

# Heracleon

## Fragments from a Commentary on the Gospel of John by Heracleon

### *Fragments preserved in Origen's Commentary on John:*

**Fragment 1, on John 1:3** (In John 1:3, "All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made.") The sentence: "All things were made through him" means the world and what is in it. It excludes what is better than the world. The Aeon (i.e. the Fullness), and the things in it, were not made by the Word; they came into existence before the Word. . . "Without him, nothing was made" of what is in the world and the creation. . . "All things were made through Him," means that it was the Word who caused the Craftsman (*Demiurge*) to make the world, that is it was not the Word "from whom" or "by whom," but the one "through whom (all things were made)." . . It was not the Word who made all things, as if he were energized by another, for "through whom" means that another made them and the Word provided the energy.

**Fragment 2, on John 1:4** In the saying, "What was made in him was Life" (John 1:4), 'in him' means 'for spiritual people.' For he (the Word) provided them with their first form at their birth, in that what had been sown by another he brought to form, illumination and into an outline of its own, and set it forth.

**Fragment 3, on John 1:18** The words, "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." (John 1:18), were spoken, not by the Baptist, but by the disciple. Fragment 4, on John 1:21 (In John 1:21, "And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' And he answered, 'No.')

John acknowledged that he was not the Christ, and neither a prophet, nor Elijah.

**Fragment 5, on John 1:23** (In John 1:23, "He said, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said.'") The Word is the Savior, the voice in the wilderness is that symbolized by John, and the echo is the whole prophetic order. . . A voice which is well fitted to the Word, becomes Word, just as a woman is transformed into a man. . . The echo can be changed in a similar way into a voice, giving the place of a disciple to the voice which is changed into Word., but the place of a slave to the echo which is changed into voice. . . When the Savior speaks of a prophet and Elijah [Matthew 11:9,14], he is speaking not of John himself, but of his attributes. But when he calls him greater than the prophets and than those who are born of women [Matthew 11:9,11], then he is describing the character of John himself. When John is asked about himself, his answers relate to himself, not to attributes. . . His attributes, like clothes, were other than himself. If he were asked about his clothes "Are you your clothes?" he would not have answered "Yes." . . . The Jews sent priests and Levites to question John because it was fitting for these people to concern themselves with, and investigate these matters, for they were firmly devoted to God, and because he (John) was of the Levitical tribe. . . They asked him if he were a prophet, wishing to know this more general fact [John 1:21]. . . It was

prophetically arranged that Isaiah would call him (John) “greater,” since no other of all those who prophesied was deemed worthy of this honor by God.

**Fragment 6, on John 1:25** (In John 1:25, “They asked him, ‘Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?’”) The words of the Pharisees imply that the office of baptizing belonged to the Christ and Elijah and to every prophet. On them alone there is an obligation to baptize. . . The Pharisees asked the question from malice, and not from a desire to learn.

**Fragment 7, on John 1:26** John's answers to those sent by the Pharisees refer not to what they asked, but to what he wished.

**Fragment 8, on John 1:26** (In John 1:26-27, “John answered them, ‘I baptize with water; but there stands among you one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.’”) The words, “there stands among you” are equivalent to “He is already here, and he is in the world and among human beings, and he is already manifest to you all.” . . . The statement, “He who comes after me,” shows John to be the forerunner of Christ, for he is in fact a kind of servant running before his master. In the words, “The thong of his sandal I am not worthy to untie,” the Baptist acknowledges that he is not worthy even of the lowliest service for Christ. . . (He means,) “I am not worthy that for my sake he should come down from the Greatness and should assume flesh as his sandal, concerning which I am not able to give any explanation or description, nor to unloose the arrangement of it.” . . . The sandal means the world. . . Everything must be understood in relation to that person who was indicated through John, that is the Craftsman of the world, who acknowledges through these words that he is inferior to Christ.

**Fragment 9, on John 1:28** In Heracleon we read “Bethany” (rather than the variant “Bethabara” in the text Origen was familiar with).

**Fragment 10, on John 1:29** (In John 1:29, “The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’”) John spoke the words, “Lamb of God” as a prophet, but the words, “who takes away the sin of the world” as more than a prophet. The first expression was spoken with reference to his body, the second with reference to Him who was in that body. The lamb is an imperfect member of the genus of sheep; the same being true of the body as compared with the one that dwells in it. Had he meant to attribute perfection to the body he would have spoken of a ram about to be sacrificed.

**Fragment 11, on John 2:12** (In John 2:12, “After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples; and there they stayed for a few days.”) The words, “After this he went down to Capernaum,” indicate the beginning of a new dispensation, for “he went down” is not said idly. Capernaum, means these farthest-out parts of the world, the material realm into which he descended. And since the place was alien to him, he is not reported either to have done anything or said anything in it.

**Fragment 12, on John 2:13** (In John 2:13, “The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.”) This is the great feast. It was a type of the passion of the Savior, for the lamb was not only slain, but, on being consumed, provided rest as well.

When sacrificed, it signified the passion of the Savior in this world; when consumed, the rest that is in the marriage.

**Fragment 13, on John 2:13-16** The ascent to Jerusalem signifies the ascent of the Lord from material realm things to the animate (psychic) place, which is an image of Jerusalem. (In John 2:14, "In the sanctuary he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business.") The words, "In the sanctuary, he found" and not "in the temple" are used so that it may not be thought to be the mere "calling" (animate), apart from the Spirit, which elicits help from the Lord. The sanctuary is the Holy of Holies, into which only the High-Priest enters, into which the spiritual go. The temple courtyard, where the Levites also enter, is a symbol of the animate ones who attain a salvation outside the Fullness (Pleroma). Those who are found in the temple selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money-changers sitting there represent those who give nothing away out of charity, but regard the entrance of strangers to the temple as an occasion of trade and profit-making, and who provide the sacrifices for the worship of God for their own gain and love of money. (In John 2:15-16, "And making a whip of cords, he drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the temple; and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade.'") And the whip which Jesus made of small cords and did not receive from another is an image of the power and energy of the Holy Spirit which blows away the wicked. The whip and the linen and the napkin and all such things form an image of the power and energy of the Holy Spirit. . . The whip was tied to a piece of wood, and this wood is a type of the Cross. On this wood the merchants who were intent on gain, and all wickedness was nailed up and done away. . . Out of these two substances was the whip made, for he did not make it of dead leather, but in order that he might make the Church no longer a den of robbers, but the house of his Father.

**Fragment 14, on John 2:17** "Zeal for thy house will consume me." (John 2:17) was spoken from the person of those powers which were cast out and destroyed by the Savior.

**Fragment 15, on John 2:19** (In John 2:19, "Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'") The words "in three days" are used instead of "on the third day." The third day is the spiritual day, on which the resurrection of the Church is revealed.

**Fragment 16, on John 2:20** (In John 2:20, "The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?'"") The fact that Solomon completed the temple in forty-six years is an image of the Savior. The number six refers to matter, that is, the structure (of his body), and the number forty, which is the uncombined Four (Tetrad) refers to the inbreathing and the seed in the inbreathing.

**Fragment 17, on John 4:12-15** (In John 4:13, Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again. But whoever shall drink of the water that I shall give shall never thirst again.") Insipid, temporary, and unsatisfying was that life and its glory, for it was worldly. The proof of it being worldly is the fact that the cattle of Jacob drank from it (i.e. the well). . . But the water which the Savior gives is from his spirit and his power. . . The words "shall never thirst again" mean that his life is eternal and never perishes as does the first (life) which the well provides, but rather is lasting. For the Grace

and gift of our Savior cannot be taken away, and is not consumed or destroyed in the one who partakes of it. The first life is perishable. . . (In John 4:14, "The water I shall give that one shall be a well of water within springing up into everlasting life.") The words "springing up" (John 4:14) refer to those who receive what is richly supplied from above and who themselves pour forth for the eternal life of others that which has been supplied to them. . . (In John 4:15, The woman says to him, "Sir give me this water, that I shall not thirst, nor come hither to draw.") The Samaritan woman showed the kind of faith that was inseparable from her nature and corresponded to it, in that she did not hesitate over what he told her. . . Having been only just pricked by the Word, from then on she hated even the place of the so-called living water. . . Through her words, the woman reveals that the water was toilsome, difficult to obtain, and not wholesome.

**Fragment 18, on John 4:16-18** (In John 4:16, "He said to her, 'Go and call your husband and come hither.'") It is clear that he was saying something like this, "If you wish to receive this water, go call your husband." The husband of the Samaritan woman mentioned by Jesus is her Fullness, so that, on coming with him to the Savior, she may obtain from him power and union and the mingling with her Fullness. For he was not speaking to her about her earthly husband and telling her to call him, for he knew quite well that she had no lawful husband. . . The Savior said to her, "Call your husband and come hither," and meant by this her partner from the Fullness. . . In the spiritual sense she did not know her husband, in the simple sense she was ashamed to say that she had an adulterer, not a husband. . . (The words) "You have rightly said that you do not have a husband" (John 4:17) mean that in the world the Samaritan woman had no husband, for her husband was in the Aeon (i.e. Fullness). (In John 4:18: "You have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband.") The six men indicate the whole of the material evil in which she was involved and with which consorted, when she lived irrationally in debauchery, and was insulted, rejected and abandoned by them (the men).

**Fragment 19, on John 4:19** (In John it says "The woman said to him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.'") The Samaritan woman acknowledged what was said to her by him. For it is characteristic of a prophet to know all things. . . She behaved in a way suited to her nature, for she neither denied, nor explicitly acknowledged her shame. She was convinced that he was a prophet and, by her question, she revealed at the same time the reason for which she had committed immorality. Because of ignorance of God and of the worship agreeable to God, she had also neglected all the things that were essential for her life, whereas what is necessary in life was always otherwise available to her. For she would not have come to the well which was outside the city. . . Wanting to learn in that way, and pleasing whom, and worshipping God, she might be released from her immorality, she said "Our fathers worshipped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." (John 4:20)

**Fragment 20, on John 4:21** (In John it says, "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.'") The mountain represents the Devil, or his world, since the Devil was one part of the whole of matter, but the world is the total mountain of evil, a deserted dwelling place of beasts, to which all who lived before the law and all Gentiles render worship. But Jerusalem represents the creation or the Creator whom the Jews worship. . . The mountain is the creation which the Gentiles worship, but Jerusalem is the creator whom the Jews serve. You then who are spiritual should worship neither the creation nor the Craftsman, but

the Father of Truth. And he (Jesus) accepts her (the Samaritan woman) as one of the already faithful, and to be counted with those who worship in truth.

**Fragment 21, on John 4:22** (In John, “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews.”) The “you” stands for the Jews and the Gentiles. . . We must not worship as the Greeks do, who believe in the things of matter, and serve wood and stone, nor worship the divine as the Jews. They who think they alone know God do not know him, and worship angels, the month, and the moon.

**Fragment 22, on John 4:22-23** “We worship” means the one who is in the Aeon (i.e. the Savior), and those who have come with him. For they knew whom they worship because they worship in truth. The words “salvation is of the Jews” are said because he was born in Judea, but not among them and because from that race salvation and the Word came forth into the world. As far as the spiritual sense is concerned, salvation came from the Jews because they are images of those who are in the Fullness. . . (In John 4:23, it continues, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him”) For the previous worshippers worshipped in flesh and in error him who is not the Father. . . They worshipped the creation and not the true creator (cf. Romans 1:25), who is Christ, since “all things came into being through him, and apart from him nothing came into being.” (John 1:3)

**Fragment 23, on John 4:23 continued** Lost in the deep matter of error is that which is akin to the Father, which is sought after in order that the Father may be worshipped by those who are akin to him.

**Fragment 24, on John 4:24** (In John 4:24a, it says,) “God is spirit.” Undefined, pure, and invisible is his divine nature. (In John 4:24b, it says,) “Those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” Worthily of the one who is worshipped, in a spiritual, not a fleshly fashion. For those who have the same nature as the Father are themselves spirit, and they worship in truth, not in error, as the Apostle teaches when he calls this kind of piety “a rational service.” (Romans 12:2)

**Fragment 25, on John 4:25** (In John it says, “The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ; when he comes, he will show us all things.’”) The Church received Christ and was persuaded concerning him that he alone knows all things.

**Fragment 26, on John 4:26-27** (According to John 4:26, Jesus said to her,) “I who speak to you am he.” Since the Samaritan woman was convinced that Christ, when he came, would announce everything to her, he said ‘Know that I who speak with you am he whom you expect.’ And when he acknowledged that he, the expected one, had come, “his disciples came” (John 4:27), for on their account he had come to Samaria.

**Fragment 27, on John 4:28-30** (In John 4:28-29, “So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?’”) The water jar which is capable of receiving life is the disposition and the thought of the power which is from the Savior. She left it with him, that is, she had with the Savior such a vessel in which she had come to fetch living water. She

returned to the world to announce the good tidings of Christ's coming to the "calling" (i.e. the animate ones). For through the Spirit and by the Spirit the soul is drawn to the Savior. (In John 4:30, "They went out of the city and were coming to him.") "They went out of the city" means out of their former way of life, which was worldly. And they came through faith to the Savior.

**Fragment 28, on John 4:31** (In John 4:31, "Meanwhile the disciples besought him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.') They wished to share with him some of what they had obtained by purchase in Samaria. Fragment 29, on John 4:32 (In John 4:32, he said to them,) "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Heracleon says nothing on this text.

**Fragment 30, on John 4:33** (In John 4:33, "So the disciples said to one another, 'Has any one brought him food?'"") They understood in a rather low way, and imitated the Samaritan woman when she said, "You have no bucket to draw with and the well is deep"

**Fragment 31, on John 4:34** (In John 4:34, "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work.'") With the words "My food is to do the will of him who sent me," the Savior explains to the disciples that this was what he had discussed with the woman, calling the will of the Father his "food." For this was his sustenance, rest, and power. The will of the Father is that human beings should know the Father and be saved. This is the work of the Savior, on account of which he was sent to Samaria, that is, into the world.

**Fragment 32, on John 4:35** (In John 4:35, "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest.") He speaks of the harvest of crops as having a fixed period of four months, whereas the harvest of which he is speaking was already fulfilled. The harvest is of the souls of believers. They are already ripe, ready for harvest, and suitable for being gathered into the barn, that is, through faith into rest, all those who are ready. For they are not all ready. Some were already ready, some were on the point of being ready, some are near to being ready, and some are still being sown.

**Fragment 33, on John 4:35 continued** What is indicated by the text, "The harvest is great but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37) is the same as is said by means of the other statement. It refers to being ready for harvest and suitable for gathering into the barn, through faith into rest, and suited for salvation and for reception of the Word.

**Fragment 34, on John 4:36** (In John 4:36a, "The one who reaps receives a wage, and gathers fruit for eternal life.") The words, "The one who reaps receives a wage" are said because the Savior call himself "the one who reaps." And the wage of our Lord is the salvation and restoration (apokatastasis) of those who are harvested, brought about by his resting upon them. "And gathers fruit for eternal life," is stated either because what is gathered is the fruit of eternal life or because it is itself eternal life.

**Fragment 35, on John 4:36-37** The words "so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together" (John 4:36b) For the sower rejoices because he sows, and because some of his seeds are gathered already, and he has hope for the rest of them. The reaper also rejoices because he harvests. But the former began by sowing, the latter by reaping. They could not

begin at the same time, for sowing must come first and reaping afterwards. When the sower stops sowing, the reaper is still reaping. But, at present, both fulfill their individual tasks and both rejoice because they consider the perfection of the seeds as a common joy. And on the words "For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'" (John 4:37): The Son of Man above the Place (of the Middle) sows; the Savior, himself also the Son of Man, harvests and sends as reapers the angels represented by the disciples, each for his own soul.

**Fragment 36, on John 4:38** (In John 4:38, "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.") Neither through them nor by them were these seeds sown, meaning the apostles. Those who labored are the angels of the dispensation, through whom - as mediators - it (the seed) was sown and brought up. "You have entered into their labor" means those who sow and those who reap do not have the same work. The former, in cold and rain and with much toil, dig up the earth and sow. Through the entire winter, they care for it by hoeing and clearing away the weeds. But the latter enter upon a prepared fruit in summer and joyfully reap.

**Fragment 37, on John 4:39** (In John 4:39, "Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'That one told me all that I ever did.')

The words "from the city" mean "from the world." And the phrase "because of the woman's testimony" means "because of the spiritual Church." The word "many" was used because there are many animate people but "the one" is the imperishable nature of the election, uniform and unique.

**Fragment 38, on John 4:40** (In John 4:40, "So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed with them for two days.") "He stayed with them," not 'among them' and "for two days," signifying either the present age and the one to come in marriage, or the time before the passion and the period afterwards during which he stayed with them, converted many more to faith through his own words, and the departed from them.

**Fragment 39, on John 4:42** In the words "It is no longer because of your words that we believe" (John 4:42a), the word 'only' is missing. "For we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." (John 4:42b) At first people believe in the Savior because they are led to that point by others, but when they encounter his words they no longer believe because of human testimony alone, but because of the Truth itself.

**Fragment 40, on John 4:46-53** (In John 4:46, "So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. And at Capernaum there was an official whose child was ill.) The official was the Craftsman, for he himself ruled like a king over those under him. Because his domain is small and transitory, he was called an "official," like a petty princeling who is set over a small kingdom by the universal king. The "child" "in Capernaum" is one who is in the lower part of the Middle (i.e. of animate substance), which lies near the sea, that is, which is linked with matter. The child's proper person was sick, that is, in a condition not in accordance with the child's proper nature, in ignorance and sins. (In John 4:47, "When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his child, for it was at the point of death.") The words "from Judea to Galilee" mean 'from the Judea above.' . . . By the words "it was at the point of death," the teaching of those who claim that the soul is immortal is refuted. In agreement with this is the statement that "the body and soul are destroyed in Hell." (Matthew 10:28)

The soul is not immortal, but is possessed only of a disposition towards salvation, for it is the perishable which puts on imperishability and the mortal which puts on immortality when “its death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Corinthians 15:54) On “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” (John 4:48): It is fittingly said to the kind of person whose nature is determined through works, and who is convinced by means of sense-perception and does not believe the word. The words, “Come before my child dies” (John 4:49) were spoken because death is the goal and end of the law which kills through sins. Before the child was utterly put to death through sin, the father asks the only Savior to help his child, that is, the nature thus constituted. (In John 4:50, “Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your son will live.’ The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way.”) The words, “Your child will live”, were said by the Savior modestly, for he did not say, ‘Let him live,’ nor did he make it known that he himself provided the life. He went down to the sick person and healed the illness, and having raised that one to life through forgiveness, said, “Your child will live.” The words “the man believed” mean that even the Craftsman is very ready to believe that the Savior, even if not present, is able to heal. (In John 4:51, “As he was going down, his servants met him and told him, ‘Your child lives!’”) The words “his servants” refer to the angels of the Craftsman who bring tidings in the words “Your child lives” that the child is behaving fittingly and rightly, and no longer doing what is unseemly. The servants bring news to the official about the salvation of his child, since the angels are the first to see the actions of human beings in the world, whether they have conducted themselves well and sincerely since the sojourn of the Savior. (In John 4:52, “So he asked them the hour when he began to mend, and they said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’”) By the hour, the nature of the person healed is defined (as animate). (In John 4:53, “The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, ‘Your child will live’; and he himself believed, and all his household.”) In addition, “he himself believed, and all his household” is said with reference to the order of angels and the human beings who are akin to him (i.e. the Craftsman). There is a question about whether or not some of the angels will be saved, namely those who descended to the daughters of men (Genesis 6:2). The destruction of the human beings of the Craftsman is made clear in the words “The children of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness.” (Matthew 8:12) Concerning them, Isaiah prophesied, “Children did I rear and bring up, but they have rejected me” (Isaiah 1:2), and he calls them alien children, and a wicked and lawless seed, a vineyard which produces thorns (Isaiah 5:6).

**Fragment 41, on John 8:21** (In John 8:2, “Again he said to them, ‘I go away, and you will seek me and die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.’”) How can they come to be in a state of imperishability when they are in ignorance, unbelief and sin?

**Fragment 42, on John 8:22** (In John 8:22, “Then said the Jews, ‘Will he kill himself, since he says, “Where I am going, you cannot come”?’”) The Jews said this because they entertained evil thoughts and considered themselves greater than the Savior. They supposed that they themselves would go away to God for eternal rest, but the Savior, making away with himself, to corruption and death unto which they thought they would not go. The Jews believed that the Savior said, ‘I am about to do away with myself and go to corruption, where you cannot come.’

**Fragment 43, on John 8:37** (In John 8:37, “I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you.”) “Because my word finds no place in you” means it has no place because they are unsuitable for it either by their

substance or by their disposition.

**Fragment 44, on John 8:43-44a** (In John 8:43-44a, “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your wish is to do your father’s desires.”) The reason why they were unable to hear Jesus’ words and understand what he said is provided in the words, “You are of your father the Devil.” He says, ‘Why are you unable to hear my word? Because you are of your father the Devil’ meaning you are of the substance of the Devil. Thus he makes clear their nature, after convincing them in advance that they are neither the children of Abraham otherwise they would not have hated him, nor children of God because they did not love him.

**Fragment 45, on John 8:44a** Those to whom the word came were of the substance of the Devil.

**Fragment 46, on John 8:44a** The verse “You are of your father the Devil” is to be understood as meaning ‘of the same substance as the Devil.’ On “and your wish is to do your father’s desires”: The Devil has no will, but only desires. . . This was said not to those who are by nature children of the Devil, but to the animate people who have become children of the Devil by intent. Some who are of this nature may also be called children of God by intent. Because they have loved the desires of the Devil and performed them, they become children of the Devil, though they were not such by nature. The word “children” may be understood in three ways: first, by nature; secondly, by inclination; thirdly, by merit. (A child) by nature means (the child) is begotten by someone who is himself begotten, and is properly called “child.” (A child) by inclination is when one who does the will of another person by his own inclination is called the child of the one whose will he does. (A child) by merit is when some are known as children of hell, or of darkness and lawlessness, and the offspring of snakes and vipers. For these do not produce anything by their own nature; they are destructive and consume those that are cast into them; but, since they did their works, they are called their children. . . He now calls them children of the Devil, not because the Devil produces any of them, but because by doing the works of the Devil they became like him.

**Fragment 47, on John 8:44b** (In John 8:44b, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”) His nature is not of the Truth, but the opposite to the Truth: error and ignorance. Therefore he can neither stand in Truth, nor have the Truth in himself. From his nature he has falsehood as his own, and by nature he can never speak the Truth. Not only is he himself a liar, but he is also falsehood’s father. His “father” means his nature, since it is composed of error and falsehood.

**Fragment 48, on John 8:50** (In John 8:50, “Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he will be the judge.”) The words “there is one who seeks it, and he will be the judge” do not refer to the Father. The one who seeks and judges is the one who avenges me, the servant commissioned for that purpose, who does not bear the sword in vain, the avenger of the king. This is Moses, as he said to them previously in the words, “on who you set your hope.” (John 5:45) The one who judges and punishes is Moses, that is, the law-giver himself. How then does he not say that all judgement has been delivered to him? (cf. John 5:22) He affirms it rightly: for the judge does this will as a servant when he judges, as happens clearly among human beings.

*Fragments preserved in the writings of Clement of Alexandria:*

**Fragment 49, on Matthew 3:11** John says, “I baptise you with water, but there comes after me one who baptizes with spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11) He baptized no one with fire. But some have marked with fire the ears of those who are sealed, and have thus understood the apostolic word. (Heracleon is referring here to the gnostic group lead by Marcellina.)

**Fragment 50, on Luke 12:8** (In Luke 12:8, “I assure you that whoever confesses in me publicly, the Son of Man will do the same in him before the angels of God”) The confession is made on the one hand that made in faith and conduct, on the other hand that made with the mouth. Confession with the mouth takes place also before the authorities, and this the multitudes incorrectly consider to be the only confession, for even the hypocrites can make this confession. But it will be found that this word was not spoken universally. For not all who are saved made the confession by mouth, among whom are Matthew, Philip, Thomas, Levi, and many others. The confession by mouth is not universal, but relates to a part. What is universal is the confession in works and action, which corresponds to faith in him. And this confession is followed by the partial one before the authorities, if it is necessary and the situation requires it. That person will make the confession by mouth who has previously confessed rightly in disposition. And of those who confess, he rightly said “in me.” But in the case of those who deny he added a “me,” even if they confess him with the mouth, they deny him since they do not confess him in action. Only those who live in confession and action which conform to him confess “in him.” In their case he confesses himself, since he has grasped them, and is held by them so that they can never deny him. For those who are not in him deny him. For he did not say ‘whoever denies in me,’ but “in me”. For no one who was ever in him will deny him. “Publicly” the confession takes place in similar fashion before those who are saved and before the Gentiles, before the former by conduct also, and before the latter by the mouth.

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