells within that human being, and no one knows the inner thoughts of God except the spirit of God' (1 Cor 2:11), so no one, after God, understands what Christ has said in dark sayings and parables except the spirit of Christ (Ps 77:2; Mt 13:35). The person who participates in Christ, not only to the extent that he is spirit but also insofar as Christ is wisdom and Logos, could perceive what is revealed by him in this passage.[65]

The comments of Origen I have set out in this paragraph might be considered to belong to the category of 'asking', and perhaps also 'knocking' in Matthew 7:7–8. The close relationship with Christ Origen refers to in these remarks was the most important aspect, in his mind, for understanding Scripture correctly. But Matthew 7:7 also includes 'seeking' in its prescription for finding. 'Seeking' in reference to Scripture interpretation implies effort and, in particular, the application of method in seeking meaning. Origen had various methods that

[61] *PArch* 2.9.4. Translation by Butterworth (1973) 132, emphasis mine.
[62] *EpistGreg* 4.
[63] *ComMt* 15.30; cf. 17.13. See Heine (1997) 141–4.
[64] *ComMt* 14.11.
[65] *ComMt* 14.6.

he applied as he considered them appropriate to the text being interpreted. In what follows I will discuss what I consider to be the more important methods he applies in his *Commentary on Matthew*.

Unity of Scripture

This first point might be better termed an assumption than a method. It is the assumption that underlies the whole of Origen's approach to Scripture. He argues that there is a divine unity in the entirety of Scripture.[66] The coherence consists in the united testimony to Christ found throughout the books comprising it. In a discussion of the seventh beatitude on the 'peacemakers', preserved in the *Philocalia*,[67] he applies the beatitude to the interpreter who can show the harmony between the parts of Scripture that may appear to be dissonant: Old and New Testaments, law and prophets, Gospel and Gospel, etc. He uses the lyre as an analogy. Each string produces its own sound differing from every other string. The person who has no understanding of harmony thinks their sounds are dissonant. The skilled musician, however, can combine the sounds from the strings of law, prophets, and gospel and produce harmonious music, 'for he knows that all Scripture is one perfect, harmonious instrument of God'. In another passage in the *Commentary on Matthew* he compares the unity of Scripture to an education that begins with 'basic principles' but advances 'to perfection'. 'A complete understanding of the writings of the law and the prophets', he says, 'is elementary education for understanding completely the gospel and every meaning related to the works and words of Christ Jesus'.[68] He presents this unity of Scripture again in a lengthy exposition of the transfiguration story.[69] There Moses, who is said to stand for the law, and Elijah, representing all the prophets by synecdoche, are in conversation with Jesus. Peter's request to build three tabernacles, one for each of the three figures on the mountain, is seen as an attempt to separate the three, namely law, prophets, and gospel. The divine voice from the cloud, however, and the sight of Jesus alone after the voice prompts Origen to say that 'Moses, the law, and Elijah, the prophecy, have become one only in the gospel of Jesus. They have not remained three as they were previously, but the three have become one'.[70] For Origen the entire Bible is a Christian book proclaiming a single message about Jesus, the Christ.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture

Comparing Scripture with Scripture is the method Origen most often mentions in his interpretation of Scripture as he either practises it himself or

[66] See Perrone (2001) 45–7.
[67] See entry 3 in the Appendix containing the translation of the fragments.
[68] *ComMt* 10.10.
[69] *ComMt* 12.36–43; see Heine (2016) 414.
[70] *ComMt* 12.38, 40, 43.

instructs his readers to do so. Drawing on Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 2:13, he sometimes refers to it as 'comparing spiritual things with spiritual'. He says in one of his earliest writings that he had learned this method from a Jewish teacher who compared Scripture to a house with many locked rooms. There is a key before each door in the house, but it is not the key to the door before which it lies. The difficulty in interpreting Scripture is like the difficulty in finding the correct key that unlocks the door to a particular room. The way to proceed is to search in other places in the Scriptures for the answer; that is, to compare Scripture with Scripture.[71]

Origen frequently refers to this methodology in his *Commentary on Matthew*. He suggests it even in his discussion of the disciples and the crowds in Matthew 13. 'We must notice', he says, 'how often the expression "the crowds" is used and the other expression, "the disciples" in the same passages, so that we may see from this observation and bringing together what is said about this that what was set forth by the evangelists was to present the differences between those who come to Jesus throughout the gospel story'.[72] He suggests in the following passage that a comparison of texts containing references to Jesus' house might yield insight into the nature of Scriptural words:

> Now to understand more accurately what the house of Jesus means, one must collect everything said about Jesus' house in the Gospels, noting both what he said and what he did in it. For when these words have been brought together, they will persuade the one who approaches this passage that not only are the bare words of the gospel not simple (as some think), but that they have become simple for the simple as an adaptation. Those who want to hear them more precisely and have the capacity to do so find that they conceal things wise and worthy of the Logos of God.[73]

This comparative approach, he suggests, holds the potential of suggesting 'very important meanings to those persons who know how to compare "spiritual things with spiritual"'.[74]

Origen's comparative approach in interpreting Scripture may involve differing blocks of Scripture for particular purposes. For example, he may make comparisons across the New Testament Gospels. He compares Luke and Mark on the number in the groups Jesus commanded to sit in the story of the feeding of the five thousand.[75] In another section he suggests comparing those in the Gospels who approach Jesus calling him 'Son of David' and those calling him 'Son of God'.[76] He may also compare Gospel accounts to reconcile differences between similar sounding stories, such as the healing of the blind man or men in the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels,[77] or the account of the anointing of Jesus in Bethany in the four Gospels.[78] At times he recommends placing the Gospels side by side to compare particular texts.[79]

[71] See Heine (1997) 136. [72] *ComMt* 11.4. [73] *ComMt* 10.1.
[74] *ComMt* 14.14. [75] *ComMt* 11.3. [76] *ComMt* 11.17. [77] *ComMt* 16.12.
[78] *SerMt* 77. [79] See *ComMt* 16.8; 17.26.

Two very significant blocks of material Origen likes to bring together for comparative purposes are texts from the Old and New Testaments. He refers to Jesus' saying about the man who 'brings forth from his treasure things that are new and old' (Mt 13:52) and says,

> [W]e must attempt in every way possible, by giving attention 'to the reading, the exhortation, and the teaching', and by 'meditating on the law of the Lord day and night', to gather not only the new sayings from the Gospels, the apostles, and their Revelation, but also the old teachings of the law,...and of the prophets who prophesied consistently with the laws. And these things will have been gathered whenever we read and understand them, and remembering them we compare 'spiritual things with spiritual' in an appropriate manner.[80]

He then proceeds to explain what it means to 'compare "spiritual things with spiritual" in an appropriate manner'. 'We do not', he says, 'compare things that are incomparable with one another, but things that are comparable and possess certain similarities of expression which mean the same thing, along with similarities of thoughts and doctrines, so that "by the mouth of two or three" or even more Scriptural "witnesses" we may establish and confirm "every word" of God'.[81] This statement shows that there were guidelines that controlled Origen's comparison of texts and that it was not a purely random grabbing of texts that happened to use the same word. There had to be similarities of expression, or thoughts and teachings.

Sequence

The sequence of the text is another interpretative tool that Origen applies to Scripture. He proceeds sequentially through the text of Matthew's Gospel. This order itself is often considered important, though more often it is the sequence of smaller details that he calls to attention. While he always seems to consider the sequence important, he does not always think it is obvious. He thinks it difficult, for example, to explain Matthew 18:6 sequentially in relation to Matthew 18:4–5. 'For someone might say', he observes, 'How is it that the person who has been converted and become as "the children" is small among the believers in Jesus and susceptible of being made to stumble?' Nevertheless, he thinks it important to try to understand the sequence of thinking in the text. He explains that among the believers there are some recently converted who are in the process of becoming as 'children' and there are others who simply fall short of 'becoming as children'. These are the ones, he says, who are susceptible to stumbling, and '[i]t is these', he concludes, preserving the sequence of the text, 'to whom we ought not present opportunities for stumbling'.[82]

The account of Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:10–11) also presents Origen with problems when he attempts to preserve the sequence of this story

[80] *ComMt* 10.15. [81] Ibid. [82] *ComMt* 13.7.

both with what immediately follows and with what precedes it. In cases such as this, what Origen means by sequence resembles what today is called context. The story is followed by the cleansing of the temple and preceded by the application of Zechariah's statement about the daughters of Jerusalem rejoicing because their king is coming. He says he wants to preserve 'the sequence of the spiritual interpretation in the Scripture that, "when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken and said, Who is this?" ' (Mt 21:10). 'Next, after this it is written that many said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee", in agreement with the prophetic word, "He will be called a Nazarene", that is, one who is always dedicated to God in a special sense'. But Origen wants to break the sequence after these words and let the story of the cleansing of the temple start another section. He seems to think that he cannot make the story of the cleansing of the temple which had become a 'den of thieves' fit sequentially with Jesus' entry into the city. And he thinks the sequence with the Zechariah passage offers even greater difficulties. 'I do not know', he says, 'if it is possible, even if one is compelled, to preserve, sequentially with "Rejoice exceedingly daughter Zion", the entire sequence even of the words which are next after those which are set forth'.[83]

In spite of his hesitancy in relation to the cleansing of the temple text, he feels compelled to approach it sequentially. 'But since the sequence now too demands', he says, 'that we speak about the things set forth in relation to the literal text of Matthew, let us call on the Father of wisdom and see if we can say courageously something on the passage worthy of the action of Jesus'.[84] It is the sequence of spiritual meaning, however, that Origen is most concerned about in texts. When he comes to interpreting Matthew 24:6, 'You will hear of wars and rumours of war', he encourages his readers to ascend 'to the moral and spiritual understanding and see if you can, in some way, discover some meaning worthy of the grandeur of the knowledge of Christ and of the precision of the evangelists, so you do not debase the dignity of the wisdom found in the gospel'.[85] He suggests an interpretation that will follow sequentially his spiritual interpretation of the preceding statement, 'Many will come in my name saying, I am Christ, and will deceive many', and will understand the wars as the 'wars of doctrine' that the follower of Christ will encounter.[86] Failure to give attention to the sequence of the way one interprets a passage can result in misinterpretation. He is adamant that this has happened in the interpretation of the passage about eunuchs in Matthew 19:12. Many interpreters have taken some of the statements literally and some spiritually. If one of the three possibilities is taken in a literal sense, he insists, all three must be, and the same is true if one is taken in a spiritual sense.[87]

[83] *ComMt* 16.19. [84] *ComMt* 16.20. [85] *SerMt* 35. [86] Ibid.
[87] *ComMt* 15.1; see Heine (2013).

Figurative Interpretation

I use the phrase 'figurative interpretation' as more accurate in describing Origen's non-literal interpreting of texts than the term allegory which is frequently used for this purpose. The latter term has often been used to describe Origen's expositions in a negative and dismissive manner.[88] Some scholars use the word allegory to translate several different words that Origen uses to refer to his non-literal interpretations rather than limiting its use to the actual Greek terms. It is important to note that Origen rarely uses either the noun *allēgoria* (allegory) or the verb *allegoreō* (to interpret allegorically) in the *Commentary on Matthew*. The noun appears only three times in the eight books of the *Commentary* preserved in Greek; the verb occurs six times, and these are all in books 10, 15, and 17.[89] There are also four passages where the older noun for allegorical interpretation, *hyponoia*, appears, and the verb *ainissomai*, which literally means 'to hint' at something, also appears four times. This latter verb was the standard verb used in the classical period of Greek literature to refer to allegorical interpretation.[90] Other terms Origen uses to refer to his non-literal interpretations in the *Commentary on Matthew* include the noun *anagōgē*, which means lifting or leading something up, and when applied to Scripture interpretation is usually rendered as the anagogical sense. This noun appears ten times in the books of the *Commentary* preserved in Greek and four times in short Greek fragments which are parallel to texts in the Latin *Series Commentariorum*. The term that Origen uses most often when he gives a name to his non-literal interpretations in the *Commentary on Matthew* is the verb *tropologeō* and its cognate forms, which refer to a figurative expression. These appear thirty times and are found in all eight of the books preserved in Greek. While there may not be great differences between the meanings of these terms, it seems to me that preserving the distinctions where that is possible may help us understand Origen's mind more clearly.

Two of the six appearances of the verb 'to allegorize' in the *Commentary* appear in a description of what Marcion said about allegorizing the eunuch passage in Matthew 19:12. Origen comments,

> Marcion has gained a certain following by declaring that one must not interpret Scripture allegorically, and has rejected these passages because he thinks they are not the words of the Saviour. He thinks that if the believer says the Saviour spoke these words he must be willing, if he wants to be obedient, to deliver himself to such audacious acts. The other option is to obey sound reason and not to submit to such audacious acts which make the word disreputable, but to deny them to be the words of the Saviour, since they are not to be allegorized.[91]

[88] See, for example, De Faye (1923) 91–5.
[89] My word counts here and in the following statements are derived from searches run in TLG.
[90] See Heine (forthcoming a). [91] *ComMt* 15.3.

Origen thinks that not just the last of the three assertions in Matthew 19:12, but all three must be interpreted allegorically.[92]

He refers to an anagogical meaning when he applies the story of the blind and lame approaching Jesus for healing in the temple to the contemporary church. 'The words of the literal text are clear', he says,

> But in keeping with the anagogical meanings set out previously, we must say that in the temple of God, the house of prayer, the church, not all can see or (if I may put it this way) walk correctly, for some who have been gathered are blind and others are lame. These, on the basis of their awareness of their blindness and lameness, and knowing that healing them is the proper work of no other than God and the Logos of God, come to him and are healed.[93]

He does the same when he comments on the priests in the temple criticizing the children who were glorifying God:

> Perhaps, then (he says), just as in the story these chief priests and scribes deserve blame, so too in the anagogical sense some chief priests deserve blame. They do not bring honour on the title bishop with their own manner of life, nor have they clothed themselves with knowledge and truth.... [A]lthough they see the marvellous works of God, [they] despise the little ones in the church and the infants who praise God and his Christ, and are angry at their progress and accuse them, along with Jesus himself, as being sinners, although they are not sinning.[94]

Jesus himself speaks figuratively in Matthew 16:6 when he warns the disciples to 'beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees'. The disciples did not understand that he was doing this, so Jesus had to instruct them about what he meant. Origen refers to Jesus' figurative statement that confused the disciples as 'the equivocal sense of loaf and leaven', and adds, 'Although he did not strip the interpretation bare but still preserved the figure of speech (*tropologia*), the disciples understood that the Saviour's saying was about what the Pharisees and Sadducees were teaching, figuratively (*tropikōs*) said to be leaven'.[95]

In Matthew 22:29 Jesus accused the Sadducees of erring, knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God when they raise the question of whose wife the woman will be in the resurrection, who was the wife of seven brothers in succession, in conformity with the law of levirate marriage. Origen notes that Jesus' comment that there will be no marriages in the resurrection but the resurrected will be like the angels cannot be found anywhere in the old Scriptures. He devotes a lengthy discussion to this verse, arguing that the person who does not give a 'figurative interpretation' (*tropologia*) to Jesus' statement will have to draw one of three conclusions: (1) there has been an error in the recording of the words, or (2) Jesus did not tell the truth, or (3) he was referring to some such words in an apocryphal writing. Origen rejects all of these alternatives and says,

[92] *ComMt* 15.1. [93] *ComMt* 16.24. [94] *ComMt* 16.25. [95] *ComMt* 12.6.

> [I]t seems to me that there is no other way to solve the question of the saying, 'You err because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God, for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage', than by the allegory (*allēgoria*) which occurs analogously with the apostle in the epistle to the Galatians about the handmaid and the free woman, and which recurs also in the other Scriptures where something has been said about a husband and wife. And just as those err who think that we will eat and drink physical foods and drinks after the resurrection because they do not interpret figuratively (*tropologeō*) the prophetic writings whose texts contain such words, so too do those who observe literally the things written about marriages.[96]

It was Jesus' parables especially, which in Matthew begin in chapter 13, that Origen believed to contain some of the deepest mysteries of Christian doctrine, and this, of course, was partly because of what both Jesus and Matthew said of them, especially Jesus' words in Matthew 13:35 where he quotes Psalm 77:2 in relation to his teaching in parables: 'I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world'. 'Now we must know', Origen says of the parable of the landowner hiring workers in Matthew 20, 'that we are investigating a parable of Jesus, "in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden" ' (Col 2:3). 'This means', he continues, 'that it contains numerous doctrines of the wisdom which has been hidden in a mystery' (1 Cor 2:7).[97] It is the figurative interpretation that Origen believes disciples are seeking when they ask Jesus for the meaning of the parables, whether in Jesus' time or in his own.

THE FRAMEWORK OF JESUS' TEACHINGS IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL AS INDICATED IN ORIGEN'S FIRST HOMILY ON PSALM 77

The preserved portion of the *Commentary on Matthew* begins with Matthew 13:36 which relates that Jesus dismissed the crowds and entered his house. The important backstory for this verse with which the preserved portion of the *Commentary* begins is the unit consisting of Matthew 13:1–35 which contains

[96] *ComMt* 17.35. The ancient Latin translation which parallels books 12 through 17 of the Greek text (the *Vetus Interpretatio*) shows that the Latin translator used the term 'moral interpretation' to translate Origen's 'figurative interpretation' (*tropologia* and cognates) twenty-one times, 'anagogical interpretation' (*anagōgē*) three times, and 'allegorical interpretation' (*allēgōria*) once in translating these books (*Tropologia* and cognates: *ComMt* 12.30, 41; 13.4, 5, 10; 15.4 (twice), 17, 18, 20, 21; 17.14, 15, 22, 27, 28, 34 (twice), 35 (three times); *anagōgē*: *ComMt* 15.5, 22; 16.24; *allēgoria*: *ComMt* 17.35). This alerts us to the possibility that the appearance of the phrase 'moral interpretation' in the *Series Commentariorum* where there is no Greek parallel text may represent any of these terms in Origen's text.

[97] *ComMt* 15.28.

four parables, along with some important information about Jesus' use of parables. The chapter begins with the words, 'In that day Jesus went out of his house and sat by the sea, and large crowds gathered to him.... And he told them many things in parables'.[98] This is the first mention of a parable in the Gospel of Matthew.[99] In Matthew 13:34–35, Matthew closes this opening section of parables in his Gospel by saying, 'Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the crowds, and he said nothing to them without a parable'. Then he gives the reason for Jesus' use of parables by quoting Psalm 77:2: 'That what was said by the prophet might be fulfilled, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world'.

Matthew 13:34–35 play a definitive role in Origen's first homily on Psalm 77. The homily covers verses 1–8, but it is almost entirely concerned with verses 1–2,[100] which read: 'Pay attention, my people, to my law. Incline your ear to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter problems from the beginning'.[101] In the opening of the homily Origen points out that 'one must know that Matthew was aware of this verse. For when he wrote that the Saviour spoke in parables, he said, "That the saying might be fulfilled, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter problems from the beginning", or "from the foundation of the world"'.[102] The fact that Matthew associates the words in Psalm 77:2 with the Saviour encourages Origen to do so as well. He points out that it is his custom in discussing the Psalms to attempt to identify in whose character (*prosopon*) the words are spoken. Because Psalm 77:3–4 do not sound like something that could have been said by the Saviour, he says that he would have been hesitant to attribute the first two verses to him without Matthew's example.[103] 'Had not Matthew, therefore, said that the Psalm is from the character of the Saviour', he says, 'I would not have dared refer to the Saviour the things recorded because of the statement, "What things we heard and know and our fathers told us". What shall I do, however, since Matthew says these things?'[104] He concludes that it is the Saviour speaking in the first two verses of the Psalm, but that the character changes in the next two verses, because there are several persons making these remarks—both the verbs and the personal pronouns change from singular to plural in verses three and four.[105] Before Origen leaves this subject, he exhorts his hearers, on the basis of Matthew's association of Psalm 77:2 with Jesus: 'Remember, therefore, that

[98] Mt 13:1–3a.

[99] Vogt (1983) 39 points out that a fragment from the prologue to the *Commentary on Matthew* preserved by Eusebius (see entry 1 in the section 'Quotations from Fourth-Century Authors' in the Appendix) shows that Origen considered the Gospel of Matthew to have been the first Gospel written. The appearance of the word parable in Mt 13:1, therefore, is not only the first occurrence of the word in the Gospel of Matthew but, from Origen's understanding, its first appearance in Christian literature.

[100] There are seven chapters in the homily and the first six are focused on verses 1–2.

[101] Ps 77:1–2. [102] Perrone (2015) 351.7–10. [103] Ibid. 353.25–354.17.

[104] Ibid. 354.18–21. [105] Ibid. 356.3–7.

the Saviour is the speaker, as Matthew recorded, and that he does not speak throughout the whole psalm.'[106]

This identification of the Saviour as the speaker in the first two verses allows Origen to understand Psalm 77:1 of Jesus, 'Pay attention, my people, to my law'. He sees this statement as a sort of precursor to the statement about parables in Psalm 77:2 and uses these two verses to provide a framework for Jesus' teachings in Matthew's Gospel. Importantly, he argues, Jesus does not begin with parables, but with law.[107] 'It is the voice of the Lord which says, "my law"'.[108] Origen reads the opening words of Psalm 77:1 literally:

> But let us hear word for word, 'Pay attention, my people, to my law'.[109]
>
> 'Appoint a lawgiver for them, let the nations know that they are humans'.[110] The Spirit in the prophet prays, therefore, in the ninth psalm that although the law of Moses exists, he will raise up a lawgiver for the nations.... The God and Father of the universe, perceiving that the times demand appropriate foundations of codes of law and actions, made a beginning with Moses' code of laws in the time of Moses, and showed at the time of Christ's coming also other more useful laws which he established for the Gentiles, having done this previously as well.[111]

Since the Saviour addresses these words to 'my people', 'he speaks to Christians', Origen says, 'for Christians are the people of Christ. And he says, Pay attention to my law, no longer to that of Moses, no longer be circumcised, no longer observe the Sabbath, no longer live in accordance with the first and old ways; "Behold new ways have come, the old have passed away"'.[112] This leads to the conclusion, 'There is, therefore, a code of laws of Christ, of which Christ says, "Pay attention, my people, to my law" (Ps 77:1), that is, the law according to the gospel'.[113]

Before Origen draws out the implications of his exegesis of Psalm 77:1a, he introduces the sequence to this in the words of Psalm 77:1b, 'Incline your ear to the words of my mouth', which he also understands literally. It is important that the 'law' comes first and the 'words of my mouth' come second. 'The perfect person pays attention to both the law and the word. No one is perfected by the law alone, not making use, as well, of both the word of wisdom and of knowledge, nor is it possible for the word of wisdom to spring up in someone who has not previously lived uprightly in the law'.[114]

Not only must one give attention to both the law and the word, but the order in which the attention is given is also essential.[115] 'So too our Saviour and Lord', Origen says, 'in keeping with the order of teaching, did not begin with

[106] Ibid. 356.8–10. [107] Cf. at note 68 above. [108] Perrone (2015) 356.1.
[109] Ps 77:1. [110] Ps 9:21. [111] Perrone (2015) 356.14–357–3.
[112] 2 Cor 5:17; Perrone (2015) 358.9–13. [113] Perrone (2015) 359.9–10.
[114] Ibid. 359.25–7.
[115] See the discussion of 'Sequence' above in the section, 'The Disciples and the Crowds in Relation to Scripture and Its Interpretation'.

parables or mysteries but with a code of law and instruction, as it were.'[116] Origen understands this code of law with which the Saviour began his teaching, prior to the uttering of parables, to be the Sermon on the Mount. 'On the mountain', Origen says, '"He opened his mouth and was teaching them saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven" and the words that follow.[117] And all those instructions were not a parable, but a command[118] or, it would likely be said in relation to these teachings, "Pay attention, my people, to my law".'[119] Origen refers to the intervening chapters between the end of the Sermon on the Mount in chapter 7 and the beginning of the parables in chapter 13 as 'an interval', after which Matthew 'recorded the parables, in order that the command might be fulfilled, "Pay attention, my people, to my law", which refers to the code of laws in the ethical passage, but the command, "Incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Ps 77:1) refers to the teaching through the parables themselves, which he relates more clearly and says, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter problems from the beginning".'[120]

Before Origen moves on in his homily, he underscores the importance of paying attention to the order of the text once more. 'And admire the order', he says:

> He did not say first, 'Incline your ear to the words of my mouth'. The first lesson is to learn the law of Christ Jesus; let us see how we must govern our life in relation to it. There is a second lesson, if you have the law, if you govern your life in relation to it, if, while seeking the word and wisdom, you make progress in them, it has also been marvellously written elsewhere, 'When you desire wisdom, observe the commandments and the Lord will furnish you abundantly with it'.[121] If, therefore, we approach the seeking of mystical doctrines before we have kept the commandments, we go astray of necessity because we are not following the route.[122]

It was the failure to pay attention to this order, Origen argues, that gave birth to the various heresies. They failed to give attention to the ethical matters and jumped immediately into the investigation of theological and mystical doctrines.[123]

The importance of the first homily on Psalm 77 for understanding the *Commentary on Matthew* is that it provides a sort of panoramic photo of how Origen viewed the Gospel. This is important because the first nine books of the *Commentary* are missing. While there are no details about the contents of these books in the homily, it does show that Origen viewed Matthew 5–7 as a

[116] Perrone (2015) 360.6–8. Cf. Origen's comments on the importance of the order of the three books of Solomon in the Biblical canon, with Proverbs treating ethics, Ecclesiastes physics, and the Song of Songs in the inspective sense (*ComCt* prologue 3.1–23).

[117] Mt 5:2.

[118] *Logos*. This is the same word that he uses of the parables a few lines later, but he obviously uses the term with different connotations in the two places. 'Command' is one of the possible nuances of the term *logos*.

[119] Perrone (2015) 360.8–11.

[120] Ibid. 360.11–366.4.

[121] Sir 1:26.

[122] Perrone (2015) 361.5–12.

[123] Ibid. 361.13–20.

new law given through Christ for Christians, and that he considered the ordering of one's life by this law to be foundational for any advanced speculation about the figurative meanings in the parables and the theological doctrines these speculations might suggest.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE *COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW* IN RELATION TO THE *CONTRA CELSUM* AND THE *NEW PSALM HOMILIES*

The *Commentary on Matthew* and the *Contra Celsum* have long been recognized to be among the last works Origen composed. Eusebius refers to both treatises as written when Origen was over sixty years old.[124] Which of the two preceded the other, however, has remained ambiguous.[125] In 2012 a manuscript containing twenty-nine anonymous homilies on the Psalms was discovered in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek of Munich.[126] Perrone, who edited the manuscript, has, on good grounds, attributed these homilies to Origen. He has also noticed that at the beginning of the eighth homily on Psalm 77, Origen reports a change of mind he has had on the interpretation of Deuteronomy 32:8–9. Origen says he had always previously applied the verse to the scattering of the people at the tower of Babel, but he has now realized that the statement about Jacob being the Lord's allotted share (Dt 32:9) could not have been true prior to Jacob's birth. He consequently now understands the passage in Deuteronomy, he says, to refer to the exodus of Israel from Egypt. Perrone notes that Origen had still held the earlier view of the Deuteronomy passage when he wrote *Contra Celsum* 5.29.[127] This shows that this Psalm homily at least, and possibly all the Psalm homilies in the manuscript, were composed after the writing of the *Contra Celsum*, and that these homilies belong, along with the *Contra Celsum* and the *Commentary on Matthew*, among the works Origen composed after he was sixty years old. These were not all that Origen wrote in his old age, as I will show in the following paragraphs, but they are the only works that have been preserved from this final period of his life.

Origen often, especially in his later writings, refers to previous works where he has treated a particular subject. The *Contra Celsum* has many such cross-references to earlier writings. He has many references, for example, to his

[124] *H. E.* 6.36.1–2. Eusebius also mentions the commentaries on the twelve prophets as produced in this period, but all of these commentaries are lost.

[125] Vogt (1990) 1–4 argues that they were being worked on at the same time. His arguments do not seem to me conclusive in that they do not show that one could not have recently preceded the other and the second reflect knowledge of what was said in the first.

[126] For the story of this discovery and their attribution to Origen, see Perrone (forthcoming) and (2015) 1–25.

[127] Perrone (2015) 24–5.

Commentary on Genesis,[128] one of his first commentaries. He refers once to his commentary on the first epistle to the Thessalonians,[129] and twice to the commentary on the epistle to the Romans.[130] These references, of course, clearly place the composition of the *Contra Celsum* later than the works to which he refers.

There are also several places in the *Commentary on Matthew* where he cites an earlier writing of his that treats the subject under discussion. He refers, for example, to his 'explanations about the hundred sheep' to be found, he says, 'in my homilies on Luke'.[131] In discussing the triumphal entry he says, '[W]e have made an examination of these matters to some extent in one of our commentaries on the Gospel according to John'.[132] The *Commentary on Romans* is alluded to when he discusses the seven brothers who, in obedience to the law of levirate marriage, all had the same woman as their wife. 'We made more comments on this text', Origen says, 'when we interpreted the passage of the epistle to the Romans in our exegetical treatises on it'.[133] He goes into some detail when he refers to his *Commentary on John* in discussing Matthew's story of the cleansing of the temple:

> The other three evangelists have also set forth what is in this passage. This is not the time to describe their differences, for it will be enough to clarify, as we are able, what is in the Gospel we are examining. But of the four evangelists who have recorded what is in the passage, we have examined, to the best of our ability, more points in what we dictated on the Gospel according to John and in which we clarified, as we were able, the words, 'And he found those in the temple selling cattle, sheep, and doves', and what follows. There we maintained that the miracle proposed was no less than the incredible miracles of Jesus because, although he was thought to be the son of a carpenter, he employed such great boldness and authority when he cast those recorded out of the temple in a crowd.[134]

He makes another reference to his earlier studies of John in relation to Matthew's reference to the two thieves crucified with Jesus.[135] In commenting on Matthew 22:41–46, Origen quotes 1 Corinthians 15:20–28 and says, 'We have given an interpretation of all these points in the proper place'. Vogt notes that this indicates that Origen had already completely explained 1 Corinthians when he reached Matthew 22 in his *Commentary on Matthew*.[136]

[128] *CCels* 4.37, 39; 6.49, 51, 60. [129] *CCels* 2.65. [130] *CCels* 5.47; 8.65.

[131] *ComMt* 13.29. This homily is not among the thirty-nine homilies on Luke that have been preserved.

[132] *ComMt* 16.19. The passage referred to occurs in one of the books of the *ComJn* that have perished.

[133] *ComMt* 17.32. See *ComRom* 6.7. [134] *ComMt* 16.20.

[135] *SerMt* 133. This appears to be a reference to the *ComJn* but there is no evidence that Origen's commentary reached John 19, which is the passage to which this comment alludes. Book 32 of the *Commentary on John* reaches only chapter 13 of the Gospel. Jerome knew only thirty-two books in the *Commentary*. It seems more likely to me that this reference to studies on John 19 is to some scholia on the Gospel of John rather than to the *Commentary*. See Heine (forthcoming).

[136] *SerMt* 8. Vogt (1993) 6–7. See the beginning of fragment 84 in Pieri (2009) 204.

Origen also sometimes refers to subjects or Biblical books that he intends to treat in future commentaries or studies.[137] He says, in relation to Jesus' quotation of Psalm 109:1 in Matthew 22:41–46, 'But one will explain this statement that is found in the Psalm more opportunely... when he plans to explain the Psalm in itself. At the present, nevertheless, we have briefly tasted its meaning'.[138] Vogt observes that this indicates that Origen had not yet explained Psalm 109 at the time he composed this text.[139] This does not mean, however, that he did so later.[140] Origen sometimes referred to contemplated works that were never written, as his reference to a possible work on Revelation shows,[141] and, in my opinion, his reference to the books of Kings and Chronicles.[142] Other works he refers to as intended to come in the future did materialize. In book seven of the *Contra Celsum* he mentions his works on Isaiah and Ezekiel, and on 'some of the twelve prophets' (*eis tinas tōn dōdeka*). He then adds that he intends to write commentaries on the rest of the twelve prophets, or at least on as many as he may have time to explain.[143] These books appear to have been written, and belong to the period of the *Contra Celsum* or later, for Eusebius and Jerome knew twenty-five books spread over eleven of the twelve prophets.[144] What is most interesting is that he refers to his commentary on Hosea in the *New Psalm Homilies* when he says, 'If you should hear, "And he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim" (Ps 77:67), understand what is said to apply to the heterodox, *as I have observed in my commentaries on Hosea*'.[145] This does not necessarily mean that this Psalm homily was later than book seven of the *Contra Celsum*, for the commentary on Hosea may have been one of the commentaries on the twelve prophets Origen had already written, but it definitely puts the composition of this Psalm homily, and perhaps all of them, in the same time period as the *Contra Celsum*.

There is one additional reference to a future composition that, in my opinion, definitely places the composition of the *Commentary on Matthew* after the *Contra Celsum*.[146] In *Contra Celsum* 2.69 Origen refers to Jesus' burial and says

[137] See Heine (2010) 220. [138] *SerMt* 7. [139] Vogt (1993) 6.

[140] Jerome does not list any commentary on this Psalm or any homily (*Ep.* 33). There are only two short fragments on Psalm 109:3 and one on 109:6 in PG 12.1569. It is impossible to say if Origen ever commented formally on Psalm 109.

[141] *SerMt* 49.

[142] *SerMt* 138. Vogt (1993) 7 thinks this comment shows that Origen had not yet explained the books of Kings and Chronicles, but that he intended to do so. He assumes that the few fragments on the book of Kings in PG 12.991–996 come from these proposed commentaries and must be placed then, 'in the last period of his work'. But the fragments might come from scholia as well, and if this is so, Origen may never have written the proposed commentaries on Kings and Chronicles. Jerome mentions no books of commentaries or of excerpts on Kings or Chronicles in his list in *Epistle* 33. He does refer to four homilies on 1 Kings.

[143] *CCels* 7.11. [144] Obadiah is absent from their lists.

[145] My emphasis. Homily 9 on Psalm 77, ch. 6, in Perrone (2015) 475.

[146] This represents a change in my thinking from what I had earlier concluded in Heine (2010) 219–20.

that the truth in the events surrounding his death and burial is not apparent in their simple narrative. Just as the crucifixion carries the symbolic meanings expressed in Paul's words about being 'crucified with Christ' and glorying in the cross, and all the symbolism attached to the cross, the account of the burial of Christ is also laden with symbolism. But, rather than go into the details of this symbolism in the *Contra Celsum* passage, Origen postpones this explanation for a later treatise where it would be fully discussed. He says,

> We will explain the meaning of his burial and the tomb and the man who buried him at a more suitable time at length in other writings where it is our primary purpose to discuss these matters. At the moment, however, it is enough to mention the linen cloth in which the pure body of Jesus had to be wrapped up, and the new tomb which Joseph had hewn out in the rock 'where never man had yet lain'....
>
> [T]he explanation of these points, which ascends from the events recorded to have happened to the truths which they signified, would be set forth at greater length and with a more spiritual interpretation at a more suitable time, when giving an account of such matters in a volume [*suntaxis*] primarily concerned with the subject.[147]

Origen specifies 'the burial', 'the tomb', and 'the man who buried him' as topics containing greater meaning to be investigated in a later treatise, and he also refers to 'the linen cloth' and the fact that the tomb is 'new' as significant points which he pursues in a limited way in the present paragraph. The latter two points, which Origen discusses in the paragraph in the *Contra Celsum*, both point to the purity of Jesus.

Matthew 27:57–65, which is Matthew's account of the burial of Jesus, is covered in detail and given symbolic meaning in the *Commentary on Matthew*.[148] There Joseph of Arimathea is described as 'not some nondescript person, but a man rich in laudable riches. And because he had been appointed as a Decurion, he bore the mystery of the name of Christ in truth (which is the meaning of ten), therefore, on the basis of his great distinction, he asked Pilate for "the body of Jesus" and did not allow him to hang on the cross'.[149]

Origen next takes up the subject of the linen cloth and the new tomb:

> Now I think that that linen possessed a greater cleanliness after the body of Christ was wrapped in it than before, for even when the body of Jesus is dead, it purifies whatever it touches as the body of Jesus. It made that new tomb that had been carved 'in the rock' even newer. And do not think that it was written by accident and just happened to be said that 'he wrapped' the body 'in clean linen and placed it in a new tomb', and that that tomb had been carved 'in the rock', a clean tomb that was made cleaner by the body of Jesus than it was before the body of Jesus was placed in it.[150]

[147] Translation by Chadwick (1965) 119.
[148] *SerMt* 142–3.
[149] *SerMt* 142.
[150] Ibid. 143.

Origen then supplements the account about the tomb in Matthew by the parallel statements from Luke 23:53 and John 19:41, where it is added of the tomb that 'no one had yet been placed' in it. He then comments, focusing on the 'yet' in the statements of the evangelists,

> To be sure, it is indicated to those who consider this saying carefully that if no one had ever been placed there, then afterwards they were; for what does it say: 'In which no one had yet been placed'. We say, therefore,... that he who said: 'We have been buried with Christ by baptism', and we have been resurrected with him, has himself, after Christ, along with all who have been buried with Christ in baptism, been buried with Christ in a new tomb carved spiritually in a rock that they may rise with him from the new tomb, the firstborn 'from the dead' holding 'the primacy in all things'.[151]

Origen finds further significance also in the size of the stone that was used to cover the opening to the tomb.[152]

This discussion of the burial of Jesus in the *Commentary on Matthew* covers all the points Origen said in the *Contra Celsum* he hoped to discuss in a later treatise: the burial, the tomb, and the man who buried Jesus. Had he composed this discussion prior to the writing of the *Contra Celsum*, he would have simply referred to his *Commentary on Matthew* as he referred to other previous works in the *Contra Celsum*. This discussion of the burial of Jesus makes it clear that the *Commentary on Matthew* was composed after the *Contra Celsum* had been written.

THE PRESERVATION OF ORIGEN'S *COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW*

Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* originally consisted of twenty-five books.[153] They appear to have covered the entire Gospel. The first nine books are lost. Book ten, the first of the preserved books, begins with Matthew 13:36. Eusebius, however, quotes a passage from Origen about the composition of the four canonical Gospels and says it comes from the first book of Origen's exegetical works on the Gospel of Matthew.[154] Pamphilus, in his *Apology for Origen*, quotes a passage related to the birth of Jesus and likewise says it comes from the first book of Origen's *Commentary on Matthew*.[155] There are, in addition, a number of fragments on the first chapter of Matthew found in the catenae commentaries that can be attributed to Origen with a reasonable amount of

[151] Ibid. [152] Ibid.

[153] See Eusebius, *H. E.* 6.36.2; Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, prologue (PL 26.20B), *Epistle* 33.4; Nautin (1977) 242; Crouzel (1989) 42–3.

[154] *H. E.* 6.25.3–6. [155] PG 17.589A; English in Scheck (2010) 93.

certainty. It seems safe to assume, therefore, that Origen began his exposition of Matthew's Gospel with the first chapter of the Gospel.

Books 10 through 17 of the *Commentary on Matthew* have been preserved in continuous commentary form in the Greek language. They cover Matthew 13:36–22:33. We are dependent for the Greek text of these eight books on the thirteenth-century codex Monacensis 191 in Munich.[156] This manuscript is also the primary witness to the text of Origen's *Commentary on John*. The manuscript is in bad condition and contains numerous lacunae, some of which probably go back to the source from which it was copied. This condition demanded that the editors of the Greek text often resort to conjectural emendations. A. E. Brooke said, speaking of the Johannine portion of the manuscript: 'Fortunately it is not so badly damaged as to preclude the possibility of restoring nearly everything which it contained with tolerable certainty'.[157] Erich Klostermann and Ernst Benz, his collaborator on the text in the GCS series, proposed a number of emendations to the portion of the manuscript containing the *Commentary on Matthew*, most of which I have accepted in my translation.[158] My translation of both the Greek and Latin portions of the *Commentary* is based on the critical text by Erich Klostermann and Ernst Benz.[159]

The Ancient Latin Translation of the *Commentary on Matthew*

There is an ancient Latin translation of the latter portion of the *Commentary on Matthew*, done perhaps in the sixth century by an unknown translator.[160] It begins in book 12, chapter 9, where the discussion of Matthew 16:13 and following commences. It runs parallel to the Greek portion of the *Commentary* from this point to the end of book 17 where the portion of the *Commentary* preserved in Greek ends; that is, through Matthew 22:33. The Latin translation continues on through Matthew 27:66. In the *Patrologiae Graecae* of J. P. Migne, the portion of the Latin translation that covers Matthew 16:13–22:33 is printed at the bottom of the page of Greek text to which it corresponds and is given the title *Vetus Interpretatio*.[161] In the edition by Klostermann it is printed in columns parallel to the corresponding Greek text.[162] The Latin translation, which

[156] For information on the manuscript situation see Preuschen (1903) ix–lix; Klostermann (1935) vii–xi; Brooke (1896) ix–xxi. The latter work shows the relationship of the various manuscripts to one another and the derivation of all of them from codex Monacensis in a stemma codicum.

[157] Brooke (1896) xxi.

[158] Vogt (1999b) questioned a few of Klostermann's corrections to the Greek text.

[159] See the three volumes listed in the Bibliography.

[160] See Vogt (1983) 8; cf. Girod (1975) 131–2.

[161] PG 13.993–1600. The Latin column printed parallel to the Greek text on these pages is the translation of Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630–1721).

[162] See Klostermann (1935) 80–703.

covers the remainder of the *Commentary on Matthew* beginning at Matthew 22:34, follows without a break from the preceding *Commentary*. It has come down to us, however, in a completely different format. While the text it translates must have been books 18 through 25 of the original Greek commentary, there is no division into books in the text that has been preserved in Latin. The manuscripts, Girod says, 'adopt whimsical and dissimilar systems' of division.[163] It took various forms in the first printed editions and finally was divided into 145 series or chapters under the title given it by Charles de la Rue which J. P. Migne took over in his *Patrologiae Graecae*: 'Series Veteris Interpretationis Commentariorum Origenis in Matthaeum'.[164] It is usually referred to today by the shorter title, *Series Commentariorum*, or simply *Series*.

The portions of this ancient Latin translation that parallel books 12.9–17.36 in the Greek text have permitted scholars to evaluate, to a certain degree, the accuracy and dependability of the Latin translator. The main interest in this, of course, is to determine how much confidence to put in the Latin texts for which there is no parallel Greek text extant; that is, how far to rely on the text in the *Series Commentariorum*. These studies have called attention to errors, omissions, additions, and peculiarities in the way some key Greek terms of Origen are rendered.[165] Vogt concluded that the translator did not know Origen's theology well, that he was not a slavish translator but translated the train of thought in the text, and that one should expect conscious changes to Origen's text even where it might first appear to be a simple mistranslation.[166]

Girod's conclusions differ somewhat from Vogt's. He concluded that the translator knew Origen's thought and did not knowingly alter it. He thought the translator's knowledge of Greek, however, was mediocre, and this affected his translation. In his view, the translator has preserved the essence of Origen's thought, but the reader today must use the *Series Commentariorum* with the necessary reservations.[167] It is also possible, of course, that some of the differences between the *Vetus Interpretatio* and the Greek text in codex Monacensis 191 should be traced to different readings in the text from which the sixth-century Latin translator worked and those in the thirteenth-century codex Monacensis 191.

The Translation of the Latin Portion of the *Commentary* in this English Translation

In Volume II, which contains the translation of the Latin texts, I have begun with the *Vetus Interpretatio* which begins with Matthew 16:13 (in book 12 of

[163] Girod (1975) 125. [164] Ibid., 125–6; Vogt (1993) 1; PG 13.1599–1600.
[165] See Vogt (1985), (1993) 3–6; Girod (1975) 132–7.
[166] Vogt (1985) 108. [167] Girod (1975) 137.

the Greek manuscript) and translated the complete Latin text from that point to the end of the *Series Commentariorum* which ends at Matthew 27:66.

The Translation of the Greek Fragments in this English Translation

In addition to this continuous text of Origen's *Commentary* running from Matthew 13:36 (the beginning of book ten in the Greek tradition) through Matthew 27:66 (the end of the *Series Commentariorum*), there are fragmentary excerpts from the portions of the *Commentary* that have been lost (covering Matthew 1:1–13:33 and Matthew 28), culled from the works of later Church Fathers and from commentaries known as catena commentaries. In an Appendix to Volume I, I have translated what I consider the more likely of these fragments to have come from Origen's work.

Book 10 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 13:36–14:15

1 'Then he left the crowds and entered his house. And his disciples came to him and said, Tell us the meaning of the parable of the weeds in the field'.[1]

When Jesus is with the crowds he is not in his house, for the crowds are outside the house. It is an act of kindness that he left the house and went out to those not able to come to him. But after he has spent enough time addressing the crowds in parables, he dismisses them and enters his own house where his disciples approach him, as they had not remained with those he dismissed. And all who are very sincere in listening to Jesus first follow him, then, when they ask about his dwelling place, they are permitted to see it. When they go and see it, they all remain 'with him that day', and some may stay even longer.[2] These are the kinds of things I think John is talking about in his Gospel when he says, 'The next day John, along with two of his disciples, stood again'.[3] In addition, to show that the superior one of those permitted to go with Jesus and see his house also becomes an apostle, it is added, 'Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed him'. Therefore, if we wish to hear Jesus differently than the crowds which he sent away when he entered the house, let us understand something more distinctive than the crowds do so that we may be made friends of Jesus and may approach him as his disciples when he enters the house. Then, when we have approached him, we too may be thought worthy of an explanation of a parable, whether that of the weeds of the field or any other parable.[4]

Now to understand more accurately what the house of Jesus means, one must collect everything said about Jesus' house in the Gospels, noting both

[1] Mt 13:36[–43]. [2] See Jn 1:37–40. [3] Jn 1:35.

[4] The differentiation between those within the house and those without is an important point in Origen's general hermeneutic. See the section, 'The Church and Scripture in Origen's Interpretation of Matthew' in the Introduction.

what he said and what he did in it.[5] For when these words have been brought together, they will persuade the one who approaches this passage that not only are the bare words of the Gospel not simple (as some think), but that they have become simple for the simple as an adaptation. Those who want to hear them more precisely and have the capacity to do so find that they conceal things wise and worthy of the Logos of God.

2 After these things 'he answered and said' from the statement, 'He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man' up to the words, 'Let the person who has ears hear'.[6]

Although we have already treated these matters as we were able in previous sections, nonetheless we have now added comments that fit closely with those previous remarks even though there are grounds for another interpretation. And consider if you can also take the good seed, the sons of the kingdom, in a different way in relation to our previous explanation. All good things produced in the human soul are sown by the Logos of God who was 'in the beginning with God'.[7] These become offspring of the kingdom of God, so that sound thoughts about each thing are the sons of the kingdom. But when they sleep and do not obey Jesus' command, 'Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation',[8] the devil prowls about and sows what are called 'weeds', worthless opinions, over the ideas some call innate, namely the good seeds that came from the Logos.

Following this reading of the text, everyone would say the field is indeed the world, and not just the church of God, for the Son of Man sowed the good seed in the whole world, and the wicked one sowed weeds, which are worthless thoughts, sons of the wicked one, sprung from evil. And at the end of things (which is called the end of the age) there must be a harvest so that the angels of God appointed for this may gather up the worthless opinions which have grown up in the soul and deliver them to destruction, refuting them by the fire that is said to burn.[9] So the angels and servants of the Logos will gather from the entire kingdom of Christ everything in souls which make them stumble along with the thoughts which produce lawlessness. They will destroy whatever they are by casting them into the flaming fiery furnace. There too those who are aware that it was thanks to their own being asleep that they received the seeds of the wicked one will, as it were, be angry at themselves. This is what the 'gnashing of teeth' refers to, which is also mentioned in the Psalms, where it is said, 'They gnashed their teeth at me'.[10] Then especially the just will no longer shine in different degrees as in their beginnings,[11] but all will shine as one sun in the kingdom of their Father.

[5] For this hermeneutical procedure see *Philocalia* 2.1–3.

[6] Mt 13:37–43. The phrase beginning, 'up to the words' is Klostermann's suggestion in a footnote.

[7] Jn 1:2. [8] Mt 26:41. [9] Mt 13:40, 42. [10] Ps 34:16. [11] See Mt 5:16.

Then the Saviour adds, as if he is revealing a mystery, 'Let the one who has ears hear'. Perhaps he is referring to everything he has said in the explanation of the parable, or perhaps he is referring particularly to the words, 'then the just will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father'. He is teaching those who think that the explanation of the parable is so clear that even common people can understand it that the very words of the explanation of the parable need interpretation.

3 But since we commented above on the statement, 'Then the just will shine as the sun', that the just will not shine in differing degrees as formerly, but all will be as one sun, we must set out our thoughts on the passage. Daniel, who knew that those who understand and the majority of the just, while differing in glory, are the 'light of the world', seems to have said that 'those who understand will shine as the brightness of the firmament, and some of the crowd of the just will shine as the stars forever and ever'.[12] The apostle also says the same things as Daniel when he says, 'There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, for star differs from star in glory, and so also is the resurrection of the dead'.[13] He gets this understanding from Daniel's prophecy.

Now someone will ask how some speak about a difference of light among the just when the Saviour says, to the contrary, that they will shine as one sun.[14] It is my opinion that it is when the saved are beginning to be made blessed, and those not belonging to this group have not yet been purged, that these matters of the differences in the light of the saved occur. But when, as we have explained, everything which causes stumbling has been collected from the entire kingdom of Christ, including the thoughts which produce lawlessness, and cast into the flaming furnace, and the worse things have been destroyed, then those who had received the sons of the wicked one, that is his thoughts, become aware of their situation. It is at this time that the just will become the one light of the sun and shine in the kingdom of their Father. And for whom will they shine other than for their inferiors who will have the benefit of their light in the same way as people on earth now benefit from the shining of the sun? For they certainly will not shine for themselves. But perhaps the saying, 'Let your light shine before humanity'[15] can be inscribed 'on the tablet of the heart' (to use Solomon's words)[16] so that it has three applications: first, that the light of Jesus' disciples shines before the rest of humanity even now, then, after death but before the resurrection, and again after the

[12] Dan 12:3 (Theodotion's version). [13] 1 Cor 15:41–2.

[14] Jesus does not use the word 'one' in Mt 13:43 according to the manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel, nor are there parallels to this saying in the other Gospels. Origen seems to be building this argument on the fact that Jesus speaks of the sun in the singular.

[15] Mt 5:16.

[16] Prv 7:3. The words are also a textual variant in the LXX at Prv 3:3, found in Codex Alexandrinus.

resurrection, until all attain 'to a perfect human being',[17] and all become one sun. 'Then they will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father'.[18]

4 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field which a man hides when he finds it'.[19]

He addressed the previous parables to the crowds, but he seems to have spoken this and the two which follow it, which are not parables but similes of the kingdom of heaven, to the disciples when he was in the house. The person who pays attention to what he reads[20] should examine the two which follow also to see if they are parables or not. In the case of those previous passages, the Scripture did not hesitate to prefix the term parable to each, but it has not done the same with these, and with good reason. For if he spoke to the crowds 'in parables', and 'he spoke all these things in parables, and did not speak to them except in parables', but when he enters 'the house' he does not address the crowds, but the disciples who approach him in the house, it is clear that what he has spoken in the house are not parables, for he speaks in parables to those who are 'outside' and 'have not been granted knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven'.[21]

Someone will ask, then, If they are not parables, what are they? Shall we not follow the letter of Scripture and say that they are similes? Now a simile is different than a parable. Mark has written, 'To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or in what parable shall we place it?' This proves that there is a difference between a simile and a parable. The simile appears to be general and the parable specific. But perhaps too, the simile, which is the most general form of the parable, contains the latter in its form, just as the parable, so the simile also is a homonym to the universal name. This has happened in the case of other terms, as the experts have observed concerning the giving of many names. They say that impulse is the universal which contains many specific meanings, both repulsion and attraction for example, and that attraction, which is a homonym with the universal in its appearance, is used in opposition to repulsion.[22]

5 In this case, we must investigate separately the field and the treasure hidden in it. We must also investigate in what manner the man, when he has found this hidden treasure, goes off joyfully and sells all that he has so that he may purchase that field. And we must consider what it is that he sells. First of all, the field seems to me to be Scripture, which has been planted with the obvious literal meanings in the history, the law, the prophets, and the other literary genre (for the planting of the literal words of all Scripture is abundant and various).

[17] Eph 4:13. [18] Mt 13:43. [19] Mt 13:44.
[20] Cf. 1 Tim 4:13. [21] Mt 13:11.
[22] The word *ormē* which appears here means impulse, or a strong attraction to something. Its opposite was *aformē*, repulsion. Origen appears to mean that *ormē* has both a universal and a specific meaning.

The treasure which has been hidden in the field, however, is the concealed thoughts underlying the obvious meanings of the wisdom which has been hidden 'in a mystery', that is in Christ, 'in whom are the secret treasures of wisdom and knowledge'.[23] But someone else might say that the field is the one who is truly full, namely the Christ of God whom the Lord blessed. In this interpretation, the treasure hidden in the field would be the things Paul referred to as hidden in Christ when he said of him, 'In whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden'.[24] Heavenly matters, therefore, namely the kingdom of heaven, have been written in the Scriptures, which are the kingdom of heaven, as in an image, or Christ himself, the king of the ages, is the kingdom of heaven which is represented as a treasure hidden in a field.[25]

6 But when you have reached this stage, you will ask whether the kingdom of heaven is like the treasure alone hidden in the field, and the field is something other than the kingdom, or it is like this whole field and the treasure hidden in it. In this latter comparison, the kingdom of heaven is both the field and the treasure hidden in it. Now when a person approaches this field, whether the Scriptures or Christ, who is presented in their obvious and hidden meanings, the person discovers a hidden treasure of wisdom, either in Christ or in the Scriptures (for as one goes about the field inquiring into the Scriptures and trying to understand the Christ, one discovers the treasure in the field). Once he has discovered it, he hides it, thinking it dangerous to reveal to the common crowd the secret meanings of the Scriptures, or the treasures 'of wisdom and knowledge' in Christ.[26] When he has hidden the treasure, he departs, engaged in how he will purchase the field, or the Scriptures, that he might make them his very own, taking 'the oracles of God formerly entrusted to the Jews' from the people of God.[27] And when the person who has been instructed by Christ has bought the field, 'the kingdom of God' (which is a vineyard in another parable) is taken from those people and given 'to a nation producing its fruits'.[28] That means it is given to the person who, by his faith, has bought the field by selling all of his possessions, keeping none of his former possessions (now they[29] were evil) for himself any longer. And you will make the same application even if Christ should be the field which contains the hidden treasure. For those 'who have left everything'[30] and follow him, have as it were, in another way of saying it, sold their possessions. They did it by selling and giving up

[23] See 1 Cor 2:7; Col 2:3. [24] Col 2:3.

[25] This sentence seems to be Origen's attempt to combine the two interpretations he has suggested.

[26] The sentiment of this statement echoes maxim 352 of *The Sentences of Sextus*. For Origen's use of this maxim in other places see Chadwick (1959) 114–16.

[27] Rom 3:2. [28] Mt 21:43.

[29] I have translated *tauta* from the apparatus rather than *autō* which Klostermann prints in the text.

[30] Lk 5:11.

those things and, in their place, with the help of God, receiving a good intention, so that they might purchase the field containing the hidden treasure at the high price the field is worth.

7 'Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for beautiful pearls.'[31] Although there are merchants trading in many commodities, since the kingdom of heaven is like none of those, but is like a merchant looking for beautiful pearls, who finds one that is very expensive, worth as much as a pile of the others, and buys it rather than all of them, I think it is reasonable to examine things about the nature of a pearl. Now observe carefully that it did not say that he sold all the pearls that he had. He sold not only the pearls which he had purchased when he was looking for beautiful pearls, but he also sold everything he had to buy that beautiful pearl.

We discovered the following things, then, about the nature of a pearl from those who write about stones.[32] First, some come from the land and some from the sea. Second, those from the land come from India alone and are appropriate for rings, headbands, and necklaces. The best pearls, which come from the sea, are found among the same Indians, but there are also some excellent pearls in the Red Sea. The second grade of pearls are those taken from the ocean at Britain. Finally, those found in the Bosporus around Scythia are a third grade, not only falling behind the first, but also the second grades of pearls. Furthermore, the Indian pearl is said to originate in mussels which look like large snails. These are depicted as if they were in companies procuring pasturage for themselves in the sea. They have a leader who stands out from those under him by his colour and size, like the queen bee among bees. In regard to the search for these superior Indian pearls, they also say that the natives encircle the shore with nets, then dive down intent on grabbing that one, out of all the rest, who is the leader, for when this one is caught, they say, the catching of the herd under him is easy, since not one in the herd remains stationary, but they follow the leader as if they were tied to him.

Now the formation of Indian pearls is said to occur over a period of time, with the creature undergoing numerous changes and transitions, until the pearl is perfected. They also claim that the shell of the creature bearing the pearl opens like a gaping mouth and takes in the dew which descends from heaven and when it is filled with pure, clear dew it begins to glow and produces a large, symmetrical stone. But if it happens to take in dew that is cloudy and

[31] Mt 13:45.

[32] At the beginning of section 8 below Origen refers to a single treatise on stones from which he had drawn his information. Klostermann (1935) 7 provides several parallels to Origen's subject from the *Animal Stories* of Claudius Aelianus (*c.* 172–235 AD). Lesky (1966) 853 thinks Aelianus drew on a 'collection of marvels from natural history' that 'could have been produced in Alexandria in the second century AD'. Perhaps it was this collection from which Origen drew his information.

abnormal, and it is winter, it brings forth a pearl that is misty and blemished with stains. And we also discovered that if the process of forming the stone is cut short by lightning, the shell closes and, as it were ***, in terror reduces what was being made to powder and dissolves it into what is called mucus. And sometimes, as if born prematurely, pearls are small and cloudy, but properly proportioned. The Indian pearl has this further advantage over the others—it is white with the appearance of silver, and shines with a soft, pale sheen and, as a rule, is round. It is also more delicate and softer than the average stone. Consequently, it is a very pleasing sight, to use the words with which the nobles praise it (as the person who described stones said). The best pearl also has the following characteristics. Its surface is round, its colour is pure white and translucent, and it is very large. These are the characteristics, then, of the Indian pearl.

They say that the stone found near Britain has a golden tinge, but its sparkle is somewhat cloudy and dull. And that which comes from the strait of Bosporus is cloudier than the Britain pearl and is livid, completely dim, as well as being soft and small. And the stone formed in the strait of Bosporus is not found in the pinna, which is the pearl-producing form of shells, but in what are called mussels.[33] And the feeding grounds for these, I mean those in the strait of Bosporus, are in the marshes. A fourth grade of pearls is said to exist in the pinnae of oysters around Acarnania, but these are not very good. They are irregular in their form, and their colour is completely dark and turbid. And there are still others found around this same Acarnania which are rejected because they lack all desirable qualities.

8 Now that I have gathered this information from the treatise on stones, I say that the Saviour knew that pearls differ in grade, some being beautiful and others worthless, when he said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls'. For if some pearls were not worthless he would not have said the merchant was 'seeking beautiful pearls'. He is seeking pearls among words of every kind which claim to be true, and among the people who bear them. And let the mussel shells which conceive from the heavenly dew be the prophets (if I may speak like this) pregnant with the word of truth from heaven. These are the beautiful pearls which the merchant in the text before us is seeking. And the leader of the pearls, with whom the rest are found when he is found, the very expensive pearl, is the Christ of God, the Logos who supersedes the precious letters and ideas in the law and the prophets. When he has been found all other things are easily captured.

But the Saviour is addressing all the disciples as merchants who not only are seeking beautiful pearls but have also found and purchased them, when he

[33] This is a different word for 'mussels' than the word used above describing the Indian pearl. It appears that the former were mussels with shells and the latter lacked shells.

says, 'Don't throw pearls before pigs'.[34] Now it is clear, from the preceding words, 'Seeing the crowds, he went up into the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him',[35] that he addressed these words to the disciples, for subsequent to those words it is said, 'Don't give what is holy to dogs, nor throw pearls before pigs'. Perhaps, then, the person who does not have pearls, or the very expensive pearl, is not a disciple of the Saviour and ***[36] the beautiful pearls, not the cloudy or hazy pearls, whose qualities the teachings of the heterodox possess. These latter are not brought forth at sunrise, but at sunset, or in the north, if we should also make use of these things we discovered based on the difference in pearls which originate in different places. And perhaps the darkened words, and the heresies which have been bound up with deeds of the flesh, are the pearls which are hazy and not beautiful, that come into being in the marshes.

9 But you will combine with the statement about the 'one seeking beautiful pearls' the saying, 'Seek and you will find', along with the statement, 'Everyone who seeks finds'.[37] For what 'are you seeking', or what 'does everyone who seeks find'? I dare say that the answer is pearls, even the pearl which the one who has surrendered and forfeited all things has acquired. It was of this pearl that Paul says, 'I have forfeited all things that I might gain Christ'.[38] 'All things' refers to beautiful pearls, and 'that I might gain Christ' refers to the one very expensive pearl. A lamp is valuable to people in darkness, and one is needed until the sun rises. So too, the glory on the face of Moses (and I think on the prophets also) was a valuable and beautiful sight. It was this glory which brought us to the point that we could see the glory of Christ, to which the Father testifies when he says, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'.[39] But 'because of the surpassing glory, what was glorified in this earlier matter has not been glorified'.[40] We previously needed that glory which anticipates being abolished for the 'surpassing glory', just as we need the knowledge which is in part, which 'will be abolished when the perfect has come'.[41] Every soul, then, which enters youth and proceeds 'to maturity'[42] needs a pedagogue, managers, and guardians until it reaches 'the fullness of time'.[43] This is so that later the person who was no better off 'than a slave although he was Lord of all' might be freed from the pedagogue, the managers, and the guardians and inherit the father's possessions. The latter are analogous to the expensive pearl and to what is perfect which abolishes 'that which is partial'[44] when it arrives. This happens when one is capable of containing 'the excellence of the knowledge of Christ'[45] because he has previously exercised himself (if I may speak like this) in the knowledge which is exceeded by the knowledge of Christ. But because most people do not perceive the beauty of the numerous pearls in the law along with that know-

[34] Mt 7:6. [35] Mt 5:1. [36] Klostermann indicates a gap in the manuscript here.
[37] Mt 7:7–8. [38] Phil 3:8. [39] Mt 3:17. [40] 2 Cor 3:10.
[41] 1 Cor 13:10. [42] Heb 6:1. [43] Gal 4:4. [44] 1 Cor 13:10. [45] Phil 3:8.

ledge which is still 'partial' in all the prophets, they think they are able, without a clearly comprehended picture of those writings in their entirety, to find the 'one expensive pearl' and to behold 'the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus'. In comparison with the latter, everything which preceded such exceedingly profound knowledge, while it was not dung in reality, appeared to be such. Perhaps it is that dung which the vineyard worker put around the fig tree which caused it to bear fruit.[46]

10 'There is a time, therefore, for all things, and a season for every activity under heaven'.[47] There is a 'season to gather stones'[48] (that is, beautiful pearls), and a season after they have been gathered to find the one expensive pearl. At this time it is proper to go and sell everything one has so one can buy that pearl. Everyone who will be wise in speaking about reality must first be instructed in basic principles. Then he advances through elementary education. While this education is highly valued for its basic principles, he does not continue in it but goes on 'to perfection'[49] being thankful for its previous usefulness. In the same way, a complete understanding of the writings of the law and the prophets is elementary education for understanding completely the Gospel and every meaning related to the works and words of Christ Jesus.

11 'Again the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea'.[50] When pictures and statues are made, the likenesses do not extend to the details of what is represented. The picture painted on a flat piece of wood, for example, resembles the appearance in its colour; it does not preserve the recesses and bulges but only gives an impression of them. On the other hand, the sculpting of statues attempts to preserve the recesses and bulges, but not the colour. But if it is a question of a lump of wax, the attempt is made to preserve both (I mean the colour and the recesses and bulges), but it is not an image of the things in the depth of what is represented. Consider the kingdom of heaven with me in this same way when it is compared to anything in the similes in the Gospel. It is not compared to all the details of the likeness, but to those things needed by the argument which has been used. Here, then, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea'. Some argue incorrectly that it is differing natures of the wicked and the just who have come into the net which are assumed in the story.[51] They then conclude, on the basis of the statement that they 'are gathered from every kind', that there are many different natures of the just, and likewise of the wicked. All the Scriptures which indicate that there is free will and censure those who sin but approve those who live a good life oppose such an interpretation. Otherwise it would not be just for blame to fall on those who belonged to the worthless by nature, or for praise to apply to the noble. The fact that some fish are worthless and others good does not concern the souls of the

[46] Lk 13:6–9. [47] Eccl 3:5. [48] Ibid. [49] See Heb 6:1. [50] Mt 13:47.
[51] An allusion to the Gnostic doctrine of 'natures' which Origen attacks in many of his works.

fish, but is based on that which the Logos said with full knowledge, 'Let the waters bring forth creeping things with living souls', when also 'God made the huge sea-monsters and every soul of the living creeping things, which the waters brought forth according to their kind'.[52] Here, then, 'the waters brought forth every soul of the living creeping things according to their kind', and no reason is given for the individual soul. In our case, however, we are the causes of our being good kinds and worthy of the so-called vessels or bad and worthy of being cast out, for no nature that we possess is the cause of our wickedness; it is rather our free choice which is prone to evil.[53] So, neither is any nature which is incapable of admitting unrighteousness the cause of righteousness. It is instead the rational faculty which we have received that produces righteous people. Indeed, one does not see the kinds of water creatures changing from worthless kinds of fish to excellent, or from the better to the worse. Among humans, however, one can always see the righteous or the wicked either attaining virtue from having been evil, or abandoning the advance towards virtue for the profusion of evil.

This is why Ezekiel has written the following words about the one who turns from lawlessness to keeping the divine commandments: 'And if the lawless person should turn from all the lawless deeds which he committed', and what follows up to the statement, 'That he turn from his wicked way and live'.[54] The following words also apply to the one who abandons the advance towards virtue for the profusion of evil: 'But when the righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits unrighteousness' and the rest up to the words, 'And he will die in his sins which he has committed'.[55] Or let those who introduce natures into the parable of the net tell us what kind of nature the man was when he was lawless, who later turned 'from all the lawless deeds which he committed' and kept 'all the commandments' of the Lord and performed deeds that were 'righteous and merciful'. It was certainly not a praiseworthy nature. But if it was blameworthy, then what sort of nature might he reasonably be said to be when he turns 'from all the lawless deeds which he committed'? For if his nature was bad because of his former deeds, how did he change for the better? But if he had a noble nature because of his second state, how was he lawless when he possessed a noble nature? And you will raise the same question about the righteous person who turns 'from his righteousness' and commits 'unrighteousness in all forms of lawlessness'.[56] For prior to turning from righteousness, when he was performing righteous works, he did not possess a bad nature, for a bad nature would not exist in the midst of righteousness, since a bad tree (that is, evil) cannot produce good fruit (that is, the fruits of virtue).[57] And on the other hand, if he possessed a noble and changeless nature he would not

[52] Gn 1:20–1.

[53] Is this the evil inclination (*yetzer*) that the rabbis discussed? See Montefiore and Loewe (1963) 295–314.

[54] Ez 18:21–3. [55] Ez 18:24. [56] Ez 18:24. [57] Mt 7:18.

turn from the good after being called righteous, 'on the basis of his righteousness', to 'commit unrighteousness in all the forms of lawlessness which he practised'.[58]

12 Now, since these things have been said, we must regard 'the kingdom of heaven' to be compared to 'a net thrown into the sea which gathers from every kind' to show the variety of human choices which differ extremely from one another, so that the phrase, 'which gathers from every kind', embraces the praiseworthy and the blameworthy in their propensities towards the forms of virtues or vices. And 'the kingdom of heaven' is like the complex mesh of a net in relation to the old and new Scripture which has been plaited from diverse and complex thoughts. And just as some of the fish which are caught in the net are found in one part of the net, and others in other parts, each in the part in which it was caught, so you would also find in the case of those who are caught in the net of the Scriptures. Some have been caught by the mesh of the prophets (by Isaiah, for example, in this way of speaking, or by Jeremiah, or by Daniel), and others in the mesh of the law, and others in that of the Gospel, and still others in the apostolic mesh. For one who is caught first by the Logos, or seems to be caught, is taken from some part of the whole net. And it is not strange if some of the fish which are caught are enclosed by the entire mesh of the net in the Scriptures and are constrained and held on every side, unable to escape, as if they were enslaved from every side and not allowed to escape from the net.

Now this net has been thrown into the sea, which is the life of human beings everywhere which rises and falls like the waves of the sea, ***[59] and they swim about in the briny activities of life. This net had not been filled completely before the time of our Saviour Jesus. For he who said, 'Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I did not come to destroy, but to fulfil'[60] was absent from the mesh of the law and the prophets. The mesh of the net has been completed in the Gospels and the words of Christ through the apostles. This, then, is why 'the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea and which gathers from every kind'.

But distinct from the explanations we have given, the clause, 'which gathers from every kind', can indicate the calling of the nations from 'every race'.[61] And those who look after the net which is thrown into the sea are Jesus Christ, the Lord of the net, and those angels who came and ministered to him.[62] They do not draw the net up from the sea, and carry it off to the shore beyond the sea,

[58] Ez 18:24.

[59] Klostermann indicates that a brief phrase may be missing from the text at this point. If the suggestion of Koetschau is correct, the text would read here: 'Now this net has been thrown into the sea, which is the life of human beings everywhere which rises and falls like the waves of the sea, who are borne up and down and swim about in the briny activities of life'.

[60] Mt 5:17.

[61] The Greek word *genos* which appears in the Biblical text can mean race, as well as kind.

[62] Mt 4:11.

that is, to the affairs beyond this life, unless the net has been filled, that is, 'the fullness of the nations has entered' it.[63] But once the fullness has entered, they draw up the net from the affairs of this sea here below, and carry it to the place called figuratively 'the shore'. Then the task of those who drew up the net will be to sit down on the shore and stay there to place each of the good fish in the net in its proper order or, to use the words of the text, in their 'vessels', and to throw out those which are the opposite and are called 'bad'.[64] Now 'out' means the 'fiery furnace', as the Saviour interpreted it when he said, 'So will it be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked themselves from the midst of the just, and will throw them into the fiery furnace'.[65] But notice that both the parable of the weeds and the simile before us already teach that angels will be entrusted with discerning and separating the bad from the just. For it says above, 'The Son of Man will send forth his angels and they will remove from his kingdom all the occasions for stumbling and those who practise lawlessness, and throw them into the fiery furnace. There they will weep and gnash their teeth'.[66] And here it says that 'the angels will go out and separate the wicked from the midst of the just, and will throw them into the fiery furnace'.[67]

13 The opinion that some base on these words does not follow. They conclude that the humans saved in Christ are greater than the holy angels. For how could those put in vessels by the holy angels and who are arranged in their order under the authority of those very angels be compared to those who put them in vessels? When we say this, we are not unaware that humans who will be saved in Christ excel certain angels who have not been entrusted with this economy (but not all of them). For we have also read the words, 'into which things angels wish to look',[68] where it does not say, 'all angels'. We are also aware of the statement, 'We will judge angels', where again it does not say, 'all angels'.[69]

Now since these things have been written about the net and those in the net, the person who wants there to be no wicked people 'of any kind' in the net before the end of the age and before the angels go out to separate the wicked from the midst of the just appears not to have understood the Scripture and to want things that are impossible. This is why we should not be surprised if we see our gatherings filled also with wicked people before 'the wicked have been separated from the midst of the just' by the angels who have been sent out for this purpose. But may those who will be thrown 'into the fiery furnace' not outnumber the just!

Since we were saying earlier that parables and similes are not referred in all their points to what they are compared or likened, but only to some points, we must establish this further point also on the basis of what will be said. In the

[63] Rom 11:25. [64] Mt 13:48. [65] Mt 13:49–50. [66] Mt 13:41–2.
[67] Mt 13:49–50. [68] 1 Pt 1:12. [69] 1 Cor 6:3.

case of fish, so far as their life goes, it is bad for them to be found in the net, for they are deprived of their natural life. And it doesn't matter whether they are placed in vessels or thrown out. In either case they lose their life as fish. But so far as those matters to which the parable is related are concerned, it is a bad thing to be in the sea and not to enter the net to be placed in vessels with the good. And in the same way, bad fish are thrown out and tossed aside, but the bad in the simile before us are thrown 'into the fiery furnace'. This is so that Ezekiel's words about the furnace might also be applied to them: 'And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of Man, Behold! The house of Israel! They have all become mixed with bronze and iron', and the words which follow down to the statement, 'And you shall know that I, the Lord, have poured out my wrath on you'.[70]

14 'Have you understood all these things? They answer, "Yes"'.[71] Christ Jesus, who knows everything in the human heart (as also John taught about him in his Gospel[72]), does not ask out of ignorance, but because he had formerly assumed humanity, he was subject to all of it, one aspect of which was asking questions. Now it is not strange that the Saviour does this, since even the God of the universe, bearing the manner of humans, 'as a man might bear the manner of his son',[73] asks questions. For example, 'Adam, where are you?'[74] Or, 'Where is Abel, your brother?'[75] Now someone will strain this passage and say that the verb 'understood' is not used to ask a question, but to make an assertion. And this person will further say that the disciples agree with the assertion by saying, 'Yes'. But whether he asks or makes an assertion, he is not speaking of 'these things' alone (which is demonstrative), or 'all things' alone, but 'all these things'.

And now he seems to present the disciples as being scholars before the kingdom of heaven.[76] But the following words in the Acts of the Apostles oppose this understanding: 'But when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated, common people, they were amazed, and recognized that they were with Jesus'.[77] Someone, then, will ask, if they were scholars, how are they said to be 'uneducated, common people' in Acts? But on the other hand, if they were 'uneducated, common people', how does the Saviour so clearly designate them scholars? Now one might say to these queries that not all the disciples are said to be 'uneducated, common people' in Acts, but Peter and John. There were additional disciples to whom the statement about 'every scholar' etc. was addressed, because they understood everything. Or one might say that everyone who has been instructed in the letter of the law is called a 'scholar', so that even the unlearned and common people (but educated by the letter of the law) are said to be scholars in some sense. It is especially common people, who do not know about figurative interpretation or

[70] Ez 22:17–22. [71] Mt 13:51. [72] See Jn 2:24. [73] Dt 1:31. [74] Gn 3:9.
[75] Gn 4:9. [76] See Mt 13:52. [77] Acts 4:13.

understand the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures, but believe in and defend the bare letter, who call themselves scholars.

In the same way, one will also take the words, 'Woe to you, scholars and Pharisees, hypocrites',[78] to be addressed to everyone who understands nothing but the letter. On this point, you will investigate whether the scholar who treats the Gospel is like the scholar who treats the law. Just as the latter reads the law, listens to it, and says, 'these things are allegorical',[79] so too the former reads the Gospel, in such a way that he knows the unfailing elevation to spiritual things (although the historical sense of what happened is preserved), so that the lessons learned may not be about 'spiritual forces of wickedness'[80] but, quite to the contrary, about spiritual forces of goodness. On the one hand, a 'scholar' is instructed 'in the kingdom of heaven' in the simpler sense when one leaves Judaism and accepts the church's teaching about Jesus Christ. But in a deeper sense this happens when one treats the literal meaning of the Scriptures as introductory material and advances to the spiritual meanings, which are called 'kingdom of heaven'. When each thought is encountered, understood in a lofty sense, compared, and demonstrated, it is possible to understand the kingdom of heaven, since the one who excels in knowledge that is not false is in the kingdom of the multitude of the heavens which are explained in this way. And you will also interpret figuratively the words, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near',[81] so that when the scholars, meaning those who rely on the bare letter, repent from such an interpretation they may be instructed in the spiritual teaching of the word animated by Jesus Christ. This teaching is called the 'kingdom of heaven'. Therefore, to the extent that Jesus Christ, God the Logos 'in the beginning with God'[82] does not reside in a soul, the kingdom of heaven is not in that soul; but whenever someone is on the verge of grasping this Logos, the kingdom of heaven has drawn near to that person.

Now if 'kingdom of heaven' and 'kingdom of God' are the same in reality (even though they are expressed differently), it is clear that 'the kingdom' of heaven 'is within you' might be said to those people to whom Jesus said, 'The kingdom of God is within you',[83] especially because of the action of turning from the letter to the spirit, because 'whenever' someone 'turns to the Lord, the veil' on the Scripture 'is removed; and the Lord is the spirit'.[84] And he is truly master of the house, and is free and rich. He is rich because from the craft of the scholar he has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven 'in every word' drawn from the Old Testament 'and in all knowledge'[85] concerning the new teaching of Christ Jesus, and he possesses this wealth stored up in his treasure. And, because he has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven, he stores this treasure 'in heaven, where neither moth destroy, nor thieves break in'.[86] And it is possible to provide precise indicators concerning the one who lays up treasure

[78] Mt 23:13. [79] Gal 4:24. [80] Eph 6:12. [81] Mt 4:17. [82] Jn 1:2.
[83] Lk 17:21. [84] 2 Cor 3:16, 17. [85] 1 Cor 1:5. [86] Mt 6:20.

in heaven (as we have explained it). Not even one moth of the passions can touch his spiritual and heavenly goods. Now I said moth of the passions, drawing on the Proverbs where it is written, 'just as a moth in a garment and a worm in wood, so human grief damages the heart'.[87] Grief is a worm and a moth which damages the heart which does not have its treasures in heaven and in spiritual things. If anyone stores his treasure in heaven (since 'where the treasure is, there too is the heart'[88]), he has his heart in heaven, and because of it he says, 'If a camp should draw up in battle-order against me, my heart will not be afraid'.[89] So too thieves, of whom the Saviour said, 'All who came before me are thieves and robbers',[90] cannot break into the things which have been stored up in heaven and into the heart which is there with them and says, 'He raised us up and seated us in the heavenly places with Christ',[91] and also, 'Our citizenship is in heaven'.[92]

15 Since 'every scholar who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is master of a house, and brings forth from his treasure things that are new and old',[93] it is also clear (in relation to what is called the conversion of the proposition) that everyone who does not bring forth things that are new and old from his treasure is not a scholar who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, we must attempt in every way possible, by giving attention 'to the reading, the exhortation, and the teaching',[94] and by 'meditating on the law of the Lord day and night',[95] to gather not only the new sayings from the Gospels, the apostles, and their Revelation, but also the old teachings of the law, 'which contains a shadow of the good things to come',[96] and of the prophets who prophesied consistently with the laws. And these things will have been gathered whenever we read and understand them, and remembering them we compare 'spiritual things with spiritual'[97] in an appropriate manner. We do not compare things that are incomparable with one another, but things that are comparable and possess certain similarities of expression which mean the same thing, along with similarities of thoughts and doctrines, so that 'by the mouth of two or three' or even more scriptural 'witnesses' we may establish and confirm 'every word' of God.[98] Further, by means of these comparisons we must refute those who dissect the deity (so far as they are able), and dissociate the new teachings from the old, since they have little resemblance to the master of the house who brings forth 'from his treasure things that are new and old'.[99]

[87] Prv 25:20. [88] Mt 6:21. [89] Ps 26:3. [90] Jn 10:8. [91] Eph 2:6.
[92] Phil 3:20. [93] Mt 13:52. [94] 1 Tim 4:13. [95] Ps 1:2. [96] Heb 10:1.
[97] 1 Cor 2:13.

[98] 2 Cor 13:1. This statement is a description of how the hermeneutic functions that Origen regularly uses (see note 5 above). Not all things in Scripture can be compared. There must be similarities in the texts brought together between either the external forms of expression, or thoughts and teachings shared by the various texts.

[99] The referents here are Marcionites.

Since one who is likened to another is other from that one to whom he is likened, 'the scholar who is instructed in the kingdom of heaven' will be the one who is likened, and the master of the house, who brings 'from his treasure things that are new and old', will be the other distinct from him. But the one who is likened, in imitation of this other, wants to act in a similar manner. Perhaps, therefore, the man who is master of the house is Jesus himself. He brings forth from his treasure at the right time new points of teaching which are spiritual and which he always renews in the inner person of the just, which inner person itself is always being renewed 'day by day'.[100] But he also brings forth old things 'in letters carved in stones',[101] even in the stony hearts of the old person, so that by comparison of the letter and the appearance of the spirit he might enrich the scholar instructed in the kingdom of heaven and make him like himself, until the disciple 'become as the teacher',[102] first imitating the imitator of Christ, but after this imitating Christ himself, as Paul said, 'Be imitators of me, just as I too am of Christ'.[103] But Jesus, the master of the house, can also, in a simpler way, bring forth new things from his treasure, namely the teaching of the Gospel, and old things, meaning the comparison of the words received from the law and the prophets. Examples of this can be found in the Gospels. We must listen to the spiritual law concerning these old and new things. It says in Leviticus, 'And you shall eat the old things and the old things of the old, and you shall bring out the old things from the new; and I will place my tent among you'.[104] For we eat the old things with blessing, namely the words of the prophets, and the old things of the old things are the words of the law. When the new things came, that is the things of the Gospel, although we live according to the Gospel, we bring forth the old things of the letter in view of the new. Furthermore, he places his own tent among us in fulfilment of the promise he made, 'I will dwell among them and walk among them'.[105]

16 'And it happened that when Jesus finished these parables he departed from there and entered his fatherland'.[106]

Since we examined above whether the words addressed to the crowds were parables and those addressed to the disciples were similes, and we presented what I think to be significant observations which occurred to us on this matter, we must recognize that the statement, 'And it happened that when Jesus finished these parables he departed from there', appears, contrary to all those remarks, to be said not only of the parables, but also of the similes (as we interpreted them). We are investigating, therefore, whether we must reject all our previous arguments, or whether we must speak of two kinds of parables, the

[100] 2 Cor 4:16. [101] 2 Cor 3:7. [102] Mt 10:25. [103] 1 Cor 11:1.

[104] Lev 26:10, 11. Origen reads *skēnē* (tent), but the current text of the LXX has *diathēkē* (covenant). The apparatus in Swete's edition of the LXX shows that the seventh-century codex Ambrosianus has the reading Origen has.

[105] 2 Cor 6:16. [106] Mt 13:53.

one kind addressed to the crowds and the other proclaimed to the disciples. Or perhaps we should consider the word parable to be a homonym, or we should refer the statement, 'It happened that when Jesus finished these parables', only to the parables above which precede the similes. Because the Saviour has said to the disciples, 'It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to the rest they are in parables',[107] he cannot speak to the disciples in parables (because they are not outsiders). These are the options. Either the statement, 'And it happened that when Jesus finished these parables he departed from there' refers to the parables delivered above, or the word parable is a homonym, or there are two kinds of parables, or what we called similes are not parables at all. Add to this the fact that he speaks these parables outside his fatherland, for it says, 'When he finished, he departed from there and entered his fatherland and was teaching them in their synagogue'. Furthermore, Mark says, 'And he entered his fatherland and his disciples followed him'.[108] We must also investigate, in accordance with this text, whether he is calling Nazareth his fatherland, or Bethlehem. It might be Nazareth because of the saying, 'He will be called a Nazarene',[109] or Bethlehem since he was born there. I wonder also whether the evangelists, who could have said, 'he entered Bethlehem', or, 'he entered Nazareth', did not do this, but used the word 'fatherland', because something of a mystical nature about his fatherland is revealed in the passage. His fatherland, in which he has been dishonoured, in accordance with the saying, 'A prophet is not without honour except in his fatherland',[110] is the whole of Judea. And if anyone carefully observes Jesus Christ, 'a stumbling-block to the Jews'[111] who persecute him even now, but he is preached and has been accepted in faith among the Gentiles (for his Logos has run through all the earth[112]), he will see that Jesus has no honour in his own fatherland, but he is honoured by the Gentiles, the strangers 'to the covenant'. The evangelists have not recorded what he said when he was teaching in their synagogue, but described it as so great and of such a kind that everyone was amazed. It is likely that what was said went beyond their Scripture. But 'he was teaching in their synagogue', neither separating from it nor rejecting it.

17 The question, 'Where did this man get this wisdom?',[113] shows clearly that the wisdom in Jesus' words was great and exceptional, worthy of the saying, 'And behold one greater than Solomon is here'.[114] And he was performing greater miracles than those worked by Elijah and Elisha, and still earlier, by Moses and Joshua the son of Nun. And because they did not know that he was the son of a virgin, or believe it (if indeed it was rumoured), but assumed him to be the son of Joseph the carpenter, those who were marvelling said, 'Is this not the son of the carpenter?'[115] And they disparaged all of what appeared to be

[107] Lk 8:10; cf. Mt 13:11. [108] Mk 4:11. [109] Mt 2:23. [110] Mt 13:57.
[111] 1 Cor 1:23. [112] Cf. Ps 18:5 (LXX); Rom 10:18. [113] Mt 13:54.
[114] Mt 12:42. [115] Mt 13:55.

his nearest relatives and said, 'Is not his mother said to be Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude? And are not all his sisters with us?'[116] They thought he was Joseph and Mary's son. Now some, using a tradition from the Gospel with the title, *According to Peter*, or the *Book of James* as their starting point, say that the brothers of Jesus were sons of Joseph from a wife prior to Mary. Those who say this wish to preserve the dignity of Mary in virginity until the end, so that that body which was judged to have served the Logos which said, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you',[117] should not experience a sexual relationship with a man after the Holy Spirit came upon her and the power from on high overshadowed her. And I think it is reasonable that Jesus became the first-fruits of male purity in chastity, and Mary of female, for it is not pious that the first-fruits of virginity be attributed to another besides her.

And this is the James whom Paul mentions seeing in the letter to the Galatians when he said, 'But I saw no other apostle, except James the Lord's brother'.[118] This James was so conspicuous among the people for his righteousness that Flavius Josephus, who wrote the *Antiquity of the Jews* in twenty books, wishing to provide the reason the people suffered so much that even the temple was razed, said that these things happened to them as a result of God's wrath because of what they had dared do to James the brother of Jesus, who was called Messiah.[119] 'It is amazing'[120] that although he did not accept our Jesus to be the Messiah, nonetheless he bore witness to the tremendous righteousness of James. And he also says that the people thought they had suffered these things because of James. Jude wrote a letter of only a few lines, but filled with words empowered with grace from heaven. He says in the prologue, 'Jude, servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James'.[121] We have no information about Joseph and Simon. The words, 'Are not all his sisters with us?' seem to me to mean something like this: They have understanding of our kinds of things, not those of Jesus, and have no extraordinary portion of exceptional understanding as Jesus does. But perhaps a question concerning Jesus not being human but something more divine is suggested by these words, since he was the son (as they supposed) of Joseph and Mary, and the brother of four males, and no less also of other females, and was like no one in his family, nor had he advanced so far in wisdom and power by means of education and teaching. For they ask elsewhere, 'How is this man educated when he has not been instructed?'[122]

[116] Mt 13:55–6. [117] Lk 1:35. [118] Gal 1:19.

[119] See Josephus, *Antiquites of the Jews* 20.200 where it is said that James and some others were put on trial before the Sanhedrin, accused of violating the law, and condemned to be stoned. Origen's words identifying James as 'the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ' are verbatim from Josephus. There is nothing in the Josephus passage, however, about this being the reason for the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Origen has a very similar discussion of Josephus, Jesus, James, and Paul in *CCels* 1.47. The *Commentary on Matthew* and the *Against Celsus* were written in the same general period of time when Origen was living in Caesarea (see the Introduction).

[120] See Jn 9:30. [121] Jude 1. [122] Jn 7:15.

This is similar to what is said here. But those who say these things and take the question so far and are amazed did not believe, but stumbled at him, as if the eyes of their understanding were overcome by the powers which he would triumph over at the time of his suffering on the cross.

18 'But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honour except in his fatherland'.[123] We must investigate whether what is said applies generally and equally to every prophet, as if each of the prophets was dishonoured only in his own fatherland (not every prophet who was dishonoured was dishonoured in his fatherland), or, because the singular is used, these words have been spoken of one prophet. If, then, these words are spoken about one person, what we have said is sufficient, when we refer what has been written to the Saviour. But if it is a general statement, it is not true in the literal sense, for Elijah was not dishonoured in Tishbeth of Gilead, or Elisha in Ebalmaoula, or Samuel in Armathaim, or Jeremiah in Anathoth. On the other hand, taken figuratively it is very true. For we must understand 'fatherland' to mean Judea, and relatives to mean that Israel, and 'house', perhaps, to mean the body. For all the prophets were dishonoured in Judea by Israel 'according to the flesh',[124] while they were still in the body, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles in a rebuke to the people, 'For whom of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who spoke in advance to them about the coming of the just one'.[125] Paul has said similar things in the first letter to the Thessalonians, 'And you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus, because you yourselves also suffered the same things from your own kinsmen, as they did from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, persecuted us, and are not pleasing to God, and are opposed to all humanity'.[126]

No prophet, therefore, is dishonoured among the Gentiles, for they either don't recognize him at all, or they learn from him, accept him, and honour him as a prophet. And those from the church are like this. Now according to the literal sense, prophets are dishonoured first when they are persecuted by the people, and second when the people do not believe their prophecy. For if they had believed Moses and the prophets, they would have believed Christ who had come, because to believe Christ follows as the consequence for those who believe Moses and the prophets, and not to believe Moses follows in the same way for those who do not believe Christ. And further, just as the sinner is said to dishonour 'God by transgressing the law',[127] so, by not believing what is prophesied, the prophet is dishonoured by the one who does not believe his prophesies.

Now it is useful to read through what Jeremiah suffered among the people in the literal sense. His comment on this was, 'And I said, I will not speak nor

[123] Mt 13:57. [124] 1 Cor 10:18. [125] Acts 7:52.
[126] 1 Thess 2:14–15. [127] Rom 2:23.

will I mention the name of the Lord'. And again, elsewhere, 'I continued to be mocked'.[128] And he has further recorded in his prophecy all that he suffered from the one who was king of Israel at that time. And this has also been written: that frequently some of the people came to stone Moses.[129] His 'fatherland' was not the stones of a particular place, but the people who followed him and also dishonoured him. Isaiah, too, is related to have been sawn in two by the people.[130] Now if someone does not accept the story because it circulates in the apocryphal Isaiah, let him believe what is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were put on trial'.[131] For the verb, 'they were sawn in two', applies to Isaiah, just as the phrase, 'they were killed by the sword', applies to Zachariah who was killed 'between the temple and the altar', as the Saviour taught, testifying, in my opinion, to a writing not in circulation in the books that are common and have been placed in the hands of the people, but was, perhaps, in circulation in secret books.[132] But they were dishonoured in their 'fatherland' by the Jews, and went about 'in sheepskins, in the skins of goats, being in need, afflicted', etc.[133] For 'all who wish to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted'.[134]

Paul seems to have understood this saying about the prophet having no honour in his own fatherland, for while he preached the word in many places, he never preached in Tarsus. This is also why the apostles left Israel and carried out the Saviour's command, 'Make disciples of all the nations', and the other command, 'You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth'.[135] They have done, therefore, what was commanded in Judea and Jerusalem, but because 'a prophet has no honour in his own fatherland', when the Jews did not accept the word, they left and went to the nations.

Now think about this. Because the saying, 'I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, and they will prophesy', has been fulfilled in the Gentile churches after the coming of the Saviour, can you say that when those who formerly belonged to the world and no longer belong to it because of their faith receive the Holy Spirit and prophesy, they have no honour 'in their own fatherland', that is, the world, but are dishonoured? For this reason they are blessed when they suffer the same things with the prophets, as the Saviour said, 'Their fathers used to do the same things to the prophets'.[136] Now if someone who gives diligent attention to these matters should be hated and plotted against because of his strict life-style and his rebuke of sinners, to the extent that he is persecuted and

[128] Jer 20:9, 7. [129] See Ex 17:4; Num 14:10. [130] See Torrey (1946) 20.

[131] Heb 11:37. The last verb, 'they were put to trial', is not in the text of the twenty-seventh ed. of Nestle-Aland. It appears in the apparatus as a substitute in some MSS for the second verb, 'they were sawn in two'.

[132] On Origen's understanding of the Christian canon of the Old Testament and the use of apocryphal books see Heine (2011) 393–409.

[133] Heb 11:37. [134] 2 Tim 3:12. [135] Mt 28:19; Acts 1:8. [136] Lk 6:23.

reproached 'because of righteousness', not only will he not be grieved but he will even rejoice and be glad, convinced that, because of these things, he has a great reward 'in heaven' from the one who has made him like the prophets because he has suffered the same things.[137] Therefore, the person who is zealous for the prophetic life and has received the spirit which was in them must be dishonoured in the world by sinners who view the life of the just person as a burden.

19 Next we must look at the statement, 'He did not perform many miracles there because of their unbelief'.[138] This statement teaches us that the miracles occurred among believers because 'It will be given to everyone who has and he will have in abundance'.[139] Not only are miracles not worked among unbelievers, but (as Mark recorded) they cannot be, for note the statement, 'He was not able to perform any miracle there'.[140] He did not say, 'He did not want to', but, 'He was not able'. It is as if the faith of the person on whom the miracle is working comes to the assistance of the miraculous power which is working, but unbelief prevents it from working.

Observe, then, that he answered those who asked, 'Why could we not cast it out?' by saying, 'Because of your little faith'.[141] And when Peter started to sink, Jesus said, 'O man of little faith! Why did you doubt?'[142] But there is also the haemorrhaging woman who didn't consider herself worthy of healing, but thought that if she might only touch 'the hem of his garment', she would be healed, and 'she was healed immediately'. And the Saviour acknowledges the manner of healing when he says, 'Who touched me? For I know that power has gone out of me'.[143] Perhaps just as in the case of material objects there is a natural attraction in some objects to certain other objects, as a magnet to iron, and what is called naphtha to fire, so there is a natural attraction in faith such as this to divine power, even as the saying has it, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move'.[144]

Matthew and Mark, who want to present the surpassing greatness of the divine power and show that it is effective even when there is unbelief, but not as effective as when there is faith in those who are the object of the kindness, seem to me to have said accurately, not that he did not perform miracles because of their unbelief, but that 'he did not perform many miracles there'. Mark, too, did not say that 'he was not able to perform any miracle there' and stop at that, but added, 'except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them'. In this way, his power overcame even unbelief.

It seems to me that just as in material matters tilling the soil is not sufficient to produce a harvest if the weather does not cooperate, or rather he who gives

[137] Cf. Mt 5:10–12. [138] Mt 13:58. [139] Mt 25:29. [140] See Mk 6:5–6.
[141] Mt 17:19, 20. [142] Mt 14:31. [143] Lk 8:43–7; cf. Mt 9:20–2. [144] Mt 17:20.

the weather whatever quality he wishes and makes it whatever he wills, nor is the weather without the tilling of the earth. But God provided in advance that the things which spring up from the earth do not spring up without the tilling of the soil, for he did this once and for all when he said, 'Let the earth produce vegetation, seed which produces according to its kind and in its likeness'.[145] So too miraculous activity without the faith of those being healed does not exhibit its completed work in reference to healing, nor does faith, of whatever sort it might be, without the divine power. And you will apply what has been written about wisdom[146] also in kind to faith and the virtues so that you come up with sayings such as these: 'For even if someone among the sons of men should be perfect' in faith, but the 'power' 'from you is absent, he will be considered as nothing' or, 'perfect' in prudence 'among the sons of men', but if the prudence 'from you is absent', he will be considered as nothing, or, 'perfect' in justice and the remaining virtues, but if the justice 'from you is absent' and of the remaining virtues, 'he will be considered as nothing'. For this reason, 'let the wise not boast in their wisdom, nor the strong in their strength'.[147] For what is worthy of boasting does not come from us, but is a gift of God. The wisdom is from him, and the strength, and likewise for the rest.

20 'At that time Herod the Tetrarch heard a report about Jesus and said to his servants, This is John the Baptist'.[148] It reads the same in Mark and Luke. The Jews had differing opinions about these matters. Some were false, such as the Sadducees' views that the dead do not rise and that angels do not exist, but that the things written on these subjects have only a figurative meaning and contain nothing that is true in the literal sense. But other opinions held by them were true, such as the Pharisees' teaching that the dead rise. What is being investigated in this passage, therefore, is this: Was there some such opinion about the soul which Herod and some of the people mistakenly held, namely that John, whom he had killed a little earlier, had arisen from the dead after being beheaded, and was using another name, now being called Jesus, and was capable of receiving the same powers which were formerly at work in John? How persuasive is it that he who was so well known among all the people and was famous in all Judea, whom they said was the son 'of the carpenter' and Mary and had such and such as brothers and sisters, was thought to be none other than John, whose father was Zacharias and whose mother was Elizabeth who themselves were not obscure people? It is likely that the people who thought that John 'was truly a prophet'[149] were not ignorant of the fact that he was the son of Zachariah. The Pharisees were afraid to answer the question whether John's baptism 'was from heaven or from men'[150] because the people were so numerous that the Pharisees did not want to appear to say something displeasing to them. And perhaps also information about the vision seen in the temple

[145] Gn 1:11. [146] See Wis 9:6. [147] Jer 9:22.
[148] Mt 14:1, 2. [149] Mk 11:32. [150] Mk 11:30.

when Gabriel appeared to Zachariah had reached some of them. How persuasive indeed, then, is the delusion of either Herod or some of the people to think that John and Jesus were not two persons but one and the same, being John, who arose from the dead after he was beheaded, and was called Jesus?

Someone might say that Herod and some of the people held the false notion of transmigration from which they drew the conclusion that he who at one time was John by birth came back into life from the dead as Jesus. But the time between the birth of John and Jesus, which was not more than six months, does not allow this false notion to be considered persuasive. Perhaps Herod assumed something like this: The powers which were at work in John went over to Jesus, and on the basis of these powers the people had believed Jesus to be John the Baptist. And someone might use a proof like this: Just as it is said of John, 'He is Elijah who is to come', not because of Elijah's soul, but because of the spirit and power of Elijah, since Elijah's spirit and power had passed over to John, so Herod thought that the powers in John, which in John's case had become effective in the works of baptism and teaching ('for John did not perform even one sign'[151]), had worked prodigious miracles in Jesus. And someone will say that those who said that Elijah had appeared in Jesus, or a prophet of the 'ancients' had arisen, assumed the same thing.[152] But the doctrine of those who said that Jesus was 'a prophet like one of the prophets' has no pertinence for this question.[153] The saying recorded about Jesus is false, therefore, whether it comes from Herod or was said by others. But the parallel between the saying that John had gone forth 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' and what these are now conjecturing about John and Jesus seems rather persuasive to me. But since we have learned first that after the temptation the Saviour 'heard that John had been delivered and withdrew into Galilee' and second, that when John was in prison he heard the stories about Jesus and 'sent two of his disciples and said to him, Are you the one who is coming, or should we expect another?', and third, in general, Herod said of Jesus, 'He is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead'. Matthew has now recorded this in a similar way as has Mark, because we have known the manner of the slaying of the Baptist from no previous passage. Luke, however, passed over in silence many elements of the story in these authors.

21 The text of Matthew is as follows: 'For Herod seized John and bound him in prison'.[154] Here is my view on these matters. Just as 'the law and the prophets were until John', after which the gift of prophecy ceased among the Jews, so the authority possessed by those ruling among the people, which stopped short of taking the life of those they thought worthy of death, lasted until John. When Herod, contrary to law, destroyed the last prophet, the king of the Jews was deprived of the authority to take a life. For if Herod had not been deprived of this authority, Pilate would not have condemned Jesus to death; Herod, with

[151] Jn 10:41. [152] Cf. Lk 9:8. [153] Mk 6:15. [154] Mt 14:3.

the council of the chief priests and elders of the people, would have sufficed for this action. And at that time, I think, the following words of Jacob to Judah were fulfilled: 'A ruler from Judah will not be lacking, nor a leader from Israel, until he comes for whom it is stored up, and he is the expectation of the nations'.[155] Perhaps the Jews were also deprived of this authority because the divine providence provided for the teaching of Christ to spread among the people, so that even if this spreading was hindered by the Jews, their action would not go so far as to kill believers with the apparent approval of the law.

'But Herod seized John, bound him and put him away in prison', providing a symbol (so far as it depended on him and the evil of the people) of the binding and locking up of the prophetic word even as he prevented John from continuing freely as a herald of the truth as he had been previously. Now Herod did this 'because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip; for John said to him, It is not lawful for you to have her'.[156] This Philip was tetrarch 'of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis'.[157] Some think, therefore, that after Philip died, having left a daughter to Herodias, Herod married his brother's wife in spite of the fact that the law allowed marriage only in the case of childlessness.[158] But because we have nowhere found any clear indication that Philip was dead, we think Herod's transgression was even greater, because while his brother was still living he took away his wife.

22 John, therefore, adorned with prophetic boldness, and fearless of the royal dignity of Herod, did not pass over such a great sin in silence. Not even fear of death silenced him, but filled with the divine will, he said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have her', for 'it is not lawful for you to have the wife of your brother'.[159] And Herod 'seized John, bound him, and put him away in prison'. He did not dare kill 'the prophetic word'[160] completely and remove it from the people. Now the wife of the king of Trachonitis, which means a wicked opinion and a wretched doctrine, had borne a daughter who had her mother's name. Her movements, which appeared graceful, pleased Herod, who was fond of fortunes connected with birth. Her graceful movements are the reason there is no longer a prophetic source[161] among the people. And up to this point I think the movements of the Jewish people, which appear to follow the law, are nothing other than the daughter of Herodias. But the dancing of Herodias was contrary

[155] Gn 49:10. Origen's quotation differs from the text of the LXX. On the different ways this verse was rendered in the LXX and the Fathers, see Heine (2007) 110–15.

[156] Mt 14:3–4. [157] Lk 3:1.

[158] See Dt 25:5–6. I have supplied the word 'only' in the translated text. If Philip had died and he and Herodias had only a daughter, then the marriage would have been acceptable according to the law in the Massoretic text of Dt 25:5, which specifies not having a 'son' to continue the name of the brother. The LXX, however, which Origen read, has 'seed' instead of 'son'.

[159] Mt 14:4 and Mk 6:18. [160] 2 Pt 1:19.

[161] The word here is 'head', which can also mean 'source'. Origen may be playing on the term, since Herod had 'beheaded' John and sent his head to Herodias.

to sacred dancing. Those who have not participated in the latter dancing will be reproached when they hear the words, 'We piped for you, and you did not dance'.[162] But also, on birthdays, when lawless thinking rules them, they dance so that their movements are pleasing to that thinking. One of our predecessors noted the birthday of Pharaoh recorded in Genesis and explained that the bad man who is fond of the fortunes connected with birth feasts on his birthday.[163] And we, taking a cue from that earlier man, did not find a just man celebrating a birthday in any Scripture. For Herod was more unjust than that particular Pharaoh. For the latter, on his birthday, killed the chief baker, but the former killed John, than whom 'no one greater among those born of women has arisen'.[164] The Saviour says of John, 'But why did you come out? To see a prophet? I say to you, Yes, and more than a prophet'.[165] But we must give thanks to God that, although the prophetic gift was taken from the people, a gift greater than that gift in its entirety was poured out on the nations through our Saviour Jesus, 'who became free among the dead'.[166] 'For even though he was crucified in weakness, he lives in the power of God'.[167]

And consider further the people who examine their food to see if it is clean or unclean, but despise prophecy when it is brought to them on a platter instead of cooked food. The Jews do not have the source of prophecy, since they denied Christ Jesus, the summation[168] of all prophecy. And the prophet was beheaded because of oaths, in relation to which the right thing to do was to break the oaths rather than keep them. For the accusation of rashness when making an oath and of breaking an oath because of rashness, and the accusation of putting a prophet to death to keep an oath are not the same. This is not the only reason he was beheaded; 'those reclining with'[169] him also wanted the prophet to be killed rather than to live. Those celebrating his birthday reclined at table and feasted with the wretched reasoning which was ruling the Jews. Now you may, on some occasion, make elegant use of this saying in relation to those who swear rashly and wish to stand by their oaths which have turned out to be contrary to the law, by saying that not every keeping of an oath is appropriate, just as that of Herod was not. And notice further that Herod does not murder John boldly, but secretly and in prison. For even the present Jewish people do not boldly deny the prophecies, but implicitly and secretly they deny them and are convicted of this by their disbelief in them. For just as it is true that if they had believed Moses, they would have believed Jesus,[170] so it is true that if they had believed the prophets, they would have accepted the one prophesied. But when they do not believe in him, they also do not believe in the prophets and decapitate them, having confined 'the prophetic word' in

[162] Mt 11:17. [163] Perhaps Philo, *De Ebr* 208. [164] Mt 11:11; Lk 7:28.
[165] Mt 11:9; Lk 7:26. [166] Ps 87:5. [167] 2 Cor 13:4.
[168] This word can also mean 'head', though it is a different word from that used above at note 161, and earlier in this sentence.
[169] Mt 14:9. [170] See Jn 5:46.

prison, and they consider it to be dead, divided, and by no means sound, because they do not understand it. But we have Jesus complete, since the prophecy which says of him, 'not a bone of him will be broken', has been fulfilled.

23 The disciples of John came and buried his remains. 'And they went and told Jesus. And he withdrew to a desert place', that is to the nations. And after the prophets were slain, 'crowds followed him from cities' everywhere. When he saw how many they were 'he had compassion and healed their sick', and after this, with elements which were blessed and multiplied from a few loaves, he feeds those who followed him. 'But when Jesus heard it he withdrew from there in a boat to a desert place alone'.[171]

The literal meaning teaches us to withdraw, so far as possible, from those who persecute us and from situations where we anticipate being plotted against because of the Logos. This would be reasonable, but on the contrary, to come to close quarters with dangerous situations when it is possible to avoid them is rash and reckless. And who would still be doubtful about avoiding such situations when Jesus not only withdrew when it came to the matters related to John, but also teaches and says, 'If they persecute you in this city, flee to the other'.[172] Therefore, when a trial comes no thanks to us, we must endure it very nobly and bravely, but it is reckless not to avoid it if this is possible.

We have examined the literal meaning of the passage and now must examine its higher, or spiritual, meaning. It is necessary to say first that when the Jews had plotted against prophecy and destroyed it, because they honoured the fortunes of birth, and in their acceptance of empty movements which had been ungraceful and dissonant in truthful judgement of them but which the ruler of the wicked people and those feasting with him considered to be graceful and pleasing, Jesus withdrew from the place where prophecy was plotted against and condemned. Now he withdraws to the place bereft of God among the nations, so that the Logos of God might be among the nations when the kingdom is taken from the Jews and given 'to a nation bringing forth its fruits'.[173] And because of the Logos, 'the children of the widowed woman' become 'many more than those of the woman who has' the law as 'a husband', although she has been taught neither the law nor the prophets.[174]

[171] See Mt 14:12–19. [172] Mt 10:23. [173] Mt 21:43.

[174] Is 54:1, quoted by Paul in Gal 4:27. Origen has used the exegetical procedure of gathering passages where the same word occurs to interpret a passage. In the translation above it is the same Greek word that I have rendered 'desert' in the quotation from Mt 14:13 where Jesus withdraws 'to a *desert* place', which also appears in Is 54:1 where it is used of a woman who has lost her husband and I have rendered '*widowed*'. Origen uses the same phrase to modify the meaning of the text of Mt 14:13 from the literal 'desert place' where Jesus withdrew after the death of John to give it a spiritual application to the condition of the nations/Gentiles up to this time as a 'place *bereft* of God'.

When, then, the Logos used to be with the Jews, he was not with them in the same way as he is with the nations. This is why it has been said that when he heard about the slaying of the prophet, he went to be 'in the desert place alone in a boat', that is, in the body. But when he went to be in the desert place he was in it 'alone'. The Logos is alone, and his teaching is contrary to the customs and practices among the nations. And the multitudes among the nations heard that the Logos had come to dwell in their desert place and that he was 'alone', as we said previously, and 'they followed him from' their own 'cities'. Each of them had forsaken the superstitious customs of their fatherland and had come to the law of Christ. But they followed him 'on foot', and not in a boat, since they followed the image of God not in body, but in their naked soul and free will which had been convinced by the Logos. And Jesus goes out to these, since they are not able to come to him, so that when he was outside with those outside, he might bring those outside inside. Now there was a large crowd outside to which the Logos of God went out. He poured out the light of his visitation on the crowd and 'saw' it. And when he saw that they deserved to be pitied because of their circumstances, as a friend of humanity the one who was without passion experienced compassion. Not only did 'he have compassion' but he also 'healed their sick' who had all kinds of illnesses which were the result of evil.

24 If you want to see what illnesses of the soul are like, observe with me those who want to be rich and famous, and the paedophiles, and anyone who is a womanizer. For when he saw these too in the crowds and had compassion 'on them, he healed them'. We must not think that every sin is a sickness; it is that which has attacked the whole soul. For thus one can see those who want to be rich focused on preserving and acquiring money; and those who want to be famous focused on the opinion that others have of them, for they are hungry for the adoration of the common crowds. And you will understand the rest of the things we mentioned analogously and any other thing that is similar.

Because we said that not every sin is a sickness when we were explaining the clause, 'He healed their sick', it is worthwhile to provide support from Scripture for the difference between these. The apostle says to the Corinthians who were guilty of various sins, 'For this reason many of you are weak and sick and several are asleep'.[175] Note carefully in these words the conjunction 'and', which plaits and produces a compound sentence of different sins, wherefore some are weak, but others are sick which is more serious than weak, and others, compared with both the preceding, are asleep. For there are some whose souls are impotent and because of this they are liable to slip and sin in any way whatever, even if they do not belong wholly to any form of sin as the sick do. These are those who are only weak. But others love money or praise or women or boys

[175] 1 Cor 11:30.

with their whole soul and whole heart and whole understanding, instead of loving God. These have suffered something more than weakness, and are sick. But others are asleep. When they need to be alert and on guard, they are not. Because they have given so little attention to their power of choice, they are dosing and their rational powers are drowsy. They are 'dreamers who defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones'.[176] And because these are asleep in empty fantasies and distorted dreams, they do not accept what is real and true in the matters of their circumstances, but are deceived by the things in their empty fantasies. It is of these that Isaiah says, 'As a thirsty man dreams he is drinking, and awakens still thirsty, and his soul has put its hope in nothing, so will be the wealth of all the nations who made war on Jerusalem'.[177] Therefore, although we seem to have wandered astray in our explanation of the difference between the weak, the sick, and those asleep because we presented what the apostle said in the epistle to the Corinthians, we made the digression because we wanted to show what spiritual meaning is present in the statement, 'And he healed their sick'.

25 After this, the Word says, 'But when it was evening his disciples came to him and said, This place is deserted and the hour is already advanced. Therefore, dismiss the crowds, so that they may go off to the villages and buy food for themselves'.[178]

Note that when he is about to give the loaves of blessing to the disciples that they might serve them to the crowds, first 'he healed the sick', so that after they were made well they might partake of the loaves of blessing. Those who are still sick cannot receive the loaves blessed by Jesus. Furthermore, if someone needs to hear the words, 'But let each person examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread' etc., but does not listen to them, and, in this state, happens to partake of the bread and cup of the Lord, he becomes weak or sick, or even asleep,[179] being plunged into deep sleep (if I may put it this way) by the power of the bread.

[176] Jude 8. [177] Is 29:8. [178] Mt 14:15. [179] 1 Cor 11:28, 30.

Book 11 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 14:15–15:39

1 'But when it was late' (that is at the end of the age, of which one can appropriately say, 'it is the last hour', which appears in the epistle of John[1]) 'his disciples came to him'. As they did not yet understand what the Logos was about to do, they say to him, 'The place is deserted', since they perceived the desertion of the divine law and word among the masses.[2] And they say to him, 'The hour is already past', as if the appropriate time of the law and the prophets had passed. But perhaps, because John had been beheaded and the law and the prophets which were until John had ceased, they said this about Jesus' statement.[3] Therefore, they say, 'The hour is past', and there is no food available because the season is no longer present that those who followed you in the desert might serve the law and the prophets. And the disciples say in addition, Therefore, 'dismiss them' so that although they cannot buy food from the cities, at least they may do so from the villages which are more underprivileged districts. The disciples, on the one hand, made these statements despairing that incredible new foods would be discovered by the crowds after the letter of the law had been abolished and prophecy had ceased. Take note, however, of Jesus' reply to the disciples, when he all but cries out and says clearly, You think that if the large crowd departs from me in need of food they will find it in villages rather than from me, and in human systems (not made up of citizens but of villagers), rather than when they remain with me. But I declare to you that they do not need what you think they need (for they have no need to depart); and what you suppose they have no need of (namely me, because I cannot feed them), they need more than you can imagine. Since, then, I have instructed you and made you adequate to give rational food to those needing it, you give the crowds that have followed me something to eat, for you have received the ability from me to give food to the crowds. If you had understood this, you

[1] 1 Jn 2:18. [2] Mt 14:15. [3] See Lk 16:16.

would have known that I am completely capable of feeding them, and you would not have said, 'Dismiss the crowds that they may depart and buy food for themselves'.

2 Because, therefore, Jesus had given the disciples the ability to nourish others, he said, 'You give them something to eat'. But while they do not deny that they are able to give loaves, because they consider themselves too insignificant and insufficient to nourish those who followed Jesus, and they do they see that when Jesus takes each loaf or word he extends it as far as he wishes, they say, 'We have only five loaves and two fishes here'. By 'five' perhaps they are hinting that the loaves are the sense-perceptible words of the Scriptures and, therefore, are equal in number to the five senses. And the two fishes are either the spoken word and thought, as if they were a relish of the sense-perceptible words in the Scriptures, or perhaps they are the word that had reached them about the Father and the Son. For this reason, also after his resurrection he 'ate some broiled fish' having taken 'a piece' from the disciples, and received favourably the divine teaching about the Father which they were able, in part, to relate to him. This is how we have been able to contribute to the explanation of the five loaves and two fishes. It is likely, however, that those more able than us to combine the five loaves and two fishes with one another may be able to explain the meaning of these things more fully and better.

It must be noted, however, that in Matthew, Mark, and Luke the disciples 'say' they have 'five loaves and two fishes', not noting whether they were made of wheat or barley. John alone said the loaves were barley, wherefore perhaps the disciples do not admit that they have them among themselves in the Gospel of John but say in it, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes'.[4] And so long as the disciples did not bring these five loaves and two fishes to Jesus they did not increase or multiply, and they were not capable of feeding multitudes. And when the Saviour took them he first looked up to heaven, and the rays of his eyes drew down power from there, as it were, which would be mixed with the loaves and fishes that would feed the five thousand. Next, he blessed 'the five loaves and two fishes', increasing and multiplying them by his word and blessing. Third, he divided, broke, and gave them to the disciples that they might serve them to the crowds. Then the loaves and fishes were sufficient so that all ate and were filled, and they were unable to eat some of the bread that had been blessed. So much was left over from the crowds, which was not appropriate for the crowds but for the disciples who could take up 'what was left over of the broken pieces' and put it away in baskets filled with the leftovers, baskets whose number equalled the tribes of Israel. It has been written, therefore, of Joseph in the Psalms, 'His hands served in the basket',[5] but of the disciples of Jesus, that the twelve (I think) 'took up what remained of the broken pieces, twelve baskets' not half full, but 'full'. And the

[4] Jn 6:9. [5] Ps 80:7 (81:6).

twelve baskets full of the broken pieces of living bread which the crowds are unable to eat continue to exist (I think) up to the present and on to the end of the age with the disciples of Jesus who are superior to the crowds. Those, however, who ate from the five loaves which preceded the twelve baskets of leftovers were related to the number five, having attained the level of the senses, and, therefore, were five thousand; or alternately those who ate had attained the level of the senses because they too were nourished from the one who looked up to heaven, blessed, and broke the loaves, and were not children or women, but men. For there are also differences (I think) in sense-perceptible foods, since some of them belong to those who have put aside 'the things of a child', and some to those who are still children and carnal 'in Christ'.[6]

3 We have said these things because of the statement that 'those eating were five thousand men without children and women'[7] which is ambiguous, for either those who ate were five thousand men and there was no child or woman among those eating, or the men alone were five thousand without counting children and women. Some, therefore, as we have already said, have taken it that neither children nor women were present at the increases and multiplications of the five loaves and two fishes. But another might say that although many ate and partook of the loaves of blessing in relation to their worth and capacity, some were men worthy of numbering (analogous to the Israelites twenty years old who were numbered in the book of Numbers[8]), but others were children and women who were not worthy of such a great reckoning and numbering. But give a figurative meaning with me to the children in relation to the statement, 'I could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ', and to the women in relation to the statement, 'I wish to present all of you as a pure virgin to Christ', and to the men in relation to the statement, 'When I became a man I put away the things of a child'.[9] And let us not pass over without explanation the statement, 'After he commanded the crowds to sit on the grass, he took the five loaves and the two fishes, looked up to heaven and blessed them and broke them and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate'.[10] For what does it mean, 'He commanded' all 'the crowds to be seated on the grass', and what can be understood in the passage that is worthy of the command of Jesus? Now I think that he commanded the crowds to be seated on the grass based on what is said in Isaiah that 'all flesh is grass',[11] that is he meant to put the flesh down and to subordinate 'the will of the flesh' so that in this way one might be able to partake of the loaves that Jesus blesses.

Then, since there are different orders of those in need of the food from Jesus, since not all are nourished by the same words, for this reason I think that Mark has written, 'And he commanded them all to be seated in groups on the green

[6] See 1 Cor 13:11; 3:1. [7] Mt 14:21. [8] See Num 1:18.
[9] 1 Cor 3:1; 2 Cor 11:2; 1 Cor 13:11. [10] Mt 14:19. [11] Is 40:6.

grass, and they sat down in groups of one hundred and of fifty'.[12] Luke, on the other hand, has written, 'And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down in companies of about fifty each'.[13] For those who will rest in the nourishments of Jesus must belong either to the order of one hundred, which is a sacred number and is dedicated to God because of its unity, or to the order of the fifty, which number contains forgiveness in relation to the mystery of the year of Jubilee that occurs every fifty years, and of the feast related to Pentecost. But I think that the twelve baskets have to do with the disciples to whom he would say, 'You will sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel'.[14] And just as the throne of the one judging the tribe of Reuben would be said to be a mystery, and the throne of the one judging the tribe of Symeon, and another the tribe of Judah and so on successively, so would also the basket of the food of Reuben, and another of Symeon, and another of Levi. But it does not belong to the present discussion to digress so far from what now lies before us and gather what is said about the twelve tribes and separately the things about each of them and discuss what each tribe of Israel signifies.

4 'And immediately he compelled the disciples to embark in the boat and precede him to the other side while he will dismiss the crowds'.[15]

We must notice how often the expression 'the crowds' is used and the other expression, 'the disciples' in the same passages, so that we may see from this observation and bringing together what is said about this that what was set forth by the evangelists was to present the differences between those who come to Jesus throughout the Gospel story. Some of these are crowds and are not called disciples, but others, who are superior to the crowds, are called disciples. It is sufficient at present that we provide a few examples so that someone moved by these might do the same in all the Gospels. The following has been written, therefore, as though the crowds were below but the disciples were able to go to Jesus when he ascended the mountain (where the crowds could not go): 'And seeing the crowds, he went up into the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and began teaching them saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit' and what follows.[16] Again, in another passage, as though the crowds needed healing, it is said, 'Many crowds followed him, and he healed them'.[17] We have not, however, found a healing recorded concerning the disciples, since if one is already a disciple of Jesus he is healthy, and being well he does not need Jesus in his capacity as physician, but in his other capacities.[18] Again, in another passage, 'when he was speaking to the crowds, his mother and brothers stood outside seeking to speak to him'. When this was made known to him he replied, 'having extended his hand', not

[12] Mk 6:39–40. [13] Lk 9:14. [14] Mt 19:28. [15] Mt 14:22.
[16] Mt 5:1–2. Origen has failed to notice that at the end of the Sermon on the Mount Matthew says that 'the crowds were amazed at his teaching'.
[17] Mt 12:15. [18] See Lk 5:31.

over the crowds but 'over the disciples, and said: Behold, my mother and my brothers', and, testifying to the disciples as doing the will of the Father in heaven and,[19] because of this, being worthy with Jesus of the family and household names, he adds, 'Behold my mother and my brothers'; 'whoever does the will of my Father in heaven, is my brother and sister and mother'.[20] And again, in another passage it is written that 'All the crowd stood on the shore, and he was saying many things to them in parables'.[21] Then, after the parable of the sower, no longer the crowds, but 'the disciples came to him and said', not, 'Why do you speak' to us 'in parables', but 'Why do you speak to them in parables?', at which time he also 'answered and said', not to the crowds but to the disciples, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven', 'but to the rest they are in parables'.[22] Therefore, of those who come to the name of Jesus, those who know 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven' would be called disciples, but those to whom such 'has not been given', who are inferior to the disciples, would be said to be crowds. Take careful note that he said to the disciples, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven', but of the crowds he said, 'To those it has not been given'.[23] And in another passage he dismisses 'the crowds', but not the disciples, and goes 'into the house', and not the crowds but 'his disciples' 'came to him in' his 'house saying, Explain to us the parable of the tares in the field'.[24] But also in another passage, because he had 'heard' the things about John 'Jesus withdrew in a boat to a desert place privately' and 'the crowds followed him', and when 'he disembarked he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick', that is of the crowds, not of the disciples.[25] 'But when it was late', not the crowds, but 'the disciples' came to him saying' (as being other than the crowds), 'Dismiss the crowds, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves'.[26] But also when 'he took the five loaves and the two fishes and looked up into heaven and blessed and broke the loaves, he gave them' not to the crowds but 'to the disciples' that the disciples might give them 'to the crowds'. The crowds were incapable of receiving them from him, and barely received the loaves of Jesus' blessing from the disciples, and did not even eat all of these (for the crowds were filled and left 'what remained over' behind in twelve full baskets).[27]

5 We have referred to these matters because of the passage before us that says that Jesus distinguished 'the disciples' from the crowds and 'compelled' the former 'to embark in the boat and precede him to the other side while he will dismiss the crowds'. The crowds were not able to depart to the other side

[19] Klostermann adds the following clause from the fourteenth-century manuscript Cantabrigiensis Coll. S. Trinit. 194.

[20] Mt 12:46–50. [21] Mt 13:2, 3. [22] Lk 8:10. [23] Mt 13:11. [24] Mt 13:36. [25] Mt 14:13–15. [26] Mt 14:15.

[27] Klostermann notes that Koetschau posited that something was missing at the end of this sentence.

because they were not Hebrews in the mystical sense (Hebrews means 'those who come from abroad'). This work belonged to the disciples of Jesus, I mean to depart 'to the other side' and to go beyond 'the things that are seen' and are physical since they are 'temporary', and to arrive at 'the things that are not seen and are eternal'.[28] The kindness shown to the crowds by Jesus in being dismissed by him, therefore, was sufficient for them. They were not able (because they were crowds) to depart 'to the other side'. No one has the authority to perform this dismissal except Christ alone. And no one can be dismissed who has not previously eaten of the loaves that Jesus blesses, and no one is able to eat of the loaves of Jesus' blessing unless he has done as Jesus commanded and sat 'on the grass' (as we have explained it). But neither was it possible for the crowds to do this who had not followed Jesus from their own cities 'when he withdrew to a desert place privately'.[29] And previously when the disciples suggested that he dismiss 'the crowds', he did not dismiss them until he fed them with the loaves of blessing; now, however, he dismisses them after he has first compelled the disciples 'to embark in the boat', and he dismisses those who were somewhere below (for the desert was below), but he himself 'went up into the mountain to pray'.[30]

And notice that immediately after the five thousand were fed Jesus 'compelled the disciples to embark in the boat and precede him to the other side'. The disciples were unable, however, to precede Jesus 'to the other side' but when they reached the middle of the sea the boat was harassed by a contrary wind, and they were frightened when Jesus came to them about the fourth watch of the night.[31] And if Jesus had not gotten 'into the boat', the wind that was adverse to the disciples who were sailing would not have ceased, nor would those sailing 'have crossed over and come' 'to the other side'.[32] Perhaps, wishing to teach them by trial that it is not possible to depart 'to the other side' without him, 'he compelled' them 'to embark in the boat and precede him to the other side', but when they were unable to go further than the middle of the sea, he appeared and did what is written, and showed them that the one who reaches 'the other side' reaches it because Jesus sails with him. But what was 'the boat' in which 'Jesus compelled the disciples to embark'? Perhaps it is the struggle with temptations and difficult circumstances into which one goes, compelled by the Logos and unwillingly as it were, because the Saviour wishes the disciples to be trained in this boat which is harassed 'by the waves' and 'the contrary' wind.[33]

But since Mark has slightly altered the text, 'Immediately he compelled the disciples to embark in the boat and precede him to the other side', (having written, 'And immediately he compelled his disciples to embark in the boat and precede him to the other side to Bethsaida'[34]) we must give attention to the

[28] See 2 Cor 4:18. [29] Mt 14:13. [30] Mt 14:23. [31] See Mt 14:24–6; Mk 6:48.
[32] See Mt 14:34, 22. [33] See Mt 14:24. [34] Mk 6:45.

expression, 'he compelled' once we see the things related to Mark's slight change. He indicates something more definite by his supplement to the article.[35] The phrase 'immediately he compelled the disciples', and the phrase 'his disciples' do not indicate the same thing. What Mark has written contains something more than simply 'the disciples'. Perhaps, then, that we might come to terms with this text, Jesus decided that those disciples who wished to be with him and could not be separated from him by even a chance circumstance, experience the trial of the waves and the contrary wind. This would not happen if they were with him, so he decided that they must 'embark in the boat' without him. Therefore, the Saviour compels 'the disciples to embark in the boat' of trials 'and precede him to the other side' and to surpass the difficult circumstances by conquering them. But when they were in the midst of the sea, the 'waves' of trials, and the contrary winds prevented them, although they were struggling, from crossing over 'to the other side'. They were unable to overcome the waves and the contrary wind and reach 'the other side' without Jesus. The Logos, therefore, having mercy on those who were doing everything in their power to come 'to the other side', 'came to them walking' on the sea. The sea had no waves for him nor wind capable of opposing him unless he wished it, for indeed it is not written that 'he came to them walking' on the waves, but on 'the waters'. And Peter said, 'Bid me come to you', not on the waves, but 'on the waters'. When Jesus said to him, 'Come', at the beginning Peter 'got out of the boat and walked', not on the waves, but on 'the waters', to go to Jesus. But when he doubted, he saw that 'the wind was strong', which was not strong for him when he put aside his little faith and his doubt.[36] And when Jesus went on board 'the boat' with Peter the wind stopped, since it had no further power to oppose it because Jesus was on board.

6 And then the disciples 'crossed over and came to the land of Genesaret'.[37] If we knew the meaning of this word it might provide some help for the interpretation of the words before us. Now observe (since 'God is faithful', and does not permit the crowds to be tempted beyond what they are able[38]) how the Son of God 'compelled' the disciples 'to embark in the boat', since they were stronger and able to reach the middle of the sea and endure the trial of the waves (until they should become worthy of divine help and see Jesus, and hear him speak, and be able, when he came on board, to cross over and come 'to the land of Genesaret'). He dismissed the crowds, however, since they, being weaker, did not receive the trial of the boat, the waves, and the contrary wind, and 'he went up into the mountain alone to pray'.[39] But for whom did he pray? Perhaps for the crowds that when they were dismissed after the loaves of blessing they might do nothing contrary to Jesus' dismissal, and for the disciples

[35] Mark has the pronoun 'his' in addition to the definite article with the 'disciples'; Matthew has only the definite article.

[36] See Mt 14:28–31. [37] Mt 14:34. [38] See 1 Cor 10:13. [39] Mt 14:23.

that, although he had compelled them 'to embark in the boat and precede him to the other side', they might suffer nothing in the sea from either the waves that put their boat to the test or from the contrary wind. And I would say boldly that it was because of Jesus' prayer to the Father for the disciples that they suffered nothing even though the sea, the waves, and the contrary wind opposed them.

Let the simple believer, then, be satisfied with the story. Let us, however, if we ever encounter the constraints of trials, remember that Jesus 'has compelled' us 'to embark in the boat', wishing us 'to precede him to the other side'[40] for it is impossible to reach 'the other side' without enduring the trials 'of waves' and contrary wind. Whenever, then, we see many difficulties rising up around us and we have gone through them with moderate effort for some time, let us think that our 'boat' is in the middle of the sea at that time, being put to the test by 'the waves' that want to shipwreck us 'concerning the faith'[41] or some of the virtues. But whenever we see the spirit of evil acting against our deeds, let us understand that 'the wind' is 'contrary' to us at that time. Whenever, therefore, we complete three watches of the night of darkness in trials while suffering these things, contending as well as we are able and being careful not to suffer shipwreck 'concerning the faith' or some of the virtues, (the first watch being against the father of darkness and evil, the second against his son who 'opposes and exalts himself over every so-called god or object of worship',[42] and the third is the spirit in opposition to the Holy Spirit) then let us believe that since the fourth watch is at hand when 'the night has advanced and the day is near',[43] the Son of God will come to us that he may conciliate the sea for us by walking on it. And when we see the Logos manifested to us, we will be troubled before we grasp clearly that the Saviour has come to us, still thinking that we see a phantom, and we will cry out in fear, but he will 'immediately' say to us 'Cheer up, it is I, do not be afraid'.[44] And if any Peter be found among us who is on the way 'to perfection' but has not yet arrived and is warmly stirred by the words, 'Cheer up' and 'gets out of the boat' as if he were outside of that trial by which it was being battered, at the beginning he will walk wanting 'to go to Jesus on the water' but, since he is still of little faith and still doubts, he will see that 'the wind is strong' and will be frightened and begin to sink'. He will not suffer this, however, because he calls on Jesus with a loud voice and says, 'Lord, Save me'. Then immediately, while such a Peter 'is still speaking' and saying, 'Lord, Save me', The Logos will stretch out his hand, extending help to such a person, and will seize him when he begins to sink, and will reproach him for his little faith and doubt.[45] But notice that he did not

[40] The use of the plural 'us' and 'we' in this and the following sentences suggests that Origen is addressing a group, perhaps a class, or, minimally, Ambrose and himself.

[41] See 1 Tim 1:19. [42] 2 Thess 2:4. [43] Rom 13:12.

[44] Mt 14:27. [45] See Mt 14:28–31.

say, 'Faithless one', but 'Of little faith', and that he said, 'Why did you doubt', since he has some faith, but is inclined to its opposite.

7 And furthermore, both Jesus and Peter will go on board the boat and the wind will stop and 'those in the boat', aware of the great dangers they were delivered from, will worship, saying not simply, 'You are the son of God' (as the two demoniacs said[46]) but, 'Truly you are the Son of God',[47] which 'those' disciples 'in the boat' say, for I do not think that anyone other than the disciples has said this.

And when we have experienced these things in their entirety and have crossed over, we will come to the land to which Jesus commanded us to proceed. And perhaps some secret, hidden mystery about some who had been saved by Jesus is revealed by the clause, 'And when the men of that place recognized him' (and it is clear that the place is 'on the other side'), 'they sent into that whole surrounding region', that is, the region surrounding the other side (not in the other side itself, but around it), 'and they brought to him all who were sick'.[48] And notice in this that 'they brought to him' not only many 'who were sick', but 'all' in that surrounding region. And those who were sick who were brought to him 'begged him that they might touch only the hem of his garment', asking this grace from him, since they were not like 'the woman with a flow of blood for twelve hears', 'who approached him from behind' and touched 'the hem of his garment', because 'she said in herself, If only I shall touch his garment, I will be healed'[49]—for observe the agreement in what is said about 'the hem of his garment'—wherefore 'her flow of blood stopped immediately'.[50] Those, however, from the surrounding region of the land of Genesaret, to which Jesus and his disciples crossed over and came, did not come to Jesus on their own, but were brought by those who had sent, since they were not able to come on their own because they were very sick. And they did not simply touch 'the hem' like the woman with the flow of blood, but after they had entreated him. Also, as many of these as touched it were healed. And you yourself[51] will consider if there is any difference between the expression 'they were healed' which is said to these, and the expression 'to be saved', for it was said to the woman with the flow of blood, 'Your faith has saved you'.[52]

8 'At that time Pharisees and scribes come to him from Jerusalem and say, Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread'.[53]

The person who has noticed at what time 'Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem' came 'to Jesus saying, Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders' and the words that follow, will know that of necessity Matthew did

[46] See Mt 8:29. [47] Mt 14:33. [48] Mt 14:35. [49] Mt 14:36; 9:20, 21.
[50] Lk 8:44. [51] These words are singular; contrast note 40 above. [52] Mt 9:22.
[53] Mt 15:1–2.

not simple write that the Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem had come to the Saviour inquiring of him about the things that are set forth, but he has written, 'At that time' they come to him 'from Jerusalem.'[54] We must observe, therefore, what time the expression 'at that time' indicates. When Jesus and his disciples 'had crossed over and come to the land of Genesaret', when the wind had abated after Jesus boarded the boat, and when 'the men of that place recognized him and sent into that whole surrounding territory, and they brought to him all who were sick, and they begged that they might touch only the hem of his garment, and all who touched it were healed',[55] at this time 'Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem' came to him, not astounded at the power in Jesus that heals those who touch 'only the hem of his garment', but censoriously charging the teacher, not with the transgression of a commandment of God, but of one tradition of the Jewish elders. And it is likely that the charge itself of the accusers shows the piety of Jesus' disciples, who give no opportunity of accusation to the Pharisees and scribes so far as the transgressions of a commandment of God is concerned. The latter would not have brought the charge about transgression by the disciples of Jesus in relation to their transgression of a command of the elders if they had been able to seize the accused and prove that they were transgressing a commandment of God.

But do not think that since the disciples of Jesus kept the law up to that time that this argues for the necessity of observing the Mosaic law according to the letter, for he who 'became a curse on our behalf' in his suffering for humanity 'did not redeem us from the curse of the law'[56] before he suffered. But just as Paul also appropriately became 'a Jew to the Jews that' he 'might gain Jews',[57] why is it strange that the apostles who spent their time among the Jews were indulgent even if they knew the spiritual contents of the law, just as Paul circumcised Timothy and brought a sacrifice related to some legal vow, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles?[58] But those who have nothing about a commandment of God to bring as an accusation against Jesus' disciples, but only something about one tradition of the elders are revealed to be very fond of finding fault. And their fondness for finding fault is especially obvious in that they bring the charge in the presence of those who have been healed from their illnesses. They bring the charge against the disciples in appearance, but in truth they intend to discredit the teacher because it was a tradition of the elders that washing oneself was necessary for piety. For they thought that hands unwashed before eating bread were defiled and unclean, but the hands of those who washed with water became pure and holy, not symbolically, but in correspondence with the law of Moses according to the letter. Let us, however, not in accordance with the tradition of their elders, but in accordance

[54] This passage is a good example of Origen's exegetical technique of paying attention to the sequence of the text.

[55] See Mt 14:32–6. [56] Gal 3:13. [57] 1 Cor 9:20. [58] See Acts 16:3; 18:18, 24–6.

with correct reason, attempt to purify our actions and in this way, wash the hands of our souls whenever we are about to eat the 'three loaves' which we seek from Jesus who wishes to be a friend to us;[59] for we must not partake of these loaves with hands that are 'defiled', 'unwashed';[60] and unclean.

9 Jesus, however, does not accuse them about a tradition of the Jewish elders, but about two of the most indispensable commandments of God. One was the fifth commandment in the Decalogue, which is as follows: 'Honour your father and your mother, that it may be well with you, and you may have a long life on the land that the Lord your God is giving you.'[61] The other has been recorded in Leviticus as follows: 'If a man speaks ill of his father and mother, let him die the death; he has spoken ill of his father or mother; he shall be guilty.'[62] But since we wish to see the very text which Matthew quotes, 'Let the one who speaks evil of father or mother die the death',[63] consider whether it was taken from that passage where it is written, 'Let the one who strikes his father or his mother die the death', and, 'Let the one who curses his father or his mother die the death'.[64] These are the texts from the law concerning the two commandments. Matthew has quoted them partially and succinctly, and not in the exact words.

But we must observe the charge the Saviour brings against the Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem when he says that they transgress 'the commandment of God because of their traditions'. God said, 'Honour your father and your mother', teaching that the child must pay the honour due to the parents. A portion of this honour to parents was to share in their physical needs for sustenance and shelter and, if possible, freely give anything else to their own parents. But the Pharisees and scribes had put forth such a tradition that contradicted the law. It appears vaguely in the Gospel, which we would not have thought of had not one of the Hebrews called our attention to what is in the passage. Sometimes, he says, those who loan money encounter stubborn debtors who are able but unwilling to repay their debt. The lenders then dedicated what is owed to the account of the poor, for whom each of those wishing to share with them cast into the treasury (as he was able). They, therefore, sometimes said to the debtors in their own dialect, What you owe me is Corban, that is, a gift, for I have dedicated it to the poor in the account of piety towards God. Then the debtor, since he no longer owes men but God and piety towards him, is bound, as it were, to repay the debt, even though he is unwilling, no longer to the lender but now to God into the account of the poor in the name of the lender. What, therefore, the lender did to the debtor, some sons sometimes did to their parents, and said to them, 'Whatever you are owed from me', father or

[59] See Lk 11:5. [60] See Mk 7:2. [61] Ex 20:12. [62] Lev 20:9.

[63] Mt 15:4. Matthew's wording differs from that in Exodus. He uses a different word for die, and some different grammatical forms.

[64] Ex 21:15, 16 (vs. 17 in Hebrew and English texts). The wording of Mt 15:4 is closest, but not identical, to Ex 21:16 (LXX).

mother, know that you receive from Corban, the account of the poor who are dedicated to God.[65] Then, when the parents hear that what is given for them is Corban, which is dedicated to God, they no longer wish to receive it from their sons although they have great need of the necessities of life. The elders, therefore, declared such a tradition to the people: 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother', that what is given to any of them is Corban and a gift, is no longer obligated to give the necessities of life 'to his father or mother'.

The Saviour refutes this tradition as unsound and opposed to the commandment of God. For if God says, 'Honour your father and mother', but the tradition said that the one who has dedicated what would have been given to his parents to God as Corban is not obligated to honour his 'father or mother' with a gift, it is clear that the commandment about honouring parents has been nullified by the tradition of the Pharisees and scribes which says that the one who has once and for all dedicated to God what the parents would have received need not honour his 'father and mother'. And the Pharisees, as lovers of money, were teaching such things so that, using the poor as a pretext, they might receive even the things that would have been given to someone's parents. The Gospel also testifies to their love for money when it says, 'And the Pharisees, who are lovers of money, heard all these words and mocked him'.[66]

If, then, any of our so-called elders or rulers of the people in any way wishes to give to the poor in the name of the common good rather than giving to the members of his own household, should they need the necessities of life, and those who give cannot do both, this man would justly be said to be a brother of those Pharisees who nullified the word of God because of their own tradition and who were reproved by the Saviour as hypocrites. And not only are these things especially preventive of anyone taking from the account of the poor and thinking that 'the piety of others is a means of gain',[67] but there is also what is written of the traitor Judas who, in appearance, was an advocate for the poor and said in indignation, 'This ointment could have been sold for three-hundred denarii'.[68] In truth, however, 'he was a thief and, holding the common purse, he used to take what was put in it'.[69] If, then, even now someone who holds the common purse of the church speaks on behalf of the poor (as also Judas did), but takes from what is put in it he would be placing his own lot with Judas who did these things. Because of this greed that he had spreading in his soul like gangrene, the devil put it 'in his heart' to betray the Saviour,[70] and when he had received 'the flaming arrow' for this, later the devil accomplished it (himself having entered into his soul). And perhaps when the apostle says, 'The love of money is the root of all evils', he says it because of Judas' love of money, which is the root of all evils against Jesus.

[65] See Mt 15:5; Mk 7:11. [66] Lk 16:14. [67] 1 Tim 6:5.
[68] Mk 14:5. [69] Jn 12:6. [70] See Jn 13:2.

10 But let us indeed return to the words before us, in which the Saviour has abridged and explained two commands from the law. One is from the Decalogue in Exodus and the other from Leviticus or one of the other books in the Pentateuch. Since, then, we have explained how those who say, 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother, whatever you are owed by me is a gift, shall not honour his father or mother', have nullified 'the word of God' (which declares, 'Honour your father and your mother'), someone may inquire how it is that the saying, 'Let him who speaks ill of father or mother die the death', is not superfluous.[71] For grant that he does not honour his father and mother who attributes the things that would be given to honour his father and mother to what is called Corban. How, then, does the tradition of the Pharisees also reject the one who says, 'Let him who speaks evil of father or mother die the death'? Perhaps, 'whoever says to his father or mother, Whatever you are owed from me is a gift', is casting abuse, as it were, on his father or mother, as if he were calling his parents temple-robbers when they take from the things he had put aside and dedicated to Corban. The Jews, therefore, according to the law, punish sons as speaking ill of 'father or mother' who say to their 'father or mother, Whatever you are owed from me is a gift', and you, by your one tradition, are nullifying two commandments of God. Are you, then, not ashamed when you accuse my disciples for transgressing not even one commandment (for they walk 'blamelessly in all his commandments and decrees'[72]) but 'a tradition of the elders' in their fear of transgressing a commandment of God? If this were also your goal, you would have kept the commandment about honour of a father and mother and that which says, 'Let him who speaks ill of father or mother die the death', and you would not have kept a tradition of the elders which contradicts these commandments.

11 Next, wishing to discredit the lot of the traditions of the elders among the Jews from the words of the prophets, he quotes a saying by Isaiah, which says, in these very words, 'And the Lord said, This people draws near to me with their mouth' and the rest.[73] And we said previously that Matthew has not recorded the prophetic saying in the exact words. And since it is necessary to explain it as we are able (because of the Gospel which uses it), we will take in addition the text which precedes it which, in my opinion, we have taken note of to be useful for the explanation of the saying taken from the prophet in the Gospel. The saying in Isaiah is as follows, from the beginning, 'Be faint and distraught; be intoxicated not from strong drink or wine, because the Lord has given you a spirit of stupefaction to drink, and he will close their eyes, and those of their prophets and princes, who see hidden things. And all these words will be for you as the words of a book that has been sealed which they give to an educated man and say, Read these things. And he will reply to him,

[71] See Mt 15:4–6. [72] Lk 1:6. [73] Mt 15:8; Is 29:13.

I cannot read it for it has been sealed. And this book will be put in the hands of an uneducated man, and he will say to him: Read this; and he will reply: I am not educated. And the Lord said, This people draws near to me' and the rest, down to the words, 'Woe to those who plan secretly; their works will be in darkness'.[74]

Taking up, therefore, the text under discussion in the Gospel, I have set out some of the words that precede it and some that follow, so that we may show in what way the Logos threatens to close 'the eyes' of those of the people who are amazed and intoxicated and have been given a 'spirit of stupefaction' to drink, and threatens to close the eyes of their prophets and their princes who claim to see 'hidden things'. These things occurred among that people, in my opinion, after the coming of the Saviour. For all the words in the whole of Scripture, including Isaiah, have become for them 'as the words of a sealed book'. Now 'sealed' refers to a book which is closed by obscurity and not opened by clarity. It is obscure equally to those not able to make even a beginning of reading it because they are uneducated, and to those who claim to be educated, who do not know the meaning in what has been written. He appropriately adds to these words that when the people, made faint from their sins and distraught in madness against him, with which they will be intoxicated against him 'by a spirit of stupefaction' which they will be given to drink by the Lord who closes their eyes (since they are unworthy of seeing), along with those of their prophets and princes who claim to see the hidden mysteries in the divine Scriptures, when their eyes close, then the words of the prophets will be sealed and hidden for them. The people have suffered this who do not believe in Jesus as the Christ. And whenever the words of the prophets have become 'as the words of a sealed book' to them, not only to the uneducated but also to those who claim to be educated, then the Lord said the people of the Jews draws near to God only 'with their mouth', and honour him 'with their lips', because 'their heart' is far from the Lord on account of their unbelief in Jesus.

And now especially, since they have denied our Saviour, God would say of them, 'In vain do they worship me', for they no longer teach the commands of God, but of men, and their doctrines no longer come from the wisdom of the Spirit, but are human doctrines. When these things happen to them, God has positioned the Jewish people differently and has destroyed the 'wisdom' found in the wise among them (for wisdom is no longer among them just as prophecy is not), but God has also buried and hidden 'the intelligence of the intelligent' of the people, and it is no longer manifest and conspicuous. Wherefore, even if they appear to produce some 'deep' counsel, they are considered miserable because they do not produce it through the Lord. And if they profess to know certain secrets of the divine will, they are lying, since their works do not proceed from the light and the day, but from darkness and night.[75] Now we

[74] Is 29:9–15. [75] See Is 29:14, 15; Jn 3:19.

thought it good to set forth the prophecy briefly and give a limited exposition since Matthew mentioned it. Mark also mentioned it, from whom we shall make a useful comparison concerning the tradition of the elders who thought the Jews must wash their hands whenever they eat bread. The wording of the passage is as follows: 'For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat if they do not diligently wash their hands, clinging to the tradition of the elders. And they do not eat when they come from the market if they do not immerse themselves; and there are certain other rules which they have received to hold to: the immersions of pots, and pitchers, and bronze vessels, and beds'.[76]

12 'And when he had summoned the crowd, he said to them: Hear and understand' and what comes next.[77]

The Saviour is clearly teaching through these words that when we read the commands about clean and unclean foods in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, in relation to which the physical Jews and the Ebionites who are very similar to them accuse us as being transgressors of the law, we are not to think that the goal in Scripture lies in the common understanding of these words. For if 'what enters the mouth does not defile a person but what comes out of the mouth', and especially since in the Gospel according to Mark the Saviour said these things 'making all foods clean',[78] it is clear that we are not defiled when we eat foods that the Jews say are unclean (for they wish to serve the letter of the law). But we are defiled when it is right that our lips be devoted 'to perception' and we say we make for them 'a yoke and a weight',[79] but we speak of whatever is at hand and we argue about inconsequential things. This is the source of sins for us. And it is fitting for the law of God to forbid things that arise from evil and prescribe things related to virtue, but to leave alone things that, on their own reckoning, are indifferent. These latter can, by the power of choice and reason we possess, be done in an evil manner when sin is committed, but turn out good when done well. And one who has carefully thought about these matters will see that it is possible to sin when one takes up things thought to be good in an evil manner and from passion, and that it is possible that things said to be unclean be reckoned clean if we use them in a rational manner. For just as the circumcision of the Jew who sins will be reckoned as uncircumcision, and the uncircumcision of the man from the Gentiles who acts uprightly will be reckoned as circumcision,[80] so the things thought to be clean will be reckoned unclean to the person who does not use them suitably, or when he should, or as often as he should, or for the reason that he should. And so far as the things said to be unclean are concerned, 'all things' are 'clean to the clean, for nothing is clean to those who have been defiled and are unfaithful, since their mind and their conscience are defiled'.[81] And when these things have been defiled, they make everything they touch defiled, just as

[76] Mk 7:3, 4. [77] Mt 15:10. [78] Mk 7:19.
[79] See Prov 15:7; Sir 28:25. [80] See Rom 2:25, 26. [81] Tit 1:15.

again, on the contrary, a pure mind and a pure conscience make all things pure even if they happen to seem impure. The righteous do not make use of food and drink from intemperance, or love of pleasure, or quarrelling which drags this way and that[82] since they are mindful of the saying, 'Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it for the glory of God'.[83]

But if it is necessary to indicate the foods that are unclean according to the Gospel, we will say that they are those provided from greediness, the leftovers from base covetousness, and those received from the love of pleasure and from deifying the belly which is honoured when it, and the desires associated with it, and not reason, rules our soul. But also, since we know that demons use some foods (or do not know but surmise), and we are in doubt about a particular food, if we use such foods we have not used them 'for the glory of God'[84] or in the name of Christ. Not only does the suspicion that a food has been offered to an idol condemn the one who eats, but even one's doubt about it. 'For one who doubts', according to the apostle, 'is condemned if he eats because the act does not proceed from faith, and whatever does not proceed from faith is sin'.[85] One, therefore, who has faith that what is eaten has not been sacrificed in the temples of idols or strangled or contains blood[86] eats 'in faith', and one who is in doubt about any of these matters does not eat 'in faith'. And the one who knows that these foods have been sacrificed 'to demons' and uses them nevertheless becomes a participant in 'the demons', being defiled by the faculty of his imagination about the demons who have participated in the sacrifice.[87] And the apostle, understanding that it is not the nature of the foods that is the cause of harm for the one who uses them or of profit for the one who abstains from them, but the tenets and the principle that is inherent in them, said, 'But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we superior, nor if we do not eat are we inferior'.[88] And he knew that those who have nobler thoughts about what foods are clean and what unclean in the law, and keep away from the distinctions and superstitions (in my opinion) in the distinctions about the use of clean and unclean foods, are indifferent in the use of foods and are, therefore, judged by the Jews to be transgressors of the law. This is why he said somewhere, 'Let no one judge you in the matter of food or drink' and what follows.[89] He is teaching us that the things according to the letter are a shadow, and the true thoughts of the law, stored in these letters, are the good things that are to come, in which it is possible to discover what are the clean, spiritual foods of the soul and what are the unclean foods in words that are false and contrary, which harm the person nourished on them, 'For the law contains a shadow of the good things to come'.[90]

13 Just as in many passages one must notice the marvel of the Jews at the words of the Saviour because they were spoken with authority, so to in the case of the

[82] See Rom 14:1. [83] 1 Cor 10:31. [84] Ibid.
[85] Rom 14:23. [86] See Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25. [87] See 1 Cor 10:20; 8:7.
[88] 1 Cor 8:8. [89] Col 2:16. [90] Heb 10:1.

words in this passage. 'When he had summoned the crowd', then, 'he said to them: Hear and understand' and what follows. And the Pharisees were offended at what he said since they were not a part of the plant of his Father in heaven and were, therefore, being rooted up because of their unsound teachings and their simple understanding of the law. For they were uprooted because they did not accept Jesus Christ, the true vine cultivated by the Father. For how could those be a plant of the Father who were offended by the words of Jesus which separate one from the saying, 'Handle not, taste not, touch not, all of which perish with use, in relation to the commands and teachings of men',[91] and lead the intelligent hearer to seek 'the things above' in these matters and 'not the things on earth', as the Jews do?[92] And since the Pharisees were not a plant of the Father in heaven because of their unsound teachings, he says to his disciples, as if speaking of those who are incorrigible, 'Leave them'. 'Leave them' because they are blind. They need to become aware of their blindness and seek leaders. Instead, unaware of their own blindness, they proclaim themselves to be leaders of the blind, not considering that they will fall into a 'pit'. It is written of this in the Psalms, 'He dug a pit and cleaned it out, and he will fall into the hole he made'.[93] Elsewhere it is written that 'seeing the crowds, he went up into the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him', and then he stretches out his hand to the crowd, 'having summoned' it, and averted it from the literal interpretation of questions related to the law. First, he said to those who did not yet understand what they heard, 'Hear and understand', and next, he said to them in parables, 'It is not what enters into a man's mouth that defiles him, but what comes out'.

14 Next, it is worthwhile to look at a text that is misrepresented by those who declare that the God of the law and the God of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not the same.[94] They say that the heavenly Father of Jesus Christ is not the cultivator of those who think they worship God according to the Mosaic law. But Jesus himself said that the Pharisees, who were serving the God who created the world and the law, were not a plant which his heavenly Father planted and, therefore, were being uprooted. And they might also add that even if the one who 'brought in' the people who came out of Egypt and planted them 'on the mountain of' his own 'inheritance, in' his own 'prepared dwelling place'[95] was not the Father of Jesus, Jesus would have said to the Pharisees that 'every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted'. And we will reply to these words that all who were not a 'plant of the Father' in heaven because of their unsound interpretation of the words in the law, have been blinded in their 'thoughts' by the one made a god by the sons of this age and, therefore, called by Paul the god 'of this age', since 'they do not believe the truth but take delight in unrighteousness'.[96] And do not think that our Paul says he is truly

[91] Col 2:21–2. [92] See Col 3:2. [93] Ps 7:16.
[94] That is, followers of Marcion. [95] Ex 15:17. [96] 2 Cor 4:4; 2 Thess 2:12.

God, for as he said 'the belly', which is not God, of those who love pleasure and honour it excessively rather than loving God, is their 'God', so, although he is not God, the ruler of this age, of whom the Saviour says, 'Now the ruler of this age has been judged', is said to be god of those unwilling to receive 'the spirit of adoption' that they might become sons of him who is eternal and sons 'of the resurrection of the dead'. They have, therefore, remained in the sonship of this age.[97] I thought it necessary to include these remarks, although it was a digression, because of the saying, 'They are blind leaders of the blind'.[98] Who? The Pharisees, of whom 'the god of this age has blinded their understanding'. They are 'unbelievers' because they have not believed in Jesus Christ. 'The god of this age blinded' them 'to prevent them from seeing the light of the Gospel of the glory of God in the face of Christ'.[99] We must not only avoid being guided by those who are blind and are aware that they need guides because they have not yet received the ability to see on their own, but we must also listen carefully in the case of all who claim to be leading in sound teaching. We must apply sound judgement to what is being said so that we not ourselves appear to be blind and imperceptive of the meaning of the Scriptures because we are guided by the ignorance of those who are blind and do not see the matters related to sound teaching, and both the leader and those being led fall 'into that pit' of which we spoke previously.

And after these words it is written how Peter answered and said to the Saviour (since he did not understand the statement, 'It is not what enters into a man's mouth that defiles him, but what comes out'), 'Explain the parable to us'.[100] The Saviour responds, 'Are you still void of understanding', as if to say, although you have been with me for such a long time do you still not understanding the intention of what is said, and you still 'do not understand' why 'it does not defile a man'? It is because 'what enters' his 'mouth passes into the belly' and, passing on from there, 'is cast into the toilet'.[101] The fact that the Pharisees were not a 'plant' of the Father of Jesus was not the fault of the law in which they seemed to believe, but of their unsound interpretation of the law and the things written in it. For two things are understood in relation to the law. There is the ministry 'of death' engraved 'in letters' which contains nothing that relates to the Spirit, and the ministry of life which is understood in the spiritual law. Those able to say in all sincerity, 'For we know that the law is spiritual' and, therefore, 'the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good',[102] were the 'plant' which 'the heavenly Father planted'. Those, however, who honoured only the 'letter' that kills[103] were not a 'plant' of God, but of him who hardened their heart and placed a veil on it. This veil continues to prevail over them as long as they do not turn to the Lord, 'For if anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit'.[104]

[97] See Phil 3:19; Jn 16:22; Rom 8:15; Lk 20:35, 36. [98] Mt 15:14.
[99] 2 Cor 4:4, 6. [100] Mt 15:11, 15. [101] Mt 15:16.
[102] Rom 7:14, 12. [103] See 2 Cor 3:6. [104] 2 Cor 3:16, 17.

And someone who comes upon this passage might say that just as 'what enters the mouth does not defile a man' even if the Jews think it does, so 'what enters the mouth' does not make 'a man' holy, even if the simpler think that what is called the bread of the Lord does so. This argument, I think, is not to be despised and, therefore, needs a clear explanation which seems to me to be as follows. Just as it is not the food but the conscience of the one who eats while entertaining doubt that defiles him (for 'he who doubts is condemned if he eats because it is not from faith'[105]), and just as nothing is pure in itself to the one who is defiled and unbelieving but is like his defilement and unbelief, so what is sanctified 'by the word of God and prayer'[106] does not make the one who uses it holy by its own value, for if this were the case, it would sanctify even the person who eats 'unworthily' of the Lord. Furthermore, this bread would prevent one becoming weak or sick, or dying (for Paul presented something like this when he said, 'For this reason many among you are weak, and sick, and several have died'[107]). In the case of the bread of the Lord, therefore, the benefit for the participant occurs whenever he partakes of the bread with an undefiled mind and a pure conscience. And so it is that neither from not eating, that is not eating in and of itself from the bread that has been sanctified by the word of God and prayer, 'do we lack' something good, nor from eating 'do we abound' with something good, for evil and sins are the cause of lacking, and the cause of abounding is righteousness and virtuous actions. This is what Paul means when he says, 'Neither if we eat do we abound, nor if we do not eat do we lack'.[108] And if 'everything that enters the mouth passes into the belly and is cast out into the toilet', also the bread that has been sanctified 'by the word of God and prayer',[109] being material in itself, 'passes into the belly and is cast out into the toilet'. And in accordance with the prayer that is added to it 'in the analogy of faith'[110] it becomes profitable and a cause of the clear vision of the mind which looks to what is profitable. It is not the material of the bread, but the word pronounced over it that profits the person who eats it 'worthily' of the Lord.[111] These things pertain to the body that is a type and symbol. Many things might also be said of the Logos himself who became 'flesh' and 'true food'.[112] The one who eats this food will, by all means, 'live forever', since no unworthy person is able to eat it. For if it were possible that one still unworthy eat the Logos become flesh, who is also living bread, it would not have been written that 'everyone who eats this bread shall live forever'.[113]

15 Next, let us consider how 'the things that come out' and defile 'a man' do not 'defile a man' at the moment they come 'out of his mouth' but are responsible for the defilement that is in his heart seeing that 'they come out' of it (prior to their going out through 'the mouth'): 'wicked thoughts', whose manifestations are

[105] Rom 14:23. [106] 1 Tim 4:5. [107] 1 Cor 11:30. [108] 1 Cor 8:8.
[109] 1 Tim 4:5. [110] Rom 12:6. [111] See 1 Cor 11:27. [112] See Jn 1:14; 6:55.
[113] Jn 6:51, 58.

'murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies' 'are what defile the man' when they come out 'of his heart', and when they come out they pass through his 'mouth'.[114] Consequently, if they were not to occur outside the heart, but were detained perhaps just there in the vicinity of the heart, not being permitted to be spoken by the mouth, they would very quickly be obliterated and a man would no longer be defiled. 'Wicked thoughts', therefore, are the spring and source of all sin, for when these do not prevail neither will there be murders, adulteries, or anything else of this sort. This is why each person must guard his heart with all care. For also when 'the Lord' comes on the day of judgement 'he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make the intentions of hearts apparent' 'in the midst of' all 'the thoughts' of men 'which condemn or even defend' them, when 'their own deliberations surround them'.[115] Wicked thoughts are such that sometimes they make even what seems good and praiseworthy (in the judgement of the people at least) blameworthy. If, then, we give 'alms' 'before men' with the intention of 'being seen' by men as philanthropists and being honoured for our philanthropy, we receive 'our reward' from men. In general, then, everything which one does, aware that he is acting so as to be honoured 'by men' has no consummation with the one who sees 'in secret' and secretly rewards those who are pure.[116] So too, therefore, if what appears to be chastity is motivated by vain glory or greed, and if assumed ecclesiastical doctrine becomes servile in the cause of flattery, or becomes an excuse for the covetousness of someone seeking human glory for his teaching, it is given no consideration by those God appointed 'in the church', first apostles, second prophets, and third teachers.[117] And you will say the same thing in the case of the man who desires 'episcopacy'[118] for the human honour attached to it, or human flattery, or the gain from those who approach the Logos and give in the pretence of piety. Such a bishop 'does' not 'desire a good work', nor can he be above criticism, or sober, or self-controlled since he is drunk on honour and intemperately takes his fill of it.[119] And you will also say the same thing about presbyters and deacons. And although we will seem to some to have said these things as a digression, consider if it was not necessary to say them because evil thoughts are the spring of all sins, capable of polluting even the things that (if they were to be done without them) would justify the one who does them. We have, therefore, examined to the best of our ability what the things that defile are. 'To eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man', but, if one must dare say it, to eat anything whatsoever with unwashed heart defiles by nature our ruling principle.

16 'And going out from there Jesus crossed over into the regions of Tyre and Sidon, and behold a Canaanite woman'.[120]

[114] See Mt 15:18–20. [115] See 1 Cor 4:5; Rom 2:15; Hos 7:2. [116] See Mt 6:1–4.
[117] See 1 Cor 12:28. [118] See 1 Tim 3:1. [119] See 1 Tim 3:1–2.
[120] Mt 15:21, 22.

To what else does 'from there' refer than from the land of Genesaret, of which he said previously: 'And when they had crossed over they came into the land of Genesaret'?[121] He withdrew, perhaps, because the Pharisees were scandalized when they heard that 'not what goes in, but what comes out defiles a man.'[122] But because of the statement, 'And when he heard that John had been delivered, he withdrew into Galilee,'[123] it is clear that he said[124] 'he withdrew' because they were suspected of plotting against him. This may also be why Mark records in the passage that 'he arose and went into the regions of Tyre. And when he entered the house, he wanted no one to know it.'[125] It is likely that he was circumventing the Pharisees who had been offended at his teaching, since he was awaiting the intended and well-defined time to suffer. One might even say that Tyre and Sidon have been used to refer to the Gentiles, and that he has withdrawn, therefore, from Israel and is present in the parts of the Gentiles. When the Hebrews use the word Tyre it is translated Sor, which means 'distress'. Sidon, likewise, when used by the Hebrews is translated 'hunters'. And among the Gentiles the 'hunters' are the evil powers, and there is much 'distress' among them in their wickedness and passions. When Jesus departed from Genesaret, therefore, and withdrew from Israel, he did not go into Tyre and Sidon but into 'the parts of Tyre and Sidon'. Consequently, a part of the Gentiles now believe. Had he visited all Tyre and Sidon no unbeliever would have been left in them. But in Mark's words, 'Jesus arose and went into the regions of Tyre',[126] the distress of the Gentiles, so that those from those regions who believe might also be able to be saved, whenever they leave the regions. For give attention to the statement, 'And behold, a Canaanite woman from those regions went out and cried aloud saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David; My daughter is terribly possessed by a demon.'[127] In my opinion, had she not 'come out from those regions' she could not have cried to Jesus from great faith (as it was testified). And 'in proportion to faith'[128] one comes out 'from the regions among the Gentiles' which, 'when the Most High apportioned the nations, he established them according to the number of the sons of Israel'[129] and forbid their further movement.

Here certain borders of Tyre and Sidon are mentioned, but in Exodus borders of Pharaoh in which (they say) the plagues against the Egyptians occur. And we must believe that when each of us sins we are in the borders of Tyre or Sidon, or of Pharaoh and Egypt, or of any of those places outside the land God distributed. When we turn from wickedness to virtue, however, we depart from the borders connected with bad things and come to the borders of the portion of God[130] (and there is a distinction in these which is apparent to those able to understand the matters concerning the division and distribution

[121] Mt 14:34. [122] See Mt 15:11, 12. [123] Mt 4:12.
[124] I have followed Codex Cantabrigiensis and read *eipe to* in place of *ei pote*. [125] Mk 7:24.
[126] Ibid. [127] Mt 15:22. [128] Rom 12:6. [129] Dt 32:8. [130] See Dt 32:9.

of the land of Israel in conformity with the spiritual law). And take note also of the meeting, as it were, which occurs of Jesus with the Canaanite woman. He comes as to 'the parts of Tyre and Sidon', but she 'has come out of those regions' and has cried aloud saying, 'Have mercy on me, Lord Son of David'. And she was a Canaanite woman which, translated means, 'a woman who has been prepared for humiliation'. The righteous, on the one hand, have been prepared for the kingdom of heaven and for exaltation in the kingdom of God, but sinners have been prepared for the humiliation of the wickedness in them and of their deeds that proceed from it (which prepare them for it) and of the sin that reigns 'in their mortal body'.[131] The Canaanite woman, however, 'who came out from those regions', came out from being prepared for humiliation, since she cried out and said, 'Have mercy on me, Lord Son of David'.

17 Now bring together from the Gospels who those are who call him 'Son of David', as this woman and the blind men in Jericho, and those who call him 'Son of God', and whether the phrase lacks the addition of 'truly', as the demoniacs say, 'What is there between us and you, Son of God', or includes it, as those who worship him in the boat and say, 'Truly you are the Son of God'.[132] For I think the bringing together of these texts will be useful for you to see the difference between those who approach him. Who are those who come, as it were, to the one born 'from the seed of David according to the flesh', and who are those who come to the one declared Son of God 'in power according to the spirit of holiness', and who of these use 'truly' and who do not?[133] Next, notice that the Canaanite woman appeals to him not on behalf of a son (which she appears not to have had to begin with), but on behalf of a daughter who is terribly afflicted by a demon. Another mother, however, receives a son back alive who was being carried out as dead.[134] And again, the ruler of the synagogue asks on behalf of his twelve year old daughter as being dead, and the royal official asks on behalf of his son as still being ill and about to die.[135] The daughter, therefore, under the power of a demon and the dead son belonged to two mothers; the daughter who had died and the son who was sick to death to two fathers, one of whom was the ruler of a synagogue and the other a royal official. I am convinced that these texts contain arguments about different kinds of souls that Jesus heals and makes alive. And all the healings that he performed among the people, especially those recorded by the evangelists, occurred at that time so that those who would not believe unless they see 'signs and wonders' might believe,[136] but the things occurring at that time were symbols of all the things that are always being accomplished by the power of Jesus. For there is no time when each of the deeds recorded does not occur by the power of Jesus in relation to the worth of each person.

[131] Rom 6:12. [132] See Mt 20:30; 8:29; 14:33. [133] See Rom 1:3, 4.
[134] See Lk 7:11–14. [135] See Lk 8:41, 42; Jn 4:46, 47. [136] See Jn 4:48.

Because of her race, therefore, the Canaanite woman was not worthy to obtain an answer from Jesus, who acknowledged that he had not been sent from the Father to any other than to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel', a lost race of clear-sighted souls.[137] But on account of her resolve and her worship of Jesus, the Son of God, she obtains an answer that reproaches her ignoble birth and shows its worth, because she was worthy of 'crumbs' like a pup, but not of loaves. But when she has intensified her resolve and acknowledged the word of Jesus as correct, even to receive 'crumbs' like a pup, and she acknowledges that the lords are more nobly born, then she obtains a second answer which testifies that her faith is great, and she is told that she will receive what she wants. And I think, on the analogy of the 'Jerusalem above' which is free and the mother of Paul and those like him,[138] that we will have to think of the Canaanite woman who is mother of the terribly demon-possessed girl to be a symbol of the mother of such a soul. And consider if it is not reasonable that there are also many fathers and many mothers on the analogy of the fathers of Abraham to whom the patriarch departed, and of Jerusalem, the mother, as Paul says, of himself and those like him.[139] And it is likely that this mother, of whom the Canaanite woman who had come out from the regions of Tyre and Sidon is a symbol, of which the places on earth were types, has approached the Saviour and asked him, and continues to ask even now, saying, 'Have mercy on me, Lord Son of David; my daughter is terribly demon-possessed'.[140] Then he answers and says to those on the outside, and to the disciples when he must, 'I was not sent'.[141] He is teaching that there are some intelligent, clear-sighted, leading souls, figuratively called the 'sheep of the house of Israel that are lost'. The simple, I think, who consider these things to have been said of the Israel 'according to the flesh', will necessarily believe that the Father sent our Saviour to no others than those lost Jews. We, however, who boast to say truthfully, 'Even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, we now know him no longer in that way',[142] know that the primary work of the Logos is to save the more intelligent, for these are more closely related to him than those who are less sharp. But since 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' except for the 'remnant chosen by grace'[143] did not believe in the Logos, he, therefore, 'chose the foolish things of the world' (namely those who were neither Israel nor clear-sighted), 'that he might shame the wise' (of Israel), and he called 'the things that are not' (understand Gentile), having delivered to them what they were capable of receiving, namely, 'the foolishness of preaching', and was pleased 'to save' those 'who believed' in this, that he might utterly refute 'the things that are' (by perfecting 'praise' for himself 'from the mouth of infants and those nursing'), since they had become enemies of the truth.[144]

[137] See Mt 15:24. [138] See Gal 4:26. [139] See Gn 15:15; Gal 4:26.
[140] Mt 15:22. [141] Mt 15:24. [142] 2 Cor 5:16. [143] Rom 11:5.
[144] See 1 Cor 1:21–8.

And the Canaanite woman came and worshiped Jesus as God saying, 'Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not possible to take the loaf of the children and throw it to the pups'.[145] Now someone may ask about the meaning of this text. It was not reasonably possible to feed the pups the beautifully made loaf of the children because both the children and the little dogs of the household could not eat loaves, or the loaves of beauty which were well made, since there was a limit of loaves present. But there appears to have been no such limit so far as the power of Jesus was concerned, from which it was possible for both the children and the so-called pups to partake. Consider, then, whether or not we must say in relation to the statement, 'It is not possible to take the loaf of the children', that he who emptied himself to assume the 'form of a servant'[146] brought a limited power, related to the capacity of worldly things. And he was aware that some quantity from this power went out from him, as is clear from the words, 'Someone touched me; for I know that power has gone out from me'.[147] He was dispensing from this measure of power, therefore, bestowing more on those who were superior and called sons, and less to those who were not such, as to the little dogs. But although this is the way things were, none the less, where there was great faith he gave the loaf of the children to her as if she were a child although she happened to be a little dog because of her Canaanite origin. But perhaps also some of Jesus' words are loaves which one can give only to the more reasonable as to children, and other words are crumbs, as it were, from the great feast and table of the nobles and lords, which some souls may make use of as dogs. And it is written in the law of Moses to throw some things 'to the dogs'.[148] The Holy Spirit was concerned to command that some foods be left for the dogs.

Let others, therefore, who are strangers to the teachings of the church, suppose that souls pass over from the bodies of people to the bodies of dogs related to the difference in their wickedness.[149] But since we do not find this at all in divine Scripture, we say that a more rational state changes into an irrational one, because of massive indifference and negligence. Likewise, also a resolve that is more irrational because of its neglect of reason turns, at some time, to be rational with the result that the former dog that loved to eat 'from the crumbs that fell from the table of its masters', becomes a child. For virtue contributes greatly to producing a child of God, but wickedness, madness in insolent words, and shamelessness to producing someone called a dog (according to the teaching of Scripture). And you will think the same in the case of the remaining names related to irrational animals. But one who has been reproached as being a dog and is not annoyed at being said to be unworthy of the loaf of the children, and with great forbearance says what that Canaanite

[145] Mt 15:25–6. [146] See Phil 2:7. [147] Lk 8:46. [148] See Ex 22:31.

[149] This paragraph is found, as Klostermann notes, translated in Pamphilus' *Apology for Origen*, ch. 10 (PG 17.610).

woman said, 'Yes, Lord, for even the little dogs eat from the crumbs of what falls from the table of their masters', will obtain the kind reply of Jesus who says to him, 'Great is your faith', when he takes up such great faith, and adds, 'Let it be to you as you wish', so that he himself may be healed and, if he has borne any fruit in need of healing, this one too may be healed.

18 'And when Jesus had passed over from there' (and it is clear from what has been said that this is from the parts 'of Tyre and Sidon'[150]) 'he went along the Sea of Galilee' (commonly called the lake of Genesaret[151]) and went up again into the mountain where he sat down after he had gone up.[152]

One can say, therefore, in relation to this mountain where Jesus sat down that not only those who are healthy go up but also with the healthy those afflicted with various sufferings. And perhaps this mountain where Jesus went up and sat down is more generally called the church which has been set up by the Logos of God alongside the rest of the earth and those on it. There, not the disciples, having left the crowds as in the case of the Beatitudes,[153] but large crowds approach. They are not denounced as deaf or suffering anything, but they bring such people with them. For it is possible to see among these crowds approaching this mountain where the Son of God sits some who have become deaf to the promises, others who are blind in their soul and do not see 'the true light',[154] others who are lame and cannot walk according to reason, and still others who are crippled and cannot work in accordance with reason. Jesus does not, however, heal the people afflicted with these maladies in their soul who, with the crowds, go up the mountain where he was, insofar as they are removed from the feet of Jesus. But whenever the crowd casts them at Jesus' feet, the outskirts of the body of Christ, he heals them because they have such afflictions even though they are unworthy of healing so far as they themselves are concerned.

And whenever you see the catechumens in the gathering of what is commonly called the church, who have approached with their deafness, blindness, lameness, and deformity, cast at its outskirts as if at the feet of the body of Jesus, the church, being healed in time by the Logos, you would not err in saying that such, with the crowd, have ascended the mountain of the church where Jesus was, and were cast at his feet and healed. As a result, the crowd of the church sees this and is amazed at the changes from such great evils to a better state that have occurred and says, Those previously deaf speak the word of God and the 'lame walk',[155] fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah not only in physical ways but also in spiritual. Isaiah says, 'Then the lame person will leap like a deer, and the speech of those who speak with difficulty will be clear'.[156] And if it is not said randomly there, 'the lame shall leap as a deer', we will say that it is not without reason that those formerly lame who now leap like a deer

[150] See Mt 15:21. [151] See Lk 5:1. [152] Mt 15:29. [153] See Mt 5:1.
[154] Jn 1:9. [155] Mt 11:5. [156] Is 35:6.

because of Jesus are compared to a deer. The deer is a clean animal, hostile to snakes and in no way harmed by their venom.[157] And the prophecy which says, 'And the speech of those who speak with difficulty will be clear', or rather, that which says, 'Hear, you who are deaf',[158] is fulfilled insofar as those who are deaf are seen speaking. And the blind also see according to the prophecy that follows, 'Hear, you who are deaf', which says, 'And you blind, look up to see'.[159] Now the blind see when they see the world and discern the creator 'analogously from the greatness and beauty of created things',[160] and when they perceive that 'his (that is, God's) invisible things are understood from the creation of the world in the things made', that is, they both see and understand carefully and clearly.[161]

And when the crowds saw these things 'they glorified the God of Israel',[162] and they glorify him because they are persuaded that the same God is Father of the one who healed those previously mentioned, and God of Israel, for he is not 'God of the Jews only', but 'also of the nations'.[163] Let us, therefore, make the deaf, blind, lame, crippled, and many others who wish to ascend 'the mountain' with us, go up the mountain, that is the church, with us where Jesus sits, and let us cast 'them at the feet' of Jesus that he may heal them, so that 'the crowds marvel' at their healing. For the disciples are not recorded to have marvelled at such things although they were present with Jesus at the time as is clear from the fact that 'Jesus summoned the disciples and said to them, I have compassion on the crowd' and the words that follow.[164] But perhaps if you give careful attention to the statement, 'Large crowds came to him', you may discover that the disciples did not come to him then, but had begun to follow long ago and followed him 'into the mountain'. But those who were less than the disciples also came to him, and they came to him at that time for the first time. They had not experienced the same things as those who had gone up with them. And observe carefully in the Gospel who are recorded to have followed Jesus, who to have come to him, and who to have been brought, and who are those divided into those who go before and those who follow, and who of those who came to him came to him in the house and who came when he happened to be elsewhere. For from this observation, by comparing 'spiritual things with spiritual',[165] you would discover many things worthy of the precise wisdom in the Gospels.

19 'But Jesus summoned his disciples and said'.[166]

In the similar story above about the loaves, before the loaves '(Jesus) went out and saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on it and healed their sick. And when it became late the disciples came to him saying, This is a desert place and the hour has already past, dismiss them' and the following words.[167]

[157] Cf. *HomCant* 2.11. [158] Is 42:18. [159] Ibid. [160] Wis 13:5.
[161] Rom 1:20. [162] Mt 15:31. [163] See Rom 3:29. [164] Mt 15:32.
[165] 1 Cor 2:13. [166] Mt 15:32. [167] Mt 14:14, 15.

Now, however, after the healing of the deaf and the rest, he has compassion 'on the crowd' which has remained with him 'already three days' and has had nothing to eat. And there the disciples ask on behalf of the five thousand, but here he speaks on his own for the four thousand. And those are fed late after they have spent a day with him, but these, who are said to have remained three days with him, partake of the loaves so that they not faint 'on the road'. And there the disciples say, although he does not ask, that they have only 'five loaves and two fishes', but here when he asks, they reply concerning seven loaves and a few little fishes'. And there he bids 'the crowds to recline', not to sit, 'on the grass' (Luke indeed has written, 'Make them recline', and Mark says, 'He commanded them all to recline'[168]), here, however, he does not bid, but exhorts 'the crowd to sit down'. Again, there the three evangelists say in the same words, 'he took the five loaves and the two fishes, looked up to heaven and blessed',[169] but here (as Matthew and Mark have recorded), 'Jesus gave thanks and broke it'. And there they recline 'on the grass', but here they sit 'on the ground'. And you will investigate how John differs in what is said in relation to these passages. He has recorded, in relation to that first action, that Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down' and that 'he gave thanks and gave to those sitting' from the bread,[170] but he has not even mentioned the beginning of this latter action.

By paying attention, therefore, to the variation in what has been written in the passages on the loaves, I think that these latter are of a different status than the former because these are fed on a mountain, but those in a desert place, and these after remaining with Jesus three days, but those one, on which day they were fed in the evening. And further, if it is not the same thing for Jesus to act on his own and to act when he has heard from the disciples, consider if those shown kindness by Jesus on his own accord do not excel since he fed them to show them kindness.[171] And if, as John says, the loaves were barley, from which twelve baskets 'remained', but nothing such is said of these latter loaves, are not these better than those former ones? And 'he healed the sick' in that former crowd, but here he does not heal the sick among the crowd, but the blind, and lame, and deaf, and deformed. Moreover, the four thousand marvel at these people, but nothing such has been said in the case of the sick. And in my opinion, those who ate from the seven loaves for which thanks was given are better than those who ate from the five loaves that were blessed, and those who ate from the few little fishes than those who ate from the two. And perhaps also those who sat on the earth were better than those who reclined 'on the grass'. And those previous people left behind 'twelve baskets' from fewer loaves, but these left 'seven baskets' from more, because they were capable of containing more. And perhaps these walk on all things of the earth and sit on

[168] Lk 9:14; Mk 6:39. [169] Mt 14:19; Mk 6:41; Lk 9:16. [170] Jn 6:10, 11.
[171] Koetschau thought there was a lacuna at the end of this sentence.

them, but those only 'on the grass' that is their flesh, for 'all flesh is grass'.[172] And take note also after these things that Jesus does not want to dismiss them 'fasting', so that they not faint because they lack the loaves of Jesus and might suffer harm as they still happen to be on the way to their own affairs. And notice if Jesus is recorded anywhere to have dismissed anyone, that you may see the difference between those dismissed after he fed them and those dismissed otherwise. Perhaps the statement, 'Woman, you have been released of your ailment'[173] is an example of one dismissed otherwise. In addition, the disciples who are always with Jesus are not dismissed by him, but the crowds are dismissed after they ate. Just as again, the disciples, thinking there was nothing great about the Canaanite woman, say, 'Dismiss her, for she cries out behind us'.[174] The Saviour, however, is not seen to send her away at all, for he said to her, 'Woman, your faith is great; let it be for you as you wish', and he healed her daughter 'from that hour'. It has not been written, however, that he dismissed her. This is the extent of what we have been able to examine and perceive at present in the passage that has been expounded.

[172] Is 40:6. [173] Lk 13:12. [174] Mt 15:23.

Book 12 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 16:1–17:9

1 'And Sadducees and Pharisees approached and, to tempt him, asked that he show them a sign from heaven.'[1]

The Sadducees and Pharisees, who disagree with one another on the most essential teachings—for the Pharisees advocate that there is a resurrection of the dead, hoping that there is an age to come, but the Sadducees recognize nothing in store for a human being after this life whether one is advanced in virtue or has not even made a start at leaving the boundaries of evil—agree so that they may tempt Jesus. Something like this occurred, as Luke has recorded, with Herod and Pilate when they became friends with one another in order to put Jesus to death.[2] For perhaps their strife with one another would have made Herod think him not to deserve being put to death to please the people who were saying, 'Crucify, crucify him.'[3] And their strife might have made Pilate, who had an inclination to release him, not condemn him, since his hostility towards Herod contributed to his previously existing inclination to release Jesus. But the esteemed friendship strengthened Herod's demand against Jesus with Pilate who wanted, perhaps, because of the fledgling friendship, to do something indulgent towards Herod and the whole Jewish nation. And one can frequently even now see in life those who hold the most discordant doctrines, whether in Greek philosophy or in some other teachings, seeming to agree so that they may mock and attack Jesus Christ in his disciples. And I think it is possible reasonably to pass over from these things and see that perhaps also when opposing powers that are at odds with one another, such as Pharaoh with Nebuchadnezzar, and Tirhakah, king of the Ethiopians, with Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, they are in harmony against Jesus and his people. It was perhaps in this way that 'the kings of the earth stood side by side and the rulers gathered together', who previously had no agreement with one

[1] Mt 16:1. [2] See Lk 23:12. [3] See Lk 23:21.

another, in order that they might take thought 'against the Lord and against his Christ' and put 'the Lord of glory' to death.[4]

2 But we have come to these matters in the word in reference to the Pharisees and Sadducees who have approached Jesus together. Although they are at odds on their teachings about resurrection, they have come to an agreement, as it were, about tempting our Saviour and asking him 'to show them a sign from heaven'. For not being satisfied with the prodigious healings of every sickness and every malady 'among the people' and the other incredible works which our Saviour had performed, as many knew, they wanted him 'to show them', in addition, 'a sign from heaven'. I am guessing that they considered the signs on earth as possibly not being of God. They had not hesitated to say that Jesus 'casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons', and it seemed to them that a sign from Beelzebul or any wicked power could not be 'from heaven'.[5] But they erred about both the signs on earth and those from heaven, since they were not 'approved money-changers',[6] nor did they know how to discern the spirits in action—which ones are from God and which are in revolt against him.[7] They must also have known that many of the portents of Moses against Egypt, although not from heaven, were clearly from God, and that the 'fire' that fell 'from heaven' on Job's sheep was not from God, for that fire came from the same one to whom 'the marauders' belonged and those who made 'three bands' of horsemen against Job's flocks and herds.[8] I think also in Isaiah, since signs could be shown from both earth and heaven (those that are true from God, and those performed 'with all power and signs and lying wonders' by the wicked one[9]) it was said to Ahaz, 'Ask for a sign for yourself from the Lord your God in the depth or in the height'. For if there were no sign that did not come 'from the Lord God' of those in the depth or in the height, it would not have been said, 'Ask for a sign for yourself from the Lord your God in the depth or in the height'.[10] I am very aware that someone will think this kind of interpretation of the saying, 'Ask for a sign for yourself from the Lord your God' is strained, but consider what the apostle says about the man 'of sin', the son 'of perdition', that he will appear 'with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and all unjust deceit to those who are perishing' imitating all the wonders that are of the truth.[11] And just as the enchanters and sorcerers of the Egyptians, although inferior to the man 'of sin' and the son 'of perdition', imitated certain powers, and signs, and wonders of the truth, performing the works of falsehood so that the true ones not be believed,[12] in the same way I think the man of sin has imitated signs[13] and powers.

[4] Ps 2:2; 1 Cor 2:8. [5] See Mt 9:34; 12:24.
[6] A frequently cited agraphon in Origen. See Resch (1967) 117–18.
[7] See 1 Cor 12:10; 1 Jn 4:1. [8] See Job 1:15–17. [9] 2 Thess 2:9. [10] Is 7:11.
[11] 2 Thess 2:9, 10. [12] See Ex 7:11. [13] Klostermann indicates a lacuna here.

Now perhaps also 'the Pharisees' (but I ask if 'Sadducees' too) being suspicious of these works because of the prophecies about him, 'tempting him, asked' Jesus 'to show them a sign from heaven'. And if we should not say that they were suspicious, what reason will we give for their disposition to Jesus' wonders, since they continued hard-hearted and were not shamed by the incredible nature of the things he did? Now if anyone thinks we have given the Pharisees and Sadducees opportunities of defence, where on the one hand, they say that it was 'in Beelzebub' that Jesus cast out demons,[14] and on the other, they ask for a sign from heaven with the intent of tempting Jesus, let him know that it is with plausible grounds that we say that they have been distracted so that they not believe in the incredible works of Jesus, not at all so as to be pardonable for not observing the words of the prophets that were fulfilled in the deeds of Jesus which no evil power was capable of imitating. For to cause a departed soul to return, so that it comes forth from the tombs already stinking and completing the fourth day, was the work of none other than he who had heard from the Father, 'Let us make mankind in our image and likeness'.[15] Furthermore, to command the winds, and stop the raging of the sea with a word was the work of none other than him 'through whom all things' came to be, including the sea and the winds.[16] And even further, what else did the teaching which summons to love of the Creator in harmony with the law and the prophets, and restrains impulses, shaping the habits in accord with godliness, make clear to those capable of seeing than that he who accomplished such great things was 'truly the Son of God'?[17] In relation to this he also said to the disciples of John, 'Go, tell John what you have seen and heard; the blind see' and what follows.[18]

3 Let us next observe how it was that when he was asked for one sign to show that it was 'from heaven' to the Pharisees and Sadducees who asked, he answers and says, 'A wicked and adulterous generation seeks a sign, and no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet', when 'also he left them and departed'.[19] Now take note in relation to their question that 'the sign of Jonah' was not simply a 'sign', but was also 'from heaven', so that even to those tempting and seeking a 'sign from heaven' he has none the less given a 'sign' out of his abundant goodness. For if as Jonah spent 'three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so did the son of man in the heart of the earth' and after this he arose from it, from where would we say the 'sign' of the resurrection of Jesus to have come other than 'from heaven', especially since at the time of the passion he was in the paradise of God together with the thief who was shown kindness. After this, in my opinion, he descended into Hades to the

[14] See Mt 12:24. [15] See Jn 11:39; Gn 1:26. [16] See Mt 8:26; 1 Cor 8:6.
[17] See Mt 22:37–40; 14:33. [18] Mt 11:4, 5.
[19] Mt 16:2a, 4. Origen's Biblical text seems not to have had the words bracketed in Nestle-Aland (2b–3), for he says nothing about them, but addresses only the sign of Jonah in vs. 4.

dead as one 'free among the dead'.[20] And the Saviour seems to me to join the sign about himself with the story of the sign related to Jonah saying that not only is the sign given by him like that sign, but that it is that sign itself. For notice the statement, 'And no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet'. That sign, therefore, was this sign insofar as that sign became indicative of this one, so that the solution of that sign which is obscure on its own is that the Saviour suffered and spent 'three days and three nights in the heart of the earth'.[21] At the same time also we learn, in general, that if this sign indicates something, each of the recorded signs (whether as in history which has happened, or as in a command) is indicative of something that is fulfilled later. Jonah, who came out from the belly 'of the sea monster' after three days, was such a sign of the resurrection of our Saviour who was raised from the dead after 'three days and three nights'. So too is circumcision called a sign of that which it signifies by Paul in the statement, 'For we are the circumcision'.[22] But also investigate yourself to what concrete reality in the new Scripture every sign in the old Scriptures points as a type, and what that which is called a sign in the new Scripture indicates, whether in the age to come or even in the later generations after the sign has occurred.

4 And he said they were a wicked generation because of the quality that had developed in them from what is wicked (now wickedness is voluntary evildoing); but adulterous because the Pharisees and Sadducees were corrupted by the liar and the 'law of sin' when they forsook the word of truth[23] or law since it is figuratively called a 'husband'.[24] For if there are two laws, the one 'in our members' at war against 'the law of the mind', to which a wife (the soul) has been joined by God to a husband ('the law') according to the Scripture, 'A woman is joined to a man by God'—we must say that the law 'of the mind' (that is the 'spiritual' law) is the husband—and the other law is an adulterer with the soul subjected to it, and because of it the soul is called an adulteress. Now Paul presents clearly in the epistle to the Romans that the law is husband of the soul when he says that 'the Law is binding on a person as long as that person lives, for a married woman has been bound by the law to her husband while he lives' and what follows. For note in these words that 'the law is binding on a person so long as that person lives (the law as husband of the wife), for the married woman (the soul under the law) has been bound to her husband (which is) the law while he lives, but if the husband (the law) dies, she is set free from the law (which is the husband)'.[25] And the law dies to the one who ascends to blessedness and is no longer governed by law, but passes over, like Christ, who although he was born 'under law' for the sake of those under law, 'that he might gain those under law', neither remained under law nor abandoned those under law that he had freed, for he led them up along with himself

[20] See Lk 23:43; Ps 87:5. [21] Mt 12:40. [22] See Rom 4:11; Phil 3:3.
[23] See Eph 1:13. [24] See Rom 7:1–3. [25] Rom 7:1, 2.

to the divine citizenship that surpasses the law that contains sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins for those who are imperfect and still sinning.[26] The person who is without sin, therefore, and no longer in need of the legal sacrifices and who has been perfected has passed beyond, perhaps, even the spiritual law, and has come to exist in the Logos which is beyond it, who became 'flesh' for those living in flesh, but those no longer still waging war 'in flesh' see him as he was 'in the beginning with God', when he is God the Logos, and reveals the Father.[27] There are three women one must consider in this passage: a married woman under a husband, that is, the law; an adulterous woman, that is, the soul that 'is with another man', the law of the flesh, 'while her husband', the law, 'is still living'; and a woman married to the brother of her dead husband, that is to the Logos who is living and does not die, who 'having been raised from the dead, dies no more', for 'death no longer rules over him'.[28]

And these things are said because of the statement, 'If the husband die, she is free from the law of the husband', and the statement, 'Therefore while the husband is living she will be called an adulteress if she is with another man', and the statement, 'If the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress when she is with another man'. But we have used the statement, 'She will be called an adulteress while her husband is living', because we want to show clearly why Jesus called the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were tempting him and asking that 'he show them a sign from heaven', not only a 'wicked generation' but also an 'adulterous' one. In general, then, the law in the members which wages war against 'the law of the mind' is, like an adulterous man, an adulterer with the soul.[29] And now, every adverse power which prevails over the human soul and has intercourse with it is its adulterer because it has the Logos, given it by God, as its bridegroom.

After these words it is written that 'he left them and went away', for how will the bridegroom, the Logos, not leave the adulterous generation and depart from it? Now you might say that the Logos of God left the Jewish synagogue, as an adulteress, and departed from it, and took 'a wife of fornication'[30] the people from the Gentiles because those who formerly were 'the faithful city, Zion',[31] had become fornicators. These latter, however, have become as Rahab the harlot who received the spies of Joshua and was saved with her whole household,[32] and afterwards was no longer a harlot, but came to the feet of Jesus and washed his feet with tears of repentance and anointed them with the fragrance of the perfume of her way of life. It was because of her that he reproached Simon the leper, the former people, and said the things that have been written.[33]

[26] See 1 Cor 9:20; Heb 5:1. [27] See Rom 7:14; Phil 1:22; Jn 1:14; 2 Cor 10:3; Jn 1:2.
[28] See Rom 7:1–3; 6:9. [29] See Rom 7:23. [30] See Hos 1:2. [31] See Is 1:21.
[32] See Josh 6:25. The Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua is Jesus, so Origen moves easily from one to the other.
[33] See Lk 7:36–50.

5 'And when his disciples went to the other side they forgot to take bread'.[34]

Since the loaves the disciples had before they came to the other side were not useful on the other side, (for they needed one kind of loaves before the other side and another on the other side) they had been negligent in bringing in loaves when they set off to the other side, and forgot to take any with them. Now the disciples of Jesus who have crossed over from material things to spiritual and from sense-perceptible things to intellectual have come to the other side. And perhaps it was to prevent those who began with the spirit (because they have hastened to the other side) from relapsing to the things of the flesh[35] that Jesus said, 'Watch and beware'. For there was a lump of dough of teaching and of truly old leaven which the Pharisees and Sadducees were offering. It corresponds to the bare letter and for this reason had not been removed from those things that come from evil. Jesus did not want his own disciples to eat further from this teaching since he had made a 'new' and spiritual 'lump of dough' for them,[36] presenting himself (to those who have shrunk from the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and have come to him) as living bread which has come down from heaven and gives life 'to the world'.[37] And he says to the disciples first, 'See' and second, 'Beware', because the way for the one who no longer uses the leaven, dough, and teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees to avoid ever partaking of their forbidden leaven because they do not see and are inattentive is first to see and second to beware. It belongs, therefore, to the clear-sighted and attentive to separate the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and all food not of the unleavened bread 'of sincerity and truth'[38] from the living bread and the bread that has come down out of heaven, so that one not approach the lump of dough of the Pharisees and Sadducees, but may be strengthened in his soul by eating the living and true bread.

And we might appropriately apply the saying to those who choose to live physically as the Jews do along with living as Christians, for these neither see nor beware 'of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees' but, contrary to the will of Jesus who forbids it, eat the bread of the Pharisees. And these include (in my opinion) all who do not wish to understand that 'the law is spiritual', and contains 'a shadow of the good things to come' and is a 'shadow of the things to come'.[39] These do not investigate what good thing to come each of the laws foreshadows, nor do they see or beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. And those too who deny the resurrection of the dead are not on guard against the leaven of the Sadducees. There are many among the heterodox who are confused by the leaven of the Sadducees because of their disbelief in the resurrection of the dead.[40] When Jesus said these things the disciples 'began to ponder in themselves', 'saying', not aloud but in their hearts, 'It is because we did

[34] Mt 16:5. [35] See Gal 3:3. [36] See 1 Cor 5:7. [37] See Jn 6:51, 33.
[38] 1 Cor 5:8. [39] Rom 7:14; Heb 10:1; Col 2:17. [40] See 1 Cor 15:12–14.

not bring loaves'.[41] It is as if they were saying, If we had loaves, we would not have taken from the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, but since there is a lack of loaves we are in danger of taking from their leaven, and the Saviour does not want us to return to their teaching, therefore he said to us, 'See, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees'. They were pondering these things, and Jesus, perceiving the thoughts in their hearts and hearing the arguments among them, as a true overseer of hearts, rebukes them as neither understanding nor remembering the loaves which they had received from him. It was because of these loaves that they did not need the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees even though they seemed to be without loaves.[42]

6 Then, to clarify and present rather starkly (for those distracted by the equivocal sense of loaf and leaven) that he was not speaking to them about a loaf perceptible to the senses but about the leaven that is in teaching, he adds, 'How do you not understand that I did not say to you about a loaf of bread, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?' Although he did not strip the interpretation bare but still preserved the figure of speech, the disciples understood that the Saviour's saying was about what the Pharisees and Sadducees were teaching, figuratively said to be leaven. As long, therefore, as we have Jesus with us who makes the promise that declares, 'Behold I am with you always until the end of the age',[43] we cannot 'fast' or lack nourishment, so that because of this lack we should seek to take and eat from the forbidden leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Now there might come a time sometime when he is with us that we are without food, as is said in the lines above, 'Already they remain with me three days and they have nothing to eat'.[44] Even if this should occur, unwilling 'to dismiss' us 'fasting lest we faint on the way', he gives thanks over the loaves the disciples have and makes from the seven loaves for us the seven baskets to remain over (as we have already explained). And further, we must also notice this (because of those who think that the Gospel according to Matthew does not have very much to say about the deity of the Saviour) that when the disciples were pondering in themselves and speaking about not having bread, it was not by human power that Jesus knew their thoughts and said, 'Why are you pondering in yourselves, O you of little faith, about not having brought bread?' The Lord 'alone' knows the human heart, as Solomon says in the third book of the Kings.[45] Now since Jesus said, 'Beware of the leaven', and the disciples understood that 'he did not mean to beware of the loaves, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees', you will observe whether wherever leaven is mentioned, it is a figurative expression for teaching, either in the law or also in the Scriptures that follow the law. And so, leaven is never offered on the altar[46] for prayers are not to be a form of teaching but are to be, pure and simply, requests for good things from God. And

[41] Mt 16:7. [42] See Mt 16:7–11. [43] Mt 28:20. [44] Mt 15:32.
[45] 3 Kgs (1 Kgs) 8:39. [46] See Lev 2:11.

someone may inquire because of the things that have been expounded about the disciples who came 'to the other side', if it is possible that someone who has come 'to the other side' be reproached as one of little faith and as not yet understanding or remembering the things Jesus has done. It is not difficult, however, in my opinion, to reply to this that just as in the case of 'the perfect' which, 'when it comes, the partial shall be abolished', so all our faith here is little faith, and thus in relation to that, we who know 'in part' do not yet understand or remember;[47] for we are unable to assume a capacity of memory sufficient and far reaching enough for the magnitude of the nature of the sights beheld.

7 Further, it is also possible to learn from this passage that we are sometimes accused and reproached as being of little faith even for thoughts which we entertain. I am of the opinion that just as someone commits adultery 'in his heart' alone, and does not at all proceed also to the act, so too someone commits the rest of the forbidden things in his heart. Just as, therefore, one who has committed adultery 'in his heart' will be punished in a manner suitable to such adultery, so too the one who has committed any of the forbidden things in his heart, say for example he has committed theft in his heart alone, or he has given false testimony in his heart alone, he will be punished not as one who has committed theft in deed, or has completed the action of giving false testimony, but as having done such things only in his heart. And there is the case of someone who, in spite of himself, did not attain the wicked action, but in addition to wishing, attempted it and failed. This person will not be punished as one who has sinned in his heart alone, but as one who has sinned in the act. And someone may inquire in this same line of thought if anyone commits adultery 'in his heart' alone, even if he does not commit the act of adultery but fails only in his heart to be chaste. And you will ask a similar question concerning the rest of the praiseworthy actions. But the passage contains something plausibly capable of misleading us which we must clear up (I think) in this way: Adultery that occurs 'in the heart' is a lesser sin than if one should also add the action; but it is impossible that there be chastity in the heart which hinders chaste action, unless perhaps one bring in as an example the virgin who (according to the law) was violated in the desert.[48] For grant that someone's heart is extremely pure but she has suffered violence at the hands of a licentious man that has brought about the corruption of the chaste woman's body—she seems to me to be completely chaste in secret, but in her body she is no longer pure as she was before the violence, but not because she is not pure is she now also licentious.

These comments have been made because of the statement, 'They were pondering in themselves thinking, It is because we did not take loaves', to which is added the statement, 'Jesus knew these things and said, O you of little faith,

[47] See 1 Cor 13:9–10. [48] See Dt 22:25–7.

Why are you pondering in yourselves', and the words that follow, for we had to examine the one who is blameworthy for things done in secret and, correspondingly, the one who is praiseworthy for secret actions.

8 But I wonder if, before Jesus clarified the statement for them, the disciples were thinking that their teacher and Lord was forbidding the leaven perceptible to the senses to them when he said to be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees or Sadducees because it is unclean and for this reason is forbidden, so that may might not use their leaven even when they had not brought loaves. Now we might look for the same thing in other passages, but for the sake of an example, that concerning the Samaritan woman is sufficient, when Jesus says, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst forever'.[49] For there too (so far as the letter is concerned) the Samaritan seems to think that the Saviour is making a promise about perceptible water when he says, 'Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst forever'. We must, therefore, interpret those words figuratively and compare the water of the well 'of Jacob' from which the Samaritan woman draws with the water of Jesus,[50] and we must do the same thing here, for perhaps the loaves had not been baked but the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees was a raw leaven in and of itself.

9 'And when Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples'.[51]

Jesus asks the disciples 'Who people say' he 'is',[52] so that we may learn from the answer of the apostles the different opinions the Jews held of our Saviour at that time. But perhaps also so that the imitators of Jesus might be taught always to be curious about what people are saying about them, which is profitable if we do it in this way: If something bad is said, to eliminate occasions for this in every way, but if something good, to increase the occasions for this. But consider, because of the differing factions among the Jews concerning Jesus how, based on certain unsound teachings, some were saying that he was John the Baptist (like Herod the Tetrarch who said to his servants, 'This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead and because of this the powers are at work in him'[53]). Others said that he who is now called Jesus is Elijah, either having submitted to a second birth or, continuing to live in the flesh from that time, has appeared in the present time. And those who declare that Jesus might be Jeremiah, and not that Jeremiah was a type of Christ, were perhaps motivated by what is said in the opening words of Jeremiah about Christ which,

[49] Jn 4:13–14. [50] See Jn 4:5, 7.

[51] Mt 16:13. The ancient Latin translation (*Vetus Interpretatio*) of the *Commentary on Matthew* begins here and continues on beyond the end of the Greek book 17 (which ends at Mt 22:33), to Mt 27:66.

[52] Mt 16:14. [53] Mt 14:2.

since they were not fulfilled at that time in the prophet, but were beginning to be fulfilled in Jesus, whom God appointed over 'nations and kingdoms, to uproot, raze, and destroy, and to rebuild and plant',[54] and made him a prophet to the Gentiles to whom he preached the word. But some also said that he was one of the prophets. They assumed such things about him because of what is said in the prophets as though addressed to them but which were not fulfilled in them.

But the Jews, as deserving of the veil on their heart,[55] held false views about Jesus. Peter, however, since he was not a disciple 'of flesh and blood'[56] but was even capable of a revelation from the 'Father in heaven',[57] confessed that he was the Christ. Peter's words to the Saviour, 'You are the Christ', were great, since the Jews did not know that he was the Christ. But it was greater that he believed him not only to be the Christ, but also the 'Son of the living God' who had also said through the prophets, 'I live',[58] *** and ***[59] 'They have left me, the source of living water'. But he also who said, 'I am the life', is life since he is from the Father, the source of life. And pay careful attention whether just as the source of a river and the river are not the same so it is with the source of life and life. But we have added these comments because the phrase, 'of the living', is attached to the statement, 'You are the Christ, the Son of God', for it was necessary to offer something special in what was said about the God and Father of the universe as living, in regard both to the principle of life and those things that partake of it. But since we said that those who declared Jesus to be John the Baptist, or any of those additional names, spoke under the influence of unsound teachings, let us prove this by saying that if they had happened to be present with Jesus when he went off to John for baptism, or with John when he baptized Jesus, or had heard about it from someone, they would not have said that Jesus was John. But also, if they had understood the teaching from which Jesus said, 'If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come', and as having 'ears' they would have heard the one who had spoken, some would not have said that he was Elijah. And if those who said that he was Jeremiah had perceived that the majority of the prophets assumed some things symbolic of him, they would not have said that he was Jeremiah, and likewise others would not have said he was one of the prophets.

10 And perhaps if we, as Peter, should say what 'Simon Peter answered and said' in his statement, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God', flesh and blood not having revealed it to us, but a light from the Father in heaven which shone in our heart, we also become what Peter became, being pronounced blessed because the reasons for his blessing have extended also to us. The reason

[54] Jer 1:10. [55] See 2 Cor 3:15. [56] See Jn 1:12–13.
[57] See Mt 16:17. [58] Jer 22:24.
[59] Klostermann posits lucanae at these two places based on the ancient Latin translation and on the fragment MS C.

is that flesh and blood have not revealed to us about Jesus being 'the Christ, the Son of the living God', but the Father in heaven, from heaven itself, has revealed a revelation to us that lifts us up into the heaven which removes every 'veil' from the heart,[60] and has restored the spirit of the 'wisdom' and 'revelation' of God,[61] so that we may 'become citizens' in heaven.[62] But also, if we have said as Peter, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God' (since flesh and blood have not revealed it to us, but a light from the Father in heaven has shone in our heart), we become Peter, and the Logos might say to us, 'You are Peter', and the remaining words. For everyone is a rock who is an imitator of Christ, from whom they drank who 'drank from the spiritual rock that followed'.[63] And every teaching of the church and the life of the community connected with it is built on every such rock. For the church that God is building is in each of the perfect who possess a collection of the teachings and deeds and all the thoughts which go to fill up the blessing.

11 And if you think the whole church is being built by God on that one Peter alone, what would you say about John, the son 'of thunder', or of each of the apostles? Would we truly dare to say then that 'the gates of Hades will not prevail' against Peter in particular, but that they will prevail against the remaining apostles and the perfect? And does not the previous statement, 'the gates of Hades will not prevail against it', along with the statement, 'On this rock I will build my church' apply to all and to each of them? Does Christ give the keys 'of the kingdom of heaven' to Peter alone and no other of the blessed receives them? But if the statement, 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven' is made in common and to others, how does this not apply to everything said previously and to the words that are added as if they had been said to Peter?[64] For here indeed the words, 'All that you bind on earth will be bound in heaven' and those that follow appear to be addressed to Peter as it were. In the Gospel of John, however, when the Saviour gives the Holy Spirit to the disciples by breathing on them he says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' and the following words.[65] Many, therefore, will say to the Saviour, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God', but not all who say this will say it to him because they have in no way learned it from things revealed by flesh and blood, but the Father 'in heaven' himself has removed the 'veil' that lies on their heart so that after this, 'beholding the glory of the Lord in a mirror with unveiled face' they speak 'in the Spirit of God' saying of him, 'Jesus is Lord', and saying to him, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'.[66]

And if anyone, to whom flesh and blood have not revealed it, but the Father in heaven, says this to him, he will obtain those things that are mentioned, just

[60] See 2 Cor 3:15, 16. [61] See Eph 1:17. [62] See Phil 3:20. [63] See 1 Cor 10:4.
[64] Klostermann says there is a lacuna at the end of this question and refers to the Latin version.
[65] See Jn 20:22. [66] See 2 Cor 3:15, 18; 1 Cor 12:3; Mt 16:16.

as the letter of the Gospel says to that Peter, and as his Spirit teaches everyone who has become what that Peter was. For the names of all imitators of Christ are derived from the rock, namely 'the spiritual rock that followed' those being saved so that they might drink the 'spiritual drink' from it.[67] Now these are those whose names are derived from the rock, namely Christ; but also, being 'members of Christ'[68] they are called by the derived name 'Christs', and as members of the rock, they are called 'Peters'. And taking your lead from these you will say that the just bear a name derived from the justice of Christ and the wise from the wisdom of Christ, and you will do the same for his remaining names that are used for the saints in a derived way. What the Saviour said might be said in respect to all such derived names, 'You are Peter' and what follows down to, 'will not prevail against it'. But what is 'it'? Is it said of the rock on which Christ builds the church, or of the church (for the expression is ambiguous), or does it refer to the rock and the church as one and the same? I think the latter is true, for 'the gates of Hades will prevail' against neither the rock on which Christ builds the church nor the church, since you would not find 'the way of a snake on a rock' (as has been written in Proverbs).[69] Now if 'the gates of Hades should prevail' against someone, such a person would be neither a rock on which Christ builds the church nor the church Christ is building on the rock. For the rock is both impassable by the snake and stronger than the gates of Hades wrestling against it so that, because of its strength the gates of Hades do not prevail against it. And the church, as a structure of Christ who is building his own 'house' wisely 'on the rock', is impregnable to the gates of Hades,[70] which prevail against every person outside the rock and the church, but are impotent against it.

12 And once we have understood how each sin which can cause us to end up in Hades is a gate of Hades, we will grasp that the soul that contains 'a spot, or wrinkle, or anything of the sort', being neither 'holy' nor 'unblemished',[71] is not a rock on which Christ is building either the church or a part of the church that Christ is building on the rock. Now if anyone wants to get upset with us about these words because of the multitudes of apparent believers who belong to the church we must quote to this person not only the saying, 'Many are called but few are chosen' but also what is said by the Saviour to those who approached him (as stated in the Gospel according to Luke), which is as follows: 'Struggle to enter through the narrow gate, because many, I say to you, will seek to enter (through the narrow gate) and will not be able', and we must say also what has been recorded in this way in the Gospel according to Matthew: 'Because the gate is narrow and the way is restricted which leads to life, and they who find it are few'.[72] By paying attention to the statement 'that many, I say to you, will seek to enter and not be able', you will understand that this applies to those

[67] See 1 Cor 10:4. [68] See 1 Cor 6:15. [69] Prov 30:19.
[70] See Mt 7:24, 25; Lk 6:48. [71] Eph 5:27. [72] Mt 22:14; Lk 13:24; Mt 7:14.

who boast of belonging to the church but whose life style is feeble and contrary to the church's doctrine. Those, therefore, of those who seek to enter and are not able, would not be able because the gates of Hades prevailed against them. And these who seek to enter, and are able, against whom the gates of Hades do not prevail, are able to do 'all things' 'in Christ Jesus who strengthens' them.[73] And we must know this too, that just as the gates of cities have names, each with names proper to them, in the same way the gates of Hades might be named after the nature of their sins. One gate of Hades might be named, for example, Fornication, through which fornicators pass; and another might be called 'Denial' through which those who deny God descend into Hades.***[74] Each of the heterodox, along with those who have produced some falsely called knowledge,[75] have built a gate of Hades: Marcion built one, Basilides another, and Valentinus another. And in this way each of the fathers of an unsound opinion has become an architect of some gate of Hades. And those who cooperate with the teaching of the architect of such gates are servants and stewards who serve the unsound, impious doctrine of the architect. And although the gates of Hades are many and difficult to count, no gate of Hades will prevail against the rock, or the church which Christ is building on it. But these gates have some power by which they rule over those who do not strive and struggle against them; they are conquered by others, however, who have removed all the gates of Hades from their own soul because they do not stand aloof from him who said, 'I am the door'.[76]

13 Here, therefore, gates of Hades are mentioned, but in the Psalms the prophet gives thanks and says, 'You who have lifted me out of the gates of death, that I might proclaim all your praises in the gates of daughter Zion'.[77] From this we learn that it is never possible that anyone can proclaim all 'the praises' of God who has not been lifted 'from the gates of death' and come to 'the gates of Zion'. Now the gates 'of Zion' should be thought to be contrary to the gates 'of death', as intemperance is a gate of death, but self-control is a gate of Zion, and likewise injustice is a gate of death, but justice a gate of Zion. The prophet points this out when he says, 'This is the gate of the Lord; the just shall enter in it'.[78] Again, cowardice is a gate of death, but courage a gate of Zion, and thoughtlessness is a gate of death and its opposite, thoughtfulness, is a gate of Zion. There is one gate of true knowledge opposed to all the gates of 'what is falsely called knowledge'.[79]

But consider if you can say (because of the statement, 'Our wrestling is not with blood and flesh' and the remaining words[80]) that each authority and

[73] See 1 Tim 1:12; Phil 4:13. [74] Klostermann indicates a lacuna here.
[75] See 1 Tim 6:20. [76] Jn 10:9. [77] Ps 9:14, 15. [78] Ps 117:20.
[79] See 1 Tim 6:20. Klostermann and Koetschau think there is a lacuna at the end of this sentence in both the Greek and Latin texts. The sentence, however, is complete as it stands.
[80] Eph 6:12.

world-ruler 'of this darkness' and the spiritual power 'of wickedness in the heavenly places' is a gate of Hades and a gate of death. Therefore, the rulers and authorities against which 'we wrestle' might be said to be gates of Hades, and 'the ministering spirits'[81] gates of righteousness. And just as in the case of those things that are better, many gates are proclaimed and after the many, one in the saying, 'Open to me the gates of justice, and when I have entered in them I will confess to the Lord', and 'This is the gate of the Lord; the just shall enter in it',[82] so also in the case of their opposites, there are many gates of Hades and death, namely each authority against which we wrestle, but above all these gates the evil one himself is a gate of death and Hades. And let us be on our guard against each sin as if we descend into some gate of Hades if we sin; but when we are lifted up 'from the gates of death' let us proclaim 'all the praises' of the Lord 'in the gates of daughter Zion'. For example, in one gate of daughter Zion, that called self-control, we will proclaim the praises of God from self-control, and in another called justice, we will proclaim the praises of God from justice. And in general, in all our activities that deserve praise, we are in some gate of daughter Zion proclaiming some praise of God in relation to that activity. We must examine, however, how it is said in one of the Twelve Prophets, 'They hated the man who rebuked in the gates, and felt a loathing for the holy word'.[83] Perhaps, then, the one who rebukes 'in the gates' is from the gates of daughter Zion, rebuking those who are in sins contrary to this gate, and belong to the gates of Hades or death. But if you do not take the statement, 'They hated the one who rebukes in the gates' in this way, either the phrase 'in the gates' will be superfluous, or investigate in what way it has been said that is worthy of the prophetic spirit.

14 Next, let us see in what way it has been said to Peter, and to every Peter, 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven'.[84]

First, I think the statement, 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven', has been made in consequence of the statement, 'The gates of Hades will not prevail against it'. For he who has fortified himself against the gates of Hades that they may not prevail against him is worthy of receiving 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' from that same Logos, as if he receives 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' as a prize because 'the gates of Hades' have been impotent against him. Consequently, he may open by himself the locked gates for those who have been conquered by the gates of Hades. And he enters, as one who is self-controlled, through some gate of self-control opened by the key which opens self-control,[85] and through another, as a just person, the gate of justice which is opened by the key of justice, and so on for the remaining virtues.

[81] Heb 1:14. [82] Ps 117:19, 20. [83] Amos 5:10. [84] Mt 16:19.

[85] I have translated the accusative with the MSS; Klostermann prints a genitive following the Latin translation.

For I think that for each virtue of knowledge certain mysteries of wisdom in conformity with the kind of virtue are opened to the person who has lived virtuously since the Saviour gives as many keys as there are virtues to those not overpowered by the gates of Hades. These keys open an equal number of gates in conformity with the revelation of the mysteries in each virtue. And perhaps also each virtue is a kingdom of heaven, and all together are the kingdom of the heavens.[86] Seen in this way, the person who lives virtuously is already in the kingdom of the heavens. And in this same way, the statement, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near',[87] does not refer to time, but to our deeds and disposition, for Christ, total virtue, has come to stay, and says, for this reason, 'The kingdom of God is within' his disciples, and is not 'here and there'.[88]

And consider what great authority the rock has on which Christ builds the church, and everyone who says, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God', so that the judgements of this person remain firm, as God is judging in him so that in his judging the gates of Hades may not prevail against him. The gates of Hades do prevail, therefore, against the person who judges unjustly, and does not bind on earth in accordance with the Word of God or loose on earth in accordance with his will. But that person judges justly against whom the gates of Hades do not prevail, wherefore he has 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven', opening to those loosed 'on earth' so that they may be loosed and free in heaven also, and closing to those bound 'on earth' by his just judgement so that they may be bound and judged in heaven as well.[89] But since those who claim the position of bishop use this saying, as Peter, and because they have received 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' from the Saviour they teach that the things they have bound, that is condemned, are also bound in heaven, and the things that they have loosed, that is granted forgiveness, have also been loosed in heaven, we must say that they speak soundly if they have the work on account of which it was said to that Peter, 'You are Peter', and if they are so great that Christ builds the church on them, then this saying would reasonably have reference to them. And the gates of Hades ought not prevail against the person who wants to bind and loose. But if he is tightly bound by the ropes of his own sins',[90] in vain does he bind and loose. And perhaps you can say that the bad person has been bound in the heavens, that is, the virtues in the wise person, and again, the good person has been loosed in those same heavens and has received amnesty for the sins that preceded his virtue. And just as not even God might bind the person who does not have ropes of sins or sins compared to 'a long cord' or 'the strap of a heifer's yoke',[91] so neither whoever might be

[86] Origen follows Matthew's use of the plural 'heavens' in the phrase that I have consistently translated with the singular, 'kingdom of heaven', as do nearly all Bible translations of Matthew. Here, however, he is making a distinction between a single kingdom and a plurality, so I have used the plural in this passage alone, where Origen puts an emphasis on the plurality.

[87] Mt 3:2; 4:17. [88] Lk 17:21. [89] See Mt 16:19. [90] Prov 5:22. [91] Is 5:18.

Peter. And if anyone who is not Peter and does not have the qualities mentioned here, thinks he can bind 'on earth' just as Peter, so that what has been bound has been bound in heaven, and loose 'on earth' so that what has been loosed has been loosed in heaven, this person 'has become conceited' and does not understand the intention of the Scriptures, and 'having become conceited' he has fallen 'into the condemnation of the devil'.[92]

15 'Then he gave express orders to his disciples that they tell no one that he is the Christ'.[93]

Above it is written that 'Jesus sent these twelve forth saying to them, Do not go into the way of the Gentiles'[94] and he spoke all the following words to them that are recorded, sending them on their mission. Did he, therefore, want those already doing the work of apostles also to preach that he was the Christ? For if he wished it, it is worth investigating why in the world he now gives express orders 'to the disciples that they not say that he is the Christ'. Or if he did not wish it, how can the works of his mission be preserved? And one might also ask in this passage, When he sent the twelve forth, did he send them not thinking that he was the Christ? But if the twelve did think this, clearly Peter did too. How, then, is he pronounced blessed now? For the text indicates through these words that now, for the first time, Peter confessed Christ to be the Son 'of the living God'.[95] Matthew, then, according to some of the copies, has written, 'Then he gave express orders to the disciples that they tell no one that he is the Christ', but Mark says, 'He warned them not to say anything about him', and Luke says, 'Having warned them, he ordered them to tell no one this'.[96] But what does 'this' mean or, that according to Luke Peter answered and said (to the question, 'Who do you say I am?'), 'the Christ of God'.[97] One must be aware, however, that some of the copies of the Gospel according to Matthew have, 'He warned'. The difficulty, therefore, seems to me to be very genuine, and an incontrovertible solution must be sought for it. Let the person who finds it make it public, if it be more believable than our humble suggestions.

Consider, then, if you can say that for Jesus to be believed to be the Christ is something less than for what has been believed to be known. And perhaps there is also a distinction in knowing that Jesus is the Christ, since not everyone who knows him knows him in the same way. The fact, therefore, that to be believed apart from knowledge is inferior to being known is clear from the Gospel according to John: '***If you remain in my word, you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free'.[98] But also the fact that there is a distinction in Jesus being known to be the Christ, since not all who know him know him equally, presents itself as a self-evident truth to the person who has even a

[92] See 1 Tim 6:4; 3:6. [93] Mt 16:20. [94] Mt 10:5. [95] See Mt 16:15–17.
[96] Mk 8:30; Lk 9:21. [97] Lk 9:20.
[98] Jn 8:31–2. Diehl posits a lacuna at the beginning of this citation because the Latin version quotes the words from the beginning of Jn 8:31 that introduce the saying.

minimal understanding of the matter. For who would not acknowledge that (for example) although Timothy knows that Jesus is the Christ, he has not been enlightened in his knowledge about him to the extent that the apostle Paul has been enlightened? And who, again, would not admit that although many speak the truth about God, because 'He has given me unerring knowledge of the things that exist',[99] they will not have the same clarity or comprehension of the things known, nor will they say this knowing so great a number of things. But it is not only because of a difference in knowing that it is possible that those who know do not know alike, but also because of the fact that he has the highest blessing in respect to the knowledge presented who has known the Son after the Father revealed him (as Peter is testified to have known).[100] And if what we have said is sound, you will understand if the twelve formerly believed but did not know, and consequent to believing, also had the first principles of knowing and knew rather small details about him, but later they advanced in knowing so that they were able to receive knowledge from the Father who revealed the Son—in the sort of condition Peter was in at the time he was pronounced blessed.[101] And Peter was pronounced blessed, not only for having said, 'You are the Christ', but also after the addition, 'The Son of the living God'.[102] Mark and Luke, therefore, who have recorded that Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ' and have not added the phrase found in Matthew, 'the Son of the living God', for this reason have not recorded the blessing on the one who spoke and the praise[103] after the blessing which says, 'You are Peter' and what follows.

16 But now the first thing that we must investigate is that they were announcing other things about him, such as how great and amazing he was, but were not yet preaching that he was the Christ, so that the Saviour not appear to take away their right to announce him to be the Christ, which he had previously given them. And perhaps someone will be persuasive with an argument of this sort, alleging that the apostles had first taught the Jews the things held in esteem about Jesus as in an introduction so that at the right time the things about him being the Christ might be built on those. And perhaps many of the things said to them are said, in effect, to all who believe; for the statement, 'You will be brought before governors and kings because of me, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles' fits not only the apostles, and perhaps not the apostles at all, but all who will believe the statement, 'And brother will deliver brother to death' and the words that follow.[104] But also the statement, 'Everyone, therefore, who shall confess me' and the following words, is not made specifically to the apostles, but to all who believe.[105] According to this view, then, there is a preliminary account of the teaching through the things said to the apostles, which will become useful later both for them and for every teacher.

[99] Wis 7:17. [100] See Mt 16:17. [101] Ibid. [102] Mt 16:16.
[103] This word could also be translated 'blessing'. Origen has used the synonyms, *makarismos* and *eulogia*, for which English has no good synonyms.
[104] Mt 10:18, 21. [105] Mt 10:32.

17 But the person who prefers that the apostles, who heard the statement, 'What I say to you in the darkness, say in the light, and what you hear in your ear, proclaim on the houses',[106] had proclaimed earlier that he was Christ will say that it is as if he wanted first to give a rather obscure instruction to those who were to hear the name Christ from the apostles, then to allow this to ripen, as it were, in their minds, so that after a time of silence about the message proclaimed about him, Christ Jesus crucified and raised from the dead might more opportunely be built on what they had learned before. Not even the apostles themselves knew this early on, for it is written in the words now being investigated that 'from that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer' this and that.[107] But if the apostles are now learning these things from Jesus that are to come upon him—the elders' scheme against him, that he will be killed, and that after these things 'he will be raised' from the dead on the third day—why must we think that those being instructed at the hands of the apostles knew about Jesus previously? Or why must we think that even if Christ had been proclaimed to them, the message proclaimed about him had been presented in an introductory form and not with clarity? For it was indeed our Saviour's intention when he 'gave express orders to his disciples that they tell no one that he is the Christ' to keep the more advanced teaching about himself for a more appropriate time, when the disciples who had seen him crucified and raised would be able to testify about his resurrection to those who had seen him crucified. For if the apostles who were always with him and had seen all 'the wonders that he did' and testified that his words were 'words of eternal life', stumbled on the night of his betrayal, what do you think those who had learned earlier that he was the Christ would have suffered?[108] I think it was to spare them that he expressly ordered these things.

18 But the person who wants the things said to the twelve to refer to the times following these, and the apostles not yet to have announced to their hearers that he is the Christ, will say that he wished the concept of the Christ which has been interwoven with the name of Jesus be reserved for the more advanced and saving preaching, of the sort Paul understood and spoke of to the Corinthians: 'But I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified'.[109] Wherefore previously they preached Jesus doing this and that and teaching such and such now, once Peter confesses him to be the Christ the Son 'of the living God',[110] since he does not yet want himself proclaimed to be the Christ, as this would be proclaimed more opportunely after he has been crucified he gives express orders 'to the disciples that they tell no one that he is the Christ'. And perhaps it is shown that this is his intention when he forbids that he be preached to be the Christ by the statement, 'From that time Jesus began

[106] Mt 10:27. [107] Mt 16:21. [108] See Mt 21:15; Jn 6:68.
[109] 1 Cor 2:2. [110] See Mt 16:16.

to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders' and from those subjoined in the text. For it is as if then, at the precise moment, he announces to the disciples who have come to know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son 'of the living God', because the Father has revealed it to them, that, instead of believing in Jesus Christ 'crucified', they believe in Jesus Christ who will be crucified, but also, instead of believing in Jesus Christ, and him 'raised from the dead', he teaches them to believe in Jesus Christ, and him who will be raised from the dead.[111] And since 'he has disarmed the rulers and authorities and exposed them and triumphed over them publicly in the cross', if anyone is ashamed of the cross of Christ, he is ashamed of the economy of salvation on account of which they were triumphed over.[112] And the one who believes and has come to know these things must also 'boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ', 'through which' cross of Christ the rulers, including (in my opinion) the ruler of this world, are exposed and triumphed over when the world is crucified to the believer.[113] Wherefore, when suffering approached, he said, 'Now has the ruler of this world been judged', and 'Now the ruler of this world will be cast out; and if I be lifted up (he says) from the earth, I will draw all people to myself', since the ruler who prevented those being drawn by him from coming to Jesus no longer has so much power.[114]

19 It is necessary, therefore, that in conjunction with Jesus Christ being preached that he be preached as 'crucified'. It is a defective message to preach him and be silent about his cross.[115] And it does not seem to me to be as defective to say that Jesus is the Christ while being silent about some of his other prodigious works as being silent about the fact that he has been crucified. Wherefore, retaining the things about himself to be preached more completely by the apostles, 'he gave express orders to his disciples that they tell no one that he is the Christ'. He was preparing them to say that he is the Christ who has been crucified and raised from the dead. It was now that he began not only to say, or advance to the point of teaching, but also 'to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and' the things that follow. Now pay attention to the word 'to show'. Just as things perceptible to the senses are said to be shown, so it is said that the things Jesus said to his disciples were 'shown'. And I do not think that each of the things seen was shown so clearly to those who saw him physically suffering many things from the elders of the people as the spiritual exhibition of this to the disciples.

20 'And at that time he began to show'.[116] It is likely that after this he showed these things more clearly to them as they became more capable. He was no longer beginning to show them to people being introduced, as it were, but now

[111] See 1 Cor 2:2; 2 Tim 2:8. [112] Col 2:15. [113] Gal 6:14.
[114] Jn 16:11; 12:31–2; see Mt 19:14.
[115] See 1 Cor 2:2. Koetschau suggested this last clause on the basis of the Latin text.
[116] Mt 16:21.

he progresses in the showing. And if it is reasonable to think that, without exception, Jesus completed what he began, then at some time he certainly completed what 'he began to show the disciples' about the necessity of him suffering the things that had been written. For when anyone comprehends the complete knowledge from the word about these mysteries, it must be said that then, when the mind perceives the things shown from the intellectual showing, the showing has been completed for the one who wishes to see these things, and being capable, sees. And since it was not possible that 'a prophet be killed outside of Jerusalem',[117] a loss resembling the saying, 'He who loses his life for my sake will find it',[118] he had, therefore, 'to go to Jerusalem' so that when he had suffered many things and been killed in that Jerusalem he might produce the first fruits from the dead in the Jerusalem 'above', abandoning, setting aside, and destroying the Jerusalem on earth with all the divine service in it.[119] For so long as 'Christ' 'had' not 'been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who sleep', and those being conformed to his death and resurrection were not raised with him, the city of God, the temple, the purifications, and the other things were being sought below.[120] Once this happened, however, this was no longer so, but in order for the things which are above to be set in place, he had 'to go to the Jerusalem' below 'and suffer many things there' in it 'from the elders and the chief priests and scribes of the people'. This was so that he might be glorified by the heavenly elders who comprehend his acts of kindness, and chief priests more divinely appointed under the power of the one chief priest,[121] and be glorified by scribes of the people who engage in Scriptures not written 'with ink but' which are explained by 'the Spirit of the living God', and be killed in the Jerusalem below but, after he arose, rule on 'mount Zion and in the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem'.[122] And on the third day he arose from the dead, so that after he had been delivered 'from the evil one'[123] and his son, in whom was falsehood, injustice, war, and everything opposite to what Christ is, and delivered, in addition, from the impure spirit that disguises itself as a holy spirit,[124] he might secure the right for those who were delivered to be baptized in their spirit, soul, and body 'into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit', which, to those who have become sons of light because of them, are three days eternally present together.[125]

21 But since Peter thought sufferings to be unworthy of Christ, the Son 'of the living God' and also below the Father who had revealed such great things about Christ to him (for the things he was to suffer had not been revealed to him), therefore, 'he takes him aside' and as if he has forgotten the dignity of Christ, and that 'the Son of the living God' says or does nothing deserving

[117] Lk 13:33. [118] Mt 10:39. [119] See 1 Cor 15:20; Gal 4:26.
[120] See Rom 6:5; 8:29. [121] See Heb 4:14–15; 5:5–6; 9:11.
[122] See 2 Cor 3:3; Heb 12:22. [123] See Mt 6:13. [124] See Jn 8:44; 2 Cor 11:13.
[125] See 1 Thess 5:23; Mt 28:19.

rebuke, 'he began to rebuke him' and, as if speaking to one needing propitiation (for he did not know perhaps that 'God put' this man 'forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood'), he said, 'May God be propitious to you, Lord'.[126] He accepted Peter's good intention, and rebukes his ignorance, and because the good intention was an assurance, he says to him, 'Get behind me' as if speaking to one who has ceased to follow Jesus because of what he did not understand and did not speak of correctly. And because of his ignorance, he said, as if to someone holding something contrary to the things of God, 'Satan', which in Hebrew means 'Contrary'. And if he had not spoken out of ignorance or rebuked the Son 'of the living God', saying to him, 'May God be propitious to you, Lord; this will not happen to you', he would have said to him neither, 'Get behind me', as to one who had ceased to be behind him and to follow him, nor would he have said, 'Satan', as to one who had said things contrary to what he himself had said. But now, even though Peter had followed Jesus and walked behind him, Satan prevailed over Peter to shrink from following Jesus and from being behind the Son of God, and deserving of hearing the words, 'Satan', and 'stumbling block' for the Son of God, and not thinking about 'the things of God but those of men'.[127] But the fact that previously (before he committed this sin) Peter was behind the Son of God is clear from the words, 'Come behind me, and I will make you fishers of men'.[128]

22 And at the same time, you will compare what he said to Peter, 'Go behind me, Satan', and what he said to the devil (after he said to him, 'I will give you all these things if you will fall down and worship me'), 'Go, Satan', without the addition of 'behind me'.[129] For to be behind Jesus is a good thing; wherefore it was said, 'Come behind me, and I will make you fishers of men'.[130] And the statement, 'He who does not take up his cross and follow behind me is not worthy of me', is of the same nature.[131] And observe that in general the term 'behind' is a good thing, when someone goes 'behind the Lord'[132] God and is behind Christ; but it is the opposite when someone casts the words of God behind them or when one transgresses the command that says, 'Do not go after your own desires'.[133] And Elijah says to the people in the third book of the Kings, 'How long will you limp on both legs? If the Lord is God, go after him; but if Baal is Lord, go after him'.[134] And Jesus says this to Peter after he has turned, for this too is beneficial. And when you, therefore, gather more examples of the expression 'turned' (and especially those ascribed to Jesus) and when you have compared them with one another, you will discover that the expression does not occur superfluously. But it is sufficient at the present to cite from the Gospel according to John: 'And Jesus turned and saw them (Peter and Andrew, of course) following and says to them, What are you seeking?'[135]

[126] See Mt 16:16, 17, 21, 22; Rom 3:25. [127] See Mt 16:23. [128] Mt 4:19.
[129] Mt 4:9, 10. [130] Mt 4:19. [131] Mt 10:38. [132] See Hos 11:10.
[133] Sir 18:30. [134] 3 Kgs (1 Kgs) 18:21. [135] Jn 1:38.

For notice that in these words too the expression 'turned' is for the benefit of those to whom he turned.

23 Next we must investigate how it is said to Peter, 'You are a stumbling block for me', especially since David says, 'There is much peace for those who love your law, and they have no stumbling block.'[136] For someone will say, if this is said in the prophet because of the steadfastness of those who have love and are incapable of experiencing stumbling (for love 'bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things; love never fails'[137]), how did the Lord himself, who sustains 'all who are fallen' and restores 'all who are cast down',[138] say to Peter, 'You are a stumbling stone to me'? Now one must say that not only is the Saviour impervious to stumbling, but so also is everyone who has been perfected in love, and to this extent the person who says or does such things is a stumbling block in himself even for the one who will not be made to stumble, unless perhaps Jesus calls every disciple who sins a stumbling block also for himself, since he would say, because of love, much more than Paul, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with anger?'[139] parallel to which one can put, Who is made to stumble, and I am not made to stumble? And if Peter at that time (because he said, 'May it be propitious to you, Lord, this will not happen to you'), is said by Jesus to be a stumbling block, since he is not thinking on 'the things of God' in what he said, 'but the things of men', what must we say of all those who proclaim that they are disciples of Jesus but do not think on 'the things of God' and do not look to the things that are not seen and are eternal, but think on 'the things of men' and look to the things that are seen and are temporal?[140] Would Jesus not call such people even more a stumbling block for himself and, because they are a stumbling block for him, they are also one for the brothers? As he says to these people, 'I was hungry and you did not give me to eat' and what follows,[141] so he might say also, You caused me to stumble when I was running. Let us not think, therefore, that to think on 'the things of men' is just any chance sin, since it is necessary to think on 'the things of God' in all things. And it will be appropriate to say this also to everyone who has fallen from the teachings of God and church doctrines, and true thought, and holds to be true (so to speak) the teachings of Basilides, or Valentinus, or Marcion, or any of the others who teach human doctrines as divine.

24 'Then Jesus said to his disciples, If anyone wishes to follow after me' and the succeeding words.[142]

It is shown by these words that to wish to go after Jesus and to follow him is not the result of some chance brave deed, and that no one would find himself behind Jesus who has not denied himself. And he who, in a noteworthy change,

[136] Ps 118:165. [137] 1 Cor 13:7, 8. [138] Ps 144:14. [139] 2 Cor 11:29.
[140] See 2 Cor 4:18. [141] Mt 25:42. [142] Mt 16:24.

expunges his own previous life which has been lived in evil, denies himself as, for example, the formerly undisciplined person denies himself as an undisciplined person when he has learned self-control, and so on. But it is likely that someone may object if one confesses himself in the same way he has denied himself, after he has denied himself on the one hand as an unjust person but on the other confesses himself as a just one. But if Christ is justice, he who has taken up justice does not confess himself but Christ. So also the person who has found wisdom through him who possesses wisdom confesses Christ.[143] And such a person indeed who believes 'in the heart' 'for justice', and confesses 'with the mouth' 'for salvation', and bears witness to Christ by his works, since he has, by all of these, confessed Christ 'before men' will be confessed by Christ 'before the Father in heaven'.[144] But so also the person who has not denied himself but confesses himself and denies Christ, also since he has denied Christ will experience the saying, 'And I will deny him'.[145] For this reason may our every thought, notion, word, and action proceed from our denial of ourselves and our testimony and confession of Christ and in Christ. I am convinced that every action of the perfect person is a testimony to Christ Jesus, and abstinence from every sin is a denial of oneself that places one behind Jesus. And a person like this is crucified with Christ, and takes up his own cross and follows the one who carries his own cross because of us according to what is said in John, 'They took him and put it on him' and the words that follow up to the words, 'where they crucified him'.[146] But the Jesus in John (if I may put it that way) carries 'the cross by himself' and, 'carrying it he went out', but the Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke does not carry it himself, for Simon of Cyrene carries it.[147] Perhaps Simon is a reference to us who carry the cross of Jesus because of Jesus, but Jesus himself carries it for himself for, that is to say, there are two conceptions of the cross, the one which Simon of Cyrene carries, and the other which Jesus himself carries 'by himself'.

25 And further, on the phrase, 'Let him deny himself', what Paul, who denies himself, said seems to me to be useful. It goes like this: 'But I no longer live, but Christ lives in me'.[148] For the statement, 'I no longer live', was the utterance of one denying himself, since he has put aside his own life and taken Christ up into himself so that he might live in him as 'justice' and 'wisdom' and 'sanctification' and 'our peace' and as the 'power of God' which accomplishes all things in him.[149] And further, also take note of this: While there are many ways of dying, the Son of God was crucified, hung 'on a cross', so that all who die 'to sin' should die to it in no other way than in that connected with the cross.[150] For this reason they will say, 'I have been crucified with Christ' and 'May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been

[143] See 1 Cor 1:30. [144] See Rom 10:10. [145] See Mt 10:32, 33.
[146] See Gal 2:19; Jn 19:16–18. [147] Jn 19:17; cf. Mt 27:32; Mk 15:21; Lk 23:26.
[148] Gal 2:20. [149] See 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 2:14; 1 Cor 1:24. [150] See Gal 3:13; Rom 6:2.

crucified to me and I to the world'.[151] For perhaps also each of those who are crucified with Christ disarms 'the rulers and powers' and makes a show of them, leading them in triumph on the cross, or rather Christ does these things in them.

26 'For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it'.[152]

The first saying is ambiguous. One way it can be understood is as follows: If anyone, is a lover of life and thinks the present life to be something good, and treats his own life with great care so far as living in the flesh goes, being afraid to die since he will lose it through death, this person, by wishing in himself to save his own soul in this way, will lose it since he is placing it outside the bounds of blessedness. But if anyone, despising the present life because of my word which has convinced him to struggle for truth to the point of death, loses his own life, delivering it for piety's sake to what is commonly called death he, since he has lost his life because of me, will save it rather and will be kept safe. And we might interpret the saying in another way like this: If anyone has understood what salvation is and wishes to acquire the salvation of his own soul, and has said goodbye to this life and has denied himself and taken his cross and is following me, Let him totally destroy his own life in this world, for once he has destroyed it on account of me and all my teaching he will acquire salvation, the goal of such destruction.

27 And at the same time also observe that at the beginning he says, 'Whoever wishes', but next, 'Whoever shall lose it'. Because, therefore, we wish to save our soul, let us lose it to the world, since we are crucified with Christ and have our boast 'in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world' will be crucified to us and we 'to the world', so that we may acquire 'the goal, the salvation of' our 'life', which begins with our losing it on account of the Logos. But if indeed we think for our life to be saved is a blessing related to the salvation in God and the blessedness with him, any loss of life on account of Christ ought also to be good since it will be the prelude of the blessed salvation. It seems to me, therefore, in conformity with denying himself in relation to the things that have been explained that each one must lose his own life. Let each one, therefore, lose his own sinful life so that when he has lost the sinning life he may take up the life that is being saved by living a good life. But 'a person will benefit in no way if he should gain the entire world'.[153] And, in my opinion, he gains the world, to whom the world is not crucified. And it will be at the expense of his own life for that person to whom the world is not crucified. But two options are set forth: either to suffer the loss of the world to gain life, or to suffer the loss of life to gain the world. It is a much better choice that we suffer the loss of the world but gain life from losing it because of Christ.

[151] Gal 2:19; 6:14. [152] Mt 16:25. [153] See Mt 16:26.

28 And the saying, 'Or what will a man give as an exchange for his soul?', said as a question will appear to show the possibility of giving an exchange for his soul when he has handed over his entire substance after his sins, in order that he may dole out his goods to the poor, since he will be saved through this. But I think it is said as a statement to show that a man has nothing that, given as 'an exchange for his soul' which is in the grip of death, will ransom it from death's hand. A man, therefore, may not give 'an exchange for his soul', but God gave the precious blood of Jesus as an exchange for our soul insofar as we were bought 'for a price', ransomed 'not with corruptible things as silver or gold', 'but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish or spot'.[154] It is said to Israel in Isaiah, 'I gave Ethiopia, Egypt, and Soene as an exchange on behalf of you, from this time you became precious before me, you were glorified'.[155] For the firstborn of the Egyptians became an exchange (so to speak) for the firstborn of Israel, and it was on behalf of Israel that the Egyptians died in the remaining plagues that came upon Egypt and in the drowning after the plagues. And based on these facts let the one who is capable examine whether the true and spiritual Ethiopia (if I may put it this way), Egypt, and Soene of Egypt have been given as an exchange for the true Israel by God 'who delivers Israel from all its lawless acts'.[156] And, to investigate rather daringly, perhaps Soene has been given on behalf of Jerusalem, and Egypt on behalf of Judaea, and Ethiopia on behalf of those who are fearful because they are other than Israel and the house of Levi and the house of Aaron.

29 'For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels'.[157]

The Son of Man has now come but not in his glory, for 'We saw him, and he had no form or beauty, but his form was without honour and lacking, more than the sons of men, a man suffering calamity and pain, and knowing how to bear sickness; he was dishonoured and was not esteemed because his face had been diverted'.[158] It was necessary for him to have come in this fashion so that 'he might bear our sins and' suffer pain 'for us', for it was not fitting that one in glory bear 'our sins and' suffer pain 'for us'.[159] But also, he comes in glory once he has prepared the disciples through his appearance which did not have 'form or beauty'.[160] And he became as they so that they might become as he,[161] 'conformed to the image' of his glory, since previously he had become conformed 'to the body of our lowliness', on account of which 'he emptied himself and took the form of a slave', and has been restored to the form of God and makes them 'conformed' to it.[162]

30 But if you are able to understand figuratively[163] the distinctions in the Logos which are announced in the foolishness 'of preaching' to those who believe, and which are spoken in wisdom 'to the perfect'[164] you will see in what way the

[154] 1 Pet 1:18, 19. [155] Is 43:3, 4. [156] Ps 129:8. [157] Mt 16:27.
[158] Is 53:2, 3. [159] Is 53:4. [160] Is 53:2. [161] See Gal 4:12.
[162] See Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21; 2:7. [163] *Tropikōs*. [164] See 1 Cor 1:21.

Logos has the 'form of a slave' to those being introduced, so that they might say, 'We saw him, and he had neither form nor beauty', but he comes 'in the glory of his Father' to the perfect who will say, 'And we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth'.[165] For indeed, the glory of the Logos is seen by the perfect, and his being the only begotten with the Father God, and his being 'full of grace', and likewise also full 'of truth'. The one who needs to believe the foolishness 'of preaching' cannot contain this.[166] But 'the Son of man will come' not only 'in the glory of his Father', but 'with his angels'. And if you can perceive all the co-workers in the glory of the Logos and the revelation of the wisdom (which is Christ[167]) who accompany him, you will see in what way 'the Son of Man' comes 'in the glory of his Father with his angels'. And consider if you can say on these words that there is a correspondence between the prophets who suffered earlier for not having any 'form or beauty' of words and the Logos who had neither 'form nor beauty'.[168] And just as 'the Son of Man' comes 'in the glory of his Father' so the angels who are the words in the prophets are with him, preserving their own corresponding glory. And whenever a Logos of this kind comes 'with his angels' to the mind of the believer he will give a share of his own glory to each one and the brilliance of his angels, in accordance with the conduct of each person.

But we are not saying these things to reject as spurious the simpler understood second coming of the Son of God. For when will these things have happened, or when will that apostolic saying be fulfilled which says, 'For we must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ, that each may receive back what he has done in the body, whether good or evil'?[169] And if 'he will repay each one according to his conduct', neither in respect to the well-pleasing conduct apart from the evil, nor the evil apart from the well-pleasing, it is clear that 'he will repay each one according to' all his evil conduct and according to all his well-pleasing conduct. But I suppose (being convinced in these matters by the apostle, but comparing also Ezekiel's words in which the sins of the person who has completely repented are wiped out and the previous virtuous actions of the person who has totally fallen away are not taken into account[170]) that the sins of the person who has been perfected and has put aside evil completely are wiped out, but no good deed done previously by the person who has fallen away from godliness completely is taken into account on his behalf. But what we have done, 'whether good or evil', has been granted to us who stand 'before the judgement seat of Christ' somewhere between the perfect and the apostate, for we are neither so pure that our evil actions will not be considered at all, nor have we fallen away to such an extent that our better actions will be forgotten.

31 'Truly I say to you, that there are some of those standing here who will not taste of death'.[171]

[165] Is 53:2; Jn 1:14. [166] See 1 Cor 1:21. [167] See 1 Cor 1:24, 30.
[168] See Is 53:2. [169] 2 Cor 5:10. [170] See Ez 18:21, 22, 24. [171] Mt 16:28.

Some people refer these words to the ascent 'after six days', or eight as Luke says, of the three apostles with Jesus to 'a high mountain by themselves'.[172] Those who explain it this way say that Peter and the other two did not taste death before they saw 'the Son of Man' coming 'in his kingdom and in his glory'. For when they saw Jesus transformed 'before them' so that 'his face' shone and the words that follow,[173] they had seen 'the kingdom of God having come in power'.[174] For like spear-bearers stationed around a king, so 'Moses and Elijah appeared' to those who had ascended the mountain, speaking with Jesus.[175] And it is worthwhile to consider if the statement about sitting 'on the right hand and on the left' of the Saviour 'in his kingdom' refers to these men, so that the phrase, 'but for whom it has been prepared',[176] was said because of them. Now this explanation concerning the three apostles not tasting death until they should see Jesus transfigured, fits well with those who are, as Peter called them, 'as newborn babes' who desire 'the rational, unadulterated milk'.[177] Paul says to such, 'I gave you milk to drink, not solid food' and what follows.[178] And every explanation of the letter of the text, in my opinion, that can edify those incapable of the greater things would correctly be called milk, which flows from the holy ground of the Scriptures, ground which flows 'with honey and milk'.[179] But he who has been weaned, as Isaac, and is worthy of the festivities and entertainment that Abraham made for the weaning of his son, should seek the more solid food in these words and in all Scripture.[180] This is different, I think, from meat, but not from solid food[181] and those foods figuratively called vegetables, which are for the weaned but not for the strong. They are nourishment for the weak according to the statement, 'The weak person eats vegetables'.[182] Likewise also, the one who has been weaned as Samuel and is presented before God by his mother and is devoted to God by his mother (and she was Anna, which means 'Grace'), would also be a son of grace who seeks meat, the holy food of the perfect and, at the same time, of the priests since he is reared in the temple of God.[183]

32 Such are the things that come to mind for us at the present on the passage before us. There were some standing where Jesus was, who had the bases of their soul firmly fixed beside Jesus. The standing of their feet was related to the standing of Moses, of which he said, 'And I stood on the mountain forty days and forty nights'. He too was considered worthy of the command God addressed to him, 'But you stand here with me', since God considered him to deserve to stand beside him.[184] These, indeed, who stand beside Jesus, that is, beside the Logos of God, do not all stand equally, for there are also differences between those who stand beside Jesus. For this reason, not all who stand beside

[172] See Mt 17:1; Lk 9:28. [173] See Mt 17:2. [174] Mk 9:1. [175] See Mt 17:3.
[176] See Mt 20:23. [177] 1 Pet 2:2. [178] 1 Cor 3:2. [179] See Ex 13:5.
[180] See Gn 21:8. [181] See Heb 5:14. [182] Rom 14:2.
[183] See 1 Kgs (Sam) 1:23–8; 2:11. [184] Dt 10:10; 5:31.

the Saviour, but some of them, since they stand in a better way, are said not to taste death 'until they see' the Logos who visited men and is, therefore, called Son of Man, 'coming in his kingdom'. For the Logos does not always come 'in his kingdom' when he comes, for he is such to those who are entering it that when they see him they say he is not glorious or great, but is inferior to many human words: 'We saw him, and he did not have form or beauty, but his form was dishonoured, lacking more than all the sons of men'.[185] And those who see his glory will say these things about their former times when the Logos seen at the beginnings in the synagogue 'did not have form or beauty' to them. There is displayed, therefore, some royal quality of the Logos who has very clearly assumed sovereignty over all words which is seen by some of those who have stood by Jesus, since they are able to follow him when he goes before them and ascends 'the high mountain' of his manifestation. Some of those who stand beside Jesus are worthy of this if they be either Peter, 'against whom the gates of Hades do not prevail', or 'the sons of thunder' and are begotten by the loud voice of God who thunders and shouts loud words from heaven to those who have 'ears' and to the wise.[186] Such people do not taste death.

But if a clearer exposition must be set forth in addition to what has been said, what is revealed in seeing 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom and in his glory?' And what does seeing 'the kingdom of God having come in power' mean? Are they things illuminated in our hearts, or are they discovered by those who seek, or are they slipped under our reasoning powers? We will set these issues out, but let each person decide as he wishes. Now he who perceives and grasps the preeminence of the Logos which, on the one hand, destroys and refutes all the plausible arguments of liars, and on the other, proclaims the truth, sees 'the Son of Man' (corresponding with the 'Logos' of John, the 'Logos of God'[187]) 'coming in' his own 'kingdom'. But if such a person should see the Logos not only destroying every plausible argument of the opposition, but also presenting his own transparently clear arguments, he would see here, in addition to the kingdom, also the glory. And such a person would indeed see in himself 'the kingdom of God having come in power'. And he would see this since he is by no means still ruled by sin which rules in the mortal body of sinners,[188] but has been settled forever under the king, the God of the universe, whose kingdom is 'within us' in power, and in actuality, and (as Mark put it) in power and by no means in weakness, 'within' the perfect alone.[189] Jesus promised these things, therefore, to disciples who stand, prophesying not about all of them, but about some.

33 And we must understand what it is to taste death. Now the one who says, 'I am the life', is life.[190] And this 'life' 'has', indeed, 'been hidden with Christ in

[185] Is 53:2, 3. [186] See Mt 16:18; Mk 3:17; Mt 11:15. [187] See Jn 1:1; Rev 19:13.
[188] See Rom 6:12. [189] Lk 17:1; Mk 9:1. [190] Jn 11:25; 14:6.

God', and 'whenever Christ, our life, has been made manifest, then' those deserving to be made manifest 'with him' will be made manifest 'in glory'.[191] And the enemy of this life, who is also 'the last enemy' of all his enemies 'is destroyed'.[192] This is 'death' which the soul that sins dies,[193] since it is oppositely disposed to what happens concerning the soul that is upright and lives because it is upright. And when it is said in the law, 'I have given before your face life and death', 'choose life', Scripture says these things concerning the one who said, 'I am the life' and concerning his enemy death, one or the other of which each of us is always choosing by what we do.[194] And whenever we sin with life 'before' our 'face', the curse is then fulfilled in us which says, 'And your life will be hung up before you' and what follows down to the words, 'and from the sights that your eyes will see'.[195]

Just as, therefore, he is the life and the living bread 'that has come down from heaven and has given life to the world', so his enemy, death, is dead bread.[196] And every rational soul is nurtured either on living bread or dead, by which it receives good teachings or bad. If just as it is possible in the case of the more common foods at one time only to taste them, but at another to eat of them more fully, so also in the case of these breads, one eats more sparingly tasting them, but another takes his fill of the living bread even that which has come down from heaven, since he is good or is in the process of becoming so, but the wicked person takes his fill of the dead bread, which is death. And perhaps those who sin rarely and in insignificant matters only taste death, and those who have adopted virtue do not even taste it, but are always nurtured on living bread. It was fitting, therefore, for Peter, against whom 'the gates of Hades do not prevail', not even to taste death since at the time someone tastes death he also eats death, when 'the gates of Hades' prevail against him, and he eats or tastes death proportionately to death's prevailing against him to a greater or lesser extent and more or fewer gates of Hades prevailing. But it was also impossible for the sons 'of thunder', born from thunder, a heavenly event, to taste death which is so far removed from their mother, thunder.

And the Word prophesies these things for those who will be perfected and who have progressed to such an extent from having stood beside the Logos that they do not even taste death until they see the appearance and glory and kingdom and supremacy of the Logos of God, in relation to which he rises above every word that by appearance distracts and diverts those not able to break asunder the bonds of distraction and ascend to the height of the supremacy of the Logos of truth.

34 But someone may be of the opinion that the Saviour's promise sets a temporal limit to not tasting death, because 'they will not taste death until they see

[191] Col 3:3, 4. [192] 1 Cor 15:26. [193] See Ez 18:4.
[194] Dt 30:15, 19; Jn 11:25; 14:6. [195] Dt 28:66, 67. [196] Jn 6:33.

the Son of Man coming in his kingdom', but after this they will taste it. Therefore, we must demonstrate, that in the customary usage of language in Scripture 'until' shows that the time concerning what is revealed is urgent, but is not a fixed limit so that after the 'until' the opposite to what is revealed necessarily occurs. Now in addition to other things, the Saviour also says to the eleven disciples when he arose from the dead, 'Behold I am with you all the days until the end of the age'.[197] For when he said that he will be with them 'until the end of the age', did he no longer promise to be with them after the end of the age, when the other age is present, called the age to come, so that from this way of looking at it the time 'until the end of the age' would be better for the disciples than that after the end of the age? But I do not think anyone would dare say that after the end of the age the Son of God will no longer be with the disciples because the text says he will be with them so far, that is, until the end of the age is present. For it is clear that what was being inquired after was if before the age to come and the expected retributive promises of God, the Son of God will already be with the disciples. And when it was granted that he would be with them, they would have asked whether sometimes he would be with them and sometimes not. Wherefore, in order to release us from suspicion of doubting, he declared that already and continuing for all days he will be with the disciples, not abandoning those who have become his disciples 'until the end of the age'. Truly he was not present with them in the nights, if the sun had set for anyone. Now if this is the meaning of 'until the end of the age', it is clear that we will not be compelled to admit that those who see 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom' taste death after they have been considered worthy of seeing him in this way. But just as in the case of what we cited, the urgency of the saying was for us to learn that he will not abandon us 'until the end of the age' but will be with us 'all the days'. In the same way, in this present saying I think it is clear to those who know how to perceive the sequence of things that the one who has once seen 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom', and who has seen him 'in his glory' and has seen 'the kingdom of God having come in power', would not taste death after he has beheld such great good things. But without the word of Jesus' promise, it would not be irrational for us to suppose that we taste death so far as we have not yet been considered worthy to see 'the kingdom of God having come in power'[198] and 'the Son of Man coming in his glory and in his kingdom'.

35 But since the assertion, 'they will not at all taste death', has been recorded here by the three evangelists,[199] but in other places different things are said about death, it is not out of place to juxtapose those passages and compare them with tasting death. In the Psalms, then, it is said, 'Who is the person who will live and not see death?'[200] And again in another passage, 'Let death come

[197] Mt 28:20. [198] Mk 9:1. [199] Mt 16:28; Mk 9:1; Lk 9:27. [200] Ps 88:49.

upon them, and let them descend alive into Hades'.[201] And in one of the prophets, 'Death prevailed and swallowed them',[202] and in the Apocalypse, 'Death and Hades follow' certain ones.[203] Now it seems to me in these passages that to taste death is one thing, and to see it another, and for it to come to certain people is yet another, and a fourth thing is meant in addition to what has already been said by the statement that 'Death prevailed and swallowed them', and some fifth thing in addition to these, by the statement, 'Death and Hades follow them'. And should you collect them you may, perhaps, find even additional differences beyond these that we have remembered. By comparing these with one another and investigating them in the proper way you would discover the meanings in each passage.

But I am seeking in these comparisons whether seeing death is the lesser evil and tasting it is the greater. But even worse than this is for death to follow someone, and not only to follow, but also already to come upon him and to overtake that person whom it was formerly following. To be swallowed by it, however, seems to me to be more serious than all the things mentioned. And when you have understood the things said and the distinction between the sins committed, you will not hesitate, I think, to admit that some such things were in the mind of the Spirit who caused these things to be written in the oracles of God.

36 'And after six days' (according to Matthew and Mark[204]) 'he takes Peter and James and John his brother, and leads them up a high mountain alone. And he was transformed before them'.[205]

Now let this have occurred long ago and as stated in the text, in addition to the points of the explanation of these things that we present. But it seems to me that it was not without reason that six days after the preceding discourses Jesus leads them up into a high mountain and considers them worthy of seeing his transformation in private. For since in six days, a perfect number, the whole universes came into existence, this perfect piece of workmanship, it is my opinion that the words, 'after six days Jesus takes' so and so, indicate the person who transcends the affairs of the world in that he looks no longer to 'the things that are seen' (for these are 'temporary') but looks already to 'the things that are not seen' and only to 'the things that are not seen' (because these are 'eternal').[206] If, then, anyone of us wants Jesus to take him and lead him up 'a high mountain' and consider him worthy of a private viewing of his transformation, let him transcend the 'six days' because he no longer looks to 'the things that are seen', nor does he love 'the world or the things in the world', or desires any worldly desire which is a desire of bodies and of wealth in the body and glory associated with the flesh.[207] All these things, by their nature, distract the soul and divert it from what is better and more divine and force it down

[201] Ps 54:16. [202] Is 25:8. [203] Rev 6:8. [204] Mk 9:2. [205] Mt 17:1, 2.
[206] See 2 Cor 4:18. [207] See 1 Jn 2:15–17; Tit 2:12.

and anchor it in the deceit of this age: wealth, glory, and the other desires that war against the truth.[208] For once one has passed through the six days (as we have explained), he observes a new Sabbath, rejoicing on the high mountain because he sees Jesus transformed before him. For the Logos has differing forms, disclosing himself to each person in a way beneficial to the one who sees him. He never shows himself in a way that is beyond the capacity of the one who sees him.

37 But you will investigate if, when he was transformed before those he took up 'into the high mountain', he appeared to them 'in the form of God' in which he existed long ago, as he appeared to those below having the 'form of a slave', but to those who followed him 'into the high mountain' 'after six days', he did not have that form, but the form of God.[209] But hear these words spiritually (if you can), noticing at the same time that it is not said simply that 'he was transformed', but with a certain necessary addition which Matthew and Mark recorded,[210] for in the texts of both 'he was transformed before them'. And in relation to this you will say that it is possible that Jesus was transformed before some in respect to this transformation, but was not transformed before others at the same point of time. And if you wish to see the transformation of Jesus 'before' those who ascended 'the high mountain privately' with him, look with me at the Jesus in the Gospels understood rather simply and, as someone put it, known 'according to the flesh'[211] to those who do not ascend 'the high mountain' of wisdom by works and thoughts which have advanced. He is known 'according to the flesh' 'no longer', however, to those who ascend, but is acknowledged to be divine through all the Gospels and is seen in the 'form of God'[212] in accordance with their knowledge, for it is before these, and in none of those below, that Jesus is transformed. And when he is transformed 'his face' will also shine 'as the sun', so that he may be made manifest to the children 'of light'[213] who have put off 'the works of darkness' and put on 'the armour of light'[214] and are no longer children 'of darkness or night', but who have become sons 'of the day' and who walk 'honourably as in the day'. When he is made manifest he will shine on these, not simply as 'the sun', but showing himself to them to be 'the sun of justice'.[215]

38 And not only was he himself transformed before such disciples nor does the text add to the transformation only that 'his face' shone 'as the sun', but indeed, 'his garments too' appeared bright 'as the light' to those he took up 'the high mountain privately'. Now the garments of Jesus are the words and letters of the Gospels in which he is clothed. And I think the things revealed about Jesus by the apostles are also his garments which become 'white' to those who ascend

[208] See Mk 4:19. [209] See Phil 2:6, 7. [210] Mk 9:2. [211] 2 Cor 5:16.
[212] See Phil 2:6. [213] See Eph 5:8. [214] See Rom 13:12.
[215] See 1 Thess 5:5; Rom 13:13; Mal 3:20 (=4:2).

'the high mountain with Jesus'. But since there are also differences in white, his garments become white as the light, which is the brightest, purest white of all. Whenever, therefore, you see someone not only accurately describing the divine doctrine of Jesus but also clarifying every text in the Gospels do not hesitate to say that for such a person 'the garments' of Jesus have become 'white as the light'. And whenever the Son of God is understood in this way and is seen transformed so that 'his face' is 'as the sun and his garments are white as the light', immediately the one who sees Jesus in such a way will see Moses, the Law, and Elijah, not as a single prophet but as all the prophets by synecdoche, conversing with Jesus, for this is what is meant by the words 'speaking with him'. In the Gospel of Luke, however, it says that 'Moses and Elijah appeared in glory' and what follows down to the words 'in Jerusalem'.[216] Now if anyone has seen the glory of Moses, that is has understood the spiritual law as one with the teaching of Jesus, and the 'wisdom hidden in a mystery' in the prophets, he has seen Moses and Elijah 'in glory', when he has seen them with Jesus.[217]

39 Next, since it will be necessary to explain the statement in Mark, 'And while he was praying he was transformed before them',[218] we must say that it is by no means possible to see the Logos transformed before us unless we have done the things mentioned previously and ascended the mountain and see the very Logos conversing with the Father and praying to him for the things that the true high priest would pray for to the only true God. But so that he might converse with God in this way and pray to the Father, he ascends the mountain and then, according to Mark, 'his garments' become 'white and shine as the light, as no launderer on earth can make them white'.[219] And perhaps the launderers 'on earth' are the wise 'of this age'[220] who are concerned about literary style which they esteem as brilliant and pure, so that both their shameful thoughts and false teachings appear to be embellished by their laundering work (if I can call it that). But it is the Logos who shows 'his garments' 'glistening' to those who have ascended, and brighter than what the washing of launderers can make them; it is he who brings out the brilliance of the sense in those texts of the Scriptures that many despise. It is then that the apparel of Jesus, according to Luke, becomes 'white' and 'flashes like lightning'.[221]

40 Let us see, then, next what was in Peter's mind when he 'answered and said to Jesus, Lord, It is good for us to be here; let us make three booths', and what follows.[222]

We must investigate these matters especially because Mark goes on to say, apparently on his own account, 'For he did not know what he answered', and

[216] Lk 9:30, 31. [217] See Rom 7:14; 1 Cor 2:7; Lk 9:31.

[218] Mk 9:2. The phrase 'while he was praying' is absent in modern editions and translations of Mark. It is attested, however, in the third-century papyrus, P^{45}, and in a few other MSS (Nestle-Aland 26).

[219] Mk 9:3. [220] See 1 Cor 1:20–1; 2:6. [221] See Lk 9:29. [222] Mt 17:4.

Luke says, 'Not knowing what he says'.[223] You will consider, then, if Peter was speaking in ecstasy, filled with the spirit that was moving him to say these things, which could not be the Holy Spirit, for John taught in his Gospel that before the resurrection of the Saviour no one had the Holy Spirit, 'For the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified'.[224] Now if the 'Spirit was not yet', and he 'who did not know' what he was saying was speaking, moved by some spirit, one of the spirits that had not yet been triumphed over 'on the wood', or made a public example of with those of whom it is written, 'He disarmed the rulers, and made a public example of them, triumphing over them on the wood',[225] was inspiring him to say these things. And this spirit was perhaps what Jesus called a stumbling block and identified as Satan in the words, 'Go behind me, Satan; you are a stumbling block for me'.[226] Now I am well aware that such remarks will offend many readers who think it irrational that Jesus would slander the person he had just previously pronounced blessed when he said that the Father 'in heaven' and not flesh and blood had revealed to Peter what he said about the Saviour, namely that Jesus would be both 'the Christ' and 'the Son of the living God'.[227] But let such a person observe Peter and the rest of the apostles very carefully when they act as if they were still strangers, and ask things of him who redeemed them from the enemy and purchased them with his 'precious blood'.[228] Or let those who think the apostles had become perfect even before the passion of Jesus tell us how it was that 'Peter and those with him' at the time of Jesus transformation 'were heavy with sleep'.[229]

But anticipating something from events to come in order to apply it to the text in front of us, I would raise the following questions: Is it possible that someone be caused to stumble at Jesus apart from the activity of the devil who causes stumbling? And, is it possible to deny Jesus, and to do these things in front of a little servant girl and door-keeper and the most worthless men without the spirit being in the denier which is hostile to the Spirit and Wisdom which is given to those whom God aids to confess in accordance with their worth? But he who has learned to refer the roots of sins to the devil, the father of sin, will not say that apart from that father of sin either the apostles were made to stumble or Peter denied three times before that crowing of the cock. And if this is so, perhaps, in order to cause Jesus to stumble (so far as that was in his power) and back off from the economy of salvation connected with suffering very willingly for people, he who causes what seem to bring these things about also here wishes, as it were, deceitfully to divert Jesus so that he no longer comes down to people for good and comes to them and submits to death for them, but remains behind on the high mountain with Moses and Elijah. Now he offered to make 'three booths', one private booth for Jesus,

[223] Mk 9:6; Lk 9:33. [224] Jn 7:39. [225] Col 2:15. [226] Mt 16:23.
[227] See Mt 16:16, 17. [228] See Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 1:19. [229] Lk 9:32.

another for Moses, and another for Elijah, as if one booth would not have room for the three (if indeed they had to be in booths and on the high mountain). But perhaps also by this suggestion the one who is activating him who does not know 'what he is saying' does not want Jesus, Moses, and Elijah to be together but wants to keep them separate from one another with the pretext of the three booths. But even the statement, 'It is good for us to be here' was false, for if it had been good, they would have stayed there. And if it was false, you will investigate who caused the lie to be spoken, especially since, according to John, 'Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks out of his own things, because he is a liar and the father of the lie', and just as there is no truth apart from the activity of him who said, 'I am the truth', so neither is there a lie apart from the enemy of the truth.[230]

The antitheses, truth and falsehood, were, therefore, still in Peter. It was from the truth that he said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of God', but it was from falsehood that he said, 'God forbid, Lord, this will never happen to you',[231] and the statement, 'It is good for us to be here', is in the same category. But the person who does not want Peter to have said these things influenced by the activity of some inferior spirit, but wants Peter's words to be his own simple choice, on being asked how one should interpret the assertion, 'not knowing what he was saying' and the other, 'For he did not know what he answered', will say that in the first case Peter thought it shameful and unworthy of Jesus that the Son 'of the living God', whom just now the Father had revealed to him to be the Christ, accept being killed. In the second case, he will say that when Peter had seen the two forms of Jesus and how different the transformed form was, because he was very pleased with this form, he said 'it is good' to prolong their time on that mountain so that he and those with him might be encouraged by seeing the transformation of Jesus, and 'his face' shining 'as the sun' and 'his garments white as the light'. Furthermore, he wished that they might always see Moses and Elijah in glory who appeared once 'in glory', and they might be encouraged by those things that they hear them speaking with one another and taking counsel together, Moses and Elijah with Jesus, and Jesus with them.

41 But since we have not yet seriously applied ourselves to a figurative interpretation of the words in the passage, as our previous remarks have been made in a close examination of the letter of the text, let us subsequently look to these matters. Perhaps when Peter, who was previously mentioned, and the 'sons of thunder' were taken up the mountain of the doctrines of the truth and saw the transformation of Jesus, and of Moses, and Elijah who appeared 'in glory' with him, they wanted to make booths in themselves for the Word of God who was to dwell in them, and for his law which had been seen with glory, and for the prophecy which speaks of Jesus' 'departure which he was about to accomplish'.[232] And because Peter loved the life of contemplation and chose its delight

[230] Jn 8:44; 14:6. [231] Mt 16:16, 22. [232] See Lk 9:31; Mk 3:17.

over being among the multitudes with its accompanying annoyance, he said, for the purpose of encouraging those who wished this kind of life, 'It is good for us to be here'. But since love 'does not seek its own things', Jesus did not do what Peter considered good.[233] Therefore he descended 'the mountain' to those incapable of ascending it and seeing his transformation, so that they might behold him in whatever way they were capable of seeing. It is, therefore, the character of the just person also, who possesses the love that does not seek 'its own things', to be free, on the one hand, 'from all', but on the other, to enslave himself 'to all' those below 'that' he may gain 'more' of them.[234] Now someone might reject that interpretation in our previous remarks about ecstasy and the activity of an inferior spirit in Peter concerning the statement that he 'did not know what he was saying', and say that in Paul some, 'wishing to be teachers of the law', do not know what they are talking about, but in spite of the fact that they do not make the nature of the things they speak of clear, nor understand their meaning, 'they make confident assertions' about things of which they have no knowledge.[235] Peter, too, suffered something like this. For although he did not grasp what the 'good' was concerning the economy related to Jesus and of the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mountain, he says, 'It is good for us to be here', and what follows, 'not knowing what he was saying', 'for he did not know what he was saying'.[236] For if indeed a wise person 'will understand the words from his own mouth, and upon his lips will bear prudence',[237] the one who is not so does not understand 'the words from his own mouth' nor is he aware of the nature of the things he says.

42 Next after these words is the statement, 'While he was still speaking', and 'Behold a bright cloud overshadowed them' and what follows.[238]

Now I think that God, to dissuade Peter from making three booths, under which they were going to dwell so far as Peter's will was concerned, shows the cloud to be a better (if I can put it this way), and far more excellent booth. For if the function of a booth is to overshadow and shelter the person in it, and the 'bright cloud overshadowed them', it is as if God has made a more divine booth for them as it were, which happens to be bright, as an example of the coming rest,[239] for a 'bright cloud' overshadows the just who are sheltered, and at the same time, enlightened and illuminated by it. But what might the 'bright cloud' overshadowing the just be than perhaps the Father's power from which the voice of the Father comes when it testifies to the Son as beloved, and well-pleasing, and urges those sheltered by the cloud to listen to this one and no other? And as it was of old and always is, he speaks through what media he

[233] 1 Cor 13:5. [234] Ibid.; see 9:19. [235] See 1 Tim 1:7. [236] Lk 9:33; Mk 9:6.
[237] Prov 16:23. [238] Mt 17:5.
[239] Klostermann's emendation; the MSS read *anastaseōs*, resurrection. The phrase is reminiscent of the use of 'rest' in Hebrews, though there the word is *katapausis*, not *anapausis*. See Heb 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 10, 11.

wishes. But it is also possible that the Holy Spirit is the bright cloud, overshadowing the just and prophesying the activities of God who works in it and says, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased'.[240] And I might even dare say that our Saviour is the bright cloud. Therefore, Peter says, 'Let us make here three booths', one because of himself, one because of the Son, and one because of the Holy Spirit. For the bright cloud of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit always overshadows the genuine disciples of Jesus'. Or, a bright cloud overshadows the Gospel, the law, and the prophets for the one capable of looking at its light in accordance with the Gospel, the law, and the prophets. And perhaps it is to Moses and Elijah that the 'voice from the cloud' says, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased; listen to him', since they desire to see the Son of God, and hear him, and contemplate him as he was 'in glory'. And perhaps it teaches the disciples that the Son of God, in the proper sense of the phrase, and his beloved in whom he was well-pleased, whom it is especially necessary to hear, was the one seen at that time who had been transformed and whose face shone 'like the sun' and who was clothed in 'garments white as light'.

43 And next it is written that when the three apostles heard the voice from the cloud testifying to the Son, unable to endure the glory of the voice and the power accompanying it, they became as suppliants and fell on their face before God, for they were exceedingly fearful of the astounding nature of the spectacle and of what had been said from the spectacle. And take note if you can also say the following about the things described in the passage: when the disciples understood that the Son of God had had dealings with Moses and that he is the one who said: 'For a human being will not see my face and live',[241] and when they saw 'the face' of the Son of God become 'as the sun' and had received in addition the testimony of God about him, since they were not able to endure the rays from the Logos they were humbled 'under the mighty hand of God'.[242] But after the Logos touched them, they 'lifted up their eyes and saw Jesus only, and no other'.[243] For Moses, the law, and Elijah, the prophecy, have become one only in the Gospel of Jesus. They have not remained three as they formerly were, but the three have become one.

But consider these points with me in relation to mystical matters. For in relation to the bare meaning of the letter, Moses and Elijah 'appeared in glory', spoke with Jesus, and departed to the place from which they had come. Perhaps they went to share the words that Jesus had spoken with them with those not as yet benefited by him, who would be benefited by him at the time of the passion when 'many bodies of the saints who were asleep', once their tombs were opened, would go off 'into the' truly 'holy city', not the Jerusalem wept for by Jesus, and appear to many there. But after the economy on the mountain,

[240] Mt 17:5. [241] Ex 33:20. [242] 1 Pet 5:6. [243] Mt 17:8.

when the disciples 'come down from the mountain' to go 'to the crowd' and in order to serve the Son of God for the salvation of the crowd, 'Jesus commanded the disciples saying, Tell no one of the vision until the Son of Man has arisen from the dead'.[244] Now the command, 'Tell no one the vision', is similar to that in the words examined above, when 'he commanded the disciples that they tell no one that he is the Christ'.[245] Therefore, what was said on that passage can be useful for us also in relation to the present passage, since in these matters also Jesus does not want the matters about his glory to be mentioned before his glory after the passion. For people who heard, and especially the crowds, would be thrown into confusion seeing the one who had been glorified in this way crucified. For this reason, since his being glorified in the resurrection was related to his transformation and his face appearing 'as the sun' he wants the apostles to speak of these things then, when he 'has arisen from the dead'.[246]

[244] Mt 17:9. [245] Mt 16:20. [246] Mt 17:9.

Book 13 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 17:10–18:18

1 'And the disciples asked him, saying, Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?'[1]

The disciples who had gone up with Jesus remembered that the scribes had handed down that before the coming of the Christ Elijah will come and prepare for him the souls of those who will receive him. The vision on the mountain in which Elijah appeared, however, did not seem to agree with what was said since Elijah did not seem to them to have come before Jesus, but with him. They make these comments, therefore, thinking that the scribes were mistaken. In his reply to this the Saviour does not deny the traditions about Elijah. He declares, however, that there was another coming of Elijah before the Christ which was not recognized by the scribes because they contributed to his being cast into prison and killed by Herod, and did what they wished against him. Then he says that he will suffer things like what they did to Elijah by the same men. The disciples raised these questions and the Saviour answered as though speaking about Elijah, but those who heard understood that the statement, 'Elijah has already come' and the Saviour's following comments, referred to John the Baptist.[2] Let these remarks clarify the saying being expounded. But now let us examine, as we are able, the things stored up in the saying.

In these words, it seems to me that Elijah is meant, not the soul of Elijah, lest we fall into that teaching foreign to the church of God concerning transmigration. This is neither handed down by the apostles nor does it appear anywhere in the Scriptures, for it is contrary to the statement, 'The things that are seen are temporary', and this age will experience an end. It is also contrary to the fulfilment of the statement, 'Heaven and earth will pass away' and, 'For the form of this world is passing away' and, 'The heavens will perish' with the things that

[1] Mt 17:10. [2] See Mt 17:12, 13.

follow that statement.[3] For if we suppose that the same soul can exist in the body twice in the established order of the world from its beginning to its end, for what reason would it exist in it? If it is because of its sin that it exists in the body twice, why will it not exist in it three or more times, since the punishments because of this life and the sins committed in it will be repaid only in this way according to the theory of transmigration? If this be granted, consequently, there will perhaps be no time when the soul will not be put into another body, for it will always reside in the body because of its former sins, and so the destruction of the world in which 'heaven and earth will pass away' will have no place.[4] But to grant, in reference to this supposition, that no absolutely sinless soul will ever enter the body through generation, how many ages do you think it will take to discover one absolutely pure soul not in need of transmigration? But nevertheless, also since some one of the determined number of souls is always being altered and no longer enters a body, generation will cease at some time after infinite ages, as it were, when the world has been reduced to one or two or a few more souls, and after they too have been perfected the world will be destroyed, since there are no more souls entering a body.

This does not conform to Scripture, for it knows a multitude of sinners at the time of the world's destruction. This is clear if the statement, 'But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?' is examined in conjunction with this doctrine.[5] In relation to this we discover Matthew saying: 'And just as the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man, for as they were in the days before the flood', and the words that follow. The punishment for sins for those living at that time will not occur by transmigration, for if they are seized still sinning they will be punished after this either by another manner of punishment and, consequently, there will be two principal manners of punishment (one by transmigration, and the other outside such a body; and let them explain the reasons for and differences between these punishments), or they will not be punished, as though those seized at the end quickly cast off their sins. A better option is that there is one manner of punishment for sins committed in the body, namely to suffer outside the body and the framework of this life in proportion to what the sins deserve. Now for the person capable of peering into the realities, each of these arguments can refute the doctrine of transmigration.

But if the Greeks, who introduce the doctrine of transmigration, do not want the world to be destroyed, they must, of necessity, to posit things in conformity with these views, look straight at the Scriptures that reveal that the world will be destroyed and either disbelieve them or invent ingenious arguments to explain what is said about the end. Even if they wish to do this they will not be able. Additionally we will say to those who have dared to say that

[3] 2 Cor 4:18; see Mt 13:39; Mt 24:35; 1 Cor 7:31; see Ps 101:26, 27.
[4] Mt 24:35. [5] Lk 18:8.

the world will not be destroyed that if the world is not destroyed but goes on without end, God will not be one who 'knows all things before they come to be'.[6] But if, then, he knows each thing, or some things, partially 'before' they 'come to be', there will be other things after these, for it is not possible that things infinite in nature be comprehended by a knowledge disposed by nature to place boundaries around the things that are known. And, consequently, there can be no prophecies about anything whatsoever since all things are infinite.

2 I think it was necessary to have lingered on the examination of the doctrine of transmigration because of the suggestion of some who think the soul (that we discussed) of Elijah and John was the same, first called Elijah, and second John. He was not called John without God's action as is clear from the angel who appeared to Zachariah and said to him, 'Fear not, Zachariah, because your entreaty has been heard and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will call his name John', and from Zachariah's having recovered his speech after he had written on the tablet about the one born being called John. Now if it was the soul of Elijah, he who was born second would have had to be called Elijah or some reason would have to be disclosed for the name change, as in the case of Abram and Abraham, and of Sara and Sarah, and of Jacob and Israel, and of Simon and Peter. Although not even this would save their argument for the name changes in the preceding cases occurred in one and the same life. But someone will ask, if it was not the soul of Elijah, first in the Thesbite and secondly in John, what was it the Saviour called Elijah in both? And I answer that Gabriel has hinted at what the same substance was in Elijah and John in what he said to Zachariah, for he says, 'He will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah'.[7] For take note that he did not say 'in' the soul 'of Elijah', so that transmigration might have a basis, but 'in the spirit and power of Elijah'. And it is clear that Scripture knows the difference between spirit and soul since the saying, 'May God sanctify you completely, and may your spirit, soul, and body be kept perfect and blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ', and the saying, 'Bless, O spirits and souls of the righteous', which is recorded in the Septuagint version of Daniel, prove the difference between spirit and soul.[8] John, therefore, has been called Elijah, not because of his soul but because of his spirit and power. It is not a problem for Christian teaching if these were formerly in Elijah and later appeared in John. 'And the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets',[9] but the souls of prophets are not subjects to prophets; and the 'spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha'.[10]

And we must investigate whether the spirit of Elijah is the same with the Spirit of God in Elijah or these are different from one another, and if the spirit

[6] Susanna 35 LXX (42 Theodotion). [7] Lk 1:16–17. [8] 1 Thess 5:23; Dan 3:86.
[9] 1 Cor 14:32. [10] 4 Kgs (2 Kgs) 2:15.

in him was some novel spirit in addition to the spirit of that man which was in him. For the apostle shows clearly that even though the Spirit of God is in us, it is other than the spirit of each person which is in him where he says, 'The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God', and where he says, 'No human being knows the things of a human being except the spirit of the human being that is in him; so also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God'.[11] And do not be amazed at what is said about Elijah if, just as something strange happened to him that differed from all the other saints who have been recorded because he was taken up 'into heaven in a whirlwind', in the same way his spirit possessed something special so that it not only rested on Elisha, but also descended with John at his birth, and that John, on his own account, had been filled 'with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb' and, on his own, had gone before Christ 'in the spirit and power of Elijah'.[12] For indeed it is possible that multiple spirits are in the same person, not only worse spirits but also better. David, at least, asks to be established 'with the spirit of a leader', and for an 'upright spirit' to be renewed within him.[13] And if the Saviour was also filled with the spirit 'of the fear of God' that he might give us a share of the spirit 'of wisdom and understanding', the spirit 'of counsel and strength', the spirit of knowledge and godliness', these additional, better spirits can also be understood to be in the same person.[14]

I have provided this explanation because of the statement that John went before Christ 'in the spirit and power of Elijah', in order that the statement that 'Elijah' has 'already come' might be referred to the spirit of Elijah in John, as the three 'disciples' who went up with Jesus 'understood that he spoke to them about John the Baptist'.[15] Therefore, only 'the spirit of Elijah rested on' Elisha, but John went before the Christ not only in the 'spirit' but also in 'the power of Elijah'. This is why Elisha was not said to be Elijah, but John was himself Elijah. And if we must explain the Scripture from which 'the scribes' said 'that Elijah must come first', listen to what Malachi says: 'And behold, I am sending to you Elijah the Tishbite' and what follows up to the words, 'Lest I come and strike the earth utterly'.[16] Now it appears to be shown through these words that Elijah, by means of certain holy words and conditions in souls, prepares those friendly to the glorious coming of Christ, which the people on earth could not have borne because of the extraordinary degree of glory,[17] had Elijah not prepared them beforehand. And I do not take Elijah in these words to mean the soul of that prophet, but his spirit and power, for it is by these that 'all things' will be restored,[18] so that the Son of God who will appear in glory may reside in those who have been restored and, on the basis of the restoration, have become receptive of the glory of Christ. And if indeed Elijah was some sort of

[11] Rom 8:16; 1 Cor 2:11. [12] 4 Kgs (2 Kgs) 2:11; Lk 1:15, 17.
[13] Ps 50:14, 12. [14] Is 11:2, 3. [15] See Mt 17:12, 13. [16] Mal 4:4, 5.
[17] See 2 Cor 3:10. [18] See Mt 17:11.

word, inferior to the Logos 'in the beginning with God', God the Logos,[19] he could also have come to the people prepared by him as a sort of preparatory training, so that the people might be fully prepared for the reception of the perfect Logos.[20] But someone may ask whether the spirit and power of Elijah in John suffered, in relation to the words, 'They did whatever they wished in him'.[21] A simple reply to this is that it is not strange that, because of love, things which are helpful suffer with those being helped. Jesus, for example, says, 'I was sick' because of the sick, and 'I was hungry' because of the hungry, and 'I was thirsty' because of the thirsty.[22] A more profound reply, however, is that it is not said, 'But they did to him whatever they wished', but 'they did in him whatever they wished', for the things he suffered had been directed against 'the spirit and' the 'power of Elijah', since the soul of John, and perhaps the body too, was by no means Elijah. For in one manner, the soul, spirit, and power are in the body, but in another, the body of the righteous person is in those better things, since it has been planted in them and depends on them. 'And those who are in the flesh cannot please God, but you are not in the flesh if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you', for the soul of the sinner is in the flesh, but that of the righteous person is in the spirit.[23]

And in addition to this, it may be asked to whom the statement, 'But they did in him whatever they wished', refers. Is it to the scribes of whom the disciples inquired and said, 'Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' But John does not appear to have suffered anything at all at the hands of the scribes except perhaps that they did not believe him or, that they became accessories to the things Herod undertook against him as we said above. But another might say that the words, 'But they did in him whatever they wished', do not refer to the scribes but to Herodias and her daughter and Herod, who did 'in him whatever they wished'. And if the former statement refers to the scribes, the following words, 'So shall the Son of Man suffer at their hands', would as well, but if the former refers to Herod and Herodias and her daughter, so too the second, for Herod most likely also cast a vote for the death of Jesus, and perhaps his wife too shared in the plot against Jesus with him.

3 'And when they came to the crowd a man approached him, bowing to him and saying, Lord, Have mercy on my son'.[24]

Those suffering, or the relatives of those suffering, are among the crowds, which is why Jesus descends to them after he has dealt with matters beyond the crowds, so that those unable to ascend because of the sicknesses restraining their soul might be helped, because the Logos has descended to them from the heights. But we must investigate for what afflictions those suffering believe and are considered worthy of healing on their own by touching either himself or 'the hem of his garment',[25] and for which ones others do this for them, such as

[19] Jn 1:1, 2. [20] See Lk 1:17. [21] Mt 17:12. [22] See Mt 25:35, 36.
[23] Rom 8:8, 9. [24] Mt 17:14. [25] See Mt 9:20, 21.

the centurion for his servant, and the royal official for his son, and the ruler of the synagogue for his daughter, and the Canaanite woman for her demon-possessed female child, and now the man who bows down to him for his epileptic son.[26] And you will search out and examine along with these when the Saviour heals from his own initiative when no one has asked, as the paralytic at the Sheepgate.[27] When these healings have been compared with one another and examined together, they will present many doctrines about the different symptoms related to souls and the manner of their healing to the person capable of hearing the wisdom of God hidden 'in a mystery'.[28]

4 But since it is proposed now not to make an examination of every example but of the passage being expounded, let us see who we can say the epileptic is figuratively and his father who makes entreaty on his behalf, and why the one suffering falls 'sometimes into fire and sometimes in water' not always, but 'frequently', and why he could not be healed by the disciples, but by Jesus himself. For it is reasonable, if indeed every illness and every malady 'among the people' our Saviour healed at that time is related to different symptoms in souls, that the paralytics indicate those who are palsied in soul and keep it lying disabled in the body; the blind indicate those who are blinded concerning the things to be seen only by the soul, and are blind; and the deaf point to those deafened to the acceptance of the word of salvation. The things concerning the one suffering from epilepsy will also need to be examined in a comparable way. This condition attacks those who suffer it at noteworthy intervals. During the time a seizure does not affect him, the person suffering it seems no different from a healthy person. You find some such symptoms in certain souls that are often thought to be healthy in self-control and the other virtues, then occasionally, as if they are taken by some seizure of the passions, they fall from where they seemed to stand and are convulsed in regard to the deceit of this age and the other lusts. Perhaps, then, you would not be wrong to say that such (if I may put it this way) are spiritually epileptic. They are thrown down by the spiritual forces 'of evil in the heavenly places',[29] and are 'frequently' ill at the time the passions seize their soul, sometimes falling 'into the' flames 'of fire' when they become, according to what is said in Hosea, 'adulterers, like an oven heated by the flame for baking',[30] and sometimes into water, when the dragon, 'king of all things in the waters',[31] casts them down from where they seem to breathe freely, to come to the depths of the waves of the sea of human life. He who says in Wisdom of the uniformity of the just person agrees with us in such an interpretation of the epileptic, 'The discourse of a pious person is always wisdom', but of those who have been referred to, 'But the fool changes like the moon'. It is also possible to see impulses in such people that are capable of seizing and carrying away in praise those who do not understand their instability,

[26] See Mt 8:5; Jn 4:46; Mk 5:22; Mt 15:22. [27] See Jn 5:2–9. [28] See 1 Cor 2:7.
[29] Eph 6:12. [30] Hos 7:4. [31] Job 41:26.

so that they would say it was as if the full moon were on them, or all but a full moon. But again, you might see the light that seemed to be in them waning, since it is not the light of day, but the light of the night and lunar, abating to such an extent that the light which seemed to be seen in them does not exist. But you will consider whether or not those who first gave names to things named the suffering of epilepsy moonstruck for some such reason as this.

5 And the father of the moonstruck child, perhaps his allotted angel if we must say that every human soul has been put in the charge of some angel who is like a father, prays on behalf of his son that the physician of souls might deliver him whom the insufficient understanding that the disciples possessed could not heal from his malady. And we must interpret the 'speechless and deaf' spirit cast out by the Logos figuratively to be the irrational impulses, even those impulses to do an apparent good, so that the person no longer irrationally does what he used to do as irrational acts which were considered good by those who saw them, but does them in accordance with the rationality of the teaching of Jesus. Now this condition, that things that are not good appear to have been done well, is hard to heal and is strong. Action like this is so great in such people that it is compared to a mountain which needs one who heals by means of all faith to remove it from the person suffering it. And all faith is compared to a mustard seed.[32] From this saying Paul too was moved to say, 'If I have all faith so as to remove mountains'.[33] For the one who has all faith, which is as a mustard seed, removes not only one mountain, but also the many that are similar to it. When faith is made to appear something trifling and cheap it is despised by people, but when the earth happens to be good (that is, a soul capable of receiving such a seed), 'it becomes a great tree so that' nothing without wings, but 'the birds of heaven' equipped with spiritual wings can nest 'in the branches' of faith of this kind.

6 Now, then, let us attend also to the letter and ask first how the child who is blinded and thrown down by some spirit that is unclean, deaf, and speechless is said to be moon struck, and why the name of the ailment, 'to be moon struck', is derived from that great light in heaven that is second after the sun, which God ordained 'to rule the night'.[34] Let physicians, then, investigate the natural causes, inasmuch as they think there is no unclean spirit involved in this topic, but some physical symptom, and when they investigate the fluids let them say that those in the head are moved in some sympathetic affection with the light of the moon which has a fluid nature. We, however, who believe with the Gospel that this observed affliction is caused by an unclean, speechless, and deaf spirit in those suffering it, and who see that those too who customarily

[32] See Mt 17:20. These three sentences have been inserted by Klostermann from a fragment in MS C, following the ancient Latin translation.
[33] 1 Cor 13:2. [34] Gen 1:16.

promise healing in relation to such afflictions, like the Egyptian enchanters, sometimes succeed in them, will say that perhaps this unclean spirit watches for certain configurations of the moon to discredit God's creations so that injustice might be spoken 'against the height' and they might set 'their mouth against heaven.'[35] In this way, based on his observation, the unclean spirit causes people to suffer in relation to a particular configuration of the moon so that it might seem correct to understand that the cause of such a great evil is not 'the speechless and deaf' demon[36] but the great luminary in heaven which has been ordained 'to rule the night'[37] and has no rule over this kind of sickness in people. And all people speak 'injustice against the height'[38] who say that the cause of all misfortunes on earth is related to the position of the stars (whether in general, or in detail). Such people truly 'set their mouth against heaven,'[39] when they say that some stars cause evil and others cause good, since the God of the universe made no star to cause evil. Indeed, Jeremiah has written in Lamentations, 'Evil things and good will not proceed from the mouth of the Lord.'[40]

And it is likely that just as this unclean spirit that causes the condition called moonstruck observes the configurations of the moon so that it may work in the person delivered to it for certain reasons and who has not made himself worthy of angelic guardianship, so also other spirits and demons pay attention to certain configurations of the other stars, so that not only the moon but also the remaining stars might be reviled by those speaking 'injustice against the height'.[41] It is possible, indeed, to hear those who practise astrology refer the cause of every madness and every demon possession to the configurations of the moon. Therefore, that the people who suffer the condition called moonstruck 'sometimes fall into the water' is obvious, but that they also fall 'into the fire' is rarer, but it also happens. And for this reason, this sickness is hard to heal so that even those who possess the gift of healing the demon-possessed sometimes fail in this case, and sometimes succeed with fasting, prayer, and numerous labours. But you will inquire if there are such disorders in spirits just as in people, so that some of them speak and some are speechless, and some hear but others are deaf. For just as the cause for them being unclean will be discovered to be their freewill, so also this is the cause of their condemnation to be speechless and deaf. For indeed some people will suffer such a condemnation if indeed the prayer of the prophet as spoken by the Holy Spirit shall be heard in which it is said to some sinners, 'May your deceitful lips become speechless.'[42] And so perhaps the one who asked, 'Who made a person hard of hearing and deaf?',[43] will also make deaf those who make a bad use of their hearing and have accepted a vain rumour, so that never again do they accept a vain rumour.

[35] See Ps 72:8, 9. [36] See Mk 9:25. [37] Gen 1:16. [38] Ps 72:8.
[39] Ps 72:9. [40] Lam 3:38. [41] Ps 72:8. [42] Ps 30:19. [43] Ex 4:11.

7 And since the Saviour said, 'O unbelieving and perverse generation',[44] he indicates that the evil, which had originated contrary to nature, has slipped in from perversion and made us perverse. Now I think it was because he was weighed down on account of this evil and his fleeting time with them that the Saviour said of the whole human race on earth, 'How long shall I be with you?'[45] We have, therefore, previously commented in part on the words, 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard, you will say to this mountain', and what follows. Nonetheless, we will make these comments also on the passage along with some clearer insights we have had. I think the mountains mentioned in these words are the opposing powers which have come to exist in great and massive evil, and have been planted, as it were, in the souls of people. Whenever, then, someone has 'all faith' so that he no longer disbelieves any of the things that are in the holy Scriptures, and has the kind of faith that was Abraham's faith, who believed God to such an extent that his faith was reckoned 'as righteousness', this person has 'all faith' 'as a grain of mustard'.[46] Such a person will then say to this mountain (I mean 'the speechless and deaf' spirit in the so-called moonstruck person), 'Move from here' (that is, of course, from the suffering person) 'to there' (perhaps to the abyss) 'and it will move'.[47] And the apostle, using this saying as his starting point I think, said with apostolic authority, 'And if I have all faith so as to remove mountains',[48] for there is not just one mountain, but many more similar to it that one who has 'all faith' which is 'as a grain of mustard' removes, and nothing will be impossible for one who has faith like this.

But let us also take note of the statement, 'This kind does not come out without faith and fasting',[49] so that if it should ever be necessary that we are engaged in the healing of someone suffering something like this we should not adjure, ask, or even speak to the unclean spirit as to someone who hears, but by 'devoting ourselves to prayer and fasting'[50] we may successfully pray for God's deliverance of the sufferer, and by our own fasting we may drive the unclean spirit away from him.

8 'And when they gathered in Galilee Jesus said to them, The Son of Man is about to be handed over into the hands of men'.[51]

These words will appear to be equivalent to those that say that 'he began to explain to the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests'.[52] But this is not true. For it is not the same thing to explain 'to the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes' and after suffering, 'to be killed and' after being killed 'to rise on the third day', with it being said to those

[44] Mt 17:17. [45] Ibid. [46] See 1 Cor 13:2; Rom 4:3 (Gen 15:6).
[47] See Mt 17:20. [48] 1 Cor 13:2.
[49] Mt 17:21. This verse is lacking in the older MSS and is, therefore, placed in the footnotes of modern translations.
[50] See 1 Cor 7:5. [51] Mt 17:22. [52] Mt 16:21.

who were in Galilee (which we have not learned from the previous passage) that straightway 'the Son of Man is about to be handed over', for the handing over is not mentioned in the previous passage, and now it is also said that it is 'into the hands of men'. Let us ask on this subject by what person he is about 'to be handed over into the hands of men', or by what persons. For in the previous passage we are taught by whom he will suffer and in what place he will suffer, but in this passage besides those details we learn that his 'suffering many things' occurs at the hands of the previously mentioned people who do not happen to be primarily responsible for him suffering 'many things'. This latter belongs rather to the one or ones who hand him over 'into the hands of men'. Someone will say, then, that when the apostle relates this he speaks of God, 'Who did not spare his own Son, but handed him over on behalf of all of us', and the Son also delivered 'himself' to death 'on behalf of us' so that he was handed over not only by the Father, but also by himself.[53] But another, collecting the things set forth on the same subject, will say not only that, but also that the Son has been handed over first by God to the ruler 'of this age' and the others who rule it, when he will be tempted, then when he is in agony, after that when he will suffer for humanity or even for 'the whole world' that he might take away its 'sin', and finally the rulers of this age hand him over 'into the hands of the men' who kill him.[54] This person will use what happened to Job as an example. 'Behold I give all his possessions into your hand, but you shall not touch him'.[55] Then, it is as if he had been handed over by the devil to his princes, to those who take prisoners, to the horsemen, to the fire coming down, as it were, from heaven, to the great wind coming from the desert and causing the house to fall.[56] And you will consider if, just as he handed Job's possessions over to those who take prisoners and to the horsemen, so also to some cosmic force of those under 'the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience',[57] so that the fire coming down from there on Job's sheep was seen coming down out of heaven by the messenger who announced to Job that 'fire fell out of heaven and burned up his sheep and consumed the shepherds as well'.[58] And you will investigate in a similar manner if also the 'instantaneous great wind' which came 'from the desert' and struck 'the four corners of the house' was one of those under the devil to whom he handed over the party of Job's 'sons and daughters' that 'the house' might collapse 'on the children' of the just man and they would die.[59]

Let it be, then, as in the case of Job, that the Father first handed over the Son to the opposing powers, and next, let these hand him over 'into the hands of men', of whom Judas was one, whom 'Satan entered after the piece of bread'.[60] The latter handed him over in a more primal sense than Judas. But take care when you make a comparative examination of the Son being handed over to

[53] Rom 8:32; Gal 1:4. [54] See 1 Jn 2:2; Jn 1:29; 14:30; 1 Cor 2:8. [55] Job 1:12; 2:6.
[56] See Job 1:15–19. [57] Eph 2:2. [58] Job 1:16. [59] Job 1:18, 19.
[60] Jn 13:27.

the opposing powers by the Father with the Saviour being handed over by those 'into the hands of men' that you not think that to be handed over means the same thing in both cases. For be aware that the Father did not simply hand him over but, out of his love for humanity, 'handed him over on behalf of all of us'. When the opposing powers, on the other hand, handed the Saviour over 'into the hands of men' they were not considering the handing over to be on behalf of the salvation of anyone, but so far as they were concerned, since none of them knew the 'wisdom of God hidden in mystery',[61] they were delivering him to be put to death so that his 'enemy, death' might bring him into subjection like those who die 'in Adam'.[62] And also the men who killed him did it, not shaped by the now established will of God, but by the will of the powers who wanted Jesus to be subject to death. I think it was necessary to examine these matters because of the statement that Jesus was handed over 'into the hands of men'. He was not handed over by men 'into the hands of men', but by powers to whom the Father 'handed over' the Son 'on behalf of all of us'.[63] In his having been handed over and coming under those to whom he was handed over the Son destroys 'the one who holds the power of death', for 'through death' he abolished 'the one who holds the power of death (that is, the devil) and' set free 'all these who, by fear of death, were subject to lifelong slavery'.[64]

9 And we must acknowledge that the devil has 'the power of death'.[65] This is not that intermediate, common death in which those composed of soul and body die when their soul is separated from their body, but that death that is contrary and hostile to the one who said, 'I am the life', in relation to which 'the soul that sins, it shall die'.[66] And the Saviour indicates that God did not deliver him into the hands of men when he says, 'If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight so that I not be delivered to the Jews'.[67] For when he was delivered to the Jews he was delivered 'into the hands of men', not by his own servants, but by the ruler 'of this age' who said of those kingdoms which have been set up among invisible powers against humanity, 'I will give you all these things if you fall down and worship me'.[68] Therefore, we must also acknowledge that the words, 'The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers came together against the Lord and against his Christ' were spoken of those powers.[69] On the one hand, those 'kings' and 'rulers' 'took their stand' and 'came together against the Lord and against his Christ', but on the other, we who have been benefited from his being delivered by them 'into the hands of men' and killed say, 'Let us break through their bonds and cast their yoke from us'.[70] For when we become 'conformed' to the death of Christ we are no longer under the bonds of the kings 'of the earth' (as we have defined them), nor are we under 'the yoke' of the rulers 'of this age' who have come together

[61] 1 Cor 2:7. [62] See 1 Cor 15:26, 22. [63] Rom 8:32. [64] Heb 2:14, 15.
[65] Heb 2:14. [66] Jn 11:25; 14:6; Ez 18:4. [67] Jn 18:36. [68] Mt 4:9.
[69] Ps 2:2. [70] Ps 2:2, 3; see Acts 4:26–8.

against the Lord. The Father 'did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for all of us' so that the rulers who received him and handed him over 'into the hands of men', might be laughed at by the dwellers 'in heaven', and mocked by the Lord for the destruction of their own kingdom and rule, contrary to their expectation, when they received the Son from the Father.[71] For the Son 'was raised on the third day' because his enemy, death, had been rendered ineffective and we have been made conformed, not only 'to his death' but also 'to his resurrection' and, therefore, we walk 'in newness of life', no longer sitting 'in the region and shadow of death' but also of the 'resurrection', because the 'light' of God has risen on us.[72]

And when the Saviour said, 'the Son of Man is about to be handed over into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will arise',[73] the disciples became very sad because he was about to be handed over 'into the hands of men' and be killed, since they perceived these events to be gloomy and deserving grief and failed to note that he would be raised 'on the third day', since he needed no more time 'to destroy, through death, him who has the power of death'.[74]

10 'And when they entered Capernaum those who receive the drachmas approached Peter'.[75]

Some are 'kings of the land' and their 'sons'. These do not pay custom duties or poll-taxes. Others, separate from their sons, are foreigners to the kings of the land. 'The kings of the land collect customs duties or poll-taxes' from these. Their 'sons', on the one hand, are free in the judgement of the 'kings of the land' as sons in the judgement of their fathers. Their foreigners, on the other hand, although they are free so far as things outside the land are concerned, in relation to those who hold power over them and reduce them to slavery (as 'the Egyptians oppressed the children of Israel and grievously afflicted their life' and 'enslaved them forcibly'[76]), are slaves. It was on account of those who are slaves, similar to the slavery of the Hebrews that the Son of God assumed only 'the form' of the 'slave',[77] since he performed no servile work of clay. Therefore, since he has the 'form' of that 'slave', he pays the customs duty and the poll-tax no differently than that paid by his disciple, for the same stater sufficed, that is, the one coin given for Jesus and his disciple. But this coin was not in Jesus' house, but happened to be in the sea, in the mouth of a fish of the sea. This fish was benefited, in my opinion, by having gone up, caught on Peter's hook, who was becoming a fisher 'of men', among whom was the figuratively so-called fish, so that the coin possessing the image of 'Caesar' might be removed from it and it might take its place among those who are caught by those who have learned to fish for men. Let, therefore, the one who possesses 'the things of

[71] Rom 8:32; see 8:29; 6:4; Ps 2:3, 4.
[72] See 1 Cor 15:26; Rom 8:29; 6:4; Mt 4:16.
[73] Mt 17:22, 23.
[74] Heb 2:14.
[75] Mt 17:24.
[76] Ex 1:13, 4.
[77] See Phil 2:7.

Caesar' pay them back 'to Caesar' so that afterwards he may be able to pay back 'the things of God to God'.[78] But since Jesus was the 'image of the invisible God', he did not possess the image of 'Caesar' (for 'the ruler of this age' had 'nothing' in him).[79] Therefore, he does not take the image 'of Caesar' from his own house but from its proper place in the sea, that he might give it to the kings 'of the land' for himself and his disciple, so that 'those who receive the drachma' might not suppose Jesus to be a debtor to them and the kings of the land, for he paid the debt. He did not assume it, or procure it, or obtain it, or ever make it his own possession, so that never might the image 'of Caesar' exist alongside the image 'of the invisible God'.

11 This might be said in another way. Some are sons of the kings of the earth and some are not their sons, but are sons and sons absolutely, and on the other hand others, because they are aliens to the sons of the kings of the earth are sons of no one on the earth, but for this very reason are sons either of God, or of his Son, or of someone of those who belong to God. If, then, the Saviour asked Peter, 'From whom do the kings of the earth receive customs duties or poll-taxes, from their own sons or from those of foreigners', and Peter replied that it is not from their own sons, but from those of foreigners, Jesus says of these who are foreigners to the kings of the earth and of those who are free because they are sons, 'In that case then the sons are free', for the sons of the kings of the earth are not free because 'everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin', but those are free who remain in the truth of the Logos of God and, therefore, know the truth that they may be made free from sin.[80] If, then, someone is simply a son, and in no way is a son of the kings of the earth, he is free. Nevertheless, although he is free, he is concerned not to cause the kings of the earth and their sons and those who receive the drachma to stumble. Therefore, he says, 'That we not cause them to stumble, go and cast your hook and take the first fish that comes up', and the rest. But I would inquire of those who delight in creating myths about natures, What sort of nature were 'the kings of the earth' or 'their sons' or 'those who receive the drachma' whom the Saviour does not want to cause to stumble? It appears, so far as the subject matter is concerned, that they do not possess a nature worthy of praise, and nevertheless he is concerned that they not be made to stumble, and prevents any such thing happening to them either that they might not commit any worse sin, or, if they are willing, that they might come to salvation by receiving the one who has spared them from stumbling. And since they are in the 'Region of Comfort', for this is what Capernaum means, comforting the disciple and proclaiming him to be free and a son, he grants him the power first to catch the fish, so that when it came up Peter might be comforted by its coming up and being caught, and take from its opened mouth the stater to be given to those suited to it and who demand such a coin as their own.

[78] See Mt 22:21. [79] Col 1:15; see Jn 14:30. [80] Jn 8:34, 31–2.

12 You might sometime cleverly apply the passage to a covetous person who has nothing in his mouth except words about money, when you see some Peter heal him by removing not only the stater, which is a symbol of all his covetousness, from his mouth and words but even from his entire disposition. For you will say that such a person was in the sea, in the briny affairs of life and waves of the worries of covetousness, holding the stater in his mouth when he was without faith and was covetous, but he has come up from the sea, caught by the spiritual hook and blessed (by some Peter who taught him the truth) and no longer has the stater in his mouth but in place of it the utterances of God which bear his image.

13 In addition, in relation to the statement, 'Those who receive the drachma came to Peter', you will explain from Numbers that, according to the law of God, when it comes to the saints, not simply is a drachma given, but a holy drachma. For it is written, 'And you shall take five shekels per head, according to the holy drachma'.[81] But a holy drachma is also given per head for 'all the sons of Israel'.[82] Since, then, the saint of God could not possess holy drachmas and profane drachmas (if I may call them this), therefore, the Saviour commanded that the stater (which equalled two drachmas), found in the mouth of the first fish that came up, be given for the teacher and the disciple to those who receive the drachmas that are not holy and who asked Peter, 'Does your teacher not pay the drachma?'

14 'In that day the disciples came to Jesus saying, Who, then, is greater in the kingdom of heaven?'[83]

Although Matthew could have explained for our instruction this one point alone: what the disciples who came to Jesus expected to learn from him and how he responded to their question, he added, as some copies have it, 'The disciples came to Jesus in that hour', and as others have it, 'in that day'. We must not leave the evangelist's intention unexamined. Therefore, let us observe the words that precede the phrase 'in that day', or 'hour', and consider if it is possible from those words to detect a way to perceive the addition, 'in that day' or 'hour', as necessary. Jesus, therefore, had come into 'Capernaum' with his disciples and there 'those who receive the drachma came to Peter and' asking him, said, 'Does your teacher not pay the drachma?' Then, when Peter answered them and said, 'Yes', 'Jesus', to defend himself in advance concerning the giving of the drachma, sends Peter, to pull up a 'fish' with his hook, in whose mouth he declared a 'stater' would be found to be given for himself and Peter. It seems to me, then, that the disciples thought that this was a very great honour Jesus granted to Peter, as he judged him to be greater than the rest of his companions, and they wanted to confirm their suspicion by inquiring of Jesus and hearing from him if he considered Peter to be greater than them, as

[81] Num 3:47. [82] See Num 3:45. [83] Mt 18:1.

they assumed. At the same time, they hoped to be told the reason for Peter being preferred to the rest of the disciples. In my opinion, then, Matthew, wanting to make these things known, added the words, 'in that day or hour the disciples came to Jesus saying, Who then is greater in the kingdom of heaven?' to the statement, 'Take it (the "stater" of course) and give it to them for me and you'.[84] And perhaps they were also in doubt because the three had been preferred at the transformation, and they were in doubt about which of those three Jesus considered to be greater.[85] For John reclined on Jesus' 'breast' because of love;[86] and consequently they had seen many signs of special honour given to John by Jesus before the supper. And Peter was pronounced blessed because he said in his confession, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'.[87] And again, because of the statement, 'Go behind me, Satan; you are a stumbling block to me, for you are not thinking the things of God, but those of human beings', they were confused whether he might not be 'the greater'; and there is the other of the sons of Zebedee. So many things are said because of the statement 'in that day or hour' in which the matters concerning the 'stater' occurred.

15 And next we must understand the words, 'The disciples came to him', as disciples proposing problems and asking, 'Who, then, is greater in the kingdom of heaven'. And we must imitate the disciples of Jesus in these actions if sometime or other we investigate something and do not happen to solve it. Let us then go to Jesus in complete agreement concerning the subject being investigated, for he is present where 'two or three are gathered' in his name[88] and is ready, by his presence, with power to enlighten with knowledge the hearts of those who want to become disciples in relation to the understanding of the things being investigated. And it is also not out of place for us to go to any of those appointed by God as teachers in the church and propose some problem similar to, 'Who, then, is greater in the kingdom of heaven?' What, then, did the disciples already know in relation to this question? And what were they seeking? For they had grasped that there is not an equality of those deserving the kingdom of heaven, and that, since there is not equality, someone is greater and so on successively down to the least. But of what sort is the greater? And how has the least lived, and who are those in between? These are the things they were still seeking. Perhaps it is possible, then, to say more precisely that they knew who is least from the statement, 'Whoever shall destroy one of these least commandments and teach people thus, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven'.[89] But they did not know who is greater than all, even though they had understood the teaching, 'But whoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven',[90] for although many are great, it was not clear to them who was greater among the great (as people consider it). And

[84] See Mt 17:24–18:1. [85] See Mt 17:1–2. [86] See Jn 13:25. [87] Mt 16:16.
[88] See Mt 18:20. [89] Mt 5:19. [90] Ibid.

that many are great, but the great are not great to the same degree, the expression 'great' applied to Isaac will show 'who advanced and became great until he became very, very great',[91] and this is said also in the case of Moses, John the Baptist, and the Saviour.[92] And everyone will admit that although all these were great according to the Scripture, the Saviour, nevertheless, was greater than them. But also, it is risky to declare that John, than whom 'no one born of women was greater' was greater than Isaac and Moses, or was not greater but was equal to both, or to any one of them. And it is possible to learn from Isaac 'who progresses and becomes greater until he became' not simply great but with the addition of the repeated 'very', that there are differences among the great, one being great, another very great, and another very, very great. Therefore, when the disciples came to Jesus they were seeking to learn 'Who, then, is greater in the kingdom of heaven'. And perhaps they wanted to learn by hearing from him such a statement, 'So and so is greater in the kingdom of heaven'. He, however, refers the discussion to something more general. He shows in what sort of quality one is 'greater in the kingdom of heaven'. Let us understand, as we can, on the basis of what has been written, who this is.

16 For 'Jesus summoned a child' and the words that follow.[93]

It is possible to interpret it simply first. One who interprets the teaching in these words of the Saviour in a simple manner would say that if anyone who is a man puts 'the acts of the body' to death 'in the Spirit', 'always' carries about 'the death of Jesus in his body',[94] and deadens his male desires to the extent that he has the frame of mind of a child who has never tasted erotic pleasures and has no concept of masculine excitements, such a man has been converted and become 'as the children'. And the more he has assented to the frame of mind of children concerning such excitements, the 'greater' he is 'in the kingdom of heaven', exceeding others who are endeavouring and have not pushed on to such great self-control. And what we have said in relation to children about erotic pleasures might also be said of the other passions, sicknesses, and disorders which children, who have not yet fully attained the ability to reason, are not subject to by nature. For example, someone might be converted and, although he is a man, become like a small child in relation to anger and, like a child in relation to grief, sometimes laugh and play at the very time of a father's death, or that of a mother or friend. This is how the one who has been converted would become like children, and take up from the Word the state of mind that does not admit grief, so that he becomes as a small child in relation to grief. And you will say the same about so-called pleasure, which irrationally excites the wicked. Children do not suffer this, nor do those who have turned and become as children.

[91] Gn 26:13.
[92] See Ex 2:11 (Heb 11:24); Lk 1:15.
[93] Mt 18:6.
[94] See Rom 8:13; 2 Cor 4:10.

Since, then, others have carefully proven that no passion befalls children who have not yet fully attained the ability to reason, and if there is none, neither, clearly, does fear. But if, in that case, something similar to the other passions occurs in children, and these passions are weak and very quickly removed and healed, consequently the person who has been converted as the children, has, for this, attained the state of being beloved in so far as he has, as it were, his passions subjected as the children. And you will understand fear, therefore, in a way similar to what we have explained. Children do not experience fear of bad things. They experience something different which those who do not thoroughly understand the passions and the terminology about them call fear. For example, children instantaneously forget the bad and in the same moment they are crying, their tears are changed into laughter and they play with those thought to have caused them distress and made them afraid, but who have not, in truth, produced these emotions.

So too one 'will humble himself' as the child that Jesus summoned, for haughtiness and the self-conceit of noble birth or wealth or any of the things thought to be good but are not, do not fall to a child. Therefore, it is possible to see infants, up to the ages of three and four years, exactly like the ignoble even if they seem to be noble born, and not at all appearing to prefer the rich children over the poor. If, then, the disciple of Jesus takes up on the basis of reason, what children experience at their age in relation to such passions as stir up senseless people, he has humbled himself as the child Jesus showed, since he is not excited by paltry glory, or puffed up by wealth or a robe, or conceited by noble birth. And such especially, whom Jesus showed to have been converted as that child he took, are to be received and honoured in the name of Jesus since Christ is in them in a distinct way. And for this reason, he says, 'And whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.'[95]

17 It is difficult to explain the next statement in sequence with the previous explanation. For someone might say, How is it that the person who has been converted and become as 'the children' is small among the believers in Jesus and susceptible of being made to stumble? Let us attempt to clarify this also sequentially. Every person who consents that Jesus is the Son of God in relation to the true account about him and is proceeding through deeds related to the Gospel to live virtuously and has been converted and is proceeding to become as 'the children' cannot but enter 'into the kingdom of heaven'. But it is impossible for the person who has not been converted to become as the children to enter the kingdom of heaven. Many such as this, therefore, who are converted to become as 'children' are successful in being made like the children but not all. Each one falls short of the likeness to children to the extent that he falls short of a child's state of mind previously mentioned in relation to the passions. In the entire multitude of believers, therefore, there are both

[95] Mt 18:5.

those who just now, as it were, have been converted concerning becoming as children, who are designated 'small' in so far as being converted to become as children, and there are those in this multitude who have been converted to become as children, but who fall very short of actually becoming as children. These are 'small' and susceptible to being made to stumble. Each of these falls short of the likeness to children to the extent that he falls short of the state of mind of children in relation to the passions that was discussed previously. It is these to whom we ought not present opportunities for stumbling. Otherwise, the person who has caused the stumbling will be in need of a millstone of a donkey being hung 'around his neck' and being drowned 'in the depth of the sea' since this is better for him for the cure of his sin.[96] For when he has thus paid the appropriate penalty in the sea (where 'the dragon' is which 'God formed to mock'[97]) and has been punished in this way and experienced the benefit that contributes to the goal, in what follows he will be spared the distresses of the depth of the sea, which he endured when he was dragged down by the millstone of a donkey. There are differences in millstones, one being of a man (if I may call it that), and another of a donkey. That is of a man of which it is written, 'Two' will be 'grinding at' one 'mill, one is taken and one is left';[98] and that of a donkey is the one placed on the person who has caused stumbling. But someone might say (I do not know whether correctly or incorrectly), that that of a donkey is the heavy, downward tending body of the wicked which every sinner will take up at the resurrection that he may be drowned in the abyss which is called the depth of the sea where the 'dragon' is which 'God formed to mock'.[99] Another will refer the cause of the small ones stumbling to the powers that are invisible to humans, for Jesus showed that many stumbling blocks for the small come from these. But whenever they cause one of the small ones indicated by Jesus who believe in him to stumble, he will take up the millstone of a donkey, the corruptible body that oppresses the soul, which is hung from his neck dragging him down to the affairs here so that by these means their self-conceit may be removed and, when they have paid the penalty by means of the millstone of a donkey, they may enjoy what is beneficial for them.

18 But let another interpretation be mentioned alongside the simple one, whether for the sake of a teaching or an exercise. Let us investigate what sort of child it was Jesus summoned and stood in the midst of the disciples. Consider whether you can say that the child Jesus summoned was the Holy Spirit who had humbled himself[100] and was summoned by the Saviour and stood in the midst of the ruling principle of the disciples, or that he wishes us, having turned from all other things to be turned to the examples suggested by the

[96] See Mt 18:6. [97] Ps 103:26. [98] Mt 24:41.
[99] Ps 103:26. [100] See Phil 2:8.

Holy Spirit so that we thus become as the children (that is as the apostles), who themselves also have turned and been made like the Holy Spirit. They are the children God gave the Saviour according to what is said in Isaiah, 'Behold, I and the children God gave me'.[101] It is not possible for one to enter the kingdom of heaven who has not turned from worldly affairs and been made like the children who bear the Holy Spirit. Jesus summoned this Holy Spirit who descended from his own perfection to human beings and stood him as a child in the midst of the disciples. One must, therefore, turn from worldly desires and humble oneself, not simply as a child but, as it is written, as 'this child'. And humbling oneself as that child humbled himself on behalf of God is also to become an imitator of the Holy Spirit who humbled himself for the salvation of human beings. And that the Savour and the Holy Spirit were sent by the Father for the salvation of human beings is made clear in Isaiah who says in the person of the Saviour, 'And now the Lord sent me and the Holy Spirit'.[102] You must be aware, however, that the text is ambiguous. For either God and the Holy Spirit sent the Saviour, or, as we have taken it, the Father sent both the Saviour and the Holy Spirit.[103] One, therefore, who has humbled himself in imitation of that child is 'greater in the kingdom of heaven' than all who have humbled themselves. There are many, therefore, who wish to humble themselves as that child, but the one who, in all ways, approaches that child who humbled himself would be found to be called 'greater' than all 'in the kingdom of heaven'. We must, therefore, receive 'one such child in the name of Jesus', especially since Jesus is in him. And just as the person receives Jesus 'who receives one such child in' his 'name', so the person who is not willing to receive 'one such child in the name' of Jesus rejects Jesus and casts him aside. And if there are also differences among those considered worthy of the Holy Spirit, that is believers who receive more or less of the Holy Spirit, some would be the little ones of those who believe in God and are capable of being made to stumble. It is to procure justice for these who have been made to stumble that the Logos says of those who cause them to stumble: 'it is advantageous for him that a millstone of a donkey be hanged on his neck and he be drowned in the depth of the sea'. Let these remarks be made in relation to the words Matthew has set out.

19 Let us also look at similar passages from the others. Mark, therefore, says that the twelve 'were discussing on the way who' of them is 'greater'.[104] Therefore, 'he sat down and called' them and taught them who is the greater. He taught that the greater of the leaders will be the one who has become last 'of all' through moderation and graciousness, so that the place of one being served is

[101] Is 8:18. [102] Is 48:16.

[103] Origen takes it this way in *CCels* 1.46, but as Chadwick (1965) 42 notes, in *ComJn* 2.79 he takes it in the former way.

[104] Mk 9:34.

not to be assumed but that of one who serves. This does not mean, furthermore, to serve some but not others, but quite simply all. For take note of the statement, 'If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all', and next after these words it says, 'He took a child' (that is, Jesus, of course) 'and stood him in the midst' of his disciples, 'and after he had embraced him he said to them, Whoever shall receive one such child in my name receives me'.[105] But what other child did Jesus take and embrace in the deeper meaning in these passages than the Holy Spirit? There were some, indeed, who had become like this child, of whom he said, 'Whoever shall receive one such child in my name receives me'.

In Luke, however, the 'argument' among the disciples had not arisen, but 'came up' in relation to the question, 'Who of them might be greater'. And 'when Jesus perceived the reasoning of their hearts' (because he has eyes which see the reasoning of hearts even when he has not been asked), in Luke he took a child and 'stood' him, not simply in their midst, as Matthew and Mark have said, but further also 'beside him and said' to the disciples not only 'whoever shall receive one such child' or 'whoever shall receive one such child in my name, receives me'. Rather, he took the thought further and said, 'Whoever shall receive this child in my name receives me'.[106] According to Luke, therefore, one must receive 'in the name' of Jesus that child which Jesus took and 'stood beside himself'.[107] I do not know whether or not anyone can interpret the saying figuratively, 'Whoever shall receive this child in my name', for each of us must receive that child 'in the name' of Jesus that Jesus 'took' at that time 'and stood beside himself'. That child lives, as though immortal and must be received 'in the name' of Jesus, since Jesus himself placed him by his side. And since Jesus is not separated from the child, he is beside the person who receives the child, so that in this way it has been said, 'Whoever receives this child in my name receives me'. Then, since the Father is inseparable from the Son, the Father, at the same time, is also with the one who receives the Son. This is why it has been said, 'And whoever receives me receives also the one who sent me'.[108] And he who has received the child, the Saviour, and the one who sent him, is 'least among all' the disciples of Jesus. He thinks little of himself, and the more he thinks little of himself the more he becomes 'great' under him who enjoins that he think little of himself and causes him to advance to greatness, for notice the saying, 'He who is least among all of you is great'.[109] But we have also read in other copies, 'And he will be great'.[110] Now according to Luke, unless one 'shall receive the kingdom of God as a child, he will by no means enter it'. This text is also ambiguous, for it is either that the one who receives the kingdom of God comes to be as a child, or that he receives the kingdom of God which comes to be for him as a child. Perhaps it means that in this material world

[105] Mk 9:35, 36, 37. [106] Lk 9:48. [107] See Lk 9:47, 48. [108] Lk 9:48.
[109] Ibid. [110] See the apparatus in Nestle-Aland on Lk 9:48.

those who receive the kingdom of God receive it while it is as a child, but in the age to come it is no longer as a child in the magnitude of its perfection which is displayed in its spiritual maturity (if I may speak like this) to all those who received it in the present time when it was in this material world as a child.

20 'Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks'.[111]

The term 'world' is used uniquely and absolutely in the statement, 'He was in the world, and the world did not know him'.[112] In the statement, 'That you not look up to heaven and see the sun, and moon, and the entire world of heaven and be deceived and worship and serve them',[113] however, it is mentioned in relation to its intertwining with that of which it is a world. And you will say the same thing in Esther, where it is said of her, that she removed 'all her world' [i.e. adornment[114]]. The term 'world' is not identical when it is used absolutely, and when it is used in the phrase 'the world of heaven' or 'the world' of Esther. And what we are now investigating is yet another meaning. I think, therefore, that the world referred to in the divine writings is not the organized system of heaven and earth, but only the region surrounding the earth, and this region is not understood as the whole earth, but refers to our inhabited world, for 'the true light was in the world', that is, in the surrounding region understood as our inhabited world, 'and the world did not know him', that is, the people in the surrounding region, and perhaps also the powers proper to this region.[115] For it would be strange to speak of the organized system of heaven and earth and their inhabitants in such a way as to say that the sun and moon and chorus of stars and the angels in this whole world did not know 'the true light' and, although they were ignorant of it, kept the order ordained for them by God. But also, when the Saviour says in his prayer to the Father, 'And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had beside you before the world existed', we must hear world mean the inhabited earth in relation to us who are on it.[116] But also when the Saviour says, 'And I am coming to you, I am no longer in the world' he means the world consisting of the earth.[117] We must not think that he is contradicting himself when he says, 'And I am coming to you, and I am no longer in the world, and I am in the world'.[118] We must also understand this terrestrial region in the statement, 'And I say these things in the world',[119] for the Father gave people to the Son from this world, on whose behalf alone the Saviour asks the Father, and 'not for the' whole 'world'

[111] Mt 18:7. [112] Jn 1:10. [113] Dt 4:19.

[114] My addition. Origen is using the term *kosmos*, which appears in Mt 18:7. This term has many meanings, all related to the verbal meaning of putting something in order, hence 'something which is in order'. I have chosen to use 'world' because of its meaning in Mt 18:7. The exact reference is unknown. The phrase in quotations appears in Judith 10:4, but it is used of Judith, not Esther, and not of removing, but of putting on.

[115] See Jn 1:9, 10. [116] Jn 17:5. [117] Jn 17:11.

[118] Ibid. as preserved in Codex Bezae (D). [119] Jn 17:13.

of people.[120] This is clearly also what is meant in the words, 'And the world hated them, because they are not of the world',[121] for it is not the world of heaven and earth and every being that exists in them that has hated us (from the time that we no longer look to 'the things that are seen but to those that are not seen'[122]) because of the teaching of Jesus, but the people who are on earth with us. For the statement, 'They are not of the world' is the same as saying, 'They are not of this earthly place'. So, too, the disciples of Jesus 'are not of the world' since he was not 'of the world'. Furthermore, the statement, 'That the world may believe that you sent me' (which is said twice in the Gospel of John[123]) does not refer to things that surpass human beings, but to human beings who need to believe that the Father sent the Son into the world here. And there is also the statement in the apostle, 'Your faith is proclaimed in the entire world'.[124]

21 Now if there is 'woe' to people everywhere on earth 'because of stumbling blocks', that is people whom the stumbling blocks affect, but the disciples are not 'of the world' because they do not look to 'the things that are seen' just as their teacher is not 'of the world', the 'woe because of stumbling blocks' does not apply to any of the disciples of Jesus since 'there is great peace to those who love the law of God, and there is no stumbling block for them'.[125] If, however, someone appears to wear the name disciple but is still 'of this world' because he loves 'the world' and 'the things in it' (I mean life in this earthly place which survives in relation to things, or property, or whatever) so that the definition 'they are not of this world' does not fit him, since he is truly 'of the world', the 'woe because of stumbling blocks' which falls to the world will fall to him. And let the person who wants to avoid this 'woe' not be fond of life, but let him say with Paul, 'The world has been crucified to me and I to the world'.[126] For the saints 'who are in this tent' groan, 'being weighed down' by the body of lowliness and do all things to be worthy of being found in the mystery of the resurrection, when God 'will transform' not 'the body of lowliness' that all have, but that of those who are genuinely disciples of Christ, that it might be 'conformed to the body of the glory' of Christ.[127] For just as there is no 'woe' that falls to any of the disciples of Christ, so neither does 'the woe to the world because of stumbling blocks'. Even if a myriad of stumbling blocks occur they will not affect those who are no longer 'of the world'. If, however, someone is liable to being made to stumble because of the instability of his faith and the uncertainty of his deference[128] to the Word of God, let him know that Jesus does not

[120] See Jn 17:9. [121] Jn 17:14. [122] 2 Cor 4:18. [123] Jn 17:21, 23.
[124] Rom 1:8. [125] Jn 17:14, 16; 2 Cor 4:18; Ps 118:165. [126] Gal 6:14.
[127] 2 Cor 5:4; Phil 3:21.
[128] The text has *sugkatabaseōs*, but one must wonder if a *theta* got mistaken for a *beta* in the transmission, for if we substitute this one letter we have the word, *sugkatathesis*, 'assent', or 'agreement', which seems to me to fit the context better, i.e. 'the uncertainty of his assent to/agreement with the word of God'. The Latin translator seems to reflect such a reading, for he translates: 'consentit salutaribus Christi mandatis' ('agrees with the saving commands of Christ').

yet call him his disciple. And we must understand that there are so many stumbling blocks that the 'woe' extends not to some sections of the earth, but to the whole world in it.

22 'And it is necessary that stumbling blocks come', which are different, I think, than the people through whom they come.[129] The stumbling blocks that come, therefore, are some army of the devil, that is, his angels and a wicked choir of unclean spirits which seek organs through which they may work, and often find those completely foreign to piety, and sometimes also some of those who are thought to believe in the Word of God. The 'woe' is even worse for these people than the 'woe' for the person who is made to stumble, just as 'it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgement' than for the places where Jesus worked signs and wonders and was not believed.[130] And in the same way as one could make a diligent study of a collection from the Scriptures of those who are pronounced blessed and for what they are pronounced blessed, so also one might do of the 'woes' that have been recorded and of the people on whom the 'woes' have been pronounced. And further, you will also compare the statement, 'Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it is better for him' and what follows, with the 'woe' being worse for the one who causes stumbling than for the one made to stumble.[131] For because the little one who was made to stumble is avenged from the one who made him stumble it is suitable that what has been written about the one who causes stumbling be so serious and difficult to bear. But if we considered these things more carefully, we would avoid sinning 'against our brothers and' and wounding 'their weak conscience' so that we not sin 'against Christ'. The brothers in our company for whom 'Christ died' are frequently destroyed not only by our 'knowledge', but also by certain other actions. Because we sin 'against Christ' in addition to these brothers, we will pay the penalty when the soul of those destroyed because of us is avenged from us.[132]

23 Next, we must examine closely the term 'necessity' in the statement, 'For it is necessary that stumbling blocks come' and the term that means the same in Luke, 'It is inadmissible (instead of impossible) that stumbling blocks not come'.[133] Now just as there is necessity that what is mortal die and that it not die is inadmissible, and there is necessity that one in a body be nurtured—for it is inadmissible that one not nurtured live—so it is necessary that stumbling blocks come and it is 'inadmissible that stumbling blocks not come', because it is necessary also that evil precede virtue in the heavenly realms,[134] from which evil there are stumbling blocks. For it is inadmissible that a human being be found who is completely sinless and who has taken up virtue apart from sin.

[129] Mt 18:7. [130] See Mt 11:22. [131] Mt 18:6.
[132] See 1 Cor 8:11, 12. [133] Mt 18:7; Lk 17:1.
[134] This is Klostermann's reading following the Latin translation. The MSS. M and H both have the abbreviation *anois* which P.G. 13 reads as *anthrōpois*, i.e. 'human beings'.

For the evil in the wicked powers, which is the original source of the evil in people, no doubt hastens to operate through any instruments against the people of the world. And perhaps the wicked powers which have been cast out by the word of Jesus are even more savage, and the demons which were nurtured on the blood of sacrifices are furious because their worship is diminished since their usual sacrifices are not being offered to them. Now it is necessary that these things come, but not that they come through any particular person. For this reason the 'woe' falls on the person 'through whom the stumbling block comes', who has given place to the wicked action that is produced to cause stumbling. But do not think that there are certain stumbling blocks which, by their nature and makeup, seek people through whom they might come. For just as 'God did not make death',[135] so he did not create stumbling blocks, but free will produced a stumbling block in some people who were unwilling to endure the struggles on behalf of virtue.

24 And it is good, therefore, if the eye and the hand are praiseworthy so that 'the eye' cannot reasonably 'say to the hand, I have no need of you'.[136] But if anyone in the whole body of the gatherings of the church is called a hand because of his business-like nature, and changes and becomes a hand that causes stumbling, let the eye say to such a hand, 'I have no need of you', and having said that let him cut it off and cast if from him.[137] And in the same way, it is good also if any head be blessed, that the feet too be worthy of the blessed head so that 'the head', being watchful for the things that are appropriate to itself, cannot say to 'the feet, I have no need of you'.[138] If, however, some foot be discovered which is a stumbling block for the whole body, let the head say to such a foot, 'I have no need of you', and having cut it off, let him cast it from him.[139] For indeed, it is much better that the remaining body 'enter into life' (having left behind the foot or the hand that causes stumbling) than that the stumbling block be handed on to the whole body and 'the whole body be cast into the Gehenna of fire' with two feet or two hands.[140] And in the same way, it is good that the one who has been enabled to become an eye of the whole body be worthy of Christ, the head,[141] and of the whole body. If, however, such an eye should ever change and become a cause of stumbling for the whole body, it is good to remove it and cast it out of the whole body, and for the remaining body to be saved without that eye than, because the whole body has been perverted along with it, for 'the whole' perverted 'body to be cast into the Gehenna of fire'.

25 But it is possible to apply these words also in the case of relationships which are also our members, as it were, being considered our members because of our close relationship, whether by birth or the intimacy of friendship (if I may put it that way). They must not be spared if they are harmful to our soul. Let us

[135] Wis 1:13. [136] 1 Cor 12:21. [137] See Mt 18:8. [138] 1 Cor 12:21.
[139] Ibid.; see Mt 18:8. [140] See Mt 18:8, 9. [141] See Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18.

cut off from ourselves as a hand, or foot, or eye, a father or mother who want us to perform actions that are contrary to our reverence for God, and a son or daughter who (so far as they are able) remove us from the church of Christ and his love.[142] But even if 'the wife in our bosom or the friend like our soul'[143] should become stumbling blocks for us, let us not spare them but cut them off from ourselves and cast them outside our soul as not of our family but as enemies of our salvation. For whoever 'does not hate father and mother' and those who are added, when it is the right time to hate them as treacherous enemies so that it is possible to gain Christ, is not worthy of the Son of God.[144] And it is possible to say further that some lame person is saved from his situation, as it were, having lost a foot (that is to say, a brother) and alone inherits the kingdom of God, and some crippled person is saved, when his father or mother is not, but they are lost and he is separated from them so that he alone attains the promises of blessedness. So, too, someone with one eye is saved (having cut out the eye of his own house, his fornicating wife) so that he not depart 'into the Gehenna of fire' having two eyes. For it is possible also that the sinfully (if I may put it this way) active and moving part of the soul and the sinfully perceptive faculty are the hand and foot that cause stumbling and the eye that causes stumbling. It is better to cast these off, since they are evil, and put them away from oneself, and without them 'to enter into life' lame or crippled or one-eyed, as it were, than with them to lose the whole soul. So too, in the case of the soul, it is good and blessed to use its power for the best things, and if we shall be about to lose it because of some one [power[145]] it is preferable to cast off its use which is causing stumbling, so that we may be saved with its other powers.

26 'See that you not despise one of these little ones.'[146]

In my opinion, just as there are major differences among human bodies, some of them being small, others large, and others intermediate, and in turn there are differences among the small regarding being more or less small and the same applies to the large and the intermediate, so too among human souls some things indicate their smallness and others (if I may put it this way) their greatness and, in general analogous to bodies, other things indicate their middle position. In the case of bodies, however, someone is short and small, not because of human responsibility but because of generative principles, another is large, and another intermediate. But in the case of souls, it is what is in our power, namely the quality of our actions and character, that is the cause of someone being great, small or in between. And, it is on the basis of what is in our control that we either increase in stature advancing to greatness, or do not increase and are small. It is in this way that I understand the statement, 'Jesus

[142] See Rom 8:35. [143] Dt 13:6 (in some MSS; see the text printed in Swete [1909]).
[144] See Lk 14:26; Phil 3:8.
[145] Klostermann marks a lacuna here and refers to the Latin which has quadam virtute animae.
[146] Mt 18:10.

increased', made about the Saviour after he had taken up a human soul, for just as the increase of his soul 'in wisdom and grace' was the result of what is in our power, so too was that in 'stature'.[147] And the apostle says, 'Until we all arrive at the mature person, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ',[148] for we must understand arriving at adulthood, and this mature, 'in relation to the inner person' who has passed through childish things, reached adulthood, and having put an end to 'childish things' has, in general, accomplished the things of an adult.[149] Consequently, we must assume that there is some measure of spiritual stature which the fully mature soul can attain and become great from magnifying the Lord. So, therefore, too did Isaac, Moses, and John of whom this has been written,[150] and the Saviour himself over and above them all, become great, for it was indeed of him that Gabriel said, 'He shall be great'.[151] The little ones, however, the 'newborn infants' in Christ *** who long for the 'pure spiritual milk' as 'newborn infants', who also need the foster-fathers and nurses mentioned by Isaiah when he says, of the calling from the Gentiles, 'And they will bring your sons in their bosom and will carry your daughters on their shoulders, and kings will be your foster-fathers, and their ruling women your nurses'.[152] Because of these words, then, you will also consider with the words, 'You shall not despise one of the little ones' whether it is their angels who bring them 'in their bosom', when they are sons, but also carry those called daughters on their 'shoulders', and whether some of these are 'foster-fathers' who are called 'kings', and 'nurses' who are given the name 'ruling women'. And since the little ones who have been indicated by our Saviour are cared for by nurses and foster-fathers, as it were, for this reason I also think that Moses, believing in his place among the great to have been ordained already, said in response to the statement, 'My angel will proceed you', 'If you yourself do not go with me do not bring me up from here'.[153] Since the little one and 'heir'—but insofar as he is 'a child' and a little one, he is no different from 'a slave' (so long as he is a child)—has the spirit 'of slavery leading to fear', but the one who in no way is still such no longer has the spirit of 'slavery', but already has that of 'adoption', when 'perfect love casts out fear'.[154] It will be clear to you that it is in relation to these things that 'the angel of the Lord' is said to encamp 'around those who fear him' and to deliver 'them'.[155] And you will also consider in relation to these matters if they are the angels of the little ones who are led by a spirit 'of slavery to fear' (since 'the angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them'), but of the great it is the Lord who is greater than the angels (who might say of each one of them, 'I am with him in trouble'[156]). So long as we are imperfect and need a helper to deliver us from evils, we need the angel of whom Jacob said, 'The angel who

[147] See Lk 2:52. [148] Eph 4:13. [149] See Rom 7:11; 1 Cor 13:11. [150] See ch. 15.
[151] See Lk 1:32. [152] Is 49:22, 23. [153] Ex 32:34; 33:14, 15.
[154] See Gal 4:1; Rom 8:15; 1 Jn 4:18. [155] Ps 33:8. [156] Ps 90:15.

delivers me from all evils', but when we have been perfected and have passed through the stage of being under 'foster-fathers, nurses, governors, and trustees', we are now capable of being provided for by the Lord himself.[157]

27 Then again someone may ask when the angels, which are mentioned of those the Saviour shows to be little ones, are put forward. Did they begin their responsibility of providing for them from the time they were born 'through the washing of regeneration' and, 'as newborn infants' desiring 'the spiritual and pure milk', are no longer subject to any evil power, or did they begin from birth in accordance with the foreknowledge of God and his predetermination and were set over these souls 'whom' God 'foreknew and predestined' who will be 'conformed' to 'the glory' of Christ?[158] Someone might cite the following passages in relation to the view that we have angels from birth: 'He who set me apart from my mother's womb'; and the verse, 'You are my protector from the womb of my mother'; and, 'You have assisted me from my mother's womb', and, 'I was cast on you from the womb'.[159] Additionally, it says in the Epistle of Jude, 'to those who are beloved in God the Father, and to the called of Christ Jesus who are guarded', by the guarding angels no doubt.[160]

28 In relation to the words, when 'through washing' they became infants 'in Christ',[161] there is no holy angel present with those who are still living in evil. During the time of their unbelief they are under the angels of Satan. After our rebirth, however, he who purchased us with his own blood hands us over to a holy angel who also, because of his purity, beholds the face of God.[162] But there might also be a third opinion about the passage that goes like this: just as it is possible for a human being to change from unbelief to faith and from licentiousness to self-control and, in general, from evil to virtue, so too the angel entrusted with some soul at the time of birth can, at the beginning, be bad, but later, perhaps believes, conformable to the person who believes, and advances so far that the angel himself becomes one of those who 'always' see 'the face of the Father in heaven',[163] having begun from the time he was yoked with the person who was foreknown and foreordained to believe at that time. The judgements of God, which are unspeakable, unsearchable and like the abyss, appropriately bring together every such harmony between angels and human beings.[164] And it is possible also that just as in the case of a husband and wife who both are unbelievers, when the husband first has believed he, in time, saves the wife, and when the wife is first she later, perhaps, persuades the husband, so it happens in the case of angels and human beings.[165] You yourself will investigate, then, if such a thing occurs with other angels or not, and

[157] Gn 48:16; see Is 49:23; Gal 4:2.
[158] See Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 2:2; Rom 8:29; Phil 3:21.
[159] Gal 1:15; Ps 70:6; 138:13; 21:11.
[160] Jude 1.
[161] See Tit 3:5; 1 Cor 3:1.
[162] See 1 Pt 1:18, 19; Mt 18:10.
[163] Mt 18:10.
[164] See Rom 11:33.
[165] See 1 Cor 7:16.

whether such a thing should not be said of that angel who has been so highly honoured by the word of our Saviour that he is said 'always' to see 'the face of the Father in heaven'. But because we said in our statements above that there are angels of the little ones, but that the great ones have passed beyond such an order, someone will contradict us, using the Acts of the Apostles where it is written that Rhoda, a maid-servant, went to answer 'the door' when Peter 'knocked' 'and when she recognized the voice of Peter', she ran in and 'announced that Peter was standing at the door'. Those gathered in the house were astonished, and thinking it to be impossible, as it were, that Peter truly stood there said, 'It is his angel'.[166] For, the opponent will say, that once they learned that each believer has an angel of some sort, they knew that Peter had one also. But the person who stands by what we have said above will say that the statement of Rhoda need not be a doctrine. And this would be the case also of people who have not understood completely when someone who is small and fears God is provided for by some angel and when by the Lord himself. Next, to confirm the understanding of the little one as we have taken it, it will be said that we have no need of a command about not despising in the case of the great, but we need one in the case of the little ones. Therefore, it has not been said simply, 'You shall not despise one of these', indicating all the disciples, but 'one of these little ones', the little being pointed out by him who sees smallness and greatness in the soul.

29 Should another say, however, that the perfect person is meant by 'little' in these words, by using the statement, 'For the one who is least among you will be great',[167] he will also say that the one who humbles himself and becomes an imitator of him who humbled himself for the salvation of humanity and became an infant among all believers (even if one were an apostle or bishop) becoming 'like a nurse cherishing her own children',[168] is the one Jesus means by 'little', and he will say that an angel of such a person is worthy of seeing 'the face of' God. For to call the perfect 'little' here on the basis of the statement, 'He who is least among all of you is great' and, as Paul said, 'To me, the least of all the saints, was given this grace', will seem not[169] to be in accord with the statement, 'Whoever causes one of these little ones to stumble' and with the words, 'Thus it is not the will of my Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish'.[170] For the little one, as now explained would not be made to stumble, nor would he perish, 'for those who love the name of God have great peace, and there is no cause of stumbling for them'.[171] Furthermore, the one who is least of all

[166] See Acts 12:13–15. [167] Lk 9:48. [168] 1 Thes 2:7.

[169] Klostermann's text prints *mē*; PG 13.1172 B prints *men*. Neither text indicates any MS difficulty. The ancient Latin version has the negative, '*non videtur convenire*'. The sentence in Klostermann's text, however, begins with the causal conjunction *gar*, 'for', which makes the negative more difficult. The sentence in the Latin version begins with the adversative conjunction '*sed*', 'but', which allows the negative to make better sense.

[170] Eph 3:8; Mt 18:6, 14. [171] Ps 118:165.

among all the disciples of Christ would not perish, therefore, he becomes great; and since he would not perish, he would say, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ' and the words that follow.[172] But the person who wants to hang on to this last interpretation will say that even the soul of the just person is subject to change, as Ezekiel also testifies when he says that the just person can desert the commandments of God so that his former righteousness is not reckoned to him.[173] This is why it is said, 'Whoever shall cause one of these little ones to stumble' and, 'It is not the will of my Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish'.[174] You have the explanations about the hundred sheep in my homilies on Luke.[175]

30 'And if your brother sins, go and correct him between you and him alone'.[176]

The person who relies on this text and brings forward Jesus' surpassing love for humanity will say that since these words do not suggest a difference between sins, those who supply the idea that these words are said to apply to the case of lesser sins alone will make an excessive assumption that is also contrary to the goodness of Jesus. But someone else who also relies on this text and does not wish to introduce an extraneous idea will say that these things are not said of every sin, because the person who commits those great sins is not a brother not even if he is called a brother, as the apostle says, 'But if anyone called a brother should be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater (and the words that follow) do not even eat with such a person'.[177] For no one who is an idolater is a brother, nor is a fornicator or covetous person, for if he has any of these sins, while he appears to wear the name of Christ and 'be called a brother', he would not correctly be said to be a brother. Therefore, just as the person who says that such things have been said in the case of every sin, whether the sin be murder, or witchcraft, or the corruption of children,[178] or any such sins, afforded occasions of provocation by his imagination of the excessive goodness of Christ, so on the opposite side, the one who distinguished a brother from one called a brother would teach that the one who does not repent after reproach for the lesser human sins should be considered as a Gentile and a tax-collector for sins 'not to death' or, as the law designates them in Numbers, 'not death-bearing', which would seem to be rather harsh.[179] I do not think that anyone will soon be found who has not been reproached three times for the same form of sin, say for example, verbal abuse (in which those who are abusive speak badly of their neighbours), or pride, or excessive drinking, or false and idle speech, or any of the faults found among the masses.

[172] Rom 8:35. [173] See Ez 33:13. [174] Mt 18:6, 14.

[175] See Mt 18:12, 13; Lk 15:4–7. This homily is not among the thirty-nine homilies preserved in Jerome's translation, nor are there any fragments from it among the fragments of Origen's expositions of Luke.

[176] Mt 18:15. [177] 1 Cor 5:11. [178] See Rev 21:8; *Didache* 2.

[179] See Mt 18:17; 1 Jn 5:16; Num 18:22.

You will investigate, therefore, whether some observation on the passage has not been overlooked both by those who in their impression of the goodness of the Word grant pardon to those who have committed the greatest sins, and by those who make those who have sinned hardly at all strangers to the church, teaching that for these least sins they are to be reckoned as a Gentile and a tax-collector after they have been reproved two or three times. But what they have each overlooked seems to me to be the following: 'You have gained your brother'.[180] The Word ordained this in the case of him who heard only; he did not additionally apply it to the one who stumbled and was reproved a second or third time. He left hanging, as it were, what will be said of the one who has been reproved two or three times that is analogous to 'You have gained your brother'. He is neither, therefore, completely gained nor completely lost, or he will receive blows. Pay careful attention to the first statement which says, 'If he hears you, you have gained your brother', and to the second passage which says word for word, 'But if he does not hear you, take with you one or two, so that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall stand'. He has left it to us to consider what will happen to one who shall have been warned a second time after 'every word' has been established 'by two or three witnesses'. And again, 'If he refuses to listen to them',[181] clearly meaning the witnesses who were taken along, 'Tell it' (he says) 'to the church'. He did not say what he will suffer if he does not listen to the church, but he taught that 'if he shall not listen to the church' he must be for the remaining time as a Gentile and a tax-collector to the one who admonished him three times and was not heard.[182] Therefore, he is neither completely gained nor completely lost, but God would know what it is the person will suffer who formerly did not listen and had need of witnesses, or even the one who refused to heed these and was brought to the church. We do not give an opinion in keeping with the saying, 'Do not judge, that you not be judged' and, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the motives of hearts'.[183]

Now in relation to the seeming harshness on those who have committed lesser sins, might someone say that it is not possible that someone who has not heard twice in succession should hear the third time, so that he is no longer as a Gentile and a tax-collector and no longer stands in need of reproof before the whole church? We must remember the saying, 'So it is not the will of my Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish'.[184] For indeed if it is necessary that 'we all' stand 'before the judgement-seat of Christ, that each one may receive his reward for what he did in the body, whether good or bad',[185] how

[180] Mt 18:15. [181] Mt 18:17.

[182] Origen has very astutely noticed that the 'you' in Mt 18:17 is singular, and understood it, therefore, of the person wronged and not of the church in general.

[183] Mt 7:1; 1 Cor 4:5. [184] Mt 18:14. [185] 2 Cor 5:10.

much effort must one exert on the things in his power that he not be repaid for more bad things done in the body even if he will receive his due for all the worse things he did. One must, rather, strive to be rewarded for more good deeds, since 'with what measure' we measure, 'it will be measured back' to us and 'it will happen' to us 'in accordance with the works of' our 'hands'.[186] And those who have sinned will receive their sins from the hand of the Lord not infinitely multiplied, but twofold or sevenfold. But there is a time when someone is repaid not 'according to the works of his hands', but more than what he has done, for as Isaiah taught, Jerusalem 'received from the hand of the Lord twofold for its sins', and the neighbouring peoples of Israel (whoever they were) will receive sevenfold according to the following statement in the Psalms, 'Repay our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom for their reproach with which they reproached you, Lord'.[187] And other manners of repayment might be found which, if we understand, we will know that it is profitable to repent after sins, however many they are, so that we are not paid back for more sins and some hope is left for us concerning good things done at some time, even if prior to them there were a thousand or more failures. For it would be strange for someone's worse deeds to be reckoned to him but the better ones afterwards to profit him nothing. It is also possible to learn this from Ezekiel for those who give careful attention to his words about such things.[188]

31 Now it seems right to me that the statement, 'Truly I say to you' (obviously to those who have judged someone to be as 'a Gentile and a tax-collector'), 'whatever you bind on earth' and the words that follow has been linked with the person who has been judged to be 'as a Gentile and a tax-collector' after being admonished three times.[189] For the person who has admonished someone three times without being heard has justly bound the person who has been judged to be as a Gentile and a tax-collector. Therefore, when such a one has been bound and judged by a person such as this he remains bound, since no one of those in heaven cancels the vote of the one who has bound him. So too, the person who was once admonished and did things worthy of being gained is freed by the admonition of the one who gained him and is bound no longer 'by the ropes of' his own 'sins' for which he was admonished and, set free, he will be judged justly also by those in heaven. In that case the powers that were granted to Peter alone above[190] appear to be shown to have been given to all who address three admonitions to all who have sinned, so that, if they not be heeded, they may bind 'on earth' the one who has been judged to be as a Gentile and a tax-collector, as such a person has been bound in heaven. But since it was necessary, even if something has been said in common in the case of Peter and those who have admonished brothers three times, that Peter have something exceptional over and above those who have admonished three

[186] Mt 7:2; Is 3:11. [187] Is 40:2; Ps 78:12. [188] See Ez 33.
[189] See Mt 18:17, 18. [190] See Mt 16:18, 19.

times, the following has been prescribed in the case of Peter: 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven'[191] apart from the statement, 'And whatever you bind on the earth' and the words that follow.[192] And yet if we were to pay careful attention to the Gospel writings we would find a significant difference and a superiority in the things said to Peter over and above the second brothers even in these words and in the ones that appear to be common to Peter and the ones who have admonished the brothers three times. For it is no small distinction that Peter has received the 'keys' not of one heaven but of many, and that as many things as he binds 'on the earth' should be bound not only in one heaven but in all the heavens. To the many who bind on the earth and loose on the earth, however, it is not said as it is to Peter that these things have been bound and loosed in the 'heavens', but in one heaven, for they do not exceed in power, as Peter, that they may bind or loose in all the 'heavens'.[193] By how much, therefore, the one who binds is better, by so much more than in one heaven has the one who has been bound been bound, and by how much the one who looses is better, by so much is the one who has been loosed more blessed since his having been loosed is valid in the heavens everywhere.

[191] Mt 16:19.

[192] Mt 18:18. In Mt 16:19 the 'you' is singular; in 18:18 it is plural.

[193] Origen's argument in these latter assertions is based on the word heaven being in the plural in Mt 16:19 (as it is normally in the phrase translated in the singular 'kingdom of heaven' throughout Matthew), but being singular in Mt 18:18 (though it is plural here also in some MSS of the Gospels).

Book 14 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 18:19–19:11

1 'Again I say to you that if two of you shall be in harmony on earth concerning any matter, whatever they shall ask will be done for them'.[1]

The term harmony is applied in its precise sense to the concord of musical sounds. In music, some sounds are harmonious and others are discordant. The Gospel writing knows the term applied in the musical sense[2] in the text, 'He heard harmony and dancing'.[3] For it was appropriate that when there was harmony with the father based on the repentance of the lost and found son, that harmony be heard in the partying of the household. The wicked Laban, however, did not understand the term harmony when he said to Jacob: 'If you had told me, I would have sent you off with a party, with music, drums, and lyres'.[4] But the story in the second book of the Kingdoms is related to this kind of harmony, when 'the brothers' of Aminadab 'went before the ark, and David and the sons of Israel danced before the Lord with musical instruments tuned with might and with songs'.[5] For the instruments tuned 'with might and with songs' contained in themselves the musical harmony which avails to such an extent that if only two, who are harmonious in the divine and spiritual music, bring a request to the Father in heaven concerning anything whatsoever, the Father grants the requests to those who ask in conjunction with their being in harmony on earth. This is most amazing. It applies to whatever those who experience the previously mentioned harmony might ask.[6] I understand the following words of the apostle in the same way: 'Do not withdraw from one another, except perhaps in concord[7] for a season that you might have leisure for prayer'.[8] For since the term concord is applied to those who marry in God

[1] Mt 18:19. [2] The words up to this point appear verbatim in *FragLk* 219.
[3] Lk 15:25. [4] Gn 31:27. [5] 2 Sam 6:4–5.
[6] Cf. Origen, *CCels* 8.69; *PEuch* 24.4.
[7] The word is the same as what I have been translating 'harmony'.
[8] 1 Cor 7:5. Cf. Origen's use of this verse in the same way in *PEuch* 2.2.

in the following saying from Proverbs, 'Fathers divide their house and property to their children, but a wife is put in concord[9] with a husband by God',[10] it is consistent with the concord from God that the term and the matter enjoy harmony for prayer, which is shown in the words, 'except perhaps in concord'.

Then, repeating that for two on earth to be in harmony is the same as being in harmony with Christ, the word adds, 'For where two or three are gathered in my name'.[11] Therefore, the two or three who are gathered in the name of Christ, who are in harmony on earth are not only two, but sometimes also three. But the one who is able will consider whether this harmony, and such a gathering with Christ in its midst, can be found in a larger number, since 'the way that leads to life is narrow and restricted, and those who find it are few'.[12] But perhaps it is not even a few, but two or three who are in harmony, as Peter, James, and John to whom the Logos of God showed his own glory since they were in harmony.[13] And the two, Paul and Sosthenes, were in harmony when they wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians, and later, Paul and Timothy, when they sent the second epistle to the same people. Three were in harmony when 'Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy' instructed the Thessalonians through an epistle.[14] And if one must present examples from the old Scriptures as well of three who were in harmony on earth, because the Logos was in their midst uniting them, consider the inscription of the forty-first of the Psalms which is, 'To the end; for understanding, for the sons of Kore'.[15] For there were three sons of Kore. Their names are found in Exodus.[16] One was Asir, which means 'instruction'; the second was Elkana, which translates into 'God's possession'; the third was Abiasaph, which would mean in the Greek language, 'assembly of the father'. The prophecies of the sons of Kore were not divided, but were spoken and written as by one spirit and one voice at work in a truly harmonious manner in one soul. The three speak as one when they say, 'As a deer longs for springs of water, so *my* soul longs for you, O God'. On the other hand, they speak as a plurality in the forty-third Psalm when they say, 'O God, *we* have heard with *our* ears'.[17]

And if you want to see even more examples of those who were in harmony on earth, look at those who heard the words, 'That you might be perfected in the same mind and in the same purpose', and who were zealous to achieve what is said in Acts, 'The soul and heart (of all the believers) was one'.[18] They became one, if indeed it is possible for such unity to be found in a multitude, so that there was not even common discord among them, just as there is no discord between the strings of a ten-stringed harp. On the other hand, there is

[9] The noun 'concord', which appears earlier in Origen's sentence, and the verb used here are from the same root. It could be better translated here 'joined', but that does not show the connection Origen saw.

[10] Prv 19:14. [11] Mt 18:20. [12] Mt 7:14. [13] See Mt 17:1, 2.
[14] 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1. [15] Ps 41:1. [16] Ex 6:24.
[17] Ps 41:2; 43:2. The italics are mine. [18] 1 Cor 1:10; Acts 4:32.

no harmony on earth between those who say, 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollo, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ'.[19] There were 'divisions' among them. To solve the divisions, they were being gathered with the Spirit in Paul 'with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ', that they might no longer bite and devour one another, since they were being destroyed 'by one another'. For discord destroys, just as harmony reconciles. It divides the Son of God who is in the midst of those alone who are in harmony. Harmony occurs, in its proper sense, in two typical settings: in the discipline (as the apostle calls it) of the same mind, which means intellectually holding the same doctrines, and in the discipline of the same purpose, which means sharing a similar life-style.[20]

Notice the saying, 'If two of you shall be in harmony concerning anything on earth whatever they shall ask will be done for them by the Father' of Jesus 'who is in heaven'.[21] It is obvious that where it is not done 'by the Father in heaven' 'concerning anything whatever they ask', that neither were there two in harmony 'on the earth'. It is because we are not in harmony with one another on the earth in either doctrines or life that we are not heard when we pray. Furthermore, if we are indeed the body of Christ, and 'God placed each of the members in the body' so that 'the members might have the same concern for one another' and be in harmony with one another, and when one member suffers all suffer together, and when one is glorified all rejoice together, we ought to practise the harmony coming from the divine music so that when we come together in the name of Christ, Christ, who is God's Logos, God's wisdom, and his power, might be in our midst.[22]

2 This is the more common understanding of the two and three whom the Logos summoned to be in harmony. Let us now engage with another explanation which an earlier exegete mentioned when urging chastity and purity on those who are married. One must think, he said, that the two whom the Logos wishes to be in harmony on the earth are husband and wife. By agreement they mutually withdraw from bodily intercourse that they may have leisure 'for prayer'.[23] When these pray 'for anything', they will receive 'whatever they ask'. Their request, coming from such great harmony, is granted them 'by the Father' of Jesus Christ, 'who is in heaven'. This explanation does not seem likely to us to cause a divorce[24] but to encourage harmony. So, if one partner should want to be pure, but the other does not so wish or is not able and for this reason, the one who both wants and is capable of the better choice stoops to the other who either is not willing or is not able, they would both fall short of the saying concerning 'anything whatever they ask' being done 'for them by the Father' of Jesus Christ 'who is in heaven'.

[19] 1 Cor 1:12. [20] 1 Cor 1:10. [21] Mt 18:19.
[22] 1 Cor 12:27, 18, 25, 26; 1:24; Jn 1:1. [23] 1 Cor 7:5.
[24] The phrase *dialusin gamou* is used for divorce in Plutarch, *Sulla* 35.2. Origen uses the term five times, but only here in connection with marriage (TLG).

3 I also know another interpretation such as this about the harmony of two, including those who are married. Among the wicked, 'sin' rules over the soul, sitting on this 'mortal body' as on a proper throne so that the soul 'might submit to the body's desires'.[25] But among those who rise up and struggle against the sin which previously ruled their body as from a throne, 'the flesh desires against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh'.[26] But among those who have already been perfected, the spirit has prevailed and has put to death 'the deeds of the body'.[27] It gives a portion of its own life to the body, so that the saying has already come to pass that says, 'He will make our mortal bodies alive because of his Spirit which dwells in us',[28] and the harmony of the two, body and spirit, occurs on the earth. When this has successfully come about, a harmonious prayer is also sent up from the one who believes 'in his heart' for righteousness and confesses 'with his mouth for salvation'.[29] Consequently, his heart is no longer far from God, and by this means, the righteous person approaches God with his lips and his mouth.[30] But it is even more blessed if three should come together for the same purpose in the name of Jesus that the words might be fulfilled, 'May God sanctify you completely, and may your spirit, soul, and body be preserved perfectly and blamelessly in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'.[31] But because the harmony of spirit and body has been mentioned, someone will inquire if it is possible for these two to be in harmony without the third, I mean, of course, the soul. This person will ask further if it is not consistent with the harmony of these on the earth that after the two have been brought together in the name of Christ, the three also are already brought together in his name. The Son of God comes in their midst and, because all are dedicated to him, I mean the three, no one is in opposition to him. Not only is the spirit not in opposition, but neither is the soul nor even the body any longer.

4 It is well also to exercise our understanding and presentation of the harmony of the two covenants.[32] I mean the one which preceded the bodily visit of the Saviour, and the new covenant. For the subject of prayers concerning 'anything they ask being done for them by the Father in heaven' is one of the subjects the two covenants are in harmony on so that there is no discord of the one with the other. But if you also require the third as joiner of the two, do not hesitate to say it is the Holy Spirit, since the 'words of the wise' (whether they were prior to, during, or after the advent) are 'like ox-goads and nails which have been implanted, which were given from the collection of one shepherd'.[33] You

[25] See Rom 6:12. [26] Gal 5:17. [27] Rom 8:13. [28] Rom 8:11.
[29] Rom 10:10. [30] Cf Mt 15:8. [31] 1 Thess 5:23.
[32] This is an important theme for Origen. According to a fragment preserved in the *Philocalia* 6.2, he had discussed this earlier in the now lost book 2 of the *ComMt*. See also *Philocalia* 5.7 which preserves a fragment from the lost book 5 of the *ComJn* where the same theme is discussed.
[33] Eccl 12:11.

should not permit even this to go unobserved, because he did not say, 'Where two or three are gathered, there I *will be* in their midst'. He said, 'There I *am*', indicating that he is neither about to come nor delaying to come, but he himself is found present in their midst coextensive with the harmony.[34]

5 'Then Peter approached him and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?'[35]

It seems to me to be very simple-minded and unworthy both of Peter's progress with Jesus and of Jesus' divine magnanimity to think that these words were spoken in a straightforward manner. It is as if Peter is choosing to forgive the brother who sins against him seven times, but not eight, and as if the Saviour is teaching that a person sits down and counts the sins of his neighbour against him so that he may concede seventy-seven sins, but he may not forgive the one who has wronged him seventy-eight times. It may be that these words possess an obscurity akin to that in the statement, 'Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech', and what follows.[36] Anyone who has already become a friend of Jesus so that he is instructed by the Spirit of Jesus which enlightens the reason of the person who has worthily advanced so far would know the true meaning to these words since Jesus himself would have made them clear. But we, who are deficient in the magnanimity of the friendship with Jesus would be content if we could describe in a few words what is said in the passage.

The number six, then, seems to be a productive and laborious number but the number seven embraces rest.[37] Now consider if you can say that the person who loves 'the world' and performs the works of the world and does material things sins six times and the number seven is the end of his sin. Thinking in some such way as this, Peter wished to concede seven sins to his brother who sinned against him. But since the numbers ten and a hundred, so far as their units are concerned, possess a common relational meaning with the number in the units, and Jesus, knowing that some extend their sins even further, for this reason, I think, includes the number seventy also with the seven and says that, on the one hand, there must be forgiveness for our brothers who have sinned in this material world and for the deeds done here. But on the other hand, if someone goes beyond sinning in this world and in this age, even if this should be something small, he would no longer have forgiveness for his sins, and for good reason. Forgiveness extends to the deeds done here, and justly is granted to those who have sinned here, whether the forgiveness occurs late or

[34] My italics. [35] Mt 18:21.

[36] Gn 4:23. Origen probably associated this verse with this passage in Matthew because of the words 'seven times' and 'seventy-seven' which are part of Lamech's saying in Gn 4:24.

[37] This is, perhaps, based on the six days of creation followed by the seventh day of rest. Origen, however, accuses Celsus of misreading the Genesis story when he ridicules God needing to rest after his work. He says Celsus uses the word rest (*anapausis*), when the LXX speaks of God 'stopping' (*katapauein*) his work (*CCels* 5.59; 6.61). The word Origen uses here is *anapausis*.

early. But there is no forgiveness for the brother who has sinned more than the seventy-seven times. And you might say that the brother who has sinned in this manner, whether against Peter or against the Peter against whom 'the gates of Hades' do not prevail,[38] so far as sins of this sort go, is in the smaller number of sin. But so far as those that are still worse, he is in the number which has no forgiveness of sins.

6 'For this reason I say to you, The kingdom of heaven is like a king who wished to reckon accounts with his servants.'[39]

The principal theme of the parable intends to teach us to be forgiving of those who have sinned against us by wronging us, and especially if after the wrong, the person who did the wrong should beg the person who was wronged, expecting that his previously committed sins be forgiven. The intent of the parable is to teach us these things by showing us that after we have received forgiveness we might still be punished for those sins for which we have already received forgiveness from God, if we do not forgive so completely the sins of those who have wronged us that we no longer harbour even a memory of having been wronged. So may we, with our whole heart, aided by forgetfulness of injury, which is a great virtue, forgive the person who has wronged us by committing wicked deeds against anyone of us, even if they were malicious.

But subsequent to the principal theme of the parable, it is possible also to examine the whole of it in a simpler manner word by word. The one who advances carefully to investigate properly each of the things previously mentioned has the advantage of the touchstone of the things already discussed. Now it is possible, even likely, that there is an interpretation that is more mystical, transcendent, and difficult to trace out, in relation to which someone might investigate each of the words in this parable like the evangelists do in those parables which they interpret. Who, for example, is the king? Who are the servants, and what is the beginning of reckoning accounts? Who is the one who owes many talents? Who is his wife? Who are his children and what are the 'all things' mentioned besides these which the king commanded to be sold so that the debt could be repaid from the man's possessions? And what does it mean that the man who had been forgiven the debt of many talents 'went out'? And who is that fellow servant found who is in debt, not to the householder but to the servant who has been forgiven? And what does the number one hundred denaria mean? And what does it mean that 'he choked him saying, Repay what you owe me'?[40] And what is the prison into which the man who had been forgiven all the talents went and cast his fellow servant? And who are the fellow servants who are grieved and make known to the master all that has happened? And who are the torturers to whom the man who cast his fellow

[38] He appears to mean sins committed against the church.
[39] Mt 18:23. The parable continues on through 18:35.
[40] Mt 18:28.

servant into prison was delivered? And how did he, once delivered to the torturers, repay everything he owed so that he had no further debt?[41]

Now it is also likely that additional points could be brought forward by a person more capable in digging into the passage. I think, however, that the plain setting forth of the facts[42] and their interpretation is beyond human capacity and must be aided by the spirit of Christ who spoke them, so that Christ may be understood as he spoke. For just as no 'human being knows the inner thoughts of a human being except the spirit which dwells within that human being, and no one knows the inner thoughts of God except the Spirit of God',[43] so no one, after God, understands what Christ has said in dark sayings and parables except the spirit of Christ.[44] The person who participates in Christ, not only to the extent that he is spirit but also insofar as Christ is wisdom and Logos, could perceive what is revealed by him in this passage. But we make no claim at all to explain the most elevated aspect, nor do we despair, on the other hand, when we are aided by Christ, who is God's wisdom, to grasp what is made known in this parable. But whether it turns out that such things are suggested in this Scripture or not, may God attempt to do what pleases him in Christ. My one concern is that the 'word of wisdom' which is given 'through the Spirit' may be given also concerning these matters, along with the 'word of knowledge' which is provided in the Spirit.[45]

7 'The kingdom of heaven', he says, 'is like' and what follows.[46]

Now if the kingdom of heaven is like a king such as this and he has done things such as this, who else could the king be than the Son of God? For he himself is the king of heaven, and in the same way that he is wisdom itself and justice itself and truth itself, so is he no less the kingdom itself. And the kingdom does not belong to anything below, nor is it a portion of what is above. It is the whole of what is above, that is, whatever has been designated heaven.

Should you investigate how 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven',[47] you can say that theirs is Christ, insofar as he is the kingdom itself. He rules, in accordance with each concept which defines him,[48] over the person who is no longer ruled

[41] This series of questions is like the kind of questions Origen addressed to the creation story in his *ComGn* and which I have suggested elsewhere reflect the way the Valentinians questioned texts. See Heine (2003) 68.

[42] I have understood *diēgēsi* here to have its rhetorical sense of the narration of events (see Heath [1995] 257). It could have the more general meaning of 'explanation'. If that is the case, however, then the two nouns used here would be more or less synonymous—'explanation and interpretation'.

[43] 1 Cor 2:11. [44] See Ps 78:2; cf. Mt 13:35. [45] 1 Cor 12:8.

[46] Mt 18:23–35. [47] Mt 5:3.

[48] I understand Origen's word *epinoia* in reference to Christ. J. Patrick in ANF 10, 498 takes it in reference to the person ruled and translates it 'thought'. I think Origen is describing Christ with this term because he understands it in reference to wisdom, justice, and truth. These were important '*epinoiai*' which Origen understood to define the incarnate Christ. It is out of this understanding of taking on the *epinoiai* of Christ that Origen can go on to speak here of a person becoming 'heaven' by 'bearing the image of the heavenly'. See Heine (2004a).

by sin, which rules those who subject themselves to it 'in this mortal body'.[49] When I say that Christ rules in accordance with each concept which defines him, I mean something like this. Where there is justice and wisdom and truth and the rest of the virtues he is ruling the one who has become heaven because he bears 'the image of the heavenly',[50] and he rules every power, whether angelic or the rest of those called saints and who are worthy of such a kingdom 'not only in this age but also in the age to come'.[51] This, therefore, is the kingdom of heaven, which came to exist 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' so that 'on behalf of sin' he might condemn 'sin'.[52] Although he 'did not know' sin, 'he made' him 'sin for our sin', who bear a 'body of sin'.[53] It is this kingdom of heaven which 'is like a king' understood in relation to Jesus, since it has been united with him (if I may speak so boldly) who has a greater capacity for being united and becoming one in every way with the firstborn 'of all creation',[54] if[55] 'the one who is joined to the Lord' becomes 'one spirit' with him.[56] And this kingdom of heaven, which is likened to the king understood as the Saviour and is united with him, is said, in anticipation, to wish to make a reckoning with his servants. For he has not yet made the reckoning with them but he will do so in order that it may be seen how each servant has used the legal tender and rational coins of the householder. And this example in the parable has been drawn from actual reckonings of masters with their own servants.

But we will understand more accurately what is being revealed in these words of the parable if we focus our own thought on the actions of the household servants who have disbursed the master's property and are required to give an account of themselves. For each of those servants received a different amount from the master's goods and either used it properly so that the master's goods increased, or spent it on unnecessary things self-indulgently, and squandered what had been put in his charge indiscriminately without discretion. Now some have managed these abundant properties well, but have experienced loss in some areas. When they give an account at the time the master makes his reckoning with them, these losses and gains are totalled up. Then, based on how well he has managed the property, the servant is either honoured or made to pay up. In other cases, the debt is forgiven, and in some he loses the property.[57]

Now, based on what has been said, let us take a look at these rational coins and legal tender of the master. One receives more of them, and another less.

[49] Rom 6:12. [50] 1 Cor 15:49. [51] Eph 1:21. [52] Rom 8:3.
[53] 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 6:6. [54] Col 1:15.
[55] Klostermann suggests the reading 'if' in place of the manuscripts' 'than'. While the two words are spelled differently in Greek, they were probably pronounced the same.
[56] 1 Cor 6:17.
[57] Origen is telescoping two Matthean parables in his interpretation. Some of the imagery he uses is drawn from the parable of the talents in Mt 25:14–30. Perhaps he does this because in each case the master in the parable is said to 'make a reckoning' with his servants (Mt 18:23; 25:19).

The amount received is based on each person's ability. One is given 'five talents', because he is capable of managing so much. Another gets two, because he does not possess the capability of the previous person, and another gets one, because he has even less ability than the other.[58] But I do not know if these alone are the differences, or if others are mentioned concerning certain people in later passages of the Gospel, and there are even others in addition to these. Two debtors are found in other parables, one owing five-hundred denaria, and the other fifty.[59] But we have not been taught whether they were entrusted with these amounts and managed them badly, the lesser having been entrusted with the talent based on his ability, or that they have simply received the amounts. What we do seem to be taught by the parable is that they owed a great deal. Ten other servants are found who have each been entrusted with a mina apiece.[60] And if anyone understands the variety in the human soul and the great differences between souls in possessing or lacking natural facilities for more or less of the virtues and for these virtues or those, perhaps that person may perceive how each soul has come into this world with certain coins of the owner of the house. These coins appear with the perfection of the rational faculty and the pursuit of reason subsequent to its perfection. They are connected with the practice of what is proper, or the pursuit and practice of other things, whether they are useful pursuits or partly useful and partly not, such as doctrines that are neither completely true nor totally false.

8 And you will want to know in these investigations whether all people can be said to be servants of this king, or whether some are servants, 'whom he foreknew and foreordained',[61] and others are not servants but are called bankers who assist the servants in transacting business. You will carry out your investigation in this manner. Are there those, not only foreigners to the faith but even some of the faithful, in addition to the servants from whom the owner of the house announces he will exact payment with interest? Now the servants alone are the administrators of the account. But when the king makes his reckoning with his servants he inquires also of those who have had loans from the servants, whether of a 'hundred bushels of wheat' or of a 'hundred gallons of olive oil' or of whatever those outside the king's household have received,[62] for the man who owes the hundred bushels of wheat and the hundred gallons of olive oil is not found in the parable to be a fellow servant 'of the unjust administrator'. This much is clear from the question, 'How much do you owe my master?'[63] Note that he did not say, 'Our master'.[64] Now consider with me that

[58] Mt 25:15. [59] Lk 7:41. [60] Lk 19:13. [61] Rom 8:29.

[62] Origen has introduced details from the parable of the dishonest administrator (Lk 16:1–8) into Matthew's parable. I have simplified the quantity of the measurements by using modern units of measurement. Each is said to be one hundred in the text of Luke and Origen, but the two measurements were considerably larger than a single bushel or gallon.

[63] Lk 16:5. [64] Klostermann adds this based on the reading in the Latin MS.

each good or proper deed is like a profit and a surplus but a bad one is like an expense. Just as there is one profit when the money is greater and another when it is less and more and less differ, so too in the case of virtuous deeds there is a valuation, as it were, of greater profits or less. The examination of such things belongs to him alone who knows how, since his view is based on the condition, the reason, the deed, and the things which facilitate what is in our power as opposed to what is not, to reckon what sort of work is a great profit, what is less, and what is least. The same thing is true also in the case of the opposites: what sort of sin is discovered in the reckoning of accounts with the servants to be a great expense, what less and, if I must mention it, what is the expense of the last penny or the final farthing.[65] An account of the whole life, therefore, is taken by the so-called kingdom of heaven which is likened to a king, when 'we must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive the things done in the body in respect to his deeds, whether good or bad'.[66] Then, as the reckoning is taking place, there will be introduced into it both 'every idle word which people will speak', and whether one has given 'a cup of cold water' to drink 'in the name alone of a disciple'.[67]

9 These things will take place whenever the words recorded in Daniel occur, 'Books were opened, and a court of judgement was in session'.[68] It is as if there is a registry which contains everything that has been said, done, and thought. Furthermore, our every secret will be made manifest by divine power, and everything which has been hidden will be revealed.[69] Consequently, when someone is found who has not taken 'pains to come to a settlement' with his adversary,[70] he will proceed to prison via the ruler, the judge, and the servant until he pays back the last penny. On the other hand, when one has taken 'pains to come to a settlement' with him, and owes 'nothing to anyone',[71] and has multiplied his money by ten or by five, or has doubled the 'five talents' or turned the 'two' into four, he may obtain the compensation that is proper by 'entering into the joy of his master', or by being appointed 'over all his possessions', or hearing the words, 'Have authority over ten cities' or, 'Have authority over five cities'.[72]

We do not think these things are said because so much time is needed to make a reckoning with us humans concerning the whole stretch of life in this material world, until the things which reach from the beginning of the world until the completion of not one age, but of many ages should come to the end, as we might think that the affairs of a king who makes an individual reckoning

[65] This sentence is chaotic in the Greek text. There is no verb in the main clause. I have taken an infinitive to be the subject of the main clause. Klostermann thinks something is missing. The Latin translation in the ancient Latin MS begins, 'God alone knows the difference between these things and he can...'.

[66] 2 Cor 5:10. [67] Mt 12:36; 10:42. [68] Dan 7:10. [69] See Mt 10:26–7.
[70] See Lk 12:57–9. [71] See Rom 13:8. [72] See Lk 19:16–19; Mt 25:20–3; 24:47.

with each of numerous servants demands so much time. The truth is not like this at all. For when God wants to rekindle in the memory of all people everything which each has done in all time he does it all at once with an inexpressible power, so that each of one's own deeds, whether good or bad, is perceived simultaneously. When we want to remember anything, we need a period of time to go through what we have said and to bring to mind what we want to remember. It is not this way with God. If he should want us to remember what we have done in this life so that when we have been made aware of what we have done, we may comprehend why we are punished or honoured, he would make it happen. And if anyone doubts the speed of God's power in these matters, he has not yet understood that the God who made the universe did not need time to create the vast heaven, and earth, and everything in them. For although he appears to have made them in six days, one must use his intelligence to understand what the words, 'in six days' means, because of what follows: 'This is the book of the generation of heaven and earth' and what follows these words.[73] One must be bold, therefore, and say that the moment of the anticipated judgement does not require time.[74] Rather, just as the resurrection is said to occur 'in a moment, in the blink of an eye',[75] so (I think) also the judgement occurs.[76]

10 Next, we must address the statement that 'when he began to reckon accounts, a man was brought to him who owed many talents'.[77] What I think this means is this: On the one hand, the 'moment of the beginning of judgement' begins 'with the house of God',[78] for God said to the angels appointed over punishments, as it stands written in Ezekiel, 'Begin with my saints'.[79] This beginning is like the 'blink of an eye'.[80] On the other hand, it contains the beginning of reckoning accounts (a beginning apprehended by thought, for we have not forgotten our earlier words) with those who have the greater debt. For this reason, it has not been written, 'When he reckoned accounts', but it says, 'When he began to reckon accounts (that is, at the beginning of him reckoning accounts), a man owing many talents was brought'. This man had lost so many thousand talents; he had been entrusted with great things and had had many things committed to him, but he had brought his master no profit. On the

[73] Gn 2:4. Origen's point appears to be, although he does not make it explicit, that in Gn 2:4–7 only a single day is mentioned in relation to the creation of heaven, earth, vegetation, and humanity.

[74] Origen uses two different words for time in this sentence. The first, which I have translated 'moment', is *kairos*. This word refers to a definite point of time, a fixed or opportune moment. The other word is *chronos*, which I translated 'time'. This refers to the normal progression of time hour after hour, day after day, etc.

[75] 1 Cor 15:52.

[76] The discussion of the time needed for God to bring recall to individuals in the judgement has a parallel text in *FragLk* 228 (see Rauer [1959] 325–6). There it is a part of the discussion of the parable of the pounds in Lk 19:11–26.

[77] Mt 18:24. [78] 1 Pt 4:17. [79] Ez 9:6. [80] 1 Cor 15:52.

contrary, he had lost so many thousands, resulting in his owing many talents. Perhaps he owed many talents because he followed the woman named Lawlessness who sits on the talent of lead.[81] And notice, in relation to the passage, that each great sin is a loss of talents belonging to the householder. These sins are committed by the sexually immoral, adulterers, homosexuals, those who are effeminate, idolaters, and murderers. Perhaps, then, the man brought to the king who owes many talents has committed no small sin, but all his sins are great and serious. If you search for him among humans, you might find him to be the man 'of sin', the son 'of destruction', the opponent who exalts himself 'against every God or object of worship'.[82] And if you look outside of human beings, who might he be than the devil, who has destroyed so many[83] human beings who have received him by causing them to sin? 'For humanity is great, and a merciful man precious'.[84] He is valued as a talent either of gold (like the lampstand of gold weighing a talent[85]), or of silver, or of material of whatever quality conceived by the mind. Symbols of these things have been recorded in the Computations of the Days, when David was enriched with many talents, whose number is indicated, so many talents of gold, silver, and the remaining materials mentioned there, from which the temple of God was constructed.[86]

11 Even though he does not have the talents to pay back, because he had lost them, he does, however, have a wife, children, and other things of which it is written, 'Everything which he has'.[87] And it was possible that he might prosper once he had been sold, along with his possessions, and the man who bought him had paid his full debt by means of the price he paid for the man and his possessions. And it was also possible that he no longer serve the king, but become a servant of the man who bought him. And he earnestly requests that he, together with his possessions, not be sold but might remain in the house of the king. This is why he falls down and worships him (since he recognizes that the king is God), and says, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you everything'.[88] For it is likely that he was resourceful and saw that he could pay off the total shortfall from his former loss of many talents from future successes. And this good king had compassion on the man who owed the many talents and released him, giving him something more than the petition which he had presented. For the debtor promised to repay the patient ruler everything he owed him. But the master who had compassion on him (not patiently to await his due) not only forgave him at that time, but released him completely, and forgave his entire debt. This wicked servant, however, who had just asked for patience from his master for the many talents, acted mercilessly. For he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denaria, grabbed him, and

[81] See Zach 5:7. [82] 2 Thess 2:3–4.
[83] I have translated the reading of the MSS M and H rather than Klostermann's emendation.
[84] Prv 20:6. [85] Ex 25:39. [86] See 1 Chron 22:14.
[87] Mt 18:25. [88] Mt 18:26.

began to choke him saying, 'Pay up if you owe me anything'. Was that not a demonstration of excessive wickedness to seize his fellow servant, choke him, and deprive him of breath because of a hundred denaria? This was the very man who, when he owed many talents, was neither seized nor choked, but had been commanded earlier to be sold along with his wife, children, and possessions. Then later, he bowed down and had mercy shown to him when he was released from his master and forgiven of his entire debt.

Now it is difficult to say whom Jesus intends the one fellow servant to be who is found owing a hundred denaria not to his own master, but to the debtor who owed many talents. Likewise, who are the fellow servants who see the one man choking the other and the other being choked, and are exceedingly grieved and make a clear report to their own master of everything which was done? In my opinion, this is the truth of the matter. No one can explain it unless Jesus, who explained 'everything for his own disciples privately',[89] resides in one's mind and opens all the dark, hidden, invisible treasures in the parable, and grants confidence through clear demonstrations to the one whom he intends to enlighten with the light of knowledge concerning the contents of this parable. In this way, it might occur to one who the debtor is who owes many talents and is brought to the king and what follows in the text, as well as the other man who owes this debtor the hundred denaria and the remaining words in the text. The first could be the 'man of sin' whom we mentioned previously, or even the devil, or neither of these. He could be some other man, or some being under the devil's control. For it is the work of God's wisdom to explain what has been prophesied in whatever way it has been recorded by the divine Spirit, whether about specific characteristics or things made in accordance with such qualities, among either invisible powers or certain human beings. But seeing that we have not yet assumed a mind that is adequate to be commingled with the mind of Christ, and has the capacity to attain such great vistas and, with the Spirit, to search 'all things, even the depths of God',[90] taking up a rather indefinite impression about matters in this passage, we think that the wicked servant shown in the parable and represented as owing a debt of many talents refers to some specific being.

12 Now it is important to consider when the king wished to reckon accounts with his servants and to what particular time what is said must be referred. For, on the one hand, if it occurred after the end of the ages, or at it, that is, at the time of the anticipated judgement, how would one preserve what is said about the one who owes a hundred denaria and is choked by the one who was forgiven the debt of many talents? But on the other hand, if it occurred before the judgement, how could one express the king reckoning accounts with his servants before that event?

[89] See Mk 4:34. [90] 1 Cor 2:10.

In general, we must think about every parable whose explanation has not been recorded by the evangelists as follows: Because Jesus 'explained all things privately to his own disciples',[91] and because what was revealed in the parables surpassed the nature of written characters, those who wrote the Gospels hid the plain truth of the parables. Each explanation and clarification of parables of this kind was of such a nature that not even 'the world' itself 'has room for the books written' on such parables.[92] Now it might happen that a suitable heart be discovered, I mean one that can contain the written characters of the plain truth of the parables because it is pure, with the result that they are recorded on it 'by the Spirit of the living God'.[93] But someone will object that we act impiously when, because of the secret and mystical nature of some texts, we wish these to be indicative of the above writings and attempt to clarify them, even if it appears in theory that we know their intention precisely. We must reply to this, however, that those who have received the ability to understand them accurately know what they must do. We, on the other hand, admit that we fall short of being able to plumb the depth of what is revealed in these words, even though to a certain extent we grasp some minor peripheral notion of the contents of the passage. We dare not entrust to writing some of what we appear to discover from our extensive testing and investigation, regardless of whether its source is God's grace or our own intellectual ability. We set forth other things, however, in a limited way to provide an exercise for ourselves and those who will read these words. Let these words be my defence, because the meaning of this parable is so deep.

Now on the question of the time the king in the parable wanted to reckon accounts with his servants, we will say that it is likely that such an action occurs around the time which has been announced for judgement. This is shown by a parable at the end of the present Gospel and another in the Gospel according to Luke. And in order not to prolong the explanation by quoting the text itself, since one who wishes can take it from the Scripture itself, we will say that the parable in Matthew indicates that 'as a man was going abroad, he summoned his servants and delivered his possessions to them', to one five talents, to another two, and to yet another one.[94] Next, those servants did things with the talents put in their hands. Then 'after a long time the master of those servants comes', and it says in these very words, 'And reckoned accounts with them'.[95] Observe, then, what it says, 'And he reckoned accounts with them', and compare this with the phrase, 'And he began to reckon'.[96] Notice also that he called the time in which we are 'at home in the body and absent from the Lord',[97] the householder's journey abroad, and his arrival, when 'after a long time the master of those servants comes', the time at the end when there is judgement. For after a long time 'the master of those servants comes and reckons accounts with them' and the things which follow occur.

[91] Mk 4:34. [92] See Jn 21:25. [93] See 2 Cor 3:3. [94] Mt 25:14–15.
[95] Mt 25:19. [96] Mt 18:24. [97] 2 Cor 5:6.

But the parable in Luke clearly shows that a nobleman went 'into a far country to receive a kingdom for himself and returned'. As he was going he summoned ten servants and 'gave them ten minas and told them, Engage in business until I return'. But this nobleman was hated by his own citizens. They sent 'a group of ambassadors after him' because they did not want him to rule over them. After he had received 'the kingdom' he returned 'and ordered that the servants to whom he had given the money be called to him that he might know what they had gained in their trading'. When he saw what they had done, he praised the man who had earned a tenfold increase by saying, 'Well done, good servant. You were faithful with the least'. He gives him authority over ten of the cities under his rule. He did not bestow praise, as in the first case, on another who had multiplied his resources fivefold, nor did he specify the term 'authority', as with the previous man, but he said to him, 'And you be over five cities'. But to the man who had tied the mina up in a handkerchief he said, 'I judge you from your own mouth, useless servant', 'and he said to those standing by, Take the mina from him and give it to the man who has ten'.[98]

Who, then, will not say that, so far as this parable is concerned, the nobleman who goes 'into a far country to receive a kingdom for himself, and returns' is Christ? He goes abroad, as it were, to receive the kingdom of the world and of the things in it. Those who received the ten minas are those who have been empowered to manage the message with which they have been entrusted. His citizens, when he was a citizen of this world in the incarnation, who did not want him to be their king may be the Israel which did not believe in him, and perhaps also the nations which did not believe in him.

13 I have said these things to refer his return, when he came with the kingdom, to the end time. At this time 'he ordered that the servants to whom he had given the money be called to him that he might know what they had gained in their trading'.[99] I also want to show from this and from the parable of the talents that the clause, 'Who wished to settle accounts with his servants',[100] also refers to the end time when he is already king and is receiving the kingdom for which, as another parable has it, 'he went into a far country to receive a kingdom for himself and returned'.[101] When he had returned, therefore, and had received 'the kingdom', 'he wished to reckon accounts with his servants. When he began to reckon accounts, one man who owed many talents was brought'. He was brought, as to a king, by those appointed as servants under him, probably angels. And perhaps someone has been entrusted with an important managerial position in the kingdom and has not managed it well, but has squandered what was entrusted to him. Consequently, he is in debt for all the talents which he has lost. Perhaps because this man cannot repay his debt the king orders that he be sold, along with his wife, from whom, as his spouse, he has fathered some children.

[98] Lk 19:12–22. [99] Lk 19:15. [100] Mt 18:23. [101] Lk 19:12.

Now it is not easy to perceive the spiritual meaning of father, mother, and children. God would know the truth about what is intended by this action. But let the one who is capable judge whether he has granted this to us or not. Here is how we understand it. Just as the Jerusalem above is the mother of Paul and those like him,[102] so the mother of others, analogous to Jerusalem being a mother, may be, let us say, Syene of Egypt, or Memphis, and Tyre and Sidon the mother of others, or as many cities as are mentioned in the Scriptures. Then, just as Jerusalem has been adorned as a bride for Christ, 'her husband',[103] so perhaps are those mothers of certain powers which have been allotted them to be conceived as wives or brides. And just as there are children from Jerusalem as mother and Christ as father, so there may be children of Syene or Memphis, or of Tyre or Sidon who have as fathers the rulers placed in command over them. Perhaps too, then, this one man who is brought to the king, owing him many talents has, as we have explained previously, a wife and children whom the king first ordered to be sold along with everything which the man had. Later, however, he had compassion and forgave him his entire debt. It has been recorded that the king acted in this way not because he did not know what would happen, but so that we might learn about what happened. Therefore, each of those who have a wife and children, as we have explained previously, will give an account, whenever the king comes to reckon accounts, once he has received 'the kingdom' and returned. And each of these, as ruler of some Syene, Memphis, Tyre, Sidon, or someplace like these, also has debtors.

This man, therefore, who was released and forgiven of his entire debt, went out from the king and found one of his fellow servants, and what follows in the text. And this, I think, is why he began to choke him—he had gone out from the king. He would not have begun to choke his fellow servant if he had not gone out. Next observe carefully the precision of Scripture. It relates that one who fell down, worshipped, and the other who fell down did not worship but entreated.[104] And the king had compassion and released him and forgave him his entire debt. But the servant was not willing to be merciful to his fellow servant. And the king, before he forgave the debt, ordered the man and his property to be sold. But the man whose debt was forgiven cast his fellow servant into prison. And notice that the fellow servants did not calumniate or tell, but 'made quite clear', and that the king did not say 'wicked' in his first dealings concerning the money, but kept the term to use later concerning how the man treated his fellow servant. And note too how fitting the king's actions are. He did not say, 'You worshipped me', but, 'You entreated me'. And no longer did he order the man and his possessions to be sold, but he delivered him to the torturers for greater suffering because of his wickedness. And who would these be but those who have been appointed for punishments?

[102] Gal 4:26. [103] Rev 21:2. [104] See Mt 18:26, 29.

Now at the same time, because of those heretics who use this parable, take careful note that if they condemn the creator as inclined to anger because the words indicate the wrath of God, they must also condemn this king since he, being angry, delivered the debtor to the torturers. Furthermore, we must say to those who are unwilling that Jesus deliver anyone to the torturers, Tell us, Gentlemen, who is the king who delivers the wicked servant to the torturers? And let them pay attention also to the statement, 'So, then, will my heavenly Father also do to you'.[105] And one might point out to these same people further the words in the parable of the ten minas where the Son of the good God said, 'But those enemies of mine who do not want me', and what follows in the text.[106] The conclusion of the parable, moreover, is applicable to the simple as well. For we are all taught together that those who have been the recipients of the forgiveness of sins and do not forgive their brothers will suffer the fate of the man who was forgiven and did not forgive his fellow servant.

14 'And it came about when Jesus had finished these words'.[107]

The person who expounds completely each of the problems proposed to him and leaves nothing out finishes his own words. On the other hand, one will express his opinion on this more confidently if he pays very careful attention to every passage of the Old and New Testament. For if the phrase, 'He completed his words', is used of no one else, neither of Moses nor of any of the prophets, but of Jesus alone, then one might dare say that only Jesus 'completed his words'. He it was who came to bring an end to things and to fulfil what was lacking in the law by his statement, 'It was said to the ancients', and what follows in the text.[108] Again he said, 'That what was said by the prophets might be fulfilled'.[109] But if it has been written somewhere in those writers also, then one should search out the words completed by those men as well, and examine them along with those completed by the Saviour to discover the difference between them. And in this case too one must certainly investigate if the expression 'he had finished' occurs in reference to things said in an oracle, either in reference to things said by Moses or one of the prophets, or both. Attentive observation might suggest very important meanings to those persons who know how to compare 'spiritual things with spiritual' and, for this reason, do 'not' speak 'with words taught by human wisdom, but with words taught by the Spirit'.[110]

But someone else might understand the expression, 'He had finished', more ingeniously to have been used as it is in the mysteries.[111] Insofar as one 'delivered mysteries and initiations to his subjects'[112] in a way not to be praised, and

[105] Mt 18:35. [106] Lk 19:27. [107] Mt 19:1. [108] Mt 5:21.

[109] I have not been able to locate these words. Klostermann's references are incorrect.

[110] 1 Cor 2:13.

[111] The verb translated 'finished' is a form of the Greek verb *teleō*. Verbs and nouns from this same root were used to mean initiation into the mysteries, and the rite of initiation. It is this etymological relationship that is the basis for Origen's remarks in this section.

[112] Wis Sol 14:15.

another delivered mysteries of God to those worthy of them and, initiations analogous to such mysteries, the person who perceives the expression this way might say that after Jesus had initiated them into the mysteries he created a rite. Because of this rite his words appeared plainly to be powerful when 'the Gospel' of Jesus was preached 'in the whole world'[113] and, because of this divine rite, prevailed over every soul which the Father drew to the Son, as the Saviour had said, 'No one comes to me unless the Father who sent me draws him'.[114] For this reason also, the word of those who by God's grace are ambassadors in regard to the Gospel and their 'proclamation' of it was 'not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in the demonstration and power of the Spirit'.[115] For these people, the words of the teaching of Jesus had been finished. And you will observe, therefore, how often the expression 'he had finished' is used, and in what connections it appears. And you will take as an example what is said in relation to the beatitudes and the whole of that teaching to which is appended the statement, 'And it occurred that when Jesus had finished these words, all the crowds were amazed at his teaching'.[116] But in the present instance the phrase, 'Jesus had finished these words', is referred immediately to the rather mystical parable in which 'the kingdom of heaven is compared to a king who wanted to reckon accounts with his servants',[117] and further, above this parable, it is related to the words recorded prior to it.

15 But 'when Jesus had finished these words', which he spoke in Galilee, in the vicinity of Capernaum, he then 'left' there 'and entered the Judean borders', which is other than Galilee.[118] He did not go to the middle of Judea, but was, as it were, on the fringe. There 'large crowds followed him', and 'he healed' them, along the Judean borders beyond the Jordan where baptism used to be administered.[119] And you will observe the difference between the crowds who simply followed, and Peter and the others who left everything and followed,[120] and Matthew who 'rose up and followed him'.[121] For the addition, 'he rose up', is significant. There are always many who follow, like the crowds. They have neither risen up to follow, nor left all their former things. But those who have risen up, left everything, and followed are few. 'In the regeneration', these will sit on twelve thrones'.[122] But if someone wants to be healed, that person should follow Jesus.

16 After this it is written that 'the Pharisees came to him and tested him by asking, Is a man permitted to divorce his wife on every ground of complaint?'[123] Mark has recorded an equivalent statement.[124]

Some of those who came to Jesus and asked him questions were people who did this just to 'test' him. Now since so great a person as our Saviour was tested, who of his disciples who has been commissioned to teach should be irritated

[113] See Mt 24:14; 26:13. [114] Jn 6:44. [115] 1 Cor 2:4. [116] Mt 7:28.
[117] Mt 18:23. [118] Mt 19:1. [119] See Jn 1:28; see also Origen, *ComJn* 6.204–26.
[120] Mt 19:27. [121] Mt 9:9. [122] Mt 19:28. [123] Mt 19:3. [124] Mk 10:2.

at being tested and questioned by some who are not interested in learning, but just want to test him?[125] If you were to collect the passages on this subject you would discover many things on which the Pharisees and others (such as a certain lawyer, and perhaps also scholars) tested our Jesus. If you were to gather everything said about those who tested Jesus, your investigation might yield something useful on the nature of these words. But the Saviour's answer, even to those testing him, contained deeply religious principles. For they asked, 'Is a man permitted to divorce his wife on every ground of complaint? And he replied and said, Are you unaware that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female?'[126] and the rest.

I think that the Pharisees proposed this issue so they could attack him no matter what he answered. For example, had he said, 'It is permitted', they would have accused him of dissolving marriages for trivial reasons. But had he answered, 'It is not permitted', they would have accused him of permitting a man to live with a wife even when she was committing sinful acts. They did not see how blameless and wise his answer was in the case of the poll-tax.[127] For had he said to pay it, they would have accused him of subjecting the people to the Romans and not to the law of God. But if he had said not to pay it, they would have accused him of promoting war and discord and stirring up those unable to resist the great Roman army. Observe how blamelessly he answered. First, he denied the right to divorce a wife 'on every ground of complaint', and second, he responded to their words about the certificate of divorce. He saw that not every ground of complaint is a good reason for dissolving a marriage, and that the husband must live with his wife 'as a weaker vessel showing her honour' and bearing her 'burdens' in sins.[128] And on the basis of what is written in Genesis, he shames the Pharisees, who flaunted their knowledge of the writings of Moses, when he says, 'Are you unaware that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female?' and what follows. And because of the statement, 'And the two shall be one flesh', he adds for them, in conformity with the teaching about the 'one flesh', his teaching, 'So that no longer are they two, but one flesh'.[129] Finally, to the statement about not divorcing a 'wife on every ground of complaint', he makes the persuasive addition, 'Let a human being not separate what God has joined together'.[130]

One must take note, however, that in Jesus' exposition of the words from Genesis in the Gospel, that it has not been recorded in the order in which it

[125] Origen is probably thinking of numerous occasions when he has been asked questions from precisely this motive. One of his favorite quotes was the statement in *The Sentences of Sextus*, 352, 'There is no small danger in speaking even the truth about God'. See Chadwick (1959) 114–16. He sometimes also worries about casting pearls before swine in his teaching (see, for example, *DialHer* 12–13; *HomGn* 10.1; *HomEx* 13.1).

[126] Mt 19:4. [127] Mt 22:17–21. [128] 1 Pt 3:7; Gal 6:2.

[129] Origen is noting here that Jesus has joined a statement from Gn 2:24 to one from Gn 1:27 and has then added his own comment about the pair no longer being two, but one flesh (Mt 19:4–6).

[130] Mt 19:6.

was spoken. In fact, I do not think that the statements in Genesis were even made of the same beings. There were those who were made in the image of God, and there were those who were made from the dust of the earth and from one of Adam's ribs. For where you have the words, 'He made them male and female', it is about those made in the image.[131] But where it says, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother', and the rest, it is not speaking of those made in the image, for at some time or other after those, 'The Lord God formed the man, by taking dust from the earth', and from his rib he formed the helper.[132] Note also that in the case of those made in the image it does not speak of man and woman, but of 'male and female'. We have also observed this in the Hebrew language, for man is indicated by the sound *IS*, but male by the sound *ZACHAR*. And again, woman is indicated by the sound *ESSA*, but female by the sound *OUNKEBA*. For it is never said that woman was made in the image, nor man, for that matter, but those who are superior, namely male, and second, female.[133] Furthermore, if a man leaves father and mother, he clings not to the female, but to his wife and, since man and woman are one in flesh, they become one flesh.[134]

Then the Saviour, describing how it must be between those joined together by God to be worthily joined together by God, adds the words, 'so that they are no longer two'.[135] Where, indeed, there is oneness of mind, agreement, and harmony between a husband and wife, with the husband ruling, as it were, and the wife obedient, as it were, to the saying, 'He shall rule you',[136] it is truly possible to say in such cases that 'they are no longer two'. Then, since becoming 'one spirit' with the Lord must be reserved for the person who clings to the Lord, in the case of those joined together by God, the words 'but one flesh' have been added after the words, 'so that they are no longer two'.[137] And it is God who has joined the two into one, so that they are no longer two, wherever 'a woman is joined to a man by God'.[138] And because God joins together, there is a gift in the relationship between those joined together by God. Paul understood this to be equal to the gift of the pure unmarried state, and speaks of marriage according to the word of God as a gift when he says, 'I wish all people were as myself, but each one has his own gift from God, one this way, and the other that'. And those who are joined together by God both understand and carry out the instructions, 'Husbands, love your wives as also Christ loves the church'.[139]

The Saviour commanded, therefore, that a human being should not separate what God joined together. But human beings want to separate what God has joined together. They depart from the sound 'faith' and pay attention to 'deceptive spirits and daemonic teachings, in the hypocrisy of liars who have been

[131] Gn 1:27. [132] Gn 2:24, 7, 20–1.

[133] Origen is referring here to the words of Gn 1:27, and is following the order of the text in mentioning male first and then female.

[134] Gn 2:24. [135] Mt 19:6. [136] Gn 3:16. [137] 1 Cor 6:17; Mt 19:6.

[138] Prov 19:14. [139] Eph 5:25.

seared in their own conscience so that they forbid' not only sexual immorality, but even 'marriage'. In this way, human beings separate even those previously joined together in the foreknowledge of God. Let these things be said, then, after the literal meanings related to the words concerning male and female, and man and woman are observed, as the Saviour taught in his answer to the Pharisees.

17 Now the apostle understands the statement, 'And the two shall be one flesh' to refer to Christ and the church.[140] For this reason I must say that Christ, in observance of the command, 'Let a human being, therefore, not separate what God has joined together', did not divorce his former wife, so to speak, meaning the former synagogue, on a ground other than sexual immorality. That wife was seduced by the wicked one and together they plotted against her husband and killed him when she said, 'Remove such a one from the earth' and, 'Crucify him, crucify him'.[141] She, therefore, put herself away rather than her husband divorcing and sending her away. It is, then, in reproach to her who revolted against her husband, that Isaiah says, 'What kind of bill of divorce was your mother's, with which I sent her away?'[142]

And he, who in the beginning created the one who is in the image (as 'he is in the form of God'[143]), made him male and the church female, and gave the 'being in the image' to both as to one. And for the sake of the church, the Lord, the husband, left the Father with whom he was when 'he was in the form of God',[144] and left also his mother, since he is son of the 'Jerusalem above',[145] and was joined to his wife who had fallen to this material world, and in this world the two became one flesh. For it was because of her that he too became flesh when 'the Logos became flesh and lived among us'.[146] And 'they are no longer two, but' now there is indeed one flesh,[147] since it is said to the wife, the church, 'But you are the body of Christ and parts of a part'.[148] For the body of Christ is not something which exists on its own, different from the church which is his 'body' and 'parts of a part'. And God has joined together these who are not two, but who have become 'one flesh', and has commanded that no human being should separate the church from the Lord. And the person who is careful not to be separated from Christ speaks boldly, since he will not be separated, and says, 'Who will separate us from the love of Christ?'[149] The statement made to the Pharisees in this passage, therefore, 'Let a human being not separate what God has joined together', might be addressed to those who are superior to the Pharisees in the words, 'Let *nothing* separate what God has joined together',

[140] Eph 5:31, 32. [141] Acts 22:22; Lk 23:21.
[142] Is 50:1. Origen understands this to mean that there was no bill of divorce, i.e. God did not send Israel away, but Israel departed without a bill of divorce. This is to support his previous assertion that Christ did not divorce the synagogue, so that, again, there has been no bill of divorce. He will identify later in his argument what he understands the bill of divorce to be.
[143] Phil 2:6. [144] Ibid. [145] Gal 4:26. [146] Jn 1:14.
[147] Eph 5:31; Gn 2:24. [148] 1 Cor 12:27. [149] Rom 8:39.

neither empire nor body of magistrates,[150] for God, who has joined together, is more powerful than anything someone might be able to conceive and name.

18 Next, we will discuss what the Pharisees said to Jesus: 'Why, then, did Moses command to give a bill of divorce and divorce her?'[151] It is appropriate to use the text from Deuteronomy about the bill of divorce in relation to this question. It reads as follows: 'And if someone takes a wife and lives with her, and it turns out that she does not please him because he discovered a shameful deed in her' and the rest up to the words, 'And you shall not pollute the land which the Lord your God gives us as an inheritance'.[152] Now I raise the question in relation to the contents of this law whether we need investigate anything more than the literal meaning in it, since God did not give it, or whether it had to be said to the Pharisees, 'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your heart, but from the beginning it was not so', because they had used the saying, 'Moses commanded to give a bill of divorce and divorce her'.[153]

But if someone ascends to the Gospel of Christ Jesus which teaches that 'the law is spiritual', he will investigate the spiritual meaning of this law.[154] Furthermore, the person who wants to interpret these things figuratively will compare Paul's confident assertion based on the divine grace he had, that 'a wife is bound for as long as her husband lives, but if the husband die, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, but only in the Lord. She is more blessed, however, if she remains as she is, in my opinion, and I think that I too have the Spirit of God'.[155] In this statement Paul appropriately added, 'I think that I too have the Spirit of God', to the words, 'in my opinion', so that his opinion not be despised as devoid of the Spirit of God. In the same way, Moses too, because he had been granted the authority to give laws permitting certain things, including the divorcing of wives because of the hardness of heart of the people, could have thought that the legislation came from the Spirit of God even in the case of the laws based on his own opinion. And the person wishing to interpret these things figuratively will say that, unless[156] one law is spiritual and another is not, and this latter is also a law, then it too is spiritual and one must investigate its spiritual meaning.[157]

19 Now mindful of what we said above on Isaiah's statement about the bill of divorce, we will say that the mother of the people removed herself from her husband, the Christ, without receiving a bill of divorce. Later, however, when a 'shameful deed' was discovered in her and she did not 'please him', he wrote her a bill of divorce. For the new covenant, which calls those from the nations into

[150] See Col 1:16; Rom 8:38–9. [151] Mt 19:7. [152] Dt 24:1–4. [153] Mt 19:7–8.
[154] Rom 7:14. [155] 1 Cor 7:39–40.
[156] I have translated the reading of the MSS rather than Koetschau's emendation ('therefore') which Klostermann prints.
[157] This argument depends, of course, on the statement in Rom 7:14 quoted at the beginning of this paragraph.

the house of him who had cast off his former wife, in effect has given the bill of divorce to the former wife who withdrew from her husband, the law and the Logos. Therefore, he gave up all claim to her and married another, if I may speak this way, after he gave the bill of divorce 'into the hands' of his former wife.[158]

It is because of the bill of divorce that they can no longer perform the things commanded them in the law. The sign that the former wife has received the bill of divorce can be seen in the destruction of Jerusalem, along with what they called the sanctuary and the things they considered to have been holy in it, such as the altar of whole burnt offerings and every service associated with it. Furthermore, the fact that they cannot celebrate festivals even literally is a sign of the bill of divorce, even though the intention of the law commanded them to celebrate festivals in whatever place the Lord God should choose. But also, the fact that the whole synagogue has lost the right to stone those guilty of various sins along with the right to carry out thousands of other commandments is a sign of the bill of divorce. And it is a sign of the same that 'there is no longer a prophet', and that they say, in the words of Isaiah, 'We do not' still 'see signs',[159] for the Lord (it says) has removed 'from Judea and from Jerusalem', 'the strong man and the strong woman, the giant and the strong man' and the rest up to the words, 'the understanding hearer'.[160]

Now Christ can have taken the synagogue as wife and lived with her in marriage first but later not have been pleased by her. The ground of her not pleasing him was that a shameful deed was found in her.[161] For what is more shameful than the fact that they considered Barabbas the thief worthy of release and condemned Jesus when it was proposed that one be released at the feast? And what is more shameful than that they all said against him, 'Crucify, crucify him', and, 'Remove such a one from the earth'?[162] And is it not also shameful when they said, 'His blood be on us and on our children'?[163] When, therefore, he was vindicated, Jerusalem was surrounded 'by armies' and 'her desolation' was near and their 'house' was abandoned to them and 'the daughter of Zion' was forsaken 'like a tent in a vineyard, and like a garden-watcher's hut in a cucumber bed, and like a city besieged'.[164] And it was at the same time, I think, that the husband wrote the 'bill of divorce' for his former wife and placed it 'in her hands' and sent her away 'from his house', and the certificate of indebtedness of the wife from the Gentiles was expunged. The apostle says of this, 'He cancelled the certificate in ordinances which was against us and removed it from our midst when he nailed it to the cross'.[165] For Paul and others became proselytes of Israel for the wife from the Gentiles.[166]

[158] Dt 24:1. [159] Ps 73:9. [160] Is 3:1–3. [161] Dt 24:1.
[162] Lk 23:21; Acts 22:22. [163] Mt 27:25. [164] Lk 21:20; Mt 23:38; Is 1:8.
[165] Col 2:14.
[166] 'And others' is Huet's conjecture. Klostermann thinks something is missing in the text at this point, but does not make a suggestion. There must be an additional subject besides 'Paul' because the verb in the sentence is plural.

The former wife, therefore, who did not please her husband because a 'shameful deed' was found in her, departed from the house of her husband. After she departed she became another man's wife and subjected herself to him. One must say that the other husband was either the thief Barabbas who, in a figurative sense is the devil, or that he was some wicked power. And what was written first in the law has happened in the case of some who belong to that synagogue, and in the case of others, what was written second. For the last man hated the woman. 'He will write her a bill of divorce, and will put it in her hands and send her out of his house' sometime at the end of things since God has ordained this to happen.[167] For just as the good God will put 'enmity between' the serpent and 'the woman and between' his 'seed and her seed',[168] so he will ordain that 'the last man will hate her'.[169]

20 And it happens that others live with a husband who does not hate them. They remain in the house of the last husband and he takes their synagogue as his own wife.[170] But even in their case, the last husband dies, perhaps when 'death, the last enemy' of Christ 'is destroyed'.[171] But whether it is the first or the last of these possibilities that happens to the woman, 'the first husband who sent her away', it says, 'cannot return and take her to be his wife after she has been defiled, because it is an abomination before the Lord your God'.[172] These words, however, will seem inconsistent with the saying, 'When the fullness of the Gentiles has entered, all Israel will be saved'.[173]

But consider if one can say, in relation to this that, at any rate, if she is to be saved, her salvation will depend on her former husband returning and 'taking her as his wife after she has been defiled'.[174] A priest, on the one hand, 'shall not take' a wife who is a 'prostitute' and 'divorced', but no one else is forbidden to do this (since all others are inferior to the priest).[175] But if you inquire about the calling of the Gentiles in relation to the 'prostitute', you will make use of the command, 'Take for yourself a wife of prostitution and children of prostitution' and what follows these words.[176] For as 'the priests in the temple are innocent when they profane the Sabbath',[177] so is he innocent also who divorces his former wife and, at the right time, takes a wife of prostitution. This is true because he acted on the command of the one who said, 'You shall not take a prostitute' as a wife, when this prohibition was necessary and as long as it was necessary, and who said, when there was good reason to do so, 'Take for yourself a wife of prostitution'.[178] For just as 'the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath', and not a slave of the Sabbath as the people are, so he who gave the law is Lord of giving and altering the law 'until the time of correction' comes. But once the 'time of correction' approaches he has authority also to give 'another way and another heart' 'at the acceptable time' 'and in the day of salvation', after the

[167] Dt 24:3. [168] Gn 3:15. [169] Dt 24:3. [170] Dt 24:3b. [171] 1 Cor 15:26.
[172] Dt 24:4. [173] Rom 11:25–6. [174] Dt 24:4. [175] Lev 21:14.
[176] Hos 1:2. [177] Mt 12:5. [178] Lev 21:14; Hos 1:2.

former way and the former heart.[179] This is one way of interpreting the law about the bill of divorce.

21 Now someone might investigate if the human soul can figuratively be called a wife and the angel who protects her and rules her, who is her recourse because he has dominion over her,[180] a husband, since in this way, each angel lives lawfully with the soul which is worthy of the protection of a divine angel. But at some point, after a long and extensive cohabitation, there might be a cause in the soul which results in it not pleasing the angel who has dominion over it and rules it because a 'shameful deed' was found in it. The angel would then write certificates of indebtedness,[181] as they are written, and he would write a 'bill of divorce', which is put 'in the hands' of the soul being divorced, so that the soul being sent 'out of his house' might no longer be a member of the household of its former protector. And it could also come about that the soul 'which departs' from her former household might marry 'another' husband and experience failure with him too. It could happen this time because he hates her, and not as in the former marriage when she did not please her husband because 'a shameful deed' was discovered 'in her'.[182] And this second husband who is sending her away 'from his house' might also write her a 'bill of divorce' and put it in her hands.[183] Now someone might ask, even though it is a daring question, if there can be a change of the life of angels with humans so that, so far as their relation with us is concerned it is equivalent to their death. But however that may be, the wife who has once fallen away from her former husband will not return to him, for 'the former husband who divorced her will not be able to return and take her to be his wife after she has been defiled'.[184] Now if one might dare and justify such a view from a writing which is in circulation among the churches but which not all think is divine, one might take the passage from *The Shepherd* concerning some who are under Michael at the time they believe but fall away from him because they love pleasure and come under the control of the angel of unrestraint, then under that of the angel of punishment, after which they come under the angel of repentance.[185] For you see that no longer does the wife or soul which once surrendered to unrestraint return again to the first ruler, but even after she has been punished, she becomes subject to someone inferior to Michael, for the angel of repentance is inferior to him. We must pay careful attention, then, that a 'shameful deed' is not discovered in us and we fail to please our husband,

[179] Mt 12:8; Heb 9:10; Jer 39:39; Is 49:8. [180] Gn 3:16.

[181] Since this is mentioned in conjunction with the bill of divorce, but nevertheless seems to be a separate document, it may be a reference to the Hebrew *Ketubah*, which was a written document in which a bridegroom promised a sum of money to the bride in case he died or divorced her. For the definition see Danby (1958/1933) 794, and for the rabbinic discussions see Ibid., 245–64.

[182] Dt 24:2, 3. [183] Dt 24:3. [184] Dt 24:4.

[185] *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Similitude 8.3; 6.2, 3; 9.1, 14.

Christ, or the angel who has been put in charge of us. For if we do not pay attention, it may turn out that we too will receive a bill of divorce and either be deprived of a guardian—but I do not think this desirable, if I may put it this way—or we will go to another husband and accept the marriage of an angel with our soul.

22 And since I have arrived at the passage I would say that perhaps now we will be able to understand and present clearly a question that is difficult to grasp and perceive related to the apostle's legislation concerning ecclesiastical affairs. Paul wants no one in the church who has accepted any authority over the masses, such as in the sacramental rites, to have been married a second time. In the first Epistle to Timothy he lays down the law concerning bishops and says, 'If anyone desires the position of bishop, he desires an excellent work. The bishop, therefore, must be blameless, husband of one wife, sober, self-controlled' and what follows.[186] And of deacons he says, 'Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling well their own children and households', and the rest.[187] And also when he established the order of widows, he said, Let a 'widow have reached no less than sixty years of age, the wife of one husband', and after these words he adds things that take second and third place to this.[188] Finally, in the Epistle to Titus he says, 'I left you on Crete that you might complete the things which remained, and appoint elders in each city, as I commanded you, if anyone is blameless, husband of one wife, having children who are faithful' and of course what follows.[189]

We raise the question at this point of why Paul does not permit twice-married people to be appointed to ecclesiastical offices, since we perceive it to be possible that some who have been married twice are much better than those married only once. Such an issue seems to me worth investigating. It is possible that someone who failed in two marriages was still a young man when he divorced the second wife and that he passed the rest of his life into his elderly years in a chaste and pure manner.

Who, then, with good reason, would not raise the following question? Why in the world, when we are looking for a ruler of the church, do we not appoint such a twice-married man as this on the basis of the texts about marriage?[190] Instead, we latch on to and make our ruler a man who has been married only once and has, perhaps, lived into old age with his wife, even if he has not always practised purity and self-control. Since the bishop, presbyter, and deacon are symbols of realities related to these terms, on the basis of what is said in the law concerning the bill of divorce, I wonder if it was his desire to appoint those married only once symbolically, so that the person capable of giving attention

[186] 1 Tim 3:1–2. [187] 1 Tim 3:12. [188] 1 Tim 5:9. [189] Tit 1:5–6.

[190] I think Origen may be referring here not to the Pauline texts he has just cited, which are not specifically texts about marriage but about ecclesiastical offices, but to the Dt 24:1–4 texts which he has been discussing in the last several chapters.

to the realities might discover from the spiritual law that person who is unworthy of ecclesiastical rule, whose soul did not please her husband because a 'shameful deed' was discovered in it and it had come to deserve the bill of divorce. For such a soul, after it has lived with the second husband and has been hated by him, can no longer return to her former husband after the second bill of divorce. It is probable, then, that other reasons will be discovered by people much wiser than us and more capable of perceiving such important things, either on the law about the bill of divorce or the apostolic teaching which forbids twice-married people to rule the church or from being honoured with presiding in it. We, however, have uttered the insights which have occurred to us on these passages, until those superior insights are discovered which, by the sheer brilliance of their intellectual light, can make what we have said dim.

23 Now even if we appear to have touched on things beyond our capacity in these passages, none the less we must add the following remarks because of the literal meaning. Some of the laws were written, not to continue but to accommodate the weakness of those for whom they were given. Something like this is revealed in the statement that 'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your hearts', but what precedes and continues after the law which was written because of the hardness of heart is found in the words, 'but from the beginning it was not like this'.[191] But in the New Testament as well there are some laws which have been given which follow the pattern in the saying that 'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your hearts'. For example, it is because of the hardness of our heart, because of weakness, that is, that it has been written, 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman; but because of the prevalence of sexual immorality let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband'. Further, there is the exhortation, 'Let the husband fulfil his sexual duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband'. At all events, he adds to these words, 'But I say this as a concession, not as a command'.[192] But there is also the statement, 'A wife has been bound for as long as her husband lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord'.[193] Paul says this because of our hardness of heart or weakness, because we do not want to be zealous for 'the greater gifts'[194] and to become more blessed.[195] Now already some leaders of the church have permitted things beyond what has been written[196] so that a woman is married 'while her husband is living', acting

[191] Mt 19:8. [192] 1 Cor 7:1–6. [193] 1 Cor 7:39. [194] 1 Cor 12:31.

[195] 1 Cor 7:40. The Latin text adds here the words of 1 Cor 7:8–9, 'But if this has been commanded because of the hardness of our heart, how much more is that because of the hardness of our heart which he says elsewhere about widows who want to marry again: But if they do not practise self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn'.

[196] Cf. 1 Cor 4:6.

contrary to the written word which says, 'A wife has been bound for as long as her husband lives', and the further word, 'Therefore, the woman who marries another man while her husband is living will be called an adulteress'.[197] The latter is not at all unreasonable for it is likely that this accommodation was permitted in contrast to worse things contrary to laws which had been ordained and recorded from the beginning.

24 But perhaps some Jewish man will dare to oppose our Saviour's teaching and say that Jesus, too, said, 'Whoever divorces his wife except for sexual immorality makes her an adulteress'.[198] Jesus permitted divorcing a wife like Moses did. But he said Moses had given the law because of the people's hardness of heart. The objector will say further that Moses' words, 'Because he discovered a shameful deed in her'[199] are equivalent to Jesus' statement about sexual immorality, for which a husband might, with good reason, divorce his wife. But we must reply to him that if, in keeping with the law, a woman who is involved in adultery shall be stoned,[200] then it is clear that adultery is not what is meant by a 'shameful deed'. For there is no need to write a 'bill of divorce' in the case of adultery, or any sexually disgraceful conduct, and place it in the hands of the wife. But perhaps Moses meant that every sin a wife commits is a shameful deed. On this basis, a husband writes a bill of divorce and dismisses the wife from his house for whatever he might discover in a woman who does not please him. 'But from the beginning it was not like this'.[201] After these words our Saviour says, 'Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery'.[202] This permits the dissolution of marriages on the basis of no sin other than sexual immorality being discovered in the wife.

Now it might be asked that if this is the only ground on which Jesus commands the divorce of a wife, what should be done if a wife is caught, not in sexual immorality, but say in witchcraft, or in the destruction of a child born to them during the husband's absence, or in any form of murder whatever? And further, if a wife is stealing and squandering or plundering her husband's household but is not involved in sexual immorality, someone might ask if he will, with good reason, divorce such a wife, since the Saviour forbids anyone to divorce his wife 'except on the ground of sexual immorality'. Either way something absurd is indicated, but I do not know if it is truly absurd. For to put up with such great sins, which are likely worse than adultery and sexual immorality, will appear to be irrational. But on the other hand, everyone would agree that it is impious to act contrary to the intention of the Saviour's teaching.[203]

[197] Rom 7:3. [198] Mt 19:9. [199] Dt 24:1. [200] See Dt 22:13–24.
[201] Mt 19:8. [202] Mt 19:9.
[203] Origen seems to be appealing here to the rhetorical topic, common in arguing legal cases, that distinguished between what a document said and what the author of the document meant (Quintillian 7.6.1 in Butler (1953/1921) Vol. 3, 135).

I wonder, therefore, why Jesus did not say, 'Let no one divorce his wife except on the ground of sexual immorality', but says instead, 'Whoever divorces his wife except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery'.[204] For there is no question that the husband who divorces a wife who is not committing sexual immorality makes her commit adultery so far as lies in his power to do so. For if it is true that a woman 'will be called an adulteress if she marries another man while her husband is living' and the husband, by divorcing his wife, gives her the occasion for a second marriage, he obviously, by this action, makes her commit adultery. And you might also investigate whether or not there is a defence for divorce[205] in the case of a wife caught in witchcraft or murder, or who has committed some act such as these. For a husband can cause his wife to commit adultery for other reasons than divorce. This is the case, for example, when a husband permits his wife more freedom than is proper, and allows her to be friends with men of her own choosing. For such mistakes are often made by women because of the stupidity of their husbands. But after making a careful investigation one will declare if there is a topic[206] of defence for such men or not in the case of such occurrences, and one will do the same for the difficulties we have raised on the passage.

Furthermore, the husband who abstains from his wife[207] often makes her commit adultery because he does not fulfil her desires, even if he does it under the illusion of practicing greater holiness and self-control. And perhaps the husband who, so far as lies in his power, makes his wife commit adultery because he does not fulfil her desires is more deserving of blame than the one who divorces his wife on grounds other than sexual immorality, such as witchcraft or murder or any of the most serious sins. And just as a woman is an adulteress even though she appears to be married to another man while her former husband is still living, so too a man, although he appears to marry a woman who has been divorced, does not so much marry her as commits adultery with her according to the word of our Saviour.[208]

25 After this, when the disciples of Christ have grasped how many things can come up in marriages which the husband must put up with and, for this reason, dismiss the most cruel activities, or not put up with them and transgress

[204] Mt 19:9, except that according to the Nestle-Aland 27 text of Mt 19:9, after the opening words of the quotation ('Whoever divorces his wife') Origen's words are those of Mt 5:32. The Nestle-Aland apparatus shows, however, that the fourth-century MS Vaticanus has the wording of Mt 5:32 here as Origen does, so the MS Origen used may have had this reading for Mt 19:9.

[205] My conjecture. Klostermann indicates that something is missing in the text at this point.

[206] Origen appears to be thinking as a rhetorician here. 'Topics' was the title given to a list of subject areas from which arguments could be drawn, and which every rhetorician would have memorized for instant access. See Cicero, *Topica* 2.8.

[207] See 1 Cor 7:5.

[208] This, again (see note 204 above), derives from Mt 5:32, although the Nestle-Aland apparatus shows that Vaticanus has the clause here, as does the fourth-century papyrus P25, which contains only portions of Mt 18 and 19.

the teachings of Christ, they say to him, 'If this is the way it is between a man and his wife, it is not advantageous to marry'.[209] They flee to celibacy for refuge as being easier and more advantageous than marriage seems to be.[210] But the Saviour replies to their comment, and teaches us that absolute purity is a gift given by God, and that it does not come by discipline alone but is given by God in accompaniment with much prayer. What he says is, 'Not all can embrace this teaching, but those to whom it has been given'.[211]

Then, since some misrepresent the words, 'to whom it has been given', as providing a defence for those who want to be pure in celibacy but are overpowered by their desires, we must say that since we believe in what has been written, why do we latch on to the words, 'but to whom it has been given', and do not further pay attention to the words, 'Ask, and it will be given to you', and to what is added to that, 'For everyone who asks receives'?[212] For if those 'to whom it has been given' can embrace the teaching about absolute purity, let the person who wants it ask, trusting and believing in the one who says, 'Ask and it will be given to you', and he will receive if he has no doubt regarding the saying, 'Everyone who asks receives'.

And since you are considering that passage, you will inquire who it is who asks. For no one of those who did not receive asked, even though he seemed to do so, since it is not right to assert that the saying, 'Everyone who asks receives', is false. Who then is the one who asks, other than the one who trusts in Jesus who says, 'If you stand praying', 'believe that you receive, and you will receive'?[213] The one who asks must do everything in his power to pray 'in the Spirit', 'but also' to pray 'with his mind', and 'to pray unceasingly', remembering the words, 'He addressed a parable to them that they must always pray and not faint, saying, There was a judge in a city', and the words which follow.[214]

It is useful to know what asking and receiving are, and what the words, 'Everyone who asks receives', mean, along with the words, 'I say to you, although he will not get up and give to him because he is his friend, because of his shamelessness he will arise and give him as much as he needs'. Then he adds, 'And I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you', and the words which follow.[215] Further, because of the words, 'Not all can embrace this teaching, but those to whom it has been given', there is the exhortation to ask in a manner worthy of receiving, along with the words, 'What son will ask his father for a fish, and be handed a snake instead of a fish?' and what follows. God, therefore, will give the good gift, which is absolute purity in celibacy and chastity, to those who ask him from their whole soul, in faith, and ceaseless prayer.[216]

[209] Mt 19:10.

[210] Quintillian 2.4.25 indicates that the question 'Whether marriage is desirable?' was the kind of thesis used in educating boys in deliberative oratory.

[211] Mt 19:11. [212] Mt 7:7, 8. [213] Mk 11:25, 24.

[214] 1 Cor 14:15; 1 Thes 5:17; Lk 18:1–2. [215] Lk 11:8–10. [216] See Lk 11:11–13.

Book 15 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 19:12–20:16

1 'For there are eunuchs who were born such from their mother's womb', up to the words, 'Let the one who is able to embrace this embrace it'.[1]

Before we set forth the interpretation of this passage we think is correct, we will note two incorrect interpretations. First, we will refute the incorrect interpretations as well as we can and guard ourselves, so far as possible, from making false statements. Then, if we grasp the true intention[2] of the words in the passage, we may have better lives. So, let us approach the passage before us.

Based on sequence[3] with the meaning of the two references to eunuchs which appear to be physical, some think the third is physical also. These have had the audacity, either from fear of God or ignorance, to submit to physical castration. They have brought reproach on themselves and perhaps shame as well not only from those who are hostile to the faith but even more from all who are aware of human actions, or from the one who produced the pain and mutilation of the body and whatever else one who has submitted to such a deed might suffer in the illusion of fearing God and practising continence against unlimited desire.

Many others have understood the passage in the following way because they did not examine closely the manner of the sequence of the teachings. They have taken the two previous cases as obviously intended in a physical sense by the Saviour who indicated nothing more than what could be perceived by the senses. They have not, however, thought the third as well to have been meant literally. Instead, they think castration in the third example refers to the action of the Logos. This happens when, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, they

[1] Mt 19:12.

[2] See Book 14.24, note 203.

[3] See the Introduction, section 'The Disciples and the Crowds in Relation to Scripture and Its Interpretation'; see also Heine (forthcoming b), section 'The Sequence of the Text' and below in 15.25.

have cut off the desire for physical things by means of the very sharp Word,[4] and have despised the wanton acts of the body which lose their power against the soul which has cut off desire by means of the Logos.

Now one must be aware that the first interpreters are friends of the letter of the Gospel and have not understood that Jesus spoke these words as well in parables and in a spiritual manner.[5] They have understood the words in the passage consistently with those who concede that the two previous castrations were meant physically, for they explain the third consistently with the previous two. They do not err so far as the sequence among the three is concerned, for if the first two are meant in a physical sense, it follows that the third is physical too. Their error is that they have looked at the beginning of the sayings in the passage incorrectly.

The second group, however, has understood the third case correctly when they considered the saying to reveal the cutting of the sensuous nature off from the soul. But they have not perceived in addition that it is also consistent with such an interpretation to explain the two previous castrations allegorically in the same way as the third or, conversely, to explain the third in a similar manner to the previous two. Since, then, it is fitting to say of certain other words not only in the Old Testament but also in the New, 'The letter kills, but the spirit gives life',[6] one must affirm this also of the words in the passage before us. For if the letter of the two castrations is observed, one might say that it killed those who considered the third consistently with the previous cases and who dared to say (since they think they are embracing it in accordance with the word of the Lord) that they made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven like those first examples who were made eunuchs.

2 Now if someone wants to take other examples from the New Testament which contain a letter which kills he should listen to what the Saviour said to the apostles, 'When I sent you out without purse, knapsack, and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?' To this the evangelist adds, 'And they answered, No. Therefore, Jesus said to them, But now let him who has a purse take it up, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who does not have a sword sell his garment and buy one'.[7] If someone does not perceive the intention of Jesus' words to sell his material garment and buy a murderous sword he will perish, and he may even perish 'by the sword', because he has taken such a 'sword' and has acted contrary to the intention of Jesus and has misinterpreted his word.[8] This is not the time to explain what sort of sword is meant.

[4] This seems to be an allusion to Heb 4:12, but the vocabulary is somewhat different.

[5] The phrase, 'these words as well in parables', refers, I think, to the first two categories of eunuchs. The first two categories appeared to almost all readers to be literal, and this was what gave some the basis for understanding the third category to be literal also.

[6] 2 Cor 3:6. [7] Lk 22:35–6. [8] Mt 26:52.

'Greet no one on the road'[9] is another example. If one has not examined what Jesus intended when he gave this command, and consequently, being zealous for the apostolic life he should 'greet no one on the road', he would appear unsocial and foolish to those who see him acting this way. Whenever those who attribute the cause of thinking in this way to the Logos on account of whom that person seems to have done this, they would be led to hate the Logos of God since he renders those in him boorish and unsocial. And the person who 'greets no one on the road' for this reason may suffer death because of the pretext of the letter, since the letter killed him. And further, if someone were to cut out his right eye as the cause of his seeing wicked things, or cut off the right hand of his body or the right foot of his flesh, he would suffer with those who are killed because of the letter, since he too has remained with the letter when he should ascend to the spirit of what is said. Others of our predecessors, therefore, did not hesitate in their own writings to incite some to have the audacity to suffer the third state of castration in the same way as the first two because of the kingdom of heaven.

3 We, however, although we once knew Christ, the Logos of God, 'according to the flesh' and according to the letter 'but now no longer know him in this way',[10] disapprove of the understanding of those who apply the third state of castration to themselves because of the kingdom of heaven. We would not spend more time on the refutation of the one who wants to understand the third state of castration physically in a manner similar to the first two if we had not seen those who dared, and read those able to move a very fervent (in faith, not rationality) soul to such audacity. Sextus, indeed, says in his *Sentences*, a book that circulates among many people as an approved book, 'Cast off every bodily part which moves you to disregard continence, for it is better to live a continent life without the part than with it to be in danger of death'. Again, further in the same book, he gives occasion for a similar action and says, 'You may see men undergo operations and cast off parts of the body for the health of the rest of it; how much better to do this for continence'.[11] And Philo too, who is highly esteemed among intelligent people for many of his treatises on the law of Moses, says in a book to which he gave the title, *That the Worse Likes to Attack the Better*, 'To be castrated is better than to rage after lawless sexual relationships'.[12]

But we must not believe them because they have not understood the intention of the sacred writings on these matters. For if abstinence has been listed among the fruits 'of the Spirit' along with love, joy, patience, and the rest,[13] one must produce abstinence as a fruit and preserve the body given by God as

[9] Lk 10:4. [10] 2 Cor 5:16.
[11] *The Sentences of Sextus*, maxims 13 and 273. See the discussion of this section in Chadwick (1959) 109–14.
[12] Philo, *Det* 176. [13] Gal 5:22–3.

male,[14] rather than venture some other thing[15] with the result that one also transgresses the command which says, 'You shall not destroy the appearance of your beard'.[16] This is a useful statement, even in the literal sense, to dissuade those who are fervent but rather young in the faith. We must say of such young men that they have a desire for continence 'but not in accordance with knowledge'.[17] We must also call attention to the words, 'And if men fight together, a man with his own brother', and the words which follow, up to the statement, 'Your eye shall not spare her'.[18] For if a hand which has seized a man's testicles is cut off, what is to happen to the man who has handed himself over to such a misfortune because he is ignorant of the way which leads to continence? Therefore, let the man who is contemplating such an audacious act consider the things he will suffer from those who reproach him and use the statement, 'A castrated male and one who has made himself a eunuch shall not enter the assembly of the Lord',[19] since they number him with those who have made themselves eunuchs.

I have not yet mentioned what one also might suffer when the sperm is hindered (as the sons of the physicians say) from descending from the head to the masculine areas and in its descent through the blood-vessels around the cheeks causes men to grow hair on their chins from the natural heat of the descent. Those who think they must make themselves eunuchs in a physical sense because of the kingdom of heaven lack this hair.[20] And what might one suffer from bodily fluid such as this, whether headaches or vertigo, which sometimes come upon the reasoning faculty and confuse the imagination by forming strange images?[21]

Before I come to the explanation of the words in this passage, I must say that Marcion has gained a certain following by declaring that one must not interpret

[14] Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paed* 3.4.26.3, 'The true eunuch is not the one who is unable to indulge in sexual pleasure, but the one who is not willing'.

[15] See Lucian, *The Eunuch* 6, where an objection to a eunuch being appointed to a chair of philosophy in Athens was that 'a eunuch was neither man nor woman but something composite, hybrid, and monstrous, alien to human nature' (trans. Harmon [1936] 337).

[16] Lev 19:27. [17] Rom 10:2. [18] Dt 25:11–12. [19] Dt 23:1 (2).

[20] Origen is here reflecting rather closely the ancient view of the movement of sperm in the body that Hippocrates expressed. He believed that sperm originated in the head and, especially but not exclusively, in intercourse, moved through the blood-vessels to the genitals. It was believed to be slowed in passing around the chin because of its protrusion, hence producing the growth of more hair there. Hippocrates further asserted that men made eunuchs when they were children lacked hair on their chins because the blood-vessels were never opened for the sperm to pass through (*On the Nature of the Child*, ch. 20). Absence of a beard is also the sign of a eunuch in Lucian, *The Eunuch*, 8–9 (Harmon [1936] 339–41).

[21] This too reflects ancient medical opinion. Galen, who had spent six years studying medicine in Alexandria in the mid-second century AD, believed that excessive amounts of seed in a male could cause headaches. 'At times, doctors might even counsel ejaculation, so as to relieve the body of the excessive deposits of seed that caused headaches and torpor: health-conscious gentlemen made love, wrote Galen, even when the act gave them no particular pleasure' (Brown [1988] 20 citing Galen, *de locis affectis* 6.5, in C. G. Kühn, ed. *Galeni Opera* 8:417–20).

Scripture allegorically,[22] and has rejected these passages because he thinks they are not the words of the Saviour. He thinks that if the believer says the Saviour spoke these words he must be willing, if he wants to be obedient, to deliver himself to such audacious acts. The other option is to obey sound reason and not to submit to such audacious acts which make the word disreputable, but to deny them to be the words of the Saviour, since they are not to be allegorized.

4 We, however, who want to preserve the sequence of the three states of being eunuchs, and who approve of the spiritual interpretation of the third, will say that the first two should be interpreted the same way as the third. Now those who are sexually inactive and follow moral restraints in these matters, and do not devote themselves to moral impurities or similar things would be said to be eunuchs. I think there are three distinctions among those who are sexually inactive. Some are such by their constitution. One might say of these, 'There are eunuchs who were born such from their mother's womb'. Others, however, impelled by human words practise abstinence from sexual pleasures and all intemperance connected with the topic. It was truly not the word of God which produced in them such purpose, discipline and, if I may call it this, achievement, but human words, either from Greek philosophers, or heretics 'who forbid marriage and command abstinence from foods'.[23] It is these, in my view, who are referred to in the words, 'There are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men'. The following, however, is what is worthy of approval: to take up the word which is living, and active, and sharper 'than any two-edged sword', even 'the sword of the Spirit',[24] as the apostle labelled it, and cut off the passionate faculty of the soul without touching the body, and do this [not unwillingly because one fears men, or because one wants human praise, but][25] because one has considered the kingdom of heaven and concluded that cutting off the passionate faculty of his soul is the greatest thing towards inheriting it. The words, 'There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs because of the kingdom of heaven', would be appropriately applied to such people, but not in the way those think who have understood these words to refer to a physical act.

5 It is a great capacity to embrace the castration of the soul by that[26] word which 'not all can embrace, but those to whom it has been given'. And 'it has been given' to all who have asked for the sword of reason from God and have used it in the proper way to make themselves eunuchs 'because of the kingdom

[22] See Harnack (1960/1924) 260, where he has collected the passages in which Marcion rejects allegorical interpretation.

[23] 1 Tim 4:3. [24] Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17.

[25] The bracketed words come from the Latin text. Klostermann marks a lacuna in the Greek manuscript here.

[26] There is no article or demonstrative adjective with the term *logon* here, but Origen clearly intends the *logon* which is the object of the verb 'embrace' in Mt 19:11.

of heaven'. If we must also treat Scriptural narratives by the aid of the anagogical meaning we have brought to light in them, we will say that some are eunuchs of Pharaoh and are incapable of producing any good. They were made eunuchs to pour his wine and bake his bread. On the other hand, there are men of God who are eunuchs incapable of producing any evil[27] that they might build Jerusalem which had fallen. The story about the first eunuchs is written in Genesis;[28] an example of the second group is found in the second book of Ezra, who says, 'And I was a eunuch for the king. And it came to pass in the month Nisan in the twentieth year of Arthasastha the king' and what follows, up to the words, 'And it was good before the king, and he sent me'.[29] When you read second Ezra you will discover everything mentioned in the passage and you will understand why it was worthy to become a chief eunuch: it resulted in the temple of God being rebuilt. For the children of the Hebrews say that Daniel and the three with him, Hananias, Azarias, and Misael, were made eunuchs in Babylon fulfilling the prophecy Isaiah spoke to Hezekiah in the words, 'They will take some of your seed and make them eunuchs in the house of the king of Babylon'.[30] And they say that Isaiah also prophesied about these when he declared, 'Let not the foreigner who is devoted to the Lord say, Then the Lord will banish me from his people', and what follows up to the words, 'better than sons and daughters'.[31] It is good, therefore, in relation to Babylon as a mystical place, not to produce children there, but to be sterile in relation to Babylon, as Daniel was, so that we might conceive from the divine Spirit and bring forth visions and prophecies, as Daniel and those with him did.

Now you must be aware that there are several plausible arguments for constructing a case that the three castrations are physical. The person who wants to prove this by reason might discover support for them both in what I have mentioned above and in those authors whose writings have taught this. But we did not want to present these arguments so that, for the sake of an exercise in presenting arguments and their refutations, we not become the occasion for those who do not embrace the word about the eunuch in the way Jesus intended it. They assume this saying is to be understood physically and think one must embrace it in a way that differs from the proper way to understand it. But the person who lives 'in the Spirit' and follows 'the Spirit'[32] must also be convinced that the three cases of castration were meant spiritually.

[27] Supplied by Klostermann, based on the Latin tradition.

[28] The term 'eunuch' appears in the LXX at Gn 39:1 and 40:2, 7. The Hebrew text has the word meaning 'eunuch' (*saris*) in these passages as well, but the NRSV has chosen to translate it 'officer'.

[29] Gn 40; 2 Ezra (Neh) 11:11–12:6. (Siniaticus has 'wine pourer' instead of 'eunuch' in 11:11.)

[30] Is 39:7. See Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 10.186; Archer (1977/1958) 20: on Dan 1:3. 'From this passage the Hebrews think that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were eunuchs, thus fulfilling that prophecy which is spoken by Isaiah regarding Hezekiah: "And they shall take of thy seed and make eunuchs of them in the house of the king of Babylon" (Isa. 37:7)' [from PL 35.624E]; *B San* 93.b.

[31] Is 56:3–5. [32] Gal 5:25.

6 'Then children were brought to him', and the words which follow up to the words, 'and when he had placed his hands on them he departed from there'.[33]

At the time the story which is recorded happened children were brought to Jesus because those bringing them wanted him to place his hands on them and pray. One must recognize, however, that there is no time when children do not offer their soul to Jesus, of whom he says, as if they were a deposit from God, 'Behold I and the children whom God gave me'.[34] Now let us call some of these children infants and others sucklings, who are younger than infants. And let our Lord prepare 'praise from the mouth' of both, so that when we have perceived how great his kindness to the children is we might repeat the saying, 'From the mouth of infants and sucklings I will prepare praise'.[35]

Those who belong to the flesh and are infants in Christ must be referred to as children. They are the sort of people the apostle Paul understood the Corinthians to be when he said, 'And I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but as those who belong to the flesh, as infants in Christ'.[36] Children like this were brought to Jesus then, and they are always being brought to him. The bringing of the infants to Jesus is a symbol of the numerous infants in Christ who belong to the church, along with the sucklings 'who need milk, not solid food'.[37] The one who said, because he cherished them 'like a nurse cherishing her own children',[38] 'I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you could not yet eat it, but you are not even able now', might say the same to them.[39]

The evangelists who mention the events in this passage have written, as Matthew says, 'Children were brought to Jesus', or as Mark says, 'They were bringing children to him' or, as Luke says, 'And they were bringing even babies to him'. But at the same time, they have all failed to mention by whom they were brought, or who was bringing them. They have, therefore, left us the task of investigating what they have omitted. It is worthwhile to see if it was by chance that such information was passed over by the three evangelists, for they could have written, Children were brought to him by their parents, or by their mothers, or, their mothers were bringing babies to him, or children to him. On the other hand, was it with thoughtful knowledge and wisdom that they wrote as they did to show that angels approached Jesus and were ministering to him?[40] The evangelists, who have a superior divine understanding, perceive the differences between the children or the babies, and know who must bring them to Jesus and when, so that, once they have been brought to him he might lay his hands on them. And they also know who must not bring them or at what time they must not be brought, for I think it is not without the ministry of angels that such children approach Jesus.

Now the intention of those bringing the children to Jesus is, as Matthew says, 'that Jesus might place his hands on them and pray'.[41] But Mark says it is

[33] Mt 19:13–15. [34] Heb 2:13 quoting Is 8:18. [35] Ps 8:3. [36] 1 Cor 3:1.
[37] Heb 5:12. [38] 1 Thess 2:7. [39] 1 Cor 3:2. [40] See Mt 4:11. [41] Mt 19:13.

'that he might touch them', and Luke, who calls them 'babies', says it is 'that he might touch them'.[42] For by Jesus' prayer and touch, the children and babies who cannot hear what those who are already spiritual hear, are satisfied with the help and benefit which they can grasp. For the power of Jesus touches them when the hands of his care alone are placed on them, and nothing worse touches them any longer. But perhaps, so far as the literal meaning is concerned, the intention of those bringing babies and children to him was that they thought that, once Jesus had touched the babies or children and had transferred his power to them by his touch, it was not possible that chance, or a demon, or anything else touch what Jesus had previously touched.

7 Now I think, too, that there are many evil powers busy around the human soul from the beginning, which frequently contrive against it. Those who brought the children or the babies to the Saviour did so because they had already learned of his power from previous experiences. They wanted him to place his hands on the children and the babies, pray for them, and touch them so that the worse spirits might be driven away. They hoped that his power would enter them and continue into the future, sufficing as a preventive measure against the touch of the opposing powers. The Saviour, therefore, understood this action not to be something simple and ill-timed, but to provide safety for those whom he touched by placing his hands on them. He says to the disciples, therefore, who were rebuking them and, thereby, preventing the children or the babies to be brought to him, 'Permit the children to come to me and do not hinder them'.[43]

If this explanation of by whom the children were brought or who was bringing them is reasonable, then it follows that there were among them certain select disciples of Jesus who should be understood as holy powers who were instructed by the son of God, for the designation, disciples of Jesus, is reasonably applied to such beings. Consequently, it is not only humans who are instructed by him, but also angels, to whom he appeared,[44] and any other in addition who wishes to believe in him from 'every name which is named not only in this age but also in that to come'.[45]

If, however, anyone considers such a view forced because he does not want the word disciples who were rebuking those bringing infants and children to Jesus applied to beings other than humans, then those bringing the infants and children to Jesus would be the simple. They undertake to teach the word and still possess the word of children which is like the milk the one who gives a drink to those needing milk gives. For they are not able to believe a more spiritual word than the observance of these things *** as he who is able to say, 'I am debtor both to Greeks and barbarians, both to wise and foolish'.[46] While these

[42] Mk 10:13; Lk 18:15. It is the same verb in Mk and Lk, but it is an aorist subjunctive in Mk and a present subjunctive in Lk. No distinction in translation can be made.
[43] Mt 19:14. [44] See 1 Tim 3:16. [45] Eph 1:21. [46] Rom 1:14.

are bringing such infants and children to Jesus, that is infants in faith who have learned even less, those who are thought to be teachers with more understanding than those who are simple and are, therefore, called disciples of Jesus, rebuke those teaching simply and bringing children and infants to Jesus before they learn about such infants and children.

But you will understand this clearly, if you have understood the statement, 'For consider your calling, brothers, because not many were wise in a fleshly sense, not many mighty, not many noble; but God chose the foolish things of the world' and, 'the weak things' and the 'ignoble' and 'the things which are not, that he might abolish the things which are'.[47] Let one notice, therefore, someone who professes ecclesiastical instruction and teaching bringing 'the foolish things of the world' and 'the despised things', and 'the ignoble things' *** which will be called, for this reason, children and infants, and when he sees this, let him rebuke the one bringing infants and children so young to the Saviour and teacher (as acting rashly).

And note if it is not fitting to refer the things just now examined to such matters, I mean those bringing children that Jesus 'might place his hands on them and pray',[48] and the disciples rebuking them. And the teacher, Saviour, and Lord might say to those rebuking the children who were being brought to Jesus, 'Permit the children, and do not hinder them coming to me'.[49] Then, urging his disciples who were already men to condescend for the benefit of the children (that they might become children to the children that they might gain the children[50]) let the Saviour say, 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven'.[51] For even he himself, 'although he was in the form of God did not consider being equal to God a thing to exploit'.[52] He became a child, for Herod said to the Magi, 'Go and inquire carefully about the child'. Matthew said that 'the star which they saw in the east went before them until it came and stopped where the child was'.[53] And after a few words Matthew says, 'They entered the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother'. The angel who appeared to Joseph also called our Saviour, who was such, and so young, a child when he said, 'Arise and take the child and his mother and flee into Egypt'.[54] And again, when Herod died an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream in Egypt and said, 'Arise, take the child and his mother'.[55] Jesus, therefore, not only in the historical sense but also in the figurative, humbled 'himself as a child'.[56]

Consequently, since he says, 'Learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart',[57] so he also says, 'learn from me' by becoming like a child. How, I ask,[58] is the kingdom of heaven of such? What sort of children are these concerning whom he does not permit the disciples to hinder those bringing them? Paul likewise, because he understood the saying, 'For of such is the kingdom of

[47] 1 Cor 1:26–8. [48] Mt 19:13. [49] Mt 19:14. [50] 1 Cor 9:22.
[51] Mt 19:14. [52] Phil 2:6. [53] Mt 2:8, 9. [54] Mt 2:13. [55] Mt 2:20.
[56] Mt 18:4. [57] Mt 11:29. [58] Klostermann indicates a lacuna in the text.

heaven', when he could have 'insisted on his own importance as an apostle of Christ', became an infant and, like a nurse cherishing her own child,[59] spoke like a child because of the child.

8 We must listen attentively to these words so that we not despise the little ones and the children in the church in the illusion of wisdom and of having progressed as adults. Knowing that Jesus said, 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven', let us become the kind of people that the children may be saved through us also. We must not only permit the children to be brought to Jesus, or only not prohibit them being brought, we must also ourselves become children[60] with the children, and do the will of the Saviour so that when the children are saved because we have become children, we may be exalted by God because we humbled ourselves. For something like this can also be understood in relation to the saying, 'Everyone who humbles himself will be exalted',[61] especially since Matthew has written a little earlier, 'Therefore, whoever shall humble himself as this child is the one who is great in the kingdom of heaven'.[62] When children are brought to Jesus, may these words be helpful to the disciples who censure those bringing them. And let the children know, even though they cannot understand everything that is said because they are children, that Jesus placed his hands on the children and when he had done this he departed from there. And after he had left power with the children by his touch he departed from the children, since they were not able to follow Jesus like the disciples did.

Now since the 'sayings of the Lord' are both evangelical and 'pure sayings' and 'silver refined by fire', 'tested', sent 'to the earth' and carefully 'purified' even 'seven times',[63] there ought to be some good reason why Matthew, who told the story in this passage, mentioned two reasons the children were brought to Jesus, but refers to only one in the words which follow. For the children were brought not only that Jesus might place his hands on them, but additionally that he might pray for them.

9 Now it is written next that 'after he placed his hands on them he departed from there'. It does not add, 'and after he prayed' (for it could have been said, 'And after he placed his hands on them and prayed he departed from there'). Consider, then, if you can say that the prayer of Jesus is preserved for the larger children, who can receive both the placing of Jesus' hands on them and his prayer to the father for them, but the imposition of his hands was sufficient for the smaller ones. I take the saying, 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven', to mean that even the wisest person should not treat the little ones in the church in an arrogant manner or despise the children and infants in Christ. It is helpful

[59] See 1 Thes 2:7.
[60] Koetschau, on the basis of the ancient Latin translation, supplies 'in humility' after 'children'.
[61] Lk 14:11. [62] Mt 18:4. [63] Ps 11:7.

to introduce the following saying from the Gospel according to Luke in this connection, 'Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a child'.[64] This refers to the one who is not a child but a man who has put away 'the things of a child' and who becomes 'as a child' to children,[65] and says to them, 'I was not able to speak to you as to spiritual people but as to people of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food'.[66] The whole context of the saying in Luke is, 'And they brought to him even babies, that he might touch them' and what follows, up to the saying, 'Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a child will by no means enter it'.[67] Mark, likewise, presented the last things particularly in almost the same words.

10 'And behold, someone approached him and said, Teacher, what good deed shall I do that I may have eternal life?' and what follows, up to the words, 'But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first'.[68]

It is written in the Psalms, as man is able to do good, 'Who wishes life, loving to see good days? Stop your tongue from speaking evil, and your lips from speaking deceitfully; shun evil and do good'.[69] But here the Saviour replies to the man who asked, 'What good deed shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life? Why do you ask me about the good? There is one who is good'. He said this because good, in the strict sense, can be attributed to no one except God. Now you must know that here good, in the strict sense, is applied to God alone, but in other places it is applied loosely to good works, a good man, and a good tree. You would also find good applied to many other things. One must not think, therefore, that the command, 'Do good', is in conflict with the saying, 'Why do you ask me about the good? There is one who is good', which is addressed to the man who asked, 'Teacher, what good deed shall I do?' Matthew, therefore, recorded this, since the Saviour was asked about a good deed in the question, 'What good deed shall I do?' But Mark and Luke say the Saviour said, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except one, God',[70] because the word 'good' which is applied to God would not also be applied to another. For God would not be good in this way should it be said, 'A good man' brings forth good things 'from the good treasure of his heart'.[71]

And as the Saviour is the 'image of the invisible God', so he is also the 'image of his goodness',[72] and in the case of all inferior things to which the expression 'good' is applied, what is said in relation to himself has a different meaning. As he is an 'image' of his 'goodness' in relation to the Father, so in relation to the rest he is whatever the goodness of the Father is in relation to him. Or indeed, it is possible to see some appropriate analogy in the case of the goodness of God in relation to the Saviour who is the image 'of his goodness' rather than in the case of the Saviour in relation to a good man, a good work, and a good tree.

[64] Lk 18:17. [65] 1 Cor 13:11. [66] 1 Cor 3:1–2. [67] Lk 18:15–17.
[68] Mt 19:16–30. [69] Ps 33:13–15. [70] Mk 10:18; Lk 18:19. [71] Lk 6:45.
[72] Col 1:15; Wisd 7:26.

For because the Saviour is the 'image of the goodness' of God himself, his pre-eminence in relation to the inferior good things is greater than the pre-eminence of God, who is good, in relation to the Saviour who said, 'The Father who sent me is greater than me',[73] since he is also the image 'of the goodness' of God in relation to the others.

But perhaps the statement, 'When you do all that you are ordered to do, you ought to say, we are useless slaves; we have done what we ought to do',[74] pertains to the intention of what was said in the question, 'What good thing shall I do?' And Jesus responded to it, 'Why do you ask me about the good? There is one who is good'. For if we do all that we are ordered to do, we have not in this way (as related to the words in this place) done anything good. For if the things we do are good, he would not have said that the one who has done what he was ordered to do must say, 'We are useless slaves'. Now it is possible by using language imprecisely to say that these things are good in a way similar to the command, 'Shun evil and do good'.[75] But I think that the one who does what is commanded in the words, 'Shun evil and do good', does good so far as the accomplishments of the rest of humanity are concerned, but so far as truly [doing good in relation to the words in this text, 'There is one who is good', our good is not] good.[76] And just as 'no living being will be considered just before God',[77] since all human justice is proven not to be justice when the justice of God is seen, so no person would be called good before the good God, although one might be said to be good as compared to other people in relation to lesser things.

11 Now someone might say that since the Saviour knows that the habitual state and purpose of the person who is inquiring falls very short of doing that good which humans are capable of, he said to him (who asked, 'What good thing shall I do?'), 'Why do you ask me about the good?' It is as if he had said, Do you inquire what good thing you must do to inherit eternal life even though you are not prepared for what I will say about the good? Then he teaches that there is one who is truly good, of whom the law says, 'Hear, Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord'.[78] For he, whom I am convinced does all things as good, is Saviour in the precise sense, and Lord in the precise sense, and good in the precise sense.

But you will ask how those things not apprehended spiritually by those who accuse the God of the law among themselves and condemn him, exude the fragrance of his goodness, things which perhaps it is not easy to say of a human

[73] Jn 14:28. [74] Lk 17:10. [75] Ps 33:15.

[76] The bracketed words are based on the Latin text. Klostermann marks a lacuna in the Greek text. One might also assume that a negative has dropped out of the Greek text in this clause. This would yield a sentence meaning: But I think that the one who does what is commanded in the words, 'Shun evil and do good', does good in relation to the accomplishments of the rest of humanity, but *not* in relation to what is truly good.

[77] Ps 142:2. [78] Dt 6:4.

being.[79] For I am convinced that even the statement, 'I kill', exudes the fragrance of God's goodness no less than the statement, 'And I shall make alive'. Likewise, the statement, 'I smite', no less than, 'I shall heal'.[80] And even if 'he causes pain', you must know that a physician frequently causes pain too, but after God has caused pain he 'again restores'.[81] So too, out of his goodness 'he struck' those whom he struck, for 'God is dealing with you as sons' who are being disciplined. 'For what son is there whose father does not discipline him'?[82] But also, 'No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later, however, it returns the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those exercised by it'.[83] Wherefore, as God has smitten, so has he also healed. For the statement is true: 'He smote and his hands healed'.[84] And although what I am about to say is a paradox, nevertheless, I shall say it: Even what is called his wrath is an attribute of the good God. He reproves as he performs his saving work, and his so-called wrath, since it is an attribute of the good God, disciplines so that it might correct. Many things might be said concerning the goodness of God and 'the multitude of his kindness', to those not easily mislead. He, with good reason, hid this 'for those who fear' him, so that they not store up greater 'wrath' against themselves because they despise 'the wealth of his kindness and tolerance and patience in their hard and impenitent heart'.[85] They would not store up wrath because 'the wealth of the goodness' of God is hidden for them. I have said, therefore, what I can on the questions posed in this passage, 'Who is good?', and 'What good thing shall I do?'

12 Next, consider what the statement means, 'If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments'.[86] Note that he says, 'If you wish to enter into life', to one who is still, as it were, outside of life inquiring about the good. Here I investigate how many ways one can understand 'being outside of life' and 'entering into life'. Perhaps one way is that the person who is outside of him who said, 'I am the life',[87] and is estranged from him, is outside of life. Another is that everyone on earth (even if one is extremely righteous) can be in the shadow of life, since he says, 'Christ the Lord is the breath of our face, of whom we said, In his shadow we shall live among the nations'.[88] This person is not, however, in life itself, because he carries around a body of death and says, 'Who will deliver me from this body of death?',[89] and 'sits in the land and the shadow of death',[90] not yet having entered the land of the living.[91] For indeed, not only

[79] This appears to be an allusion to the Marcionites. See Origen's remarks about Marcion above in 15.3.

[80] Dt 32:39. [81] Job 5:18. [82] Heb 12:7. [83] Heb 12:11. [84] Job 5:18.

[85] Rom 2:4, 5; Ps 30:20. I have followed the Greek text, which has a dative form, in translating 'hidden *for* them' from Ps 30:20. This is the way the NRSV also translates the Hebrew text of Ps 30:20. The Latin text of Origen's comments here, however, has *ab*, 'from' them.

[86] Mt 19:17. [87] Jn 11:25; 14:6. [88] Lam 4:20. [89] Rom 7:24.

[90] Mt 4:16; Is 9:1.

[91] The phrase 'the land of the living' appears in the Hebrew and Vulgate texts of Job 28:13, but in the LXX the phrase 'among men' appears instead of this phrase, and no variants are listed.

the life of the bad, but even that of Paul and the apostles while they were still on earth had been hidden in God. This is why he says, 'Our life has been hidden with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our life, appears, then you too will appear with him in glory'.[92]

But take notice of everything related to 'inside' and 'outside' so that you may collect the things which correspond to the saying, 'If you wish to enter into life'. I mean statements like, 'Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he send out labourers into his harvest'.[93] You should investigate whence 'he would send' them 'out'. And if the workers have been sent out in this world into the harvest of the Lord, are they outside the space from which they were sent out? And when they have performed well the labours of the harvest, will they enter into life, cleansed 'from dead works' and doing the living works which are their opposite, and no longer speaking dead words, but speaking living and active words in accordance with the living word 'of God'?[94] And so, in correspondence with dead words and words of eternal life there are on the other side [dead thoughts and living thoughts, of which the apostle says][95] with thoughts which accuse, when he says that 'thoughts accuse or even defend' them in the day of judgement.[96] The one, whose thoughts offer a defence, will be saved, but the other, whose thoughts become accusers, will perish. Therefore, if we wish 'to enter into life', let us listen to Jesus when he says, 'If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments'. We will enter into life in accordance with the measure of our keeping the commandments, either into its innermost and most blessed parts, or into the middle parts, or wherever the keeping of the least and rather ill-defined commandments concerning life brings us.

13 Now he who heard the words, 'Keep the commandments', replies, 'Which commandments?', so that we may learn which commandments in particular Jesus wants us to keep. For he replied to the question, 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honour your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself'.[97] Perhaps these things are enough for someone to enter into the beginning of life (if I may speak in this way), but these commands and others like them are not enough for someone to enter into perfection, since the person who is guilty of violating one of these commandments cannot even enter into the beginning of life. Therefore, even if we wish to enter the beginning of life we must keep ourselves free from adultery, murder, and all theft. For just as the

[92] Col 3:3–4. [93] Mt 9:38. [94] Heb 9:14; 4:12.

[95] The bracketed words are from the parallel Latin text to which Klostermann refers in the apparatus, where he suggests a lacuna in the Greek manuscript.

[96] Rom 2:15.

[97] Mt 19:18–19. Origen has reversed the order of the first two commandments as Matthew has them. He has the order which appears in Dt 5:16–22, except that the command to honour father and mother comes first there, as in Ex 20:12–16. Matthew and Origen's list contains the command about loving your neighbour from Lev 19:18.

adulterer and murderer will not enter life so neither will the thief. But many who are said to believe in Christ are guilty of this sin. They are exposed as not free from theft in their daily activities, in financial affairs in which they are trusted, and in the small shops which they operate. And not only will the thief not enter life, but his partner who concurs with him as well. For it is written in Isaiah, 'Those who love gifts are partners of thieves'. In the forty-ninth Psalm the person is forbidden to set forth 'the statutes of God' and to take his 'covenant' upon his lips who is reproved in the words, 'If you see a thief, you concur with him' (which is said first) and then, 'And you keep company with adulterers'.[98] And notice that this is not said of a thief or an adulterer, but of the one who concurs with a thief, and 'keeps company with adulterers'. Furthermore, the person who will enter life must not bear false witness, and the one who does not fulfil the commandment which says, 'Honour your father and mother', is cast out of life. Now perhaps it is not very difficult to maintain these commands, but it is, as it were, a greater and more useful task for all who are led by the previous commands to fulfil that command which says, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. For, indeed, it is the view of the apostle that the commands, 'You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, and if there is any other command, are summed up in this word, You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.[99] And if every command is summed up in this word, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', and the person who has fulfilled every command is perfect, it is clear that the person who has fulfilled the command to love your neighbour as yourself is perfect.[100]

14 But if such a person is perfect, one might ask how, when the young man replied, 'I have kept all these things from my youth; what do I still lack?' the Saviour responded as if he who had done all these things was not yet perfect. Although the Saviour agrees with his statement, 'I have done all these things', he replies, 'If you wish to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow me'.[101] Take note then if the following is a possible response to the proposed question: Perhaps the Saviour did not use the words here, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', but they were added by someone who did not understand precisely what was being said. Furthermore, the presentation of the parallel accounts in Mark and Luke will agree with the understanding that the words, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' were added here. Neither of these Gospels has added to the commandments used by Jesus in this passage the words, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. The person who maintains that the commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', has been thrown in inappropriately

[98] Is 1:23; Ps 49:16, 18. [99] Rom 13:9.

[100] On the logic in this last sentence see Long and Sedley (1990/1987) 217, which is a quotation from Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*, 8.229–37.

[101] Mt 19:20–1.

will argue that if the same stories have been recorded in different words by the three Gospels, Jesus would not have said, 'You lack one thing', or, 'One thing still remains for you', to the man who had announced that he had fulfilled the command, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.[102] And this is especially the case if, with the apostle, the commands, 'You shall not kill' and those that follow down to the words, 'If there is any other commandment', are summed up in this saying, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.

Mark's words, too, that Jesus 'looked at' this rich man (who said, 'I have kept all these things from my youth') and 'loved him', appear to agree with the man's profession that he has done what he has professed to have fulfilled. For when Jesus looked intently into his mind he saw a man who professes to have fulfilled the commandments in question with a clear conscience. Mark and Luke would not have omitted the more important and excelling commandment if the man had said that in addition to the other commandments he had also fulfilled the command, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', unless one should say that what has been recorded are similar events, but they have not been said of the same man. Furthermore, how did Jesus say to the man who had fulfilled the commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', in addition to the other things that were commanded, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor' etc., as if he were speaking to someone not yet perfect?

Now if there were not also internal disagreements in many other copies, so that not everything in Matthew is in agreement, and likewise in the other Gospels, one might think the person impious who supposes that this command to the rich man was added here and that the Saviour did not say, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. But it is clear that the differences between the copies have become numerous, either from the shoddy work of copyists, or from the wicked recklessness of some either in neglecting to correct what is written, or even in adding or removing things based on their own opinions when they do correct. We discovered that the disagreements between copies of the old covenant are cleared up, if God grants it, when we use the other versions as a criterion. By using the other versions to make decisions regarding passages which were ambiguous in the Septuagint because the copies disagreed, we preserved accord among them. We marked some passages with an obelus since they do not appear in the Hebrew text. We were not so audacious as to remove them altogether. We added other passages and marked them with asterisks that it might be clear that they do not appear in the Septuagint but were added by us from the other translations in agreement with the Hebrew text. The person who wishes may agree with them, and the person they offend may do what he wishes concerning their acceptance or rejection.[103]

[102] These two additions appear in Mark (10:21) and Luke (18:22) who lack the command, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'.

[103] See the long addition in the Latin translation from the Gospel according to the Hebrews at this point.

The person, therefore, who does not wish the command, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', to have been inserted here, but actually to have been spoken by the Lord with the previous commands at that time, will take the following approach. He will say that our Saviour, wishing gently and without hostility to reprove that rich man because he was not truthful when he said that he had also kept the command, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor'. For in this way he will show that he has truly kept the command, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.

15 But if someone takes human weakness into account and how difficult it would be to do such a thing for perfection in God, and despises the literal meaning and turns to allegory, he will be put to shame by some of the stories of the Greeks. There, for the sake of wisdom among the Greeks, some are recorded to have done the very thing the Saviour here says to the rich man. For they say that Crates the Theban chose to allow all his goods to be given to the people of Thebes for the sake of the freedom of his soul because he wanted to be an example of a frugal life and (as was thought) to show himself to the Greeks as blessed and in need of nothing 'of this world'. Afterwards he said, 'Today Crates frees Crates'. Now if someone has done such a thing for the sake of Greek wisdom and teachings which free the human soul, why is it not possible for someone to do such a thing who is striving to receive the perfection of Christ in himself?

And if someone needs persuading from the divine Scriptures that such a deed is possible, he should listen to what Luke records in the Acts of the Apostles. He says of those who were persuaded by the apostolic power to believe and live perfectly in relation to Jesus' word, 'Now all who believed were together and had all things in common' and what follows down to the words, 'praising God and having favour with all the people'.[104] And again, after a few words, it is written in the same book, 'The multitude of the believers was of one heart and soul' and what follows down to the words, 'He brought the money and placed it beside the apostles'.[105] Then the story of Ananias and Sapphira is added to these words. They sold their 'property', but they withheld some of the price and did not lay aside the whole amount at the feet 'of the apostles', but only a part.[106] For this reason they suffered what has been recorded for their sin. They deserved to receive the penalty of the divine visitation in this world for the sin committed by the misappropriation. Because of this they could depart from this life in a purer state, purified by the discipline encountered in their common death.[107]

[104] Acts 2:42–7. [105] Acts 4:32–7. [106] Acts 5:1–2.

[107] Origen believed, in agreement with the Jewish view, that death suffered as the punishment for a sin atoned for that sin. See *HomLev* 14.4; *Philocalia* 27.7, and for the Jewish view, *Mishnah*, Sanhedrin 6.1–2.

They had, after all, believed, and they had placed 'a certain portion at the feet of the apostles'.[108]

And I think Ananias fell down and breathed his last 'when he heard these words' because he could not bear Peter's scrutiny. He was so tormented and chastised that he even died, because Peter's words touched his soul. One must not think that Peter here killed Ananias. Ananias could not bear Peter's emotional intensity when he said to him, 'Why did Satan fill your heart?', and what follows, down to the words, 'And great fear came on all who heard'.[109]

Now someone is likely to object to the account of Ananias, in which we made a defence on Peter's behalf, because of Sapphira, since she, 'not knowing what had happened, entered. And Peter asked her, Is this what you received for the field? And she said, Yes. Peter said to her, Why have you agreed to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door and they will carry you out'. For 'she fell down immediately', and 'died at his feet'.[110] But it might be said that she too died chastised and depressed in soul (partly by the reproach for the sin, partly for the misfortune of her husband and for grief concerning him, and partly for grief in relation to God), since Peter had foreseen in the Spirit what was to happen to her. We have said all of this wishing to prove that it is possible for anyone who wants to become perfect to be obedient to Jesus when he says, 'Go, Sell your possessions, and give to the poor'. Now I think that it was the task of those who were genuine and possessed all the characteristic marks of a bishop to search out and encourage those who were capable and responded to the invitation by providing support for them from the common purse and to encourage others to do this. For this became a kind of image of the harmonious life of the believers at the time of the apostles.

16 Now someone will ask next if the person who possesses all the virtues and no longer does any evil is perfect, how is it that the one who sells his possessions and gives to the poor would become perfect? For assume that someone has done this. How would he, in turn, suddenly stop being hot-headed, if he happened to be prone to anger? And how would he become free from grief any better than anyone else who is able to come to terms with grief when the situation arises? And how will he be completely fearless concerning pain or death or anything else that can make the soul that is still imperfect fearful? And in what way will the person who sells his possessions and gives to the poor be without desire? For someone might say that it is possible, once one has experienced the impoverished human condition by selling all one's possessions, to change one's mind about this daring action and desire to regain similar possessions. And if so-called pleasure, which is an irrational elation of the soul,[111] is

[108] Acts 5:2. [109] Acts 5:3–5. [110] Acts 5:7–10.

[111] This was a Stoic definition of pleasure. See Ab Arnim (1979) 95 (#391). Origen appears to be following a Stoic list here for four of the five topics he mentions are listed in a list of four 'passions' by Andronicus: grief, fear, desire, and pleasure (Ibid.). Andronicus does not have anger in

a passion, how would someone sell all his possessions and give to the poor and, at the same time, be freed from being irrationally elated? And someone might add to the difficulty the question, How can someone become wise and receive the wisdom of God, so that he can give a reason to everyone who asks him about his faith,[112] about each thing he believes, and about the mysteries hidden in the sacred Scriptures by selling possessions and giving to the poor?

Take note that this difficulty is capable of general application, and is truly genuine and not easily solved. One option is that we will say that someone has become perfect by this act alone, even if he has not taken up the things we have presented. We will thus fall into the paradox of saying that someone is both perfect and, at the same time, a sinner. For the person is a sinner, who is hot-headed, grieved by the grief of this world, fearful of pain or death, desirous of what he doesn't have, and whose soul is irrationally elated as if he is experiencing good things although they are not. The other option is that we will say that at the same time that someone sells his property and gives to the poor he becomes divinely possessed, as it were, so that he takes up all the virtues and rids himself of all evil. This answer, if I may put it bluntly, uses the language of faith, but I don't know if it is true. And those who hear such a solution offered for the difficulty will, perhaps, laugh at us for making stupid statements.

17 One might seem to speak more sensibly, therefore, by preserving the words of the text and giving them no figurative interpretation at all, thus making a faithful response. You yourself, however, will judge if what is said is also worthy of what the passage means. The person taking this approach will say, then, that if indeed the one who has given to the poor is assisted towards his own salvation by their prayers, that is, by receiving into his own spiritual poverty the spiritual abundance that those possess who lack material things, as the apostle indicated in his second letter to the Corinthians,[113] he would have been the recipient of gentle assistance. For God listens to the prayers of those who have been relieved of such great poverty, some of whom might perhaps be near the apostles, or a bit needier than they were, poor in material things as the apostles were, but rich in things of the spirit. The person who receives poverty in exchange for wealth so that he might become perfect in obedience to Jesus' words would suddenly be assisted, even as the apostles of Christ, to become wise in Christ, courageous, just, self-controlled, and free from every passion. The person who defends such a view will argue that one need not assume that this happened on the very same day the man sold his possessions and gave to the poor. But it may be that it was from that day that the divine oversight began to lead him to the mastery of the passions, which is something worthy of praise, and to all virtue. And 'advancing', like Isaac, because of God's assistance

his list. Philo cites the same four in a list (Ibid., #393), and gives the same definition of pleasure as Origen in *Leg* 3.346.

[112] Cf. 1 Pt 3:15. [113] 2 Cor 8:14.

to him in Christ, he will be 'great', 'until' he increases and becomes 'very, very great' in every virtue, and all evil disappears completely from his soul.[114] The person who has offered this explanation will not be compelled to claim that the very act itself of giving his possessions to the poor made the man become perfect so far as his other faults were concerned.

18 But another who is perhaps mature in faith and in the use of imagery to penetrate to the understanding, and perhaps also great in investigating and discovering something in the thoughts worthy of God in passages will leave the literal meaning behind and go up to the figurative and say that each person's possessions are the things which follow him after his exodus, so that the existence of possessions is good for the just but the opposite for the bad. In this passage, then, he will say that the rich man who has many possessions is a symbol of the person who has acquired many bad things, among which can be the love of wealth and glory, and that the soul of the guilty rich man had been filled with other earthly things. It may be possible that a person rich in this way abstains from certain kinds of bad actions, like adultery, murder, theft, and false testimony, and also performs his duty to his parents in an honourable way. He might even be courteous to his neighbour. Nevertheless, because he is not perfect, the Saviour commands such a person symbolically to sell all his evil possessions and, as it were, give them to those powers which had devised them and are badly in need of everything good, and are not threatened because, as the Scripture says, 'The poor are not threatened'.[115]

But know well that this interpretation will appear exceedingly forced. Although it solves rather nicely the difficulties raised about perfection, it is not very persuasive at all about someone being thought to have put aside evil and sold his possession of evil and given to the poor. But I will say, since I have been preoccupied with this passage, that the person who defends this opinion will say that the sinner has been filled with spirits in correspondence with his sins. For example, if he happens to be a fornicator, he has been filled with the spirit of fornication, as is said in the prophets.[116] And if he is a wrathful person, he has been filled with a spirit of wrath, and so also if he is a slanderer, he has been filled with a spirit of slander. Someone who is bad has acquired these possessions and has become 'more complicated than Typhon'[117] by his participation with the evil spirits. And just as he acquired these things by purchasing them with his will which yielded to what is wicked, so might he sell them in obedience to Jesus and give to the kind of poor of which this explanation speaks. For as 'the peace' of the apostles returns to them if there is no 'son of peace' who hears the greeting 'peace' to you,[118] so fornication and all sins return to the poor who are their causes.

[114] Gn 26:13. [115] Prv 13:8. [116] Hos 4:12; 5:4. [117] Plato, *Phaedrus* 230A.
[118] Lk 10:5, 6.

There can be no doubt that the person who has in this way sold everything which has been explained as possessions and given to the poor becomes perfect immediately. But if the possessions are sold over an extended period of time, and much time is necessary to give them to those whom we called the poor, the explanation given (on the analogy of what has been returned to the poor) would in no way, because of time, prevent the one who does these things from becoming perfect. Clearly the person who has done these things will have treasure in heaven and will become heavenly himself. For 'as the man of earth' (the wicked one, of course), 'so too the earthly, and as the heavenly man' (meaning Christ), 'so also the heavenly'.[119]

The one who wanted to become perfect, therefore, and sold all his possessions and gave to the poor will have treasure in his portion of heaven. But don't expect to find so great a person among those rich in this life's goods. For which one of them has put aside his love of wealth and, if I may speak in this way, his love of the world? And who has put aside completely the spirit of vain glory, so he can receive in his own heaven the treasure of God's glory and God's wealth in every word and in all wisdom? And who has put aside the spirit of desire and of fear and pleasure, and wrath? For the person who investigates these matters frankly is declared to be beloved among the apostles and those like them. And this person, who has sold everything (as we have explained it) and has treasure in heaven, is also able to follow Jesus, for no wretched possession distracts him from following Jesus.

19 Following these words it is said that 'when the young man heard the word, he went away sad, for he had many possessions'.[120] You will observe (especially in relation to the anagogical sense) how difficult it is for us to keep from thinking that the rich man or the glory of this world is good. Because we love desire, we want to obtain the things we desire even casually rather than be set free from the desire, and we want to avoid encountering things we imagine to be fearful rather than putting aside the hated fear for the fear of God. But it is not an old man, or an adult who has set aside 'the ways of a child',[121] who has been introduced here; it is a young man who heard the word and went away sad. For he was a young man in his soul and, for this reason, he left Jesus and went away. The expression 'he went away' is meant as a condemnation. And he went away sad, with the sadness of 'this world', which produces 'death',[122] for he had many possessions which he loved. He loved to be angered and made sad (wherefore he went away sad), and he loved everything which had been born of evil and which had taken possession of his soul.

If, however, you were to stick to an explanation for the story given by a previous interpreter, you would find this young man to be half deserving of praise and half deserving of blame. For on the one hand, he had not committed adultery,

[119] 1 Cor 15:48. [120] Mt 19:22. [121] 1 Cor 13:11. [122] 2 Cor 7:10.

murdered, stolen, or been a false witness. Also, since he was by this time a young man, he had honoured his father and mother. And he was grieved at Jesus' words which enjoined and promised perfection if he would sell his possessions. This shows that there was something good in him. But on the other hand, he went away from Jesus, sad because of his possessions. He should have rejoiced that he was about to possess treasure in heaven in place of those possessions and, by following Jesus, to walk in the footsteps of the Son of God. This shows that he deserved blame.

20 When he went away, 'Jesus said to his disciples, Truly I say to you that it will be difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven'.[123] You must take note of the precise statement of the Saviour which is recorded on this subject. He did not say that a rich person will not enter the kingdom of heaven, because if he had said this, he would have excluded the rich person completely from the kingdom of heaven. He says that it will be difficult for a rich person to enter. He has stated the difficulty for the salvation of a rich person, not however the impossibility, which seems reasonable from the point of view of the literal meaning, since the rich are able, with difficulty, to resist the passions and sins and not be totally conquered by them. But if the rich person be interpreted figuratively, you will ask how he will enter the kingdom of heaven even with difficulty. The parable which says, 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven'[124] indicates how difficult it is for one considered rich from either view to enter salvation. In this parable, the rich person is compared to a camel, not only because of the beast's uncleanness, as the law taught,[125] but also because of its entire crookedness. But the kingdom of heaven is compared to the eye of a needle to show that the entrance into the kingdom of heaven is very narrow and extremely reduced in size for each rich person. And it shows that just as it is obviously impossible for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, but it is possible so far as it is up to God, so also it is impossible for the rich person so far as it is up to him to enter the kingdom of heaven. But because all things are possible for God, such a thing also is possible for him who, by his indescribable power, either makes the fat wicked man slender or the narrow entrance wider for him. He took the needle's eye and the camel as an example because the rich person enters the kingdom of heaven with difficulty. This was not, however, to show the impossibility of entering the kingdom, as is clear from what is said to the disciples, who asked, 'Who then can be saved?', and he responded, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'.[126] Therefore, it is also possible for the camel to enter through the eye of a needle. But this is only possible by God's means, and not by those of men. So, too, the rich man can enter the kingdom of God. But it is God himself, and his

[123] Mt 19:23. [124] Mt 19:24. [125] Lv 11:4. [126] Mt 19:25–6.

Christ, and whoever has received the revelation from his Son who would know the procedures which make such things possible.

The person with superior wisdom and understanding may, therefore, venture something which surpasses this, even to the point of suggesting a meaning for the needle and its eye. We, however, will be satisfied with the following remarks. There are things in the law which fall to the handiwork of an embroiderer who must have a needle so that he may perform the tasks of the handiwork which he has taken up in relation to the wisdom of God.[127] As, therefore, the works and that needle of the embroiderer may be understood, so too will what has been said in this passage be understood. It may be beyond us to bring up and clarify these subjects now. In fact, it might border on a major, untimely digression even for the knowledgeable person.

But of the two options proposed, namely a camel entering through the eye of a needle and a rich person entering the kingdom of God, Jesus says the first is easier. You will investigate if, among humans one who has become a camel enters through the eye of a needle, but another who is rich enters the kingdom of God (in a way that is impossible for humans but possible for God). The same is true in the case of the camel and that of the eye of the needle. Whoever the camel is discovered to be, and whatever the eye of the needle is thought to be, the camel will enter through it, because this is impossible with humans, but possible with God. [I think Jesus introduced this parable because he wanted to show that the entrance of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven is easier than that of the wealthy Jews. In spiritual matters Gentiles were said to be poor and the Jews were rich.][128] But let the person who is able examine carefully whether these things suggest some final mysteries leading to a goal through ways that are possible only with God.

21 Next we must look at the things connected with the saying, 'Then Peter answered and said to him, Behold, we have left everything and followed you. What, then, will we have?'[129] One will observe these words as well in the literal sense, and another will discredit the literal sense as ignoble and interpret them figuratively.

The person defending the literal meaning will argue something like this. Just as in the case of a gift, God does not accept and justify what is given. He accepts, rather, the motive of the person who gives. He accepts the person who has given the lesser gift with a more perfect motive over the one who, from his abundance, has given more but with an inferior attitude. This is clear from the story recorded about the abundant gift of the rich and the two pennies which the widow cast into the temple treasury for the poor.[130] So it is also with those

[127] See Ex 27:16.

[128] The parallel Latin text adds these two sentences which are not in the Greek tradition. While unattested in the Greek, they sound very much like something Origen could have said at this point.

[129] Mt 19:27. [130] Mk 12:41–4; Lk 21:1–4.

who have left what they have acquired because of their love for God, in order that they may follow the Christ of God without distraction and do everything in accordance with his word. The person who has left more is not necessarily more acceptable than the one who has left fewer things, especially when someone happens to have left fewer things with his whole soul in comparison with the one who appears to have despised more things.

Therefore, although what Peter and his brother Andrew left were small and insignificant when they both heard, 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men', and they 'left their nets immediately and followed him',[131] they were not considered to be small by God. He understood that they had done it from such a state of mind that even if they had had many possessions and much property, these would not have restrained or hindered the impulse of their desire to follow Jesus. It was Peter's confidence, I think, based on his choice rather than on the material things he had forsaken that allowed him to say boldly to Jesus, 'Behold, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?' It is likely that he was thinking not only of the nets he had left, but also of his house and wife, whose mother had been delivered from a fever when Jesus was present.[132] One might even conjecture that he had possibly left children behind, and perhaps even some small piece of property.

Something great, therefore, is revealed about Peter and his brother because when they heard, 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men', without any delay they 'immediately left their nets and followed him'. They did not imitate the man who said, 'But first let me return to my house and say farewell to my household',[133] nor did they do anything like the person who said, 'Let me first return and bury my father'.[134] And take careful note of the fact that they were struck in a remarkable way by the command of Jesus and by his promise and believed that when they had forsaken the menial skill of fishing for fish they would catch people for salvation. It was as if they had been wounded by the benevolent service for Jesus and his promise of catching men that 'they immediately left their nets' and, as if they had forgotten their domestic duties, 'they followed him'. Based on that impulsive action Peter became worthy to say with confidence what he just said. But at the same time, you must observe that Peter said this because he had understood Jesus' statement, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow me'. And because Peter had observed the young man who heard this depart sorrowfully preferring his many possessions on earth to becoming perfect in God, and he had also reflected on the difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom of heaven, he spoke the words before us as if he too had done a thing that was not easy when he had left everything and followed the Saviour. Therefore, the Saviour responds to Peter who has spoken freely with the words of that great promise which follows, that Peter will be one of the judges of Israel.[135]

[131] Mt 4:19–20. [132] Lk 4:38–9. [133] Lk 9:61. [134] Mt 8:21. [135] Mt 19:28.

22 But the person who presumes that the literal meaning is insufficient to convince a sophisticated reader, since other texts of Scriptures contain what is worthy of respect in the anagogical meaning, will make an argument something like this. Since Peter had left his little net and paltry house and his laborious life in poverty, his statement, 'Behold we have left everything and followed you', is not anything great. It is not a statement worthy of so great a disciple, to whom 'flesh and blood did not reveal' that Jesus was 'the Christ, the Son of the living God', 'but' his 'Father who is in heaven', and to whom Jesus had addressed the words, 'You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it'.[136] But perhaps the explanations given previously when we interpreted the saying, 'Go, sell your possessions', and what follows, are useful and true for the text before us. For Peter had left everything connected with his sinful life. It was because of these things that he said, 'Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man'.[137] His praise was great, who had the confidence because he was no longer a sinner, to say, 'We have left everything', and not only have we left our faults, but we have followed you. And the statement, 'We have followed you', can be the equivalent of saying, Since the Father has revealed to us, as to Peter, who you are in relation to all things, and because you are righteousness, we have followed you in so far as you are righteousness, and so also in so far as you are sanctification, wisdom, peace, truth, the way which brings one to God, and true life. Therefore, like a winning athlete who does not understand what the prizes are for the game, asks the person in charge of the game after the contest is over, Peter, with confidence based on his brave actions, asks the Saviour, 'What, then, will we have?' And if we want to receive the things included in the answer given to Peter's question, let us likewise leave all things, and no longer cling to evil and the activity associated with it. And let us follow the Logos of God that he might make the added promises to all of us as well who have followed him: 'And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you that you who have followed me' and the remaining words.[138]

These words themselves have both a simpler, hortatory meaning in relation to leaving possessions, and another meaning which is deeper than this. The person, therefore, who interprets this passage of the Gospel literally will argue as follows. The saying claims that not all follow Jesus. Its reference is to the apostles at that time and those like them who followed him constantly. The words, 'And everyone who has left brothers or sisters' and what follows,[139] point to later generations. But someone will refute this interpretation of 'following' as forced saying that 'following' is applied to all people in the saying, 'Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of being my disciple'.[140]

Those, therefore, who have followed the Saviour sit 'on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel'.[141] They will receive this authority in the resurrection of the dead, for this is 'the regeneration',[142] which is a new coming to

[136] Mt 16:17, 18. [137] Lk 5:8. [138] Mt 19:28, 29. [139] Mt 19:29.
[140] Mt 10:38; Lk 14:27. [141] Mt 19:28. [142] Ibid.

be, when a new heaven and a new earth are created for those who have renewed themselves, and a new covenant is delivered along with its cup.[143]

23 What Paul calls the 'washing of regeneration' is the prelude of that regeneration, and what he adds to the washing of regeneration in the words, 'the renewal of the Spirit', is the mystery of that newness.[144] And perhaps it is in relation to that birth that 'no one is pure from filth, not even if his life should last but one day'.[145] This is connected with the mystery concerning birth, of which each person who has been born might say in David's words in the fiftieth Psalm, 'I was conceived in lawlessness, and in sin my mother became pregnant'.[146] Now so far as the regeneration from the washing is concerned, everyone who has been born 'from above' 'from water and spirit' is[147] 'pure from filth'[148] but, to put it boldly, pure 'in a mirror' and 'in a riddle'.[149] But concerning that other regeneration, when 'the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory',[150] everyone who has attained to that regeneration in Christ is completely clean 'from filth'.[151] He sees 'face to face',[152] and he comes to that regeneration 'through the washing of regeneration'.[153] Now if you want to understand that washing, note how John, who baptizes 'in water for repentance', says of the Saviour, 'He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire'.[154]

Therefore, in the regeneration through washing we were buried with Christ, 'for we were buried with him (according to the apostle) through baptism'.[155] But in the regeneration of the washing by fire and Spirit we become conformed 'to the body of the glory'[156] of Christ who sits on the throne of his glory. Furthermore, we too sit on twelve thrones, if we have left all things (understood in either of the two ways we suggested, but preferably the second) and followed Christ. And at that time, whenever 'The Son of man sits on the throne of his glory', the prophecy is fulfilled which says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet'.[157] And then 'he must reign until he places all the enemies under his feet', until 'death, the last enemy', is destroyed.[158] When this has happened death will no longer exist for those who are saved; there will be only life in which they believe. For while death exists, those held in its power disbelieve in life, but once it is destroyed all believe in life. You will find written in the law, 'I have set before you life and death'[159] and, 'Your life will hang before your eyes' and, 'You do not at all believe in your life'.[160] But the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory and no one dishonourable or disreputable with God is included in his kingdom. For at that time all who do not receive 'glory from mankind', or do anything to be glorified by mankind, but who seek glory from 'him alone' who sits on the throne of his glory will be ruled by him.[161] At that time too, the Saviour's

[143] See Rev 21:1; Mt 26:27–9. [144] Tit 3:5. [145] Job 14:4, 5. [146] Ps 50:7.
[147] Jn 3:3, 5. [148] Job 14:4. [149] 1 Cor 13:12. [150] Mt 19:28. [151] Job 14:4.
[152] 1 Cor 13:12. [153] Tit 3:5. [154] Mt 3:11. [155] Rom 6:4. [156] Phil 3:21.
[157] Ps 109:1. [158] See 1 Cor 15:25, 26. [159] Dt 30:15. [160] Dt 28:66.
[161] Jn 5:41; Mt 6:2; Jn 5:44. The last clause might also be rendered, 'but who seek the glory which comes "from [God] alone", will be ruled by him who sits on the throne of his glory'.

requests are granted which he had made in his prayer, 'Father, glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world existed'.[162]

24 The Logos in the flesh became what each person needed him to become[163] so that he might gain all people. But if you can understand the Logos, after he was flesh and had become all the things which he became for mortals, now restored to what 'he was in the beginning with God' in his own glory (when the Logos was God), the glory of so great a Logos, you will see him sitting on the throne of his glory.[164] The Son of man is no other than the one perceived as the human Jesus. For this man Jesus becomes one with the Logos more than all of those who become 'one spirit' with him because they are joined 'to the Lord'.[165] But at the time these things occur in the restoration of the Saviour, those too, who left everything and followed him, will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, since they have been conformed 'to the body' and to the throne of the glory of Christ,[166] for the whole life of the just will judge the twelve tribes of Israel who have not believed. The apostles too, and those who have successfully emulated the apostolic life will judge those of noble birth (because they are Israelites) but who have not done things worthy of their noble birth.

But perhaps the statement made to the Corinthians, 'The world will be judged by you', is addressed to those from the Gentiles, and the statement, 'You yourselves will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel', is addressed to the apostles and those who have emulated the apostolic life, who judge those who constitute Israel and are considered more noble than the entire world. But reflect on these matters in a way that is worthy of the magnanimity of the Gospel: Israel, on the one hand, is noble and by nature superior, but on the other, has not believed. And think anagogically about the statement concerning Israel and the twelve tribes. Let the twelve orders refer to genera of souls and more noble persons, of whom some are preeminently excellent, and the rest, ranked in eleven groups, belong to a second order. It is beyond us, who have not beheld such remarkable things, to be able to establish how the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel are twelve stars, as the prophetic dream of Joseph, if I may call it that, revealed.[167] But it is as if each Israelite who is judged will be judged either by someone sharing the name and nature of a star or by an apostle and one who has lived the apostolic life similar to a star.

25 If, then, someone has left everything and followed Jesus, he will obtain what was promised Peter in answer to his question. But the one who has not left

Origen's text of Jn 5:44 seems to have lacked the word God, as the papyri P66 and 75, and manuscripts Vaticanus and the Freer MS, plus some later texts.

[162] Jn 17:5. [163] See Heine (2004a). [164] 1 Cor 9:19; Jn 1:2, 1.

[165] 1 Cor 6:17. See Origen, *ComJn* 32.326 for this same argument based on the same Scripture in 1 Cor.

[166] Phil 3:21. [167] Gn 37:9.

everything, but has left what is added, will receive much more than he left and will inherit eternal life.[168] Now one must learn what does not fall into the category of 'everything' but is mentioned specially, from the words, 'And everyone who has left brothers or sisters' and what follows.[169] Everyone will admit that despising every physical relationship and all property is not a negligible subject even given a simple and hortatory interpretation. But if this statement also admits of an anagogical meaning, one will lack faith and another will openly declare whatever he has. It is indeed clear in the literal sense that many who have believed in our Saviour were hated and killed by relatives. These left every possession to inherit eternal life, persuaded that everyone who has left brothers in the flesh, and sisters related in the body only, and parents of the physical bodies, and children of the flesh, and fields and houses on the accursed earth, and have left them for no other reason than the name of Jesus, will inherit much more than they left. For he will inherit an infinite amount of spiritual, rather than physical, things if I must spell it out. He will not receive this abundance in this temporal life, but when he has entered eternal life. It is easy to explain the multitude of brothers and sisters whom someone has left because of the Word of God. For even in this world, brothers in the faith are much more numerous than those the believers have left behind because of their unbelief. For in place of the two parents left behind, one receives all the bishops who are blameless and the presbyters who are without reproach.[170] Likewise, for children one has all those who are children in age. And reckoning in this way it is not possible to count how many more fields or houses one inherits than what he left behind, unless someone should give an unreasonably large and distorted account. But once the fields and houses are explained allegorically one is compelled, by the principle of sequence, also to explain the things listed above these in the same way.

There are, therefore, in my opinion, brothers, among the holy and blessed powers of those who have received the 'measure of the stature of Christ', who have attained 'to a perfect man',[171] and sisters, consisting of all those who have presented themselves to Christ as pure virgins, not only, in my opinion, from humans, but also from the remaining powers. And what would parents represent more appropriately than those mentioned to Abraham in the words, 'But you will depart to your fathers in peace, cherished in a good old age'?[172] And if these (analogous to those fathers) should ever become fathers of others, they, like Abraham, will receive much more, including children. And consider with me also the fields and houses which are much more numerous than those left behind. They are found in that 'rest' which lies in the divine paradise and the city of God, of which 'glorious things were spoken', and 'in' whose 'fortifications

[168] Mt 19:29. [169] Ibid. [170] 1 Tm 3:2; Tit 1:6. [171] Eph 4:13.
[172] Gn 15:15. Origen's text has the reading that Rahlfs (2006) prints, i.e. the word for 'buried', but note that Codex Alexandrinus has the reading for 'cherished'.

God is known when he assists it'.[173] Consequently, one can say to those who inherit houses there, 'Just as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God', of which it is said, 'Inspect its fortifications'.[174] For people such as this, it is blessed to inherit eternal life. They possess as their inheritance large fields and trees cared for by God, plus houses made of living stones in which 'everyone who has left brothers or sisters' and the other things mentioned will rest.[175]

26 After this there is the saying, 'But many who are first will be last, and last first'.[176] This saying contains things which, even in the simple sense, can persuade those who have recently come to the divine Word to hasten through the things prescribed. They can ascend to a life and understanding superior to many who are thought to have grown old in the faith. Neither time nor wicked parents hinder those who believe later, when they demonstrate that they are contending blamelessly. Now it is a struggle to put down conceit based on having been raised in the Christian faith by noble-minded Christian fathers, especially if one happens to be able to boast of fathers and forefathers who were thought worthy of positions of authority in the church, such as the bishop's throne, or the honour of the presbytery or diaconate among the people of God. For when they have been taught that 'Many who are first will be last and last first', both groups will remember neither to be presumptuous because they believe they are first, nor to be abased and humbled, as though they possess something less than the previous group because they are the last to have received the doctrines of Christianity.

But I think the saying has another meaning. We can understand it to speak in general about the many Israelites who were designated first before us, but who came to be last because of their unbelief in Jesus and their betrayal of him. It speaks about us too who were last, but who can receive the first places if we continue in faith, 'not being haughty but accommodating ourselves to humble ways'.[177] But how? If, by participating in the root of the patriarchs and the richness which comes from the word of the fathers, we become united by nature with the will of the spiritual law and that of the prophets understood in the same way, we who were the last will be first, and those who were the first, have become last, cut off from the cultivated olive tree because of their unbelief.[178] For because of the coming of Christ who came into the world 'for judgement', that the Gentiles 'who do not see may see and Israel, who sees, might become blind' because of their unbelief, we the people who are 'the stranger' have gone 'up, up' and become first, while Israel, who was before us and first has become last, and gone 'down, down'.[179]

[173] Ps 86:3; 47:4. [174] Ps 47:9, 14. [175] 1 Pt 2:5; Mt 19:29. [176] Mt 19:30.
[177] Rom 12:16. [178] Rom 11:24.
[179] Jn 9:39; Dt 28:43; cf. Origen, *ComRom* 2.13 (18); J. B. C. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra* III (Paris, 1883), 105 (Origen on Ps 74:8); and Homilia in Psalmum LXXIV.3, in Perrone (2015) 273–4.

Now it is also possible to understand the saying, 'If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be last of all', in the same way.[180] It is as if he said, Since at the present time the Gentiles who believe in me and who are considered last in Israel are receiving the first places, and all the Israelites who have not believed are judged by God to be last even if they are thought, 'so far as time goes',[181] to be first, if anyone, then, wants to receive the true first, let him join the ranks of those the present Israel considers to be last. For whoever wishes to be among those who consider themselves to be first will fail to obtain the first places which have passed over to the Gentiles and will, instead, be numbered among the last, for the Gentiles are becoming the head because of their belief, and unbelieving Israel is becoming the tail because of disbelief.[182]

According to this saying, many (but not all) of the first will be last, and again many of the last will be first. To be sure, if someone who is last has converted, resolved on being numbered with the believing Gentiles, this person will be reckoned among the first, for there are also those, such as the apostles of Christ who were Israelites and Abraham's seed, who were first and continue no less to be first. And there are those who are last and who continue no less last, whose lives fall far short of those said to be of the church ***.[183]

27 Next, consider if you can say that the race of angels is first, since they are more honourable than the human race which is thought to be last. For so it stands written in Job, 'When the stars were born all his angels praised God'.[184] This shows that they are more ancient and honourable, not only than humanity, but also than the whole creation which came after them. Consequently, one might dare to assert that many angels who were superior to humans become inferior to some humans. On the other hand, many humans who were by nature inferior to the angels, because of their life and the Logos of God, become superior to some angels who were ranked first, but become last because of certain accusations.[185] The words from the first epistle of Peter and those from the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians apply very appropriately to what is said here. For Peter says, 'In whom you now believe and rejoice, although you do not see him' (meaning Jesus Christ, of course), down to the words, 'into which things angels wish to look'.[186] And Paul says, 'Or do you not know that we will judge angels? Shall we not much more judge things of this life?'[187] See then if it is not these, insofar as they kept 'their own domain' and did not forsake 'their proper dwelling place', who greatly excelled human beings and were superior

[180] Mk 9:35. [181] Heb 5:12. [182] Dt 28:13.

[183] Klostermann thinks there is a lacuna of a few words here, based on the parallel Latin text where the final clause reads: 'who conduct their lives in a way that is improper for Christian people and appear to be of the church when they are not'.

[184] Job 38:7.

[185] The words translated 'superior' and 'inferior' are the words 'first' and 'last' in Origen's text, which follows Mt 19:30.

[186] 1 Pt 1:8–12. [187] 1 Cor 6:3.

to those humans whose 'soul was humbled to the dust' and came to exist in this lowly body and once said weakly, 'I am a wretched human being; who will deliver me from the body of this death?'[188] Human beings, on the other hand, who are inferior in comparison with the angels, become superior to the angels who did not keep 'their own domain', but forsook 'their proper dwelling place'. Humans receive the domain in the words, 'Have authority over ten cities' or, 'Have authority over five cities'.[189]

Some of the angels left their proper dwelling place when they were in it, and human beings become superior when the kingdom of heaven is proclaimed to them and they do the things that lead them up to it. For some on the earth are inferior to heavenly beings, and some in heaven are superior to those on earth. Many of the heavenly beings and those who are first become last, and are kept 'in eternal chains in darkness for the judgement of the great day'.[190] On the other hand, many of the last and of those born on the earth, by ascending so that they can say boldly, 'But our citizenship is in heaven', become first.[191]

He who fell like lightning 'from heaven' was first when he walked blamelessly 'in all his ways'. Then lawlessness was discovered in him, and he became last and descended to Hades.[192] Those who saw him were amazed and said, 'You too have been seized just as we have, and you have been reckoned among us. Your glory, your abundant joy, has descended to Hades'.[193] So everyone who lacked understanding and was disobedient was last, serving 'their desires and pleasures of all sorts', living 'in wickedness and envy', hateful and hating. They became first, however, 'by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit', 'when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared' and they received the one who said, 'He who receives me receives him who sent me'.[194] But in accordance with these teachings we have explained 'first' to mean those who will be saved, and 'last' to be those who do not deserve the rank of those being saved but deserve punishment and being left behind, either until 'the fullness of the Gentiles should enter' or until they have paid off the debts of their own sins.[195]

The parable which follows the saying, 'But many who are first will be last and last first', also proclaims that the last in the parable are saved, since the first who worked, but received their pay last were, therefore, reckoned as last although they were first. And he says that the last who have been called to the works surpass them. They not only received their pay first but they also received pay equal to those who grumbled against the householder and said, 'These last did one hour's work and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the burning heat'.[196] Those called to the work last are said to be first in addition to having been paid first. But after we have

[188] Jude 6; Ps 43:26; Rom 7:24. [189] Lk 19:17, 19. [190] Jude 6. [191] Phil 3:20.
[192] Lk 10:18; James 1:8; Ecc 11:9. [193] Is 14:10–11. [194] Tit 3:3, 4, 5; Mt 10:40.
[195] Rom 11:25. [196] Mt 20:11–12.

prayed to God and called on 'the name of our Lord Jesus Christ', let us quote the parable and see what things will be granted to us to examine and say or even suggest in relation to it. The parable is as follows.

28 'The kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early to hire workers', and what follows down to the words, 'For many are called but few are chosen'.[197]

The whole parable can be taken as intended to teach us how the last who came to the work were paid first as if they had been called first, and how the householder put the first called in last place, so that they were also paid last. Now we must know that we are investigating a parable of Jesus, 'in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden'.[198] This means that it contains numerous doctrines of the wisdom which has been hidden in a mystery.[199] These will be discovered by those capable of discovering such doctrines, so that the Saviour might say of this parable especially, 'I will open my mouth in parables, and cry out about problems from the beginning', and 'I will utter things hidden from the foundation'.[200]

The person who will understand the parable must perceive the meaning of the day and the hours revealed in it, and that it is not at random that the householder delivers the work of the vineyard to five ranks of workers. The one who is able will investigate the reason some workers for the vineyard were hired early, and others later. They were not, however, hired about the second hour, but the third, and after this, not about the fourth or fifth hour, but about the sixth, then after this not about the seventh or eighth, but about the ninth hour, then, at the end, not about the tenth hour, but about the eleventh. There ought to be some reason worthy of Jesus for there being three equal intervals of the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours, after the early morning hour, followed by a shorter interval equivalent to that between the early morning hour and the third hour, related to those idle about the eleventh hour.

One must also not fail to observe that the householder had agreed to pay a denarius apiece to those employed early and sent into his vineyard, but had not specified in an orderly manner the wage for those called about the third hour. Instead, he had said, 'I will give you whatever is right'.[201] One must observe, further, that he did the same with those called about the sixth hour and the ninth. Finally, he said to those called about the eleventh hour and who defended themselves for being idle the entire day, 'You also go into the vineyard'.

It is also necessary to observe that he appears to be outside the vineyard and to find the workers there. He sends the first group 'into the vineyard', and says

[197] Mt 20:1–16 is the block of text Origen discusses here, but the saying, 'Many are called but few are chosen', is found in Mt 22:14. Mt 20:16 has: 'So the last will be first and the first last'. Nestle-Aland 27, however, shows that some MSS add at the end of vs. 16, 'For many are called but few are chosen'. The Latin translation, which quotes the entire passage, suggests that Origen's text contained these words.

[198] Col 2:3. [199] See 1 Cor 2:7. [200] Ps 77:2; Mt 13:35. [201] Mt 20:4.

to the second group, 'You also go into the vineyard', and to those called about the eleventh hour he makes the same statement, 'You also go into the vineyard'.[202] And the one who is able should understand what the 'marketplace' is in which the householder found the second group standing idle when he went out. In the same way, he should also investigate who those found standing idle about the eleventh hour are, to whom the householder says, 'Why have you stood here idle the entire day?' And let someone also look into the defence of those who stood idle the whole day. They bore the stress of standing the entire day and said boldly that they were eager to work but no one hired them, as if many of them would have wished to be hired, but were not.

29 And do not consider offhandedly the statement that 'when it was late the lord of the vineyard says to his administrator, Summon the workers and pay them, beginning with the last to the first'.[203] What moved the lord of the vineyard to order the administrator to summon the workers and pay them, beginning from the last and thus proceed to the first, so that those hired at the eleventh hour received what was due them first, and those at the ninth hour second, and those at the sixth hour third, and after them, those at the third hour fourth, and last of all those hired in the early morning? For this is shown clearly by the words, 'Pay them, beginning from the last to the first'. And who is the lord's administrator, in addition to the lord of the vineyard, who gives the pay at the command of the lord? But also, since those called at the ninth hour did not bear the 'burden of the day and the burning heat', they obviously did not 'grumble against the householder saying, These last worked one hour, and you made them equal to us who bore the burden of the day and the burning heat'. But neither did those called in the sixth hour bear the burden of the day, but perhaps of half a day. And those called in the third hour did not bear the burden of the complete day but, if one must be precise, of three quarters of the day. Only those hired at dawn bore the whole burden of the day and the burning heat; the rest, parallel to the last, bore a burden in proportion to the time in which they worked in the vineyard.

30 Now since different parables mention a vineyard, one must ask whether the vineyard is understood of something different each time or of the same thing. I think one must also examine why the householder did not respond to all those who went first and grumbled against him because they thought that they would receive more. He replied to only one of them, 'Friend, I am not wronging you. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?' And, 'I wish to give to this last worker as I also give to you'.[204]

Because, therefore, this parable holds these and similar mysteries which one might investigate in it, I strongly affirm that no one can speak worthily about it except one who has said truthfully, 'But we have the mind of Christ'.[205] Being

[202] Mt 20:27. [203] Mt 20:8. [204] Mt 20:13–14. [205] 1 Cor 2:16.

confident in this, I will give my opinion. Who, then, 'has known the mind of Christ' on this parable except the person who has handed himself over to the Paraclete? The Saviour says of this latter, 'He will teach you all things and will remind you of everything which I said to you'.[206] For if the Paraclete should not teach everything which Jesus said in respect to this parable too, nothing worthy of Jesus would be said about it. And if all those who read the Gospel according to John were to inquire into such things from the Paraclete in accordance with the saying of Jesus, some of them would not devote themselves to 'spirits of deceit', as if to the Paraclete, 'and to teachings of demons, in the hypocrisy of liars who have cauterized their own conscience'.[207] Consequently the spirits of deceit and the demons make public proclamations in the great name of the Paraclete, which the Saviour promised to the apostles and to anyone who is like the apostles.

I am convinced that Matthew knew the mysteries contained in this parable, just as he knew those in the parable of the seed and of the weeds sown among the wheat. He did not, however, judge it to be reasonable to record the interpretation of this parable as he had recorded that of those,[208] since he did not entrust the exposition of this parable to written characters even in a limited sense, as he had, for instance, recorded the interpretation of those previous parables completely. But if Matthew kept silent for a reason concerning the interpretation of the parable, someone might obviously be able to understand it partially. One might perhaps reasonably suggest something of the interpretation which is made manifest to him, not at all explaining everything that is revealed to him, and if he believes in the Scripture, he will escape the danger connected with the exposition of mysteries.

31 Come, then, we who are far removed from the depth of realities in the parable and can imagine very few things in it, will in some way, with prayer, give a partial exposition of some of its mysteries. And after we have, in this way, pointed out some of the things which are made manifest near the beginning, and have made some appropriate remarks, we will enter into the parable and the words which follow it.

First, then, let us observe the mysteries connected with the day in the parable being investigated. Can one say that the whole present age is a day? It would be a long one so far as we are concerned, but a short one, lasting only a little while, so far as the life of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit is concerned. Perhaps it would be short also so far as the life of certain blessed and lofty powers is concerned in comparison with the race of the multitudes below the sovereign

[206] Jn 14:26.

[207] 1 Tim 4:1–2. Origen is probably alluding to the Montanists, who boasted that the Paraclete spoke in their prophets. 1 Tim 4:1–2 was a Scripture used against them.

[208] He is referring to the fact that an interpretation accompanies the two parables in Mt 13:3–30, 36–43, but no interpretation is given here.

Trinity. For so far as their life goes, the whole present age is calculated as humans calculate one day in relation to their whole possible lifespan. And the person who is capable will investigate whether or not some such mystery is made known in Deuteronomy in the song where it is written, 'Remember the days of the age'.[209] If such days are of the age, it would follow, then, to consider a similar interpretation for the words, 'I remembered the years of the ages and meditated; at night I talked with my heart and my spirit probed. And I said, The Lord will not thrust aside for ages, will he?'[210] And perhaps, if I may speak rather boldly, 'The Lord will' not 'thrust aside for ages' (for it would be a lot for the Lord to thrust aside for one age), but perhaps he will thrust aside even into a second age, when some great sin is not forgiven 'either in the present age or in the one to come'.[211]

Who, then, is sufficient to interpret anagogically the six days and the seventh day of rest in relation to such great days, and in addition to the week, the new moons and the feasts in the first month, and the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month and the subsequent days of unleavened bread? So, proportionately, one will fall into an abyss of ideas when he imagines the rest of the feasts on days such as this, and the whole sabbatical year when God graciously gives to the poor, the proselytes, and the beasts of the earth the fruits which grew up from the previous planting because the earth is not cultivated during this time. And who can ascend to the number of the days of the abyss in the fifty-year period (I say 'of the abyss' because of the depth of the doctrines) so that he might go up and see the fiftieth year and the things legislated in relation to it fulfilled?[212] Otherwise when we investigate the one day of the parable which is being expounded and think of it as the whole present age, we enter unawares into the depth of God, and need the Spirit which searches 'all things, even the depths of God'.[213]

Now I think that just as it is said that certain things must happen at the end of the year, so also 'at the end of' more 'ages', either completing some year or whatever, our Jesus 'appeared to remove sin', so that after the completion of one year of days, as it were, another beginning of the ages might again be received and 'in the ages to come God might show the abundant wealth of his goodness' to those whom he knows it must be shown.[214] Let these things be said because of the day in the parable. They can also be proven from the epistle of John who says, 'Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour'.[215] For the last hour follows the eleventh hour in the parable we are considering, since the householder in the parable 'went out about the eleventh

[209] Dt 32:7. The phrase is better translated, 'Remember the day of old', but I have translated 'of the age' to show why Origen relates it to his discussion of 'the age' here. The Greek word he has been using is the same word that appears in Deuteronomy.
[210] Ps 76:6–8. [211] Mt 12:32. [212] See Lev 25. [213] 1 Cor 2:10.
[214] Heb 9:26; Eph 2:7. [215] 1 Jn 2:18.

hour and found others standing, and said to them, Why have you stood here idle the entire day?'[216]

32 Next we examine how it was not randomly that the householder delivered the works of the vineyard to five orders of workers. The first was when 'he went out early to hire workers for the vineyard', the second, when 'he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace', the third and fourth when 'he went out again about the sixth and ninth hour and did likewise', and the fifth, 'about the eleventh hour' when 'he went out and found others standing, and said to them, Why have you stood here idle the entire day?'

Do you think it possible that the first order was that related to Adam at the time of the creation of the world? The householder 'went out early' and (if I may put it this way) hired Adam and Eve to work the vineyard of the worship of God. The second order was that connected with Noah and the covenant made with him. Third was that connected with Abraham, with whom the things related to the fathers down to Moses are understood to have been included, and fourth was that connected with Moses and all the divine provisions which occurred in Egypt, along with the giving of the law in the wilderness. The final order 'about the eleventh hour' is that connected with the coming of Christ Jesus. But one householder (so far as the parable before us is concerned) went out five times and came to the affairs in this world that he might send out workers to the vineyard who will do his works, who have no need to be ashamed, and who soundly expound 'the word of truth'.[217] For the one Christ (who has often come down to the aid of humanity) has always handled the affairs related to the calling of workers.

33 Let the one who is capable consider if the five receptions of workers contain some symbol from the perceptible world and from those who will begin to perform the works from sense perception. And let one do the exercise even if he does not want to accept the conclusions as doctrines. For someone will say that the sense of touch is connected with the first calling. This is why 'the woman said to the serpent, God said, you shall not eat from it nor shall you touch it'.[218] Smell is connected with the second, since it says in the case of Noah, 'The Lord smelled a pleasing odour'.[219] With Abraham it is taste, since when he entertained the angels he offered them bread from fine flour baked in ashes, and the tender calf.[220] Hearing is the sense connected with Moses, because the voice of God was heard from heaven. Finally, sight, the most honoured of all the senses, is connected with the visitation of Christ, when the Christ was seen by blessed eyes. Let these things be said because of the five callings, whether someone wants it for the sake of an intellectual exercise or a doctrinal one.

[216] Mt 20:6. [217] 2 Tim 2:15. [218] Gn 3:2–3.
[219] Gn 8:21. [220] Gn 18:6, 7.

34 I also think that the hour the workers were hired was related to the works required in the vineyard. For there were works that had to be done in the vineyard in the early morning, and the householder who called the workers saw who were suitable for the works beginning in the early morning. But there was another work about the third hour that involved Noah, when God established a covenant with him. Then there were ten generations from Noah to Abraham which ceased at Abraham, the beginning of another surpassing calling. At that time Abraham began to work in the vineyard. And after him, Moses and his companions were invited into the vineyard. But a final work in the vineyard remained. It demanded a fresh new calling which would accomplish the remaining work in the vineyard vigorously, all at once, and in a short time. This was the work of the new covenant. On the one hand, therefore, the intervals were equal between those called about the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours. On the other, the interval from the ninth hour when Moses was called to the eleventh hour when the visitation of Christ Jesus in the flesh occurred was proportionate to that from the beginning to the third hour.

The householder had agreed on a denarius for those invited early in the morning. I think this coin is salvation, since things connected with glory are not reckoned along with it. For I think denarius is the name of salvation, and that which is beyond the denarius is called glory, if perhaps coins should be mentioned which are five or ten times more than the mina which was given.[221] And he who says to those invited about the third hour, 'I will give you whatever is just', has encouraged the workers of the third hour to do everything that they are able to do, but he has reserved for himself the decision of what pay is just for the work which is done. And since he did likewise with those hired about the sixth and the ninth hours, of course he also said to them, 'I will give you whatever is just'. Those who, in a shorter time, wish to increase the intensity of the effort and energy put into the work and do not grow weary, which had happened to those called early in the morning, can have done equal work in the vineyard with those who had worked since early morning.

But someone will inquire how the householder, when he went out about the eleventh hour, says not only to those who are idle, but also to those who have stood the entire day, that is, for the whole period of time preceding the eleventh hour, 'Why have you stood here the whole day idle?' Now I conjecture that there is a secret teaching about the soul hidden in these words. Seeing that they were idle the entire day until the eleventh hour, wanting to work but not being invited into the vineyard, they boldly defend themselves and respond, 'No one hired us'. We, therefore, have drawn the conclusion from many Scriptures as well as from the parable before us, and dare to say such things to

[221] Lk 19:12–27. Mt 25:14–30 has the same parable, but only Lk uses the term mina. Mt uses talent.

establish how those called about the eleventh hour had stood idle the complete day. It was because no one had hired them.

35 Now let those who object to such doctrines explain to us 'the entire day' and 'those who stood idle' the whole day wanting to work but were not called into the vineyard and who asserted boldly, 'No one hired us'. For if the soul is sown along with the body, how did they stand idle the entire day? Or, let them tell us what the entire day is, and the different callings of the workers in it related to the different hours. But it is beyond us to think about so great a subject in a worthy manner as whether those hired by the householder in the parable were blessed, and there were also other workers hired either by other householders or by the same, and they were either not blessed or not so blessed. It is even beyond us to believe the things being considered in Scripture as we think about them.

I inquire also about the regions outside the vineyard where the workers are found by the one who went out to hire them, and I reflect on whether perhaps the place outside the vineyard is the place of souls before they are joined to the body, and the vineyard is not only the regions of this world but also those outside the body where, in my opinion, the workers do their work. For the souls of the workers invited into the region of the householder, which have been released from the body, are not idle. Samuel, indeed, worked outside the body by prophesying, and Jeremiah by praying for the people.[222] Let us strive eagerly, therefore, and work the vineyard 'whether at home in the body or away' that we might receive whatever is just.[223]

And no one, so far as the parable is concerned, is sent into the vineyard who does not do its works. The householder blamed no one for neglecting to do the work, although he blamed them for hoping for more pay. And perhaps the place outside the vineyard is the marketplace where those were who stood idle. It was a great defence, indeed, by those who said, 'No one hired us'. It made them worthy of a full day's pay, because he hired them and, if I may put it this way, paid them for standing patiently the entire day and waiting until evening for the person who was to hire them.

Next, when it was evening, that is, the end of the age and of the day in the parable, 'the lord speaks to his administrator', either an angel in charge of rewards or even an administrator from the numerous administrators, just as it is said that the heir is 'under administrators and managers' as long as 'he is a minor'.[224] At the command of the householder, therefore, the administrator summons the workers to pay the last first. For the earlier workers, 'although approved through faith, did not receive the promise of God' since the householder 'had provided something better for us' who were called in the eleventh hour, 'that they might not be made perfect without us'.[225] And we were shown

[222] 1 Kgs 28; 2 Macc 15:14. [223] 2 Cor 5:9. [224] Gal 4:1, 2. [225] Heb 11:39–40.

mercy for standing the entire day and wanting the employer to come to us, but we were unemployed. On the basis of our defence we were thought worthy of the work, and we, the disciples of Christ, were shown mercy and expect to receive our pay first. Then he will move up and pay those who worked before us, then those before them, and so on till he comes to the first. But when one sees the place where Samuel spent his time and subsequently contemplates the workers called about the eleventh hour, he will see in what manner the previous workers bore the burden and burning heat of the day. We who were called about the eleventh hour did not bear the burden of the day and its burning heat as those did. But we bore the burden of standing idle before the householder visited us, who said to us, 'Come to me all who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest'.[226] For being unemployed and not yet being thought worthy of working in the vineyard was a burden. Those called before the eleventh hour bore the burning heat, indeed, each in proportion to his calling.

But the first workers, not knowing the honour of the householder and that one must not grumble against him, thought they would receive something more than the salvation which the last received. 'They grumbled against the householder', resenting us who were last, who had worked one hour before the end, and who had become equal to those called to the divine vineyard from the beginning. The householder said to one of them, perhaps Adam, 'Friend, I did not wrong you; did I not agree with you for a denarius? Take what is yours and go', for salvation is your denarius. 'I wish to give to this last man even as I gave to you'. He did not say 'to these last men'. He indicated some single person par excellence. One would have to be daring to give this person a name. But one might make the persuasive suggestion that the reference is to the apostle Paul who worked one hour and perhaps did more than all those before him.

And if one must also say something about the vineyard, taking a clue from him who interpreted the vineyard in his words about another parable, we will say that the vineyard is the kingdom of God, for this is what he said in the words, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation which produces its fruit'.[227] All, therefore, who do the works of the vineyard, that is, who perform the works of the kingdom of God in a manner worthy of salvation, will receive the denarius.

36 After dictating these words on this parable which we are expounding, I had these further thoughts about it. They can be useful to those who are advancing in the deeper and more esoteric interpretation. Someone will say, then, that the day in this parable is the totality of human life. What is revealed, then, is that those who are hired by the householder at daybreak are those who are called as children in their earliest years to do the works of the kingdom of God. Those who arrive at the third hour are those who come to the service of God

[226] Mt 11:28. [227] Mt 21:43.

after adolescence; those sent out to the vineyard at the sixth hour are those who are already adults; those invited to the Word of God about the ninth hour, after the burning heat experienced in youth and the burden of their activities preceding old age, are the old men who are brought to the service of God. Finally, those called to the works of the vineyard at the eleventh hour would be the old men already at the point of death. Since then it is the choice, and not the time which one has worked in the faith, that is being examined, the equal payment of salvation is given to all who have performed the things imposed on them from the time they were called. This is why those who were faithful from childhood and toiled and constrained their youthful urges are angry if they are to receive salvation equal to those who, so far as service to God is concerned, have been idle from their youth until their old age and, doing nothing in their unbelief, have come to faith and the works of faith for only a short time.

37 Now according to this interpretation the church of God would be the vineyard, and the marketplace and the places outside the vineyard would be the places outside the church. These are the places from which the Logos invites those who are called and sends them to the vineyard, that is, to the church. But according to this interpretation, all who were formerly called to the service of God but who did not maintain the things of the faith and were conquered by passions and departed would not be numbered among those workers in the vineyard. For even if after they have had their fill of the pleasures of sin they wish to repent and start to work again from the beginning in the vineyard, they cannot say to the householder, 'No one hired us', for they were hired previously at the time they were called to believe. But neither have they been asked, 'Why have you stood here idle the entire day?' especially if, after 'beginning with the spirit' and later ending with the 'flesh', they should again want to return to live anew in the spirit. We are not saying these things to dissuade those who have fallen from getting up or to hinder those who have strayed from returning, or those licentious sons who have squandered the substance of the Gospel teaching from running back to the father's house. For because they have repented and are constrained by a life that has been turned around, let them have the consolation of salvation, which is beyond those constrained in sins. For one must surely not assume that they are like those who sinned in youth because they had not learned even the beginning elements of the faith. Therefore, the householder wishes to give the denarius, that is salvation, to the last as also to the first, since he has the right to do what he wishes with his own things, and he reproves the man who has the evil eye because the householder is good. 'Many', therefore, 'of the last will be first' and some of those called first will be last, for the called are many, but the chosen are few.

It is likely, therefore, that a person wiser than us, and judged by God to be worthy of a clearer and richer gift in a word of wisdom through the Spirit of

God, and a gift of knowledge in the word according to the Spirit,[228] will discover with full apprehension things loftier and greater in the parable and, employing words of a more noble nature for them, he will provide an abundance of proofs. But we, having expounded the meaning of the parable as we have understood it, ask leniency from our readers even though we have not been able to attain in a worthy manner the intention of the things written here. Perhaps, because of our eagerness and lack of hesitation, we will appear to have something worthy of acceptance.

[228] 1 Cor 12:8.

Book 16 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 20:17–21:22

1 Now when 'Jesus' was about to go up 'to Jerusalem he took the twelve aside privately on the way and said to them', and what follows down to the words, 'and on the third day he will rise up'.[1]

Words equivalent to these have also been recorded by Mark as follows, 'Now they were on the way going up to Jerusalem and Jesus was preceding them' and what follows down to the words, 'and on the third day he will rise up'.[2] Luke also will seem to agree with these words since he has written, 'And he took the twelve aside and said to them', and what follows down to the words, 'and they did not understand what he said'.[3]

Paul urged us to imitate himself even as he had imitated Christ, when he said, 'Be imitators of me, just as I too am of Christ'.[4] When Paul saw Christ proceeding to the very spot of obvious dangers and eagerly going up 'to Jerusalem' with the foreknowledge that 'he will be delivered to the high priests and scribes' and be condemned 'to death', and what follows, he did a very similar thing. For on the one hand, Agabus took Paul's 'belt', bound himself hand and foot, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, So will they bind the man to whom this belt belongs', if he goes off to 'Jerusalem'.[5] But when Paul learned this, in imitation of his teacher, he eagerly went up to Jerusalem.

And when he experienced the human emotion of those who were weeping because of their love for him and preventing him from 'going up to Jerusalem', he said, 'What are you doing weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready

[1] Mt 20:17–19. Origen has the verb *anastēsetai*, 'will rise up'; Nestle-Aland has *egerthēsetai*, 'will be raised'. The reading Origen has agrees with Codex Vaticanus and appears also in the parallel texts in Mk 10:34 and Lk 18:33. The reading accepted by Nestle-Aland appears in Codex Sinaiticus.

[2] Mk 10:32–4. Origen's text has 'on the third day' exactly as in Matthew; the Nestle-Aland reading is 'after three days'. Origen's reading appears in Codex Alexandrinus; that of Nestle-Aland is in both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

[3] Lk 18:31–4. [4] 1 Cor 11:1. [5] Acts 21:11.

not only to be bound when I go to Jerusalem, but even to die for the name of my Lord Jesus'.[6] When we have understood these things, therefore, there are times when, with full knowledge that difficult trials are impending, we have good reason to proceed directly to them choosing to take as an example such men as the Saviour, and after him, his apostle. But do not think that this statement is in opposition to what we have said on these words: 'If they pursue you from this city, flee to another', and what follows, and on Jesus withdrawal when he heard 'that John had been delivered' to prison.[7] For we say that it is not always proper to avoid dangers, nor is it always proper to go to meet them head on. One who is wise in Christ must scrutinize what sort of occasion calls for retreat and what sort readiness for the struggle with no retreat and even more so, no flight. Let this suffice in relation to the intention of the Scripture before us to encourage us sometimes to despise the dangers of death.

2 Next, we must notice that when Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, since he took the twelve aside privately, and Judas was still one of the twelve, he also took Judas aside privately. It is reasonable to think that Judas was still worthy of being taken aside privately with the remaining eleven. And when Jesus said to them on the way, 'Behold we are going up to Jerusalem',[8] and what follows, the teacher was clearly of the opinion that Judas too was one of those who would hear what he was to suffer. He does not reject him, because Judas, like each of us, still did not know what he would do. For it has also been said to each of us, 'Do not boast about the things of tomorrow, for you do not know what the coming day will bring forth'.[9] For in my opinion the devil had not yet put it 'into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray' Jesus.[10] And since the present task is to examine the Gospel according to Matthew, let the person who is capable investigate carefully whether Matthew ever maligns Judas anywhere from the beginning of the Gospel up to the words before us, except in the list of the twelve where he said, 'And Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, who also betrayed him'.[11] And we assembled many arguments to confirm that Judas was previously like the rest of the apostles when we examined the words, 'Jesus sent the twelve forth after he had charged them saying', the things which are recorded.[12]

One must compare what was said here[13] with the similar words recorded earlier, for there, in response to words like these spoken prophetically by the Saviour,[14] 'Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him saying, May God spare you, Lord; this will never happen to you'.[15] Here, however, the disciples

[6] Acts 21:12, 13.

[7] Mt 10:23; 4:12. For some of Origen's comments on Mt 4:12 see the Appendix, Catena Fragments 70 and 71. In Frag 71 he joins Mt 10:23 with 4:12: 'When Christ withdrew, he kept the word of the Scripture which says, "If they pursue you from this city, flee to another." And [he said this] that he might bring the nations to himself and enlighten them with the light of knowledge'.

[8] Mt 20:18. [9] Prv 27:1. [10] Jn 13:2. [11] Mt 10:4.

[12] Mt 10:5. Origen must be referring to his treatment of Matthew 10:5 in an earlier (now) lost book of the *Commentary*.

[13] See Mt 20:18–19. [14] See Mt 16:21. [15] Mt 16:22.

are recorded to have said or done nothing in response to the report about the very severe things which were going to happen. I think that the disciples were silent on this occasion because previously, when 'Peter took' Jesus 'aside and began to rebuke him saying, May God spare you, Lord; this will never happen to you', Jesus 'turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling-block for me because you are not thinking about the things of God but about human things'.[16] It is likely, then, that when they remembered what had been said to Peter, they were cautious that they not hear the same or even worse things from the teacher.

3 It does no harm to set forth the previous text which is similar to the words we are expounding. It reads as follows: 'Then he gave express orders to his disciples that they should tell no one that he is the Christ' and what follows down to the words, 'and on the third day be raised'.[17] For in response to these words it is said that 'Peter took him aside' and what follows.[18] And further, it is said in the previous passage that the Saviour will 'be killed'. Here, however, the form of his execution is recorded, namely crucifixion.[19]

So long, then, as Jesus was not delivered to the high priests and scribes in Jerusalem, or condemned to death, or mocked, or beaten, or crucified, Jerusalem stood firm and what is called the sanctuary was not thrown down.[20] But when they dared to do these things to Jesus, then those who handed him over were abandoned. The high priests ceased to be high priests, as there were no high priests after them. And the scholars who condemned Jesus to death became insensible in their understanding and were blinded in their thinking so that they no longer perceived the intention of the Holy Scriptures. All those who condemned Jesus to death were delivered to death, the enemy of Christ.[21] Those who mocked Jesus became a mockery when 'Jerusalem' was surrounded 'by armies' and when her desolation drew near.[22] But those who whipped Jesus were themselves also whipped and continue to be whipped until 'the fullness of the Gentiles shall enter',[23] for 'the person who throws a stone in the air is hit on his own head when it falls'.[24] And all these things have happened that God's providential care might depart from them and be given instead to those being saved from the Gentiles, together with the remnant 'according to election'.[25] For 'if the Lord Sabaoth had not left' them 'seed', they would have become 'as Sodom and Gomorrah'.[26]

Now I think that just as the ancient worship, which was performed in accordance with the 'pattern and shadow' 'of the heavenly things',[27] was done away with because of the heavenly things, so too the symbolic high priest ceased to exist when the true high priest came, and the symbolic sacrifices were abolished when the true sacrifices for sins were completed. Likewise,

[16] Mt 16:22–3. [17] Mt 16:20–1. [18] Mt 16:22. [19] Mt 20:19.
[20] See Mt 16:21. [21] See 1 Cor 15:26. [22] Lk 21:20. [23] Rom 11:25.
[24] Sir 27:25. [25] Rom 11:5. [26] Is 1:9. [27] See Heb 11:5.

when the true Jerusalem received Jesus as he went up on his own body as a donkey (at which time daughter Zion rejoiced greatly and the daughter of the Jerusalem above[28] proclaimed it aloud[29]), then the Jerusalem which was a shadow was demolished and the temple made of dead stones fell because the temple made of living stones will be raised up,[30] and the altar below was utterly destroyed because Jesus himself, in true worship, performed the dedication[31] of the heavenly altar.

But if, according to a certain way of signifying things, humans are the city, even now Jesus is delivered in Jerusalem (and by Jerusalem, I mean those people whose hopes are centred on this earthly place) to the Jews who claim to be serving God. And those who are high priests, as it were, and the scholars, who boast that they interpret the divine Scriptures, condemn Jesus to death by their evil speech against him. They are always handing Jesus over to the Gentiles, mocking him and his teaching among themselves, and tongue-lashing the worship of God through Jesus Christ. They themselves crucify him by their anathemas and their desire to destroy his teaching. But he who is better than all of them arises after a short interval and appears alive to the Gentiles who have received the ability to see. For now, as Isaiah says in the person of God, 'who is blind but my servants, and who are deaf, except their rulers?' For he says with great prophetic and spiritual ethos, 'Hear, you who are deaf, and look up and see, you who are blind. And who is blind but my servants, and who are deaf but their rulers? Even the servants of God were blinded'.[32] For Jesus came 'into this world for judgement, that those who do not see (these are the Gentiles) may see and those who see (that is, Israel) might become blind'.[33] Such a great and true light arose, and the word pointed him out and said, 'Behold a man, Rising is his name'.[34] They did not see the light because 'their wickedness blinded them and they did not know the mysteries of God',[35] and a paradox occurred in relation to that people and the Gentiles. For, on the one hand, the people saw each lamp of the prophets, but when the sun of righteousness arose they did not recognize it. This is also why they destroyed anyone whom they thought had a lamp. But on the other hand, 'the people' of the Gentiles 'who sat in darkness saw a light'. It was not a small light like Israel saw, for each of the prophets was a little light. 'The people who sat in darkness saw a great light',[36] even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. His greatness is seen extending 'mightily from one end of the earth to the other and managing' the churches 'well',[37] when his Spirit has filled the world and the prophecy has been fulfilled which says, 'the mountain of God' will be 'manifest in the last days'. Even now 'all the Gentiles are coming to it',[38] and Christ Jesus is this mountain.

[28] See Gal 4:26. [29] See Zach 9:9; Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15. [30] See 1 Pt 2:5; cf. Jn 2:19.
[31] See 2 Esd 6:16. [32] Is 42:18–19. [33] Jn 9:39.
[34] Zech 6:12. I translated 'him', the personal pronoun, with the MSS, rather than the reflexive pronoun, himself, which Klostermann prints.
[35] Wis 2:21–2. [36] Mt 4:16; Is 9:1. [37] Wis 8:1. [38] Is 2:2.

4 'Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached him with her sons' and what follows down to the words, 'but when the ten heard, they were angry at the two brothers' (Mt 20:20–4).

Mark recorded the same thing in this way, 'And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him and said to him', and what follows down to the words, 'They began to be angry at James and John'.[39]

It is worthwhile in the present passage to look for a meaning that is not contemptible and is truly appropriate to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have stated this in advance[40] because to the uninstructed and completely simple, who are incapable of investigating the depths of God and of his Scriptures, the letter indicates the frankness of the petition and of Jesus' response to it. On the other hand, to those able even to a limited degree to examine issues closely, the meaning indicated immediately is petty, trivial, and contains nothing significant, especially when Jesus answers in a way appropriate to his magnanimity. For just as in a kingdom of this world those appear to be preeminent who sit with the king when he is seated in his royal apparel and administers whatever it might be of the affairs of the royal house, so the mother of the sons of Zebedee (or James and John themselves as Mark has recorded it) will appear (so far as the bare text is concerned) to be contemplating that one of her sons be considered worthy by the Saviour to sit on his right when he is in his kingdom, and the other on his left. And it would not be strange at all for a woman to think it proper to entertain such thoughts because of feminine[41] simplicity and lack of education. But grant that the two apostles as well, as men who were still imperfect and did not think anything very profound about the kingdom of Christ, had the same assumptions about sitting with Jesus. But when Jesus too, in agreement with it being significant for someone to sit at his right or left, takes up the request and says, 'You do not know what you are asking', and, 'It is not mine to give, but is for whom my Father has prepared it',[42] anyone who appears to be an intelligent reader of Scripture would ask what is intended by sitting 'at the right' or 'left' of Jesus 'in' his 'kingdom'.[43]

And for those who suspect that we are meddling when we investigate these matters, we must collect the things which have been recorded about God or of Christ sitting so that by the touchstone of the things assembled on this subject and by their juxtaposition with one another some important doctrine can appear taken from a simple example. Take, for example, what is written in the third book of the Kingdoms: 'Michaias said, I saw the God of Israel seated on his throne, and all the host of heaven stood around him on his right and on his left', and what follows.[44] And in the second book of the Supplements the same Michaias makes a similar statement: 'Hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord seated on the throne of his glory, and all the power of heaven stood at his right

[39] Mk 10:35, 41. [40] Klostermann's conjecture, based on the Latin, hoc autem praemisi.
[41] Klostermann's addition on the basis of the Latin ex muliebri simplicitate.
[42] Mt 20:22, 23. [43] Mt 20:21. [44] 3 Kgs (=1 Kgs) 22:19.

and at his left', and what follows.[45] It is also written in Isaiah, 'And it happened in the year that king Ozias died I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and raised up', and what follows.[46] And further, such things are also written in Daniel: 'I continued to look until thrones were put in place, and an ancient of days sat' and what follows.[47] One can also find similar words at the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecy, when he says, 'Above the firmament over their heads (he obviously means the Cherubim), which had the appearance of a sapphire, was the likeness of a throne on it, and above the likeness of the throne was a likeness in the form of a human being'.[48] And in the one hundred and ninth Psalm the statement, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand', reveals a seat for the Father and another for the Saviour who is seated at his right hand.[49] Again, in another Psalm, the prophet prays and says, 'You who sit on the Cherubim, become visible',[50] and again, 'God is seated on his holy throne'.[51]

And if you wish to take examples from the Gospels as well, hear Matthew when he records how Jesus said to the disciples, 'Truly I say to you that you who have followed me, in the time of regeneration when the Son of Man sits on the throne of his glory',[52] and what follows. Matthew also says, 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory',[53] and what follows, and, 'Starting now you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power'.[54] Mark has recorded what is equivalent to this in the words, 'And you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven', as has Luke, in the words, 'For from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God'.[55]

Why must I gather more passages like these? I intend to present a mystical interpretation after[56] the trivial, simple, lowly interpretation of the sitting of Christ in the kingdom and of those seated on his right and on his left. Then those capable of ascending to the divine thoughts can make a rational examination and discover something worthy of the spiritual person who examines 'all things' and is examined 'by no one',[57] analogous to Paul's words when he spoke about spiritual things and things pertaining to the Gospel. For as Paul understood the things concerning the manna, the rock, and the water from the rock in accordance with the spiritual law[58] and said, 'And all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from the spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ',[59] so the spiritual person who stands on this rock might say, both in thanksgiving to God for this and of himself, 'He established my feet on a rock and prospered my steps'.[60]

[45] 2 Chron 18:18. [46] Is 6:1. [47] Dan 7:9. [48] Ez 1:25–6.
[49] Ps 109 (110):1. [50] Ps 79 (80):1. [51] Ps 46:9 (47:8). [52] Mt 19:28.
[53] Mt 25:31. [54] Mt 26:64. [55] Mk 14:62; Lk 22:69.
[56] Klostermann's conjecture on the basis of a similar statement in *HomJer* 18.4 (Klostermann [1983] 154.25).
[57] 1 Cor 2:15. [58] See Rom 7:14. [59] 1 Cor 10:3–4. [60] Ps 39:3 (40:2).

The sitting of God is spiritual, as is that of Christ on a spiritual throne. Furthermore, Christ's sitting 'on the right hand of the power' is also spiritual. These words reveal nothing about a physical sitting, which they define as the place for the buttocks seated on a chair. It is ridiculous, because of the physical terminology used, to think that physical[61] thrones have been created—I do not know what material was used—capable of being a seat for God, or Christ, or those seated at Christ's right or left, for whom the Father has prepared such. But I do not know if it is holy to think of the host 'of heaven' physically standing 'at the right and left' of God,[62] or again to think that those who are saved and who are commended in their bodies are at the right hand of our king Jesus Christ, and those who are blameworthy and being destroyed are on the left in bodies like the former.[63]

5 But perhaps Christ is restored to his kingdom when he has recovered his rule,[64] once the sin which rules in the mortal bodies of human beings[65] has been destroyed along with every sovereignty which rules evil people, and every authority, and power,[66] and this is what it means for him to sit 'on the throne of his glory'.[67] But that he places everything on the right side before God, so that there is no longer anything to his left is what will be shown in those who will be 'at the right hand of the power',[68] and who will see, for example, 'the right hand of power' seated on his right and left in the kingdom of Christ, the Logos. Those whom God restores, by cooperating with them and preparing them to be near the dignity of Christ, so that the one who precedes the others who are near Christ may be at his right, touching him, as it were, and clinging to the things on the right of the Logos, but the one who is inferior is near the things on his left. And consider if you can understand what is on the right of Christ as what is called the invisible creation[69] and what is on the left the visible and physical, but Christ rules over all. But immediately some of those near him have been allotted the things which are on the right and are perceptible to the intellect, and others the things on the left which are perceptible to the senses.

Perhaps the true mother of the sons of Zebedee, whom the Saviour called Boanerges, 'which means sons of thunder',[70] who was herself[71] thunder, had lofty expectations of her sons James and John (and they were indeed great men) and assumed that they could have chief rank over all human nature since

[61] Koetschau's suggestion on the basis of the Latin text. [62] See 3 Kgs (1 Kgs) 22:19.
[63] Mt 25:32–4, 41. [64] Lk 19:15. [65] Rom 6:12.
[66] Eph 1:21. Origen makes statements similar to what he has made in this section about sitting, etc. in a fragment from his *ComEph* on Eph 1:20–1: 'One must consider these things to have been said in a physical image, not that there are any chairs or thrones perceptible to the senses situated in the heavens on which the Father is seated and the Son at the right hand of the Father, for should we think in this way we would not say things worthy of the divine nature' (Heine [2002] 111–12).
[67] Mt 25:31. [68] Mt 26:64. [69] See Rom 1:20. [70] Mk 3:17.
[71] Diehl's suggestion, accepted by Klostermann, based on ipsa in the Latin text.

they possessed her bombastic manner. She approached the Lord and thought it proper that he seat one of them on his right and the other on his left. To correct James and John's very bombastic mother, because she was ignorant of who those are who exceed and because so great a gift comes from God alone who is over all things, inspiring, working with, and giving such supremacy to those whom he has seen to be suitable, the Saviour said, 'You do not know what you are asking'. He added, 'To sit at my right or left is not mine to give, but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father'.[72]

The one who is able will understand what the Saviour gives and what the Father gives. He will perceive that there are some things which the Son may not give, but only the Father. It is bold, on the one hand, to investigate if even the Gospels present something like this, in one place introducing the Saviour praying for certain powers that he might have the requests from the Father, and in another, acting without prayer since he already has those powers thought suitable. But, nevertheless, let the one who is able investigate even these questions in a pious manner. I think, however, that it is because he wants to show the mother of the sons of Zebedee and the sons themselves that they are lacking in the perfection that humans, who are not common everyday people, can attain, that he replied after he said, 'You do not know what you are asking', 'Are you able to drink the cup which I will drink?'[73] Or, as Mark has it, 'Are you able to drink the cup which I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?'[74]

6 And someone will ask on these words, What is the cup and what is the baptism?[75] Since they differ from one another and are separately designated, they need a meaning that is out of the ordinary concerning what is being drunk or of the one who will be baptized. What is being drunk is not other than the cup which Jesus was about to drink; and the baptism of the one who will be baptized resembles that baptism with which the Lord himself was about to be baptized. Many refer both to martyrdom. They do not show whether the saying contains two ideas revealed through the two terms which happen to be one in reality or whether two things can also be revealed in these words. Now we do not reject this interpretation, but we wonder if it is possible that the two terms disclose something other than these meanings. And since it is too much to treat these matters in detail now, we will present a few things to establish what the passage suggests to us.

To show that these words indicate martyrdom one will certainly use the passage, 'Father, if it is possible, remove this cup from me',[76] since it is drunk with suffering by the one who submits to the struggles associated with martyrdom,

[72] Mt 20:22, 23. [73] Mt 20:22. [74] Mk 10:38.
[75] This is the problem-and-solution approach to a text. Perrone (1995); Heine (2003) 64–72.
[76] Mt 26:39; Mk 14:36.

until one drains it after enduring everything inflicted on him in the testing that goes with martyrdom. But one will also make use of what is said in the one hundred and fifteenth Psalm, 'What shall I give back to the Lord for all that he has given back to me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord'.[77] 'I will express my prayers to the Lord before all his people'.[78] 'The death of his holy ones is precious before the Lord'.[79] For we can give back nothing greater to the Lord for his benefits to us than eagerly to take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord in order to drink it. In this draining of the cup one gives back all one's own prayers 'to the Lord before all his people'. And the one who adds to this saying about the cup the statement, 'The death of his holy ones is precious before the Lord', has taught clearly in these words that the cup is martyrdom.

Martyrdom, however, is twofold in its meaning. One is called the 'cup of salvation', and the other, baptism. In so far as one endures the pains, a cup is being drained by the one who is bearing everything being inflicted on him. He is taking up and, as it were, drinking the bodily pains without pushing them aside, casting them off, or vomiting them forth. But in so far as the person who endures martyrdom receives forgiveness of sins, it is a baptism. For if baptism promises forgiveness of sins, just as we have been told concerning baptism in water and spirit, and the person who endures the baptism of martyrdom receives forgiveness of sins, then there would be good reason for saying that martyrdom is a baptism. And it is clear that everyone who endures martyrdom receives forgiveness of sins from the statement, 'Whoever confesses me before men, I will confess him before my Father in heaven'.[80] Certainly the Saviour confesses before the Father in heaven everyone who confesses him[81] whenever he may have sinned before the confession. For if he will not confess those who have confessed sinning at any time, the statement, 'Whoever confesses me' and what follows, will not be true.[82] But I do not think that the Saviour will confess before the Father in heaven one who is guilty of any sin you please, for when the Son speaks freely before the Father, the confession is for the person who is confessed to be worthy of the confession of Christ to the Father.

And let it not upset us that the Saviour also drinks the cup in Mark and is baptized with the baptism. For indeed, when John 'came into all the surrounding country of the Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins' and Jesus 'came to John to be baptized by him', he was washed for our sins, as it were, so that we might be cleansed by his washing.[83] Or rather, it is indicated that we are cleansed by our martyrdom for him, since after he took up our sins, he was baptized in order to remove them from us and himself. For this reason, 'in that he died, he died to' our 'sin', since he died 'to sin' that was not his own but ours. Now if such an interpretation seems reasonable to anyone

[77] Ps 115:3–4 (LXX). [78] Ps 115:9 (LXX). [79] Ps 115:6 (LXX). [80] Mt 10:32.
[81] My addition. [82] Mt 10:32. [83] Lk 3:3; Mt 3:13.

then the sons of Zebedee have drunk the cup and been baptized with the baptism. For Herod killed 'James, John's brother, with the sword', and the Roman emperor, as tradition teaches, sentenced John to the island of Patmos for his testimony for the word of truth.[84] And John teaches about his own martyrdom, not mentioning who sentenced him, when he declares in the Apocalypse, 'I John, your brother and partner in the oppression, kingdom, and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the Word of God' and what follows.[85] It appears that the revelation was seen on the island.

7 The person who goes beyond the interpretation which has been given for the cup and the baptism says something like this: Just as there is something called the food of the Saviour, of which he says, 'My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work', so there is a cup analogous to that food.[86] It is rather daring to draw an inference from the food and make a factual suggestion, but nevertheless let the one who is able consider whether the food is the active life and the drink the contemplative. For it is eating when Christ does 'the will of the one who sent' him and finishes 'his work', and drinking when he reflects on 'the will of the one who sent' him and completes his knowledge. But you must judge whether it is possible or not also to refer the words 'My flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink', to this distinction.[87] For someone might say that action is truly food and contemplation is truly drink. The one who makes this claim will say that this is the reason he first gives the 'bread' 'to the disciples' 'when he has blessed' and broken it, because action is first. Afterwards, 'he took a cup, and when he had blessed it he gave it to them saying, Drink from it, all of you', since it is necessary that the things which produce the harmony of works and bring what is practical to successful issue proceed in this way through circumstances and arrive at contemplation. For indeed the prophet says, 'Sow justice for yourselves; reap the fruit of life', so that we might first do what must be done. Then he says, 'Enlighten yourselves with the light of knowledge',[88] for it is like a traveller on the road to knowledge who first purifies his morals, that he may proceed and be enlightened.

We have made these remarks as a digression because of our deeper scrutiny about the meaning of the cup. The first statement in the twenty-second Psalm also says, 'You prepared a table before me opposite those who afflict me'. Next it says, 'Your cup intoxicates me as if it were very strong'. Let not the person who reads what we have written presume to censure us, because we had to describe the recorded sittings of God or of Christ in some way.[89] For we reply that it was proposed that we refute from the words alone what is said about sitting, and turn the reader away from the inferior interpretation. For a major investigation about the sitting, standing, and walking of God or Christ is a

[84] Acts 12:2; Rev 1:9. [85] Rev 1:9. [86] Jn 4:34. [87] Jn 6:55. [88] Hos 10:12.
[89] See *ComMt* 16.4 above, pp. 235–6.

matter that must be taken up at another time. The present inquiry does not demand this. Such would be a large and untimely digression.

8 But the Saviour addressed these words to the request of the mother of John and James, or to the request of the sons of Zebedee themselves. 'When the ten heard', it says, 'they were angry at the two brothers'[90] since the rest thought themselves worthy to be honoured. Note carefully that Judas too was among those who were angry (Mark has recorded this as well).[91] Now if Judas was among those angry, along with the other nine, perhaps the devil had not yet put it 'into his heart to betray' our Lord, but he was still one of the apostles with free will. But since we have said many things about him in previous sections we are not repeating proof here that Judas, along with the rest, being in possession of free will of some sort, fell. He fell into the snare of the evil one, loved money, and delivered up the Saviour.

'And Jesus summoned them and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them' and what follows down to the words, 'and to give his life a ransom for many'.[92] Mark has recorded words with the same meaning.[93] And we have noticed that just as in many other passages so here too, Matthew and Mark preserve the order of what has been recorded, whether healings or sayings. For Matthew has preserved all things in order, one after another, from the statement, 'And when Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve aside privately', as far as the words, 'And immediately he will send them'.[94] Mark also does the same, from the words, 'And they were on the road going up to Jerusalem', as far as the words, 'He will immediately send it here again'.[95] But you will discover what I have said once you have placed the Gospels side by side in these passages and compared them. Luke, however, has recorded something similar in part, having prefixed the statement, 'And there was strife between them over which of them was greater'. He adds to these words, 'But he said to them, The kings of the Gentiles rule over them and those who have authority are called their benefactors. But you are not like this' and what follows.[96] Let these things be said, then, so that we may not overlook the things concerning the parallel meaning which has been observed in the passage in Matthew and Mark, and partially in Luke. But now we must investigate the intent of what is said.[97]

It has been said previously that James and John were claiming the first places beside Jesus, and considered themselves worthy to receive the seats at his right and left in his kingdom (or that their mother was asking this on their behalf).

[90] Mt 20:24.

[91] He means that both Matthew and Mark refer to the 'ten' other disciples being angry, which must include Judas. Judas' name is not mentioned.

[92] Mt 20:25–8. [93] Mk 10:42–5. [94] See Mt 20:17–21:3.

[95] See Mk 10:32, 11:3. [96] Lk 22:24–6.

[97] Origen uses the technical rhetorical term here (*dianoia*) which Heath (1995) 255 says refers to 'the verbal instrument interpreted according to its spirit (opp. letter)'.

It was also said additionally that the remaining 'ten were angry' because James and John were claiming the first places beside Jesus, and wished to steal the proximity to Jesus in glory, as if they were superior to the remaining ten. And since these things were said previously, it is with good reason that Jesus summons either the ten angry disciples, or even the two with the rest, and teaches them the way by which someone will be great and first with God. And this is what he said. 'Those who rule the Gentiles' (or 'seem to rule' them[98]) are not satisfied with being lord of their subjects, but wish to prevail over them with violence and 'lord it over them'.[99] And likewise, those who are great among the Gentiles, so far as reputation in this life goes, do not stop at having power over their subjects, but rise up against them and 'tyrannize them'.[100] But these things shall not happen among you, my disciples. Let not those who have been entrusted with any rule over those who believe in me, or considered to have authority in the church of my Father and God lord it over their own brothers or tyrannize those who have fled to godliness through me. But if someone wants to be considered great by my Father and to excel in comparison with his own brothers, let him serve all whom he wishes to excel. But also, if anyone desires the first ranking positions beside me,[101] let him know that the first position will belong to no one who, when the opportunity to serve was present, did not perform with moderation and praiseworthy lowliness the service which could benefit the one serving and gratify or give rest to those served. But Luke includes kings and those who exercise authority over the Gentiles in the discourse, dissuading the one wanting to be great among the brothers from imitating the royal authority or the desire for flattery of those exercising authority. He teaches us that the one who is truly 'great' should become 'as the younger' (that is, as a child) in simplicity and equality, and 'the one who leads (and this, I think, is how he is designating the person called a bishop in the churches) as the' one who ministers to the underlings.

The Word of God teaches us these things. But we either do not understand the intent of the teaching in these words of Jesus,[102] or we despise such important precepts of the Saviour. We are so bad that sometimes we surpass even the vanity of the wicked rulers among the Gentiles and all but seek spearmen to precede us,[103] like the kings, and render ourselves fearful and unapproachable, especially to the poor. We are worse to those who appeal to us and ask about certain things than the tyrants and most savage rulers are to their suppliants. It is possible, indeed, to see leaders of the people of God who permit no ecclesiastical

[98] Mk 10:42. [99] Mt 20:25. [100] Mt 10:25.

[101] The Latin MS sums up everything from here to the end of this paragraph in the short sentence, 'And the person who desires preeminence in the church ought to become servant of all in servile humility, so that he may yield to all in those things which pertain to salvation'.

[102] See above, n. 97. Origen uses *boulēma* for 'intent' here, a synonymous term among the rhetoricians.

[103] The idea of 'preceding' comes from the *Vetus Interpretatio*. The Greek text has only 'spearmen'.

equality with themselves in many churches which are held in honour, and especially in those of the larger cities. There are times when they even forbid[104] the most honourable of Jesus' disciples to be with them. Now the apostle commands masters concerning their household servants, 'You masters treat your servants with justice and equality, knowing that you too have a master in heaven'.[105] And he also teaches masters to stop threatening their servants.[106] But one can see some bishops making savage threats, sometimes at the pretence of sin, and sometimes to deal contemptuously with the poor. This is contrary to the apostolic word where it is said, 'They gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcision. They asked only that we remember the poor'.[107] Again, they neither have a thought for equality with those under their control nor imagine that it is proper that humility and equality be present especially in Christians and, to an even greater degree, in those who bear any rank that carries a name belonging to the church. For it is written, 'Humble yourself all the more, the greater you are, and you will find grace with the Lord'.[108] We must also know what is written in Proverbs, 'Before oppression a man's heart is exalted, and before honour it is humbled'.[109] But also to avoid falling into thinking or saying what the 'one who wished to justify himself' said, who was not ashamed to say to the Saviour, 'And who is my neighbour?' when Jesus was teaching, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself',[110] we must have read Paul's words, 'Although we could have insisted on our importance as apostles of Christ, we were gentle among you, like a nurse cherishes her own children'.[111] We must also imitate the words, 'Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself that you might be exalted?'[112]

Therefore, let those who rule the Gentiles lord it over them, but let those who rule the church serve it. But also, those who are great among the Gentiles exercise authority over them, but let such among the faithful hear him who said, 'Learn from me, because I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls'.[113] And we are also taught not to accept flattery nor to accept the title 'benefactors' from men, which we have good reason to think some have done. Now we are not making these statements out of ignorance, since we wish to humble ourselves 'under the mighty hand of God' and in accordance with his Word, under the service of the church.[114] But there are times when, in accordance with the apostolic voice, we must rebuke 'before all those who are sinning, so that the rest may be fearful'.[115] And there are times when one must use the authority 'to deliver' someone 'to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord'.[116] But one must do this rarely, for one must admonish 'the disorderly', encourage 'the

[104] Accepting Koetschau's suggestion of *apeipontas* as the omitted word in the lacuna.
[105] Col 4:1. [106] See Eph 6:9. [107] Gal 2:9–10. [108] Sir 3:18.
[109] Prov 18:12. [110] Lk 10:27, 29. [111] 1 Thess 2:7. [112] 2 Cor 11:7.
[113] Mt 11:29. [114] 1 Pet 5:6. [115] 1 Tim 5:20. [116] 1 Cor 5:5.

fainthearted', cling to 'the weak', be patient 'with all', and repay no one 'evil for evil'.[117] And we must not consider the sinner to be an enemy, but we must listen to the apostle when he says, 'Consider no one an enemy, but admonish him as a brother'.[118]

I have said all these things wishing, in accordance with the Logos, to show that the ruler of the Gentiles is not to be imitated by the ruler of the church, nor are those to be emulated who exercise lordship, authority, and kingly power. Instead, in so far as possible in these matters too, Christ should be imitated, who most graciously conversed with women and laid his hands on children. But there is an even greater example. Jesus put 'water in a basin' and washed 'the disciples' feet. And one must listen no less to him saying of these actions in the words of the text, 'You call me Teacher and Lord, and you speak correctly, for I am', and what follows.[119] By these words he teaches the disciples to become imitators of his laudable humility. And perhaps also since, although he was Lord, he served our race on behalf of human salvation, for this reason it is said that he took up the 'form of a slave' and humbled himself becoming 'obedient unto death'. And since it was for this reason that 'God highly exalted him', let the one who wants to be exalted act in a comparable way so that he may be highly exalted because of it.[120]

Indeed, 'the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve', even if he was served when 'angels came and ministered to him', and again when he was served by Martha.[121] These acts, however, do not mean that he came to be served. For he visited humanity to serve, and he went so far in his service for our salvation that he 'gave his own soul as a ransom for many' who believed in him.[122] And if, by way of supposition, all believed in him, he would have given his soul as a ransom for all. But to whom did he give his soul a ransom for many? Certainly not to God. Was it perhaps, then, to the evil one? For he had power over us until the soul of Jesus was given to him as our ransom. He was deceived of course and imagined that he could have power over it. He did not see that he could not apply torture to constrain it. Therefore, 'death', although it thought it had power over 'him, no longer had power' over him who alone was free 'among the dead' and stronger than the power of death.[123] He was so much stronger that all those held by death who wished to follow him were able to be free. Death no longer had any power against them at all, for death cannot assail anyone who is with Jesus.

In the words which we are examining in the Gospel, therefore, it has been written that our Saviour has given 'his own soul as a ransom for many'.[124] But Peter said that 'we were ransomed from our vain way of life passed down to us from our fathers not by corruptible silver and gold, but by precious blood'.[125] And the apostle also says, 'You were bought with a price; do not become slaves

[117] 1 Thess 5:14, 15. [118] 2 Thess 3:15. [119] Jn 13:5, 13. [120] Phil 2:7, 8, 9.
[121] Mt 20:28; 4:11; Jn 12:2. [122] Mt 20:28. [123] Rom 6:9; Ps 87:5.
[124] Mt 20:28. [125] 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

of men'.[126] We were purchased, therefore, with the precious blood of Jesus, but the soul of the Son of God has been given as a ransom on our behalf. It was not his spirit that was given, for he had commended it earlier to the Father saying, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit'.[127] Nor was it his body, for nowhere do we find any such thing recorded of it. And because his soul was given as a ransom for many, although it did not remain with him to whom it was given as a ransom for many, it says in the fifteenth Psalm, 'You will not leave my soul in Hades'.[128]

And since this happened once for all according to this passage, I would remind some that their teaching is unsound when, in the fantasy of praising Christ, they confuse issues concerning the firstborn of all creation with issues concerning the soul and body of Jesus, and perhaps also his spirit, thinking what was seen and present in this life was one and completely uncompounded. For let us ask them if the deity of the image 'of the invisible God' and the preeminence of the firstborn 'of all creation', or if that one in whom 'all things have been created, things in the heavens and on the earth, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or rules, or authorities' was given as a ransom for many.[129] And to what enemy, who held us captives until he should receive the ransom, was that soul given as a ransom? And was that enemy capable of receiving so great a ransom for the captives? I do not make these comments to despise the soul of Jesus and make light of it. I wish to show that this soul, so far as possible, was given by the whole Saviour, and that that preeminence and deity could not have been given as a ransom. But I am not at this time separating Jesus from the Christ. Much to the contrary, I know Jesus Christ and his soul to be one with the first born 'of all creation', along with his body, if it is necessary to mention it, so that this whole is one even more so than 'he who clings to the Lord is one spirit'.[130]

9 'And when they departed from Jericho a large crowd followed him. And behold, two blind men were sitting beside the road' and what follows.[131]

Let the words of the narrative of events in this passage be true, that a large crowd followed Jesus when he departed from Jericho with the disciples. And there were 'two blind men' sitting 'beside the road' on which he departed from Jericho 'who heard that Jesus' was going by that place. And let them have cried out and said, 'Have mercy on us, Lord, son of David', and let them have cried out in unison and said what is recorded. And because the blind men expected to receive mercy let 'Jesus have stopped' and called them, so that he did not call in passing, scarcely noticing them, but let him have stopped and inquired of them, 'What do you want me to do for you?' And let the blind men, who by this time were standing near him, address their specific request to him, that they want Jesus to 'open their eyes'. And our kind and compassionate Saviour

[126] 1 Cor 7:23. [127] Lk 23:46. [128] Ps 15:10. [129] Col 1:15, 16.
[130] Col 1:15; 1 Cor 6:17. [131] Mt 20:29–34.

had compassion on the blind men. He had compassion, I think, because they had anticipated the mercy of Jesus being called forth, if I may put it this way, for this had been their cry, 'Have mercy on us, Lord, son of David'. And because they had believed, they expected their eyes to be opened. When Jesus touched their eyes and infused healing power into their eyes by his touch, let him make the blind men see again, and let them gratefully follow Jesus.

And let one who believes in these words and also knows the saying, 'If you do not believe, you will not understand', receive the understanding on the basis of having believed 'according to the analogy of faith'.[132] And when he has received it, let him speak about these things on the basis of his faith concerning them, interpreting the things about them according to the saying, 'I believed, therefore I spoke'.[133] And let such a person not only believe in Jesus and the words recorded in this passage, but also know what they mean. For the person who abides in the truth of the faith, and by the works of the Logos abides in 'the Logos', according to Jesus promise, knows 'the truth' and is made free by it.[134]

And since we too will not be aware of the intention of what is said if we do not believe, but will understand if we understand on the basis of believing, we will present to the best of our ability what occurs to us in relation to this passage, praying to the one who prevents 'the Gospel' from being hidden from us.[135] First, let us understand what it means that a large crowd followed Jesus when the disciples departed from Jericho with the Saviour. Recalling, therefore, and paying attention to what is suggested to us in the parable in Luke's Gospel which says, 'a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves', see if you can say that perhaps here too Jericho is a symbol of the earthly place normally called the world in Scripture.[136] It is Adam, that is, humanity, therefore, who has gone down 'from Jerusalem to Jericho' and has fallen among 'thieves'. And although our Jesus, together with his disciples, was in Jericho (for he had entered Jericho) busily engaged because of the multitudes in Jericho, for there was a large crowd in Jericho, let him go forth to lead those wishing to follow him. For those who are in Jericho do not know how to go out from the mindset of the world unless they see not only Jesus going out from Jericho but also his disciples. But when they see these things they follow him as a large crowd. And it is possible, if one is observant, to look at the words in this passage as referring to those wishing to live according to the Word and desiring to despise the world and all worldly things following Jesus and his disciples, going out of Jericho and walking in their steps. The large crowd follows Jesus so that by walking behind him and using him as their guide, they may ascend to that heavenly[137] Jerusalem.

[132] Is 7:9; Rom 12:6. [133] Ps 115:1. [134] Jn 8:31–2. [135] See 2 Cor 4:3.
[136] Lk 10:30.
[137] The words 'that heavenly' are from the *Vetus Interpretatio*. Klostermann marks a lacuna in the Greek text.

10 (After a few words, then, he adds that 'when they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples' and what follows.[138])

Then next[139] it is written, as if the Logos is pointing out that the men are blind in so far as they will not yet be healed, 'And behold two blind men were sitting beside the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out saying, Have mercy on us Lord, son of David'.[140] Pay attention in these words to the expression, 'And behold two blind men'. Does not the word 'behold' imply an exhibition? If, then, we can give close attention to the word as it portrays the two blind men, and see them, we will say that the blind men were Israel and Judah before Jesus came. But they were sitting by the road engaged in the study of the law and the prophets. Because they were blind, they did not see the true teaching in the law and the prophets before Jesus came into their souls. But they have cried out, 'Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David', because they are aware that they are blind. They do not see the intention of the Scriptures, and they want to recover their sight and see the glory in them. But because they are still blind and have no lofty concepts of Jesus, but think of him only according to his flesh, they call him the son of David who was 'of the seed of David according to the flesh', because they understood nothing more than this. And all their seeming grandiloquence because of their service of God knows nothing more to say of the Saviour than that he was the son of David.

And since I am calling the two blind men Israel and Judah before Jesus entered their soul, lift your thoughts to the two kingdoms and consider the people, Israel and Judah, who were divided in the times of Rehoboam. Next, look at the prophets. Sometimes they prophesied to Israel and sometimes to Judah, but at other times they prophesied to both at the same time. By paying attention to the reading of the prophets you would discover how they prophesy to each of the two individually, but to Israel and Judah together when God promises, through Jesus, to establish 'a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which' God 'made with their fathers' when they went out 'of the land of Egypt'.[141] And since Israel is blind, a subject on which we have frequently expounded contrasting it with

[138] Mt 21:1. This short quotation seems out of place here. The comments that follow immediately are about the two blind men at Jericho. The quotation of Mt 21:1 does not appear in the *Vetus Interpretatio* and this appears preferable to me, but Klostermann says nothing about omitting it in his apparatus. He does, however, enclose the text in parentheses. Origen's reference to Mt 21:1, if it was a part of his original text, must have been to show that Jesus was leading the crowd from Jericho into Jerusalem. Everything else in that text, after the mention of Jerusalem, was irrelevant to his purpose.

[139] The 'next' cannot refer back to Mt 21:1 which Origen has just quoted, but must refer back to Mt 20:29, which has been the subject under discussion in ch. 9. He is now taking up the following verse, Mt 20:30, for discussion. See n. 137 above.

[140] Mt 20:30. [141] Heb 8:8–9; cf. Jer 38:31–2.

the Israel according to the flesh,[142] and Judah likewise, 'When they heard', it says, 'that Jesus was passing by, they cried out'. For 'when they heard', I think, those who announced the things about the advent of Jesus, and that 'he was passing by' Jericho which will be passed unnoticed (since he visited it, but will be departing from it), they take care that he not pass them by without showing them mercy. This is why they have cried out to him 'saying, Have mercy on us Lord, son of David'. And the Saviour, in an act of kindness, does not pass by, but stops. He stops so that his kindness not flow past them but might spring up in the recipients of the kindness, as if it were from a stream which had stopped.

11 Jesus, therefore, 'stopped' and, struck by their cry and request, summoned them to himself.[143] When 'he called them' is considered already the beginning of his kindness, for he did not call in vain or for nothing to be accomplished in those called. Would that, in the same way, when we have cried out to him and said, 'Have mercy on us, Lord', he would call us, who begin from the son of David, and would stop and call us because he is paying attention to our request. Therefore, he said to them, 'What do you want me to do for you?'[144] Here is what I think this means: Present 'what you want'; reveal it, so that all who are departing from Jericho and following me may hear and see what happens. But they answered, 'Lord, that our eyes may be opened'.[145] This is the answer which those who were noble because they were from Israel and Judah, but who had been blinded by ignorance and were aware of it, cried out when they heard those speaking about the Saviour. They say that they want their 'eyes to be opened'. And those who are not unaware that they are blind to the meaning in sacred Scripture when they read it say this especially. These are the ones who say, 'Have mercy on us' and, 'We want our eyes to be opened'. Would that we too, perceiving in what we are blind and do not see, as we sit beside the very road of the Scriptures and hear that Jesus is passing by, might stop him by our request and say that we want our eyes to be opened. If we say this from a disposition which desires to see what things are freely granted to see when Jesus touches the eyes of the soul, our Saviour will have compassion and, because he is Power, Logos, Wisdom, and everything which has been recorded of him, he will touch our eyes which previously did not see. And when he touches them, darkness and ignorance will flee, and not only will we immediately see again, but we will also follow him because he assists us to see again for no other reason than that we follow him who restores sight, so that by always following him, he may lead us to God. Then we may see God with our eyes which he has restored, along with those who are blessed because they have a pure heart.[146] What we have, then, is a large crowd which goes out from Jericho and follows Jesus, being neither

[142] The first mention of Israel in this sentence refers to those of Israel seeking to understand the Scriptures but needing their eyes to be opened, in contrast to the 'Israel according to the flesh' which Origen uses here to refer to the people of Israel as a whole as 16.11 clarifies.

[143] Mt 20:32. [144] Ibid. [145] Mt 21:33. [146] Mt 5:8.

Israel nor Judah. And we have the two blind men who heard that Jesus was passing by, and knew that he was the son of David. They were aware of their blindness and requested that their eyes be opened. These we explained to be Israel and Judah, whose eyes, although they had been closed and shut, see again by the touch of Jesus. This is what Matthew says.

12 Now since some think that Mark and Luke tell the same story but others that it is another similar one, it is worthwhile to look at their accounts. First, we must observe what Mark has written on the topic. 'And he comes into Jericho. And as he is leaving there with his disciples and a significant crowd, behold, blind Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus' and what follows, down to 'and he followed him on the road'.[147] The person, therefore, who stands by the simple story and does not want the evangelists to disagree will say that what is in Matthew and Mark did not happen at the same time. Instead, the things related about the two blind men who received their sight happened on one visit to Jericho, those about this one son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, on another, and the things related in Luke on still another. For if we believe that the Gospels have been recorded accurately with the cooperation, too, of the Holy Spirit, and that those who wrote them did not err in their recollection, it is clear that Matthew has revealed one visit and Mark another, and indeed Luke even another, since it cannot possibly be true that the two blind men and the one were healed on one and the same visit. One who has taken notice of this disagreement with the others can declare this with confidence. And it is not at all strange that someone in Jericho who had observed the former healing (because he uses the same language and makes a similar request) had wished to be healed in the same place. And someone might say that the blind man healed in Luke is yet another.

The person, however, who seeks a deeper interpretation of all these stories will say that one and the same deed is presented in the differing texts. For the two blind men are Israel and Judah, as was explained; the one is the entirety of these two peoples, when one blind man is shown to be healed. When, therefore, 'a sufficient crowd' from the Gentiles goes out with Jesus and his disciples from the things that belong to the world, some remnant of Israel 'sitting beside the road', that is beside the prophetic Scriptures, poor in its understandings and begging for the need of its soul, on hearing 'that it is Jesus of Nazareth', begins shouting loudly that the Saviour, since he is son of David, consent to grant it mercy. And whenever you see the faith concerning the Saviour of those Jews who believe in Jesus, who sometimes think him to be of Mary and Joseph, and sometimes of Mary alone and the divine Spirit, but not at all holding the teaching about his divinity, you will see how this blind man, whom many are rebuking, says, 'Son of David, have mercy on me', for the many are Gentiles who are leaving Jericho and they rebuke the deficiency of those Jews who seem to have faith. But if one refers it anagogically to the noble soul which has

[147] Mk 10:46–52.

become poor regarding such things and has even reached the point of begging, he will not go astray from the teaching.

But since Mark saw fit to record both that the name of the blind man's father was Timaeus and that the blind man was called Bartimaeus, we will look into whether Mark may have understood something deeper in the passage. Perhaps he added the name out of necessity because it was part of the story, but someone might say that he did it because it was useful.[148] And although we will seem to provide an example of bad taste, having come so far as to examine such things, we investigate Timaeus who is named after 'honour', and his son, Bartimaeus, which means son of Timaeus.[149] Now perhaps because the patriarch Jacob, namely Israel, was held in honour, he is figuratively Timaeus, and Bartimaeus, who represents those who have acquired nobility from Timaeus, is blind, based on what we have said previously, and likewise is also sitting 'beside the road' and 'begging'. Then, since 'many' reprimand him 'to be silent' when he says, 'Son of David, have mercy on me',[150] I ask if you can say that many Gentiles reprimand the Ebionite and the one who is deficient concerning his belief in Jesus. The Gentiles have all, with few exceptions, believed him to have been born of a virgin. They reprimand the one who thinks he is from the seed of a man and woman, whose succession derives from David's race and tell him to 'be silent'. But although many were reprimanding him, he cried out 'all the more', believing, on the one hand in Jesus, but on the other, believing in a rather human manner he cried out and said, 'Son of David, have mercy on me'.[151] But the compassionate Saviour stopped, no longer (as Matthew has it[152]) does he call him, but he commanded that he be called.[153] And those who were commanded said to him, 'Cheer up, get up' (for they say, 'Get up', to him because he is seated and had been reclining), and they tell him, 'He is calling you'.

After these words Mark says that 'he threw off his cloak, jumped up and went to Jesus'.[154] Did he have nothing in mind when he wrote about him throwing off his cloak, jumping up, and going to Jesus? Will we dare say that these words have been tossed into the Gospel in vain? I, for my part, do not believe that there is one empty iota or curlicue in the divine teachings, but to be successful, I think the interpreter must have a lot of understanding because of the difficulty of interpreting these actions. Perhaps, then, they disclose the veils and coverings of the blind man and beggar with which Bartimaeus was clothed. The blind man threw them off when he heard, 'Cheer up, get up, he is calling you'. When he had thrown off the veils and coverings of his begging, 'he jumped up' and stood up that he might go to Jesus and gain the answer from

[148] The usefulness (*to chrēsimon*) of a writing was an important topic discussed by ancient commentators. See Heine (1995) and (2001).

[149] Origen is alluding to the visual similarity between the name Timaeus and the Greek word for honour, which begins with the letters *tim*.

[150] See Mk 10:46–8. [151] Mk 10:48. [152] Mt 20:32.

[153] Mk 10:49. [154] Mk 10:50.

him expressed in the question, 'What do you want me to do?' And he himself intended to use a more important expression than 'Son of David, have mercy on me', for he perceived that to say, 'Rabbouni', was more important than 'Son of David'. He also presented the desired form of mercy in his words, 'That I might see again'.[155] And the Saviour, to be sure, does not grant him the kindness because of his cry, 'Son of David, have mercy on me', or when he was wearing the garment of blindness and begging, or even when he was sitting by the road begging. But consequent to his request, 'Rabbouni, that I might see again', the Saviour said to him, 'Go, your faith has made you well'.[156] The Saviour, on the one hand, said to him, 'Go'. But he did something better than this command, for he did not go off, but 'began following' Jesus 'on the road', when 'he immediately regained his sight'.[157]

13 Now let us also see what Luke has. 'And it happened that when he approached Jericho and a certain blind man was sitting by the road begging' and what follows down to the words, 'and all the people saw it and praised God'.[158] We will not repeat what this passage has in common with the others which we have just interpreted as it occurred to us, but we will present the principal and peculiar points to the best of our ability. First, notice that Matthew and Mark have recorded that the activities concerning the blind men, or the blind man, occurred when Jesus was departing from Jericho with his disciples. Luke, however, says, 'And it happened that when he approached Jericho'.[159] According to Luke, therefore, it was when he was entering Jericho and drawing near it that he carried out the ministry related to the blind man. Someone might say that in the mystical sense, Luke's account is first, that of Mark second, and that of Matthew third. For first one must approach Jericho, then enter it, and afterwards depart from it. Luke, therefore, has written, 'And it happened that when he approached Jericho', and Mark, 'And he enters Jericho, and when he departs from there'. Matthew, on the other hand, has recorded neither the approach to Jericho nor that he enters Jericho, but only the fact that when they were departing from Jericho a large crowd followed him. It is possible, therefore, that, according to Luke Jesus did this when he approached Jericho, and according to Mark, when he entered Jericho, but according to Matthew when he departed from it. And you see that also the blind man in Luke's account 'heard the crowd passing by (and not Jesus, of course) and began to ask what it was', but in Mark's account 'he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth and began to cry out'. The two blind men in Matthew's account, however, were sitting by the road and heard that Jesus was passing by, and cried out.[160] And in Matthew it is not Jesus of Nazareth who is beside the blind men, but he is in the other Gospels. The blind man in Mark hears that 'it is Jesus of Nazareth'. When the one in

[155] Mk 10:51. [156] Mk 10:52. [157] Ibid. [158] Lk 18:35–43.
[159] Lk 18:35; cf. Mt 20:29; Mk 10:46. [160] Lk 18:36; Mk 10:47; Mt 20:30.

Luke begins to inquire from the crowd 'what this is', he learns from those who report to him that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

Notice next that 'those before' the blind man who calls out and says, 'Son of David, have mercy on me', 'reprimand him and tell him to be silent'.[161] It is as if Luke[162] was saying, Those who have believed first reprimand the one who says, 'Son of David', and tell him to be silent and not to use the lesser title of him in public, but rather to say, Son of God, have mercy on me. But he 'cried out even more, Son of David, have mercy on me'.[163] Then it says, 'Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to him'.[164] And notice if this blind man (as we observed) is not inferior. For neither did Jesus call him nor did he say that he be called,[165] for since he was not capable of these things, 'he commanded that he be brought to him' because he could not come to him on his own. Then, it says, 'When he approached, Jesus asked him saying, What do you want me to do for you?' He did not ask the man making the entreaty before he drew near to him, but when he drew near and, because he was asked, he said, 'That I might see again, Lord'. Then it says, 'Jesus' answered and 'said to him, See again; your faith has made you well'.[166]

The blind men in Matthew's account, however, get something more. It has been written of them that Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes.[167] He touched neither the blind man in Mark's account nor the one in Luke's. But, on the other hand, the blind man in Luke's account receives a certain advantage since as soon as 'he immediately saw again', not only did he 'begin to follow him', but he received something beyond the others, for it says that 'he began to follow him, glorifying God'.[168] And the result of his following and glorifying God was that the whole crowd saw him and 'praised God'. This is our present perception of these passages. We have come to this knowledge either by our own observation or from what we have received from others. But may God grant to whom he wills a richer word of wisdom and a more distinct word in the light of knowledge so that these words of ours, in comparison with those proceeding from such great gifts, may be found to be like a lamp beside the sun.

14 'And when they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives', and what follows down to the words, 'mounted on a donkey and a colt, the foal of a beast of burden'.[169]

Mark wrote as follows on this passage, 'And when they approach Jerusalem and Bethany, to the Mount of Olives', and what follows down to the words, 'and he will send it immediately'.[170] And Luke has it this way: 'And when he had said these things, he proceeded to go up to Jerusalem', and what follows down to the words, 'You shall say that the master needs it'.[171]

[161] Lk 18:39. [162] My addition. There is no subject specified in the text.
[163] Lk 18:39. [164] Lk 18:40. [165] Mt 20:32; Mk 10:49. [166] Lk 18:40–2.
[167] Mt 20:34. [168] Lk 18:43. [169] Mt 21:1–5. [170] Mk 11:1–3.
[171] Lk 19:28–31. Cf. Origen's discussion of these same three passages in *ComJn* 10.152–96.

It is worthwhile in the presence of such words of the Gospel to understand the intent of the recorded words and the meaning they convey. What did the evangelists have in mind when, in addition to the prodigious and incredible things done by the Saviour, they recorded things which display nothing of the kind? For grant that they have written about the recovery of sight of the blind, the healing of the palsied, the resurrection of the dead, and the cleansing of the lepers to edify those about Jesus who read these accounts in Scripture. But what do they intend in the story before us that when Jesus approached Jerusalem with his disciples and came to Bethphage near the Mount of Olives, he 'sent two disciples' instructing them to untie a donkey and its foal and bring them to him? Sometimes he did not hesitate to take the longer way and to complete the journey on his own feet, as when he went from Jerusalem to Galilee through Samaria and, when he reached the well, sat down by it because he was tired 'from the journey'. And why, too, does it set forth that Jesus himself orders that a donkey, bound with its colt, be untied, and commands them to say to anyone who asks about this that 'the Lord has need of them, and will send them back immediately'? For let so great a Lord who has need of a donkey and foal which have been bound for a long time indicate what is worthy of his magnificence in this.

The prophet Zacharias, the son of Barachias, intensifies our inquiry related to this passage, because he uttered a prophecy about these matters which deserves to be understood. He has written as follows in the very words, 'Rejoice exceedingly, daughter Zion; announce it, daughter Jerusalem, Behold your king is coming to you, just and saving; he is meek and mounted on a beast of burden and a young foal'.[172] And if you want to learn from the prophet how this prophecy is deserving of joy for daughter Zion, listen to the words which follow. 'And he will destroy completely the chariots from Ephraim and the cavalry from Jerusalem; the bow for battle will be destroyed, and there will be abundance and peace from the nations. And he will govern the waters as far as the sea, and the rivers at the exits of the earth. And you, with the blood of the covenant, will send out your prisoners from the waterless pit. And you will sit in your fortress as prisoners of the assembly, and for one day of your sojourning I will give back to you double'.[173] So as not to prolong the discussion further, let us leave the examination of everything related to the topics in the text before us to the person who wants to compare the prophecy with the account in the Gospel. But let us notice, as in other passages, that Matthew and John have not presented the prophetic saying in the exact words. For 'Rejoice exceedingly, daughter Zion; announce it, daughter Jerusalem', is not the same as 'Say to daughter Zion', or as 'Fear not, daughter Zion'.[174] Furthermore, after 'Behold your king is coming to you', Matthew does not have the words, 'he is just and saving' which precede 'meek'. And in addition, instead of the words,

[172] Zach 9:9. [173] Zach 9:10–12. [174] Zach 9:9; Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15.

'mounted on a donkey and the foal of a beast of burden', there occurs the words, 'and mounted on a donkey and a young foal', or as in some manuscripts, 'a foal of a beast of burden'. But instead of the words, 'mounted on a beast of burden and a young foal', John has written, 'he is coming seated on a foal of a donkey'.[175] To indicate that there is a need for knowledge in relation to this passage John adds the statement, 'But his disciples did not have knowledge of these words earlier'.[176]

15 But someone may ask how the prophet will reasonably command daughter Zion to rejoice exceedingly and daughter Jerusalem to announce it, because of the one seated 'on a beast of burden and a young foal', when only shortly before Jesus had seen Jerusalem and 'wept for it' saying, 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets' and what follows.[177] Consider, then, if you can say that the Zion now referred to as 'daughter' of the one who commands her to rejoice and again Jerusalem as 'daughter' of the one who bids her to announce it,[178] can be the heavenly Zion which received the one who had been crucified, rather than the Zion which crucified the Lord. It has been written of this heavenly Zion in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'But you have drawn near to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to a myriad of angels in festal assembly', and again in the Epistle to the Galatians, 'But the Jerusalem above, which is our mother, is free'.[179] For perhaps these things are symbols of the Saviour who, through his disciples, has released from bonds the private beasts of burden both for those who believed from his people and those who believed from the Gentiles. For the synagogue at that time was bound by sins, as was also the colt with it which later became the new people who believe from the Gentiles. And when the Saviour drew near to both these on his ascent to the Jerusalem above, he commanded that they be released by the teachings of his disciples to whom he gave the Holy Spirit and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whoever's sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whoever's you retain are retained'.[180] And Christ's disciples, whom 'he made sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit', always release the donkey which is bound and the colt and bring them to Jesus who wants to use the beasts of burden released by his genuine disciples from the old bondage of sin.[181] It is fitting indeed for the Son of God to have need in this way of the donkey which has been bound and of the colt bound with her, for he is kind. He needs them so that he may give them rest when he sits on them, rather than rest himself on those on whom he is seated.

16 But someone will ask how the statement which follows will be consistent with the explanations we have given. I am referring to the words, 'And he will send them back immediately' or, 'And he will send it back here again immediately'.[182]

[175] Jn 12:15. [176] Jn 12:16. [177] Lk 13:34. [178] See Zach 9:9.
[179] Heb 12:22; Gal 4:26. [180] Jn 20:22–3. [181] 2 Cor 3:6.
[182] Mt 21:3; Mk 11:3.

But you will solve the difficulty by investigating the dispatching either of the two, as Matthew has it, or of the colt, as Mark has it. Since there was no other Lord of those who have been bound than he of whom the apostle says, 'But for us there is one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things', it was clear that no one of those saying, 'Why are you untying the colt?' or whatever they say, will contradict him. For because there were none who would contradict him, the Saviour said, 'And if anyone should say anything, you shall say that the Lord needs them', or, 'If anyone should say to you, Why are you untying the colt? say that the Lord needs it'. And as Luke has it: 'If anyone should ask you why you are untying it, you shall say that the Lord needs it'.[183]

And you shall investigate if, after Jesus has gone up to Jerusalem and has mounted these beasts, or this one, there will be some commission for some kind of necessary work at the place, so that the donkey and the colt may perform some work in relation to what is not mentioned, a work indicated, but not clearly revealed. Now I got this idea by paying attention to the order of the beatitudes in Matthew. In these, after the words, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven', next comes, 'Blessed are the meek, because they shall inherit the earth'. For observe in these words that 'the kingdom of heaven' is first for those pronounced blessed. Second, 'they shall inherit the earth', not so that they are on it forever, for after they have been comforted, and filled with righteousness because they have hungered and thirsted for it, and received mercy, and seen God and been called his sons, they are again restored to the kingdom of heaven.[184]

Now if those who have been referred to earlier are a donkey and colt on which the Saviour is mounted, you should not take offence at the word which compares those who bear Jesus, who is carried by them, to irrational burden-bearing beasts. For perhaps the prophet also had something like this in mind when he said that he had become beastlike, not in general, but in the presence of God or Christ, according to the saying, 'And I became like a beast in your presence'.[185] For just as not only we, but also beings possessing much more intelligence and wisdom than we do, are beastlike in relation to pure intelligence and the majesty of God, so also in relation to the intelligence of the shepherd, we are his sheep. Therefore, the intelligence in even the most perfect human beings, when compared to pure intelligence, is further removed from it than the soul of a donkey and colt, or a sheep from a human being.

Perhaps they go up to Jerusalem (when Jesus is mounted) as a beast of burden or even a colt, but when they are there they do not remain a beast of burden or colt, but are sent back changed, helped, and partakers of the deity of the Logos and the superiority of his knowledge so that they are returned to the place

[183] Mt 21:3; Mk 11:3; Lk 19:31.

[184] See Mt 5:3–10. Origen's point seems to be that the blessing promised in the beatitude in vss. 3 and 10 is the kingdom of heaven.

[185] Ps 72:22 (LXX).

from which they were formerly untied to be made worthy of the glory of God, because the Lord has remade them and rewarded them with so great a change for carrying him that even though they are sent back to their former place, it is no longer for their former works. For our kind Lord, once he has received them and honoured them, releasing them from their bonds and being carried by them, will not send them back again to their bonds or to works inferior to that which they had performed, for they had received the Son of God on their backs. Now it was fitting, on the basis of a mystery like this and what was said with it, for Zion, the daughter of God, to rejoice exceedingly and to incite joy (the fruit 'of the Spirit'[186]), and for Jerusalem, his daughter, to announce it, for 'the just and saving king' was coming to her.[187] He is not simply 'saving', but is 'just and saving', that is, from the observation that he is just, he both saves by means of justice and prepares those being saved for salvation. And he himself was coming to Zion and Jerusalem, 'meek and mounted on a beast of burden and a young colt' (as we have expressed it), visiting Israel when he completely destroys the 'chariots from Ephraim', which were similar to the chariots of Pharaoh when 'he threw the chariots of Pharaoh and his army into the sea'.[188] But he also came destroying the 'horse', the animal of war, from Jerusalem to make peace for Israel by turning back his lost sheep, and peace for Jerusalem by bringing back her children who have fallen away. How could the entrance into Jerusalem of the king, who is just, saving, and meek, fail to be a source of great joy, when he is about to destroy completely every 'bow for war' so that 'sinners' may no longer bend their bows or prepare 'arrows for the quiver to shoot at the upright in heart on a moonless night'?[189] And at that time there will be 'abundance and peace' from the 'Gentiles' who believe and are being saved, when the Saviour governs 'the waters as far as the sea' and governs also 'the rivers at the exits of the earth' and the rivers make outlets for themselves and water earth's many places.

But the person who wants to understand the words, 'daughter Zion' and 'daughter Jerusalem' more simply of the Jewish people whom the Saviour had visited will say that the prophetic word commands daughter Zion to rejoice and daughter Jerusalem to announce it. And if some were disobedient and did not do things deserving of rejoicing nor take up the command about announcing it, they themselves have become the reason they have suffered what they have suffered. Consequently, it was said to them, 'It was necessary to proclaim the Word of God to you, but since you judge yourselves unworthy, behold we are turning to the Gentiles'.[190]

Now you ought to know that there happen to be five translations of Zachariah. In the Septuagint and Aquila, we find the words, 'He is meek and mounted on a beast of burden and a young colt', or 'on a donkey and the male colt of a

[186] Gal 5:22. [187] Zach 9:9. [188] Zach 9:10; Ex 15:4. [189] Zach 9:10; Ps 10:2.
[190] See Acts 13:46.

donkey'. Theodotion has, 'He is understanding and mounted on a donkey and a male colt of a donkey', and Symmachus, 'He is poor and mounted on a donkey and the male colt of a donkey'. In the fifth translation it says, 'He is poor and mounted on a beast of burden and the male colt of donkeys'. Anyone at all can apply these words to the story in the Gospel passage we are examining, when being meek, understanding, and poor the Saviour entered Jerusalem, for 'although he was rich, he became poor so that' those who hear him who understands us may become rich in his 'poverty'.[191]

17 And let us see about the expression 'Bethphage' in Matthew, but 'Bethany' in Mark, and 'Bethphage and Bethany' in Luke. These were 'at the Mount of Olives'.[192] Now we say that Bethphage means 'House of Jawbones' (this was a town of the priests), but Bethany means 'House of Obedience'. Those beasts of burden which were untied, or the one which was untied, therefore, are brought to the house of obedience so that there Jesus may be mounted on them. Or, they are brought to the house of the jawbone. One may speak of this by beginning with the book of the Judges in which there is a spring called 'of a jawbone' from which Samson drank when he was thirsty.[193] Or, perhaps because you must offer your other jaw 'to the one who strikes you on the jaw',[194] Bethphage, whence Jesus sat upon the beasts which were untied by the disciples at Jesus' command, was a symbol of the leniency of those being saved. And the Mount of Olives is[195] those who, bearing fruit which is the garden olive, say, 'But I am like an olive tree which bears fruit in the house of God'.[196] And those who are beginning and are being introduced among them are 'like shoots of olive trees around the table' of Christ, since they are his children and 'sons'.[197]

Now if we must also explain the two disciples whom Jesus sent to the donkey and colt which were tied, to untie them and bring them to him, there may be a basis for saying that the two disciples are Peter and Paul who give the right hand 'of fellowship' to one another, so that Peter should go 'to the circumcision', the beast of burden, that is the people who were under the burden of the law, and Paul 'to the Gentiles', the young and untamed colt.[198] And they had both, that is the beast of burden and the colt, been tied in the village, not in the city, before Jesus came. But the disciples of Jesus untie both and bring them to Jesus.

But to give a further elevated sense to the discussion respecting the two disciples, you will say that there is one order of those who serve those of the circumcision, and another of those who serve the Gentiles. There is, however, a commonality in their tasks, which are to untie those Jesus has commanded to be untied. If, while they are untying them, anyone should say to them, 'Why

[191] See 2 Cor 8:9. [192] Mt 21:1; Mk 11:1; Lk 19:29.
[193] Jdg 15:19. [194] See Lk 6:29.
[195] Klostermann inserts 'church' here, based on its appearance in the *Vetus Interpretatio*.
[196] Ps 51:10 (LXX). [197] See Ps 127:3 (LXX). [198] Gal 2:9.

are you untying the colt?' or whatever, he says of both: we shall announce that the Lord of those who were previously bound has need. He needs them to ride on when they have been released from their sins and have received forgiveness, for Jesus does not sit on those who are still bound and tied 'by the cords of their own sins'.[199] In Mark and Luke, however, the colt too, 'on whom no human being had sat', has been tied,[200] for since it had done nothing rational and in accord with human custom it had once been sold and placed with the colt from the Gentiles. And this colt on which nothing rational had previously mounted succeeded in having God sit upon it as Logos, the Logos of God, in order that being guided by him who held the reins, it might reach the Jerusalem of God. These are the things we have perceived in relation to this passage at the present. But let the person who is able and who possesses a greater grace in relation to this passage speak greater and better things, and let him, rather, be heard by those who are thirsty for clearness pertaining to the Gospel.

18 'And the disciples went and did just as Jesus commanded them and brought the donkey and the colt' and what follows down to the words, 'from Nazareth of Galilee'.[201]

Mark has set out the events in the passage in this way: 'And they departed and found a colt tied at the door, outside on the street, and they untied it' and what follows down to the words, 'blessed is the kingdom of our father David which is coming, peace in the highest heavens'.[202] Luke speaks as follows: 'And those who had been sent departed and found a colt standing, just as he had said', and what follows down to the words, 'If these remain silent, the stones will cry out'.[203]

We will explain what is set forth here in conformity with what we have explained about the two disciples who were sent forth to untie the donkey that was bound, and the colt that was with her, and in conformity with everything we have said on the passage. In the words here it is said that the two disciples went and did what the Saviour had commanded them and brought the donkey and colt to him. They did not leave them bare but conferred decorum on them with garments which preserve propriety, garments with which they themselves had been adorned and covered. These adorned the donkey that they had untied and the colt with her, so that the Logos of God might mount, situate himself, and rest on the donkey and colt which had been adorned with the garments of the disciples who taught, since he alone was over them and held the reins of the beasts which have been untied and are carrying him. But Jesus sits on the garments of those who taught, which have been placed on the donkey and colt, since each one must contribute something to Christ, the meek king mounted on a beast of burden and a young colt.

'But a very large crowd spread their own garments on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread these on the road'.[204] It was a very large

[199] Prv 5:22. [200] Mk 11:2; Lk 19:30. [201] Mt 21:6–11.
[202] Mk 11:4–10. [203] Lk 19:32–40. [204] Mt 21:8.

crowd that entered Jerusalem with Jesus who was seated on the donkey and colt. They demonstrated the fruit of their acceptance of the Saviour by spreading their own garments under him, and what they had as adornment and covering. 'A very large crowd spread their own garments on the road' on which he was guiding the donkey and colt to Jerusalem so that the donkey and colt might arrive in Jerusalem with feet free from earth and earthly things with no dust on them at all. But a third order has now been included in the list besides the two disciples and the very large crowd that spread their garments on the road. Others were carrying out something very beautiful on the road over which Jesus, mounted on the previously mentioned beasts, was travelling to Jerusalem. The beauty belonged to those cutting branches from trees and spreading them beside each garment which had been spread out. Or perhaps this was a fourth order. For the disciples who untied the donkey are one order, the donkey that was untied and the colt with her is another, the very large crowd is a third, and those who cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road is a fourth. And consider with me based on these, that there is also a fifth and sixth order listed consisting of those who precede Jesus and those who follow him.[205] And you will say that those who precede are from the people before the advent, perhaps the just and the prophets; and those who follow are from those who follow the Logos after the advent. These follow him either as the just or even as the apostles of Christ. Those who precede, however, do not say one thing and those who follow another. They were all crying out together like a chorus harmoniously singing together. They were chanting the humanity of the Saviour in the words, 'Hosanna to the son of David', his second coming in the words, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', and his restoration to the holy places in the words, 'Hosanna in the highest'.[206]

19[207] In the midst of these three acclamations made by the agreement of those preceding and following Jesus, he enters the true Jerusalem. And the heavenly powers, referred to as 'the whole city', are astonished, and ask, 'Who is this?'[208] This resembles what is prophesied in the twenty-third Psalm concerning the ascension of the Saviour and the astonishment of the heavenly powers at the new sight of his physical vehicle. The Psalm reads as follows: 'Left up your gates, you rulers, and be lifted up, eternal gates, and the king of glory will enter', and what follows.[209] There are similar prophecies in Isaiah about the ascent of the Saviour after the dispensation, for it is written, 'Who is this coming from Edom, from Bosra with scarlet garments, this one who is beautiful in his robe?'[210] If you read through the whole passage you will be able to understand

[205] The *Vetus Interpretatio* has a quotation of Mt 21:9 here, 'But the crowd which preceded and which followed was crying out and saying, Hosanna to the son of David, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest'.

[206] Mt 21:9. [207] The *Vetus Interpretatio* begins ch. 19 by quoting Mt 21:10–11.

[208] Mt 21:10. [209] Ps 23:7 (LXX).

[210] Is 63:1. Cf. the similar use of this verse and Ps 23:7 (note 209 above) in Origen, *ComJn* 6.288.

what the astonished powers say at the ascent of the Saviour's body and the answer they are given. But I have included these words because I want to preserve the sequence of the spiritual interpretation in the Scripture that, 'when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken and said, Who is this?'[211] Next, after this it is written that many said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee', in agreement with the prophetic word, 'He will be called a Nazarene', that is, one who is always dedicated to God in a special sense.[212] But let the things in the passage related to this interpretation be concluded and let the words which are subjoined be a beginning of another section, so that one is not compelled (by joining the interpretation of the things that follow with the former words) to investigate certain people who are cast out of the temple of God and rebuked because they have made the house 'of prayer' a 'den of thieves'.[213] But I do not know if it is possible, even if one is compelled, to preserve, sequentially with 'Rejoice exceedingly daughter Zion', the entire sequence even of the words which are next after those which are set forth.

Next, let us examine closely what the words mean, 'Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest'.[214] Clearly, then, the phrase, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', occurs in these very words in the Psalm called the one hundred and seventeenth in some copies, that precedes the longest Psalm.[215] Now it seems to me that the words, 'O Lord save', which are placed before the words, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', are represented in the Hebrew language in the words, 'Hosanna to the son of David'.[216] The Hebrew text reads as follows: ANNA ADŌNAI OSIANNA, ANNA ADŌNAI ASLIANNA, BAROUX ABBA BSAIM ADŌNAI.[217] Then it seems to me that the Gospels, which were frequently copied by Greeks who did not know the Hebrew language, were confused by those who held these words from the previously mentioned Psalm to belong to the passage. If you want to learn precisely what the text has, listen to Aquila who translates it like this, 'Please, O Lord, save, O Lord please, help, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'. But let us sum up again what is in the passage, and say that either Paul and Peter or two other expressions of those who teach have released those from the circumcision and those from the uncircumcision from their bonds at Jesus' command, and adorned them and given them the dignity to carry the Logos on themselves as he goes up to Jerusalem. So too will be the remainder so far as one interpretation goes. But according to another interpretation, the time is always present when those who follow Jesus spread their own garments on the road for him and adorn it

[211] Mt 21:10. [212] Mt 2:23. [213] Mt 21:13.
[214] Mt 21:9. [215] Ps 117:26 (LXX).
[216] Origen is referring to the word which he transliterates into Greek as ŌSIANNA, which means 'to save'. The rest of the line in Mt 21:9, 'to the son of David', does not appear in the Hebrew text (or in the LXX).
[217] Ps 118:25–6a (Heb/Eng).

with branches, and precede him and follow. And besides, each one precedes Jesus through what he has already done, and follows him through what he will yet do, and speaks the words which have been recorded. These are our observations on these words. But let the person who disagrees with us on numerous points examine the matters and teach. But we have made an examination of these matters to some extent in one of the commentaries on the Gospel according to John, when we undertook to interpret the words, 'On the next day, then, the large crowd that had come to the feast' and what follows.[218]

20 'And Jesus entered the temple of God and cast out all those selling and buying in the temple' and what follows.[219]

The other three evangelists have also set forth what is in this passage. This is not the time to describe their differences, for it will be enough to clarify, as we are able, what is in the Gospel we are examining. But of the four evangelists who have recorded what is in the passage, we have examined, to the best of our ability, more points in what we dictated on the Gospel according to John[220] and in which we clarified, as we were able, the words, 'And he found those in the temple selling cattle, sheep, and doves', and what follows.[221] There we maintained that the miracle proposed was no less than the incredible miracles of Jesus because, although he was thought to be the son of a carpenter, he employed such great boldness and authority when he cast those recorded out of the temple in a crowd. Not even one with the support of the ruler of the Gentiles could have easily done what Jesus did.[222] And while we were slavishly following the letter, as we proceeded, we gave a spiritual interpretation to the intention of John. But since the sequence now too demands that we speak about the things set forth in relation to the literal text of Matthew, let us call on the Father of wisdom and see if we can say courageously something on the passage worthy of the action of Jesus.

First, we must identify what the temple of God is which God acknowledges in the words of the prophet, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'.[223] In a manner analogous to the circumcision of the flesh and the physical feasts and sacrifices of the law, the temple of God was thought to be the structure built by Solomon from stones incapable of feelings, and later rebuilt by Ezra, but destroyed by the Romans after the incarnation of the Saviour. And that was thought to be the house of prayer. Since it has been destroyed and the Jews no longer have a house of prayer, they must say that they no longer have the special privilege of God's providential care which they used to think they had because they prayed in the house of prayer, nor can they celebrate the duties of the divine service in the law. And let our Saviour, who has also performed symbols with their own spiritual actions, have cast out physically from that building those selling and buying, and let him have overturned the tables of

[218] Jn 12:12. This book of the *ComJn* has not been preserved. [219] Mt 21:12–13.
[220] See *ComJn* 10.197–202. [221] Jn 2:14. [222] See *ComJn* 10.145–9. [223] Is 56:7.

the moneychangers and the seats of those selling doves, and let him have spoken the words set forth to correct the people of that time. Instead of a solemn assembly celebrating in the name of God, they were devoting themselves to selling and buying, and not in the proper place where one should sell and buy, but in the temple, where they ought to have come together to pray since they were in the house of prayer. What they were doing in it, however, was opposite to praying. They were buying, selling, exchanging currency, and sitting on seats to sell doves as if they were in a house of merchandise. And let our Jesus have destroyed what was ignoble in those who were from the Jews at that time, when he rebuked those who, instead of celebrating a feast in accordance with the law, carried out business and revelled physically.

21 But I think that now the church is a temple constructed from living stones, and that there are some in it who do not live as in the church but as if they were waging war 'according to the flesh', and they are making the house of prayer constructed from living stones a 'den of thieves' because of their wickedness.[224] For who will not say that the magnificent mystery of the church has become a den of thieves, once he has become aware of the sins being committed by leading Christians in some churches who consider 'the piety' of others to be 'a source of gain' and, while they ought to live 'from the Gospel' alone, do not do this, but amass wealth and possessions? Consequently, Jesus would address the words from the Psalms to those sinning in the living temple which he built, 'What benefit was there in my blood, when I descended to corruption?'[225] Add to these the words of Hosea (I think),[226] where the soul of Jesus, displeased with the life of those who are sinning and who seem to be in the temple, says, 'Woe is me because I have become like one gathering stubble at the harvest, and like a gatherer of grapes left for gleaning at vintage time, when there are no heads of wheat to eat the first fruits. Woe is me, my soul, because the pious person has disappeared from the earth, and an upright human being does not exist'. And if you take offence at Jesus speaking these words and lamenting our mistakes and saying, 'Woe is me, my soul', examine along with them what is said in the Gospel where it is written that when he saw Jerusalem 'he wept for her, and said':[227] If indeed Jesus had reason to weep for Jerusalem, he will have even more reason to weep for the church which was built to be a house of prayer, but has become a den of thieves because of the unchecked greed and luxury of some (but how I wish these were not also the guides of the laity).

But then 'Jesus entered the temple of God and' cleansed it by casting out 'all those selling and buying in the temple', and overturning 'the moneychangers' tables' with the seats on which those selling 'doves' were sitting.[228] But now, so long as those who are gathered together in the name of Jesus Christ are not visited, there are those in the gatherings selling and buying 'in the temple', and

[224] See 1 Pt 2:5; 2 Cor 10:3. [225] Ps 29:10. [226] The quotation is from Mic 7:1.
[227] See Lk 19:41. [228] Mt 21:12.

doing other things, and nowhere does Jesus appear to them so that when he has cast them out he might save the rest, or even make those cast out aware of their sin and cause them to enter the sanctuary, but no longer to sell and buy or do the other things. But whenever he looks at our sins and, because he loves us, visits us to discipline and chastise us as sons so that he may receive us,[229] then when we and the Holy Spirit are gathered together, the power of Jesus will enter us and when it has entered it will cast out 'all those selling and buying in the temple'.[230] They sell and, as it were, barter even if they have something useful, but buy worthless things in their place, and they do these things in the church, 'the temple of God'. But how I wish that Jesus would enter the temple of the Father, the church, the house of prayer, and overturn the tables of the money changers, I mean those who are shamefully greedy and avaricious and who fritter away the real money for many cheap things not worth mentioning that they might mislead those for whom they exchange money, and they, then, themselves do not use the money for what is necessary. But there are also others selling and buying the doves of Christ in the temple and handing over those innocent as doves, who have prayed and said, 'Who will give me wings like doves, and I will fly and be at rest?'[231] and who have been made obedient to rulers whom they ought not obey.

22 And I think the teaching concerning those selling doves applies to those who hand the churches over to bishops or presbyters or deacons who are greedy, tyrannical, ignorant, and impious. This is the reason Matthew and Mark mention the seats of only those selling doves to have been overturned by Jesus. How I wish those who boast that they sit 'on the seat of Moses' and who sell whole churches of doves and hand them over to such leaders would hear these words with a mind attuned to the divine Scripture! The word of the Lord in Jeremiah might be addressed to such leaders: 'The leaders of my people do not know me; they are sons without either sense or intelligence; they are wise when it comes to doing evil, but they do not know how to do good'.[232] Micah's word fits them as well: 'Those who lead my people will be thrown out of their luxurious house'.[233] For if they had heard this word, they would not have sold the doves of Christ, but would have appointed as their leaders men who have consideration for the doves and take forethought for their salvation, and not men who look about for a fat dove they can kill and feast on.

And Jesus addresses the written word to those being cast out as sellers and buyers and the money changers and those selling the doves, shaming them with the prophetic words, as if from the person of the Father, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'.[234] For in the church of God there must be nothing except prayer for all activity to be holy, summoning the providential care of God, reckoned as prayer in the presence of God, just as it is also possible to

[229] See Heb 12:6; Prv 3:12. [230] See 1 Cor 5:4. [231] Ps 54:7.
[232] Jer 4:22. [233] Mic 2:9. [234] Mt 21:13; Is 56:7.

'pray without ceasing'.[235] But you, Gentlemen, have made the house of prayer a den of thieves by your wicked actions. In many places, you can find the affairs of the supposed church slowly slipping into error, so that when the congregation is assembled in the name of Christ it does not differ from a den of thieves. Consequently, it could be said to them, 'Because of you my name is constantly blasphemed among the nations'.[236]

But if we must describe more specifically the three groups here referred to in the plain truth of the Scripture, perhaps those among the people who devote themselves to nothing in the world except having time for selling and buying, and who rarely devote themselves to prayers and to the works which the divine Word demands, are those who sell and buy in the temple of God. And the money changers, who have tables of money which Jesus overturned, are those deacons who do not properly manage the church's property, but are always groping after these things but not administering them properly. Instead, they collect the supposed wealth and property that they may grow rich from the things given for the sake of the poor. And those who sell the doves, whose seats Jesus overturned, are the bishops and presbyters of the people who have been entrusted with the chief seats, and who give away, as it were, whole churches to men to whom they should not, and appoint as rulers those who ought not be rulers. Let each person, then, who sits on an ecclesiastical seat and loves the 'chief seats in the synagogues' beware not to sit on his own seat in such a way that when Jesus comes he overturns it because it deserves to be overturned. But let each deacon too who gathers wealth and property for himself and robs the poor think about the Scripture before us and no longer heap up money on the tables, so that Jesus not overturn them. But also, let those take heed who are always being led by the cares and anxieties of life into buying and selling that when Jesus comes he not cast them out of the temple of God, since the person who has been cast out has no hope of reentry. And I wonder, as I examine the Scripture being expounded, whether Jesus may perhaps do these things at the second coming or at the anticipated divine judgement. For when Jesus has entered the whole temple of God (from which the church is constituted), that is the entire church, which has remained firm in the name of Christ until the end of the age,[237] he will cast out whomever he finds of those thought to be in the temple of God who have devoted themselves to selling and buying. And whomever he finds captivated by tables and being money changers he will correct by overturning their tables and by explaining, by means of the Word, in what ways they have erred concerning money. And finally, he will also overturn the seats (as we have explained them) of those selling doves. But if someone has no part in these three groups and is found to be in the temple of God, let him be confident. For Jesus will not cast him out, nor will anything of his be overturned. Furthermore, he will not be reproached as a thief for having made

[235] 1 Thess 5:17. [236] Is 52:5. [237] See Mt 28:20.

the house of prayer a den of thieves, since those who made the house of prayer a den of thieves will be chastised for their own robbery and wrongdoing.

23 Since, then, we have expressed the interpretation which has occurred to us in relation to this passage and have explained it in relation to the church in two ways, let us next see if the words in the passage can also be understood in the following way. Every rational nature is, in its nature, no less a temple of God than the church, since it has been made to contain the glory of God. This glory is mentioned in the second book of Chronicles and in the third book of the Kings. It was seen after the construction of the shrine in the temple.[238] We, by sinning, have filled this which by nature is a temple of God, that is the soul, with arguments which sell and buy, and other debates which look to all things concerning money. And by our sinning we have filled it also with other thoughts which sell and barter if any holy remnant, which was a dove, remains in our soul. Therefore, Jesus addresses what has been written to those who sin and have filled themselves with arguments that are thieves: 'My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves'.[239]

On the one hand, then, Jesus cast out of the temple the thieves who had made the house of prayer a den of thieves. But on the other hand, those who thought like the thieves concerning Jesus, said, 'Crucify, crucify him'.[240] Of Barabbas the thief, however, they said, 'Release Barabbas to us'.[241] This is why the Jews do not have Jesus down to the present day (for they have not believed in the Son of God). They have, instead, Barabbas[242] the thief with them from the spiritual powers 'of evil'.[243] He had already been taken captive and locked up 'in prison', but they considered him worthy to be released among themselves.[244] This is the reason Barabbas the thief rules the unbelieving Jews.

24 'And the blind and lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them', and what follows, down to the words, 'that out of the mouth of infants and those nursing you have prepared yourself praise'.[245]

The words of the literal text are clear. But in keeping with the anagogical meanings set out previously, we must say that in the temple of God, the house of prayer, the church, not all can see or (if I may put it this way) walk correctly, for some who have been gathered are blind and others are lame. These, because of their awareness of their blindness and lameness, and knowing that healing them is the proper work of no other than God and the Logos of God, come to him and are healed.

[238] Origen's sentence is rather obscure here, though this seems to be its meaning. What I have rendered 'temple' is the pronoun 'it', which is either neuter or masculine. All the earlier words to which the pronoun can refer are feminine except the word 'temple' in the statement comparing the rational nature and the church to a temple.

[239] Mt 21:13. [240] Lk 23:21. [241] Lk 23:18. [242] See Jn 18:40.
[243] Eph 6:12. [244] Lk 23:25. [245] Mt 21:14–16.

25 Next, it is written that 'the chief priests and scribes', although 'they saw the marvellous works that' Jesus 'did' and heard the children glorifying the Son of God 'in the temple', the church, 'were angry' and, showing contempt for the children praising Jesus, said in anger to the Saviour, 'Do you hear what these are saying?'[246] And he shamed them and answered, Have you who have spent so much time in the divine Scriptures up till now not read, 'that out of the mouth of infants and those nursing, you have prepared yourself praise?' that you may stop despising the little ones and children in the church who praise me and my Father in heaven?

Perhaps, then, just as in the story these chief priests and scribes deserve blame, so too in the anagogical sense some chief priests deserve blame. They do not bring honour on the title bishop with their own manner of life, nor have they clothed themselves with knowledge and truth. These men, then, although they see the marvellous works of God, no less despise the little ones in the church and the infants who praise God and his Christ, and are angry at their progress and accuse them, along with Jesus himself, as being sinners, although they are not sinning, and say to him, as though he does not hear or observe every ordinance, 'Do you hear what these are saying?' But we will understand this even better once we perceive how often the chief priests who deserve blame criticize as undisciplined those who are boiling in the Spirit[247] and who expose themselves even to imprisonment with the unbelievers, despising every danger, practicing purity and virginity with all perseverance, even though they are unskilled in language. These high priests accuse them, along with Jesus, as if they were more righteous than such simple, earnest, honest children. Jesus, however, bears testimony to the children and accuses the high priests of ignorance of the Scriptures when he says, 'Have you never read that out of the mouth of infants and those nursing you have prepared yourself praise?'

And whenever you see those in the church who, as Peter says, desire 'the rational, pure milk like newborn infants' and are sucking it, being given milk to drink,[248] and further are praising God with their faith and manner of life, take note that the saying, 'Out of the mouth of infants and those nursing you have prepared yourself praise', is being fulfilled in them. For God is preparing praise for himself in such people, for whom the Son gives thanks to the Father and says, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to infants, yes, Father, for so it was' and what follows.[249]

26 'And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany' and what follows down to the words, 'and everything that you ask for in prayer, believing, you will receive'.[250]

[246] Mt 21:15–16. [247] Rom 12:11. [248] 1 Pet 2:2; 1 Cor 3:2.
[249] Mt 11:25–6. [250] Mt 21:17–22.

Who was it that Jesus 'left when he went out of the city' of Jerusalem and departed from it to Bethany, if not the chief priests and scribes of the people who saw 'the marvels which he did and the children crying out in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David', and who, none the less, became angry at those praising Christ and were, therefore, rebuked because they had not understood the saying, 'Out of the mouth of infants and those nursing you have prepared yourself praise'?[251] And because he left that Jerusalem and was absent from the city, it has fallen and 'stone' did not remain 'upon stone' but was pulled down until all things were destroyed.[252] And 'he entered Bethany', the HOUSE OF OBEDIENCE, the church, where he both lodged and rested, since he had no place in Jerusalem 'where he might lay his head',[253] because the chief priests and scribes who were there were so wicked. But when he had rested in Bethany, the HOUSE OF OBEDIENCE, after the church had come into existence and Christ rested in it, then he went up again into the city which he had left and from which he had been absent. And as he was going up again into it, he was hungry, and 'seeing a fig tree on the road', the tree being the people,[254] 'he went to it'. 'And he found nothing' edible 'on it', but only the outward appearance of life, for there were 'leaves' without fruit on the fig tree.[255] Since, then, this fig tree was alive, he addresses it as capable of hearing the curse it deserves. And what he said was as follows: For as long as the present age exists, may there 'never be fruit' on you. This is the reason the Jewish synagogue is without fruit, and this situation continues for it 'until the end of the age', until 'the fullness of the Gentiles enters'.[256]

And 'the fig tree withered'[257] while Jesus was still a human being and walked among people as a man. And 'when the disciples saw it they were amazed and said, How has the fig tree withered so quickly?'[258] For they saw the mystery of the withered fig tree with the eyes of their soul, and they were amazed not so much at its withering, as at the immediacy of the withering, for they saw the fig tree, that is that people Israel, withered. 'And Jesus answered and said' to the disciples who were amazed at seeing the fig tree wither immediately (confirming what is said with the 'amen'), 'If you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do this to the fig tree, but even if you should say to this mountain, be removed and cast into the sea, it will happen'.[259] Therefore the disciples who believe and do not doubt do what Jesus did to the fig tree. They say to it, 'The Word of God had to be spoken to you, but since you do not judge yourselves worthy, behold we turn to the Gentiles',[260] and having forsaken it, they cause it to wither, that its power of life might pass over to those from the Gentiles, and the Spirit which formerly held that people together might pass over to those from the Gentiles. But in addition to the disciples withering the fig tree, the

[251] See Mt 21:15–16. [252] See Mt 24:2. [253] Mt 8:20.
[254] The *Vetus Interpretatio* renders this phrase 'the people of the circumcision'.
[255] Mt 21:19. [256] Mt 28:20; Rom 11:25. [257] Mt 21:19. [258] Mt 21:20.
[259] Mt 21:21. [260] Acts 13:46.

Logos of God further promises them that if they have faith and do not doubt they will say to the mountain which he sees and points out, that is, the hostile activity which exalts itself against humanity, 'Be removed and cast into the sea', and it will happen. For Satan, that heavy mountain of wickedness, is removed from each person who is helped by Jesus' disciples. When the one who conquered him removes him, he is also cast 'into the sea', that is, the abyss,[261] since he casts him into the place of punishment he deserves. There is also a word about this sea in the Psalms. 'This sea is vast and wide; there boats pass through it, there are creatures small and large; this is the dragon that you formed to mock'.[262] And in another Psalm, there 'you crushed the heads of the dragons upon the water', obviously it means in the sea, and, there 'you crushed the head of the dragon, and gave him as food to the people of Ethiopia'.[263] The mountain, therefore, which Jesus sees and identifies, is removed for each of those the Logos is preparing for salvation and is cast into the sea by the word of the disciple who profits from Jesus' teaching and says to the mountain in each of the hearers, 'Be removed and cast into the sea'. And he speaks with faith and without doubt so that what is said may happen. The person who has faith and does not doubt will receive everything he requests in prayer, if he believes.

27 This is the Bethany where Jesus' friend whom he had raised from the dead lived. But everyone as well who is obedient to the Word of God and has the Word of obedience established in himself is a HOUSE OF OBEDIENCE and Bethany in which Jesus lodges and rests. But since we must derive things of consequence from these words that are worthy of the Wisdom of God by which the Gospels have been written, consider if the words, 'He left them and went out of the city', are not redundant as the simple understand them. For how could he be 'out of the city' if he had not left those with whom he previously was? But for those who take a more intelligent approach to these words, he does not leave the previous people at all when he goes to be with others; he leaves the wicked and sinful, and when he is with the just he is also, after those and along with those, with others. But also, when he lodged in Bethany, he did not leave Bethany when he returned to the city. He remained in Bethany and again returned to the city. And Jesus was always hungering for and wanting to partake of the fruits of the Spirit in the just person. These are his figs (if I may put it this way) which he is hungry to eat: The love of the one who produces it, is the first 'fruit of the Spirit', along with joy, peace, patience, and the rest.[264] So long as we produce such things as fruit, we will not be withered. But whenever we fail to provide such fruit for him to eat when he is present and looking for it, it is said to us, 'May there be no more fruit from you forever'.[265] For apart from the interpretation previously given of the fig tree as being the people, it is also possible to refer the word anagogically to each individual, who is a fig tree

[261] See Rev 20:3. [262] Ps 103:25–6. [263] Ps 73:13–14.
[264] See Gal 5:22–3. [265] Mt 21:19.

that is either withered or is bearing fruit, living, and being cultivated so it can bear more fruit.

And perhaps just as in the case of the seed, 'the sower went out to sow' and 'some fell beside the road and the birds of heaven came and devoured it', and others fell on the rock, and others among 'the thorns', and others on 'good' and excellent soil, so also there are differing fig trees.[266] If there is a fig tree in good and excellent soil, it also bears 'fruit' and provides it for Jesus when he is hungry. But if it be 'beside the road', as this tree of which it is written, 'and seeing a fig tree on the road', it does not provide fruit for Jesus when he comes, for he finds nothing on the fig tree 'beside the road' except leaves. Therefore, he says to it, since it was 'beside the road' and had only leaves which gave an appearance of life but without fruit, 'May there be no more fruit from you forever'. For so long as Jesus does not come to the fig tree nor now seek its fruit, but patiently waits to see if the tree will bear fruit, it is not withered.[267] But when he is present and hungry for our fruit and we are found to have nothing but the profession of faith with no accompanying fruit, we who are faithful in appearance only will be withered immediately and destroyed. One can find such people who have worn the name Christian for a long time and give the appearance of being alive, but they are completely dry.[268] And because they do not bear fruit, you can see them separated completely from the Word and withered. In this passage, then, the tree which does not provide fruit for Jesus when he is hungry is withered, but there was another fig tree that was ordered to be cut down so that it not waste the land.[269] Next, when the disciples see someone withered who gives the appearance of being alive, they are amazed and say, 'How is the fig tree withered so quickly?'[270]

But we will reflect still further and make individual applications of the words in the passage, observing how Jesus looks for fruits in our temptations, let us say, for example, the confession and martyrdom in persecution, and the self-control and sexual restraint of Joseph in someone who is madly in love with a woman, and the fruit which follows each temptation in this manner. When Jesus is hungry and present, the person who is not prepared to give him the confession or sexual restraint is withered immediately. For the person who apostatizes is withered, as is also the one who commits sexual immorality, even though immediately prior to the temptations he displays the force of life and is covered, as it were, with the foliage of the fig tree. And the disciples are amazed at such people, how Jesus was present, hungry and seeking fruit, but when he did not find it he immediately 'spoke' 'and it happened', and the fig tree which had not been prepared to bear fruit was withered immediately. And frequently, although someone has been a fig tree for many years and not withered, when Jesus comes at a time of temptation and demands fruit, because he

[266] See Mt 13:3–8. [267] See Lk 13:6, 8. [268] See Rev 3:1.
[269] Lk 13:7. [270] Mt 21:20.

has not given it to him, he has withered immediately and lost the life of so many years. This happens seeing that, in keeping with the Saviour's word, 'To everyone who has it will be given and he will have an abundance, but from the one who does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him', so that 'what he seems to have' will not be unproductive. But each disciple, if he has faith and does not doubt, also performs the withering of the fig tree and what follows it.

28 It is difficult to show how the disciple of Jesus who looks for fruit in a fig tree and does not find it, says to it, 'May there be no more fruit from you forever', with the result that the fig tree is immediately withered. In relation to this, imagine someone who professes the doctrines of the faith, is thought to eat and drink in the name of Jesus, and claims that Jesus has taught 'in the streets' of his soul.[271] Then imagine a disciple coming looking for the fruit of wisdom and the Logos in him in accordance with his claim to teach the things of God, and when he investigates and examines him with the Logos he finds no fruit. Therefore, when he has shown those who are perceptive that he is devoid of Christ, let him show by means of the word that there can no longer be any fruit from him who has been perverted by his conceit. Consider, then, if in such action the disciple who has faith and does not doubt does not perform nearly the same miracle of the fig tree with Jesus.[272] And it is better, indeed, that the deceptive fig tree which is thought to be alive but does not produce fruit, after being rebuked because it is without fruit, be shown to be dry by the words of Jesus' disciples, than to deceive further 'the hearts of the innocent' and easily deceived, by what is thought and claims to be alive.[273] It seems to be good, therefore, that the work related to the withered fig tree belongs both to Jesus and his disciples. And I think there is a mountain lying on each unbelieving and lawless person in proportion to his unbelief and lawlessness, and that that mountain is taken up and cast into the sea of its punishment by the word of Jesus' disciples. And the disciples of Jesus will receive everything that they ask in prayer, believing, since disciples will ask for nothing they ought not, and since they are obedient to the teaching to ask for nothing but the great and heavenly things. For Jesus said to his disciples, 'Ask for the great things, and the little things will be added to you; and ask for the heavenly things, and the earthly things will be added to you'.[274]

[271] See Lk 13:26.

[272] The *Vetus Interpretatio* adds here: Just as 'Peter said to' Simon, withering him who gave the appearance of being a teacher about Christ, 'May your money go with you to destruction, because you think the gift of God can be purchased with money'. 'For your heart is not right before God'. 'I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and are bound by iniquity' (Acts 9:20–1.23).

[273] See Rom 16:18.

[274] The first part of this agraphon appears in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom* 1.24.158.2 (cf. 4.6.34.6) where it is not explicitly attributed to Jesus, and in Eusebius *In Ps* 16.2 where it is attributed to the Saviour. In Origen, both parts of the saying appear, besides here, in *PEuch* 2.2, 14.1; and *CCels* 7.44.

29 But when Mark recorded the things in this passage he added something incongruous (so far as the literal text is concerned) when he wrote that when Jesus 'saw a fig tree in the distance having leaves, he went', expecting to find something 'on it'. But 'when he came to it' and found nothing 'except leaves' alone ('for it was not the season for figs') 'he answered and said to it, May no one eat fruit from you again forever'.[275] For someone might say, If it 'was not the season for figs', how did Jesus go expecting to find something 'on it'? And what right did he have to say to it, 'May no one eat fruit from you again forever'?

But we have already said in relation to this that the fruits of the Spirit which have been enumerated by the apostle—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control—sometimes yield fruit in their own season.[276] But it would be better if, when the things which have been referred in opposition to fruit-bearing are proposed, someone were able, because of the great benefit from the Logos, no less also at that time to produce the fruits of the Spirit. What I mean is this: love is one of the fruits of the Spirit. It is the season of love when it is not difficult to produce the fruit of loving, and the fruit of the Spirit is to love the one who loves, but this is not the case in the off-season (if I may speak this way) of figs. But when someone who is deceitful, contriving, and perverted in his character so that he seems to deserve being hated, is stirred up to hatred against a believer, the just person does not hate such a person but (as a son 'of the one who causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good'[277]) loves even him at that time, and because he produces the fruit of love in the off-season, as it were, of figs, he is blessed.

And you will think of the similar fruit of joy. It is not difficult to bear the fruit of the spirit in relation to joy when one is not challenged by grief and distress. But when circumstances summon one to grief, despair, and distress, and one advances so far with the help that comes from the Logos, that even in seasons of apparent distress, one is well-pleasing, and rejoices in seasons of being dishonoured and flogged and, in a word, in every season whatever the circumstances, remembers the words, 'Rejoice always', this person would be blessed because he is producing joy even in the off-season (if I may put it this way) of figs.

It is not difficult to write something similar about the other fruits of the Spirit. God wants the person who comes to his Logos to be superior to human nature, and demands of him works that are astounding and, if I may put it this way, more in the character of God than of human beings. Therefore, he also says to all whom he calls to blessedness, 'I said, you are all gods and sons of the highest'.[278] But he complains to those who do not want to be deified and become sons of the highest, and says, 'But you will die like human beings'.[279] For when we are living 'in the flesh and in a human manner' we are doing

[275] Mk 11:13–14. [276] Gal 5:22–3; see above at n. 264. [277] Mt 5:45.
[278] Ps 81:6. [279] Ps 81:7.

nothing other than dying sin by sin, and it is obvious that 'if' we live 'in accordance with the flesh', we will die, just as the apostle taught.[280]

I have said these things because of the words, 'For it was not the season for figs'. But in Mark, when Peter saw 'the fig tree weathered from its roots', he said to the Saviour, 'Look, the fig tree you cursed is weathered'.[281] For the fig tree that is not bearing fruit for the Logos when he is seeking it deserves to be cursed by the Logos. But at the end, the story has a word of exhortation for the believer about receiving: we will only receive if we ask.[282] Therefore, may our disposition be worthy of getting what we ask for;[283] may the prayer that we offer with understanding be worthy of being granted; and may the things we ask for be heavenly things, great things, and things worthy of God granting.[284]

[280] 1 Cor 3:3; Rom 8:13. [281] Mk 11:21. [282] Mt 21:22. [283] See *PEuch* 2.3, 6.4.
[284] See the agraphon at n. 274 above.

Book 17 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew 21:23–22:33

1 'And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and asked, By what authority are you doing these things?', and what follows down to the words, 'Neither do I tell you by what authority I am doing these things'.[1]

Since three evangelists considered it necessary to record the present story, it is worthwhile to see what 'the chief priests and elders of the people' were thinking when they questioned the Saviour and presented him with not one question, but two. The first was, 'By what authority are you doing these things?' The other was, 'And who gave you this authority?' And what did the Saviour intend when, in this case alone, he responded with a counter question to avoid answering their question? I would observe that they were not worthy of the answer to the question and of the explanation of the problem. But it will be clear from our inquiry that the things in this passage are not, as some think, simple and easy to understand, but are mystical and require a wise heart.

First, then, we will agree with the plausibility of the simpler understanding of the passage. For the simple, understanding that there are two kinds of authority, will say that the authority of God is the better, and that of the devil is the worst. The chief priests and elders of the people were asking the Saviour by which of these two authorities he was performing these extraordinary works, and from whom he had received it. Then Jesus, so as not to argue with them, asked a counter question, at the same time intending also to rebuke his questioners because they acted contrary to right thinking when they had disbelieved John the Baptist. His counter question accomplished two things: it rebuked them for their disbelief in John, and it distracted the questioners so that they thought it reasonable not to answer him. But someone might say it would be ridiculous to ask by what authority Jesus was doing these things. For he would not answer

[1] Mt 21:23–7.

that it was by the authority of the devil. I do not mean that the Saviour would not say this, but that not even 'the man of sin, who opposes and exalts himself over every so-called god or object of worship' would tell his questioners the truth, that it is by the authority of the devil that he performs every miracle, 'sign and wonder', by which he will amaze and lead astray, 'if possible, even the elect'.[2] Now if not even that man would admit to performing signs and 'false' wonders by the authority of the devil, which things are accomplished 'with all unrighteous deceit for those who are perishing',[3] what chance is there that the Saviour, even if he had not raised a counter question, would have given any other answer than that he performed them by the authority of God? And it seems absurd to me that they would have inquired about so obvious an answer, and that the Saviour would not have answered.

2 Perhaps, then, the words in this passage mean something like this. In the wisdom of God, which encompasses the knowledge of divine and human affairs and their causes, there are 'treasures' which must be of the sort that are the treasures 'of wisdom' and 'of knowledge', and these are 'hidden'.[4] And if anyone is considered worthy to know the 'words which are unspeakable, which no human being is allowed to speak', he would know the 'wisdom in a mystery', 'which has been hidden, which God preordained before the ages for the glory' of the just.[5]

There are, then, in the hidden treasures 'of wisdom and knowledge', deep and secret words about different authorities. There are two such authorities in general, but specifically, so far as they are individually concerned, there are more than two and they are difficult to distinguish. Now the two general authorities are as follows. There are some who belong to the better order. Just as there are men of God who do not happen also to be blessed angels of God, and there are prophets of God who are inspired, so there are also certain powers of God, of which the apostle, glorifying Christ, says in the epistle to the Colossians, The Saviour is the 'image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation', in whom 'all things were created in heaven and on earth, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers, or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him, and he is before all things'.[6] The authorities which have been created in Christ are, then, one form of the authorities under God; others are parallel to the rules, thrones, and lordships. Each exercises authority over certain beings, having been appointed by God according to some secret worth in relation to those deserving to be held under authority related to the difference of the authorities themselves under each authority. 'The discourse' would be 'long and difficult to interpret' about the affairs related to these authorities and those over whom they exercise their authority.[7]

[2] 2 Thes 2:3, 4; Mk 13:22. [3] 2 Thes 2:9, 10. [4] Col 2:3.
[5] 2 Cor 12:4; 1 Cor 2:7. [6] Col 1:15–17. [7] See Heb 5:11.

And just as there are certain authorities of God, so also there are opposing authorities analogous to the men of sin and the angels of the devil.[8] And indeed 'the wrestling' for those who no longer wrestle 'with blood and flesh' but, because they have transcended these in their power, contend with forces beyond them, is 'with the authorities' which struggle against the athletes of piety.[9] And just as there were more ranks under God, so also in the opposite region there are not only authorities, but also world rulers 'of this darkness', and 'spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenly places', and perhaps also rulers.[10] It is my opinion that there is a homonym in the opposite camp for everything that belongs to those of God. Therefore, because those men who had been allotted the differing titles in Israel, that is the chief priests and elders of the people, were aware of more things about authorities and ranks of mysteries in heaven,[11] whether they understood them from traditions or were impelled by secret writings (I do not know whether reasonably or unreasonably), they perceived that Jesus must have some power with him to perform his extraordinary works. They, therefore, wanted to learn from Jesus' knowledge, or from the knowledge which they thought he had, the form and specific character[12] of this authority.

And if there had been any chief priests who were holy and blessed (such as Aaron, Eleazar, Phineas, and all who fulfilled the tasks of this ministry in a praiseworthy manner) who inquired of the Saviour at that time, and elders like those chosen by Moses at God's command,[13] in all probability the Saviour would have presented a discourse that not even the whole world could contain to those worthy of such great lessons because they were not testing him, but were eager for knowledge.[14] And once begun, he would have handed down the knowledge about the blessed powers and the differences between them, and the reason they had arrived at being powers, and the knowledge of those under them, whether souls or whatever rational beings. He would also have gone through the reason for the opposing authorities and would have presented the differences between them. And in correspondence with the words, 'the law' 'which was ordained through angels', and with the words, 'If the word spoken through angels became steadfast'[15] (I mean in correspondence with the word about the angels who served the law and about the authority in the Scriptures), it is likely that he would have taught by what sort of authority in the service of God, or what sort of opposing authorities, each of the wonders in Egypt occurred, and what authority served to change Moses' rod into a snake, and what authority, in opposition to this authority, was served to transform the rods of the Egyptians into serpents. And he would have addressed the power of the authority by which the rod of Aaron swallowed those of the Egyptians.[16]

[8] See 2 Thes 2:3; Mt 25:41. [9] See Eph 6:12. [10] Ibid.

[11] The phrase 'ranks and mysteries in heaven' comes from a similar phrase in the *Vetus Interpretatio.*

[12] 'Specific character' added on the basis of the *Vetus Interpretatio.* [13] See Num 11:16.

[14] See Jn 21:25. [15] See Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2. [16] See Ex 7:10–12.

He would also have spoken about what authority was involved in the change of Moses' hand to snow, and what sort of authority on the opposite side was joining forces with the Egyptian enchanters each time they seemed to imitate the signs of God.[17] In this manner he would have gone through the ten Egyptian plagues and their dispatching by the wicked angels. And he would have told what authority was involved in the passage of the people through the Red Sea and in the drowning of the Egyptians, and what authority was involved in the changing of the bitter water to sweet by means of a tree.[18] He would also have told what authority was involved in the water coming from the rock.[19] And he would have mentioned whether it was the same or a different authority involved in the rain of manna and in the onslaught of quail.[20] He would also have related what power it was that changed the same manna of the six days into worms and stench, but preserved it on the Sabbath day.[21]

And why must I tally up and set forth the prodigious events in the wilderness up to the death of Moses? The Saviour would have addressed the issues concerning authority if the chief priests and elders of the people had been worthy of an answer to their question. You can see the correspondence when you go through the whole Scripture. Some power stopped the sun in Gibeon, and the moon in the ravine of Aijalon, and much more, allowed the Jordan river to be crossed, and stopped the manna.[22] And in the book of the Kings you can search for and find many such stories, like the astonishing ones about Gideon and Sampson.[23] And from the books of the Kings you can seek out and find the stories about Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and Hezekiah.[24] By approaching the subject in this manner and going through the mystery related to the different authorities, the Saviour would have taught by what authority and how, by this excelling authority, he was performing the marvels that the people were seeing. It was by an authority given to him by no angel or servant of God, or by any of the powers inferior to God; it had been given to him by the Father himself.

3 And since the chief priests and elders of the people at that time were by no means worthy of such great subjects of inquiry, he did not answer them, but posed a counter question so that by their not answering the questions about John, he might persuade his questioners that it was not without reason that he responded and said, 'Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things'.[25] But I am investigating in this passage whether each of those who have performed incredible works by some authority have always performed them by one authority, or if some at the beginning performed them by this authority, but then progressed to some greater authority. It is most probable, however, that the Saviour performed these works by one authority, which he received from the Father. For the words, 'Neither do I tell you by what authority I do

[17] See Ex 4:6; 7:11–12. [18] See Ex 14; 15:23–5. [19] See Ex 17:6.
[20] See Ex 16:4, 13. [21] See Ex 16:20, 21–4. [22] See Josh 10:12–13; 3:14–16; 5:11–12.
[23] See Jdg 6:14–17. [24] See 1 Kgs 3ff.; 3 Kgs 18 ff.; 4 Kgs 2 ff.; 20 ff. [25] Mt 21:27.

these things', were the words of one teaching that he had done them by one authority. He did not, however, provide them with the answer 'by what' authority he did them, nor did he disclose its specific nature and segregate any number of things about it, to show its distinction from the other authorities by which the earlier prophets had worked. But Jesus is also in the temple now, I mean the church. He is teaching and some, like those chief priests and elders of the people, are questioning him but are not getting an answer, because they are unworthy of knowing the things that they want to learn.

Someone will ask whether Jesus, wanting to shake them off, raised the question about John randomly, as if he was asking about any other such person, or did he have to ask about John so that he might make the following responses about authority in relation to their answer about John. My opinion is that it was not at random in the passage, but because John was 'a voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord', and was the one of whom the prophet said, 'Behold I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you',[26] I think he asked about him because of these recorded words, not unaware that when they have considered the question they will say, 'We do not know'. But let us suppose, since he used the phrase 'from heaven', that his authority was consistent with the answer that John's baptism was from heaven.

4 'What do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, Child, Go work today in my vineyard', and what follows down to the words, 'But when you saw, you did not later repent and believe in him'.[27]

Only Matthew has recorded this parable. It seems to me to contain the story of Israel's disobedience to God, and that of the people from the Gentiles who believed, for these are the two children whom God, 'like a man who puts up with the moods of his son', had.[28] And this man goes to the first, whom 'he acquired' 'from the beginning', whom 'he foreknew and predestined', and said to him, 'Child, Go work today in my vineyard'.[29] And he disregarded the request and fled this region because of the 'burning heat' and troubles in it, and said, 'I do not want to'. Sometime later, however, at the end, he was sorry that he had said to his father, 'I do not want to', and entered the vineyard and did the will of his father. Of course, when the first said, 'I do not want to', the father went to the other and said the same thing. Then the second son answered and said, 'I will go, Sir', but he did not go to the vineyard of the Logos and the field of the Father. And it is obvious that the one who said, 'I do not want to', and later was sorry and went and worked in the vineyard, did the will of the father not in speech, but in work. For the one who made a promise with his speech and did not carry it out in his works refused to do the will of the father.

Now consider if you can apply this parable also to those who promise little or nothing, neither virginity nor any other activity related to the Gospel, but in

[26] See Mt 3:3; Mk 1:2 (Mal 3:1; Is 40:3). [27] Mt 21:28–32. [28] Dt 1:31.
[29] See Dt 32:6; Ps 73:2; Rom 8:29; Mt 21:28.

their works, demonstrate things to the contrary, which they did not promise at the beginning in speeches about good deeds. And can you apply it further to those who make big promises but do nothing in relation to their promise. For one says, as it were, I do not want this virginity; it is beyond my power. And again, to renounce my way of life in order to have time for the Word exceeds my value. But another, hearing of each of the great works in Scripture, says, 'I will go, Sir'. And you can see some, from regret as it were, devoting and directing themselves to what is better contrary to the earlier expectation. Others, however, impetuously promise many things but in their works, act contrary to their promises.

5 And after the parable, he attaches to the one who said, 'I do not want to' and later was repentant and returned, the saying, 'Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you', and to the one who said, 'I will go Sir' and did not return, he attaches the saying, 'For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him'.[30] And again, he says in reference to the former son, 'The tax collectors and prostitutes believed him', and in reference to the son who said, 'I will go Sir', and did not, he says, 'But when you saw, you did not later repent and believe in him'.[31] And anyone who has observed those from the most depraved manner of life coming to the Word and believing in Christ, and those boasting about the law and the prophets and disbelieving in the Son of God, and living an undisciplined life, even being rather cruel to members of their own race, will perceive that the statement of Jesus is true: 'The tax collectors and prostitutes will precede' Israel 'into the kingdom of God'. And that Israel that has seen Jesus is still not repenting so that even later it might believe in the truth.

But consider also the words, 'They will enter the kingdom of God before you'. These words do not exclude Israel from ever entering the kingdom of God. For no one precedes someone who will never be in that place where he went first. See, therefore, if it is not revealed that whenever 'the fullness of the Gentiles shall enter', then 'all Israel will be saved'.[32] Israel, however, is not to be understood 'in the fleshly sense',[33] but as Israel characterized by nobility of soul, possessing a genius and clarity in understanding, not, to be sure, because he was reared in faith and a good life, in a manner worthy of natural goodness.

6 'Hear another parable. There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it, and dug a winepress in it', and what follows down to the words, 'It will be given to a nation that produces its fruit'.[34]

The parable will seem very clear to the person who does not examine the words in this passage further or scrutinize each phrase, when it is interpreted as follows. The people before us, being also the 'portion' of God,[35] were the

[30] Mt 21:31, 32. [31] Mt 21:32. [32] Rom 11:25.
[33] See Rom 2:28; 1 Cor 10:18. [34] Mt 21:33–43. [35] See Dt 32:9.

vineyard planted by the householder in the parable. The watchful care of God was the hedge around it; the temple was the tower, and the winepress was the place of libations. The elders and wise men of the people were the farmers. The departure of the master to another country occurred when the Lord, who was with them in a cloud 'by day' and a 'pillar of fire' by night[36] until he had brought them 'to his holy mountain' 'and to his dwellings'[37] and planted them, no longer appeared to them in this way. And the season for the fruits which was near was the time of the prophets who demanded fruit from the farmers and the vineyard, so that those who had accepted the law might show that they had lived by it. And the first prophets were the servants who were sent to the farmers to receive the fruits. The rulers and wise men of the people insulted these servants and struck them; they killed some and stoned others. And the other servants after these who were more than the first group represent the time of the majority of the prophets. Their names are written in the second book of Chronicles, in Jeremiah, in the books of the Twelve, and in Daniel, for one might say that Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael were also prophets.[38] And they treated these who exceeded the former prophets in number in the same way, by striking, killing, and stoning them. Finally, the householder sends his son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who can make the vineyard and the farmers ashamed. But when the chief priests, elders, and wise men of the people saw the son, since they were not completely unaware of their own dignity, they assumed him to be the heir. But they had the audacity to kill him too, so that they might become lords of the vineyard. They cast him out, having judged him to be outside the affairs of Israel, and killed him. And immediately the lord of the vineyard whom they killed visits them, having arisen from the dead, and destroys the wicked farmers in a wicked manner. He delivers to other farmers, that is, his own apostles, those who believed from the people, who return the fruits to the householder in their proper seasons. These believers are the vineyard.

Then, when those who asked in the words above, 'By what authority are you doing these things?' said, after the parable, 'He will destroy the wicked men in a wicked manner',[39] the Saviour responded, teaching them from the prophecy that he had been rejected by those builders but with God he is honourable and head of the whole edifice and of the coherence in it, and the head is indeed marvellous to see in the eyes of those who have seen it.[40] Then, prophesying about the calling from the Gentiles, he says to the teachers of the Jews who do not believe in him, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation that produces its fruits'.[41]

But, as we said previously, such is a certain interpretation, in rather rough outline and not word for word. A person who is 'spiritual' and able to judge 'all things' might raise many questions in relation to it, by knocking at its obscurity,

[36] See Ex 13:21. [37] See Ps 42:3. [38] See Dan 1:6. [39] Mt 21:23, 41.
[40] Mt 21:42; Ps 117:22, 23. [41] Mt 21:43.

that is the locked door of the thoughts hidden there, and by seeking correctly he might find, and by asking from God, he might receive.[42] We, however, mindful of our limitations, have the following thoughts on the passage. We think the human householder is God, of whom it is written, 'The Lord your God put up with you, as a man would put up with his son'.[43] For so he is said to be a man in some parables because the one who helps human beings, in his helping them, puts up with and bears a human character. And here, the 'man' is called a 'householder' because of the 'vineyard' and the 'hedge' surrounding the vineyard, and 'the winepress' which 'he dug' and 'the tower' which 'he built', and the 'slaves' whom he had acquired and whom he sends 'to the farmers', and a second time sends 'more'. And so, the 'householder' 'leased the vineyard to farmers', from whom he takes it away and gives it to others. And again, a human householder is mentioned in previous passages in these words: 'For the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a householder, who went out early to hire workers for his vineyard'. And, as a householder, he has a vineyard and hires farmers. But he also has a manager to whom he says, 'Summon the workers and pay their wages, beginning with those hired last down to the first'.[44] But in the parable about the supper and the wedding of his son and the summons, it is not a householder but a king who is mentioned. For being greater than a householder, as king, he sends an army and destroys those who had seized 'his servants', mistreated, and killed them.[45] And with royal authority, not only as a householder, 'he told his servants' to bind the 'feet and hands' of the man who had entered the wedding without a 'wedding garment' and to cast 'him' out 'into outer darkness'.[46] But when it is said in the words above, 'A man had two sons', he is designated neither a householder nor a king, but simply a man.[47]

Just as there are, therefore, many concepts of God in the divine Scriptures, so too there are distinctions between him being referred to as a man, either simply, or as a householder or king. These words apply to Matthew. But in Luke the parable like the one being expounded here designates him as a man in the words, 'A man planted a vineyard, and leased it to farmers'.[48] But Mark also says, 'A man planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it'.[49] And again Luke, when he sets out the parable about the invitation, says, 'A man made a great supper and invited many'.[50] But if God is anywhere designated a man, by bringing together and comparing 'spiritual things with spiritual' in the word on this subject, and seeking correctly the matters in the passages, you may find more things on the subject of God being referred to as a man in agreement with your investigation. 'This man, a householder, planted a vineyard', which

[42] Origen alludes here to two Scriptures that were important for his understanding of how to read the Bible—1 Cor 2:15 and Mt 7:7. On his use of Mt 7:7, see Origen, *Phil* 13.4. The reference to the 'locked door' is an allusion to the story of the house full of locked rooms that he attributes to a Jewish scholar (see Origen, *Phil* 2.1–3).

[43] Dt 1:31. [44] See Mt 20:1–8. [45] See Mt 22:1–7. [46] See Mt 22:11–13.
[47] See Mt 21:28. [48] Lk 20:9. [49] Mk 12:1. [50] Lk 14:16.

we must investigate very carefully, and not pass by so significant a parable without proper examination.

7 Of what sort, then, is the vineyard which 'the householder, a man, planted', since it is different in the case of the first farmers and the second? This vineyard is first leased to insolent farmers, and second, in accordance with the answer given concerning the vineyard, it is leased 'to other farmers who will give its fruits in their seasons'. This is the Saviour's word: 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruits'.[51] Will we have to say, then, that the kingdom of God which is taken from the first farmers and given 'to a nation producing its fruits' is identical with the vineyard, or is the kingdom of God one thing and the vineyard another?

But since we have shown from Scripture that the people are called a vineyard, let us see first if everything in the passage can be referred to such an interpretation. Isaiah, then, says, 'I will sing a song of the beloved to my beloved vineyard. The beloved had a vineyard on a hill, in a fertile place. And I put a hedge around it and fortified it, and I planted a Sorech[52] grape vine', and what follows down to the words, 'And it produced lawlessness, and instead of justice, an outcry'.[53] I have set out the song from Isaiah, wishing to examine it along with this parable, to see if the term vineyard occurs with the same meaning in each Scripture. Notice that the texts which have been set out have some things that are similar and some that are not, so that by seeing the differences between the similar and the dissimilar, you may, in this way, understand the mind of the Scripture. These words in the parable, therefore, 'He planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower', are like the words in Isaiah, 'The beloved had a vineyard on a hill, in a fertile place. And I put a hedge around it and fortified it, and I planted a Sorech grape vine, and I built a tower in its midst, and I dug a winepress in it'.[54] For put the words, 'I planted a Sorech grape vine', beside the words, 'He planted a vineyard'; and the words, 'I put a hedge around it', beside the words, 'He put a hedge around it'; and the words, 'I dug a winepress in it', beside the words, 'He dug a winepress in it'; and the words, 'I built a tower in its midst', beside the words, 'He built a tower'.

But there is a dissimilarity mentioned in both passages concerning the fruits of the vineyard. In Isaiah it says, 'I waited for it to produce a bunch of grapes, and it produced thorns', but in the Gospel parable it is clearly not the vineyard that is accused of not producing fruits when their season approached, but 'the farmers', who also 'took the servants' of the householder and 'beat one, and killed another, and stoned still another'. And when 'he sent even more servants than the first', again, 'the farmers' are accused of treating them the same way.

[51] Mt 21:43.

[52] This is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word. The LXX translators did not translate it. The NRSV renders it 'choice'.

[53] Is 5:1–7. [54] Is 5:1–2.

And there is a third point. 'The farmers' are accused of saying, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance', and they cast him 'out of the vineyard' and killed him. And in Isaiah, the Logos threatens the vineyard itself, saying, 'I will take away its hedge, and it will lie open to plundering, and I will destroy its wall, and it will lie open to being trampled. And I will abandon my vineyard, and it will not be trimmed or cultivated, and a thorn will grow up in it like in a barren field'. But also, when it is announced that 'the clouds' are commanded 'not to rain on the vineyard', he is threatening the vineyard, which the prophet said is the house 'of Israel' and the 'man of Judah', which have not produced fruit, meaning 'judgement' and justice, but have produced thorns, meaning 'lawlessness' and an 'outcry'.[55]

In the Gospel, however, we hear nothing about the vineyard suffering, but rather (if I must speak in this way) thinking about bearing the proper fruits for the householder. For when he takes thought for the vineyard, he takes it away from the previous farmers who, when the Saviour asked, 'When, then, the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers?' answered and said, either compelled by the story and its sequence or even unwillingly (if I may put it this way), prophesying about themselves, that when the Lord of the vineyard comes 'he will destroy the wicked' farmers 'in a wicked manner', and taking thought for his vineyard, 'he will lease it to other farmers who will return to him its fruits in their seasons'.[56] But also, in accordance with the words, 'For the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel; and the man of Judah is a beloved young plant',[57] it is said in Jeremiah to the sinning people, 'But I planted you as a completely pure fruit-bearing vine'.[58] And similar to the words, 'I waited for it to produce a bunch of grapes, and it produced thorns', and the words, 'I waited for it to produce judgement, but it produced lawlessness and, instead of justice, an outcry', there are the words, 'How were you turned into bitterness, a foreign vine?'[59]

You see, therefore, in the prophetic texts that the people are said to be a vineyard, and the one who planted it threatens and says to it, 'I will take away its hedge, and it will lie open to plundering', and the rest. But in the Gospel parables no censure is applied to the vineyard; each one is addressed, rather, to the farmers and, in addition to there being no threat to the vineyard, its concern is to give the householder its 'fruits in their seasons'. If you wish to preserve the precise meaning of the Scripture of the Gospels, you probably cannot demonstrate clearly that the vineyard was the people. But perhaps the vineyard in the Gospel is the kingdom of God which happens to be, in my opinion, the same with the oversight of God in the teaching of the Scriptures. For the statement, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruits', which is added to the parable about the vineyard, clearly, in my opinion, reveals that the mysteries of the kingdom of God are said to be

[55] Is 5:5–7. [56] Mt 21:40–1. [57] Is 5:7. [58] Jer 2:21. [59] Is 5:4, 7; Jer 2:21.

the vineyard that the householder, a man, planted. 'The Lord of the vineyard leased' this vineyard, which is, in my opinion, the law, the prophets, and all divine Scripture, 'to farmers'. The first was that people (for they first 'were entrusted with the logia of God'[60]), and the second was 'the nation producing its fruits', the church from the Gentiles. But when the vineyard in the Gospel is understood in this way it is difficult to explain the hedge put around it, which suffers nothing such as the hedge in Isaiah, of which it is written, 'I will remove its hedge and it will lie open to plundering',[61] and the winepress dug in it, and the tower which was built.

And see if we can say that the vineyard is the teaching about nature in the divine Scripture, and that the fruit of the vineyard is the life in conformance with this true teaching about nature which produces fruit in virtue and the most excellent traits of character. And see if we can say furthermore that the intellectual sphere and every letter of Scripture is the hedge surrounding the vineyard from the outside so that the vineyard and its fruit, which is especially in secret, is not observed by those on the outside, and that the depth of the soul which receives these fruits and casts off everything superficial is the winepress dug in the vineyard. And the tower built in the vineyard, prominently elevated high above the vineyard, the hedge, and the winepress, is, in my opinion, the word about God which is the temple of the divine mind in it. I think it was of such a tower that the Saviour said, 'Who of you, wishing to build a tower, does not first figure out' if he can lay the foundation and complete it, 'so that' 'those who see it do not begin to mock' the man who could not complete it?[62] For it seems to me that this parable also says that you must consider carefully, when you are about to teach about God, whether, once you make a beginning, you can complete everything that the Logos requires of you in the teaching about God, so that you do not begin with the doctrines of piety and leave the tower about God unfinished and not build a parapet on it, for if you do not build a parapet, someone will fall from the act of thinking about God and die.[63] God 'leased' this 'vineyard' (as we have explained it) 'to farmers', that is, to the people before us. Then 'he went away' to his own high dwelling-place after he had given resources to the farmers in the things he himself planted, hedged, dug, and built, for producing 'fruit in their seasons'. The seasons for fruits, therefore, approached for each farmer, and I think also for the whole people in general. Now to explain accurately the approach of the seasons for fruits demands a greater maturity than we have, and a heart that is much purer and more discerning than ours. Nevertheless, we will devote ourselves to the passage as we are able in the following manner, taking the topics up one at a time.

[60] Rom 3:2. [61] Is 5:5. [62] Lk 14:28–30.

[63] See Origen's use of this same imagery from the parable of the incomplete tower in *ComJn* 6.6–7.

8 Let the Reason in each soul be considered a vine planted by the householder, and the resources for all the problems necessary for salvation a vineyard. In the case of vines, then, there is a season when they put forth leaves, and another when the first small signs of fruit are shown, another when blooms appear, another when the grapes are green, another when they darken, and yet another when it is time to gather the fruit which is mature and ready to produce a quality wine. In the same way, let the first season of human life in infancy contain the bare vine possessing nothing but the power of life. Then let it be the season of the first flowering when speech[64] begins to be developed and the soul is cultivated and advances like a vineyard which is cultivated and shows signs of the bunches of grapes that will be. They bloom and give off a pleasant odour (which will be virtue) at the beginning. But later, sour grapes appear when evil is already present in youth. It doesn't remain, but it is introduced of necessity; it never is inclined to the worse, but always (if I must put it this way) travels towards virtue. But if the evil should remain and we not make use of another passage to virtue as it were, always making progress towards virtue, an unripe grape develops which, if someone eats it, his teeth are set on edge as the prophet says.[65] And further, someone who is progressing has a bunch of grapes that is turning dark, as it were, but has not yet matured. And after the progress there is a settled condition of excellence when the cultivated vine bears fruit—mature clusters of love, joy, peace, patience, and the remaining virtues that have been enumerated by the apostle and in countless other Scriptures.[66] For one is a cluster of grapes in relation to the saying, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit', and another in relation to the saying, 'Blessed are those who mourn', and still another in relation to the saying, 'Blessed are the meek', and another in relation to the words, 'Blessed are the peacemakers', and another in relation to the saying, 'Blessed are the pure in heart'.[67] But why must I enumerate the clusters of grapes responsible for the beatitudes? I examined these words more fully because I wanted to understand and clarify the saying, 'When the season of fruits approached'.

9 But it is the householder alone, with his divine understanding, who knows the season of each human being, when the season of fruits has approached and when it is still far off. But even we, if we have a greater understanding, by comparing the time when we were called with the whole period of time of our faith, can see how some, like those 'who ought to be teachers because of the time', have 'need again' to be taught 'certain beginning elements of the oracles of God'.[68] So some, so far as the time period of God's dispensation and the calling of all people is concerned, who ought already to be bearing fruits, either

[64] Logos. I translated Logos as 'Reason' at the beginning of this paragraph. The *Vetus Interpretatio* seems to understand it as 'speech' here in its rendering, 'cum autem coeperit posse loqui'.

[65] See Jer 38:29. [66] See Gal 5:22. [67] See Mt 5:3, 4, 5, 9, 8. [68] Heb 5:12.

have none at all, or when they ought to have mature fruit are blooming unseasonably and producing sour grapes out of season.

If you have understood how one must take the words, 'But when the season of fruits drew near', applied to individuals, transition now (if you can) to the meaning applied to those who received the law through Moses, because there was a time for them too, when 'The season of fruits drew near, and he sent his own servants to those' first 'farmers' who had been entrusted with 'the oracles of God' in order to receive 'the fruits' of the vineyard in each. It is easy, then, to say that the prophets were the 'servants'. But we must investigate how they are sent 'to the farmers to receive the fruits' of the vineyard. For one might say that the prophets are not sent to 'receive the fruits', but rather to cultivate and assist the fruits.

Consider, then, if we can say that the spiritual fruits[69] and the divine offerings are given to the servants who are sent by those who have cultivated the vineyard, so that, as priests, they might bring to God the fruits of the people who present the offerings. But 'the farmers' in the law seized 'the servants' sent to receive 'the fruits' of the vineyard. One they beat, as 'Zedekiah, son of Chenaanah' 'struck Micaiah on the cheek', when also the false prophet said to him after he had prophesied, 'What sort of spirit of the Lord has spoken in you?'[70] 'Another they killed', as they did Zachariah, 'between the temple and the altar',[71] 'and another they stoned' as Azariah, son of Jehoiada, the priest, just as it is written in the second book of the Chronicles. For when 'the Spirit of God clothed himself with Azariah the son of Jehoiada, the priest, and he stood up before the people and said, Thus says the Lord, Why do you bypass the commandments of the Lord? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the Lord, he will also forsake you'. 'They laid hands on him and stoned him at the command of Joash the king in the court of the house of the Lord. And Joash did not remember the mercy which Jehoiada, his father, had shown him, and he killed his son. And as he died, he said, May the Lord see and judge'.[72]

10 The next words in the parable are, 'Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did to them likewise'.[73] Scripture is full of things that happened to the prophets whom 'he sent' on behalf of the people, that, as holy priests, they might offer up their fruit to God through prayers. And 'later', after the prophets, 'he sent his son', the Christ.

Now you will investigate how the one who sent 'the son' says, 'They will respect my son'. He said this as if he did not anticipate what would happen to him, for they do not appear, in the literal sense, to have respected him. And to declare that in these words the father of the son who was sent did not know in advance what would happen, but what he said was false since other things happened, is impious. And again, to say that 'the farmers' respected him is contrary to the

[69] See Gal 5:22. [70] 3 Kgs (1 Kgs) 22:24. [71] Mt 23:35.
[72] 2 Chron 24:20–2. [73] Mt 21:36.

obvious facts, for 'when the farmers saw' his 'son, they said to themselves, This is the heir', and what follows.

On the one hand, then, one person will say on these words that the statement, 'They will respect my son' had to be made, although it did not happen at that time. But another will say that the father who sent the son did not say, 'My son will receive the fruit from the farmers', but, 'They will respect him'. For, on the one hand, they respected him in that they knew that 'this' was 'the son', and 'said to themselves', 'This is the heir'. But on the other hand, if they had not respected him at all and they had been struck down at the beginning, they would immediately also have taken the actions of those showing respect.[74]

11 And at the same time also someone will investigate who these 'farmers' were who said, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him'.[75] For they do not appear to have been Jews who killed him as son of the householder. But someone will reply, When they were discussing with one another who he might be, some said, He is the Christ, to which others responded, 'When the Christ comes, no one knows where he comes from. But we know where this man is from'.[76] Then, since they thought that he was the Christ of God because they were struck with amazement by his signs, marvels, and divine miracles, but did not confess it, the statement, 'They will respect my son', is true, but the statement that once they had recognized that he was the son, they said, 'This is the heir; Come, let us kill him', is also true. Therefore, the Saviour said, 'You know me, and you know where I am from'.[77] But someone who has understood what has been written about Herod, when he learned from the magi that the king 'of the Jews' had been born, will see that those who killed the Saviour, although they knew that he was the Son, were able to have contrived nothing less against him. For when Herod learned from the scribes that 'the Christ is born' 'in Bethlehem', and had agreed that the one born would be the Christ, he sent them off, saying, 'Go and inquire accurately about the child, that I too may go and worship him'.[78] But nonetheless, when they had returned, he plotted against the child, believing that he was the Christ. For in no way at all was it because of disbelief that he killed all the children 'in Bethlehem and the surrounding regions, from two years of age and younger according to the time at which he had carefully inquired from the magi'.[79] But he also believed that he was the Christ of prophecy, yet he wanted to kill him, and furthermore, so far as it was in his power, he killed him.

So, then, those who plotted against the Saviour could have known (not so as to pass their word on to others, for 'they said to themselves, This is the heir'), but nonetheless killed him. For they thought that after they had killed the Christ, and since they did not understand his resurrection ('For if they had

[74] The *Vetus Interpretatio* suggests that the translator's text was different from the Greek we have. See Vol. II, *Vetus Interpretatio* 17.10.

[75] Mt 21:38. [76] Jn 7:27. [77] Jn 7:28. [78] See Mt 2:4–8. [79] Mt 2:16.

known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory'[80]), they themselves would be the lords of things, because their evil blinded them and they did not know the mysteries of God. And because they did not know them, 'They cast' the son 'out of the vineyard and killed him'.[81] The words, 'They cast him out of the vineyard' seem to me to mean this. So far as it was up to them, they judged him to be a stranger both to the vineyard and the farmers when they passed the vote of death against him. In relation to these actions the Saviour asks those wicked farmers themselves, saying, 'When, then, the lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers? And they reply to him', judging and condemning themselves from their own mouth, that the wicked men are destroyed in a wicked manner and will no longer have 'the oracles of God',[82] in the words 'He will destroy those wicked men in a wicked manner, and he will lease the vineyard to other farmers who will give him its fruits in their seasons'.[83] And as if they are prophesying like Caiaphas, the chief priest 'of that year' who did not speak the truth 'from himself', but since he was 'chief priest', prophesied,[84] they prophesy of the Gentiles that they will give the householder 'the fruits in their seasons'.

12 Then the Saviour shames them with these words from the Scripture, since they considered themselves also to be builders of the people, saying that the Father will set him, who is the stone that they have rejected, as the head of the whole building. It holds together the two corners of the Old and New Testament and the two buildings of the peoples. For this is what the Scripture means, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was from the Lord, and is marvellous in our eyes?'[85] The text is in the one-hundred-seventeenth Psalm, which is placed before the Psalm with many verses, and reads as follows: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This was from the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord made, let us rejoice and be glad in it'.[86] If there are any other prophecies about Christ that can shame the person who ignorantly examines what has been written, this one ought to be placed among them. For if the prophet does not say these things about an insensible stone, as one might speak of a man without sense, it would be obvious that Jesus, who has been rejected by the wise men, the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes in that people, has truly become the head of the corner, as head of the church, unifying and bringing together the two covenants. This head has been given freely by the Lord to the entire world, and it is marvellous in the eyes of us who can see it.

And because the builders rejected this stone, 'the logia of God', where the kingdom of God was, were taken away from those farmers and those builders, and given 'to a nation producing its fruits'. And if it is true that 'the kingdom of

[80] 1 Cor 2:8. [81] Mt 21:38. [82] See Rom 3:2. [83] Mt 21:40, 41.
[84] See Jn 11:51. [85] Mt 21:42. [86] Ps 117:22–4.

God will be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruits', clearly the kingdom of God is not given to anyone who does not produce the fruits of the kingdom of God, for the kingdom of God is given to no one who is ruled by sin.

But someone will say, if the kingdom of God is not given to anyone who does not produce its fruits, how was the kingdom of God given to those from whom it was taken, in accordance with the saying, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you'? Since we are in such a great difficulty with no simple solution, notice if it is possible to explain what is being investigated by observing the difference between the things said about the vineyard first, and the kingdom of God second. What is said about the kingdom of God is not said about the vineyard. For in the first instance, it is written of the vineyard that 'he leased it to farmers', but of the kingdom of God, that 'it will be given to a nation producing its fruits'. What is in the passage would be insoluble if, just as it had been written in the case of the first, 'he leased it to farmers', so it had been said also of the second, It will be leased to a nation producing its fruits. And if, as is said of the second, 'It will be given to a nation producing its fruits', it was said also of the previous that he gave it 'to farmers'.

I have raised these questions on the passage and have said what seemed right to me. But listen to that person, rather than us, who has a better understanding and something better to say.

13 'And when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he was talking about them. And although they were seeking to seize him, they feared the crowds, because they considered him to be a prophet'.[87]

'When the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables', the first of which began with the words, 'A man had two sons', and the other, 'There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard',[88] 'they knew that he was talking about them'. In the first parable the second son says, 'I will go, Sir, and did not go', and in the other, since it was spoken in relation to what had been said against the first farmers who sinned, Jesus said, 'The kingdom of God will be taken from you and will be given to a nation producing its fruits'.[89] And because they knew that 'he was talking about them', they were seeking 'to seize him', and do whatever they could to him, but they were not able, because they were not able to survive the wrath of the crowd which considered Jesus to be a prophet. Indeed, all who wish to seize the Logos with treacherous motive so that when they have seized him they may kill him would never be able to seize him or put him to death because of the crowds who assume him to be a prophet of God and divert those wishing to seize and plot against him.

Next, we must recognize that there are differences between those seeking to seize Jesus. The chief priests and Pharisees were seeking to seize him in one way, but it was in another that the bride in the Song of Songs sought him. She

[87] Mt 21:45–6. [88] Mt 21:28, 33. [89] Mt 21:30, 43.

arose and went about the city, 'in the markets and in the streets', and with difficulty, at last found him, shortly after she passed by the sentinels who go about 'in the city'. When she found him she seized him, at which time she also says, 'I seized him and will not release him until I have brought him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her who conceived me'.[90] But this bride says at the beginnings of the Song of Songs, 'I seized him in my mother's house and in the chamber of her who conceived me'.[91] At the end of the same book, however, since she has progressed and will seize him in a different and better way than the former, she says, 'I said, I will climb the palm tree, and I will seize his heights'.[92] But so that you may understand the chief priests and Pharisees who seek to seize him and do not, understand that in the case of other words besides the Word[93] of Christ, it is possible to seize and grasp the mind (of words which have made assertions at any time) and carefully refute and (as Scripture calls it) instruct it. For as the wise person according to the Gospel, who discerns 'all things' as a 'spiritual person', 'but himself' is scrutinized 'by no one', discerns, carefully examines, and tests other words, whether of the wise of the world or of those who appear to be prominent among the heresies, but the mind of Christ in him is neither condemned nor comprehended, nor is it seized by those who intend to refute him. 'For who has known the mind of the Lord; who will instruct him?' It is obvious that if someone will instruct someone's mind, first he will know it, and then he will instruct it. 'But who' will know 'the mind of the Lord; who will instruct him'?[94] For he will be caught by him and will become like him. Now I have said these things because of the words, 'And though they were seeking to seize him, they feared the crowds, because they considered him to be a prophet'.[95]

14 But even if the crowds speak well of Jesus and have something true about him in their mind, they do not at all understand his greatness. For on the one hand, Jesus was indeed a prophet, as is obvious to the person who reflects on the saying, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers; You shall heed him in all that' that prophet 'says'. And whoever 'shall not heed that prophet shall be destroyed'.[96] But his preeminence did not lie in being a prophet, but in being the Son of God, the firstborn 'of all creation' and the image 'of the invisible God' in whom 'all things were created in heaven and on earth, whether visible or invisible', and what follows.[97] And furthermore, his preeminence lay in his being Wisdom which says, 'God created me the beginning of his ways for his works', before he made anything, and 'before the age he founded me in the beginning, before he made the earth', and what follows.[98]

[90] Song 3:2–4. [91] Song 3:4. [92] Song 7:8.
[93] Logos. I usually leave this as Logos, but translate it Word here as Origen is making a play on words and the Word (Logos).
[94] 1 Cor 2:15, 16. [95] Mt 21:46. [96] Acts 3:22–3; Dt 18:15, 19.
[97] Col 1:15, 16. [98] Prv 8:22, 23, 24.

And when the chief priests and Pharisees plotted wishing to seize Jesus, they feared these crowds that thought in this way about him and were ready to fight for him against his enemies, and they were not able to seize him. It is written here, therefore, 'Because they considered him to be a prophet', but beyond this, you might assume that the crowds, even if they consider him to be a prophet in the text, whatever they might consider him, consider him something much less than what he is. They do not attain even the knowledge 'in part' of those who know him 'in part', and they have no clear understanding of anything worthy of him.[99]

Now I say this of those who hold true opinions about him. For we must not think that those are 'for' him[100] who hold false opinions about him in the fantasy that they are glorifying him. Such are those who confuse the concept of Father and Son and grant the Father and Son to be one in substance, distinguishing the one underlying substance in concept and names only.[101] And the heretics who speak 'injustice against the height'[102] in the fantasy that they are thinking lofty thoughts about him when they speak wickedly about the creator are not 'for' him, for they are not 'with' him and, therefore, they are 'against' him, 'for he who is not with me (he says) is against me'.[103] And so, even if those who do not hold true views of the Son gather in the name of Jesus, they are scattering rather than gathering. For the Saviour says, 'And he who does not gather with me scatters'.[104] Take note that it does not say simply, 'He who does not gather scatters', but there is the precise addition, 'with me'. For the one who gathers must gather with him. And you will know the meaning of the one who gathers with him when you have understood the words, 'When you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh'.[105] For the words, 'when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus', make clear what the one who gathers with him means. For you would not use the words 'when you are gathered together in the power of the Lord Jesus' in conjunction with those gathering with someone living wickedly or being gathered with someone holding wicked and impious thoughts either about God or about his Christ.

These things are said because the crowds that thought about Jesus considered him to be a prophet; they were for him even though they thought he was much less than his true worthiness. But when you have examined the text of Luke on the same subjects in conjunction with these words you will confirm more distinctly (I think) what we have just said. Luke says, 'And he was teaching daily in the temple, and the chief priests and scribes and elders of the people

[99] See 1 Cor 13:9. [100] See Mk 9:40.

[101] Origen is referring to the group of Christians known as Monarchians here. On the Monarchians, see Heine (2004b) esp. 201–3 and (1998) esp. 78–89.

[102] Ps 72:8. [103] Mt 12:30. Origen is referring to the Gnostics in this sentence.

[104] Ibid. [105] 1 Cor 5:4, 5.

were seeking to kill him, and they did not find what they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.'[106]

It is made clear in these words that those who are leaders of the Jewish crowds unlawfully (called high priests), and the scribes (who are hostile to Jesus), and the elders of the people are attempting to destroy Jesus and to blot his name and faith in him from human thought. But they do not find what they might do against what they want to destroy because all the people who believe in him prevent it and cling to love for Jesus and hang on the words of his teaching. And it is possible to see this very thing even now. Those who put themselves forward as high priests attempt to destroy the worship of God, and those who put themselves forward as scribes attempt to destroy the divine Scripture, and those who put themselves forward as elders of the people attempt to destroy what is ancient. They attempt to destroy Jesus and to obliterate the doctrine about him. While they do all these things for this purpose in line with the will of their fathers, they do not find anything at all to do that will separate the people devoted to Jesus from him and erase him from their thought.

But perhaps also all who hold any doctrine whatever concerning the divine and advocate for it in a manner hostile to the teaching of Jesus wish to destroy Jesus, but cannot because the whole crowd hangs on his words. But also, those who devote themselves to books of whatever sort where there may be wisdom, and for this reason are figuratively called scribes, wish to destroy Jesus from humanity but they cannot find anything they can do that is capable of this. And also, all the elders, the sayings of the Greeks and barbarians hostile to the teaching of Jesus, wish to destroy Jesus, but cannot because they are overcome by all the people of Jesus who cling to the teacher when they hear and perceive the meaning of his teaching.

Mark also suggests similar things when he says, 'And the chief priests and scribes heard, and were seeking how they might destroy him, for they feared him, because all the people were amazed at his teaching'.[107] For all the people of Christ are amazed 'at his teaching', and nothing can be done by the previously mentioned chief priests and scribes, although they seek to destroy Jesus from humanity's memory and put an end to the admiration all his people have for him.

15 'And Jesus answered and addressed them in parables again, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king, who prepared a wedding feast for his son. He sent his servants" and what follows down to the words, "For many are called, but few are chosen"'.[108]

This parable too will seem to be clear on the whole. In it the God and Father of Christ Jesus is said figuratively to be a king, and the wedding of the king's son is the restoration of the bride, the church of Christ, to Christ, her groom.

[106] Lk 19:47–8. [107] Mk 11:18. [108] Mt 22:1–14.

The servants who are sent to call those invited to the wedding are the prophets who, at that time, by their prophecies were turning some of the people to the festivities celebrated at the restoration of the church to Christ. And those who did not want to go, although they were previously invited, were those who did not listen to the words of the prophets. And the other servants who were sent was another group of prophets, and the 'dinner' which was prepared, for which 'the oxen' of the king and his 'fatted calves' had 'been killed', were the solid intellectual foods[109] of the mysteries of God. And so 'all things are prepared', the rational explanations[110] of all things which exist, which ('when perfection comes'[111]) those who have followed the invitation will eat and drink. But since some of those invited by the prophets only disregarded what was being said and devoted themselves to the affairs of their own lives and did not at all treat the prophets wickedly, but others acted wickedly against them, he wanted to show the difference between them and said, 'Some disregarded them and departed, one to his field and another to his business, but others seized his servants, treated them disgracefully, and killed them'.[112]

Then, subsequent to this general narrative, the wrath of the king is considered. The apostle also mentions it concerning the Jews and says, 'But wrath has come upon them at the end'.[113] Then the war against the Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the slaying of the people after the coming of Christ are prophesied in the words, 'And he sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city'.[114]

16 And the words, 'Then he says to his servants, The wedding feast is prepared, but those invited were not worthy; go, then, to the main roads and invite whomever you find to the wedding',[115] might refer to the apostles of Jesus Christ when they say to the Jews, 'It was necessary to proclaim the word of God to you, but since you judge yourselves unworthy, behold, we turn to the Gentiles'.[116] The main roads, then, are activities outside of Israel, along which those found by the apostles are invited to the wedding feast, when the apostles gather all whom they have found. And they found those who listened, and they did not pay attention when they invited them to whether those who were invited were wicked or good prior to the invitation for they invited all who were found. Now we must consider the expression 'good' here to be used rather simply of the more moderate of those coming to reverence for God, to whom you might apply the following apostolic word, 'But whenever Gentiles who do not possess the law do by nature the things of the law, such who do not possess the law are a law in themselves, who demonstrate the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience testifying with them'.[117] And the wedding of

[109] See Heb 5:14. [110] Logoi. [111] 1 Cor 13:10. [112] Mt 22:5–6.
[113] 1 Thes 2:16. [114] Mt 22:7. [115] Mt 22:8–9. [116] See Acts 13:46.
[117] Rom 2:14–15.

Christ and the church is filled and those found by the apostles are restored to God, and recline to enjoy themselves at the wedding.

Then, since the wicked and the good had to be invited, certainly not so that the wicked might remain wicked, but having stripped themselves and removed the garments improper for a wedding they might clothe themselves with wedding garments—'compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience'[118] (for these are wedding garments)—the king entered 'to see those reclining' before 'the dinner' which had been prepared, 'the oxen' and the 'slaughtered fatted calves and all things prepared', that he might see and observe those wearing 'wedding garments' and rejoice, and condemn those who were not. When he entered, therefore, he found one of those who had been invited and who had come at the invitation, but had not changed his way of living and was not wearing a wedding garment, and he says to him, 'How did you enter here since you are not wearing a wedding garment?' Then he is silent, because he who sins and has not been restored, nor has he put on the Lord Jesus Christ,[119] has no occasion for a defence. Therefore, it is written, 'but he was silent'. And it is not enough that the one who dishonoured the invitation be cast out of the wedding feast. For it was necessary that he, after he was bound by the servants of the king who are in charge of the bonds respecting life, which life he had not used for anything proper and the efficacious power by which he did not complete any good action, not only be cast out of the wedding feast, but also condemned to the place lacking all light, where the darkness was, as it were, deeper among shades of darkness, and called the 'outer darkness'.

If anyone of us has come to the son's wedding at the invitation of the king, and appears to be answering the invitation and coming with those invited but is not clothed with the previously mentioned wedding garment, he will suffer these things and, bound hands and feet, will be cast into the outer darkness where, according to the saying, 'Woe to you who laugh now, because you will weep',[120] the weeping is for those who have committed sins deserving of weeping and mourning. And they will weep, mourning their own pain. Then, to show the fear, trembling, dark activities, and toils that those who did not wear a wedding garment will experience the Logos said, 'There will be weeping' and not only weeping, but also 'the gnashing of teeth'.[121] And because those who were called have been shown to be many, but not all but only a few of them have come, he adds to the whole parable the words, 'Many are called, but few are chosen'.[122]

17 Let these things suffice, then, as a rather general explanation of the parable. We will return to it, however, and attempt to examine it in relation to the present meaning. If, then, with the help of the Spirit of wisdom, we discover something

[118] Col 3:12. [119] See Rom 13:14. [120] Lk 6:25.
[121] Mt 22:13. [122] Mt 22:14.

even deeper in the parable to edify us, depending on what is suitable, we can also keep it secret, hint at it, or make it public. 'The kingdom of heaven', then, 'is like a man, a king', so far as it concerns the one who rules. And in relation to the one who rules with the king, it is like 'his son', and so far as those who are ruled, it is like the servants and those invited 'to the wedding feast', some of whom 'did not wish' to go, but ignored it and 'went off, one to his field and another to his business'. 'Others seized the servants, treated them disgracefully, and killed them'. In addition, among those ruled there is the king's army, the wicked and the good gathered from the main roads until 'the wedding feast was filled with those reclining', the man among those reclining who did not have a 'wedding garment', and the servants who were commanded to bind 'the man not having a wedding garment hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness'.

It could, however, have been written, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a king', without the addition of the word man. But since 'man' is added, it too must be explained. In my opinion, it is clarified as follows. One of our predecessors composed books of allegory on the sacred laws.[123] When he explains the texts which present God as having human feelings and those indicating his divine nature, he uses one passage about God, who administers men, being said to be as a man, namely, 'The Lord your God put up with you, as a man would put up with his son'.[124] He uses another concerning God being not as a man, namely, 'God is not as a man, to be deceived'.[125]

18 We, however, have an abundance of examples in the Gospels of God being compared to a man in the parables. Therefore, we will make use of the parables which refer to God as a man for a defence against those who assert how often in the texts the Father of Christ is subject to human feelings, and we will say to the heterodox, because they have not understood the things said in this manner in the old writings and take offence at the God of the law, of the prophets, and of the creation of the world that, if God is compared to a man in the Gospel parables, why, in conformity with these parables, do you not take the wrath, anger, repentance, turning away of the face, sitting, standing, and walking of God as a parable? For they have either not observed or they do not admit that his sleep recorded in the prophecies is a parable. And we will say to them further that if you are not willing to hear the Scriptures describing him with human passions, in conformity with God being said to be a man in parable, show how the God of the universe, who is said to have no human characteristics (as you suppose) is said to be a man in the Gospel.

[123] Origen is clearly referring to Philo. Klostermann points to Philo's treatise, *The Unchangeableness of God*, 53, where Philo discusses this issue much as Origen lays it out here. Instead of Dt 1:31, however, to which Origen refers on the subject of God compared to a man, Philo uses Dt 8:5. The second Scripture cited, Num 23:19, is used by Philo in this passage as Origen says it is.

[124] Dt 1:31. Origen has cited this passage twice above, in chs 4 and 6 in reference to the use of the term 'man' of God in other parables as well. See notes 28 and 43 above.

[125] Num 23:19.

And we have more than enough evidence to put them to shame for not even having examined the writings of the New Testament carefully. In these writings, according to the present parable, the king, a man who prepared a wedding feast for his son, became angry at those who had not wanted to come to the wedding feast at his invitation, and at those who neglected to dine at the wedding feast, but had gone off, one to his own field, and another to his own business. And he was angry also at those who had seized his servants, treated them disgracefully, and killed them. For let them tell us whether this man who became angry, seeing that he prepares a wedding feast for his son, is the Father of Christ, or some other besides the one who becomes angry (so far as the parable is concerned) is his Father. And they will be embarrassed either way, either from not wanting the man who makes the wedding feast for his son and becomes angry to be the Father of Christ because of his anger, or from being compelled because of the wedding feast and the son to accept that he would be the Father of Christ and that he becomes angry. And if they should attempt to provide an interpretation for the expression 'to become angry', we will say to them, Gentlemen, is it not absurd that you do not try to avoid, because of his anger, the one who prepares a wedding feast for his son in the Gospel, and seek another, but because of the same term, 'anger', and others related to it in the law and the prophets you seek to invent another god besides the one of the law and the prophets?

19 Therefore, in so far as we are men, and it does not benefit us to behold the wealth 'of the goodness' of God and the 'great abundance of' his 'goodness' which he has hidden[126] (that we not suffer harm), 'the kingdom of heaven' had to be 'likened to a king, a man', so that he might speak to men as a man and manage men who are incapable of being managed by God, although he remains God in every way, both when he speaks through the prophets and when he manages men. And the kingdom of heaven will cease being compared to a man whenever jealousy, strife, and the other passions and sins and living 'in a human manner'[127] cease and we become worthy of hearing from God or from his Christ, 'I said, You are gods and all sons of the Highest', because we no longer do the kind of things that would cause him to say to us, 'But you will die like men'.[128] And I think that the kingdom of heaven will cease being compared not only to a man who is a king but also to countless other things of which sinful man has need. It is written in Hosea, for example, 'I am as a panther to Ephraim, and as a lion to the house of Judah', and in another place, 'I will come upon them like a hungry bear'.[129] When he no longer has those who have need of him as such, he will show himself 'just as he is'.[130] I perceive the saying, 'Our God is a consuming fire', in the same way.[131] In so far as there are things in us that deserve to be consumed, to that extent, 'our God is a fire

[126] See Rom 2:4; Ps 30:20. [127] See 1 Cor 3:3. [128] Ps 81:6, 7.
[129] Hos 5:14; 13:8. [130] See 1 Jn 3:2. [131] Dt 4:24.

which consumes' those things. But whenever the things which have sprung up to be consumed by that fire have been consumed by the consuming fire, then 'our God' will no longer be 'a consuming fire', but only light, as John said, 'God is light'.[132]

And since these topics have been under discussion, take note if you can understand this figure from the catholic epistle of John this way, 'Beloved now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we will be. We know that if he is revealed we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is'.[133] For now, even if we should be thought worthy to see God with the mind and heart, we do not see 'him just as he is' but just as he comes to be with us because of our dispensation. However, at the end of things and of the 'restoration of all things of which he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old',[134] we will not see what he is not, as now, but as is fitting at that time, we will see what he is.

20 And once we have said these things on the words, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king', we can also discover the reason the Saviour frequently called himself Son of the man or Son of man. He was showing that just as God is said to be as a man in the parables when he administers men, and perhaps in some way becomes such, so too the Saviour, being in the first instance Son of God, is also 'God' and Son 'of his love', and 'image of the invisible God',[135] but he does not remain in what he is in the first instance but becomes Son of man in relation to the dispensation (of the God who is called a man in parables, but is God) in imitation of the God who is mentioned in the parables and who becomes, in some way, man, when he administers men. And there is no need for any person to investigate and say that the Saviour is son of that particular man, but having taken a stand on the concepts of God and on the parables which say he is a man, one needs intelligently to hear him calling himself Son of man. With us men, then, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king', but with those said to be gods in the Scriptures, 'in a gathering' of whom 'God stood, in the midst' discerning 'gods',[136] 'the kingdom of heaven' is like a god, a king.

21 But you will investigate if, just as among men who are inferior to angels (so far as their nature is concerned), and to thrones, dominions, rulers, and powers, 'the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king', so among thrones, 'the kingdom of heaven is like' a throne, a king, and among dominions, a dominion, a king, and among rulers, a ruler, a king, and among powers, it is like a power, a king.[137] For someone will say, What absurdity that among lesser beings the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king, but among those better than men there is nothing similar to this.

[132] 1 Jn 1:5. [133] 1 Jn 3:2. [134] Acts 3:21. [135] See Jn 1:1; Col 1:13, 15.
[136] Ps 81:1. [137] See Col 1:16.

He who is like a man, a king, made 'a wedding feast for his son and sent his servants to call those invited to the feast'. And you will consider if, just as in the case of the physical facts, the bride who is married is other than the servants who call and the people who have been invited to the wedding feast, so too in the case of mystical matters, some are included in the company of the bride, others in the rank of the servants sent to call those invited to the wedding feast, and third, besides these, there are those invited to the feast. Now God would know the different ranks of the souls or also of the powers with them, and the reason that these are included in the company of the bride, but others in the servants who serve this invitation, and others in those invited. And consider the reception of the Logos as bridegroom to be intercourse in spiritual marriages, and childbirth to be the good works produced by the bride, the soul, which is married to the Logos and is not corrupted by him. But consider also what sort of spiritual children would come from such marriages when, at each act of intercourse with him, incorruption is partaken of and gives birth.

22 And consider the meal prepared in such marriages to be from the solid nourishment[138] found in spiritual sayings. And understand with me that the solid nature of the nourishment is found figuratively in the bulls, but the spiritual nature of the same contemplation is found in the slain fatted calves, and understand the variety of other foods in the spiritual contemplation analogous to the physical foods to be represented in the words, 'and all things are prepared'. For the king prepares in royal abundance such a meal worthy of his kingdom and wealth.

It seems to me that the preceding invitation to the wedding feast was for certain noble souls of the Israelites. For in the first instance, through those calling by the message of the teaching, God wants those more naturally suited for understanding to come to this blessed feast. And you can see that such people do not wish to come to the invitation. For this reason, other servants are sent to call forth those who did not wish to come. They announce that if those who have been invited would come, they would partake of a meal which has been prepared by the king, and consists of bulls greater than all the pure things as among the pure, even bulls that have been fattened on the complex and broad demonstration of understandings for each problem. For he who brings the broad and full demonstration concerning the problem before us presents an argument that has been fattened, as it were, or divided and said to have been slain in a figurative sense. Suppose someone were to bring a few weak arguments for the solution of the problems, against what appear to be convincing arguments. Would not these slain bulls appear thin, lean, dried up, and fleshless, so to speak? But the foods prepared in the meal of the king are not like this. He says, 'My bulls and my fatted calves have been slain', and further, 'and

[138] See Heb 5:14.

all things are prepared', so that each servant who has been appointed to the rank of servants and for the service of spiritual cup-bearers might bring to the meal those things especially by which he has learned to minister to his own needs. And summoning the second (as I said) group of servants in the parable, he said, 'Behold I have prepared the meal; my bulls and fatted calves have been slain, and all things are ready; come to the wedding feast'.[139]

23 But those initially called, since they were poor and needy in their understanding, 'disregarded it and went off', looking after their own affairs and enjoying them rather than those things which the king promised through the servants who were sent. Observe that one of them did not go to the wedding feast because he possessed his own field; another, who has acquired merchandise, wishes, perhaps, to imitate what is said in the parable about the merchant of the pearls who was seeking 'beautiful pearls' and, when he found 'one very expensive', sells his numerous pearls so that he may buy the one.[140] But this merchandise, on account of which the one who was invited departed and did not partake of the meal prepared by the king—the bulls and fatted calves which had been slain, and of everything which was prepared—was not advantageous. All those, then, who were invited and, with clear discernment, do not respond to the calling,[141] do not, to be sure, treat the servants sent to call them shamefully and kill them. They are more respectable than those who dare to do such things, and take their rest, one in his field, and the other with his merchandise. But let us see who 'the rest' are, besides these.[142] It seems to me that these have slipped into the preparation of fallacious and sophistical arguments with which they seize the servants who are sent and who are not prepared to solve sophisms; or they seem to seize them, and treat those who serve the calling[143] disgracefully. And you can see those who have been devoted to the way of life found in the divine words and who want to intercede for them with the divine wisdom being treated disgracefully by those who, on the one hand, are discerning, but on the other, are not willing to believe the truth. You can also see some of them being killed by those with whom the king is said to be angered, since what is called 'wrath has come upon them'.[144]

And the outcome of the wrath is that 'the army' of the king is sent, the army being either the 'multitude of the heavenly host'[145] or the angels appointed over punishments, and they destroy 'those murderers' of the servants of the Logos, and the king burns their whole city. For it is, as it were, a city and community of the impious in accordance with each of those welded together in the wisdom of the doctrines 'of the rulers of this age', which the king burns and blots out because it consisted of inferior structures. And whenever you observe the demolition and intense refutation of the 'falsely named knowledge' or of any arguments whatsoever which lay claim to truth, do not hesitate to say that

[139] Mt 22:4. [140] See Mt 13:45–6. [141] See 1 Cor 1:26. [142] See Mt 22:6.
[143] See 1 Cor 1:26. [144] 1 Thes 2:16. [145] Lk 2:13.

such has been done by the armies of God which have burned the cities of the enemies of God's truth. The city of Jewish teaching was burned after the coming of Christ. After it had been burned 'the king said to his servants', the apostles of Christ or the angels of God appointed over the calling of the Gentiles, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy; go, therefore, to the main roads and invite everyone you find to the wedding feast'.[146] And it is possible to see those from every road of unlearned and not unlearned doctrines related to the customs of the nations, cities, villages, and places invited to the wedding by those appointed to do this. And 'the servants who went out', either the apostles of Christ from Judea and Jerusalem, or from the boundaries within where the blessed angels were, and 'went to the streets' and 'gathered' and will gather 'all' whomever they find, 'the wicked' ***,[147] so that by putting off their wickedness (meaning that which is alien to the wedding garment) and clothing themselves with so-called good works, namely the wedding garment, they may fill the wedding hall when they recline.

24 When, therefore, 'the wedding' is filled 'with those reclining' and resting in their faith and worship of God, at that time the king will enter to examine carefully and pass judgement concerning those reclining, that he may question and punish the man who does not have a 'wedding garment', and may serve up to the rest the 'meal' which has been prepared, including the 'slain fatted calves' with the bulls, and everything else which he has prepared. And 'he saw' one 'who was not wearing a wedding garment',[148] referring to one class or species those who have retained the evil they practised before they believed and have not put it aside. And he finds fault with such a person because he has acted wickedly in that he had the audacity to enter such a wedding feast without taking up the 'wedding garment', the robe of virtue, the radiant garment of which Solomon gave command in Ecclesiastes when he said, 'Let your garments always be white'.[149] And the man who dared enter this radiant wedding without a wedding garment is silent and cannot speak. He is condemned, as deserving punishment and judgement, by the one who said 'to the servants' (who are other than the army mentioned above[150]) that they bind him hands and feet, which he had not used for what he should have (for he had neither walked in the way of life which was necessary, nor had he accomplished the deeds which he should have) and cast him not only out of the wedding hall but even cast him 'into the outer darkness' which contains no mixture of light at all so that, when he has thirsted for light after he has been in the outer darkness, he may wail to the God who is able to show him kindness and rescue him from there, and he may gnash his teeth which have eaten sour grapes because of evil and, because of this, are set on edge. For the person's 'teeth' who eats 'sour grapes' are set on edge.[151] But even there one must understand the sour grapes to

[146] Mt 22:8–9. [147] Klostermann thinks some words are lacking here.
[148] Mt 22:11. [149] Eccl 9:8. [150] See Mt 22:7. [151] See Jer 38:29.

mean the evil of the person who does not forget the things 'behind', or stretch out 'to the things ahead',[152] but remains in evil when he ought to ripen and make the grapes of virtue sweet.[153]

And he adds the words, 'For many are called', to the whole parable because of the many who are called and do not become worthy. And he adds the words, 'but few are chosen',[154] because those who enter the wedding feast and recline there are so few. And if someone should consider the crowded gatherings of the churches (if I may put it rather simply) and carefully examine how many there are who live appropriately and are being transformed 'by the renewal of the mind', and how many live rather frivolously and are being conformed 'to this age',[155] he would see that the saying of the Saviour is useful when he says, 'For many are called, but few are chosen'. Elsewhere you can find it said, 'Many will attempt to enter and will not be able', and, 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate', because few find it.[156]

25 'Then the Pharisees took counsel against him to ensnare him in his speech' and what follows down to the words, 'and they left him and departed'.[157]

The literal intention of the text to be expounded appears to me to be as follows. Since the Jews have their own teaching based on the law of Moses and their own way of life alien to the conduct of the Gentiles, and they have a doctrine which says, 'Struggle for the truth to the point of death, and the Lord will fight for you',[158] they resisted the Gentiles who ruled them to avoid transgressing the law of God. They frequently risked being destroyed completely by the Romans when they wanted to bring a statue of Caesar into the temple of God, by resisting and hindering those who were stronger than them because the Jews had sinned. And we find written in the histories at the time of Tiberius Caesar how there and then the people took up arms in the time of Pontius Pilate, when Pilate pressed them hard to set up a statue of Caesar in the temple and the Jews resisted beyond their power. The same thing is recorded to have happened in the times of Gaius Caesar.[159] It is our guess that so long as the people were watched over and 'the vineyard of the Lord, the house of Israel, and the man of Judah, his beloved young plant' were walled around with what the prophets call a hedge, nothing extraordinary happened.[160] But what is most paradoxical, Pilate himself, to whom they delivered Jesus, first dared to defile the temple of God.

At the time of the Saviour, then, when the Jews were ordered to pay tax to the Romans, there was inquiry and deliberation among the Jews concerning whether it was proper for those who depend on God and are his portion[161] to

[152] See Phil 3:13.
[153] Cf. Origen's comments on the man without a wedding garment in his *ComJn* 28.61–5.
[154] Mt 22:14. [155] See Rom 12:2. [156] Lk 13:24; see Mt 7:14.
[157] Mt 22:15–22. [158] Sir 4:28.
[159] For these accounts see Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 18; *The War of the Jews* 1 2.
[160] Is 5:7, 2. [161] Dt 32:9.

pay tax to their rulers or to fight for freedom, if they might perhaps be granted to live as they wish and not pay the tax. And it is related that Judas the Galilean, whom Luke has mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles,[162] caused a large group of Jews to revolt and taught them that they must not pay tax to Caesar or call him Lord. But the tetrarch in his time wished to persuade the people to accept the present situation and not to choose to start a war with those who were stronger, but to pay the taxes. Now such things are not obvious in the text of the Gospel that is before us, but the saying to be expounded proves that these things are so to the person who can see with intense scrutiny. For had Jesus declared that it was not necessary to pay the tax and had agreed not to pay it, 'the Pharisees', who wished to ensnare him 'in his speech', would have had no occasion when they sent their 'disciples with the Herodians' to ask Jesus whether 'it was right to pay tax to Caesar or not'.

26 And consider if these points in the story being expounded are not revealed in the fact that the Pharisees, who wish to ensnare Jesus in his speech, have sent not only their own disciples to inquire about the tax, but sent them 'with the Herodians'.[163] For it is likely that among the people at that time those who taught to pay the tax to Caesar were called Herodians by those who did not want to do this, and the Pharisees who, in the fantasy of freedom, prevented paying the tax to Caesar, seemed to be those who had a thorough knowledge of the teachings of the Jews. And if someone does not want matters to be this way, let him show how it is that the Pharisees, when they wish to ensnare Jesus in his speech, send their own disciples, and the Herodians as well, to inquire about the tax. For what sort of snare was there in Jesus answering whether he was willing to pay tax to Caesar or not, unless (as we have explained it), should he forbid paying tax to Caesar, the Herodians will hand him over to the Romans as teaching revolution, but if he permits it, the Pharisees will accuse him of looking for human approval rather than teaching the way of God in its truth? And consider carefully in yourself that the Pharisees' disciples say, 'Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God in its truth, and you have no concern for anyone, for you do not look for human approval',[164] as if they are inviting him through this flattery not to favour the Herodians and those who agree with Caesar, so that they might hand him over to the Herodians once he has expressed an opinion in agreement with the will of the Pharisees about it not being necessary to pay tax to Caesar. And notice also that 'Jesus knew their craftiness and said, Why do you test me, hypocrites?'[165] He knew, therefore, when he was tested by the Pharisees who approached him craftily, that whatever he answered they would contrive against him on the basis of his answer.

[162] Acts 5:37. [163] See Mt 22:16. [164] Ibid.
[165] Mt 22:18. The Nestle-Aland Greek text has 'wickedness' (*ponēria*) where Origen has 'craftiness' (*panourgia*).

Let these things be said on the passage from the Gospel before us in relation to the literal meaning. The words of Mark and Luke agree with them on the same subjects, as you can see by placing the Gospels side by side and comparing them with one another. For there is not another meaning beyond this expressed by Matthew concerning the matters in the passage, and in a similar manner, by Matthew in comparison with Mark. And at the same time, we are also taught by our Saviour not to pay attention to things the multitudes say and which, therefore, appear wonderful in their pretext of piety towards God, but to pay attention to things proven by careful examination and the sequence of argument. For give attention to the fact that when it was being investigated if one must pay tax to Caesar or not, Jesus did not respond simply with his own opinion, but said, 'Show me the coin for the tax', and asked, 'Whose image and superscription is it?' They said that it was Caesar's, and he replied that one must give to Caesar his own things when he asks and not defraud him of his own things in the fantasy of piety. And one must not, I presume, give the things of Caesar to Caesar and not give the things of God to God, and someone who gives the things of Caesar to Caesar is not prevented from giving the things of God to God.[166]

27 But someone can interpret the words in the passage figuratively in this way. We consist of soul and body (let the mention of spirit be postponed at the present) and we ought to pay something, a tax as it were, to the ruler of bodies said to be Caesar, since the things that are necessary for the body bear the bodily image of the ruler of bodies. These things are food, covering, necessary periods of rest, and sleep. And we owe other things to God, the king of the soul, since it, by nature, is in the image of God.[167] These are things which are useful and appropriate to the nature and essence of the soul, namely all the ways that lead to virtue and all the actions which are in accordance with virtue. Those who are taught the law of God concerning the things of the body and the things owed to it do not hold the same opinions. For some act analogously to those who advise not to pay tax to Caesar, by mistreating the body as much as possible with fasts, vigils, and abstinence from everything related to the body and its necessary actions. But there are others besides these who grasp the words in the passage in a muddled way and imagine that one must give the body its dues. But our Saviour, 'the Logos of God',[168] clearly distinguishing the debts reasonably owed the body from the spiritual dues to the soul, says 'Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and to God the things that belong to God',[169] for the tribute, which constitutes the totality of what is owed to the body, bears the image of Caesar and of physical things.

28 But I also know another interpretation which is offered on this passage that is as follows. The ruler of this age is figuratively called Caesar. And the king of

[166] See Mt 22:19–21. [167] See Gn 1:27. [168] See Heb 4:12. [169] Mt 22:21.

all the ages, not symbolically, is God who is so named everywhere. Since, then, we possess something of the ruler of this age, that is things that are evil, and cannot pay 'the things of God to God' before we have laid aside everything that is evil and paid 'to Caesar the things of Caesar', therefore, after the Saviour was shown the coin and the image on it, he says, 'Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and to God the things that belong to God'. Let us examine this in relation to the passage because if we are ever tested by those looking for occasions,[170] who propose certain problems, not to learn but, so far as possible, to accuse us, we should listen to their arguments put forward to test us. We ought neither to be completely silent nor to respond in an offhand way, but to respond with full consideration, to remove (so far as possible) the occasions 'of those wanting' occasions,[171] and to teach blamelessly the doctrines which save those wanting to be saved when they hear.

The Pharisees can be understood to represent the teachers of the various Jewish traditions, and the Herodians to represent the doctrine thought to be royal by most of the Jews who are mentioned so simply. Inquiries about the tax, therefore, are addressed to the Saviour from each group, and he answers them as we have explained. But since they do not want to learn from questioning him, but to ensnare him in his speech and to test him, therefore, when they have heard his views in relation to their question and have been amazed, because he did not give them occasions to develop a plot against him, they did not remain with him, as the disciples, nor did they simply depart, as is written of others, but 'they left him and departed'.[172] And such, indeed, are those who have left the Logos and not believed in him and have departed from him after hearing him. And the person will not err who says of those who have departed after they have heard, that they hear the words, 'Such left Jesus and departed'. But we will say what the bride said, 'I grasped him, and I have not let him go'.[173]

29 'In that day Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him' and what follows, down to the words, 'They were amazed at his teaching'.[174] Mark and Luke have an equivalent or the same story with minor differences.

'In that day'. What other day could be referred to than when 'the Pharisees came and took counsel against him that they might ensnare him in his speech', and inquired about the tax?[175] For it is likely that when our Saviour answered the question about the tax and said, 'Therefore give what belongs to Caesar to Caesar and what belongs to God to God', and all were amazed at his answer, the Sadducees saw that his answers were intelligent. They thought either that they could commend themselves through their question for discussion as having a better argument than those who hope for a resurrection, when they say that there is no resurrection. Or, perhaps they even thought that they would be taught how a resurrection can be possible according to the Scripture of Moses

[170] See 2 Cor 11:12. [171] Ibid. [172] Mt 22:22. [173] Cant 3:4.
[174] Mt 22:23–33. [175] Mt 22:15.

and what sort of life those who are raised will have. And observe that nearly all the teaching of our Saviour at this time occurred in reference to questions. First, 'when he entered the temple the chief priests and elders of the people approached him as he was teaching, and said, On what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?'[176] After Jesus had questioned them in turn about John, it seemed reasonable to decline an answer related to their intention. Next, he delivers the parable about the two sons, the one who did not submit to work 'in the vineyard' and worked, and the one who promised to work and did not.[177] Then, after these words, he delivers the parable about the vineyard and the farmers who killed the servants and the son,[178] and following these words there is another parable about those invited to the wedding feast.[179] And after this Matthew has recorded a second question, namely that about the tax,[180] and a third, the question asked by the Sadducees about the resurrection.[181] But there was also a fourth interrogation after this last, coming from a Pharisee testing him about 'which commandment in the law is the greatest'.[182] And after so many questions were put to him, 'when the Pharisees were assembled' he also 'asked them' the things 'about the Christ'.[183]

'The Sadducees', of course, 'who say there is no resurrection' deny not only that designated the resurrection of the flesh in the customary language of the simple, but also annul completely not only the immortality of the soul, but even its continued existence, thinking the writings of Moses nowhere indicate a life of the soul after the present things.[184] And down to the present day, the Samaritans[185] and those learned in the law who seem to be from them and who struggle to the point of death about the Mosaic law and circumcision hold this same doctrine about the human soul with the Sadducees. And there were some even of the Corinthians in the time of the apostle, who held this view of the resurrection (I mean the view of the Sadducees and Samaritans who deny the life of the soul after the present order). They expressed the opinion that there is no resurrection, to which the apostle responds in these words: 'But if Christ is preached that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?'[186] And the apostle makes clear that those in Corinth who said there is no resurrection of the dead denied the continued existence of the soul as the Sadducees did when he writes, 'If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are more miserable than all humanity'.[187] If you examine this carefully, you will see that the person who denies the resurrection of the dead which has been believed in the church, even if he denies it in error, has not at all hoped 'in Christ only in this life'. For, as a

[176] Mt 21:23. [177] Mt 21:28–30. [178] Mt 21:33–9. [179] Mt 22:1–14.
[180] Mt 22:15–22. [181] Mt 22:23–33. [182] Mt 22:36. [183] Mt 22:41.
[184] See Origen, *HomLk* 39.
[185] There was a sizable Samaritan population in Caesarea in the later empire. See Levine (1975) 103–12.
[186] 1 Cor 15:12. [187] 1 Cor 15:19.

hypothesis, let it be that the resurrection which has been believed by the majority is not true. The person who denies the resurrection of the life of the soul has not hoped 'in Christ' 'in this life only', since the soul does not take up that body again, but is clothed in something heavenly and better. But neither 'are we more miserable than all humanity' if we should say that the soul continues to live and exist, but we do not bestow this body on it or say that it takes it up again.[188]

And to further confirm that the apostle establishes this especially to be what is meant in the first letter to the Corinthians, we will make use also of his words, 'If the dead are not raised at all, why are they baptized on their behalf? Why, too, do we suffer danger every hour?', and his words, 'What did it benefit me, if I fought wild beasts at Ephesus as a human being? If the dead are not raised let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'.[189] For let what many think be true, that the doctrine about the resurrection of the dead is not true. How does it follow from this that it is worthless[190] for us to suffer danger as we struggle for the salvation of our souls? And how is there no benefit for the person who has fought wild beasts because of Christ, who is disciplined in a worthy manner, but may not take up again the former body? And how do the words, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die', follow from their not being a resurrection of the flesh?[191] We do not say these things disbelieving in what Isaiah has written in respect to this way of speaking, 'All flesh will see the salvation of God', or in what is said by Job, 'He who is about to make an end to me on the earth is everlasting, and my skin which has endured these things will rise up'.[192] And we also do not disbelieve in the apostolic word which says, 'He will make your mortal bodies live because of his Spirit which dwells in you'.[193] But so far as possible let us clear up what is meant by the statement about the resurrection in the Gospel text being expounded, for which purpose we have also adduced the words from the first letter to the Corinthians.

'Sadducees', therefore, who said that 'there is no resurrection', but resurrection as they understood it (as we have explained), 'approached' Jesus, and 'questioned' our Lord 'saying, Moses said, If someone dies not having children, his brother shall marry his wife as next of kin and raise up seed for his brother'.[194]

30 It seems worthwhile to me in relation to this matter to adduce the text of Moses to which the Sadducees referred what they are recorded to have said in the Gospel. The statement in Deuteronomy is as follows: 'But if brothers reside together and one of them dies' and what follows down to the words, 'the house of him whose sandal was removed'.[195] The Sadducees heard this word in an ordinary way since they have no hope of the resurrection, and they inferred nothing worthy of God in the law being expounded. They thought it follows

[188] Cf. Origen, *CCels* 5.18–23. [189] 1 Cor 15:29–30, 32. [190] See 1 Cor 15:17.
[191] 1 Cor 15:32. [192] Is 40:5; Job 19:25–6. [193] Rom 8:11. [194] Mt 22:23–4.
[195] Dt 25:5–10.

there being a resurrection that a man will again be a man, raised with male genitals, and a woman will be raised as a woman wearing a female body. And because they understood the things said about the resurrection in such a debased way, based on what they assumed to follow, they made up a story about seven brothers who married one woman, and raised the question of whose wife such a woman would be when she is raised, since she had previously been called the wife of seven men. But they could also, without such a made-up story, have raised the question on the basis of women who have been married many times, and perhaps also of men married many times. And when our Saviour answered them, he did not explain the intention of the law of Moses, since they were not worthy of knowledge of so great a mystery, but only declared simply that the divine Scriptures say of the resurrection of the dead that there are no marriages there, but those raised from the dead become 'like the angels in heaven', and just 'as the angels in heaven neither marry nor are married', so, he says, also are those raised from the dead.[196] But I think that it is revealed through these words that not only do those considered worthy of the resurrection from the dead become like the angels in heaven in not marrying and not being married, but also in their bodies of 'humiliation' being transformed to become heavenly and luminous as are the bodies of the angels.

And someone might investigate a certain strange doctrine held by the majority of believers, raising a question, perhaps from many sides, but clearly from here, whether, just as those raised from the dead are 'like the angels in heaven' and some rank of angels, changed from being humans, so too others are 'angels in heaven', who once were humans, and because they fought well in the human body, have become 'angels in heaven', as some others before them. And once the person investigating this strange doctrine from the text that is before us, and perhaps from another source as well, has broadly inspected all Scripture and the consequence of the matters in hand and what follows for one who has been put in these conditions, let him carefully discern if one must accept such a teaching with such consequences as are revealed in the words, 'we will judge angels', and 'into which things angels desire to look'.[197] And if someone also uses the epistle of Jude, let him observe what follows from the doctrine: because 'he has kept the angels, who did not keep their own original state but forsook their proper dwelling, in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgement of the great day'.[198] And let the person who dares investigate such matters observe in what way one must understand what is written in Genesis, 'When the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, they took wives for themselves from all whom they chose'.[199] But perhaps it is not safe to raise questions related to this passage with clarity and to reflect on their consequence and entrust the plain truth of such great questions to a sheet

[196] See Mt 22:30. [197] 1 Cor 6:3; 1 Pt 1:12.
[198] Jude 6. On the discussion of angels in this section, see above, *ComMt* 15.27.
[199] Gn 6:2.

of papyrus. It is sufficient that we have ventured thus far in relation to these words.

31 Now I think it is not out of place to see what the intention is in the text of the law from Deuteronomy we have already set out. We must investigate, therefore, who the one woman in it is and who the two men are who are brothers. First there is the one who marries a wife but does not bear fruit from her; and second, the brother of the dead man who marries and begets a child in the name of the one who died. Next, you will investigate who he is who is not willing 'to take his brother's wife', and for this reason his 'one sandal' is removed 'before the council of elders' and the woman spits 'in his face' and goes up 'to the gate' and says, 'My husband's brother is not willing to raise up his brother's name in Israel'.[200] The following should also be investigated in the passage: Who the council of elders is, and what the gate is to which the woman goes up and speaks the words which are recorded. For we must believe that every law which claims to be of God is something holy and worthy of respect or, if it is not holy, we must believe that it is not a law of God. Everyone who is not completely witless would agree with this. But whether we are able to discover what is holy and venerable in this law or not, God and his Christ would know in the first instance, and after them also the one Scripture calls an 'approved money changer' who knows how to test 'all things', hold fast to the 'good' and abstain from 'every form of evil'.[201] Come then, let us who want the problem related to the law which lies before us to be explained, call on the one who said, 'I will utter problems from ancient times',[202] and say that the things given by him are 'good', if we hold them fast, but if not, at least let us say the things which occur to us on the passage. The one who encounters our explanation will judge.

It seems to me, at least, that in one way of interpreting the passage, the human soul is a woman married first to the letter of the law and not bearing children from it. She is married, in the second instance, to the spiritual law and, when she bears fruit from this law and has given birth she does not withdraw in what she has engendered from the honour due the law of the letter which has died to her. And perhaps each soul which will be blessed and figuratively said to be a wife is certainly married first to the letter of the law in its elementary teachings. This law dies when the woman, the soul, progresses, so that she might attain a marriage that is nobler and productive of children, when 'she will be saved through childbearing', if the children remain 'in faith, love, and holiness with self-control'.[203] She will not be saved before the childbearing or apart from it. And the children of this wife, the soul, from the

[200] Dt 25:7, 9.

[201] 1 Thes 5:21, 22. This saying does not appear in our canonical Scriptures. Origen cites it rather frequently, however, sometimes attributing it to Jesus (*ComJn* 19.44). He often also joins these two phrases from 1 Thes 5 with it as if they were a part of the saying as he knew it (see *ComJn* 19.44; *ComMt* ser. 68; *FragEph* on Eph 4:25a in Heine (2002) 192, 205).

[202] Ps 77:2. [203] 1 Tim 2:15.

second husband, the spiritual law, are the works produced in conformity with this law. The two indeed are brothers, and the two laws ***[204] which always dwell together[205] have been born from one mother of understanding. For their house has not been divided, but they are 'brothers' and both ways of understanding dwell in one house, as it were, namely the Scripture which contains them. Consider if this cannot be revealed by the words, 'And if brothers dwell together'. Next come the words, 'And one of them dies, and there is no seed to him', which we have interpreted to the best of our ability.

But let us also consider the words, 'The wife of the man who died shall not be outside, for a man who is not near'.[206] What wife, that is, soul, transgresses this law, and what soul observes it? As in such passages I assume that after the death of the interpretation of the law according to the letter and its annulment which, in accordance with the divine commandment, makes a soul which was formerly the wife of the dead man and entrusted to him, to be 'outside' the law completely, for 'a man who is not near', when she receives a teaching which is not near the interpretation of the letter, but is totally foreign. Such are the souls of the heterodox, for whom the interpretation of the letter of the law is dead and who do not want the spiritual law[207] to be married to one who always dwells 'together' with that law, but to be a participant in some teaching that is 'outside' both of these and is by no means 'near' them. And I assume another soul or wife who has lived as God wants, as wife of the first husband who died and was destroyed. This soul is not willing to be 'outside' and 'for a man who is not near', but is married to the brother of the man who died and who dwelt 'together' with him, when 'the brother of her husband goes in to her' and becomes at home in her soul and takes 'her to himself as his wife' and lives with that soul itself for its blessing, since it is married with the consent of God to the second and spiritual law. 'And the child which she may bear', that is, which the wife, or soul, which lives with the second, spiritual brother, may bring forth, is established 'from the name' of his 'dead' brother. The child does not come from the first brother, but he shares his name, for the name of the one born of the spiritual law is the name of the one who died, since he too was called law of God, and 'the name' of the husband who died need not be blotted out by the Israel that is discerning and truly Israel, even though he himself was blotted out.

32 Let these words be a partial statement about that law. But there is an even greater need for God to enlighten our mind in Christ to contemplate the next words. For 'if', it says, 'the man is unwilling to take the wife of his brother, the wife of his brother shall go up to the gate to the council of elders and shall say' the things which are added.[208] Observe first that as long as the wife was doing

[204] Koetschau posits, on the basis of the *Vetus Interpretatio*, that the words, 'first, the word of the law, and second the word of the gospel', have dropped out of the Greek MS here.
[205] See Dt 25:5. [206] Dt 25:5. [207] See Rom 7:14. [208] Dt 25:6.

what the law prescribed, and the man went in to her and dwelt with her and bore a child from her, he is not said to be a man, but the 'brother' of the woman's husband.[209] But when he was unwilling 'to take the wife of his brother' and 'did not wish to raise up his brother's name in Israel', and when he is summoned by the council of elders 'of the city' and says, 'I am not willing to take her' and is dishonoured when 'his sandal' is removed and the woman spits 'in his face' and he is given a new name, so that 'his name' is 'the house of the man whose sandal was removed', then he is no longer referred to as a brother, but as a man.[210] For it is as though it was said to him, 'I said you are gods and all sons of the Most High' because he observed the law, and as if he is rebuked by the word which declares to him, 'But you will die as men', because he acted contrary to the law.[211] And note if you can imagine that after the death of the interpretation of the letter there is some other interpretation of the law. It is quite wrong, being neither spiritual nor blameless, but having its origin, which has gone wrong, from the law, and having taken its beginning from the starting point of things written in the law, it is not willing 'to raise up the name of his brother' and to honour the name of the law. Such an interpretation is unwilling to take the wife, the soul, of its brother, for it does not wish to bear fruit for the glory of the name of the dead brother. For this reason, the wife, who is prepared to honour her first husband, did not stand below, but goes up 'to the gate' and the entrance of her city, which also has a 'council of elders'.[212] And let these things be thought to occur in relation to the church and the introduction and entrance to it.

The woman, therefore, rebukes the man who is unwilling to bear fruit, that is, such a teaching, and says, 'The brother of my husband is not willing to raise up the name of his brother in Israel'.[213] Then 'the council of elders of' that 'city' questions such a man to learn if he is truly unwilling.[214] And when he answers that he is unwilling this woman goes to the one unwilling to raise up seed for his brother and, in the presence of the council of elders, rebukes him and dishonours him by removing 'his one sandal'.[215] And because of the command addressed to Moses and Joshua to 'untie the sandal from your feet', and the words, 'the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie', which are written in the Gospel according to Luke and in that according to Mark and in that according to John, consider whether to untie the sandal is not the same with removing it.[216] For Moses is not commanded to remove his sandal, and neither is Joshua. And John, speaking of the Saviour's sandal, did not speak of removing it, but of untying it. This transgressor of the law, then, has neither removed himself completely from the law, nor has he adorned himself altogether with its footwear, but half-heartedly holds to each. This is why the woman rebukes him and spits 'in his face' in the presence of the council of elders, for every soul

[209] Dt 25:5. [210] Dt 25:7–10. [211] Ps 81:6–7. [212] Dt 25:7. [213] Ibid.
[214] Dt 25:8. [215] Dt 25:9. [216] Ex 3:5; Josh 5:15; Lk 3:16; Mk 1:7; Jn 1:27.

spits on the teaching which does not produce a child or bear fruit, and through this overthrow she removes him on the basis of the things in which he erred and 'she answers and says, Thus shall they do to the man who does not build up the house of his brother'.[217]

And notice again here that the term man is used a second time in the case of the one who erred, and now again in the case of the one who does not build up 'the house of his brother'.[218] Let everyone, therefore, who sees this man whose sandal was removed by the woman and who was spit on and who hears her saying, 'So shall they do to the man who does not build up the house of his brother', do 'all things for the building up' of his brother.[219] For if he does not build up 'the house of his brother', the law, his 'one sandal' will be removed and he will be spit on, and all those who see this 'will call' 'the name' of every such person 'in Israel' 'the house of the man whose sandal was removed'.[220]

But let us look at a second interpretation for the passage being expounded. Let the two laws stand as brothers. In these two brothers, the one who observed the first was not 'outside the law of God', and the one who keeps the second is 'in the law of Christ'.[221] And consider with me that at the coming of Christ the first law died, like a man with a human soul, since the first 'which once had glory has lost its glory because of the exceeding glory' in the second,[222] and the second law of Christ is a brother of the first and, through Moses, also a son of the same[223] Logos who also begot the first law. Therefore, while these two brothers were dwelling 'together', especially at the time of the coming of Christ, one of them died and left no seed.[224] But the soul under the law, that is, the wife of the man who died, is not 'outside for a man who is not near' after the death of her first husband.[225] For a man is near, that is, the law of the Gospel, as brother of the man who died in the first law. This man goes in to the wife of his brother. Consider with me, as an example, the soul of Paul 'under the law', then being under the Gospel, because of Christ who purchased him from the law.[226] And see if the husband of Paul's soul did not die, and when he had died no less, the wife of the man who died was not 'outside', as the heretics think, nor was she 'for a man who was not near'. For the 'brother of her husband' went in to her and took 'her to himself for a wife' and lived with her, and there was fruit and offspring, and 'the child' that was born 'in the name of the one who had died'.[227] For in the spiritual law the Gospel names all things, and the name of the one who has died has not been blotted out when the law of the Gospel has come, for the name of the first law is preserved alongside the true Israel. But next, who is the man who is unwilling 'to take the wife of his own brother', or the teaching among the heresies which is not willing to receive the soul

[217] Dt 25:9. [218] Ibid. [219] Ibid.; 1 Cor 14:26. [220] Dt 25:10.
[221] 1 Cor 9:21. [222] 2 Cor 3:10.
[223] I follow Vogt here (1990) 289, 321 in reading the genitive rather than the accusative of *Logos*. He notes that the correction was suggested by Früchtel.
[224] See Dt 25:5. [225] Ibid. [226] See 1 Cor 9:20; Gal 3:13. [227] See Dt 25:6.

which has honoured the first husband and the memory of the first husband? The wife of his brother goes up against this man 'to the gate', of which it has been said, 'This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter in it', and she goes up 'to the council of elders' and testifies concerning the man who is not willing 'to raise up seed to his brother in Israel' nor to honour the law of God through Moses.[228] Once, then, 'the council of elders' asks such a man if the woman is telling the truth about him and he is not willing to raise up seed for his brother, then 'the wife' of the dead man goes 'before the council of elders' and removes 'the one sandal from his foot', so that even if the name of Christ has been bound to him as sandals, and the name of God has been removed he does not, therefore, bear the name of Christ in a reputable way and truthfully. The wife spits 'in the face' of such a man and reproaches him as a man who is not willing to be made divine by bearing fruit. And she says it will be this way for everyone who does not build up 'the house of his brother', the teaching of the Gospel, which is related to the law and the prophets. And the person who does not build up the name of his brother will have no other name among the Israelites than this—this is the 'house of the man whose sandal was removed'.[229] Every heretic, therefore, especially those that divide the deity and separate the law from the Gospel,[230] although continually busy, is a 'house of the man whose sandal was removed', who has been spit on 'in the face' and has had his 'one sandal' removed.

But we have also received a third suggestion on the passage which we will mention briefly as follows. Wisdom is said to be a woman because of the words, 'I sought to take her to myself as a bride', and one must love her, according to what Solomon said, 'Love her and she will keep you'.[231] The wise man is called her husband. If, then, the wise man should depart from life without begetting any children of wisdom, the brother who has dwelt with him and who has rested in the same teachings should take charge over them, so that one who has achieved a good reputation might be engendered from wisdom to present fruit for the one who has departed the companionship. But if the brother who remains should not be willing to take charge over the teachings, he will be dishonoured by wisdom who will half remove him, for such a one will neither fail to be removed, nor will he be removed completely. But to confirm that Scripture speaks of the law as a husband and the soul as wife, we will present the following words from the epistle to the Romans, 'Or are you ignorant, brothers, for I am speaking to those who know the law, that the law rules over a man so long as he lives?' and what follows, down to the words, 'she marries another man'.[232] We made more comments on this text when we interpreted the passage of the epistle to the Romans in our exegetical treatises on it.[233]

[228] See Dt 25:7; Ps 117:20.
[229] Dt 25:10.
[230] A reference to the Marcionite heresy.
[231] Wis Sol 8:2; Prv 4:6.
[232] Rom 7:1–3.
[233] See Origen, *ComRom* 6.7.

33 Let these comments, although they seem to be a digression, be made on the plain truth of the Mosaic law. When the Sadducees recalled this law, they asked the Saviour, saying, Moses said, 'If someone dies without having children' and what follows.[234]

Come, let us examine the other words in the Gospel which follow these, beginning with the words, 'Now there were seven brothers among us, and the first one married and died' and what follows.[235] Isaiah says in his prophecy, 'Seven women will lay hold of one man and say, We will eat our food and wear our clothes, but let your name be called upon us; remove our reproach.'[236] But the Sadducees who approach the Saviour say the opposite to the prophecy when they talk about seven men marrying one woman. I think their problem is fictitious since they were proposing to disprove the teaching about the resurrection by means of the problem. They thought that each of those raised would have the same relationship with others he had in this life after the resurrection. The husband would resume his relationship with his wife after experiencing resurrection, and the father would remain in the relationship with his son, and the brother with his brother. They did not know namely that the creator, who makes all things for their usefulness, has necessarily made such relationships, where there is coming to be and ceasing to be, so that a husband is provided with the generation of children through his wife, and those born have some kinship from their generation through the same parents, being brothers; and the relationships of father, son, mother and daughter were the function of generation. If, then, those considered worthy of honour in the blessedness will be in that life because they lived a good life in the present age, and no one who did not contend well here is considered worthy of the resurrection from the dead, obviously what things were needed here for the sake of generation will not exist there. For God makes nothing superfluous, nor does anything useless come from him.

Those Sadducees needed to see the consequence of their suggestion about each husband resuming the relationship with his own wife, because there would be childbearing there, and births of children, and deaths. And if there are these things there would also be illnesses. And if there are births and infancies, and growth from infancy to the attaining of speech, and later of reason, there will be evil. And once more, scarcely will virtue be found among the few who seek it.

What would be more worthless than these things? It is indeed better for there to be no resurrection than for it to be the kind the Sadducees conjecture, when they assume that after the resurrection of the dead each man resumes the relationship with his wife, and each of the things we have just mentioned follow. If, then, a new age really is hoped for and, as Isaiah called it, 'a new heaven and a new earth', and as it stands written in the Gospel, a 'cup' of a new covenant, from a new vineyard, I think, all the truly blessed things of life there

[234] Mt 22:24; Dt 25:5. [235] Mt 22:25. [236] Is 4:1.

must be of a different kind.[237] And just as our argument has demonstrated, that it followed there being a wife and husband that there will also be children of fathers, and brothers of brothers, and mothers of those born, so perhaps it follows there not being wife or husband that no longer will there be father and mother and any brothers of one another. And perhaps this is true not only of those who would be born in the future, but also of those from times past. For there will no longer be memory of kinship in the flesh there, in the view of those who hear the saying in a reasonable way, 'Do not remember the first things, and do not consider the ancient things; behold I am making all things new'.[238] According to this statement, in the age to come Terah will not be called father of Abraham, or Abraham father of Israel and of the children from Keturah, and perhaps not even of Isaak, 'for all things old have passed away'. Then it will be said, 'Behold all things have become new'.[239] But the person who is capable of investigating such great subjects correctly because he contains 'the Spirit' which searches 'all things, even the depths of God', will know if it is possible for one to be a brother differently than 'in the flesh', and a father and son in another way than in the acts of procreation, produced no longer through a woman or through the private parts of the body but analogous to the Saviour being Son of God.[240]

But not only in these cases do I accept the difference in kind and treat them as homonyms, I mean the relationships of brother, father, and son, but also in those of husband and wife. For the statement is true that 'in the resurrection' of the dead 'they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven'. The statements are also true, however, that are made in the parable about the difference in comparison to wedding feasts on earth in the words, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king, who made a wedding feast for his son' and what follows, and in the words, 'Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten virgins who took their lamps' and what follows.[241] The son of the king, therefore, 'in the resurrection' of the dead prepares a wedding which surpasses any wedding that eye has seen and ear heard and has ascended 'to the human heart'.[242] That wedding will be majestic, divine, and spiritual with unutterable words that a human may not speak.[243] And someone will investigate if, analogous to the marriage of the bridegroom at the resurrection of the dead there are also other marriages, or at the resurrection of the dead the bridegroom alone, when he has abolished every marriage, prepares a marriage not where 'the two will be one flesh', but where it is possible to say more importantly, the bridegroom and the bride are one spirit. But beware, when you hear

[237] See Is 66:22; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25.
[238] Is 43:18–19. Origen has quoted the last clause as it appears in Rev 21:5. Isaiah says, 'Behold I am doing new things which are now springing up'.
[239] See Gn 11:27; 25:1–4; 2 Cor 5:17. [240] 1 Cor 2:10; see Rom 9:5.
[241] Mt 22:30; 22:2; 25:1. [242] See 1 Cor 2:9. [243] See 2 Cor 12:4.

such words, that you do not slip into admitting the myth about male and female aeons with respect to those who imagine their couplings, since they by no means exist, nor are they revealed by the Holy Scriptures.[244]

34 Since the question of the Sadducees about the seven brothers who had one wife needs no figurative interpretation, let us consider the Saviour's words on these matters, in which he says, 'You err, since you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels in heaven'.[245] Now someone will investigate the following points in relation to this. The Saviour who says to the Sadducees, 'You err, since you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God', indicates that it is shown in the Scriptures that there are no marriages 'in the resurrection' of the dead, since humans will be like the angels in heaven with whom there is no marriage. What Scripture, then, shows that 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage'? And where do we learn from the law or the prophets that those who will be raised will be 'like the angels in heaven'? Clearly, we do not find such things in the old Scripture. This question will not be investigated in the Gospel according to Luke where it is recorded that the Saviour said, 'The sons of this age beget and are begotten, marry and are given in marriage' and what follows.[246] He did not say anything in this passage to the Sadducees about these things being revealed in the Scriptures. But one might investigate it in the Gospel according to Matthew and likewise in that according to Mark. In the latter Jesus answered and said to the Sadducees, 'Is it not for this reason that you err, that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? For whenever they arise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven'.[247]

Let each one, then, who is concerned about our difficulty investigate from the Scriptures what our Saviour is represented to have said about those after the resurrection. We will say, however, that the Scriptures do not contain such topics expressly, or in a way that random readers can understand them, but in a figure of speech. 'For the law which contains a shadow of the good things to come'[248] and has framed certain laws concerning wives and husbands and described righteous marriages, does not speak primarily about those matters which someone might understand from the text at hand, but about things which we too have previously expressed when we explained matters about the marriage of the Saviour and the church which will take place in the age to come.[249] For example, if 'Abraham had two sons, one from the handmaid and one from the free woman, and the one from the handmaid was born according to the flesh, but the one from the free woman through the promise', I do not

[244] The reference is to the doctrine the Gnostics called syzugies, which was the pairing of male and female deities in their hierarchy.
[245] Mt 22:29–30. [246] Lk 20:34 according to the reading of D. [247] Mk 12:24–5.
[248] Heb 10:1. [249] See ch. 15 above, and Heine (2002) 48–55; 233–41.

have to take a position about the physical marriage of the free woman and the intimate relationship with the handmaid, for these things 'are an allegory'.[250] But even though 'for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh',[251] one must not understand what is said to reveal nothing mysterious, for 'this is a great mystery' and, as Paul says, is to be referred 'to Christ and the church'.[252] And just above, when we discussed the question of the woman married to the brother of her dead husband, we examined the intention of that law as we were able.[253] And there are countless other laws about a wife and husband, as that about the bill of divorce, and that about the two women married to one man, one of whom is loved and the other hated, and that about the captive who is married to a man who passionately desires her, and when she is married, after she has been shaved, weeps in mourning for her father and mother.[254] Each of these contains something holy and divine in the true figure of speech found there. If, then, someone who reads the law and goes through those about marriages, wives, and husbands in detail thinks nothing more is revealed than what is meant by the letter, he errs, 'knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God'.[255]

35 And someone might investigate whether the words spoken to the Sadducees, 'You err, not knowing the Scriptures' have reference to Scriptures other than the law of Moses, since they did not accept any Scripture besides the law. Someone will say, then, on this very point that the Sadducees are accused because, as a result of not accepting the Scriptures that come after the law, they err, in that they do not know them. But another will say that it is sufficient for the error of the Sadducees to be rebuked because they did not know the Mosaic Scriptures since they did not understand the divine meaning in them. Nevertheless, he says, there were two things the Sadducees did not know. One was the Scriptures and the other 'the power of God', which power is responsible for the resurrection and the new life that follows it. And someone can say that it is said that the Sadducees did not 'know' that 'the power of God' refers to the Saviour himself, since Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.[256] And the Sadducees did not know him, because they did not know 'the Scriptures' about him, nor what sort of things will be supplied in the resurrection of the dead of those who will be saved. But the person who is not satisfied with solving the question which has been raised about the saying, 'You err because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God', by the figurative interpretation must do one of two things. Either he will think that the words being expounded were not recorded correctly, that is that the Saviour did not speak of things which have not been written as if they had been written, or he will dare to think that Jesus did not tell the truth. And third, someone, by taking

[250] Gal 4:22–4. [251] Gn 2:24. [252] Eph 5:31–2. [253] See above, ch. 31.
[254] See Dt 24:3; 21:15, 11–13. [255] Mt 22:29. [256] See 1 Cor 1:24.

refuge in apocryphal treatises,[257] where matters pertaining to the blessed life appear to have been written more clearly, will say that the words written here, 'You err because you do not know the Scriptures', refer to those writings. Now see if one does not fall into absurdities on every side because he avoids the figurative interpretation. For one will either disbelieve in Scripture, acting contrary to the teaching of the church, or he will disbelieve in Jesus, like a literal Jew, or he will flee to the apocryphal treatises. He will not approach the subject as it is confessed by the believers. For this reason, it seems to me that there is no other way to solve the question of the saying, 'You err because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God, for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage', than by the allegory which occurs analogously with the apostle in the epistle to the Galatians about the handmaid and the free woman, and which recurs also in the other Scriptures where something has been said about a husband and wife. And just as those err who think that we will eat and drink physical foods and drinks after the resurrection because they do not interpret figuratively the prophetic writings whose texts contain such words, so too do those who observe literally the things written about marriages, husbands, and wives and think we will also enjoy sexual intercourse then, when it is because of this that it is not possible even to devote ourselves 'to prayer' since we are in some sort of defilement and impurity from enjoying sexual pleasures.[258]

36 Next I investigate whether the saying, 'You err because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God' refers only to the words, 'For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage', or if it refers also to the words, 'They are like the angels in heaven'. For I do not find those who will be saved described anywhere in Scripture as being 'like angels in heaven', unless perhaps someone claims that this is revealed in the saying, 'But you will depart to your fathers with peace, having reached a good old age', and that which says, 'he was added to his people', or 'he was added to his race'.[259] Or perhaps it refers to what is said in Deuteronomy about humanity as stationed by God in heaven and on earth.[260] But you will make your own discovery when you have observed the text carefully.

Next comes consideration of the saying, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what God said to you when he said, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God who is God of the dead but of the living'.[261] We will say on this that although the Saviour could have cited countless words from the prophets about there being a future life for human beings, he did not do this because the Sadducees accepted only the Mosaic Scripture. He wished to shame them from the Mosaic

[257] Logoi, which might also be translated as words, or teachings.
[258] See 1 Cor 7:5; *PArch* 2.11.2. [259] See Gn 15:15; 25:8; 35:29. [260] See Dt 4:32.
[261] Mt 22:31–2.

Scripture with a deductive argument which proves something like the following. God said to Moses, 'I am God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob' when he had dealings with him at the bush. Therefore, God is either God of those who exist or God of those who do not. But it is absurd to say that the God who said, 'I am he who exists', 'this is my name', is God of those who in no way exist.[262] But if this is absurd, he is God of those who are, who are alive, who exist, and who are aware of the grace God has given them. He proclaims himself their God and says, 'This is my eternal memorial'.[263] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive, therefore, and aware of God and of his grace, and God is mentioned in relation to each of them individually. For it is not written, 'I am God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob', but, 'I am God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob'. Matthew, Mark, and Luke have recorded it in this way, I think, to show those who pay attention to the reading that God is God of each of them, having granted them this privilege.[264] They were not like the Hebrews, so that God is said collectively to be God of those just as also of these. In the case of those, it is written, 'The God of the Hebrews sent me',[265] but in the case of these they are named individually, so that the Logos might show that the one Abraham has honour equal to the whole nation of Hebrews, for God is not equally God of Abraham and God of the Hebrews. And you will say the same thing also of God in his being God of Isaac and God of Jacob as God of the Hebrews. But I think Elijah was also considered worthy of such honour because it is written in the fourth book of the Kingdoms, 'The God of Elijah'.[266]

God was God, therefore, of Abraham alone, and likewise also of Isaac, and of Jacob. But God is not only God of our Saviour, who is better than them, but also Father. Therefore, the apostle says correctly, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'.[267] This Jesus Christ, then, whose 'God and Father is blessed', has granted his genuine disciples that the same one is not only their God but also their Father. For he says to Mary after he had risen from the dead, 'Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God'.[268] And I think that he then granted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that God was no longer only their God, but now also their Father. Luke has added the words, 'For all with him are living', to the words, 'He is not the God who is God of the dead, but of the living', which occur in Matthew and Mark.[269] This was no common praise of the patriarchs, since our magnificent Saviour testifies on their behalf that they not only live, but that the life they live, they live with God and with no other.[270] It is good that we honour this saying, 'For all with him are living', in every way and memorize it so that we

[262] See Ex 3:14–15. [263] Ex 3:15. [264] Mt 22:32; Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37.
[265] Ex 7:16. [266] 4 Kingdoms (=2 Kgs) 2:14. [267] 2 Cor 1:3. [268] Jn 20:17.
[269] Lk 20:38; cf. Mt 22:32; Mk 12:27. [270] See Gal 2:19–20.

may all live with no other than God in Christ. And 'when the crowds heard' this brief demonstration about the patriarchs living, from the writings of Moses for those who accept only those writings as divine, 'they were amazed', and they acknowledged the Saviour's teaching as very wise, capable even of converting to himself those who were distrustful.[271]

[271] See Mt 22:33.

Appendix

Selected Fragments of the *Commentary on Matthew* on Matthew 1:1–13:33 and 28:1–18

The fragmentary remains presented in this Appendix fall into two recognized categories.[1] The first consists of six texts from the *Commentary on Matthew* drawn from the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea, the *Apology for Origen* by Pamphilus, and the *Philocalia*, a compilation of passages from various works of Origen, composed by the two Cappadocian Fathers, Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea. The works containing these excerpts from Origen all stem from the fourth century. They name Origen as the source of their quotations, and they mention the *Commentary on Matthew* along with the specific book of the *Commentary* from which the quotations are drawn. The texts from Pamphilus' *Apology* are known only through the Latin translation of Rufinus; those from Eusebius and the *Philocalia* exist in a Greek manuscript tradition. These quotations give us brief texts from three of the lost books of the *Commentary* (books 1, 2, and 7), and two from books that are preserved in the Greek manuscript tradition (books 11 and 13). There are two quotations from book 1 of the *Commentary*. I have designated the section containing these: 'Quotations from Fourth-Century Authors'. These quotations are generally trusted as reliable sources for the material they report.

The second category of texts is known as catena fragments. These are comments from Origen taken from the so-called catena commentaries. Catena is the Latin word for chain. It is used to refer to a kind of Biblical commentary that seems to have originated in the fifth century.[2] The authors of these commentaries composed their works by quoting excerpts from the earlier commentaries of the Church Fathers. They identified their sources, when they did so, by writing either the Church Father's name or, more usually, an abbreviation of the name in the margin, more or less at the point where the quotation begins. No indications are given of the specific work from which the quotation is drawn. Because several different Fathers were usually quoted on each text, the quotations were often abbreviated by summaries or ellipses, some of which could be quite long.[3] Furthermore, the same quotation is sometimes attributed to different Fathers in various catena commentaries. These observations about catena commentaries warn us to be cautious about using these sources to give us Origen's precise words. Sometimes they probably do so, but at other times they may give us only an echo of what Origen actually said.

In the following translation of the catena fragments it will be noticed immediately that there are gaps in the numerical sequence. For example, the first five excerpts are numbered

[1] See Klostermann (1941). [2] See Heine (2002) 35–7.
[3] For these and additional ways quotations were altered see Heine (1986) 118–34 and (2002) 36–7.

1, 3, 4, 6, 11. The numbers are those of Klostermann's edition.[4] He has printed, however, many fragments that I have not included in my translation. I thought it best to preserve his numbers so that those wanting to look at the Greek text may do so without the confusion of two numbering systems. There are two categories of fragments that I have omitted. First, I have omitted all the fragments from his numbers 303–564. These are fragments covering texts that are preserved complete either in the Greek manuscript tradition or in the ancient Latin translation. Second, among those fragments that come from texts not covered in the Greek and Latin manuscript traditions, I have omitted all fragments that are attributed to other Fathers as well as to Origen in various catena manuscripts. This, of course, is not a scientific criterion and it in no way guarantees that none of the fragments I have omitted come from Origen or, on the other hand, that all that I have included actually come from him. It was a consistent way, however, of limiting the size of this work by passing over those fragments which have been associated with authors other than Origen.

QUOTATIONS FROM FOURTH-CENTURY AUTHORS

1 On the Inscription, from *Book 1 of the Exegetical Works of Origen on the Gospel According to Matthew* (Eusebius, *Church History* 6.25.3–6)

And in the first book of the exegetical works on the Gospel according to Matthew, in defence of the ecclesiastical canon, Origen testifies that he knows only four Gospels, writing something like this: As I learned in the tradition about the four Gospels which alone are incontrovertible in the church of God under heaven, the first written was that according to Matthew, the one-time tax-collector, but later apostle of Jesus Christ. He published it for the Jews who believed, since it was composed in the Hebrew language. The second was that according to Mark, who composed as Peter instructed him. Peter acknowledged him as a son in the catholic epistle, declaring in these words: 'The elect lady in Babylon and my son Mark greet you'.[5] The third Gospel was that according to Luke, which was praised by Paul and written for those from the Gentiles. After all of them, there was that according to John.[6]

2 On Matthew 1:1 from the first book of the Gospel according to Matthew (Pamphilus' *Apology for Origen*, ch. 5)[7]

If, when Christ Jesus 'was in the form of God he did not think it robbery to be equal to God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of a human being, found as a human being, humbling himself he became obedient to death, even the death of a cross', there is no doubt that his 'birth' was not that of one who did not previously exist beginning to exist as is believed in the case of the birth of human beings.[8] Rather, he who existed previously and was 'in the form of God' came that he might also receive 'the form of a servant'. Therefore, 'what is born of the flesh is

[4] See note 1 above. [5] 1 Pet 5:13.

[6] The phrase I have rendered 'after all of them' could also be rendered 'over and above all of them'. See Origen's listing of the four Gospels in his *Commentary on John* and how he refers to the Gospel of John there (*ComJn* 1.21–23).

[7] Cf. Cat Frag 3. [8] Phil 2:6–8.

flesh', he said, that is, 'what is born of' her who said, 'Behold the maid-servant of the Lord, may it be done to me in accordance with your word', this is the form of a servant, which certainly is flesh.[9]

3 On Matthew 5:9 from book 2 of the exegetical works on the Gospel according to Matthew, on the phrase: 'Blessed are the peacemakers' (*The Philocalia of Origen* by Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea, ch. 6)

And to this person who is a peacemaker in either way there is no longer 'anything' in the divine oracles that is 'twisted or tortuous' for 'all things are forthright to those who understand',[10] and since nothing is 'twisted or tortuous' to such a person, therefore, he sees 'an abundance of peace'[11] in all the Scriptures, even in those which seem to contain an inconsistency and things contradictory to one another.

But there is a third peacemaker. It is the person who shows what seems to others to be an inconsistency in the Scriptures not to be an inconsistency, and presents their harmony and agreement, whether it is of the old Scriptures with the new, or those of the law with the prophetic, or of the Gospel writings with Gospel writings, or of the Gospel writings with the apostolic, or of apostolic writings with apostolic writings. For all the Scriptures, according to the Ecclesiast, are 'words of the wise like ox-goads and like nails firmly planted, which were given from the collections of one shepherd' and nothing is 'superfluous in them'.[12] And the Logos is the one shepherd of the spiritual words[13] which have the appearance of discord to those who do not have ears to hear,[14] but which have harmony in relation to what is true.

For just as the different strings of the harp or lyre, each of which produces a certain sound of its own and doesn't seem to be like that of the other, are thought, because of the dissimilarity of the sounds, to be discordant by the person without musical training and who lacks understanding of the theory of musical harmony, in the same way those who do not know how to hear the harmony of God in the sacred Scriptures think the old Scripture is out of tune with the new, or the prophets with the law, or the Gospels with one another, or the apostle with the Gospel or with himself or the other apostles. But when one comes who has been educated in the music of God and who is wise 'in deeds and words'[15] and, therefore, bears the name David, which interpreted means 'competent with the hand', this person will produce the sound of the music of God having learned from it to strike at the right time now the strings of the writings of the law and now, harmoniously with those, the strings of the Gospels, and now those of the prophets. And when reason demands he will strike the apostolic strings which have the same pitch with these, and so too the apostolic writings with those of the Gospels, for he knows that all Scripture is one perfect, harmonious instrument of God which produces one saving tone from the different sounds for those willing to learn. This saving tone puts a stop to and hinders all the activity of the evil spirit, as David's music put a stop to the evil spirit that was in Saul and was troubling him.[16] You see, therefore, that the person who obeys the Scripture and sees the peace in all of it and imparts this peace

[9] See Jn 3:6; Lk 1:38; Phil 2:7. [10] Prv 8:8, 9.
[11] See Ps 71:7. [12] Eccl 12:11.
[13] There is only the adjective *logikōn*, which I have rendered 'spiritual words'. It could be taken also as 'rational', 'logical', or a number of other synonyms.
[14] See Lk 8:8. [15] See Acts 7:22. [16] See 1 Kgs (Sam) 16:14–23.

to those who seek in the proper way and who genuinely love learning is a 'peacemaker' in a third way.

4 On Matthew 11:14, 15 in the seventh book of the Gospel according to Matthew (*The Apology for Origen of Pamphilus*, ch. 10)

Because of the words, 'He himself is Elijah who is to come', some think that the soul of Elijah was the same as John's. For they suppose that the words, 'He himself is Elijah' are to be referred to nothing other than the soul, and on the basis of little more than this saying alone they have introduced the doctrine of *metensōmatōseōs* (that is, the transmigration of souls), as if even Jesus himself affirms it. But if this were true, it would have been necessary to consider that something similar ought to be found in many Scriptures of the prophets at least, or of the Gospels. Further, even that saying that is joined to this one, when he says, 'Let the person who has ears to hear, hear', shows that there is a kind of secretive and hidden sense in these words which have been spoken that is to be searched for rather than that sense they have assumed as the meaning on the basis of the bare words. And this must be added, that if, as they think, the transmigration of souls occurs on account of sins, for what sins was the soul of Elijah transferred into John, whose birth was announced in advance by the very angel who announced the birth of Jesus our Saviour?[17] How, therefore, is it not as clear as day that this is false, that he who was so perfect that he did not even taste that common death should come to the transmigration of his soul,[18] which by their own assertion cannot happen except on the basis of sin? Further, how do they explain what John said: 'Are you Elijah? And he says, I am not'?[19] But, to show that this is consistent also with that word spoken by the Lord: 'If you wish to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come', his words 'He is Elijah' are to be referred to the spirit and power of Elijah. For John went forth 'in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons'.[20]

5 On Matthew 15:27, 28 from the eleventh book of the Gospel according to Matthew (*The Apology of Pamphilus for Origen*, ch. 10)

Those who are strangers to the catholic faith think that souls are transferred from human bodies into the bodies of animals on the basis of the difference in their sins. But we, who have found this warning nowhere in the divine Scriptures, say that when human good sense in life is neglected and despised by means of excessive carelessness it becomes like an irrational animal by ignorance or neglect, not by nature. And likewise also those who have been made such from the neglect of their own resolve by which they did not trouble themselves to be educated become rational and wise if they devote themselves to learning and to rational exercise, just as it is written of those dogs in the Gospels who ate 'from the crumbs that fell from the table of their masters'.[21] From those words the Canaanite woman was made a daughter of God according to the Saviour's words to her: 'O daughter, great is your faith'.[22] For just as the virtue of the soul confers to everyone that he is a Son of God, so the evil, madness, and lack of judgement of mind and words causes everyone to be called a dog according to the authority of Scripture. And it should be understood in the same way also in the case of the names of the other dumb animals.

[17] See Lk 1:19, 26. [18] See 4 (2) Kgs 2:1, 11. [19] Jn 1:20.
[20] Lk 1:17. [21] Mt 15:27. [22] Mt 15:28.

6 On Matthew 17:10–13 from the thirteenth book of the Gospel according to Matthew (*The Apology of Pamphilus for Origen*, ch. 10; cf. *ComMt* 13.1)

Elijah, not the soul of Elijah, seems to me to be meant in these words, so that we not be blamed for the doctrine about the transmigration of souls which is foreign to the church of God. This doctrine has not been handed down from the apostles or ever warned against in the Scriptures. For it is in opposition to these things that the apostle has said: 'Because the things which are seen are temporary'.[23] Furthermore, when is this event that all Scriptures agree on, that the present age is to come to an end? But not even can this statement be secure: 'Heaven and earth will pass away', or this statement of the apostle, 'For the form of this world will pass away', and this, 'the heavens will pass away' and the words that follow these.[24] For if, as the authors of this doctrine claim, no one, from the beginning of the world to its end, can be restored to that earliest stage which existed at first, why must the soul be changed or transferred a second or third time, or frequently? For if they are frequently transferred into different bodies, they assert, in this way the offences and punishments of each are exacted from them. This will certainly become excessive, if no end of correction occurs, nor will there ever be a time when a soul is not transferred. And if it is always necessary for souls to be given over to various bodies for their offences, what end will ever be granted to the world so that the words may be fulfilled, 'Heaven and earth will pass away'? Even if it should be granted, for example, that there may be someone without sin who no longer needs to return to a body, how many ages shall we assume for perhaps just one soul to be found which is so completely pure that it needs no change of body? And if we grant this, the doctrine turns out to contradict its own teaching. For if we grant that some few souls can be restored individually to perfection, so that they subsequently have no need to enter a body, it is necessary (notwithstanding through infinite ages and enormous amounts of time) for some individual souls which have been restored to perfection to cease at last the use of bodies, and by this means the world receives an end and is dissolved. Nevertheless, it does not appear this way in Holy Scripture, which says that a multitude of sinners is to remain at the end of the age. This is made very clear from that which is written in the Gospel: 'But when the Son of man comes, do you think he will find faith on the earth?' 'For as in the days of Noah so will the coming of the Son of man be'.[25]

AND AFTER HE DISCUSSED MANY SUBJECTS ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES HE THEN STATED HIS OWN VIEW IN THIS WAY

There will be vengeance on those who exist at that time, but not by the transmigration of souls, for there will be no place for sinning then, but there will be other kinds of punishment, for the transmigration of bodies will not constitute the punishment of sinners, so that no external punishments shall be thought to be inflicted. There is rather a means of punishments for sinners, that is, so that they may receive the punishment for the offences that they committed in this world. However, it is clear to those who can give careful attention to the logical sequence of the subject that these individual arguments contradict this doctrine in which they maintain that souls are transferred. But if Gentile authors, who have pursued this viewpoint from the logical sequence of their own first principles, wish to follow it, saying when these things come about that there is no doubt that this world can never end, it follows that those who feel this way do not believe in

[23] 2 Cor 4:18. [24] See Mt 13:39; 24:35; 1 Cor 7:31; Ps 101:27. [25] Lk 18:8; Mt 24:37.

our Scripture which very clearly announces a future end of the world, and they ought not seek to find this doctrine in our Scriptures by using inept and illogical expositions or assertions, since it can in no way be shown by using our Scriptures that there will never be an end of the age.

Catena Fragments

1. Inscription

The Gospel is a discourse containing a rational report of actions. It brings delight to the hearer because it is beneficial whenever the report is accepted. Another definition is that it is a discourse containing the presence of good things; yet another is that it is a report announcing that something good which has been anticipated is present.[26]

3. Matthew 1:1

It is the book of the generation 'of the one born of the seed of David according to the flesh'.[27] The expression 'he was born' is used of all people. But the birth of Christ is not a passage from not existing to existing, as some think of human birth. It is, rather, a passage from being 'in the form of God' to taking up the 'form of a servant'.[28] And one must not find fault with the evangelists for deriving the successions from the beginning and having constructed them inversely, for this had long been a practice of the Hebrews and was customary in the divine Scriptures...[29] And although the genealogy of women is not calculated, because Christ was born in the flesh from the virgin alone, and she had descended from David, he too is reasonably calculated to have descended from David himself. David was mentioned first, and not Abraham, because they had more recent memories of him, and because he was a prophet and king and was famous among them...[30]

4. Matthew 1:1

There are two books of generation in the Old Testament. For 'this', it says, 'is the book of the generation of human beings'[31] and, 'This is the book of the generation of heaven and earth'.[32] But at the end of the ages there is also the book of the generation of Jesus Christ. It is not like the generation 'of heaven and earth', or like the generation described in the words, 'God formed Adam as dust from the earth',[33] or like the generation in the words, 'Adam knew Eve his wife and' she conceived 'and gave birth',[34] or again, like the generation described in the words, 'And God cast an ecstasy on Adam and he slept, and he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh in its place. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman'.[35] It is, on the other hand, an astonishing generation, since 'when his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit'.[36]

[26] These three definitions can be found in almost identical language in Origen, *ComJn* 1.27.
[27] Rom 1:3. [28] Phil 2:6–7. [29] Omitting the bracketed material.
[30] Omitting the final thirteen lines, which Klostermann says belong to a Cyril scholion.
[31] Gn 5:1. [32] Gn 2:4. [33] Gn 2:7. [34] Gn 4:1.
[35] Gn 2:21–2. [36] Mt 1:18.

6. Matthew 1:5

He has also called to mind Rahab, who gave birth to Boes, the grandfather of Jesse, from Salmon. She was obscure and introduced nowhere in Scripture and, if I may speak like this, it is as if she was dropped into the Gospel from a machine. He also mentions Ruth who was a Moabitis, so that those Moabites who do not enter 'the assembly of the Lord till the tenth generation and forever',[37] and those banished with them can enter the assembly of God if, in imitation of Ruth, they do not wish to forsake the Israelite woman. Instead, they say, 'May it not happen that I forsake you, or turn from you, because wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people will be my people and your God my God, and wherever you die I will die and there I will be buried. May the Lord do thus to me and add thus, that death will separate me from you'.[38]

11. Matthew 1:18

But these matters have been examined sufficiently. You, however, in addition to these matters, investigate how it is that here the evangelist has mentioned the birth, but at the beginning of the Gospel he mentioned the generation. For here he says, 'The birth of Jesus Christ was as follows', but there, 'the book of the generation'.[39] What, then, is the difference between the birth and the generation, and how are both understood in relation to Christ? Just as this uttered speech is intangible and invisible in its own nature, but when it is written down in a book and given bodily form as it were then it is both visible and capable of being touched, in the same way the Logos of God who is without both flesh and body, being neither seen nor described in his deity, is both seen and described when he is made flesh. Because he was made flesh, therefore, there is also a 'book' of his 'generation'. But why Matthew said 'book' and not 'vision' or 'word' (for this has been said) has not been investigated here. We are investigating instead how it is that previously Matthew mentioned 'generation', but here birth, and what birth is and what generation is.[40] Generation and birth are different. Generation refers to the initial formation by God; birth, on the other hand, is the taking over of the sentence of death because of the passage from one to another. And further, generation possesses incorruptibility and blamelessness, but birth is liable to death and is prone to sin. The Lord, therefore, who had received the sinlessness of generation naturally, did not take incorruptibility in addition, and although he had taken birth's liability to death, he did not take its sinfulness in addition, bearing, without diminution, the first Adam in the portions related to both. Generation in the case of Christ, therefore, would not be the advance from non-existence to existence, but the passage from being 'in the form of God' to taking up the 'form of a slave'.[41] And his birth occurred in a twofold manner: in accordance to us and on behalf of us. For to have been born 'of a woman' was the according to us, and the on behalf of us was the not 'from the will of flesh' or 'of man but of' the Holy Spirit, wherefore he also predicted the coming birth which he was about to bestow freely on us from the Spirit.[42]

[37] Dt 23:3. [38] Ruth 1:16–17. [39] Mt 1:18; 1:1.

[40] On the Gnostic background for framing exegetical questions in this way see Heine (2003) esp. 68.

[41] Phil 2:6–7. [42] See Gal 4:4; Jn 1:13.

12. Matthew 1:18[43]

a Generation is one thing and birth another, and both can be perceived in holiness in Christ Jesus.

b And to mention both generation and, at the same time, birth in a holy and pious manner in the case of Christ does not violate the word of truth, even if the terms differ greatly from one another. Whenever something experiences birth, there is also generation; it is certainly not the case that if something experiences generation, there is also birth. And the term generation is likely more general, and for this reason there is no harm in using it of birth.

16. Matthew 1:20, 21

He named the child not yet born privately in the case of the Saviour who was born, wherefore in the Gospel according to Luke he is at work before the actual birth as is clear in the words, 'For behold when the sound of your greeting reached my ear, the child leaped'. And Elizabeth says Mary is mother of the Lord, when she had not yet given birth, in the words, 'How do I deserve this, that the mother of my Lord should come to me'.[44]

18. Matthew 1:20

Joseph was afraid, not because she had committed fornication, but because of the incredibility of the situation and because he did not know if that conceived of the Holy Spirit had already been formed.

21. Matthew 1:22

Prophecy is the proclamation of things to come; what is said contains the end of the things which are being fulfilled. It did not happen because it was spoken, for this is not prophecy, but it was spoken because it was about to happen. The latter is prophecy.

24. Matthew 2:1[45]

Magi were Persian wise men, of whom Balaam was one.[46] And perhaps these men possessed what had been prophesied to Balak when he blessed Israel instead of cursing them, saying, 'A star will rise up out of Jacob and a man will go up out of Israel' and the rest.[47] Therefore, because they possessed these prophecies and were expecting a great king to be born to the Jews, they knew that a greater power was present because the demons no longer answered them in the same way or made their rites and spells effective. And the star of the great king Jesus Christ appeared so much more incredible because comets and such phenomena in the upper air indicate something new in life.

[43] Where Klostermann has printed parallel columns I have labelled the left column a. and the right b. throughout the fragments.

[44] Lk 1:44, 43. [45] See *CCels* 1.59–60.

[46] The story of Balaam and Balak is told in Num 22–24. [47] Num 24:17.

29. Matthew 2:1–11

Consider if the magi can be a symbol of the Gentiles who were friends with the opposing powers (before they believed), and the star a symbol of the shining word of the prophets which testifies to the coming of Jesus. The gold which the Gentiles offer is rich in good 'works', the frankincense is their confession to God, and the myrrh is the knowledge that Christ died 'to sin' on behalf of human beings and was buried 'according to the Scriptures'.[48] Herod might be a symbol of that disobedient people to whom the magi came and learned the words of the prophets.

31. Matthew 2:14–16

When he flees, he teaches us to give 'place to wrath', and that he had truly become incarnate.[49] And the children are destroyed that he might prepare 'praise' for himself 'from the mouth of infants'.[50]

32. Matthew 2:16

Not to follow the will and foreknowledge of God is very harmful and destructive both for those who set themselves against it and for those who fight against it, which indeed also happened to Herod.

34. Matthew 2:18

b[51] Ramah means high place, which is why in some copies of the prophet it is written, 'A voice was heard on high' and what follows.[52] The tomb of Rachel is at the hippodrome in Bethlehem. This is why Rachel is said to have wept for her children—those who did not wish to be comforted for their children because they did not exist were in the place of Rachel. For they had not yet learned from the one clearly able to provide the resurrection of the dead on the basis of his own resurrection that those thought not to exist by those weeping and lamenting do exist.

35. Matthew 2:18

Rachel is observed to be a type for the church below and for that above, but it is speculated that she means more.

38. II Matthew 3:2

b The kingdom of heaven would be Christ himself, each of the separate things which are understood in the concept of him (wisdom, Logos, truth) being a heaven which neither passes away nor is destroyed. Or, it would be his presence, for this bestows the participation of the Spirit on us, the ascent into heaven, and the immutability in good for the saints in the age which will be.

[48] See 1 Tim 6:18; Rom 6:2; 1 Cor 15:3. [49] See Rom 12:19. [50] See Ps 8:3.

[51] Klostermann has three parallel columns here. I have omitted the first because it is attributed to another, and the third because it is brief, containing only a repetition of the first sentence in b.

[52] Jer 38:15. The apparatus in Rahlfs (2006) indicates that this is the reading of the original hand of Codex Sinaiticus.

39. Matthew 3:4

As high priest on behalf of human beings Jesus, 'who bears' not only 'the sin' of the people but even of the whole 'world', was clothed in filthy garments, as Zacharias says.[53] But John, as priest, was clothed in the garment of Christ, because of the perversity of those who swallow camels and who have been considered like them,[54] who have stripped themselves of the garment from the lamb. And just as Jakob, when he mourned for Joseph, 'put sackcloth on his loins',[55] so John, mourning both for the fruit of the loins of Israel and the deadness of soul of those begotten, by putting on the dead skin, was putting to death the loins. And insofar as 'he is Elijah', he was girded with what Elijah wore, and he also mourned for the people, 'being zealous' for the Lord like Elijah.[56]

41. Matthew 3:4

b He ate locusts because the people were being nourished on a teaching that was lofty and uplifted, but not, however, durable and raised above the earth. And he mentions wild honey, which is not cultivated by humans, just as the law was not cultivated by the Jews, for although they possessed it, they did not cultivate the teaching, since they did not examine it, nor did they search the Scriptures, as Christ says.[57]

45. Matthew 3:9

If children are given to Abraham from the stones, he is not father on the basis of the flesh. It is, rather, on the basis of virtue that people are called God's people and have Abraham as father. You investigate how or why.[58]

47. Matthew 3:10

Fire cleanses, enlightens, and effects many other things. And they say that love is also called fire. Consider this along with what it assists.

48. Matthew 3:11[59]

The Son of God taking up flesh and his descent into Hades are two shoes. The one who has understood their meaning and bears it by carrying it in his memory has something greater than 'loosing'.[60] The person, then, who carefully bears the meaning of the garment of Christ, the seamless tunic woven 'throughout', is greater.[61]

56. Matthew 3:15, 16

If, then, righteousness means to obey God, and God sent John to baptize the people, Christ fulfilled this too along with all the other items related to laws. But he was also baptized to sanctify the waters for us. And the Spirit comes down in the form of a dove, because where there is reconciliation with God there is a dove, as on the ark of Noah. Even now the Spirit comes in the form of a dove proclaiming the mercy of God to the

[53] See Heb 3:1; Jn 1:29; Zach 3:3. [54] See Mt 23:24; Lev 11:4. [55] Gn 37:34.
[56] See 3 Kgs (=1 Kgs) 19:10. On John and Elijah see above Quotations 4, 6, and *ComMt* 13.1.
[57] See Jn 5:39. [58] This has the appearance of a school exercise given to a student.
[59] Cf. Origen, *ComJn* 6.174, 178. [60] See Mk 1:7; Lk 3:16. [61] See Jn 19:23.

world and, at the same time, also to reveal that the spiritual person must be innocent, meek, simple, and honest.

57. Matthew 3:16

The appearance of the dove reveals the deliverance from the flood and the regeneration of the world below, as it once did, for the first things bear an image of the second.

62. Matthew 4:3–10

b[62] And it is possible to understand something like this in relation to the temptation of the Lord. For when he learned of the devil's thinking, he went up 'into the wilderness', and willingly 'became hungry', since the devil thought that if he was hungry he could deceive him by means of food just as he had Adam. And it was in relation to the devil's thinking that he again went up to 'the pinnacle'. And although it says he took him up on the mountain and showed him 'all the kingdoms of the earth', in whatever manner it was, he went up willingly. So too, of old, when God saw the devil considering if it were possible for the snake to speak, thinking, 'I might approach and deceive the first-formed humans by means of the snake', God permitted this and prepared his own handiwork to speak. When also in the time of Job he permitted the destruction of so many things because the devil was considering how, if it were permitted, 'I might put to the proof his feigned virtue which he appears to have because of his wealth'. For the dialogue there has such great power because of the clarity of the writing which composes the thoughts in the form of speech.

63. Matthew 4:4

What was said was said by the Saviour, but it is made clear to the one who understands that before the manna, which was a food from heaven, they had to be distressed and suffer hunger, because the abundance of their food supply had been exhausted. It has been written as follows: 'And recall the whole way that the Lord your God led you in the wilderness, so that he might distress you, and test you, and discover in your heart if you would keep his commandments or not. He distressed you and made you hungry, and fed you bits of manna which your fathers did not recognize, so that he might announce to you that a human being shall not live on bread alone'.[63] And it is made clear (he says) that the manna was a word (*Logos*), when Moses said in answer to the question of the sons of Israel, when 'one' said 'to the other, What is this?' What, then, did Moses say? 'This (he says) is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat; this word (*rēma*) that the Lord commanded'. Then the devil proceeds to another failure.

65. Matthew 4:6, 7

Since it is likely that some believe that the devil has understood the prophecy correctly as being spoken of no one other than Christ, and are disobedient to what is said, let

[62] I have omitted 62a as it reads like a summary of 62b.

[63] Dt 8:2–3. Origen cites these same two vss. in the fragments of his *ComEx* (PG 12.277A). Dt 8:3, and Jesus' citation of it in Mt 4:4, contains the additional phrase, 'but by every word (*rēma*) that proceeds from the mouth of God'. Origen assumes this phrase in his further comments here when he identifies the manna as a 'word'.

them know that everything in the Psalm is referred to the nature of man who is in need of much help and shelter from God and support from him, so that he may be delivered from every 'snare' of the hunters, and from every 'troublesome' and false 'word'.[64] The deceiver makes mention of a prophecy; the truthful one has recalled a prophecy. 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God', that is I, who am speaking to you.

66. Matthew 4:8

It is irrational to understand the mountain, the going up, and the kingdoms physically. Perhaps, then, he led him up to the height of things to be reached by contemplation, even the differing glories that surround piety, and showed him the kingdoms 'when the Most High distributed the nations, as[65] he scattered the sons of Adam, and established the boundaries of the nations in relation to the number of the angels of God'.[66]

68. Matthew 4:11

b The statement that 'angels ministered to him' shows that each of the faithful who possesses the commandments of Christ by nature and guards them is being ministered to by an angel. David has said as much in the Psalms: 'He will command his angels concerning you and they will carry you on their hands'.[67]

70. Matthew 4:12–16

In relation to the statement that 'when he heard that John had been delivered, he withdrew', someone might investigate whether he who knew 'what was in a human being' had not known this before he heard it.[68] But it does no harm for one who has known to have heard, and after he had heard to have withdrawn or to have heard in relation to the dispensation in which he was also tempted. But in addition, the words, 'He himself knew what was in a human being', are said by John who does not trace his human descent, but his divine.

71. Matthew 4:12

And when he withdrew, Christ observed the word of the Scripture which says, 'If they pursue you from this city, flee to the next'.[69] And he did it that he might bring the Gentiles to himself and enlighten them with the light of knowledge.

75. Matthew 4:17

a 'Kingdom of heaven' refers either to the good things after the resurrection, or to the proclamation.

b But 'the kingdom of heaven' is both Christ and the virtuous life.

77. Matthew 4:23, 24

You will see the variety of vices in self-indulgence, or love of money, or vulgarity, or the absence of moral restraints, folly, deceitfulness, presumptuousness, cowardice, and all

[64] See Ps 90:1–3 (LXX).

[65] I have translated *hōs* ('as/when') with the LXX rather than *hous* (whom) which Klostermann prints.

[66] Dt 32:8. [67] Ps 90:11, 12. [68] Jn 2:25. [69] Mt 10:23.

bad things which are contrary, but the touchstones of the soul are wealth, good repute, poverty, and disrepute. Bodies, on the one hand, are injured by demons, but souls are activated to sin and rage. And the one who is moon struck has the 'deaf and dumb' demon.[70] Such sufferings intermittently afflict the soul. They deafen it to the saving word, because anger is a paralysis of souls whose imposed tension weakens both their practical and active capacities. Greeks make the general statement that a disease from a vice is a weakness of the soul, and it is especially contrary to perseverance, since it is a yielding to endurance, exertion, and pain.

78. Matthew 4:24

The lunar demon who tries to set at variance God's creation goes forth for injury with the movement of the moon. And you will equally discover another cause and this specifically, but you will see it when you contemplate the image.

80. Matthew 5:2

When the mouth of Christ is opened, 'the treasures of wisdom' are present,[71] which he brings forth through his teaching, beginning fittingly with that from the pronouncements of blessedness.

81. Matthew 5:5

a[72] Meekness is gentleness, with the absence of anger, towards those who do wrong, or the acquired habit of being very moderate in chastisements. Or, meekness is the acquired habit which easily leads *to doing what falls to everyone and not being carried away with anger towards anyone,*[73] or a moderate temperament of soul, or a calmness of passion amid things that seem frightful, or the control of anger so that it does not even flare up, or a calm contentment of soul. Or, meekness is the acquired habit by which we sort out what kind of person is meek and what kind not. Now it is not difficult to apply the definitions to Moses, who is recorded to have been meeker than 'all human beings on the earth'.[74] There is also David, of whom it is said, 'Lord, remember David and all his meekness'.[75] And what shall we say of the Saviour, who, because of meekness, 'was led as a sheep to the slaughter' and what follows, and who says himself, 'Learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart'?[76]

82. Matthew 5:5

Earth is the lofty inheritance of the 'living',[77] along with the personal, glorious, and incorruptible bodies of those inheriting it.

84. Matthew 5:7

God is true. His 'mercy and truth' go before him.

[70] See Mk 9:25. [71] See Col 2:3.
[72] I omit b as it is only a very brief summary of a.
[73] The italicized words appear in a fragment of Chrysippus found in Stobaeus (*SVF* III.632).
[74] Num 12:3. [75] Ps 131:1. [76] Is 53:7; Mt 11:29.
[77] Klostermann suggests that this may be an allusion to Ps 26:13.

85. Matthew 5:7

There is mercy that is blameworthy, as was true of Saul's regarding Agag the foreigner;[78] what is hurtful is not mercy, nor is it done with knowledge. This is why God says of sinners through the prophet, 'I will not have pity and I will not show mercy', and Paul says, 'Behold, then, the goodness and the severity of God; severity on those who fell, and kindness on you'.[79]

86. Matthew 5:8

a It is not possible to see God if one has not been purified in heart, for the heart is an eye, and the eye is the nature of the mind. Just as the eye, then, is in accordance with nature when it sees the light, but is contrary to nature if it does not see it, so also it is with what is spiritual. For to see in accordance with nature is what is pure.

b No one who is impure and defiled by the passions will ever see God. For the eye of our soul which is completely obscured with the troublesome things of this life is awakened by virtuous activity[80] and sees the light, and by means of the light sees God.

87. Matthew 5:9

a Peacemakers are those who act in accordance with the Son of God within their own limit. For Christ became the reconciliation of all.

b The person who points out the harmony of the old Scriptures with the new, of the legal with the prophetic, of the Gospels with the Gospels in the apparent conflict with one another is a third peacemaker.[81] On account of this, having imitated the Son of God, he will be called a Son of God for his work since he has received the 'spirit of adoption'.[82]

c Those who interpret the apparent conflict in the divine Scriptures correctly and reduce it to harmony and teach others to think in this way are called peacemakers.

88. Matthew 5:10

All who have chosen to live in Christ or have pursued virtue even perhaps in another way will be persecuted because of the dissimilarity of their lifestyle and the tendency to evil of those persecuting them.

89. Matthew 5:10

Christ, the Son of God, is righteousness.

90. Matthew 5:13

At the end when Christ 'has come' he seeks 'faith on the earth'.[83] 'The salt' becomes tasteless: Those who are salted with faith preserve the remaining earth of mankind, but those who have fallen away from the faith are something trampled underfoot of the rational nature, being despised because they have forsaken their own 'good'.[84]

[78] See 1 Kgs (=1 Sam) 15:9. [79] Jer 21:7; Rom 11:22. [80] Literally 'active virtue'.
[81] See Quotation 3 above from the *Philocalia*. [82] See Rom 8:15. [83] See Lk 18:8.
[84] See Mk 9:50.

91. Matthew 5:13

Why is it necessary to mention the many uses of salt in the life of humans? But it is worthwhile now to disclose why Jesus' disciples are compared to salt. Therefore, it seems to me that just as salt hinders so many things from becoming wormy from their stench and makes them usable longer, since they would not last long without salt, although people need them, so too the disciples of Christ preserve this whole earthly region and, by placing themselves in the stench that comes from the sins of idolatry and sexual immorality, constrain them. I think this is the reason Matthew has described Jesus' disciples as salt. Luke, however, does not reveal this clearly and, for this reason, his text can be ambiguous.[85] In the Gospel according to Mark, too, it is thought that each of us who is not salt ought to have salt in himself.[86] Perhaps one has as much salt as he has capacity for the gracious benefactions of Christ in accordance with the saying, 'May grace be multiplied to you',[87] and the further saying, Whoever 'has found grace before the Lord God',[88] as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and any other person, if there is such, who has been recorded to have found grace before God. Paul brought grace and salt together in the same passage when he said, 'May your word always be with grace, seasoned with salt'.[89] If someone, therefore, who has been thought worthy of grace should make this grace vain, this person would be one in whom salt has become tasteless.

93. Matthew 5:14

The true light[90] is that of the world which said, 'Your light left its mark on us'.[91] But they became light by participation.

94. Matthew 5:14

The body of citizens that is excellent in its belief and conduct is a city set on a hill.

95 I. Matthew 5:15

a Those who illuminate the light of knowledge in themselves light a lamp which they do not place under a bushel, but because they are faithful managers they distribute 'the food allowance at the right time'.[92] 'Upon a lampstand' refers to the soul or the rational disposition, of which the golden lampstand in Moses is a type.[93] In order that it might illumine 'all those in the house' refers to those in the church according to the ordinary understanding.

b The 'lamp' 'under the bushel' does not have to be the food allowance, for let the fellow servants have their food allowance served with the bushel by the faithful and prudent manager,[94] and let them see the beams from the lamp placed on the lampstand made public by the Word in the church, the house of all people. But neither do they place the lamp 'under the bed' where one rests, nor under any other vessel, for he who does this does not take thought for those entering the house.[95]

c Therefore, the person who has lit an intellectual lamp in his soul must not hide it, but place it on a lampstand, of which Moses recorded a symbol in the tent of testimony.[96]

[85] See Lk 14:34. [86] See Mk 9:50. [87] See 1 Pt 1:2. [88] See Gn 6:8.
[89] Col 4:6. [90] See Jn 1:9. [91] Ps 4:7. [92] See Lk 12:42.
[93] See Ex 25:31. [94] See Lk 12:42. [95] See Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16. [96] See Ex 25:31.

For let the fellow servants have their food allowance served with the bushel by the faithful and prudent manager,[97] and let all see the beams from the lamp placed on the lampstand, that is to say, the church. But neither do they place the lamp 'under the bed' where one rests, nor under any other vessel, for he who does this does not take thought for those entering the house.[98]

96. Matthew 5:16

b 'Let your light shine' before men, he says. He does not say before God (for God knows your works), but before men, that God may be glorified by them.

97. Matthew 5:17

a Understand this in the same way as an infant that does not become a man by the forms and limbs being destroyed but by their growing.

b Just as you can see in the case of newborn children (for they advance to manhood not by their form being destroyed, but by its growing greater and by receiving an even more excellent form), so it happened also in the case of the law. The new covenant arrived and the law was not destroyed but has been given a more precise and perfect form. This is the covenant in grace, the old being both renewed and transformed.

98. Matthew 5:17

If words in the law, someone says, really remain and will not pass away, indeed they are unseen and eternal.[99] And he does not annul the law even when he says on a Sabbath, 'Take up your bed and walk'.[100] But he appears to annul the letter so that he may establish the spirit of the temple, the altar, the sacrifices, the purifications, the high-priests, the day of atonement, the sabbatical of the earth, and the rest of the laws. And even the saying, 'The law and the prophets are up to John'[101] will appear to have been annulled, but it is rather fulfilled also at that time.

99. Matthew 5:18, 19

But the 'one serif' is not only the iota among the Greeks, but it is also what is called yod by the Hebrews. Now it is possible that Jesus is meant symbolically by the one iota or the one serif, since his name begins with a yod among both the Greeks and the Hebrews. The one serif, then, will be Jesus, the Word of God in the law which does not pass away until all things occur. But the iota might also be, as he himself says, the ten commands of the law. For all things pass away, and they do not pass away. But not even Jesus passes away. Even if he should fall 'to the earth', he falls willingly, in order that he may bear 'much fruit'.[102] And the 'one iota or one serif' again is in control of what is above and below.

101. Matthew 5:22

If the one who simply calls a person a fool is liable to the punishments which are announced, how does one who calls a believer this not deserve greater punishments?

[97] See Lk 12:42. [98] See Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16. [99] See 2 Cor 4:18.
[100] Jn 5:11. [101] Mt 11:13. [102] See Jn 12:24.

For not only has he insulted the believer, in so far as he is a human being, but he has also insulted the mystery of our faith. For one must call believers sensible and wise, but not fools and stupid.

102 I. Matthew 5:25, 26

b We must think of the opponent in two ways: when it is the devil, and when it is the one in opposition to our moral wills. The devil is the first opponent, and the second is the commandment. Christ urges us, therefore, to be reconciled to both, that is to the devil, since we have no part in the judgement of his friends, and to the commandment since we have fulfilled all things enjoined by it; for if you do not come to the judgement in this way, you will pay the 'last penny'.

103. Matthew 5:27, 28

The approval of the sin is a fully constituted evil, even if one does not perform it. In this way, the Saviour attempts to eliminate this sin by restraining us from the cause of sins, for if this act is not in our souls it will not be carried out.

104. Matthew 5:32

But you must know that we did not find the words, 'he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery', in many copies.

105. Matthew 5:33

'You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain' is the third commandment of the Decalogue.[103] But investigate if it has been said anywhere as it is written here.

106. Matthew 5:33–7

a But let the testimony of our life be a greater guarantee than an oath. But if some shameless person who is not put to shame by your life should dare to apply an oath to you, let your yes be yes and your no be no in place of an oath.[104]

107. Matthew 5:37

For if someone swears truly on any random thing, he errs, but one who has not sworn would never swear falsely. And you will discover that an oath is the unchangeable 'confirmation' of each person, as in the saying, 'I swore and I established it', and 'The Lord swore and will not change his mind'.[105]

108. Matthew 5:39

He is not speaking only about forbearance when he adds the other cheek also to the right one, for one strikes this cheek contrary to nature and as an insult. Therefore, when a person who is prepared 'for a defence to everyone' encounters a person who is malicious concerning his faith, he will not resist, but will offer the rational doctrines and the ethical teachings to the one striking him on the right to shame those who do not see the Logos himself, to stop their scandalous accusation and attack on divine things.

[103] Ex 20:7; Dt 5:11. [104] See *HomJer* 5.12.
[105] Heb 6:16; Ps 118(119):106; Ps 109(110):4.

110. Matthew 5:46–8

To love only those who love is imperfect, for this appears to happen for the sake of gain and not because of virtue. But to love also those who hate for no other reason than the goodness of love is good and perfect.

111. Matthew 5:48

The person who possesses all the virtues, or is completely good, is perfect.

114. Matthew 6:1

Just as water always fights against fire and fire against water and such opposites never exist together, so vainglory and virtue are opposite one another and can never coexist in one and the same soul. Therefore, we must expel vainglory from our souls and remain in the ordinances of Christ.

116. Matthew 6:5

It is not evil to pray on the road, for indeed it is good to pray and do good on the road, in bed, at the table, and in every place under one's control.

119. Matthew 6:9, 10

For because he is holy, he dwells among the holy. For 'you shall be holy', he says, because I am holy'.[106] And no one, in my opinion, who is impure, unclean, or a fornicator can hallow the name of God. For the one who has hallowed this name has become holy himself. Next, he prays for the kingdom to come, saying, 'May your kingdom come', when death does not rule in himself, or the sin which rules in humanity. For since he is God, he rules every rational soul in which no one else rules.

121. Matthew 6:9

The expression 'hallowed' is not in the imperative, but in the optative mood, as if it were 'may it be hallowed'. It is not that it may be hallowed by an impure person, but that when his holiness has been revealed to us, we may offer holiness in a manner worthy of him by declaring him God.

122. Matthew 6:11

Since[107] the substance which has stood firm (such as no bodily substance which fluctuates and perishes), which 'the Logos', being 'God', nourishes as living bread, from which they fast when the bridegroom who nourishes the invisible soul in an invisible manner (wherefore the Saviour says, 'He who eats this bread will live forever'[108]) is taken away[109]—since, therefore, Jesus says one must not fast from this bread, we say, 'our daily bread' and what follows.

[106] Lev 19:2.
[107] I have omitted the initial sentence in the fragment as it appears not to be from Origen.
[108] Jn 6:58. [109] See Mt 9:14, 15.

123. Matthew 6:13

If 'life is a trial' it is not possible not to be tried, but it is possible not to be defeated in the trial.[110] For he who is deservedly delivered 'to dishonourable passions' or a 'reprobate mind' comes into trial,[111] but he who conquers in wrestling, not being tried beyond what he is able[112] and not being abandoned, does not come into trial.

124. Matthew 6:13

We ask to avoid temptation 'because of the weakness of the flesh'.[113]

127. Matthew 6:22, 23

A 'simple eye' is an eye that sees things as they are. It does not see one thing as two, or something smaller as larger, or colour falsely. The eye that is not simple, however, is evil. And just as an eye is evil on its own when it does not perform as an eye should, so too each member of the soul and its whole body is shown to be dark with evil from the evil eye, but light from translucent simplicity. But if having considerable success concerning something is a medium condition between excellence and baseness, how will the whole body of the soul be bright? Perhaps as a lamp is either dim or bright, so too in the case of the mind said to be a lamp of that essence which has been produced to think. It is not a lamp of the attention to understanding, as when we say, This person has sense. But the Gospel does not know two meanings of mind.

128. Matthew 6:23

When our mind is a friend to matter, the light in us is dark. But he is speaking in a way to raise difficulties such as, if that which by nature is to enlighten you has become dark in ignorance, beyond the darkness lies 'the mindset of the flesh' and the flesh which desires 'against the spirit'.[114]

132. Matthew 6:34

Christ forbids these things that the rich say in the evening: 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we put on?'

133. Matthew 6:34

The Saviour, in his desire to separate us utterly from the things of the physical life, teaches us not even to have a care about tomorrow.

134. Matthew 6:34

The blessed Paul says, 'Redeem the time, because the days are grievous' (and if they are grievous, there is also trouble in them).[115] And Jacob says, 'My days have become few and grievous'.[116] And Moses says, in a psalm, 'The days of our years are seventy' and what follows.[117] Overall in the Scripture the days of this age are said to be grievous. For just as every place is defiled by what is impure, and a Nazirite by the corruption of the

[110] See Job 7:1.
[111] See Rom 1:26, 28.
[112] See Eph 6:12; 1 Cor 10:13.
[113] Rom 6:19.
[114] See Rom 8:6; Gal 5:17.
[115] Eph 5:16.
[116] Gn 47:9.
[117] Ps 89:10 (LXX).

dead on him, so the days, which are not created grievous, are said in a mystical manner to be grievous, because they are made such by what is grievous and bad. And suffering is also frequently said to be trouble.

136. Matthew 7:2

The phrase 'with what measure' means nothing other than 'with what law' you judge, you also will be judged. For the law is the measure of justice.

137 I. Matthew 7:6

The bread of the children is what is holy. And 'it is not good to take the bread of children and cast it to the dogs'.[118] Therefore, one must not share the holy mysteries with those shamelessly unblushing and barking abusers or those flatterers because of their belly, whose coinage shall not enter 'the house of the Lord'.[119] Nor must one give a portion of the pearls that adorn the bride of the Logos to those who are pleasure-loving and bad so that they may not 'trample them' with their unclean, muddy feet. He addresses these words, as it were, to those seeking and possessing 'good pearls'.[120] Perhaps the person who does not possess them is not even a disciple.

137 II. Matthew 7:6

As far as some sins go, human customs are likened to irrational animals. It is for this reason that the Saviour has used these names that the prophets have also used. For the latter called those who were wild for women horses because of their lack of sexual restraint,[121] and another says, 'Don't be like the horse and the mule that have no understanding'.[122] And Herod was labelled a fox because of his treacherousness, but others were also reproached as having 'the poison of asps under their lips' because they brought death to their hearers, and furthermore, as being a 'generation of vipers'.[123] For it was to show the distinction in the sin at work in humanity that he gave it the names of reptiles, birds, and four-footed creatures. But he also summoned them to repentance by these names in accordance with the 'vision' of Peter mentioned in the Acts.[124] Therefore, he called those prone to lewdness and who bark out abuses and are ready to flatter for the sake of their belly dogs because of their shamelessness, and he called those pigs who are insatiate, foul in filth, and consume their excrement for food. Here is why one must have no share or part in these people; one must not even offer the sale price from such animals 'in the house of God',[125] for the beast is totally disinclined to holiness.

138 I. Matthew 7:7, 8

For the truth of the saving doctrines is received in a threefold manner: concerning their discovery by means of prayer, and the intensity of the ruling principle in seeking the realities, and concerning the finding, in the awareness of the obscurity of the hidden writings, that they are opened by force as it were.[126] But perhaps one must ask from God the Father, seek from the Holy Spirit, and knock at the one who said, 'I am the door'.[127] And if the one who asks receives, and what follows, then he who has not

[118] See Mt 15:26. [119] See Dt 23:1, 8. [120] See Mt 13:45. [121] See Jer 5:8.
[122] Ps 31:9. [123] See Lk 13:32; Ps 139:4 (LXX); Mt 3:7. [124] See Acts 10:12, 15.
[125] See Dt 23:18. [126] See Origen, *Phil* 13.4 from the *Epistle to Gregory*. [127] Jn 10:7.

received does not ask, even if he seems to ask for something; and he who does not find has not sought in the correct manner, but seeks foolishly and spouts empty words for something useless; and the one to whom it is not opened does not knock, even if he knocks on the walls and the places outside the door.

138 II. Matthew 7:7

a So that the disciples not be ignorant of who among their hearers are dogs or pigs, he says, Seek continually from God and all things will be revealed to you. For virtue begins with knowing the good through prayer, then knowing how one must follow virtue, and in the third place knocking by means of works that the door may be opened to him, for this means knocking with one's hands. For the truth of the saving doctrines is received in a threefold manner: by diligent prayer, and the frame of mind of the ruling principle in seeking the divine matters, and concerning the conscious discovery of the depth of the obscurity of the hidden writings in the precise search for knowledge. For this is the way, he says, the Scriptures will be opened.

b The beginning of virtue is to pray that the way of righteousness may be made known to one. The second step is to seek how one must follow that way. Third, once virtue has been seized, to knock at Christ, that he may open to him the door and remove him from the narrow and difficult way, and bring him into the broad, enlightened work. One receives all these things through entreaty of God and to God. But by saying to him, 'Knock', he hinted that it is equal to ask both with a deed and with entreaty to God. For a person knocks with the right hand, and the right hand is a symbol of a good deed.[128]

139. Matthew 7:7

One must seek the truth of the doctrines diligently, and second, ask God that the mysteries of the wisdom which has been hidden 'from the ages and from' these 'generations'[129] be revealed to us, and third, that he may knock and be acknowledged[130] when he enters through the doors of righteousness.[131] If, then, he fails in one of these points, he obtains nothing. It is possible, therefore, to seek the Holy Spirit, so that through him, we may ask the Son, and when the Son has opened the doors of Scripture he may make known to us the things concerning the Father, for he himself is 'the door'.[132] But how will a person receive if he does not first ask? And how will he find if he does not seek? And how will he enter if he does not knock? The person with understanding, therefore, asks 'that a word might be given' to him 'when he opens' his 'mouth'.[133]

140. Matthew 7:9–11

These words which promote confidence in praying are added to the command, 'Ask'.[134] But see if bread is not that nourishment in knowledge necessary for the soul, without

[128] I have omitted the final sentence which Klostermann attributes to Chrysostom.
[129] Col 1:26.
[130] The verb is future Mid/Pass. The middle is usually given the active sense of 'confess', but it seems to me that a passive meaning is demanded here.
[131] See Ps 117:19. [132] Jn 10:7.
[133] Eph 6:19. The final sentences have been omitted as coming from Chrysostom.
[134] Mt 7:7.

which it cannot be saved, such as the accurate instruction concerning how one must live. And a fish is the love of learning, like a delicacy, such as 'knowing the constitution of the world, the force of the elements, the beginning, end, and middle of times' and everything which follows that Wisdom recounts.[135] God, therefore, does not give a stone (which the devil wanted Jesus to eat[136]) in place of bread, nor, in place of a fish, does he give a snake which the Ethiopians, who are unworthy to eat a fish, eat. For the Psalm says, There 'you crushed the heads of the dragon, you gave it as food to the peoples of Ethiopia'.[137]

146. Matthew 7:17, 18

When the tree is good, so is the fruit; when the tree is rotten, so is the fruit. And the fruits of spiritual trees are spiritual activities.

147. Matthew 7:18

If 'a good tree cannot produce bad fruit', how did Moses disbelieve at the water of dispute, or David have the wife of Uriah, or Peter deny, or how do the majority of those who have not made much progress still sin?[138]

149. Matthew 7:21–3

This is said to the false prophets themselves, and these are those who possess the name, but deny it with their works.[139] He denies them because every heresy has denied him. He does not recognize them, but says, 'Depart from me, you who work lawlessness'. For you honoured 'me with your lips, but your heart is far from me, and in vain' you worship 'me while you teach the doctrines of men'.[140]

150. Matthew 7:21, 22

No one can say, 'Lord, Lord' 'except in the Holy Spirit'.[141] But something such as this exists in deeds, not in words, as some think.

Some who were unworthy prophesied in the name of Christ, namely Balaam, Saul, and Caiaphas, and others as Judas and the sons of Sceva cast out demons.

152. Matthew 7:24–7

The person who hears must understand what is being said, for understanding produces intention and the deed follows this. And he builds chosen stones on the foundation of the prophets and apostles,[142] of which he says, 'If the Lord does not build the house, the builders labour in vain'.[143] 'Glory and wealth' will be 'in' this 'house'.[144] And the house itself, which is built from the commandments of God, becomes a dwelling of God, for 'I will dwell in them and walk among them'.[145] This house has been built on the rock, 'and the rock was Christ'.[146] 'For no one can lay a different foundation than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ'.[147] And in relation to hearing and doing, for whatever

[135] Wis Sol 7:17, 18. [136] See Mt 4:3. [137] Ps 73:13, 14.
[138] Dt 32:51; 2 Kgs 11; Mt 26:72. [139] See Tit 1:16.
[140] Mt 15:8, 9. The final section, bracketed by Klostermann, has been omitted.
[141] Mt 7:22; 1 Cor 12:3. [142] See Eph 2:20. [143] Ps 126:1. [144] Ps 111:3.
[145] 1 Cor 6:16; see Lev 26:11. [146] 1 Cor 10:4. [147] 1 Cor 3:11.

you do in word or deed, 'do it in the name of Jesus Christ'.[148] For if the foundation is placed on the rock, neither wind, nor rain, nor rivers can harm that house. Rivers, winds, and rains occur in winter. Pray, therefore, that your flight does not occur 'in winter', for this age is winter for the just.[149]

153. Matthew 7:24–7

For 'neither death, nor life, nor angels nor' the remaining things 'can separate us from the love of Christ'.[150] But neither can rivers from the land of Egypt and Assyria which practise the 'wisdom of this age'[151] which only hinder the children of Abraham from the sand.[152] And the winds that blow are the false prophets. These all come at the same time and beat against the house. And if it is on the rock, they do not harm it. For the 'way of a serpent' is not found 'on a rock'.[153] But they beat against the house which appears firm before 'there is a flood'[154] of temptations and persecutions, and it falls, for it did not have Christ for a foundation and base. But if he is speaking of the truly wise man who built his house on the rock, this is the Lord who built his 'church' on the rock,[155] that is on his own firmness and perseverance. For not even 'the gates of Hades will prevail against it', for all persecutions 'fell on that house' and accomplished nothing because it was built 'on the rock'.[156]

154. Matthew 8:5–9

He calls a household slave 'child'. Luke makes this very clear when he designates him a 'slave'.[157] And he was a man of understanding (he says) and believed such remarkable things about Christ based on a likely argument from his own affairs. For I too am a man (he says), but nevertheless I am lord of those over whom I have received authority. Consequently, it is not unlikely that you too have received this authority from God to banish sufferings with only a word. For the centurion did not come to him as to the Son of God and Lord of all creation (for the disciples were not even aware of this before the cross). He came to him as a man who, because of his virtue, had received a greater than human authority from God. This is why he says, 'For I too am a man'. For since he said to him, 'Speak the word', well did he go on to say, 'For I too am a man', in place of saying, 'It is not unusual if you should be able to do this, being a man who has received this from God, since I too, being this, receive preeminence over subjects to command as I wish'.[158]

156. Matthew 8:10

Perhaps Jesus marvelled not only because the centurion spoke with faith but also with truth. For it is likely that there were certain cosmic forces inflicting the paralysis and agony on the servant that had to be expelled from the servant when Jesus gave the command, or when he ordered the angels serving him to expel and cast out the things causing the paralysis and the agony.

[148] See Col 3:17. [149] See Mt 24:20. [150] Rom 8:38, 39. [151] See 1 Cor 2:6.
[152] See Gen 22:17. [153] Prov 30:19. [154] See Lk 6:48, 49. [155] See Mt 16:18.
[156] Mt 7:25. [157] See Lk 7:2.
[158] The final bracketed sentence has been omitted as it is clearly the words of the author of the catena.

158. Matthew 8:11

a And after a few words: And perhaps the saying, 'they will recline' on the breast 'of Abraham'[159] concerns the statement, 'The kingdom is like a man who made a wedding feast for his son and sent out his servants' and what follows.[160] 'The sons of the kingdom' who are cast out relate to the Israelites; the Gentiles are those from 'the east and the west'.

b Perhaps the statement, 'They will recline' on the breast 'of Abraham' and what follows concerns the statement that 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who made a wedding feast for his son and sent out his servants' and what follows.

160. Matthew 8:20

Christ, being holy, rests 'in those who are holy'. Therefore, he says to the man, Demons, that is 'foxes', rest in you. But I will not rest in you, but 'in those who are holy'.[161]

162. Matthew 8:22

a The dead are accustomed to burying their own dead, because the soul which exists in evil is dead. And physical death is the result of sin; appropriately, therefore, is sin said to be death, and the person who is in it is dead.

b If the dead are accustomed to burying their own dead, a soul which exists in evil is dead. And if physical death is the result of sin, sin is appropriately said to be death, and the person who is in it is dead. And because Christ knew the aptitude of this person's soul for deeds that are good and obligatory, he commanded him to follow.

163. Matthew 8:26

For he it was who also at the beginning set 'bars and gates' for it and said, 'You shall come to this point and you shall not pass over it, but your waves shall be broken on yourself'.[162]

164. Matthew 8:28–30

Since then Matthew said two demon-possessed men came out from the tombs, but Luke and Mark mention one, consider whether the one possessing the legion was one of the two in Matthew. Both Mark and Luke composed a story about him, telling about the things related to him alone because the things that happened in his case were more remarkable and greater.[163] Likewise, for whatever reason, Matthew recorded things in general about the two demon-possessed men, and Mark and Luke mentioned things in particular and specifically about the one who had the legion because the narrative relating the part about him had been passed over in silence in Matthew. But the demons call him Son of God, at one time because they have been overpowered by his power, at another because they have picked up from his teaching that he is Son of God. And perhaps the demons were never judged worthy to suffer anything from the wrath of God which corrects those not willing to yield to reason. But the patience of the Saviour

[159] This conflates Lk 16:22 with Mt 8:11. [160] Mt 22:2–3. [161] See Is 57:15.
[162] Job 38:10, 11. [163] Cf. Mt 8:28–34; Mk 5:1–20; Lk 8:26–39.

concedes time in the midst of the consummation because of those who have contended against legions of demons and can be crowned. Since then, in the in-between-time, demons have the time to do what they wish concerning humanity, he cries out against the Lord that he is compelling them and subjecting them to retribution before the proper time.

166. Matthew 8:28, 29

Consider if their statement is based on knowledge or not, or is like those who say, 'His blood be on us and our children'.[164] But explore spiritually the whole narrative word for word. When the demons seceded from the heavenly realms they gained possession of the earthly region, not accidently, but by some secret logic, whence they were fearful because they have their habitation in this world, whence also they had entered this dwelling as a judgement of God. For this reason, then, they began crying out, You have come here, where[165] no one has been able to travel. And investigate the expression 'the beyond', whether it means this world outside of the better, or the nations outside of Israel.

168. Matthew 8:32, 33

a If the swine had not rushed down the cliff into the sea and drowned in the waters, those tending them would not have run from tending the swine and become heralds of the marvellous works of the truth.

b If the swine had not rushed down the cliff into the sea and utterly drowned, the swineherds would not have left them and fled and become heralds of the marvellous works of Christ.

172. Matthew 9:1–3

Paralytics are mentioned three times,[166] but they were brought to him at separate times. The details concerning the other two have some similarity with the one.

174. Matthew 9:13

Hosea's words are as follows: 'And my judgement will go forth like light, because I want mercy and not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than whole burnt offerings'.[167]

175. Matthew 9:13

Sacrifice follows the law; mercy lies beyond the law.

176. Matthew 9:14

The disciples of John were still following the leaven of the Pharisees.[168]

178. Matthew 9:16, 17

a Those who have been conformed to the way of life related to the law are old wineskins, but the grace that comes through Christ is new wine.

[164] Mt 27:25.

[165] The word is *dio*, which is a conjunction meaning 'wherefore', but the context seems to demand 'where'.

[166] See Mt 4:24; 8:6; and here. [167] Hos 6:5, 6. [168] See Mt 16:6.

b Those who have been conformed to the way of life related to the law are old wineskins; the grace that comes through Christ is new wine. Those conformed to grace are new wineskins. Understand in the same way the old garment and the unshrunk. But investigate why or how the tear becomes worse because the patch pulls away from 'the old'.

179. Matthew 9:18–19

While there were many rulers of the synagogues, the rest were against the Saviour. But this one was someone rare, like Nicodemus. Although he was someone like this, even so need compelled this man to come to Jesus, wherefore he said, 'If you do not see signs and wonders, you do not believe'.[169] But this man was Jairus, who did not have faith like the centurion. For he would have sent and said, 'I am not worthy that you should come under my roof'.[170] But nevertheless the Lord kindly followed him.

181. Matthew 9:20, 21

The haemorrhaging, that is her affliction, was a scourge. So, you will say also that such afflictions are physical scourges from God. Wherefore he said to the paralytic, when he had set him free from a scourge, 'See, you are well; sin no more, so that nothing worse may happen to you'.[171] His disciples also touched and handled him, but the haemorrhaging woman touched 'his garments'.[172] And similar to the haemorrhaging woman they touched him believing, consequently they are said to press against him and, according to Luke, to constrain and crush him.[173] But it was not his garments that healed the woman (since even his enemies 'divided his garments'[174]), but her way of thinking when she said, 'If I may touch even his garment, I will be healed'.

185. Matthew 9:24

a What did he mean when he said, 'She has not died', although she was dead? He meant that those who have hope in Christ for the resurrection have not died but are sleeping. This is why the apostle says, 'I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you do not grieve as the rest who have no hope'.[175] At one and the same time he degrades the deed he is about to perform, or rather he conceals it, and says that she is asleep, so that after those had said that she had died, when he raised her, they could not deny what had happened.

b Those who have hope in Christ for the resurrection have not died, but are sleeping. This is why the apostle says, 'I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you do not grieve as the rest who have no hope'. At one and the same time he degrades the deed he is about to perform, or rather he conceals it, and says that she is asleep. This is why he also advises them afterwards to tell no one.[176]

187 I. Matthew 9:27–30

The Christ is called son of David because he descended from him in the flesh. Those who cry out 'son of David' take him to be Christ, but they know him 'according to

[169] Jn 4:48; see Mk 5:22. [170] Mt 8:8. [171] Jn 5:14.
[172] See 1 Jn 1:1; Mt 9:20; Mk 5:28. [173] See Mk 5:24; Lk 8:45. [174] Mt 27:35.
[175] 1 Thess 4:13. [176] See Lk 8:56.

the flesh' for they are still infants.[177] And he instructs them to tell no one, for he did not want them to talk about the healing that had occurred, but for all to see what had happened.

187 II. Matthew 9:27–31

Those who see did not know the son of David; the blind, however, recognized him, so that his words might be fulfilled, 'I have come for judgement of the world, in order that those who do not see may see'. and the blind may see again.[178] How did they recognize him unless they certainly had that mind which leads them to follow the good shepherd?

188. Matthew 9:36

It is the task of the good shepherd to have compassion on his own sheep and to suffer with the sheep that is sick, and it is especially the task of the Saviour to have compassion on his own image.

189. Matthew 9:37

He says that the crowd that possesses an aptitude for religion is the harvest, and the teachers relating the Gospel are the labourers in the harvest. But the end of the age is also another harvest, as related in the saying, 'Leave' the weeds, 'and at the time of harvest I will say to the harvesters'.[179]

190. Matthew 9:37

If the harvesters are angels, even now these things are being said to the angels of the apostles.[180] And the harvest is of those who received the word as seed 'on' their own 'good earth'.[181] But the harvesters are few, for there are not many who unashamedly rightly divide 'the word of truth'.[182]

192. Matthew 9:38, 10:1

Then he selects the twelve disciples as workers in the harvest, when he gave them authority over unclean spirits and the power to heal diseases as God, so that when they had cowered peopled by this means they might have them as obedient hearers of their message.

193. Matthew 10:1

b As a good teacher he delivers mature lessons to the mature without envy, and as a learned supreme physician he delivers the science of medicine to the industrious disciples so that they could heal not only a plague of the body, but also one of the soul. For by means of Adam's disobedience, humanity became subject to various diseases of both the soul and the body. And he gave them authority to cast out the unclean spirits that invisibly effect diseases, so that both together, I mean soul and body, with unanimous harmony might together glorify and bless the God who has united them.

[177] See 2 Cor 5:16; 1 Cor 3:1. [178] Jn 9:39.
[179] Mt 13:30. Cf. Origen, *ComJn* 13.285–90. [180] See Mt 13:39.
[181] See Mt 13:8. [182] See 2 Tim 2:15.

194. Matthew 10:2–4

But according to Luke, Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James son of Alphaeus and Simon called the zealot, Judas son of James, Judas Iscariot 'who also became a betrayer'.[183] And according to Mark, Simon, who is also Peter, John and James, the sons of thunder, Andrew and Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon and Judas Iscariot.[184] And in some copies of the Gospel according to Mark 'James son of Alphaeus' is found instead of 'Levi son of Alphaeus'.[185] According to Mark himself, after Jesus healed the paralytic, 'he was walking along and saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth'.[186] It is likely, therefore, that he has two names. Particular care was given to noting the names of the apostles so that no one might persuade us that there is another apostle besides those mentioned, for he knew that soon there would be false apostles who would bestow this high rank on themselves.[187]

195 I. Matthew 10:2

a Or he was obliged also to exhibit the names of those who have already been written in the book of the living in heaven.[188] And the 'twelve' is related to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve legions of angels, and the twelve months of the year (for someone said 'the acceptable year of the Lord'), and of the twelve hours of the day, 'which the Lord made'.[189]

b The Saviour chose twelve disciples in relation to the twelve legions of angels, or the twelve hours of the day. For the number six is perfect, and he doubled this number and made the number of his disciples its equal.

197. Matthew 10:6

b In the literal sense the Jews had not rejected the teaching. But Christ gave these commands to the apostles to destroy every excuse the Jews had. And when they rejected the message, 'the word of truth' passed over to the Gentiles.[190]

199. Matthew 10:10, 11

For the sake of stability and unchangeableness: for it will be fitting for those travelling to go about from one to another, but no longer for the incorruptible. And he showed that it is just for those being taught to provide the fruit of the necessities of life, which is the reward for those labouring. But when he said food, he put a stop to luxuriousness.

201. Matthew 10:16

Those considered to be obedient and completely good are sheep. The wolf is their opposite.

202. Matthew 10:16

a The Lord reminds the disciples of the ancient wisdom of the serpent, for when he wanted to transmit his own teaching he explored the place, the opportunity and the

[183] See Lk 6:14–16. [184] See Mk 3:16–19.
[185] See the critical apparatus in Nestle-Aland at Mk 2:14, and Origen, *CCels* 1.62.
[186] See Mk 2:14. [187] The final sentence has been omitted as coming from Chrysostom.
[188] See Ps 68:29. [189] See Mt 26:53; Is 61:2; Ps 117:24. [190] See Eph 1:13.

compliant person, and he achieved what he wanted.[191] You, he says, do the same. The serpent gives up its whole body to preserve with all its power its own head. The serpent drinks water and avoids poison. The serpent tries to escape those pursuing him and hides himself. And if you investigate, you will discover many qualities in the serpent. And by referring to the dove, he indicated purity, quietness, innocence, benevolence, and forgiveness. And he reminded them of the dove of Noah long ago.[192]

b For as the serpent, he says, drinks water and avoids poison, so too you avoid evil when you have received the Gospel.

204. Matthew 10:23

a He is referring to his appearance,[193] not the renowned, glorious, general consummation, but his manifestation at various times. When he is seen in this way, because they are being persecuted, he will provide his aid to make them confident. And again, he addresses the same subject when he promises, I and my Father 'will come to him and make our abode with him'.[194]

b He means here his own coming to them, not the renowned and glorious coming, that is, his second coming, but his timely help and consolation for those who are being afflicted on his account.

205. Matthew 10:24

Bear it when you suffer, as I do, for you are not suffering on my behalf.

206. Matthew 10:26

a Perhaps he is speaking of that time 'when God will judge the secrets of human beings' and 'will bring to light the secret things of darkness and make the wishes of our hearts known'.[195] Or perhaps he is thinking in this way. To the extent that someone attempts to conceal what is good with a false accusation, the good, by its nature, is unconcealed. The same is also true in the case of evil.

b The more some want to conceal the good, the more manifest it becomes. You can say the same thing about evil.

207. Matthew 10:27–33

What I now say to you in private (he says), teach with boldness; and the things I do not now discuss in the hearing of many, proclaim freely on the houses with no fear of those who kill the body and not the soul. For if not even sparrows fall to the earth apart from divine foreknowledge, neither would you, of whom even your hairs have been numbered, fall to persecutors without your Father. And be aware that whoever, with whatever kind of life, has confessed me, will be confessed, and the one who denies me, even though he appears just, will be denied.

[191] See Gn 3:1. [192] See Gn 8:8–12.

[193] *Parousia*. This is the word that is usually used in the New Testament for the final advent of Christ for judgement, but it also had other uses, especially outside the New Testament. It was the general word used for the *coming* of the emperor to a city, or to his *presence* at a place. It is this sense that Origen means here when he contrasts it with the final coming of Christ.

[194] Jn 14:23. [195] Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5.

208. Matthew 10:28

In these words, he taught the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, and in the following he also made the judgement known. For investigate how he destroys 'both soul and body in hell'.

210. Matthew 10:28

Notice the word 'more' that is placed with the word 'fear', and observe how 'to kill' differs from 'to destroy'. He says 'to kill' when he speaks of human beings, but he does not say 'to kill' when he speaks of God, but 'to destroy in hell'. And notice that it is not written of human beings, 'those who are able to kill', but 'who kill', but in the case of God, not 'to destroy', but 'to be able to destroy'. And notice that 'to destroy' is different from 'to kill', as the statement makes clear that says the Saviour came 'to seek and to save what has been destroyed'.

211. Matthew 10:29–31

He is teaching that even things thought to be useless are controlled by the providence of God. But he did not say, 'And even the hairs of your heads', but 'of your head', which is Christ who produces hairs in you, that is, thoughts which are present with God in verbal expression and number. And here one might make use of the mystery of the Nazirites Samuel and Samson.[196] And he shows[197] that while the differences are many, they are not total, for perhaps they did not differ, but were similar to those who say, 'I lay awake; I became like a solitary sparrow on a house', and, 'I trust in the Lord. How will you say to my soul, Flee like a sparrow to the mountains?', and, 'Our soul was saved like a sparrow from the snare of the hunters'.[198]

215. Matthew 10:34

In relation to the perceptible sword he did not speak of the nature of the concrete reality, but of the choice of human beings.

216. Matthew 10:37

But he does not say, 'He who does not love me more than father or mother or son or daughter', but 'he who loves these more than me'. And since the affection for these is physical, but the superior affection is based on reason, he wants our affection for him to be rational and not to be overpowered by the physical. Notice, therefore, that here where there is a comparison of affection, a wife is not mentioned.[199]

217. Matthew 10:39

This saying quite simply encourages martyrdom. The first words refer to those who deny, who find their soul so far as the present is concerned but lose it for the future. The next

[196] See Jdg 13:5, 7; 16:17. There is no reference to Samuel as a Nazirite in the Bible.

[197] The comment seems to shift here from Mt 10:30 to 10:31. The abruptness of the transition may be the work of the excerpter rather than Origen.

[198] Ps 101:8; 10:1; 123:7.

[199] The final sentence is omitted as coming from Chrysostom.

words refer to the martyrs who lose their present life resisting 'sin to the point of blood',[200] but who find it in the age to come where 'our life is hid with Christ in God'.[201]

218. Matthew 10:40, 41

But according to the anagogical meaning, the one who correctly understands the intention of an apostolic writing and does not misinterpret it receives an apostle, and the Christ who speaks and lives in him, whose lessons it also contains. And since the fatherly mind of God is in the Son, the one who receives a word 'of wisdom' and all the other things Christ is[202] receives the God who is Father of the universe. Refer the first words anagogically to the new covenant, and these to the old. For one who thinks of the prophets, not as people who speak wisely from their own mind, but as people moved by the divine Spirit, and who also understands the mind in them, possesses the prophetic Spirit and reasonably receives the reward of a prophet. And when the person who contends for the just and the unjust and who has not lived unjustly welcomes a just person, not only because he is hospitable but if he is also just, he receives the reward of a just person.

220 I. Matthew 11:2, 3

You have already come (he says) and I have been fully satisfied, and I am not in doubt about this. But since I am in prison, I know I will die and when I have been buried I will depart into the region of souls also as the precursor of someone better. I wish to learn through my disciples whether you are the one going there too, or I and the other souls should expect another to come to this place.

220 II. Matthew 11:2, 3

b John's question was not for his own sake alone, but also for those he sent. Those he sent needed to learn whether or not he was the one to come.[203] But John needed to learn whether he would come to those regions below where John was getting ready to go.

221. Matthew 11:7, 8

The changeable and unstable person is a reed carried about by every movement. The one who has a life that is effeminate, lewd, and hostile to virtue is clothed in soft garments. In these words, Jesus teaches those who had just now heard the testimony of John concerning himself and his answer, not by asking a question in the manner of John, but by uttering a teaching.

226. Matthew 11:11

Jesus Christ himself is the kingdom of heaven, inviting all to repentance and drawing them to himself by grace.

227. Matthew 11:12, 13

The days of John and Jesus are understood not in relation to time, but in relation to the previously mentioned condition of the soul of the hearer of the divine Scripture. And

[200] See Heb 12:4. [201] Col 3:3. [202] See 1 Cor 12:8.
[203] The bracketed sentence from Chrysostom has been omitted.

the 'now' points to the days of Jesus which the seventy-first psalm indicates as follows: 'Justice will arise in his days, and an abundance of peace until he is struck off'.[204] The one, therefore, who is taught in advance, who has come to the beginning of the words of Jesus, still proceeding on the way which appears rough and steep to those entering it, seizes forcibly the kingdom of heaven which submits to force, for the verb 'is overpowered by force' is not active, but has been taken as passive. The law and the prophets were appropriately until John, if the perfect Logos gives the inheritance of the Father to the person he has accepted, who expected freedom under the law and the prophets as guides and stewards.[205]

229. Matthew 11:13

The goal of the law and the prophets is the healing of humanity. But it is Christ to whose entrance John pointed.

230. Matthew 11:13

When the Saviour said that the law and the prophets prophesied up to John, he showed that there was one Spirit in all of them, and the same Spirit was in John up to the Saviour. For he who 'spoke' in the law and 'in the prophets'[206] 'will say: "I am present"'; for 'I did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them'.[207] Therefore, when the one who fulfilled all things (that is, the king) came, 'the law and the prophets' were completed.

231. Matthew 11:16, 17

Those who intentionally make war on the truth are reproved as evil-doers; for they are unable to overturn what is true with true words and testimonies. Therefore, even if they attempt with each of these, they fall into the meshes they deserve.

232. Matthew 11:17

a That means, we communicated the joyful teachings of the kingdom of heaven and you did not receive them with joy, and again, we threatened you with disasters and punishment and you did not repent of your sins.

233. Matthew 11:18, 19

For John taught a dirge of repentance on the life that they evilly preferred. But the Lord came 'eating and drinking', for he provided joy by forgiving sins and transposing the hearers to eternal life.

237. Matthew 11:19

b Christ, the wisdom of God, is justified both from wisdom's children (that is, the believers), since they have been saved by him, and from the destruction of those who perish, since they did not accept everything he said, did, and taught.

[204] Ps 71:1. [205] See Gal 3:23–5.
[206] See Heb 1:1. [207] Mt 5:17.

238. Matthew 11:20

Now a reproach is a verbal blow that reminds one of a failure, especially the lack of gratitude for and forgetfulness of a good deed.

240. Matthew 11:25

'He who exalts himself'[208] and is confident in his own perfection does not turn to God, nor does he seek to receive good things from him, and separates himself further and becomes bereft of the grace of God. But the person who humbles himself and thinks he has nothing turns to God, and when he turns he is united with him, and when he has been united he enjoys the benefits, for 'he who asks receives' and 'it will be opened to the one who knocks'.[209]

241. Matthew 11:25

It is hidden from the wise who possess the second wisdom.[210] Read 'Yes, Father' instead of 'Good, Father'.

242. Matthew 11:27

'All things were delivered' to him, just as also he himself was delivered 'for all',[211] but it is clear that this was in accordance with the divine plan of God. Just as the Father is said to have made all things, although he made them through the Son,[212] so all things are said to be delivered to the Son, because the Father possesses him as power,[213] governs the universe through him, and coexists with him.[214]

245. Matthew 11:28–30

a Sin causes fatigue and is a very great burden because it is contrary to nature. The struggle on behalf of piety is light, because it receives the greatest support.

b The struggle on behalf of piety is light, because it receives the greatest support.

248. Matthew 12:6

If the temple was shown to be above the commandment, then Christ was above the Law.

249. Matthew 12:9, 10

The phrase 'when he passed over from there' indicates the following: When he makes the new covenant and puts an end to the Sabbath with a mighty work, then he is passing over. The reason they accuse him and his disciples, not outside but inside the synagogue, is that their sins might be completely full. They brought the barrenness of their hands to the Saviour, for to have a withered hand indicates barrenness. And what is withered is close to being uprooted.

[208] See Lk 14:11. [209] Mt 7:8. [210] Cf. Clement of Alexandra, *Str* 6.16.138.2.
[211] See 1 Tim 2:6. [212] See Jn 1:3; Heb 1:2. [213] See 1 Cor 1:18, 24.
[214] The final sentence (bracketed) has been omitted.

250. Matthew 12:9–15

If 'the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath'[215] and also calls himself king, it is lawful for the king to pass laws concerning the Sabbath at one time, and at another to put an end to the Sabbath with its sacrifices, whole burnt offerings, and the rest of temple worship by enacting a new covenant.[216]

251. Matthew 12:9–13

The excellence of the Saviour was shown because he made something alive that had become useless and dead. And again, they presented a problem to him to prevent him from healing the man by a mighty work so that they might cause some to disbelieve because he was not able to heal him or, if he healed him, that they might accuse him. But Jesus knows 'their thoughts'[217] and presents the problem about other animals to them.

252. Matthew 12:14–16

Anyone who draws closer to Jesus does not take counsel, for the counsel of the wicked does not draw near to Jesus. But when anyone departs from Jesus he takes counsel to destroy Jesus, who is the light, the good way, the life, the treasure, the pearl, the love, the peace. Should anyone destroy him, he is called a 'son of destruction'.[218] But Jesus knew and departed, for he did not have to remain with the sons 'of destruction'. They destroyed; but we, who were not seeking, found, for 'I was found by those not seeking me, I became manifest to those not asking about me'.[219] For he 'came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel',[220] and they disregarded their own shepherd.[221] And he withdraws, not fearing their plot, but putting a check on their evil. And so that no one might think he has withdrawn because of fear, he healed everyone, demonstrating his almighty power. He draws back, however, so as not to be displayed since he is gentle and without conceit.

253. Matthew 12:15

The sick were found to be whole and those who seemed whole were sick, for they destroyed their physician. For this reason, he says, 'Leave them, they are blind'.[222] Whence Isaiah cried out saying, 'You who are blind, Recover your sight, and you who are deaf, Hear'.[223]

255. Matthew 12:18

I will put my spirit on him 'like a dove descending' from heaven 'and remaining on him'.[224]

256. Matthew 12:18

He was not well pleased with Israel who had been rejected, but with the nations who held on to judgement and believed in the judge 'of the living and the dead'.[225]

[215] Mt 12:8. [216] The concluding sentences are omitted as coming from Chrysostom.
[217] See Mt 12:25. [218] Jn 17:12. [219] Is 65:1. [220] Mt 10:6.
[221] See Jn 1:11. [222] Mt 15:14. [223] Is 42:18.
[224] See Jn 1:32. [225] See Acts 10:42.

260. Matthew 12:20

A soul crushed by sins is a crushed reed, and a smoking wick means those who are arrogant against the truth.

261. Matthew 12:20

He calls the one who wrote in mockery at Pilate's command, 'This is the king of the Jews', a reed which he did not bruise although he could have broken it easily without even being aware, but he lifted it up by suffering and bearing the inscription. And he refers to the delusion of the arrogant kings as a smoking wick, which the Lord Jesus Christ also did not quench for a while because he was busy with the salvation of humanity by means of his appointed passion. The arrogant kings were Pilate and Herod who had become puffed up by the prestige of ruling and who put themselves forward as chosen judge of the judges.

262. Matthew 12:20

He who does not stretch out his hand to the sinful breaks, in some way, the bruised reed, and he who has left behind those who possess a little spark of faith quenches a smoking wick. Christ did not do this.

263. Matthew 12:24

Beelzebul was not with Jesus. He who banishes evil is good, but the wicked one, who accuses both the deed and the doer, credits the good to the evil one.

264. Matthew 12:25–8

Since then, these things do not happen with the cooperation of demons, and they are accomplished in no other way than by the power of the Spirit by whom every termination of demons is accomplished, nothing else can be said than that the kingdom has drawn near. As your evangelist and agent of this, I promise to you the imparting of the Spirit, by whom also all things necessary for the completion of the kingdom of heaven to come occur.

266. Matthew 12:28

If you believe, the kingdom of God has come upon you; but if you do not, you will be delivered to destruction.

267. Matthew 12:29

Sin is the strong man, and its house is the body, 'the old man'.[226]

269. Matthew 12:29

Unless the opposing power (he says) of the strong man (I mean the devil) tempt and bind the sacred, powerful rationality of the mind, it cannot spoil the virtues of the soul and destroy its house (I mean the body) which is bound together with it.

[226] See Rom 6:6.

270. Matthew 12:33

a Consider if the good tree is the Holy Spirit and the rotten one the devil, and not humanity (as the heretics say). And he says, 'Either make', that is, do such things that you cause the Holy Spirit to dwell in yourselves, and do not do such things that 'the tree' in you becomes evil.

b The good tree is the Holy Spirit and the rotten one is 'the unclean spirit' or the devil. He says, therefore, 'make' deserving fruits that you may cause the Holy Spirit to dwell in yourselves and do not do such things that 'the tree' in you becomes evil.

271. Matthew 12:33

The 'good tree' is the ruling principle which exists in virtue, and its fruit is good when it acts virtuously; and the 'rotten tree' is a ruling principle which has become evil, and its fruit is rotten when it acts in an evil manner. Perhaps, therefore, it is preferable to be either hot or cold instead of lukewarm,[227] and to say good things without dissimulation and compulsion rather than speaking flatteringly. It is a good tree if the fruits are better, but if they are worse it is not. 'For God said to the sinner, Why do you recite my ordinances?'[228]

274. Matthew 12:39

a It was 'evil' because it had the quality of the evil one within it. It was 'adulterous' because it had forsaken its figurative husband, the word of truth or the law, and was living with the lie. In general, then, the law 'in the members' of our flesh that is at war 'with the law of the mind' is the adulterer of the soul. And further, every opposing power commits adultery against the soul that possesses reason, the bridegroom given to it by God, when it mingles with it.

b The soul that has forsaken reason, its natural husband, and, contrary to nature, has been joined to an opposing husband, or law 'in' our 'members' that is at war with 'the law of the mind' is the adulterer of the soul. And further, every opposing power commits adultery against the soul that possesses reason, the bridegroom given to it by God, when it mingles with it.

275. Matthew 12:39

a Why did he say, 'Except the sign of Jonah'? He means his own passion will be given to them, because Christ is made known especially through this, since the earlier prophecies which proclaim his passion explain this, as Paul also declares to Agrippa.[229] And he set forth his passion in the parable about Jonah. Those who asked needed this, for they were not worthy of a sign from heaven. Nor was a sign provided for them except the sign of the cross by which their weakness was abolished.

b Jonah is a sign of the Saviour's resurrection from the dead. He addresses this to the Jews because they need it, for they were unworthy of a sign from heaven.

[227] See Rev 3:15, 16. [228] Ps 49:16. [229] See Acts 26:19–23.

276. Matthew 12:40

Jonah was alive in the belly of the huge fish, and although Christ was in death, he was free from it.

277. Matthew 12:42

The church of the Gentiles that so truly has come 'from the corners of the earth' supplies the role of the queen of the 'south', bringing as gifts not 'corruptible things', such as 'gold'[230] and spices,[231] but faith which is spiritual incense, and pouring the perspiration of virtues and the blood of martyrdom out as libations. With such gifts, Christ 'our peace',[232] the true Solomon, is pleased. Solomon is interpreted to mean peaceful.

278. Matthew 12:43–5

The parable of the unclean spirit is about those who go from conversion to carelessness or from healing to laziness, by which they bring something worse on themselves.

279. Matthew 12:44, 45

The house which has been swept, which the demons enter, stands for the souls of those who imagine they are passing their lives in harmony with arguments that are true but belong to what is falsely called knowledge.[233] The same is the house that has been put in order, in the likeness of a temple, although it is not a temple.

280. Matthew 12:43–5

We learn from this that the one who chooses more honourable things for himself is inaccessible to the demon, putting virtue forward as a barrier to his entrance and not leaving his place, as the Preacher advises.[234] But on the contrary, the person who is indifferent concerning what is good is an easy target for the wicked father. And we learn that the demons have a certain comfort in their indwelling those suitable for them, just as on the opposite side, God 'rests in the saints'.[235]

281. Matthew 12:46–50

a Those who do not know the mystery about the virgin say 'your brothers', but he who knows says the one who does 'the will' of God is a brother.

And every virgin and uncorrupted soul that has conceived of the Holy Spirit to bear 'the will' of the Father is a 'mother' of Jesus.

b Those who do not know the mystery about the virgin say 'your brothers' to Jesus; for if[236] they had known, they would have believed in him. One becomes a 'brother' or 'sister' or 'mother' of Jesus by doing 'the will' of the Father 'in heaven'. And if this is the case, one is not by nature a 'brother' or any of the rest. Furthermore, every virgin and uncorrupted soul, that has conceived of the Holy Spirit to bear 'the will' of the Father, is a 'mother' of Jesus.

[230] See 1 Pet 1:18. [231] See 3 Kgs 10:2, 10. [232] See Eph 2:14.
[233] See 1 Tim 4:20. [234] See Eccl 10:4. [235] See Is 57:15.
[236] There is a misprint in Klostermann's text here. There is only an *e* standing at the end of the line. I assume it was *ei*. The sentence has all the other marks of a contrary-to-fact condition, lacking only the initial *ei*.

282. Matthew 12:50

Kinship with God is to be preferred over that of the flesh, for this precedes and continues.

283. Matthew 13:1–3[237]

Whenever Jesus is in the house, he is not with the crowd, for the crowd is outside Jesus' house. But in keeping with his kind-heartedness for the large crowds, he went 'out of his house' and 'sat by the sea' so that they might gather to him. And he spoke 'in parables' to those who stood 'on the shore', but he says to his disciples when they approached him, 'You hear the parable of the sower'.[238]

285. Matthew 13:12

In the present age, grace has been given in a variety of ways to us who have believed, and he who has been conformed in relation to it possesses it; consequently, the kingdom 'will be given' to this person. These are, therefore, those who received grace, and do not possess it because they did not practise it. In the age to come, therefore, 'it will be taken' from them because they did not make appropriate use of it, for which they will give an account.

286. Matthew 13:13–15

Because even though they see, they were unwilling to see, and they hear what they were unwilling to listen to, Isaiah prophesied, 'You will certainly hear' and the rest. For so that no one supposes that it was by God's fortuitous choice and selection that it was given to some and not to others, but rather (which is true) this happened in strict accordance with the virtue of those who received and the evil of those who did not, he adds the prophecy of Isaiah which puts the blame on the fatness and blindness of the heart of those who did not receive.

287. Matthew 13:16

[***][239] And these things would be said concerning every eye which sees the divine things and every ear which hears spiritual things. The prophet says of this, 'The Lord provided me with an ear to hear',[240] instead of understanding with the inner ears of the heart 'in the inner person'.[241] For the people uncircumcised in heart were deaf in their inner ears.

And after a few words: For this reason, even that hearing which they seemed to have of the law and the prophets was taken away and given to those having the new covenant, that the Saviour's words might be fulfilled, 'Blessed are your ears because they hear, and your eyes because they see'.

288. Matthew 13:17

Those just men who desired to see with mental images received knowledge of what they desired. They desired to see what the apostles saw, God incarnate, and to hear the voice of God who was united with flesh in his substance.

[237] Cf. *ComMt* 10.1. [238] See Mt 13:10, 18.
[239] This fragment begins with a lacuna then two individual words which I have left untranslated.
[240] Is 50:4. [241] Rom 7:22.

289. Matthew 13:17

And not all the prophets and not all the just people who desired to see or hear did not see or hear, but many. Some who desired saw and heard, as did Abraham (I think) and Moses and the more eminent. And the person who accepts these things will grant that those who did not desire were inferior, for because they have not discerned what will be and have despised them even if they should come to be, they did not desire them.

292. Matthew 13:20, 21

a 'Trouble' is what occurs with parents, relatives, co-workers, or friends in appearance. 'Persecution', on the other hand, occurs when people are brought 'before governors and kings' on account of the word.[242] Luke refers to both generically as temptation.[243]

b Those who immediately receive 'the word', according to Matthew and Mark, immediately fall away 'when trouble or persecution occurs because of the word'. 'Trouble' is what occurs from parents, relatives, co-workers, or friends, but 'persecution' occurs when people are brought 'before governors and kings' on account of the word. Luke refers to them both generically as temptation.

293. Matthew 13:20, 21

'Immediately' is not added in vain, for the one who does not act immediately does not belong to this group. And the phrase 'on rocky ground' is appropriate, for he who has not prepared the hardness of his heart in advance, but hardens it like Pharaoh, does not receive the word deeply. But even though the soil found lying on the rocky ground is sparse, the seed strikes root and springs up.

294. Matthew 13:22

'The deceit of wealth' and the word of the heterodox 'chokes', for the wealthy are liars and a 'poor just person is better'[244] than they, poor that is in speech and knowledge, but just in living. And the 'anxiety for all the churches' expressed by the apostle is not an anxiety about this age, but anxieties related to living.[245] The person who has not renovated his own earth experiences these things.[246] He receives the word carelessly and thorns spring up because the earth was cursed on account of Adam's transgression and he heard the words, 'Thorns and thistles shall grow up for you'.[247] Their 'end is burning'.[248] For these are not sown, but spring up in humanity and choke the Word of God because of a wicked free choice.

295. Matthew 13:23

The person who truly knows and understands also bears fruit. Now if someone seems to understand but is not bearing fruit, that person does not understand. And if one seems to bear fruit though not to understand, that person is not bearing fruit. The reference to sixty, thirty, and a hundred showed, of course, the varied nature of virtue, since not all demonstrate equally the strict rigour of virtue, but some cultivate less of it and others more, showing that he admits even these on the analogy of a household.

[242] Mt 10:18. [243] Lk 8:13. [244] Prv 19:22. [245] See Lk 21:34.
[246] See Jer 4:3. [247] Gn 3:18. [248] Heb 6:8.

297. Matthew 13:24–8

One must raise these questions for those who think they understand the parable. Who are the men who are sleeping? Who are 'the slaves of the householder'? And why is 'the enemy' said to be a man?

299. Matthew 13:30

If someone despises the command, 'Remove the evil man from your midst' and those who teach, 'Do not mingle' with those called brothers and who are sinful,[249] he will use the statement, 'Let both grow together until the harvest'. One must say to such a person that this is said to people about things difficult to distinguish in relation to the difference between things worse as opposed to better, like weeds as opposed to shoots from wheat.

300. Matthew 13:30

We must understand the 'granary' to be the 'Jerusalem above', that is the rooms in heaven[250] in which the saints are stored like wheat so that they may each receive proportionally the grace given to them by God.

301.1 Matthew 13:31, 32

Although the message about the kingdom of God appears small and trivial in its beginnings because of the cross, the death, and its shabby literary style, it has increased so that it has become greater and more powerful than all the messages ever spread abroad among humanity. It has grown so much that even the heavenly powers rest under it with those who have borne fruit in it. And I think those who are great in the Word of God are said to be 'great branches'.[251]

302. Matthew 13:33

a On the one hand, the teaching 'of the Pharisees' is leaven.[252] On the other hand, so is that of Christ about the kingdom of heaven. A woman, that is the church, took this and hid it in the secret places of the human spirit and of the intellect in the soul, and of the body so that the person might be leavened by being united with the teaching of Christ.

b The teaching of the truth is leaven, and the church is a woman who took the leaven and delivered it to all the Gentiles. He calls the Gentiles 'three measures' because they were born from the three children of Noah. And just as the leaven mixes with the meal and alters the whole to its own quality, so also when the Word of God falls into rational souls it transforms them to itself. The 'three measures of meal' is the human being who possesses these three things: soul, body, and spirit.

c It is possible[253] to take the woman otherwise for the church, the leaven for the Holy Spirit, and the 'three measures' as body, spirit, and soul...

[249] 1 Cor 5:13, 11. [250] Gal 4:26; Jn 14:2. [251] See Mk 4:32. [252] See Mt 16:11.
[253] I have read the Greek verb *eimi* as accented on the first rather than the last syllable as printed.

565. Matthew 28:1

Day one was the remainder of the Day of Preparation after 'the ninth hour' in which Christ died,[254] and the entire night and day of the Sabbath was the second, 'and after the Sabbath', as Matthew said of the approaching day when the night was becoming light (and the day was not darkened by the peak of night as when it was held by the night), was the third day on which our Lord arose in accordance with his prediction.[255] And the person who says, because this 'darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth'[256] is taken for a night, there were three days and three nights, counts portions of days for complete days. For breaking up the day of preparation, the part up to the sixth hour is set out as one complete day, and the portion as from the ninth hour as a second day. But which of the two is the day of preparation, and which the Sabbath? For there are by no means two successive days of preparation or two Sabbaths, and the day knows one true night and another which is not. For there was some prodigious change and misfortune even as that portion of the day became darkness, only not when the sun was veiled and clothed in black to created beings, but night was not considered, and if a night lacking moon and stars might be called strange and out of the ordinary, for this reason too it has not been reckoned along with the other nights. But if 'after the day of preparation' there was the Sabbath, and after this the first day of the week, the day of preparation has clearly been completed at that time up to the sixth hour, and after the ninth hour came the Sabbath, and the first day of the week occurred later. And if the first day of the week is stretched over into the second, how do we still celebrate it as the Lord's day? Both the number and the order of the days are obviously confounded when the intercalated day is disregarded, as Zachariah prophesied: 'In that day there will not be light, and cold and frost will be for one day, and that day is known to the Lord and it is not day and not night, and at evening there will be light' (Zach 14:6, 7).

566. Matthew 28:2–5

The stone which the one who descended from heaven rolled away was a symbol of evil and unbelief for those souls seeking life. It was fearful and an instrument of death to the adversaries, but joyful and kind to its own.

570. Matthew 28:17–20

'They fell down and worshipped', they did not pray, but those who did not fall down and worship even 'doubted', either Thomas or Phillip (for the latter baptized and did not give the Holy Spirit[257]). Since they recalled the saying, 'Many will come' in 'my name saying, I am the Christ', or similar sayings, they doubted. Wherefore he did not issue these commands to censure them but to impart forbearance.

571. Matthew 28:18

Previously he had authority in heaven and a certain portion also on earth (for 'Jacob' was 'his people and Israel the allotment of his inheritance').[258] But when he had also completed the spiritual struggles on behalf of human beings he also received all authority

[254] See Mt 27:46–50. [255] See Mt 20:19. [256] See Mt 27:45.
[257] See Acts 8:12, 16. [258] Dt 32:9.

on earth, so that as in the case of Gideon, not only was there moisture 'on the fleece', but there was 'dryness' on 'all the ground', and the opposite also occurred when he heard, 'Ask from me and I will give you the nations as your inheritance'.[259] He received this authority so that he might make peace 'through the blood of his cross whether in regard to the things on earth or the things in heaven'.[260] Even if this does not yet exist because of the battle with evil, it will be in the end when there will be perfect peace.

[259] Jdg 6:37, 38; Ps 2:8. [260] Col 1:20.

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