

*THE FATHERS  
OF THE CHURCH*

A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 80

# THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

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# ORIGEN

## COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN BOOKS 1–10

*Translated by*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- ACW Ancient Christian Writers. New York, New York/Mahwah, New Jersey: Newman Press, 1946–.
- ANF Ante-Nicene Fathers. Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1969 (reprint).  
*EP* *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 8 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1967.
- FOTC The Fathers of the Church. New York and Washington, D.C., 1947–.
- GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Leipzig, 1897–.
- JThS* *Journal of Theological Studies*
- LCL Loeb Classical Library
- LSJ *A Greek-English Lexicon*. ed. H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1940.
- LXX *Septuagint*. Ed. A. Rahlfs. 2 vols. Stuttgart. 1935.
- NAB *The New American Bible*. Patterson, New Jersey, 1970.
- OCD *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 2d ed. ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard. Oxford, 1970.
- ODCC<sup>2</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 2d ed., ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford, 1984.
- PGL G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1961.
- RSV The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version.
- SC Sources chrétiennes. Paris, 1942–.
- SP Studia Patristica. ed. E. A. Livingstone.
- SPCK Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- TU Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur. Berlin, 1882–.
- VC *Vigiliae Christianae*.

Abbreviations of Classical and Patristic texts follow OCD and ODCC<sup>2</sup>.





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# INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE STUDY OF THE BIBLE stood at the center of Origen's life and work. The majority of his writings are either commentaries on books of the Bible or homilies preached on biblical texts. His exegesis is interlaced with texts from the Bible. His mind wandered at ease through its pages, plucking appropriate phrases and arranging them artfully in his pursuit of the spiritual meaning he perceived to be latent in each word and phrase. "There has never been a theologian in the church," Harnack observed, "who was (and wished to be) so exclusively a biblical exegete as Origen."<sup>1</sup>

(2) Perhaps no book of the Bible, certainly none of the New Testament, was so suited to Origen's exegetical approach as the Gospel of John. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* we have the greatest exegetical work of the early church. He himself praises it in the *Commentary* as the high point of all Scripture.<sup>2</sup> The nature of the Gospel of John, which early earned it the title, "the spiritual Gospel,"<sup>3</sup> makes this particular commentary from the early Church of continued interest. M. F. Wiles has noted that while modern critical approaches to the Bible have so completely revolutionized our interpretation of some books that we find little in patristic exegesis that is of value in understanding them, "there is probably no book of which this is less true than the Fourth Gospel. It is of such a nature," he says, "that it seems to reveal

1. A. von Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes* (1919) 2.4, as quoted in H. von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible*, tr. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 307.

2. *Comm. Jn.* 1.23.

3. See Eusebius *H.E.* 6.14.7, quoting the *Hypotyposes* of Clement of Alexandria.

its secrets not so much to the skillful probings of the analyst as to a certain intuitive sympathy of understanding."<sup>4</sup>

*Date and Place of Writing*

(3) This magisterial treatise was begun rather early in Origen's career while he was still at Alexandria, but was finished much later, after he had taken up residence in Caesarea.<sup>5</sup> Origen indicates in Book 1 that he began to work on it shortly after returning to Alexandria following an absence of some duration.<sup>6</sup> He gives no indication of where he had been. Nautin thinks this absence was his visit to Palestine which was precipitated by tension between Origen and Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, over the publication of his *Commentary on Genesis* and his treatise *On First Principles*.<sup>7</sup> The fragment preserved in the *Philocalia*, from the preface to Book 5, indicates that he was again away from Alexandria.<sup>8</sup> Nautin surmises that this absence coincided with Origen's trip to Antioch at the invitation of the mother of Alexander Severus in A.D. 231-232.<sup>9</sup> This would place the composition of the first four books in Alexandria in A.D. 230-231,<sup>10</sup> and part, at least, of Book 5 in Antioch in A.D. 231-232. Origen says he dictated the words of the commentary as far as the fifth book at Alexandria, and began the sixth book there.<sup>11</sup> The trouble between him and Demetrius heated up and became so disruptive of his scholarly tranquillity, however, that he ceased work on the commentary until after he had abandoned Alexandria and settled in Caesarea.<sup>12</sup>

4. M. F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel: The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), 1.

5. For a brief sketch of Origen's life see *Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, tr. R. E. Heine, FOTC 71, 7-25. For a fuller account see H. Crouzel, *Origène* (Paris: Éditions Lethielleux, 1985); and J. W. Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983).

6. *Comm. Jn.* 1.12-13.

7. P. Nautin, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 366-70; 423-27.

8. *Comm. Jn.* 5.1.

9. Nautin, *Origène*, 427, based on Eusebius *H.E.* 6.21.3-4.

10. Cf. Nautin, *Origène*, 425-27. 11. *Comm. Jn.* 6.8.

12. *Ibid.*, 6.9.



(4) He seems to have returned to his work on the commentary soon after his move to Caesarea, but says he had to begin the sixth book over since what he had dictated at Alexandria had not been brought.<sup>13</sup> The move to Caesarea probably occurred in A.D. 234.<sup>14</sup> This provides a date for when he began working on Book 6, but no clue as to when he completed the commentary. Book 6 is still discussing chapter 1 of the gospel. The introductory section to Book 32, the last preserved book of the *Commentary* and probably the last written by Origen on this gospel,<sup>15</sup> indicates a weariness with the work and an uncertainty that it will be completed.<sup>16</sup> Book 32 was written after he had delivered his *Homilies on Luke*, for he refers to one of them in the book.<sup>17</sup> All of Origen's homilies, if we accept Nautin's dating,<sup>18</sup> were delivered sometime between A.D. 238 and 244. Nautin puts the composition of Book 32 of the *Commentary* in A.D. 248;<sup>19</sup> there is, however, no clear evidence for assigning a specific date to its composition. The best we can do with assurance is to say that it appears to have been written late in Origen's life. The composition of the *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, therefore, spans a large portion of Origen's scholarly career.

#### *Occasion for the Composition of the Commentary*

(5) The *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, as several other of Origen's writings,<sup>20</sup> was addressed to Ambrose, and was probably written at his instigation. He is directly addressed in the opening section of each book that is complete at the beginning.<sup>21</sup> The comments in the fragments of Book 5 sound as

13. *Ibid.*, 6.10–12.

14. See Nautin, *Origène*, 431–32.

15. See the Introduction below on the size and preservation of the *Commentary*.

16. *Comm. Jn.* 32.1–3.

17. *Ibid.*, 32.5. The homily referred to, however, is not extant. See my note on the passage.

18. Nautin, *Origène*, 401–9.

19. *Ibid.*, 412.

20. See, for example, *Against Celsus*, Preface 1; and *On Prayer* 2.1.

21. *Comm. Jn.* 1.9; 2.1; 6.6; 13.1; 20.1; 28.6; 32.2. Book 19 clearly lacks the opening section; Book 10 appears also to lack the opening. The second person singular pronoun in 10.2 presumably refers to Ambrose, as do the comments in sections 1, 2, 4, and 8 of the fragments of Book 5.

though Origen had entered an agreement with Ambrose to produce a commentary on John's Gospel, and that Ambrose was prodding him to keep working at it even when he was away.<sup>22</sup> It was Origen's love for Ambrose which caused him to persevere in producing the books of the commentary.<sup>23</sup>

(6) Ambrose, Eusebius says, had been a Valentinian before Origen converted him.<sup>24</sup> This may provide the reason Ambrose was interested in a commentary on John's Gospel. E. Pagels has pointed out that it was the Gospel most used by Gnostics, and that the Valentinians especially used it.<sup>25</sup> Irenaeus refers to the extensive use of John by the Valentinians;<sup>26</sup> and Heracleon, the disciple of Valentinus whom Origen quotes in the *Commentary*, wrote the earliest commentary on the gospel known to us. Ambrose must have known this Gnostic exegesis of John, and particularly that of Heracleon, and wanted a counterpart from the Church.

(7) While Origen obviously intended to refute Heracleon's understanding of John, he seems to have had a broader goal in mind. Heracleon's comments are not the focus of Origen's arguments in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* in the way that Celsus' comments are the focus of his arguments in the *Against Celsus*. The latter work is structured by Celsus' attacks on Christians and Origen's responses to those attacks. There are, however, large sections in the *Commentary on the Gospel of John* where there is no reference to Heracleon. Heracleon's

22. See *Comm. Jn.* 5.1 and 2. Cf. Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 61, where he says Ambrose urged Origen to write commentaries on Scripture, provided him with secretaries and copyists, and exacted work from him on a daily basis. For this reason, he says, Origen called Ambrose his taskmaster in one of his letters.

23. *Comm. Jn.* 5.4.

24. Eusebius *H.E.* 6.18.1. Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 56 and 61, says Ambrose had been a Marcionite before Origen converted him. Since Ambrose appears to have been from Alexandria where Valentinus had taught, it is more likely that Eusebius is correct. Origen says in *Comm. Jn.* 5.8 that Ambrose had followed the heterodox before he abandoned them by using his own understanding.

25. E. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John* (New York: Abingdon, 1973), 16. See also K. Rudolph, *Gnosis*, tr. R. McL. Wilson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 17.

26. *Adv. Haer.* 3.11.7.

work may have been the stimulus that moved Origen to action, but he seems to have intended to write a commentary that would be independent of Heracleon's work, and that would provide an interpretation of John's Gospel that would appeal to Christian intellectuals.<sup>27</sup>

(8) He says as much in a fragment of Book 5 where he notes that the heterodox were composing numerous books interpreting both the Gospels and the Epistles, and that these books had an appeal to inquisitive minds. "For this reason," he says, "it seems necessary to me that one who is able intercede in a genuine manner on behalf of the teaching of the Church and reprove those who pursue the knowledge falsely so-called."<sup>28</sup> Origen's method for achieving this, however, was not simply to take up the various interpretations of Heracleon and the Gnostics and argue against them, but to set forth his own interpretation in line with the teaching of the Church. He grappled with the kinds of questions raised by an intelligent reading of the Gospel, such as points of difference between John and the Synoptics, as well as with specific differences of interpretation between Heracleon and himself.

#### *The Size and Preservation of the Commentary*

(9) The *Commentary on John* became a massive production. At the end of six books Origen had reached only John 1.29. The three of the first six books which are preserved total 159 pages in Preuschen's Greek text. If the other three were of approximately the same size, Origen devoted over 300 pages to verses 1-29 of John's Gospel. In successive books he went into less detail than he had in the earlier ones, but by the end of Book 32, the last book of the *Commentary* known to us, he had reached only John 13.33.

(10) There is no evidence to suggest that Origen wrote more than thirty-two books on John. Jerome knew only thirty-two. He says in the preface to his translation of Origen's *Homilies on Luke* that Blesilla's request that he translate

27. Cf. C. Blanc, *Origène: commentaire sur saint Jean I*, SC 120.10 (1966); and Trigg, *Origen*, 149.

28. *Comm. Jn.* 5.8.

into Latin Origen's twenty-six books on Matthew, five on Luke, and thirty-two on John was beyond his strength, his leisure, and his energy.<sup>29</sup> In his list of Origen's works in Epistle 33 he again refers to thirty-two books on John.<sup>30</sup> There is only one fragment on a passage beyond John 13, the chapter covered in Book 32.<sup>31</sup> We have already noted that Origen expresses some doubt at the beginning of Book 32 that he will complete the commentary. It is also significant that Book 32 closes with no indication that anything will follow. Books 13, 20, and 28 all close with statements which anticipate what will be taken up in the next book.<sup>32</sup> All the evidence available points to Book 32 being the last book of the *Commentary* Origen composed.

(11) Nine of these thirty-two books have been preserved in more or less complete form in Greek—1, 2, 6, 10, 13, 19, 20, 28, and 32. Book 19 lacks several pages at both the beginning and end of the book. Book 2, in my view, lacks a few pages at the end; it closes by introducing the second half of John 1.7 for discussion. The entire verse had been presented for discussion earlier,<sup>33</sup> and the first half discussed. We have no example elsewhere in the *Commentary* of Origen referring a part of a verse he has already quoted for discussion in one book to the next. Book 6 also lacks something at the end, and Book 10 at the beginning. The latter begins with a quotation of John 2.12–25, the passage of Scripture which is discussed in the book. Preuschen suggested that this quotation was added by someone after the opening page had been lost, because Origen nowhere else quotes the entire scriptural text for a book of the *Commentary* in one place.<sup>34</sup>

29. *Origenes Werke: Die Homilien zu Lukas in der Übersetzung des Hieronymus und die griechischen Reste der Homilien und des Lukas-Kommentars*, ed. M. Rauer, GCS 1 (1959).

30. Nautin, *Origène*, 228–29.

31. Frag. 105 does not come from Origen, but from Theodore of Mopuestia. Frag. 106 is on Jn 20.25. See note 41 below on the questionable authenticity of the fragments.

32. See *Comm. Jn.* 13.455; 20.422; 28.249.

33. *Comm. Jn.* 2.199.

34. See my note 2 in Book 10 below.

(12) We do not know when or how the other books of the *Commentary* were lost.<sup>35</sup> It seems doubtful that they were intentionally destroyed because someone found their contents unacceptable. It is more likely that they perished because the work was too large to be copied in its entirety, the fate which the *Hexapla* also seems to have suffered. The *Commentary* would have been kept in the library at Caesarea which Pamphilus established.<sup>36</sup> By the mid-fourth century that collection was in danger of extinction because of the fragility of the papyrus on which it was written. Bishops Acasius (340–366) and Euzoios (369–376) each commissioned the library's scriptorium to transcribe the papyrus documents onto parchment.<sup>37</sup> We do not know, however, how much had already been lost before it could be copied onto parchment, nor do we know what kind of decisions may have had to be made about abbreviating documents because of the exigencies of cost and time.<sup>38</sup>

(13) In addition to the nine books of the commentary that have been preserved, a large number of fragments containing comments on John's Gospel ascribed to Origen are extant.<sup>39</sup> The authenticity of five of these fragments, which are drawn from the *Philocalia* by Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, the *Church History* of Eusebius, and the *Apology for Origen* by Pamphilus, is not questioned.<sup>40</sup> The remainder of the fragments,

35. For the preservation of Origen's works in general, see my discussion in FOTC 71, 25–27.

36. See Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 75.

37. See T. M. Tanner, "A History of Early Christian Libraries from Jesus to Jerome," *The Journal of Library History* (1979), 419; and P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, tr. H. Wedech (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 103–4.

38. Rufinus, for example, who translated many of Origen's works into Latin in the fourth century, notes in the preface to his translation of the *Commentary on Romans* that he had been asked to abbreviate the *Commentary* as well as translate it into Latin. He also notes that some of the books of the *Commentary* were missing.

39. A. E. Brooke, *The Commentary of Origen on S. John's Gospel* 2 (Cambridge, 1896), appends 110 fragments to his edition; E. Preuschen, *Origenes Werke: Der Johannesevangelium* GCS 4 (1903), appends 140 to his.

40. The fragments from the *Philocalia* (M. Harl and N. De Lange, SC 302.269–305) and from Eusebius (*H.E.* 6.25.7) constitute the fragmentary text of Books 4 and 5 which are translated in this volume.

however, which are found in catenae are of questionable authenticity. Several have been discovered to belong to the works of other Fathers. Of the remaining fragments, twenty-five cover passages in John's Gospel which are treated in the extant books of the *Commentary*, but only ten of them can be found in Origen's comments on these passages, and they have sometimes been severely abbreviated, and even altered. This raises serious questions about trusting those fragments that cover sections of the gospel not treated in the extant books. It means that where we have no corroborating evidence from other texts of Origen that we can never be certain that we have his thoughts, much less his words, in a fragment from the catenae.<sup>41</sup> It is for this reason that the fragments from the catenae contained in Preuschen's text are not included in this translation.

#### *Origen's Hermeneutics in the Commentary on John*

(14) This is not the place to attempt a comprehensive presentation of Origen's hermeneutic. To borrow a statement he sometimes makes of various subjects that come up in his exegetical discussions, such a study would demand a volume of its own. A number of fine studies on this subject and narrower aspects of it have already been written.<sup>42</sup> We have the

41. For a more complete presentation of the evidence against the trustworthiness of most of the fragments attributed to Origen among the catenae, see R. E. Heine, "Can the Catena Fragments of Origen's Commentary on John be Trusted?" *VC* 40 (1986) 118-134.

42. See, for example, J. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, tr. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), 273-288; Peter Gorday, *Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom, and Augustine*, *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* 4 (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1983); R. M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1957); R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959); M. Harl and N. De Lange, *Origène: Philocalie, 1-20 sur les écritures*, SC 302.42-157 (1983); H. de Lubac, *Histoire et Esprit: l'intelligence de l'écriture d'après Origène* (Paris: Aubier, 1950); K. J. Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Structure in Origen's Exegesis*, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 28 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986); idem, "Origen's Interpretation of the Psalms," *SP* 17, 2.944-958; W. Ullmann, "Hermeneutik und Semantik in der Bibeltheologie des Origenes dargestellt anhand von Buch 10 seines Johanneskommentares," *SP* 17, 2.966-977.

more modest goal of observing how Origen works at the text of John's Gospel and presenting these observations in a somewhat systematic fashion. In the *Commentary on John* there are approaches to Scripture which we would expect to find in Origen, along with a few surprises.

(15) Origen lays out a theoretical hermeneutic in *On First Principles* which corresponds to the tripartite division of man: "Just as man consists of body, soul and spirit, so in the same way does the Scripture."<sup>43</sup> He attempts to base this threefold level of meaning in Scripture on Proverbs 22.20–21.<sup>44</sup> The "flesh" of Scripture is to edify the simple, its "soul" is for the man who has made some progress, and the spiritual level is for the perfect.<sup>45</sup> Origen then notes that some passages lack a bodily or literal meaning and possess only those higher levels of meaning corresponding to the soul and the spirit of man. This, he suggests, may be the reason the waterpots at the wedding in Cana are said to contain two or three measures apiece.<sup>46</sup> Two measures means that sometimes there is only the soul meaning and the spiritual meaning in a passage of Scripture, at other times, as those containing three measures suggest, all three levels of meaning are present in a text.

(16) In practice, Origen rarely speaks of three levels of meaning in his exegesis. And, when he deals with two, it is usually the literal and the spiritual which he discusses. The intermediate level of meaning receives almost no attention in Origen's exegesis.<sup>47</sup> K. J. Torjesen has correctly said, "The contemporary consensus about the allegorical method holds that it proceeds in two distinct stages. The first stage is an exposition of the historical sense. And the second stage is an exposition of the allegorical or spiritual sense."<sup>48</sup> This must be taken one step further, however, in regard to Origen's ex-

43. Origen, *Princ.* 4.2.4. Quotations from this work are from *Origen: On First Principles*, tr. G. W. Butterworth (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

44. See W. Ullmann, "Hermeneutik und Semantik," 968.

45. Origen, *Princ.* 4.2.4. 46. Jn 2.6; Origen, *Princ.* 4.2.5.

47. Cf. M. F. Wiles, "Origen as Biblical Scholar," *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1.467–470.

48. Torjesen, "Origen's Interpretation of the Psalms," 944.

egesis of John. Quite frequently he deals with only one sense of Scripture. One of the surprising features of Origen's exegesis in the *Commentary on John* is that there are so many extended discussions which begin and end with the literal level, and make no suggestions concerning a higher level of meaning. Furthermore, his usual approach when he discusses both the literal and the spiritual level is to demonstrate that the problems involved in the text at the literal or historical level cannot be solved at that level of meaning. Consequently, the sole purpose of his discussion of the literal meaning in those cases is to show that there must be some meaning in the text at a higher level of interpretation. The literal level, therefore, is discussed only to be dismissed, not to provide edification at its own level. This, too, must be considered an interpretation of only one sense of Scripture, i.e., the spiritual sense. Origen's exegesis of John may be summarized, then, by saying that sometimes he offers an interpretation at only the literal level, sometimes at only the spiritual, and occasionally an interpretation at both levels. We shall attempt to offer some illustrations of each of these in the following discussion.

### *Spiritual Exegesis*

(17) Origen's spiritual exegesis is rooted in his view of Scripture. While he does not deny the human agency in the writing of the Scriptures, the ultimate author of all Scripture for Origen, as for the early church in general, is the Holy Spirit. The meaning that one finds in Scripture, then, must be worthy of the Spirit from whom it comes. When the text of Genesis relates that Abraham was standing under a tree, "we ought not," Origen says, "believe that it was of greatest concern to the Holy Spirit to write in the books of the Law where Abraham was standing. For what does it help me," he continues, "who have come to hear what the Holy Spirit teaches the human race, if I hear that 'Abraham was standing under a tree?'"<sup>49</sup> And when Rebecca is said to come daily to the wells, Origen remarks, "Do you think these are tales and

49. *Gn. Hom.* 4.3; and FOTC 71.106.



that the Holy Spirit tells stories in Scriptures? This is instruction for souls and spiritual teaching which instructs . . . you to come daily to the wells of the Scriptures, to the waters of the Holy Spirit. . . ."<sup>50</sup>

(18) On the other hand, the human agents who put the teachings of the Spirit in written form were not ignorant of the spiritual meanings in the material they wrote. Moses knew the allegorical meanings in the Law and in the stories he recorded; Joshua understood "the true distribution of the land"; and the Prophets perceived the meanings of their visions.<sup>51</sup>

(19) Such a view of Scripture demands that the exegete search for spiritual meaning in each detail of the text. It demands also that the exegete be filled with the same Spirit that filled the authors of Scripture.<sup>52</sup> Origen says as much in an analogy he draws at the beginning of Book 6 of the *Commentary on John*. He compares himself as the composer of the *Commentary* to the builder in Jesus' parable who counted the cost to see if he had sufficient resources to complete the building of a tower. Origen finds his own resources inadequate for the project. "We have, however," he says, "trusted in God who enriches us in all speech and knowledge, trusting that he will enrich us as we struggle to keep the spiritual laws. On the basis of what he supplies, we anticipate advancing in the construction even to the parapet of the house."<sup>53</sup>

(20) This view of Scripture and of the exegete must be kept in mind as the background to the introduction to the *Commentary* which Origen provides in Book 1. There he offers an elaborate discussion of the Gospels as the firstfruits of all the Scriptures, and John's Gospel as the firstfruits of the Gospels.<sup>54</sup> The meaning of such a Gospel standing at the pinnacle

50. *Ibid.*, 10.2; and FOTC 71.160. 51. *Comm. Jn.* 6.22-23.

52. See R. E. Heine, "Gregory of Nyssa's Apology for Allegory," *VC* 38 (1984), 362; E. Nardoni, "Origen's Concept of Biblical Inspiration," *The Second Century* 4 (1984), 20; and J. W. Trigg, "The Charismatic Intellectual: Origen's Understanding of Religious Leadership," *Church History* 50 (1981) 10-11.

53. *Comm. Jn.* 6.7. Cf. *Comm. Jn.* 1.89; 20.1; 28.6; 32.1-3.

54. *Ibid.*, 1.12-23.

of all Scripture is not open to just anyone. The one who would understand it must have leaned on Jesus' breast, and have received Mary to be his mother. The latter means that he must have, in some sense, become Jesus, for Mary had only one son. Therefore, when Jesus said to Mary, "Behold your son," it was as though he had said, "Behold, this is Jesus whom you bore." This, Origen finds to be in harmony with Paul's statement that the one who has been perfected "no longer lives, but Christ lives in him."<sup>55</sup> The words of John's Gospel, then, which in their physical sense as language can be read or heard by anyone, can be accurately understood only by one who can say, "But we have the mind of Christ, that we may know the things that are given us by God."<sup>56</sup>

(21) Origen calls this higher level of insight attained by the Spirit-led exegete the spiritual gospel. John, he thinks, alludes to it in his reference to the eternal gospel in Revelation 14.6.<sup>57</sup> This spiritual gospel is the reality of which Christ's acts were symbols; it is the secrets hidden in the mysteries of Christ's words.<sup>58</sup> There are, then, two gospels. The one is perceptible to the senses, the gospel consisting of the language which tells of the teachings and activities of Jesus which all can read. The other is the spiritual gospel, the bare truth behind the types in the gospel perceptible to the senses. The task of the exegete is "to translate the gospel perceptible to the senses into the spiritual gospel."<sup>59</sup>

(22) We must note here that this spiritual translation includes more than allegorical interpretation. It includes, for one thing, what modern scholars call typological interpretation. J. Daniélou has called attention to the following Old Testament types found in the commentary: various crossings of the Jordan serve as types of baptism in Book 6; the paschal

55. *Ibid.*, 1.23.

56. *Ibid.*, 1.24.

57. Cf. R. Gögler, *Origines: Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (Zürich, Köln: Benziger Verlag Einsiedeln, 1959), 74. In *Lev. Hom.* 4.10 Origen links the "eternal law" of Lv 6.15 (LXX) with the "eternal gospel" of Rv 14.6, and in the same paragraph equates the "eternal law" with the "spiritual law" of Rom 7.14. Cf. R. Gögler, *Zur Theologie des biblischen Wortes bei Origenes* (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), 384-5.

58. *Comm. Jn.* 1.40.

59. *Ibid.*, 1.44-46.

lamb is a type of the crucified Christ in Book 10; the tabernacle and the temple are viewed as types of Christ and the Church in Book 10.<sup>60</sup> Origen is "an innovator," Daniélou says, "in the extent to which he brings the New Testament into the typological process."<sup>61</sup> This means that Origen sees certain things in the New Testament to be types of spiritual realities just as certain things in the Old Testament were types of corresponding things in the New Testament. For example, his discussion of the pasch in John 2.13 proceeds from the pasch in Exodus to Christ via 1 Corinthians 5.7, and from there to the Christian eucharist via John 6.53-56. The process does not stop here, however, but he goes on to suggest that there will be "a third pasch which will be celebrated with 10,000 angels in a most perfect assembly and a most blessed exodus."<sup>62</sup>

(23) Origen does not, however, see typological exegesis to consist primarily, if at all, in finding correspondences between various historical realities, as earlier exegetes such as Justin had done. "We must not suppose," he says, "that historical things are types of historical things, and corporeal of corporeal. Quite the contrary: corporeal things are types of spiritual things, and historical of intellectual."<sup>63</sup> Origen makes little discernible distinction between typological and allegorical interpretation. What modern scholars would distinguish as typological and allegorical exegesis are woven together indiscriminately by Origen in this discussion as he pursues the spiritual meaning of the simple statement, "And the pasch of the Jews was near."

(24) Fulfillment of prophecy is closely related to typology in the Christian tradition. Origen also uses this in the *Commentary on John*.<sup>64</sup> He attacks the heterodox who deny the va-

60. J. Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 276-8. See also J. Daniélou, *Origène* (Paris: la table ronde, 1948), 145-147. Daniélou's sharp distinction between typology as belonging to the tradition of the Church, and allegory as a part of the Hellenistic tradition, has been rightly criticized by Hansen, *Allegory and Event*, 97-129.

61. Daniélou, *Gospel Message*, 278.

62. *Comm. Jn.* 10.67-111.

63. *Ibid.*, 10.110.

64. See, e.g., *Comm. Jn.* 1.142-150; 2.166.

lidity of the prophecies about Christ.<sup>65</sup> Prophetic testimony, he argues, is one of the proofs of the Incarnation.<sup>66</sup> This is similar to the type of arguments advanced in the New Testament and by later Christians such as Justin in his *Dialogue with Trypho*. As in the case of typology, however, Origen does not stop by seeing historical connections between the word of the prophet in the Old Testament and its fulfillment in the historical life of Christ depicted in the New Testament. The prophetic testimonies may, in addition, teach theology concerning such things as the relationship between the Father and the Son.<sup>67</sup> Prophetic testimonies that have historical fulfillment in Christ in the Gospels also have higher, spiritual meanings. Zacharias' prophecy, for example, which the evangelists quote in connection with the triumphal entry foretells more than "the bodily event which is revealed in the Gospels."<sup>68</sup> Prophecies, therefore, as well as types contain spiritual meanings which transcend whatever literal fulfillment they may have had.

(25) Origen's spiritual exegesis also, of course, contains classical examples of allegorical interpretation. In his treatment of John 1.1, he cites Revelation 19.11ff. as an ancillary passage, in which a rider appears in heaven on a white horse. He then proceeds through the passage object by object giving special meanings to each in typical allegorical fashion.<sup>69</sup> The mention of the shoes of Jesus which John the Baptist was not worthy to unloose leads Origen to suggest that one of the shoes is the Incarnation, and the other the descent into Hades.<sup>70</sup> Sometimes he offers more than one possible meaning in his allegories. The ass and colt, for example, which Jesus rode into Jerusalem at one point are the Old and New Testaments,<sup>71</sup> but a little later he suggests that they are "those of the circumcision and those from the gentiles who believed later."<sup>72</sup>

(26) Although there are exceptions, in general Origen al-

65. *Ibid.*, 2.199-205.

67. *Ibid.*, 2.205.

69. *Ibid.*, 2.45-63.

71. *Ibid.*, 10.174-5.

66. *Ibid.*, 2.202.

68. *Ibid.*, 10.161.

70. *Ibid.*, 6.174.

72. *Ibid.*, 10.185-6.

legorizes narratives and metaphors.<sup>73</sup> His allegorization of narratives arises from his assumption that all the biblical texts must offer spiritual lessons. Historical statements, as we pointed out above, lack religious value in his judgment. They are, therefore, given religious value by allegorization. Some have suggested that he allegorized metaphors because he lacked poetic sensitivity.<sup>74</sup> It seems more likely to me that he saw poetic statements, like historical statements, to be devoid of religious value in themselves. While a metaphor is not an historical statement, it shares with historical statement the fact that it involves the physical world. There is a sense, indeed, in which it is correct to say that Origen saw the whole physical world as a metaphor for spiritual realities. As H. Koch has noted, in Origen's view the invisible, eternal world is now hidden from souls because of the fall. Consequently, God created the visible world in such a way that each thing in it is an image of something eternal so that human reason can lift itself to the heavenly world by contemplating the objects in the physical world.<sup>75</sup> Origen appeals to this cosmological basis for his hermeneutic in his discussion of the simile in Song of Songs 2.9: "My lover is like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel." "Paul teaches us," he says,

that the invisible things of God are understood by means of things that are visible, and that the things that are not seen are beheld through their relationship and likeness to things seen. He thus shows that this visible world teaches us about that which is invisible, and that this earthly scene contains certain patterns of things heavenly. Thus it is possible for us to mount up from things below to things above, and to perceive and understand from the things we see on earth the things that belong to heaven. . . . And perhaps, even as God made man in his own image and likeness, so also did he create the other creatures after the likeness of some other heavenly patterns. And perhaps the correspondence between all things on earth and their celestial prototypes goes so far, that even *the grain of mus-*

73. For an example of the latter, see *Comm. Jn.* 2.193-5.

74. Wiles, "Origen as Biblical Scholar," 470; so also R. P. C. Hanson in his review of *Origène: Philocalie 1-20* in *Patristics* 14 (July, 1985), 3.

75. H. Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932), 45-6.

*tard seed, . . . which is the least of all seeds, has something in heaven whose image and likeness it bears. . .*<sup>76</sup>

(27) All of this comprises what Origen calls the translation of "the gospel perceptible to the senses into the spiritual gospel."<sup>77</sup> While Origen thinks the gospel perceptible to the senses is not of much value without this translation, he does not completely despise it. Just as Paul made certain concessions to those of the circumcision in order to gain them, so the one who would benefit the multitudes cannot do so by "inward Christianity alone." "This is why," he says, "we must live as a Christian in a spiritual and in a physical manner." And when necessary, we must preach the literal gospel, declaring "nothing except Jesus Christ, and him crucified."<sup>78</sup>

#### *Literal Exegesis*

(28) As we have already noted, Origen sometimes interprets a passage at both the literal and spiritual levels. Such is the case when he discusses John 1.6: "There was a man sent from God." At the literal level, he says, this means he was sent to Israel and to those who heard him preach in the wilderness. At the deeper level, it means he was sent into the world. The implications of the latter meaning are then pursued in relation to the question of whence he was sent. This leads finally to the conclusion that John was an angel who assumed a body to bear testimony to the light.<sup>79</sup> The fragment of Book 5 preserves another clear example of both a literal and spiritual meaning being given to a statement. There Origen is reflecting on the length of his *Commentary* in light of Ecclesiastes 12.12: "My son, beware of making many books." At the literal level this may mean either that one ought not own many books, or that one ought not compose many books. While there is much to commend the historical meaning of this text, Origen notes that if this is all it means, Solomon himself

76. *Comm. Cant.* 3.12; translation from Origen: *The Song of Songs Commentary and Homilies*, ACW 26.218-19.

77. *Comm. Jn.* 1.45.

78. *Ibid.*, 1.42-43. Cf. W. Ullmann, "Hermeneutik und Semantik," 970.

79. *Comm. Jn.* 2.175-192.

sinned in relation to it, for he spoke 3000 parables and 5000 odes. This leads him to search for a deeper meaning, which is that all truth is one word, regardless of how many words or books express it, while error consists of a multitude of words.<sup>80</sup>

(29) In the two examples cited in the preceding paragraph the literal meaning is preserved, although its significance is subordinated to the deeper meaning. There are other instances in the *Commentary*, however, where the literal meaning is investigated only to show that it is impossible, and that one must look for a spiritual meaning. This is especially the case where there are differences in parallel passages in the Gospels. The problem of fitting John 2.12–25 into the chronology of the Synoptics leads Origen to say that “the truth of these accounts lies in the spiritual meanings.”<sup>81</sup> If this solution is not accepted he fears that many will dismiss “credence in the Gospels as not true, or not written by a divine spirit, or not successfully recorded.”<sup>82</sup> The problem in this passage, Origen notes, is not an isolated case. There are so many disagreements between the Gospels at the historical level that one would become dizzy examining them.<sup>83</sup> Origen proposes a kind of parable to explain how the truth can be communicated through so many discrepancies. Suppose, he says, that God reveals things to four different men in different places who all see in the spirit. Each one would report what he had seen and heard. Let them agree with one another in some things, he says, and disagree in others. Let one man report that God appeared to someone in a particular form in one place, and another report that he appeared to someone else in another place at the same time. Anyone, he asserts, who thinks that what these men write is history, and that God shares in the limitations of space and time, will have to conclude that they cannot be telling the truth. The only way their accounts could be harmonized would be to see that they were trying to communicate the things they had seen in their mind

80. *Comm. Jn.* 5.2–8.

82. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*, 10.10.

83. *Ibid.*, 10.14.

by means of a type. So it is with the four evangelists. "In some places they have interwoven in Scripture something made clear to them in a purely intellectual manner, with language as though it were something perceptible to the senses."<sup>84</sup> Sometimes they have even altered what happened historically for the sake of the spiritual meaning.

Their intention was to speak the truth spiritually and bodily at the same time where that was possible, but where it was not possible in both ways, to prefer the spiritual to the bodily. The spiritual truth is often preserved in the bodily falsehood, so to speak.<sup>85</sup>

(30) It remains to set forth examples where Origen discusses the literal meaning of a passage and does not move beyond this to a spiritual meaning. There are several places where Origen deals only with the literal sense in his debate with Heracleon. For example, Heracleon, Origen asserts, attributed certain words in the prologue of John's Gospel to the Baptist which should be attributed to the disciple, and vice versa.<sup>86</sup> There follows a lengthy and circuitous argument which, nevertheless, moves at the literal level of interpretation. The argument closes with a statement stressing the importance of paying close attention to the details of Scripture at the historical level. "The one who will read Scripture accurately must," Origen says, "pay attention everywhere, to observe, when necessary, who is speaking, and when it is spoken, that we may discover that words are appropriately matched with characters throughout the Holy Books."<sup>87</sup>

(31) In another place he reconciles a discrepancy in the way a saying of the Baptist is reported in the different Gospels at the literal level by saying that he made both statements, but

84. *Ibid.*, 10.15-18.

85. *Ibid.*, 10.20. Origen sets forth a similar hermeneutic for the entire Bible in *Princ.* 4.3.1-5. Cf. Harl's comments in Harl and De Lange, *Philocalia*, 1-20, 97-101; 190-191. Wiles, "Origen as Biblical Scholar," 470-71, notes that once Origen accepted the principle that some things stated as historical facts in the Bible are not true historically, he was surprisingly reluctant to use it. He does, however, use it several times in Book 10 of the *Commentary on John*. See, for example, in addition to the passage discussed here, 10.119-130; 10.199-200.

86. *Comm. Jn.* 6.13-14.

87. *Ibid.*, 6.13-53.



at different times. This reconciliation is offered to preserve the credibility of the evangelists,<sup>88</sup> something which he attempts in other places by denying the historicity of the differing accounts in favor of the spiritual meaning.<sup>89</sup> The fact that he chose to reconcile the differences at the historical level here shows that he did not take the historical sense lightly, but dismissed it as impossible only in those places where he could see no way of harmonizing the accounts at the historical level.

(32) Large portions of Books 1 and 2 consist of literal exegesis directed at theological problems posed by various groups, some Gnostic, some the simple pious, and others unidentified.<sup>90</sup> No spiritual meaning is offered for anything contained in the first five verses of John's Gospel. Allegorical interpretations are sometimes offered for ancillary passages that are discussed in conjunction with these verses,<sup>91</sup> but these verses themselves are not allegorized.

(33) We noted earlier that Origen usually allegorized narratives and metaphors. He considered the opening verses of John, however, to be theological propositions. The first two verses of the gospel, he asserts, consist of four propositions:<sup>92</sup> (1) "In the beginning was the Word"; (2) "The Word was with God"; (3) "And the Word was God"; (4) "The same was in the beginning with God." The first three propositions teach us "in what the Word was, namely 'in the beginning,' and with whom he was, namely 'with God,' and who the Word was, namely 'God.'"<sup>93</sup> The fourth teaches "that 'he was in the beginning' and 'in the beginning' he was 'with God,' neither being only 'with God' since 'he was' also 'in the beginning,' nor being only 'in the beginning,' and not being 'with God,' since 'the same was in the beginning with God.'"<sup>94</sup> While Origen rambles over numerous subjects, and quotes and interprets several texts from both the Old and New Testaments in

88. *Ibid.*, 6.170-172.

89. See note 85 above.

90. See, for example, *Comm. Jn.* 2.155; 2.171; 2.16; 2.73-4.

91. As, for example, the treatment of Rv 19.11-16 in *Comm. Jn.* 2.45-63.

92. *Comm. Jn.* 2.11-12; 2.34-5; 2.64-68.

93. *Ibid.*, 2.35.

94. *Ibid.*, 2.69.

the course of discussing these first two verses of the Gospel, the exegesis he offers of the verses themselves is literal.

(34) The treatment of John 1.3 is structured by two problems posed by Heracleon's exegesis of the verse, (1) What does the expression "all things" include? and (2) What is the significance of "through him"? He concludes that "all things" must include everything (even the Holy Spirit) except the aspects which are in Christ (i.e. the life, the light of men, etc.), and that "through him" means that all things have been made *through* the Word *by* the creator.<sup>95</sup> This, again, is interpretation at the literal level.

(35) While Origen does not call John 1.4 a paradox, it reminds him of the Stoic paradoxes, and his interpretation is modeled on those paradoxes:

Now if life is equivalent to the light of men, no one who is in darkness is alive, and no one who is alive is in darkness, but everyone who is alive is also in light, and everyone who is in light is alive. Consequently only the one who is alive, and everyone who is alive, is a son of light.<sup>96</sup>

(36) John 1.5 is treated as an extension of verse four. After pursuing the concepts of light and darkness through various biblical passages, Origen offers this interpretation of the verse:

This light, indeed, which was made in the Word, which also is life, 'shines in the darkness' of our souls. It has come to stay where the world rulers of this darkness live (who by wrestling with the human race struggle to subject those who do not stand firm in every manner to darkness), that, when they have been enlightened, they may be called sons of light. And this light shines in the darkness and is pursued by it, but it is not overcome.<sup>97</sup>

(37) The nomenclature of literal and spiritual interpretation does not appear in relation to these first five verses of John. Origen offers one interpretation and gives no indication that he thinks another to be possible at another level of understanding the text. When he comes to verse six, however,

95. *Ibid.*, 2.70-104.

96. *Ibid.*, 2.132.

97. *Ibid.*, 2.167.

he offers an interpretation "according to the literal account," followed by an interpretation "according to the deeper meaning."<sup>98</sup> John 1.6 marks the beginning of the narrative about John the Baptist: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John," and consequently, the beginning of Origen's allegorization of the words of the Gospel.

*Heracleon and the Tripartite Tractate*

(38) Our knowledge of Heracleon, the second century Gnostic whose exegesis of John Origen occasionally quotes and attacks in the *Commentary*, is very limited. Origen tells us that he was said to have been a pupil of Valentinus,<sup>99</sup> and Clement of Alexandria calls him the most famous of the Valentinian school.<sup>100</sup> Irenaeus,<sup>101</sup> Tertullian,<sup>102</sup> and Hippolytus<sup>103</sup> connect him with Ptolemaeus and the Italian branch of the school of Valentinianism. Ps.—Tertullian refers to him as sharing some views with Valentinus, but differing in others.<sup>104</sup>

(39) None of Heracleon's writings have been preserved except for forty-eight fragments quoted in Origen's *Commentary on John*, two fragments quoted by Clement of Alexandria, and an allusion to a viewpoint of Heracleon in Photius.<sup>105</sup> The Nag Hammadi documents have shed some uncertain light on Heracleon.<sup>106</sup> Y. Janssens thinks the *Gospel of Truth*, which some have attributed to Valentinus,<sup>107</sup> has a number of ap-

98. *Ibid.*, 2.175.

100. *Strom.* 4.9.71.1.

102. *Adv. Val.* 4.

104. *Haer.* 4.

99. *Comm. Jn.* 2.100.

101. *Adv. Haer.* 2.4.1.

103. *Ref.* 6.35.

105. The fragments in the *Commentary on John* are found in Books 2, 6, 10, 13, 19, and 20. They are printed in block quotations in this translation. Those in Clement are in *Eclogae Propheticae* 25.1 and *Strom.* 4.9.71.1–73.1; that in Photius is in *Ep.* 134. These fragments are conveniently collected and translated in W. Foerster, *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts*, tr. R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 162–183.

106. For a convenient English translation of the documents see *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. J. M. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1977). All translations from the Nag Hammadi documents in this introduction are from this volume.

107. See G. W. MacRae's comments in the introduction to his translation of the treatise in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 37, and K. Grobel, *The Gospel of Truth* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1960), 26–27.

parent contacts with the fragments of Heracleon.<sup>108</sup> More direct light on Heracleon's thought may come from another treatise from Nag Hammadi which has been named the *Tripartite Tractate* by modern scholars. H. Puech and G. Quispel have argued that Heracleon may have been the author of this treatise.<sup>109</sup> Quispel is certain that the *Tripartite Tractate* "reflects the views of the Western school of Valentinianism and more specifically those of the school of Heracleon."<sup>110</sup> Whether Heracleon was the actual author of this treatise will probably never be known. There are, nevertheless, some striking similarities between the viewpoint expressed in a few of the fragments of Heracleon preserved by Origen in the *Commentary on John* and viewpoints set forth in the *Tripartite Tractate*.<sup>111</sup>

(40) The most striking contact between a fragment of Heracleon and the *Tripartite Tractate* is found in the fragment Origen quotes in Book 2 of the *Commentary*.<sup>112</sup> The discussion in the *Commentary* concerns the meaning of John 1.3: "All

108. Y. Janssens, "L'épisode de la Samaritaine chez Héracléon," in *Sacra Pagina* 2, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium* XII-XIII (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1959), 82.

109. H. Puech and G. Quispel, "Le quatrième écrit Gnostique du codex Jung," *VC* (1955), 65-102. See also G. Quispel, "From Mythos to Logos," *Gnostic Studies* 1 (Istanbul, 1974), 165-6; idem, "Origen and the Valentinian Gnosis," *VC* (1974), 29-42; and the notes of G. Quispel and J. Zandee in *Tractatus Tripartitus*, Part 1 *De Supernis*, ed. by R. Kasser, M. Malinine, H. Puech, G. Quispel, and J. Zandee (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1973), 311ff.

110. Quispel, "Origen and the Valentinian Gnosis," 35. The followers of Valentinus were divided into an Oriental branch represented in the writings of Theodotus, and a Western or Italian branch headed by Ptolemaeus and Heracleon. The Western branch introduced a number of new elements into the teachings of Valentinus which brought them nearer to certain views of the Catholic Church (*Ibid.*, 33-4).

111. There are more numerous contacts between viewpoints Origen expresses as his own and certain views in the *Tripartite Tractate* if one looks beyond the *Commentary on John* to other works of his as the *On First Principles*. These similarities led Quispel, "Origen and the Valentinian Gnosis," 33, 36-42, to suggest an evolution of certain concepts from Valentinus via Heracleon to Origen. Daniélou, *Origène*, 190-198, had already shown the influence of Heracleon's exegetical approach on Origen, and E. de Faye, long before the discoveries at Nag Hammadi argued for Gnostic influence on Origen's view and treatment of the Bible, and on all the major points of his theology in "De l'influence du Gnosticisme sur Origène," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (1923) 181-235.

112. *Comm. Jn.* 2.100-104. See note 135 on this passage.

things were made through him." There are two problems, Origen notes, with Heracleon's interpretation of this statement. First, he limits the expression "all things" to this world and its contents, excluding all the beings of the higher realms. Second, he identifies the *logos* not with the agent of creation, but with the cause, making the creator lower than the *logos*. These same views can be found in the *Tripartite Tractate*, though they are not connected with John 1.3. Here the higher realm, called the *aeon*, and the beings of the higher realm, called *totalities* or *aeons*, come forth from the Father independent of the *logos*, who is also one of the *aeons*, prior to the creation of the world and the things in it.<sup>113</sup> The *logos*, on the other hand, is the cause of the creation of the world and the lower beings, including mankind, but is not the agent. The *archon* is the agent of creation, being used by the *logos* as a "hand."<sup>114</sup> Consequently, the *logos* is higher than the creator of the world in the *Tripartite Tractate*. This is precisely what Origen accuses Heracleon of saying.

(41) A somewhat lesser point of contact is found in Heracleon's identification of the *logos* as the Savior,<sup>115</sup> and the appearance of the same identification in the *Tripartite Tractate*.<sup>116</sup> The significance is to be seen in connection with our discussion in the preceding paragraph, i.e. both Heracleon and the *Tripartite Tractate* identify the *logos* as the cause of creation and as the Savior.

(42) Another similarity between Heracleon and the *Tripartite Tractate* lies in the way they each describe the response of pneumatics to redemption once it is revealed to them. In the *Tripartite Tractate* the spiritual race responds immediately to the light once it is revealed.<sup>117</sup> Heracleon "praises the Samaritan woman because she demonstrated a faith that was unhesitating and appropriate to her nature, when she had no doubt about what he said to her."<sup>118</sup> E. Pagels takes the frag-

113. *Tripartite Tractate*, 59.5-64.35.

114. *Ibid.*, 100.30-34; 114.7-8.

115. *Comm. Jn.* 6.108.

116. *Tripartite Tractate* 113.38-39; 114.7-8; 115.26-29.

117. *Ibid.*, 118.29-37; 123.4-11.

118. *Comm. Jn.* 13.63. Cf. 13.92.

ments of Heracleon on the Samaritan woman to be dealing with the subject of pneumatic conversion.<sup>119</sup> "Hearing the Savior's offer of 'living water,'" she says, "the Samaritan responds with spontaneous recognition, as if hearing what she already has known intuitively. Her answer is 'immediate, uncritical, indiscriminating'—a response 'appropriate to her nature' . . . since she is already one of those 'chosen by the Father.'" <sup>120</sup>

(43) The metaphor of marriage in relation to the final state of the elect appears to be another point of contact between the *Tripartite Tractate* and Heracleon. In the *Tripartite Tractate* it is said that "the election shares body and essence with the Savior, since it is like a bridal chamber because of its unity and its agreement with him."<sup>121</sup> Heracleon thinks that "the husband of the Samaritan woman mentioned by Jesus is her pleroma, so that, on coming to the Savior, she may obtain from him power, unity, and union with her pleroma."<sup>122</sup>

(44) These similarities are not all of equal significance, nor are they sufficient in their totality to prove Heracleon to have been the author of the *Tripartite Tractate*. They do suggest, however, a similarity of viewpoint between Heracleon and the *Tripartite Tractate* and consequently, if used with prudence, may help us better understand the theological position of Heracleon, and even of Origen himself.

*Manuscripts, Editions, and Translations of the  
Commentary on John*

(45) While there are eight, and possibly nine or ten,<sup>123</sup> Greek manuscripts containing the *Commentary on John*, they are all dependent on one thirteenth century manuscript Codex Monacensis 191 (M) which is located in Munich. This

119. E. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel*, 86–92.

120. *Ibid.*, 87.

121. *Tripartite Tractate* 122.14–16. Cf. Quispel, "Mythos," 169.

122. *Comm. Jn.* 13.67. Cf. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel*, 88.

123. For the uncertainty of whether there is a ninth, and even a tenth manuscript of the commentary, see A. E. Brooke, *The Fragments of Heracleon, Texts and Studies* 1, ed. J. A. Robinson (Cambridge: University Press, 1891), 6; *idem*, *The Commentary of Origen on S. John's Gospel* 1, 12.

dependence on Codex Monacensis has been established by A. E. Brooke<sup>124</sup> and E. Preuschen,<sup>125</sup> and is accepted by C. Blanc in the only critical edition of the commentary to appear after the editions of Brooke and Preuschen.<sup>126</sup> This means that our knowledge of the text of the commentary is completely dependent on this one manuscript. Consequently, wherever there are lacunae in this manuscript, and there are several, we must either resort to conjecture or leave gaps in the text. And wherever the reading of the manuscript appears incorrect, we must either offer emendations or mark the text as corrupt at that point.

(46) The first edition of the *Commentary* was produced by Huet in 1668, based on the sixteenth century manuscript Codex Regius of Paris. The Delarue edition of all of Origen's works, based on the sixteenth century manuscript Barberinus and the seventeenth century manuscript Bodleianus was produced in 1733–1759. Lommatzsch's edition of Origen's works appeared in 1831–1848 and was based on the work of his predecessors. Migne reproduced the edition of Delarue in 1857.<sup>127</sup> A. E. Brooke produced his new edition based on his study of Codex Monacensis in 1896. This was followed in 1903 by the edition of E. Preuschen based on the same manuscript. The edition of C. Blanc, which is based on that of Preuschen,<sup>128</sup> is still in process of appearing.<sup>129</sup>

(47) In the sixteenth century Ambrosius Ferrarius translated the commentary into Latin from the fourteenth century Codex Venis. There are four translations of the commentary into modern languages in various degrees of completeness. A. Menzies translated Books 1 through 10 into English. His

124. See the works by Brooke cited in the preceding note.

125. Preuschen, GCS 4.9–61.

126. Blanc, SC 120.41.

127. See the discussion of these editions by E. Corsini, *Commento al Vangelo di Giovanni di Origene* (Torinese: Unione Tipografico-Editrice, 1968), 93–4; and by A. Menzies, ANF 10.294.

128. Blanc, SC 120.41.

129. The first volume, containing Books 1–5, appeared as SC 120 (1966); the second, containing Books 6 and 10, appeared as SC 157 (1970); the third, containing Book 13, appeared as SC 222 (1975); and the fourth, containing Books 19 and 20, appeared as SC 290 (1982).

translation now appears in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* 10. No date accompanies the translation, but Menzies says in a note that the edition of A. E. Brooke appeared too late to be used in his translation.<sup>130</sup> The translation is based on the text of Lommatzsch. There is an Italian translation by E. Corsini (1968), based on the text of Preuschen.<sup>131</sup> R. Göglér produced a partial translation of the commentary in German in 1959, also based on the text of Preuschen.<sup>132</sup> This translation contains sections from each of the nine extant books of the commentary, with some of the books translated in their entirety. C. Blanc is producing a French translation based on her edition of the text. This is now complete through Book 20 of the *Commentary*.<sup>133</sup> There are, in addition, two anthologies of texts of Origen which contain some selections from the *Commentary on John*. One was done by R. B. Tollinton in 1929,<sup>134</sup> and the other by H. Urs von Balthasar in 1938. The latter was translated into English by R. J. Daly in 1984.<sup>135</sup>

(48) Our translation is based on the text of Preuschen. The editions of Brooke and Blanc, however, have been constantly at hand and have been consulted on all passages where there are difficulties in the text. All places where we have deviated from Preuschen's text have been noted in footnotes. As in my translation of Origen's *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* (FOTC 71), I have followed the Douay version of the Bible for the spelling of all names of biblical persons and places.<sup>136</sup>

130. ANF 10.294.

131. Corsini, *Commento al Vangelo di Giovanni*, 110.

132. Göglér, *Origenes: Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 89.

133. See note 129 above.

134. R. B. Tollinton, *Selections from the Commentaries and Homilies of Origen*, Translations of Christian Literature, Series 1: Greek Texts (London: SPCK, 1929). See also, C. M. Moss, *Origen's Commentary on John, Book 13: a translation with annotations* [Ph.D. Diss] Louisville, Ky.: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982.

135. H. Urs von Balthasar, tr. R. J. Daly, *Origen: Spirit and Fire* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1984).

136. The reason for following the spelling in this version is given in FOTC 71.42-3.



COMMENTARY ON  
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN  
BOOKS 1–10

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## BOOK 1



JUST AS THE PEOPLE of old, who were called the people of God,<sup>1</sup> were divided into twelve tribes plus the Levitical order, and this order itself, which engaged in service of the Divine, was divided into additional priestly and Levitical orders, so, I think, all the people of Christ according to "the hidden man of the heart,"<sup>2</sup> who bear the name "Jew inwardly" and who have been circumcised "in spirit,"<sup>3</sup> possess the characteristics of the tribes in a more mystical manner. This can be learned most clearly from John in the Apocalypse, although the other prophets are not silent for those who know how to understand such matters.

(2) John speaks as follows: "And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, 'Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads.' And I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000 were sealed of every tribe of the children of Israel; 12,000 were sealed from the tribe of Juda; and 12,000 from the tribe of Ruben."<sup>4</sup>

(3) And after enumerating the remaining tribes consecutively, except for Dan, he adds further on, "And I saw, and behold the lamb stood upon Mount Sion and with him 144,000, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the noise of many waters, and as the sound of loud thunder; and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpists playing

1. Cf. Nm 27.17.

3. Rom 2.29.

2. 1 Pt 3.4.

4. Rv 7.2-5.

on their harps. And they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who were purchased from the earth. These are those who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were purchased from men, the firstfruits for God and for the Lamb, and no lie was found in their mouth, for they are blameless.”<sup>5</sup>

(4) Now the following words point to the conclusion that John says these things of those who have believed in Christ and who themselves are from the tribes, even though their physical race does not appear to go back to the seed of the patriarchs. “Hurt not,” the angel says, “the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads. And I heard the number of those who were sealed, 144,000 sealed of every tribe of the children of Israel.”<sup>6</sup>

(5) Those, therefore, from every tribe of the children of Israel who are sealed on their foreheads are 144,000 in number. These 144,000 are later said by John to have the name of the Lamb and of his Father written on their foreheads, being virgins and not defiled with women.

(6) What else, then, would the seal on the foreheads be than the name of the Lamb and of his Father? In both passages the foreheads are said to have, in one place, the seal, and in the other, the letters containing the name of the Lamb and the name of his Father.

(7) But also, if those “from the tribes” are the same as the virgins, as we showed previously, and a believer from Israel according to the flesh is rare, so that one might perhaps dare to say that the number of the 144,000 is not filled up with believers from Israel according to the flesh,<sup>7</sup> it is clear that the 144,000 is composed of those gentiles who come to the divine Word, who are not defiled with women. Consequently, he who declares that the virgins of each tribe are its firstfruits would not be wrong.

5. Cf. Rv 14.1-5.

7. Cf. 1 Cor 10.18.

6. Rv 7.3-4.

(8) For he also adds, "These were purchased from men, the firstfruits for God and for the Lamb, and no lie was found in their mouth, for they were blameless."<sup>8</sup> Now we must not be unaware that the saying about the 144,000 virgins admits an anagogical sense.<sup>9</sup> But at this time it would be superfluous and not in accord with our purpose to compare the prophetic texts which teach us the same thing about those from the gentiles.

(9) What, indeed, do all these things mean for us? You will raise this question when you read these words, Ambrose, since you are truly a man of God,<sup>10</sup> and a man in Christ,<sup>11</sup> and are eager to be spiritual, no longer being man.<sup>12</sup> Those from the tribes, on the one hand, offer tithes and firstfruits to God through the Levites and priests, not having all things as firstfruits or tithes. But the Levites and priests, although all their possessions consist of tithes and firstfruits, offer tithes to God through the high priest and, I think, firstfruits too.

(10) Most of us who approach the teachings of Christ, since we have much time for the activities of life and offer a few acts to God, would perhaps be those from the tribes who have a little fellowship with the priests and support the service of God in a few things. But those who devote themselves to the divine Word and truly exist by the service of God alone will properly be said to be Levites and priests in accordance with the excellence of their activities in this work.

(11) And, perhaps, those who excel all others and who hold, as it were, the first places of their generation will be high priests according to the order of Aaron, but not according to the order of Melchisedech.<sup>13</sup> If someone should object to this, thinking that we are impious when we prescribe the title of high priest for men, since Jesus is proclaimed as great priest in many places—for we have "a great high priest who

8. Rv 14.4-5.

10. Cf. 1 Tm 6.11.

12. Blanc (SC 120.62), calls attention to *Comm. Jn.* 2.138, where Origen discusses the distinction between being "spiritual" and being "man."

13. Cf. Heb 7.11.

9. *Anagōgē*. PGL, 100.

11. 2 Cor 12.2.

has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God"<sup>14</sup>—, we would have to say to him that the apostle indicated this when he said that the prophet said of Christ, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech,"<sup>15</sup> and not according to the order of Aaron. On this basis we too say that men can be high priests according to the order of Aaron but only the Christ of God according to the order of Melchisedech.

(12) Since we are eager for those things which are better, all our activity and our entire life being dedicated to God, and we wish to have all our activity as the firstfruits of many firstfruits—unless, indeed, we are mistaken when we think this—what more excellent activity ought there be, after our physical separation from one another, than the careful examination of the gospel? For, indeed, one might dare say that the gospel is the firstfruits of all the Scriptures.

(13) What other firstfruits of our activities ought there to have been, then, since we have come home to Alexandria, than that devoted to the firstfruits of the Scriptures?<sup>16</sup> But we ought to know that firstfruits and firstling are not the same.<sup>17</sup>

14. Heb 4.14.

15. Heb 7.17; 5.6.

16. On the historical significance of this statement, see FOTC 71.15; and Nautin, *Origène*, 366–67.

17. *Aparchē* and *prōtogenēma*, Origen seems to have exaggerated the distinction between the two terms. *Prōtogenēma*, according to E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint*, 2 vols. (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-Verlagsanstalt, 1954) is used in the LXX for the Hebrew *bikkûrim*, "firstfruits," being "the first of grain and fruit that ripened and was gathered and offered to God according to the ritual" (this and the following definitions of Hebrew words are from F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959]). It also translates the Hebrew *rē'šit* which can also mean "firstfruits" in the sense of first of fruits. *Aparchē* too, however, is used by the LXX to translate *rē'šit*. In addition, *aparchē* translates the following Hebrew words in the LXX: (1) *hēleb*, in the sense of "choicest" or "best part" of the products of the land; (2) *Ma'āsēr* meaning "tithes"; (3) *tnûpâh*, "offering," and (4) *trûmâh*, "contribution" or "offering." Philo uses the two terms nearly synonymously. He defines *prōtogenēma* in this way: "One explanation of the name, 'Feast of the First-products' (*prōtogenēmatōn*) is that the first produce of the young wheat and the earliest fruit to appear is brought as a sample offering (*aparchē*) before the year's harvest comes to be used by men" (*De Specialibus Legibus* 2.179; tr. F. H. Colson, *Philo*, LCL, 7 (1950)). Cf. *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.183 and *De Decalogo* 160). The Mishnaic treatise *Bikkurim* refers to no such distinctions in "offerings."

For firstfruits are offered after all the fruits, but the firstling is offered before.

(14) One would not go wrong, then, in saying that of the Scriptures which are in circulation in all the churches of God and which are believed to be divine, the law of Moses is the firstling, but the gospel is the firstfruits. For the perfect Word has blossomed forth after all the fruits of the prophets up to the time of the Lord Jesus.

(15) But if someone should object, because of the idea inherent in the explanation of firstfruits, and say that the Acts and the Epistles of the apostles were brought forth after the Gospels, and that the statement that the gospel is the firstfruits of all Scripture would not still prevail in accordance with our previous explanation of firstfruits, we would surely have to say that you have in the Epistles which are in circulation the understanding of wise men who have been aided by Christ, who need the testimonies contained in the words of the law and Prophets in order to be believed. Consequently we must say that the apostolic writings are wise and trustworthy and most beneficial; they are not, to be sure, on a par with, "Thus says the Lord almighty."<sup>18</sup>

(16) And in relation to this, consider if Paul also includes his own writings when he says, "All Scripture is inspired of God and profitable."<sup>19</sup> Do not his statements, "I speak, and not the Lord,"<sup>20</sup> and "I ordain in all churches,"<sup>21</sup> and "Such things as I suffered at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra,"<sup>22</sup> and words similar to these which he wrote from time to time, present<sup>23</sup> the apostolic . . . authority . . . , but not the absolute character of divinely inspired words?

(17) We must note in addition that the Old Testament is not gospel since it does not make known "him who is to come,"<sup>24</sup> but proclaims him in advance. On the other hand,

18. 2 Cor 6.18.

19. 2 Tm 3.16.

20. 1 Cor 7.12.

21. 1 Cor 7.17.

22. 2 Tm 3.11.

23. The MS. is damaged here. Brooke prints *parechonta*; Preuschen, and Blanc following him, leaves a lacuna.

24. Cf. Mt 11.3.

all the New Testament is gospel, not only because it declares alike with the beginning of the Gospel, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,"<sup>25</sup> but also because it contains various ascriptions of praise and teachings of him on account of whom the gospel is gospel.

(18) Furthermore, if God placed apostles, prophets, and evangelists,<sup>26</sup> and pastors and teachers, in the Church,<sup>27</sup> when we examine what the task of the evangelist is, we see that it is not exclusively to narrate in what way the Savior healed a man blind from birth,<sup>28</sup> how he raised a dead man beginning to stink,<sup>29</sup> or how he performed any of his incredible deeds. Since the gospel is characterized also by hortatory discourse to confirm the things concerning Jesus, we shall not hesitate to say that the things written by the apostles are, in a certain way, gospel.

(19) But as regards the second explanation, we must say to the one who objects that we are not correct in naming all the New Testament gospel because the Epistles are not entitled gospel, that in many passages of the Scriptures, when two or more things are given the same name, the name applies more appropriately in the case of one of the things mentioned. For example, although the Savior says, "Call no one teacher on the earth,"<sup>30</sup> the apostle says that teachers also have been appointed in the Church.

(20) These, then, will not be teachers as far as the precise sense of the expression in the gospel. In the same way, everything written in the Epistles will not be gospel when it is compared with the narrative of the deeds, sufferings and words of Jesus. The gospel, however, is the firstfruits of all Scripture, and we offer the firstfruits of all our future activities to the firstfruits of the Scriptures, as we have vowed.

(21) Now, in my opinion, there are four Gospels, as though

25. Jn 1.29.

26. *Evangelistēs*. The word "gospel" is *evangelion*. Origen is taking the work of the *evangelistēs*, i.e. the author of a gospel, to be the same as that of the *evangelistēs* which Paul discusses. Cf. Eph 4.11.

27. Cf. 1 Cor 12.28; Eph 4.11.

28. Cf. Jn 9.1.

29. Cf. Jn 11.39.

30. Cf. Mt 23.8.



they were the elements<sup>31</sup> of the faith of the Church. (The whole world which has been reconciled to God consists<sup>32</sup> of these elements, as Paul says: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself."<sup>33</sup> Jesus took away the sin of this world, for the word which is written, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,"<sup>34</sup> is about the world of the Church.) But I think that John's Gospel, which you have enjoined us to examine to the best of our ability, is the firstfruits of the Gospels. It speaks of him whose descent is traced, and begins from him who is without a genealogy.

(22) For since Matthew, on the one hand, writing for the Hebrews awaiting the son of Abraham and David, says, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham,"<sup>35</sup> and Mark, knowing what he is writing, relates the "beginning of the gospel,"<sup>36</sup> perhaps we find its goal in John [when he tells of]<sup>37</sup> the Word "in the beginning,"<sup>38</sup> the Word being God. But Luke also, . . . ;<sup>39</sup> but indeed he reserves for the one who leaned on Jesus' breast<sup>40</sup> the greater and more perfect expressions concerning Jesus, for none of those manifested his divinity as fully as John when he presented him saying, "I am the light of the world";<sup>41</sup> "I am the way, and the truth, and the life";<sup>42</sup> "I am the resurrection";<sup>43</sup> "I am the door";<sup>44</sup> "I am the good shepherd";<sup>45</sup> and in the

31. *Stoicheia*. This term was commonly used in philosophy after the time of Plato (cf. *Tht.* 201e) of the four basic components of the world: earth, air, fire, and water. Origen is alluding to this philosophical view in the analogy he presents here.

32. Cf. Col 1.17.

33. 2 Cor 5.19.

34. Cf. Jn 1.29.

35. Mt 1.1.

36. Mk 1.1.

37. *Diēgoumenō* is supplied by Brooke. The codex is damaged. He supplies the dative in agreement with John. It is possible that a passive participle in agreement with goal might be correct. "In John," *para tō Jōannē*, would then become "by John."

38. Cf. Jn 1.1.

39. Lacuna in the text. Brooke's emended text reads, "But Luke also having said in the beginning of Acts, 'The former treatise I made of all things which Jesus began to do and teach.'"

40. Cf. Jn 13.25.

41. Jn 8.12.

42. Jn 14.6.

43. Jn 11.25.

44. Jn 10.9.

45. Jn 10.11.

Apocalypse, "I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."<sup>46</sup>

(23) We might dare say, then, that the Gospels are the firstfruits of all Scriptures, but that the firstfruits of the Gospels is that according to John, whose meaning no one can understand who has not leaned on Jesus' breast nor received Mary from Jesus to be his mother also. But he who would be another John must also become such as John, to be shown to be Jesus, so to speak. For if Mary had no son except Jesus, in accordance with those who hold a sound opinion of her, and Jesus says to his mother, "Behold your son,"<sup>47</sup> and not, "Behold, this man also is your son," he has said equally, "Behold, this is Jesus whom you bore." For indeed everyone who has been perfected "no longer lives, but Christ lives in him,"<sup>48</sup> and since "Christ lives" in him, it is said of him to Mary, "Behold your son," the Christ.

(24) How great, then, must be our understanding, that we may be able to understand in a worthy manner the word which is stored up in the earthen treasures<sup>49</sup> of paltry language, whose written character is read by all who happen upon it, and whose sound is heard by all who present their physical ears? What also must we say? For he who will understand these matters accurately must say truthfully, "But we have the mind of Christ, that we may know the graces that have been given us by God."<sup>50</sup>

(25) Now it is possible to introduce evidence from Paul's words on our point that the whole New Testament is the gospel when he writes somewhere, "according to my gospel."<sup>51</sup> For among Paul's writings we do not have a book called a "gospel" in the usual sense, but everything which he preached and said was the gospel. And the things which he preached and said he also wrote. What he wrote, therefore, was "gospel."

46. Rv 22.13.

47. Jn 19.26.

49. Cf. 2 Cor 4.7.

50. 1 Cor 2.16.12. See R. E. Heine, "Gregory of Nyssa's Apology for Allegory," *VC* (1984):361.

51. Rom 2.16.

48. Cf. Gal 2.20.

(26) But if the writings of Paul were gospel, it is consistent with that to say that Peter's writings also were gospel and, in general, those which present the sojourn of Christ and prepare for his coming and produce it in the souls of those who are willing to receive the Word of God who stands at the door and knocks<sup>52</sup> and wishes to enter their souls.

*What is a "gospel"?*

(27) It is now time, however, to examine what the term "gospel" means, and why these books have this title. The gospel, therefore, is a discourse containing a report of things which, with good reason, make the hearer glad whenever he accepts what is reported, because they are beneficial. Such a discourse is no less gospel should it also be examined with reference to the hearer's attitude. The gospel is either a discourse which contains the presence of a good for the believer, or a discourse which announces that an awaited good is present.

(28) All the definitions which we have already mentioned fit those books entitled the gospels. For each gospel brings cheer with good reason. Each is a composition of declarations which are beneficial to the one who believes them and does not misconstrue them since it produces a benefit in him. Each gospel teaches about the saving sojourn with men of Christ Jesus, "the firstborn of every creature,"<sup>53</sup> a sojourn which occurred on account of men. But it is also clear to everyone who believes, that each gospel is a discourse which teaches about the sojourn of the good Father in his Son with those who are willing to receive him.

(29) And it is also obvious that these books announce something good which has been awaited. For John the Baptist summed up more or less the voice of all the people when he sent to Jesus and said, "Are you he who is to come, or do we look for another?"<sup>54</sup> For the Christ was the good awaited by the people. The prophets preached about him until even all

52. Cf. Rv 3.20.

54. Mt 11.3.

53. Col 1.15.

the common people who were under the Law and prophets had their hopes in him, as the Samaritan woman testifies when she says, "I know that the Messiah is coming, who is called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things."<sup>55</sup>

(30) But Simon and Cleophas too, talking "together of all the things which had happened"<sup>56</sup> to Jesus, say to the risen Christ himself, though they did not yet know that he had risen from the dead, "Are you alone a stranger in Jerusalem, and do not know the things that have been done there in these days?" And he said, "What things?" and they answered, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and princes delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who would redeem Israel."<sup>57</sup>

(31) Besides these, when Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, found his own brother Simon, he said, "We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ."<sup>58</sup> And a little later, when Philip found Nathanael, he said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth."<sup>59</sup>

(32) But someone may think he must object to the first definition since those writings not entitled gospels also fall under it. For the Law and the prophets are believed to be discourses containing a report of things which, with good reason, make the hearers glad whenever they accept the things which are reported, because they are beneficial.

(33) One might reply to this, however, that before the coming of Christ, the Law and the prophets did not contain the proclamation which belongs to the definition of the gospel since he who explained the mysteries in them had not yet come. But since the Savior has come, and has caused<sup>60</sup> the gospel to be embodied in the gospel, he has made all things gospel, as it were.

55. Jn 4.25.

57. Lk 24.18-20.

59. Jn 1.45.

60. Accepting *poiēsās*, the reading of M, with Brooke and Blanc. Preuschen has *thelēsās*.

56. Lk 24.14.

58. Jn 1.41.

(34) And I would not be off target to use the example, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."<sup>61</sup> Because . . .<sup>62</sup> sons of men in his divinity, when he had removed the veil on the Law and prophets,<sup>63</sup> he showed the divine nature of them all when he presented clearly to those wanting to become disciples of his wisdom what things were true in the law of Moses, which the ancients cultivated in a copy and shadow,<sup>64</sup> and what the truth was in the events in the stories, which "happened to them in a figure, and were written" on account of us "on whom the ends of the world have come."<sup>65</sup>

(35) Everyone, then, in whom Christ has dwelt, worships God neither in Jerusalem nor on the mountain of the Samaritans, but because he has learned that "God is spirit," serves him spiritually "in spirit and truth,"<sup>66</sup> and no longer worships the Father and creator of all things figuratively.

(36) Nothing of the ancients was gospel, then, before that gospel which came into existence because of the coming of Christ. But the gospel, which is a New Testament, made the newness of the Spirit which never grows old shine forth in the light of knowledge. This newness of the Spirit removed us from "the antiquity of the letter."<sup>67</sup> It is proper to the New Testament, although it is stored up in all the Scriptures. But that gospel which produced the gospel thought to exist in the Old Testament too, had to be called "gospel" in a special sense.

(37) We must not fail to remark, however, that Christ came spiritually even before he came in a body. He came to the more perfect and to those who were not still infants or under pedagogues and tutors,<sup>68</sup> in whom the spiritual "fullness of the time"<sup>69</sup> was present, as, for example, the patriarchs, and Moses the servant,<sup>70</sup> and the prophets who contemplated the glory of Christ.

(38) But just as Christ visited the perfect before his sojourn

61. Gal 5.9.

63. Cf. 2 Cor 3.15.

65. 1 Cor 10.11.

67. Rom 7.6.

69. Gal 4.4.

62. Lacuna in the text.

64. Cf. Heb 8.5.

66. Jn 4.24.

68. Gal 3.25; 4.2.

70. Cf. Heb 3.5.

which was visible and bodily, so also he has not yet visited those who are still infants after his coming which has been proclaimed, since they are “under tutors and governors”<sup>71</sup> and have not yet arrived at “the fullness of the time.”<sup>72</sup> The forerunners of Christ have visited them—words with good reason called “pedagogues” because they are suited to souls which are children—but the Son himself, who glorified himself as the Word who is God,<sup>73</sup> has not yet visited them, because he awaits the preparation which must take place in men of God who are about to receive his divinity.

(39) And we must also know that just as there is a “law” which contains a “shadow of the good things to come,”<sup>74</sup> which have been revealed by the law proclaimed in accordance with truth, so also the gospel, which is thought to be understood by all who read it, teaches a shadow of the mysteries of Christ.

(40) And that which John calls an eternal gospel,<sup>75</sup> which would properly be called a spiritual gospel, clearly presents both the mysteries presented by Christ’s words and the things of which his acts were symbols, to those who consider “all things face to face”<sup>76</sup> concerning the Son of God himself. Consistent with these matters, we understand that just as one is a Jew outwardly and cir[cumcised], there being both an outward and inward cir[cumcision],<sup>77</sup> so it is with a Christian and baptism.

(41) Both Paul and Peter, formerly being Jews outwardly and circumcised, later received from Jesus to be such also inwardly, not only confessing in words, but demonstrating in deeds<sup>78</sup> that they were Jews outwardly for the salvation of the many in accordance with the dispensation. And one must say the same thing also of their Christianity.

(42) Just as Paul cannot help those Jews in the flesh unless,

71. Cf. Gal 4.2.

73. Cf. Jn 1.1.

75. Cf. Rv 14.6.

77. Cf. Rom 2.28–29. There are some textual uncertainties in this passage.

78. Cf. Jas 2.18.

72. Ibid.

74. Heb 10.1.

76. Cf. Prv 8.9.

when reason persuades, he circumcise Timothy,<sup>79</sup> and, when it is reasonable, be shaved<sup>80</sup> and offer an offering and, in general, become a Jew to the Jews, that he might gain the Jews,<sup>81</sup> so he who is set out for the benefit of many cannot, through inward Christianity alone, improve those who are instructed in the basic principles of outward Christianity and lead them forth to better and higher things.

(43) This is why we must live as a Christian in a spiritual and in a physical manner. And wherever it is necessary to preach the literal<sup>82</sup> gospel declaring among the carnal<sup>83</sup> that we "know nothing except Jesus Christ, and him crucified,"<sup>84</sup> we must do this. But whenever we find those who are established in the Spirit and are bearing fruit in him<sup>85</sup> and desiring the heavenly wisdom, we ought to share with them the Word who was restored from being made flesh to what "he was in the beginning with God."<sup>86</sup>

(44) We do not think our discussion was in vain when we examined these matters about the gospel, distinguishing in concept, as it were, the gospel which is perceptible by the senses from the intelligible and spiritual gospel.

(45) And, indeed, the task before us now is to translate the gospel perceptible to the senses into the spiritual gospel. For what is the interpretation of the gospel perceptible to the senses unless it is translated into the spiritual gospel? It is little or nothing, even though the common people believe they receive the things which are revealed from the literal sense.

(46) But all kinds of difficulties stand in our way as we attempt to reach into the depths of the meaning of the gospel and examine the bare truth of the types in it.

#### *The contents of the gospel*

(47) If the good things in the proclamation of those who preach the good news are investigated, the apostles preach

79. Cf. Acts 16.3.

81. Cf. 1 Cor 9.20.

83. Cf. 1 Cor 3.1.

85. Cf. Col 1.10.

80. Cf. Acts 21.24.

82. Or, bodily (*sōmatikon*).

84. 1 Cor 2.2.

86. Jn 1.2.

Jesus. They are said, however, to preach him as good, and the resurrection. The resurrection is Jesus in some way, for Jesus says, "I am the resurrection."<sup>87</sup> Jesus, however, preaches the things stored up for the saints as good news to the poor,<sup>88</sup> inviting them to accept the divine promises.

(48) And the divine Scriptures bear witness both to the preaching of the gospel by the apostles and to that by our Savior. David, on the one hand, says of the apostles, and perhaps also of the evangelists, "The Lord shall give the word to them that preach good tidings with great power; the king of powers is of the beloved."<sup>89</sup> At the same time he also teaches that it is not the composition of a speech and the utterance of sounds and the practised beauty of speech that produce persuasion, but the provision of divine power.

(49) Wherefore Paul also says somewhere, "I will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power. For the Kingdom of God is not in speech, but in power."<sup>90</sup> And elsewhere, "And my speech and my preaching were not in the persuasive words of wisdom, but in a demonstration of the Spirit and power."<sup>91</sup>

(50) Simon and Cleophas testify to this power and say, "Was not our heart burning on the road as he opened the Scripture to us?"<sup>92</sup> And since the quantity of power God supplies to those who speak also differs, the apostles had great power in accordance with David's statement: "The Lord shall give the word to them that preach good tidings with great power."<sup>93</sup>

(51) Isaias, on the other hand, declares, "How beautiful are the feet of those who announce good things!"<sup>94</sup> Since Isaias perceived the beautiful and opportune preaching of the apostles who follow him who said, "I am the way,"<sup>95</sup> he praises the "feet" which proceed over the intelligible way, which is Christ Jesus, and go in to God through the door.<sup>96</sup> But these, whose feet are beautiful, announce Jesus as "good things."

87. Jn 11.25.

89. Ps 67.12 (LXX).

91. 1 Cor 2.4.

93. Ps 67.12 (LXX).

94. Cf. Is 52.7. Origen quotes it, however, as it appears in Rom 10.15.

95. Jn 14.6.

88. Cf. Mt 11.5.

90. 1 Cor 4.19-20.

92. Lk 24.32.

96. Cf. Jn 10.9.



(52) And let no one be surprised if we have understood Jesus to be announced by the plural "good things." For when we have understood the things of which the names which the Son of God is called are predicated, we will understand how Jesus, whom these whose feet are beautiful preach, is many good things.

(53) For life is one good thing, and Jesus is life. And "the light of the world"<sup>97</sup> is another good thing, which is "the true light"<sup>98</sup> and "the light of men."<sup>99</sup> The Son of God is said to be all these. The truth is another good thing in concept over and above the life and the light; the way which leads to it is a fourth in addition to these. Our Savior teaches that he himself is all these when he says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."<sup>100</sup>

(54) And is it not a good thing to shed the grave and death, and to rise obtaining this from the Lord insofar as he is resurrection, since he says, "I am the resurrection"?<sup>101</sup> But the door too, through which one enters into the highest blessedness, is a good thing, and Christ says, "I am the door."<sup>102</sup>

(55) And what must we say of wisdom which "God created as the beginning of his ways for his works"?<sup>103</sup> Her Father rejoiced at her, rejoicing in her manifold spiritual beauty which only spiritual eyes see. Wisdom's divine heavenly beauty invites the one who contemplates it to love. For the wisdom of God which is proclaimed along with the good things mentioned previously by those whose "feet are beautiful" is a good thing.

(56) But the power of God too, which Christ is,<sup>104</sup> is now the eighth good thing in our list.

(57) And we must not pass over in silence the Word who is God after the Father of all things. For this too is a good thing, no less than any other. Blessed, therefore, are those who comprehend these good things and receive them from those whose feet are beautiful, and who proclaim them.

97. Jn 8.12.

99. Jn 1.4.

101. Jn 11.25.

103. Cf. Prv 8.22.

98. Jn 1.9.

100. Jn 14.6.

102. Jn 10.9.

104. Rom 1.16.

(58) But even if one who is a Corinthian, since Paul judges to know nothing with him except "Jesus Christ, and him crucified,"<sup>105</sup> should, when he learns this, receive him who became man because of us, he is "at the beginning" of good things when he becomes a "man of God" by the man Jesus and dies to sin by his death, for he too, "in that he died to sin, died once for all."<sup>106</sup>

(59) Everyone, however, who has become conformed to his resurrection receives the power to live unto God from his life since Jesus, "in that he lives, lives unto God."<sup>107</sup> And who will doubt that absolute righteousness is a good thing, and absolute holiness, and absolute redemption? Those who proclaim Jesus proclaim these very things too, saying that he has become righteousness for us from God, and holiness, and redemption.<sup>108</sup>

(60) But one who presents how Jesus is a multitude of good things can infer from these innumerable things written about him that the things which are in him in whom all the fullness of divinity "was pleased" to dwell "bodily"<sup>109</sup> are by no means contained in writings.

(61) And why do I say "in writings," when John says even of the whole world, "The world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that would be written."<sup>110</sup>

(62) It is the same thing, therefore, to say that the apostles preach the Savior and that they preach good things. For he is the one who received from the good Father that he be good things, in order that each one who received through Jesus the thing or things he is capable of, might engage in good things.

(63) But the apostles too, whose "feet are beautiful," and their emulators, could not have announced the good things had Jesus not previously announced good things to them, as Isaias says, "I myself who speak am here; as the springtime upon the mountains, as the feet of him who announces a message of peace, as one announcing good things, because I

105. 1 Cor 2.2.

107. Ibid.

109. Cf. Col 2.9; 1.19.

106. Rom 6.10.

108. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

110. Jn 21.25.

shall make your salvation heard, saying to Sion, Your God shall reign."<sup>111</sup>

(64) For what are the mountains on which the speaker acknowledges that he is present except those who are inferior to none of the highest and greatest on earth? Those who are fit ministers of the New Testament<sup>112</sup> must seek these out that they may keep the commandment which says, "Go up onto a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Sion; lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem."<sup>113</sup>

(65) But do not be surprised if Jesus announces the good things which happen to be nothing other than himself to those who are about to announce the good things. For the son of God announces the good things of himself to those who are able to learn of him without the aid of others. But he who treads upon the mountains and announces the good things to them does not despise the poor in soul since he was instructed by the good Father who makes "the sun" rise "on the bad and good" and rains "on the just and unjust."<sup>114</sup>

(66) For he brings good news to these too, as he himself testifies when he took Isaias and read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, therefore he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind." For "when he closed" the book and "gave it back to the attendant, he sat down," and when all fix their eyes on him he says, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears."<sup>115</sup>

(67) We ought to know that every good deed done to Jesus is also included in so great a gospel. For example, there was the woman who had performed wicked deeds and repented. She was able to anoint Jesus with a fragrant substance because of her genuine repentance of evil deeds, and she produced the scent of ointment in the whole house, perceptible to everyone there.<sup>116</sup>

(68) For this reason it is also written, "Wherever this gospel

111. Is 52.6-7.

113. Is 40.9.

115. Lk 4.18-21; cf. Is 61.1.

112. 2 Cor 3.6.

114. Cf. Mt 5.45.

116. Cf. Lk 7.37; Jn 12.3.

is preached among all the nations, that also which she has done shall be told for a memory of her."<sup>117</sup> Now it is clear that the things done to Jesus' disciples [also] happen to him. Therefore, when he points out those who have received benefits, he says to those who have done the beneficial deeds, "What you did to these, you did to me."<sup>118</sup> Consequently, every good deed which we perform for our neighbor is taken up into the gospel which is written in the tablets of heaven and read by all those worthy of knowledge of all things.

(69) But also, on the contrary, the sins committed against Jesus are a part of the gospel for the accusation of those who have committed them.

(70) Judas' betrayal, therefore, and the outcry of the impious people who said, "Away with such an one from the earth,"<sup>119</sup> and, "Crucify him, crucify him,"<sup>120</sup> and the mockery of those who crowned him with thorns, and the things like these have been included in the Gospels.

(71) Consequently, we should understand that everyone who betrays Jesus' disciples has been reckoned a betrayer of Jesus. Therefore, [he said] to Saul while he was still a persecutor, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."<sup>121</sup>

(72) But who are those who have the thorns with which they crown Jesus to dishonor him? Those who have received the Word of God and "yield no fruit," because they are choked "by the cares and riches and pleasures of life."<sup>122</sup>

(73) For this reason we must beware lest perhaps we too, as though crowning Jesus with our own thorns, be recorded to be like these and be read about by those who learn the Jesus who is in and with all spiritual or holy persons. They learn how he is anointed with ointment, entertained, and glorified, or, on the contrary, how he is dishonored, mocked, and beaten.

(74) We have made these comments out of necessity, then,

117. Mt 26.13.

119. Acts 22.22.

121. Acts 9.4-5.

118. Mt 25.40.

120. Lk 23.21.

122. Lk 8.14.

to show how our good deeds and the sins of those who stumble are included in the gospel either "to life eternal or to reproach and eternal shame."<sup>123</sup>

*Angels, the Old Testament and the gospel*

(75) But if there are among men those who are honored with the ministry of evangelists, and Jesus himself preaches the good news and preaches the gospel to the poor, there was no need that the "angels" who had been made "spirits" by God and who were "flames of fire," "ministers" of the Father of all things, should themselves be deprived of being evangelists too.<sup>124</sup>

(76) It was for this reason also that an angel stood by the shepherds and, when he had made glory shine around them, said, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for today a Savior is born to you in the city of David, who is Christ the Lord."<sup>125</sup> And when people do not yet understand the mystery of the gospel, their superiors, being a heavenly army of God, praise God and say, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among men."<sup>126</sup>

(77) After the angels said these things, they withdrew from the shepherds into heaven and left us to consider how the "joy" announced to us through the birth of Christ Jesus is "glory to God in the highest," since those who were humbled to the dust return "to" their "rest"<sup>127</sup> and are about to glorify God "in the highest" through Christ.

(78) But the angels marvel too at the peace Jesus shall bring to earth, the battlefield to which "Lucifer, who rises early," fell "from heaven,"<sup>128</sup> and where he is crushed by Jesus.

(79) In addition to what has been said, we must know this too about the gospel. First of all, it is the gospel of Christ Jesus, the head of the whole body of the saved, as Mark says:

123. Dn 12.2.

124. Heb 1.7; Ps 103.4. I have followed Brooke's punctuation. Preuschen has a question mark, followed by Blanc.

125. Lk 2.9-11.

126. Lk 2.14.

127. Cf. Ps 114.6-7; 43.25.

128. Is 14.12.

“The beginning of the gospel of Christ Jesus.”<sup>129</sup> But further, it is also the gospel of the apostles, on account of which Paul says, “According to my gospel.”<sup>130</sup>

(80) But the beginning of the gospel (for its greatness consists of a beginning, a sequence, a middle, and end) is either all the Old Testament, John being its type, or, because of the connection of the New with the Old, the final events of the Old Testament which were presented through John.

(81) For the same Mark says, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As it is written in Isaias the prophet, Behold I send my angel before your face, who shall prepare your way. A voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”<sup>131</sup>

(82) This passage causes me to wonder how the heterodox attribute the two testaments to two gods, when they are refuted no less even by this word. For how could John, the man of the demiurge, and ignorant of the new deity, as they suppose, be the beginning of the gospel, as they themselves think, when he belongs to a different God?

(83) The angels, however, are not merely entrusted with one brief service pertaining to the gospel, nor merely with visiting the shepherds. At the end of time an angel flying in mid-air with the gospel will proclaim good news to every nation, since the good Father has not completely forsaken those who have fallen away from him.

(84) Wherefore, John, the son of Zebedee, says in the Apocalypse, “And I saw an angel flying in the midst of heaven having the eternal gospel to preach to those who sit upon the earth, and to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory because the hour of his judgment has come; and adore him who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’”<sup>132</sup>

(85) Since, then, according to one interpretation, we presented all the Old Testament, which is indicated by John’s

129. Mk 1.1.

131. Mk 1.1-3.

130. Rom 2.16.

132. Rv 14.6-7.

name, to be "the beginning of the gospel," we shall juxtapose from Acts what is said of the royal Ethiopian eunuch and Philip, so that this interpretation will not be without a witness. For "Philip," Scripture says, "preached the Lord Jesus to him, beginning from the Scripture of Isaias which reads, 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb without voice before his shearer.'" <sup>133</sup> Now how does he preach Jesus, beginning from the prophet, unless Isaias was some part of the beginning of the gospel?

(86) But at the same time this can also be shown from our remarks in the beginning about all divine Scripture being capable of being gospel. For indeed if the one who preaches "preaches good things," and all those before Christ's bodily sojourn preach Christ as being "the good things" as we demonstrated, the words of all of these are in some way part of the gospel.

(87) Since whatever is called gospel is spoken in the whole world, we understand that it is proclaimed in the whole world, not only in the surrounding earth, but also in the whole system of heaven and earth, or of the heavens and earth.

### *Conclusion*

(88) And why must we prolong further our discourse on what the gospel is? The remarks we have made are quite sufficient. On the basis of these words, which are not inappropriate, it is possible to gather comparable things from the Scriptures and see what the glory of the good things in Jesus Christ is from the gospel. The gospel is served by men and angels and, I think, also by principalities and powers and thrones and dominions "and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," <sup>134</sup> since indeed it is also served by Christ himself. Here, perhaps, we shall stop the preliminaries to our reading together the things which have been written.

(89) Let us now ask God to work with us through Christ in the Holy Spirit to explain the mystical meaning stored up like a treasure in the words.

133. Acts 8.35-32 (Is 53.7).

134. Eph 1.21.

## In the beginning was the Word.

### *Sense of the term "beginning"*

(90) It is not only the Greeks who say that the designation "beginning" means many things. For, indeed, if anyone should observe this title, collecting its occurrences from every source, and should wish, by careful examination, to understand its application in each passage of the Scriptures, he will discover many meanings of the expression even in the word of God.

(91) One meaning involves change, and this belongs, as it were, to a way and length which is revealed by the Scripture: "The beginning of a good way is to do justice."<sup>135</sup> For since a "good way" is very great, we must understand that the practical, which is presented by the phrase "to do justice," relates to the initial matters, and the contemplative to those that follow. I think its stopping point and goal is in the so-called restoration because no one is left as an enemy then, if indeed the statement is true, "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. And the last enemy to be destroyed is death."<sup>136</sup>

(92) For at that time those who have come to God because of the Word which is with him<sup>137</sup> will have the contemplation of God as their only activity, that, having been accurately formed<sup>138</sup> in the knowledge of the Father, they may all thus become a son, since now the Son alone has known the Father.

(93) For if someone should carefully examine when it is that those shall know the Father to whom the Son who has known the Father reveals him,<sup>139</sup> and should see that the one who sees now sees "through a mirror and indistinctly"<sup>140</sup> not yet having known "as he ought to know,"<sup>141</sup> he would be correct to say that no one has known the Father even if he be an apostle or prophet,<sup>142</sup> but that it will occur whenever they become one as [the] Son and the Father are one.<sup>143</sup>

135. Prv 16.7 (LXX).

136. 1 Cor 15.25-26. On *apokatastasis* see PGL, s.v. 195.

137. Cf. Jn 1.1.

138. Cf. Gal 4.19.

139. Cf. Mt 11.27; Lk 10.22.

140. 1 Cor 13.12.

141. 1 Cor 8.2.

142. Cf. Eph 3.5.

143. Jn 10.30.



(94) But if anyone should think that we have digressed by explaining one meaning of "beginning" and making these remarks, we must show that the digression was necessary and useful for that which lies ahead. For if "beginning" has to do with change and a way and length, "and the beginning of a good way is to do justice,"<sup>144</sup> it is possible to know that every good way has "doing justice" as a "beginning" in some manner, and after the beginning, contemplation, and in what manner it has contemplation.

(95) There is also a "beginning" of creation, however, which would seem to be its use in the statement, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth."<sup>145</sup> But I think what is meant is stated more clearly in Job in the statement, "This is the beginning of the Lord's creation,<sup>146</sup> made to be mocked by his angels."<sup>147</sup>

(96) For someone might suppose that "heaven and earth" were made "in the beginning" of those things which happened to exist in the genesis of the world. But it is better to say, as with the second quotation, that of those many beings which have come into existence with bodies, the first of those with bodies was that called a dragon, and named also perhaps "the great sea-monster"<sup>148</sup> which the Lord subdued.

(97) And we must raise the question if, while the saints continued to live a completely immaterial and bodiless life in blessedness, he who is called a dragon deserved to be bound to matter and a body before all others because he fell from the pure life, so that this is why the Lord should say through storm and clouds as a warning, "This is the beginning of the work of the Lord, made to be mocked by his angels."<sup>149</sup>

(98) Nevertheless, it is possible that the dragon is not the beginning of the work of the Lord in general, but is the be-

144. Prv 16.7 (LXX; 16.5 Douay-Rheims).

145. Gn 1.1.

146. *Plasma*, something molded or formed, as by a potter.

147. Jb 40.14 (19).

148. Jb 3.8.

149. Jb 40.14 (19). In *Princ.* 1.5.5 Origen quotes Jb 40.20 and identifies the dragon with the devil in a discussion of the fall of Satan from heaven. He makes the same identification in *Princ.* 2.8.3. Origen is thinking here of the original fall of souls from God, in which the devil fell furthest.

ginning of the many made with a body "to be mocked by his angels," since some can exist with a body in another manner. For the soul of the sun is in a body too, as is true also of all creation, of which the apostle says, "All creation groans and travails until now."<sup>150</sup>

(99) Perhaps the following statement is also about that: "Creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope,"<sup>151</sup> that bodies and doing bodily things, which is . . . necessary . . . for one in a body, might be vanity.<sup>152</sup> He who is in a body does bodily things unwillingly. For this reason creation was subjected to vanity unwillingly.

(100) And he who does bodily things unwillingly does what he does because of hope. It is as if we should say that Paul wishes "to remain in the flesh,"<sup>153</sup> not willingly, but because of hope. For though he preferred "to depart and be with Christ,"<sup>154</sup> considered by itself, it was not irrational for him to wish "to remain in the flesh" because of the benefit to others and progress in the things hoped for, not only his own progress, but also that of those benefited by him.

(101) And in relation to this, we will be able to understand what is meant by the beginning of creation, and what Wisdom says in Proverbs: "For God," she says, "created me the beginning of his ways for his works."<sup>155</sup> It is possible, of course, for this also to be referred to our first meaning, i.e. that pertaining to a way,<sup>156</sup> because it is said, "God created me the beginning of his ways."

(102) But someone will say with good reason that the God of all things is clearly a beginning too, proposing<sup>157</sup> that the Father is the beginning of the son, and the creator<sup>158</sup> is the beginning of the things created and, in general, God is the beginning of the things which exist. And by understanding

150. Rom 8.22.

151. Rom 8.20.

152. There are two lacunae in the text.

153. Cf. Phil 1.24.

154. Cf. Phil 1.23.

155. Prv 8.22.

156. See above, paragraphs 91ff.

157. Accepting Preuschen's suggested emendation of *proballōn* for *propitōn*.

158. *Dēmiourgos*.

the Son to be the Word, he will justify his view by the statement, "In the beginning was the Word,"<sup>159</sup> because what is said to be in the Father is in the beginning.

(103) And third, that from which something comes, as the underlying matter, is thought to be a beginning by those who understand matter to be uncreated, but not by us who believe that God made the things which are from that which does not exist, as the mother of the seven martyrs in Machabees taught, and the angel of repentance in the *Shepherd of Hermas*.<sup>160</sup>

(104) In addition to these definitions, that "according to which" something is made, as according to its form, is also a beginning in the following manner. Since the firstborn of all creation is the image of the invisible God,<sup>161</sup> the Father is his beginning. And likewise also Christ is the beginning of those made according to the image of God.<sup>162</sup>

(105) For if men are "according to the image," and the image according to the Father, the "according to which" of Christ, on the one hand, is the Father, his beginning but, on the other hand, Christ is the "according to which" of men, who are made, not according to that of which Christ is the image, but according to the image.<sup>163</sup> The statement, "In the beginning was the Word," will fit the same paradigm.

(106) There is also a beginning that pertains to learning, according to which we say that the letters of the alphabet are the beginning of writing.<sup>164</sup> In accordance with this the apostle says, "Although, because of the time, you should be teachers, you have need that someone teach you again the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God."<sup>165</sup>

(107) Now the beginning pertaining to learning is twofold. One involves its nature and the other its relation to us. It is as if we should say in the case of Christ that, on the one hand,

159. Jn 1.1.

160. Cf. 2 Mc 7.28; *Hermas Mand.* 1.1; *Vis.* 1.1.6.

161. Col 1.15.

162. Cf. Gn 1.27.

163. See Blanc, *Origène* (SC 120.115), n. 4.

164. Grammar was the beginning level of the ancient Greek and Roman school curriculum; cf. Plato, *Sophist* 253.

165. Heb 5.12.

in his nature, divinity is the beginning. But, on the other hand, in his relation to us who are not able to begin from the greatness of the truth about him, it is his humanity, according to which Jesus Christ, and he crucified, is proclaimed to infants.<sup>166</sup> So in accordance with this we say that in nature Christ is the beginning of learning insofar as he is "the wisdom" and "power of God."<sup>167</sup> But in his relation to us the beginning of learning is "the Word became flesh,"<sup>168</sup> that he might dwell among us who are able to receive him only in this manner at first.

(108) And perhaps, for this reason, he is not only the first-born of all creation, but also Adam, [which] means "man." And because he is Adam, Paul says, "The last Adam has become a life-giving spirit."<sup>169</sup> There is also a beginning which pertains to action, in which action there is some goal after the beginning. And consider if wisdom, since it is the beginning of God's actions,<sup>170</sup> can thus be understood as a beginning.

#### *Application to the Son of God*

(109) Although so many meanings of "beginning" have occurred to us at the present time, we are investigating how we ought to take the statement, "In the beginning was the Word."<sup>171</sup> It is clear that we are not to understand it in its meaning related to change, or a way and length. And we should certainly not take it in its meaning related to creation.

(110) But it is possible that he is the "by which," which is effective, since "God commanded and they were created."<sup>172</sup> For Christ is perhaps the creator to whom the Father says, "Let there be light," and "Let there be a firmament."<sup>173</sup>

(111) But it is as the beginning that Christ is creator, according to which he is wisdom. Therefore as wisdom he is called the beginning. For wisdom says in Solomon, "God

166. 1 Cor 2.2; 1.24.

168. Jn 1.14.

170. Cf. Prv 8.22.

172. Ps 148.5. Blanc (SC 120.118-19), notes that Origen alludes to the four causes of Aristotle in the following sections: Material cause (103), formal cause (104-5), final cause (108), and efficient cause (110-111).

173. Gn 1.3.6.

167. Cf. 1 Cor 1.24.

169. 1 Cor 15.45.

171. Jn 1.1.

created me the beginning of his ways for his works,"<sup>174</sup> that "the Word might be in the beginning,"<sup>175</sup> in wisdom. It is wisdom which is understood, on the one hand, taken in relation to the structure of the contemplation and thoughts of all things, but it is the Word which is received, taken in relation to the communication of the things which have been contemplated to spiritual beings.

(112) And it is not extraordinary if, as we have said before, the Savior being many good things has conceived in himself things which are first and second and third. John, therefore, added, declaring of the Word, "What came to be in him was life."<sup>176</sup> Life, therefore, came to be in the Word. And neither is the Word other than the Christ, God the Word, the one with the Father, through whom all things came to be, nor is the life other than the Son of God who says, "I am the way and the truth and the life."<sup>177</sup> Just as life, then, came to be in the Word, so the Word was in the beginning.

(113) But consider if it is possible also for us to take the statement, "In the beginning was the Word,"<sup>178</sup> in accordance with this meaning, so that all things came to be in accordance with the wisdom and plans of the system of thoughts in the Word.

(114) For I think that just as a house and a ship are built or devised according to the plans of the architect, the house and the ship having as their beginning the plans and thoughts in the craftsman, so all things have come to be according to the thoughts of what will be, which were prefigured by God in wisdom, "For he made all things in wisdom."<sup>179</sup>

(115) And we must say that after God had created living wisdom, if I may put it this way, from the models in her he entrusted to her [to present] to the things which exist and to matter [both] their conformation and forms, but I stop short of saying their essences.

174. Prv 8.22.

175. Jn 1.1.

176. Jn 1.3-4.

177. Jn 14.6.

178. Jn 1.1.

179. Ps 103.24. On *protranoomai* (not in LSJ) "prefigure," see *PGL*, s.v., 1190.

(116) On the one hand, it is not difficult to say, roughly speaking, that the son of God is the beginning of the things which exist, since he says, "I am the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, the first and the last."<sup>180</sup> But, on the other hand, we must know that he himself is not the beginning according to everything which he is named.

(117) For insofar as he is life, how can he be the beginning? This life came to be in the Word, which clearly is its beginning. And it is even clearer that he cannot be the beginning insofar as he is the "firstborn of the dead."<sup>181</sup>

(118) And if we should carefully consider all the concepts applied to him, he is the beginning only insofar as he is wisdom. He is not even the beginning insofar as he is the Word, since "the Word" was "in the beginning,"<sup>182</sup> so that someone might say boldly that wisdom is older than all the concepts in the names of the firstborn of all creation.

(119) God, therefore, is altogether one and simple. Our Savior, however, because of the many things, since God "set" him "forth as a propitiation"<sup>183</sup> and firstfruits of all creation,<sup>184</sup> becomes many things, or perhaps even all these things, as the whole creation which can be made free needs him.<sup>185</sup>

(120) And for this reason he becomes the light of men when men, darkened by evil, need the light which shines in the darkness and is not grasped by darkness.<sup>186</sup> He would not have become the light of men if men had not been in darkness.

(121) And it is possible to perceive a similar thing also in the case of him being the firstborn [from] the dead.<sup>187</sup> For if, by way of supposition, the woman had not been deceived and Adam had not fallen into sin,<sup>188</sup> but the man created for incorruption had grasped incorruption, he would have neither descended "into the dust of death"<sup>189</sup> nor died since there

180. Rv 22.13.

182. Jn 1.1.

184. Cf. Jas 1.18.

186. Cf. Jn 1.5.

188. Cf. Gn 3.

181. Col 1.18.

183. Cf. Rom 3.25.

185. Cf. Rom 8.21.

187. Cf. Col 1.18.

189. Cf. Ps 21.16.

would have been no sin for which he had to die because of his love for men. And if he had not done these things, he would not have become the "firstborn from the dead."<sup>190</sup>

(122) We must also consider whether he would not have become a shepherd if man had not been compared "to senseless beasts nor become like them." For if "God saves men and beasts,"<sup>191</sup> he saves what beasts he saves by granting a shepherd to those who lack the capacity for a king.

(123) Once we have collected the titles of the Son, therefore, we must test which of them came into existence later, and whether they would have become so numerous if the saints had begun and continued in blessedness. For perhaps wisdom alone would remain, or word, or life, and by all means truth, but surely not also the other titles which he took in addition because of us.

(124) And blessed indeed are all who, although they need the son of God, have become such that they no longer need him as physician who heals the sick,<sup>192</sup> or as shepherd,<sup>193</sup> or redemption,<sup>194</sup> but as wisdom, and word, and righteousness,<sup>195</sup> or if there is any other title for those who, because of their perfection, can receive his noblest titles. Enough said on the phrase, "In the beginning."

*Explication of "the Word," the title of the Son of God*

(125) But let us consider more carefully what the Word is which is in the beginning. I frequently marvel when I consider the things said about the Christ by some who wish to believe in him. Why in the world, when countless names are applied to our Savior, do they pass by most of them in silence? Even if they should perhaps remember them, they do not interpret them in their proper sense, but say that these name him figuratively. On the other hand, they stop in the case of the title "Word" alone, as if they say that the Christ of God is "Word" alone; and they do not investigate, consistent with the

190. Cf. Col 1.18.

192. Cf. Mt 9.12.

194. Cf. Rom 3.24.

191. Ps 48.13, Ps 35.7.

193. Cf. Jn 10.2.

195. Cf. 1 Cor 1.30.

rest of the names, the meaning of what is indicated by the term "Word."

(126) Now what I mean when I say I marvel at many people—for I shall speak more clearly—is this. The son of God says somewhere, "I am the light of the world."<sup>196</sup> In other places he says, "I am the resurrection,"<sup>197</sup> and again, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."<sup>198</sup> It is also written, "I am the door."<sup>199</sup> And it is said, "I am the good shepherd."<sup>200</sup> And to the Samaritan woman who says, "We know that the Messiah is coming who is called Christ; whenever he comes, he will tell us all things," he answers, "I who speak to you am he."<sup>201</sup>

(127) In addition to these, when he washed the disciples' feet, he confessed that he was their Lord and teacher by these words: "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you speak correctly, for I am."<sup>202</sup>

(128) But he also announces clearly that he is the Son of God when he says, "Do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, you blaspheme, because I said, I am the Son of God?"<sup>203</sup> And, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son, that the son may glorify you."<sup>204</sup>

(129) We find him announcing also that he is king, as when in response to Pilate's question, "Are you the king of the Jews?"<sup>205</sup> he says, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now my kingdom is not thence."<sup>206</sup>

(130) And we have read, "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman."<sup>207</sup> And again, "I am the vine, you are the branches."<sup>208</sup>

(131) Let the saying also be taken into account with these:

196. Jn 8.12.

198. Jn 14.6.

200. Jn 10.11.

202. Jn 13.13.

204. Jn 17.1.

206. Jn 18.36.

208. Cf. Jn 15.5.

197. Jn 11.25.

199. Jn 10.9.

201. Jn 4.25-26.

203. Jn 10.36.

205. Jn 18.33.

207. Jn 15.1.



"I am the bread of life,"<sup>209</sup> and again, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven" and "gave life to the world."<sup>210</sup> We have presented these titles which suggested themselves at present from those which occur in the Gospels. The Son of God says that he is all these things.

(132) But he also says in the Apocalypse of John, "I am the first and the last and the living one, and I was dead, and behold I am living forever and ever."<sup>211</sup> And again, "I am the alpha and the omega, and the first and the last, the beginning and the end."<sup>212</sup>

(133) The discerning reader of the Holy Books can take several similar things also from the prophets. For example, he calls himself a "chosen arrow" and a "servant of God" and a "light of the gentiles."<sup>213</sup>

(134) Isaias speaks as follows to be sure: "From my mother's womb he called me by my name and he made my mouth like a sharp sword and he hid me under the shadow of his hand. He made me as a chosen arrow and hid me in his quiver. And he said to me, You are my servant Israel, and in you I will be glorified."<sup>214</sup>

(135) And a little further he said: "And my God shall be my strength. And he said to me, This is a great thing for you to be called my servant, to establish the tribes of Jacob and to turn back the diaspora of Israel. Behold I have set you for a light of the gentiles that you might be for salvation to the end of the earth."<sup>215</sup> But also in Jeremias he likens himself to a lamb as follows, "I was as an innocent lamb led to be slaughtered."<sup>216</sup>

(136) Therefore, he applies these and similar titles to himself. But it is possible to collect 10,000 times as many titles which are applied to the Son of God in the Gospels by the apostles and the prophets. These represent either those who wrote the Gospels setting out their own idea of what he is, or the apostles praising him on the basis of what they have

209. Jn 6.35.

211. Rv 1.17-18.

213. Is 49.2.3.6.

215. Is 49.5-6.

210. Jn 6.51.33.

212. Rv 22.13; 21.6.

214. Is 49.1-3.

216. Jer 11.19.

learned, or the prophets proclaiming in advance his coming sojourn and declaring the things about him with different names.

(137) John the Baptist, for example, calls him "Lamb of God," when he says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."<sup>217</sup> And he calls him "man" in these words: "This is he of whom I said, After me comes a man who ranks before me because he was before me, and I did not know him."<sup>218</sup>

(138) In the catholic epistle John declares that he is an "advocate" with the Father concerning our souls when he says, "And if anyone sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just."<sup>219</sup>

(139) And he adds, "And he is the propitiatory for our sins."<sup>220</sup> In a similar manner Paul says that he is a "propitiation," when he declares, "Whom God proposed to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, for the remission of former sins, in the forbearance of God."<sup>221</sup>

(140) And he has been proclaimed according to Paul to be the wisdom and power of God, as he says in the Epistle to the Corinthians that Christ is the power and wisdom of God.<sup>222</sup> In addition to these titles, he states that he is both "sanctification" and "redemption," for he says, "God made him our wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption."<sup>223</sup>

(141) But he also teaches us that he is a great high priest, when he writes to the Hebrews, "Having, therefore, a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold fast our confession."<sup>224</sup>

(142) But in addition to these, the prophets also apply other names to him. Jacob calls him Juda in the blessing to his sons: "Juda, may your brothers praise you; may your hands be on the back of your enemies; [the sons of your father shall bow down to you];<sup>225</sup> Juda is a lion's whelp; you

217. Jn 1.29.

219. 1 Jn 2.1.

221. Cf. Rom 3.25-26.

223. 1 Cor 1.30.

225. Preuschen thinks this clause was omitted in the MSS. by homoiote-

218. Jn 1.30-31.

220. 1 Jn 2.2.

222. Cf. 1 Cor 1.24.

224. Heb 4.14.

sprung up, my son, from a shoot; you lay down and slept as a lion and as a whelp; who shall awaken him?"<sup>226</sup> . . . But this is not the time to present in plain language how the things said to Juda pertain to Christ.

(143) But even the objection which can reasonably be adduced, "A ruler shall not fail from Juda, and a leader from his thighs,"<sup>227</sup> will be solved more appropriately in other places.

(144) And Isaias knows that the Christ is named Jacob and Israel, when he says, "Jacob is my servant, I will help him; Israel is my elect, my soul has accepted him. He shall proclaim judgment to the gentiles. He shall not contend or cry out, nor shall anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench until he send forth judgment to victory,<sup>228</sup> and the gentiles shall hope in his name."<sup>229</sup>

(145) For Matthew shows clearly in his gospel that it is the Christ concerning whom these things have been prophesied when he recalls a portion of the passage and says, "That that which was said might be fulfilled, he shall not contend or cry out," and the rest.<sup>230</sup>

(146) But David also is called the Christ, as when Ezechiel prophesied to the shepherds and added, in the person of God, "I will raise up David my servant, who will shepherd them."<sup>231</sup> For the patriarch David will not be raised up to shepherd the saints, but Christ.

(147) And in addition, Isaias calls the Christ "rod" and "flower," in the statement: "And a rod shall come forth out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of God shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit

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leuton and that its inclusion is necessary to bring out the Messianic significance of the citation. Blanc omits it.

226. Gn 49.8-9.

227. Gn 49.10.

228. Accepting Preuschen's suggestion to read *eis nikos* with the text of Mt 12.20. He prints *ek nikous* and marks it as a textual corruption.

229. Is 42.1-4. After the first sentence, Origen follows the text as it appears in Mt 12.18-21.

230. Mt 12.17.19.

231. Cf. Ez 34.23.

of knowledge and godliness, and a spirit of the fear of God shall fill him."<sup>232</sup>

(148) And also in the Psalms our Lord is said to be a "stone" as follows: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same became the head of the corner. This was done by the Lord, and it is wonderful in our eyes."<sup>233</sup>

(149) Now the gospel, and Luke in Acts, reveal that the stone is no other than the Christ. The gospel has it this way: "Have you never read: the stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner? Everyone who has fallen on this stone shall be broken; and it shall crush him on whom it falls."<sup>234</sup>

(150) And Luke writes in Acts: "This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which has become the head of the corner."<sup>235</sup> One of the names, of course, attributed to the Savior, but not used by him, and which has been recorded by John is also, "The Word in the beginning with God, God the Word."<sup>236</sup>

#### *Sense of these titles*

(151) It is worthwhile to consider those who disregard so many names and treat this one as special. And again, they look for an explanation in the case of the other names, if someone brings them to their attention, but in the case of this one they believe they have a clear answer to what the Son of God is, when he is named Word. This is especially obvious since they continually use the verse, "My heart uttered a good word,"<sup>237</sup> as though they think the Son of God is an expression of the Father occurring in syllables. And in accordance with this view, if we inquire of them carefully, they do not give him substance nor do they elucidate his essence. I do not yet mean that it is this or that, but in what manner he has essence.

(152) For it is impossible for anyone to understand a proclaimed word to be a son. Let them declare to us that God the Word is such a word, having life in himself, and either is

232. Is 11.1-3.

234. Mt 21.42.44; Lk 20.18.

236. Cf. Jn 1.1.

233. Ps 117.22-23.

235. Cf. Acts 4.11.

237. Ps 44.2.

not separated from the Father and, in accordance with this position, does not subsist nor is he a son, or is both separated and invested with substance.

(153) We must say, therefore, that just as in the case of each of the previously mentioned names we must disclose the meaning of what is named from the title, and produce appropriate proof to show how the Son of God is said to be this name, so must we also do in the case of him being named "Word."

(154) For what absurdity not to hold to the letter in the case of each title, but to investigate, for example, how we must understand him to be a "door," and in what manner he is a "vine," and for what reason he is a "way,"<sup>238</sup> but not to do this only when it is recorded that he is the "Word"!

(155) That we may, therefore, with more conviction recognize what will be said on the questions concerning how the Son of God is Word as correct, we must begin from those names of him previously set forth.

(156) We know that such a procedure will seem excessively digressive to some. But the attentive person will find it useful for what is proposed to test the concepts in relation to which the titles are used, and an understanding of the concrete realities will serve as preparation for what is to come.

(157) And once we have taken up the theology of the Savior, and discover the things about him which can be learned by inquiry, we shall of necessity understand him more fully not only insofar as he is the Word, but also insofar as he is the other things as well.

(158) He said, therefore, that he was the "light of the world."<sup>239</sup> We must also examine the expressions that are closely related to this, since some think they are not only closely related, but the same.

(159) Now these titles are, "the light of men,"<sup>240</sup> "the true light,"<sup>241</sup> and the "light of the gentiles."<sup>242</sup> The title, "the light of men," occurs in the beginning of the gospel lying before

238. Cf. Jn 15.1.5; 14.6.

240. Jn 1.4.

242. Is 49.6.

239. Jn 8.12.

241. Jn 1.9.

us, for John says, "What was made in him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it."<sup>243</sup> He is called the true light in the words which follow the same Scripture: "The true light which enlightens every man was coming into the world."<sup>244</sup> But it is in Isaias that he is called the "light of the gentiles," as we said before when we quoted the statement, "Behold I have given you for a light of the gentiles that you might be for salvation to the ends of the earth."<sup>245</sup>

(160) The sun is the light of the world perceived by the senses, and after it the moon and stars will appropriately be given the same title.

(161) But since these are light perceived by the senses, which are said in Moses to have come into existence on the fourth day, they are not the true light because they enlighten the things on the earth. The Savior, on the other hand, is the light of the spiritual world because he shines on those who are rational and intellectual, that their mind may see its proper visions. Now I mean he is the light of those rational souls which are in the sensible world, of which the Savior teaches us that he is the maker, being, perhaps, its directing and principal part, and, so to speak, the sun of the great day of the Lord.<sup>246</sup>

(162) Because of this day he says to those who partake of his light, "Work while it is day; the night is coming when one can no longer work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."<sup>247</sup> But in addition he says also to his disciples, "You are the light of the world," and, "Let your light shine before men."<sup>248</sup>

(163) Now we understand the moon and stars to be analogous to the bride, the Church, and the disciples, who have their own light or a light acquired from the true sun to illuminate those who have not been able to provide a source of light in themselves. For example, we will say that Paul and

243. Jn 1.3-5.

245. Is 49.6. See above, section 135.

246. Cf. Rv 16.14; 6.17; Jl 2.11; Zep 1.14.

247. Cf. Jn 9.4-5.

244. Jn 1.9.

248. Mt 5.14-16.

Peter were a "light of the world," but the world of which the apostles were a light was the general run of those instructed by them, who, while they were illuminated, on the one hand, could certainly not illuminate others.<sup>249</sup>

(164) The Savior, however, being the "light of the world," does not illuminate corporeal natures. He illuminates the incorporeal spirit with an incorporeal power in order that each of us, being illuminated as though by the sun, may also be able to see the other spiritual beings.

(165) And just as the ability of the moon and stars to give light becomes faint when the sun is shining, so those who are illuminated by Christ and have received his rays have no need of any ministering apostles and prophets—for we must dare to speak the truth—or angels. And I will add that they do not need the more excellent powers either, since they are instructed by the firstborn light himself.

(166) The ministering saints, however, provide a light which is much weaker than the previously mentioned one, for those who do not receive the rays of the sun which come from Christ. These people are scarcely able to receive even this light, and are filled by it.

(167) But Christ, who is the light of the world, is the true light in contradistinction to that which is perceptible by the senses, since nothing perceptible by the senses is true. It does not follow, however, that because that which is perceptible by the senses is not true, it is false. For what is perceptible by the senses can have a resemblance to that which is apprehended by the intellect. Everything which is not true certainly cannot correctly be designated false.

(168) But I am investigating whether the title "light of the world" is identical with "light of men." I think that a greater power of light is expressed when Christ is designated "light of the world" than when he is designated "light of men," for, according to one interpretation, "the world" is not only "men."

(169) Paul, in the first letter to the Corinthians, will demonstrate that the world is more, or other than, men when he

249. Cf. Origen, *Gn. Hom.* 1.5-7.

says, "We were made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men."<sup>250</sup>

(170) But consider if, according to another interpretation, the "world" is the creation which is freed "from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God," "the expectation" of which "awaits the revelation of the sons of God."<sup>251</sup>

(171) Now we added "consider," because the corresponding statement made by Jesus to the disciples, "You are the light of the world,"<sup>252</sup> can be compared to the statement, "I am the light of the world."<sup>253</sup>

(172) For there are those who understand those men who have been truly instructed by Jesus to be greater than the other creatures, some being such, some think, by nature, others, according to others, also by the principle<sup>254</sup> related to the more difficult struggle.

(173) For those who are in flesh and blood have more troubles and a more precarious life than those in an ethereal body. Should the lights in heaven assume earthly bodies, they would not pass through life here free from danger and without any sin at all. And the defenders of this position will use the texts of the Scriptures which set forth the greatest things about men, which declare the incomparability of the promise that extends to men, texts which do not at all relate this same thing also concerning the creation, or the world, as we understood it.<sup>255</sup>

(174) For the statements, "As you and I are one, that they too may be one in us,"<sup>256</sup> and, "Where I am, there also shall my servant be,"<sup>257</sup> have clearly been written of men, but of the creation it is said that it is freed "from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God."<sup>258</sup> And they will add that if it is freed it does not already also share in "the glory of the children of God."

250. 1 Cor 4.9.

252. Mt 5.14.

254. *Logos*.

256. Cf. Jn 17.21.

258. Cf. Rom 8.21.

251. Rom 8.21.19.

253. Jn 8.12.

255. See above, sections 168-9.

257. Jn 12.26.



(175) These people will also voice the fact that the firstborn of all creation became man because man is more honored than all creatures; he did not, indeed, become some being in heaven. In addition, the star which appeared in the East was created second, as both a minister and servant of the knowledge of Jesus, being either like the other stars, or perhaps even greater, since it was a sign of him who surpasses all.

(176) And if the boasts of the saints are in their tribulation, since they know "that tribulation produces patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope is not disappointed,"<sup>259</sup> the creation which has not been afflicted will have neither the same patience, nor trial, nor hope, but a different one, since "the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope."<sup>260</sup>

(177) But he who does not dare attribute such great things to man, at the same time when he has confronted this problem will say that the creation, which is subjected to vanity, is afflicted, groaning more than those who are in the temporary habitation,<sup>261</sup> since creation, too, is enslaved to vanity for a very long time, much longer than the trial that humans experience.

(178) For why does it do this "not willingly"? Doubtless because it has been subjected to vanity contrary to its nature and lacks its previous condition of life which it will take up again when it is set free and released from the vanity of bodies in the destruction of the world.

(179) But since we seem to have spoken about a larger problem and one not related to that set before us, we shall return to our starting point, suggesting why the Savior is said to be "light of the world," "true light," and "light of men." For, on the one hand, we have explained that he is said to be "true light" because of the light of the world which is perceptible to the senses, and that the expression "light of the world" is either equivalent to "the light of men" or is capable on examination of not being equivalent.

259. Rom 5.3-5.

261. Cf. 2 Cor 5.4.

260. Rom 8.20.

(180) Now we have had to investigate these matters because of those who have no understanding of the fact that the Savior is the Word, on the one hand, that we might be persuaded not to stop absurdly with the concept and title<sup>262</sup> "Word" without interpreting the change of meaning and, on the other hand, that we might interpret anagogically and allegorically the expression "light of the world" and the many others which we have cited.

(181) Now just as he is "light of men" and "true light" and "light of the world"<sup>263</sup> because he enlightens and illuminates the intellects of men or, in general, of spiritual beings, so he is called "the resurrection"<sup>264</sup> from the fact that<sup>265</sup> he effects the putting away of all that is dead and implants the life which is properly called life, since those who have genuinely received him are risen from the dead.

(182) Now he effects this not only for those who can say at the present, "We have been buried together with Christ by baptism"<sup>266</sup> and we have risen with him, but much more when someone has completely put away all that is dead, even that related to the Son himself, and walks in newness of life; that is, when we have been aided in so remarkable a manner, "we always carry about here the dying of Jesus in our body that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies."<sup>267</sup>

(183) But also the journey in wisdom, that is the active journey of the saved which takes place in him by means of discussions concerning truth in the divine Word and activities in conformity with the true righteousness, enables us to perceive how he is the way<sup>268</sup> on which one needs to take nothing, neither travelling bag nor garment. The traveller does not even have to have a rod or put sandals on his feet.<sup>269</sup>

(184) For the way itself is sufficient in place of any provisions; no traveller on this way has any need, since he has been

262. Accepting Lommatzsch's emendation: *prosēgonas*.

263. Jn 1.9; 8.12; 9.5.

264. Jn 11.25.

265. Omitting *dia tou* with Brooke and Blanc. Preuschen brackets the words.

266. Cf. Rom 6.4.

267. 2 Cor 4.10.

268. Jn 14.6.

269. Cf. Lk 9.3; Mk 6.8; Mt 10.10.

adorned with a garment befitting one invited to a wedding,<sup>270</sup> and no difficulty can encounter him on this road. For, according to Solomon, it is impossible to discover the paths of a serpent on a rock,<sup>271</sup> and I say that the same is also impossible of any beast at all.

(185) Therefore, there is no need for a rod on a way which lacks the tracks of adversaries and, because of its firmness, for which it is called a rock, does not admit wicked men.

(186) And the only begotten is truth since, according to the will of the Father, he has embraced the whole principle of the universe with all clarity, and, insofar as he is truth, he has shared it with each one as he deserves.

(187) But someone may inquire if our Savior understands everything known by the Father in the depth of his wealth and wisdom and knowledge,<sup>272</sup> and in the delusion of glorifying the Father, he may declare that something known by the Father is not known by the Son who refuses<sup>273</sup> to be made equal to the perceptions of the unbegotten God. If this inquiry should be made, we must consider that he is the Savior on the basis that he is truth, and we must apply the consideration that if the truth is complete, he is ignorant of nothing true, lest the truth stumble because it lacks those things which it does not know, which, according to those, are in the Father alone. Or let someone show that there are things which are known which do not belong to the appellation truth, but are beyond it.

(188) Now it is clear that the principle of the life which is pure and unmixed with anything else is properly in the first-born of all creation.<sup>274</sup> The participants in Christ truly live because they receive their life from this life, while just as those who are thought to live without him do not have the true light, so neither do they live the true life.

270. Cf. Mt 22.10–11.

271. Cf. Prv 24.54 (30.19).

272. Cf. Rom 11.33.

273. Blanc takes the participle *diarkountos* to have this meaning here. The phrase is obscure. For the way others have interpreted it, see Blanc (SC 120.152–3).

274. Cf. Col 1.15.

(189) The Savior has also been recorded to be a door since it is not possible to be in the Father or beside the Father if one has not first taken the initiative to ascend from below to the divinity of the Son through which one can be led also to the blessedness of the Father.

(190) And since he is benevolent and is in favor of helping souls improve in any way possible, he becomes a shepherd for those who do not hasten to reason, but are like sheep which, in an unexamined and non-rational way, are gentle and meek. "For the Lord saves men and beasts,"<sup>275</sup> and both Israel and Juda are sowed with the seed not only of men but also of beasts.

(191) In addition to these titles, we must consider first of all the title Christ, and we must add that of king, to perceive the difference by the juxtaposition. In Psalm 44 he who has loved justice and hated iniquity more than his fellows<sup>276</sup> is said to be anointed because he has thus approached justice and hated iniquity. Consequently, he did not receive the anointing at the same time with his being, as something coexistent and created at the same time with himself. Anointing is a symbol of sovereignty among mortals, and sometimes also of priesthood. Is, then, the sovereignty of the Son of God added later and not congenital with him?

(192) And how could the firstborn of all creation, when he was not a king, later have become a king because he had loved justice, and that when he happened to be justice? His human nature, however, never escapes our notice when he is Christ, especially when he is considered in relation to the soul which became both troubled and sorrowful<sup>277</sup> because of his humanity. On the other hand, his kingly nature is obvious when he is considered according to the divine.

(193) And I support this from Psalm 71 which says, "Give to the king your judgment, O God; and your justice to the king's son, to judge your people with justice, and your poor with judgment."<sup>278</sup> For clearly the Psalm, which has been ascribed to Solomon, prophesies of Christ.

275. Cf. Ps 35.7.

277. Cf. Jn 12.27; Mt 26.38.

276. Cf. Ps 44.8.

278. Ps 71.1-2.

(194) And it is worthwhile to see to what king the prophecy prays that God give judgment, and to what son of a king, and of what kind of a king justice.

(195) I think, then, that "king" is used of that preeminent nature of the firstborn of all creation.<sup>279</sup> Judgment is given to this nature because it transcends. And "the king's son" is used of the human nature which is assumed, which is formed and shaped in accordance with justice by that nature.

(196) And I am led to accept that this is so from the fact that both have been brought together into one Word, and the fact that the things which are added are no longer related as of two individuals, but as of one.

(197) For the Savior had made "both one,"<sup>280</sup> having made them according to the firstfruits of both which came to be in himself before all things. And I say "of both" also in the case of men in whose case each man's soul has been mixed with the Holy Spirit and each of those who are saved has become spiritual.

(198) Just as there are some, then, of whom Christ is shepherd because, as we said previously, they are meek and tranquil, and more irrational, so also there are some over whom he is king insofar as they approach piety in a more rational manner.

(199) There are also differences between those who are governed by a king. They are governed either in a manner that is more mystical, esoteric and worthy of God, or in a manner that is inferior.

(200) I would also say that those who have contemplated the bodiless realities called "invisible" and "not seen" <sup>281</sup> by Paul, who exist by reason<sup>282</sup> apart from everything perceptible by sense, are ruled by that preeminent nature of the only begotten.<sup>283</sup> But those are ruled by the Christ who have arrived at the rational principle<sup>284</sup> of those things perceptible by the senses, and through them glorify the one who made them,

279. Cf. Col 1.15.

281. Cf. Col 1.16; Rom 1.20; 2 Cor 4.18.

282. *Logō*.

284. *Logon*.

280. Cf. Eph 2.14.

283. Cf. section 195.

and are themselves ruled by reason. But let no one take offense when we distinguish the aspects in the Savior, thinking that we also do the same with his essence.

(201) Now it is very clear even to the common crowd how our Lord is teacher and interpreter for those striving for piety, and lord of servants who have "the spirit of bondage in fear."<sup>285</sup> But when they progress and hasten to wisdom and are judged worthy of it—since "the servant does not know what his lord wishes"<sup>286</sup>—he does not remain their lord; he becomes their "friend."

(202) He himself teaches this, declaring somewhere when his hearers were still servants, "You call me teacher and lord, and you speak correctly, for I am."<sup>287</sup> And elsewhere, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what the will of his lord is, but I call you friends," because you have continued "with me in all my temptations."<sup>288</sup>

(203) Those, therefore, who live in the fear which God demands of those who are not good servants (as we have read in Malachi, "If I am a lord, where is my fear?")<sup>289</sup> are servants of a lord who is called their Savior.

(204) But the noble origin of the Son is not presented clearly by all these titles. It is, however, when God, with whom it is always "today," says to him, "You are my Son, today have I begotten you."<sup>290</sup> There is no evening of God possible and, I think, no morning, but the time, if I may put it this way, which is coextensive with his unoriginated and eternal life, is today for him, the day in which the son has been begotten. Consequently neither the beginning nor the day of his generation is to be found.

(205) We must add to what has been said a discussion of how the Son is the "true vine."<sup>291</sup> Now this will be obvious to those who understand the following statement in a manner worthy of the grace the prophets received: "Wine cheers the heart of man."<sup>292</sup>

285. Rom 8.15.

287. Jn 13.13.

289. Mal 1.6.

291. Cf. Jn 15.1.

286. Cf. Jn 15.15.

288. Cf. Jn 15.15; Lk 22.28.

290. Ps 2.7; Heb 1.5; cf. Lk 3.22.

292. Ps 103.15.

(206) For if the heart is the intellectual part, and what cheers it is the most delectable reason, which completely rids it of human concerns and causes it to experience ecstasy and to be intoxicated with an intoxication which is not irrational, but divine—I think it is this intoxication with which Joseph also intoxicates his brothers,<sup>293</sup>—it is reasonable that he who brings the wine which cheers the heart of man is the “true vine.” He is “true” because he has the truth as grapes, and as branches he has the disciples, his imitators, who themselves also bear the truth as fruit.

(207) It is difficult, however, to present the difference between the bread and the vine, since he says he is not only the “vine,” but also the “bread of life.”<sup>294</sup>

(208) But see if, perhaps, it is like this. As bread nourishes and strengthens and is said to sustain the heart of man, but wine pleases and cheers and confounds, so the ethical teachings, since they preserve life for the one who learns and carries them out, are the bread of life (these would not be said to be the fruit of the vine), but the esoteric and mystical doctrines<sup>295</sup> come from the “true vine” and are called “wine” because they cheer and produce ecstasy, being present in those who delight in the Lord and desire not only to be nourished, but also to revel in him.

(209) In addition to these names [we must consider]<sup>296</sup> how he is described in the Apocalypse as the “first and last.”<sup>297</sup> As first, he is different from the alpha and the beginning, and as last, he is not the same as the omega and the end.

(210) I think, therefore, since rational creatures are represented in many forms, that one of them is first, and another second, and third, and so on to the last.

(211) And to say precisely what is first, and of what sort the second is, and upon what basis the third is true, and so on to the last, is not possible for man at all, but is beyond our nature.

293. Cf. Gn 43.34.

294. Cf. Jn 6.48.

295. *Theōrēmata*. Origen contrasts this with the earlier *mathēmata* (“teachings”).

296. *Epistateon*. Conjecture of Preuschen adopted by Blanc.

297. Rv 22.13.

We shall attempt to stop, however, and treat the subjects in the passage as we are able.

(212) There are certain gods of whom God is god, as the prophecies say, "Give thanks to the God of gods," and, "The God of gods, the Lord has spoken, and has called the earth."<sup>298</sup> And according to the gospel, "he is not God of the dead, but of the living."<sup>299</sup> Those gods, therefore, of whom God is god, are also living.

(213) The Apostle also acknowledges this when he writes in his letter to the Corinthians, "Just as there are many gods and many lords."<sup>300</sup> He understood the term gods to mean existing beings, in accordance with the prophetic writings.

(214) There are other beings besides the gods of whom God is god. Some of these are called "thrones," others are said to be "principalities," and others besides these are called "dominations and powers."<sup>301</sup>

(215) And because of the saying, "Above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,"<sup>302</sup> we must believe that there are other spiritual beings besides these, to whom we do not usually give a name. The Hebrew used to call one species of these beings Sabai (who was their ruler and none other than God), and from which the name Sabaoth was derived. In addition to all these, man is a mortal spiritual being.

(216) The God of the universe, therefore, has created a spiritual race, first in honor, composed, I think, of those beings called gods. Let us say for the moment that "thrones" are second, and "principalities," without doubt, third. In this way we must descend in thought to the last spiritual being which, perhaps, is none other than man.

(217) The Savior, therefore, in a way much more divine than Paul, has become "all things to all," that he might either "gain" or perfect "all things."<sup>303</sup> He has clearly become a man to men, and an angel to angels.

298. Ps 135.2; cf. 49.1.

300. 1 Cor 8.5.

302. Cf. Eph 1.21.

299. Mt 22.32.

301. Cf. Col 1.16.

303. Cf. 1 Cor 9.22.



(218) No believer will have any doubt that he became a man; and we may be convinced that he became an angel if we observe the appearances and words of the angels when [some angel appears with authority]<sup>304</sup> in certain passages of Scripture when the angels speak. For example, "An angel of the Lord appeared in the fire of a burning bush. And he said, I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob."<sup>305</sup> But also Isaias says, "His name shall be called angel of great counsel."<sup>306</sup>

(219) The Savior, therefore, is first and last,<sup>307</sup> not that he is not what lies between, but it is stated in terms of the extremities to show that he himself has become "all things."<sup>308</sup> But consider whether the "last" is man, or those called the underworld beings, of which the demons also are a part, either in their entirety or some of them.

(220) We must inquire about those beings to whom the Savior says through the Prophet David when he also became one of them, "And I have become as a man without help, free among the dead."<sup>309</sup> Just as he was more than man insofar as his birth from a virgin was concerned, and the rest of his astounding life, so was he among the dead insofar as he was the only free man there; his soul was not left in Hades.<sup>310</sup> So, then, he is "first and last."<sup>311</sup>

(221) But if there are letters of God, as there are, which the saints read and say they have read what is written in the tablets of heaven, those letters are the thoughts about the Son of God which are broken up into alpha and the letters that follow to omega, that heavenly matters might be read through them.

(222) And again the same one is beginning and end, but he is not the same insofar as the aspects are concerned. For he is the beginning insofar as he is wisdom, as we have learned in Proverbs. Therefore it has been written, "God created me the beginning of his ways for his works."<sup>312</sup> But insofar as he

304. This is Preuschen's conjecture for the text at this point.

305. Ex 3.2.6.

307. Cf. Rv 22.13.

309. Ps 87.5-6.

311. Rv 22.13.

306. Is 9.5 (LXX).

308. Cf. Col 3.11.

310. Cf. Ps 15.10; Acts 2.27.

312. Cf. Prv 8.22.

is Word he is not the beginning, for "in the beginning was the Word."<sup>313</sup>

(223) His aspects, therefore, have a beginning, and something that is second beyond the beginning, and third, and so on to the end. It is as if he had said, "I am the beginning insofar as I am wisdom," and second, if there should be such, "insofar as I am invisible," and third, "insofar as I am life," since "what came to be in him was life."<sup>314</sup>

(224) And if someone is able, by close examination, to perceive the meaning of the Scriptures, perhaps he will discover many things about the order and the end. For I do not think that he will discover everything. But beginning and end seem rather clearly to be applied usually to what is united, as the foundation is the beginning of a house, and the parapet its end.

(225) And because the Christ is the "chief cornerstone,"<sup>315</sup> we must indeed adapt the illustration to the whole united body of the saved, for Christ the only begotten is also "all in all",<sup>316</sup> for example, he is the beginning in the man which he assumed, but the end in the last of the saints—being, of course, also in those in between—, or, he is the beginning in Adam, but the end in his sojourn among us, according to the saying, "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."<sup>317</sup> But this saying will apply also to the interpretation of "first and last."<sup>318</sup>

(226) By observing, however, the things said about "first and last" and about "beginning and end,"—in some places we referred the argument to the forms of spiritual beings, and in others to the differences in the aspect of the Son of God—we have gained also a distinction between "first" and "beginning," between "last" and "end," and further also between the "Alpha" and the "Omega."<sup>319</sup>

(227) Nor is it obscure why he is called the "living" and the "dead," and the one who lives forever and ever after death.<sup>320</sup> For since we were not benefitted from his superior life while

313. Jn 1.1.

315. Eph 2.20; Is 28.16.

317. 1 Cor 15.45.

319. Ibid.

314. Jn 1.4.

316. Cf. 1 Cor 15.28.

318. Cf. Rv 22.13.

320. Cf. Rv 1.18.

we were in sin, he came down to our mortality, that when he died to sin,<sup>321</sup> we, by bearing about in the body the mortification of Jesus,<sup>322</sup> might be able to receive in due order his life forever and ever after our mortality. For those who always bear Jesus' death about in their bodies will also have the life of Jesus manifested in their bodies.

(228) He made these statements, which are found in the books of the New Testament, about himself. But in Isaias he declared that his "mouth" was made by the Father "as a sharp sword," and that he was hidden "under the shadow of his hand," being likened to a chosen arrow hidden "in the quiver" of the Father. The Father calls him "servant" of the God of the universe, "Israel," and "the light of the gentiles."<sup>323</sup>

(229) The mouth of the Son of God, therefore, is a sharp sword, since "the word of God" is "living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword, and reaching to the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints and also the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart."<sup>324</sup> Above all, since he came not to cast peace on the earth, that is on the things which are corporeal and perceived by the senses, but a sword,<sup>325</sup> and since he cuts through, if I may speak in this way, the harmful friendship of soul and body, that the soul, by devoting herself to the spirit which fights against the flesh,<sup>326</sup> might be made a friend of God, he had his mouth as a sword, or as a sharp sword as the word of the prophet has it.<sup>327</sup> But also when one sees so many wounded by the divine love, like the bride who confesses that she has so suffered in the Song of Songs by the words, "I have been wounded by love,"<sup>328</sup> he will find the arrow which has wounded the souls of so many in regard to the love of God to be none other than him who said, "He made me as a chosen arrow."<sup>329</sup>

(230) And further, everyone who has understood how Jesus

321. Cf. Rom 6.10.

323. Is 49.2, 3 and 6.

325. Cf. Mt 10.34.

327. Cf. Is 49.2.

329. Is 49.2.

322. Cf. 2 Cor 4.10.

324. Heb 4.12.

326. Cf. Gal 5.17.

328. Song 2.5.

was to his disciples, not as the one who is at table, but as the one who serves,<sup>330</sup> since the Son of God took the form of a servant<sup>331</sup> for the freedom of those enslaved to sin, will not fail to recognize how the Father says to him, "You are my servant," and a little further on, "This is a great thing for you, that you are called my servant."<sup>332</sup>

(231) For we must dare say that the goodness of Christ appeared greater and more divine and truly in accordance with the image of the Father when "he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross," than when "he had considered being equal to God robbery,"<sup>333</sup> and had not been willing to become a servant for the salvation of the world.

(232) For this reason, wishing to teach us that to have served in this way was a great gift which he had received from the Father, he says, "And my God shall be my strength. And he said to me, This is a great thing for you, that you are called my servant."<sup>334</sup> For if he had not become a servant he would not have established "the tribes of Jacob" nor converted "the diaspora of Israel"; neither would he have become the "light of the gentiles" to "be for salvation to the end of the earth."<sup>335</sup>

(233) And although the Father says it was great, the fact that he became a servant was moderate indeed compared to the fact that he became an innocent little lamb and a lamb. For the Lamb of God became as an innocent little lamb led to be slaughtered that he might take away "the sin of the world."<sup>336</sup> He who bestowed speech<sup>337</sup> on all is compared to a lamb dumb "before his shearer,"<sup>338</sup> that we might all be cleansed by his death which is distributed like a drug against the adverse influences and against the sin of those who wish to receive the truth. For the death of Christ has made the powers which war against the human race ineffectual, and, by

330. Cf. Lk 22.27.

332. Cf. Is 49.3.6.

334. Is 49.5.6.

336. Cf. Is 53.7; Jn 1.29.

338. Is 53.7.

331. Cf. Phil 2.7.

333. Phil 2.8.6.

335. Is 49.6.

337. *Logos*.

an ineffable power, has brought the life in sin in each believer to an end.<sup>339</sup>

(234) And because he takes away sin until all his enemies are abolished, and death is the last indeed,<sup>340</sup> that the whole world might be without sin, John points to him and says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."<sup>341</sup> He does not say he who will take it away but is not already also taking it away; and he does not say he who took it away but is not also still taking it away.

(235) For the "taking away" affects each one in the world until sin be removed from all the world and the Savior deliver to the Father a prepared kingdom<sup>342</sup> in which there is no sin at all, a kingdom which permits the Father's rule and again admits all things of God in its whole and total self, when the saying is fulfilled: "That God may be all in all."<sup>343</sup>

(236) But also in addition to these things a "man" is mentioned who comes after John, who existed before him and who was before him, that we might learn also that the human nature of the Son of God which was united with his divinity antedates his birth from Mary.

(237) The Baptist says "he did not know" this man.<sup>344</sup> But how did he not know, he who leaped for joy while he was still an infant in the womb of Elizabeth when "the sound" of Mary's "greeting" reached "the ears" of Zachary's wife?<sup>345</sup>

(238) Consider, then, if the phrase "he did not know" can refer to what preceded his physical existence. And also, if he did not know him before he came in the body, but did know him while he was still in his mother's womb, perhaps he learns something about him other than what he knew, namely that he on whom the spirit descended and remained "is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire."<sup>346</sup>

(239) For even if he knew him still from his mother's womb,

339. *Exeleusesthai*. The text is corrupt here.

340. Cf. 1 Cor 15.26.

341. Jn 1.29.

342. Cf. 1 Cor 15.24.

343. Cf. 1 Cor 15.28.

344. Cf. Jn 1.30.31.

345. Cf. Lk 1.41-44.

346. Cf. Jn 1.33.

he certainly did not know everything about him, and perhaps he also did not know that "this is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire," when he had seen "the Spirit descending and remaining on him."<sup>347</sup> John did not know, however, that he was a "man," and the first man.

(240) But none of the previously mentioned names reveals his patronage for us with the Father, when he intercedes and is merciful on behalf of human nature, as "the advocate,"<sup>348</sup> and "[the] propitiation,"<sup>349</sup> and "the propitiatory."<sup>350</sup> The "advocate" is mentioned in the Epistle of John: "For if anyone sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just, and he is the propitiation for our sins."<sup>351</sup> And in the same Epistle "the propitiation" is said to be the "propitiation for our sins."<sup>352</sup> And, likewise, also in the Epistle to the Romans he is called the "propitiatory": "Whom God has proposed to be a propitiatory through faith."<sup>353</sup> The golden propitiatory lying on the two cherubim in the innermost places and the holy of holies was a kind of shadow of the propitiatory.<sup>354</sup>

(241) But how could he have become advocate and propitiation and propitiatory without the power of God which completely destroys our weakness, a power furnished by Jesus which flows in the souls of believers? He is before this power, the very power of God itself, on account of whom one might say, "I can do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens me."<sup>355</sup>

(242) For this reason we know that Simon the magician, who called himself "the power of God which is called great," has departed with his money into ruin and destruction.<sup>356</sup> We, however, confessing that Christ is truly the "power of God,"<sup>357</sup> have believed that all things which have received power anywhere at all participate in him insofar as he is "power."

347. Ibid.

348. 1 Jn 2.1.

349. 1 Jn 2.2.

350. Rom 3.25. This word and the preceding one are sometimes used synonymously meaning "propitiation." It was used of the mercy-seat in the OT (see, for example, Ex 25.17-20).

351. Cf. 1 Jn 2.1-2.

352. 1 Jn 2.2.

353. Rom 3.25.

354. Cf. Ex 25.17-19.

355. Cf. Phil 4.13.

356. Cf. Acts 8.10.20.

357. Cf. 1 Cor 1.24.

(243) And we must not pass over in silence the fact that he is, with just cause, the "wisdom of God,"<sup>358</sup> and for this reason is called this. For his wisdom does not exist merely in the mental images of the God and Father of the universe in a way analogous to the images in human thoughts.

(244) But if someone is able to comprehend an incorporeal existence comprised of the various ideas which embrace the principles of the universe, an existence which is living and animate, as it were, he will understand the wisdom of God which precedes all creation, which appropriately says of herself, "God created me the beginning of his ways for his works."<sup>359</sup> It is because of this creation that the whole creation has also been able to subsist, since it has a share in the divine wisdom according to which it has been created, for according to the Prophet David, God made "all things in wisdom."<sup>360</sup>

(245) Many creatures, on the one hand, have come into existence by participation in wisdom, while they do not apprehend her by whom they have been created. Very few, however, comprehend not only the wisdom concerning themselves, but also that concerning many beings, for Christ is all wisdom.

(246) But each of the wise participates in Christ to the extent that he has the capacity for wisdom, insofar as Christ is wisdom, just as each one who possesses power has obtained greater power to the extent that he has shared in Christ, insofar as Christ is power.

(247) We must also consider sanctification and redemption in the same way. For Jesus has become sanctification itself for us,<sup>361</sup> whence the saints are sanctified, and has become redemption. And each of us is sanctified by that sanctification and redeemed in relation to that redemption.

(248) But consider if the Apostle uses the expression "for us" in vain when he says, "Who became for us"<sup>362</sup> wisdom from

358. Cf. 1 Cor 1.25.

359. Cf. Prv 8.22.

360. Cf. Ps 103.24.

361. Reading *autos* with Brooke and Blanc. Preuschen has *auto*. This may be a printing error as neither his text nor Brooke's notes anything in the apparatus.

362. The NAB and RSV translate the dative *hēmin* as possessive. Origen, however, seems to have understood it as a dative of advantage. This under-

God, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption."<sup>363</sup> And consider if, in other statements about the Christ, insofar as he is "wisdom" and "power," the statement is not made absolutely that "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God,"<sup>364</sup> even if we have assumed that he was not absolutely the "wisdom" and "power of God," but was such "for us." Now, however, in the case of "wisdom" and "power," we have the unqualified expression recorded in addition to the qualification "for us." The same expression, however, has not been used in the case of "sanctification" and "redemption."

(249) For this reason, since "he who sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one,"<sup>365</sup> consider if the Father is the "sanctification" of our sanctification himself, in the same way as the Father is the head of Christ, while Christ is our head.<sup>366</sup>

(250) And Christ is our redemption, because we have been taken captive and need redemption. I do not ask, however, about the redemption of him who has been tempted "in all things as we are, without sin,"<sup>367</sup> and has never been taken into captivity by his enemies.

(251) But once the distinction has been made between "for us" and the unqualified state, "sanctification" and "redemption," on the one hand, being "for us" and qualified, and "wisdom" and "power" being both "for us" and unqualified, we must not leave unexamined the statements concerning "justice." It is clear, on the one hand, that Christ is justice "for us," from the text, "Who became wisdom for us from God, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption."<sup>368</sup>

(252) But if we should not find that he is "justice" absolutely, just as he is "wisdom" and the "power of God" absolutely, we must examine if the Father is "justice" for Christ himself also,

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standing created a problem for his theology, for he divided the titles given to Christ into those which designated things he became on account of man's salvation and those which he was by his nature. Wisdom belonged to the latter group and, therefore, was not one of the things Christ became for us. See M. Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice du verbe incarné* (Paris: éditions du Seuil, 1958), 121-22.

363. 1 Cor 1.30.

365. Heb 2.11.

367. Heb 4.15.

364. 1 Cor 1.24.

366. Cf. 1 Cor 11.3.

368. 1 Cor 1.30.



just as he is his "sanctification." For there is, indeed, no injustice with God; he is both a just and holy Lord; his judgments are in justice, and being just, he manages all things justly.<sup>369</sup>

(253) I think the distinction made by some heretics between the just one and the good one is deceptive.<sup>370</sup> They have not made clear in what way they think the creator is just, but the Father of Christ good. If the matter is investigated carefully, I think the distinction can be made in the case of the Father and the Son. The Son, on the one hand, is justice, who received the "right to perform judgment"<sup>371</sup> because he is the Son of man and "will judge the world in justice."<sup>372</sup> After the kingdom of Christ, however, the Father, by doing good to those disciplined by the justice of the Son, will demonstrate the title "good" by his works, when God becomes "all in all."<sup>373</sup>

(254) And perhaps the Savior, by his own justice, is preparing all things in their appropriate times by reason, and discipline, and punishments and, if I may put it this way, by his resources for spiritual healing, that they may receive the Father's goodness at the end. Because he understood the Father's goodness, he says to the only man who addresses him as "good teacher": "Why do you call me 'good'? No one is good except one, God the Father."<sup>374</sup>

(255) We have shown the same thing in other matters, even in the case of someone being greater than the creator. We understood the Christ to be the creator, but the Father is greater. He, indeed, who is such great things as "the advocate," "the propitiation," "the propitiatory,"<sup>375</sup> because he showed compassion "on our weaknesses" in experiencing temptation "in all things" human "in our likeness, without sin," is a "great high priest"<sup>376</sup> who offered himself as the sacrifice offered once for all,<sup>377</sup> not for men alone, but also for

369. Cf. Rom 9.14; Rv 16.5 and 7.

370. This distinction was made by Marcion.

371. Jn 5.27.

372. Cf. Acts 17.31.

373. 1 Cor 15.28.

374. Cf. Mk 10.18.

375. 1 Jn 2.1.2; Rom 3.25.

376. Heb 4.15.14.

377. Cf. Heb 9.28.

every spiritual being. For "apart from God he tasted death for all."<sup>378</sup> This appears in some copies of the Epistle to the Hebrews as "by the grace of God."<sup>379</sup>

(256) But whether "apart from God he tasted death for all," he died not only for men but also for the rest of the spiritual beings, or "by the grace of God he tasted death for all," he died for all apart from God, for "by the grace of God he tasted death for all."

(257) And, indeed, it would be strange to declare that he tasted death for human sins, but not further also for any other creature, in addition to man, which happened to be in sins, for instance for the stars, since not even the stars are absolutely pure before God, as we have read in Job: "And the stars are not pure in his sight,"<sup>380</sup> unless this was said hyperbolically.

(258) For this reason he is a "great high priest,"<sup>381</sup> since he restores all things to the kingdom of the Father, causing the things which are wanting in each of the creatures to be supplied that they may be able to receive the Father's glory.

#### *Title given by the Prophets*

(259) This high priest is named "Juda" according to a somewhat different aspect from those which have been mentioned.<sup>382</sup> This is so that those who are Jews in secret<sup>383</sup> might be called Jews, not from Juda, the son of Jacob, but from this man, being his brothers and praising him because they share in the freedom with which he made them free when he delivered them from their enemies, having placed his hands on their back and subjected them.

(260) In addition, because he supplanted<sup>384</sup> the activity of the adversary, and because he alone sees the Father he is "Jacob" and "Israel"<sup>385</sup> when he has become man; as we become light because he is the light of the world, so we become Jacob

378. Cf. Heb 2.9.

379. This textual variation in Heb 2.9 is still noted in modern critical editions of the NT. "Grace" (*chariti*), however, has much stronger manuscript support than "apart from" (*chōris*).

380. Cf. Jb 25.5.

382. Cf. Gn 49.8.

384. Cf. Gn 25.25.

381. Heb 4.14.

383. Cf. Rom 2.29.

385. Cf. Is 49.5-6.

because he is called "Jacob," and Israel, because he is named "Israel."

(261) And further, the Christ receives the kingdom from the king whom the children of Israel appointed for themselves because they began with him<sup>386</sup> apart from the will of God, and they did not consult God. He fights the battles of the Lord and prepares peace for his son, his people.<sup>387</sup> Perhaps it is for this reason that he is called "David," and later "rod"<sup>388</sup> for those who need direction that is painful and harsh and who have not offered themselves to the love and meekness of the Father.

(262) For this reason, if he is called rod, "he shall come forth,"<sup>389</sup> for he does not remain in himself, but appears to leave his preceding condition behind.

(263) After he has come forth and become a "rod," he does not remain a "rod," but after the "rod" he becomes a "flower" springing up.<sup>390</sup> This "flower" has been revealed to be the goal for which he is a "rod" to those who have experienced his visitation as a "rod," for God will visit "with a rod," that is, the Christ, "the iniquities of those" whom he will visit.<sup>391</sup> But he will not take his mercy from him,<sup>392</sup> for he shows mercy to him when the Father has mercy on those whom the son wishes to receive mercy. But it is also possible to take the fact that he becomes a "rod" and a "flower" not to be related to the same people, but to understand that he became a "rod" to those in need of punishment, and a "flower" to those being saved. I think, however, that the former interpretation is better.

(264) We must add at this point, however, that perhaps, if he becomes a "rod" to someone, he will, by all means, be a "flower" because of the goal. If he becomes a "flower" to someone, however, it does not necessarily follow that he will also have to be a "rod" to that person, unless, perhaps, because one flower is more perfect than another, and those which are

386. Preuschen thinks that there is a difficulty in the text here.

387. Cf. 1 Sm 25.28; 1 Kgs 2.33.

388. Cf. Is 11.1.

389. Ibid.

390. Ibid.

391. Ps 88.33.

392. Cf. Ps 88.34.

not as yet bearing fruit perfectly are said to flower, the perfect receive that which is beyond the flower of Christ. Those, however, who have experienced him as a rod will not participate in his perfection at the same time with the rod, but only in the flower which precedes his fruits.

(265) Finally, before we discuss the "Word," Christ was a "stone" rejected by the builders and appointed head of the corner.<sup>393</sup> For since living stones<sup>394</sup> are built upon the foundation with other stones which are "the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus," our Lord, "himself being the chief cornerstone,"<sup>395</sup> he is called "stone" because he is a part of the building made of living stones "in the land of the living."<sup>396</sup>

### *The "Word"*

(266) We have said all these things wishing to show the random and unexamined procedure followed by many interpreters. Although so many names are applied to Christ, they stop with the term "Word" alone, and do not investigate why "the Son of God" has been recorded to be the Word, God, who was in the beginning with the Father, through whom all things came into being.

(267) As, therefore, he is entitled "light of the world"<sup>397</sup> because of his activity of enlightening the world of which he is the light, and he is called "resurrection"<sup>398</sup> because he causes those who genuinely draw near to him to put off that which is dead and, rising, to assume newness of life, and because of other actions he is called "shepherd,"<sup>399</sup> "teacher,"<sup>400</sup> "king,"<sup>401</sup> "chosen arrow,"<sup>402</sup> "servant,"<sup>403</sup> and, in addition, "advocate," "propitiation,"<sup>404</sup> and "propitiatory,"<sup>405</sup> so also he is called "Word," because he removes everything irrational from us and makes us truly rational beings who do all things for the

393. Cf. Ps 117.22.

395. Eph 2.20.

397. Cf. Jn 9.5.

399. Cf. Jn 10.11.12.

401. Cf. Zec 9.9; Jn 12.15; Mt 21.5.

402. Cf. Ps 44.6; Is 49.2.

404. 1 Jn 2.1.2.

394. Cf. 1 Pt 2.5.

396. Cf. Ps 141.6.

398. Cf. Jn 11.25.

400. Cf. Jn 13.13.

403. Cf. Is 49.3.

405. Cf. Rom 3.25.

glory of God, even to eating and drinking,<sup>406</sup> so that we perform both the more common and the more perfect works of life to the glory of God because of reason.<sup>407</sup>

(268) For if, by participating in him, we arise and are enlightened, and perhaps also are shepherded or ruled, it is clear that we also become rational in a divine manner when he destroys in us all that is irrational and dead insofar as he is "Word" and "resurrection."<sup>408</sup>

(269) But consider if, perhaps, all men participate in him insofar as he is Word. This is why the Apostle teaches us that he is sought within the seekers<sup>409</sup> by those who choose to find him when he says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who shall ascend into heaven?' that is, to bring Christ down; or, 'Who shall descend into the deep?' that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what does Scripture say? The Word<sup>410</sup> is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart,"<sup>411</sup> as though Christ and the Word which is sought are the same.

(270) But also when the Lord himself says, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin,"<sup>412</sup> we must understand that the Word is saying nothing other than that there is no sin in those in whom he has not yet been completed, but that these are guilty of sin who, when they have already partaken of him, act contrary to the concepts by which he has been completed in us. Only as it is understood in this way is the saying true, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin."<sup>413</sup>

(271) Come, then, consider this in the case of the visible Jesus, as the many will imagine him. How is it true that these

406. Cf. 1 Cor 10.31.

407. *Logos*. The same term (rendered "word") occurs earlier in this sentence where it is applied to Christ. The two adjectives, *alogon* ("irrational") and *logikous* ("rational"), chosen by Origen to describe the work of Christ as the *Logos*, show that he understands the term, here at least, to mean reason.

408. Cf. Jn 1.1, 11.25.

409. Literally, "not outside of the seekers."

410. *Hrēma*.

411. Rom 10.6-8; cf. Dt 30.12-14.

412. Jn 15.22.

413. *Ibid*.

to whom he has not come have no sin? For all who lived before the sojourn of the Savior will be freed from all sin since the Jesus seen in the flesh had not come.

(272) But all those, too, will have no sin to whom the message about him has never been proclaimed, and obviously those who have no sin are not liable to judgment.

(273) Now "reason"<sup>414</sup> which is in men, in which we have said our species participates, is spoken of in two ways: according to the perfecting of concepts which occurs in everyone who has gone beyond childhood, the exceptional being excluded, or according to the excellence which is found in the perfect alone.

(274) Therefore, the words, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin,"<sup>415</sup> must be interpreted according to the first view, but, "All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, and the sheep did not hear them,"<sup>416</sup> must be interpreted according to the second.

(275) For before the perfection of reason, all men's thoughts are blameworthy inasmuch as they are deficient and inadequate. The irrational elements in us, which are figuratively said to be "sheep," do not obey these perfectly. And, perhaps, it is according to the first view that "the Word became flesh,"<sup>417</sup> but according to the second that "the Word was God."<sup>418</sup>

(276) But subsequent to this it is possible to ask [if] it is possible to perceive [anything] in human terms between the statement, "The Word became flesh," and, "The Word was God,"<sup>419</sup> as if the Word was resolved into its original elements after it had become flesh and, little by little, was reduced until it should become what it was in the beginning, namely God, the Word with the Father.<sup>420</sup> It was the glory of this Word which John saw to be truly the only begotten as from the Father.<sup>421</sup>

(277) But the Word can also be "the Son" because he an-

414. *Logos*.

416. Jn 10.8.

418. Jn 1.1.

420. Cf. Jn 1.1.

415. Jn 15.22.

417. Jn 1.14.

419. *Ibid*.

421. Jn 1.14.

nounces the secrets of his Father, who is "mind" analogous to the Son who is called "Word." For as the word in us is the messenger of what the mind perceives, so the Word of God, since he has known the Father, reveals the Father whom he has known, because no creature can come into contact with him without a guide.

(278) "For no one has known the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him."<sup>422</sup> And to the extent that he is the Word, he is the "messenger of great counsel" "upon whose shoulder the authority"<sup>423</sup> has come to rest, for he has become king because he suffered the cross. And in the Apocalypse the Word which is faithful and true is said to be seated on a white horse,<sup>424</sup> to demonstrate, in my opinion, the clarity of the voice on which the Word of truth rides which comes to reside in us.

(279) But this is not the time to show that the term "horse" is applied to the voice in many passages of Scripture, in which are found the prescribed teachings by which we are benefitted if we obey the divine teachings. But we must mention only one or two passages: "A horse is deceptive for safety,"<sup>425</sup> and, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will be exalted in the name of the Lord our God."<sup>426</sup>

(280) We must not, however, leave unexamined what is recorded in Psalm 44, which many cite very frequently as if they understood it: "My heart has uttered a good word; I speak my works to the king."<sup>427</sup> Grant that the Father speaks these words.

(281) What, then, is his "heart," that "the good word" should appear subsequent to his heart? For if the term "word" does not need interpretation, as they suppose, obviously neither does the term "heart." It is very strange to suppose that the heart is a part of God, similar to the heart in our body.

(282) But we must remind them that as God's hand, and arm, and finger are mentioned, we do not attach our understanding to the literal sense, but examine how we should

422. Cf. Mt 11.27.

424. Cf. Rv 19.11.

426. Ps 19.8.

423. Is 9.5 (LXX).

425. Ps 32.17.

427. Ps 44.2.